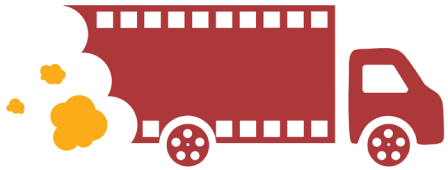

Cinema Vérité

Driving Film Relief for High Schoolers

Yunni Zhu

Cinema Vérité Process Book
ID-4823 Graphic Design Literacy
Lisa Babb, Spring 2021

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Project Overview

Cinema Vérité is a graphic design project based on a series of blended research surrounding topics from drive-in cinemas and the mental health of high school students. Proceeding the discovery of the current marketplace regarding movie theaters, an opportunity for design was developed. This process book documents the backstory of this project. The book will be divided into three different sections: Discovery, Planning, and Create; each section provides a detailed progression that is crucial to the execution of the final deliverable.

Discovery

Ideation

When the project was first proposed, I was given the important task of brainstorming topics that I am interested in. The beauty of this process was that no restriction was given regarding which category I should be focusing on. There was only one goal: find your passion.

The list on the right is a screen capture of the original document containing the top 20 ideas that I was interested in.

1. Thrift stores
2. Chocolate
3. Films
4. Web development
5. Hand sanitizers
6. Stickers
7. Water bottle/Mugs
8. Phone cases
9. Keyboards/mouse/speakers/headphones
10. Cardboard boxes, shopping bags, grocery bags
11. Packaging
12. Yoga mats
13. Puppies
14. Touch screen mirrors/other high-techs
15. Graphing calculators
16. Web development
17. Storefront design (bakery shops/candy shops)
18. Road signs
19. Notetaking apps
20. Delivery trucks

Ideation

After further research into each of the topics on my list of interests, some modifications were made to better fit the goal of finding an opportunity. I was able to narrow my wide range of passion down to the top three topics.

My idea of creating packaging for various contexts was the first to be crossed out. Reasons behind such being: I can create packaging for anything that I create, thus, there is no specific market for packaging; however, I can express my love for packaging design by implementing it in either of the two other topics: movies theaters, and bakeries.

Ideation

Now comes the question: movie theaters or bakeries?

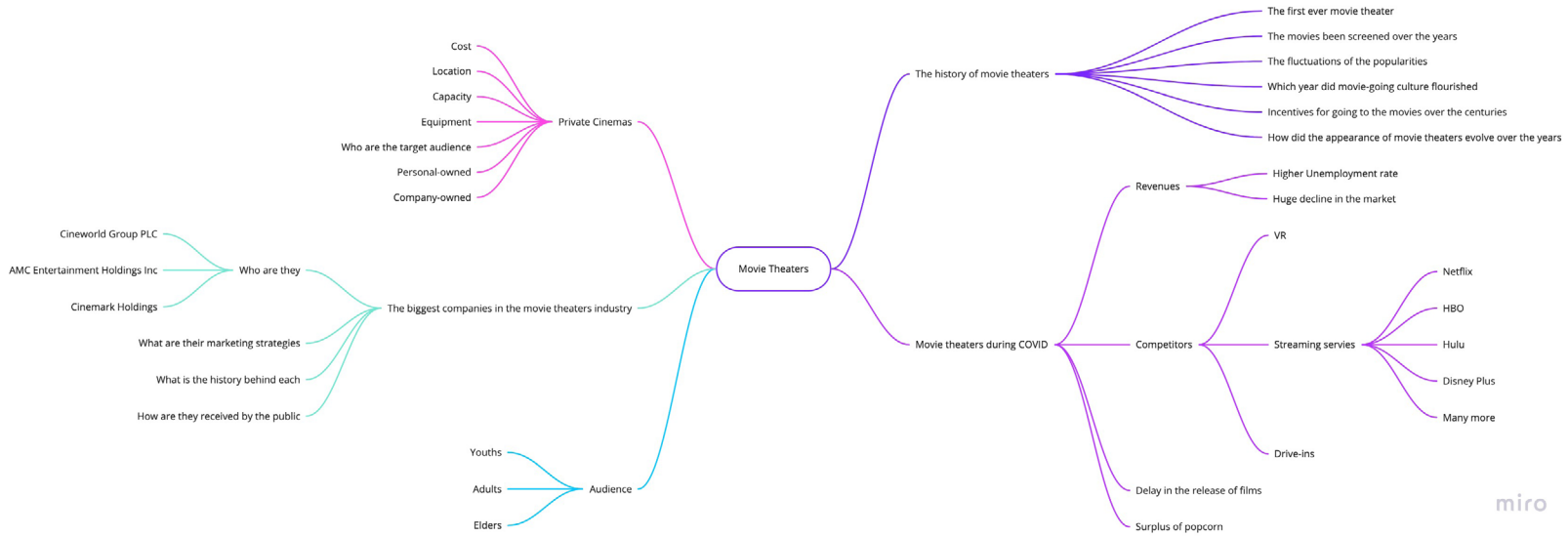
I like movie theaters because I love watching movies and critiquing them with my friends, and I am knowledgeable in this field because I have experience in film-making and organizing film festivals. Movie theaters would be a familiar but still new field to research in, and I am always invested in learning more about the construction and the technical strategies behind movie theaters.

I like bakeries and candy shops because I see a lot of graphic design opportunities behind this topic. To be quite fair, this topic is not a particular passion of mine, but it was chosen because I have already foreseen many possibilities in design upon a few research. I have a vision of turning this topic into an aesthetically pleasing project.

After meeting with the Georgia Tech Research Specialist, Catherine Manci, I made finally the decision to focus my research on movie theaters. Though Catherine played an important role in helping me to confirm this choice, I have already made this decision in my mind before meeting with her. Deep down, I knew that I am not truly passionate about bakeries, and it was only a choice made with the pure attempt to ease my findings in designing opportunities. What I truly love is the field of movie theaters, and this passion of mine was reinforced after Catherine assured me with the fact that there are way more research opportunities for movie theaters than for bakeries.

Mind Map

Before jumping into the movie theaters research, I decided to first map out all the topics related to movie theaters that I wish to explore through this process. This mind map helped me to plan which aspects I should focus on during the research process.



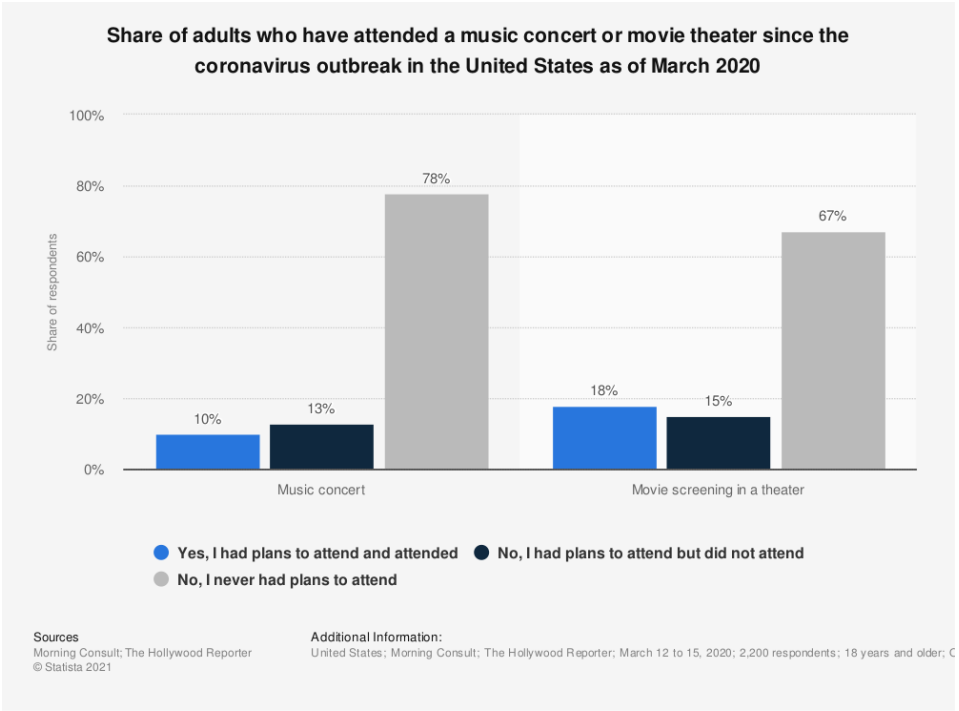
Research: The Decline

After deciding on the topic, the first problem that I ran into was: where to start? It was difficult for me to choose a beginning point because it is such a broad topic. After many considerations, I decided to start with how COVID-19 has changed the revenue of movie theaters.

There were a lot of findings regarding how movie theaters have come to a decline during this era, and how people did not feel comfortable about attending movie theaters, but it was all expected. In other words, I did not find anything new to me through this research, despite the shocking numbers I have discovered.

The bar chart on the right depicts how uncomfortable the adults of the United States feel about attending movies and concerts proceeding the breakout of the pandemic. Though this gives me some degree of opportunity to craft a solution to the decline of movie-going culture, it was not convincing enough for me to develop a distinct idea.

So, the research kept going.



Morning Consult. (March 17, 2020). Share of adults who have attended a music concert or movie theater since the coronavirus outbreak in the United States as of March 2020 [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/1104596/concert-cinema-visits-coronavirus-us/

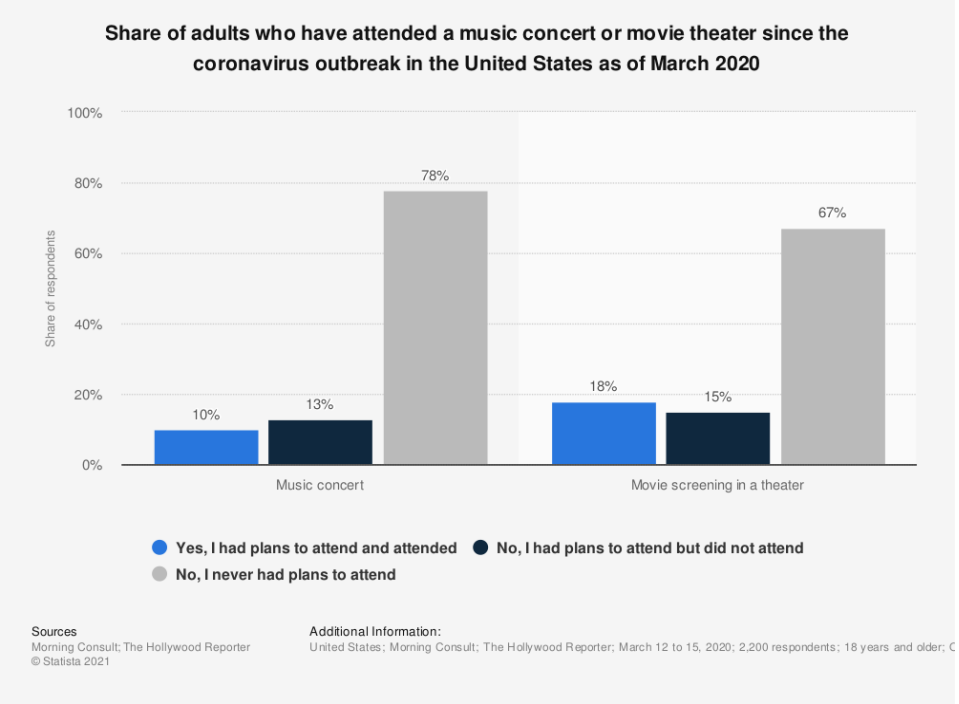
Research: Popcorn Farmers and COVID-19

Looking for more exciting opportunities, I extended my scale of research to anything related to movie-going during COVID-19. From there, I was able to discover the surplus of popcorn caused by the decline of movie theaters.

Debczak, (2020) stated that "As Food & Wine reports, how people get their popcorn has changed drastically since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic... The coronavirus lockdowns boosted sales of the microwave popcorn sold in grocery stores, while movie theater popcorn suddenly lost its main market." This fact proposed an interesting connection in my head: if I can create a system that brings more people to movie theaters, I can solve both the movie-going decline and the popcorn surplus problems. But, it is simply not safe for people to attend an in-person movie theater during the pandemic, so, how can this problem be solved alternatively?

"As Movie Theaters Struggle, Farmers Are Running Out of Room for Unsold Popcorn." *Mental Floss*, 23 Sept. 2020, www.mentalfloss.com/article/630808/movie-theater-closures-create-popcorn-surplus.

Research: Drive-in Cinemas



What about drive-in cinemas? What happened to them during COVID-19? After a new round of research, I was surprised to find out the drive-in movie attendance grew after the breakout of the pandemic due to the safety brought by the socially distanced setting—watch films with your loved ones in your own car. I was fascinated by how many opportunities drive-in cinemas can create for the film industry, so, I deciding to dive deeper into this area.

The bar chart on the left portrays the increase in interest in drive-in events in Quebec. It was also reported by several articles that a similar growth of drive-in cinemas in the United States persists as well, and this scenario is led by the mindset that this type of theater "would certainly be a lot safer" (Lindsey Bahr 2020).

Elevent. (December 1, 2020). Level of enjoyment when attending drive-in events in Quebec during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020 [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/1196754/enjoyment-level-drive-in-events-during-covid-19-canada/
Bahr, Lindsey. "Curious About Going to a Movie Theater? 7 Things to Know." NBC10 Philadelphia, *NBC 10 Philadelphia,* 30 Oct. 2020, www.nbcphiladelphia.com/entertainment/entertainment-news/curious-about-going-to-a-movie-theater-7-things-to-know/2578732/.

Initial Concept

With the three rounds of initial research, I felt ready to propose my concept for this project: a drive-in cinema that could help both the movie industry and the popcorn market. At this point of research, I thought that I had the perfect audience and the perfect solution, and I was ready to move on to the planning phase of this project.

The Right People

Anyone!! Good family time, friend-bonding time, spend it with your loved ones, or just yourself! Forget Netflix! Watch shows and movies on a big screen with stereo sounds.

The Right Message

Drive-ins are not just for movies, come out on a drive on a chill Saturday night, sit in your car and comfortably enjoy a concert, comedy show, or a play under a completely social-distancing setting.

The Right Way

A brand new movie-watching experience that attracts more audience and aims to revive the drive-in movie-going culture.

~~Initial Concept~~

I was very proud of this idea of mine, however, my confidence was soon crushed. During the concept review, I learned that my concept is not unique at all, to quote Lisa, "**your research is about drive-ins, your right way is about drive-ins, you are going to make a drive-in, come up with something *NEW*.** "

This comment shocked me and my whole understanding of this project: we need to use our research to create an idea of our own, instead of building upon existing ideas. There is no point in creating a new drive-in— there are already plenty. I immediately realized that I will need to shift my gears and turn this concept of mine into something that reflects my research and is completely unseen before.

The Right People

Anyone!! Good family time, friend-bonding time, spend it with your loved ones, or just yourself! Forget Netflix! Watch movies on a big screen with stereo sounds.

The Right Message

Drive-ins are not just for movies, come out on a drive on a chill Saturday night, sit in your car and comfortably enjoy a concert, comedy show, or a play under a completely social-distancing setting.

The Right Way

A brand new movie-watching experience that attracts more audience and aims to revive the drive-in movie-going culture.

Initial Concept: Analysis

To better learn from the mistakes I made from my first concept, I used the notes I received from my critique to help me gain a better understanding of how to re-shape my concept.

NO! This is the entire world! Make the audience more specific, you cannot design for everyone. Choose one to design for.

NO! The message needs to convey the concept. This is not a message. This does not display what we want the audience to take away from this experience!

NO! Drive-ins like this already exist, nothing here reflects research nor opportunity.

The Right People

Anyone!! Good family time, friend-bonding time, spend it with your loved ones, or just yourself! Forget Netflix! Watch movies on a big screen with stereo sounds.

The Right Message

Drive-ins are not just for movies, come out on a drive on a chill Saturday night, sit in your car and comfortably enjoy a concert, comedy show, or a play under a completely social-distancing setting.

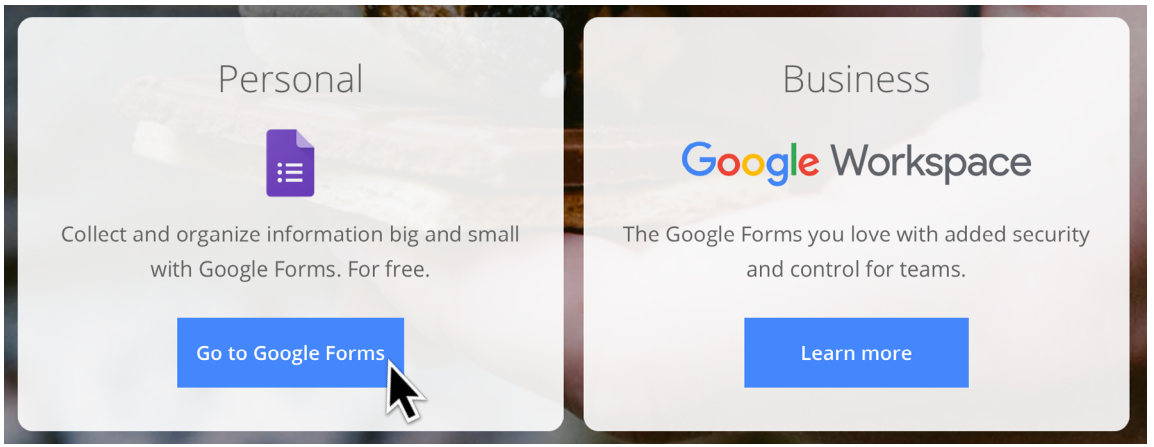
The Right Way

A brand new movie watching experience that attracts more audience and aims to revive the drive-in movie-going culture.

Survey

Feeling bummed, I was ready to dig deeper into my drive-in idea in order to discover more useful facts. However, after browsing hundreds of websites and research papers, the information became extremely repetitive, and I was unable to pivot on a single finding.

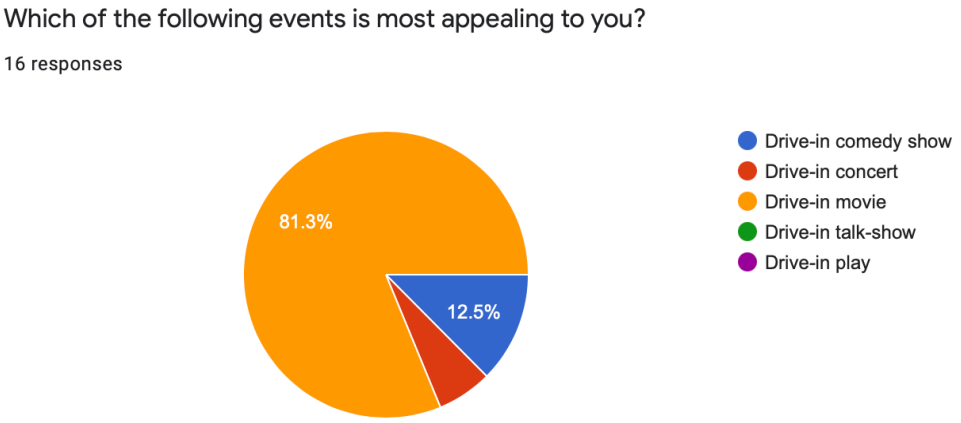
Persistent with the idea of drive-ins, I decided to shift gears and turn my research method to the use of surveys. I then sent out a survey to my friends, attempting to find a way to improve the current drive-in cinema experience, and potentially discover a breakthrough.



Survey

The survey that I sent out included a series of questions regarding what is the preferred drive-in experience. Looking back, I was slowly losing interesting in drive-ins after so much unfruitful research, so I did not provide a particularly helpful survey to aid my concept ideation process.

After getting some results back from my friends, I started feeling defeated and completely lost interest in researching more into the topic, so, I paused the spread of my survey and decided to take a break to reevaluate my ideas.



Snapshot from my google form

More Research

After some thought, I decided to change my perspectives: why design for COVID-19 specifically? The pandemic will not last forever, so why not design something that is more timeless?

Being persistent with drive-ins limits my ability to go beyond creating a drive-in theater. It makes it difficult for me to branch out and search for more interesting facts about movie theaters and films in general. I decided to *completely abandon* all my research regarding the drive-in cinemas and COVID-19, and *restart* the process.

This change in perspective become a key turning point of the discovery process, from there, I looked further and found a true opportunity.

More Research: Why Watch Movies?

I decided to restart by asking the question: why do we watch movies? After some research, I was able to find out many benefits of watching movies: they help us learn, movies can drive social changes, movies can help us process difficult life lessons, and movies help us to appropriate art (Jennings-Edquist 2020).

Out of all the benefits that I found, the part about how movies can help us to process difficult life lessons really stood out to me. I started wondering whether people watch movies to relate or to heal.

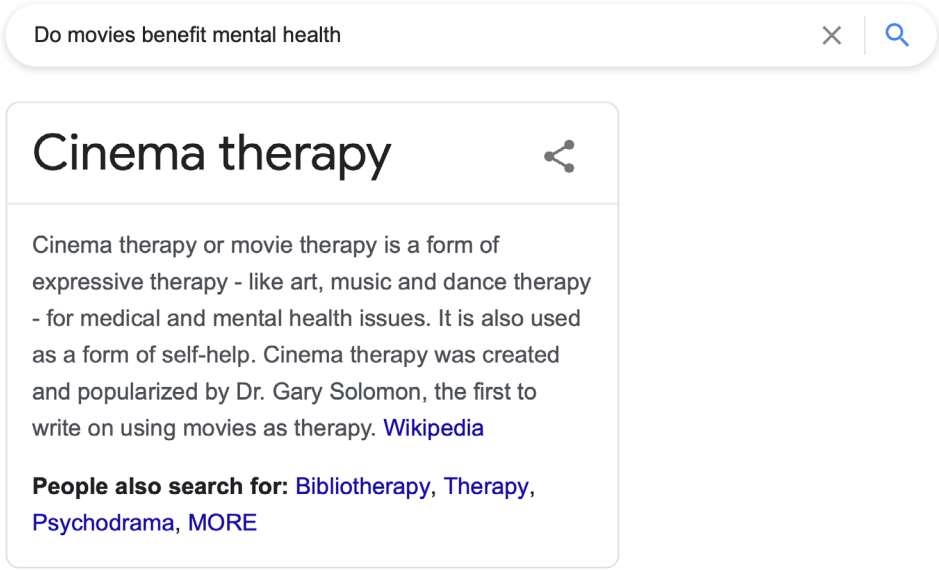
ABC Everyday. "The Very Real Benefits of Wasting Time at the Movies." *ABC Everyday*, ABC Everyday, 16 Dec. 2020, www.abc.net.au/everyday/benefits-of-watching-movies/10830400.

More Research: Cinema Therapy

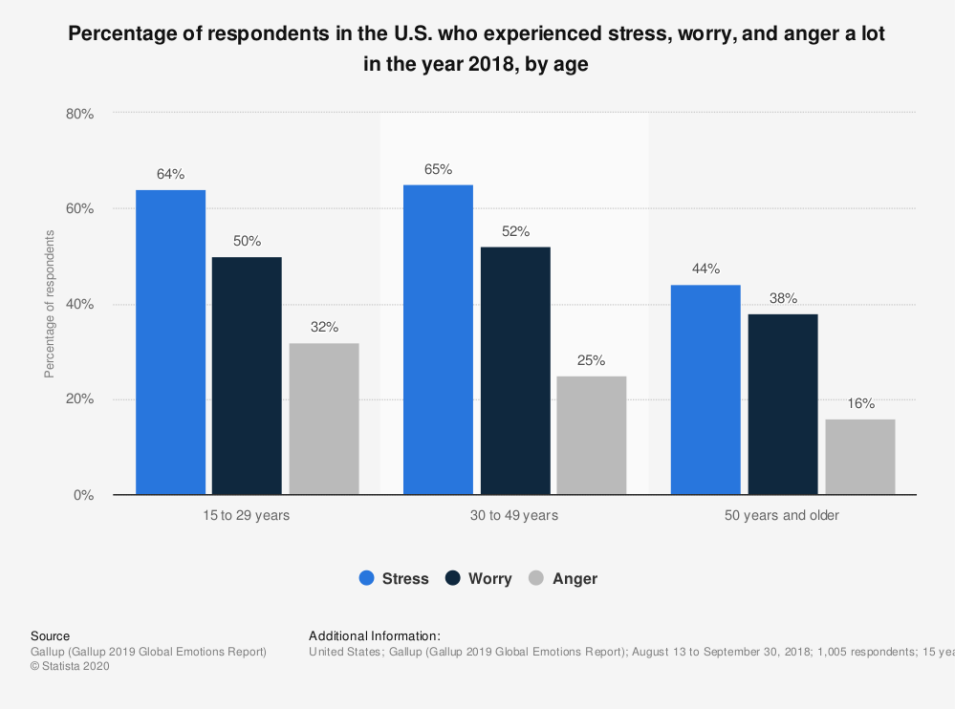
Attempting to find a connection between emotions and watching movies, I typed “do movies benefit mental health” in my google search for the very first time, and that was when I discovered *cinema therapy*.

Without the research, I would have never combined the two words “cinema” and “therapy” together. Though I knew that watching movies can make one’s emotions fluctuate, I was surprised to find out that people use films as a way of coping with their mental health.

This finding brought me sparks of excitement, and it made all the other research that I did prior regarding movie theaters and drive-ins seem completely *dull*. I was intrigued by the concept of cinema therapy, and the more I learned about it, the more I fell in love with it.



More Research: The Audience



Gallup. (April 25, 2019). Percentage of respondents in the U.S. who experienced stress, worry, and anger a lot in the year 2018, by age [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/1058028/share-of-americans-that-experienced-stress-worry-and-anger-by-age/

After I regained my fire for this project, I started looking for my target audience. Unlike the mistakes I made last time, I did not choose the already obvious audience: anyone who is struggling with mental health. For a good design, it is important to have a market with a specific demographic. We want to know who are we talking to exactly, and why they should care about the system that I am planning to create.

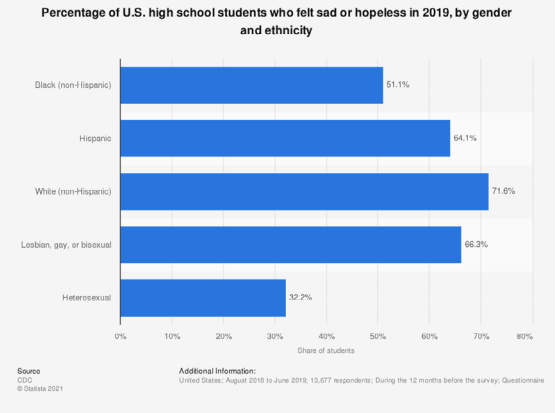
To find a good audience, I decided to research which age group is facing the most stress in today's society. I found out that 64% of people age 15 to 29 suffer from severe stress in the United States (Gallup 2019).

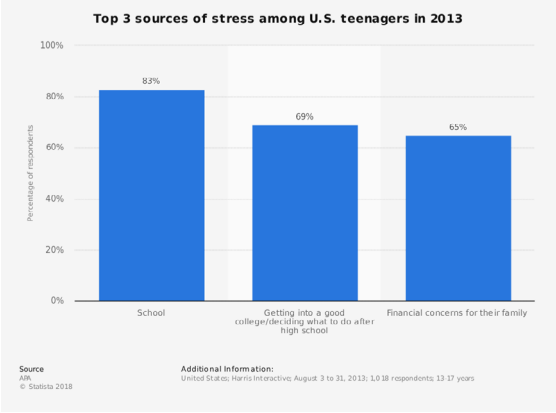
I decided to look into the reasons behind why young people tend to stress out so much, so, I started researching the youngest of this age group: high schoolers.

More Research: High Schoolers

The findings were surprising. As identified by multiple datasets, the high schoolers in the United States experience great stress from schoolwork and parents' expectations. In the 2017 survey, stress was listed as the top issue for 54.2 percent of the 8,400 high school students (Thompson 2018).

As someone who went through high school in America, I can deeply relate to this source of stress on a personal level. This connection that I have with my research findings further increased my push for creating a platform that could potentially use cinema therapy to help ease the stress faced by these high schoolers.



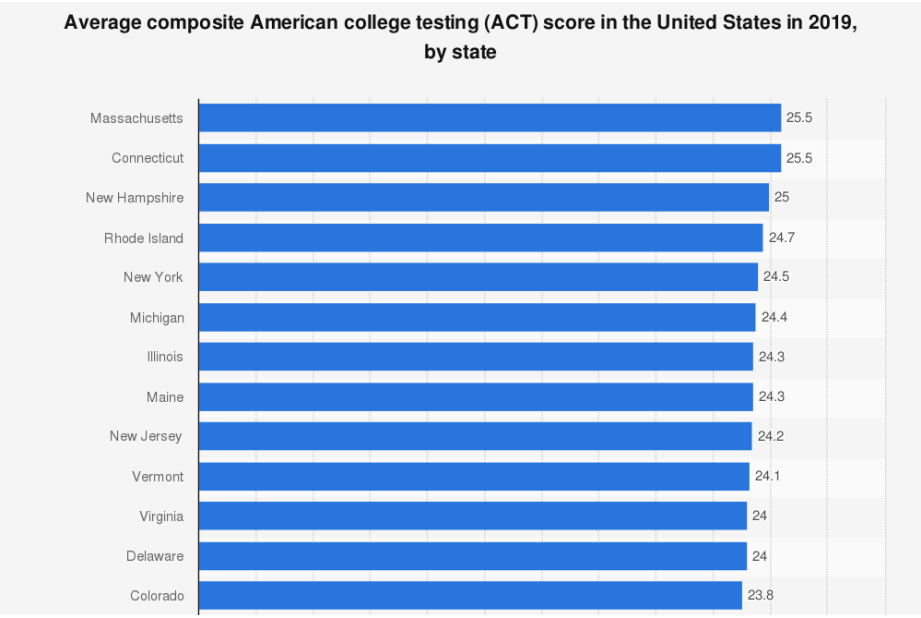


Thompson, Elaine. "Survey of Central Mass. Students Shows High Stress, Pressure." *Telegram.com*, Telegram.com, 9 Nov. 2018, www.telegram.com/news/20181108/survey-of-central-mass-students-shows-high-stress-pressure#:~:text=In%20the%202017%20survey%2C%20stress,the%208%2C400%20high%20school%20students.&text=For%20high%20school%20students%3A%20peer,by%20bullying%20(8.02%20percent).

CDC. (August 21, 2020). Percentage of U.S. high school students who felt sad or hopeless in 2019, by gender and ethnicity [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/222124/us-students-with-depression-by-gender-and-ethnicity/

APA. (February 11, 2014). Top 3 sources of stress among U.S. teenagers in 2013 [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/315823/most-common-stressors-reported-in-us-teens/

More Research: Massachusetts



Needless to say, it is impossible to create a system that can benefit all the high schoolers in the United States, I needed to narrow down my demographic so that it is within a reasonable range. The question now becomes: high schoolers from where would need this system the most?

I decided to take the approach of comparing the academic rigorousness across the states, and soon, the answer became clear.

Gathering from multiple datasets, I was able to observe the state with the most rigorous high schools— Massachusetts. Backed by data, Massachusetts has the highest overall test scores, but also the most students with concerning stress and depression levels. As of July 2020, Massachusetts is ranked number one in having the *most* difficult high school curriculum out of all the states in America (McCann 2020).

American College Testing. (October 30, 2019). Average composite American college testing (ACT) score in the United States in 2019, by state [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/305987/us-average-act-scores-by-state/
McCann, Adam. "States with the Best & Worst School Systems." WalletHub, 27 July 2020, wallethub.com/edu/e/states-with-the-best-schools/5335.

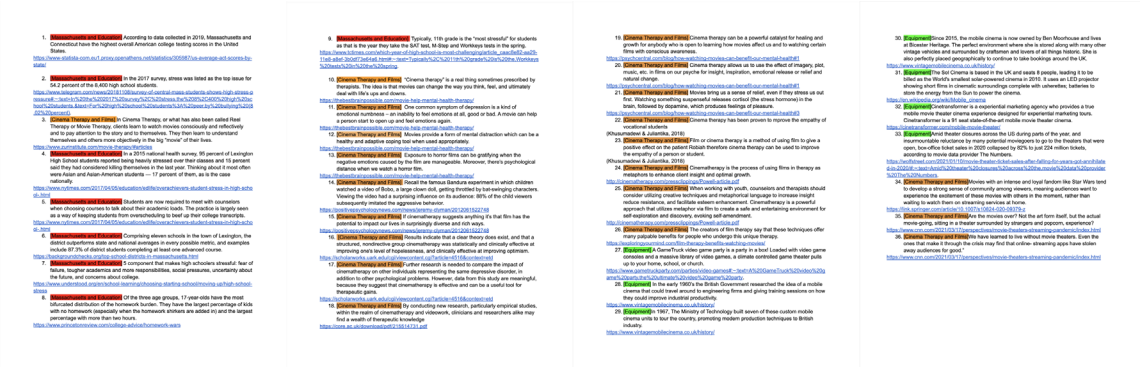
More Research: Lexington High School

During my research in the academically rigorous high schools in Massachusetts, I can't help but notice one particular location that kept popping up on my computer screen: Lexington. That's interesting. Let me research where is Lexington. Lexington Public Schools is the best school district in Massachusetts. Comprising eleven schools in the town of Lexington, the district outperforms state and national averages in every possible metric, and examples include 87.3% of district students completing at least one advanced course (compared to just 65.1% in the state) while also managing a 100% completion rate of the MassCore program of studies.

More specifically, Lexington High School, the top-ranked high school in Massachusetts, has been proven to have the students with the highest stress levels. In a 2015 national health survey, 95 percent of Lexington High School students reported being heavily stressed over their classes and 15 percent said they had considered killing themselves in the last year. Thinking about it most often were Asian and Asian-American students — 17 percent of them, as is the case nationally (Spencer 2017).

"Top School Districts in Massachusetts, 2021." *Background Checks.org*, backgroundchecks.org/top-school-districts-in-massachusetts.html.
McCann, Adam. "States with the Best & Worst School Systems." WalletHub, 27 July 2020, wallethub.com/edu/e/states-with-the-best-schools/5335.
Spencer, Kyle. "It Takes a Suburb: A Town Struggles to Ease Student Stress." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 5 Apr. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/education/edlife/overachievers-student-stress-in-high-school-.html.

More Research: More Research



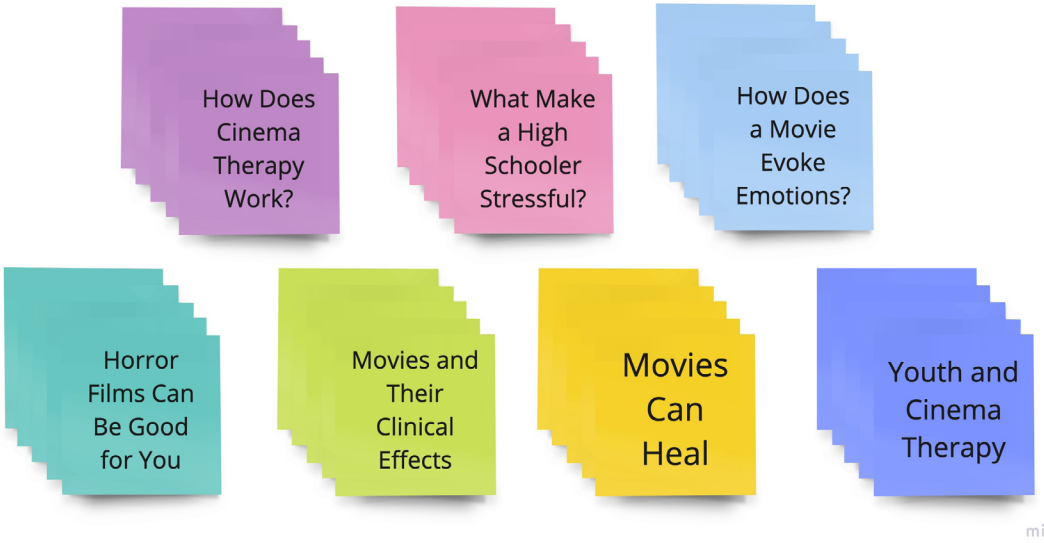
At this point in research, I have slowly formed a design opportunity in my mind. However, I have learned from my past mistakes and decided to not act too quickly this time. For an entirety of two weeks, I continued the same research for more and more information that can up my initial discovery and validates my assumptions. I have learned to really use data and facts to obtain my concept and to truly get to know and understand the market.

On the left is a snapshot of all the new information that I have discovered in this new round of research. I also started to color code my findings so that I can easily go back to the topics that I was not so familiar with and remind myself of which aspects I should be more aware of and look for more information on. The three main topics that I focused on this time are: Massachusetts and Education, Cinema Therapy and Films, and Equiment.

Sticky Notes

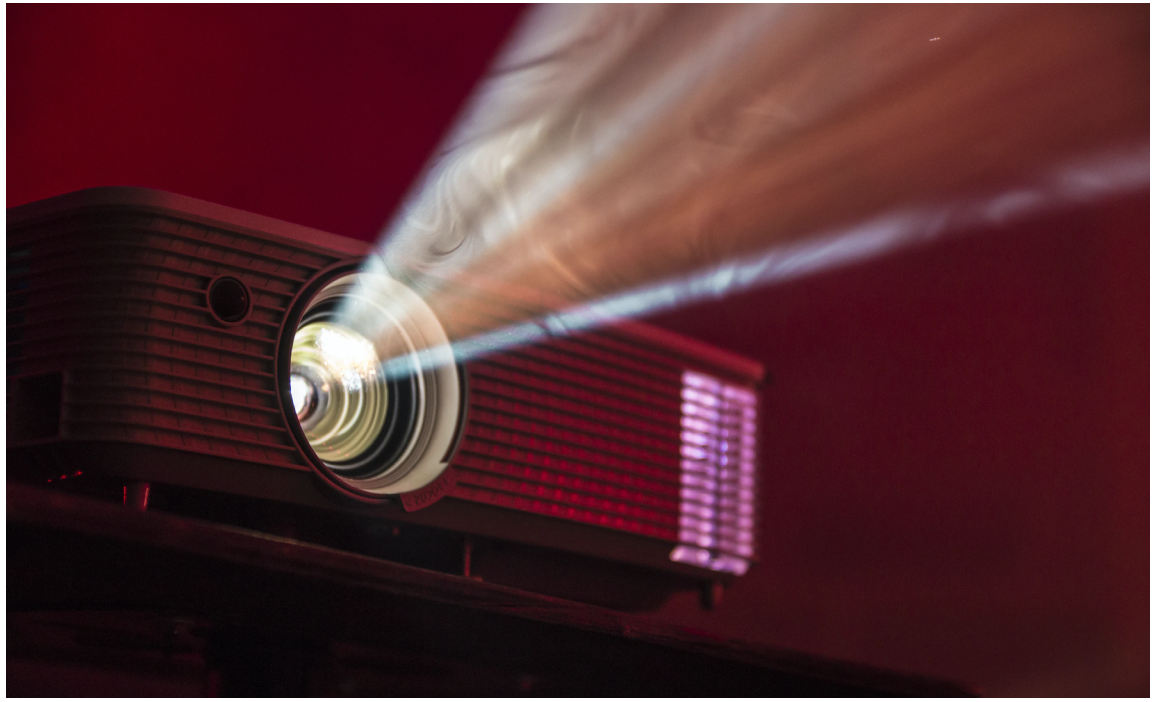
After two more weeks of research with a more specific goal, I wrapped up the research process. I decided to organize all my findings by using the sticky note feature on Miro (an online, collaborative whiteboard) to pick out the findings that I found the most interesting.

On the next 7 pages, I have displayed my top 7 findings that helped me to form my final concept ideation.



Finding #1: How Does Cinema Therapy Work?

In Cinema Therapy, or what has also been called Reel Therapy or Movie Therapy, clients learn to watch movies consciously and reflectively and to pay attention to the story and to themselves. They then learn to understand themselves and others more objectively in the big "movie" of their lives.



"Cinema Therapy, Movies Relevant to Psychology, by Ofer Zur, Ph.D. and Birgit Wolz, Ph.D. MFT." Zur Institute, 11 Feb. 2021, www.zurinstitute.com/movie-therapy/#articles.

Finding #2: What Make a High Schooler Stressful?

5 component that makes high schoolers stressful: fear of failure, tougher academics, and more responsibilities, social pressures, uncertainty about the future, and concerns about college.

"5 Stress Factors for Teens Who Learn and Think Differently." Understood, Understood, 20 Apr. 2021, www.understood.org/en/school-learning/choosing-starting-school/moving-up/high-school-stress.

Finding #3: How Does a Movie Evoke Emotions?

One common symptom of depression is a kind of emotional numbness – an inability to feel emotions at all, good or bad. A movie can help a person start to open up and feel emotions again.

Alban, Deane, et al. "How Watching Movies Can Help Your Mental Health." *The Best Brain Possible*, 24 Aug. 2020, thebestbrainpossible.com/movie-help-mental-health-therapy/.

Finding #4: Horror Films Can Be Good for You

Exposure to horror films can be gratifying when the negative emotions caused by the film are manageable. Moreover, there's psychological distance when we watch a horror film. (I found this very interesting.)

Alban, Deane, et al. "How Watching Movies Can Help Your Mental Health." *The Best Brain Possible*, 24 Aug. 2020, thebestbrainpossible.com/movie-help-mental-health-therapy/.

Finding #5: Movies and Their Clinical Effects

Results indicate that a clear theory does exist and that a structured, nondirective group cinematherapy was statistically and clinically effective at improving one's level of hopelessness, and clinically effective at improving optimism.

Powell, Michael, "Cinematherapy as a Clinical Intervention: Theoretical Rationale and Empirical Credibility" (2008). Theses and Dissertations. 2984.

Finding #6: Movies Can Heal

Cinema therapy can be a powerful catalyst for healing and growth for anybody who is open to learning how movies affect us and to watching certain films with conscious awareness.

Singer, Janet. "How Watching Movies Can Benefit Our Mental Health." Psych Central, Psych Central, 20 Dec. 2018, psychcentral.com/blog/how-watching-movies-can-benefit-our-mental-health#1.

Finding #7: Youth and Cinema Therapy

When working with youth, counselors and therapists should consider utilizing creative techniques and metaphorical language to increase insight reduce resistance, and facilitate esteem enhancement. Cinematherapy is a powerful approach that utilizes metaphor via film to create a safe and entertaining environment for self-exploration and discovery, evoking self-amendment.

Michael Lee Powell et al, 2006

The Discovery

To summarize, there are two main findings that aided me to continue to the planning phase of this project.

1.

Cinema therapy has been proven to encourage emotional release and help people who struggle with high stress levels to deal with their ups and downs.

2.

Students of the Lexington High School struggle greatly when dealing with high stress and expectations.

SWOT Analysis

After the blended research, I decided to analyze my discovery through SWOT analysis, which helped me greatly in the planning phase of my process.

Strengths

The audience is extremely specific, which is crucial to a good design. There are a lot of pain points that the current high schoolers of Lexington High School are experiencing, and I found cinema therapy to be a perfect break for these students. High schoolers rarely attend therapy sessions, and they do not realize the importance of maintaining good mental health. Cinema therapy can bridge this gap by providing mental-healing films to them.

Weaknesses

It would be extremely difficult to change the current state of education: we cannot change the way students and parents value colleges and test scores. This is a great challenge to my findings. If such a movie program exists, how effective would it really be? Furthermore, will any student be willing to attend?

Opportunities

With the weaknesses and strengths in mind, I can see an opportunity for design: a system that encourages the students to attend these movie sessions and be awarded free tickets after a big exam or a difficult week. By creating more incentives at the theater, such as free popcorn, can also help to grow this special form of cinema therapy. A design that involves an accessible distance from the students can also help facilitate this system.

Threats

Students who are friends will sit together at the theater, and the students who are regularly bullied will be discriminated against. The system needs to carefully implement the way the theater operates to minimize the bullying and discrimination that will potentially worsen the stress level of the students. Not all students who are in need will attend the movies, a strategy of not leaving out anyone should be included as well.

Before Moving on...

Before the discovery phase gets wrapped up, I want to briefly talk about some of the takeaways from the research. In the beginning, to be quite frank, I was all over the place. I was researching drive-ins, VRs, private cinemas, murals in movie theaters... It seemed endless and I did not really have a direction in where I should be aiming for. However, in this mist, I slowly grabbed onto one topic and dug deeper and deeper, without any hesitation. During this digging, I felt a strong pull for me to continue this research, and to me, that's when the research is going in the right direction. I was seeing light at the end of the tunnel and finding more and more information that supports my concept. I enjoyed this part of the project the most, so let this page be a special appreciation for it.

On the right is a collection of every single finding of mine through the entirety of the discovery phase, color-coded by how invested I was into the finding or how valuable I found the information to be.

Planning

Project Objectives

1.

Foster a community of students to enjoy and appreciate films.

2.

Create a platform where students can express their feelings after viewing the film.

3.

Bring mental-healing films to the students of Lexington High School.

Drivers

My goal for this project has become clear: I want to find a way to provide cinema therapy through routine screening of movies for the students of Lexington High School.

The Counselors

The current dilemma becomes: how do we make theses students go see these movies?

Upon some unsuccessful approaches, I decided to reach out to Lisa. With the help from Lisa and some classmates, I soon found the way: *the high school counselors*. They are the people who have access to all the records of the students, and they are also an important point of contact to all the students. In order to inform the students of this new movie program, the simplest way is to have the high school counselors have access to these tickets, and distribute them for free to the students who are in need of a break from studying.

The Audience: Revised

By having all the high schoolers of the Lexington High School, which is a total of 2,212 students according to a 2017 report, receive the tickets from their counselors for free, it will cause an extremely crowded movie-watching experience. This is not going to work out.

To go back, the main goal of this project is to help reduce these high schoolers' stress, so, who has the most stress in this high school? The answer is *the juniors*. This is because, by a student's 11th-grade year, they are thinking about careers, college visits, making sure their plan to graduate is solid, maybe having a job, preparing for the SAT, and staying involved in school activities (Rummel 2018).

This fact helped me to reduced my audience: high school juniors. However, I did not desire to exclude all the other students from participating in this event, because at the end of the day, I wanted to offer this opportunity for all the high schoolers who are in need in Lexington High School. So, instead of having the counselors handing out all the tickets for free, the system was revised to having the counselors only provide free tickets to high school juniors who struggle with mental health. This decreases my target audience by more than a quarter. As for the other students who are interested in this event, they will be able to purchase the tickets for a reasonable price online.

In this way, the system prioritizes the students who are most stressed out, while reserving the right for other students to participate as well.

Fenton, Tri-County Times |. "Which Year of High School Is Most Challenging?" *Tri-County Times*, 27 Aug. 2018, www.tctimes.com/which-year-of-high-school-is-most-challenging/article_caac8e82-aa29-11e8-a8ef-3b0df73e64a6.html.

The Films

The next on the agenda is deciding the films that would be screened. The movie theater needs to have a stable but diverse list of films that are appropriate for high schoolers to view, and the films also need to have an impact on the process of mental healing.

After visiting the article *Therapeutic Themes and Relevant Movies*, which contains the entire collection of films that may help people to deal with life situations (Ofer Zur, Ph.D. & Birgit Wolz, Ph.D.), I extracted all the films with topics relevant and proper for high schoolers and compiled a brand new list of 292 films that can be screened through the system created by me.

The image on the right demonstrates the list of films described above that have been proven to benefit mental health by professional psychotherapists, along with the associated themes.

"Cinema Therapy, Movies Relevant to Psychology, by Ofer Zur, Ph.D. and Birgit Wolz, Ph.D. MFT." *Zur Institute*, 11 Feb. 2021, www.zurinstitute.com/movie-therapy/.

The Venue

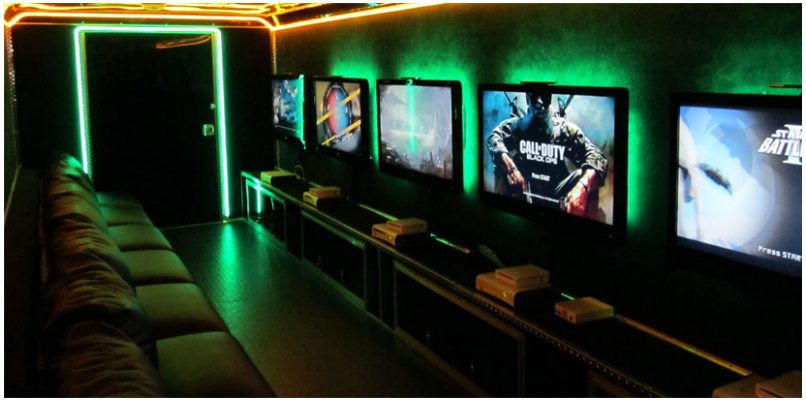
In order for cinema therapy to work in the high school, I need to secure two more things: 1) it's a routine (weekly, monthly, etc.); 2) it is accessible for all the high schoolers.

First thing first, this mental-healing movie theater cannot be a drive-in: not all high schoolers have a car, and the general idea of having to sit in a car to watch the movies defeats the purpose of fostering a community of students to enjoy and appreciate the film together.

Second, it cannot be in a classroom or auditorium: students are in classrooms all day, and auditoriums have limited sitting. The environment needs to be different but exciting.

Third, it is difficult for students to go to an actual movie theater. They are already stressed out, would they really drive (and given that not all high schoolers have a car or have access to a car) to nearby movie theaters in their free time? This further proposes that the location needs to be close by, preferably, no transportation should be needed.

The Movie Truck

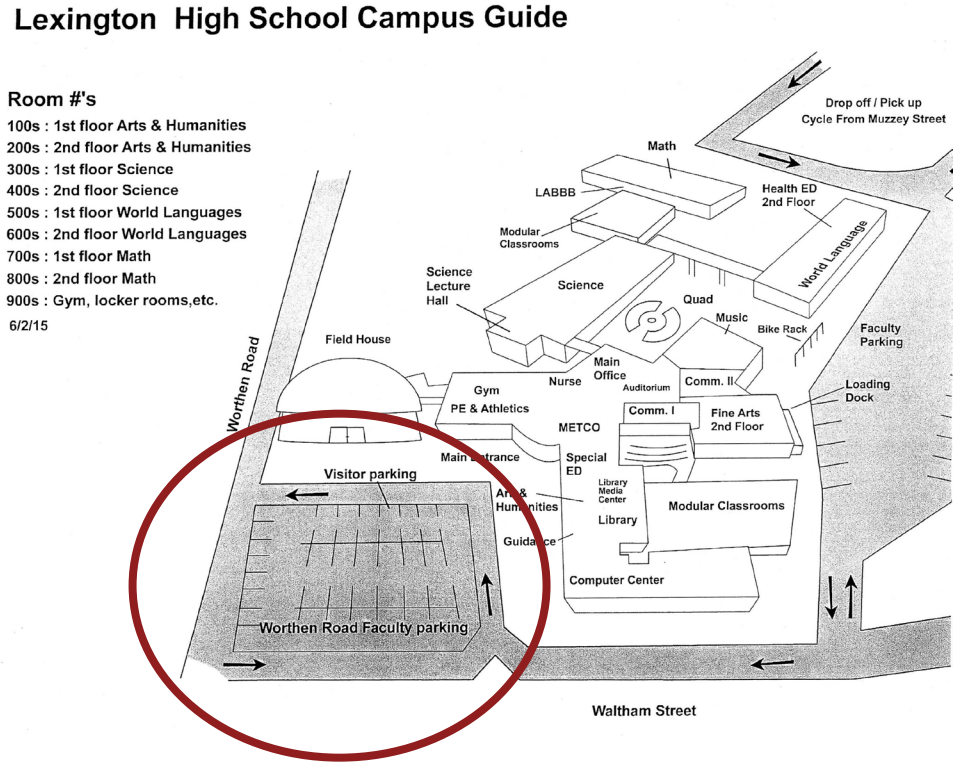


Feeling stuck, I decided to talk to one of my friends for inspiration. Interestingly, my friend suggested the idea of a “party truck”. He explained to me the concept of the truck— it is essentially a truck full of arcade games that people order to drive to their house for birthday parties or big events. I have never heard of anything like such before, so I decided to continue my research with the wish to create a party truck, but instead of games, mine delivers movies.

As I learn more about the party trucks, I started to see more of this possibility: driving films on wheels. I became so invested in this idea, not only because it is completely new, but also because it fits all the criteria of my cinema therapy theater.

The Location

After investigating the map of Lexington High School, I decided to have the “movie truck” to park and screen the movie in the visitor parking lot. This decision was made mainly based on the square footage of the place. The end goal for this project is to have a screening of the film that simulates a real movie theater, so I had a vision for as many sittings as possible. This particular parking lot had the most space, therefore it would be more feasible to place as many as chairs for students to participate in this experience. It is also, needless to say, this location is on campus, which ensures that it is accessible to all the students who attend the school.



The Concept: Revised

This final pivot of a movie truck completed my process of connecting the dots. I was able to create a perfectly straight line from my research to my audience, then to my way of delivering the message. (The right way shown here is not the entire process, however, the main idea is expressed. For an in-depth version of the right way, please visit the next page.)

The Right People

High school juniors who attend the academically rigorous Lexington High School in the state of Massachusetts.

The Right Message

Find yourself through films.

The Right Way

An outdoor mobile cinema service operated on a truck that delivers mental-healing films to the high school students in the Lexington High School after major exams such as SAT, ACT, and other important exams offered by the school.

The Right Way: In-depth

An outdoor mobile cinema service operated on a truck that delivers mental-healing films to the high school students of Lexington High School after major exams such as SAT, ACT, and other important exams offered by the school.

The movie being screened each week will be selected from a list consisting of up to 292 films that have been proven to be beneficial for mental health by professional psychotherapists. The films are of 24 different categories including authentic self, aspiration, courage & determination, stress management, etc.

The tickets will be delivered through high school's guidance counselors, who will be informed of the film being screened along with its corresponding category. The guidance counselors will then be able to give out free movie passes to high school juniors who have just finished an important assessment that week or facing emotional distress.

There will also be a mobile website that students can purchase tickets from. This helps to reach out to the students who are quiet and tend to not speak out. The students will be required to verify their student ID when purchasing the movie pass, and all juniors can be exempted from paying for the tickets. For other students, a very small fee will be charged if they are interested in attending. This ensures that the high school juniors get the priority to watch the movies.

This system will serve both as a reward program to celebrate the students who have gone through a tough week as well as an encouraging notion for students are that in need of a mental break.

The movie will be displayed on a fold-able screen of standard movie projection size (50 by 30 ft), therefore it will be able to accommodate up to 200 students each time. There will be assigned sittings to avoid complications. Popcorns will be handed out for free as each student enters the "outdoor theater".

This cinema experience will be operated outside in the school's parking lot. Outdoor patio heaters will be provided to accommodate the cold weather during winter.

Closing the Loop

After pitching this idea to Lisa, she absolutely loved my people and my message, however, she pointed out that I was missing the process of "closing the loop". I can't just create a system for the high schooler to watch movies and let them go home full of unexpressed emotions. There needs to exist a part where we let the high schoolers express their emotions and understand why they are feeling this way.

To close this loop, Lisa provided me with the idea of giving the high schoolers an opportunity to talk to people who have been through the same situations as them— the alumni of Lexington High School. They will be the perfect people for the high schoolers to share their feelings with because they have overcome the same obstacles when they were in high school, and this makes them relatable and easy to connect with.

The Right Way: Final

An outdoor mobile cinema service operated on a truck that delivers mental-healing films to the high school students of Lexington High School after major exams such as SAT, ACT, and other important exams offered by the school.

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This cinema experience will be operated outside in the school's parking lot. Outdoor patio heaters will be provided to accommodate the cold weather during winter.

After viewing the film, the students will have the choice to contact an alumnus of Lexington High School. This program is not mandatory, however, if the students feel the drive to talk to someone about how they feel after watching the movies or have any thoughts in mind, this option will always be provided. This program can be accessed both through the website and the movie ticket itself through the form of a QR code. Everything being discussed under this program will be confidential, so students can speak freely. Everyone is encouraged to sign up.

The Big Three

After the revision, I have come to the conclusion of my final big three. (The right way shown here is not the entire process, however, the main idea is expressed. For an in-depth version of the right way, please visit the previous page.)

The Right People

High school juniors who attend the academically rigorous Lexington High School in the state of Massachusetts.

The Right Message

Find yourself through films.

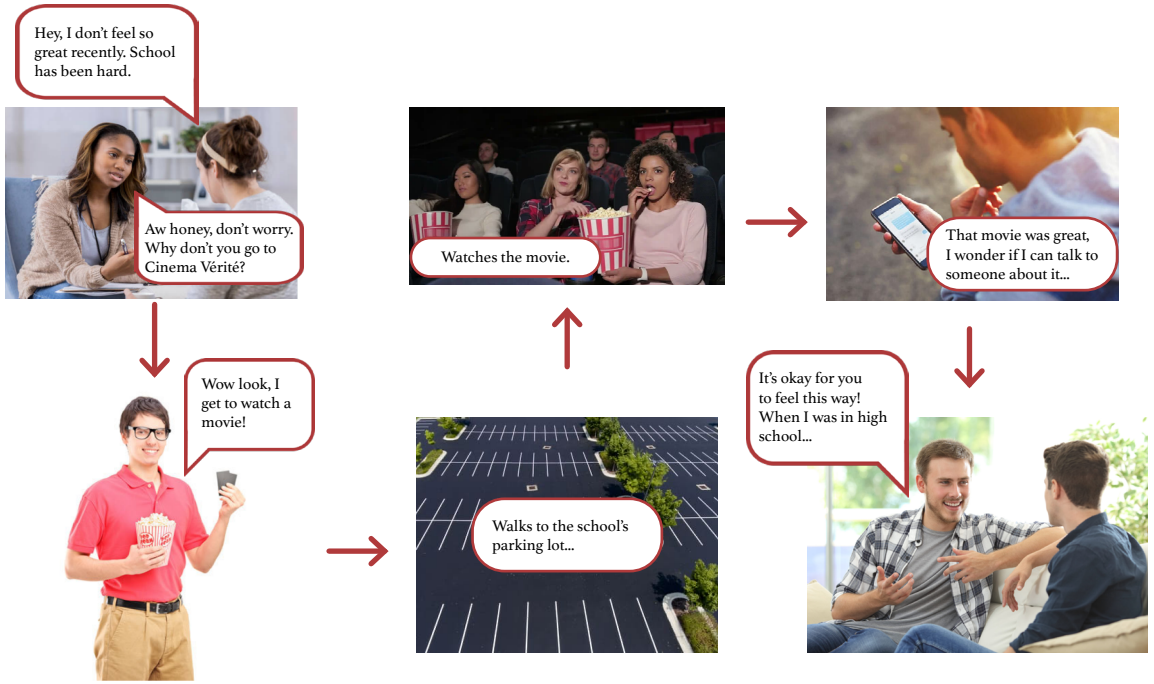
The Right Way

An outdoor movie theater operated on a truck that delivered mental-healing films to Lexington High School; after each screening, the students will have the option to connect with an alumnus to discuss the film.

The Event Flow

To visually demonstrate how the entire system works, I created an event flow in the form of a story that helps both the users and myself to understand the process better.

The notion of creating an entire system on my own was still new to me, so having this series of dialogues in mind really aided me in the design process.



The Name

After organizing the flow of the entire process, it's time for this project to move on to brainstorming design ideas. To start the design process, a name for this project is needed to set the mood and facilitate the branding. Being stuck on the name ideation was stopping me to move any further in the design process. I struggled with this process for a very long time and came up with some questionable names (shown on the right) because none of them fits the project well.

FilmStop

The Happy Truck

The Hype Truck

Filmoto

Movie Break

Auto unwind cinema

Cinema Vérité

Under the guidance of Lisa, I decided to perform more research on cinema-related words, and I discovered the term "*Cinema Vérité*", which is a style of film-making characterized by realistic, typically documentary motion pictures that avoid artificiality and artistic effect and are generally made with simple equipment (Oxford Languages). To translate directly from the French language, the term means "true cinema".

This term sounded beautiful to me. After more digging, I ensured that no other movie theater is named the same, and that's when a high school movie theater named Cinema Vérité is born.

Concerning that the name Cinema Vérité by itself does not do the system justice, I decided to add a tagline to help convey the main goal of this movie theater: *Driving Film Relief for High Schoolers.*

Together, the name and the tagline form a perfect and slick combination that establishes the essence of this project.

Cinematic Terms - *A FilmMaking Glossary*, www.filmsite.org/filmterms6.html.

Tone Words

For the tone of the project, I chose the words *upbeat*, *exciting*, and *trendy*. These decisions were made based on the overall objective of this project.

Upbeat

Cinema Vérité will cheer you up!

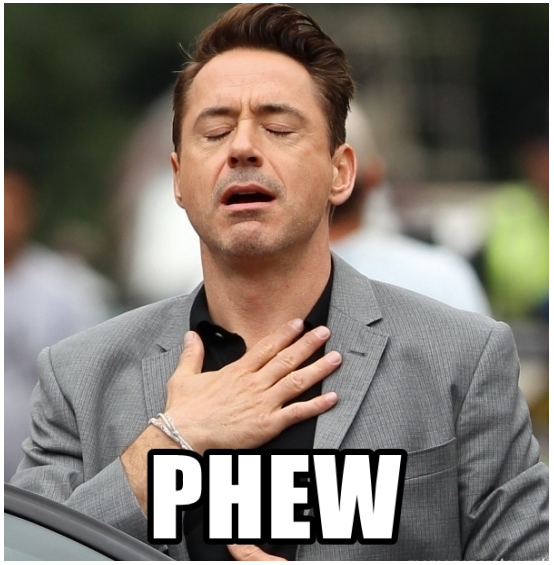
Exciting

By attending Cinema Vérité will, you get to take a break from the boring classroom and watch a movie outside (how exciting).

Trendy

Cinema Vérité is something that students are interested in attending, because it is of the most popular aesthetics of the current high schoolers.

Motif



To complete the branding process, a motif was developed. This cinema aims to drive film relief to high schoolers, so an idea for the motif comes to mind: what do people say they feel relieved? *Whew*.

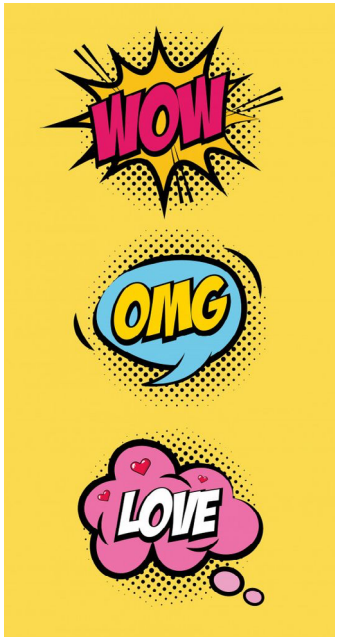
This onomatopoeia becomes an excellent motif for this project: it supports the mood of the cinema without taking up too much attention.

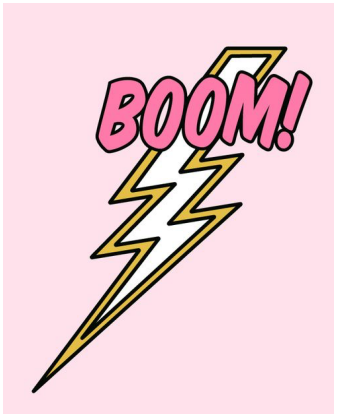
A general idea for the design of this motif that I had was to have the word "whew" lay on the top of a piece of popcorn.

"Robert Downey Jr. Car - Phew." *Memegenerator.net*, memegenerator.net/instance/84735973/robert-downey-jr-car-phew.

Visual Inspirations

The visual inspirations for this project are the hipster and vintage graphic design styles from the ’90s. This choice was made because such a style is currently making a comeback in pop culture. From graphic tees to vintage sneakers, almost everything a high schooler owns has some degree of retro and hipster vibes. Visuals like such would be fitting for Cinema Vérité, which is aimed to be trendy and exciting.





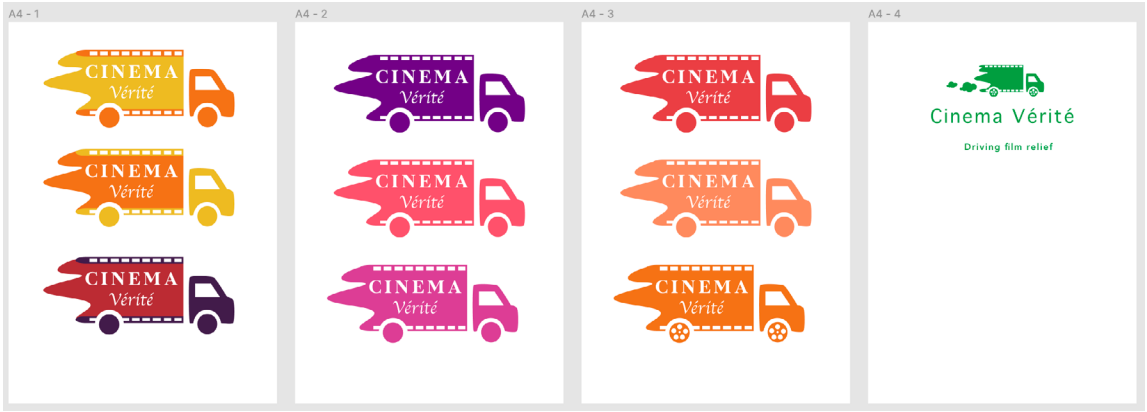
Create

The Logo: Brainstorm

To convey the entire system through a small logo can be difficult, however, I was able to land on a final idea after experimentation with several different approaches. (The colors of the draft vary, this is because I have not yet chosen a color palette at the time.)

I knew that I wanted a sketch of a truck to be in the logo because it is the entire essence of the cinema. However, a truck by itself does not convey the idea of a movie theater, so I decided to use film strips to achieve this aspect.

The green draft on the very right is an initial prototype of the logo after brainstorming.



The Green Logo

On the right is the first official execution of the logo based on the drafts.

The “clouds” on the back of the truck had triple meanings: the gas of the truck, popcorn, and emotions. However, I soon took Lisa’s opinion of reserving a single meaning to them: popcorn. This decision makes the message of the project more clear.

It was also critiqued by my peers that the current green color is not working with the cinema theme, rather, it expresses more nature than anything, which was not what I wanted.

Colors

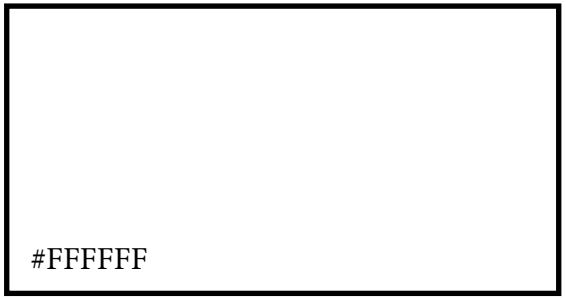
This is the point when I realized that I needed a stable color scheme. The colors of this graphic design project need to reflect the tone words well. After experimenting with many, many different color combinations, I finally decided on a color palette of three (shown below) for this project.

The Cinema Red

The red helps to convey the concept of a movie theater to the students: red carpet, red seats in the movie theaters, red popcorn box... Red also represents growth, rebirth, and encouragement.

The Popcorn Yellow

A secondary color that works amazingly with the cinema red. This color can also be used to represent the color of the popcorn in graphics, which makes it fitting for this project.



The Classic White

This color serves the main purpose of complementing the other two colors. When combined with any, a youthful and trendy tone can be delivered.

The "Old Lady"

After choosing the colors, I felt ready to redesign the logo. This second round of logo displayed on the left also has the "clouds" cluttered closer to create more resemblance with popcorn, and it is of the color scheme established beforehand.

Though I was ready to move on to the other deliverables of the project, I was hit by the comment made by Lisa: "**Your tagline's typeface looks like an old lady. Are you designing for an old lady?**"

This was when I realized how unfitting the font I chose was. So I then took a step back and started researching for font pairings that fit the tone of this project.

Typeface

The typeface choices made were also based on the essential goal of strictly obeying the overall tone of this project. The final typeface pairing chosen is Gilroy Bold and Futura Medium. The bulkiness of Gilroy is perfectly balanced by the lean Futura. This pairing also vibrates youthful and powerful energy that screams Cinema Vérité.

Logo

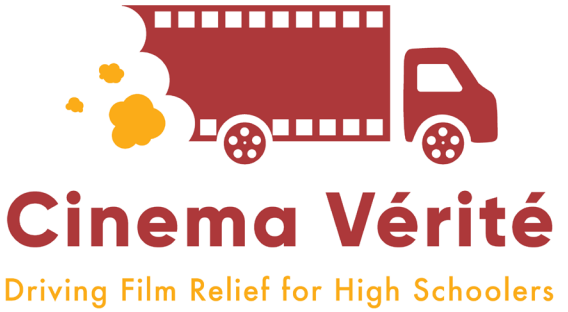
Gilroy Bold

Body Copy

Futura Medium

The Logo: Final

The typeface helped me to complete the final iteration of the logo. As displayed on the right, the final form of the logo is of the chosen typeface pairings.



The Deliverables

To fully deliver this project, I then brainstormed three pieces that will do a good job in explaining the system.

The Ticket

Students will either be granted or purchase the ticket to attend Cinema Vérité, therefore, creating a movie ticket will help to express the process. This is also the crucial piece of the project that tells the story of Cinema Vérité to the audience.

The Popcorn Box

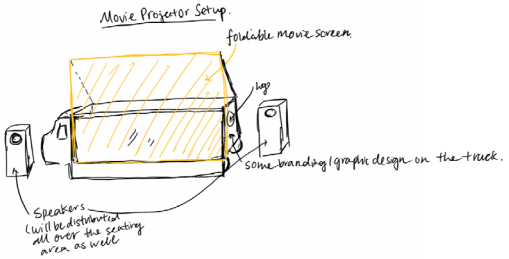
Students will receive free popcorn at the entrance, so designing an exciting popcorn box can help increase the students' interest in attending the event.

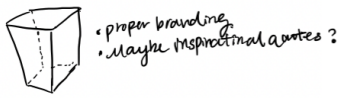
The Truck

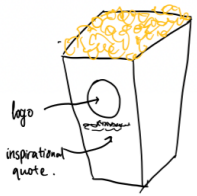
This piece is essentially where the film will be displayed. Without it, this project would be impossible for the audience to imagine how the theater would operate.

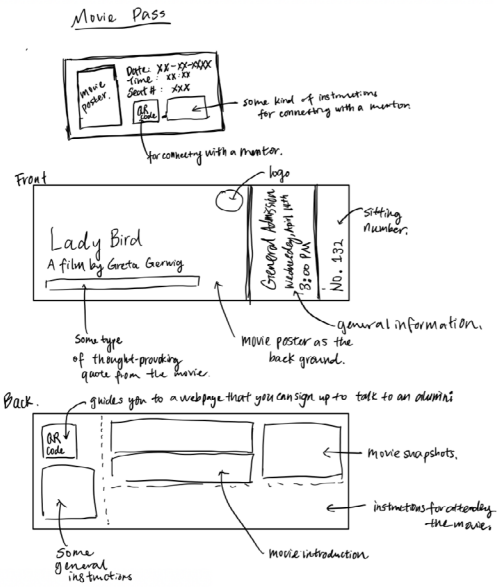
Sketches

An initial sketch of each piece was drawn prior to the creation of the official designs. This step helped me to brainstorm the different components that I wanted to provide through my pieces and allowed me to express my vision of how the final project would look like.







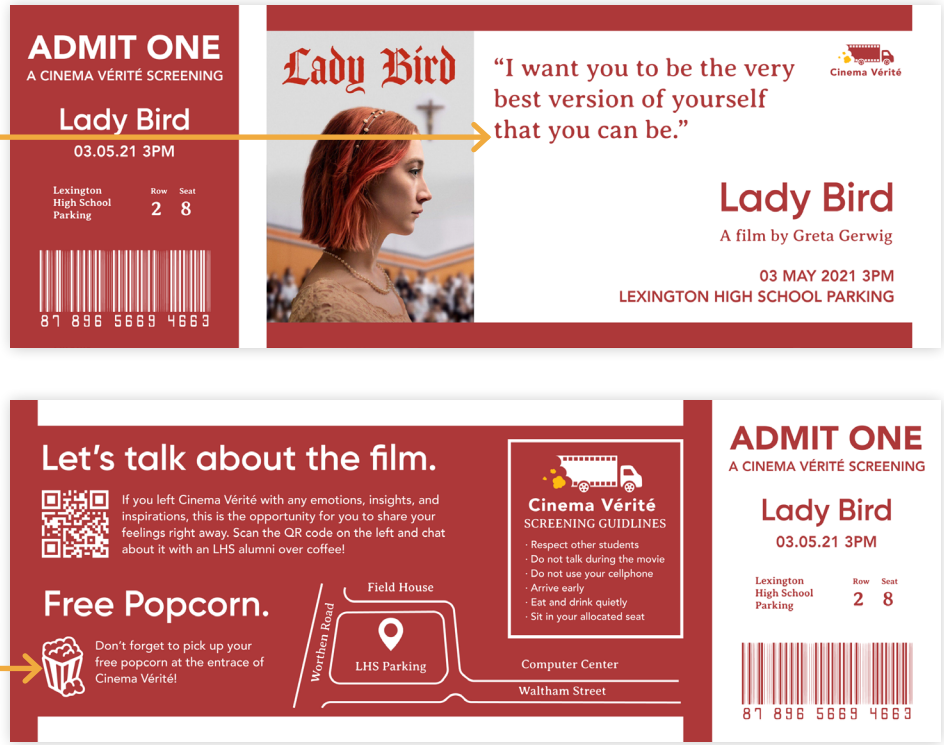


The Ticket: Round 1

For my first official round of the ticket design, I did not utilize my popcorn yellow at all; furthermore, I was still stuck with the "old lady" font at the time and persistent with it (until I finally see how it won't work with my tone).

Stop it with this font!

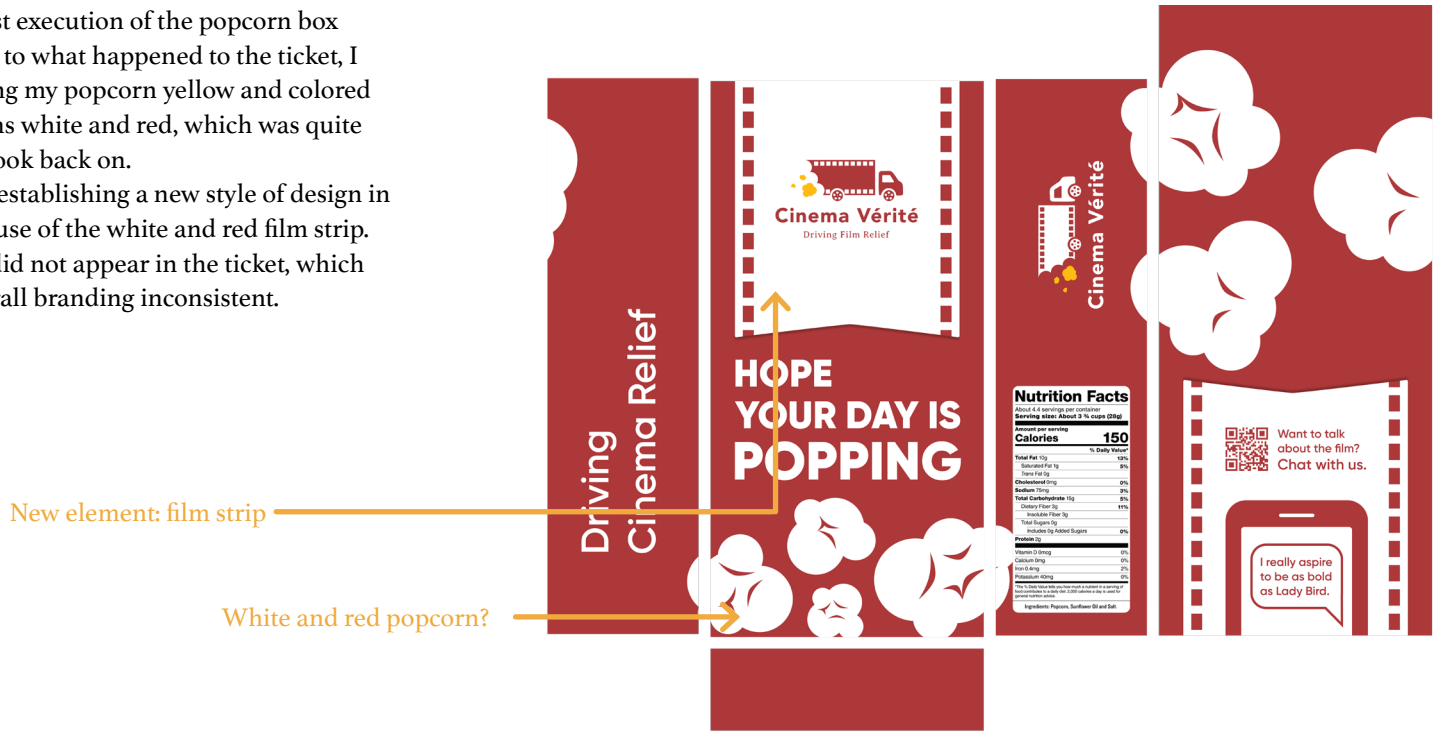
Why is this popcorn not yellow?



The Popcorn Box: Round 1

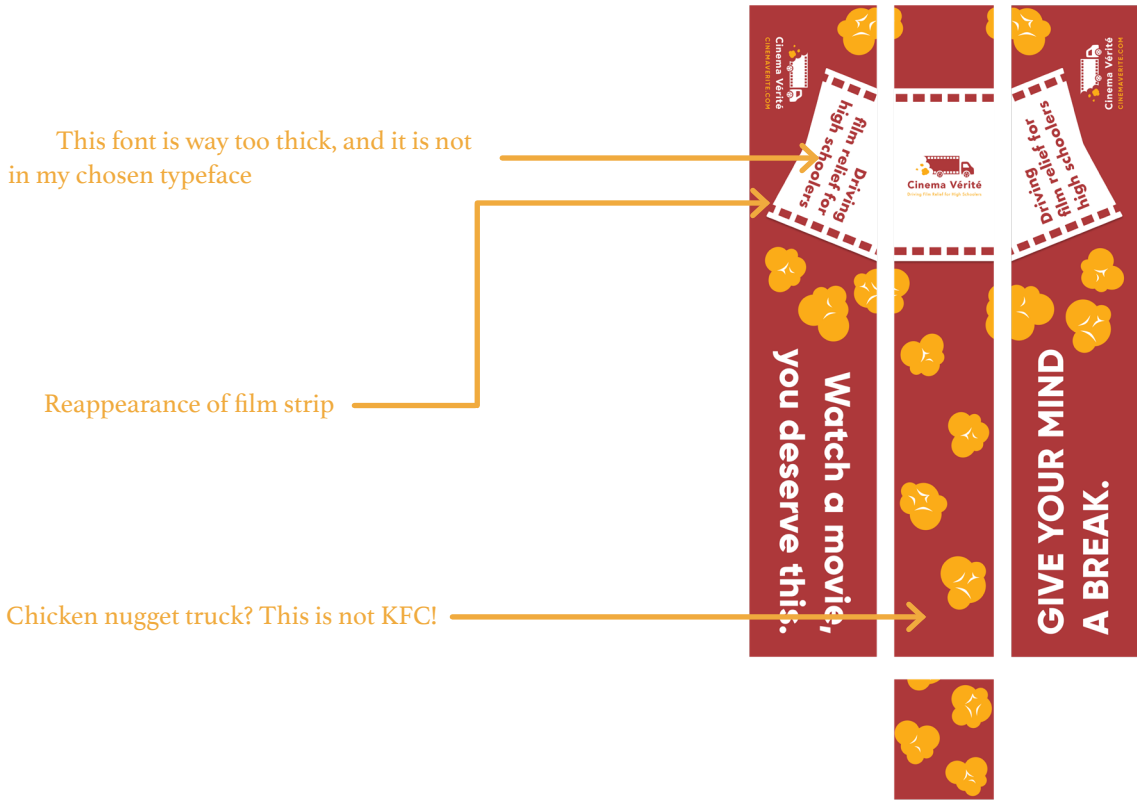
For my first execution of the popcorn box design, similar to what happened to the ticket, I was not utilizing my popcorn yellow and colored all the popcorns white and red, which was quite disturbing to look back on.

I was also establishing a new style of design in this piece: the use of the white and red film strip. This element did not appear in the ticket, which makes my overall branding inconsistent.



The Truck: Round 1

For the truck banners, I finally decided to color popcorn yellow for once. It also used the element of film strip just like the popcorn box, which is a great branding step. However, the overly distributed yellow popcorn made it seem like chicken nuggets coincidentally.



Motif Design

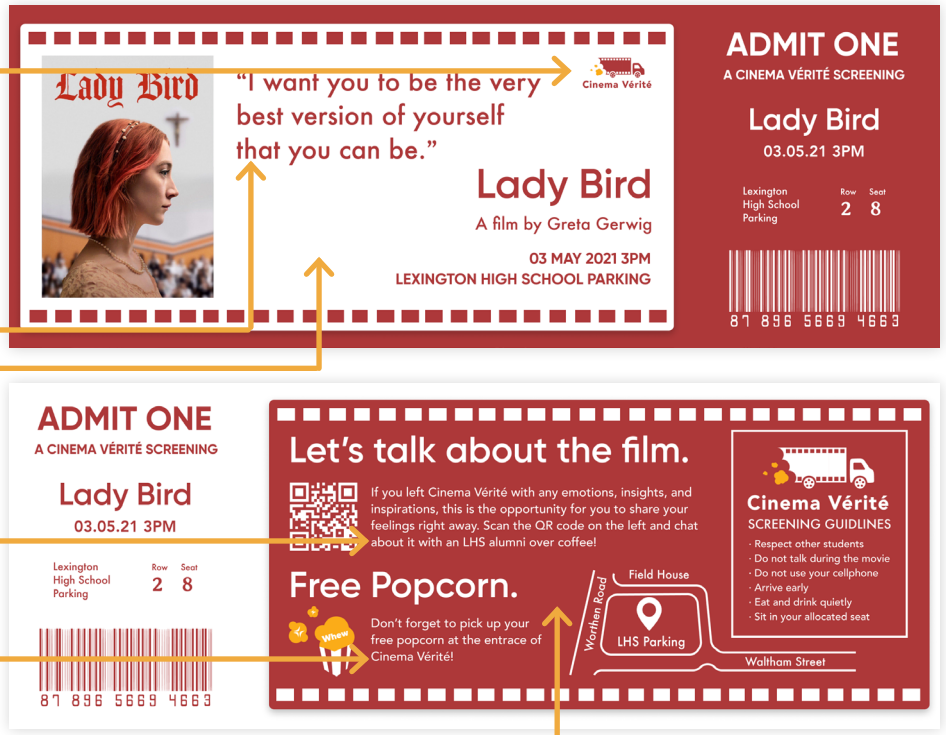
After the first round of design, I decided to carry out the motif that was already established during the planning phase. With the addition of this motif, the branding will be much more consistent, unlike before.

As for the design of the motif, I decided to follow my plan of combining the word “Whew” with popcorn. After some adjusting and angling, the final form of the motif is being displayed below.

Whew +  = Whew

The Ticket: Round 2

Comparing to round 1, I added the film strip element to the ticket as well. This change immediately made my branding consistent: now all three of my pieces consist of the same design element. Some other changes I made were the typeface of the quote and the addition of the motif on the back of the ticket.



Needs more ragging for the logo

Not hanging the quote

No yellow on this page at all!

No one will understand what LHS is!

Check typos

How do the students get these tickets? The ticket need to explain the system better.

The Popcorn Box: Round 2

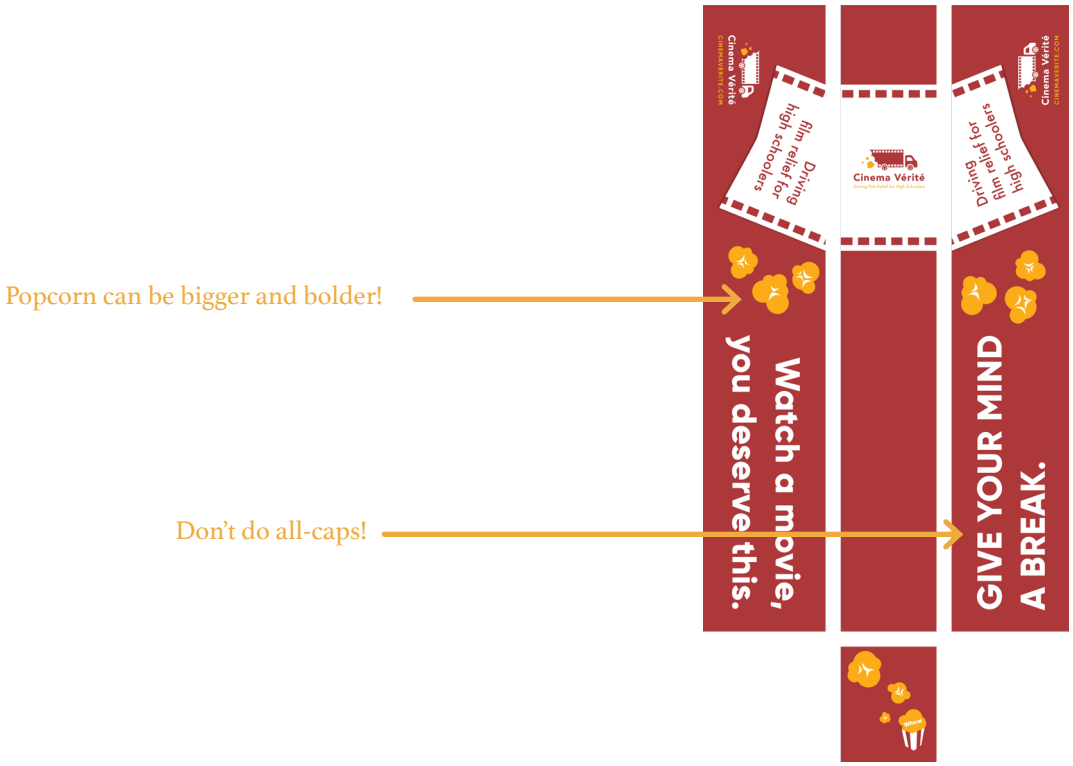
This second round of popcorn box started to look like an actual popcorn box after I colored the popcorn yellow. The motif was also added to the side and the bottom of the popcorn packaging. Some other minor positional changes were made, however, the placement of some of the texts and the illustration of the popcorn still seemed off and can be potentially difficult for the audience to understand.

Don't break the text in to three different lines.

This type of illustration makes the popcorn looks like an angry face

The Truck: Round 2

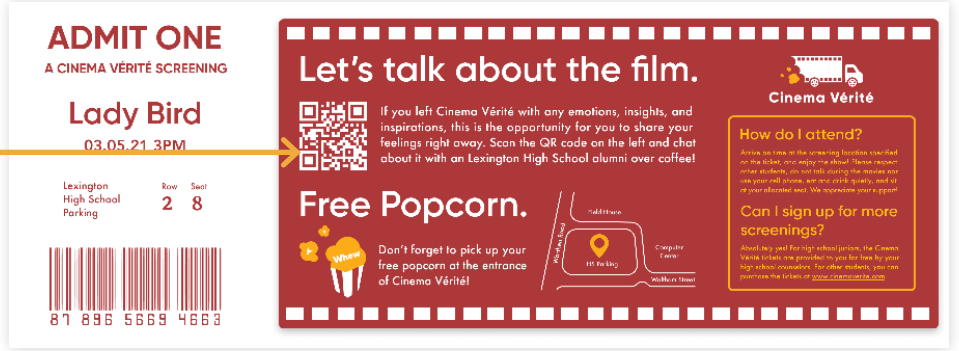
The main change that was made during this iteration of the truck banners was the amount of popcorn being displayed. After some trial and error, I decided on only including the popcorn on the sides and the back of the truck. This helped to ease the resemblance with the chicken nuggets as well. Since the top of the truck can rarely be seen from a common angle, having a logo and the film strip would be sufficient for the branding.



The Ticket: Round 3

For the third round of the ticket, I chose to include more information about why the students should come to Cinema Vérité and where they can get the ticket from. This addition made everything more cohesive and the ticket can now fully explain the entire system. However, I was still stingy in the use of my popcorn yellow, which prohibits the branding to be consistent when only looking at the first page of the ticket.

Still too little yellow!



Use a grid!

The Popcorn: Round 3

The third round of the popcorn box design mainly involved a change in the illustration of the popcorn and the rearrangement of the texts. After these minor changes, the overall design became way better than what was presented before.

The Truck: Round 3

This last iteration of the truck completes the design process for all of its banners. The popcorn is made much larger to emphasize the brand. There are no more all-caps texts on the banners, which made the content itself more readable.

The Ticket: Round 4

Following the feedback I received from my peers and Lisa, I decided to restructure the front of the ticket. As you can see on the left, the front of the ticket has a completely different formatting. I finally decided to use a grid to guide my layout process (which was an amazing decision, 10/10 would recommend), and I was able to create a very organized structure. I thoroughly enjoyed the process of continuously trying out new combinations, and I am satisfied with this final design.

Final Mock-ups

The final designs will be presented in the following section. There will be a detailed demonstration of each component in the final pieces, as well as a presentation of the designs in the form of mock-ups. Enjoy!

The Ticket


The name of the film, the director, and the motif of the film
The logo
Movie poster to attract more attention
Lady Bird
A film by Greta Gerwig
Cinema Vérité
Be yourself
Chase your dreams
03 May 2021 3PM
The movie break you deserve
ADMIT ONE
A CINEMA VÉRITÉ SCREENING
Lady Bird
03.05.21 3PM
Lexington High School Parking
Row 2
Seat 8
87 896 5669 4663
Show-time
Seat number
Instructions for connecting with an alumnus
Yes, you deserve it!
ADMIT ONE
A CINEMA VÉRITÉ SCREENING
Lady Bird
03.05.21 3PM
Lexington High School Parking
Row 2
Seat 8
87 896 5669 4663
Show-time
Seat number
Let's talk about the film.
If you left Cinema Vérité with any emotions, insights, and inspirations, this is the opportunity for you to share your feelings right away. Scan the QR code on the left and chat about it with an Lexington High School alumni over coffee!
Free Popcorn.
Don't forget to pick up your free popcorn at the entrance of Cinema Vérité!
Where
Field House
Wellness Pavilion
LHS Parking
Computer Center
Waltham Street
How do I attend?
Can I sign up for more screenings?
Cinema Vérité
The logo
The guidelines and rules to follow
How to receive a ticket
Inform the students of the free popcorn
The motif
The location

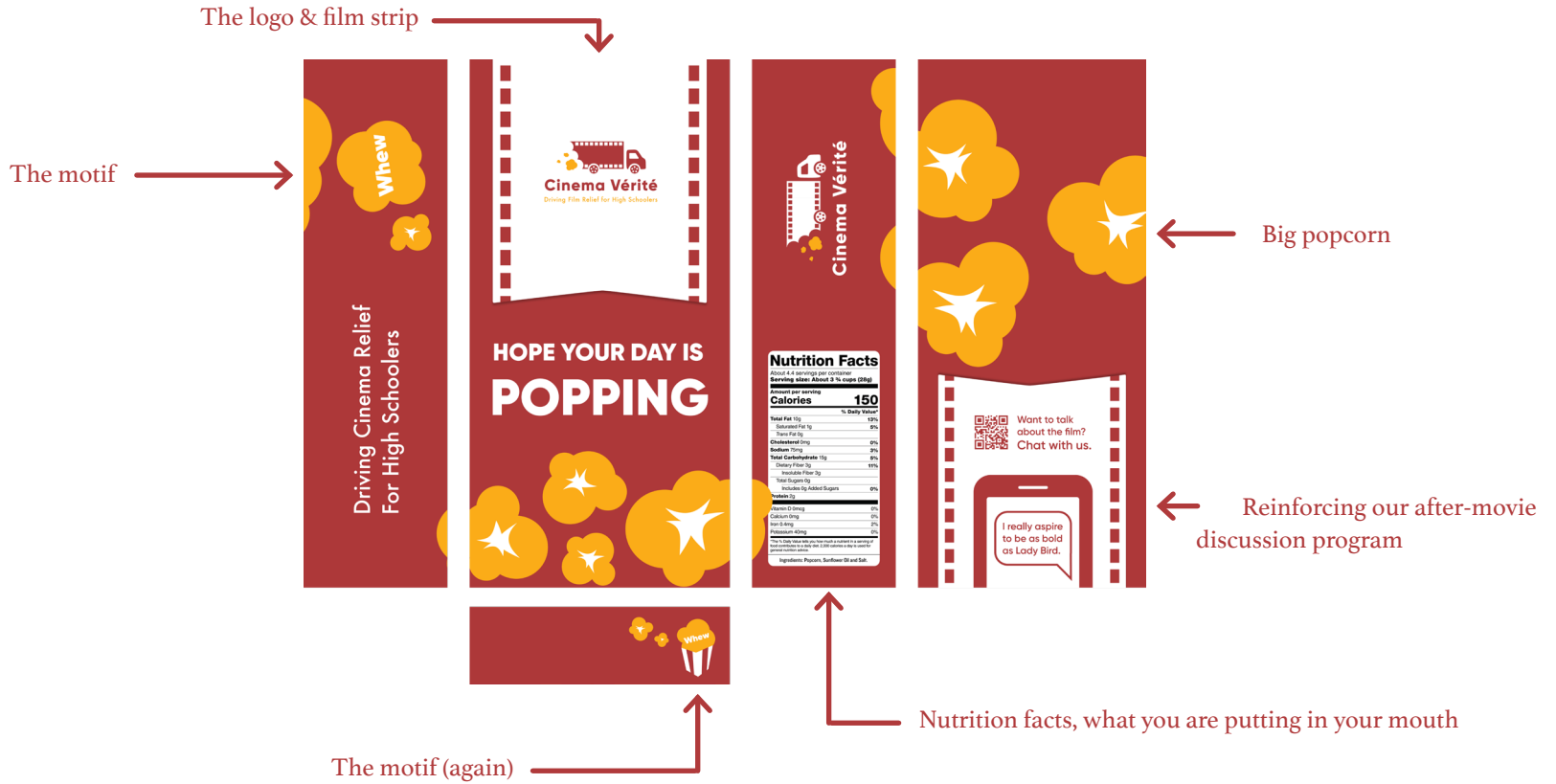
The Ticket


ADMIT ONE
Lady Bird
03.05.21 3PM
let's talk about the film.
Free Popcorn
Lady Bird
Be yourself
Chase your dreams


ADMIT ONE
Lady Bird
03.05.21 3PM
Lady Bird
A film by Greta Gerwig
Be yourself
Chase your dreams


ADMIT ONE
A CINEMA VÉRITÉ SCREENING
Lady Bird
03.05.21 3PM
Lady Bird
A film by Greta Gerwig
Be yourself
Chase your dreams
03 May 2021 3PM
The movie break you deserve

The Popcorn Box



The Popcorn Box

The Truck


Big popcorn
Why should you come to Cinema Vérité? Because you deserve it!
Watch a movie, you deserve this.
Driving film relief for high schoolers
Cinema Vérité
CINEMAVERITE.COM
The motif
The logo & tagline
Take a break from studying!
Give your mind a break.
Driving film relief for high schoolers
Cinema Vérité
CINEMAVERITE.COM
Film strip
The logo & website

The Truck


Watch a movie,
you deserve this.


Give your mind
a break.


Give your mind
a break.
Driving
film relief for
high schoolers
Cinema Vérité
CINEMAVERITE.COM

Reflections

Reflections

The process of this project was stressful and challenging at times, but I absolutely enjoyed every single second of working on it. As an Industrial Design Minor, I was able to get great exposure to the professional design process through the creation of this project.

During the discovery phase of this project, I was stuck on the topic of drive-ins for the longest time, and I could not get myself out of it. At first, I was extremely motivated about reviving the movie-going culture through a modern drive-in theater, but such a system already exists. For weeks, I researched over and over the same topics, and visited every single website that mentions the word “drive-in”. Looking back, I underestimated the beauty of giving up. Knowing I was not connecting the dots correctly, if I were to restructure my research direction as soon as I realized this fact, I could have discovered the wonderful opportunity of cinema therapy so much faster.

The project has really taught me about the power of research: everything I designed during the span of this project can be reflected by my research. From the ideation to the final design, everything is deeply connected to how much I really know about my audience and my system. Without the research, nothing would be the same.

Due to my past experiences as a brand designer, designing tickets or branding is not a new task for me, however, I learned so much more than what I was expecting going into the create phase of this project. I was so confident in my green logo and my “old lady” font that I did not see how each component can be misinterpreted as. Everything single choice made in design makes an impact on the final product, and the biggest lesson for me was that choosing each element with a purpose and a meaning is what makes a design great.

This is the best design experience that I went through thus far, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Lisa and all the amazing peers in the class. I am proud of the final product of mine, and I truly believe that this project can be carried out in real life one day to help reduce the stress of high school students.

Thank you!