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Composing Digital Media

Dr. Ben Miller

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Visual media statement

**Sources**

I started with an image from the British Library’s Flickr. Almost all images stored there are out of copyright, so I could use them without attribution. I choose not to do that, however, because I think it’s an awesome resource and I want everyone to know about it. The website provides an archivist’s level of information on the scan, but here I’ll just give the image title and a link:

 "Loved and Lost! The true story of a short life. Told in gossip verse and illustrated by L. A. Meredith"

<http://bit.ly/2yDxMlm>

The text bubbles were zero attribution, so I did not bother to document where they came from.

I was inspired by a poster for a house show I saw hanging on a bulletin board. Sam Treber, who runs the venue, most likely also designed and posted the flyer. The original image is black and white, but makes use of a floral, Victorian-looking frame around the interesting information. The line at the bottom, beneath the frame, was simply “Message for address”. I really liked the sort of ‘upcycling’ of a very old looking thing for an event like this.

**Goals**

Going in with zero photo editing experience, my goals were more about exploring the tools. Once I got the hang of GIMP, I started to think about what I wanted from the poster. The illustration is very top and bottom heavy, so I intended to use the rule of threes to have the title, details, and extra information, stacked. I ran into issues when the text overlayed the illustration at the top and made it unreadable. At first I did not want to put a text box behind that text, and did all I could to avoid it. I tried adding a shadow, having an outline around the words, and making the title small. None of these looked good, but I did learn how to do them!

After I finished this, I forgot completely I had done it, but before I started I painted over the spider web “DANGER” illustration. I was glad to start here, as it was pretty easy to do and made an immediate difference. Next, I played with transparent overlays to make the poster more colorful. The website from which I learned about this event did not seem like it accounted the spirit of the event (a farmer’s market with live music and artisan crafts), but it did make nice use of color. They used dark blue, white, green, and navy, and included pictures. I decided to go with pink, lilac, and navy because it warmed the visual up without sacrificing the integrity of the illustration in the way that blue or green might. The vintage look and feel mirrors the house venue’s goals for their poster—make something informative and inviting that reflects a very DIY, recycled spirit.

Adding the talking cats was entirely based on feedback from Ben Miller. I liked the idea a lot, but didn’t want the bubbles to draw too much attention, so I made them a lilac color not far from the newly-pinkish paper. If I had more time, I would get rid of the shadow outline. I could have used a graphic from the internet without a shadow, but I liked the shape of these. Originally they had white bubble spaces, which I filled with an alpha channel, and then my own transparent colors. These are supposed to be what draws people in and makes them want to come, either for financial reasons, animal reasons, or because it’s a little funny to see two talking cats. Here is where I most wanted to use contrast to hit something home. Anyone can google this event, so it’s not important that the reader get all of it immediately. Instead, this poster aims to work more like an advertisement.

**Outcomes**

If I had more time, I would have played around with colorizing the cats, bird, and flowers. I considered doing this quickly, but decided it would just look bad if done incorrectly. I also struggled to get the text of the main title to sit on top of the lilac semi-transparent box, so the dark blue text is overlayed and somewhat less saturated. At some point I really messed up and the whole text box just became one single layer, at which point I grew frustrated and just accepted my fate.