

Project Case Study: Reflection

This is my reflection essay, the refined branding elements of all 10 graphic design projects included in the portfolio, the portfolio itself, the website, and finally, a reflection upon my time at SNHU as a whole. Here I will discuss the various aspects of my work, including Working Knowledge of Graphic Design Software and Digital Tools, Elements of Design, Creative Self-Expression and Originality, Evidence of Thoughtful and Appropriate Critique Skills, Evidence of Following Directions, and finally, Craftsmanship and Attention to Detail:

I will also reflect on my capstone experience, its significance in relation to your own experience at and the connections the capstone and my academic program. I will also discuss how I received and gave feedback, and its incorporation into my print-ready portfolio and portfolio website and the value of collaboration with others.

I'll also discuss how I'll apply to what I've learned to my future professional life, and discuss the importance of culturally appropriate designs that leave a positive, lasting impact on the world. And finally, I shall touch on my goals for my professional career.

We'll begin with the first batch of 5 items. Both the Pasta Amore and All Star Sports design series demonstrate a working knowledge of graphic design tools, but were made in different tools.

Pasta Amore was created in InDesign, a program designed for creating Print and Digital Layouts. Pasta Amore's print branding made good use of the various features in InDesign, such as the layer usage to control the positioning of various elements, letting them manipulate them at will. It also gave me shape tools, which let me not only create intricate borders, but also let me make frames around pictures to blend them in with the rest of the work. The text tools let me place text in line with other design elements. Most importantly, the software is vector-focused, allowing for maximum scaling, image resolution pending.

The All Star Sports items were created in Illustrator, a vector-focused program, perfect for adaptability of various design elements. I used layers to control the visibility and position of elements to ensure everything ends up in the proper place. The shape tools allowed me to give great detail to the logo, and let me position and use various elements as needed. The text tools not only let me fit all the text to the logo and manipulate it into the proper position.

Of note is that both export print-ready documents, and both have guides.

Sound Tamers, Wooden Railroad, and Small Space Living logos were created using Photoshop's vector tools. While Photoshop is not known for its vector work, it does have capable vector tools, and can work in both the RGB and CMYK color spaces.

The Wooden Railroad Card, Order Form, and Price List were created in Word, a program well-optimized for creating various bound documents. Since everything was meant to be fairly plain, they didn't benefit much, if any, from being created in a program like InDesign or Illustrator. Besides that, Word documents are a fairly universal format, which can be easily updated, unlike Illustrator or InDesign.

Both the Sound Tamers and Small Space living used vector based designs for maximum flexibility, allowing me to bring them into Illustrator or InDesign if needed.

Each work makes use of various elements of design. The Pasta Amore brand has a strong focus on rectangular shapes, and management of white space. The primary shape is

a beveled rectangle as to enforce the old-time look without being too elaborate, drawing the eyes away from the main content Text is contained and “boxed” in by lines of equal thickness to maintain consistency. While space was carefully control to balance the text out and nor feel cramped, or overly airy.

All Star Sports is very line-driven, as it’s the primary design element in the work. Everything is based around crisp, clean, lines and rectangles. Notably, the logo has lined borders on the left accenting the star. It’s intended to be very clean and crisp with little in the way of flare.

Wooden Railroad, Small Space Living, and Sound Tamers logo use the elements of design effety. The Wooden Railroad logo and documents make use of lines, befitting of a railroad-themed business. The tracks in the tree carve out a white space, and linear elements dominate all elements.

The Small Space Living was a very shape-driven logo, using a variety of shapes, accented with lines, to form furniture shapes in a compact manner. The text was integrated into the bed and couch to provide a natural flow.

The Sound Tamers logo is based on contrast, with the line-based waveform paired against the shape of the tamer. The tamers whip is within reach of the waveform, proving a linear path to the “mouth” the waveform.

Both Pasta Amore and All Star Sports are based on different retro-styles. The intended look of Pasta Amore was 1930s and 1940s resturants and dining cars, using the two shades of brown to give an old-timey flavor. Still, it’s not a direct copy, and I cleaned it up quite a bit, opting for a modern, clean style, but yet retaining some of the old-world charm to give it a sense of comfort.

All-Star Sports takes many cues from the logos of the 1970s during America’s bi-centennial. I felt the patriotic look fit the brand name rather well. But, by using timeless designs and fonts, I created a timeless look, easily able to fit any period from the past to today. I fit the A into the Star shape to give it a distinct pop, and tie the entire logo together, keeping the font consistent throughout, maintaining the timeless look.

Neither design is offensive, thanks to the focus on more timeless geometric designs rather than organic shapes which don’t age all that well.

For Wooden Railroad, I had a very clear visions of what I wanted to do that worked out well, as I got more or less the logo I initially envisioned, tracks carved into the bark of a tree. The resulting design has the tracks well-integrated into the tree, with clean layout of the documents befitting the linear nature of railroad tracks.

For Sound Tamer and Small Space living, I was unsure of what I wanted to do. The client gave me free reign to try out various concepts.

For Small Space Living, I wanted to make a compact logo that combined many elements of furniture into a small space. By compacting a variety of furniture into a small space, and combining it with the logo, I achieved my goal of creating a compact logo that fit the message of the business

Sound Tamers was unique in that the client wanted it to be similar to a lion tamer, without the issue of being a lion, but an abstract aggressive sin wave, as if the tamer was trying to make the waveform behave.

All of those are unique designs that carry their intended message cleanly.

Much like the prior pieces, all of these are non-offensive designs, though the Sound Tamers logo does not quite have the same ageless quality as the others.

Critique on these designs was very useful. They were well-received, but the Pasta Amore items required a bit of re-blanching and tuning based on feedback from professors and student. Regarding the brochure, I reduced the white space, and change out many of the images to focus on the group dining aspect rather than the food. I also reduced the white space, and made better use of the space I had, filling out the area with text in a clean, efficient manner.

For All Star Sports, very little feedback negative was received, just minor fine-tuning of the logo and various elements, as the logo went mostly unchanged throughout the process, being so well-received by the professor and my peers.

For Wooden Railroad, Small Space Living, and Sound Tamers, most of the critiquing on each of these pieces was done by the client, as while they gave me a free canvas, they had a clear vision of what they wanted.

Wooden Railroad went well from the start, with the initial concept being the final design used in the product.

Small Space Living also was well-received initially, with only some fine-tuning of logos. It was also made clear that the font used be in line with other home improvement magazines.

Sound Tamer received the most revisions, as originally, it was a abstract lion shape formed by waveforms. That was abandoned in favor of a linear design of an aggressive waveform more in line with the clients final vision.

Both the Pasta Amore items and All Star Sports items were made to the exact dimensions and sizes as specified by the professors, with all the necessary elements included. Nothing was missed or done incorrectly on each one. My professors felt some elements could be done better regarding the Pasta Amore logo, but overall, everything meet the needs of the assignments and received high marks overall.

For Wooden Railroad, Sound Tamers, and Small Space living. I meant all the desires of the client with each of the logos.

For Wooden Railroad, I created a design that meet the client's wishes for a logo that mixed the organic elements of wood with a railroad theme. The documents paired with it also meet the client's specs, and work well with the logo.

The Small Space Living logo captured the compact look that the business was was trying to promote, with furniture compactly placed.

The Sound Tamer logo was a sort of remix on the classic design of a lion-tamer, but instead, with a more fitting sharp, rouge, and aggressive waveform, with a sans-serif font to match.

The attention to detail and craftsmanship is clear in both series. Both brands have excellent consistency throughout, with nothing feeling odd or out of place. With regards to Pasta Amore, all the boxes have borders that are consistently sized and spaced, and the borders feel consistently nested in each other. Blocks of text are bordered by lines of consistent thickness and style, and overall, everything is keep tight and consistent

All Star Sports also demonstrates considerable detail. The Italic text in the logo matains an even slant and is the same font, giving it a coheave whole. The red and white

accents match up with the stars well, and on the letterhead, the line is cleanly butted up against the star, with a space the same size and style as those used in the logo. The lines are all kept at an even thickness throughout, and on the business card, the red and white lines have the same thickness before the blue box.

There are examples of fine craftsmanship in the Wooden Railroad logo and documents, as all are well-laid out, with fine placement of details in the logo, seamless blending of the tracks into the tree, and overall, a consistent style and look across all elements that works well with the logo.

The Small Space living is also well-crafted, with many fine details, and a good font selection that takes inspiration after many home improvement magazines, giving it a relatable yet innovative feel evocative of the brand's image.

The Sound Tamer logo is also intricate in design, with a well-detailed figure and aggressive waveform, with many fine details in each aspect.

For this next batch, I will example two Pasta Amore Items, the logos for Cajun Crate and Box Company and Anole.TV, a magazine spread, and the print and web ads from Amethyst Bay.

For all works, all of them were created using various programs in the Adobe Suite. The Logos were created using the vector tools in Photoshop, which allows them to be brought into other programs for printing and processing.

The Amethyst Bay print-ad used Illustrator to create a print-ready design to be sent off to a printer. Both the Pasta Amore files and the magazine spread were created in InDesign, print-ready programs. The Amethyst Bay Web ad was created using Photoshop's animation tools to create a distinct ad that fits the tropical feel intended.

The Cajun Crates and boxes logo was created using rectangular and circular shapes to form a crate shape, with the vector tools being used to place text in the circle. Overall, this creates a nice looking logo with plenty of attention to detail. The same methodology was used for the Anole.TV logo, a vector-based logo. By using vector-based elements in all the designs that allows them to be brought into other programs without a loss in quality.

In all designs, the elements of design were used to great effect. The Cajun Crates and boxes logo made great usage of both lines and shapes. The crate is made of a series of rectangular boxes forming a crate, and the circle was used to contain and close the crate, with the text indicating the goals of the business.

In the Amethyst Bay brochure and logos, lines are heavily featured elements, used as dividers and boxes to contain and split elements. Also notable was the usage of stained-glass designs to fill in the space at the bottom of the ad, giving it considerable visual interest.

The Anole.TV logos used shapes as the basis, as the TV sets are composed of a variety of shapes, and

All the designs, while not strictly original per say, are designs I enjoyed overall. The Pasta Amore ads were inspired by various menus and restaurant placements of the past. The Amethyst bay designs owe a lot to older travel ads inspired by the 1950s, using clean, distinct designs paired with a retro sans-serif font.

The Cajun Crate and box logo was intended to invoke feelings of older cottage industry ads, being in black and white with a detailed design in the middle. The Anole.TV

logo takes much inspiration from companies creating video software, but combined with the TVs, carves out a distinct look for the logo.

The magazine spread was the least inspired, as I assumed whatever it was published in would want to have a plain and simple feel and style, so I took much inspiration from that, but I gave it a distinct style inside those constraints.

For all my designs, I took the time to undertake thoughtful and appropriate Critiquing skills, and even if I felt the critiques I got clashed with the visions, I respected and implemented them regardless.

Regardless, the designs only asked for minor revisions. I tweaked some design elements on the Amethyst Bay Print ad to make the text stand out more and have a better position, moved some text around in the magazine spread to improve readability, which will not matching

With regards to the Anole.TV logo, I did not want the intent of the logo changed despite some of the critiquing given otherwise, because the client had given me very specific instructions and had a very clear vision, so I split the difference to make the design a little less confusing, while still adhering to the clients

For the Amethyst Bay Banner and Ad, I mostly stuck to the designated color schemes, but changed the font to something more befitting

All items demonstrate a degree of craftsmanship, with fine details and good proportions in all items.

The Pasta Amore items make great use of Line placement, framing items in boxes to bring attention to them, and making them stand out. The Cajun Crate and Box logo demonstrates excellent line-work and good proportions, creating an attractive and unique logo.

The Anole.TV logo has fine detail with distinctive, retro-esq TVs being a standout element in the design, paired with an attractive sans-serif font.

The Amethyst Bay items are cleanly laid out, with some neat effects used, such as the stained-glass

“windows” filling out spaces and giving it quite a bit of pop.

The magazine spread is simple and clean in layout, with elements well-placed to give a distinctly academic feel while giving some pop and style, maintain readability by using dark text on a light background.

Moving onto the portfolio, it is evident that the portfolio and branding items show a level of appropriate usage of design tools, as each item made was designed using either the Adobe suite or the Microsoft Office suite depending on the needs at hand. Specifically, the branding suite as a whole was created in Adobe Illustrator, a program optimized for making print-ready documents. They were exported with print marks as PDFs, and then imported into Adobe Acrobat for finishing.

Yes, I employed the various elements of design in all my works, trending toward, and flatter, simpler designs, making good use of both shapes and lines as needed, combined with distinctive colors with plenty of “pop” as it were. For the branding suite specifically, a distinct red-black-white color scheme was used, to give a subdued look with pop that’s inspired by some retro designs. The linear look with thin and thick stripes provided nice

accents, using the red-black-white color scheme to frame the contents in an clean and attractive manner with consistent placement of elements. That was combined with various sans-serif fonts to complete the retro-futuristic look I'm going for.

I did commit a considerable amount of time to coming with a somewhat unique remix on retro designs of the past for my branding, with their sans-serif fonts and bold, distinct color scheme. Both of those, combined with the clean, sharp lines, give my profile a distinct retro look that has a timeless quality. Most of the time, I usually have a clear vision of what I want in my head, but sometimes, I commit effort to roughing out concepts. The MPC brand when through multiple revisions to get an attractive looking logo and color scheme.

I felt I demonstrated thoughtful and appropriate critiquing skills, as I addressed specific points when I critiqued other's work, such as discussing how a logo felt too messy and would benefit from being cleaner and straighter to better mesh with the sans-serif font he was using. On the other side, I responded to criticism as best as I could, resulting in multiple overhauls as I needed to make major changes to the website. I also added more pages to the portfolio to enhance content distruction.

In the same vein, I followed all the directions to the best of my ability, while trying to create something unique and interesting. Occasionally, I misinterpreted them, resulting me getting less than ideal grades as a result. One unfortunate mis-intepritation is

As for craftsmanship, all works demonstrate craftsmanship, which a consistent style, good usage of the tools at hand, and overall, a cohesive and clean look. With regards to the portfolio specifically, an overall style was maintained, as parts lead into each other, especially apparent with the portfolio, as the logo was cleanly blended into the color scheme, and a consistent style and layout was maintained throughout to give everything the aforementioned cohesive look.

Next, we shall focus on the website. The website was created in Brackets, a well-known code-editor, using the Bootstrap framework to give a solid basis for a modern, responsive website. It also has pre-defined web elements which have a standardized framework, allowing for fast construction of websites that are responsive, and thus, works on multiple devices and browsers.

The main element of design used was the line, dividing and containing elements. White-space was maximized to ensure best readability, with selective usage of lines not just to divide elements, but add accents to the page. Overall the page follows a very linear style, top to bottom, with a distinct linear flow.

I committed considerable time to creating a retro-esq website, as I went through various concepts and ideas, building multiple sitemaps to plan out my website across all devices. It's not quite original, as it takes inspiration from branding used in transportation industries, but I modernized and cleaned it up to fit a webpage. I'm rather fond of the black and white with red accents, inspired by a famous paint scheme. The red gives everything a nice pop to the website.

I demonstrated thoughtful and appropriate critique skills, both receiving and giving out suggestions. On many a website, I pointed out specific suggestions, such as color scheme inconsistencies, or specific elements that I felt I could make specific suggestions on. Color scheme inconsistencies were a big one for me, as their color scheme for their website clashes with their logo, making their site feel confused and disorganized. I also used my coding skills to help with certain aspects of websites, and even if I didn't know, I could at least inform them of the basics.

As for taking them, I made extensive notes of the changes my site needed, and I implemented as many suggestions I could that'd fit my vision for the website. One of the big issues was using CSS to increase the contrast of the text in the web bar. I also added links were suggested by my professor.

One of the biggest challenges I encountered was the massive-rollout of the modal code. Making it work seamlessly with everything meant I had to not only upload more images, but also replace what were static images with clickable buttons to engage modals to give previews of code. It was long and intense, but I got it done, and potential clients can now engage better with the work I'm doing.

I tried to adhere as best as I could to all specifications, but some elements I could not figure how to include some elements, such as the testimonials, because I either didn't get the right information I needed, or plans changed that prevented the incorporation of certain elements. I was going to incorporate the slogan into the front page in a unique fashion, but the slogan did not fit my plans. In the end though, I gave the front page a better slogan

The is definitely evidence of craftsmanship, because thanks to the usage of a flexible framework that still gave me considerable control over the website, I managed to more or less create the website I wanted. Visibility controls were carefully adhered to ensure a responsive platform suitable for mobile devices. Using CCS gave me the flexibility to control all elements of the website, to ensure best contrast and readability in all elements of the website, particularly the top menu bar, which initially had a contrast problem, but using CSS, I fixed it so the text could be read clearly. Getting the modals to work properly to provide larger previews of images took a lot of work, but ultimately was worth it in the end.

Now that the course has ended, I think it's time to reflect on how this course functions as my capstone to my degree, and how it'll lay the foundation for my future plans.

Overall, what was your capstone experience like?

My capstone was challenging in many ways, but ultimately satisfying, as I was able to get one last evaluation of my brand and how to build the best portfolio, both digitally and physically. It let me finally get a more cohesive style and gave it a unique look.

Reflect on the significance of the capstone in relation to your own experience at SNHU. What connections do you see between your capstone and your academic program?

The significance of this capstone is that it's the final stop on refining and building a personal, fully marketable brand, essentially the end point of the graphic design program, where everything I've made and built finally comes together in a unique, satisfying manner.

What feedback did you choose to incorporate into your print-ready portfolio and portfolio website? Discuss the importance of collaboration with regard to the improvement of your works.

I've already mentioned what feedback I've choose to incorporate into my portfolio, but the value of collaboration cannot be understated, both in the professional and personal space. Rarely does one come up with the best approach to something, so it's important to get the opinions of others to help tune and improve ideas one may have regarding one's work. Even personally, just sharing something with others to get feedback is an enjoyable experience. life?

I'll collaborated with fellow designers with my works to help re-orient myself if I end up becoming stuck or otherwise struggling, and practice time management to not put myself under so much stress when the clock comes down. That's been a big issue in my life, as while I can do deadlines, I put too much stress on myself as a result. It could also cause issues with

I will maintain ethical principles by being sensitive to what I draw. While I enjoy retro design, some things have not aged well, and can be rather insensitive to various ethnic and cultural groups. Therefore, my goal becomes to combine the best of the past with the sensibilities and tastes of today to create timeless pieces that leave a distinct impact.

My goals for a professional life is to more or less become a self-sustaining individual, caring out a stable existence for myself where I can engage in some comforts of life freely without having to worry about how I'll pay for my basic needs in life. I will continue my retro-futuristic design philosophy that I've become fond of, and continue to make stuff, both for myself and my clients, to be best of my ability. Overall, just live a happy and filling life, and continue to make good things, improving my skills and growing further as a designer.

And what a ride it's been over the past few years. A lot has changed in the world, but I'm happy this is all over now, and I can move onto bigger and better things. It was a worthwhile experience, and I've grown as a designer as a result.

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