

Application of Narrative Principles to Effectively Communicate Through Graphic Design

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Communicate Through Graphic Design

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Abstract:

From folk tradition to film, story has played a critical role in connecting one person to another. The principles that undergird the construction of exceptional stories may apply to other forms of communication, including visual mediums. Although studies show that storytelling communicates more effectively than simply stating information, the field visual arts has neglected to apply this tactic in its craft. What makes a great story, and why does it have the capability of emotionally moving a person? Why not use the same principles that connect a person to a narrative within the field of graphic design? Because of this disconnection, there is a need to examine the use of narrative within the visual arts critically. Properly utilized storytelling principles may prove useful to the field of graphic design at large, and a way to connect more deeply with target audiences. This paper seeks to take existing research in narratology and literary theory, and apply the principles gathered to the discipline of graphic design. The paper's aim is to provide practical strategies to improve the discipline of graphic design by leveraging the principles of good storytelling and implementing them to create memorable and emotional graphics.

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Chapter 1:

The Research Problem

The role of story in human history cannot be quantified. It has connected generations of individuals around campfires, dinner tables, theatres, and cinemas from time immemorial. It is a subject that is taken for granted by most, and yet, seriously studied by a few, especially those in the fields of mythology, narratology, and literary theory. From pictograms on cave walls to short stories, artists have used narrative to communicate human emotion and interest in various mediums, each of which has unique qualities for storytelling. For those who study the form and structure of story specific, systems have arisen. By and large, these systems have only been effectively applied to the mediums of folk tradition and literature, but have mostly remained unused in visual communication. For generations, graphic design has been a field

which cross-pollinates art and the science of communication for various purposes. “It is a visual representation of an idea relying on the creation, selection, and organization of visual elements.” (Landa 1). Graphic design as a discipline is relegated to informational and aesthetic realms, but just as different mediums of communication offer varying degrees of narrative, so can the discipline of graphic design. Ergo, serious thought needs to be applied to the use of story in this medium.

In an increasingly media-saturated culture, emotional connection in communication is essential. Target audiences are stimulated continuously through images, making it harder to communicate amidst visual noise. In a typical day, American consumers view around 10,000 marketing messages (AMA.org). In

light of this information, the question for many becomes how graphic designers can develop more effective visual techniques for greater impact among their audiences. Stories have been a fundamental aspect of human culture from the beginning of history (Alexander 69). It is plausible that this powerful medium engrained into our cultural DNA can be leveraged to create more dynamic communication within graphic design. If storytelling is a more effective means of communication than simple statement, then this may also be true in the visual arena. By correlating literary and narrative devices to visual ones, a question emerges: does storytelling create more effective graphic design? From folk tradition, to film, story has played a crucial role in connecting one person to another (Anderson). Perhaps the principles that undergird the construction of good stories can be applied to other forms of communication, including the field of graphic design, so that the information on what makes a story great and how it emotionally affects a person can be implemented for better results. In our modern culture of technology and media saturation, why not use the same principles that connect a person to a narrative within the

field of graphic design? Properly utilized, these storytelling principles may prove useful in the field of graphic design at large, allowing them the possibility of a deeper connection with target audiences. Out of the research conducted on storytelling techniques, methodologies of narrative theory applied to the field of graphic design should result in a more communicatively effective body of work: one with powerfully memorable messages to the beholder.

RESE

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Chapter 2:

Research

An art practiced for millennia, the craft of storytelling has only in recent human history been taken up for study by academics and scholars. From the Brothers Grimm cataloging fairy tales, to the first Folklore class at Indiana University, the study of storytelling has grown to become “recognized by some as its own interdisciplinary field.” (Anderson). Narratology, as defined by Mary Klage in “Narratology: Key Terms in Literary Theory” is “the science of narrative; narratological theories examine stories and storytelling” (Klage). Narratology is more concerned with the structure and ideas in the content rather than the performance of the story. The academic study of storytelling, however, has traditionally concentrated on oral and culturally significant performances, which is problematic because much of ancient history only exists in written form and will never be traditionally performed. This purist view of storytelling also neglects the incor-

poration of technology, whether that is the advent of the written word or video (Anderson). It is important that these mediums are not neglected in story. The bedrock of the claims made in this paper are the ideas and knowledge gathered from the fields of narratology and storytelling supported by literary theory. Within this paper, a more inclusive definition of storytelling will be used, as well as the use of new and emerging media. Katherine E. Perone puts it best, “Communicating thoughts and emotions through stories strengthens the ability to engage individuals, groups, organizations, and communities worldwide” (113).

Although this paper’s thesis is aimed primarily to aid graphic designers, the principles laid out will have implications for anyone who wishes to communicate in pictorial mediums. From web design, to painting, anyone who desires to convey a message to an audience visually could be affected by this

work. Not all images are stories, but the implementation of the principles laid out within this thesis will guide “visual authors” to “write” work that communicates coherent messages rather than simple aesthetics. “As it turns out if we have an affective relationship to the sensory information – if that information is connected to the part of our brains that process our emotions – then the pathways become even stronger.” (Lambert 8). By providing a method for storytelling visual communication, specifically graphic design as a whole, will be enhanced by communicating more effective, memorable, and emotionally compelling designs.

At the time of this paper, “...multimodal narratives in various media are still best described as contributing to an emerging trend rather than a clearly staked-out and mapped area within the broad field of narratology” (Kohn and Thon 254). This indicates an emerging acute need to study narratives from varying types of media. More and more, stories are appearing in unconventional spaces within marketing, public relations, or corporate meetings. Thus, “businesses use storytelling on a variety of levels. Marketing sells products by telling persuasive stories about products” (Alexander 12). Whatever the avenue, communicators are using the power of storytelling to define their public and private appearance (Anderson). With that said, “storytelling appears to be a buzzword and a storyteller can be

anything from a writer to a digital navigator” (Ayiter and Mimesis 48). This provides an opportunity for creative communicators to use their skills to tell stories which communicate information both intellectually and emotionally. Graphic designers are uniquely positioned to sit between the worlds of textual, visual, and spoken traditions.

In order to determine how designers can best contribute to this area, narrative form must be analyzed. Aristotle was the first to postulate that stories were composed of a beginning, middle, and end (Stackelberg 91). To follow this structure Aristotle’s idea indicates the passing of time. Generally, to visually indicate the movement of time, a series of images are presented. This is problematic for graphic designers, as much of the medium is static, as is the case in a poster, or individual graphic. A single image, according to Wolf, is a “weak realization of direct pictorial narrativity” (268) because “a picture can only focus on one scene... and not change from one state of affairs to another” (265). If one were to follow Aristotle’s story form, then a single image cannot complete the beginning, middle, and end model. Wolf differentiates a picture’s narrative potential by how much story is drawn from viewing them “that is, pictures which, by themselves, invite us to see core narremes such as chronology and causality at work” (271). By creating images that imply a conclusion, a graphic designer is creating an interaction with the viewer, whereby an ending is imagined. The fact that a single image cannot tell an entire story may not be a limitation, since “the pictorial medium has possibilities that go beyond what is easily realizable in verbal representations” (Wolf 270). Graphic design and images are powerful influencers for viewers. If “a picture is worth a thousand words,” then it can tell a myriad of stories. This is not argued, rather, it is a cliché that is taken for granted (Alexander 68). The most important aspect of telling a story is to connect on an emotional level, which is. This emotional connection is what engages an audience in participation and co-creation (Alexander 6, 12). Because of this engagement, there is a level of understanding and empathy generated through these emotional connections (Woodside and Carol 419). The power of story is evident in this regard and thus, communication that makes an impact will overcome straightforward information every time.

When graphic design developed as an advertising profession, the products created were thought of as a simple visual representation of a message, but “a new approach in graphic design thinking has begun to question the essentially linguistic or grammatical approach of communications theory and semiotics by regarding visual communication as persuasive argumentation” (Buchanan 11-12). Traditionally, graphic design is merely informational, but this does not always have to be the case. Graphic design as a discipline has an opportunity to fill a void between traditional communications and emotional or artistic literary connections. Serious scholarship in this area must be completed to legitimize what is taught as an intuitive art into an academic science of emotional communication.

By studying and applying literary and story principles to all areas of graphic design, visual communication will elicit more significant emotional impact on the viewer. Researchers who study teaching methods and education have found that by using visual imagery to reinforce concepts, students’ understanding was advanced (Dallacqua 378), and creates greater empathy

toward others (Moldenhauer 232). Complex information may be distilled into comprehensible elements by using “graphic metaphors.” In studies, these metaphors “created outcomes that represented incremental increases in critical thinking, visual literacy, thinking in new dimensions, and a demonstration of transformational learning” (Hube 182-3). Perhaps the most compelling data is a quantitative study to “verify the feasibility of applying narrative theory to graphic design courses” (Yang and Tzu 188). Their data shows that applying narrative techniques to visual communication helped the participants cultivate a more coherent topic and aided in their overall aesthetics. The study took thirty visual communication design freshmen from the Ming Chi University of Technology. These students were split into two groups: one group was taught a narrative design model while the other was taught a traditional design curriculum based on case studies. The study used poster designs as a means of measuring the effectiveness of implementing narrative design. The steps to implementing narrative principles outlined in the article are as follows: determine source material or message to be commu-

nicated, examine it for a narrative statement or keywords, convert statements or keywords into visual symbols, and create a poster based on these symbols. In comparison to the traditionally taught students who tended to mimic the works of well-known designers or popular styles, the narrative design model proved to “tell a lively and entertaining story on a single page” (Yang and Tzu 197). This study provides quantitative data which supports the idea that using narrative theory within the visual communication of graphic design produces both a more creative and memorable message. Although the study was meant to challenge conventional design education, the research and outcomes are directly applicable to this thesis. Other elements of story, such as creating a scene, adding characters, outlining a plot, and overcoming a struggle, can be applied to visual communication just as simply as in literary or oral mediums (Alexander 7-8).

In the analysis of visual storytelling, there seems to be very little research dedicated to narrative theory in graphic design. Much study is devoted to animation, film, and advertising, but application to single image narrative is lacking. In

the field of narratology, the primary focus is “predominantly verbal narrative structures and strategies from the perspective of literary theory and literary criticism” (Kuhn et al. 254). This article was written within months of this thesis, and it comes at a critical point in the history of design. As technology shifts and morphs designers’ skill sets, it is even more important to communicate in compelling ways.

It is worth noting a simplified list of the elements of graphic design. These elements are taken from Robin Landa’s “Graphic Design Solutions” and David A. Laurer and Stephen Pentak’s “Design Basics.” While definitions vary, the principal elements are not disputed in the field of graphic design.

The formal elements of design include line, shape, pattern and texture, and color. These fundamental elements make up all components of visual art and graphic design, spanning from photographs, to typography, and paintings. But it is how these elements are used in conjunction that embodies the art of graphic design. The principles that define this medium can be further broken down into the following components:

- Format: the medium used to display the visual or the physical dimensions of the work (Landa 29).
- Composition: the intentional visualization and positioning of graphic elements (Landa 143).
- Balance: the distribution of visual weight within a composition (Landa 30; Lauer and Pentak 86).
- Visual Hierarchy: provides the primary resource for organizing information “To guide the viewer, the designer uses visual hierarchy, the arrangement of all graphic elements according to emphasis.” (Landa 33).
- Rhythm: repetition and variation to create visual interest (Landa 36; Lauer and Pentak 110).
- Unity or Harmony: the process whereby graphic elements are made to look like they belong together (Landa 36). Fundamentally this is done by “grouping” visual elements into visually similar sets. (Lauer and Pentak 30)
- Scale: “...the size of a visual element is seen in relation to other graphic elements within the composition.” (Landa 39). See Lauer and Pentak 68.
- Color: The use of pigment or light to create focal points and communicate cultural or personal meaning. See Landa 129; Lauer and Pentak 254
- Typography: The art of giving human language visual form (Bringhurst 11). See Landa 44.
- Signs and Symbols: visual representations of physical objects or concepts (Landa 116).

Every piece of visual art uses one or more of these components. The degree to which the art communicates specific concepts is up to the artist or designer. With that in mind, it is important to make a distinction between fine art and graphic design. Graphic design, while artistic, serves to communicate clear and specific information to an end user. Fine art, in contrast, may present a specific message or ideology, but does so in a symbolic

way, usually without the use of text. Craig Elimeliah from AIGI explains that “the artist is free to express themselves in any medium and color scheme, using any number of methods to convey their message.” A fine artist does not typically have to answer to a client or a boss for their internal expression (Elimeliah). The distinction between fine art and graphic art, however, has been blended in recent decades by the likes of artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein with the movement of pop art (Janson et al. 604). Because of these movements, graphic designs are often expected to be as beautiful and unique as a work of fine art. But before a designer approaches a project, they should ask themselves what the purpose of their project is? In essence, “how can the concept be communicated in visual terms?” (Lauer and Pentak 9). In one scenario, a piece of fine art will make a brilliant advertisement, but in another, a simple block of black text on white may suffice. Designers are asked to communicate complicated concepts with minimal visual elements which are easily recognized by viewers, and to do so with emotional impact. Fortunately, stories provide a tested medium to communicate these complicated nuanced messages. The expectations a graphic designer faces are sometimes unrealistic and unappreciated, and yet, they continually throw themselves into their work, perfecting their story until it achieves the desired effect. But how does a designer tell a story through simple images? The principal elements of storytelling must be defined before this question can be answered.

As previously stated, there is significant research devoted to storytelling and narratology. Although a comprehensive exploration of this subject is beyond the scope of this thesis, some notable figures must be mentioned. At the heart of popular storytelling are the ideas propagated by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and their followers, notably Joseph Campbell. His work, “The Hero with A Thousand Faces,” has become a seminal text for story-

tellers. In the opening sentences of his work, Campbell states that “throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind” (3). Campbell’s study of the “monomyth” lead him to create a working outline for all basic storylines. The “Hero’s Journey” is represented

simply in this three-step process: the monomyth” (30). These three “separation–initiation–return: which sections are further broken down might be names the nuclear unit of into seventeen smaller ones.

STAGE 1

- The first great stage, [is] that of the separation, or departure:
- The Call to Adventure the signs of the vocation of the hero
- (Refusal of the Call- the folly of the flight from the god
- Supernatural Aid - the unsuspected assistance that comes to one who has undertaken his proper adventure
- The Crossing of the First Threshold
- The Belly of the Whale: the passage into the realm of night.

STAGE 2

- The second stage is of the trials and victories of initiation:
- The Road of Trials- the dangerous aspect of the gods
- The Meeting with the Goddess (Magna Mater)-the bliss of infancy regained
- Woman as the Temptress-the realization and agony of Oedipus
- Atonement with the Father(
- Apotheosis
- The Ultimate Boon.

STAGE 3

The third and final stage is the return and reintegration with society:

- Refusal of the Return, or the world denied;
- The Magic Flight, or the escape of Prometheus;
- Rescue from Without;
- The Crossing of the Return Threshold, or the return to the world of common day;
- Master of the Two worlds: and
- Freedom to live, the nature and function of the ultimate boon. (Campbell 36)

These seventeen stages comprise nearly any narrative ever written. This is evident in Campbell's popularity among storytellers, including George Lucas with "Star Wars" (Films Media Group), Richard Adams with "Watership Down" (Bridgeman 110), and Dan Brown with "Davinci Code" (New York Times). While Campbell's system is robust, an especially noteworthy concept is held in "the trials and victories of initiation" (Campbell 36). Every great story must have conflict and drama. Essentially, as Sandra Kaliszewski states, "no conflict, no story." (9). These principles may be applied to stories of any era, but specifically in our modern individualist culture, Campbell's work, according to Joe Lambert, "helped create a sense that we all had a 'personal mythology.' We learned we have a hero's journey myth in all our lives. A journey that allows us to confront demons, come to terms with ego, and place ourselves as victors over our demons and deficits" (11). The mythology artists speak to is no longer solely cultural, but individual and personal.

This method of storytelling, though rudimentary, can be further broken down into four elements: a message, a conflict, characters, and a plot

(Fog et al. 34). The message is a moral or ideology that unifies the story, or the central purpose of a tale's existence. The conflict "is the driving force of a good story [because it] creates a struggle in which the author can express her message (36). The characters are the interacting elements of a conflict (39). These are the ones who illustrate the issues at hand within the message. At a minimum, the character set needs to include a hero and an adversary (41). The hero has a mission, a purpose, or a calling to fulfill, while the adversary opposes this central struggle. Christopher Booker describes the hero as always standing for good, and thus, diametrically opposed to the agenda of the adversary. "The hero is always shown as acting selflessly and in some higher cause..." (Booker 33). Juxtaposing the hero the adversary is seen as the hero's counterpart; he is the villain, the monster, or as "everything in human nature which is somehow twisted and less than perfect," be it "physically, morally [or] psychologically" (33). The adversary needs not be human, but can take on many forms as long as it poses a barrier to the hero (Fog et al. 41). Finally, the plot is the "structure to propel [the story] forward and maintain

audience interest” (44). Sequential order is important because in the story, information tends to build upon itself. To have a full story, the Aristotelian structure of beginning, middle, and end must be followed.

Much like the four principles of design, all stories are comprised of these four elements. The art comes from how the author arranges the specifics of each element to craft a narrative. Booker builds upon Campbell’s work by categorizing all stories into seven basic plots. Each plot chiefly includes Campbell’s principles, but with messages and themes that are particular to their genre:

OVERCOMING THE MONSTER:

A form of evil, represented by the monster, threatens the good and must be slain to return security. The monster sometimes holds a treasure or princess (Booker 23).

RAGS TO RICHES:

A young “... ordinary, insignificant person, dismissed by everyone as of little account... suddenly steps to the center of the stage, revealed to be someone quite exceptional” (51).

THE QUEST:

A long, difficult, and dangerous journey for an incomparable reward (69). The hero is almost always accompanied by a group of supporting characters (71). The quest more than any other of the seven plots resembles Campbell’s hero’s journey most closely.

VOYAGE AND RETURN:

Similar to the quest the main character or characters travel to another strange and marvelous world. Slowly an evil emerges from which the hero is eventually forced to flee to the "...familiar world where they began." (87).

COMEDY:

As defined by Booker does not necessarily have to be humorous. Comedy as a plot has evolved, but the basic structure relies on opposing characters. One side is represented by rigidity and "...life-denying obsessions...", while the other is represented by "... life, liberation, and truth." (108). The historical evolution of this plot switches its focus from order in the world to the resolution of love. The love theme is perfectly exhibited by *The Bard*, William Shakespeare. The fundamentals of the love comedy remain that of order returned, thus resolving the story in a happy ending (114).

TRAGEDY:

The violent end of the hero who for various reasons has been lured into a "dark or forbidden" course of action (155).

REBIRTH:

The hero is overcome by some evil, falling under a "dark spell" or "...wintry state, akin to living death." They are trapped in this state until another character creates "... a miraculous act of redemption... From the depths of darkness, they are brought up into glorious light." (194).

I assert that from these simplified story elements and plots, one can create visual art that is more compelling and emotionally communicative than art which is merely formatted to show information in a clear, visually exciting way. The information covered thus far provides a framework from which to build a methodology of storytelling within graphic design. The application of the four principles of storytelling in the design process can result in the improvement of visual communication. In the next section, I will demonstrate the process designers implement to optimize their creative process.

THE MESSAGE:

What is the moral of your design? What central theme does your graphic need to communicate to the end user? These are questions that are dependent upon the project, but fundamental to the approach, form, function, and genre/style from which the designer will create their work.

THE CONFLICT:

The conflict can manifest itself in many ways, but primarily, it concerns itself with the issue being displayed within the graphic. What is the customers' pain point? Why should they choose your product? How can the information in your graphic solve their problem? Symbolically, the use of contrast, whether conceptual, compositional, or focal, is a useful way to define the forces at work in this conflict.

THE CHARACTERS:

These are the elements that should be used to connect with your audience. The characters are the interacting cast within your conflict. The viewer should identify with the hero and want him or her to emerge victorious from the conflict. Depending

on what basic plot best suits your message, this could manifest in different ways. To indicate the hero, a designer might use signs and symbols like a brand logo, a photograph of a person the consumer identifies with, or something the viewer desires. As mentioned before, the villain doesn't necessarily have to be a person, but whatever it is, it must stand in opposition to the hero's success.

THE PLOT:

The plot is the form that moves the story forward. It is chiefly determined by the format of the work. With what medium are you communicating? Why is this medium the most efficient for presenting your story graphically? After the format is determined, consider the composition or eye flow and visual hierarchy. What information needs to be seen first?

It is important to remember that a graphic designer's work must imply a beginning, middle, and end to be an actual story. For example, the question of "what happened to the hero?" may be asked. If the graphic doesn't signify a victory, then the efficacy of your product may be cast into doubt. Thus, it is quintessential for designers to imply a resolution when visually storytelling.

In the end, storytelling is an art, and after study and practice, new techniques and modes will arise. Methods and formulas can help, but will never adequately account for the emotional response that a well-communicated story can accomplish. These concepts are hard to generalize and demonstrate without specific examples. By reviewing several case studies and applying these concepts, the narrative principles become more evident.

ADIDAS

Adidas is a brand built on performance and an intimate understanding of what athletes needed, fell out of public favor in the 1980's (Gad 80). Before nearly going out of business, they found their way back into the hearts of young people. The "Voyage and Return" plot best exemplifies the transitions Adidas went through during this period. Adidas was in a place of favor among professional athletes. They supplied a majority of Olympic winning athletes with shoes from the 1950's through the 1980's (80), thereby becoming the premium athletic shoe brand. By the 80's, even though they had branched into many different sporting areas, they were not as innovative as they once were. They were now seen as an old, boring brand (81). Adidas recognized "that the only way back was to reaffirm the company's original values" (81). They fell from grace when they got away from their core message. "[T]he brand [came] back to build on the German engineering tradition of excellent equipment that helps the athlete and the everyday sports enthusiast perform better" (83). This return to the original world with new knowledge, a moral of learning from past mistakes,

is part of what draws us to their brand story "The success lay[s] in authenticity" (Gad 82). Consumers believe in a brand that has experienced the same mistakes they have. That is why the "Voyage and Return" narrative is a powerful one that can be used to explain Adidas's trajectory and how users can relate to it. Each person has endeavored to do something new, and when it doesn't work, they are grateful for what they had before, returning to make the necessary changes and being authentic to the original life they once had. This narrative was physically on display when Adidas began reproducing retro products. By showing loyalty to the original look, design, and feel, the brand physically returned to its roots.

Many brands can use this strategy in their graphic design, particularly with their logo design. A return to the original logo can signify a return to the core values of a company. This may be best exemplified by the story of “New Coke.” In 1985, The Coca-Cola Company released “New Coke,” changing the recipe and flavor of Coca-Cola for the first time in ninety-nine years (Coca-Cola Company). With this release, they updated their logo to a more modern slab serif. This was a risky move for the beloved brand, and was met with strong public disapproval. After only a few months, the brand returned to the original formula, re-branding itself as “Coca-Cola Classic” and returning to the previous logo with the addition of the word “Classic.” This voyage into a new type of cola created a public outcry that made the company return to the original concept. Not only that, but they were successfully able to strengthen brand loyalty in the process. They also demonstrated the returning concept with their logo. Because their clients could immediately recognize the difference between the new and old looks, The Coca-Cola Company was able to denote their story through their graphic design. As demonstrated in this example, the visual elements of a brand can strongly reinforce the brand story marketers are trying to tell.

IKEA

Another brand example of “The Seven Basic Plots” is IKEA. They represent the “Rags to Riches” storyline. Starting humbly in Sweden, to becoming a multi-billion dollar corporation, IKEA is internationally acclaimed as a price-conscious, affordable, and well-designed company. “IKEA aims to give customers good quality, highly practical, contemporary design at affordable prices” (Gad

29). Their dedication to a democratic marketplace is shown throughout the design of their stores, which are designed to “make shopping easy, entertaining and informative” (31). It is clear in most aspects of their experience design they are giving their customers “... a sound profile. It shows that [their customers] appreciate value for money and like good contemporary design” (30). This attention to price and ease of use carries through their corporate culture as well. These “values are communicated within, as well as outside, the company by way of clear symbols and symbolic actions. (On every folder or printed matter used by the company its value is printed. This reminds people of the fact that

everything has a cost.) Important words, such as cost consciousness, simplicity, and enthusiasm, are continually emphasized” (32). These internal business designs are consistently used to reinforce the Rags to Riches storyline. But it is important to remember that these stories have to be determined early and intentionally followed after they have been implemented. Although a storyline may be realized after the fact, using it as a marketing strategy takes a concentrated effort. Since brand design and guidelines tend to be strictly reinforced, graphics make a perfect medium to continually reinforce the narrative a brand is trying to convey to their customers

STARBUCKS

The last example of a brand utilizing storytelling is Starbucks. From the outset, Starbucks founder Howard Schultz intended for his company to be a “third space,” which is a place where people could come hang out, meet with friends, or work alone (NPR). When he started the company, most coffee shops in the United States were not a sit-down affair, nor was the coffee particularly well made. Schultz endeavored to change this tradition with

his brand. “Values, which constitute the base of a culture, are instilled from the very beginning, and the company’s guiding principles have to be implanted early so that they function as guidance... There needs to be authenticity in every aspect of the business. Starbucks has been created as a company with a competitive advantage based on its values and guiding principles” (Gad 67). That is to say, the need to implement guiding brand prin-

ciples and stories from the outset is imperative. Although Starbucks did not give themselves a brand story, the basic plot that typifies them is The Quest. Part of Starbucks' mission statements is to "develop enthusiastically satisfied customers all of the time" (68). The only way Starbucks has succeeded is by educating and convincing their customers that a high-quality coffee and a third space is the what they need. Starbucks did this by "creating" customers who shared the vision, wanted to go on the same journey, and receive the same rewards. Starbucks convinced its clients that they are on a journey to discover quality coffee, an inviting space, friends, and community, which is only accessible within their stores. This brand loyalty came "by educating one customer at a time. ...[They are] the true ambassadors of the coffee and for the brand;

[who] in turn connect Starbucks to the customers" (70). This comradeship built around the brand can be seen in the status symbol Starbucks has become. The white cup with a green label is almost ubiquitous in the United States. If you hold a Starbucks cup, you are part of a community that enjoys coffee and the third space that they provide.

These observations lead me to the conclusion that as graphic design is a form of communication, it may be used to tell stories. The benefit of communicating in stories is well documented, but has not extensively been applied to visual communication. Despite its importance and because of the lack of consistency in the research of this topic, there is a need for a system to improve the use of storytelling within design and this thesis aims to meet that need.

VISUAL SOLUTION

The result of this thesis will be a methodology whereby the application of narrative principles are definitively connected to visual communicative elements. Each portion of the deliverables will demonstrate one or more storytelling principles that can be used as a case study for my

thesis. The marketing messaging will determine the style and content of the story, while the brand identity will be used to explain the story elements in graphic design. I will demonstrate storytelling principles in graphic design by creating the following assets.

BRAND IDENTITY:

- Logo, tagline, brand vision, and brand style guide

COLLATERAL MATERIAL:

- Branded website that will outline the design processes and storytelling principles in easily understood and precise language
- Branded social media profiles
- Animated logo motion graphic for promotional use
- Promotional video demonstrating basic storytelling techniques and brand identity

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Chapter 3:

Visual Process

The result of this thesis is to create a methodology whereby graphic design is used to communicate a story. The design is always meant to reinforce the message that initially motivated it. Whether the design is a brand identity or a billboard for an event, determining the motivation is an essential step. The motivation is communicated through the elements of the story, and by correlating them to your design, it creates purposeful, meaningful, and emotional communication.

Use the following questions to unify the message with the visuals.

- 1.** Determine the four elements of your story:
 - A.** Message: The central purpose of expressing your graphic.
 - i.** What central theme do your graphics need to communicate to the end user?
 - ii.** What is the moral of your design?
 - iii.** How should your product make your viewer feel?
 - B.** Conflict: The central disturbance whereby you can communicate a solution to your audience.
 - i.** The conflict can manifest itself in many ways, but primarily it concerns itself with the issue being displayed within the graphic.
 - ii.** What is the customers' pain point?
 - iii.** Why should they choose your product?
 - iv.** How can the information in your graphic solve their problem?

C. Characters: The interacting cast within your conflict.

i. How do these elements connect with your audience?

a. The viewer should identify with the hero and want them to emerge victorious from the conflict.

b. Depending on what basic plot best suits your message, this could manifest in different ways.

ii. Who is the hero?

a. To indicate the hero a designer might use signs and symbols like a brand logo, a photograph of a person the consumer identifies with, or something the viewer desires.

iii. Who is the villain?

a. The villain does not have to be a person. Rather, the villain could be an obstacle of some sort, standing opposed to the hero's success.

b. Symbolically, the use of contrast, whether conceptual, compositional, or focal, is a definitive way to define the forces at work in this conflict.

D. Plot: The form that moves the story forward

i. What medium are you communicating?

ii. Why is this medium the most efficient for visually presenting your story?

a. Are there alternative options?

b. Could collateral material reinforce the brand story?

iii. How can this medium be used most effectively to communicate your story visually?

- a.** Take eye flow into consideration when designing for sequential information.
- 2.** Use the formal elements of design to reinforce the brand story particularly when designing a logo or using abstraction.

A. Line

- i.** Lines can convey emotion and symbolic meaning (Lauer and Pentak 129). Horizontal lines, for example, are stable, while diagonal or zigzagging lines are nervous and disorienting. The use of line can express many symbolic ideas.

B. Shape

- i.** Like line, shape also provides symbolic meaning. Curvilinear objects tend to feel soft, welcoming, and organic while rectilinear shapes are hard, simple, and functional.

C. Pattern & Texture

- i.** Lauer and Pentak define pattern as the “... repetition of a design motif” (180). Pattern and texture are generally background elements but can create a context for the other design elements. Texture arouses the sensation of touch through only visual means (Lauer and Pentak 184). These elements provide visual interest while also offering the ability to transport the viewer into a different context.

D. Color

- i.** It is well established that color theory has deep psychological and cultural implications. The effects of color are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, there are many resources available to more thoroughly understand color theory.

For the final deliverables of this thesis, a complete identity was created following the method outlined above. My brand was meant to not only exemplify the method but also educate others in the use of storytelling through graphics. I decided to create a marketing agency with the purpose of telling stories and educating people in the use of storytelling through graphic design.

To determine the message, I first examined myself. I never believed in own voice. I always liked making things and thinking deeply about subjects, but usually thought too little of myself to follow through on any single idea. I looked at entrepreneurs with a mixture of awe and disdain. How could someone be so confident in their own ideas? They must be peddling rubbish as valuable. Because I did not believe in myself, certainly they must be deceiving themselves and others with their businesses and products, but something unexpected happened. When I personally met people who genuinely believed in their services and products, I also started to believe in myself. The thoughts that said to me, "You do not have anything worthwhile to share," began to dissipate. The

moral of my brand is that in order to speak, you must first listen and observe. You must learn, intuit, and take a studied approach to tell stories. I had to discover belief in my own story to share it, and I can help you find that belief.

The conflict is an inability to communicate with those you need to reach. Why are they not listening to you? How do you overcome the noise? I did not believe I had anything to say. I was too afraid that no one would listen, so I would not even try. Now that I have realized my voice, I want to share my knowledge with everyone around me.

To determine the characters in my story, one must first define the plot. The "rags to riches" basic plot best represents my narrative. I was an afraid, unconfident, and timid person that found my voice and started using it for good. My self-doubt and fear of rejection is my villain. The hero is a confident brand that has overcome self-doubt and fear.

Finally, the form that this story will be mediated through is a branding package. From logo to photography, all elements should reinforce the brand story.

Having determined these elements, my brand will deal in communication through storytelling and graphic design.

NAME BRAINSTORM

- Joey Wright Design
- Pinnacle
- Pinpoint
- Storyful
- Narrative ideation
- Narratology
- Story vision
- Perpetual motion
- Nagasaki
- More info please
- Tell your damn tale
- Tall tale
- Situational story
- Dragon design
- Dark and stormy night
- Dracula
- Fireside
- Philosophy
- Psychological story
- Depressive delusion
- Dank design
- Drafty design
- Delusional design
- Don't stop
- Narrational
- Drive by design
- Delectable
- Nautical
- Novel
- Design at Joe's
- Astronomical
- Direct
- Direct from the horses mouth
- Mounting discipline
- A trail
- Storyboard
- Story ward
- Dogbilled platypus
- Hipster crunch
- Mustached madness
- Magic mustache
- Story makers
- Story design
- The wright draft
- Wright draw
- Fantastic
- Dogmatic
- Joseph colors
- Color Coat
- Brother color
- Builder
- Delinquent
- Ritual
- Ancient
- Pathways
- Storion
- Ritual ways
- Primal
- Ancient
- Ancient Path
- Storylithic
- Primal path
- Primal way
- Soul spark
- Spectral graphics
- Purple planet
- St Andrew
- Bard
- Minstrel
- Minstrel maker
- Story Mation

OLD WORDS & OTHER LANGUAGES

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Story: | foretelling | Word: |
| • Maltese: storja | • Saga: | • Welsh: gair |
| Tale: | • Uzbek: dastani | • Danish: ord |
| • Lithuanian: toks | Myth: | • Swahili: neno |
| • Swahili: kama | • French: mythe | • Danish – Ord |
| • Yoruba: iru | • Record: | • Zulu – Igama |
| Narrative: | • Bosnian: zapis | |
| • Norwegian: | | |

Unfortunately, many of my favorite names were already taken. So, instead of using a traditional “.com” URL I began looking for alternative top-level domains to broaden my options, while at the same time keeping a short and simple business name. Eventually, I discovered the “.haus” top-level domain from www.hover.com. This seemed like a perfect opportunity to choose a simple and uncomplicated prefix. The most straightforward choice is often the best one. Therefore, I started trying names related to storytelling and my core message. Story.haus, storytelling.haus, narrative.haus, etc. Finally, I settled on listen.haus. These two words firmly define the brand and provide a firm base to build upon.

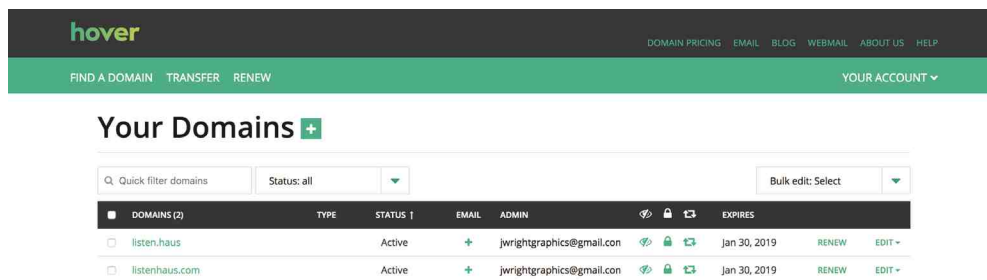


Fig 1. Domains URL's purchased from www.hover.com for use in the Listen Haus website. Screenshot by author.

LOGO DEVELOPMENT:

As I continued to work out my brand message, I looked to the people and the services that inspired me the most. Listen Haus is my attempt to emulate those that have inspired me, it is my expression of authentic

work. When I began to listen to others, I was able to determine what I had to say. I want to help people give an authentic voice to their brands with Listen Haus.

Fig. 2
 Various type treatments
 for Listen Haus logo
 development. Fonts
 used: Futura, Lazy
 Ride, Pier Sans, Ryman
 Eco, and Victor

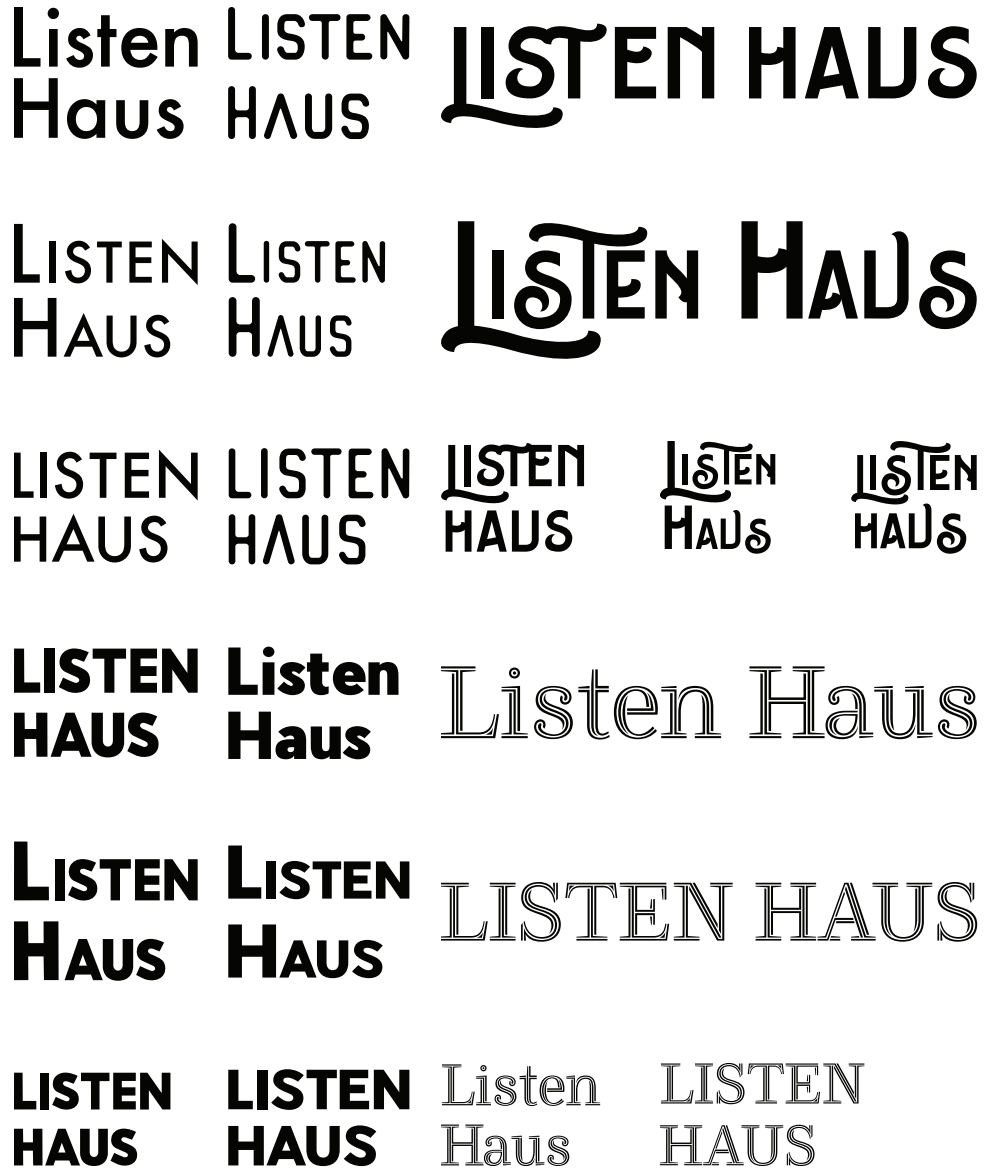


Fig. 3.
 British Library,
 Image taken from
 page 187 of
 'The Half Hour Library
 of Travel, Nature and
 Science for young
 readers'; No known
 copyright restrictions,
 flic.kr/p/hYHdP7

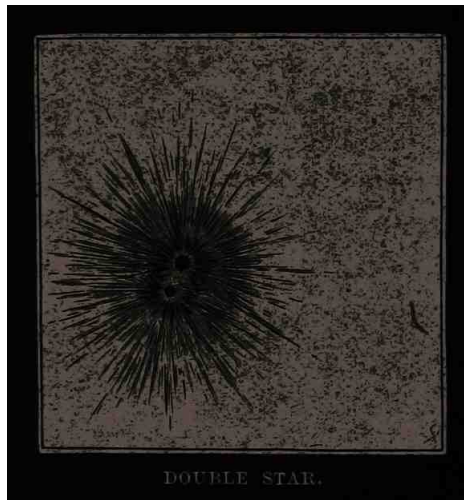


Fig. 4.
 British Library,
 Image taken from
 page 49 of 'La Terra,
 trattato popolare di
 geografia universale
 per G. Marinelli ed altri
 scienziati italiani, etc.
 [With illustrations and
 maps.]; No known
 copyright restrictions,
 flic.kr/p/icS5dH



Stories are like outer space. They are vast and filled with marvelous wonders to be explored. I wanted my brand imagery to reflect this feeling. While looking through countless images of space, a specific aesthetic started to reveal itself. I was continually drawn toward old space illustrations from encyclopedias and textbooks. The faded familiar colors and words spoke to me. They expressed a simultaneous feeling of understanding and discovery. Stories

are scientifically observable yet still mystical and beautiful. I found the space metaphor fitting and therefore incorporated it into my brand identity.

From these royalty free images found in the British Library Collection on Flickr, several logo variations were created.

These basic vector illustrations gave me a basis to begin developing the typography of the logo (Fig. 7-8).

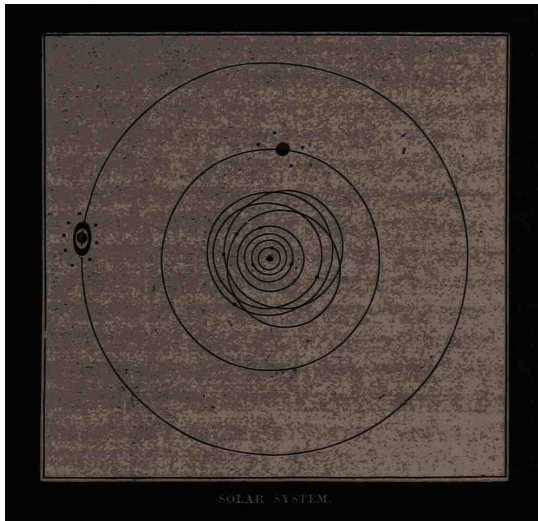


Fig. 5. British Library, Image taken from page 166 of 'The Half Hour Library of Travel, Nature and Science for young readers', No known copyright restrictions, flic.kr/p/idvsYZ

Fig. 6. British Library, Image taken from page 86 of 'Outlines of the Earth's History: a popular study in physiography ... Illustrated, etc', No known copyright restrictions, flic.kr/p/icSUEG

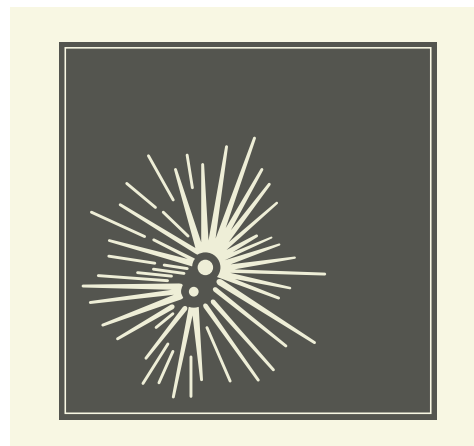
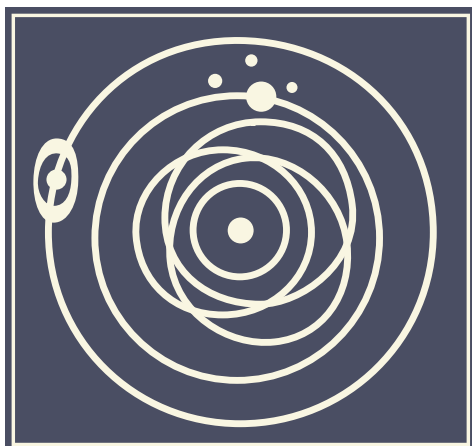


Fig. 7 Joseph Wright, Vector illustration adapted from figure 5.

Fig. 8 Joseph Wright, Vector illustration adapted from figure 3.

Fig. 9
Joseph Wright, *Listen
Haus logo iterations*,
fonts used: Bauhaus Pro
Light, Bauhaus Medium,
and Bauhaus Pro Heavy



Fig. 10
Joseph Wright, *Three
More Developed Logo
Options*, Font used:
Bauhaus Pro Medium



From the previously shown typographic designs, I needed a badge or square logo shape to enclose the logo. I was intrigued by combining both a circle within a square and ultimately found a way to do so. I also found the deep blue of the encyclopedia more compelling than only the eggshell white and grey shown in figure 8 or 9.

In the midst of generating the type, I started looking into the history of The Bauhaus movement. This led me to their famous Bauhaus typeface. The font perfectly fits the aesthetic and philosophy of Listen Haus. With very little modi-

fication, Bauhaus Pro was the clear type choice for this project. After purchasing the font, I began experimenting with various type treatments displayed in figure 9.

Figure 10 represents the last round of edits before the final logo. Visually it represents the mission of storytelling, is bold enough to stand alone but simple enough for most design situations. The lower case is inviting and readable. By combining the circular letter forms and solar system with the geometric stability of the square, I felt I had a solid place from which to move forward.

PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

I returned to my basic plot to communicate the central theme of my story. The rags to riches storyline takes a character that appears of little consequence and reveals the individual to be a person of great importance. The quintessential example of this plot is that of the ugly duckling. With this in mind, I started writing about myself and the journey I have taken to speak strongly about my ideas and my drive to communicate stories. Eventually, I distilled my story into this script for the voice over of my promotional video.

“The thing I love about stories is the connection. You can understand how someone else feels and in a way their story becomes part of your own.

“Stories are important because they teach us how to live our lives. What helps and what hurts. How to love and protect. To experience pain and empathy for those that suffer.

“In my story, I was the odd kid out. Always more interested in art and culture than sports. I usually felt outside of the group even with my closest friends. I never believed in my abilities. I was the musician, the artist, the sensitive one. So, I would listen, hear what my friends were feeling and tried to understand them.

“When I started designing I didn’t know what I was doing. Why am I making this stuff? What’s the point? I don’t want to make junk; I want to make art and move people. Stories have always moved me. I want to make stories.

“Listen Haus is that place. The place to tell your story. To communicate who you really are so that others can understand.

“Thanks for listening to me. Can I listen to you?”

Fig. 11
Listen Haus promotional video, directed and edited by Joseph Wright, cinematography by Joshua Wright, Screenshot by author.



The promotional video's main purpose is to introduce the personal aspects of my brand by putting a face to the business and humanizing the relationship between business and client. Through expressing my fears and joys, the viewer is compelled to identify with me as a person rather than only a business or service. Everyone can relate to feeling left out, alone, or awkward, and as I share my struggle, I bring the viewer into the bonding experience of overcoming these challenges. I am not only revealing my insecurities, but also sharing my knowledge and asking to participate in the communal experience of becoming a confident individual. If my story can be transformative, then perhaps I can offer my insight to help others grow as well.



Fig. 12
Listen Haus promotional video, directed and edited by Joseph Wright, cinematography by Joshua Wright, Screenshot by author.



Fig. 13
Listen Haus promotional video editing process with Adobe® Premiere® Pro CC 2018 version 12.0.0 (Build 224), directed and edited by Joseph Wright, cinematography by Joshua Wright, Screenshot by author.

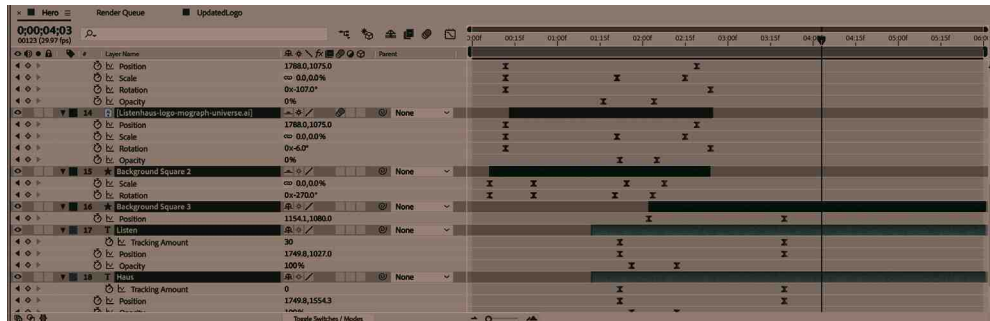
MOTION GRAPHIC

I wanted to create an animated logo reveal for promotional video material. The collateral material of my design lent itself entirely in the development of the animation. I was inspired by depictions of the universe expanding from a black void and swirling stars as the final text is revealed. Like great ideas, good stories seem to appear out of thin air. As your brain generates these ideas, sometimes you do not know where they are going until their final shape is formed. Similarly, my animation is a quick burst of movement and color that slowly settles on the established logo. It implies an act of inspiration and creation, reflecting the mission of Listen Haus to communicate stories in every aspect of the design process.

Fig. 14
Listen Haus promotional motion graphic process using Adobe® After Effects® CC 2018 version 15.0.0 (Build 180), Screenshot by author.



Fig. 15
Listen Haus promotional motion graphic process key frame detail image using Adobe® After Effects® CC 2018 version 15.0.0 (Build 180), Screenshot by author.



SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to creating an animated logo, multiple social media platforms were set up for Listen Haus. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Ello now share Listen Haus' information, blogs, and imagery. Although not actively used at this time, I plan to continue sharing new projects and knowledge as Listen Haus grows and develops. By engaging viewers in cross-medial narrative, connection with my audience can grow.

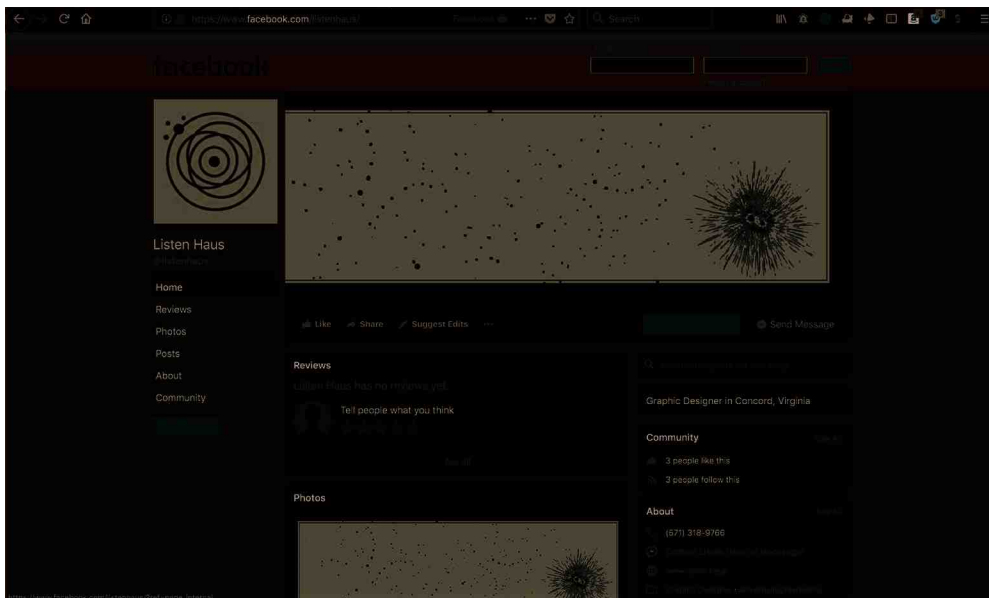


Fig. 16
Listen Haus' Facebook
social media page
www.facebook.com/listenhaus,
Screenshot by author.

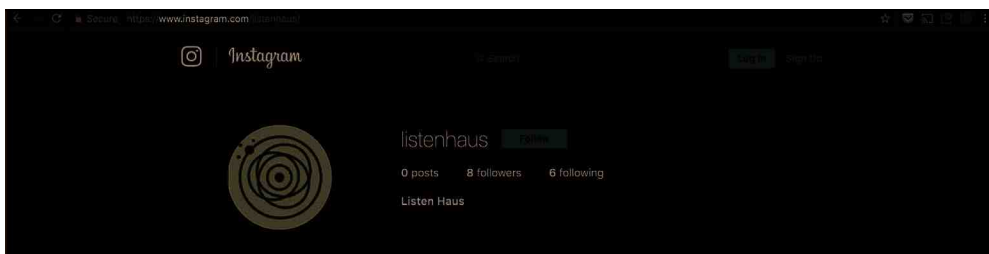


Fig. 17
Listen Haus' Instagram
social media page
www.instagram.com/listenhaus,
Screenshot by author.

Fig. 18
Listen Haus' twitter
social media page www.
twitter.com/listenhaus,
Screenshot by author.

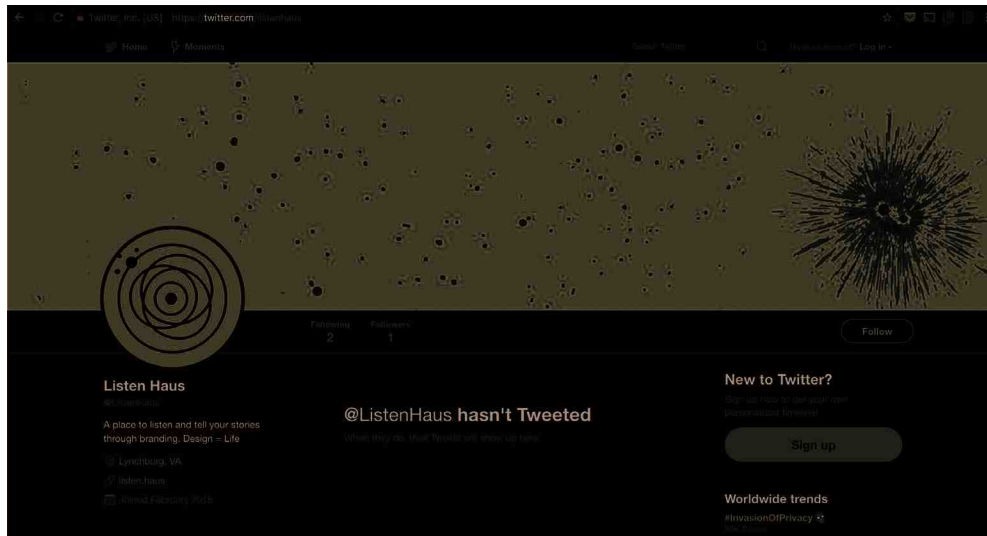


Fig. 19
Listen Haus' ELO social
media page www.
ello.co/listenhaus,
Screenshot by author.



WEBSITE

The purpose of the website is to communicate the storytelling message, gather all my visuals, and present my research in an easily understood and practical way. The content management system (CMS) of WordPress provided the perfect platform for all of my needs (Fig 20). This CMS efficiently organizes blogs, portfolios, and imagery. Although faster and easier than coding a site by hand, this process still required a significant amount of customization and problem solving.

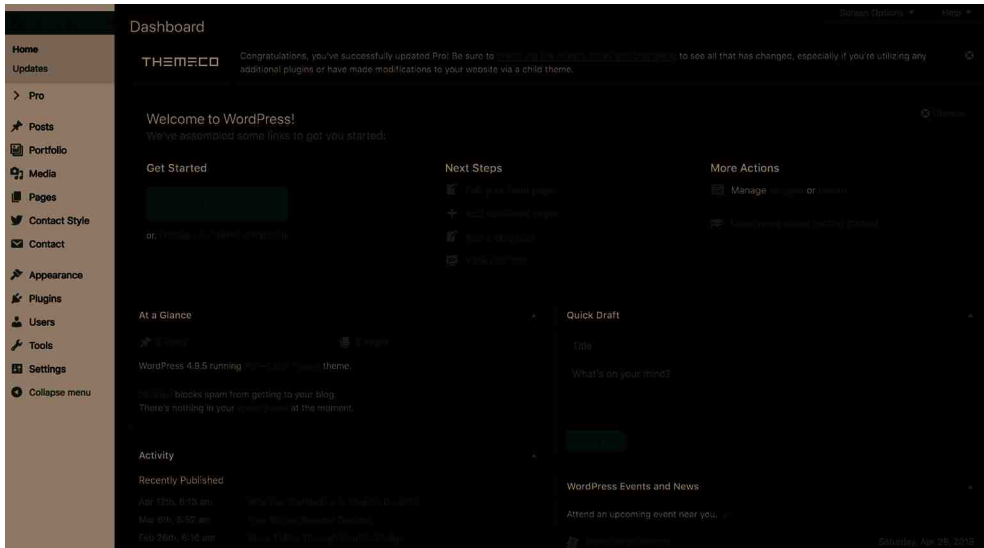


Fig. 20 Listen Haus WordPress Dashboard page. This back end is where all visual alterations to website are accomplished. Screenshot by author.

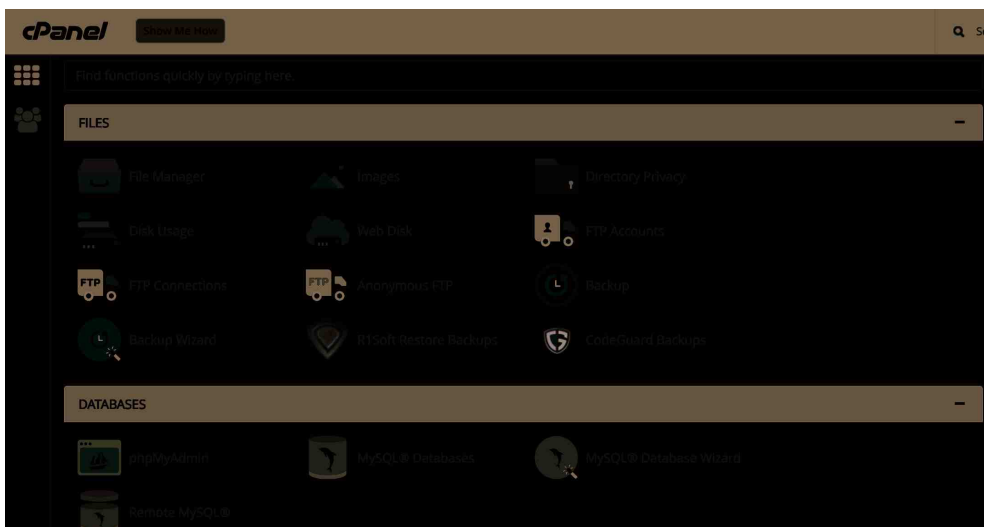


Fig. 21 Listen Haus cPanel page. This is a standard web host control panel where users, email, files, and all management of the website occurs. Screenshot by author.

Fig. 22
cPanel backend
WordPress script
installer shortcut.
Screenshot by author.

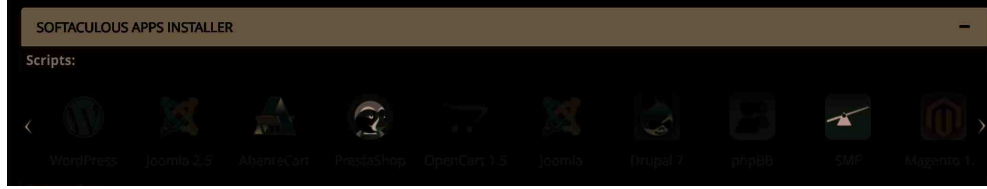
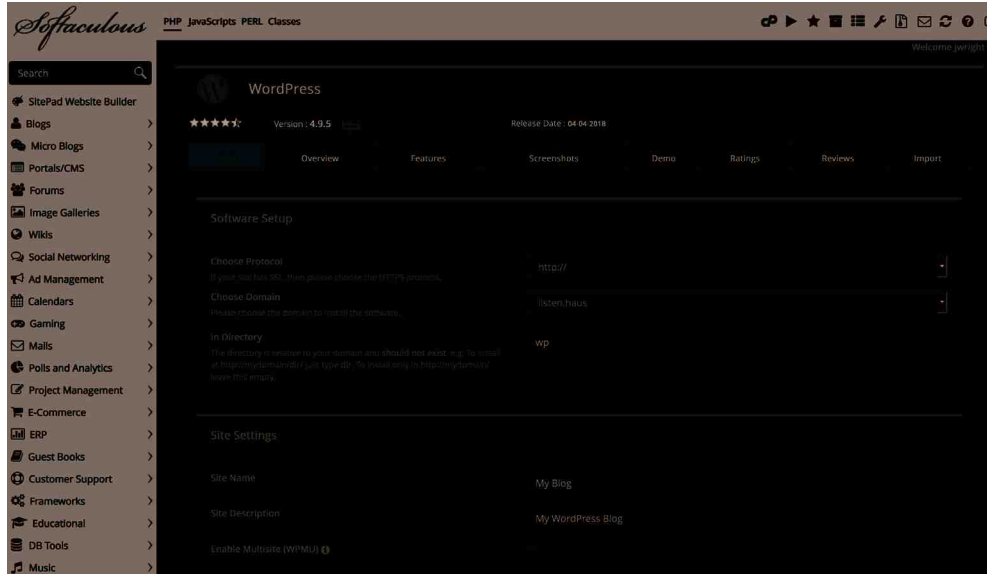


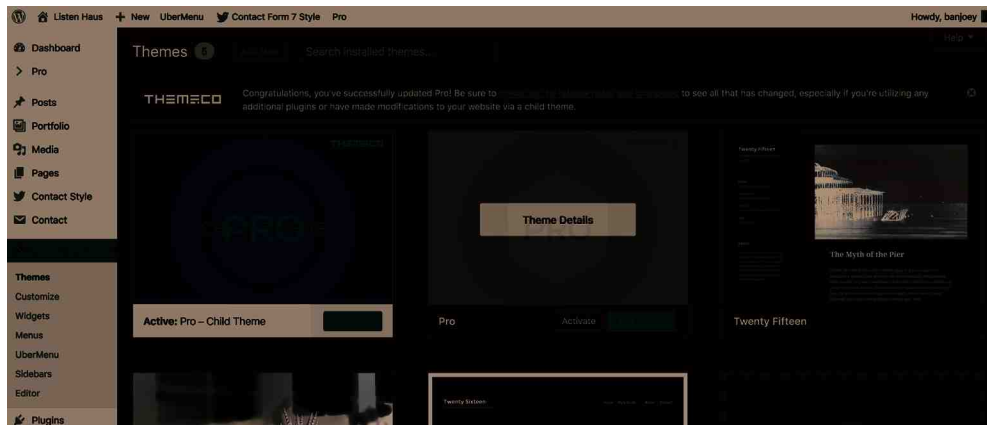
Fig. 23
Softaculous WordPress
installation script page.
Screenshot by author.



I installed WordPress through cPanel (Fig. 21-23), which is a standard control system for web hosting management.

Wordpress primarily manages content but still requires a visual theme to be installed (Fig. 24). Many of these themes are free, but I purchased X Pro from www.theme.co. This theme allowed me more visual options with a more professional user interface.

Fig. 24
WordPress dashboard
theme installation
page. Themeco's Pro
and Child Theme have
been installed here.
Screenshot by author.



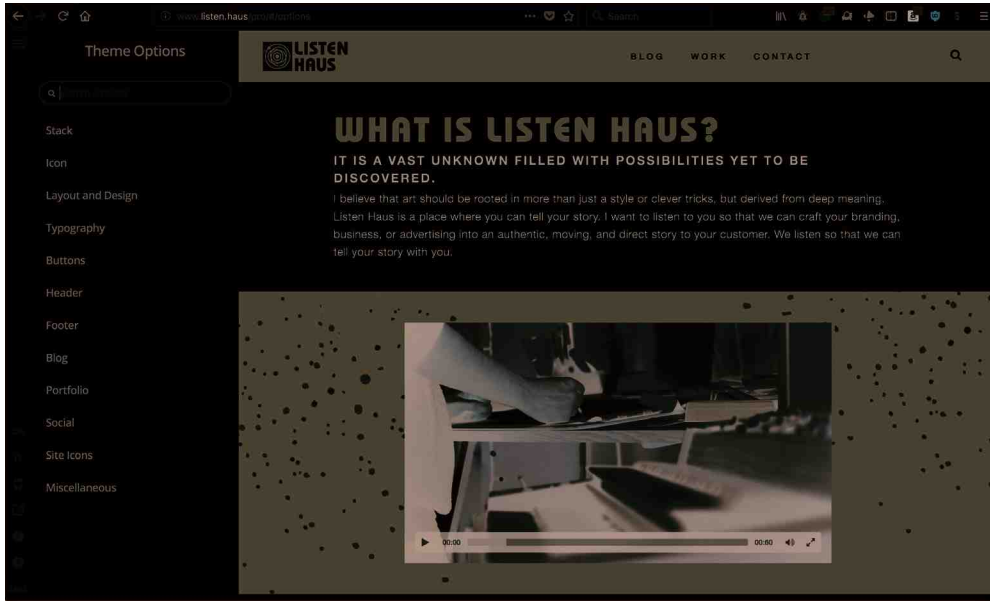


Fig 25
Themeco's X Pro WordPress theme options page. This page is where major alterations to the website may be made, such as layout, color, and typography. Screenshot by author.

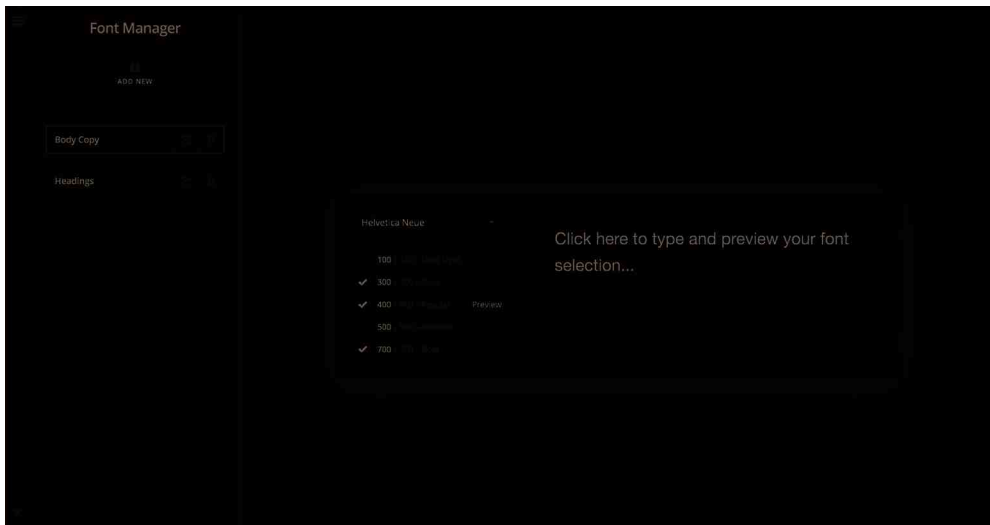


Fig 26
Themeco's X Pro WordPress theme typography options page. Standard web fonts can be installed here. Screenshot by author.

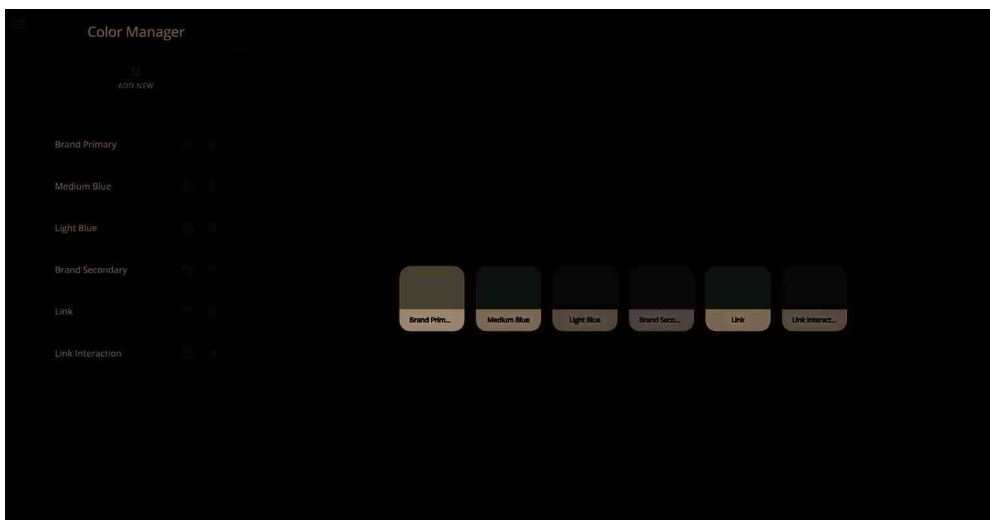


Fig 27
Themeco's X Pro WordPress theme color manager page. Site wide color rules can be defined here. Screenshot by author.

Fig. 28.
Themeco's X Pro
page layout menu.
Screenshot by author.

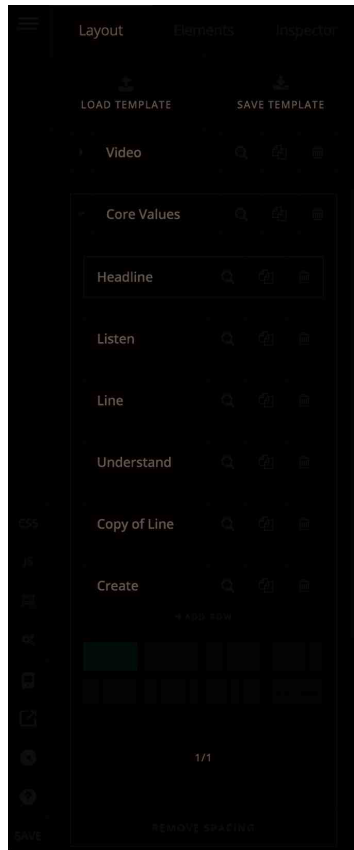


Fig. 29
Themeco's X
Pro Element
Inspector menu.
Screenshot by author.

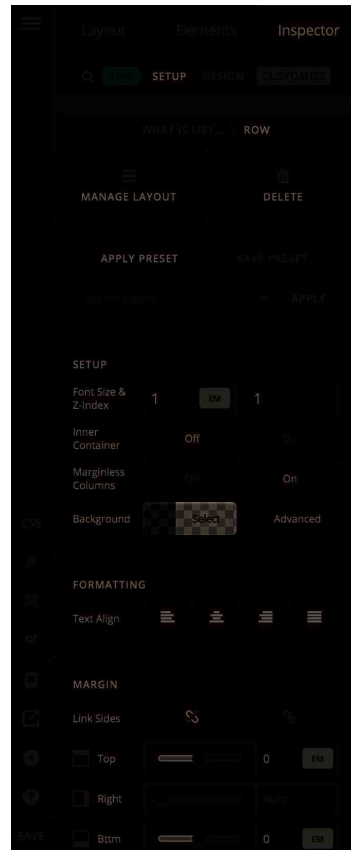


Fig. 30.
Themeco's X Pro
Element Inspector
custom code menu.
Screenshot by author.

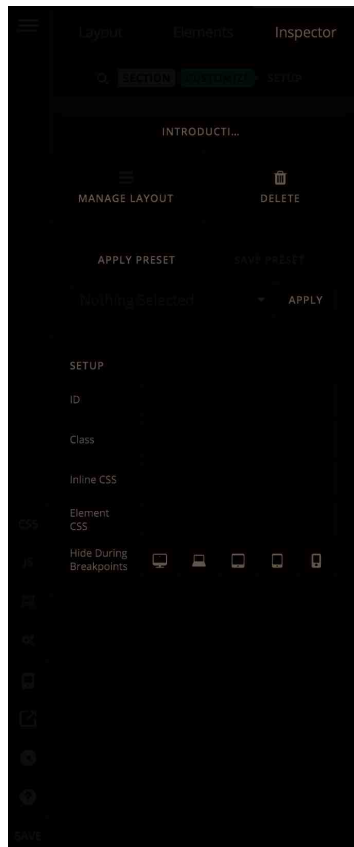
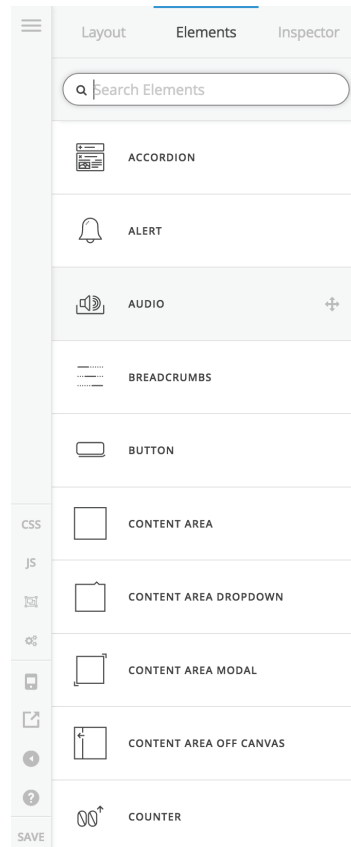


Fig. 31
Themeco's X Pro
Element menu.
Screenshot by author.



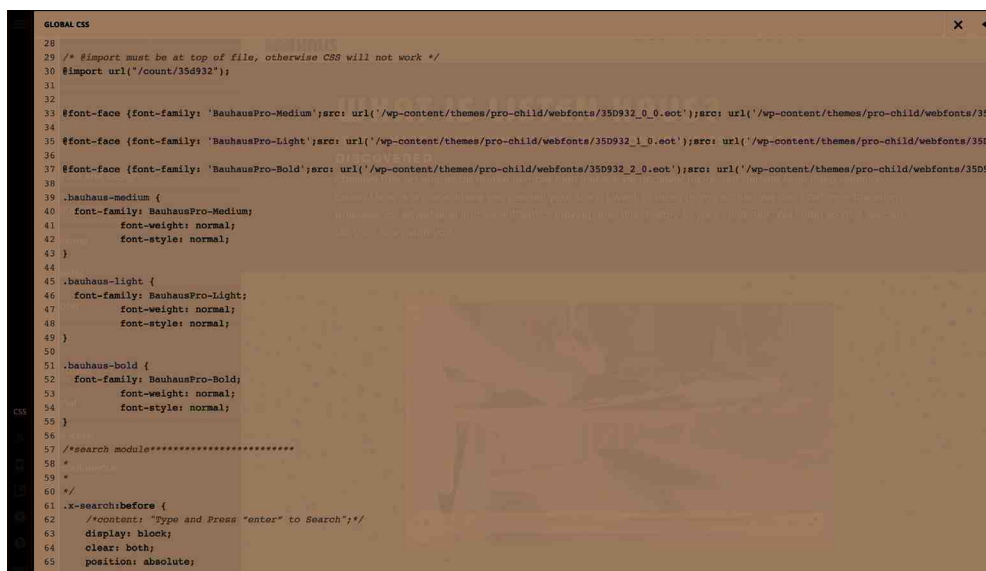
The X theme is a multipurpose visual editor that allows for extreme customization within the WordPress CMS (Fig. 25-31). After installing, I was then able to build my content. By designing the entire site on this framework, I utilized my brand guidelines for color and typography (Fig. 26-27).

The typography proved particularly difficult because there was no way to easily import the web fonts for Bauhaus Pro. I had to use custom CSS within the Global CSS file depicted in figure 32. After it was properly linked with unique CSS classes, they were easily applied to the remainder of the elements within the theme.

Other custom code was needed to be added to correct design issues on the website. For instance, hiding titles

and imagery on the portfolio page proved to be difficult to implement. Using Themeco's customer support forum, I was able to combine answers and my own knowledge of CSS to hide unwanted visual elements.

The website is meant to demonstrate and teach its visitors how to use storytelling through their visual communication. It is, of course, possible to have a successful brand without reinforcing values through design, but it is not recommended. Trends come and go and brands will change their logos. By providing designers and visual communicators a tangible example of how to consistently present a brand message with their designs, I argue that the message will be stronger and endure the judgment of time.



```
GLOBAL CSS
28
29 /* #import must be at top of file, otherwise CSS will not work */
30 #import url("/count/35d932");
31
32
33 #font-face {font-family: 'BauhausPro-Medium';src: url('/wp-content/themes/pro-child/webfonts/35D932_0_0.eot');src: url('/wp-content/themes/pro-child/webfonts/35D932_0_0.woff');src: url('/wp-content/themes/pro-child/webfonts/35D932_0_0.woff2');}
34
35 #font-face {font-family: 'BauhausPro-Light';src: url('/wp-content/themes/pro-child/webfonts/35D932_1_0.eot');src: url('/wp-content/themes/pro-child/webfonts/35D932_1_0.woff');src: url('/wp-content/themes/pro-child/webfonts/35D932_1_0.woff2');}
36
37 #font-face {font-family: 'BauhausPro-Bold';src: url('/wp-content/themes/pro-child/webfonts/35D932_2_0.eot');src: url('/wp-content/themes/pro-child/webfonts/35D932_2_0.woff');src: url('/wp-content/themes/pro-child/webfonts/35D932_2_0.woff2');}
38
39 .bauhaus-medium {
40   font-family: BauhausPro-Medium;
41   font-weight: normal;
42   font-style: normal;
43 }
44
45 .bauhaus-light {
46   font-family: BauhausPro-Light;
47   font-weight: normal;
48   font-style: normal;
49 }
50
51 .bauhaus-bold {
52   font-family: BauhausPro-Bold;
53   font-weight: normal;
54   font-style: normal;
55 }
56
57 /*search module*****
58 *
59 *
60 */
61 .x-search:before {
62   /<content: "Type and Press "enter" to Search";*/
63   display: block;
64   clear: both;
65   position: absolute;
66   font-size: 15px;
```

Fig. 32. Themeco's X Pro Global CSS page. This is where all custom code was inserted to make changes that were not prebuilt or supported in the template options. Significant changes including hiding page titles and altering the template layout were done with custom CSS. Screenshot by author.

VISUAL SOLUTION

L

TION

Chapter 4:

Visual Solution

By utilizing the method in Chapter 3, my final brand identity was created.

BRAND MESSAGE

Art should be created from deep meaning. Listen Haus is a place where you can tell your story.

I want to listen to you so that we can craft your branding, business, or advertising into an authentic, moving, and direct story to your customer. We listen so that we can tell your story with you.

OUR NAME

The “Haus” is a reference to the German Bauhaus movement, which was a group that went above and beyond their time to create hand-crafted art and design for a purpose. They studied visual techniques and form so that their products would be appealing, functional, and meaningful.

Together we have a home where you can comfortably and honestly express yourself so that we all deeply understand each other.

The significance of space imagery to Listen Haus is the exploration of the unknown. When you set out to tell your story, you do not know where you are going or what you are going to find. It is an adventure and a bit scary. But it is also something that you can learn about, something to study and understand. It is something you want to share with others. Your discoveries need to be shared! Your story is a vast unknown filled with possibilities yet to be discovered. Let’s take a journey together and see where we end up.

STORYTELLING & GRAPHIC DESIGN

Graphic design can be more than just logos and branding. The principles that under-gird the construction of exceptional stories can be applied to other forms of communication, including visual mediums like graphic design.

Studies show that storytelling communicates more effectively than simply presenting information alone.

What makes a great story, and why does it emotionally move a person? Why not use the same principles that emotionally connect a person to a story in graphic design?

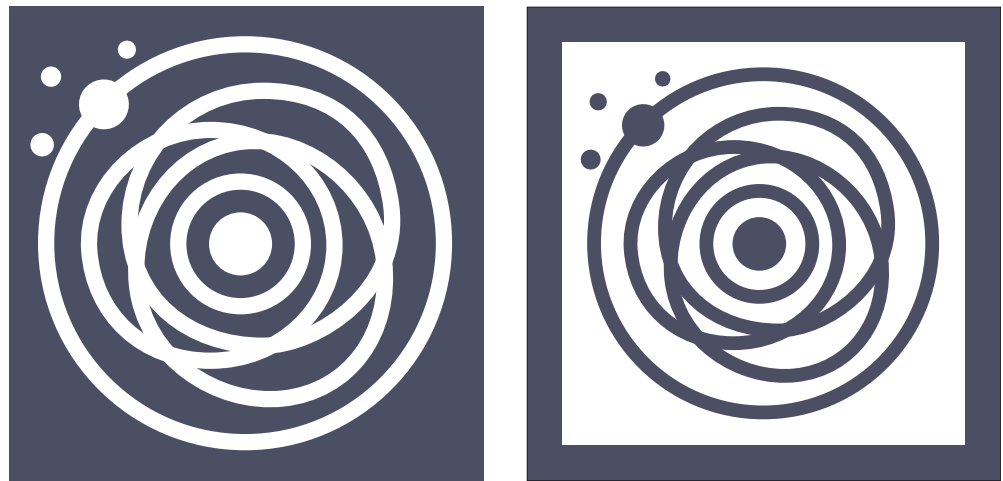
Storytelling principles prove useful to the field of graphic design by allowing users to connect more deeply with the media they are consuming.

Listen Haus provides practical strategies to improve the discipline of graphic design by leveraging the principles of good storytelling and implementing them to create memorable and emotional graphics.

The most important aspect of telling a story is to connect on an emotional level. This emotional connection is what engages an audience in participation and co-creation. Because of this engagement, there is a level of understanding and empathy generated through these emotional connections. The power of story is evident in this regard. Communication that makes an impact will overcome straightforward information every time.

FINAL LOGO

Fig. 33
Listen Haus Final
Vector Logos.
Font Used: Bauhaus
Pro Bold.



Inspired by our galaxy and the universe beyond, the final logo represents the unknown yet to be explored. It is a total mystery filled with undiscovered beauty. It is a never-ending expanse of uncharted territory to be plotted and shared, yet also represents the eternal and unchanging aspects beyond humanity.

Based on the Bauhaus design movement, the font represents the best parts of humanity striving to work together to create something beautiful and functional. We are looking to the past to inspire our present. Blending the beauty of the old with the endless possibilities of our future.

Versatile, simple, and functional it can be used in a variety of situations while remaining simple and iconic.

COLORS

Our color palette is inspired by old space and naval illustrations. The colors are meant to feel worn in and well-used. Familiar and expansive, these faded colors from old textbooks provide subtle tonal shifts when on light or dark backgrounds.

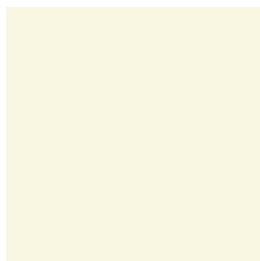
PRIMARY



C 73
M 79
Y 42
K 25

R 76
G 79
B 100

#4C4F64



C 2
M 2
Y 12
K 0

R 249
G 244
B 225

#F8F3E0

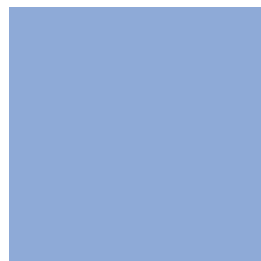
SECONDARY



C 55
M 40
Y 18
K 0

R 125
G 140
B 173

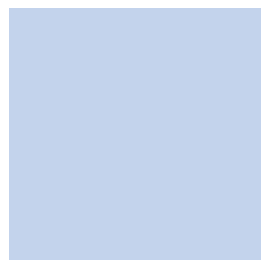
#7D8CAC



C 43
M 26
Y 0
K 0

R 143
G 169
B 216

#8EA9D7



C 21
M 11
Y 0
K 0

R 196
G 211
B 237

#C4D3EC

Fig. 34
Listen Haus color palette
used for logo and all
collateral elements.

TYPOGRAPHY

Fig. 35
Listen Huas
Typography options
for written content.

BAUHAUS PRO FAMILY

Bauhaus Pro Bold

Bauhaus Pro Medium

Bauhaus Pro Light

HELVETICA NEUE FAMILY

Helvetica Neue Bold

Helvetica Neue Medium

Helvetica Neue Regular

Helvetica Neue Light

Equal parts beautiful and functional, the typography choices reflect key historical and ideological beliefs we stand with. These fonts represent the unification of hand craftsmanship in an industrialized world and the scientific precision it takes to communicate clearly.

The fundamental belief of the Bauhaus was that fine art and craftsmanship could be used to solve problems in an industrialized world. Just as The Bauhaus was facing an industrial world, we also face an intricate web of connectivity and media. We aim to unite story with design just like The Bauhaus united craft with functionality.

Pairing Bauhaus with Helvetica connects organic artistry with precise and clear communication. The simplicity and directness Helvetica provides a stable base for which Bauhaus can contrast. Both fonts work together to express the philosophy of Listen Haus.

PHOTOGRAPHY & ILLUSTRATIONS

Every story is different and requires a unique approach. The visual aesthetic is a primary form of communication and should, therefore, be considered carefully. Imagery should always reflect the nature of our beliefs.

My illustrations are generally based on old scientific charts, mathematical graphs, naval charts, and astronomical diagrams (Fig. 36). Visuals that would be found in a turn of the century encyclopedia are ideal.

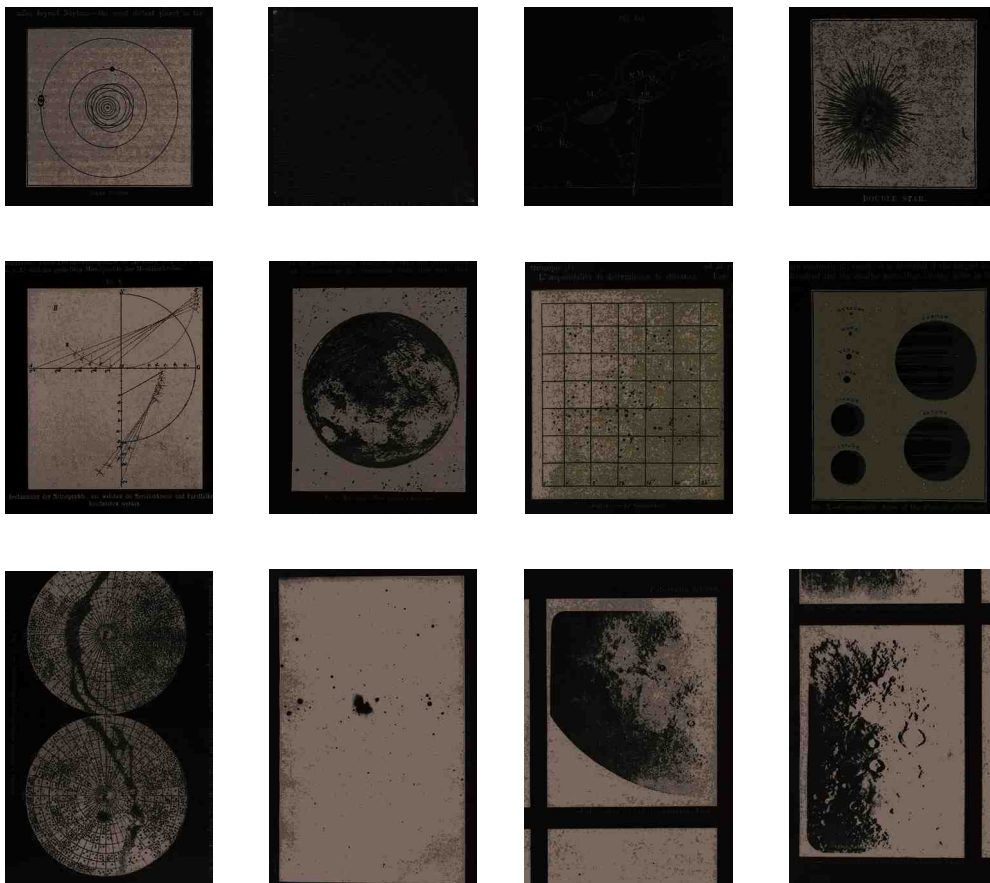


Fig. 36
British Library, A
selection of space,
astronomy & science
fiction images from
the British Library's
Mechanical Curator
Collection, No known
copyright restrictions,
flic.kr/s/aHsjPfxqio

Minimal, stark photography is preferred. The use of open areas allows for interesting combinations of illustration with photography.

The use of modern clean photography combined with old encyclopedic illustrations communicates the brand message that we are a familiar and knowledgeable agency.

Fig. 37.
Joseph Wright, *Image of Listen Haus Founder 1*,
Photography by Joshua Wright, design and editing by Joseph Wright

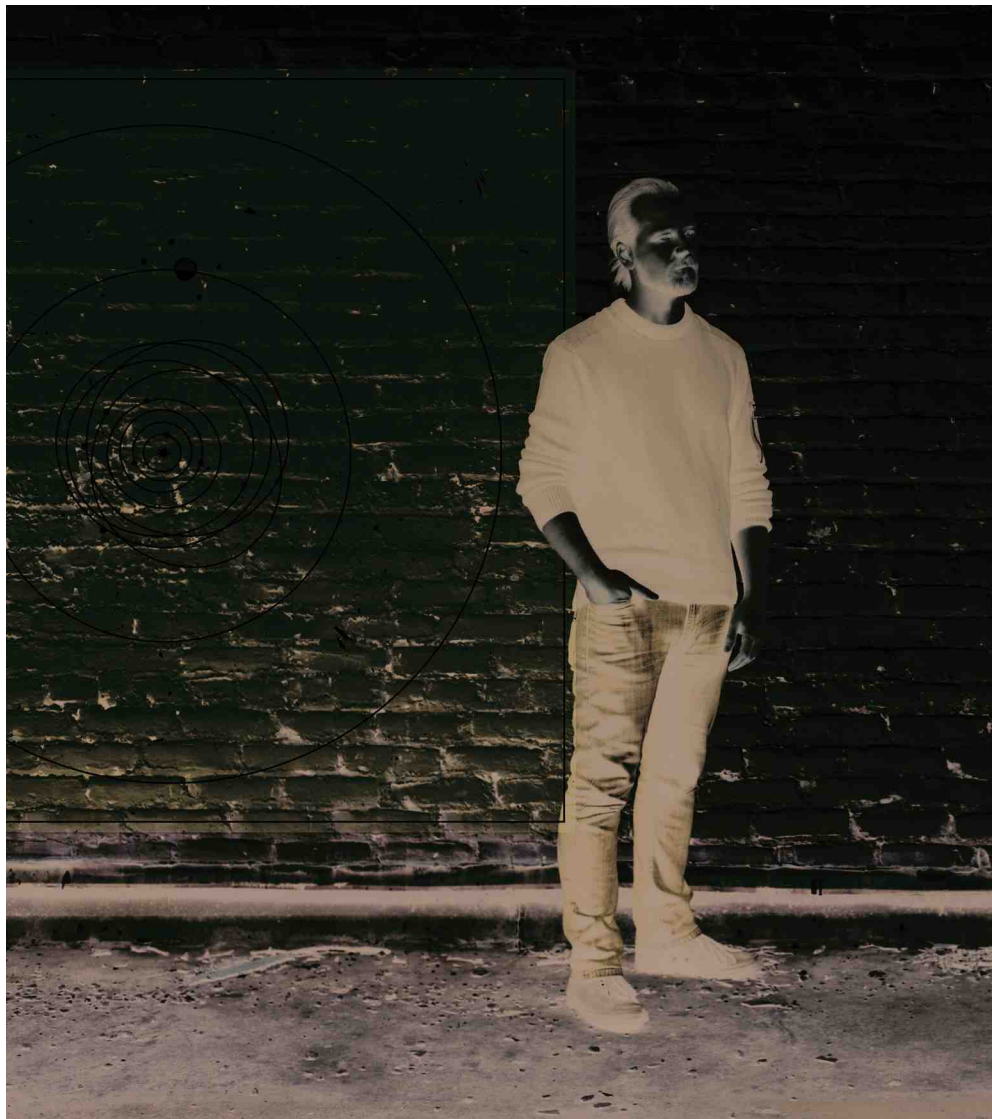




Fig. 38
Joseph Wright, *Image of Listen Haus Founder 2*,
Photography by Joshua
Wright, design and
editing by Joseph Wright

FINAL WEBSITE

My completed website can be viewed at www.listen.haus. It is comprised of a landing page that concisely explains the Listen Haus vision, a blog that outlines the methodology laid out in this document, a portfolio that demonstrates some aspects of storytelling in design, and a contact form for further inquiries.

Fig. 40
Listen Haus final website home page.
www.listen.haus.
Screenshot by Author

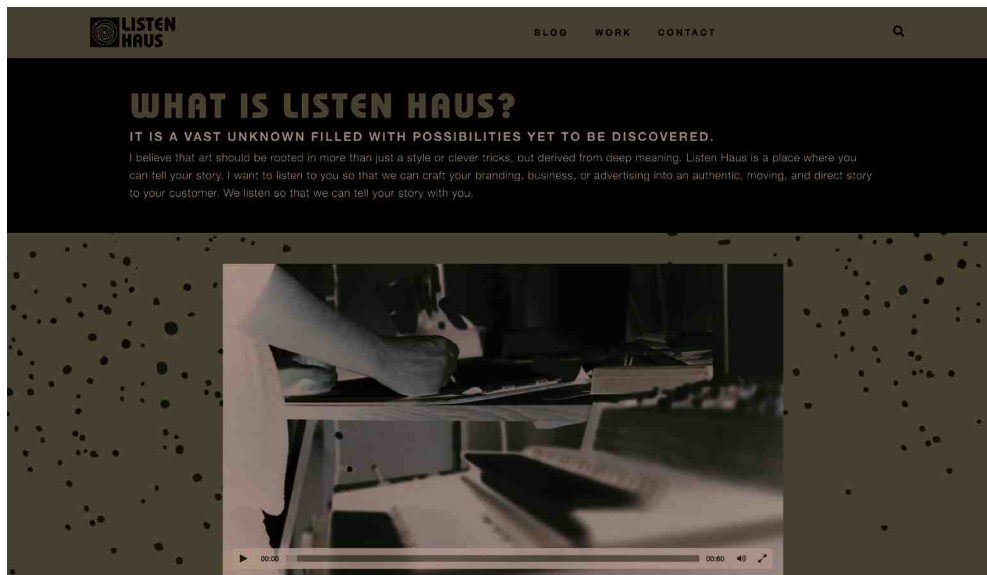
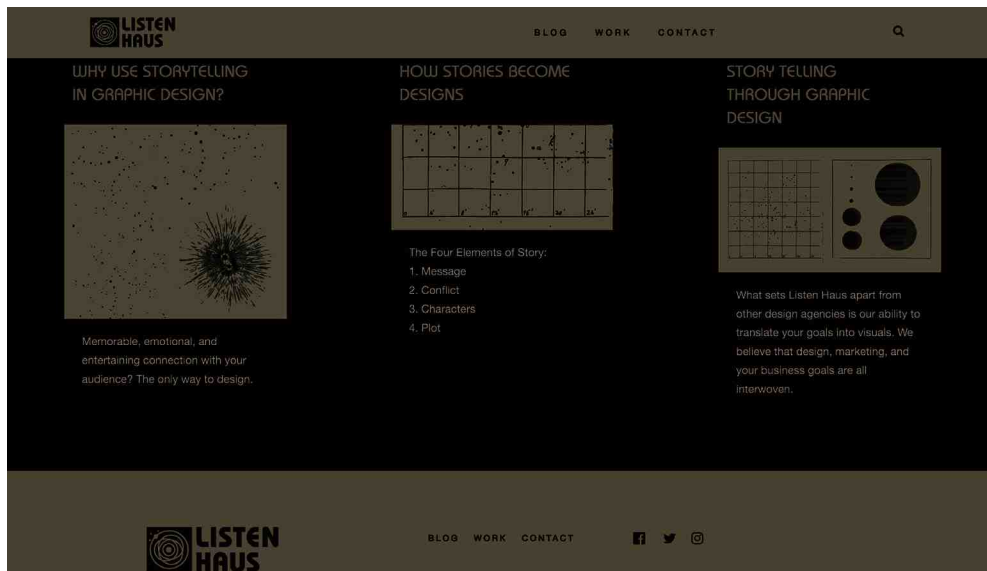


Fig. 41
Listen Haus final website blog page.
www.listen.haus/blog.
Screenshot by Author



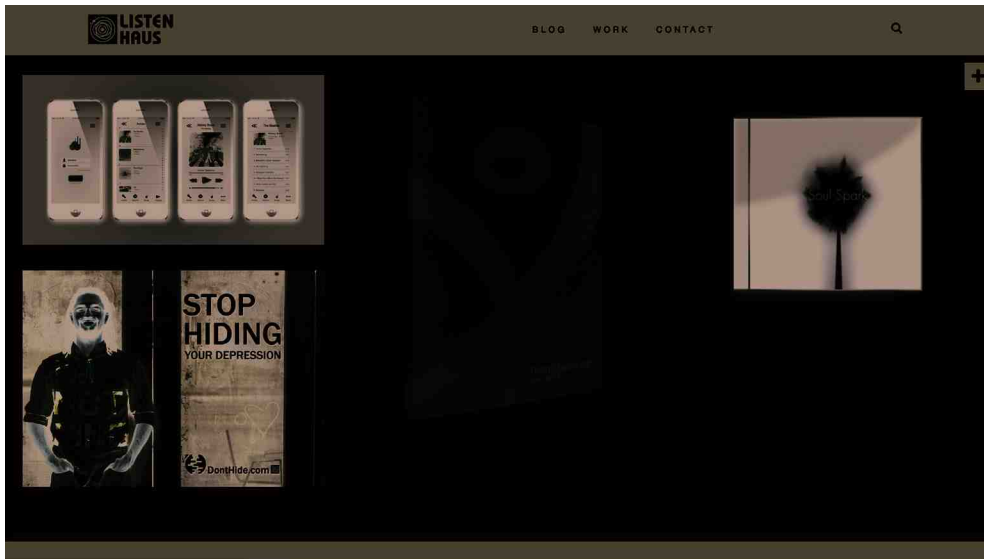


Fig. 42
Listen Haus final website
portfolio page. www.listen.haus/work.
Screenshot by Author

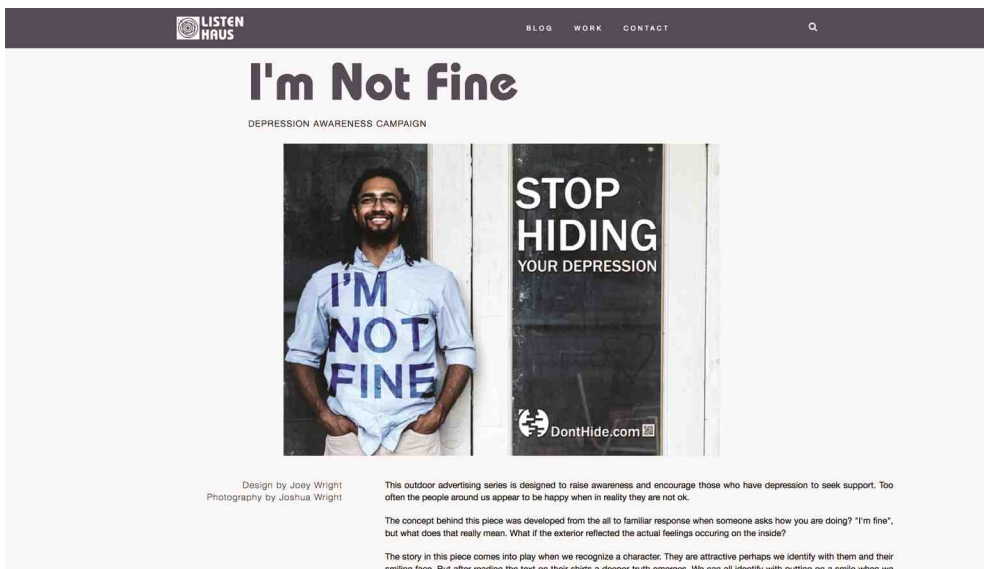


Fig. 43
Listen Haus final
website portfolio
project. www.listen.haus/portfolio-item/im-not-fine-depression-awareness-campaign/.
Screenshot by Author

By combing visual symbolism and storytelling techniques to the overarching brand message, a cohesive and engaging design identity is implemented. Every aspect of the website should reflect the goal of communicating stories through design and our ability to accomplish that aim.

CONCL

USION

Chapter 5:

Conclusion

Expressing a plain and distinct brand message in every aspect, including graphic design, is an underutilized yet effective means to communicate with an audience. This message is often best expressed through storytelling. By studying the fundamental aspects of narrative theory, plot, and emotion, a more robust means of connecting with an audience is established. Furthermore, applying the same principles to graphic design creates a unified message that conveys both information and emotion. Many designers focus on aesthetics alone when in reality, they should be exploring more efficient forms of communication. Certainly, beautiful and appealing design is helpful, but it does not necessarily contribute to the overall message. The ability to deliver consistent meaningful and emotional imagery is a crucial factor in what will contribute to the success of a brand in the eyes of its consumers. By using the methods outlined in this thesis, graphic designers, marketers, brands, and individuals can begin the process of shaping their stories. By no means is this an exhaustive list nor is it meant to be the only criteria to measure good storytelling. The mediums, methods, and styles necessary will always be changing, but at the root

of good storytelling is connection. By authentically connecting with an audience in any medium, trust will begin to be established. The ability to build a brand platform is easier than ever, and yet with voices clamoring for attention, it is difficult to be heard. The capacity to be memorable in a media hoard is one way to stand out in the crowd. By using the same storytelling techniques that have connected humanity throughout history, perhaps more meaningful communication between brands and individuals will arise. It seems the brands that affirm the values their customers wholeheartedly agree with tend to last, while ephemeral trends ebb and flow. The ability for these brands to survive is not solely due to superior products or services. This thesis postulates it is also the narrative crafted into the visuals that can improve user connection to the brand. The belief of the consumer in the brand reinforced through consistent story messaging is an avenue underutilized by graphic designers and visual communicators. It is integral to communicate a singular message through the use of graphic design. By developing a narrative through visual symbolism, graphic design can support memorable interactions in most situations. The methodology and information in this thesis aids visual communicators in creating meaningful connections with their audiences and provides them with tools to be heard in a visually cluttered market.

WORK

CITED

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