TYPE EMOTION

Nicole Wei

Type Emotion

Nicole Wei
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Senior Thesis

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Nicole Wei
BFA Graphic Design 2023
San José State University

Advisors

Connie Hwang
Graphic Design Professor, SJSU

Chang Sik Kim
Graphic Design Professor, SJSU

Yoon Chung Han
Graphic Design Professor, SJSU

Type
Emotion

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Part 1

Introduction

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Locating the Thesis Range

Locating the Thesis Range

The initial vision for this thesis project was to create a book containing typographic experiment connecting emotions with typography and a documentation of the process. However, when I presented this idea, an important point was brought up: *the topic was very common and done many times before*. It was suggested that I experiment with a time-based medium instead of print. But, I wanted to have something tangible and physical rather than digital.

What is a medium that can be both something physical and something digital?

An AR poster came to mind. The piece would be physical posters in combination with AR technology to bring the digital elements of a motion graphic into the physical posters.

From there I began to rethink my thesis, rather than showing emotion through type I wanted to tell a story typography would become my base and the motion graphic would tell a story. The topic shifted away from expressing emotion with typography and towards a piece that uses type and movement to express certain emotions.

Abstract

Abstract

Verbal communication has been the primary source of communication for people. Through speaking, people are able to express emotion with just the use of different tones, without the need for coherent words or sentences. However, even without the use of audio cues from a person, people are able to understand emotion visually. With the use of atmosphere, movement, and, of course, text, people have a visual association with certain emotions.

The visual look of the type also builds on to the feeling and voice of the text. The use of different fronts, typefaces, and colors can associate the text with certain anthropomorphic characteristics. Bolded type may give off a tough feeling and voice while a playful type will have a more youthful one. I want to explore how experimental type can affect be used to create a story without the consistent use of legible words.

The outcome of thesis experimentations is to produce a series of animated AR posters that expresses my interpretation of the emotions of fear, anger, and sadness. The final poster will influence the outcome of the motion graphic animation while the motion graphic will be influenced by my interpretation of emotions through the use of type and movement.

Thesis

Thesis

Experimental typography is used to convey emotion without the need of reading the text. People understand these emotions by feeling the atmosphere the type creates. The exploration of emotions through the use of typography and motion can enhance the writer's message.

The exploration of emotions through the use of typography and motion can enhance the writer's message.

Framing Reference

Framing Reference

My two advisors for this project are professor Chang Sik Kim and professor Yoon Chung Han. Each of the professor has expertise in the fields I am working on in my project. For professor Kim, I want to get his expertise in typographic experimentation, and for professor Han, I want her insight in motion graphics.

The things I need to know include the expression of emotion in type with movement, and how movement can affects typography. I also need feedback on my created poster design and motion graphic ensure they are conveying the emotions I want to express. For professor Han, I would like help with further understanding how to use Adobe After Effects and see if she can provide me with resources on the program. I will email both professors or discuss this with them in class or after the class session. My questions are generally for gathering technical information, critiques on my progress, and advice on how to improve.

Through my meetings with the two professors, I understood more about which direction I wanted to go in. After meeting with Professor Kim, he gave me pointers on how much more I should explore and ideas on what I can do for experimentation. For Professor Han, she helped me figure out my storyline as well as pointers on the research I can do to further help me understand the story I want to tell.

People, Places, Things

People, Places, Things

3 physical places

in an exhibition
in a living room
in a classroom

3 huge objects

posters
screens
billboards

3 tiny objects

phone
business card
stamp

3 physical qualities

smooth
paper
complex

3 abstract qualities

thought, emotion
experimental, chaotic
motion graphics

3 historical events

Dada movement
Postmodernism
Bauhaus

3 organizations that commission your thesis

Letterform archive
Studio Triple
Society of Typographic Aficionados

3 designers who give a workshop

Wolfgang Weingart
Kurt Schwitters
Jan Tschichold

Repository

Repository of Insight

"Typefaces are no longer solely tools of visual communication; their form and appearance can now be manipulated to create certain moods or feelings in an audience."

– Amic G. Ho

"People generally anthropomorphize to make sense of events and behaviors they experience. Further, attributing emotions, attitudes, mental states, faces, and values to non-human things can help you feel connected to something."

– Sarah Barkley

"Because human beings respond to visual culture in an emotional way, designers can manipulate the psychological responses of their viewers by making informed choices about the features of a design, such as colors and fonts."

– Grace Fussell

"...font connects us emotionally to the information it's meant to convey. Therefore, you need to choose your fonts carefully and according to context because it affects the emotions of your audience."

– Mala Deep

"Kinetic typography is a diverse visual story-telling technique to tell almost any story in the most fascinating way to catch viewer's attention."

– Fauzi Yusoff

"...the human body has a built-in, physiological stress response to anger—similar to the way it handles fear... anger often drives us toward confrontation."

– BetterHelp Editorial Team

"Sadness reminds us of what matters to us and what gives our life meaning, as well as what we miss from the past (nostalgia)."

– Pradeep Mahadeshwar

"Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured".

– Mark Twain

"Emotion from any typographic experience is a complex system of the person's prior cultural context, their environment, formal design principles, and psychology."

— Andrew Johnson

"Uncertainty can intensify how threatening a situation feels"

– Ema Tanovic

"Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak knits up the o-er wrought heart and bids it break."

– William Shakespeare

"Throughout history, fear has driven us to explore new lands and adapt in order to survive. Our early ancestors feared starvation, diseases, and predators."

– Isaac Olexio

of Insight

Repository of Insight

My thesis focuses on emotion with typography as a medium to express those emotions. The idea that type can be interpreted in different ways based on a person's personal experience intrigued me. My project is based on how people will see emotions displayed visually and how they interpret the feelings behind the visual.

One point of my project is to see if people are able to pick up the same emotions or interpret the emotions differently with the same graphic/motion. Although my project is not the expression of emotion through the legibility of the text, it does express emotion through the readability of the feelings.

To create a certain feeling, I put into consideration the font, typeface, colors, motion, and sound. Because people often anthropomorphize things around them, using human emotions to describe inanimate objects. Fonts and typefaces are often characterized by what feelings people get by seeing them. In Adobe Fonts, there are filters that sort certain fonts into friendly, funky, and fun. These categories are not organized with technicality like geometric or calligraphy, they are categorized by how the font makes a person feel, although some may be subjective. Color, on the other hand, has many cultural influences on what people associate with color. For example, in Western culture white is a symbol of purity and elegance, but in many Asian countries, white is a color worn for mourning a past loved one.

"Emotion from any typographic experience is a complex system of the person's prior cultural context, their environment, behavioral design principles, and psychology."

– Andrew Johnso

All these factors add up to form people's view of emotions displayed through design. Having the correct font, typeface, and color can push people to understand the emotion the writer or creator is attempting to convey without the need of hearing the motion spoken.

Manifesto

Manifesto

Progress is often slow and for the most part invisible. You will only see it when you have come a long way. Just because somethings do not come out the way you imagined it immediately, it does not mean you have failed.

Keep at it and keep these few things in mind:

1 Everything takes time
2 Progress is not immediate
3 Do not overcomplicated it
4 Trust yourself and your strengths
5 Get out of your comfort zone
6 Explore
7 And have fun

8 After Effects tutorials

Goal

Goal

The outcome of these experimentations is to produce a series of AR motion graphic posters with my interpretation of certain emotions I want to have viewers interpret the feelings in these posters and I want them to come up with their own interpretations of my story

Questions

Questions

1. How is emotion expressed visually through type/text?

2. What are the characteristics associated with certain typefaces?

3. Are people actually able to read the text in the tone intended by the writer?

4. How do movement and sound enhance emotions expressed through type?

Part 2

Research

1.1 Surveys
1.2 Ideation
1.3 Rough Storyboard

Survey

Survey

To start off this project I began to collect data on what people associated with certain emotions. I began with the five most basic emotions happiness, sadness, fear, disgust, and anger. Then I categorized and listed all the responses to help me narrow down the emotions I wanted to express and the story I wanted to tell.

What characteristic do you associate with each of the following emotion?

Happiness

Color

yellow
green
orange
pink
brown
neutral
warm
bright

Mood

cozy
warmth
comfort
summer

Objects

music
moon
star
flowers
balloons
pet
movies
animal
nature
sun/sunshine
safe place
food
sky
rainbow
games
home

Shapes

circle
boxes
heart
rounded shapes
organic shapes

Action

hug
kiss
relaxed
walking
leaping
jumping
yelling
skipping
dance
laughter
smile
rolling in grass

Sadness

Color

blue
violet
black
gray
brown
cool
dark
muted

Mood

melancholy
silence
gloom
stuck
stagnant

Objects

empty house
shows
liminal spaces
abandoned areas
war
tissue box
tears
storm
rain clouds
sad face
missed opportunities
Tim Burton
rain
tilted eyebrows

Shapes

teardrop
scratchy lines
organic shapes
oval
upside down triangle

Action

crying
smoking
alone
melting
slouching
slow motion
slow tempo
isolation
lying in bed
sitting in the corner
drooping

Fear

Color

black
red
purple
green
grey
yellow
blue
white

Mood

creepy
quiet

Objects

corpses
unknown
monster
growing up
heights
sharp objects
closet
hallway
shadow
woods
cabin
darkness
ghosts
bugs
void
silhouettes
bottomless

Shapes

octagons
long vertical shapes
skinny sketch lines
sharp
pointy
harsh perspective

Action

driving
forgetting
flinching
screaming
crying
throwing up
hiding
shaking
running
shivers
huddle
shrinking
trembling
tunnel vision

Anger

Color

red
black
warm

Mood

violence
tense
madness
intimidating

Objects

spikes
fumes
full caps
weapons
injustice
unfairness
fire
fist
guns
knife
blood
revenge
smoke
lava
brick

Shapes

triangle
arrows
sharp-edged shapes
square

Action

punching
fighting
slamming
yelling
force
build-up
breaking
argument
scowl
grinding teeth
fast movement
growing in size
stomping

Disgust

Color

brown
green
orange

Mood

filth
musty
dark

Objects

vomit
trash
sewage
rot
smog
pollution
inhuman
mold
dirt
bugs
innards
evilness
slime
dust
disease

Shapes

splatter
blobs
hexagon
asymmetrical

Action

vomiting
gagging
recoiling
avoiding
gritting teeth
smelling bad
pushing away
retraction
sticking tongue out

Analysis

Analysis

After recording the responses I found interesting patterns within each emotion. Happiness and disgust were commonly tied with tangible items while sadness, fear, and anger had distinct ideas. Sadness was described as being empty with loneliness and isolation, and abandoned areas. Fear was associated with the unknown, described with bottomless pits and long hallways, and darkness. Anger is strongly connected with violent movements such as slamming, stomping, and smashing.

Fear, anger, and sadness were the three emotions I narrowed down to. I began to explore the storyline as a series as well as the story within each emotion.

*notable association for the **3** emotions*

sadness
empty house
liminal spaces
abandoned areas
alone
isolation

fear
unknown
monsters
shadows
hallways
darkness
bottomless
void

anger
sharpness
tense
explosion
punching
slamming
breaking
smashing
screaming
stomping

Ideation

Storyline

The story in these posters is a sequence of feelings a person may feel at a point of their lives. The sequence begins with fear then to anger and then to sadness. Fear comes from the unknown, the inability to see or understand the future. Through this, many other emotions may form, one of them being anger. The anger and frustration of not knowing may emerge as action. Then to sadness. Through sadness, there is emptiness, the feeling of abandonment and isolation, and possibly introspection. A time to think and reflect on the causes of emotions whether it may be fear or anger. There may not be a solution but there will always be hope for peace of mind in a quiet place.

Fear — **Atmosphere**

uncertainty
unknown
darkness

Anger — **Action**

violent
fast, sharp
red

Sadness — **Dialogue**

isolation
loneliness
blues

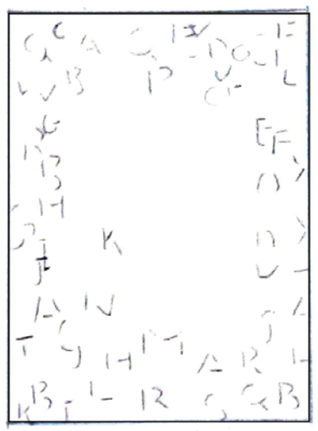
Storyboard

Rough Storyboard

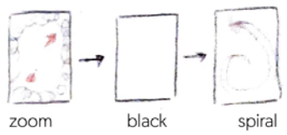
The idea of what the storyline for the motion graphic was initially really roughly sketched. Each emotion is planned to have its own way of expressing emotion; it will not be relying on the text to tell the story.

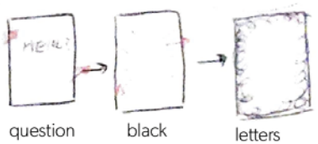
1. Fear
2. Anger
3. Sadness

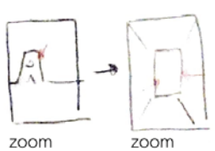
1.



constant movement into the scene







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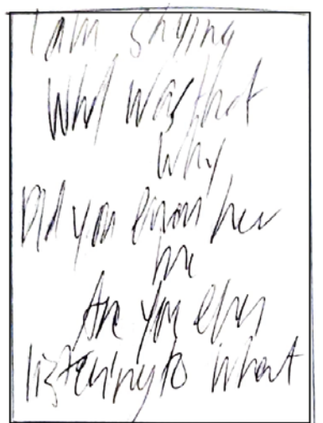
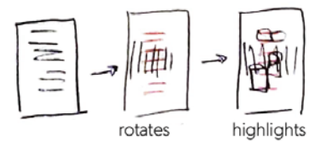
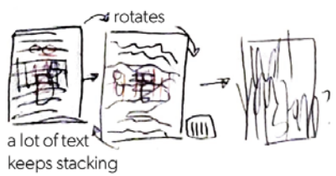


explode anger fast and sharp





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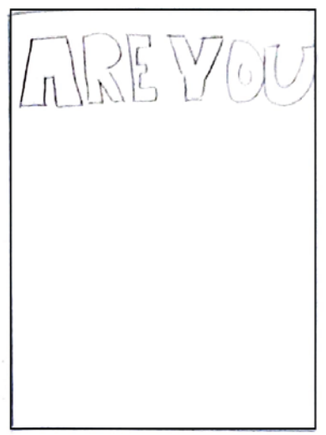
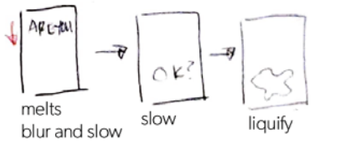
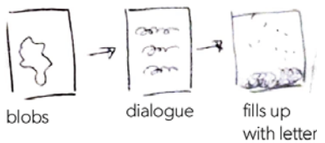
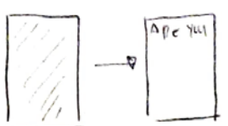


slow movements







Part 3

Exploration

1.1 Process
1.2 Revised Storyboard
1.3 Experimentations
1.4 Early Versions

Process

Process

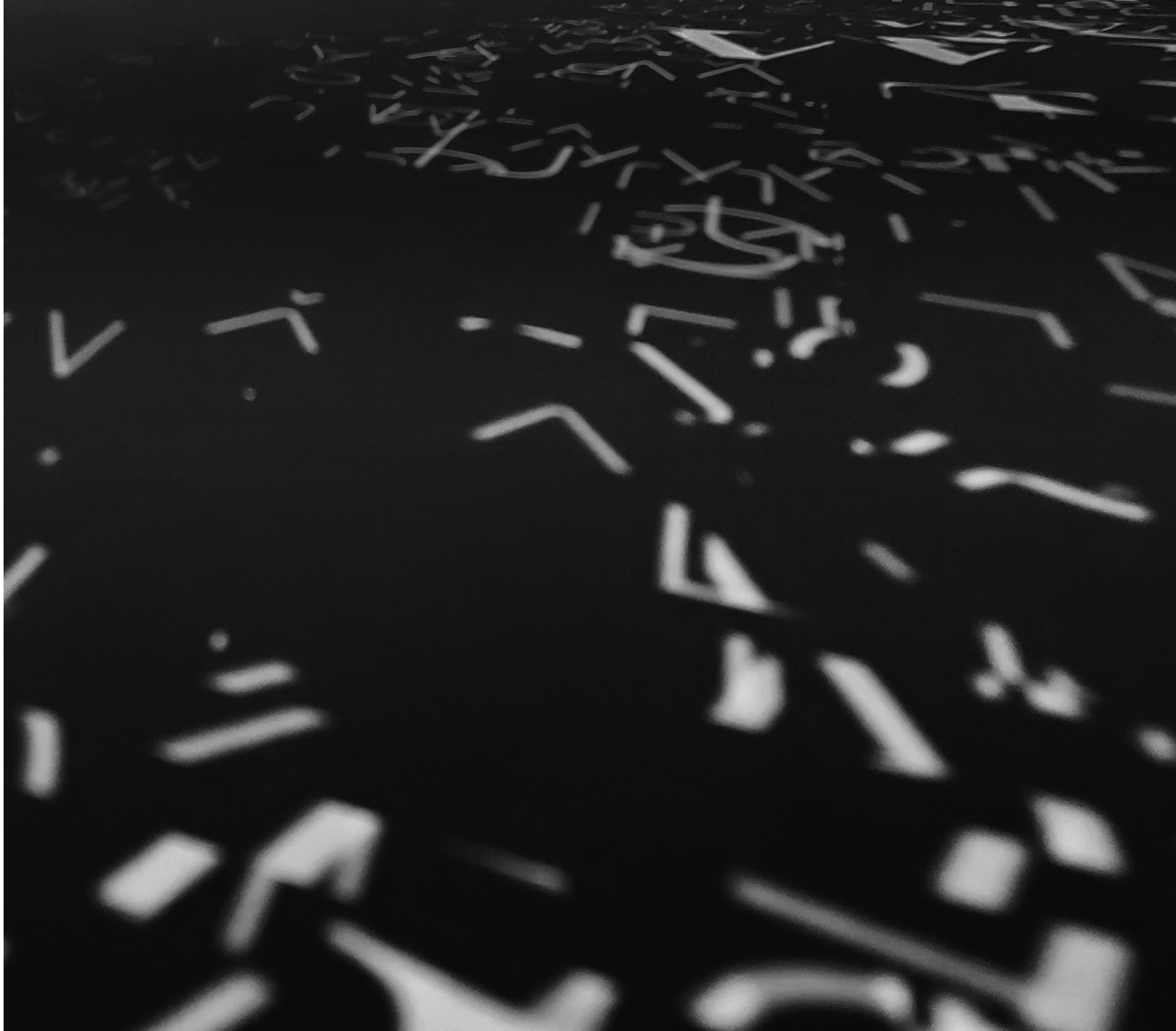
When starting each poster, I took the same approach. First I revised the storyboard to be much more polished sketches. Then I began to work in Adobe Illustrator to digitize the sketches. Each scene was then transferred to Adobe After Effects where I began to animate each element. Each poster has a different approach in animation.

Fear: I focused on filling the space and trying to convey fear through a sense of overwhelming *claustrophobia.*

Anger: I wanted it to have a lot of *movement and energy.* I use hand written text to get the energy I wanted.

Sadness: I kept it *slow and empty,* using blur effects and changes in opacity to convey emptiness without leaving the canvas blank.

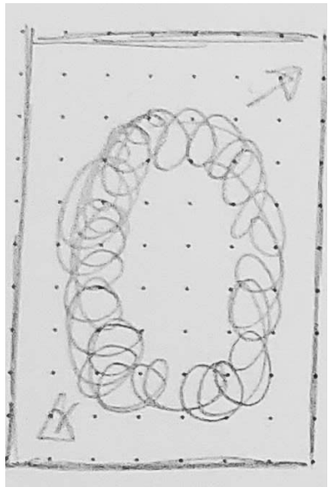
After animating all the posters, I went back to add in the third dimension for a better AR experience. Each poster has certain elements that expand out of the posters' frame.



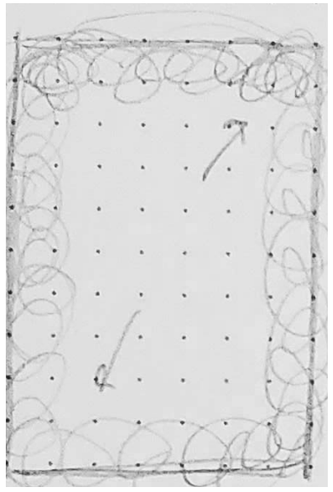
Fear

Storyboard

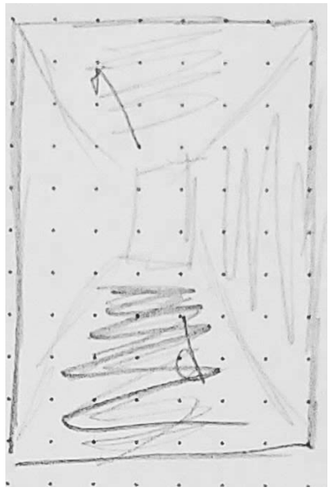
The story in fear is a constantly downward tumble towards the darkness and unknown with no end in sight.



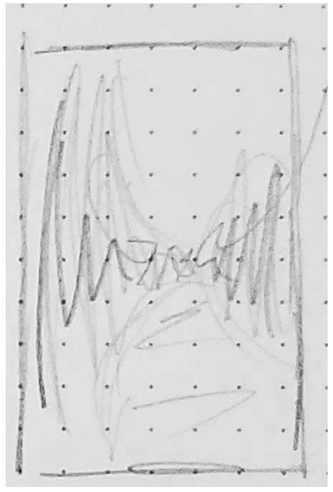
The scene begins with cut up letters scattered all throughout.



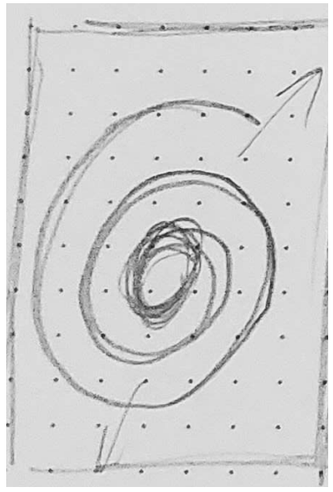
The letters move closer and create a tunnel feeling.



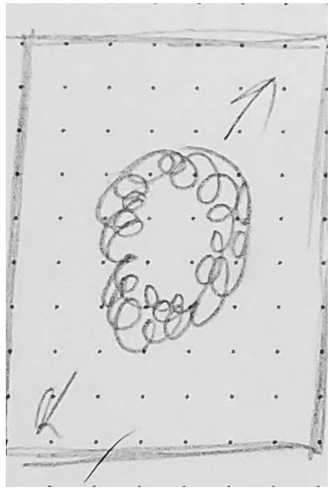
Words appear to create walls to guide the viewer deeper.



The wall twist into a string of words that spiral into the poster.



The string of words get more intense and continuously wraps around the center.

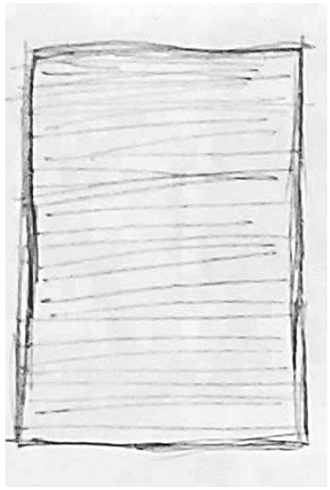


The scattered letters comes through the circle and resets the animation.

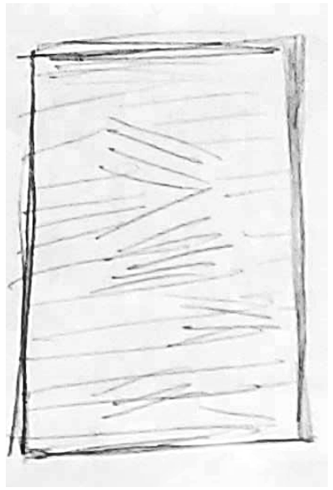
Anger

Storyboard

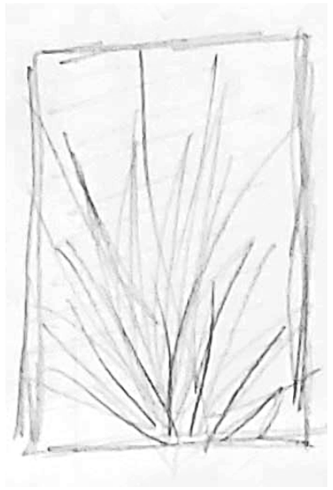
Anger is an explosion of emotions that breaking out from a calm form. It layers and builds on top of all feelings.



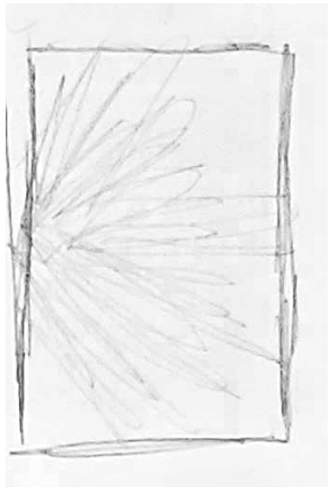
The scene starts out as calm and organized



The organized lines begins to break and fall apart.



Type shoots up from the bottom mimicking what yelling would imagined to be.



The composition rotates on to its side and the type gets more intense.

New type begins to stack on top and covers the entire composition.

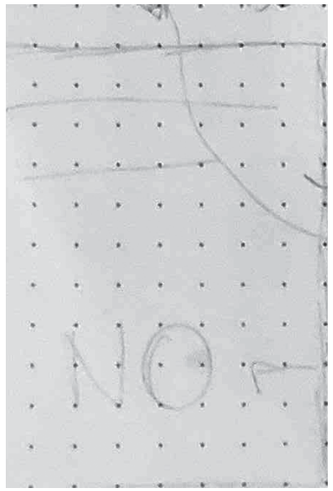
The motion ends with a large shout “ENOUGH.” along with silence.

Sadness

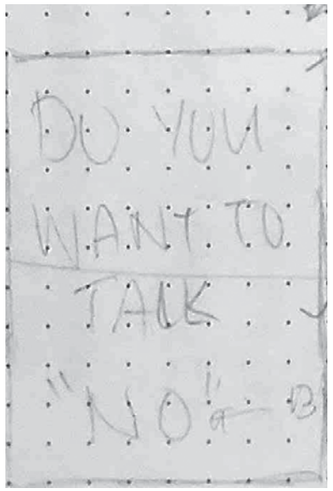
Storyboard

The story of sadness is of empty space and sharing simple sadnesses with someone who is concerned.

The scene begins with the question, "Are you alright?"



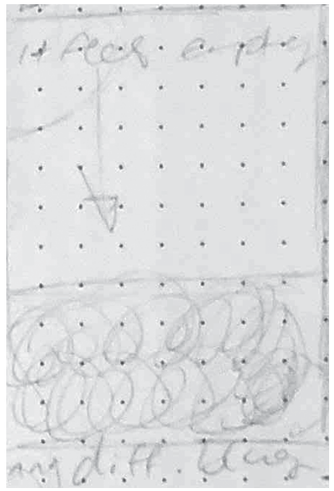
Then the answer, "no." appears.



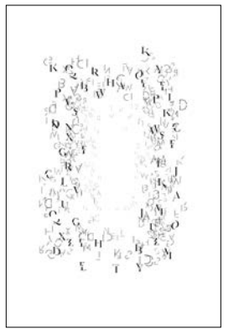
The questions changes to, "Do you want to talk," and the answer stays the same, "no."

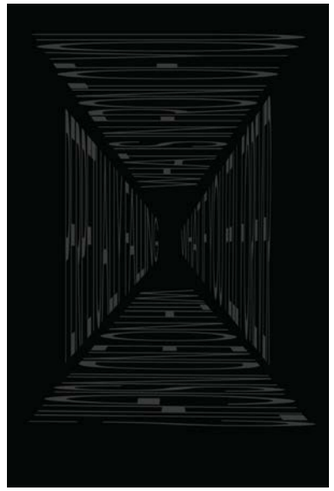
"Actually Yes." slides down from the top of the canvas leaving streaks of blue behind.

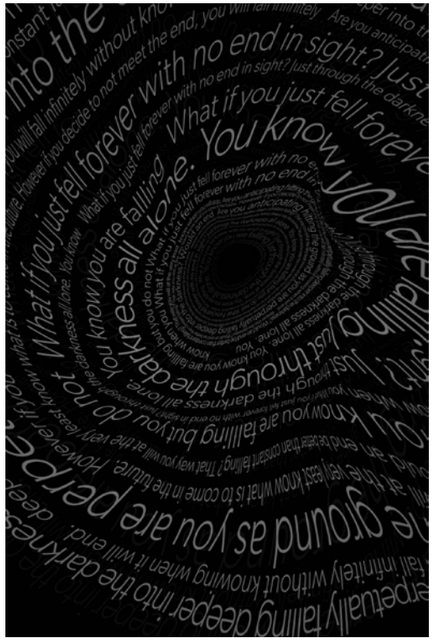
Text of things that are melancholic or sad falls down like rain and begins to build a pile of text at the bottom of the canvas.



The type falls downwards and builds a pile of more type.



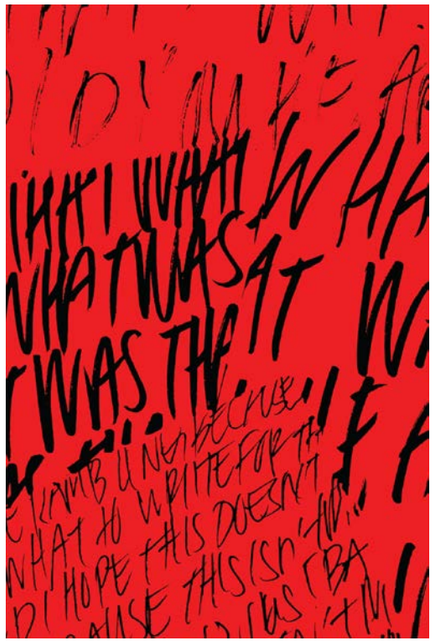


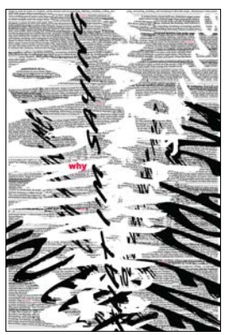


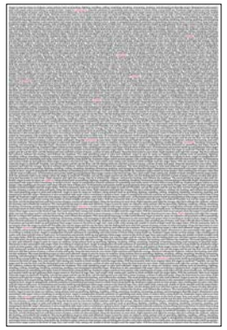
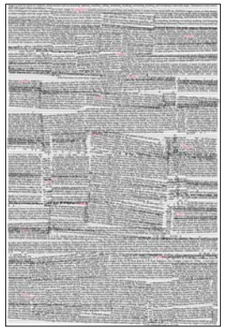
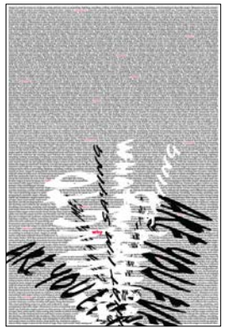
Fear

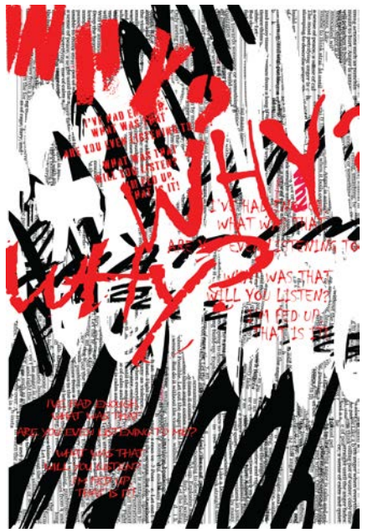
Scene Variations

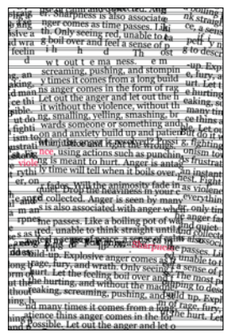
These explorations are made primarily in Adobe Illustrator and Adobe After Effects.

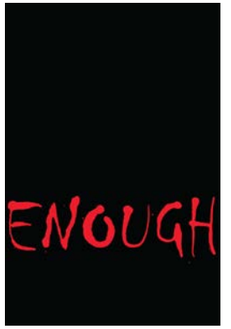






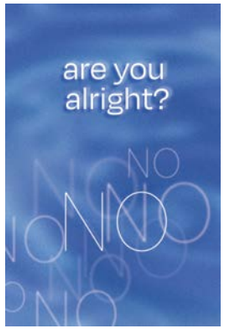


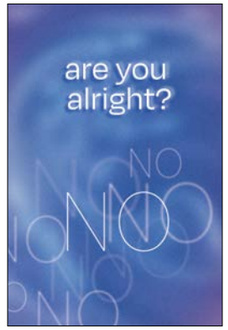


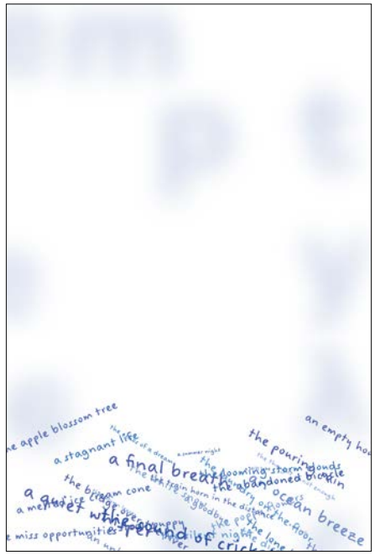
Anger

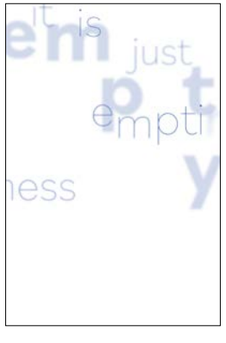
Scene Variations

These explorations uses a combination of Adobe Illustrator and my handwriting.









Sadness

Scene Variations

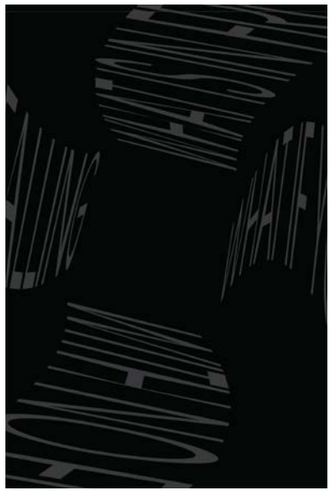
These explorations laid out in Adobe Illustrator and were made mainly in Adobe After Effects.

Fear

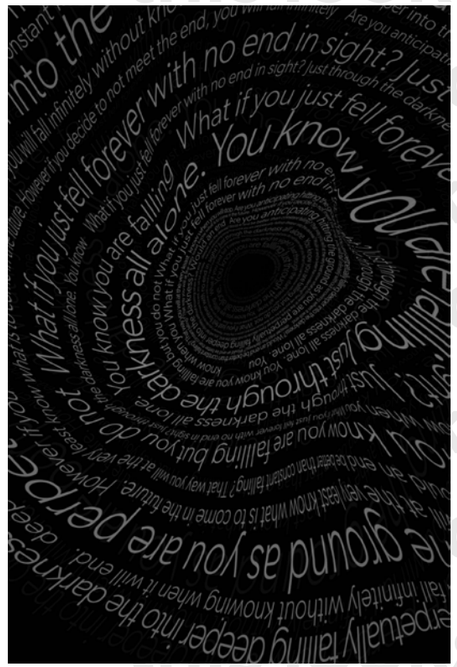
Early Version

The early version for "Fear" was too clean and in a way pretty. It did not have the fear factor. The animation itself was also too smooth and lacking in horror elements.

This scene is too *clean* and *pretty*. It did not convey the atmosphere of fear.



This scene is to *dark* and *structured*.



This scene is to *smooth*.

This transitions loops back to the beginning and starts the animation again.

compositions should to be less symmetrical and even

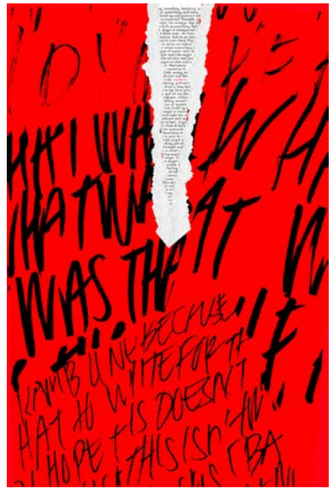
The type in this composition is too *even* and *symmetrical.*

Anger

Early Versions

The main concern for this version is the even composition through the key scenes. Some parts of were also a bit slow and needed to be sped up a bit.

The spacing in this composition can be even *more varied.*



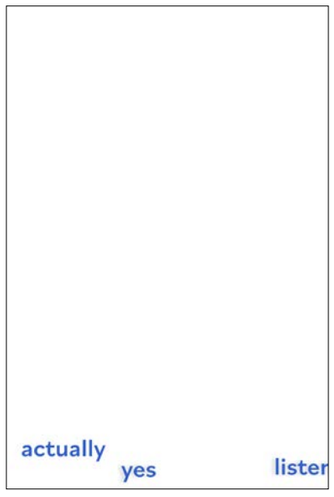
The tear should be angled the same as the beginning.

Sadness

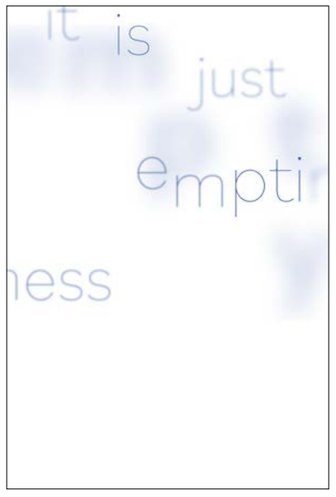
Early Versions

The overall feeling of this piece did not fit in with the colors of the set. There is too much blue in the beginning. The compositions of the later scenes were too structured and lacked dynamism.

The blue *does not match* the over all feeling of the set.



A bit too empty.



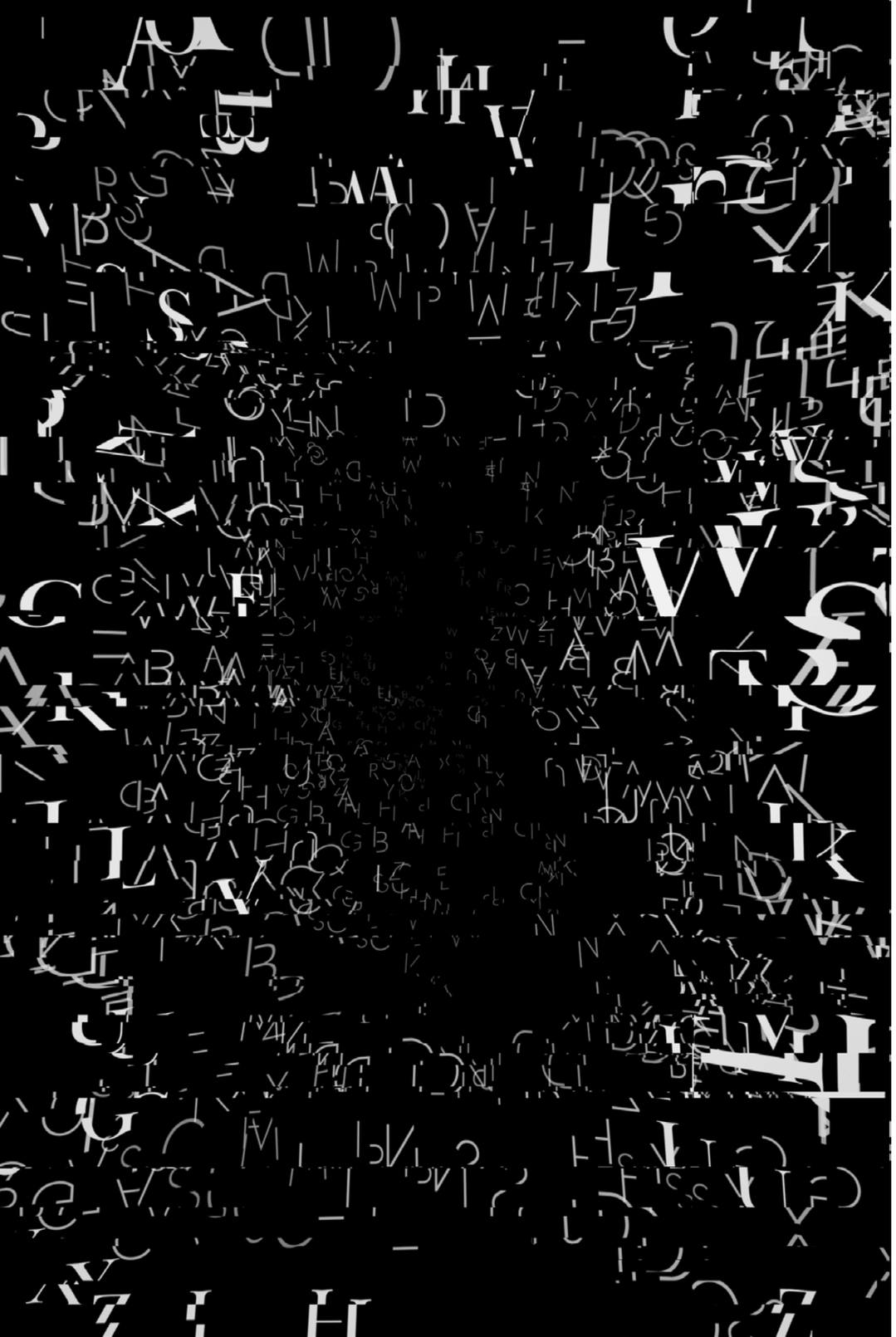
These scenes can be *combined* rather than having them appear one at a time.

find correlation between the scenes

Outcomes

Part 4

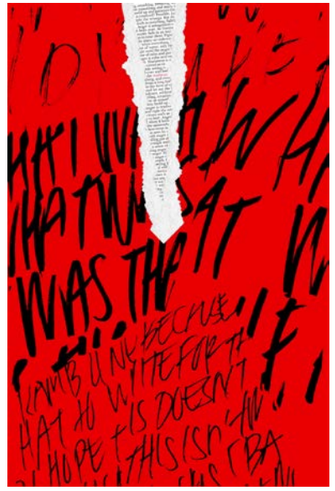
4.1 Fear
4.2 Anger
4.3 Sadness

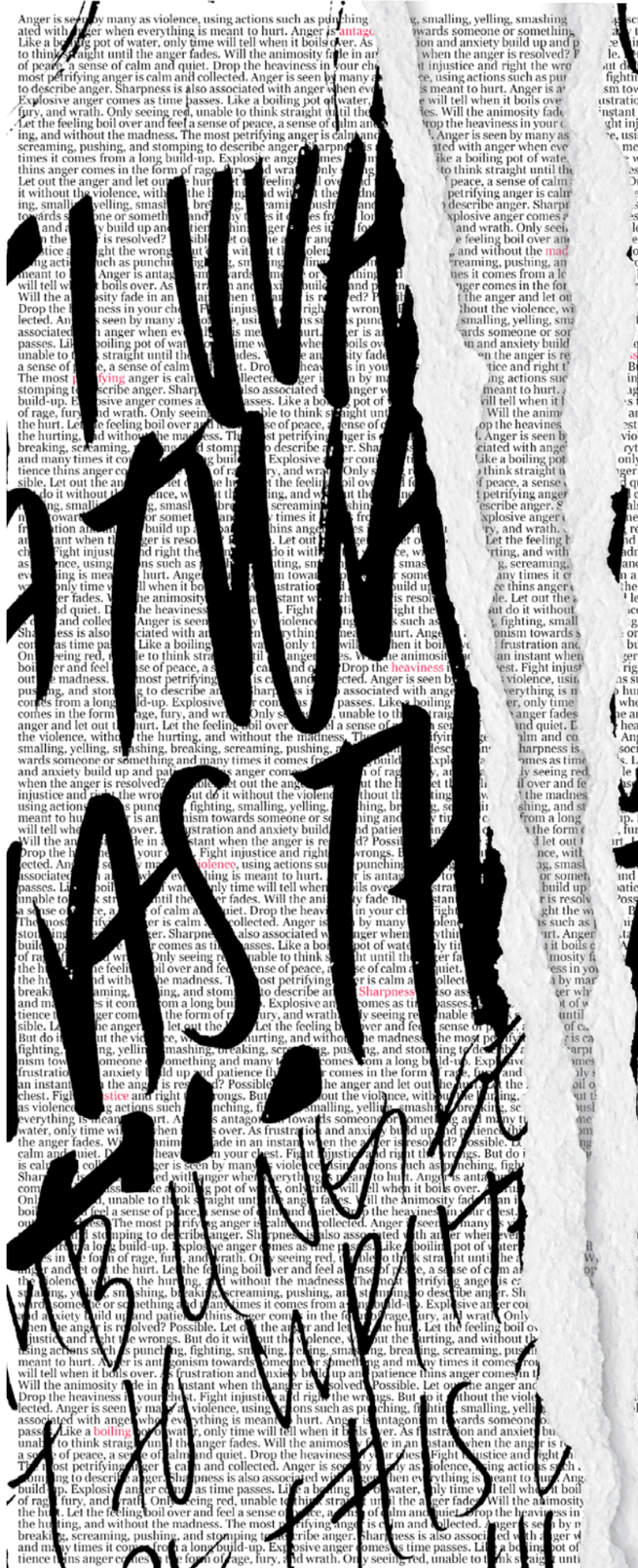


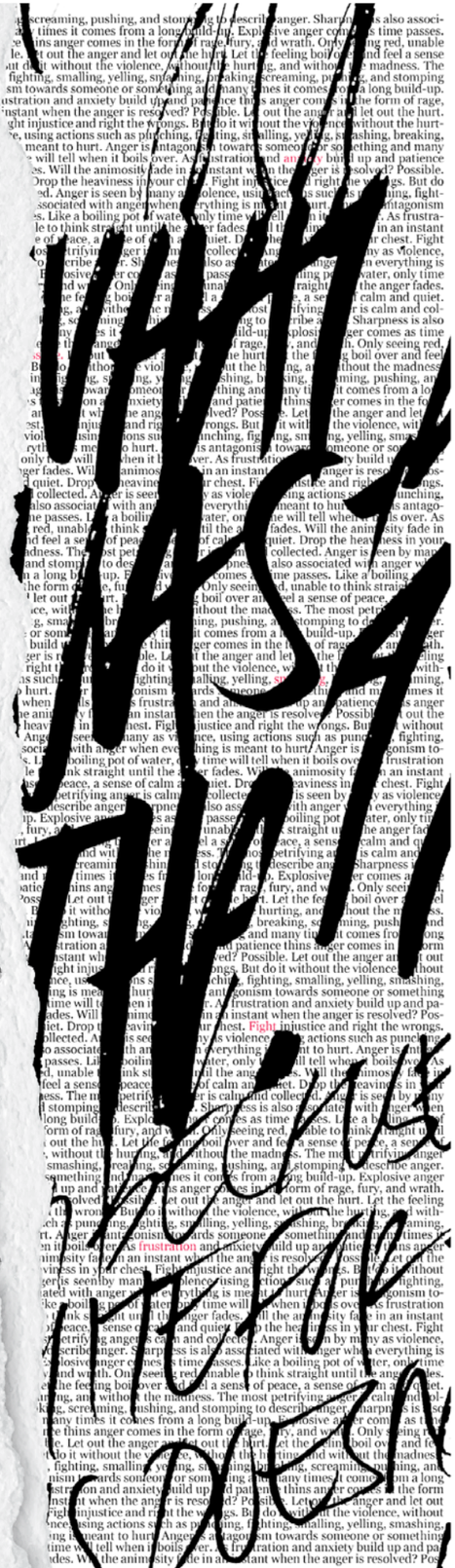
Fear

Fear

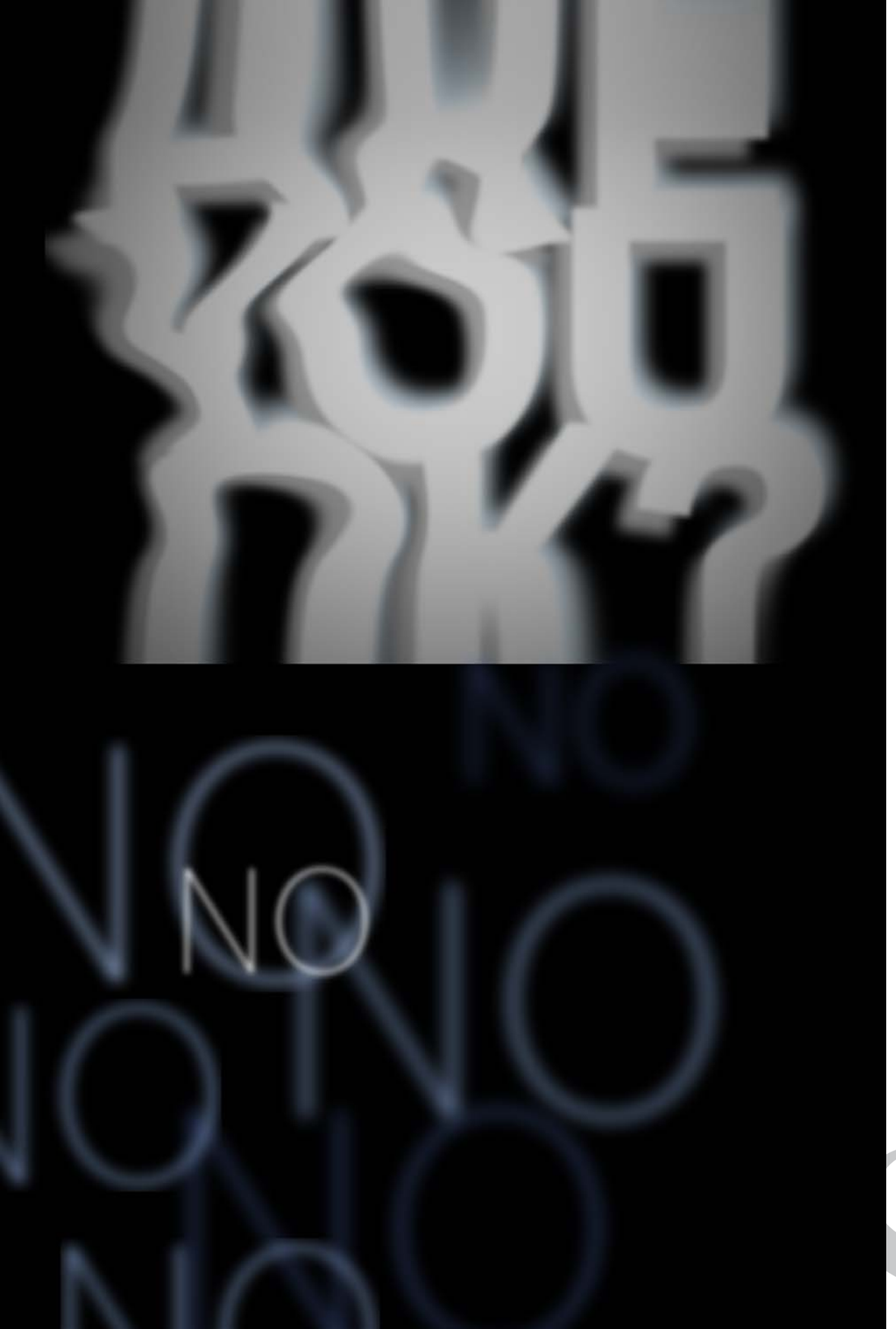
Anger

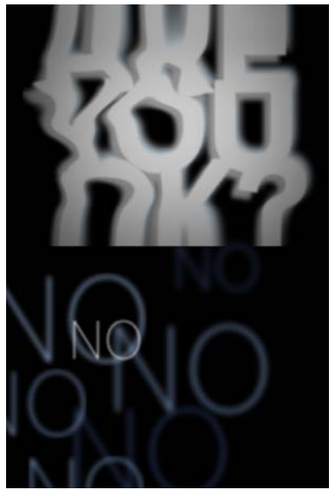




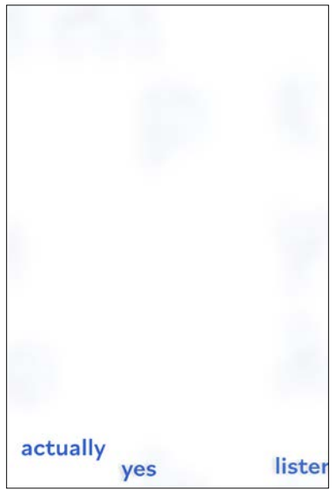


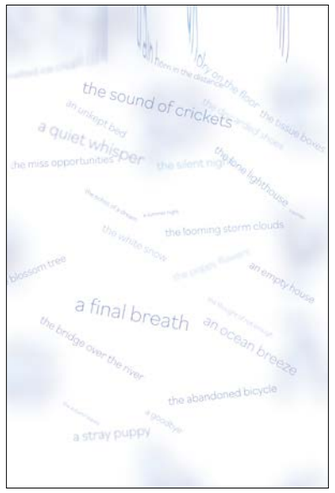
Anger

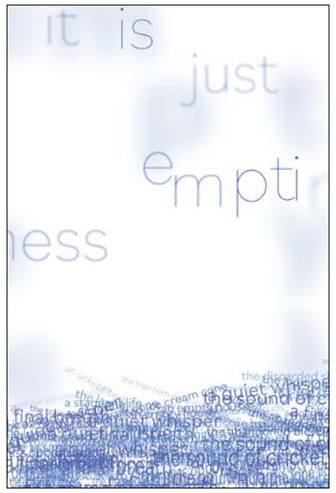

NO


NO

NO


actually
yes
lister


the sound of crickets
a quiet whisper
the looming storm clouds
an empty house
a final breath
an ocean breeze
the bridge over the river
the abandoned bicycle
a stray puppy


it is just
empti
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it is just
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Sadness

it is
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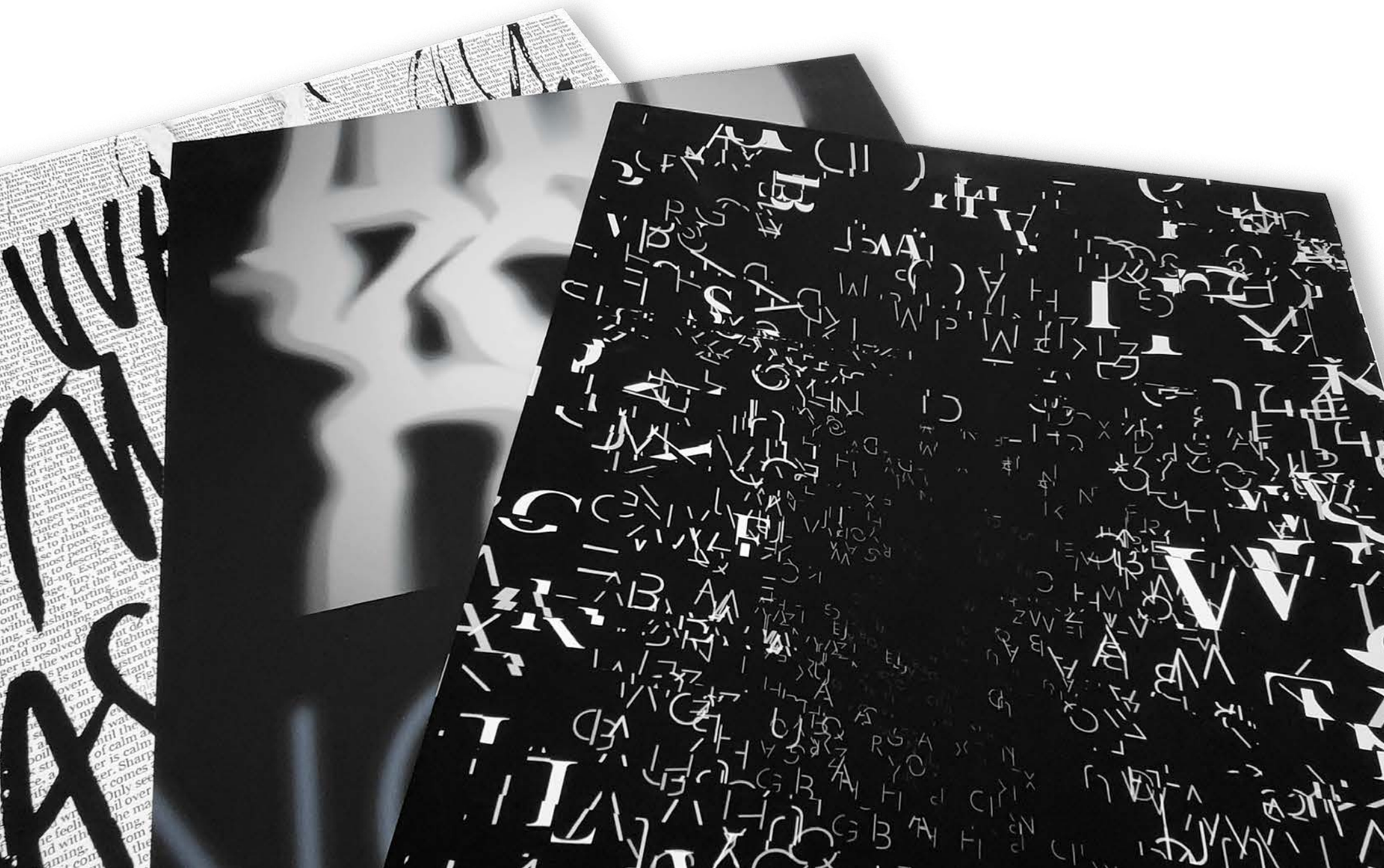
Part 5

5.1 Reflection
5.2 Annotated Bibliography

Conclusion



Reflection

Reflection

This project has been a journey. It was completely out of my comfort zone and was like nothing I would have ever done in my designs before. It was definitely a learning experience.

When I first started this project, I knew it was something I wanted to do because it was completely different from my style. The experimental aspect of it caught me off guard as the work I have usually done was primarily well structured. Especially in the beginning where my fear poster was “too pretty” which took a while for me to learn to break it down. This project became a new experience and got me to do things I would have never thought of before, like the warping and breaking of letter forms.

I had a lot of fun experimenting but there were many ups and downs. The more experimental posters with fear and anger got me motivated and excited to work. Sadness, on the other hand, was not as exciting. I found myself putting off working on it because I lost motivation in coming up with something that is meant to be both experimental and empty at the same time. However, as I worked and was able to experiment with the content I had, motivation began to come back to me.

Overall, this project was a new experience that got me into experimenting outside of my comfort zone and just having fun without getting too caught up in needing to make something pretty or clean.

Bibliography

Annotated Bibliography

Albritton, Andrew. "Emotions in the Ether: Strategies for Effective Emotional Expression in Text-Messages." Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies 7, no. 2 (2017). https://doi.org/10.29333/ojcmt/2590.

Text messages are an effective way to analyze how people would visually express themselves. Because plain text provides no context in the tone or rhythm of how a person is speaking, people have to get creative with using the provided text. Emotions are conveyed in two ways, simply written and a more emotional representation through text which can include purposeful misspellings and playful letter spacings. People are able to more easily express themselves without the indeed of communicating face to face or through voice.

Deep, Mala. "How Fonts Affect Your Emotions?" Medium. UX Planet, September 15, 2022. https://uxplanet.org/how-fonts-affect-your-emotions-49e4a4d2beb5

Typography plays a big role in pushing people to feel certain ways. Using the correct font in the correct context heavily changes the way people feel. For example, using a handwritten font for a University's graduation certificate would be inappropriate. The use of font influences emotions that relate to our designs, choosing fonts correctly will greatly enhance the feelings of the design.

Fussell, Grace. "The Psychology of Fonts (Fonts That Evoke Emotion)." Design & Illustration Envato Tuts+. Envato Tuts, February 16, 2023. https://design.tutsplus.com/articles/the-psychology-of-fonts--cms-34943.

Fonts have been used to provoke a psychological reaction from the audience. It is used to give and promotes a brand's identity. Humans tend to anthropomorphize inanimate objects, applying human emotions to things that do not have them which causes this psychological effect. People place emotional responses to fonts, noting them as friendly, playful, creative, etc.

Ho, Amic G. "Typography Today: Emotion Recognition in Typography." Accessed April 3, 2023. http://www.design-cu.jp/iasdr2013/papers/2213-1b.pdf.

Type was originally used for visual communication and over time as technology developed, typefaces expanded more on form than function and are no longer a tool for visual communication. Their appearance can manipulate and create moods with the need of reading the text itself. Emotion in typography can be seen with the use of simple changes in the design of the type.

Robson, David. "Why We're so Terrified of the Unknown." BBC Worklife. BBC, February 25, 2022. https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20211022-why-were-so-terrified-of-the-unknown.

One of the main causes of fear is uncertainty. The unknown is a fundamental fear because the brain is constantly trying to predict what will happen next. Taking away the knowledge of the future causes anxiety and fear.

A SJSU BFA Graphic Design Thesis Project

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