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CDM-Project 1

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I will admit that for the first five or so days after this visual unit project was assigned, I was floundering. You see, this is the first “writing” class at Pitt that I have taken that is not exclusively, or almost exclusively, actual pen to the paper (or fingers to the keyboard) writing. This assignment initially gave me little direction, a far cry from my other professors telling me exactly how many pages I should write, the font and font size they prefer, and what modes of rhetoric I should employ. I was scared. Not only because this was way different, but because it was different and I was going to use a different medium to do it. I had never previously used any image editing software before Gimp crossed my ears in the first class. I knew of many people who used Photoshop, and knew that I should probably know how to use Photoshop being that I am going into marketing and right now all of marketing is digital marketing. So, I waited until my final semester of college, like any serial procrastinator would do, to dive into this digital world.

**Vision**

I knew that I wanted to create something about changing perceptions, and I figured I would stay somewhere close to home with my theme. I have been interested in this body positivity movement that is going on in our world for quite some time. I grab inspiration from famous and not so famous Instagram accounts who are passionate about what is on the inside rather than the outside, and how you feel rather than how you look. I figured what better way to start this uncomfortable journey with Gimp than by creating something that might make others feel more comfortable. I wanted to particularly target younger women, who are at the cusp of deciding who they are as a person. Thus, I went with modern elements and simple striking images and text, which is common with the genre of work that focuses on body positivity. This genre showcases that the strongest messages do not include a mirage of facts, figures, and reasoning, but rather calls to action and positive reinforcement. My project looks like many of the creative ads and social media posts surrounding this movement.

**Basis for Creative Decisions and Sources**

*Scale*

I began by finding an image of an individual looking down at a scale. I wanted the audience for my poster to feel like they were the person stepping onto the scale. I knew that I wanted to change the scale in a way that it no longer included any numbers, but only positive adjectives. I had initially just replaced the numbers with words, but in my conference with Ben decided that only having one word would better serve my purpose because with the dial pointing to one option, it suggested that the person on the scale was not the other adjectives at the same time. Therefore, I decided to make the scale digital, so that each person who steps on it could receive a different adjective, adding to the variability of the medium. The legs stepping on the scale are from the initial image.

After the Canva reading, I began exploring fonts for the digital word that I would use. DS-Digital looked most realistic and was found on Dafont.com. The initial scale is from Pixabay and the digital scale is from Google Images. Both are approved for reuse with modification, so I was not infringing on copyright.

*Flooring*

The flooring underneath the scale was also replaced. I wanted it to add depth and contrast to the image, but also not take away attention. I wanted to floor to be white to contrast the black of the scale and have some texture and grout to add dimension to page and break up the audiences view since I would only have one visual focal point in addition to text. The flooring I used was found on Pixabay and was marked for reuse with modification, so I was not infringing on copyright.

*Headline and NEDA Text*

I had played around with a variety of taglines in my head, but thought the best use of my space would be two concise and powerful linked messages. The first “Redefine the scale” is meant to grab he viewer’s attention and make them look down at the scale. The secondary line “One number does not define you” reinforces the message, but is not central to understanding the meaning of the visual. I came to the decision to use the font Sintony because I wanted a Sans Serif font, but unlike Merriweather this one was a bit thinner and wider so that it would take up more of the width of my page without adding a large amount of tracking (letter-spacing) to my words. I made the text bold and black so it would draw attention against the white floors and gave top line tracking of 10 and a larger font size. Sintony was downloaded from Google Fonts which is open source and free to use.

I did not originally imagine the poster including a sponsorship graphic, but decided that including the “National Eating Disorder Awareness Week” sticker would add purpose and a reason for reproduction using additional adjectives. I drew inspiration from the actual logo for this week found on the NEDA website, but since the logo was copyrighted, recreated it with a slight change in colors so it would be more visible against the white floors. I chose the font Anton, again wanting a Sans Serif font that looked like the font in the original logo. Anton is also from Google Fonts.

*Alignment and Arrangement*

I wanted the eye to move from the top to the bottom of the page, but pay attention to the scale. I put the on the left half of the page with the headline even further left because we read from left to right. I did not want the text to align with the scale. The scale takes up the bottom two thirds of the page to emphasize its importance while the NEDA logo hangs in a bottom quadrant, important, but not a central part of the message.

**Tools and Resources**

I had never used Gimp, or any similar programs before, as I mentioned above, so the tools I used to were completely new to me.

1. New: to open the initial element on an 8.5x11 template.
2. New Layer: allowed me to crop without changing the entire template.
3. Add alpha channel: I knew I was going to want to past what I cropped onto a new background.
4. Ellipse Select Tool: to select the center circle of the original scale.
5. Invert: to remove what I had selected but nothing else.
6. Free Select Tool: to crop out the initial scale from its flooring, and then later the legs of the initial person for use on the new scale.
7. Move Tool: to arrange my different layers.
8. Rotate tool: the original element had the scale rotated 180 degrees, but I wanted to be able to look down and read it.
9. Scale: the new scale did not match the size of the original legs, so I could adjust it.
10. Text Tool: to create the headline and NEDA logo.

**Future Potential**

With more time, I would have liked to explore many of the option under filters. Yet, for a first go at Gimp, I am very happy with my work. I honestly didn’t think I would ever understand how layers worked, or how to move things on the page without all the layers moving. I see this poster as something that would fare well to reproduction due to the variable elements in the digital text on the scale, and for its purpose of promoting NEDA week. I still am not in love with the flooring and perhaps further consideration could be given to the font in my headline, but I learned that at some point you need to be done. I played around with those elements for hours, and found myself having trouble coming to a decision. I think this shows that in this medium, as well as in more formal writing, there truly is perfect way to do things so long as your intended message is conveyed.