

8-2 Final Project: Website Portfolio, Print-Ready Portfolio, and Professional Reflection

Joella Chung

Southern New Hampshire University

GRA 491: Graphic Design Portfolio

Instructor Sandra Lesh

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Portfolio Brand Identity

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

The series of designs displayed in my portfolio demonstrate my knowledge of graphic design software, particularly those of the industry standard, including Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. For instance, the logo design of the bird perched in the curve of the letter “J” exhibits my proficiency with Illustrator and the pen tool; my resume design shows my knowledge of InDesign and page layouts; and the website demonstrates my understanding of HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Bootstrap.

Elements of Design

The elements and principles of design are evident in my series of designs—one can observe boundaries established by lines; balance through the positioning and layout of elements; contrast and a feminine and elegant mood supported by a minimal color palette; visual hierarchy through typography; and simplicity and readability through the employment of white space. For example, my resume design demonstrates these qualities by using lines to separate sections, a minimal and harmonizing color palette to produce a sophisticated mood, a larger, serif font against a smaller, sans-serif font to establish visual hierarchy, and sufficient negative space to ensure that the design has enough “breathing room.” These qualities can also be seen in my other designs, such as my business card which utilizes typography and lines to emphasize contrast, visual hierarchy, and to direct the eye to specific information.

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

A substantial amount of time and effort was poured into my designs to ensure that it successfully captured my message and vision for my brand identity. In fact, my brand identity went through several adjustments. Initially, I did not think of a minimal or elegant design; rather,

I aimed for a more friendly and youthful design, and my logo design only contained a bird. However, over time, I realized that the designs could use improvement both visually and conceptually. Thus, I revised the brand identity to become more timeless, unique, and be on the same level with how I wished to present myself to others. This design change is best illustrated through my logo design: at first, the logo only contained the bird and some text. The bird bore an overall cartoonish appearance—it was drawn with more detail and colors—and the text in the logo used a mono font and a sans-serif font. However, to strive for a more creative design and one that prompted feelings of minimalism, I adjusted the logo to appear more minimal by eliminating details and resorted to using a two-color palette, and I changed the mono font to a serif font to reinforce the idea of elegance and sophistication. Moreover, to make the logo more personalized, I made the bird perch in the curve of the letter “J”—the first letter of my name. Not only did eliminating details in the bird contribute to the minimalistic approach, but it also showed an application of ethical guidelines by ensuring that the logo design was socioculturally appropriate as specific bird species can be interpreted differently based on one’s culture.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

The design of my brand identity demonstrates the insight and feedback I received from the professor and peers of the work’s course of origin. As stated earlier, the design evolved from a cartoonish appearance to one that was more minimal—this change was initiated by the feedback on the cartoonish appearance of the bird. Specifically, the professor offered feedback on how my initial logo of just a bird was not an effective logo, and later, a peer suggested that I tweak the distance between the bird and the letter “J” to provide more breathing room between the two. Based on the feedback I had received, I was prompted to take on a minimalist approach which I applied to the rest of my designs in my branding suite to establish cohesiveness.

Moreover, in this course, my instructor offered feedback on enhancing my portfolio, such as increasing the logo on the website to emphasize my brand identity.

On the other hand, during the development of our brand identity, I also offered appropriate and insightful feedback to my peers by evaluating their work against the principles and elements of design and offering suggestions on how they might improve their designs to be more in line with their visions.

Evidence of Following Directions

During the creation of my brand identity, I adhered to the instructions and specifications. When it came to reconsidering the work for inclusion in my portfolio, I did not feel that it was necessary to deviate from the original instructions as I felt that they were sufficient enough in guiding the direction of my brand identity.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

Overall, my branding identity does seem to express attention to detail by providing a high-quality presentation. This can be observed through the high resolution of the image, accuracy of colors, proper employment of layout, readability and legibility of text, and appropriate file type for screen publication. For example, the understanding of grid and format can be especially noticed in the resume design which utilizes a grid system to create a layout that flows from one section to another with appropriate white space between each section. Likewise, the final products are exported in the highest quality possible while maintaining an optimized file size to ensure that they can be quickly accessed and downloaded.

Upper Crust Bakery | Branding Identity: Logo and Business Card Designs

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

The branding identity for Upper Crust Bakery demonstrates a working knowledge of industry standard software, particularly of Adobe Illustrator. This can be especially observed in the design of the logo which utilizes the pen tool, custom brushes, and text tool in Illustrator to create the bread illustration, the rustic lines, and the arching text, respectively. Moreover, the business card also shows the employment of Illustrator's tools, such as its pen tool and text tool, to create and align the text and the decorative elements.

Elements of Design

Both the logo and business card effectively demonstrate the elements and principles of design which indicates my depth of knowledge. For example, one can see that the logo utilizes rough lines and shapes to create boundaries and direction; a warm color palette consisting of mostly browns and blacks to emphasize the bakery's personality; a rough texture to produce to a rustic and homemade environment; balance through the positioning of text and lines; unity through similar colors and texture; and contrast through color (Morales, 2020). Likewise, the business card also includes these elements as mentioned in the logo, such as color, line, shape, and texture to give contrast, balance, and unity. It also employs white space and hierarchy which is noticeable with the text, such as using fonts and size to establish hierarchy.

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

For the design process, a substantial amount of time and effort was placed into creating a branding identity that was unique and successfully capture the bakery's vision of being an inviting and homely place for people of all ages to visit. The design process consisted of creating various logos with varying colors, typography, and layout that would allude to the bakery's identity and vision. Eventually, the logo depicting a fresh bread served on a platter stood to be the best one, and to emphasize the bakery's long, established history, a warm color palette and

rough lines and texture were utilized. These design decisions and efforts towards creativity and originality are demonstrated through the designs of the logo and business card.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

The Upper Crust Bakery series demonstrates thoughtful and appropriate critique skills by incorporating the helpful feedback received from peers within this course. For example, one peer noted that the text in the logo appeared to be slightly horizontally stretched, and this was amended by decreasing the width of the text and modifying its curve. Additionally, for the business card, a peer recommended introducing a sans-serif font to complement the serif font, and another peer suggested changing the position of the logo to be centered and to reduce the distance between the two bodies of text. The updated version of the business card reflects the insight given by the peers, and it also includes additional adjustments, including setting the text from all uppercase to sentence case to make it feel less aggressive, revising the icons' appearances to be more in line with the overall design, and adjusting the decorative shape to be smoother and aligned with the shape of the logo. Meanwhile, I also demonstrated appropriate critique skills when providing feedback to others by observing their strengths and offering suggestions on how they might improve their works, such as stronger use of hierarchy and addressing readability concerns.

Evidence of Following Directions

In the creation of the series of designs, I adhered to the given directions. I felt that the original directions were sufficient and did not feel the need to change the intent of the work.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

For the final series of designs, they exhibit excellent craftsmanship and attention to detail by being presented in its best quality and clarity. The colors are also accurate, and there is an

employment of grid and format to ensure that the elements are properly positioned and balanced. The typography is also legible and readable, and this is especially noticeable in the business card which saw the change from an all-uppercase, serif text to a sentence case, sans-serif text for improved readability. For screen presentation, the Illustrator file type has been converted to PDF for viewability and is print-ready with the bleed, printer's marks, and CMYK colors.

TOWN | Stationery Items: Menu and Brochure Designs

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

The menu and brochure design for TOWN show an understanding of Adobe InDesign to create pieces that are appropriate for both digital and print media—but especially for the latter. This can be seen in the employment of lines and grids offered in InDesign to create a visually pleasing layout for the menu as well as the use of text.

Elements of Design

In the menu and brochure designs, the elements and principles of design are used to create balanced and visually appealing layouts. Noticeably, both designs use lines and shapes to separate sections; an elegant color palette provided by TOWN's style guide to establish a sophisticated mood; a serif font provided by TOWN to further emphasize dignified visual feel; contrast through color; balance through lines and shapes and layout of text; white space to ensure that elements have enough room to breathe, and hierarchy through size and color (Keung, 2019). For example, the menu design uses boxes to separate the menu sections, and font size, styling, and color are used to establish hierarchy as the section names are set in red, the menu names set in a bigger font size than the descriptions which are italicized.

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

In the design process, I committed a substantial amount of time and effort to create the menu and brochure designs. It was important to capture TOWN's vision of being an elegant restaurant for older, high-end clientele, and the designs exhibit this not only through the provided color palette and serif fonts in TOWN's style guide but also through a unique layout supported by graphics, shapes, and opacity. Initially, the designs used a traditional menu layout, but I felt that it did not effectively capture TOWN's sophisticated nature. Thus, through an unconventional design layout, the menu and brochure exhibit application of ethical guidelines by attempting to be original while remaining easily readable.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

The brochure design uses peer feedback by changing the text from grey to a whiter color to improve readability. To further address readability concerns, the gradient layers and their opacity were adjusted for better contrast against text. Moreover, based on a peer's recommendation, the hairline was adjusted to be more apparent. Meanwhile, the menu design also reflects the text color change as suggested by a peer, and it also amends the gradient layers' opacity for increased contrast against the text to support readability.

Evidence of Following Directions

In the creation of the series of designs, I mainly adhered to the given directions. However, I favored the Athelas font over the Majesti Banner font, two fonts that had been suggested in the style guide of TOWN. Specifically, the majority of text in my designs use Athelas whereas only the price numbers use Majesti Banner. In my annotated presentation, I offered an explanation for my actions, stating:

Although TOWN's typography also included the Majesti Banner family, Athelas was primarily used over Majesti Banner as the former provided better legibility than the latter;

the alternating thin-to-thick anatomy of Majesti made it difficult to read the text, especially when using the fonts such as Majesti Banner Medium and Majesti Banner Bold. The poor legibility of Majesti Banner would not only impair the design, but it would also introduce accessibility problems especially for customers with vision issues and other disabilities. It is important to consider the comfort of the customers as TOWN's vision is to acknowledge consumer insights and provide a high-quality experience for customers ranging from early 30s-60s.

In reconsidering these designs for my portfolio, I feel that it was necessary to deviate from the original style guide directions as the readability of the menu designs are important, especially due to the older target audience of TOWN.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

The final series of designs show attention to detail and craftsmanship as both pieces are presented with the best resolution and clarity. The CMYK colors are accurate as well, and there is an obvious use of grid and format to ensure that the elements are properly aligned. Likewise, the typography is readable, especially due to the change in color, and the file types are print-ready with proper printer's marks, bleed, and CMYK color format.

Caliber | Magazine Design | Web-Based Interactive Magazine

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

The interactive magazine shows my understanding of Adobe InDesign, particularly of its tools concerning layout and interactivity. For example, the magazine uses buttons which trigger another action, such as opening a link, causing content to appear, and navigating to the next, previous, or specific page. It also shows my understanding of using InDesign to not only create a web-based magazine but also one that is compatible with eBook software.

Elements of Design

Caliber's magazine shows the elements and principles of design to create a visually appealing piece. For instance, color is used to establish a mood and to create contrast and hierarchy in the design. Likewise, hierarchy is further emphasized through fonts and sizes, such as in the featured article in which the heading is larger than the body. Additionally, white space is appropriately used throughout the design to ensure that elements are not overcrowded and have enough room to breathe (InVision, n.d.).

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

A substantial amount of time and effort was poured into Caliber's magazine design. Multiple drawings were made with various layouts to determine which one would best suit Caliber and its target audience which consisted of gamers ranging from teens to adults. Additionally, I created several different color palettes to see which would not only complement the featured video game but also establish a mood that suited the target audience. Overall, the magazine which is tailored to gamers shows creativity and originality as well as evidence of adherence to ethical guidelines by ensuring that content was accessible and usable.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

The magazine design incorporates the critiques of peers by adding emphasis to the animation for "Start Reading" based on peer's recommendation. Moreover, magazine uses feedback from its course of origin by removing hyphenation of text and adjusting the layout of the elements to be properly aligned based on the instructor's suggestions. When offering feedback to others in the work's course of origin, I showed appropriate critique skills by pointing out the strengths of their magazine, such as use of hierarchy and contrast, and offered suggestions for improvement, including text spacing and stronger use of white space.

Evidence of Following Directions

In the creation of this design, I adhered to all given directions and did not feel the need to deviate from them. I felt that the original instructions were sufficient.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

The final design exhibits clarity and is in its highest resolution. The colors are accurate for the web as they are in RGB format. Additionally, there is use of grid and format, and the typography is readable with sufficient contrast and appropriate font. The design is also ready for screen publication with two file types: a published link and an ePUB.

Japanese Wood-Block Printing | Magazine Design: Layout**Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools**

The magazine layout design for the Japanese wood-block printing article demonstrates a working knowledge of Adobe InDesign which is considered to be an industry standard software. The arrangement of text and images on a print-ready, two-page layout indicates my understanding of InDesign's tools, including the text tool, gutter, and text wrap features. The attention to bleed, margin, and CMYK color format also displays my knowledge of the printing process.

Elements of Design

The layout exhibits the elements and principles of design by implementing lines to divide content and emphasize certain areas, such as pull quotes; contrast or dominance through the enlargement and color of the text heading and pull quotes; typography using a serif font for readability and to also establish a sophisticated mood; alignment to bring visual interest and order by using left justified type for stronger visuals; and white space by breaking up text and limiting the amount of text and graphics on one page (Clear Water Press, n.d.).

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

For the design process, a substantial amount of time and effort was poured into making a visually pleasing and easily legible design. I brainstormed various layouts that would create a visual mood parallel to the article's topic of Japanese wood-block printing. Additionally, I experimented with fonts before settling on serif fonts that were easily readable as their distinguished look matched the article's content. Likewise, I played around with different images of wood-block prints and their arrangement on the page; it was important that they supplemented the text and broke up the sections to increase the visual interest of the page. These design decisions and efforts towards creativity and originality are demonstrated through the designs of the two magazine layouts, and a sense of ethical guidelines is shown through the magazine's accessibility and originality.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

While I did not receive feedback on how I might improve my designs in the work's course of origin nor in this course, I closely examined my magazine and spotted areas that could use improvement. For the first layout, I cleaned up the gutter space between the bodies of text, changed the alignment of the subheading from left to right for better flow, and made the bodies of text in both pages horizontally parallel. Meanwhile, in the second layout, I fixed the excessive leading for the heading in the second layout, adjusted the gutter, and increased the font size for the subheading and citations of the wood-block prints.

As for providing feedback, I exhibited proper critique skills by observing the strengths of the magazine design, such as typography that established a visual mood matching the article's message, while offering suggestions for areas that could use improvement, including adding a gradient background over a colorful image to provide sufficient contrast against the text.

Evidence of Following Directions

In the creation of the magazine layouts, I followed the given directions which simply stated to create two different magazine layouts for the Japanese wood-block printing article. I felt that the original directions were clear and sufficient, and I did not need to deviate from the instructions to accomplish my final works.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

The magazine layouts display excellent craftsmanship and attention to detail by being presented in its best resolution and clarity. The colors are accurate, using CMYK format for print, and there is a clear use of grid and format to ensure that the text is arranged properly for the printing process. The typography is also legible and readable. For the printing process, the magazine layouts have proper use of printer's marks, bleed, and CMYK color format.

TOWN | UI/UX Design: Website Design and Development

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

The website for TOWN exhibits my knowledge of HTML, CSS, and JavaScript in Visual Studio Code. For example, the base structure of the website and its visual appearance demonstrate my understanding of HTML and CSS respectively, and the dynamic and interactive content shows my ability to use JavaScript.

Elements of Design

TOWN's website shows the principles and elements of design through lines and shapes to divide sections and create boundaries; color to organize and establish a mood of sophistication and elegance; white space to avoid creating an overcrowded sensation and to further contribute to the feeling of elegance; hierarchy through color and size; unity through sleek colors, serif and

sans-serif fonts, brush graphics, and high-quality images with gradients in order to maintain TOWN's brand identity as an elegant restaurant; and contrast through color.

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

A substantial amount of time and effort was placed into making the website during the development process. To successfully capture the elegance and high-end atmosphere of TOWN, I made several wireframes of the website to determine which one would match with the qualities of TOWN while also offering an appropriate user experience. I also experimented with CSS and JavaScript to create a functional menu gallery with a filter—a feature which took a substantial amount of time to design and create. The final result displays my efforts towards creativity and originality, and it also shows my adherence to ethical guidelines by ensuring that the website is useable and accessible.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

In the work's course of origin, I did not receive any critiques from my peers nor did my instructor offer any suggestions on what I could improve. However, in reconsidering the website for my portfolio, I made some adjustments to improve its quality, including better scaling for the text on smaller screens and adjusting the text-wrapping to be less severe for a body of text. On the other hand, when I offered feedback to my peers in the work's course of origin, I demonstrated thoughtful and appropriate critique skills by discussing the strengths of my peers' websites and what they excelled in. I also pointed out several issues with the website and offered solutions on how they might address them by providing them with HTML and CSS markups.

Evidence of Following Directions

In the creation of this website, I adhered to the assignment specifications and felt no need to deviate from the original instructions. The provided instructions were sufficient and clear in guiding me to create a cohesive and functional website.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

The final design of TOWN's website shows excellent craftsmanship and attention to detail through its high clarity and resolution of image, accuracy of colors that reflect TOWN's style guide, the use of grid and format to create alignment and order in CSS, and the readability of typography through appropriate font size and color. Moreover, the website is responsiveness in that it can be viewed on multiple devices and screen sizes, including desktop, tablet, and mobile. The content rescales and repositions itself based on the screen's width, allowing for a smooth user experience across all devices.

Java Been | UI/UX Design: Website Design

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

Similar to Toronto Cupcake, the prototypes for desktop and mobile demonstrates an understanding of UI/UX design and the Adobe XD software. Specifically, the prototypes display my knowledge of XD's tools, including the Design and Prototype functions to create, design, and link artboards as well as to place and arrange text, images, and functional icons and buttons.

Elements of Design

Java Been's website shows the principles and elements of design through lines and shapes to divide sections and create boundaries; color to establish a warm and inviting mood and to add contrast to elements; typography through a mix of a serif and sans-serif font for contrast and to further emphasize the visual mood; hierarchy through color and size of elements; and proper white space to enhance readability and give breathing room to the elements.

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

A substantial amount of time and effort was placed into making a responsive design for Java Been. I incorporated the client's style guide which consisted of preselected fonts and colors and offered a description of the brand's message and goal. To prepare for the design, I made a sitemap and several wireframes with different layouts to determine which setup offered a seamless, responsive experience for visitors. As I had to consider the transition to smaller screens, I ensured that the design remained similar across all devices for a cohesive look and feel. The final result displays my efforts towards creativity and originality, and it also shows my adherence to ethical guidelines by ensuring that the website is useable and accessible.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

In the work's course of origin, my instructor suggested that I make the navigation menu fixed, allowing visitors to access the nav items at any point on the page. I wanted the navigation menu background to be transparent initially but change to color on scroll. However, as it was not possible to reflect this in Adobe XD, I changed the nav bar to have a background at all times and to be fixed on scroll. Additionally, in reconsidering the prototypes for my portfolio, I made some adjustments to improve its quality, such as adding dropdown menus for two nav items for easier navigation and inserting more artboards for increased interactivity in the prototype to provide viewers with a stronger idea of the final product—including the slideshow and dropdown menus in the Menu pages and the navbar.

Meanwhile, when I offered feedback to my peers in the work's course of origin, I demonstrated thoughtful and appropriate critique skills by discussing the strengths of my peers' designs to create a responsive website, such as using flexible images and grids to automatically

resize images. I also noted issues with the design and offered solutions on how they might address them, including accessibility by increasing the text's contrast and size.

Evidence of Following Directions

In the creation of the design, I adhered to the assignment specifications which required me to create a responsive design on desktop and mobile for Java Been. The provided instructions were sufficient and clear in guiding me to create a responsive website.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

The final design of Java Been's responsive website on desktop and mobile demonstrates excellent craftsmanship and attention to detail through its high clarity and resolution of image and accuracy of RGB colors that reflect Java Been's style guide. There is use of grid and format to properly align the elements, and the typography uses appropriate font size and contrast to bolster the website's readability. For screen publication, the prototypes use Adobe XD's presentation mode to ensure that the designs are of high-quality and can be easily accessed.

Toronto Cupcake | UI/UX Design: Website Redesign

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

In the work's course of origin, I was tasked to create a redesign of an existing website that lacked proper UX design. Among the materials I had to submit was a working prototype of the mobile version. The prototype demonstrates my knowledge of UI/UX design and working with Adobe XD, a UI/UX design software that can be used to create wireframes and prototypes. The prototype offers interactive features, allowing for viewers to gain a better idea of how the redesign functions and appears. As it was created with Adobe XD, it exhibits my understanding of XD's tools, including the Design and Prototype functions to create, design, and link artboards.

Elements of Design

Toronto Cupcake's redesign shows the elements and principles of design by utilizing lines to divide content; typography to create a visual mood of friendliness and honesty; colors to further establish an amiable and playful mood and to create contrast; negative and positive space to enhance readability and simplify the design; contrast using size and color to place emphasis on text; repetition, such as in the menu placement to make viewers feel comfortable and familiar; and harmony through color palettes to create a sense of unity between elements in the website.

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

I committed a substantial amount of time and effort to create a redesign that offered an improved user experience while retaining the original appearance of Toronto Cupcake. I sought to keep several design elements of the original website to refrain from erasing the brand's identity, including the pink color palette, the sans-serif font, and overall friendly attitude. During the design process, I examined different websites to evaluate the UX aspects they integrated, observed the weak points of the original website and suggested possible solutions, created user personas to understand the target audience's preferences and pain points, and sketched wireframes and mockups. At the end of the process, I was able to design the final prototype that addressed the pain points of the original website, focused on the usability of the website, and retained several visual elements of the original website to create a fulfilling user experience for visitors. The design also shows evidence of ethical guidelines by acting in the client's best interests.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

One classmate commented that the prototype should have more interactivity. The prototype includes several interactive features, such as the ability to add to and see the cart, use the hamburger menu, click on a dropdown menu, and access the menu page and contact page.

This amount of interactivity met the requirements in work's course of origin. However, as adding more interactivity would indeed strengthen the presentation of the prototype, I added interactivity to the image slideshow in the homepage and increased the padding for the buttons to allow for easier tapping; gave interactivity to the search button; created an artboard for the account icon; and added interactivity to the filters in the Menu page.

Meanwhile, in the work's course of origin, I displayed proper critique skills by noting the strengths of my peers' works, especially the implementation of features that bolstered the UX design of the website, such as removing a hamburger menu on desktop and replacing it with a regular, responsive navbar as well as revising the navigation to be more clear and organized. I also made suggestions on areas that could use improvement, such as increasing white space to give elements room to breathe, increasing the sizes for buttons, and adding more contrast to allow for readability of content.

Evidence of Following Directions

I followed the original directions which stated to create a redesign of an existing website that lacked proper UX design. I did not feel a need to deviate from the original directions as they were sufficient enough for me to accomplish my work.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

The final prototype demonstrates attention to detail and craftsmanship by being presented in its highest clarity and resolution. RGB colors are used as the product will be viewed on the web, and the layout uses grid and format to ensure that elements are properly arranged and aligned. The typography is readable due to appropriate font choice and sufficient contrast. For screen publication, the prototype uses Adobe XD's presentation mode to ensure that viewers see a high-quality product.

Photography: Bird Series

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

Bird Series shows my skills with DSLR cameras and Adobe Lightroom which are among the industry standards. The photographs were taken with a DSLR camera which indicates my knowledge of the camera functions, such as aperture and shutter speed. Afterwards, they were edited in Lightroom which demonstrates my knowledge of Lightroom tools, including the effect tools, such as exposure and contrast, as well as masking and the adjustment brush tool.

Elements of Design

The Bird Series shows the elements and principles of design through the cropping and alignment of the subject in each shot. For example, the first photo shows emphasis through the placement of the subject and the use of color to make the subject stand out; texture through water in two photographs are highlighted due to the fast shutter speed; color in all photographs to establish a natural and fresh mood; and a mixture of negative and positive in all photographs to create balance and emphasis (Manickam, 2021).

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

Initially, I was planning to base my subjects on cars to demonstrate knowledge of shutter speed and aperture. However, when I was practicing taking pictures of my surroundings, I noticed several birds flying around. With it being my first time attempting to take photos of wildlife, I took my time to ensure that my photographs were composed correctly and had proper lighting. Since I used a high shutter speed to capture the birds before or while they moved, I used a lower f/stop and increased the ISO for stronger exposure. During the editing process, I used tools in Lightroom to adjust the exposure and edit the color of the photographs to match what I saw in real life. Such tools included the linear gradient tool to make the top of the photograph

lighter and the bottom darker to push emphasis on the subject and the brush tool to select the water and adjust its color using the temp and tint sliders.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

One classmate recommended that the last photo utilizes the rule of thirds. Per her suggestion, I cropped the photo using the rule of thirds. Additionally, I reviewed the rest of the photos and fixed the coloring of the grass for the first photo to match with the second one as well as removed two distracting branches near the subject using Photoshop, and I also adjusted the third photo's crop to allow the subject to be properly centered. In the work's course of origin, I exhibited appropriate critique skills when reviewing my peers' works. For example, as the assignment revolved around shutter speed and aperture, I noted how my peers accomplished this for certain subjects, such as a fast shutter speed to capture water splashing into a cup. I also offered potential ways to improve, including using composition rules for a more pleasing organization of elements.

Evidence of Following Directions

The directions for the assignment required the application of shutter speed and aperture. With the ability to choose the subjects, I did not feel a need to deviate from the original instructions.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

The final photographs of the Bird Series show excellent craftsmanship and attention to detail by maintaining clarity and accuracy of colors. The compositions of the photographs exhibit understanding of grid and format. For screen viewing, the photographs are converted to JPG for ease of viewing and sharing on social media and websites.

Photography: Lakeside Series

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

Lakeside Series shows my understanding of DSLR cameras and Adobe Lightroom which are considered industry standards. The photographs were taken with a DSLR camera which indicates my knowledge of the camera functions, such as aperture and shutter speed. Afterwards, they were edited in Lightroom which demonstrates my knowledge of Lightroom tools, including the effect tools, such as exposure and contrast, as well as masking and the adjustment brush tool.

Elements of Design

The Lakeside Series shows the elements and principles of design through the positioning and placement of the subject and other elements in each shot. For example, the photograph of a boat resting on the surface of the lake utilizes lines as seen in the divide between the trees and the water; texture in the calm water due to the fast shutter speed; emphasis on the boat through placement and color; and asymmetrical balance by having contrasting elements of the sky and water on each side; (Kennedy, n.d.). The photograph of the woman walking her dogs also shows similar elements and principles, such as leading lines; balance using the trees; and a bright color palette to establish a cheerful mood.

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

Before I started taking photographs, I took the time to observe my surroundings to determine the best spots to take pictures. In taking the photographs, I ensured that through the viewfinder, the shot contained the subject and other complementary elements in a pleasing composition. For instance, the boat photograph uses the rule of thirds technique to position the boat to be off-center. Additionally, during the editing process, I experimented with the tools in Lightroom to ensure that the photo was visually appealing, such as using the color grading tool

to adjust the color palette of the photograph. I also used the masking tool to remove distractions in the photographs, such as branches and other humans.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

In the work's course of origin, I received some suggestions on how I might improve the photographs, including straightening the photographs and adjusting their coloring. The photographs reflect the feedback I received as well as my own personal adjustments. When I presented feedback to others, I demonstrated appropriate critique skills by observing what they were successful in accomplishing, such as using leading lines and appropriate shutter speed to create texture and movement, and offering suggestions on how they might improve, such as using composition to frame the subject and reducing the amount of brightness through Lightroom.

Evidence of Following Directions

The directions for the assignment merely asserted that the photographs demonstrate an understanding of shutter speed and aperture. They did not control the subjects or theme of the photographs. Thus, I did not feel a need to deviate from the original instructions.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

The final photographs of the Lakeside series show excellent craftsmanship and attention to detail by ensuring clarity and accuracy of colors. They also show an understanding of grid and format through the compositions of the photographs, and for screen publication, the photographs are converted to JPG to ensure that they are lightweight to be viewed and sent on social media, websites, and email.

Photography: Still Life Series

Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools

Similar to the Bird Series, Still Life Series also demonstrates my understanding of DSLR cameras and Adobe Lightroom. A DSLR camera was used to photograph the still life subjects, and an application of still life arrangement and value through lighting can be seen in the photographs. Lightroom was used to further improve the photographs, including their lighting and coloring, which displays my knowledge of Lightroom tools, such as the adjustment brush tool. Moreover, to fulfill the assignment of digitally altering photos using Photoshop, the photo of the blueberries had two blueberries removed from the scene. In doing so, it demonstrates my ability to use Photoshop to remove objects in a photo and make it appear realistic.

Elements of Design

The Still Life Series utilizes the elements and principles of design to create a visually pleasing composition. This includes emphasis using color, value, and aperture; positive and negative space, such as the second photograph which emphasizes minimalism through the strong use of negative space; texture as seen in the subjects' skin in both photos and the wood of the chopping board in the first; form using lighting to shroud some areas in shadow and others with light; and harmony by combining similar colors and texture for color and texture harmony respectively (Elizarov, n.d.).

Creative Self-Expression and Originality

Finding and arranging still life objects took a substantial amount of time and effort. I experimented with a variety of items, backgrounds, surfaces, and arrangements until I felt that certain ones stood out among the rest which included the wood chopping boards, Chinese bamboo skimmer, and blueberries in the first photograph and a garbage as the background and surface, guava, and lemon for the second photograph. I wanted to experiment using uncommon

items for originality which can be observed in both photographs using unconventional objects as a surface for the still life subjects.

Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills

In the work's course of origin or in this course, I did not receive any feedback on how I might improve in the photographs' composition. However, I decided to revise some areas of the photographs, such as removing some distractions in the second photograph, including the water droplets on the surface of the garbage bag.

Evidence of Following Directions

The assignment required us to photograph still life and demonstrate value. I did not feel a need to deviate from the original instructions to accomplish this, especially as still life photography focuses on lighting to create interesting compositions.

Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail

The final photographs of the Still Life Series exhibit excellent craftsmanship and attention to detail by ensuring that the photographs are in the highest clarity and demonstrate accurate colors. The compositions of the photographs show an understanding of grid and format, and for screen publication, the photographs use the JPG format for lightweight viewing.

Professional Reflection

The overall capstone experience was positive as it encouraged me to receive critiques from others, feedback to others, and reexamine my work to refine lacking areas. Through this, my knowledge and skills as a graphic designer grew significantly, and I also gained a stronger understanding of how to market my portfolio to a target audience. As I am enrolled in the graphic design program, this capstone which involves creating and refining a website and print

allowed me to utilize the knowledge I have gained during my time in the academic program to craft an impressive portfolio that reflects my cultivated skills.

In refining my print-ready portfolio, the feedback I received from my instructor and peers was helpful in ensuring that my works were of high quality. Specifically, one peer noted the lack of readability in the menu and brochure designs for TOWN, commenting that the grey text color was difficult to discern against the translucent background. Readability is a crucial element in design, and I changed the text from grey to white to address this issue. Additionally, I received helpful feedback on improving the business card design for Upper Crust Bakery. One peer and the instructor both pointed out that the logo should be centered properly on the dark colored background, and another peer recommended that I change the font of the contact details from a serif font to a sans-serif font as the title and position were already in a serif font. These changes significantly improved the design of the business card, allowing it to appear more balanced and harmonious. The landscape photograph of the red-wing blackbird also received feedback from one peer who suggested using the rule of thirds to crop the photograph. Using the grid system in Lightroom, the photograph was cropped according to the rule of thirds which better emphasized the subject and enhanced the composition of the shot. Moreover, for my portfolio website, my instructor suggested to slightly enlarge the logo to emphasize my brand identity. In reviewing my website, the logo was indeed small which negatively affected my presence. Enlarging the logo allowed for the website to be strongly branded to the audience. Likewise, for my portfolio branding pieces, one peer recommended to add more weight to the typeface in my logo to better stand out. I switched the serif font from Lora Medium to Lora Bold and the sans-serif font from Proxima Nova Regular to Proxima Nova Medium, and this change allowed for a stronger emphasis on the logo to stand out from the rest of the elements.

Reviewing the level of improvement in my works after receiving feedback from others demonstrates the importance of collaboration. As a designer, it can be easily to overlook weak points due to self-bias or become blind to lacking areas as a result of constant exposure to the design. However, with collaboration, other people with a fresh pair of eyes can note the strengths and weaknesses of the design, allowing one to understand what they excel in and the areas that need improvement. As my peers and instructor noted positive aspects and made suggestions to refine the works, I was able to understand my strengths and how I could take advantage of them as well as my areas of weaknesses which I could make note of to improve in for future works. Likewise, I was able to return the favor by highlighting areas of strengths and weaknesses in my peers' works and offering suggestions on improvement, allowing for a fulfilling collaboration with both parties learning and growing.

The knowledge I have reaped during this course concerning improvement and critiques can be applied to my professional life where collaboration is important and a high level of skill is needed. As this course emphasized refinement of works through critiques, my understanding of areas that I need to improve in as well as my ability to receive and provide feedback has been strengthened. These skills are crucial in a professional environment, and I can use what I have learned to aid me in working with others and in improving my works to be of high quality for my clients.

To ensure that my works are socioculturally appropriate, I will continue to stay informed on past and current social issues to avoid implementing elements that are offensive towards cultural or social groups. As it is a designer's responsibility to ensure that their designs have positive effects and are not destructive to certain groups, I will conduct in-depth research on the elements I use in my designs and the potential meanings they have, especially if I plan on

targeting a specific group. For instance, if I were to create a brand identity for a client who wishes to target a Chinese audience, I should be cautious in the colors I choose, such as avoiding using an excessive amount of red and yellow which, out of context, can be problematic.

Moreover, to uphold graphic design ethics, it would be effective to create a written agreement that protects all parties involved and reflects the project's scope, timeline, and costs. In doing so, it ensures that expectations are fulfilled and fosters trust among all involved (Ethics in Graphic Design, n.d.).

The goals I have concerning my professional life are to achieve a full-time position as a graphic designer and to work with either brand identity and/or UI/UX design. Eventually, I plan on obtaining a master's degree in graphic design to teach at a college-level institution.

During this course, I have utilized my graphic design skills, software knowledge, and critique abilities. From refining my portfolio to receiving and offering feedback, these skills have been employed and enhanced throughout this course. Such skills are essential when working with peers and clients as they establish trust and rapport and enable one to craft professional designs. In building these skills, I plan on taking on side projects to continue exercising my skills. Additionally, moving forward, I expect to apply these skills in a professional environment where collaboration is key to creating high quality works that meet the client's demands.

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