Practitioner's Statement

Headspace poster design
Jordan Parker

This design brief challenged me to portray three mental health posters through the use of imagery with the inclusion of typography, for the national mental health organisation Headspace. As photography was the focal element of the design, I began by researching a range of photographic techniques. I came across the double exposure technique and decided that this would best suit the design brief as it could be used to portray the contrast between what a person is feeling on the outside versus what they feel on the inside.

I initially looked at exploring and experimenting with three layout compositions using a predominance of photography within the design and incorporating other elements such as typography. This initial experiment gave me a better understanding of how I could use these two elements effectively in my final poster designs. Portraying the mental illnesses using the double exposure technique is a modern approach which expresses the inner tension that can exist within a mental illness.

With my conceptual idea settled, I next conducted a photoshoot. I took a range of side profile photos and front on photos of three different girls as each girl would portray a different mental illness. I also took a collection of beach photos which would be masked in to portray depression and photos of a graveyard to portray self-harm.

For anxiety I chose to use photos from the internet because I wanted to mask in a busy shopping centre and butterflies which were harder to take myself. I conducted some initial layout experiments for each of my final posters to find the right balance between typography and imagery. I discovered that I needed to create a visual hierarchy to allow my poster to effectively communicate the message.

The emphasis of the photos and subtle use of the double exposure technique using Photoshop is the focal point of each poster design. Mastering this skill and taking my own photos allowed the posters to communicate stronger emotion and sincerity.

Throughout my poster designs I utilised the san serif typeface 'DIN.' I choose this typeface because of its thin anatomy, and it complimented the use of predominate imagery within my design.

I was influenced throughout my conceptualisation by Mark Gowing and David Carson's design approach. I was influenced by Gowing's use of space within his designs and the visual interest this creates. I applied this within my designs using negative space around my design with a faded background. I was inspired by Carson's creative and expressive use of typography which inspired me with my use of the DIN typeface.

I am very pleased with where this creative journey has led me and having gained more experience in Photoshop and photography. This brief challenged me to consider balance between imagery and typography in a poster. I learnt that the use of a visual stimulating focal point, a clean hierarchy within the layout, strategic use of unused space and careful understanding of proximity between design elements to balance contrast are all qualities that effectively communicates a visual message within a poster design.