

Watching the World and its People

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My brief was to create a readable piece of art in the form of a poetry novel, writing and illustrating the poetry anthology while maintaining strong personal connections to impactful moments in my life. My target audience was young adults of any gender, aged 17-29, who have an artistic interest and understand the themes covered in my novel, nature, personal growth, love, and abstract thoughts about the world.

I chose to design a poetry anthology because I have always been fascinated in the way people viewed the world, everyone interpreting life in an individual way. I wanted to visually manifest the way I see the world through a creative lens and share that with other people. Poetry, art, and design have always been a therapeutic vice for me, I have written many poems as a result. The aim was to collect all of the poems I have written over the last few years and commemorate moving into a new chapter, completing my high school years with a physical collection of my favourite moments, hardships, and artistic thoughts. I wanted this novel to be a reflection of my heart.

My practical met my brief successfully even though my original goals were altered. While I initially hoped to complete an 88-page poetry book, I realized this was too ambitious and it was simply impossible to complete each page to a standard I was happy with. I instead decided on 50 pages, still within the classifications of a full-length poetry collection. This allowed more time on each page, ensuring the stylistic decisions such as, imagery, colour, and media were meaningful and calculated, representing my poetry in its most authentic form.

My practical successfully met my aim of creating a readable art piece, merging the worlds of art and design. Since I have always loved both subjects, I wanted to include influences from artistic movements and practitioners such as Dadaism, and Hugo Ball. Ball often used collage as his main media creating surrealist subject matter, which I recreated in my own aesthetic featuring subject matter prevalent in my poems. One of the best examples of this is my [Saltwater Blood](#) spread showcasing a collaged, surrealist, ocean inside of a mouth.

While I took heavy influence from Hugo Ball for the majority of my pages, I also tried to differentiate other pages to allow for more diversity and a more chaotic "Sketch Book" aesthetic. Keri Smith is a designer known for her widely popular books *Wreck This Journal*, and *This is Not a Book*. Smith uses texture in an unconventional way, using scans of 3D objects and handwritten typography/illustrations. Smith creates three dimensional interactive novels, breaking the traditional ideology of designing literature. The cover for my poetry anthology imitates Smith's practices while applying my own aesthetic, using as much texture as possible to create a three-dimensional cover. I scanned multiple layers of paper, ripped, drawn on, and pasted on top of one another, to create the image of a heart breaking through a layer of black paper. The vivid red base being unearthed, representing that colour cannot be contained. Similarly, to Smith I used handwritten typography alongside digital san-serif fonts to create a personal aesthetic. I took influence from Smith on many of my pages scanning three-dimensional objects such as, leaves, string, and film negatives to create texture. I included these objects because I felt it strengthened my personal connection as these are objects, I found in my possession, creating a personal tie to my life.

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My own personal aesthetic developed as a result of researching these practitioners while experimenting to discover what colours, textures, type, and imagery I found aesthetically pleasing. I have been drawn to the punk rock, and street style movements. Including mainly red, black, and white hues, organic capitalized handwritten display fonts, and stereotypically messy line and texture, all visual elements associated with those movements. However, I also loved the use of vivid and saturated colours, creating at times a psychedelic aesthetic. bleeding an array of colour into random pages. Using a reoccurring layout of my type, texture prevalent in all pages, line, and hues of red, black, and white consistently allowed me to use a variety of different imagery, and media in my pages, forming and showcasing my personal aesthetic.

The entire process creating my poetry anthology changed my perspective on design, allowing me to grow as a designer. I encountered numerous issues regarding the formation and consistency, as beforehand I would only focus on the artistic form of my work, disregarding the logical function. Aligning the typography of each page on the grid was paramount in making my novel appear professional. Several of my pages required re-editing to achieve consistency. I also experienced technical issues when converting my documents to the correct colour profiles and exporting them between devices. A crucial consideration unencountered before was the requirements of the printing company. I had to ensure all pages were the correct colour profile, size, and within the bleed boundaries. Through this experience I extended my skills with editing software in Adobe Photoshop and InDesign, aiding me in my future endeavors as a designer. My journey made me realize the patience and meticulous efforts that go into design. There are far more practical and logical considerations that need to be made that are just as important than the form and aesthetic of the piece, if not more.

My poetry anthology '*Watching the World and it's People*' incorporates a combination of artistic influences such as Dadaism, and the Punk Rock movement. While taking inspiration from innovative contemporary designers like Kerri Smith. These influences made it possible for me to refine my personal aesthetic to reflect the core of who I am, and create a visual, readable, piece of art. My use of colour, image, and texture, creates a poetry anthology unique to its market, captivating my target audience.