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I, exist. Exhibition Identity Branding: Conveying the Doctrine of Existentialism


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I, exist.

Exhibition Identity and Branding:
Conveying the Doctrine of Existentialism

By
Xuan Jiang

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design

School of Design
College of Imaging Arts and Sciences

Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, New York
November 2016

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Abstract

I, exist.

Exhibition Identity and Branding: Conveying the Doctrine of Existentialism

Literature and philosophy are the concise expressions of human inner-self. The main idea which all of Existentialists have in common is the fundamental doctrine that existence precedes essence. This idea has its own historical significance for explaining the fact of thinking and action. Why do we exist? The question of existence is disturbing and unsettling. It seems inevitable for human beings to face this question. We cannot help but feel anguished because we are conscious beings.

I exist is a project that aims to develop a brand identity for a exhibition about Existentialism, or more precisely, a project that conveys the pivotal theme of Existentialism through visual representation. The objective of the project is to help people gain more knowledge of this philosophy and understand it in a more intuitive way through visual design.

The project has two main sections: the brand Identity for the exhibition and a motion graphics piece. The basic concepts involved in this project are individual existence, relationship, self-awareness, inner-self, thinking, questioning and responsibility. In this thesis project, my intention is to explore a effective approach to the representation of the image by applying simple visual elements to complex concepts.

Keyword

Existentialism, Exhibition, Digital, Philosophy, Identity, Branding, Interactive Design, Motion Graphics

Introduction

Existentialism, as a major philosophical school during the first half of the 20th century, can refer to any doctrine that considers individual's irrational thinking and thoughts as the most real existence.

Existentialism has been criticized as a philosophy of quietism for a long time (*Being and Nothingness, Jean-Paul Sartre*) which induces people to be content with desperation, and also of being biased towards the dark side of the human condition. It leads people to see the vile, despicable and poor while ignoring the bright side of humanity in some kind and wonderful things. However, this criticism is a misunderstanding of Existentialism.

Existentialism is human-centered, highly respects human individuality and freedom. The philosophy of existentialism offers a very clear view of what state of human reality. The main principle of existentialism is that, in the case of human beings, existence precedes essence. We exist first, and then, we become something afterward. Although both the living in this universe and the existence itself are meaningless, people can build up their own personalities and be wonderful on the basis of existence.

The way we see changes the way we live. Sometimes we do not see things as they are, we see them as we are. Existentialism has many great opinions and thoughts that are very instructive for every single individual to figure out the way of living and thinking. Therefore, I proposed to make an identity for a exhibit about Existentialism and help people to understand about this philosophy better.

Mainstream Public , specifically for those who wants to explore more about life, thinking and philosophy.

**Target
Audience**

Review of literature

Existentialism : a very short introduction

Flynn, Thomas. Existentialism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. 2006.

Introducing the leading figures of existentialism, the author offers a concise overview of existentialism, explaining the theme of individuality, freedom, and responsibility, which marked the movement as a way of life, not just a way of thinking. With existentialism fading away as a way of thought, this book shows that the original definition of “existentialism,” which tends to be obscured by misappropriation, and highlights how the philosophy is still relevant in our world today. It also suggests to me that as a way of experiencing the world, this can never disappear from our daily life.

Being and Nothingness

Jean-Paul Sartre. Being and Nothingness. Reprint edition. Washington: Washington Square Press. 1993.

This book is indispensable to those interested in the philosophy of consciousness and free will. If you have to deal with existentialism at some point and this book essentially gives you a very good start on the subject. There are lots of negative feedbacks about Sartre, but honestly, this book had the opposite effect on me. I took it more as if Sartre was telling me that human life still has value even if there's no point in having a life.

In this book, Sartre's thoughts penetrate deeply into very fundamental philosophical territory. Its revolutionary approach challenged all previous assumptions about the individual's relationship with the world. Basing on his conception of self-consciousness loosely on Heidegger's “being,” he sharply delineate between conscious actions and unconscious. It is a conscious choice, Sartre claims, to live one's life “authentically”-- this is the fundamental freedom of our lives.

Review of literature

Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy

William Barrett. Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy. Garden City, NY, USA: Doubleday. 1962

Existential philosophy confronts real-life issues, such as the prospect of death, anxiety and the limits of rationality as a guide to life.

I think that this book is a must for those who thinks and has ever found themselves frustrated by the inadequacy of philosophy as it's understood in American academia. Barrett discusses the views of 19th and 20th century existentialists Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre and interprets the impact of their thinking on literature, art, and philosophy. He doesn't just summarize their main points, he also brave about raising issues he thinks each philosopher has missed, or when they seem to have lost. Moreover, Barrett locates Existentialism--both as presented by each of the Big Four, and more broadly--within the context of specific earlier writers/thinkers and the major themes and concerns of philosophy generally.

Basic Writings of Existentialism

Gordon Marino. Basic Writings of Existentialism. New York, NY, USA: Modern Library, 2004

This book is a basic writing of Existentialism. Marino's introduced each thinker's passions and concerns, and the substantial selections from the foremost representatives of the movement. Marino's introductions to each writer, and his introductory overview, are lively and capture the spirit of the chosen texts. These fresh selections lay out the issues, from alienation to reconciliation, from despair to joyful wisdom, that make this world-perspective so compelling.

Review of literature

Either/Or

Soren Kierkegaard. Either/Or. New York, NY, USA: Penguin Classics. 1992

In *Either/Or*, using the voices of two characters - the aesthetic young man of part one, called simply 'A', and the ethical Judge Vilhelm of the second section, Kierkegaard reflects on the search for a meaningful existence, contemplating subjects as diverse as Mozart, drama, boredom, and, in the famous *Seducer's Diary*, the cynical seduction and ultimate rejection of a young, beautiful woman. A masterpiece of duality, *Either/Or* is a brilliant exploration of the conflict between the aesthetic and the ethical - both meditating ironically and seductively upon Epicurean pleasures, and eloquently expounding the noble virtues of a morally upstanding life.

Documentary on the life of Jean Paul Sartre:

The Road to Freedom

<http://www.youtube.com/>

[watch?v=PAMCZKDgLO4&list=TLvFXVcLQWGo2iK7wHOBHpWPaFpyz1ZgN](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAMCZKDgLO4&list=TLvFXVcLQWGo2iK7wHOBHpWPaFpyz1ZgN)

Human, All Too Human is a three-part documentary television series produced by the BBC in 1999. It follows the lives of three prominent European philosophers: Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre. The theme of this documentary revolves heavily around the school of philosophical thought known as existentialism, although the term had not been coined at the time of Nietzsche's writing, and Heidegger declaimed the label. The final episode in this series, *The Road to Freedom*, describes the life of the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. This is when the term existentialism begins to enter the realm of philosophy. The documentary shows that Sartre believes it is up to each individual human being to give his or her own life a meaning and a purpose.

Review of literature

Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism”

<http://www.youtube.com/>

[watch?v=gBjJstjBJlw&list=TLer9e6df5zinc1VYehp6s8PcBPEZmZjUW](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBjJstjBJlw&list=TLer9e6df5zinc1VYehp6s8PcBPEZmZjUW)

In this lecture, the lecturer explores some of the key themes of Jean-Paul Sartre’s classic exposition of his atheist Existentialism, “Existentialism is a Humanism.” He focuses in particular on the themes of existence preceding essence, radical human freedom, criterion-less choice that is nevertheless one made for all humanity, and on the human being as a project of freedom.

Introduction to Existentialism

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilg7PiDD8yY>

This lecture mainly talks about the history of existentialism, examine what for Existentialists is the key concern of philosophy, discuss the phrase existence precedes essence, and differentiate between existentialism and nihilism.

Geo/Graphics

Viction: workshop ltd. Geo/Graphics. HK, China: Viction: workshop ltd, 2012

Geo/Graphics is a study focused on geometric graphic designs. Looking at the collections of projects that using circles and polygons as the core visual elements, the book presents how shapes facilitate communication and fortify memories in diverse fields of design. Together with colors, shapes, textures function as the universal token of meanings, representing abstract concepts. Graphic Designers use geometric shapes in two ways— visible geometry and invisible geometry. With visible ones, designers create individual complementary and competing elements within art. Invisible geometry on the other hand, it is the key to make the visible tangible and dynamic.

Review of literature

Type: A Visual History of Typefaces and Graphic Styles

Jan Tholenaar and Cees De Jong. Type: A Visual History of Typefaces and Graphic Styles. Los Angeles, CA, USA: TASCHEN America Llc. 2009

Typography is at the heart of visual communication and graphic design. No design is successful without successful typography. This book offers a very wonderful collection of typeface design, serving as a visual reference with rare, vintage samples, with a special emphasis on the period from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century. This selection of printed letters in various design projects gives you more ideas about characters, borders, ornaments, initial letters and decorations.

Dynamic Identity

Irene van Nes. Dynamic Identity: How to create a living brand. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: BIS Publishers. 2012

This visual book looks into design systems for brand identities that produces identities that are alive, which means that they can change and generate new versions based on external data. The book offers a systematic process of creating brand identities that are alive and gives the reader a wealth of examples of international identities that were built on the discussed systems.

Process

Overview

- Research
- Concept development
- Branding design / Sketch
- Motion graphics design
- Feedback collecting / Refinement
- Other materials design
- Final refinement

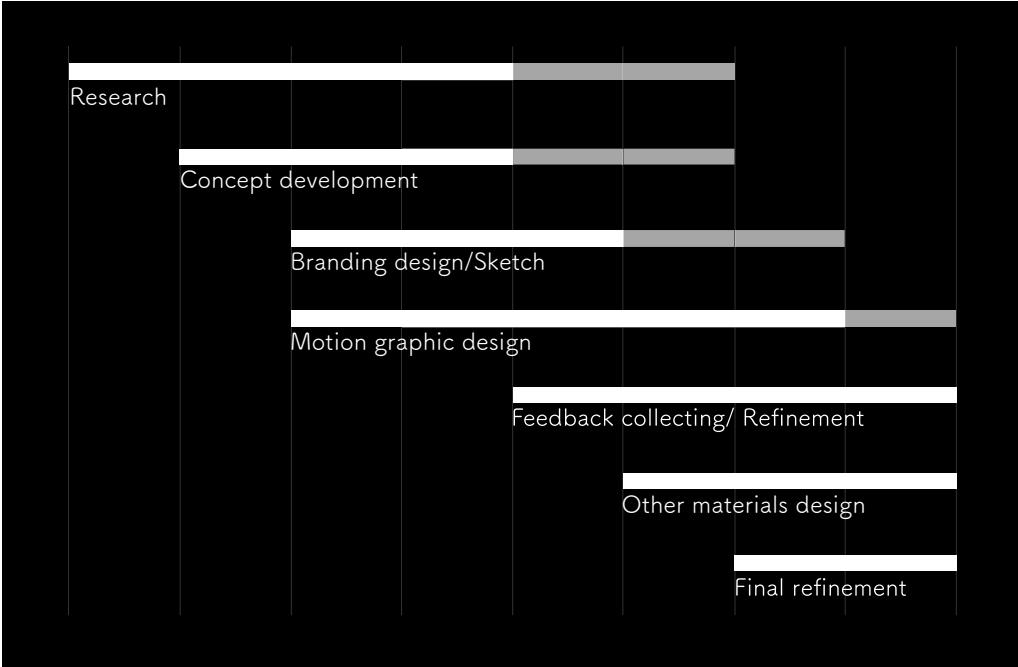


Figure 1
Process overview

Process

Research

Philosophy

Doctrine

Research Keywords:

Existence precedes essence / Absurdity / Anxiety / Subjectivity /
The Übermensch / Despair / Loneliness / Isolation / Freedom / Choice /
Nature / Self -awareness / Relationship / Responsibility / Consciousness

Basic Concepts

- Individual existence
- Personal freedom
- Authentic choice

Process

Research

Visual Elements

Philosophical inquiry is very demanding, suitable only for those who possess a modest amount of courage, humility, patience and discipline.¹ In order to convey the ideas behind that in a clear and understandable way, simple elements and shapes was considered in the design. They are more or less intuitively conceived images rather than deeply analytical, yet, a particular existential issue underlies each visual elements.

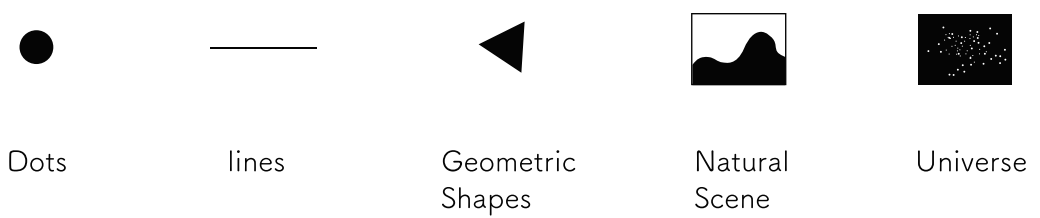


Figure 2
Visual Elements

¹ Mark Vuletic (2007). WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?.
<http://www.vuletic.com/hume/ph/philosophy.html>

Process

Research

Color Psychology

	Green	Organic / Calming / Positive
	Blue	Peaceful / Calming
	Purple	Spiritual
	Yellow	Positivity / Bright
	Orange	Confident / Friendly
	Red	Love / Dramatic / Powerful
	Pink	Soft / Gentle / Beauty
	Grey	Neutral / Calm / Open
	Black / White	Powerful / Sophisticated

The meaning of colors can vary depending on culture and circumstances. Color is a form of non verbal communication. It is not a static energy and its meaning can change from anytime with any individual— it all depends on what energy colors are expressing at that point in time.

Process

Research

Typography Emotions

Typography is an essential element in design and communication. Usually it is used to carry and convey information, so it must have some important common-sense characteristics such as high legibility and readability, scalability and appropriateness.

There are three reasons to look for emotional designs in this project

- Emotion dominates decision making
- Emotion increases motivation
- Emotion affects memories and creates personalities

There are some important typography fundamentals to take into consideration in order to keep the reader motivated

- Typographic appearance
- Readability and legibility
- High contrast
- Scalability
- Hierarchy
- Tone of voice

Process

Concept development

Ideas and Goals

Generalize a pivotal theme for motion graphics from thousand pages of Existentialism content. Existentialism emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. It is the view that humans define their own meaning of life, and try to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."² This is a famous saying written by Soren Kierkegaard. We have to learn from the past in order to live for the future. Existentialism believes that individuals must take their personal responsibility for themselves. To learn this responsibility is also to know oneself from individual to connection, from the past to the future, from one's inner-self to the outside world.



Figure 3
Ideas and goals

Concept theme Keywords:
individual / connection / integration /
see / think / question / inner-self /
outside / responsibility / attitude /
nature / universe / cells / humanity

Initial Concept

Everyone is unrepeatable.
All human beings are individual
cells in a larger body of humanity.
Even so, the entire world is an
integration of all this independent
individual. In this world, we need
to build better relationships and
connections between subjects.

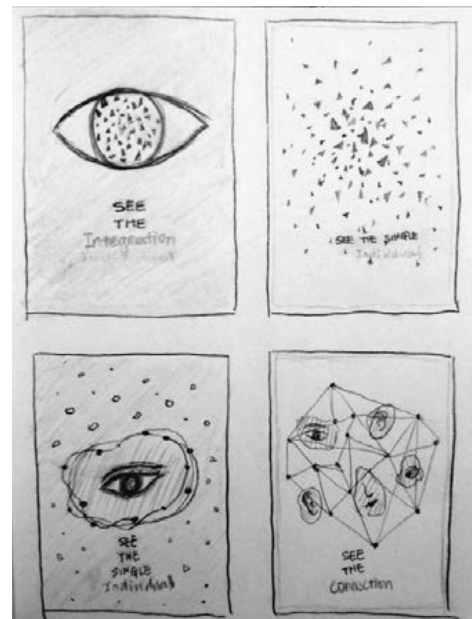


Figure 4
Initial concept sketch

² Søren Kierkegaard (1843). Journals IV A 164

Process

Concept development

Initial Concept

Compared to the entire universe, every single person is a tiny existence. Thinking and questioning about our inner selves help us build ourselves. Life can only be living forwards and thinking backwards. We understand about our responsibilities by facing up to what we did in the past.

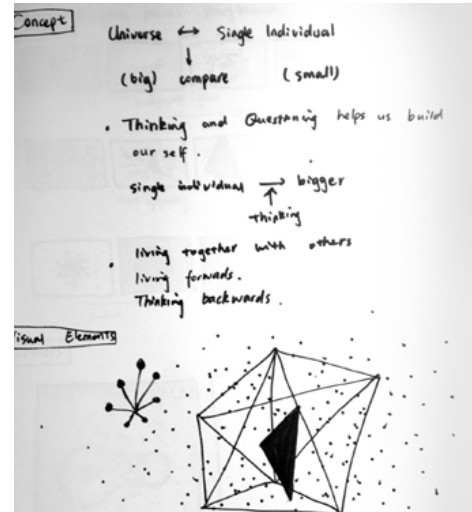


Figure 5
Initial concept sketch

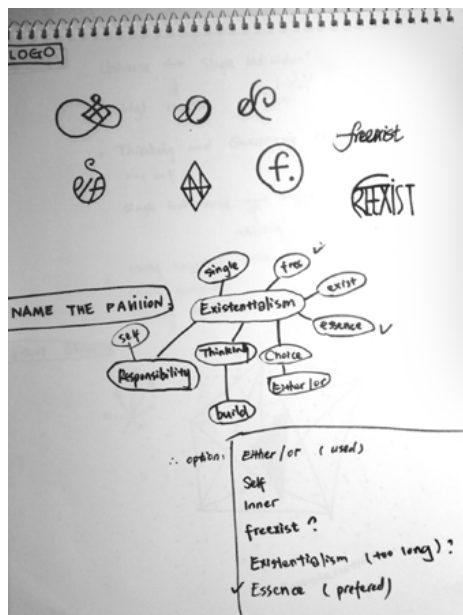


Figure 6
Initial concept sketch

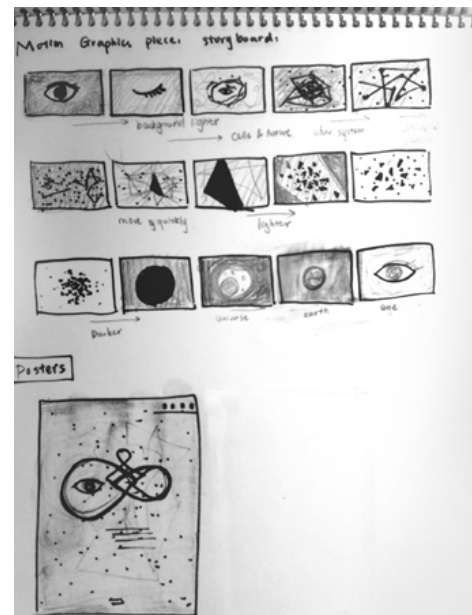


Figure 7
Initial concept sketch

Process

Motion graphics design

**Content
Structure**

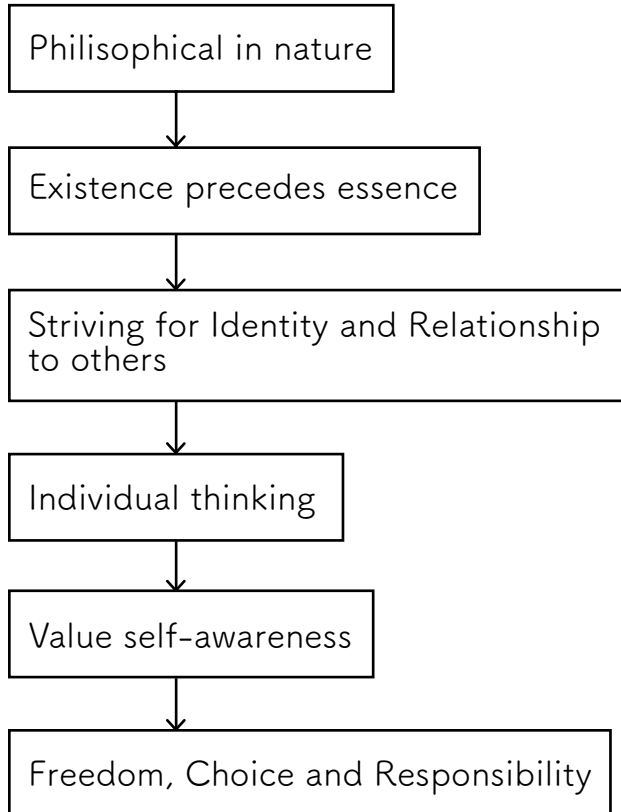


Figure 8
Content structure

Process

Motion graphics design

Scriptwriting

We see. We hear. We smell. We feel.
The way we see changes the way we live.
Sometimes. We don't see things as they are.
We see things as we are.

We are individuals.
We are the small cells of the larger body of humanity.
We are seeking to find ourselves and each other all the time.
We are individuals in this universe.
We are such a tiny parts of existence compared to the whole.

As single individuals, we are all unique.
Thinking and questioning about life makes us great.
We think backwards to know our inner selves.
As an integration of humanity, we join together and
live forwards to learn about our responsibility for the
outside world.

Music Selection

Swing Set

By Circadian Eyes

Greetings Xuan Jiang! Thank you for purchasing:

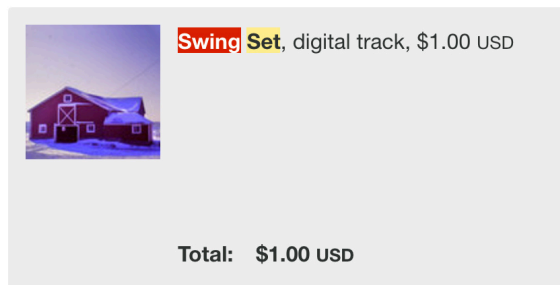


Figure 9
Proof of purchase

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Sketches

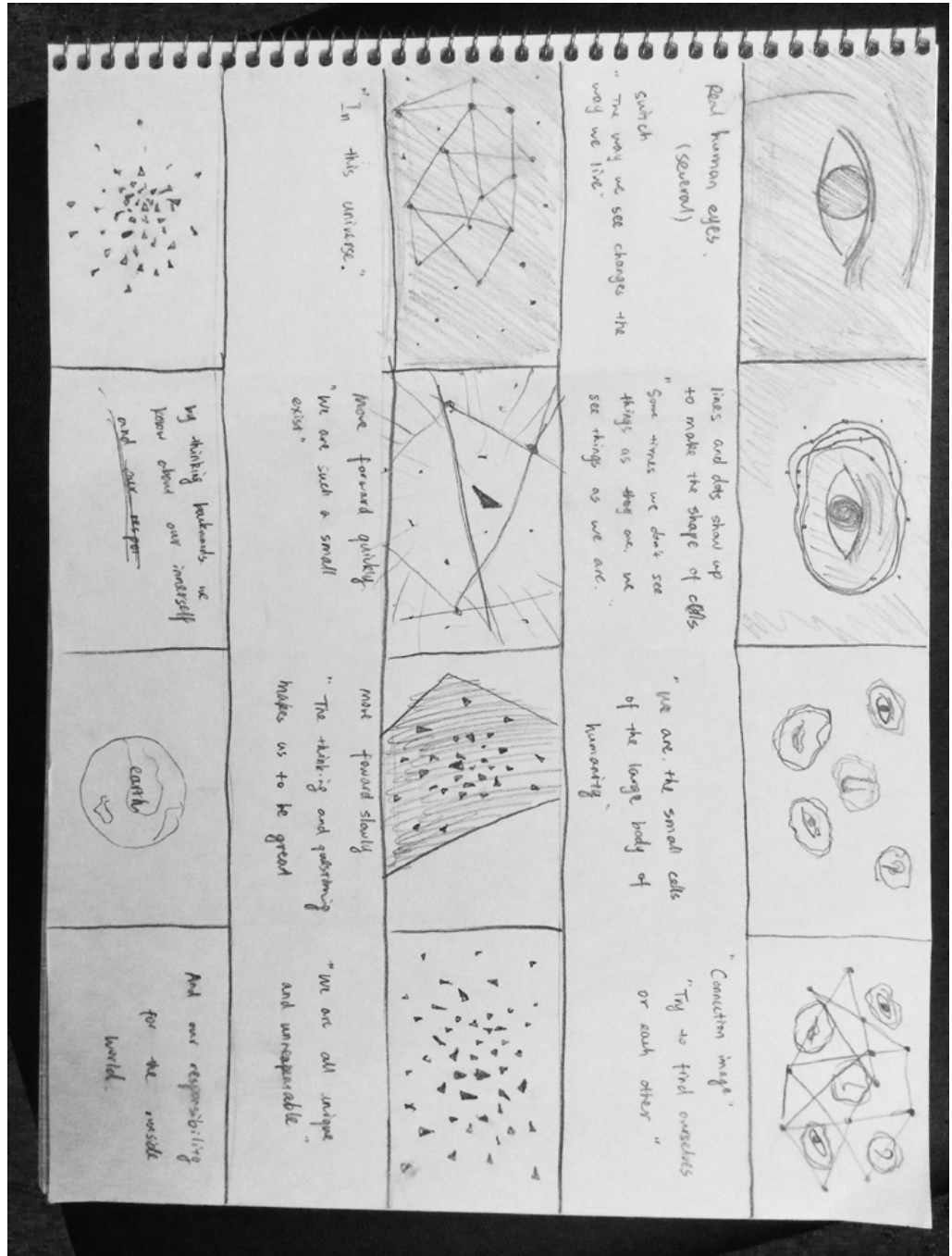


Figure 10
Storyboard sketches

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 1



Figure 11
Storyboard version 1

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 1

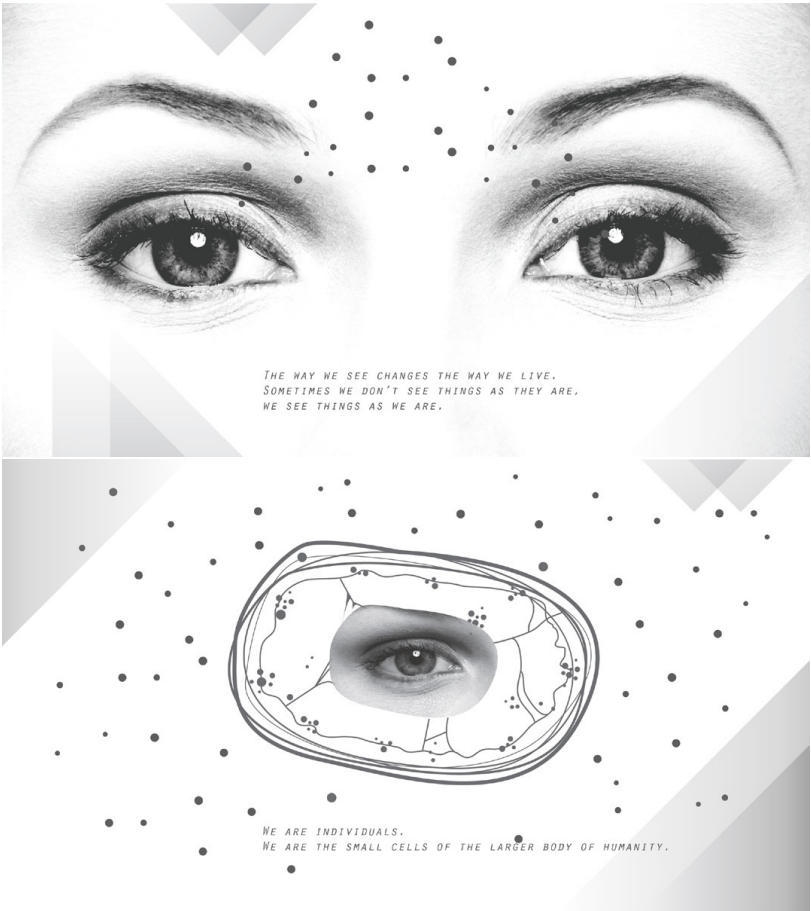


Figure 12
Storyboard version 1

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 1



Figure 13
Storyboard version 1

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 1



Figure 14
Storyboard version 1

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 1



Figure 15
Storyboard version 1

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 1

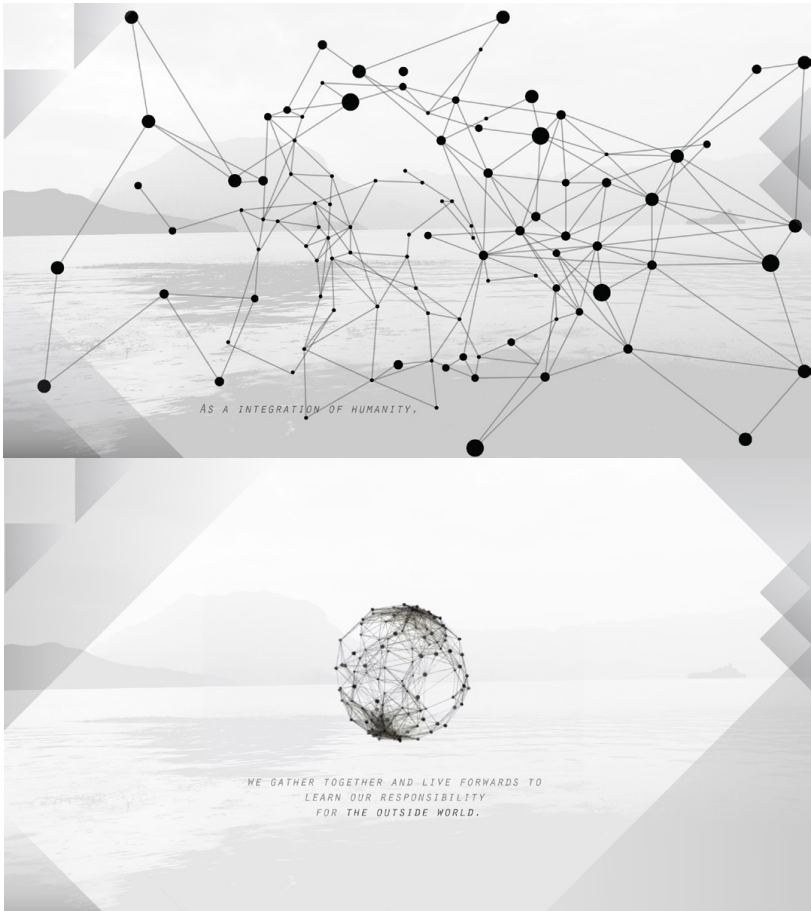


Figure 16
Storyboard version 1

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 2

Text: We see. We hear. We smell. We feel.

A seasonal natural scene video has been placed in the beginning of the motion graphics with the text “We see. We hear. We smell. We feel.” With the music and natural sounds playing slowly together, the audience can easily relax and watch.

Video



Figure 17
Storyboard version 2
video shooting

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 2

Text: The way we see changes the way we live. Sometimes. We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are. We are individuals.

There is no predetermined human nature. In the words of Jean-Paul Sartre, "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself."³ Truth is subjective. This means that what is true for one person might not be true for another.

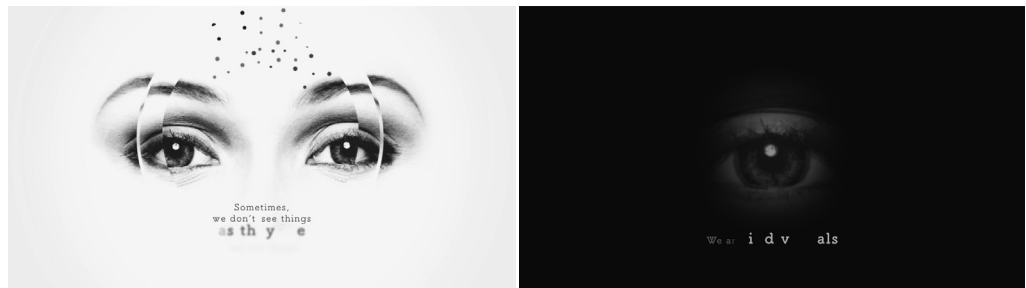


Figure 18
Storyboard version 2

Text: We are the small cells of the larger body of humanity. We are seeking to find ourselves and each other all the time.

Existentialism deals with how the individual choose to define their own reality. Everyone lives in their own little world and reality even when they are surrounded by others. Everyone lives in isolation of some kind.

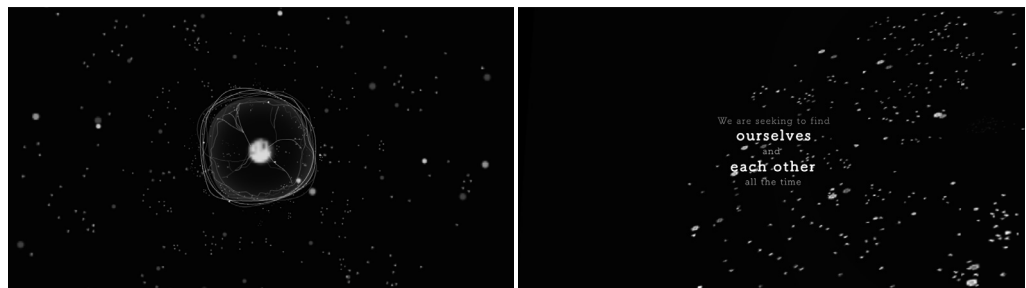


Figure 19
Storyboard version 2

³ Jean-Paul Sartre. (1993) Being and Nothingness. Washington: Washington Square Press. 1993

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 2

Text: We are individuals in this universe. We are such a tiny parts of existence compared to the whole. As single individuals, we are all unique.

Existence is about the contingency of human existence in this world. It represents a man's accidental appearance and disappearance in a certain space and time. The highest good for individual is to find his/her own unique vocation without the aid of universal, objective standards, against the traditional view that moral choice involves an objective judgment of right and wrong.

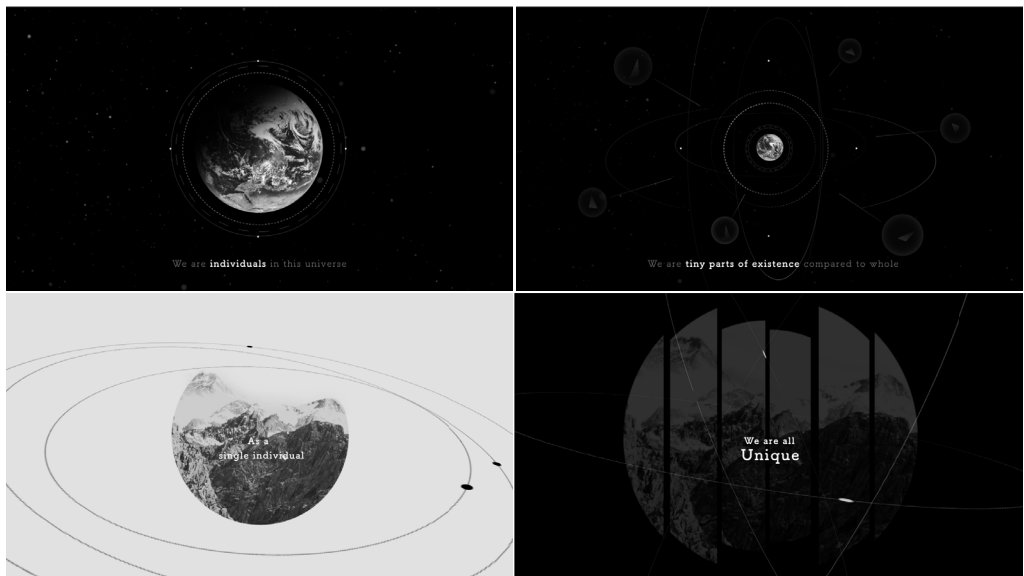


Figure 20
Storyboard version 2

Process

Motion graphics design

Storyboard Version 2

Text: Thinking and questioning about life makes us great. We think backwards to know our innerselves. As an integration of humanity, we join together and live forwards to learn about our responsibility for the outside world.

The individual's response to this situation must be to live a totally committed life, and this commitment can only be understood by the individual who has made it. The individual therefore must always be prepared to defy the norms of society for the sake of the higher authority of a personally valid way of life. The most prominent theme in existentialist writing is that of choice. Human beings do not have a fixed nature, or essence, as other animals and plants do; each human being makes choices that create his or her own nature. With the freedom of choice comes commitment and responsibility of the actions they take because of said choice.

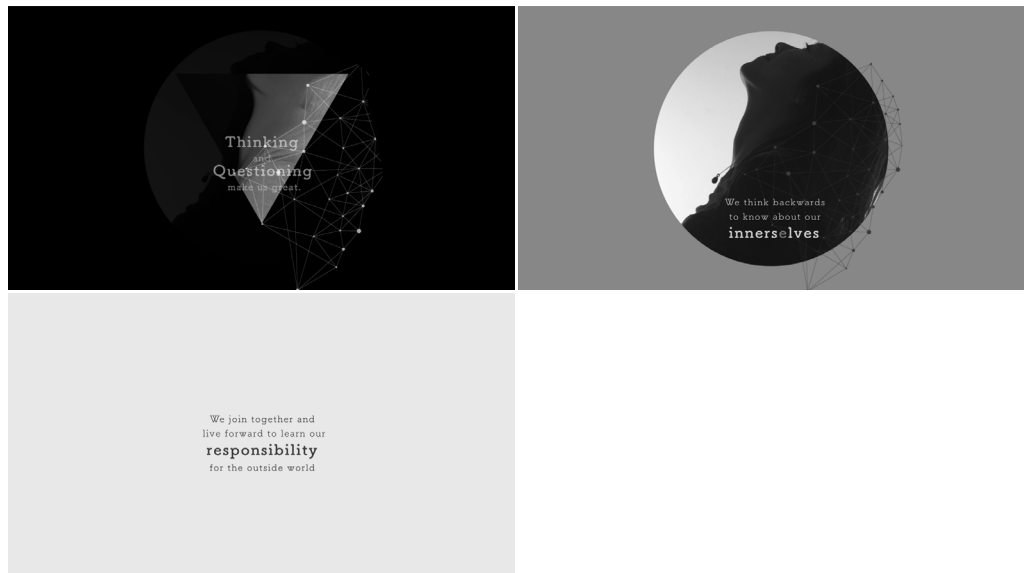


Figure 21
Storyboard version 2

Process

Branding design / Sketches

Exhibition Title

The name and the logo should reflect the scope of the concept and must be systematic with the design style of the motion graphics. I started with several name ideas based on the keywords of the motion graphics.

I , exist. (selected)

Essence

Either/or

Freexist

After collecting feedback “I , exist.” was selected as the most effective one. It represents the main principle of existentialism, existence precedes essence. We exist first, and then, we become something afterward.

Process

Branding design / Sketches

Sketches

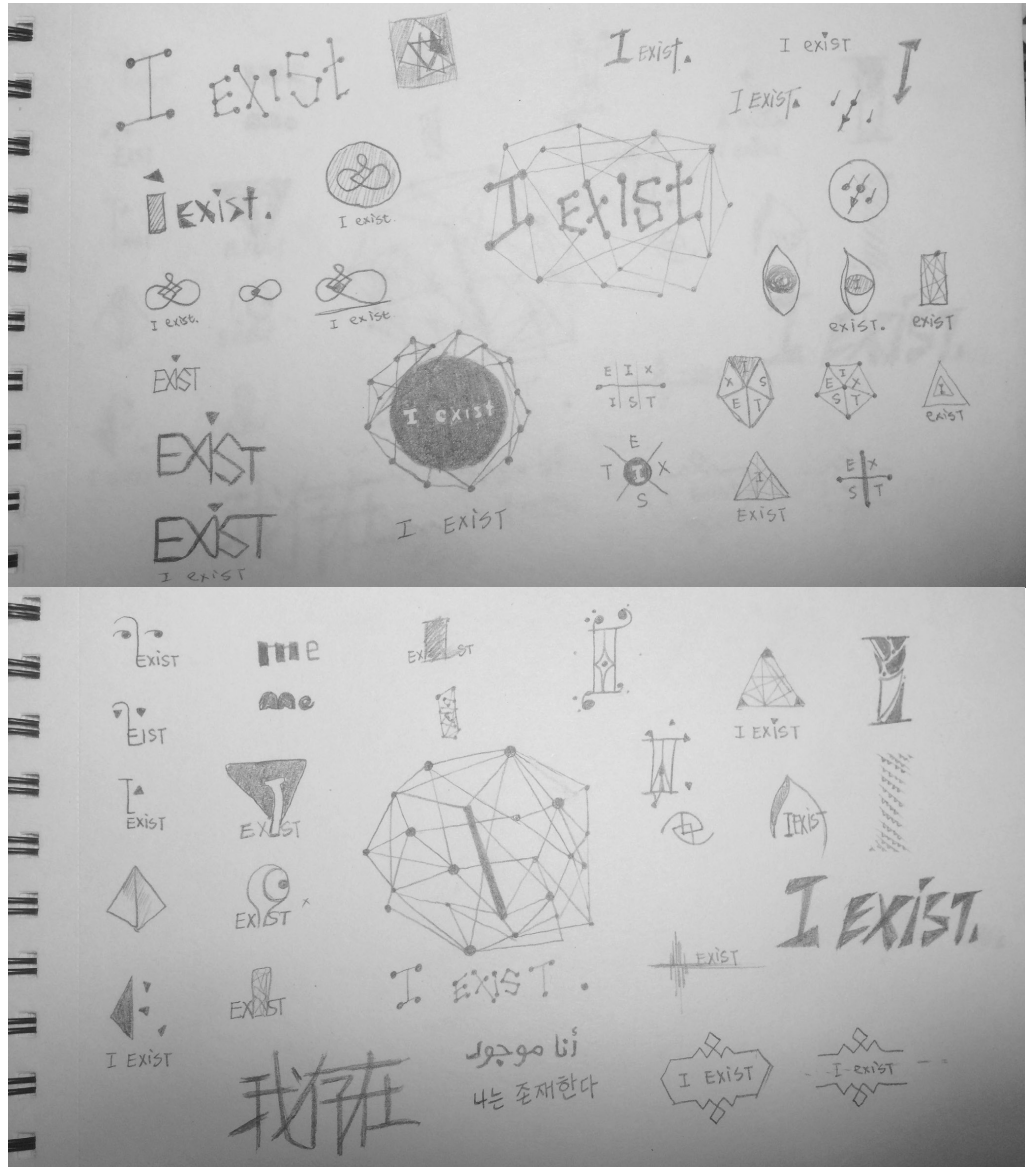


Figure 22
Logo sketches

Process

Branding design / Sketches

Logo design

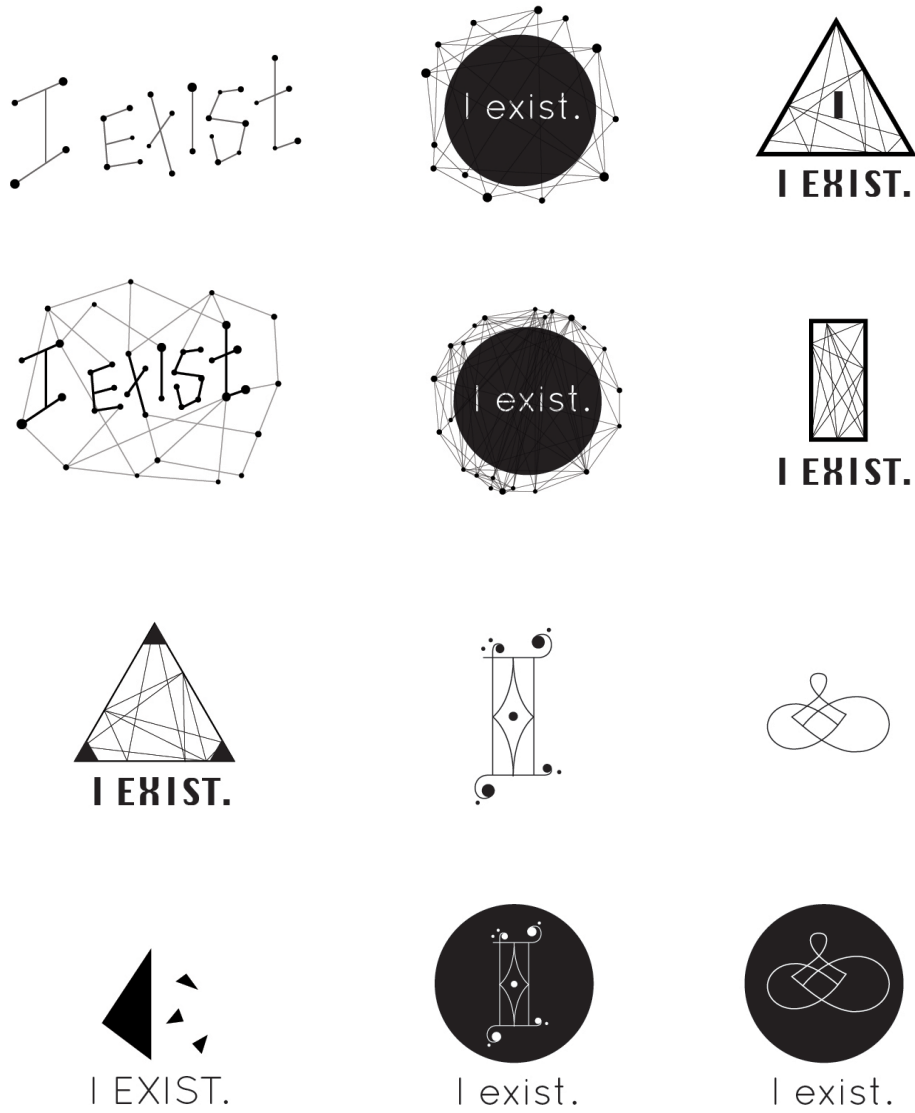


Figure 23
Logo sketches

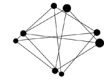
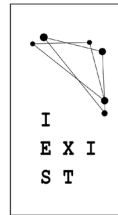
Process

Branding design / Sketches

Logo design processes



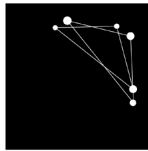
I
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I,
EXIST.

• I E X I S T •



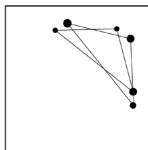
I, EXIST.



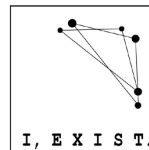
I, EXIST.



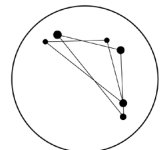
I, EXIST.



I, EXIST.



I, EXIST.



I, EXIST.

Figure 24
Logo sketches

Process

Branding design / Sketches

Final Logo

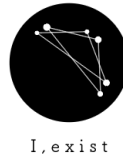
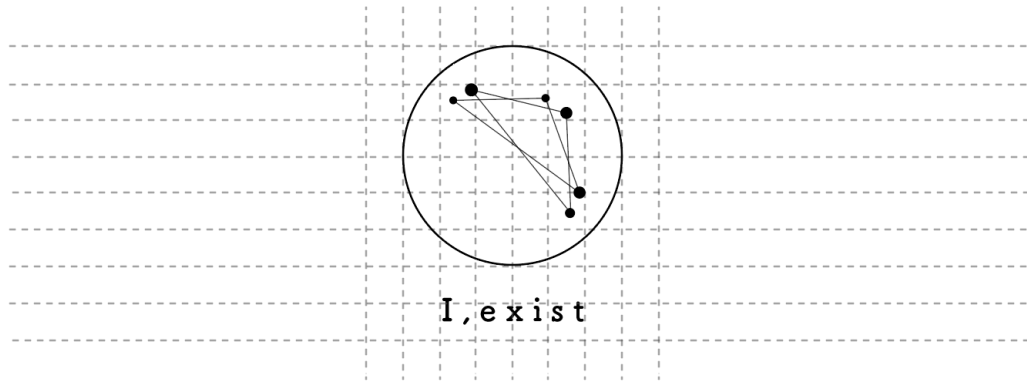


Figure 25
Final Logo

Dots and lines has been applied in the logo to represent individuals and relationships. The whole logo conveys the idea about contingency of human existence in this world. The spatial and physical location of the single dots means a man's accidental appearance and disappearance in a certain space and time. The intersecting and overlapping planes that composed by the three dots express the meaning of the connections between individuals as well as the responsibilities within each small groups.

So then, the relationship of self to other is the complete realization that loving yourself is impossible without loving everything defined as other than yourself. Thinking and questioning makes this love become real, while realizing the responsibilities leads your existence to become meaningful.

Process

Fonts

- **Basic**

Tsukushi B Round Regular

Tsukushi B Round Bold

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

- **Alternative**

Tsukushi A Round Regular

Tsukushi A Round Bold

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

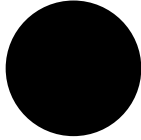
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Serif fonts look more traditional, more book-like, while sans serif fonts look cleaner and more modern. Tsukushi is Japanese fonts which look crisp and beautiful.

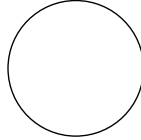
Process

Colors



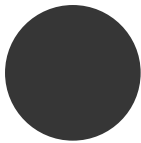
Black
#000000

C	0
M	0
Y	0
K	100



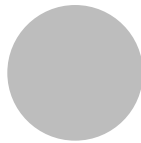
White
#FFFFFF

C	0
M	0
Y	0
K	0



Dark grey
#353535

C	69
M	63
Y	62
K	56



Light grey
#BEBEBE

C	26
M	21
Y	21
K	0

Black and white lends a certain timeless quality to the vision. It created a quite a atmosphere for the audience, whereas the colors made more distraction of the image.

Process

Final designs

Motion Graphics

<https://vimeo.com/166965376>

Tools: Adobe After Effects CC

Logo of the Exhibition

Tools: Adobe Illustrator CC

Print Designs

2 Posters

8 Postcards

1 Brochure

Print designs could be distributed in promotional campaigns. The poster is an introduction to the motion graphics, intended to draw attention and inspire viewers to think at first glance. The exported highlighted frames of the motion graphics constitute the series of postcards.

This 12 fold double- sided brochure is 50 inches by 7 inches.

It is the “still version” of the motion graphics.

Process

Final designs

Poster 1



Figure 26
Poster 1

Process

Final designs

Poster 2



Figure 27
Poster 2

Process

Final designs

Postcard Series



Figure 28
Postcard series

Process

Final designs

Postcard 1



Figure 29
Postcard 1

Process

Final designs

Postcard 2



Figure 30
Postcard 2

Process

Final designs

Postcard 3



Figure 31
Postcard 3

Process

Final designs

Postcard 4



Figure 32
Postcard 4

Process

Final designs

Postcard 5

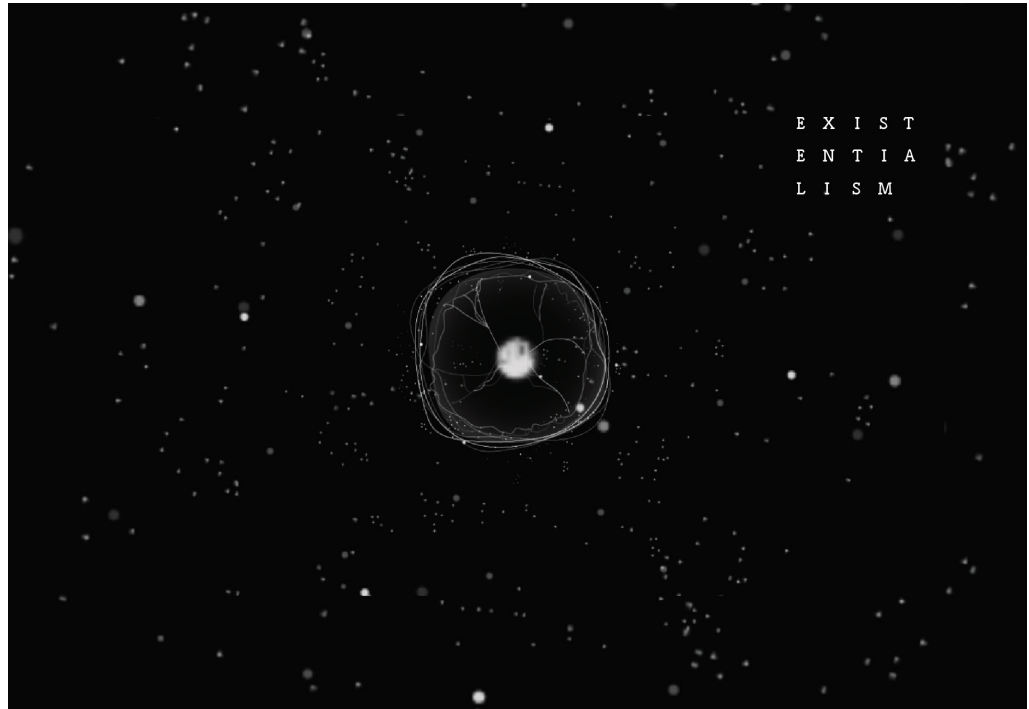


Figure 33
Postcard 5

Process

Final designs

Postcard 6



Figure 34
Postcard 6

Process

Final designs

Postcard 7



Figure 35
Postcard 7

Process

Final designs

Postcard 8

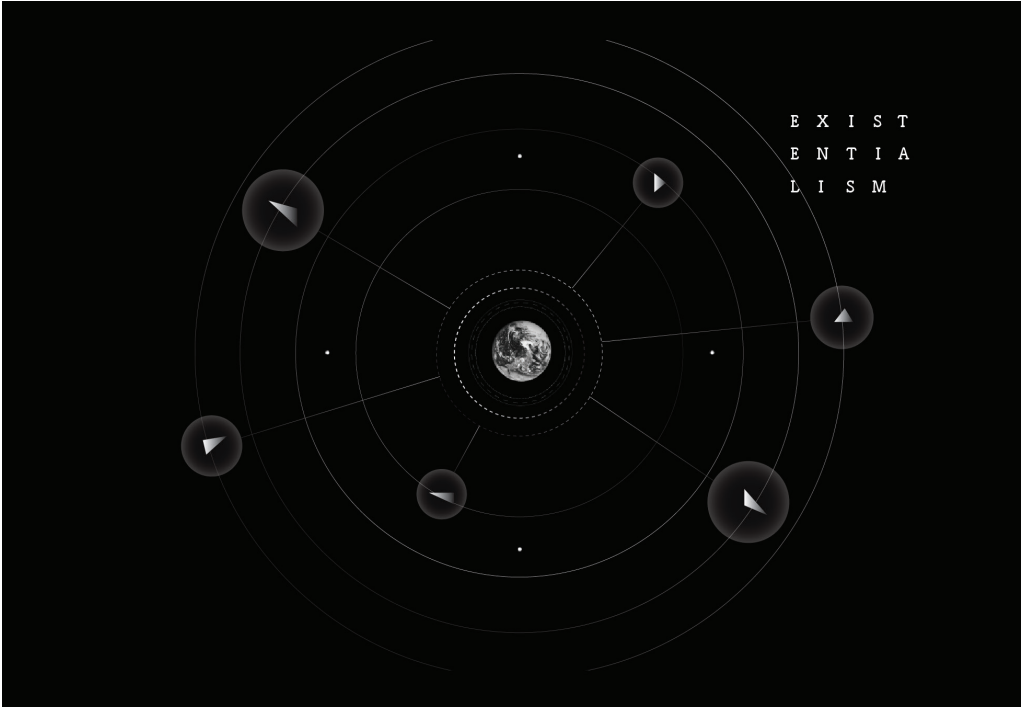


Figure 36
Postcard 8

Process

Final designs

**Postcard
address side**

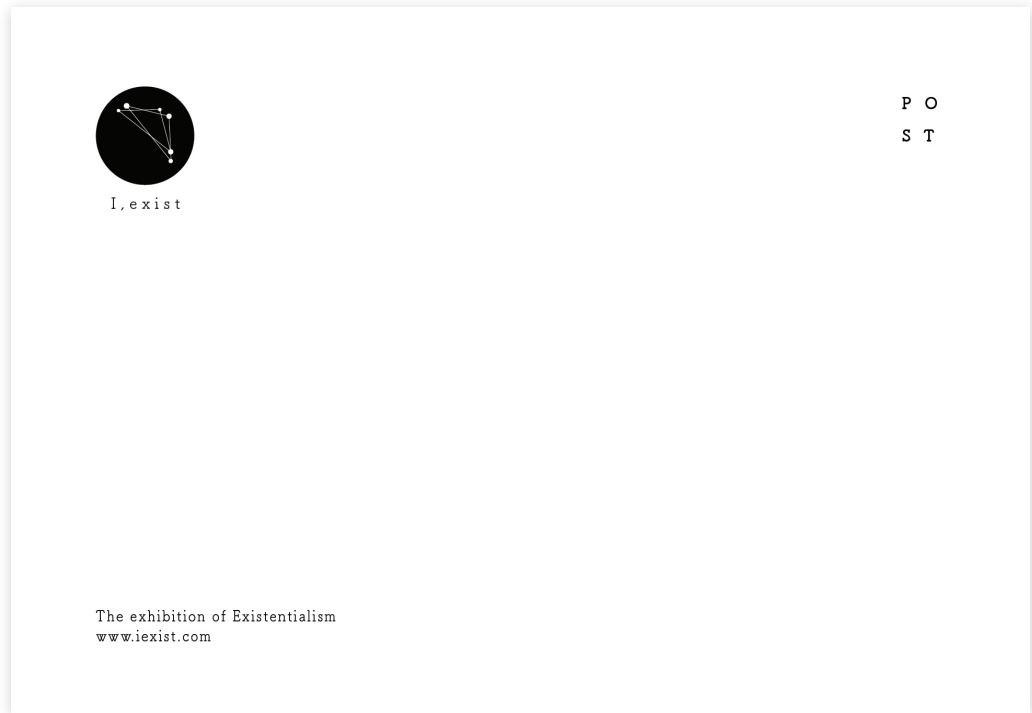


Figure 37
Postcard address side

Process

Final designs

Brochure

(Double sided)



Figure 38
Brochure

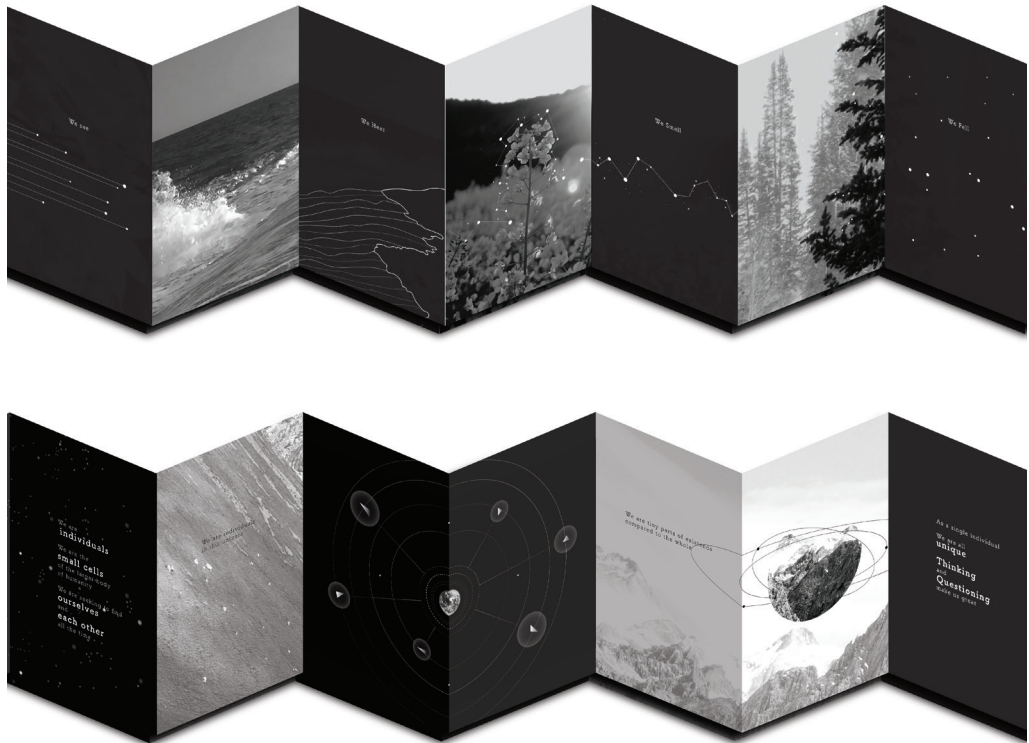


Figure 39
Brochure close up look

Process

Final designs

Front cover
and
Back cover



Figure 40
Front and Back cover of brochure

Brochure
first page



Figure 41
Brochure first page

Process

Final designs

Brochure
pages



Figure 42
Brochure pages

Process

Final designs

Brochure
pages

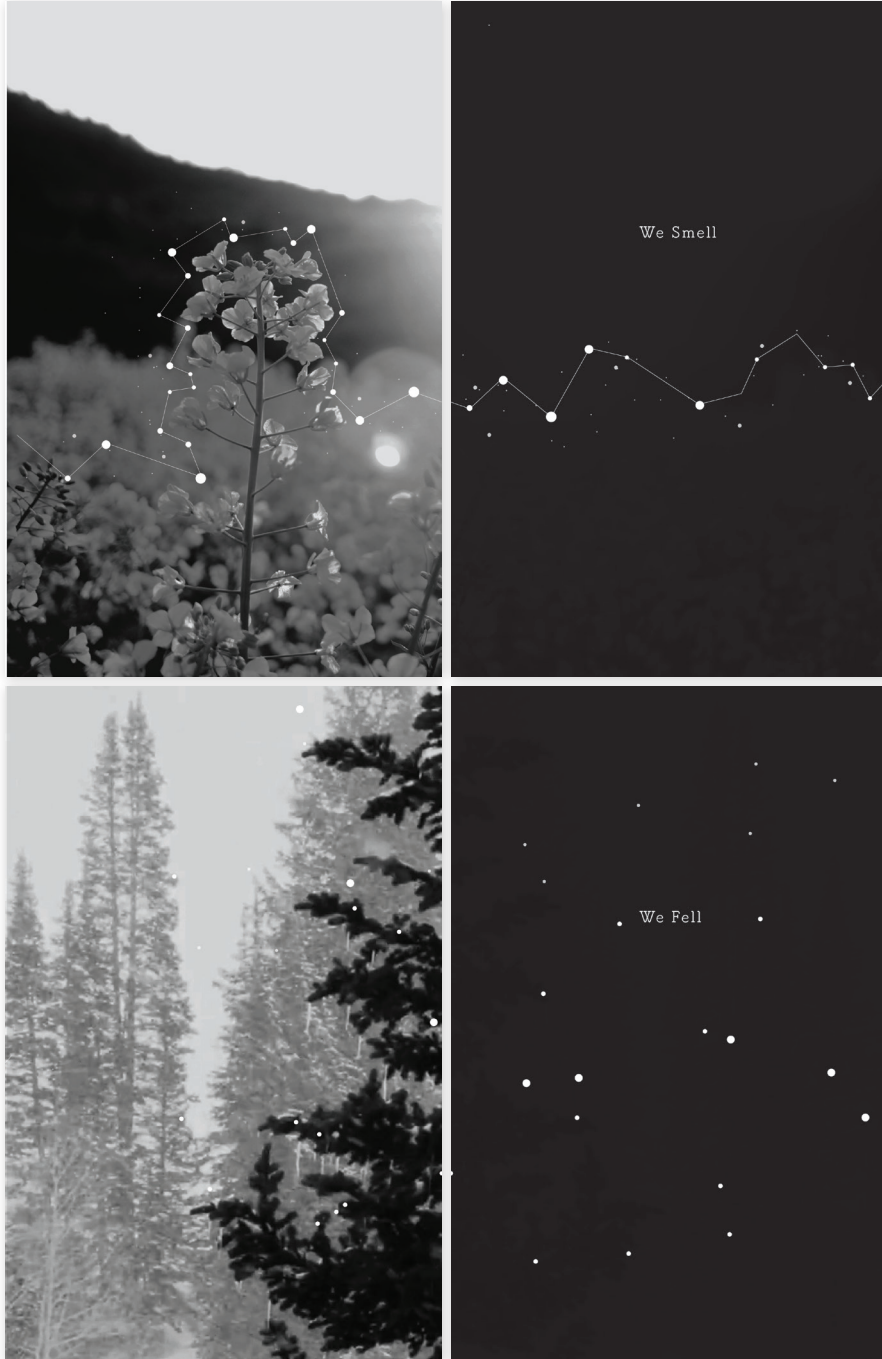


Figure 43
Brochure pages

Process

Final designs

Brochure pages

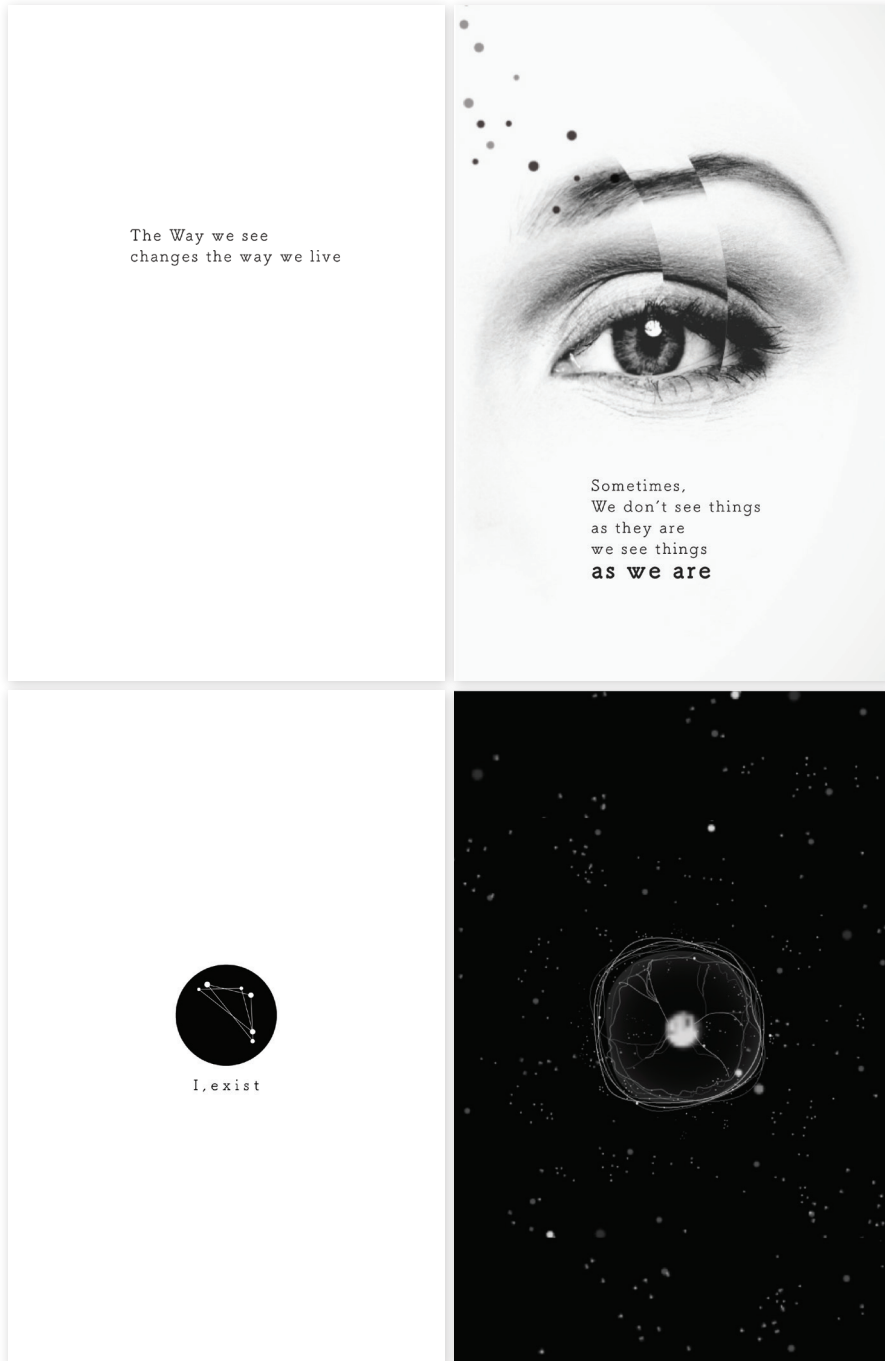


Figure 44
Brochure pages

Process

Final designs

Brochure
pages

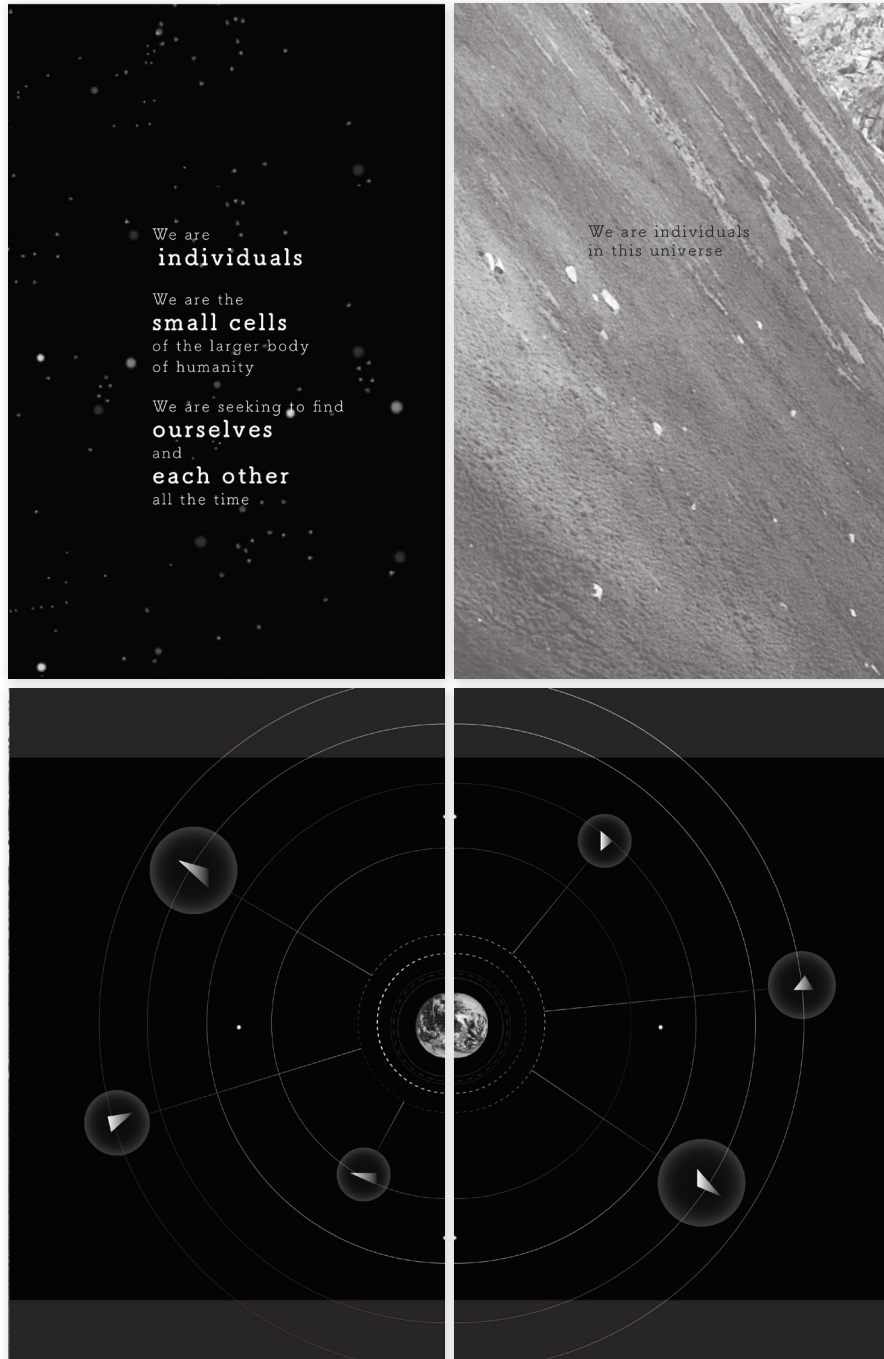


Figure 45
Brochure pages

Process

Final designs

Brochure
pages

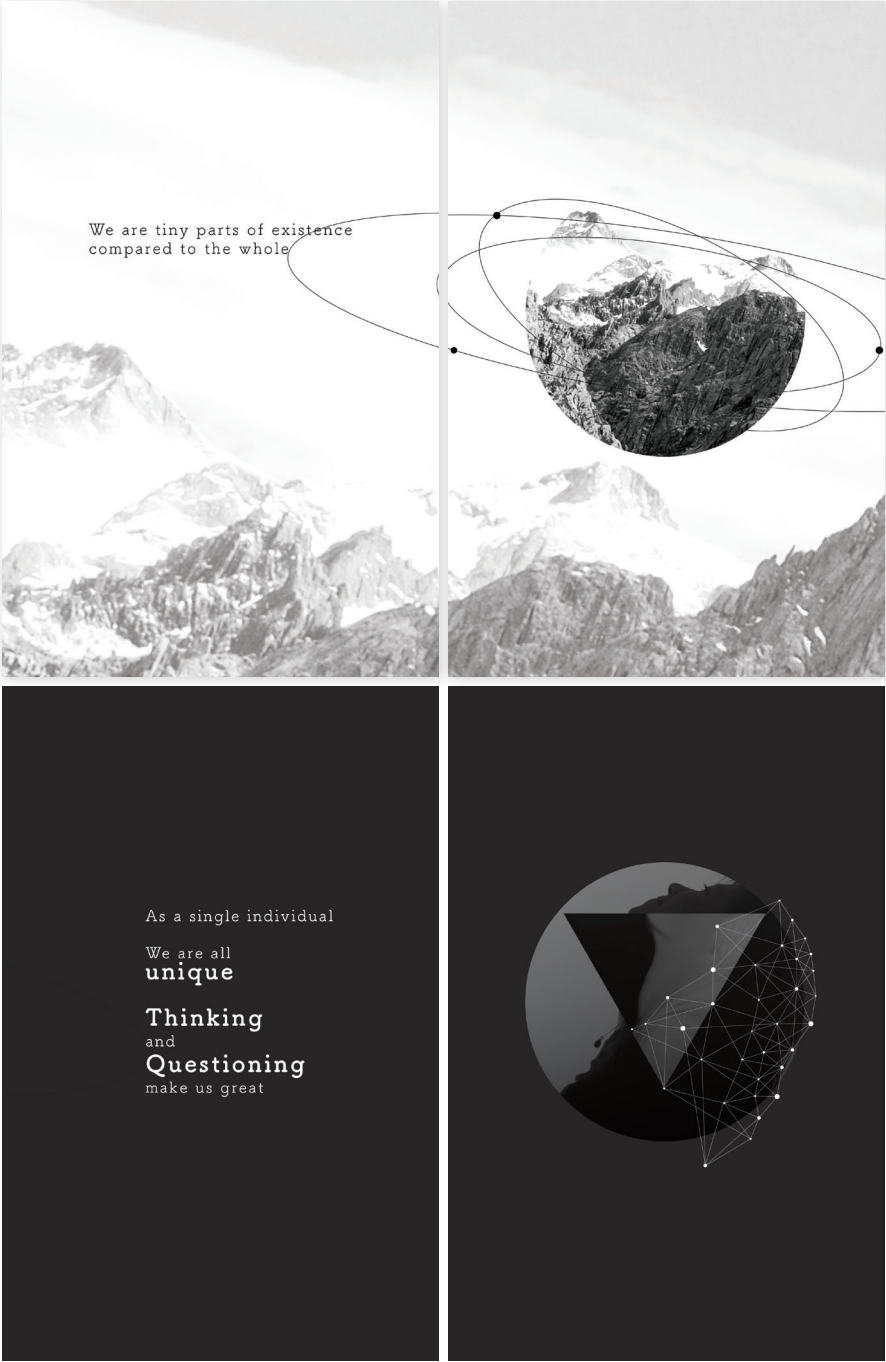


Figure 46
Brochure pages

Process

The exhibition



Figure 47
Thesis Show

Process

The exhibition



Figure 48
Thesis Show

Summary

Design decisions

Colors

Colorful → Black / White

Typography

Mechanical → Organic

Modern → Traditional

Scripts

Voiceover → Captions

Summary

Feedback collecting

Feedbacks

Feedback was collected from
Committee members
Colleagues and Classmates
Non-Designer friends
RIT literature Club

Feedback example

"I agree that the color choices you made reflect this mood very well."

"It also reminded me of Hegel's famous saying, not only that philosophy (the owl of Minerva) happens (flies) at twilight, but that philosophers can only paint grey on grey."

"Like the typeface choice, it looks like book text and fits the topic perfectly."

"It makes me more concentrated when there is no human voice in the video."

Feedback Summary:

Black and white lends a certain timeless quality to the vision. It created a quite a atmosphere for the audience, whereas the colors made more distraction of the image.

Serif fonts look more traditional, more book-like, while sans serif fonts look cleaner and more modern.

In order to avoid the audience being distracted by reading the text, more organic fonts have been apply in the motion graphics.

Summary

Evaluation Survey

Participants

20 adults, male and female, Age 18-40,
different culture backgrounds, different occupations

Process

Approached a target audience.
Introduced the thesis project briefly.
Showed the motion graphics and the brochure.
Explained the purpose, task, and process of the testing.
Interviewed the participant.

Interview questions

1. Do you like the overall look and feel of this project?
19 participants said yes. 1 said not sure about this project.
2. Do you think you have a basic understanding about existentialism after watching this motion graphics?
17 said yes. 3 said existentialism is still complicated for them.
3. According to your understanding, do you think existentialism is negative?
16 said no. 3 said they still think it might lead people to a meaningless thinking loop. 1 said it depends.
4. Do you like the typeface?
18 said yes.
5. Do you like the color theme?
19 said yes
6. Are you willing to recommend this motion graphics to others?
16 said yes

Summary

Refinements



Figure 49
Refinements

Scalability and hierarchy have been taken into consideration when refining the project. The contrast of the type size helps people to quickly get the key point of each frame.

Conclusion

The significance of the project lies in its ability to convey a pivotal theme about a controversial topic in a short video. The experience of interactive design rather than traditional lectures and presentations creates a new feeling into the philosophy itself.

My objective was to get people interested in Existentialism and to reveal the criticism that it is a quietism is not true and comprehensive. Early user testing both in and outside of campus suggests that a basic understanding was indeed gained in these subjects after watching this thesis project. The feedback largely suggests that such an exhibition would be welcomed and appreciated.

From a user experience standpoint, a deeper understanding of interactive design was discovered during the development of the project. For example, color palettes and typography affect an audience's emotional response. It was a constant challenge to keep thinking about ways in which the user would interact with content.

Future considerations include having a website page as well as a simple app demo with more detailed information. In the meantime, I will continue refining the design and the motion graphics to improve the experience.

This thesis involved cross-disciplinary research and study, profound thinking, development of concept, writing of text, and a design and evaluation survey. Through the whole process of this project, I have enriched myself with better project management skills.

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Books

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Jan Tholenaar and Cees De Jong. *Type: A Visual History of Typefaces and Graphic Styles*. Los Angeles, CA, USA: TASCHEN America Llc. 2009

Online Resources

“Introduction to Existentialism”
Academy of Ideas, Published on Nov 17, 2012
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilg7PiDD8yY>

“Documentary on the life of Jean Paul Sartre: The Road to Freedom”
Doostmusic, Published on Jul 26, 2012
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAMCZKDgLO4&list=TLvFXVcLQW-Go2iK7wHOBHpWPafpyz1ZgN->
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBjJstjBJlw&list=TLer9e6df5zinc1VYehp-6s8PcBPEZmZjUW>

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“Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism.”

Gregory B. Sadler, Published on May 29, 2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBjJstjBJlw&list=TLER9e6df5zinc1VYehp-6s8PcBPEZmZjUW>

The Aesthetics of Reading

Kevin Larson & Rosalind Picard

<http://affect.media.mit.edu/pdfs/05.larson-picard.pdf>

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Exhibit Identity and Branding: Conveying the doctrine of Existentialism

Xuan Jiang
MFA Visual Communication Design
School of Design
Rochester Institute of Technology

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Abstract

Literature and philosophy are the concise expressions of human inner-self. The main idea which all of the existentialists have in common is the fundamental doctrine that existence precedes essence. This idea has its own historical significance for explaining the fact of thinking and action.

An exhibition is a specific place for people to gain more knowledge and get better understanding of it. This project will be based on the research of existentialist literature and the understanding about the main idea of existentialism. The goal is to develop a brand identity for an exhibit about existentialism.

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Problem Statement

The way we see changes the way we live. Sometimes we don't see things as they are, we see them as we are. Existentialism has many great opinions and thoughts that are very instructive for every single individual to figure out the way of living and thinking. I am going to make an identity for a exhibit about existentialism in order to convey the doctrine of Existentialism and help people to understand about this philosophy better.

Existentialism, as a major philosophical school during the first half of the 20th century, including theistic existentialism, atheistic existentialism and existential Marxism can refer to any doctrine that considers individual's irrational thinking and thoughts as the most real existence.

Existentialism has been criticized as a philosophy of quietism for a long time (*Being and Nothingness, Jean-Paul Sartre*) which induces people to be content with desperation and also of being biased towards the dark side of the human condition. It leads people to see the vile, despicable and poor while ignoring the bright side of humanity in some kind and wonderful things. However, this criticism is a misunderstanding of the main idea of Existentialism.

Existentialism is human-centered, it highly respects human individuality and freedom. Although both the living in this universe and the existence itself are meaningless, people can build up their own personality and be wonderful on the basis of existence. Therefore, I am going to make an identity for a exhibit about existentialism and help people to understand about this philosophy better.

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Review of Literature

Subject

Research on information about Existentialism

Existentialism : a very short introduction

Flynn, Thomas. Existentialism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. 2006.

Focusing on the leading figures of existentialism, including Sartre, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, and Camus, Thomas Flynn offers a concise account of existentialism, explaining the key themes of individuality, free will, and personal responsibility, which marked the movement as a way of life, not just a way of thinking. Flynn sets the philosophy of existentialism in context, from the early phenomenologists, to its rise in the 40's and 50's, and the connections with National Socialism, Communism, and Feminism. He identifies the original definition of "existentialism," which tends to be obscured by misappropriation, and highlights how the philosophy is still relevant in our world today.

Being and Nothingness

Jean-Paul Sartre. Being and Nothingness. Reprinted edition. Washington: Washington Square Press. 1993

Jean-Paul Sartre, the seminal smarty-pants of mid-century thinking, launched the existentialist fleet with the publication of Being and Nothingness in 1943. Though the book is thick, dense, and unfriendly to careless readers, it is indispensable to those interested in the philosophy of consciousness and free will. Some of his arguments are fallacious, others are unclear, but for the most part Sartre's thoughts penetrate deeply into fundamental philosophical territory. Basing his conception of self-consciousness loosely on Heidegger's "being," Sartre proceeds to sharply delineate between conscious actions ("for themselves") and unconscious ("in themselves"). It is a conscious choice, he claims, to live one's life "authentically" and in a unified fashion, or not--this is the fundamental freedom of our lives.

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy

William Barrett. Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy. Garden City, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1962

Widely recognized as the finest definition of existentialist Philosophy, this book introduced existentialism to America in 1958. Barrett discusses the views of 19th and 20th century existentialists Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre and interprets the impact of their thinking on literature, art, and philosophy.

Basic Writings of Existentialism

Gordon Marino. Basic Writings of Existentialism. New York, NY, USA: Modern Library, 2004

In this book, the key writers of existentialism are included -- Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky from the 19th Century, and Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus, from the 20th Century. Existentialism is one of the enduring traditions in Western Philosophy, Art, and Religion, a perspective that articulates and responds to the deepest human needs. These fresh selections lay out the issues, from alienation to reconciliation, from despair to joyful wisdom, that make this world-perspective so compelling. Marino's introductions to each writer, and his introductory overview, are lively and capture the spirit of the chosen texts.

The Stranger

The Stranger. The Stranger. New York, NY, USA: Vintage, 1989

The Stranger is not merely one of the most widely read novels of the 20th century, but one of the books likely to outlive it. Written in 1946, Camus's compelling and troubling tale of a disaffected, apparently amoral young man has earned a durable popularity in part because it reveals so vividly the anxieties of its time. The plot is simple. A young Algerian, Meursault, afflicted with a sort of aimless inertia, becomes embroiled in the petty intrigues of a local pimp and, somewhat inexplicably, ends up killing a man. Once he's imprisoned and eventually brought to trial, his crime, it becomes apparent, is not so much the arguably defensible murder he has committed as it is his deficient character. The trial's proceedings are absurd, a parsing of incidental trivialities--that Meursault, for instance, seemed unmoved by his own mother's death and then attended a comic movie the evening after her funeral are two ostensibly damning facts--so that the eventual sentence the jury issues is both ridiculous and inevitable.

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Either/Or

Soren Kierkegaard. *Either/Or*. New York, NY, USA: Penguin Classics. 1992

In *Either/Or*, using the voices of two characters - the aesthetic young man of part one, called simply 'A', and the ethical Judge Vilhelm of the second section, Kierkegaard reflects upon the search for a meaningful existence, contemplating subjects as diverse as Mozart, drama, boredom, and, in the famous *Seducer's Diary*, the cynical seduction and ultimate rejection of a young, beautiful woman. A masterpiece of duality, *Either/Or* is a brilliant exploration of the conflict between the aesthetic and the ethical - both meditating ironically and seductively upon Epicurean pleasures, and eloquently expounding the noble virtues of a morally upstanding life.

Documentary on the life of Jean Paul Sartre: The Road to Freedom

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAMCZKDgLO4&list=TLVFXVclQWGo2IK7wHOBHpWPaFpyz1ZgN->

Human, All Too Human is a three-part documentary television series produced by the BBC in 1999. It follows the lives of three prominent European philosophers: Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre. The theme of this documentary revolves heavily around the school of philosophical thought known as existentialism, although the term had not been coined at the time of Nietzsche's writing, and Heidegger declaimed the label. The final episode in this series, *The Road to Freedom*, describes the life of the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. This is when the term existentialism begins to enter the realm of philosophy. The documentary shows that Sartre believes it is up to each individual human being to give his or her own life a meaning and a purpose.

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEJstjBjIw&list=TLER9e6df5zinc1VYehp6s8PcBPEZmZJUW>

In this lecture, the lecturer explores some of the key themes of Jean-Paul Sartre's classic exposition of his atheist Existentialism, "Existentialism is a Humanism." He focuses in particular on the themes of existence preceding essence, radical human freedom, criterion-less choice that is nevertheless one made for all humanity, and on the human being as a project of freedom.

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Introduction to Existentialism

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lg7FIDD8yY>

This lecture mainly talks about the history of existentialism, examine what for existentialists is the key concern of philosophy, discuss the phrase existence precedes essence, and differentiate between existentialism and nihilism.

Design

Research on design books and theories related to typography, identity, geometric shapes and design projects for philosophy.

Geo/Graphics

Viction: workshop ltd. Geo/Graphics. HK, China: Viction: workshop ltd, 2012

Geo/Graphics is a study focused on geometric graphic designs. Looking at the collections of projects that using circles and polygons as the core visual elements, the book presents how shapes facilitate communication and fortify memories in diverse fields of design. Together with colors, shapes, textures function as the universal token of meanings, representing abstract concepts. Graphic Designers use geometric shapes in two ways – visible geometry and invisible geometry. With visible ones, designers create individual complementary and competing elements within art. Invisible geometry on the other hand, it is the key to make the visible tangible and dynamic.

Type: A Visual History of Typefaces and Graphic Styles

Jan Tholenaar and Cees De Jong. Type: A Visual History of Typefaces and Graphic Styles. Los Angeles, CA, USA: TASCHEN America Llc. 2009

This book offers a novel overview of typeface design, exploring the most beautiful and remarkable examples of font catalogs from the history of publishing, with a special emphasis on the period from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century, when color catalogs were at their height. This exuberant selection traverses the evolution of the printed letter in all its various incarnations via exquisitely designed catalogs displaying not only type specimens in roman, italic, bold, semi-bold, narrow, and broad, but also characters, borders, ornaments, initial letters and decorations as well as often spectacular examples of the use of the letters.

Dynamic Identity

Irene van Nes. Dynamic Identity: How to create a living brand. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: BIS Publishers. 2012

This visual book looks into design systems for brand identities that produces identities that are alive, which means that they can change and generate new versions based on external data. The book offers a systematic process of creating brand identities that are alive and gives the reader a wealth of examples of international identities that were built on the discussed systems.

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Design Ideation

Concept

Everyone is unrepeatable and repeat. All human beings are individual cells in larger body of humanity. Even so, the entire world is a integration of all this independent individual. In this world, we need to build better relationships and see the real connectors between subjects.



Thesis Proposal

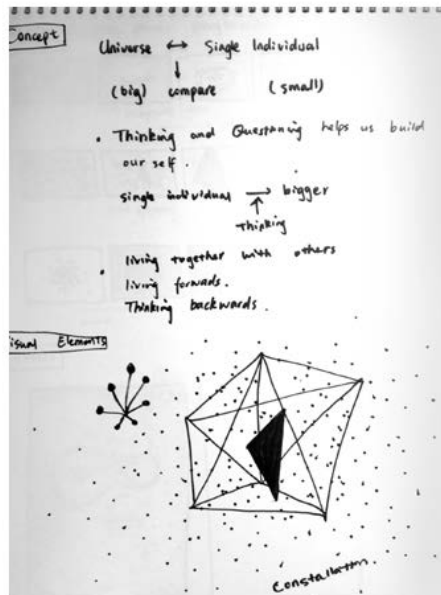
9

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Concept

Comparing to the entire universe, every single person is such a tiny existence. Thinking and questioning about our inner-selves help us build ourselves. Life can only be living forwards and thinking backwards. We are getting to understand more about responsibilities by facing up to what we did in the past.

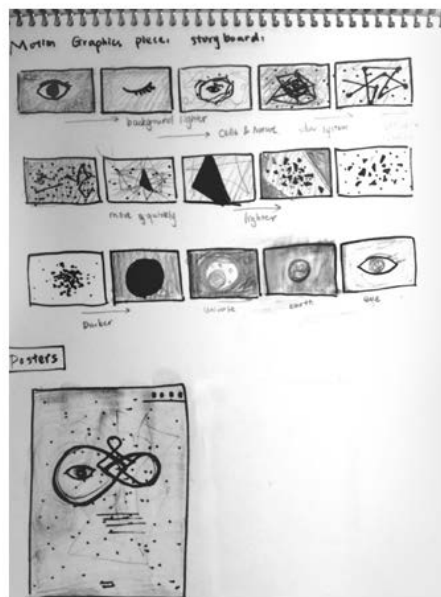


Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Concept

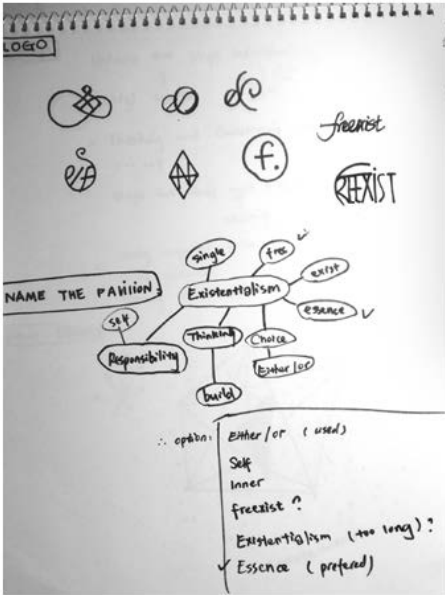
Comparing to the entire universe, every single person is such a tiny existence. Thinking and questioning about our inner-selves help us build ourselves. Life can only be living forwards and thinking backwards. We are getting to understand more about responsibilities by facing up to what we did in the past.



Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Identity ideas
Name of the exhibition: Essence



Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Methodological Design

Methodological approach

- 1) Research on the three main schools of Existentialism and the representative philosophers and learn about their doctrine.
- 2) Select and summarize some inspiring ideas or quotes about Existentialism.
- 3) Make a to do list of the products for the identity system
- 4) Design the logo, visual elements, color theme for the identity system.
- 5) Complete the design of products and start doing the motion graphic piece.

Target audience

Mainstream public
Specifically for those who wants to explore more about life, thinking and philosophy.

Anticipated hardware/software components

Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Illustrator
Adobe After Effects
Adobe Indesign
Adobe 3D Max

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Deliverables

Print:

Sticker (Entrance ticket)
Folded brochure
Street banner
Posters

Interactive:

Motion Graphics (2-3 minutes)
Mobile App (Layout design, coding part will not be included)

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Implementation Strategies

This project specifically requires a solid understanding about Existentialism. Large amount of literature reading and philosophy understanding will be included. The design concept will be based on the main doctrine of Existentialism. Philosophy is complicated and controversial for many people. In order to convey the ideas behind that in a clear and understandable way, simple elements and shapes will be considered in the design. More research and study about how to use geometric graphics elements will also be important for effectively applying them into design.

The concepts will be developed through mood boards, sketches and storyboard at the same time. Further refining will be done by screen after that. Some of the images and visual elements will be created along with watercolor or color pencils. Photographing will be the main method for products since it shows the real visual effects of the final design. Therefore, template or other sources of photos will be purchased in case of copyright issues.

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Dissemination

The final design will be distributed through Internet

Youtube
Vimeo
Behance
Facebook
Google+

Plans for submission

Pavilion under construction in Copenhagen, Denmark
Adobe Design Achievement Awards
AIGA annual student design competition
AME Awards
Andreu World International Design Contest
Young Glory
Vimeo Festival and Awards
New Media Film Festival
International Design for All Foundation Awards

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Evaluation Plan

Imagine RIT

The final design will be evaluated with the feedback of the audience. I will create a survey or questionnaire that questions about the how they feel about this philosophy before and after seeing my design.

Also, I will create a chatting pad for people to exchange their ideas and thoughts about this philosophy at that day to collect feedback.

Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Pragmatic Considerations

Budget	
Adobe Creative Cloud Suite	\$160
Printing Fees	
Posters * 8	\$20
Postcards * 4	\$10
Brochure	\$20
Note book	\$20
Stickers	\$10
Calendar	\$20
<hr/>	
Total	\$260

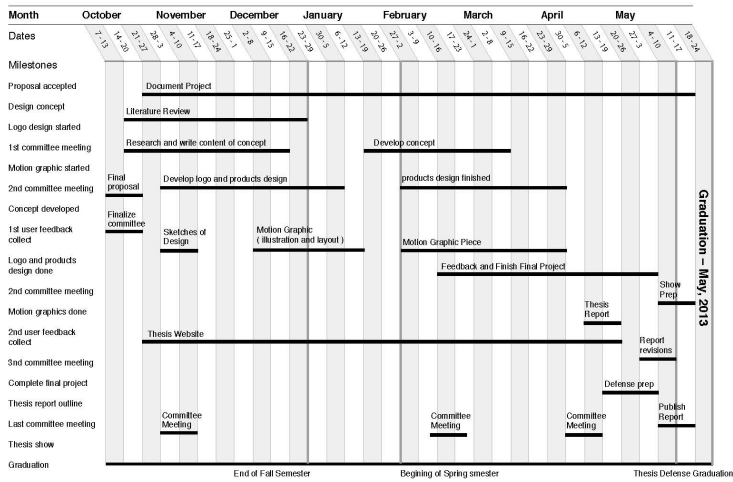
Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

Timeline

Thesis Timeline
by Xuan Jiang

Thesis Title:
Exhibit Identity and Branding: Conveying the Doctrine of Existentialism



Appendix

Original Thesis Proposal

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig7PIDD8yY>

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAMCZKDgLO4&list=TLvFXvcLQWGo2IK7wHOBHpWPaFpyz1ZgN->

"Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Existentialism is a Humanism'"
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBjJstjBJIw&list=TLER9e6d5zinc1VYehp6s8PcBPEZmZJUW>

Appendix 2

Thesis show



Figure 46
Thesis show