

Process Book
Large Poster Design

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Document Design
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Section 1.

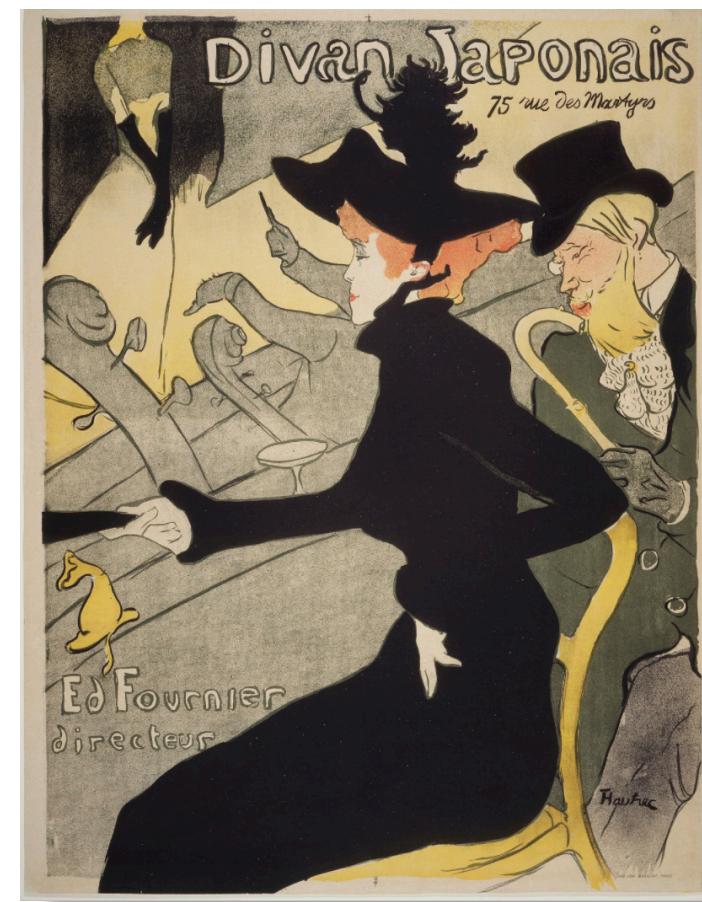
Poster Exploration

I see posters every day.

But how do I design one?

I turned to Toulouse-Lautrec for help.

Famous Poster Designer Study

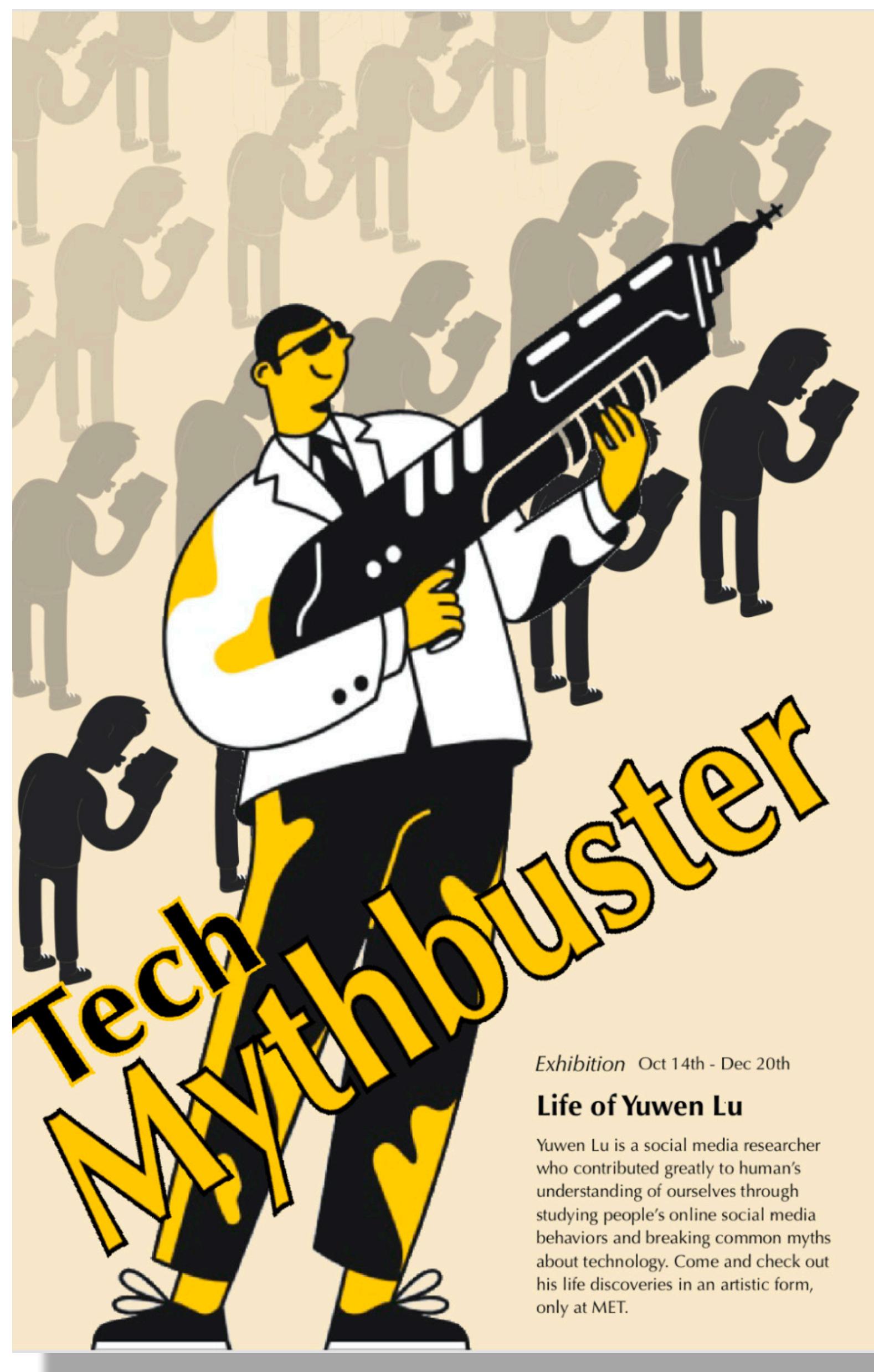


In order to familiarize ourselves with poster design, we are each assigned a famous poster designer and asked to study their works.

The designer I was assigned to was Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, a french artist among the best-known painters of the Post-Impressionist period. In his early life, he suffered from pycnodysostosis, also known as Toulouse-Lautrec Syndrome, which contributed to his short height (1.42 m or 4 ft 8 in). He suffered from alcoholism due to being mocked for his short stature and physical appearance. These life experiences made him not confident in himself, resulting in many of his posters from an angle of an outsider looking at people at the center of people's attention.

The work by him I selected was shown on the left. There was much inspirations I learned from them: how to use blurred out figures in the background to make center character more prominent, and how to use color to set off the main figure. I used these techniques in my later self-promotional poster design.

Self-Promotional Poster



As a “test run” to design our large poster, we were firstly asked to design a self-promotional poster. The context was set as 50 years from now, we were having a gallery show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC, exhibiting our life-long achievements. The poster was to promote our gallery show.

I linked the subject of my “gallery show” to the career goal I set in my previous resume redesign project: my achievements as a social media researcher. There are so many controversy and myths about social media platforms nowadays, and people are forming such a negative image of them that we just believe whatever negative narrative is brought up about them. For example, we generally longer screen time is an absolutely bad thing, however, researchers at Oxford found out it depends on the types of activities we do with our devices. I would like to be seen as a social media, or in general technology, “mythbuster” in the future that probe deeply into technology’s impact on our society.

Building on inspirations I got from Toulouse-Lautrec’s work, I put my figure in the middle, and an array of people bowing down and scrolling their phones on the periphery. I used black and yellow colors to create a dynamic and bright tone for the poster. I found the center figure icon online and I really liked how “mythbuster” aligned with the playful gun he was holding.

Section 2.

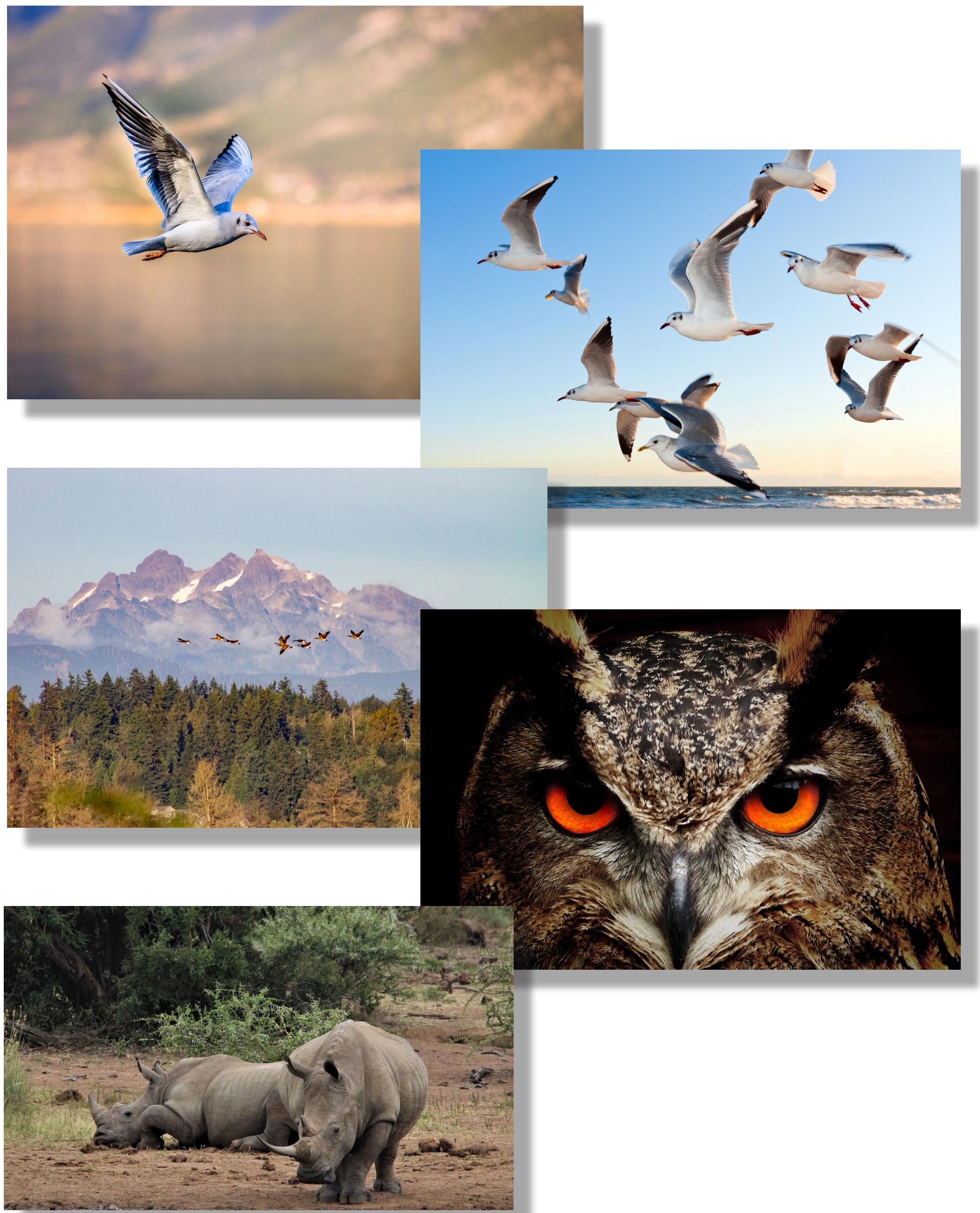
Large Poster Design

To be honest, it's a really fun
yet struggling assignment for me.

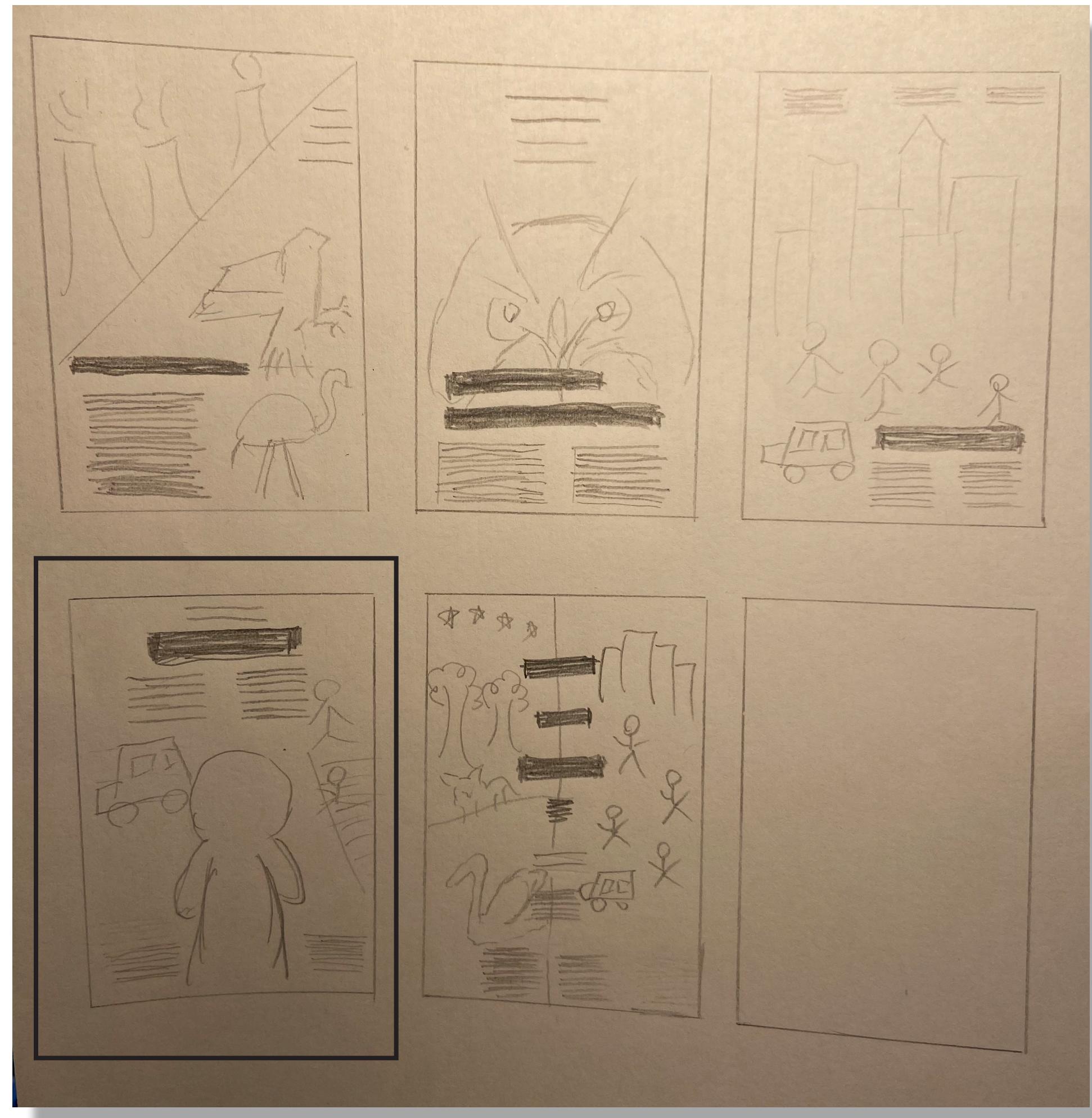
Content Preparation

We were designing the large poster for Maya Lin, an American architect and sculptor, and the designer for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The event we were promoting was her planned lecture at the University of Michigan, about her last memorial *What is Missing*.

What is Missing is a memorial of the species went extinct because of human activities. In the content preparation phase, I was mostly looking for images related to nature, animals, and plants. On the right are a few images I selected as part of my potential poster elements.



Thumbnail Sketches

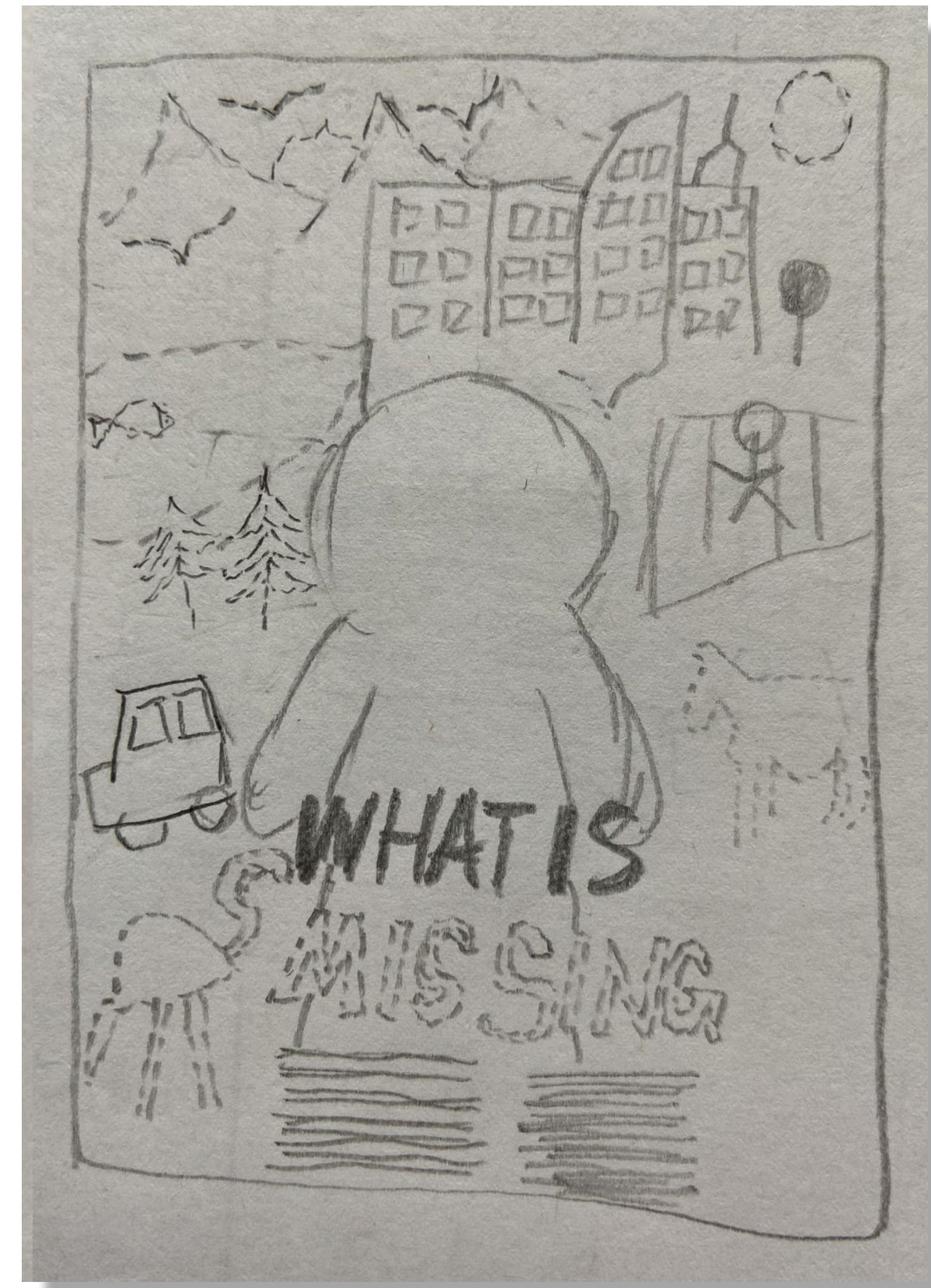


I created the first iteration of 5 thumbnail sketches to draw out my ideas of the poster. Here, I based my designs on the image materials I found online, and explored the layouts based on structures of these images. For example, the second sketch on the first row was based on the owl image that I displayed on the previous page. I chose the black-bordered image sketch as the one to proceed with.

Thumbnail Sketches

During class, we created a second iteration of the thumbnail. This time, instead of using rulers to create the outline, I free-drawn it to reduce the formality; also, I added more details to experiment with my ideas.

My main design idea in this thumbnail is to use a dashed outline on the word “missing”, and apply similar outlines to things in nature that are dying out to correspond with the idea of “missing”. However, looking back now, the poster contained too much elements and it looked very cluttered. I will talk more about this in the next pages.



Digital Sketch 1



This is the first digital sketch I created based on the thumbnail.

Here I substituted the background from a city view to a factory venting smokes and smogs, since most other city view images don't really match with the general layout. The chimneys actually worked out pretty well – they reduced noises in the background and delivered the message effectively.

There were a few places I was not really satisfied with in this first iteration. First, the lecture information on the top left was in black while the event description was in white. However hard I tried to unify the colors, the text didn't look right in either black or white. In addition, during the class critique for my peers' work, I realized I was putting too much information in the poster. Also, Karen pointed out a really great point that for poster viewers, the name "Maya Lin" is definitely more attractive than the event name.

Digital Sketch 2



To address the first text color issue, in my second iteration, I tuned the background color darker so that white text looks good in both sections. I added the name Maya Lin to the bottom section and made it appealing to attract more viewers on a distance.

However, with Maya Lin being Asian American, the gold hair person back view seemed a bit abrupt to me. Instead, I used a back view image of a little girl to represent our next generation, and also made her fluffy dog also dash-outlined. In addition, I moved the event description downward and not crossing any image, and avoided the type crime of having an orphan line in the second column.

Digital Sketch 3



Friday January 15, 2021
Distinguished Speaker Series
University of Michigan
Rackham Auditorium
915 Washington St., Ann Arbor, MI
48109



Designed as her last memorial, What is Missing? is not a singular static object, but a work that can exist in multiple sites simultaneously. Maya Lin's goal is to create, through science-based artworks, an awareness about the disappearance of species due to habitat degradation and loss. By creating innovative artworks that

utilize sound, media, and science, people of all ages connect with the species and places that have disappeared or will likely disappear if we do not protect them.

Artist and designer Maya Lin interprets the natural world through history, politics, and culture. She has designed several of the most significant and best-known works of public art of the late 20th century. Unlike many artists, she is an articulate and compelling speaker, who talks freely about the meaning of her works, her goals in creating them, and her working methods.

However, the second iteration didn't solve the clutterness of the poster.

There were too many things going on in the frame, and the dashed outline added to the messiness. My third iteration focused on cleaning up the poster while making sure the same message get delivered.

I firstly got rid of the rhinoceros, the fluffy dog, and the trees next to the factory (to be honest, I don't think many people realized these are trees). I focused on using birds as a symbol for all the endangered species, and deleted the clouds as well.

During my one-on-one critique session with Karen, she provided me with the idea of getting inspirations from my peers' posters where they cut off a bird's shape from the background. Here I combined my idea and theirs together: I filled in white color to birds' shapes and had dashed outlines around them (the outlines might not be visible in these images because of resolution, but can be seen in the large pdf file).

Digital Sketch 3 (cont.)

With regard to text, I made the following changes.

First, I reduced the weight of “what is missing” so that it’s not competing with “Maya Lin” any more. I remained the outline for the word “missing”, it might not be visible from a distance, but it would become clear together with the bird shape outlines as you get closer and pay more attention to the details (apologies again, might not be visible in this process book).

Also, to balance out the different column heights for the event description, I worked together with Karen to change it into three columns. I felt the three-column layout was much better-balanced.

I was happy with the conciseness of this iteration, and chose it as my final design.



Final Design



Reflections

This is indeed, as Karen described in the beginning, so far the only “uncomfortable” assignment that I have had in Document Design.

It’s uncomfortable not because I didn’t enjoy the process; I actually liked it a lot, but I felt I couldn’t find a way to achieve my ideal outcome. Also, the pressure from all courses during the past two weeks made it difficult to allocate more time on this assignment.

With that being said, I really loved making the two posters. It’s my first time carefully considering the layout, the composition, and the progressive disclosure of a poster. I definitely have to improve my skills of using color. From now on, whenever I come across a poster on the street, I would look at it in a completely different way: I just love how this class has been training my eyes.