Design as an Accompaniment to Performance Art:
Incorporating Imagery to Amplify Emotional Impact

Brianna O'Neal // MFA Thesis
A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA.

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Design as an Accompaniment to Performance Art:
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Good art is not what it looks like, but what it does to us.

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Left / Stacy Cannon
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Abstract

Design as an Accompaniment to Performance Art: Incorporating Imagery to Amplify Emotional Impact is an investigation of how graphic design can be used to increase the emotional impact of a performance art piece, such as spoken word or music. The research indicates that memory plays a significant role in informing the emotion felt. The felt emotion then allows the viewer to form a perspective on the artistic piece as a whole. However, it is important to note that an individual’s memory cannot be controlled by the artist. Therefore, it is necessary for the artist to place a direct focus on the characteristics of design and how they influence the emotional impact of the performance art piece. The design characteristics investigated include type, color, texture, shape, form, space, line, symbolism, iconography, anticipated motion, and layout.

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Observed Problem

Art forms of all types can evoke an emotional response in the viewer. This is commonly known among most individuals. In addition, one can assume that when pairing one art form with another, such as video with music, an even stronger emotional response becomes present. However, when researching the pairing of graphic design and performance art, there is little research into how a completed composition impacts its performance art counterpart. Therefore, the overarching problem driving the thesis is how can graphic design be used to amplify the emotional impact of performance art on the viewer? Furthermore, how do specific characteristics of graphic design contribute to, and enable a successful pairing, i.e. type, color, texture, shape, form, space, line, symbolism, iconography, anticipated motion, and layout?

Personal Problem

The creative industry continues to morph and grow with technology, transitioning from static pieces to dynamic and interactive artistic solutions. The pieces utilized are designed as multimedia, meaning the artist uses more than one medium, rather than a single medium piece, such as a photo or painting. For example, rather than simply designing a printed poster for a music concert, that poster now has built in animated parts. Then if an individual scans the poster, they can view and interact with the additional animated pieces embedded within. This is referred to as augmented reality. One source states that “the lines between creative fields are increasingly blurred. Visual artists use interactive and moving images, performers use digital media in site-specific works, and collaborative teams create sophisticated productions that captivate our senses” (QUT). Therefore, it is important to understand the role of graphic design and how it can be utilized to enhance other creative fields, specifically performance art.

Mission

The thesis topic investigates how visual elements such as videos, installations, and graphics increase the impact of performance art pieces, such as spoken word and music. The thesis student will investigate examples of these pairings and explore her own expression of a performance art piece through graphic design.
Research Chapter

A thorough investigation into the observed problem utilizing the research questions below, in an attempt to provide the thesis student with information that adequately supports a visual solution.

Research Questions

001  What emotional impact do elements such as color and typography have on the viewer?
002  What is the known relationship between music and emotion, poetry and emotion, and art (as a whole) and emotion?
003  How do each evoke emotion in the viewer?
004  What enables the viewer to feel an emotional response when experiencing an art piece, more specifically performance art?
005  In relation to the viewer, what relationship does memory have with emotion?
006  What performance art pieces have previously utilized graphic design to support or amplify their emotional impact?

This chapter utilizes scholarly research to provide initial insight into the following:

001  How memory informs emotion and emotion builds perspective, thus creating an emotional response.
002  The role thymophor plays in experiencing an emotional response to a performance art piece.
003  How to create a holistic experience within an art piece in order to evoke emotion.
Performance Art and Graphic Design

Throughout the thesis, when discussing “performance art” the reader can assume that the definition of performance art is “a time-based art form that typically features a live presentation to an audience or to onlookers (as on a street) and draws on such arts as acting, poetry, music, dance, and painting” (Wainwright). Throughout the research, performance art will be referred to as it’s specific categorical names, such as poetry or music, but the reader can assume that it is in the context of a performance art piece. Other art forms such as graphic design are discussed in the thesis. However, the relationship and similarities to performance art, as defined above, will be articulated. In the thesis, graphic design is referred to as the combination of visuals and text to communicate an idea, experience, and/or belief.

Background Information of Performance Art

Although performance art has been utilized throughout history, it made its most significant debut in the 1960s and has continued to push the boundaries of many traditional forms of art, i.e. drawing, painting, music, drama, dance, and poetry. The focus of the thesis has been placed on the pairing of graphic design with performance art for several reasons: versatile, innovative, and relevant. Performance artists can borrow ideas and gain inspiration from all forms of art, as well as the surrounding environment and situations; thus making performance art flexible in nature. In addition, performance art is at the forefront of the creative industry, with music and video as the most prominent forms. In fact, music and videos are arguably the most commonly paired forms of art, creating music videos. The press releases accompanying music records such as Beyonce, state explicitly that “the record is designed to be consumed as a comprehensive audio/visual piece from top to bottom” (Atkinson). With multiple examples of how visuals paired with audio are successful, the pairing of a performance art piece such as spoken word, with the evolving art of graphic design, ensures that the thesis is relevant to today.
Introduction to Research

As stated in the previous chapter, the overarching problem driving the thesis is as follows: can graphic design be used to amplify the emotional impact of performance art on the viewer? Furthermore, how do specific characteristics of graphic design contribute to, and enable a successful pairing? In order to address this problem, qualitative research was utilized to delve into the background of how memory first informs emotion, and that emotion then builds perspective in the viewer that allows for a connection and response to an artistic piece. The research indicates that these factors allow for the artist to understand the process of how a viewer connects and ultimately experiences an emotional reaction to the piece. However, they typically are not something that can be controlled by the artist. In addition, the research explores graphic design’s persuasive qualities and emotive characteristics, breaking down how color, line, shape/form, texture, symbolism/iconography, typography, anticipated motion, and layout all influence the viewer’s emotional response to an artistic piece.

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Memory Informs Emotion and Vice Versa

To provide support to the complicated nature of this section, refer to the question, “which came first, the chicken or the egg?” The chicken will represent memory, the egg will represent emotion. Both need each other to exist, but it is difficult to tell which one brought the other into existence because they are so intertwined. With that being said, emotion, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, is “a strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others” (“Emotion”). Examples of emotions are fear, excitement, and happiness.

Emotions rely heavily on one’s personal history, or rather, the memories of their past (Simecek 499). Those memories influence the beliefs, commitments, and values that in turn influence the emotions. As explained by Karen Simecek, “emotions in short have a history...new objects of love and anger and fear bear the traces of earlier objects; one's emotions toward them are frequently therefore also, in both intensity and configuration, emotions towards one's own past” (499). This information, although complicated in nature, is necessary to explore for the thesis. If utilized correctly, this concept allows the artist to make more informed design decisions. It provides further understanding of the viewer's process of experiencing emotion and recalling memories upon viewing a successful art piece. Dr. Ernest Hartmann states that “moments that leap out in memory are recalled as imagery, but imagery that is driven by heightened emotion” (165). When this interaction takes place within the viewer, arousal theory and thymophor gain importance. However, it is necessary to first discuss how emotion builds the viewer’s perspective before elaborating on the topic further.
Emotion Builds Perspective

An individual’s perspective is commonly known as a point of view or attitude to a particular person, place or thing. However, the thesis will discuss an individual’s perspective from a much more elaborate definition. Author Karen Simecek states that:

a perspective organizes our thoughts on a topic by imposing a complex structure of relative prominence on them, so that some features stick out in our minds while others fade into the background, and by making some features especially central to explaining others. A perspective often also imposes certain evaluative attitudes and emotional valences on its constituent features. Finally a perspective doesn't just present us with a complex thought...rather it gives us a tool for thinking. (500)

Simecek goes on to explain that a tool for thinking means that perspective provides direction and a way to respond to the thoughts that an individual has (501).

An individual’s perspective is being shaped every time an emotion is experienced. Whether it is a positive or negative emotion, it influences the perspective on whatever evoked that emotion. For instance, if a person grew up with small dogs and enjoyed this experience, he or she would most likely have the perspective that small dogs are the best type of dogs to have. Although this is not always true, this example is provided for the sake of articulating the point. When reviewing this information in a more direct relation to performance art, Simecek states that:

the experience of reading a poem can isolate elements of our perspectives (what we believe, value, find important), in part by showing emotions emerging in contexts that highlight just those elements without needing narrative structure. The activity of engaging emotionally with poetry can help us explore the nature of the evaluative aspect at the heart of our emotional experiences. (505)

The same can be argued for music and spoken word, which carry similar characteristics to poetry. In addition, Simecek states that “the poems perspective shapes the reader’s experience, which brings the reader’s own perspectives to bear” (509).

When reflecting on the last two sections, two conclusions can be made in relation to the viewer. First, memory and emotion are directly intertwined and influence the perspective that is built within the viewer. The viewer’s perspective of an art piece will ultimately reveal their own perspective, emotions, and memories if explored in detail. Second, when something occurs that creates a strong emotion in a person, their memory will create imagery to remember particular moments within that occurrence and emotional state. These two points are important for the thesis because they begin to articulate how a viewer experiences a work of art. According to Tova Rabinowitz it is important to understand that being able to communicate effectively to the target audience is dependent on the principle that all learning is active. This means that the audience chooses to be attentive to certain messages and actively interprets based off of their memories, experiences, and emotions and then actively decides how to react (340). However, from further research, it is proven that the viewer does not always actively decide how to react. There are many times when the viewer reacts purely based off of the subconscious reaction to memories, making it an uncontrollable factor. Due to this, Rabinowitz states that “understanding how communication works, and where it is most vulnerable, can help designers to visually communicate more effectively” (340). Thus, it provides insight into how to create a piece that is emotionally impactful.
Thymophor and It’s Role

Metaphor is routinely used throughout speech and in writing, especially music and poetry. Metaphor, as described by Alice Underwood on Grammarly Blog, “is a figure of speech that describes an object or action in a way that isn’t literally true, but helps explain an idea or make a comparison.” However, in order for a person to understand the purpose or the comparison of a metaphor, he or she must first understand the literal meaning of the metaphor itself. For instance, if someone were to sing “love is a battlefield,” in order for the listener to gain full understanding of this metaphor, the listener must first understand all that the word battlefield entails, which is full of compromise, sacrifice, and difficulties. Simecek states that one should view “metaphor as offering a complex representation. Metaphor can be understood as perspectival: we are asked to view one thing in a way that is guided or informed by our awareness and experience of something else” (503).

Knowing this information about metaphor and combining it with the information gathered about memory, emotion, and perspective, the thesis can now discuss the importance of thymophor. Coined by Dr. Ernest Hartmann from Tufts University School of Medicine, thymophor is the “carrying-over, or translation, of emotion into imagery, which we find is an important element of human creativity.” In other words, thymophor is a visual metaphor that is utilized to represent emotion. Both metaphor and thymophor are perspectival, allowing for an individual’s own interpretation of the comparison or representation. Emotions often determine the significance of the “thing” at hand, thus allowing metaphor and thymophor to play an integral part in determining significance as well. Dr. Hartmann has pursued the study of thymophor through dreams. Dreams have played an integral part in understanding thymophor because they themselves are a visual representation of emotion. An example used in Dr. Hartmann’s article is the Tidal Wave Dream. He states that the dream is “common in people who have recently experienced a trauma of any kind. The dream does not picture the actual traumatic experience the burning house or the rape. It pictures the powerful emotion of the dreamer— I am terrified. I am overwhelmed” (166). Although the Tidal Wave Dream does not always depict a literal tidal wave, it does depict a central image that carries the underlying emotion of the dreamer.

In an additional study conducted on dreams, Dr. Hartmann explains that graphic artists were asked to express their dreams through visuals. They found that the visuals with the clearest meaning came when the focus was placed on the underlying emotion of the dream. This information is significant for the thesis because it states that an integral part in providing a clear understanding of the piece to the viewer, is to place the underlying emotions at the core of the visuals themselves.

Arousal Theory

There were three types of Arousal Theories researched for the thesis. However, in addressing the research problem it is only necessary to focus on Associative Arousal Theory. As stated by Derek Matravers, Associative Arousal Theory is “where the connection between music and emotion is merely contingent and external. One example is the “our song” phenomenon, where an association between a piece of music and some event in the listener’s past provokes an emotional reaction.” This means that the music causes the listener to experience a path of thoughts, resulting in an emotional reaction to the thoughts themselves. This theory is especially applicable to music with lyrics because people often connect emotionally to the content within the lyrics. As a result it is important to consider whether or not the lyrics provoke the target audience to experience thoughts that connect them to the piece in some manner.
Music and Emotions

Studies have proven that music evokes emotion. However, how this actually occurs is theoretical and not fully proven. With that being said, one of the sources provides a theoretical framework of this occurrence. The 6 mechanisms discussed are as follows: brainstem reflex, evaluative conditioning, emotional contagion, visual imagery, episodic memory, and musical expectancy. Two mechanisms that are of particular interest are visual imagery and episodic memory. The source explains that visual imagery is when “emotion is induced in a listener because he or she conjures up visual images” (Juslin and Vastfjall 566). This is the same concept as memories being recalled as visuals to create a thymophor and experience an emotional response. Episodic memory is when “an emotion is induced in a listener because the music evokes a memory of a particular event in the listener’s life,” otherwise discussed as Associative Arousal Theory (Juslin and Vastfjall 567).

A proven aspect of this research and one of the most beneficial findings is that each mechanism is completed through information processing. This is important to acknowledge because information processing is completed in the same manner as forming a perspective. This essentially states that people experience an emotional reaction and form a perspective of music in the same way that they experience an emotional reaction and form a perspective of a poem. This implies that the research conducted on how music evokes emotion is applicable to how other forms of art evoke emotion, or at least other forms with written aspects.
Poetry and Emotions

Although poetry has the capability to evoke emotion through the same mechanisms as music, poetry allows for a more authentic reaction from the reader by typically approaching the topic or idea conceptually. This means that poetry often does not provide literal interpretations of ideas or messages but metaphorical. Spoken word utilizes this same conceptual approach. Karen Simecek states that “poetry presents us with images, ideas, and concepts, which connect in such a way that makes the experience of the whole poem meaningful with a deep sense of significance” (502-503). As stated previously, because poems are also perspectival in nature, they allow for the viewer to see hidden ideas and messages through metaphoric or thymophoric representations. This brings certain aspects of the poem to the forefront of the viewer’s awareness and allows others to fade.

Simecek goes on to explain that “when we read the poem, we are invited to see the significance in the perspective of the poem, those things presented as the focus of attention, but through our own perspective, with our own sense of what ought to be the focus of our attention” (504). Referring back to the previous sections discussing memory, emotion and perspective, the aspects of the piece that the viewer deems significant is based on the individual’s own perspective. That perspective is built on emotions experienced by the viewer or reader. Predicting the reaction of the viewer or reader and planning the piece accordingly can be difficult for the artist. However, if a core emotion is represented in a conceptual way and with clear meaning, the piece will provoke thought in the viewer or reader.

The sole purpose of conceptual art, as stated by Andrea MacBean, “focuses on getting the concept across in the image...they inspire the viewer (or reader) to think” (5). This forces the individual to pull from memories and personal perspective in order to provide answers to the thoughts provoked. As a result, the individual will experience an emotional reaction that is often in line with the core emotion of the piece.

Graphic design can then be utilized to further highlight and support the underlying emotion of the piece. Moreover, understanding how poetry and spoken word connect to the viewer or reader, allows for the artist to make a more informed decision when choosing the type of performance art to pair with graphic design.
Graphic Design and Emotions

Graphic design in its most simple state, is the combination of illustrations, typography, and photography to represent a topic or idea. Seeking to evoke a response in a viewer, it transforms art into a tool rooted in communication and persuasion. As explained by Kristin Cullen, a graphic designer and professor at the University of Cincinnati, “graphic design extends itself into cultural experiences and speaks to society on practical, emotional, and intuitive levels” (11). Graphic design utilizes many different aspects of art to create a connection to the viewers memories, emotions, and perceptions. In researching graphic design and how it more specifically has the power to evoke an emotional response in the viewer, there is much information found on the importance of the characteristics of a piece, such as color, layout and typeface choice. The characteristics that are most pertinent and that should be considered in creating a visual solution to the research problem will be further discussed below.

The final deliverable discussed in Chapter 3: Visual Solution will be a motion graphic piece that utilizes the principles of design. Therefore, although a subcategory of graphic design, it is important to highlight motion graphics specifically. Juliette Cezzar, a professor at Parsons The New School for Design, explains motion graphics and differentiates it from videography and animation. She states that “motion graphics combine animation, videography, and typography for a communicative purpose, and this combination over time and the space of the screen constitutes the design” (Cezzar). The interactive characteristics of motion graphics tend to be more engaging to the viewer and allow for a stronger connection overall. In fact, Katy French, a writer for the website, Column Five Media, explains that “more media platforms support video, and people are coming to prefer, if not expect, information to be delivered in that package.” French also highlights that motion graphics are emotionally captivating. She goes on to explain that “beyond being attention-grabbing, motion graphics affect our emotions... thanks to the phenomenon of emotional contagion, we immediately empathize with, and mirror the emotions of the experiences we see depicted on a screen.” Examples of motion graphics are lyric videos and opening credits to a movie or TV show. Due to motion graphics being a subcategory, when discussing the characteristics of graphic design in the coming sections, it is assumed that the same characteristics apply to motion graphics as well.
Color

Color can be used to evoke emotion and communicate with the viewer on multiple levels. One source explains that color not only influences the viewer's sense of sight but also the sense of touch. This is why colors are often identified as “cool” and “warm.” The viewer's learned associations to the color creates an often purely psychological response, but nonetheless very real (Lauer and Pentak 270).

These behaviors and reactions are learned based off of experiences and memories of the individual. Therefore, the viewer may not realize the effect that the utilized color has on their overall reaction. Leatrice Eiseman explains that colors carry underlying meanings that have the ability to communicate to the viewer subconsciously (66). For this reason, it is important to consider the target audience’s relationship with color, and what message may be communicated to them due to their personal and/or cultural history. This can be very beneficial at times, allowing for a common message and/or emotion to be communicated utilizing color. Lauer and Pentak claim that “for artists who wish to arouse an emotional response in the viewer, emotional color is the most effective device” (286). However, if not chosen properly, the color can also communicate a very negative message simply because of the learned associations and/or cultural reference. For example, the color of mourning in the United States is often black but in India it is white (Lauer and Pentak 288). If an artist creates a piece where the target audience is a group of individuals from India, it would be important to not utilize large amounts of white unless the intended feeling is mourning.

Occasionally, the individuals within the target audience do not have similarities among them that allow the artist to determine the positive and negative color associations and references. If this occurs, it is beneficial for the artist to consider the universal emotions that are linked to each color, rather than cultural references. For example, light blue often evokes the feeling of calmness, patience, and peace (Eiseman 35). However, the artist should not rely on this entirely. The emotions felt and how the color is described is often dependent on the context in which the color is used. “Josef Albers described it like this: When you take your hands from hot water and place them in room-temperature water, it feels cool. When you take your hands from ice water and place them in the same room-temperature water, it feels warm- same water, different sensation” (Lauer and Pentak 270). The fact that color has the ability to evoke an emotional response is understood by many. Eiseman states that “color can not only move people on an emotional level, but it is also a “moving element” that can stimulate an action or reaction, causing people to move in a desired direction” (66). However, context is more often than not what provides meaning and influences the reaction to the color being used.
**Line**

Line is multifaceted, with the unique ability to portray an emotion while guiding an individual’s eyes through a design. One source states that “a curious feature of line is its power of suggestion” (Lauer and Pentak 129), with many expressive qualities.

To understand the definition of line, the thesis refers to the explanation provided in Design Basics by David Lauer and Stephen Pentak. They explain that “if we think of a point as having no dimensions (neither height nor width), and then we set that point in motion, we create the first dimension: line. In terms of art and design, we know line can have varying width as well” (128). There are three types of line: actual, implied, and psychic. Design Basics explains that with actual lines (Figure 1.1), the viewer can physically see the lines within the work of art. With implied lines, a series of points allows the viewer to create a line by connecting each point. Lastly, psychic lines do not utilize points or physical lines at all. Rather, they are simply a felt connection between subject matter within the work of art (132-133).

There are also three directions of line: horizontal, vertical, and diagonal. “A horizontal line implies quiet and repose, probably because we associate a horizontal body posture with rest or sleep. A vertical line, such as a standing body, has more potential of activity. But the diagonal line most strongly suggests motion” (134). Utilizing different types of line placed in various directions can convey a wide variety of emotions to the viewer depending on his or her memories and perspectives. “The linear technique you choose can produce emotional or expressive qualities in the final pattern. Solid and bold, quiet and flowing, delicate and dainty, jagged and nervous, or countless other possibilities influence the effect on the viewer of your drawing or design” (Lauer and Pentak 139). As with color, the response evoked from the combination of lines is often a learned association and should be considered in not only creating a composition but establishing meaning within the piece (Santoro 153).

Figure 1.1
**Shape and Form**

As defined in Design Basics, shape is a “visually perceived area created by an enclosing line or by color or value changes defining the outer edge” (Lauer and Pentak 152). Shape is considered to be a 2-dimensional element, while form is typically seen as the 3-dimensional creation of the shape (Bevlin 78). Because shape is essentially a contained line, the emotive qualities are very similar to that mentioned above in reference to line. For example, an organic shape with smooth and rolling edges is often seen as having living characteristics and portrays positive, free flowing and energetic emotions. While sharp and jagged shapes (Figure 1.2) can be seen as cold or intense, and portray negative, rigid, or chaotic emotion.

**Texture**

Pattern and texture are very similar. As with patterns, texture often contains repeating elements. However, they do not repeat as regularly as within a pattern. The main difference between the two and the important aspect in relation to the thesis is that texture arouses an individual’s sense of touch while pattern is simply visually appealing. Texture allows for an individual to connect with memories and feel certain objects without physically touching them (Lauer and Pentak 186). There are two types of texture: tactile and implied. Tactile textures can be physically felt, while implied texture (Figure 1.3) can be seen and imagined but is actually smooth to the touch (Lauer and Pentak 188). Textures play an integral part in evoking an emotional response within the viewer because of their direct tie to the viewer’s memories. Although the memories are not necessarily something that can be predicted by the artist, it is important to understand the role that texture has in interacting with them.
Symbolism and Iconography

Symbols and icons represent ideas. However, there is one main difference between them. According to Marjorie Bevlin in Guide to Graphic Design, an icon (Figure 1.5) has a “direct resemblance to the thing it represents,” while a symbol (Figure 1.4) “functions more abstractly: the object being referred to is represented by an association to a general idea” (269).

When referring to symbols and icons, it is important to understand that many of the characteristics of design listed in this chapter can be referred to as a symbol or icon themselves. For example, a red octagon is viewed as the symbol for stop even when the word “STOP” is not physically displayed on the octagon. One source states that symbols and icons help to communicate ideas and messages from one individual to another and even across language barriers (Popicon). However, it is necessary to consider the cultural references associated with each symbol and icon used. As with color, texture, and many other characteristics of design, the responses to symbols and icons are formed through learned association and can vary from person to person. For this reason, symbols and icons have a direct impact on the emotional response evoked in a viewer but can cause confusion to the viewer if used inappropriately.
Typography

For the thesis, typography is defined as the “study of the design of typefaces, and the way in which the type is laid out on a page to best achieve the desired visual effect and to best convey the meaning of the reading matter” (“Typography”). For reference, definitions of common terms used in typography have been provided.

Tova Rabinowitz explains that there are many physical attributes of type to consider, such as the stroke weight and angle of stress. She describes stroke weight as “the thickness of the individual stroke of a character” and the angle of stress as “the angle to which the main strokes of a typeface aim” (58). There are many other attributes that will not be discussed in the thesis but can be found in Rabinowitz’s book Exploring Typography. Rabinowitz goes on to explain that “the straight and curved strokes of characters can be physically rendered and combined in a wide variety of ways to suggest a full range of meanings and associations, independent of the type’s content” (67). With nearly endless combinations, it is commonly known that there is a large variety of fonts available to designers and first world individuals, as over 100 fonts are available in Microsoft Word alone. Rabinowitz explains that with so much variety and opportunity, it is easy to lose sight of the font’s intended purpose and use it inappropriately (71). To provide order to this ever growing population of fonts, a classification system of type families is utilized within typography. Although the classification system varies in detail and type family names, the purpose remains the same. A system that utilizes 8 families will be focused on throughout the thesis, i.e. Blackletter, Old Style, Transitional, Modern, Slab Serif, Sans Serif, Script, and Display. Examples of each are provided to the right.

Rabinowitz explains that these families “reflect their historical origins and their stylistic qualities. Understanding how typefaces are classified can help you to make better decisions about when and how to use them” (75). Knowing that memories can be brought to bear and emotions can be experienced all because of the way a typeface looks, it is the designers responsibility to understand this and make informed decisions on the typeface that can be best utilized.

Definitions

Typeface: a collection of letterforms that have been especially designed to go together (Rabinowitz 72).

Font: a collection of all the characters of a specific typeface...they usually share specific characteristics that make them seem to belong together (Rabinowitz 73).

Type Style: a modified version of the typeface (Rabinowitz 73).

Type Families: a collection of type that includes a specific typeface and all the type styles of that typeface (Rabinowitz 74).
Through a study completed by Beth Koch, it has been proven that people respond emotionally to a typeface and that most individuals will experience the same emotion to the given typeface. Koch explains that in the study, participants were asked to indicate on a scale of 0 (I do not feel this) to 4 (I do feel this) the emotions felt when viewing six different typefaces. Twelve emotions were provided, both positive and negative. She goes on to explain that due to its “nondescript design features,” the font chosen was Helvetica and the typefaces were as follows: Helvetica Ultra Light, Helvetica Bold, Helvetica Condensed Bold, Helvetica Bold Extended, and Helvetica Rounded. In order to provide comparison, Glypha Medium was also used. The study sought out to answer three questions: “(1) whether viewing specific typefaces produces emotional responses, (2) whether all people have the same emotion responses to typefaces, and (3) whether certain emotions are predominantly associated with the formative design features of typefaces” (Koch). The article indicates that there were 42 participants who completed the entire survey and it was found that these participants associated Helvetica Ultra Light with desire, Helvetica Bold with fear, Helvetica Condensed Bold with joy, and Helvetica Bold Extended with fear and sadness (Koch). Koch states that “because people reported the same emotion responses to typographic design features, this study strongly suggests that design’s underlying features represent a common visual language” (Koch).

Therefore, it is extremely important that the artist utilizes the characteristics of design in an informed manner, meaning that all are considered and applied appropriately to communicate the intended message. Of the characteristics, typography can often be difficult to master. Cullen states that “type is an artful, detail-oriented activity that demands competence and patience” (90). She goes on to state that it is often used to unify the design as a whole and communicate an idea from one individual to another (90). Combining characteristics of design in a single piece allows each characteristic to build on one another and develop depth. This in turn provides more opportunity for the viewer to relate emotionally, and establish a stronger connection to the piece.

**Type Families**

**Blackletter / Bank of England**

```
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
```

**Old Style / Adobe Caslon**

```
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
```

** Transitional / Baskerville**

```
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
```

**Modern / Didot**

```
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
```

**Slab Serif / Rockwell**

```
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
```

**Script / Dancing Script**

```
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
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**Display / Enemy**

```
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
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Anticipated Motion

Although anticipated motion is not a popular characteristic discussed in relation to design like color or typography, it creates a direct connection between the design piece and human interaction, making it very important to consider. Normally a viewer’s interaction with other characteristics such as color and typography would stop once he or she has processed the piece and felt an emotion. The viewer typically would not physically move with the piece. When utilizing anticipated motion in a piece, the artist allows for the viewer to connect not only mentally but also physically. One source states that “much of the implication of movement present in art is caused by our memory and experience. We recognize temporary, unstable body positions and realize that change must be imminent” (Lauer and Pentak 232). Anticipated motion adds depth and an additional component to this interaction. The source goes on to state that anticipated motion (Figure 1.6) utilizes kinesthetic empathy, where “we tend to re-create unconsciously in our own bodies the actions we observe. We actually “feel” in our muscles the exertions of the athlete or dancer; we simultaneously stretch, push, or lean, though we are only watching” (Lauer and Pentak 233).

As discussed in Design Basics, anticipated motion can be achieved in many ways such as blurred outlines and the layering of multiple images. When approaching the visual solution for the thesis, anticipated motion will be a significant characteristic to consider. However, the question is raised, can anticipated motion be incorporated into a motion piece or is it only applicable to static art and design?
**Layout**

Layout is the combined use of color, line, shape/form, texture, symbolism/iconography, typography, and imagery. Therefore, it is an essential aspect of any graphic design piece and has the ability to push the emotional reaction of the viewer in one way or another. The designer may follow a strict grid to create a feeling of order and structure, or chose to break the grid (Figure 1.7) to create a feeling of chaos and tension. Additionally, small details of the layout such as photo placement can be used to direct a viewer’s eyes or create an emotional connection. For example, in discussing how the brain specifically sees human faces, Susan Weinschenk states that it is important to “decide whether you want to establish an emotional connection (the face looking right at the user) or direct attention (the face looking directly at the product)” (9). Small details such as the placement of a photo or more specifically, the position of a human face within the art piece, can impact the emotional reaction that the viewer experiences to the layout as a whole.

Additionally, layout is necessary in unifying each of the characteristics mentioned into a single composition. One source states that “when a composition works- when your intuition tells you there’s something right about it- chances are good, there’s a structural harmony behind it. Music works in this way. It’s generally easy to hear whether harmonies are in tune or whether the rhythms are synchronized. With graphic design, the arrangement of visual elements needs to work in coordination, just as musical elements need to work in harmony” (Santoro 215). Moreover, when combining graphic design with performance art, it is important to consider how the overall layout of the visuals align with the arrangement of elements in the performance art piece.
Creating a Holistic Experience

In order to successfully pair graphic design with a performance art piece and create a strong emotional impact in the viewer, it is important for the artist to understand the process in which the viewer connects with the piece itself. Through the above research, it was found that the viewer’s memories inform the emotions felt, which then allow for the viewer to build a perspective on the artistic piece. Although these factors cannot be controlled by the artist, the information allows for the artist to make decisions about design that are more informed. In addition, the research breaks down how the persuasive qualities and the emotive characteristics of graphic design influence the viewer’s emotional response to an artistic piece. These characteristics include color, line, shape/form, texture, symbolism/iconography, typography, anticipated motion, and layout.

Although each topic discussed throughout this chapter plays an important role in evoking an emotional response to a performance art piece, none are as successful on their own. Koch states that, “designers must begin to go beyond form, function and aesthetics to integrate aspects of emotional awareness” (1). This means that each aspect must be combined to create a holistic experience that connects the underlying emotion of the piece to the viewer. As a result of the research gathered, the visual solution to the thesis problem will thoroughly consider each aspect and strive to create a holistic experience for the viewer. This will be further discussed in Chapter 3: Visual Solution.
VISUAL PROCESS
VISUAL PROCESS
VISUAL PROCESS
Design Problem

How can graphic design be used to amplify the emotional impact of performance art on the viewer? Furthermore, how do specific characteristics of graphic design contribute to, and enable a successful pairing i.e. type, color, texture, shape, form, space, line, symbolism, iconography, anticipated motion, and layout?

Introduction

As I began working on a visual solution for the stated design problem, I researched well known spoken word artists and their work. I chose to utilize spoken word as the performance art portion of the visual solution because it approaches topics and ideas conceptually and allows for an authentic reaction from the listener. In an effort to find a spoken word piece to utilize in my visual solution, I looked for artists whose work best reflected the research found on poetry and emotions. Therefore, the artist’s work needed to incorporate metaphoric descriptions that could be interpreted based on the listener’s perspective, but also maintain core emotions that are clearly represented throughout each piece.

After much research, the artist I chose to contact was Levi Macallister, whose stage name is Levi the Poet. He is an established Christian spoken word artist with over 40,000 monthly listeners on Spotify. Overall, each recorded piece of Levi’s work is filled with emotion and discusses common struggles that listeners can relate to. After contacting Levi, he agreed to partner with me and send me the album that he was currently working on so that I could chose a specific piece to utilize.

To view the visual solution visit
thesisofbrioneal.com
**To begin...**

I investigated Levi’s motivation for writing the album. Throughout the album he discusses very difficult topics in relation to faith, forgiveness, and surrendering to God. According to Levi, the album, *Cataracts*:

... is deeply connected to the church - and much of it to me and my friend’s experiences with some of the more difficult aspects of the broken body that Christ’s is. So, there is an element of loss connected to that in our past, as well, coupled with the hope that Christ is still present, even when we’re not able to see him, or even if we’re only able to see him as our punching bag, and he is still wild, overflowing beyond the boxes that we have previously placed him in, wild and abounding in love. (Macallister)

As I listened to the Cataracts album, *The Dark Night of the Soul* stood out to me. *The Dark Night of the Soul* is a piece that revolves around the loss of loved ones and the internal turmoil, chaos, and spiritual questions that materialize as a result. The lyrics are raw and full of anger, frustration, and confusion. In addition to these core emotions and feelings, a theme of death can be heard throughout the entirety of the piece. To represent this key theme, Levi utilizes metaphor within his lyrics, allowing for listeners to relate back to their own memories and emotions, and build a unique perspective. According to the research on poetry and emotions, the characteristics of *The Dark Night of the Soul* allows the listeners to connect emotionally to the piece.

Once I determined *The Dark Night of the Soul* as my chosen performance art piece, I contacted Levi for some additional insight into the motivation behind the lyrics. Levi explained that the piece was written in three sections, addressing three different experiences from his personal life. Knowing this, I was able to break down the lyrics even further and combine my initial thoughts with the information he provided. In these preliminary stages of brainstorming, I analyzed the written lyrics while listening to the recorded version, highlighting certain prominent emotions and taking notes on the transitions that occur from section to section. This process allowed me to fully break down the lyrics and provide a structured outline for my visual solution.

Before progressing further into the brainstorming stages, it was important to determine which category of graphic design would be utilized for my visual solution. The main categories of graphic design include print design, web design, motion graphics, and animation. Knowing that performance art is used to visually and auditorily communicate a story to the viewer, it was important that the chosen category of graphic design would be able to augment the visual and auditory nature of the performance art piece. Additionally, *The Dark Night of the Soul* is just over four minutes long and, therefore, the performance art piece must be able to engage the viewer for the duration of the four minutes.

Reflecting on the previous research, when being paired with a category of performance art, motion graphics are most commonly paired with music. However, because of their similar characteristics, motion graphics can also be paired with spoken word. As with performance art, the goal of a motion graphic piece is to share a story with the viewer through visual and auditory communication. Motion graphics are also very versatile and can be used as visuals projected on a screen behind the performer or simply shared on social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram. In discussing the benefits of motion graphics, Katy French explains that “they blend the best of visual communication with motion storytelling and audio to create an engaging piece of content that helps brands share their story.” In this specific situation the brand is referred to as Levi the Poet and his piece, *The Dark Night of the Soul*. Furthermore, the visual solution will consist of a motion graphic piece that utilizes the principles of design.
And You cover my iniquity.

18 “But as a mountain falls and crumbles, and the sparrow falls down, I knew that when she hit the ground, and the dust flew up until it could not be called that at all.

I said: Lord is grey.

Mountains are no longer mountains and the rivers have dried up.

And the way that her father wrenched in the dirt the daughter after begging you to let her stay.

And did our doctrine sing? Where is the house, that the rain could stand?
The Dark Night of the Soul

Growing up, the river and the mountain were a fountain of life for us. We knew how to play in the water and how to rest in the shade and navigated the currents and recognized the way that the face of the mountain smiled just like our fathers, and the song of the river sounded just like our mothers’, and the sunsets in the valley glowed just like our worldview, and the lightening had not yet torn that world in two.

When I saw one of the sparrows fall I knew that when she hit the soil the earth would break like our heart-quake until it could not be called that at all.

Of course the world is grey.

Of course the mountain is no longer a mountain and the rivers have turned to snakes.

I will never forget the way that her father writhed in the dirt the day that he wept over the grave he made for his daughter after begging you to let her stay.

So where is the lullaby that our doctrine sang? Where is the house on the rock when even the rock couldn’t withstand the rain? What does it mean, you who uses spit to clean the eyes of blind men suddenly guilty for all that they have claimed to see?

It’s not that I don’t believe. It’s just that sometimes faith feels more like cataracts than clarity.

Please,

Go gentle on me.

In obscurity and silence and absurdity and violence the quiet reminded me that the surest sign I don’t understand is to be sure that I do. I knew more before I knew more. He said, “Just outside the room, I watched her die for forty-five minutes while they tried to revive my child and when she finally pulled through I thought of death and resurrection and how much I hated you.”

I love you for it. You’ve been gone so long I’ve been raging at the night in all its emptiness, all its nothingness, all its silent, darkened sky. I’ve been searching for the sadist who keeps taking his sweet time to let us see, or let us leave, or let us move on with our lives. Now that you’ve finally shown yourself again, I’ve got my fists raised high for the bliss it is to finally have a Christ to crucify (and then to kiss). You let me lose my mind and I loved you for letting me hate you, and I barely recognize the lines the rivers make on the mountain face or the color of your eyes. I thought that they were black and white. I thought I knew the creeks. I thought that they were black and white. Keep forgiving.

Keep forgiving.

Let God be wild. (Let me be free.)
Planning

The following information explains the brainstorming process utilized and the visual research that took place before executing the visual solution.

Storyboarding

With a solid grasp on the meaning of the lyrics and motion graphics as the chosen category of design, I began creating a storyboard. According to the website GoAnimate, storyboarding is “a graphic representation of how a video will unfold, shot by shot. It’s made up of a number of squares with illustrations or pictures representing each shot, with notes about what’s going to happen in the scene...” (GoAnimate). In my initial storyboard sketches, my visuals were very literal, doing little to augment the lyrics, resulting in a weak visual solution. According to the research, the visuals should spark understanding of the narrative but allow the viewer to build their own perspective based on their memories and emotions. Going back to the storyboard, I brainstormed and sketched out how to utilize different aspects of design to support the lyrics rather than repeat them visually. Type, color, texture, shape, form, space, line, symbolism, iconography, anticipated motion and layout were all considered and implemented into the visual solution.
**Visual Research - Layout**

As mentioned in the research, the use of layout is an essential part of graphic design and the subcategory, motion graphics. With limitless options of layout to utilize, I sought after a style that would assist in amplifying the core emotions and theme of *The Dark Night of the Soul*. The style that I felt could assist the most is Brutalism. One source states that “the best way to describe Brutalism is to define what it is not: the goal of a brutalist approach is not to appear easy or comfortable. It is not light, fun or friendly” (Image Smith Communications). Another source explains that Brutalism utilizes “bright colors and chaotic clashing” throughout the designs (Tinker). Brutalism allowed me to capture the weight of death by creating a layout that utilizes overlapping and layered design elements. The chaos, tension, and confusion that is described in the lyrics of *The Dark Night of the Soul*, inspired how these elements interacted.

For examples of Brutalism refer to the following website: www.awwwards.com/brutalism-brutalist-websites.html

**Visual Research - Transitions**

As I continued storyboarding and creating rough cuts of the visual solution, film transitions were necessary to consider. Gabe Moura, writer for the Elements of Cinema, explains that a film transition is “how one shot ends and the next begins, and the filmic device that bridges one to the other.”

Reflecting on *The Dark Night of the Soul*, Levi recalls memories throughout the entirety of the lyrics. Memory is not only a key aspect of the research and how viewers build perspective on an artistic piece, but it is also how Levi created the piece. The transition from memory to memory, or rather, the thought process can be heard by the listener throughout the lyrics. Therefore, I chose to utilize screen glitch (Figure 1.8 and Figure 1.9) transitions to visually reflect how the thought process feels when transitioning from one heartbreaking memory to another. In addition to the screen glitch transition, there are certain areas where a fade transition has been utilized. Moura explains that a fade transition (Figure 1.10) should be used minimally because they typically indicate the end of a scene and allow the viewer to collect their thoughts and breathe. An obvious occurrence of the fade transition can be seen from 2:06-2:10, where Section 1 of the visual solution transitions into Section 2.
**Visual Research - Color**

The color palette that I chose to utilize for the visual solution is dark and somber with hints of primary colors. A primary color palette consists of red, blue, and yellow. Each of these colors are incorporated in the design solution to communicate specific emotions and messages to the viewer. A general overview for each color is described to the right, while additional insight into the process for choosing a specific color for a scene will be further articulated in the coming sections.

Refer to page 32 for research on color.
Black

The underlying color utilized throughout the majority of the video is black. As previously stated in the research, in the United States, the color black is most commonly associated with mourning. Eiseman states that black is “connected to the fear of the unknown and ultimately death” (62), directly relating it to the overall theme of The Dark Night of the Soul. Additionally, incorporating black throughout the visual solution allows the primary colors to stand out and create a semblance of depth within each scene (Eiseman).

Red

Throughout the visual solution, red is mainly utilized within typographic elements and color overlays on certain parts of the imagery. Red is known as the “color of life-sustaining blood or life-threatening bloodshed” (Eiseman 7), grabbing the viewer’s attention and indicating a feeling of danger.

Yellow

Yellow is also utilized for several typographic elements and color overlays. Eiseman states that “the combination of yellow and all-powerful black is even more commanding and the indelible message is deeply implanted in the human mind to WATCH OUT” (21). Yellow is uniquely used in the visual solution by representing comfort and sunshine but quickly adjusting to a hazardous warning in a new scene.

Blue

Although not utilized extensively in the first section of the visual solution, blue plays a very significant role in the second and third sections. It is incorporated throughout the visual solution to insinuate the presence of an all-powerful but merciful God. Eiseman explains that “the human mind embraces the concept of blue as tranquil and constant and translates it into a symbolic image of dependability and loyalty” (31).

White

In Christianity, white is symbolic of being wiped clean of sin and surrendering to God. Therefore, it is typically incorporated throughout the visual solution to portray additional characteristics of God, such as purity, clarity, and trust. However, it is utilized for other representations as well.
**Process**

The following information has been broken down into four sections to further describe the visual process: the opening section followed by the three sections of *The Dark Night of the Soul* lyrics.

**Opening Section**

Throughout the Opening Section and Section 1, a black and white base layer is included to frame the outer edges of the video. This layer, which will be referred to as Base Layer 1 (Figure 2.1), remains static throughout the entirety of the opening section and section one. Base Layer 1 was created to not only tie the visuals together, but to also reinforce the theme of death. The majority of the imagery within Base Layer 1 consists of Christ’s death and highlighted verses from Job 2:3-4:17. I specifically chose to incorporate the book of Job because of the overall theme of death and the prominent question of why God allows bad things to happen to good people. This is often a question that is asked when a loved one passes away and also a question that Levi touches on throughout *The Dark Night of the Soul* lyrics.

*The Dark Night of the Soul* starts out with a soft 37 second introduction of just music. Knowing that the coming lyrics tackle a very heavy topic, I chose to utilize this section of the visuals to provide context to the lyrics and visually tie back to the *Cataracts* album artwork. Levi’s explanation of the album scrolls up the left side of the inset rectangle for viewers to read (Figure 2.2), while lines slide into view from the top-right and right side of the screen. The lines are incorporated to lead the viewer’s eyes to the DARK NIGHT text and the title, *The Dark Night of the Soul* (Figure 2.3). Both DARK NIGHT and the title are set in the Bank of England typeface which artist Caleb Davis utilized for the *Cataracts* album artwork.

The background footage of the man in a parking garage focuses on fidgeting hands to represent a feeling of loneliness and contemplation. Throughout the video, hands will be the focal point in several scenes. Hands can showcase an individual’s emotions, allowing the viewer to understand the scene but also draw upon their own memories without becoming distracted by the individual’s face. The opening scene also introduces several swatches from the determined color palette, specifically yellow, black, red and white.

Refer to page 52 for the Dark Night lyrics.

Refer to levithepoet.net to view album artwork.

Refer to page 32 & 59 for research and info on color.
Section 1

As mentioned previously, Levi explained that the lyrics of *The Dark Night of the Soul* were inspired by three different stories and thus the piece was broken into three different sections. Levi stated that the first section was inspired by one of his best friends who lost his daughter at birth. As I began working on this section of the video, the overall theme of losing a daughter remained at the forefront of my mind. To spark an understanding of the narrative, I tied the visuals back to this theme by incorporating a young girl throughout, but did not portray her dying at birth. Rather, I incorporated thymophors, visual metaphors utilized to represent emotion, to augment the emotions that can be felt and heard in the lyrics. Additionally, the imagery of the young girl is utilized in a way where the key focal point of each scene is not directly focused on her face. This is to allow the viewer to draw upon their own memories of a child and reflect on the emotions felt if that child were to die. The following information has been broken down according to scenes with the applicable lyrics noted at the start of each section.
When reflecting on this section of lyrics, I interpreted them to mean that as children, everything seems to be lovely and carefree (Figure 2.4). Typically, there are no gray lines or heartbreaking experiences. Children know how to love and trust unconditionally and have not yet been tainted by the world around them.

To represent this freedom that a child has, glimpses of a young girl enjoying all that life offers fade in and out of the flowers that spiral around the screen (Figure 2.5). When still-shots of the young girl are utilized, her face is directed towards the next focal point, rather than off of the screen or directly at the viewer. Referring back to the research on the psychology of design and how the brain sees, Susan Weinschenk states that it’s important to “decide whether you want to establish an emotional connection (the face looking right at the user) or direct attention (the face looking directly at the product)” (9). The visuals of the young girl are intended to assist in communicating the overall narrative, and allow the viewer to build a perspective based on their own memories and emotions of a young child. Therefore, it is important to position the young girl’s face in a way that does not become a distraction for the viewer, but rather directs the viewer to the next focal point.

The spiraling flowers mentioned previously are intended to represent a vortex of calmness before the storm. As the piece progresses to the lyrics, “play in the water,” there is a shift in color from yellow to blue flowers (Figure 2.6), allowing the flowers to transition from warm and sunny, to cool and water-like. As images of the girl fade in and out, text elements slide into focus at the bottom left side of the screen and at the top right, a few frames later. The white body text, set in the script font, Scribble, is intended to act as a supporting design element and is not meant to be read while watching the video.

This is because large bodies of text that are set in a legible typeface tend to insinuate to the viewer that the information should be read fully and can frustrate the viewer if he or she is unable to do so. However, once grasping the overall meaning of the poem and visuals, the viewer can pause the video and review the text if interested. The first section of the white body text states that “her wild and messy hair ran down her back uncontrollably and her eyes were bright with pure joy.” While the second section of the white body text states that “she loved without hesitation and her laugh made every tear dry. She faced every battle fearlessly and ran into the sun with a smile.” Both sections of body text, although not obvious or required for the viewer to read, reinforce the message of the scene.
**Section 1: Scene 2**

“...that the face of the mountain smiled just like our father’s, and the song of the river sounded just like our mother’s...” (Macallister)

Scene two utilizes simplistic visuals of the young girl with her mother and father. The visuals are tightly cropped in on the faces (Figure 2.7) to avoid a direct focus on the eyes of the parents. Again, this allows for the viewer to gather information about the narrative but connect back to their own memories and emotions without becoming distracted by the actors in the visuals. The colors for this particular scene are left in a natural state, but integrate aspects of the color palette throughout the clothing that the young girl and father are wearing. The young girl is in a white jacket to portray purity and innocence to the viewer, while her father wears a black and red shirt, foreshadowing the death and heartbreak that he is trying to protect her and himself from, but will ultimately experience.

**Section 1: Scene 3**

“...and the sunsets in the valley glowed just like our worldview, and the lightning had not yet torn that world in two” (Macallister).

Transitioning into scene three (Figure 2.8), I utilized typography to create imagery of a rotating sun. For this portion, I set words that represent a positive worldview (Figure 2.9), i.e. peace, trust, faith, and love, in the Bank of England font. The anatomy and structure of the font allows the text to fit neatly within the other, lending itself to the flames of the sun.

The middle of the sun is replaced with a black and white earth to create cohesion between the background and the foreground, as well as establish a clear focal point. Additionally, the black and white serves as a representation of the naïve thought that an individual could understand why certain life events transpire the way they do, or understand all that God has planned. The fact that neither are possible means that death (lightning) will eventually come and shatter lives. The flashes of light that flicker across the text (Figure 2.10) are intended to represent the impending threat of death on a positive worldview.

Refer to page 42 for research on how the brain sees.
Section 1: Scene 4

“When I saw one of the sparrows fall I knew that when she hit the soil the earth would break like our heart-quake until it could not be called that at all” (Macallister).

Reflecting on the lyrics, scene four is where Levi transitions from the topic of life to the topic of death. This is a key turning point in the spoken word piece and vital for the viewer to experience. Levi presents the listener with a captivating metaphor, associating the young girls death with a fallen sparrow. Therefore, to allow the viewer to fully experience the metaphor without any interruption, I presented imagery of the young girl slowly falling down the screen (Figure 3.1). This directly explains the metaphor while avoiding imagery of an actual death. The imagery of the falling girl is also an example of anticipated motion (Figure 3.2). The viewer can physically feel the uncomfortable falling position that the girl is staged in, and may even imagine the horrible experience of hitting the ground.

Positioned behind the young girl is a red, beating heart that rapidly speeds up as the girl falls further down the screen. The heart is incorporated to capture the feeling of panic, anger, and brokenness that an individual experiences when he or she finds out that a loved one has died. The red reinforces these feelings while also tying back to the previously stated “life-sustaining blood” and “life-threatening bloodshed” (Eiseman 7).
Section 1: Scene 5

“Of course the world is grey. Of course the mountain is no longer a mountain and the rivers have turned to snakes” (Macallister).

Scene five is also filled with metaphor. However, the comparison being made is much more elaborate. I interpreted this metaphor to mean that life is not black and white. Rather, it’s unpredictable and deceiving much like a hurricane or tornado. With both, blue skies and sunshine can be suddenly followed by massive loss and destruction.

Throughout this scene, I have utilized shape, line, texture, typography, and color to reinforce the tension that can be heard in Levi’s voice and the metaphor described in the lyrics. Although there are many shapes within this scene, they are all rectangles made up of straight lines and sharp corners. Surrounded by an image of destruction, the main focus of the entire scene is placed on the small rectangle at the center of the screen. I have utilized black and white photography and video footage to reinforce the lyrics with visuals of the world being grey (Figure 3.4). The red lines that slide into view on the screen (Figure 3.3) provide a sense of depth and frame the scene itself. Also included within the small rectangle focal point is red text that reads, “That’s my baby. My baby! Please God! Please!” (Figure 3.5) I chose to highlight a plea to God because it is a common reaction for a parent to have when finding out that their child has died, or is dying. This also allows the viewer to connect the hurricane footage back to a world being torn apart by death. Both the lines and text are red in color to create contrast within the scene and also communicate the underlying messages and emotions that are associated with red. Moreover, each of these aspects are combined to communicate a cold and chaotic emotional state to the viewer.

Refer to pages 32-39 for research on line, shape, texture, color, and type.
Section 1: Scene 6

“I will never forget the way that her father writhed in the dirt the day he wept over the grave he made for his daughter after begging you to let her stay” (Macallister).

Scenesixutilizesthemetheusamevisualasscenefive. Thelonlyportion that changes is the footage within the small rectangle focal point. This footage is switched out from the hurricane footage to the young girl’s father (Figure 3.6 and 3.7). The goal of this scene was to capture the father violently crying at the grave of his daughter, praying to God that it was just a nightmare. However, the footage alone felt anticlimactic, did not have much of a focal point, and did not portray the desperate feelings that a parent experiences when a child dies. Therefore, I utilized editing techniques that created a focal point on the footage of the father’s hands clenching at the dirt and reinforced the anxious and desperate feelings.

Section 1: Scene 7

“So where is the lullaby that our doctrine sang? Where is the house on the rock when even the rock couldn’t withstand the rain” (Macallister).

When reflecting on this section of lyrics, my initial focus was tied to the visual of a house on a rock. However, this imagery would do little to augment the lyrics or allow the viewer to interpret based on their own emotions and memories. There is also a much larger topic addressed in this section of lyrics rather than simply a house on a rock. Levi is essentially questioning God’s power and promise stated in Matthew 7:24-29. In this section of the Bible, God explains that all those who follow His word will have a firm foundation and will not fall. However, Levi is stating that when the death of a loved one occurs, it feels as though the individuals left behind, along with God’s promises, have been destroyed. Therefore, I redirected the concept of this scene to incorporate imagery of a stained glass window of Christ’s crucifixion, over a church that had been destroyed by a hurricane (Figure 3.8). The church, which symbolizes God’s word, continues the visual narrative and represents the lyrics, “even the rock couldn’t withstand the rain.” However, Christ’s crucifixion serves as a reminder that God is still present even in extreme heartbreak and doubt. To incorporate texture throughout the visuals and reinforce the lyrics, “where is the lullaby that our doctrine sang,” I overlaid a photo of the hymn, Will the Circle Be Unbroken, by Ada R. Habershon. Lastly, falling text (Figure 3.9), utilizing Matthew 7:25, is incorporated to act as rain throughout the scene.
Section 1: Scene 8

“What does it mean, you who uses spit to clean the eyes of blind men suddenly guilty for all that they have claimed to see” (Macallister).

This scene utilizes the artwork of Cima da Conegliano, an Italian Renaissance painter, and Jacob van Swanenburg, a Dutch painter. I combined Conegliano’s painting, God the Father (Figure 3.10), with Swanenburg’s painting, The Harrowing of Hell (Figure 4.1). Both paintings are public domain images and have been altered to create a new piece of art entirely. Observing the piece as a whole, God is positioned looking over a scene that depicts Hell on earth, as if He is allowing horrible things to happen. At the start of the scene, God is the only aspect of the visuals that the viewer can see. The scene is set up in this manner to lead the viewer to think that He would be overseeing a beautiful and flourishing earth. However, as the scene progresses, the artwork scrolls up the screen to reveal that God is actually looking over Hell. In this portion of the lyrics, Levi raises the question, why does God provide sight of an earth that is shattered, to the blind men, who were once sheltered from the awful aspects of the world? To reinforce this question, the text “Why God do you torture us?” is placed in center of the screen.

Section 1: Scene 9

“It’s not I don’t believe, it’s just that sometimes faith feels more like cataracts than clarity” (Macallister).

Transitioning into scene 9, I utilized shape, form, and texture to communicate the lyrics to the viewer. At first, the father from previous scenes, is seen violently shaking his head (Figure 4.2), representing stress, confusion and anger. As the footage freezes, and the father looks at the viewer, and his eyes are replaced with shapes that contain an implied textural element of fuzzy, static footage (Figure 4.3). Relating back to the research on the design characteristic of texture, implied means that it can be seen and imagined but not physically felt. This scene is one of the only scenes that utilizes footage of an individual looking directly back at the viewer. I chose to position the father in this way, but replace his eyes to allow an emotional connection to the viewer, but also serve as a reflection of the viewer’s emotions.
Section 1: Scene 10

“Please go gentle on me” (Macallister).

As scene 9 and Base Layer 1 fade off the screen, a letter to God stretches across. The letter states:

can you hear me God? I am crying to you. Oh please God spare me this pain. Do not let me go through this unbearable heartbreak again. I cannot endure any more. I am completely alone. Why God, why am I left to drown in my sorrow? Can you hear me?! Please listen to me! My family has been destroyed and left to cry themselves to sleep. We are broken and beaten with nothing left to give. Is that how we are supposed to live? What is the purpose of it all? Why bless us only to take away? I can’t take it anymore. So please God go gentle.

The letter as a whole utilizes little leading, which is the space between each line of text. This is to allow for the majority of the letter to act more as a texture, rather than a body of text that is meant to be read (Figure 4.5). However, key words are highlighted in red (Figure 4.4) to provide the viewer with the overall message of the letter. The key words that are highlighted are “please God, I am completely broken and beaten. Go gentle.” The words are highlighted in red to reinforce the message of being broken and beaten, while the words themselves reinforce the lyrics within this scene.

Refer to page 38 for research on typography.
Section 2

While discussing Section 2 of The Dark Night of the Soul lyrics, Levi explained that the lyrics were inspired by another one of his best friends, whose daughter was born with down syndrome and numerous amounts of birth defects. He went on to explain that although she is doing well now, she spent the entire first year of her life in the hospital and was very close to not coming home. Levi stated that she “died on the operating table for 40-45 minutes before doctors and (miraculously) God were able to see her breathe again.” This incredible story inspired an overall theme of life and resurrection for the visuals in Section 2.

To introduce a new storyline and indicate the transition from Section 1 to Section 2, the scene fades to black and into a new base layer. Like Base Layer 1, Base Layer 2 (Figure 4.6) was created to tie the visuals together and frame the outer edges of the video. However, in contrast to Base Layer 1, Base Layer 2 reinforces the established theme of life and the resurrection. The majority of the imagery within Base Layer 2 consists of Christ’s resurrection and highlighted verses from Job 14:14-16:16. The book of Job continues to address questions and statements that Levi highlights in The Dark Night of the Soul, while the imagery of Christ’s resurrection augments the steadfast love and faithfulness of God even in the darkest hours. Base layer 2 remains present for the remainder of the visual solution.

The full transition from Section 1 to Section 2 is about 18 seconds of just music, much like the Opening Section. This section of the visual focuses on the hands of a man who is trembling with fear of what is to come (Figure 4.8). Additionally, the hands are placed facing out and in the air to symbolize surrender, and ultimately a plea for mercy. The text, Job 30: 26-28, amplifies the pain and plea for mercy when death is looming (Figure 4.7). However, it is set in the font, Scribble, so that it acts as a supporting design element and allows for the hands to remain the focal point.

Refer to page 36 for research on symbolism and iconography.
Section 2: Scene 1

“In obscurity and silence and absurdity and violence the quiet reminded me that the surest sign I don’t understand is to be sure that I do. I knew more before I knew more. He said…” (Macallister).

Reflecting on scene one of Section 2, Levi reminds the listener that it is easy to neglect God’s command to trust in Him, and instead get caught up in the misleading belief that a person’s actions can control how events occur in his or her life. It often takes some form of trauma or life-altering event to push an individual back to God’s word and passionately seek after Him. With this message in mind, I utilized footage of ambulance lights overlaid on a man frantically flipping through the Bible looking for answers. Centered in the middle of the screen, the text from Job 10:8-9 reads, “Your hands have fashioned me and made me, an intricate unity; yet You would destroy me. Remember I pray that You have made me like clay. And will you turn me into dust again” (NKJV). The text is framed by a black rectangle to create contrast between it and the surrounding video footage (Figure 4.9).

Section 2: Scene 2

“Just outside the room, I watched her die for forty-five minutes while they tried to revive my child and when she finally pulled through I thought of death and resurrection and how much I hated you...I love you for it” (Macallister).

Throughout this portion of the visual solution, line, shape, color, and type are used to augment the lyrics. In the first portion of the scene, footage of a hospital room plays in the background while an animation of a heartbeat monitor, consisting of one line only, flashes across the centered rectangle (Figure 4.10). The heartbeat flat lines as Levi states “I watched her die for forty-five minutes” (Figure 5.1) and then beats again as he states “when she finally pulled through.” Both the heartbeat and the hospital footage are blue in color to suggest that God is in control and present even in this dark hour. Progressing further into the scene, a second black rectangle overlaps with the already centered black rectangle to create a cross (Figure 5.2) and symbolize Christ’s death and resurrection. At the same time, the hospital scene morphs from blue to red, to communicate that because of Christ’s death, others can be saved. At the end of the scene, the text “Thank You God” is revealed in the center of the cross to amplify the lyrics.

Refer to page 32-35 for research on color and shape.

Refer to page 36 for research on symbolism and iconography.
Section 2: Scene 3

“You’ve been gone so long I’ve been raging at the night in all its emptiness, all its nothingness, all its silent, darkened sky” (Macallister).

Transitioning into scene three, typography and color are utilized to communicate the lyrical message that Levi presents. To insinuate a feeling of rage, scattered text from Psalm 22:1-3, flies across the screen and into place (Figure 5.3). Once fixed in place, key sections of the lyrics are encased in yellow rectangles to capture the viewer’s attention (Figure 5.4). These highlighted sections consist of “why have you forsaken me?”, and the contrasting text “but you are holy” (NKJV). Additionally, throughout the entirety of scene three and into scene four, a stop watch is running in the bottom right corner of the screen.

Section 2: Scene 4

“I’ve been searching for the sadist who keeps taking his sweet time to let us see, or let us leave, or let us move on with our lives” (Macallister).

The stop watch that starts in scene three, continues into scene four to imply that generally in times of stress, individuals expect God to adhere to a timeline of his or her own making. It can be difficult to patiently allow certain situations to unfold the way God has intended. In addition to the initial stop watch, multiple others starting at different times, appear on screen to build the sense of urgency and tension (Figure 5.5). Behind the stop watches, clocks (incorporated to reinforce the passing of time) are revealed through shadows and glimmers of light shining down from above (Figure 5.6). The stop watches are set in red to contrast in color and in meaning with the blue clocks. The red stop watches indicate the longing for control in stressful situations, while the blue clocks indicate that God is in control.

Refer to page 38 for research on typography.

Refer to page 32 & 59 for research and info on color.
Section 2: Scene 5

“Now that you’ve finally shown yourself again, I’ve got my fist raised high for the bliss it is, to finally have a Christ to crucify and then to kiss” (Macallister).

Throughout this portion of the visual solution color, typography, and anticipated motion are used to reflect the internal battle that often forms when horrible situations occur, such as life threatening accidents or sickness. It is easy to curse God’s name and place the blame on Him out of outrage or frustration. However, guilt often follows this misplaced anger, and the realization forms that God is all-powerful and has a plan in every situation, even if it cannot yet be seen. This battle inspired the visuals for scene five.

At the beginning of the scene, a man is clenching the Bible in his hands, yelling up to the sky at God and ultimately throwing the Bible down on the ground (Figure 5.7). He quickly realizes that he needs God and falls to his knees as a sign of surrender (Figure 5.9). He goes on to gather the Bible and pull it close to him. These visuals serve as an example of anticipated motion and allow for the viewer to experience kinesthetic empathy. As explained in the research section on anticipated motion, kinesthetic empathy is when the viewer can feel the movements of the individual in their own muscles, causing he or she to move. Typography, is also integrated throughout the scene. The text is made up of conflicting emotions and is combined with the visuals to reinforce the battle between hating and loving God.

Throughout this scene, the viewer will notice flashes of white and red that appear on screen (Figure 5.8). The white is incorporated to represent two contrasting subject matters. First, it can be seen as a representation of God showing Himself to the man but it can also represent the intense anger that the man is feeling. This anger is so overpowering, that the man’s vision becomes erratic, thus the flashes of white occur. The intense anger is also represented by several flashes of red.

Refer to page 41 for research on anticipated motion.
Section 3

While discussing the remaining portions of The Dark Night of the Soul lyrics, Levi noted that Section 3, if it can be called a section, is more of the combination of his two friend’s experiences with his own. Levi went on to explain that he lost his dad to suicide and therefore, based the final lyrics of the piece on their experiences with loss as a whole. The transition between Section 2 and 3 does not have a clear break like Section 1 and 2. However, I utilized a fade transition to indicate to the viewer that a new scene is occurring.

Section 3: Scene 1

“You let me lose my mind and I loved you for letting me hate you, and I barely recognize the lines that the rivers make on the mountain face or the color of your eyes. I thought that they were black and white. I thought I knew the creeks.” (Macallister).

Throughout scene 1 of Section 2, anticipated motion, shape and color are utilized to communicate the lyrical message. To indicate a loss of control, followed by confusion and chaos, I incorporated footage of a man running through the woods as if he is lost and panicking. This footage is placed in the center of the screen in a rectangle with a blue overlay, making it the focal point of the scene (Figure 5.10). It also allows for the viewer to experience kinesthetic empathy, and connect to the visuals physically, amplifying the emotional connection to the scene.

Behind the focal point I have incorporated additional footage of the woods with a red-yellow overlay (Figure 6.1). This portion is filmed from the perspective of the man, who is panicking and feels as if the woods are spinning around him. I chose to utilize a red-yellow overlay to reinforce the emotions that he would be experiencing. In contrast, the blue color overlay suggests that God is looking down on the man and is in control of all situations even when he or she may feel lost and consumed by fear.
Section 3: Scene 2

“I thought that they were black and white. Keep forgiving. Keep forgiving.” (Macallister).

Transitioning from scene 1 to scene 2, the focal point remains, while the background footage of the spinning woods is replaced with black and white clouds to reinforce the lyrics (Figure 6.2). Set in the font, Scribble, the text from Ephesians 4:31-32 appears on screen. This verse allows for a additional connection to the lyrics but does not distract from the focal point. Because it is set in the font Scribble, the viewer is not inclined to read it.

Refer to page 38-39 for research on typography.

Section 3: Scene 3

“Let God be wild. Let God be wild. Let God be wild and let me be free.” (Macallister).

Throughout the ending of the video, I chose to utilize footage of God’s amazing power that can be seen throughout nature. I first utilized footage of fire with red and yellow, to indicate that God is righteous, just, and loving, even in His anger (Figure 6.3). Following the fire, I utilized footage of a glacier falling, and intense waves (Figure 6.4 and 6.5). Both are blue in color to indicate that He is merciful, constant and all powerful. Moreover, I chose to utilize footage of fire, a falling glacier, and waves to represent God’s wild power without the overall feeling of destruction that can be felt with the hurricane footage. Overlaying the footage are words that describe God’s character. Each section of text is lead onto the screen by a line. The lines are incorporated to direct the viewer’s eye across the screen. At the end of the scene, the screen flashes to white to indicate to the viewer that even through all of the pain and the heartbreak, God has the power to wash everyone clean and provide spiritual, physical, and emotional freedom.

Refer to page 32 & 59 for research and info on color.
Conclusion: Visual Process

Each of the design characteristic and how they are utilized within the visual solution have been discussed throughout this chapter. I have found that color, shape, and typography were incorporated the most and played a significant role in amplifying the emotional impact of the performance art piece. This is largely due to the Brutalism style that I chose to utilize in creating the layout, as each of these characteristics are used routinely throughout Brutalism. However, each attribute served a unique role in creating the overall visual solution for The Dark Night of the Soul.
A special thanks to:

**LEVI MACALLISTER**

for allowing me to utilize his spoken word piece in combination with my thesis project.

Art and Design  |  Bri O’Neal  
Thesis Chair   |  Stacy Cannon  
Thesis Committee  |  Monique Maloney, Chris Phillips  
Assistant Photographer  |  Audra Rygh  
Actors  |  Ryan Smith, Zach Rygh, Mike Ellsworth  
Actress  |  Lindyn Cannon
Design as an Accompaniment to Performance Art: Incorporating Imagery to Amplify the Emotional Impact

A collaboration between spoken word and motion graphics to provide a performance that draws on the memories and emotions of its viewers.
Conclusion

In conclusion, a thorough investigation was completed on how graphic design can be utilized to amplify the emotional impact of a performance art piece. The research indicates that the viewer experiences an emotional response to an artistic piece through a process involving memory, emotion, and perspective. To begin the process, the lyrics and visuals in the artistic piece prompt memories within the viewer. Key moments throughout these memories are recalled as mental images within the viewer’s thoughts. These images, known as thymophors or visual metaphors, are driven by the intense emotions that are tied to the viewer’s memories (Hartmann 165). Additionally, the images and emotions that the viewer experiences while observing the artistic piece are influenced by their memories, rather than the lyrics or visuals themselves. As a result, the viewer builds a perspective on the artistic piece based off of their personal memories and emotions.

This process is a key component to be mindful of when approaching a visual solution. Although the process itself cannot be directly controlled by the artist, being aware of how the viewer experiences emotions, allows the artist to make informed design decisions and consider the potential memories and emotions of the viewer. In making these decisions, the artist should evaluate each of the characteristics of design, i.e. color, line, shape/form, texture, symbolism/iconography, typography, anticipated motion, and layout. As indicated in the research, the elements and principles of design play a significant role in influencing the viewer’s emotional response by directing the viewer’s thoughts. If the characteristics are combined thoughtfully with the lyrics and core emotions of the piece, the artist can prompt the viewer to recall memories with a specific theme (such as death) and ultimately, experience emotions that are somewhat predictable by the artist. On the contrary, the process of making design decisions is an intuitive process, meaning the artist has the ultimate say in how each characteristic is utilized in the visual solution. The responsibility is placed on the artist to be aware of the context in which the principles and elements are being used, and determine how to best implement them throughout the visual solution.

In approaching the visual solution for the performance art piece, The Dark Night of the Soul, the core emotions and the meaning of the lyrics were evaluated in combination with the characteristics of design. The potential memories and emotions of the viewer were also considered. Therefore, if the viewer has suffered the death of a loved one and is placed in an environment that is conducive to playing videos with audio, the visuals will likely amplify the emotional impact of the performance art piece. However, due to the nature of graphic design and the process in which a viewer experiences emotion, there will never be one formulaic solution. An artist has the potential to utilize the elements and principles of design in thousands of different ways, resulting in a new solution each time. Therefore, the discussed research within the thesis should ultimately act as a guideline to the artist rather than a set of strict rules.
Appendix A

Provided is documentation of the communications with Levi and his provided permission to utilize *The Dark Night of the Soul*, his quotes, and the Bank of England typeface within the thesis.

On Dec 29, 2017, at 9:32 AM, O'Neal, Brianna Paige (Recreation Centers) wrote:

Hello,

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas. My name is Bri O'Neal and I am an MFA: Graphic Design student in Lynchburg, Va. I am currently working on my thesis which is focused on how graphic design can be used as an accompaniment to performance art in order to amplify the emotional impact on the viewer. I am in search of a professional spoken word artist that would be willing to collaborate with me to create the final piece. Your work is amazing and it seems like you already have an appreciation for pairing graphic design and performance art based off the video for your single, Sanctuary Cities.

The idea for the final visuals of my thesis is to create motion graphics that can be projected on screen behind the performer or paired with audio to create a video that can be shared on social media, like you did with Sanctuary Cities.

I have provided a link to some of the work that I have done in the past- [http://brioneal.com](http://brioneal.com) if you are interested in working with me, there are a few different ways that we could collaborate for my final visuals. If you are on the East Coast at some point this January or February that is within driving distance of Lynchburg, I could get a team together to come film you on a blank backdrop. That way your performance could be overlaid onto the visuals once complete. If you are not in the area and would be willing to provide me audio, I could pair the audio with my visuals to create my final piece. If you are interested in collaborating either way, I will credit you fully in my thesis project and will provide you with the visuals that you can use however you choose.

Please let me know if you have any questions at all. I appreciate your time and look forward to hearing from you!

Thanks so much,

Bri O’Neal
From: Levi Macallister
Date: December 31, 2017 at 10:53:25 AM EST
To: "ONEal, Brianna Paige (Recreation Centers)"
Subject: Re: Graphic Design and Performance Art Collaboration

Hi Bri!

Thanks so much for reaching out to me. What an honor!

I took a look at your site - your work is wonderful! I truly appreciate the offer to collaborate.

You’re spot on about my love for the way graphic design / performance art compliment one another. And, your idea for the projected graphics is great - I’ve actually been doing that for about three or four years now (I don’t know if you’ve seen one of my shows / we’ve met back east?). Anyhow, all of the Correspondence videos on my YouTube, for instance, are videos I put together to help tell a visual narrative along with the written / performed story. I’ve done the same for Sanctuary Cities, as well as some new pieces I’ll be putting out soon.

All that to say - I like the idea.

To be honest, my schedule is slammed right now and I know for a fact I won’t be able to make it back out to Lynchburg in Jan / Feb. I’m sorry. I would, however, be interested in sending you a piece to work with - possibly even one from my new / upcoming record.

May I ask what your hopes / directions are for the type of piece you’d like to work on for this project? Do you have a general direction for mood / feel / vibe?

Anyway, thanks again for reaching out. Hope to hear back from you soon.

Levi
On Jan 4, 2018, at 6:46 AM, ONeal, Brianna Paige (Recreation Centers) wrote:

Hey!

Thanks so much for getting back to me. Unfortunately, I haven’t had a chance to see one of your shows but I have listened to your work on spotify and checked out your videos on youtube. They’re all great and I am so appreciative and excited that you’re willing to send me a piece.

One that I am particularly interested in is The Teacher Speaks (a Time to Keep and a Time to Cast Away). First the contrast in the intro and where the spoken word starts is extremely captivating. There is also a lot of raw emotion that fluctuates and changes in speed and intensity throughout the piece. Then the overlaying of your voice in certain areas and where you repeat "and days" over an over is gripping.

I also personally relate to the message of this piece, which is helpful because a lot of the inspiration for my designs is rooted in what I am personally going through. In addition, because this piece does not include specific people from your life but is more focused on a personal battle with great use of metaphor to describe your thoughts and feelings, it allows for many people, male and female, from all different walks of life to connect to the piece in their own way. This is important because my thesis research is based on the idea that a piece of art evokes emotions in the viewer because of their personal perspectives that have been built from emotions/memories they have experienced.

I realize that this piece is from a much older record so if you have something similar in your new record, I would be very interested in that as well.

Here are some videos that I really appreciate the style of and their use of transitions. I also like the glitch effect that they use in certain areas. And just to clarify, although type will be used in my video, I will not be creating a lyric video.
From: Levi Macallister

Sent: Thursday, January 4, 2018 5:02:41 PM

To: ONeal, Brianna Paige (Recreation Centers)

Subject: Re: Graphic Design and Performance Art Collaboration

Brianna,

I really like these ideas. Thanks for writing me back. I also really like The Teacher Speaks, and am not horribly opposed to sending you that track, but if it is possible, I personally would prefer an upcoming release as opposed to an older piece.

However, I want to tread lightly because this is your project. I’m just thinking that it all might come at a great time that corresponds with some of my plans to begin rolling new stuff out, and personally think that, on a public level, folks would be more interested in that.

So... you tell me. I’m not opposed to saying yes to “The Teacher Speaks,” but if you’d be willing to help me out in the process of all of this and accomplishing what you need and want to, as well, would you consider taking a different, newer piece for the project, instead?

Let me know. If it is of interest to you, I’d be willing to send you a private link to the upcoming album so that you can listen through it for yourself, so long as - of course - you do not share it with anyone. As of now, no one even knows that I’ve been working on a new record, let alone that it is complete. I really need it to stay under wraps until I’ve sorted out announcement plans on my end.

Anyhow. I’ll look forward to hearing from you soon. Thanks for going back and forth with me on it, Brianna!

By the way, when are you hoping to have this / your thesis complete?

Talk to you soon!

Levi
On Jan 4, 2018, at 4:30 PM, O'Neal, Brianna Paige (Recreation Centers) wrote:

Hey Levi,

Thanks for getting back to me so quickly. I also think it would be best to use an upcoming release if possible and would love to listen to the album. I completely understand that it cannot be shared with anyone and I will be sure to keep it to myself. Thank you for being willing to share it with me early. I also won’t tell anyone that you have an album in the works/complete.

Just so you’re aware, if we end up going with a track from the upcoming album, I have three committee members, who are all faculty, that I would need to have review and approve what I am working on throughout this semester. However, I can make sure that they do not share the track with anyone while it is in the review stages. Is that ok with you?

Also, the dates below explain when everything has to be submitted and presented. These dates involve releasing my work to the public which would have your track with it. Please let me know if you have any questions about it or if this will cause any problems/ conflicts with when you plan to release your album.

April 9th - website is due - this is essentially a landing page for my project detailing the process and the final piece. It will be live on April 9th and you would be able to share the piece at this point if you wish.

April 16th - oral defense - this is when we present our projects. It is open to the public.

April 23 - Gallery Exhibit 1 - the final piece will go on display to the public for a few days.

May 14 - Gallery Exhibit 2 - the final piece will go on display to the public for a week.

Thanks again,

Bri O’Neal
To: ONeal, Brianna Paige (Recreation Centers)
Subject: Re: Graphic Design and Performance Art Collaboration
Bri,

thanks fo getting back to me. This sounds good, and I'm willing to
give it to you. Here is the link to the final album.

Cataracts:

You're literally the first person who isn't one of my friends to receive
this. It's kinda scary. Haha. Not because of you, just because it's
scary sharing new things with folks. You're an artist though... I'm sure
you get it.

Anyhow, take a listen through this, and let me know if anything stands
out / resonates, and if you'd like to give the thumbs up to one of
them.

Again, I appreciate your interest in working with me at all.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Levi

P.S. – By the time your project would need to be released, my album
will be out, so the timeline is alright with me.
Levi,

Oh yea I completely understand being nervous. It's so hard to release art into the world, knowing all you can do is pray that people will love it the way you do.

But thanks so much for sharing it. I am going to listen to it for a few days and see what is the best direction to go in. I will get back to you soon.

Thanks,

Bri O’Neal

Hey Levi,

I wanted to touch base with you since it has been a while and let you know that I have not dipped out on this project. My step dad passed away unexpectedly early last week. So I have been home helping my mom with everything. I am getting started on school work again this week so I will be able to give you some answers by the end of the week. Thanks for your patience!

Bri O’Neal

Hey Levi,

let me start by saying that this entire album is amazing! It was a very difficult choice. However, I was really drawn to The Dark Night of the Soul. Would you be ok if I use this track?

If you are ok with it, do you mind sending me any info that you feel would provide additional insight?

Thanks again,

Bri O’Neal
Bri,

hello.

I just got both of the emails that you sent me yesterday/today. I am devastated. I am so sorry about your step-dad’s passing. I don’t know how close you both were, but I can’t imagine that kind of unexpected loss, and I am truly sorry for it.

I didn’t think you’d dipped out at all - and thank you for the kind words about this album. I appreciate them. I love Dark Night of the Soul and think that would be an excellent choice. Certainly one I’m excited about, and frankly, probably one that resonates with both of us in the loss of close family. :-(

As for additional insight: here’s a bit, and please feel free to ask any other questions moving forward, as well...

- This poem is about two of my best friends: one of which lost his daughter at birth (the first half of the song) last year, and one (the second half) whose daughter, born with down syndrome, a huge amount of birth defects, and spent her first whole year in the hospital, though now revived, died on her operating table for a total of 40-45 minutes before doctors and (miraculously) God was able to see her breath again. I saw her last night, actually. She’s two now and she’s beautiful.
- If there is a third section, it is a combination of the three of us, and our experience with the losses we’ve faced: my father to suicide, my friends and their daughters. The whole album is also, as you may have noticed, deeply connected to the church - and much of it to me and my friend’s experiences with some of the more difficult aspects of the broken body that Christ’s is. So, there is an element of loss connected to that in our past, as well, coupled with the hope that Christ is still present, even when we’re not able to see him (The Dark Nights of our Souls), or even if we’re only able to see him as our punching bag, and he is still wild, overflowing beyond the boxes that we have previously placed him in, wild and abounding in love.
- One of the main contributing thoughts behind this song was this article: [https://www.keylife.org/articles/i-love-god-for-letting-me-hate-him](https://www.keylife.org/articles/i-love-god-for-letting-me-hate-him) - I absolutely love it, and it remains one of my favorite things I’ve ever read on the internet.
- Another contributing inspiration was this podcast which, though I hadn’t listened to much of Rob Bell since a high schooler sharing conversations with my mom, was particularly significant to me: [https://robbell.podbean.com/e/episode-2-the-river-the-mountain-and-you/](https://robbell.podbean.com/e/episode-2-the-river-the-mountain-and-you/)

So, that’s a bit to go on, anyhow. Feel free to respond with more questions if you have them. I’d love to help any way I can.

Again, thanks Bri, and I am so sorry for your / your family’s loss. May the Lord bring peace to you, and be tangibly present, sympathetic and kind in this time.

Talk to you soon,

Levi
Levi,

this is great. Thank you for providing some further insight into the piece. I am so sorry to hear about your dad and your friends loss as well, but the story about your second friend and his daughter is amazing! It’s so great that you can share those thoughts, feelings and everything else that comes with death through your art.

I agree that this is definitely one that resonates with me, as it has been a very difficult year for our family as far as death goes. That article that you shared is really just awesome and hits everything head on. I will absolutely reach out to you with further questions, as I am sure some will come up.

Thanks again. I will be in touch.

Bri

Hey Levi,

I am currently working on integrating some typography into the video and I had plans to use a Gothic inspired typeface, as I lean towards that in a lot of my work. However, before choosing which typeface, I wanted to reach out and see if you and the designer would be ok with me integrating the Bank of England typeface that is used on the Cataracts album artwork to tie in a small element from that. If not, I can absolutely use a different typeface but wanted to see what your thoughts were and if you think the designer would be ok with that. The rest of the aesthetic for the video is completely different from the album work. The only thing that I would be utilizing is the typeface. Just let me know.

Thanks,

Bri

Levi Macallister
Thu 2/8, 11:43 AM
ONEal, Brianna Paige (Recreation Centers)

To: ONEal, Brianna Paige (Recreation Centers)
Subject: Re: Graphic Design and Performance Art Collaboration

Hey Bri,

I’ll just speak on behalf of both of us and say “yes, do whatever you want to do.”

:-)

Thanks so much!

Levi
Hey Levi!

I hope everything is going well. I am getting closer to presentation time, just 4 weeks out. I am currently working on final touches for the video and writing the final chapters of my thesis paper. I will be able to send the video your way very soon! I had a few questions as I near completion.

**First question:** Is it ok if I utilize this part of your previous email at the start of the video to provide some context?

The whole album is deeply connected to the church - and much of it to me and my friend’s experiences with some of the more difficult aspects of the broken body that Christ’s is. So, there is an element of loss connected to that in our past, as well, coupled with the hope that Christ is still present, even when we’re not able to see him, or even if we’re only able to see him as our punching bag, and he is still wild, overflowing beyond the boxes that we have previously placed him in, wild and abounding in love.

**Second question:** In my process chapter I am discussing how I broke down the visuals and found inspiration for them through the stories that you explained to me about your friends and your dad. Is it ok if I quote some of the information you provided in the email in that section of my paper?

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Bri O’Neal

______________________________________________________________________________

Hey Bri!

Yes to both. :-) Please feel free to have full reign on this project. I’m honored and can’t wait to see it! Hope you’ve enjoyed the work thus far!

Levi
Appendix B

Provided is proof of purchase for the content that was not filmed by the artist. All purchased footage was altered or combined in some way to make a new art form.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIA TITLE</th>
<th>MEDIA TYPE</th>
<th>CONTRIBUTOR</th>
<th>DATE PURCHASED</th>
<th>LICENSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Large family rest in the countryside</td>
<td>HD 1080</td>
<td>ArrenVideo</td>
<td>2018-02-22</td>
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<td>Flower Tunnel 3</td>
<td>HD 720</td>
<td>GetVisuals</td>
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<td>NTSC DV</td>
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<td>MAGICTimeLapse</td>
<td>2018-04-03</td>
<td>Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storm Waves - Wild Ocean Seas</td>
<td>HD 1080</td>
<td>AAndromeda</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calving glacier</td>
<td>HD 1080</td>
<td>PopeliahusBaltimora</td>
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<td>Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huge fire in flames over young pine trees</td>
<td>HD 1080</td>
<td>Viesinsh</td>
<td>2018-04-03</td>
<td>Standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Provided is copyright information on images used throughout the thesis document and visual solution.

Summary

| Description | This is a transaxial slice of the brain of a 56 year old patient (male) taken with positron emission tomography (PET). The injected dose have been 282 MBq of 18F-FDG and the image was generated from a 20 minutes measurement with an ECAT Exact HR+ PET Scanner. Red areas show more accumulated tracer substance (18F-FDG) and blue areas are regions where low to no tracer have been accumulated. |
| Date | 2010 |
| Source | Own work |
| Author | Jens Maus [http://jens-maus.de/] |
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Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cima da Conegliano: Q3708021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Artist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Object type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current location</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Object history</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source/Photographer</strong></td>
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This file has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighboring rights.
### Summary [edit]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Jacob van Swanenburgh (1571–1638)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>The Harrowing of Hell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>between 1586 and 1638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>oil on copper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>48.8 × 71.1 cm (19.2 × 27.9 in)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>At Christie’s, London, 24 April 2009, lot 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source/Photographer</td>
<td>Christie’s</td>
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### Licensing [edit]

This is a faithful photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional, public domain work of art. The work of art itself is in the public domain for the following reason:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>These are some scanned print photo's I took after Hurricane Katrina. Slidell, Louisiana. This home has a container from a ship stuck in the roof.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>November 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Flickr: Hurricane Katrina photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Steve Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission</td>
<td>This image, which was originally posted to Flickr, was uploaded to Commons using <strong>Flickr upload bot</strong> on 20 May 2012, 22:12 by Infrogmation. On that date, it was confirmed to be licensed under the terms of the license indicated.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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Will the Circle Be Unbroken?

English: "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" Christian hymn by Ada R. Habershon (lyrics), Charles H. Gabriel (music), Song No. 55.

Date: 1908


Author: Alexander, Charles M.

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Appendix D

To view the visual solution visit thesisofbrioneal.com or https://vimeo.com/267274467

Design as an Accompaniment to Performance Art: Incorporating Imagery to Amplify Emotional Impact is an investigation of how graphic design can be used to increase the emotional impact of a performance art piece, such as spoken word or music. The research indicates that memory plays a significant role in informing the emotion felt. The felt emotion then allows the viewer to form a perspective on the artistic piece as a whole. However, it is important to note that an individual’s memory cannot be controlled by the artist. Therefore, it is necessary for the artist to place a direct focus on the characteristics of design and how they influence the emotional impact of the performance art piece. The design characteristics investigated include type, color, texture, shape, form, space, line, symbolism, iconography, anticipated motion, and layout.

For the visual solution, I partnered with Levi The Poet to create motion graphic visuals for his spoken word piece, The Dark Night of the Soul.
Bibliography


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levithepoet.net

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