

# DESN 2023

# GradEx Website

Case Study

visit [desn2023.com](http://desn2023.com) →

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What We Learned

# Background & Research

# About the Project

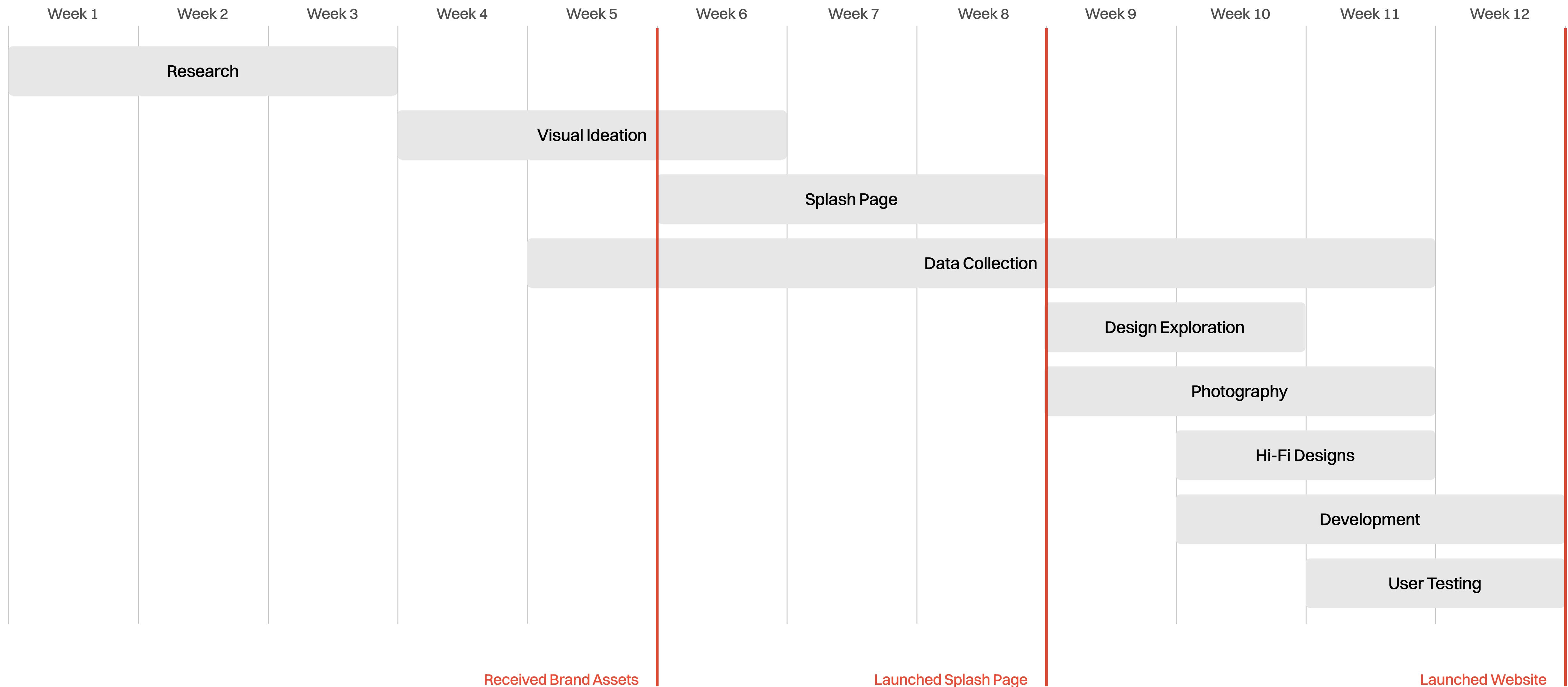
# Overview

The DESN GradEx is a yearly exhibition showcasing the up-and-coming talent of the graduating design class.

Our cohort had the honour of putting together the inaugural in-person and digital exhibition of the new Bachelor of Design (DESN) program at York University.

This case study details the collaborative design and development process that we went through to build and launch the GradEx website.

# Project Timeline

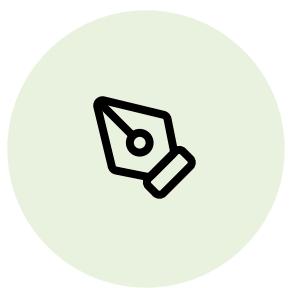


# Team Structures



## Digital

Responsible for designing and developing the exhibition website and establishing a digital presence at the in-person event



## Creative & Branding

Responsible for establishing the theme and brand identity for the exhibition and providing direction for all applications of the brand



## Employee & Recruiter Relations

Responsible for conducting outreach and building connections with relevant industry recruiters



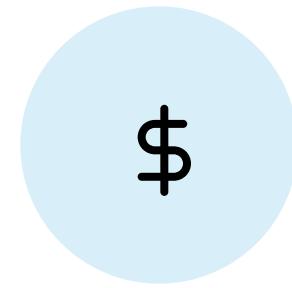
## Logistics

Responsible for hosting the in-person event and managing the finances for the exhibition



## Marketing

Responsible for promoting the exhibition through various online social media platforms and to generate traction for the exhibition



## Sponsorships & Funding

Responsible for securing sponsorships and donations from relevant design businesses

# Digital Roles

## Sean Reibling

**Team leader**  
Project management  
UI / UX  
Frontend Webflow development  
Content management  
Content validation / QA

## Khadija Bari

**Team co-leader**  
Project management  
UI / UX  
Content validation / QA

## Justin Chiu

Frontend development  
Interactive motion  
Content management

## Gajanan Ketheeswaran

Motion design  
Motion storyboarding  
Content validation / QA

## Madeline Rubba

Photography post-production  
Motion storyboarding  
Content validation / QA

## Megan Furlong

Frontend development  
Content validation / QA  
UI / UX

## Iris Mamac

UI / UX  
Content validation / QA

# Other Contributors

## Branding

Creative Team  
Established graduating exhibit brand identity and provided brand assets

## Photography

Abigail Wiley  
Photographed all graduate portraits and managed upload of originals

## Copywriting

Jennifer Huynh  
Provided copywriting for key headlines and paragraphs across the site

# Research Methodologies

# Empathy Mapping

We began by creating an empathy map examining both our aspirations and fears for our future-selves post-graduation. This provided insight into areas where our grad exhibit could help us achieve these goals.

## Fears

Debt, unemployment, rejection, failure, finances, layoffs

## Frustrations

Finances, economy, poor mental health, lack of experience

## Wants

Work-life balance, industry connections, financial stability

## Aspirations

Promotions, finding mentors , enjoying work, confidence



# Key Findings

## Find Jobs

- Students want to gain the attention and exposure of industry recruiters in order to secure great jobs
- Students want a way to network, view, and share their accomplishments

## Build Confidence

- Currently, there is a lack of confidence in capability as being designers (high imposter syndrome)
- Students want a way to confidently present themselves and their work

## Build Program Reputation

- Students want to prepare for success and make a good first impression for the first showcase of our design program, and the years to come
- Students want to establish a good reputation among industry professionals and organizations who do not yet know of our program.

# Problem Statement

# Problem Statement

How might we create an engaging, user-friendly website that showcases the work of our inaugural class to effectively reach a wider audience online?

# Defining Success

# Measuring Success

**01**

## Traffic and Engagement

80 new users/day during in-person grad show

- 40% of event attendees

900 new users in 6 months

- 2x attendance of in-person show

5 minutes average engagement time

- Enough time to navigate to 2 profiles and/or case studies

**02**

## Employer / Recruiter Conversions

50 recruiter connections on LinkedIn

- average 1.5 connections per graduate

33 recruiter messages or e-mails

- average 1 message or e-mail per graduate

**03**

## User Feedback

Positive user feedback

- At least 90% satisfaction rate

Successful site navigation

- Users are able to utilize all functions of the website with minimal friction and in a timely manner

# Design Objectives



## Content-First Design

Ensure the website's user interface does not overpower student work. To achieve this, we may employ a design that features a minimal colour palette and clean typefaces.



## Discoverability

Consistently presenting opportunities for users to discover both graduates and their case studies. This can be achieved by surfacing more content suggestions at the end of a page, as well as providing intuitive ways to manually discover content such as filtering and real-time search.



## Continuity

Create an experience where the user can seamlessly navigate between pages and sections. This can be achieved via smooth page transitions, fast image loading, and intuitive animations and transitions for menu and search dropdowns.

# Design Objectives

## Must dos

Profiles, bio, and projects, and social links

'Filtering' system based on discipline & search by names

Consider content of case studies (project overviews VS. case studies – show whole project or link out?)

Events page (physical or digital location details)

Project tags should be ranked or limited to a certain number

Discoverability should be relevant to ones project vs one's interest in jobs  
If someone only does only branding for e.g., put their work before projects that also have branding

Portraits need to be cohesive and compressed haha (maybe same overlay colour or B&W)?

Resume and work experience? (uploaded/ linked document)

Add changing spotlights to main page

Add thumbnail/ profile photo of designer underneath projects

Contact information/form in footer?

below projects - 'more from this user' or 'other projects like this' (e.g. more interaction projects)

## Would-love-to dos

Categories related to sector or topic that the design project is about, e.g. healthcare, arts+culture, social justice

Related/similar projects or more from this designer

Pop-up survey (or just a quick 1 Q) that asks viewers what type of work they are most interested in, etc. → shows them grads who specialize in that discipline

Marketing promo videos with DESN students marketing the show/ venue

Personal bio videos?

Let each designer have their own personality somehow – through answers to fun questions, quotes, personal logos/ icons etc.

Allow people to bookmark designers and projects so they can go back and find them easily (e.g. cache, Jetboost?)

A webpage within a webpage viewer with website nav controls so that people can view others' portfolio sites but easily return to the grad site (e.g. iframe)? (or just open in new tab)

Barba.js – seamless transitions between pages, URL replacement

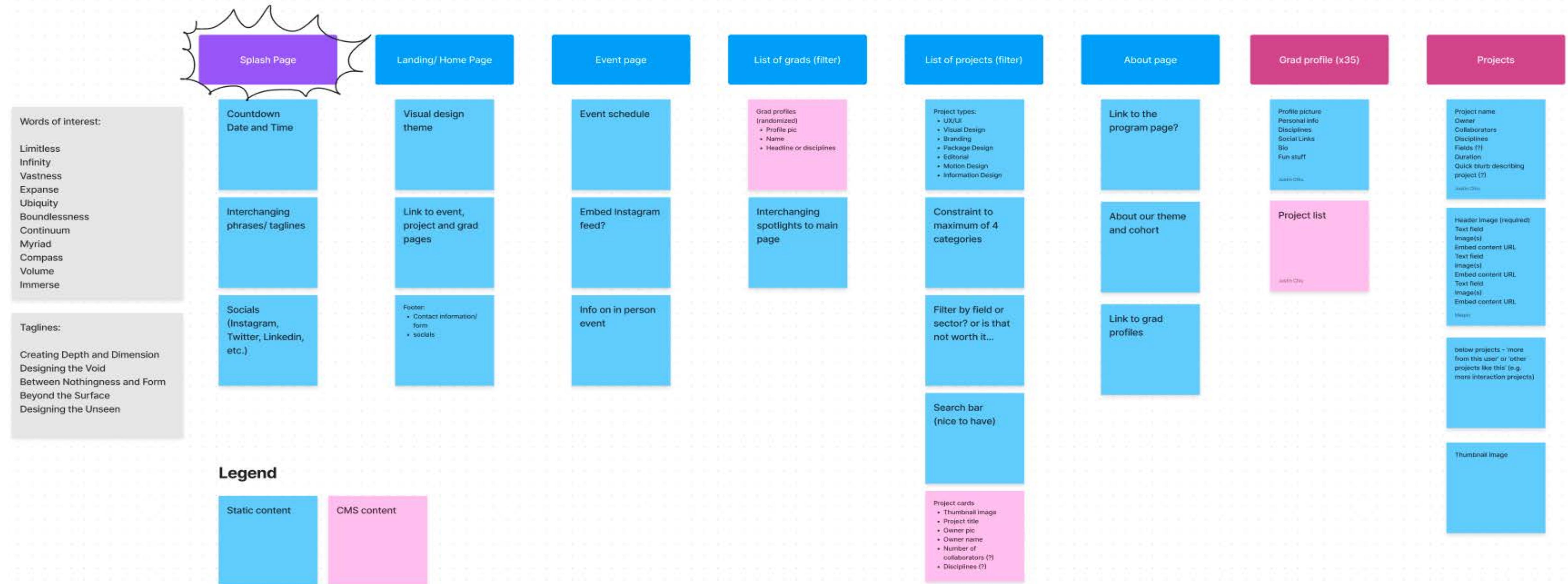
## Legend

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

JOB RECRUITMENT

PROGRAM REPUTATION

# Design Objectives



# Creation Process

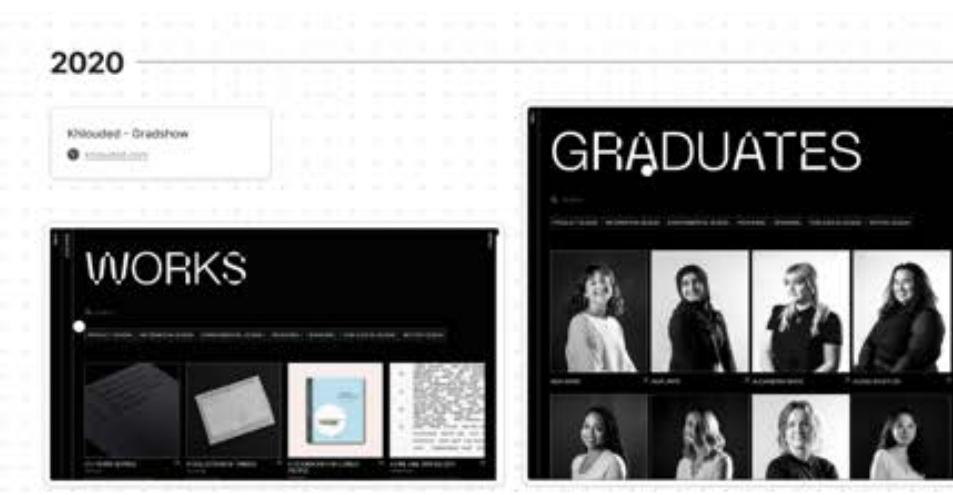
# Design Exploration

# Moodboards

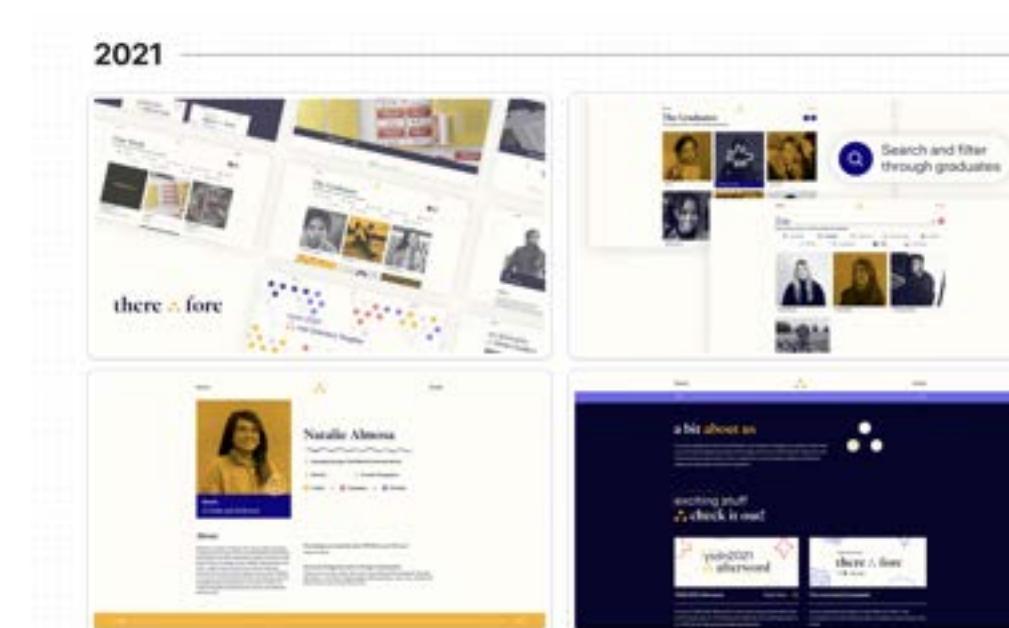
## Past GradEx Sites



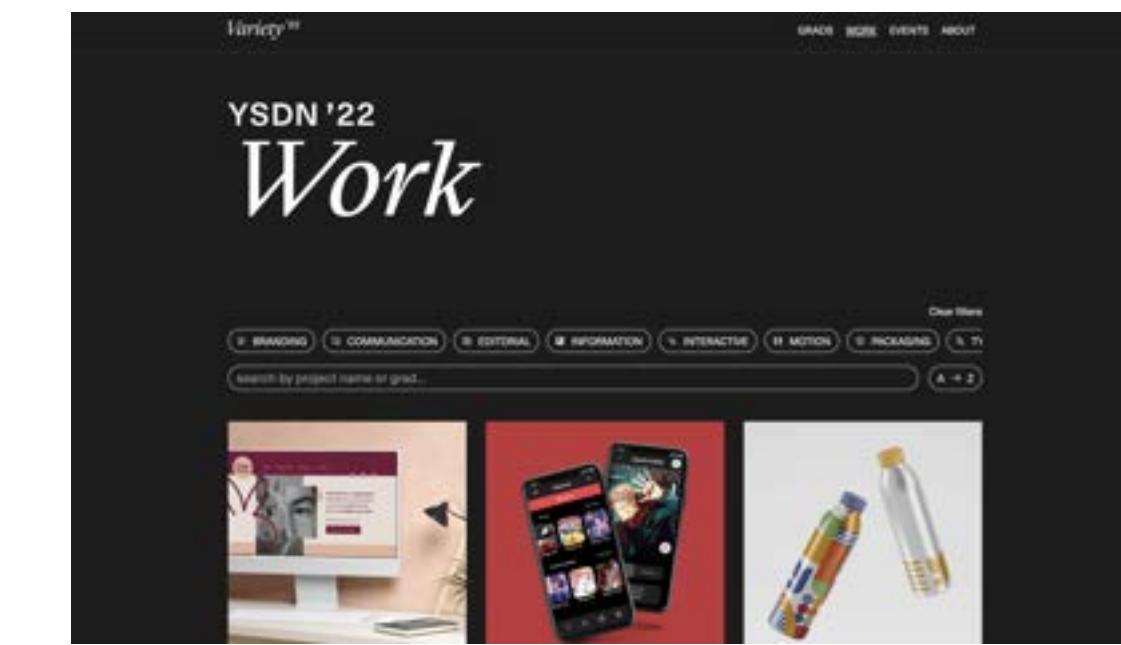
2017



2020

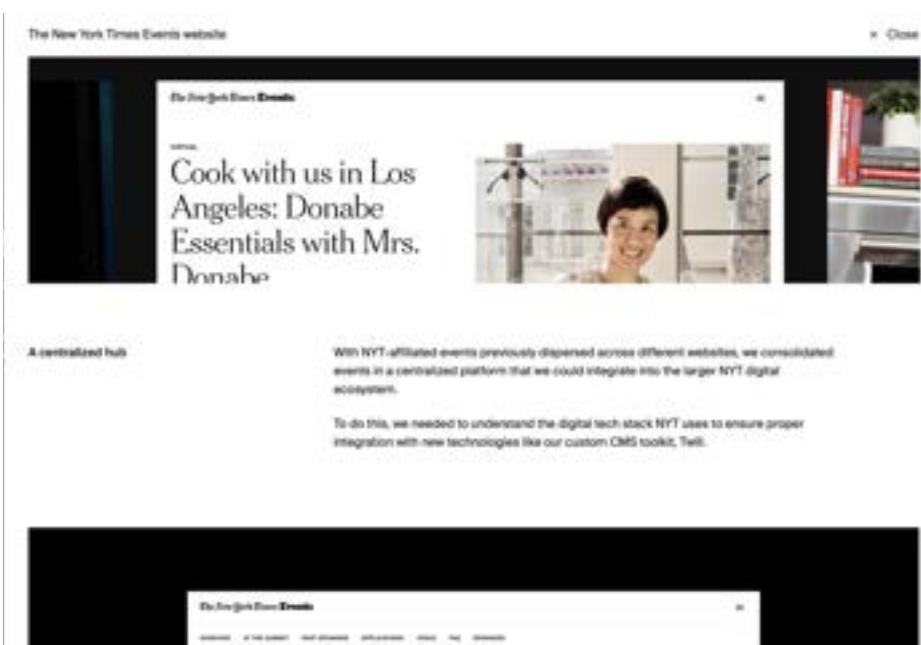


2021

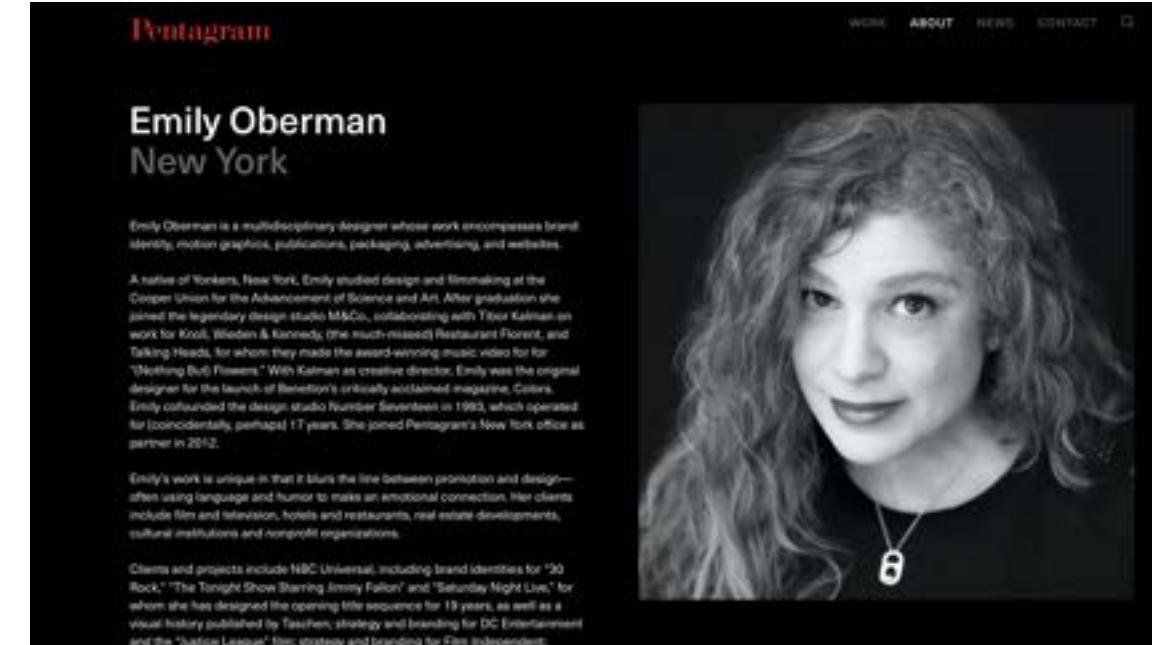


2022

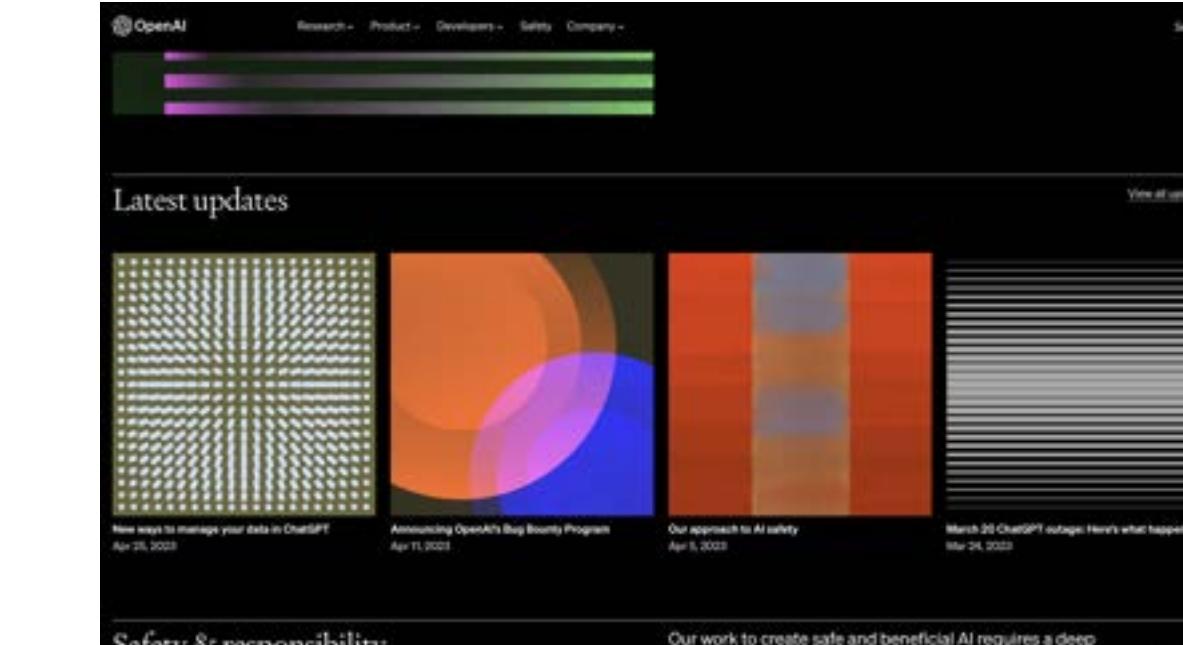
## Visual Inspiration



Area 17



Pentagram



OpenAI

# Preliminary Brand Assets

## Logo overview

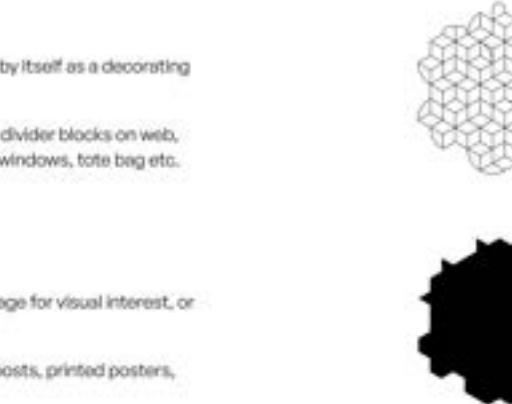
The logo is dynamic, using both the patterns from the penrose assets, along with the wordmark which stays consistent throughout each variation.



Logomark

THE DESN SPACE Brand Style Guide 33

## Graphic Motif: Variations



Garnish  
Only used at large scale, or by itself as a decorating element.  
Examples: Inside covers, divider blocks on web, decorating elements for windows, tote bag etc.

Outline  
Only used at large scale or on its own. Colour can be added behind or to create shapes depending on application.  
Examples: wayfinding, 'thank you' cards, social media, motion graphics

Tier 1  
Used as an overlay on image for visual interest, or on its own.  
Examples: social media posts, printed posters, splash page

Solid  
Only used for social media Images.

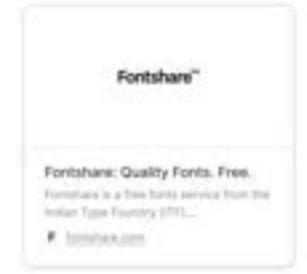
Imagery

THE DESN SPACE Brand Style Guide 09

## General Sans

HOW TO USE

- Use for all body copy
- May also use for slightly larger blocks of text like pull-quotes or short descriptive sub-lines
- Avoid using for display headlines



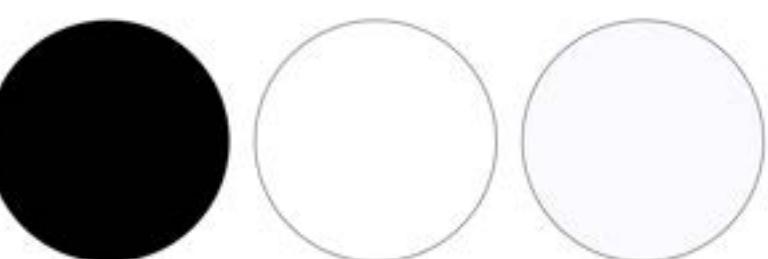
Fontshare™  
Fontshare: Quality Fonts. Free.  
Fontshare is a free fonts service from the Indian Type Foundry (ITF)...  
[Fontshare.com](https://fontshare.com)

General Sans

THE DESN SPACE Brand Style Guide 23

## Primary colours

These are the colours that will be used for the majority of all design work. Black as the accent colour on a white background. The "off-white" is used as the secondary colour on the penrose patterns.



Black  
HEX: #000000  
CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 100  
RGB: 0, 0, 0

White  
HEX: #FFFFFF  
CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 0  
RGB: 255, 255, 255

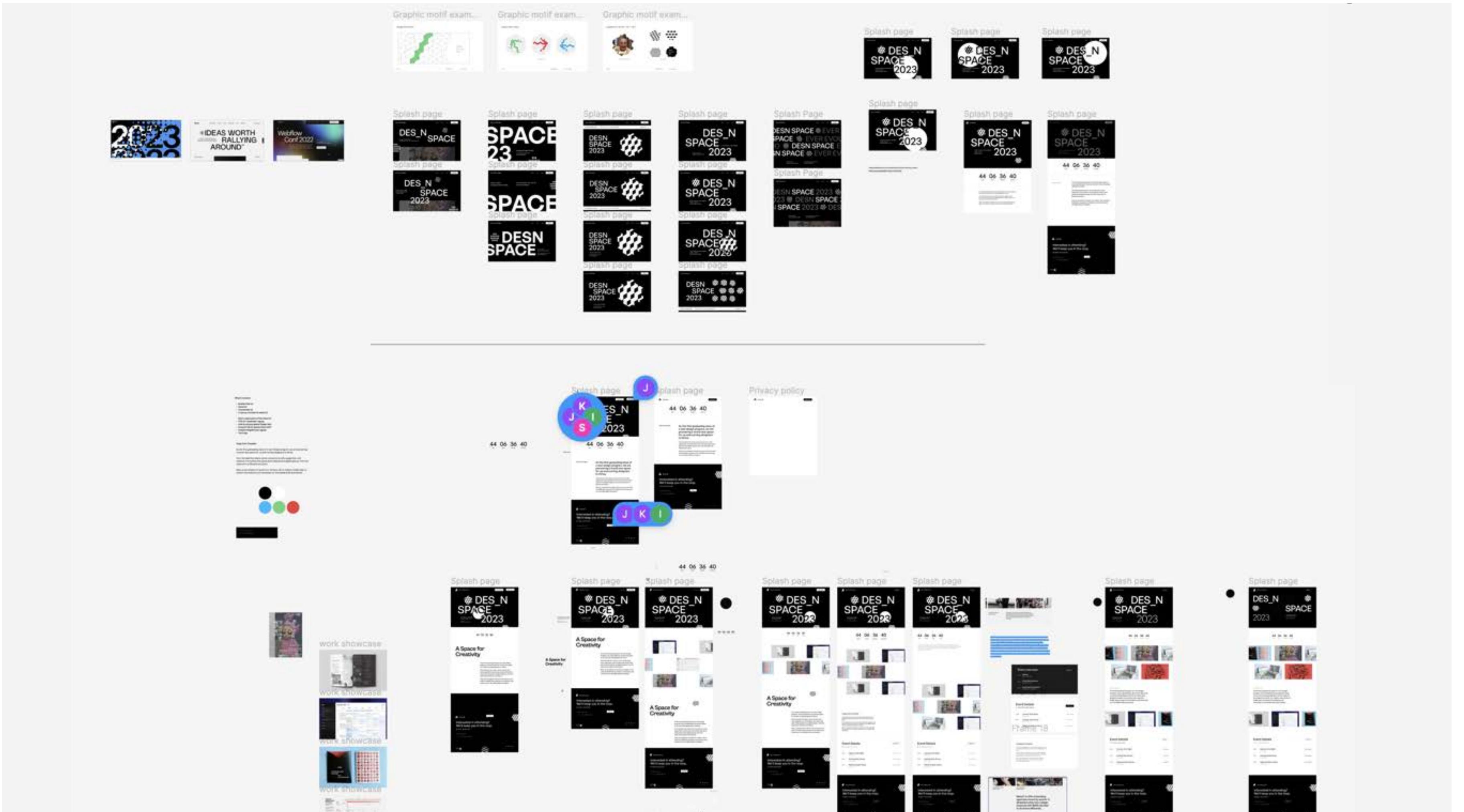
Off-White  
HEX: #FAFAFE  
CMYK: 2, 1, 1, 0  
RGB: 250, 250, 254

Colour

THE DESN SPACE Brand Style Guide 05

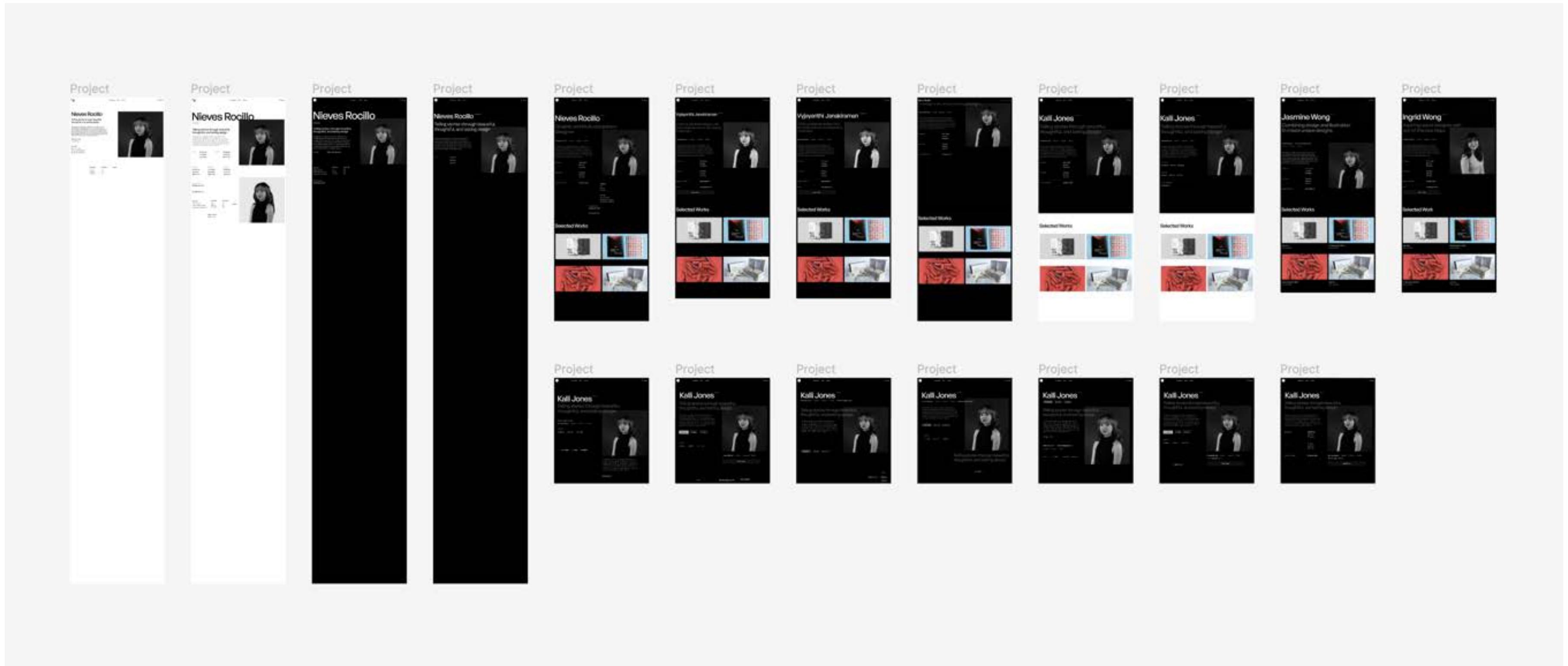
We were provided with a set of brand guidelines that loosely outlined the implementation of the identity. Type and colour guidelines were provided along with the primary identifying geometric pattern assets and logos, scaled to fit various contexts from physical signage to digital mobile devices.

# Exploration: Splash Page



We explored various visual directions for the splash page that utilized our brand visual identity in a fun, dynamic, and compelling way. We experimented with principles like scale and weight in order to achieve these outcomes.

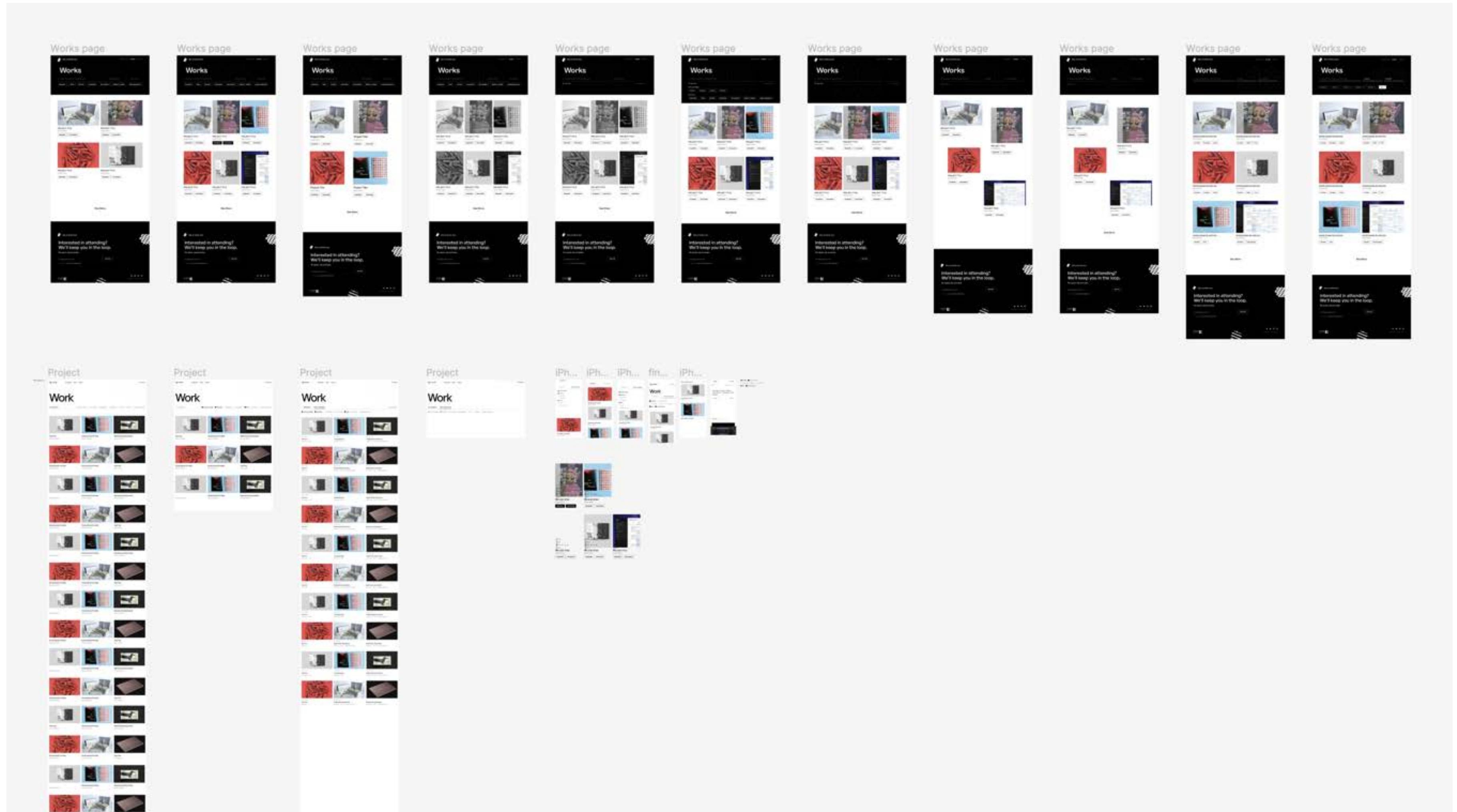
# Exploration: Profiles



The profile page required lots of iteration upon discovering that our biggest challenge was designing for dynamic content.

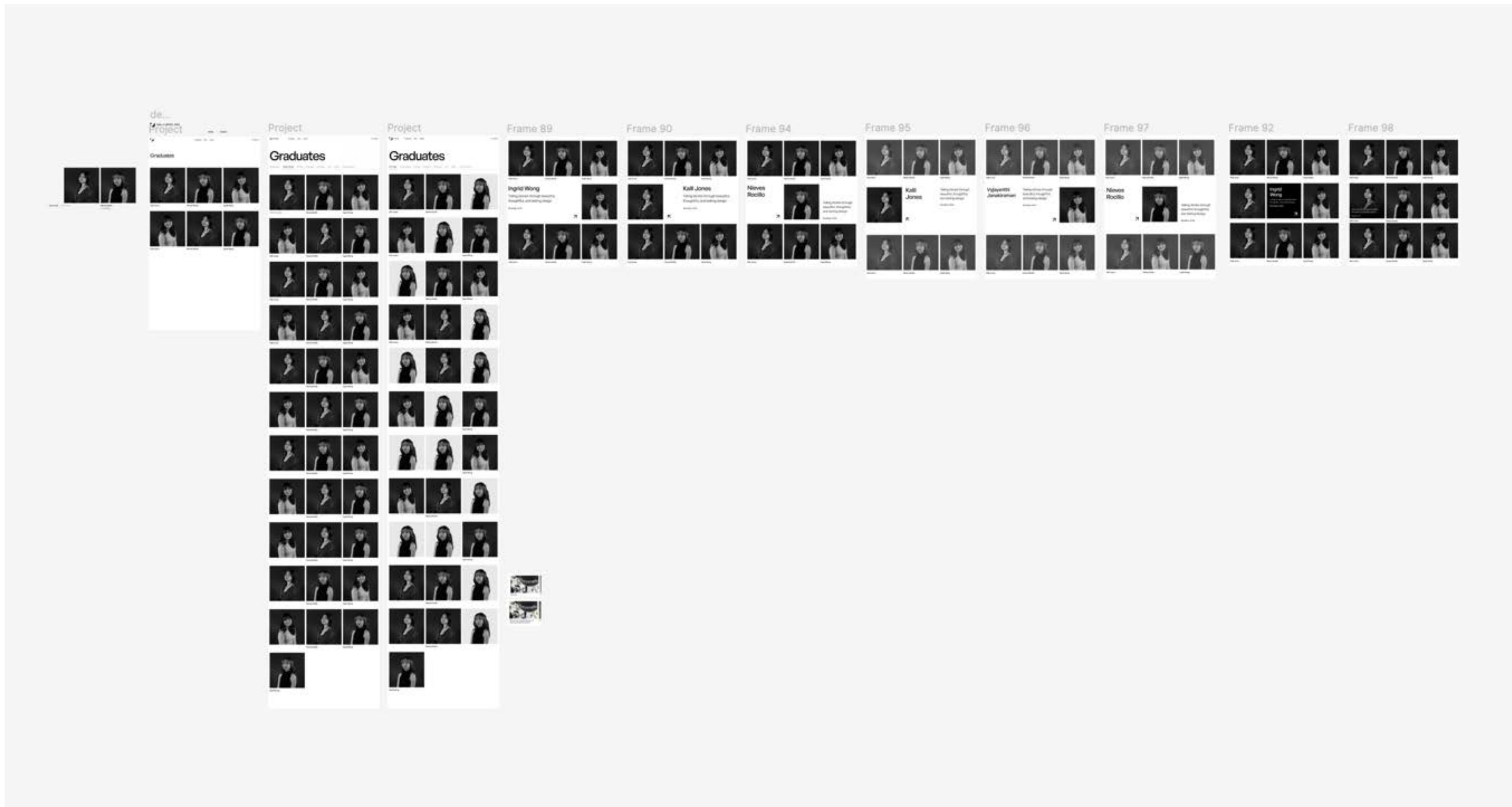
Considering each grad would provide different content of different lengths to display on their individual profiles, we had to account for these variations and explored various visual directions to achieve this.

# Exploration: Work



We explored various visual directions as to how we can best showcase our grads' work. We ended up going with a visual direction that practiced continuity across other pages we'd designed for the site, featuring a simple, clean, and elegant appearance that doesn't over shine the work.

# Exploration: Graduates



To avoid potential issues on selecting grads based on their appearance or name, our team considered various visual directions and hover-interactions to showcase a bit more about the grad.

We also considered showcasing the disciplines of each grad to provide a bit more context on their practice and work, and displaying a similar filtering scale as other pages to practice continuity.

# Final Designs & Rationale

# Home Page

Thanks for joining us! Check back soon for our recap

Coming soon

DES\_N 23

Graduates Work Events About

Q. Search

# YorkU Design

Class of 2023

Inaugural Grad Exhibition

We're carving out a space for new designers to thrive.

About our cohort

Ingrid Wong  
Academy Leader

Thanks for joining us!

Recap Coming Soon

DES\_N 23

# YorkU Design

Class of 2023

Inaugural Grad Exhibition

Ingrid Wong  
Academy Leader

We're carving out a space for new designers to thrive.

About our cohort

## Featured Work

[View all](#)

## Website Entry Point

Our developers collaborated with our branding partner to make the visual identity more dynamic for the hero and engage interest.

This page features a bit of everything to give visitors different avenues to explore, from student work, to graduates, and information about the show.

# Graduates List

The screenshot shows the homepage of the DES\_N 23 website. At the top, there's a dark header with the text "Thanks for joining us! Check back soon for our recap" and "Coming soon". Below the header is a navigation bar with links for "Graduates", "Work", "Events", and "About". The main title "Graduates" is prominently displayed in large, bold, black font. Below the title is a search bar with the placeholder "Q Search". A decorative graphic of a 3D cube grid is visible in the background. At the bottom of the page, there's a horizontal menu with links: "All Disciplines", "Branding", "Design Research", "Info Design" (which is highlighted in blue), "Motion", "Packaging", "Print", and "Product".



Print • Branding • Info Design • Packaging

Brienna Hogben



Branding • Print • Info Design

Ingrid Wong



Info Design • Design Research • Product

Justin Chiu



The screenshot shows the "Graduates" section of the website. At the top, there's a dark header with the text "Thanks for joining us!" and "Recap Coming Soon". Below the header is a navigation bar with the "DES\_N 23" logo and a search bar. The main title "Graduates" is displayed in large, bold, black font. Below the title, there are two buttons: "All Disciplines" and "Filter Disciplines". Under "Filter Disciplines", there are several radio buttons: "Branding" (unchecked), "Design Research" (unchecked), "Info Design" (checked), "Motion" (unchecked), "Packaging" (unchecked), "Print" (unchecked), and "Product" (unchecked).



Print • Branding • Info Design • Packaging

Brienna Hogben



## Photographs

We collaborated with our photographer to get professional headshots taken of each grad for consistency on the site.

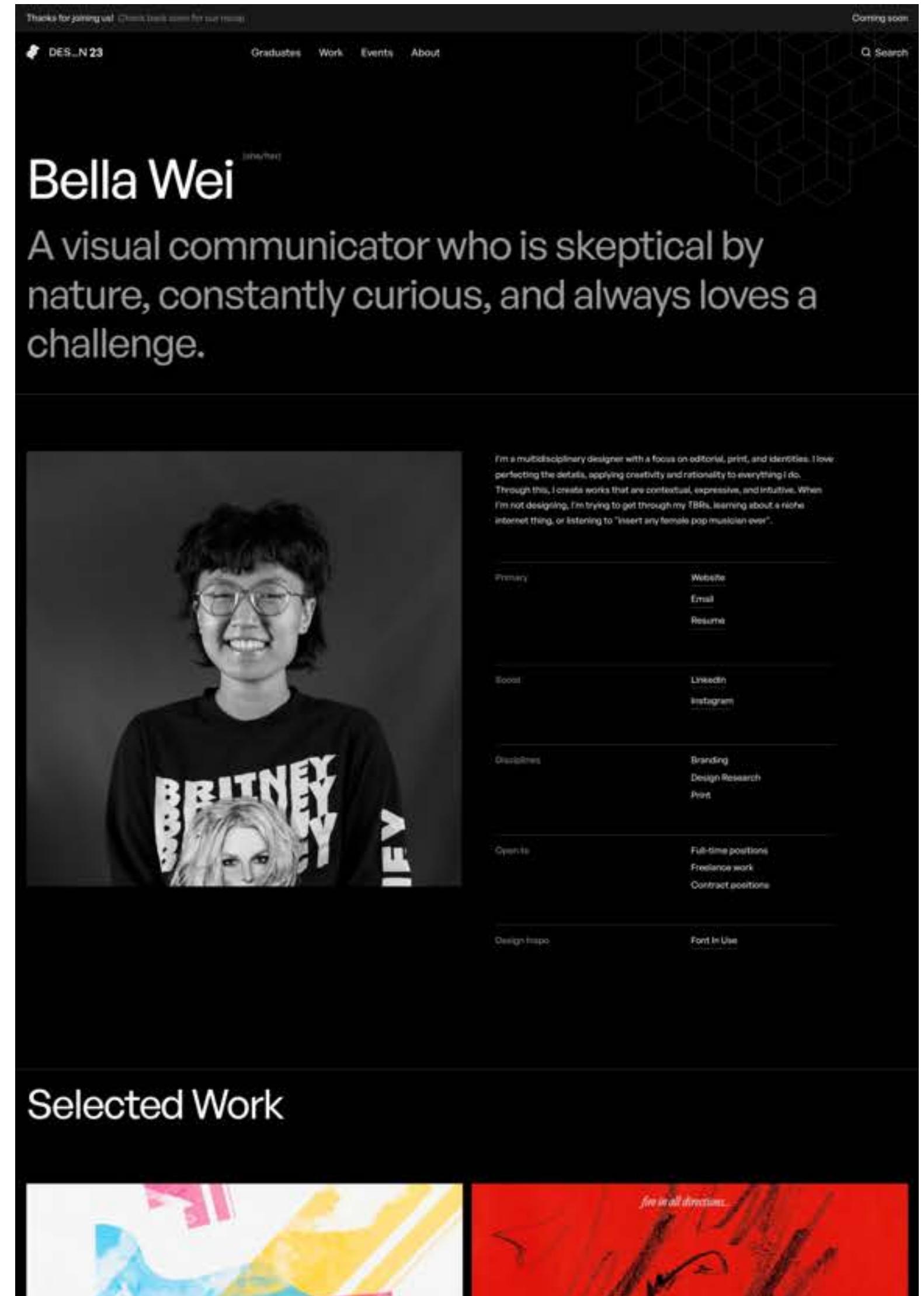
## Filtering

Visitors can filter through grads by disciplines at any point. By default, all grads are listed in alphabetical order by first name.

## UI Design

The UI is kept simple and elegant to compliment our larger brand identity and consider good practices for intuitive interactions on the site.

# Graduate Profiles



Thanks for joining us! Coming soon for our recap.

Coming soon

DES\_N 23

Graduates Work Events About

**Bella Wei**  
(she/her)

A visual communicator who is skeptical by nature, constantly curious, and always loves a challenge.

I'm a multidisciplinary designer with a focus on editorial, print, and identities. I love perfecting the details, applying creativity and rationality to everything I do. Through this, I create works that are contextual, expressive, and intuitive. When I'm not designing, I'm trying to get through my TBRs, learning about a niche internet thing, or listening to "Insert any female pop musician ever".

Primary: Website, Email, Resume  
Social: LinkedIn, Instagram  
Disciplines: Branding, Design Research, Print  
Opportunities: Full-time positions, Freelance work, Contract positions  
Design Inspiration: Font In Use

**Selected Work**



Thanks for joining us! Recap Coming Soon

Coming soon

DES\_N 23

(she/her)

**Abigail Wiley**  
graphic designer and creative specialist



Hey! My name is Abigail Wiley and I am a visual artist, designer and creative strategist based in Toronto. I specialize in editorial design, branding, and content creation. I'm a self-motivated creative that loves travelling, fashion, photography, and mixed media painting, finding inspiration in my every day life. My practices and projects are fuelled by my creativity and passion with the end goal of bringing creative experiences to life.

Primary Website Email



Thanks for joining us! Recap Coming Soon

Coming soon

DES\_N 23

(she/her)

**Jennifer Louise Huynh**  
Product designer and avid mobile app connoisseur



I'm a visual designer specializing in UX/UI design for mobile and web applications. With a passion for being creative, I enjoy bringing designs to life through colourful and bold visuals that allow for playfulness and interest. By viewing the world in its technicolour and abstract forms, I'm able to merge the spaces of art into effective design. In my spare time, you can find me hand-making collages, building custom mechanical keyboards, and downloading too many apps on my phone.

Primary Website Email

## Displaying Details

All relevant information about the student, such as their name, design disciplines of interest, their work and more are provided on this page.

The UI is kept structured and aligned to a grid to account for varying dynamic content across all our grads' information.

Lines are used for sectioning to separate different parts of the page, as well as complement our brand.

## Discoverability

Near the bottom of the page, we provide visitors with opportunities to discover more students so that they're always left with more avenues to explore.

# Works List

Thanks for joining us! Check back soon for our recap

Coming soon

DES\_N 23

Graduates Work Events About

# Work

All Disciplines Filter Disciplines

Branding  Design Research  Info Design  Motion  Packaging  Print  Product

Raven Sommerhalder  
Cultural Identity  
Print + Motion

Raven Sommerhalder  
Urb X  
Branding + Motion + Print

Jennifer Louise Huynh  
Crossed Paws  
Product + Branding + Motion

Raven Sommerhalder  
Succession  
Motion

Kelli Jones  
Take Two  
Branding + Motion

Ingrid Wong  
at the heart of your neighbourhood  
Branding + Info Design + Motion + Print

Thanks for joining us! Recap Coming Soon

DES\_N 23

=

# Work

All Disciplines Filter Disciplines

Branding  Design Research  
 Info Design  Motion  
 Packaging  Print  Product

Justin Chiu  
Blacktie  
Product + Info Design

Iris Marmac  
FLEEK  
Product + Branding + Motion

## Filtering

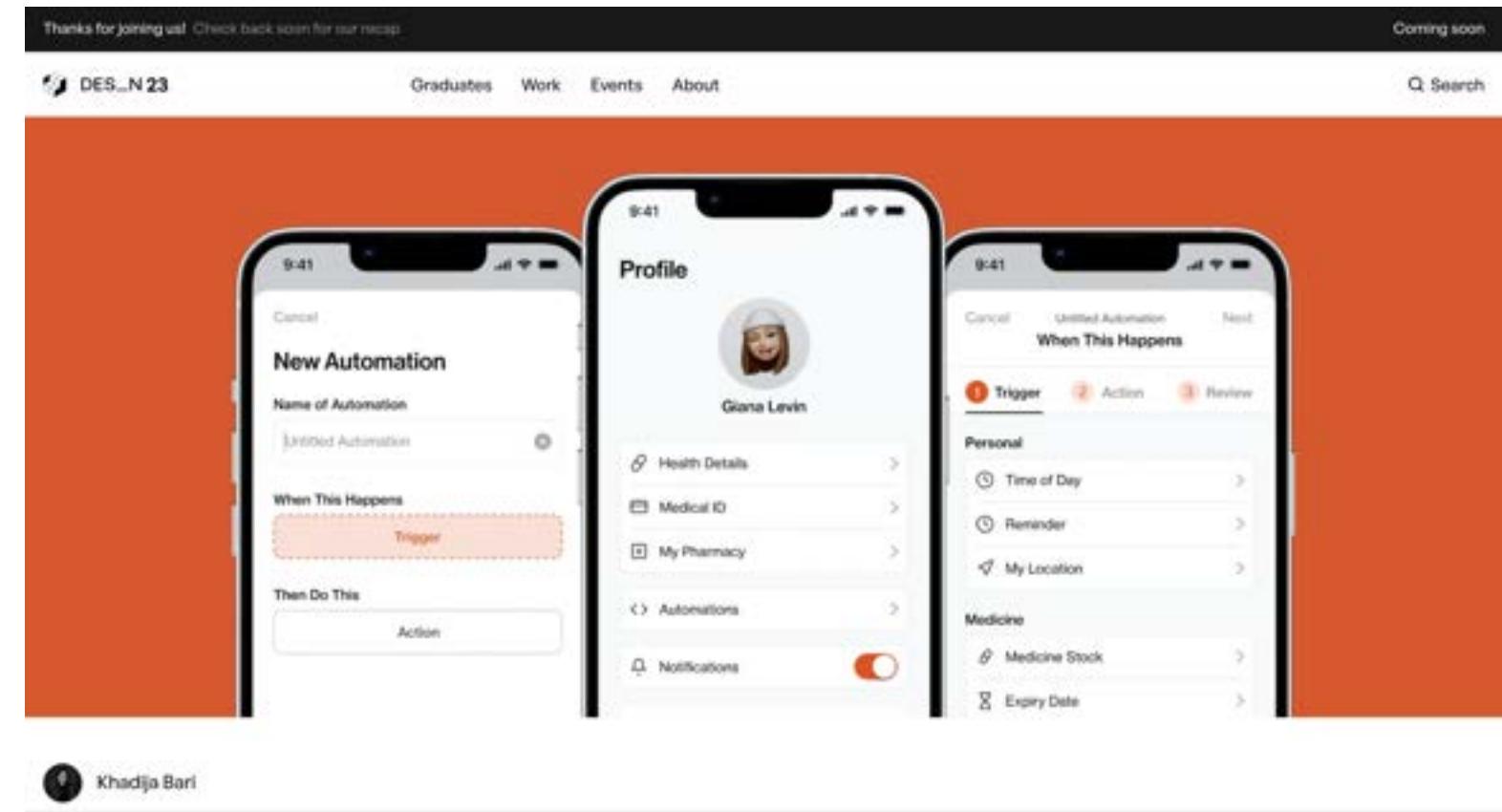
Visitors can filter through work by disciplines at any point. By default, all listed works are placed in a randomized order, and continue to randomize upon page refresh to give all students equal opportunity for exposure.

We feature a different filtering function on this page so that visitors can filter by work that incorporates multiple areas of design interest.

## UI Design

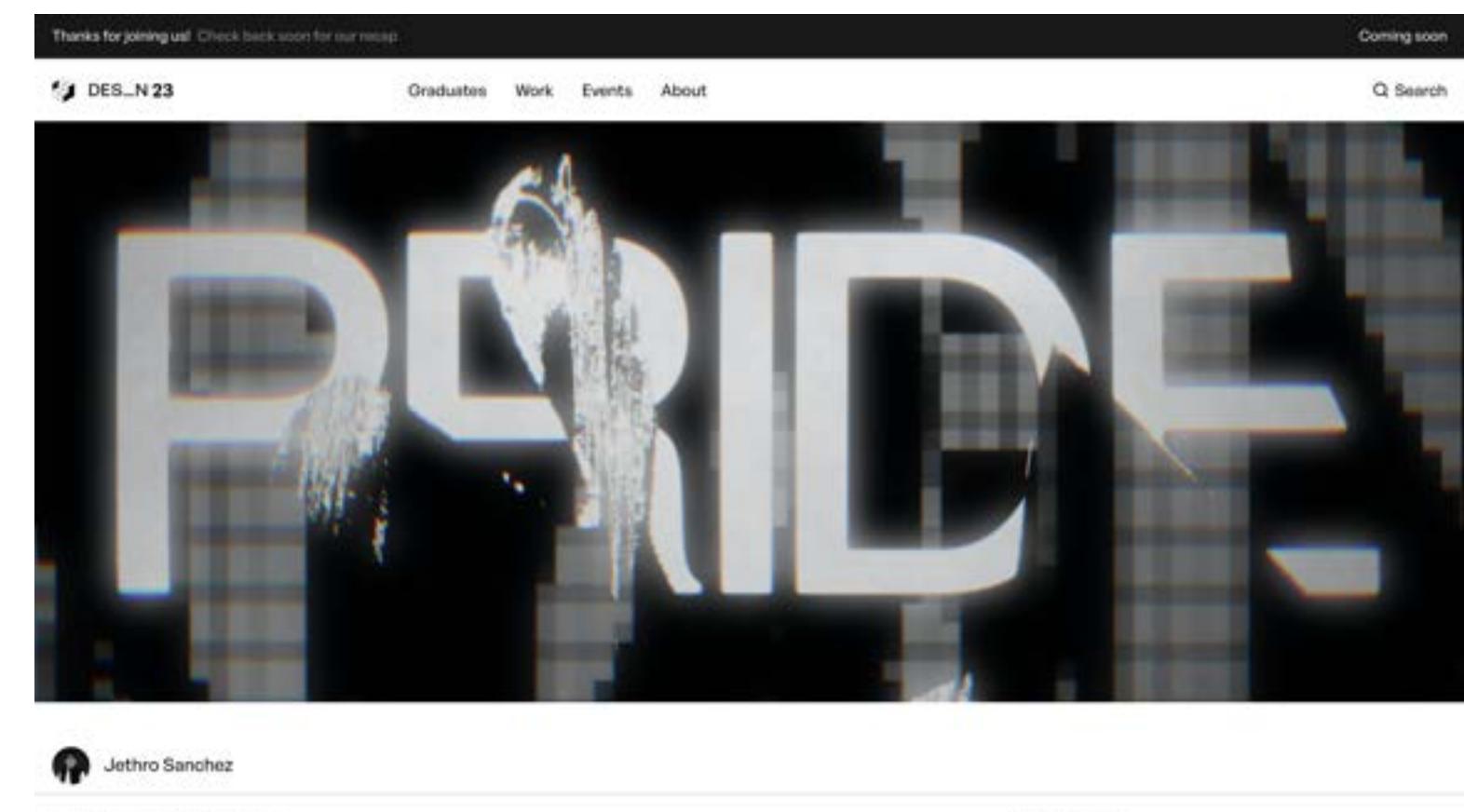
The UI is kept simple and elegant to compliment our larger brand identity and consider good practices for intuitive interactions on the site.

# Case Studies



## Refill

Custom Automations for your Personal Healthcare Experience



Pinoy Pride / Filipino Pride



## Displaying Work Details

We feature an image-first approach on all case studies to gage interest with the viewer.

We provided students with multiple ways to display their work, but set constraints on the layout to maintain visual consistency across the site.

## Discoverability

Near the bottom of the page, we provide visitors with opportunities to discover more of the student's work so that they're always left with more avenues to explore.

# Search Function

Thanks for joining us! Check back soon for our recap

Coming soon

X Close

justin

Search

6 results for justin

Profile

Justin Chiu

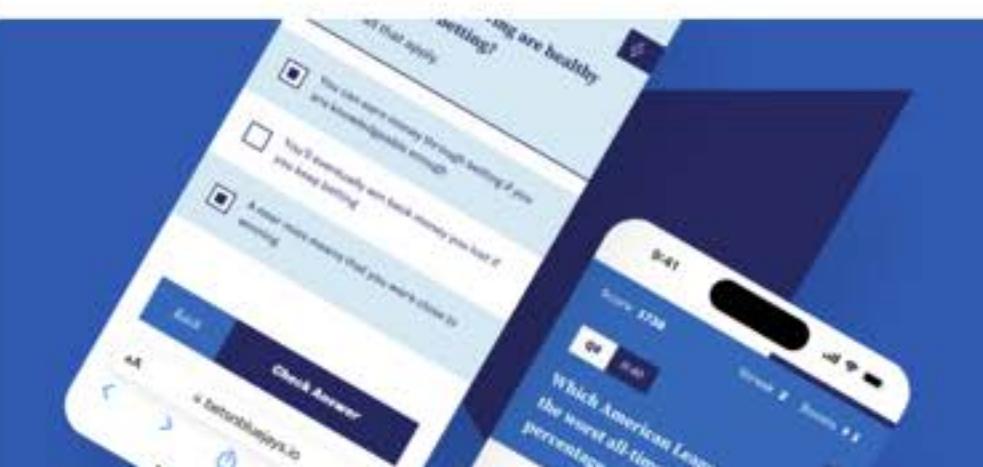
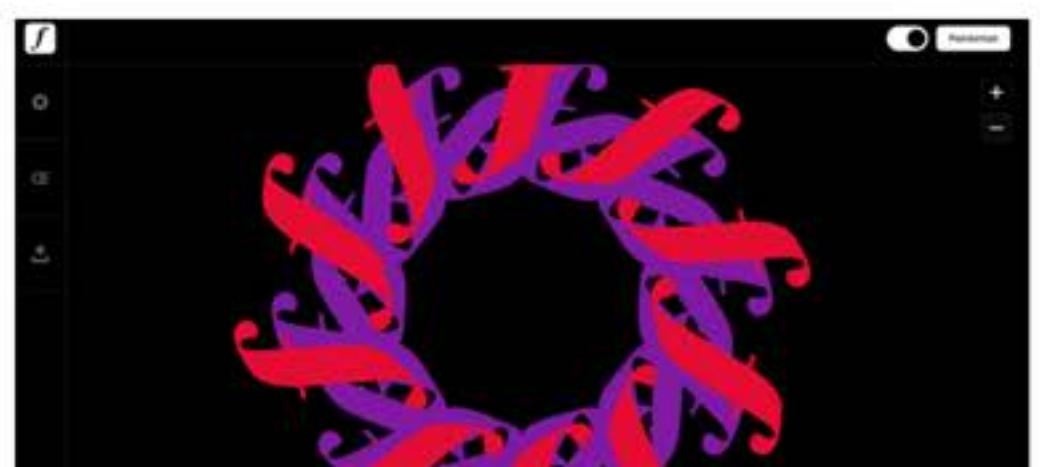
The Electric Guitar Sound

Info Design • Print

Justin Chiu

Blacktie

Product • Info Design



## Search Function Abilities

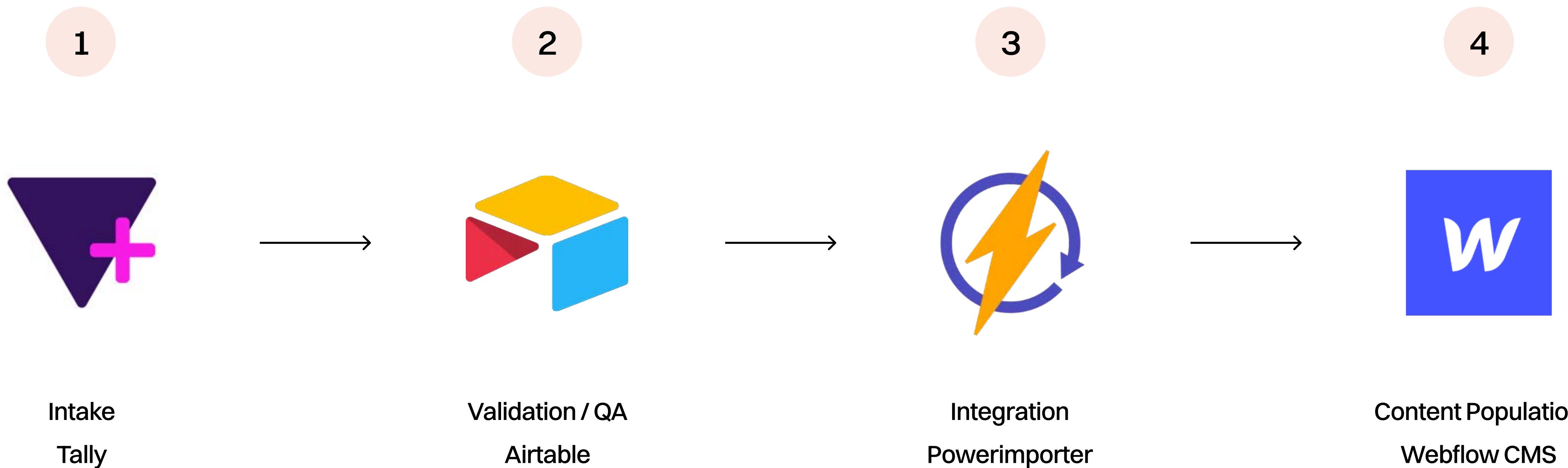
Visitors have the option to search for any grad or project through this function, with grads always appearing first.

## UI Design

The UI of this search function is kept full-width to maintain consistency on the 3-column grid that we've employed across other pages on the site, as well as to account for practices on UI/UX familiarity.

# Data Collection

# Data Pipeline



# Intake

## Tally

### Graduate Profile Submission Form

To populate the graduate profiles on the website, we collected information such as specializations, contact information, and work availability from each graduate.

- Name
- Pronouns
- Email address
- [Linkedin profile](#)
- [Portfolio link](#)
- Social links
- Disciplines
- Top disciplines
- Designer bio
- Profile headline
- Openness to work
- Resume

#### Linkedin Profile

Please double-check your URL

#### Portfolio Link

#### Other Social 1

- please provide in URL form
- career or design-related socials preferred

#### Other Social 2

## Designer Bio

#### All Disciplines \*

- Pick all the disciplines you're specializing in
- Product Design = Digital, Interaction, Web, UI/UX

 Branding Design Research Info Design Motion Packaging

# Intake

## Tally

### Project Submission Form

Each graduate submitted a minimum of four project case studies for the website. Through the form, we collected metadata, images, video links, copy, and formatting preferences.

- Project owner
- Collaborators
- Name of projects
- Disciplines
- Length of project in weeks
- Links to final product and case study
- Project blurb
- Thumbnail image
- Hero image
- Headings and text blocks
- Images
- Image layout options
- Vimeo links
- Other notes

The screenshot displays a project submission form with the following fields:

- Collaborative Project? \***: A radio button group with options "A No" and "B Yes".
- Name of Project \***: An input field for the project title.
- All Project Disciplines \***: A list of checkboxes for project disciplines:
  - Branding
  - Product
  - Packaging
  - Motion
  - Print
  - Info Design
  - Design Research
- Length of project \***: An input field for the duration in weeks, labeled "In number of weeks".
- Link to prototype or final product**: An input field for URLs, with examples like "e.g. figma.com or github.io".
- Link to external project page or case study**: An input field for URLs, with examples like "e.g. myname.ca or behance.net".
- Project Blurb**: A text area for a short one-liner describing the project.
- Thumbnail Image**: A file upload field for a thumbnail image, accepting jpg, jpeg, png, svg, webp files with a size limit of 3.9 MB.
- Hero Image**: A file upload field for a hero image, accepting jpg, jpeg, png, svg, webp files with a size limit of 3.9 MB.
- A. Text**: A section for text input:
  - Heading (optional)
  - Paragraph (optional)
- B. Content**: A section for image upload:
  - Images (optional)

# Validation & Quality Assurance

## Airtable

### Tally to Airtable API

All profile and project data collected from graduates in Tally was routed into Airtable by mapping Tally form inputs to corresponding Airtable fields.

### Validating content & QA

Each submission record was reviewed for correct formatting and consistency. Airtable automation workflows were used to format data types such as full names and URLs.

### Image Compression

We wrote a script to batch automate the creation of compressed thumbnail images and portraits.

### Approval & Sync

Once validated with status of “Approved”, submissions were added automatically to another table to await syncing through PowerImporter to the Webflow CMS.

Category	Files	Status	All disciplines	Owned projects
Design Research	Justin Chiu	Approved	Design Research	Info D
	Bella Wei	Approved	Branding	Design Resea
	Mariam Hoda	Approved	Branding	Design Resea
	Khadija Bari	Approved	Product	Branding
	Hailey Luong	Approved	Branding	Product
	Anika Jingco	Approved	Branding	Print
	Peri Agate	Approved	Print	Design Research
	Raven Sommerhalder	Approved	Branding	Print
	Madeline Rubba	Approved	Design Research	Info D
	Vijayanthi Janakiraman	Approved	Design Research	Info D
	+ Add file			
Category	Files	Status	All disciplines	Owned projects
Info Design	Justin Chiu	Approved	Design Research	Info D
	Sean Reibling	Approved	Branding	Product
	Brienna Hogben	Approved	Branding	Info Design
	Kristen Chan	Approved	Branding	Packaging
	Peri Agate	Approved	Print	Design Research
	Myah Wills	Approved	Branding	Print
	Zornitsa Stoimenova	Approved	Branding	Info Design
	Megan Furlong	Approved	Info Design	Print

# Integration

## PowerImporter

### Syncing from Airtable to Webflow

Submissions marked as “Approved” in Airtable were automatically synced with our primary CMS via a third-party automation workflow software called PowerImporter. This process occurred once every hour and allowed content to automatically populate the live website.

The screenshot shows the PowerImporter for Webflow interface. At the top, it displays the title "PowerImporter for Webflow™" and the subtitle "DESN 2023 Exhibit Degree Exhibit Sandbox". Below this is a table titled "Airtable (view)" and "Webflow" showing the sync status for various data types:

Airtable (view)	Webflow
Graduate Profiles (Synced with Webflow)	→ Graduate Profiles 33
Projects (Synced with Webflow)	→ Works 143
Disciplines (Grid view)	→ Disciplines 7
Work Type (Grid view)	→ Work types 4
Motion Assets (Synced with Webflow)	→ Showcase Assets 29
Featured Projects (Synced with Webflow)	→ Featured Projects 12

Below the table are four buttons: "Sync" (blue), "Test & Review" (purple), "Edit" (yellow), and "Schedule" (blue). The main area below the table is titled "Last 6 Imports" and shows a summary of the most recent import: "Started an hour ago" and "Completed in 3 minutes". It includes three categories: "Keeps" (11), "Updates" (217), and "Warnings" (10). A "View details" button is located to the right. At the bottom, there is a red warning message: "Started at May 1, 2023 10:09pm Failed in less than a minute Error: Webflow API Error: Inconsistent Publications Error: Site is published to multiple domains at different times". A blue speech bubble icon is in the bottom right corner.

# Content Population

## Webflow CMS

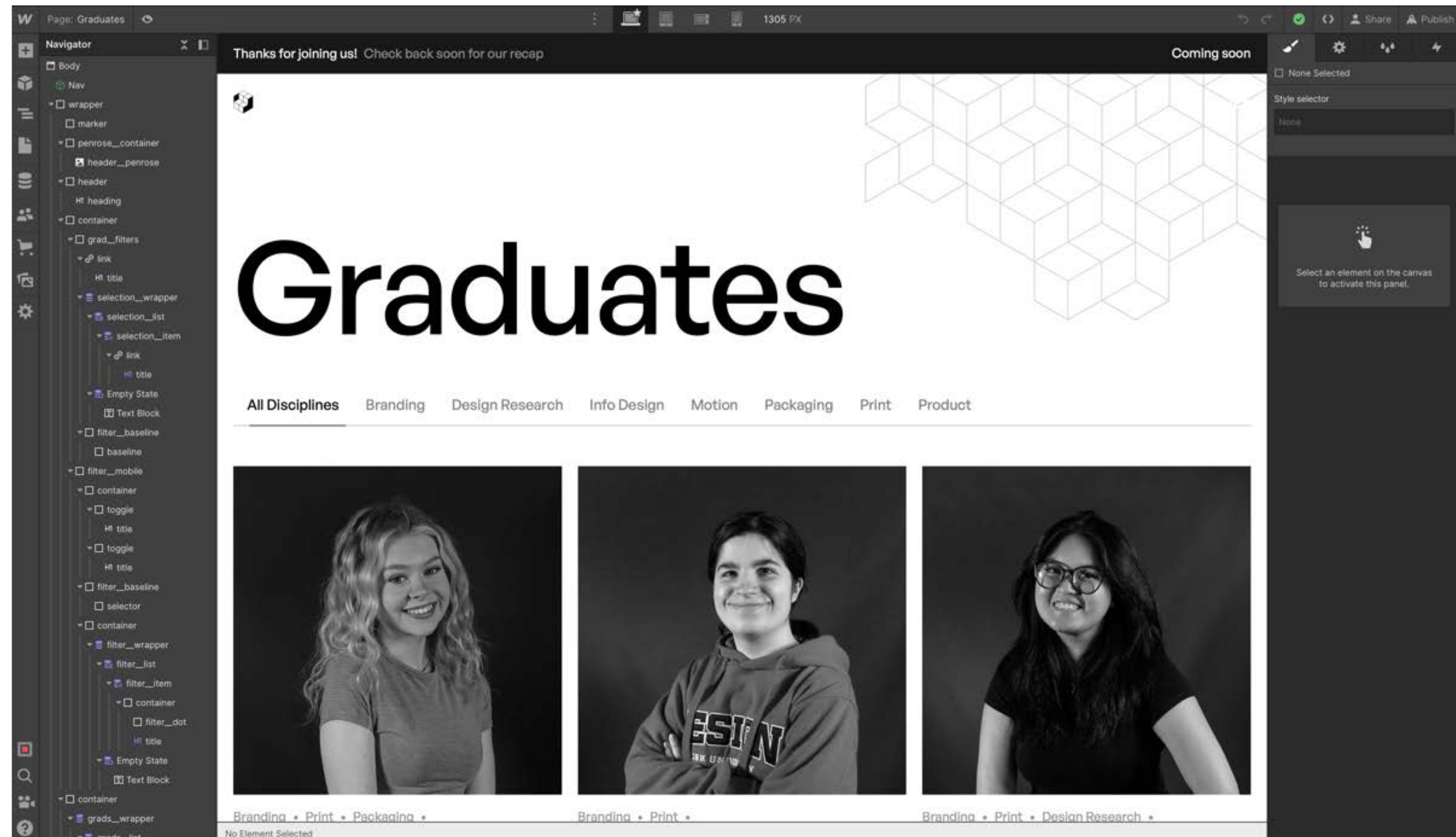
### Primary CMS

Since the bulk of our website ran on Webflow, we utilized their CMS to populate content into each custom template for graduate profiles and case studies. However, we never altered or added any data within this phase as data could not be synced backwards to Airtable.

CMS Collections	Name of project	Status	Project owner	Top discipline	Created	Modified	Published
Graduate Profiles 33 items	Crossed Paws	● Published	Jennifer Louise Huynh	Product	Apr 13, 2023 6:02 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
Works 143 items	Succession	● Published	Raven Sommerhalder	Motion	Apr 14, 2023 1:03 AM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
Disciplines 7 items	Nuit Blanche Visual Identity	● Published	Katherine Yu	Branding	Apr 14, 2023 1:03 AM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
Work types 4 items	YOU	● Published	Katherine Yu	Packaging	Apr 15, 2023 11:02 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
Featured Projects 12 items	Somer...	● Published	Khadija Bari	Product	Apr 20, 2023 6:43 AM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM
Showcase Assets 28 items	The Door in the Wall	● Published	Megan Furlong	Print	Apr 26, 2023 7:53 PM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM
	at the heart of your neighbour...	● Published	Ingrid Wong	Branding	Apr 13, 2023 6:02 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
	LOG OFF Journal	● Published	Meaghan Gonsalves	Print	Apr 14, 2023 1:02 AM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
	Mustang Stampede Packaging ...	● Published	Brienna Hogben	Packaging	Apr 8, 2023 10:33 PM	May 1, 2023 10:12 PM	May 1, 2023 10:12 PM
	VELD Music Festival	● Published	Claudia Ladeira	Branding	Apr 8, 2023 10:33 PM	May 1, 2023 10:12 PM	May 1, 2023 10:12 PM
	Ur Cancelled	● Published	Madeline Rubba	Print	Apr 14, 2023 1:02 AM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
	Montreal International Jazz Fes...	● Published	Bella Wei	Branding	Apr 15, 2023 10:02 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
	Cud6	● Published	Zornitsa Stoimenova	Packaging	Apr 13, 2023 6:02 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
	PAWZ	● Published	Claudia Ladeira	Packaging	Apr 16, 2023 10:02 PM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM
	Linear	● Published	Khadija Bari	Product	Apr 17, 2023 5:01 AM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM
	Shoot Magazine	● Published	Adrianna Kirovski	Print	Apr 13, 2023 5:02 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
	Visualizing WWII	● Published	Kristen Chan	Info Design	Apr 14, 2023 1:02 AM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM
	Lemon Festival	● Published	Ingrid Wong	Branding	Apr 16, 2023 12:02 AM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM	May 1, 2023 10:14 PM
	Yum Cha Beauty	● Published	Jasmine Wong	Packaging	Apr 15, 2023 11:02 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM	May 1, 2023 10:13 PM

# Development Process

# Webflow



## HTML / CSS

We translated Figma prototypes of the website into live HTML and CSS through the Webflow's no-code editor, which populated dynamic elements with content synced from our Airtable database to our Webflow CMS.

## Responsiveness

We applied breakpoint-specific styling through Webflow's media query interface to ensure that the website was responsive to mobile, tablet, and desktop screen sizes.

## CMS Template Pages

Based on profile and case study page templates we designed in the editor, Webflow generated a dynamic page per graduate and project. By using conditional visibility, each page was tailored to the project based on the layout preferences specified in the Tally form.

# Hosting Custom Code

The screenshot shows a code editor interface with the following details:

- EXPLORER:** Shows the project structure under "OPEN EDITORS" and "DESN2023".
- GLOBAL.JS:** The active file contains custom JavaScript logic for page transitions and interactions.
- CODE SNIPPET:** A snippet of code from line 1232 to 1262 is shown, defining views for different sections (home, graduates, work) and handling events like window resize and mobile menu closure.

```
global.navBg("white");
// cmsSlider();
window.onscroll = "";
body.style.backgroundColor = "transparent";

views: [
    {
        namespace: 'home',
        afterEnter() {
            global.homeInit();
            window.onresize = function() {
                global.mobileMenuClose();
                penrose.setSize();
            }
        },
        beforeLeave() {
            grads.init();
        }
    },
    {
        namespace: 'graduates',
        afterEnter() {
            // cmsLoad();
            window.onresize = function() {
                global.mobileMenuClose();
            }
        }
    },
    {
        namespace: 'work',
        beforeLeave() {

```

## GitHub

We pushed custom CSS and JavaScript to a GitHub repository which automatically published to GitHub Pages. We then applied the stylesheets and scripts to the live website through `<link>` and `<script>` tags in Webflow's custom head code and custom body code fields.

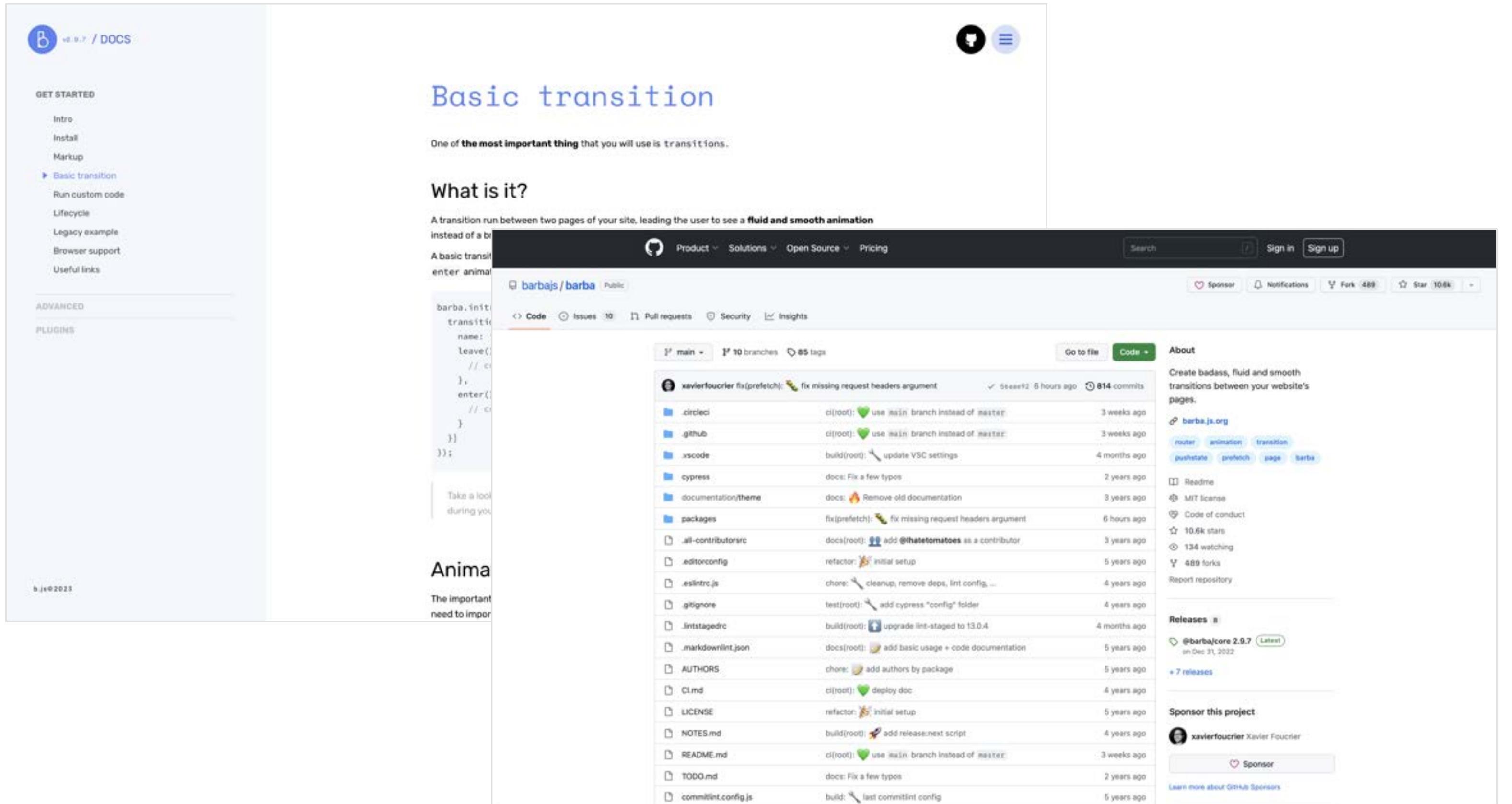
## Custom Coded Features

A significant portion of the website's interactive features was custom-coded, including all filtering interfaces, complex animations, and the geometric pattern on the home page.

## Other Libraries

- Barba.js - page transitions and prefetching
- GreenSock Animation Protocol - transitions
- Finsweet - extended Webflow CMS functionality
- ganlanyuan/tiny-slider - custom image slider

# Page Transitions



## Seamless Navigation

Barba.js - <https://barba.js.org/>

We designed seamless transitions between pages of the website with Barba.js, which allowed us to eliminate the white screen flash a viewer would normally see when navigating from page to page.

Instead of loading the destination page from scratch, Barba.js retains common elements such as the navbar while adding and removing content that is unique to each page, changing the URL in the address bar at the end.

## Nine Transitions

In total, we specified nine different transitions depending on what page the user is currently on and what page they are navigating to. Barba.js also allowed us to run custom code before, during, and after a page transition depending on the current page and destination page.

# Filtering

Thanks for joining us! Check back soon for our recap.

Coming soon

DESN 23

Graduates Work Events About

# Work

All Disciplines Filter Disciplines

Branding  Design Research  Info Design  Motion  Packaging  Print  Product

Kristen Chan  
music&psychology  
Motion • Product

Justin Chiu  
Fractal Flower Generator  
Product • Motion

Iris Mamac  
FLEEK  
STYLING SUSTAINABLY

## Filtering by Discipline

Our code responds to click events on the filtering interface by showing or hiding specific CMS items. Despite 30+ graduate profiles and 130+ project case studies, loading them all on page load is still reasonably fast because the thumbnail images are heavily compressed.

# Real-Time Search

Thanks for joining us! Check back soon for our recap

Coming soon

DES\_N 23

X Close

Bella

Search

5 results for Bella

Profile  
Bella Wei

Digital Ghosts  
Design Research

Bella Wei

bluets

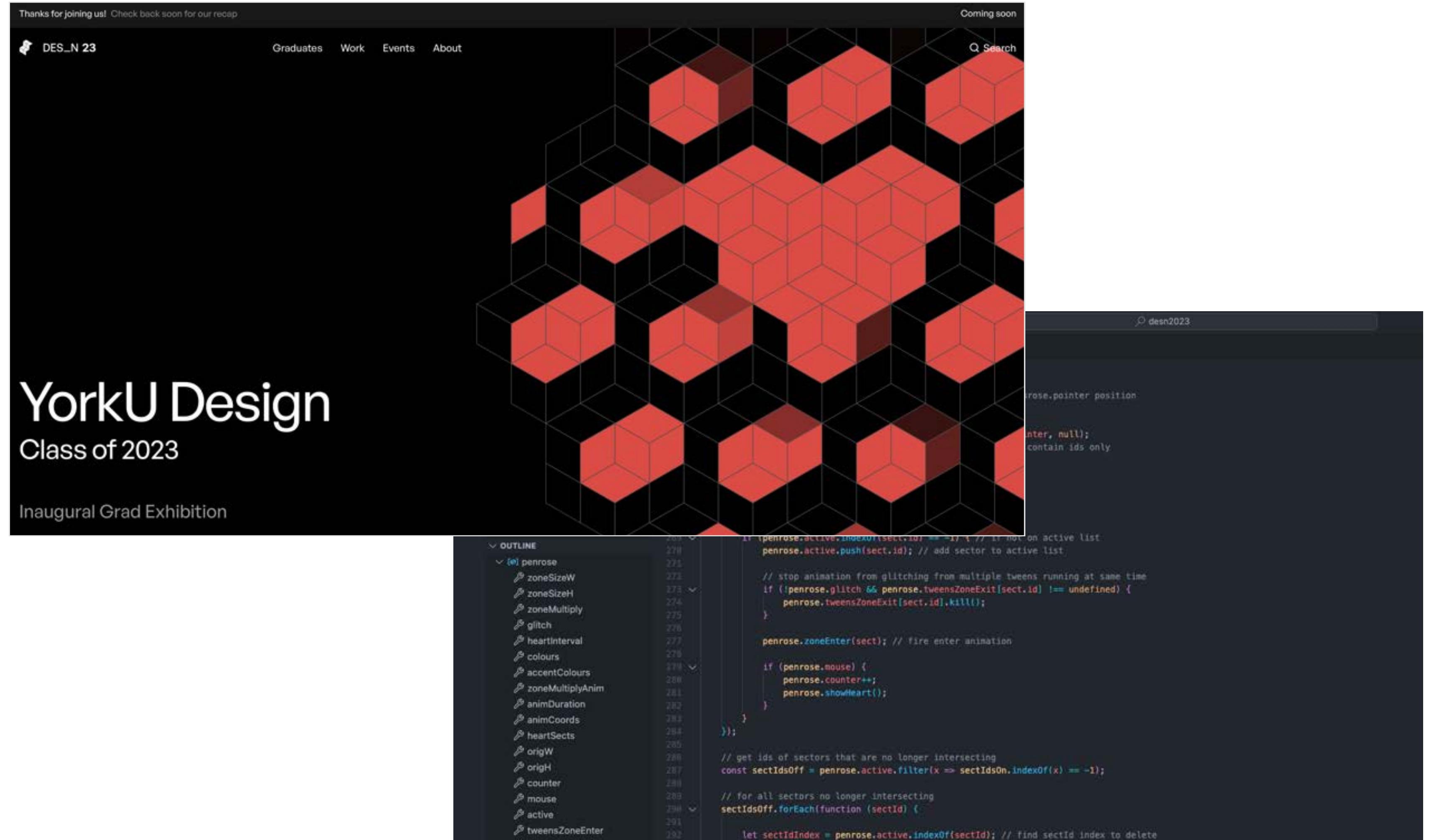
Print

## Real-time Search

Although our graduate and work pages contain filtering options, we felt it important to create a fast and seamless search function. The search implementation is global and can surface both graduate profiles and project names based on the query, with the profile always appearing as the first result.

This was achieved using a javascript library called Finsweet Attributes, which adds third-party extensions to Webflow, and can easily be initialized via custom data attributes in the designer. The specific plugins used are 'CMS Combine' coupled with 'CMS Filter'.

# Interactive Motion



## Hovering & Dragging

When a user hovers on the pattern, an invisible SVG rectangle follows the cursor. Any sector of the pattern which intersects with this invisible rectangle transitions to full opacity, revealing a fill of white or grey. The animation is the same when dragging on the pattern, except that the rectangle expands and the upward-facing sectors change to one of three colours.

When a sector no longer intersects with the rectangle, it stays at full opacity for a moment and then fades out. The timing of the decay animation varies based on a random number generator.

## Automatic Animation

When a user is not hovering over the pattern, the position of the invisible rectangle is animated automatically through interpolation between pairs of coordinates. Any sectors that intersect with rectangle continue to animate to full opacity.

## Heart Animation

When a user has caused sectors to light up 300 times, an animation sequence is played, revealing a heart shape in the middle of the geometric pattern.

# Challenges Faced

## Technical

### Code Experience

#### What we faced

- Development team of three members had limited experience with JavaScript, Git, and GitHub and no experience with back-end web development
- Low comfort level with asynchronous operations and code libraries

#### How we resolved it

- Developing most HTML and CSS in Webflow
- Enlisted a known developer from outside the design program to advise on back-end development issues
- Leveraged Stack Overflow, ChatGPT, and Bing Chat to learn development concepts and syntax and solve specific problems

### Webflow Limitations

#### What we faced

- Limits on lines of custom code allowed
- Limits on number of CMS fields, nested CMS lists, CMS items loaded on live page
- Webflow Editor lag due to high volume of CMS items
- Webflow IX2 animation engine not compatible with Barba.js page transitions

#### How we resolved it

- Hosted all custom CSS and JavaScript on GitHub Pages and created dependencies
- Implemented third-party plugins such as Finsweet Attributes to expand CMS capabilities
- Developed custom JavaScript solutions to address a variety of Webflow limitations, coding animations with Green Sock (GSAP) library

### Page Transitions (Barba.js)

#### What we faced

- Page transitions frequently aborted if the browser encountered errors or was too slow to load the next page
- Code would not destroy and reinitialize on transition
- Elements from both previous and next pages would coexist during transitions, causing `querySelector` commands to get the wrong elements

#### How we resolved it

- Turned on Barba debug mode and used browser debugger to find and address errors
- Develop custom JavaScript with all pages in mind, limiting the number of global variables to prevent conflicts
- Created a utility function to always select elements from the next page only

# Development Review

## Do Differently

- Try a different library for seamless page transitions, such as dogstudio/highway, pjax, smoothstate, swup, or turbolinks
- Develop the website entirely in bespoke code to avoid the limitations of Webflow on CMS content, styling, and animations
- Develop the website locally with a simulated live server for faster testing and debugging

## Further Improve

- Implement low-quality image placeholders, srcsets, and lazy rendering to speed up page load while preserving resolution
- Improve prefetching of destination page content to make page transitions smoother
- Use semantic HTML tags and attributes to improve accessibility
- Add image light-box functionality to project case study pages to allow user to view images up close

# Insights

# Collaboration

# How Teams Collaborated

## Cross-functional all hands

Each week, teams would present their progress, next steps, and blockers to the remaining teams in order to stay updated and streamlined on progress.

## Team lead meetings

Bi-weekly, team leads would gather to discuss any dependencies, blockers, or needs from their respective teams, as well as make executive decisions collectively.

## Team meetings

Each week, teams would gather privately to discuss and collaborate towards progress in their respective teams and tasks. This progress would be presented at each week's all-hands to update remaining teams.

# Cross-Functional Dependencies

	Required from Us	Required from Them
Creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Input into branding discussions to best optimize the brand for digital best practices</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creative direction on graduating exhibit theme and visual identity</li><li>Brand assets such as typefaces and geometric pattern assets</li></ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Splash/landing page with exhibit details start promoting the graduating exhibit</li><li>Edited photography for each graduate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Copywriting for key sections of the website</li></ul>
Recruiter Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Splash/landing page with details on time, place, and tickets to link to when sending emails to recruiters and employers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>N/A</li></ul>
Sponsorships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Splash/landing page with general event details to provide as context in emails sent to potential sponsors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List of sponsors for the “About” page of the website</li></ul>
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Website links for in-person exhibit signage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information about in-person exhibit for the “Event” page</li></ul>

# Challenges Faced

## Inter-Team

### Communication

#### What we faced

- Inter-team communication happened between team leads, who relayed messages to their teams, causing misunderstandings
- Limited central leadership and inter-team collaboration led to misalignment

#### How we resolved it

- We pivoted towards synchronous conversations with entire teams rather than team leads only
- Augmented meetings with dedicated workspace channels for inter-team collaboration
- Touched base regularly with members of other teams to ensure alignment on specific components of the website

## Creative Vision

#### What we faced

- Creative and digital teams presented different visions for the style of the exhibit brand identity.
- Creative team prioritized an eccentric identity optimized for the in-person experience, while digital preferred a subtler, cleaner identity that prioritized screen legibility and content-first design

#### How we resolved it

- Creative team ensured that digital input was collected during the development of the brand
- Digital team was given liberty to alter/optimize the brand for web as was seen fit, while still remaining true to the core identity

## UI / UX

### Designing for Dynamic Content

#### What we faced

- When designing for template pages, we needed to account for a large number of variables. This included varying amounts of written content and metadata as well as variance in things like name length

#### How we resolved it

- We went through many rounds of iterations in Figma, and used content samples on different ends of the variable spectrums

# Constraints

# Constraints

## Cross-Functional Dependencies

Considering our website relied on a brand direction, we couldn't proceed with designing and developing the site without these assets.

## Compressed Timeline

The time we had to curate the website was very limited due to the length of the school term, team dependencies, and other student responsibilities.

## Technical Skills

Not enough members on our team possessed the required skills to develop the website. Due to this, the design had to account for these technical abilities, and fewer skilled members had to carry a heavier workload in order to build and launch the site in time.

# What We Learned

# What We Learned

## Inter-Teams

### Operating as an Agency

#### **Collaboration, Communication & Timelines**

Our team learned how cross-functional collaboration works, and how our efforts contributed to the operations of other teams and to the success of the show.

We learned how to understand and maximize each team member's strengths in a short timeframe. With cross-functional dependencies, we learned the importance of strong communication and the urgency of meeting deadlines.

## UI / UX

### Designing for Dynamic Content

#### **Making New Design Decisions**

During the design process, we were faced with obstacles around designing for dynamic content. Since we couldn't always design for best-case scenarios, we had to make design decisions that would account for variations.

# Thank You!