CARS in Places

THE PROJECT BOOK

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It is the end of the semester and my project is officially complete. I can now reflect on the process as a whole. In general, this project was extremely rewarding. It spanned two semesters, where valuable knowledge and insight was gained. I experienced victories and struggles; I was met with challenges of troubleshooting and being a good sport about changing things up along the way; I encouraged myself to reach out to different people and professionals for their advice; I pushed myself harder than I ever had on a school project; and overall, I am extraordinarily proud of the work I produced.

The birth of this book stemmed from one requirement and three passions of mine: The requirement was the Senior Honors Project assigned to me as a participant of the Disciplinary Honors Program in my concentration in New Media and Design. The result began simply as disconnected passions, the first of which was my background and future in illustrating children’s books. I have experience in the illustration of these books, and through it I have had the chance to have a first-hand look into the design, writing, printing and publishing process. I felt like this would be a good direction in which to go for my Honors project because of my simple understanding and novice knowledge, and it allowed me to learn even more and execute those steps successfully. The second passion was my art background – it made sense to me that a book would be the perfect culmination of my love of both illustration and design. The third passion is my reverence for cars: how they work, their histories, their cultural significance, and so on. I had been looking forward to a chance to depict my excitement of cars in a visual, artistic way.

I had an epiphony during the beginning stages of this project, which was that children’s books are underrated methods of positively influencing the way young people learn and develop. If I can accomplish that in an artistic way, I’d call that a victory. I will absolutely share the product I have created with friends and family, whether children or adults, get their feedback, and include their assessments and reactions in my next projects. I believe this Honors project is the first step to a journey that will hopefully carry through my entire life.

The aim of this project book is to document my entire creative process. I feel like the making of this book was a highly valuable learning experience, and I want this to be a reminder to myself and a proof to those who are only now viewing the final product just how much work and research I put into this project.
Phase 1: Planning

I used my Typographic Practice course in the Fall 2018 semester as a means of creating the chart I would use throughout the entire illustration and writing process. Although some of the cars, designs or color palettes changed, this was an amazing tool that I was able to utilize.

In my very beginning stages of generating ideas for the concept of the book, these sketches were created. They are probably the very first sketches that lead to the final concept.
I used nonfiction, educational books to inform myself on the back-end production methods, from how to set up a page, to how to organize the pages for print.

There are many examples of children’s books I studied, but one of my favorites that helped model my own book was The Runaway Tomato. I took a liking to the illustration inside, and the illustrator’s lack of fear to use the color black, bold outlines, and a style that was very digital in nature. I also really enjoyed the illustrator’s style altogether. Even though the pages of my own book don’t look similar, this book was indeed a real inspiration that I reverted to whenever I was having artists’ block.
For the general feel and design of the book, I was inspired by the '50s and '80s eras. Those eras were themselves very stylistic—they are both futuristic. The '80s design inspiration translated into the use of triangles, horizontal lines, and neon; and the '50s designs showed themselves through my font choice and my illustration style.

**MY GOAL WAS TO USE THIS "STYLEGUIDE" THAT I CREATED FOR MYSELF TO GIVE CONSISTENCY TO MY BOOK.**
Phase 2: Design

My digital sketchbook became overflowed with visually interesting photos from all sorts of sources. Predominantly, I found artists on social media, and even found designs from the eras of the '80s and '50s themselves.

...And here are my narrowed down notes on what look I ultimately went for.

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This is my large collection of inspirational designs, illustrations and personal notes...
Phase 3: Illustration

I was interested in intersecting strong design and strong illustration, and managed to do that within each spread – the lefthand sides are design heavy, with strong and prominent shapes and patterns; the righthand sides are illustration heavy, and still manages to use the designs in the lefthand side as subtle elements.

To answer the question my family and friends kept asking: No, I did not trace these. I promise! I studied these cars and their parts and nuances hard, drew them freehand, then came up with notes on revisions and my own stylizations.
I jumped at the idea of researching places, eras in time and cultures that I associated each car with. I gave each spread a color palette that was inspired by the mood and environment of the setting. I referenced my *Cars That Inspire Me* chart as I worked, of course.

Here is an example of the amount of thought and planning I put into these. This isn’t even including my notes on my actual Illustrator documents. I was changing and rearranging things from beginning to end of the illustration process.
Phase 3: Illustration
I want to give a personal thank you to those individuals who helped me throughout this project, from Fall 2018 to Spring 2019:

Rachele Riley – my faculty advisor
Heather Hollan – my Honors liason
The staff at Spartan Printing
My family, friends, and classmates

One of the most exciting parts of the entire process, of course, was having the final product printed. A challenge I met was laying out the InDesign file correctly, and the staff at Spartan Printing were a huge help.

Last but not least, I have been encouraged to think about ways to take this project to the next level, beyond school requirements. My next steps are to find a reputable publisher and submit a manuscript, or learn how to self-publish. I will also revamp my online portfolio: I’ll find a web host and zero in to my focus of book illustrations. Once I successfully take those steps, I can then continue to produce more of my own books, and I am extremely excited to do so.

I used websites, Indie Publishing, and actual childrens books to determine a number of technicalities: page size and number, bind type, and paper type.