

Madewell

CONCEPTUAL AD SERIES: CASE STUDY

Rachel Thompson-Smith & Emma Cruise ~ ARTS 224-002

Section 1

MARKET RESEARCH

Company Overview

BACKGROUND

What started in 1937 as a workwear brand ⁽²⁾ now is a multi-million-dollar fashion and apparel company based out of Lynchburg, Virginia ⁽¹⁾. This denim jean empire, Madewell, was pulled from oblivion in 2004 by Mickey Drexler and J. Crew. Currently it has been carrying the J.Crew brand as stated by Drexler ⁽²⁾, “After the preppy style embraced by J.Crew began to decline, Madewell served as the company’s source of growth.”

MOTTO & MISSION

“We believe that elevated design is for every single day. That the perfect jeans do exist. And that great style (and great denim) is forever.” ⁽³⁾ This is Madewell’s motto and mission, which has been brought to life through their five-word approach: effortless, refined, unexpected, timeless, and confident.⁽³⁾ By building on this approach, they have grown “over the past two decades by tapping into millennials’ obsession with vintage aesthetics and a devotion to heritage-focused branding.” ⁽⁵⁾ However, Madewell is not just a giant superstore but a community focused shop as shown by this quote that states, “Throughout the year, we [Madewell] partner with organizations across the country and find creative ways to support their missions — whether that’s through monetary donations, collaborating with them on exclusive collections, hosting events, or volunteering.”⁽¹⁾ Madewell is a community-driven clothing destination for men and women that champions creativity, inclusivity, and self-expression. ⁽⁴⁾ While Madewell focus on a timeless and classic vibe for their styles they are taking big steps into the future as they push to expand their sustainability, climate actions, biodiversity, and overall focus on nature.⁽¹⁾

Cont.

TARGET AUDIENCE

“She cares about fashion, but she’s not led by trends. She wants to be stylish, but at the end of the day, she just wants to be authentic to herself. ... She really is immersed in culture. She knows what’s going on out there, in terms of the best restaurants. She has a downtown mindset.” Although “she doesn’t necessarily live in New York City,” ... “she’s drawn to the cool things that are going on. Her friends are in the know, and they know what art galleries to go to or what show is happening.”⁽⁵⁾ This is the “muse” of Madewell: this is who they sell to. While they target “millennial men and women seeking a casual, timeless wardrobe that reflects their authentic selves”⁽⁹⁾, statistically, around 80% of Madewell’s customers are female, most of which fall into the 25-34 age range (slightly lower than the Millennial generation as a whole)⁽¹⁾. However, Madewell also pushes for the inclusion of first responders, medical professionals and military personal by offering them 15% off in store and online.⁽⁸⁾ By doing this they help engage the community and gain more customers who are searching for great deals. The main buyers are located in the United States and more specifically California, which holds 25 of Madewell’s 153 in-person stores.^(6,1)

COMPETITORS

While Madewell is able to handle the simple mom & pop shops, big retail brands provide serious competition in the clothing market. Two of these include Gap and Urban Outfitters. Standing for many of the same values that Madewell aligns with, Gap also emphasizes a minimalistic feeling with a light and elegant vibe.⁽¹⁰⁾ While not a big outsourcer of denim, with such similarities in design and target audience, Gap could definitely be a big competitor

with their huge storefront of 401 locations ⁽¹⁰⁾. Although Madewell might be unique, customers often flock to the biggest and most familiar shops. Founded in 1970, Urban Outfitters has opened up a whole word for creative college students through their emphasis in unique culture and inclusion of all. "The idea of Urban Outfitters' being a place for likeminded creative individuals and as a creation of community spaces continues today."⁽¹¹⁾ With more focus on the arts and with a mainly younger generation this store could grab business from the millennial Madewell.

UNIQUE SELLING POINTS

While Madewell might not be the biggest fashion store, it holds its own by having a variety of unique selling points that help to entice and encourage buyers. First off, we have the Preloved part of their shop. Here they emphasize that, "Your jeans are trash (but they don't have to be)"⁽¹²⁾ and bring in customers by offering 20 dollars off any new pair of Madewell jeans when you bring in any old denim jeans, shorts, jackets, and more. However, this is not simply a cheap way to buy jeans but also helps the environment and shows that Madewell is a sustainable company. Overall, this unique selling point is a good incentive for customers who might be on the edge; and it keeps them coming back time and time again. Secondly, Madewell helps to entice shoppers by offering styling services to both potential and long-time customers. With many online (and some in-person) superstores customers complain about the fact that they don't know their style, what would look good on them, or how to match their clothes and personality. Madewell solves this problem by offering free appointments with a stylist to determine how you can look your very best while showing off your Madewell fit.

S.W.O.T.

STRENGTHS

- Trendy Fashion
- Denim Products
- Clothes for all sizes
- Recycling Clothing
- Many accessory choices
- Large customer base
- Loyal customers
- Personal tailoring

OPPORTUNITIES

- Create childrens clothing line
- Create more affordable products
- Increase loyalty program to include more
- Create a better curated collection for individual customers
- Diversify in products and materials

WEAKNESSES

- No childrens clothing
- Very expensive
- "Fast Fashion"
- Limited diversity
- Limited materials
- Create better customer service representatives

THREATS

- Gap
- American Eagle
- Hollister
- Abercrombie & Fitch
- Anthropologie
- Free People
- Nordstrom
- H&M

Section 2

CONCEPTUAL AD
OVERVIEW & EXAMPLES

Conceptual Ads

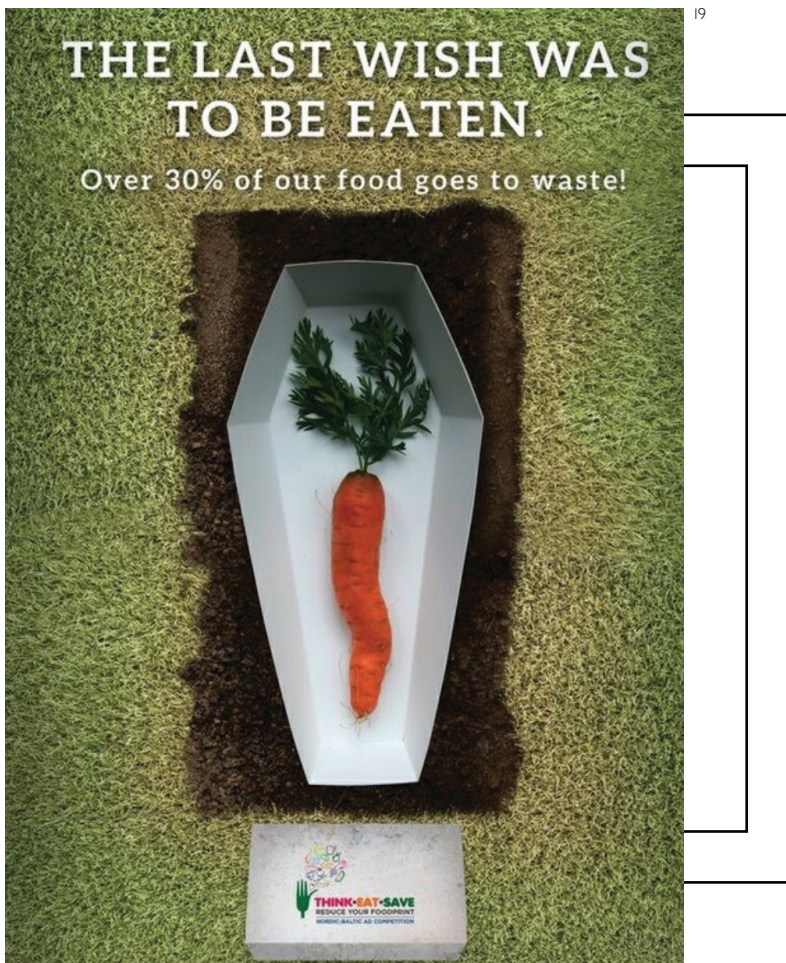
EXPLAINED

A conceptual ad is an ad that is made by utilizing a bold design by uniquely mixing both text and photos/graphics. This Adobe page explains conceptual ads perfectly: "[They] focus on underlying benefits and the desires, fears, or other emotional responses that drive decision-making. Conceptual ads often grabs readers' attention by making them think, smile, or laugh. Typically the imagery used communicates indirectly and the product or logo is a small secondary element in the ad"⁽²²⁾. It is used in a variety of industries in order to encourage customers to buy an item, show awareness about moral or civil issues, inform clients on issues or topics, and much more. Conceptual ads are often found on billboards, social media feeds, posters, and company websites. By understanding the variety of conceptual ads and how they are utilized then they can be brought into our own project. Comprehending how customers respond to ads is extremely important when evaluating your own designs, and thus me and my partner have dove deep into the collage of ads.

Ad Examples

INFORM

Informational ads are created to inform the public about something. An example is an advertisement created by SurfRider about ocean pollution. The advertisement had sushi rolls made out of plastic with the words "What does into the ocean goes into you". This informs that ocean pollution effects everyone and that we should be more careful about what we throw away and where. An example of an informative ad is shown below.



Cont.

ENTERTAIN

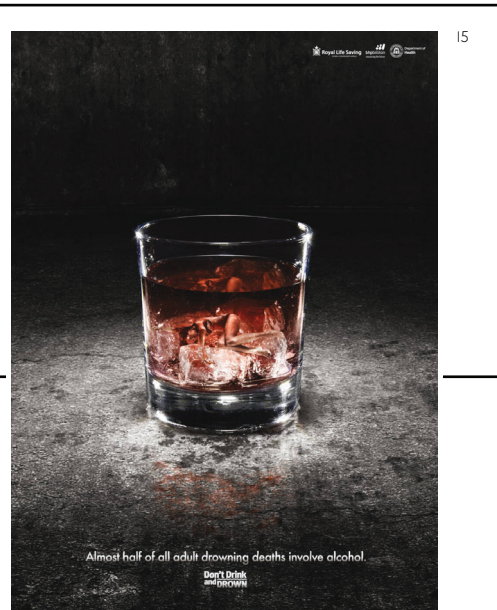
Entertainment ads encourage customer to buy their products as a way to relive the smiles produced by the commercial. One example is the Kevin Hart Hyndai 2016 advertisement. An overprotective dad keeps track of his daughter on a first date. Hart appears everywhere to scare the date away without letting his daughter see him. This brought smiles to the audience while emphasising how Hyndai cars can keep you in the loop and keep track of what you care about most. This McDonald's ad is a great example of an ad made to entertain.



Cont.

RAISE AWARENESS

The main part of a “raise awareness” poster is to bring information, that was previously unknown, in a unique and thoughtful way to the viewer. This poster shows us something that most do not associate with alcohol: drowning. While most people have been raised to understand the dangers of drinking and driving, having safety around water while under the influence is not emphasized. Here the bulk of the poster is the graphic that shows a person drowning in an alcoholic beverage and then is supported by the sobering message that “almost half of all adult drowning deaths involve alcohol”.



Cont.

SHARE VALUES

This “shared values” poster speaks emotionally and powerfully with its simple design, beautiful photo, and bold words. “Fathers Matter” is something that every single person understands because we all long for a father figure, whether it be through a biological one, mentor, or a heavenly Father. However, while this poster speaks about a shared value overall, when examined closer we see that it also pushes its viewer to acknowledge the relationship so many men have with their children currently: non-existent. So many children today are growing up in homes without a solid father figure and that needs to change.



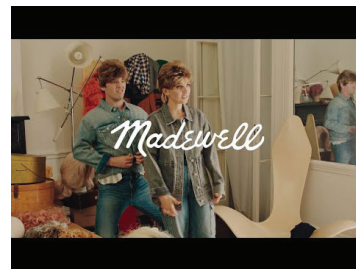
Analysis 1

FALL 2021: WHAT ARE YOU MADE OF CAMPAIGN

This campaign took several large names in the acting, comedy, and writing world and asked them what style they portray on their wardrobe. Mostly 90's retro fashion with a denim twist. This is an entertaining and shared values type of conceptual ad. It targets millennial men and women who are into 90's fashion. The strategy of this ad was to create a style that can reach as many people as possible while keeping the brand together. It utilized social media, online ads, and commercials in order to inform the public about this new clothing release. This ad was limiting as it was directed mostly towards women and not men. My overall analysis is that the campaign was successful as it boosted year end numbers. Success: Created a new line of clothing to draw in customers



21



21



21

Analysis 2

GREENPEACE AD

The images through this series of ads raising awareness for climate change are striking and eye-catching. They all show a private jet flying in the distance to lobby for support of global changes while the land below is torn to pieces. By contrasting the extreme despair of the environment with the oblivious jet these ads create a bold statement that “we live on the same planet but not in the same world”. The visual elements of these posters are what draws them together as each utilizes the main quote and company in the bottom right corner, has a small piece explaining the irony between the jet and picture, and all are formatted with the same hierarchy and positioning. The bleak photos immediately capture the attention of the audience and spark anger and contempt on those who have caused this. In fact, the audience of these ads are not just a specific people group, but the world as a whole, as they challenge people to see the real impact of private jets on the environment. All three of these posters effectively get the message across that although we are all part of this earth the rich and mighty, that often are the reason for the problems, try to remove the responsibility of their own immature actions by criticizing everyone else. One critique of mine would be to make the jet slightly bigger as it was difficult to notice at first. Out of all of them my favorite was the farming one, as I liked how it showed the difference between the working class and the upper class and who pays the price for climate change.

Cont.



16



16



16

Section 3

PROJECT BRIEF/
PROPOSAL

Project Brief

COMPANY OVERVIEW

In 1937 a workwear brand⁽²⁾ was developed and, over the years, has become the Madewell we know and love today. It focuses on denim products; specifically, jeans. Madewell aims to provide clothing to modern men and women without sacrificing the light and breezy vintage feeling which has become extremely popular again in recent years.

GOALS OF THE PROJECT

We are doing well against our competitors, but we don't just want to do well, we want to stand out and create intrigue in what we offer and/or our mission. In order to do that, let's push away from the traditional type of advertising. We desire to develop three ads as a series that are conceptual in nature. Avoiding our products as the main visual is very important. We will be using the series as a digital and print magazine advertisement.

TARGET AUDIENCE

While the current Madewell target audience is young millennial females we seek to expand this audience in order to draw attention to other aspects of Madewell's industry, specifically, the male fashion area. We aim to create designs that inspire strong and courageous masculinity for all denim wearing men. They need a place to shop for solid, inspiring workwear and Madewell will provide this.

PROJECT BUDGET

The budget for the Madewell conceptual ad series will be five thousand dollars to be used for the printing, distribution, and other expenses associated with this project.

Cont.

COMPETITOR INFORMATION:

Madewell has shown itself as a force to be reckoned with as they handle denimwear online and in their stores, thus small boutiques do not pose much of a threat: big outlets do, however. Stores like Gap, American Eagle, and Urban Outfitters are the main competition due to a variety of items. As they all target a similar audience of younger millennials and have a fresh, minimalistic tone, it's mostly up to which reaches the customers first and has the greatest impact on customers. Madewell struggles with this as it's still not as well-known as Gap or H&M, its target audience has shrunk in recent years to mostly emphasize young women (less customers, less sales), and it does not stand out in the ocean of fashion.

TIMELINE /SCHEDULE:

The deadline for this project will be in four weeks during which we will present our ideas and designs for the ad series.

Proposal

ADVERTISEMENT SUMMARY/ PLANS

Through this ad series we want to expand our target audience by promoting Madewell as more than a millennial female's "boutique". One of our main purposes is to enhance the focus on the male section of denimwear and insert a stronger, bolder, and more outdoorsy vibe to the minimalist flimsy feeling it has now. With so much competition from other, extremely similar brands, Madewell needs to expand or it will be overwhelmed by bigger, more popular companies.

CONCEPTS

We are going through many concepts in order to expand our target audience including:

» Bringing in the "community heroes"⁽⁸⁾ discount for the posters is a solid idea that will take an already existing, interesting, and unique part of Madewell and increase its familiarity. We would emphasize the fifteen percent discount that is given to all of these brave workers and invite them to take action with it. Due to Madewell offering discounts to three different categories – first responders, medical professionals, and military personnel – it would be perfect for creating an ad series with one poster based on each category.

» Another concept would be to emphasize the Madewell male clothing line. While Madewell has always sold to both men and women, over the years it has transitioned into predominantly women customers, and we aim to change this. By creating artwork emphasizing strong and courageous masculinity we can bring in more male customers and thus greatly expand the overall number of buyers.

Cont.

» Going back to the beginning and revisiting the original workwear industry design that Madewell started with will not only provide a nostalgic, vintage feel but also bring in a variety of new customers. People such as farmers, electricians, truck drivers, and more will be more comfortable shopping at Madewell and taking advantage of their variety of strong, tough denim.

» With Madewell being mostly purchased in the United States bringing in military focus could be a strong selling point. Whether it focus on bringing female power to our women warriors or creating comfortable workwear for our patriotic men, Madewell could both expand its audience and bring about a strong value for American legacies.

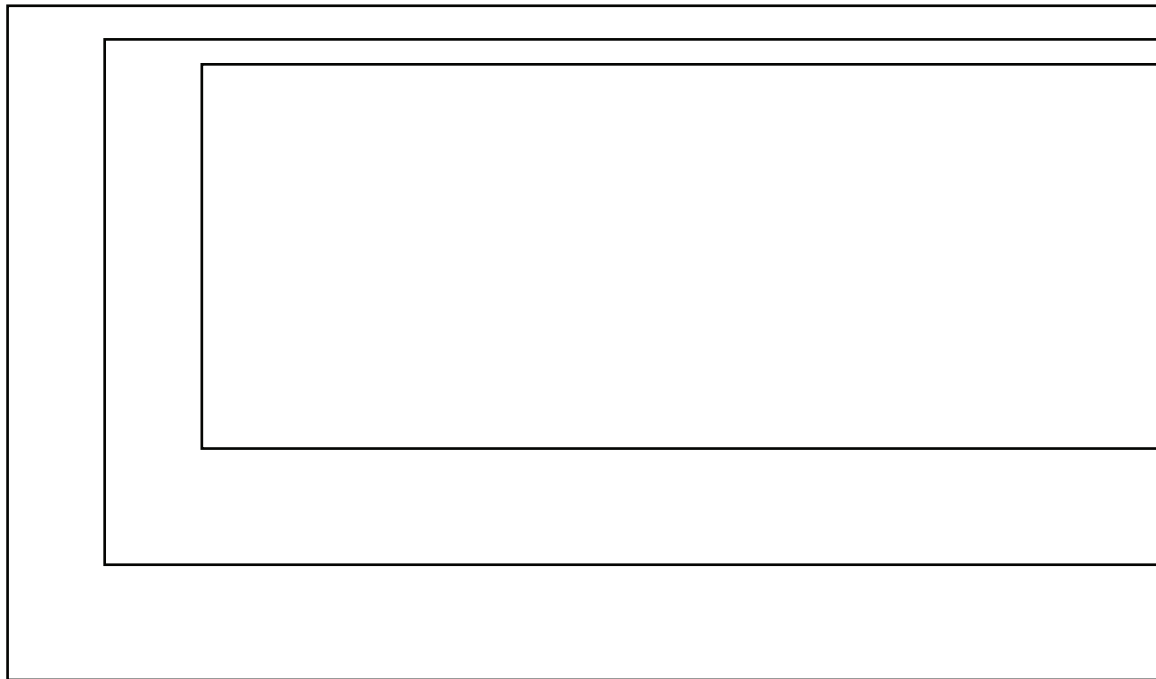
» A camping and outdoor theme was also a concept that we looked at. With this concept we could take the ad ideas many different ways: emphasize the family on their yearly trek to the mountains, show a couple reminiscing their first kiss by the falls, or even a rugged mountain man glad to be away from civilization. By doing any of these (or even a mix) Madewell's brand would grow its target audience and bring a strong, open-air vibe to their identity.

» Another concept that we discussed would be having a "retail men's day" where Madewell could offer a discount to men working in retail positions such as a Walmart cashier, Amazon employee, or an Apple technician. With this event-based ad series the male fashion would be focused, the branding would be expanded, and more customers would be attracted to Madewell's amazing denim styles.

Cont.

tone, message, & style

The tone of our message can be summed up in a few words: rustic, bold, and masculine. Expanding on these words, we concluded that we wanted to emphasize an outdoor, rugged vibe that sends the message that Madewell is not just a delicate fashion company but a hardy and timeless denim store for anyone's needs. The ad styles will follow this tone but still connect to Madewell's main branding by utilizing a minimalistic design with soft yet powerful elements.



Reference Ads

COMPANY

Madewell advertisements are targeted primarily towards younger women into semivintage fashion. In doing so, the company primarily uses social media with descriptions rather than poster or television. While the company does have them, they are more rare to find. With that in mind, Madewell captures audiences with bright colors, stylish clothing or muted filters. The three examples below are pulled from various places to showcase the typical advertisement style. Madewell also utilizes short clips on the social media platforms to push styles as well. While nothing screams the brand, subtlety can sometimes be the best strategy.



23



23



23

Cont.

COMPETITOR

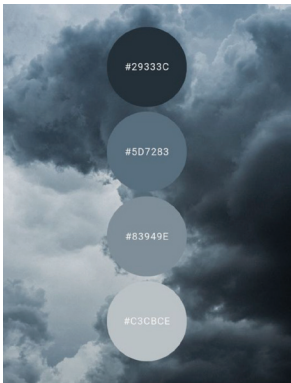
Through this multi-ad campaign (3 shown below) for Levi jeans there are several elements that we desire to see withing our own Madewell arraignments. The almost extreme photos draw the customer in, and the black and white images provide a startling amount of strength and contrast. The written type is an asset, as well, due to the inspiring messages and “hand-drawn style” of the font. Also, the use of simplicity, as most include very few words and a single photo, would line up right alongside Madewell’s identity. Within these pieces, the branding is evident through size, placement, and color (which we must be sure to include in our finished designs). While we are going for a slightly lighter feel, the boldness and outdoorsy vibe will be an instrumental inspiration for our conceptual ad series.

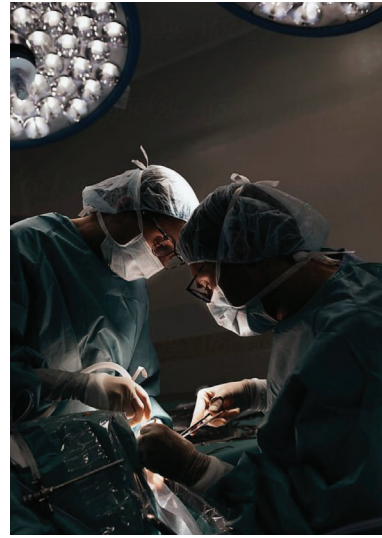


Mood Board

All photos taken from Pinterest: <https://pin.it/FvJOKfTov>







15 FREE VINTAGE INSPIRED FONTS
WWW.LIVELIGHTS.COM

Old 1842 REPORT	TYPE HAND SHIP TYPOGRAPHY	Automobile PHOTOGRAPHS
FARM HAYMAKER	Photos 1952 RICHMETALL	RADIO BEAUTIFUL HEARTBEAT
STAMPS ARTISTAMP	Clothes HANDWRITING DRAFT	typewriter BELL ME
NO. 2 DCVIN VINTAGE	VINTAGE REBELS	BICYCLE IN FELL DOUBLE PICKA
Letter YESTERYEAR	ANTIQUE OVERNOIR	paper JANE RUSTEN



OLD PRESS

Section 4

FINAL SOLUTION

Thumbnails

SMALL BASIC SKETCHES

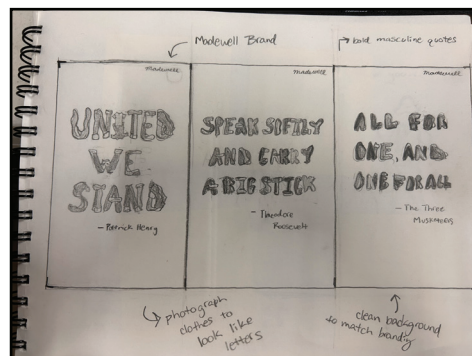
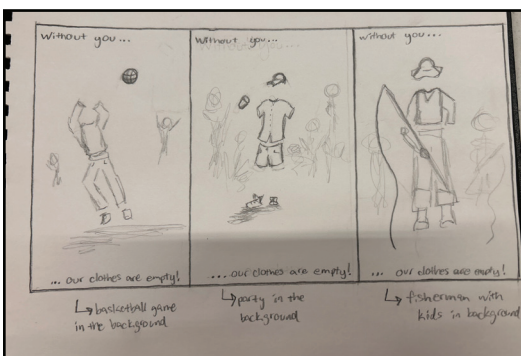
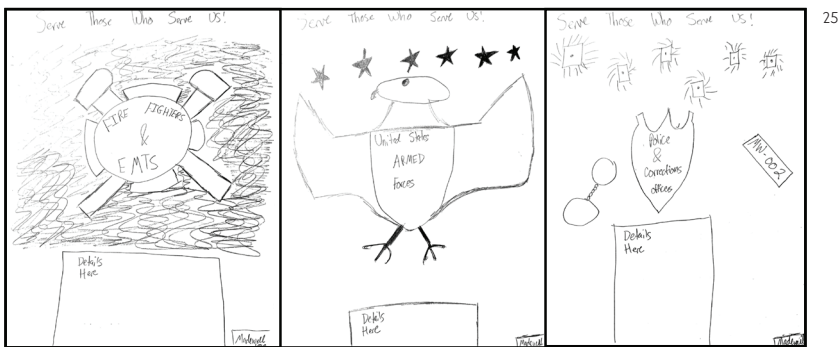
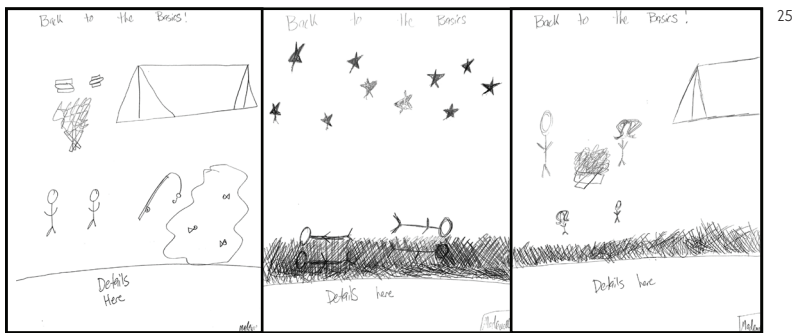
Through our thumbnails we took a variety of directions in order to completely encompass the masculine, bold, and outdoors vibe that we are striving for. After each of us completing thirty thumbnails (for a grand total of 60) we took the critique of each other and our teacher in order to choose the best ones for our roughs.



Roughs

REFINED DESIGN IDEAS

Our roughs were composed of each of our two favorite sets (6 individual roughs per person) and aimed to move our message of male clothing forward. Then we brought our rough sketches to the computer in order to explore the design, typeface, and palette choices.



25

24

28

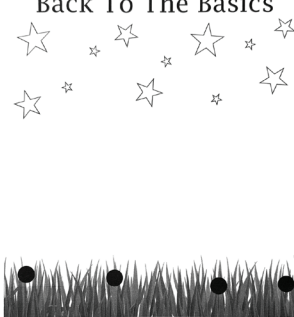
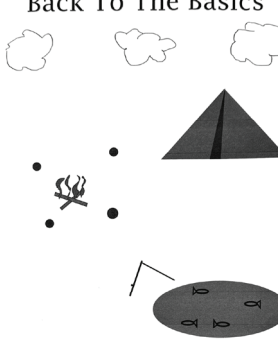
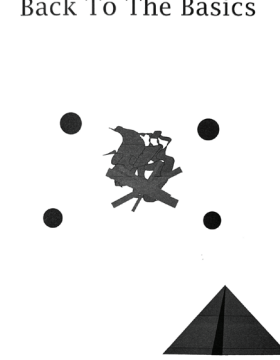
Camps

COMPUTER-BASED DESIGNS




The comps allowed for us to visually see what was possible with our designs and what it would take to build them. We also reviewed our roughs to see some interesting combinations between both our designs which we could bring to the computer. After much discussion we chose the “back to the...” design as the one to turn into our final.



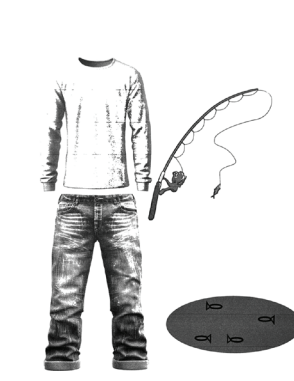
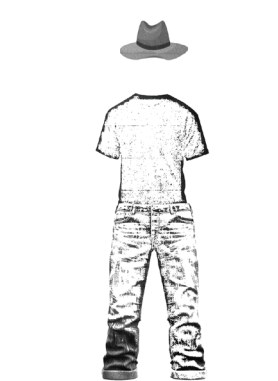

Cont.

<p>Back To The Basics</p>  <p>MADEWELL</p>	<p>Back To The Basics</p>  <p>MADEWELL</p>	<p>Back To The Basics</p>  <p>MADEWELL</p>
--	--	---

25

<p>Serve Those Who Serve Us</p>  <p>MADEWELL</p>	<p>Serve Those Who Serve Us</p>  <p>MADEWELL</p>	<p>Serve Those Who Serve Us</p>  <p>MADEWELL</p>
---	---	--

25

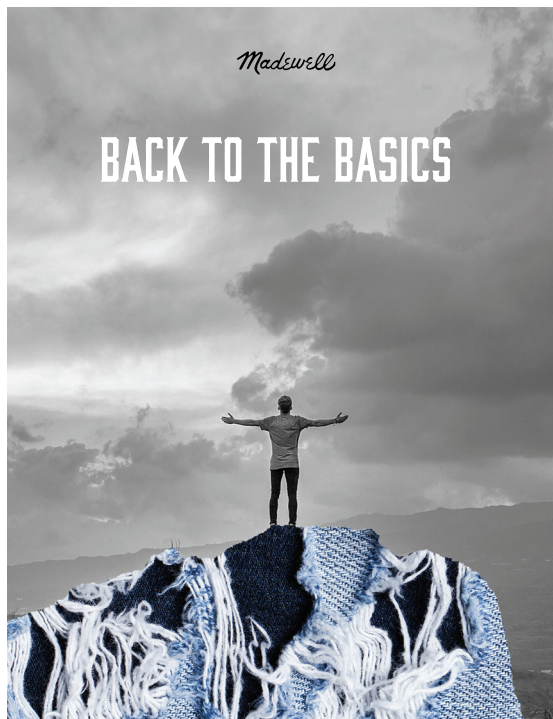
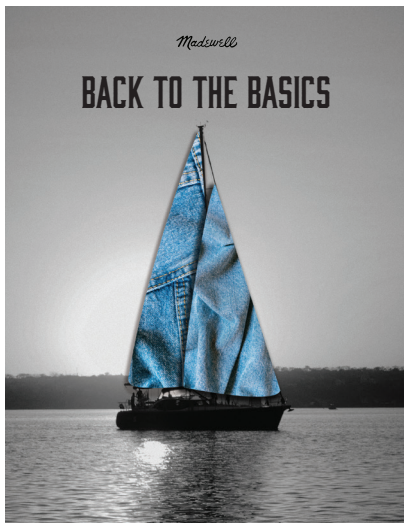
 <p>MADEWELL</p>	 <p>MADEWELL</p>	 <p>MADEWELL</p>
--	--	---

25

Refined Draft

FIRST PHASE OF THE FINAL

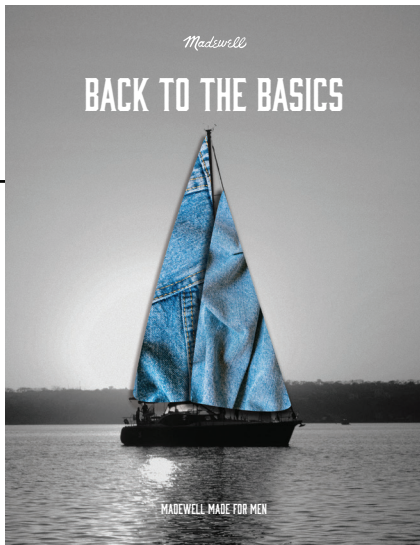
Here we took our comp and revised it into a more complete and aesthetically pleasing design. While the designs were still rough around the edges, we were able to gather a large amount of specific critique in order to further refine them. (All images from Unsplash/Pexels)



Final Design

FINISHED PRODUCT

After many revisions, helpful critique, and hours of work we decided that these three ads would best relay our message, while keeping to our desired tone and style.



28, 29, 30, 31



27, 29, 30, 31



26, 29, 30

Mockups

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

Mockups are extremely important in presenting designs to those who are in the business world, as often times it is difficult for them to visualize it. Through these mockups we successfully showed how the ads would appear in a magazine, thus emphasizing the bold design and the extreme effect it will have on customers.



Works Cited:

1. "Madewell.com." Similarweb, Jan. 2024, www.similarweb.com/website/madewell.com/#overview.
2. Flora, Liz. "Madewell's "It" Girl Glow-up Takes Aim at Gen Z." Glossy, 3 Apr. 2023, www.glossy.co/fashion/madewells-it-girl-glow-up-takes-aim-at-gen-z/.
3. "About Madewell." Madewell.com, 2020, www.madewell.com/about-madewell.html.
4. "Madewell LinkedIn." Www.linkedin.com, www.linkedin.com/company/madewell/. Accessed 5 Mar. 2024.
5. "Can Trend Forecasting Revamp Madewell's Collection Strategy?" Heuritech, 26 Oct. 2020, www.heuritech.com/company-analysis/trend-forecasting-madewells-collection-strategy/.
6. "All Madewell Locations in United States." Stores.madewell.com, stores.madewell.com/us#:~:text=155%20Madewell%20Stores%20in%20United%20States. Accessed 5 Mar. 2024.
7. Team TBH. "Marketing Strategies and Marketing Mix of Canon." The Brand Hopper, 3 Dec. 2023, thebrandhopper.com/2023/12/03/marketing-strategies-and-marketing-mix-of-.
8. "Community Heroes Discount." Www.madewell.com, www.madewell.com/community-heroes.html. Accessed 8 Mar. 2024.
9. TBH. "Marketing Strategies and Marketing Mix of Madewell." The Brand Hopper, 3 Dec. 2023, thebrandhopper.com/2023/12/03/marketing-strategies-and-marketing-mix-of-madewell/#google_vignette. Accessed 5 Mar. 2024.
10. "Number of Gap Locations in the United States in 2021." ScrapeHero, www.scrapehero.com/location-reports/Gap-USA/.
11. Urban Outfitters. "About Us." URBN, 2015, www.urbn.com/our-brands/urban-outfitters/about-us.

12. "Do Well Recycle." Madewell.com, 2020, www.madewell.com/do-well/recycling.html.

13. "Video Chat with a Madewell Stylist." Madewell-Stylistchat.splashthat.com, madewell-stylistchat.splashthat.com/. Accessed 5 Mar. 2024.

14. "Fathers Matter Poster." Human Life Alliance, humanlife.org/product/WPO37/fathers-matter-poster. Accessed 5 Mar. 2024.

15. "Royal Life Saving: Spirit, Beer • Ads of the World™ | Part of the Clio Network." Ads of the World™, www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/spirit. Accessed 5 Mar. 2024.

16. "Greenpeace: We Live on the Same Planet, but Not in the Same World • Ads of the World™ | Part of the Clio Network." Ads of the World™, www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/we-live-on-the-same-planet-but-not-in-the-same-world. Accessed 5 Mar. 2024.

17. Madewell. "What Are You Made Of? / Madewell Fall 2021." www.youtube.com, 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=WZf4aB3a3aA. Accessed 18 Mar. 2024.

18. COTW. "Levi's "Go Forth" Campaign by Wieden+Kennedy – Campaigns of the World®." [Campaignsoftheworld.com](http://campaignsoftheworld.com), 29 Jan. 2017, campaignsoftheworld.com/print/levis-go-forth-campaign/.

19. "Wasted Food Ads - Pesquisa Google | Food Waste Campaign, Save Food Poster, FoodWastePoster." Pinterest, www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/864409722212413301/. Accessed 18 Mar. 2024.

20. GDJ, About the Author / Muhammad Faisal I'm Muhammad Faisal founder of, et al. "42 Funny Advertising Print Ads That Make You Look Twice." Graphic Design Junction, 12 Mar. 2017, graphicdesignjunction.com/2017/03/funny-advertising-print-ads/.

21. "Fall 2021 Brand Campaign." www.madewell.com, www.madewell.com/fa21-what-are-you-made-of.html. Accessed 18 Mar. 2024.

22. "Components of a Good Advertisement." Express.adobe.com, express.adobe.com/page/LXye9RGCUuVPE/. Accessed 18 Mar. 2024.

23. All images provided via Instagram.

24. Emma's designs.
25. Rachel's designs.
26. Unsplash. "man standing on top of rock mountain during golden hour" Unsplash.com, 8 Feb. 2016, unsplash.com/photos/man-standing-on-top-of-rock-mountain-during-golden-hour-9idqlGrLuTE.
27. Pexels. "Men Sitting Around a Bonfire." Pexels.com, 8 May 2021, <https://www.pexels.com/photo/men-sitting-around-a-bonfire-7990710/>
28. Pexels. "Yacht sailing on river at sunset." Pexels.com, 9 Sep. 2020, <https://www.pexels.com/photo/yacht-sailing-on-river-at-sunset-7395353/>
29. "Madewell Logo PNG Vector (SVG) Free Download." Seeklogo, seeklogo.com/vector-logo/321815/madewell. Accessed 4 Apr. 2024.
30. Pexels. "Blue Denim Fabric with Seam in Close Up Photography." Pexels.com, 19 Jan. 2021, <https://www.pexels.com/photo/blue-denim-fabric-with-seam-in-close-up-photography-6843232/>
31. Pexels. "Blue Denim Textile in Close Photography." Pexels.com, 19 Jan. 2021, <https://www.pexels.com/photo/blue-denim-textile-in-close-photography-6843240/>
31. Texturelabs. Grunge 323. texturelabs.org/textures/grunge_323/. Accessed 4 Apr. 2024.
32. Graphic Burger. "Photorealistic Magazine MockUp #2." Graphicburger.com, graphicburger.com/photorealistic-magazine-mockup-2/.
33. "US Letter Magazine Mockup." MockupNest, mockupnest.com/us-letter-magazine-mockup/. Accessed 4 Apr. 2024.