

Matthew Kennedy has always had a penchant for visual creativity. One year, in a defining childhood moment, his mother let him buy new Crayola markers outside of the typical back-to-school cycle because he had used the first box so much that they ran out of ink. Since that iconic day at Office Max, Matthew color coded his way through high school and has pursued an undergraduate degree in graphic design, a master’s degree in design history, and a career in illustrated book and digital publishing.

The output of Matthew’s design practice varies from professional work to speculative projects, but frequently embraces bold color and typographic inquisitivity and aims to honor both the qualities and limitations of the medium in which it is presented. In a professional context, he has provided art direction and project management. Many personal design projects have paired visual thinking with an editorial, curatorial, or scholarly objective. And then sometimes design is just for fun and humor . . .

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DESIGN PORTFOLIO

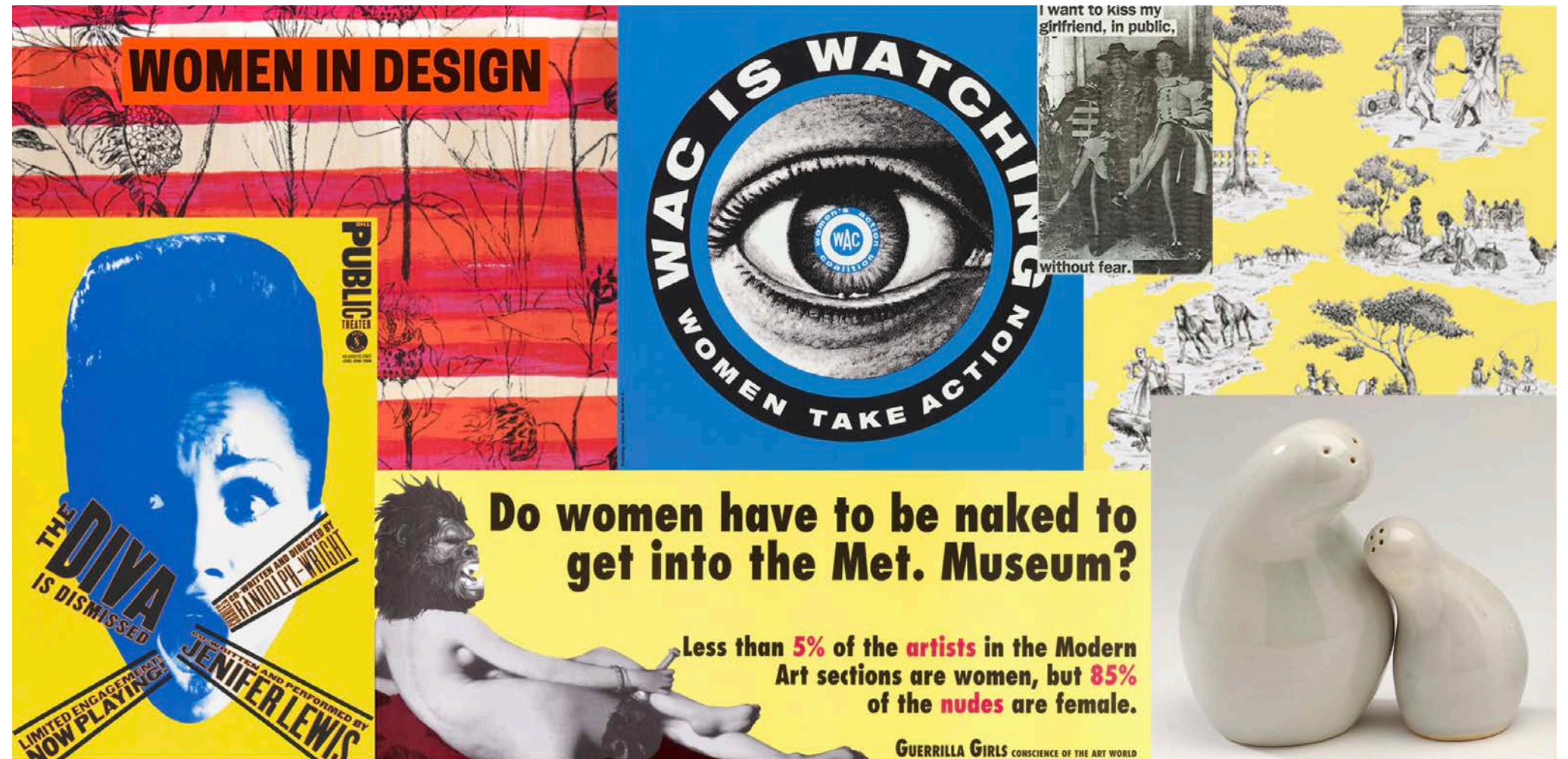
Matthew J. Kennedy

Professional Work

COOPER HEWITT DIGITAL MEDIA

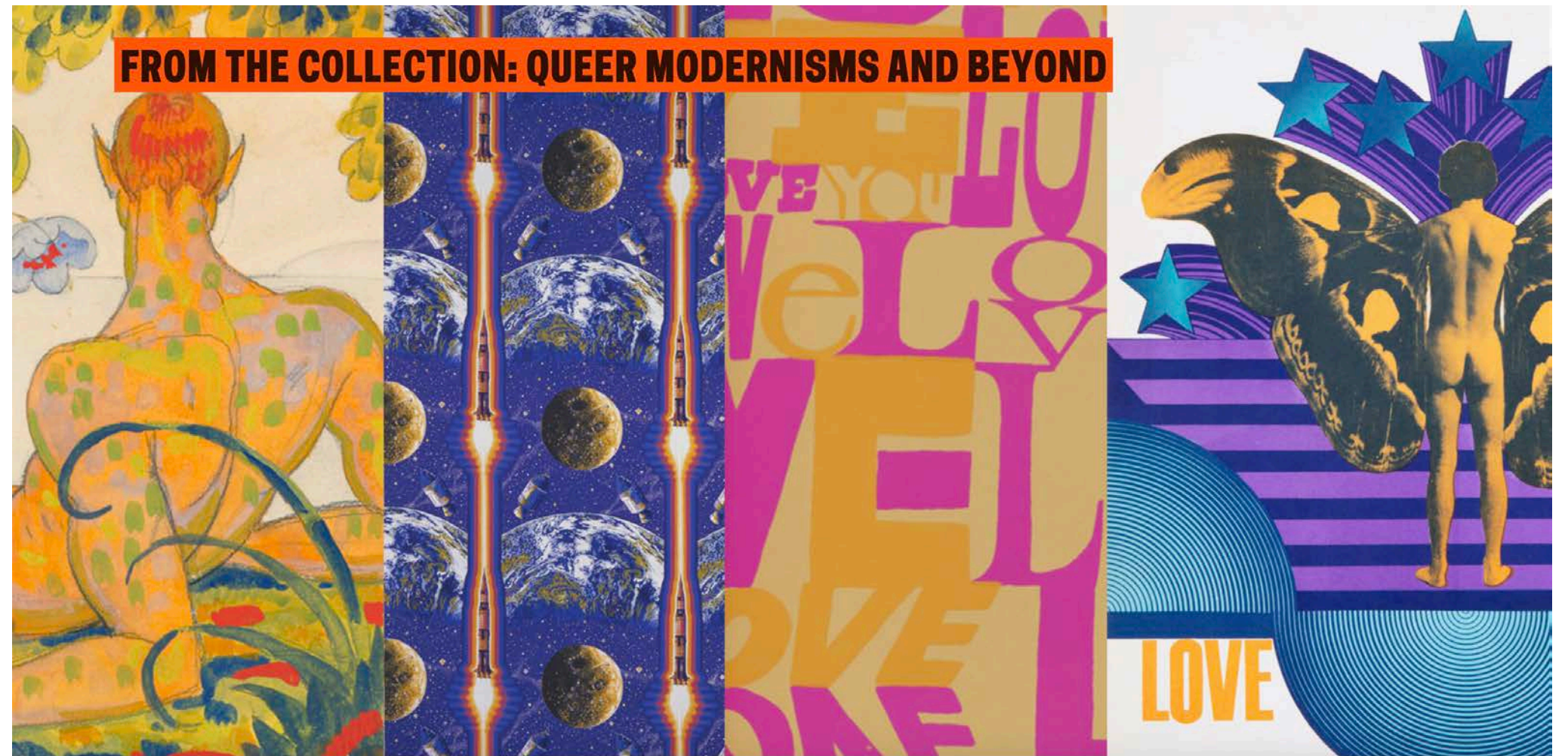
Digital Content Header Collages 2022–25

In addition to photo editing and placement, art direction for digital publishing also includes working within existing templates to give individual pieces a tone and identity. This can be accomplished through header imagery, which often collage imagery from the posts.



COOPER HEWITT DIGITAL MEDIA

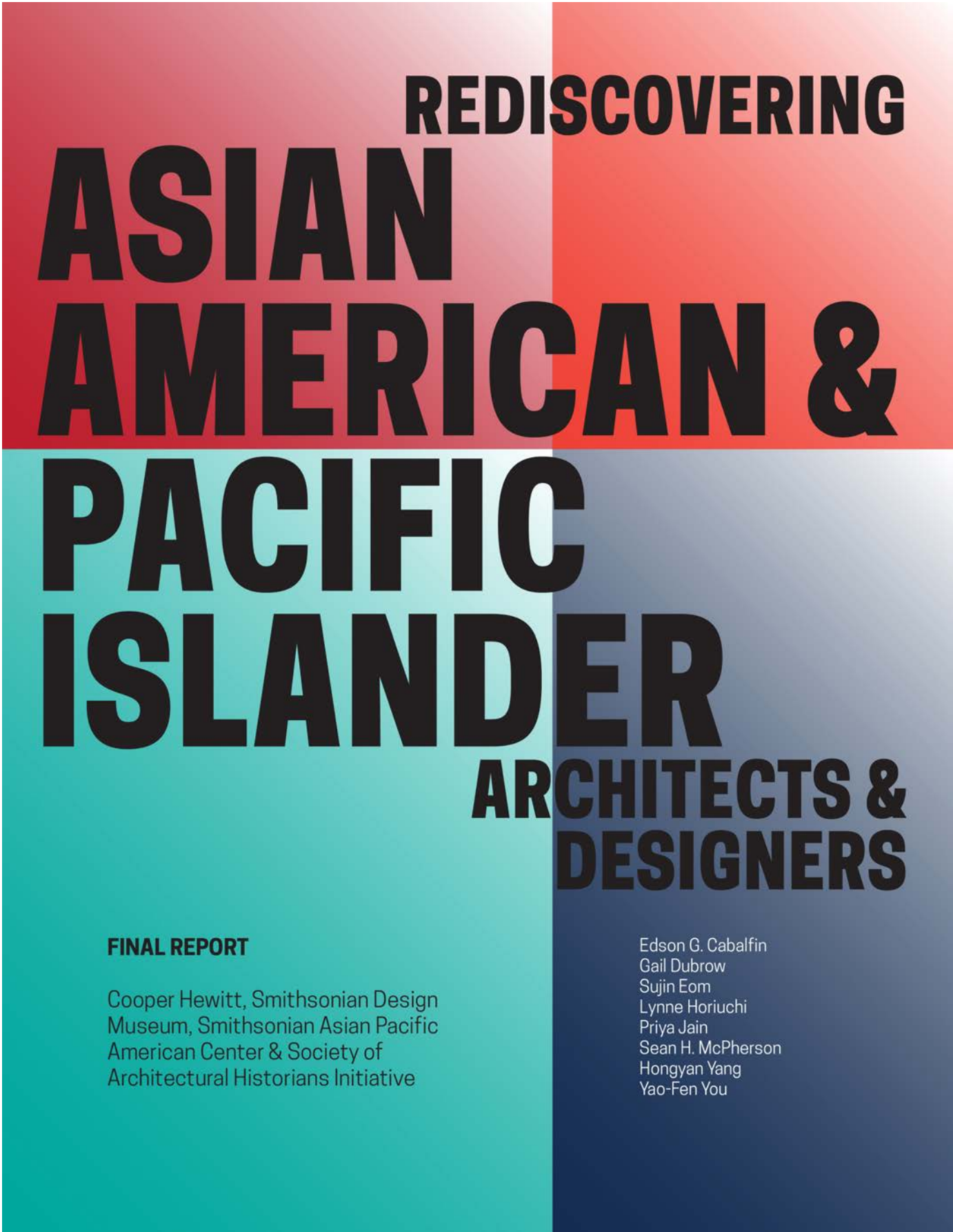
Digital Content Header Collages
2022–25



REDISCOVERING ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIF- IC ISLANDER ARCHI- TECTS & DESIGNERS

White Paper Digital Cover Design
2024

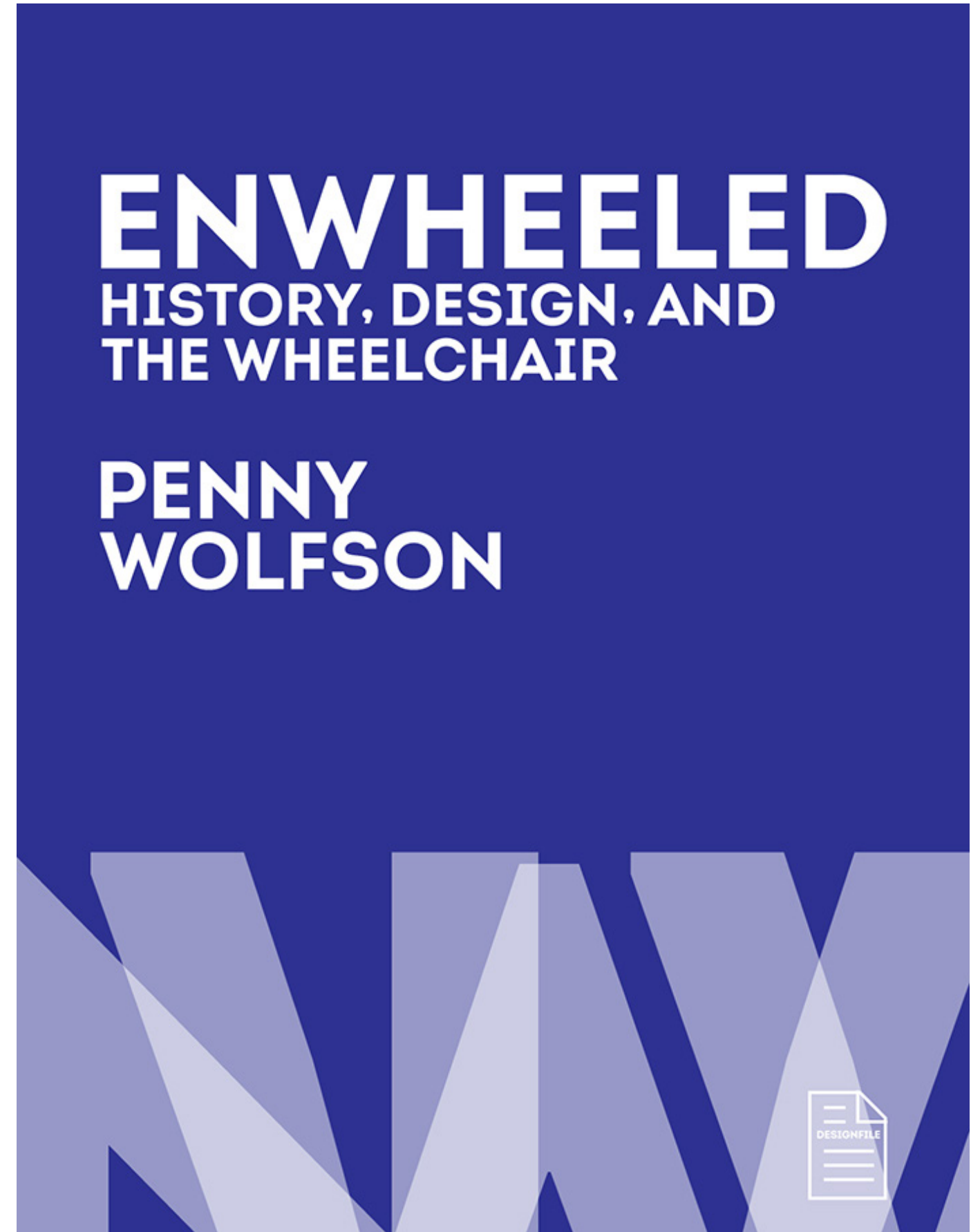
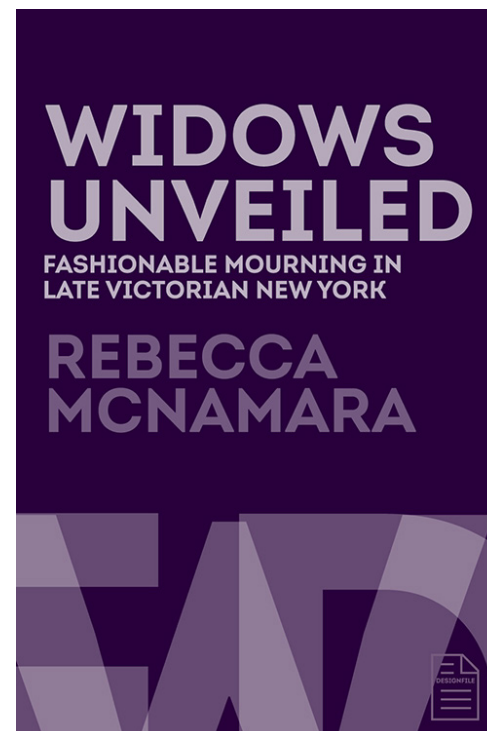
This cover supported an extensively researched white paper on Asian American and Pacific Islander architects and designers. The typography stayed aligned with the museum’s branding, while the fields of color relay the idea that within a community sharing a common trait, there are still many diverse types.



DESIGNFILE

Ebook Covers 2015–18

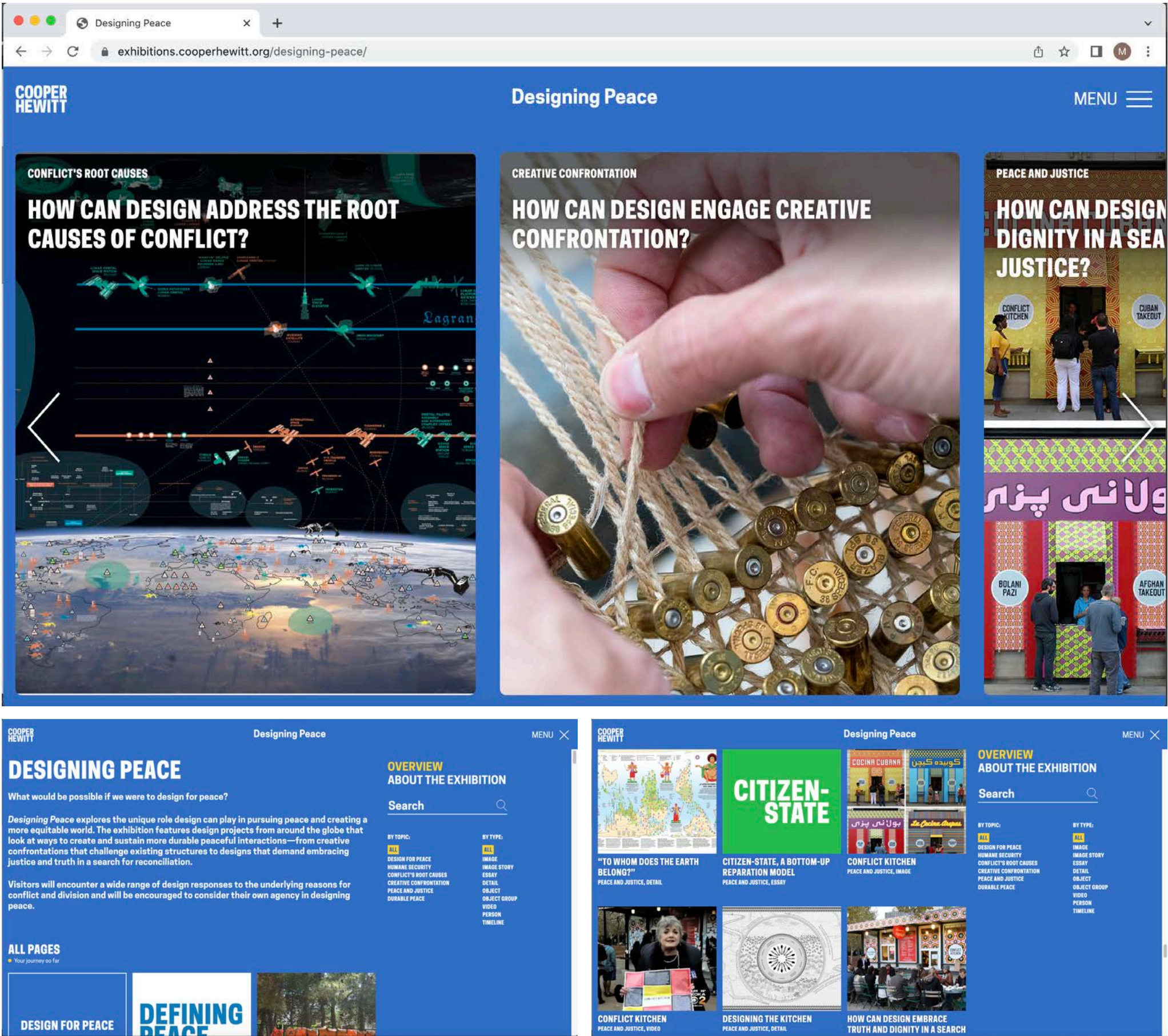
DesignFile is a line of ebooks on design writing and research. The covers are based on an existing template, adapted through color and type shape to capture the spirit of each individual book while working with the larger series. The covers were designed knowing that they would primarily be seen in thumbnail form.



DESIGNING PEACE

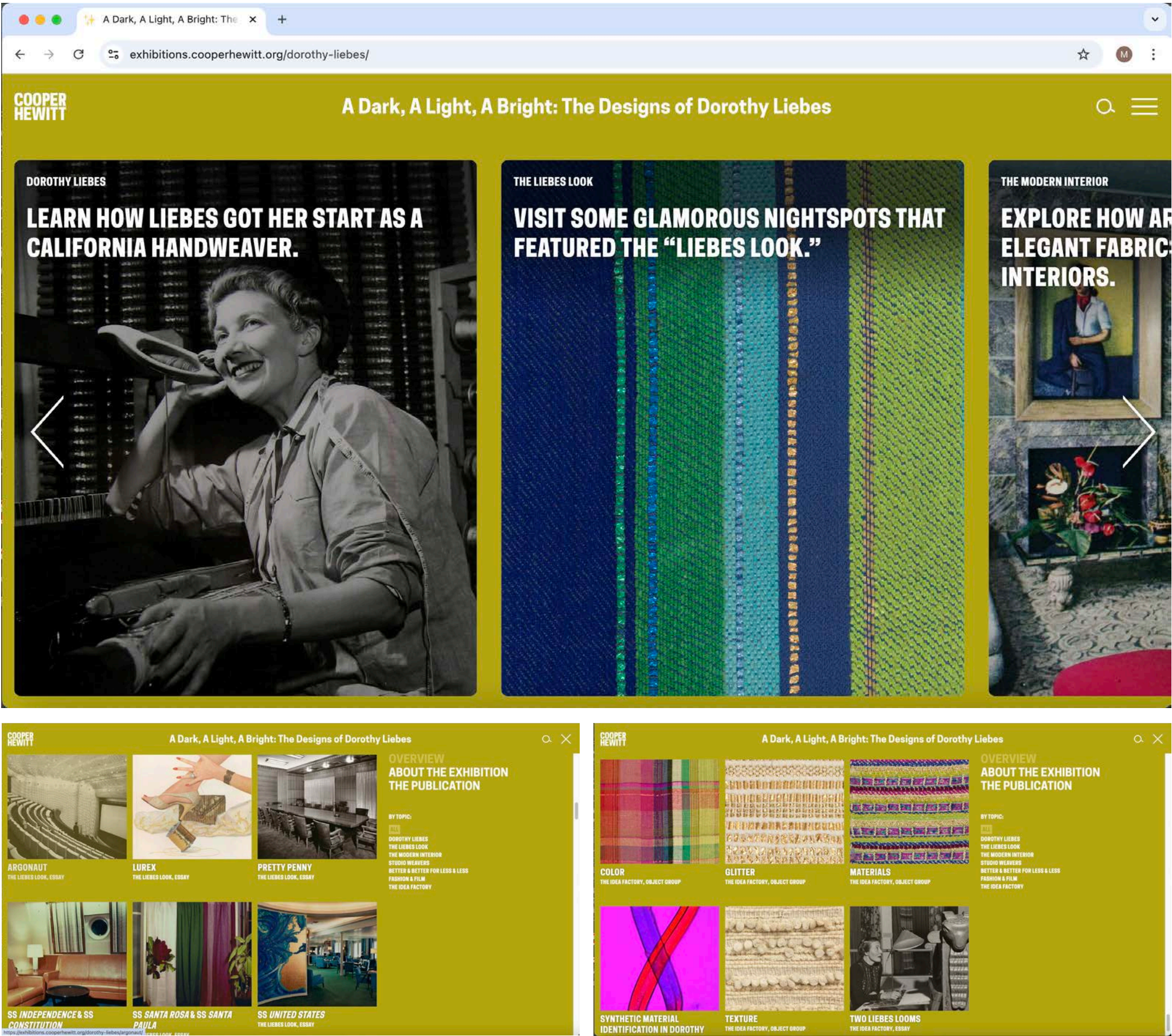
Digital Exhibition
2022

Working within an existing digital platform, Matthew built out the content and established the aesthetic tone of the exhibition. While the overall template was already designed and the bulk of the task was in digital content management, there was also some necessary art direction, editing and sizing imagery and creating typographic graphics in place of images.



DOROTHY LIEBES

Digital Exhibition
2023



DESIGN PORTFOLIO

Matthew J. Kennedy

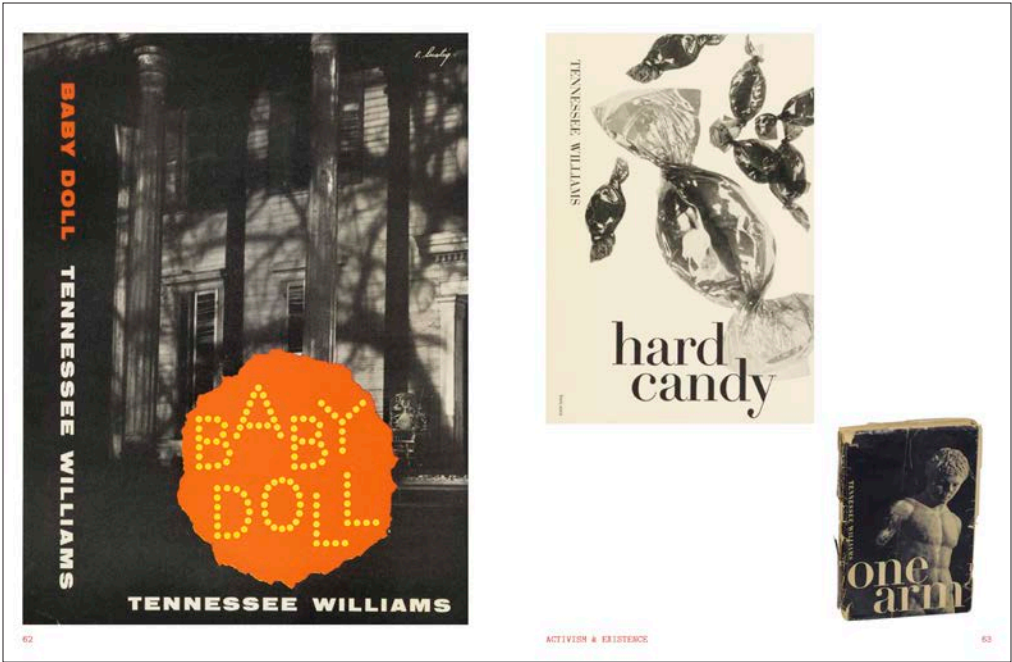
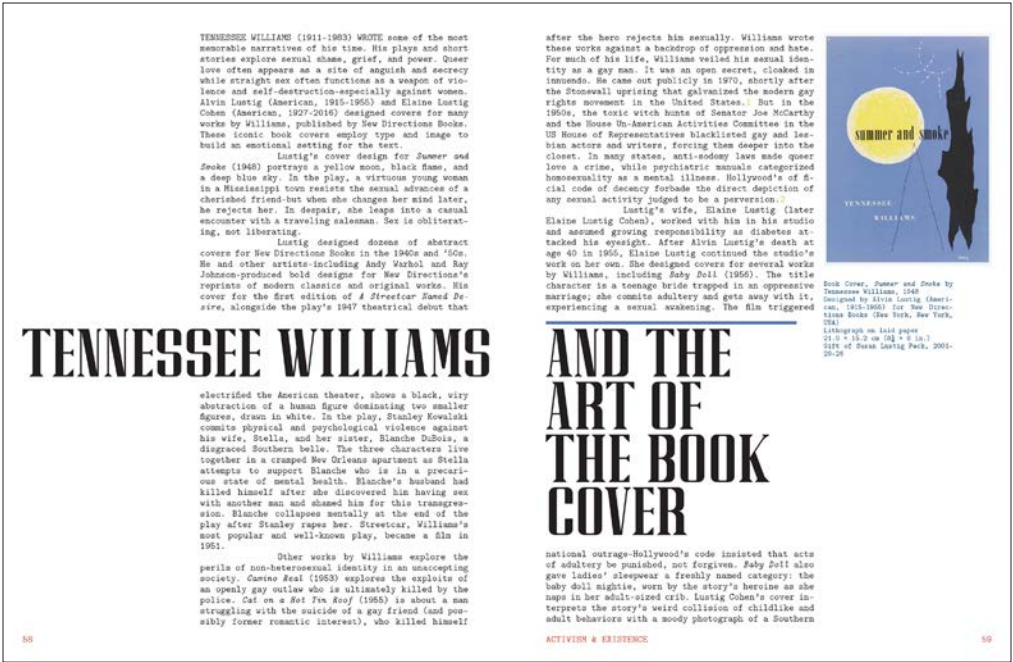
Independent Projects

LGBTQ+: A DESIGN READER

Book Design
2020–23

A project that started as a 2020 pandemic “skill building” exercise became a worthy publishing document and labor of love. Adapted from blog posts published by Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in celebration of LGBTQ+ Pride month across several years, this book is an accessible reader demonstrating the historical and present value of queer creativity and labor.

The typography choices (Hologram Display Wedge and CMU Typewriter Text) nod to a number of disparate historical periods all at once. Headings between the book’s four loosely chronological sections rise within the grid to mimic the increased visibility of the gay community over time. The overall design encourages individuality with select design elements defying the grid or other layout standards.



AIGA GET OUT THE VOTE CHALLENGE

Poster & Social Media Graphic (Two Concepts) 2022

AIGA called upon designers to create graphics to encourage voter turnout in the 2022 midterm elections in the United States.

The poster (left), utilizing calming blues and the groovy typeface Good Girl, aims to portray voting as cool and effortless—something you might quickly do before brunch.

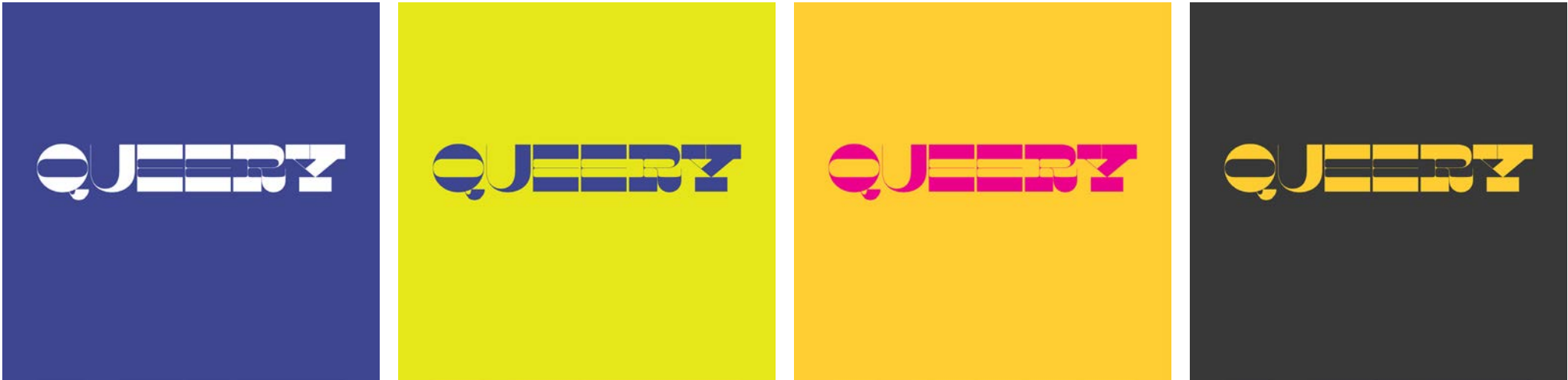
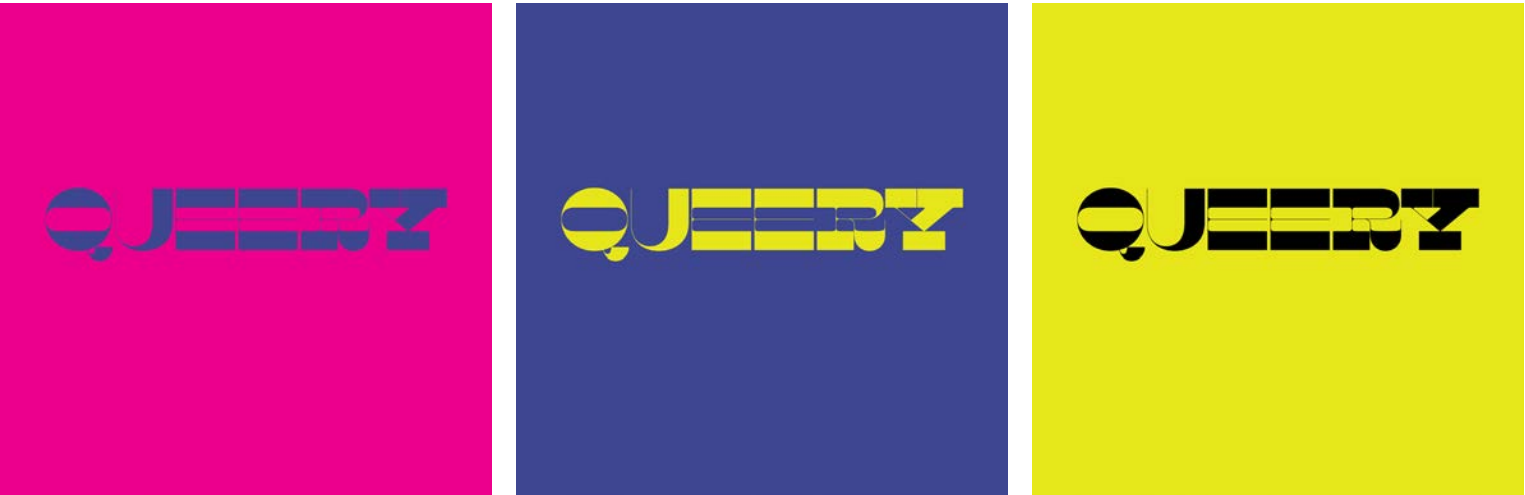
The social media graphic plays (right) on the circular feature of the typeface (Gideon) letterforms as the mark a voter leaves on their ballot. When the graphic is played, the dot moves around and changes color.



QUEERY

Concept Brand Identity 2020

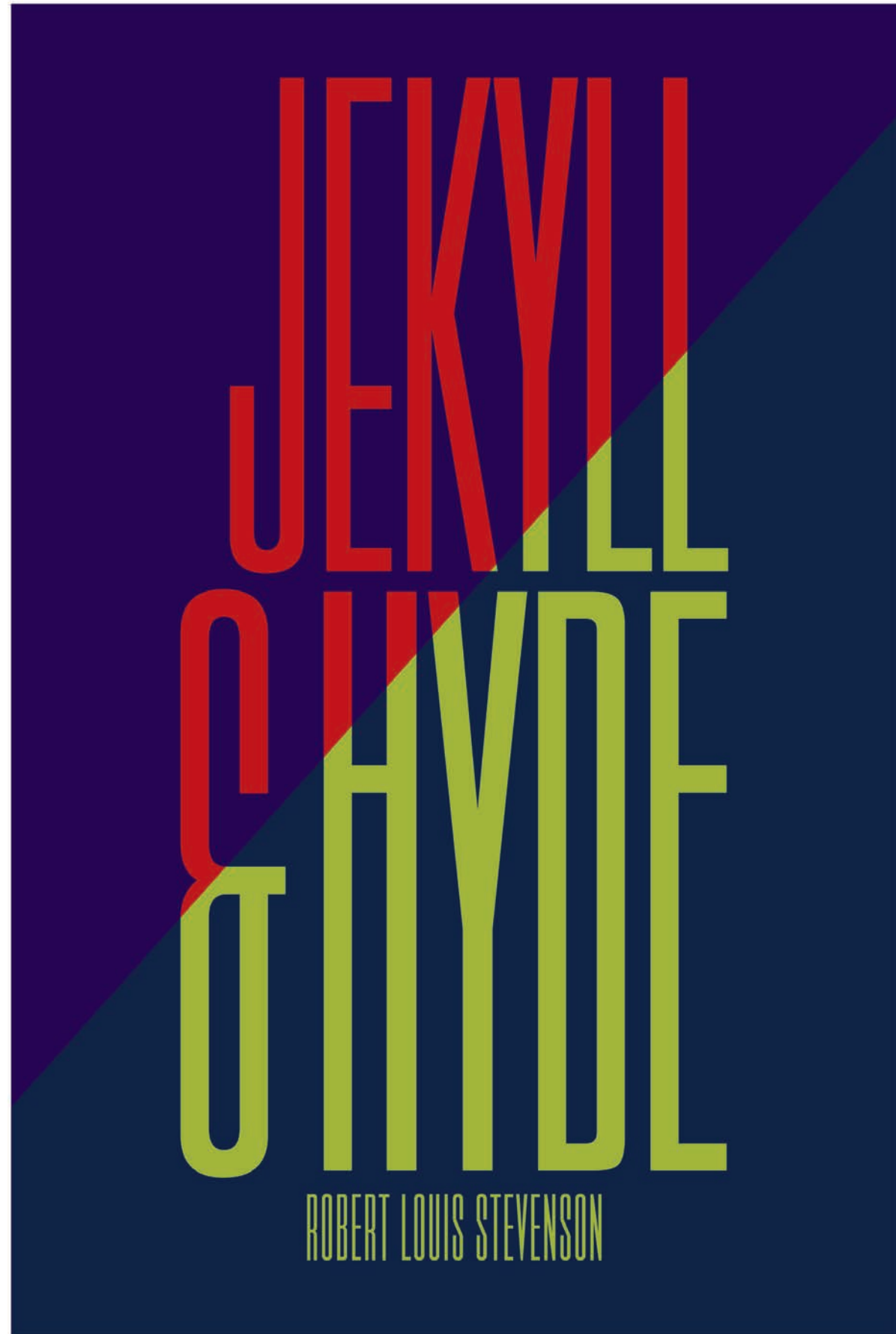
One of three brand identities designed for *Queery*, a proposed journal discussing LGBTQ+ issues and queer theory.



JEKYLL & HYDE

Concept Cover Design 2023

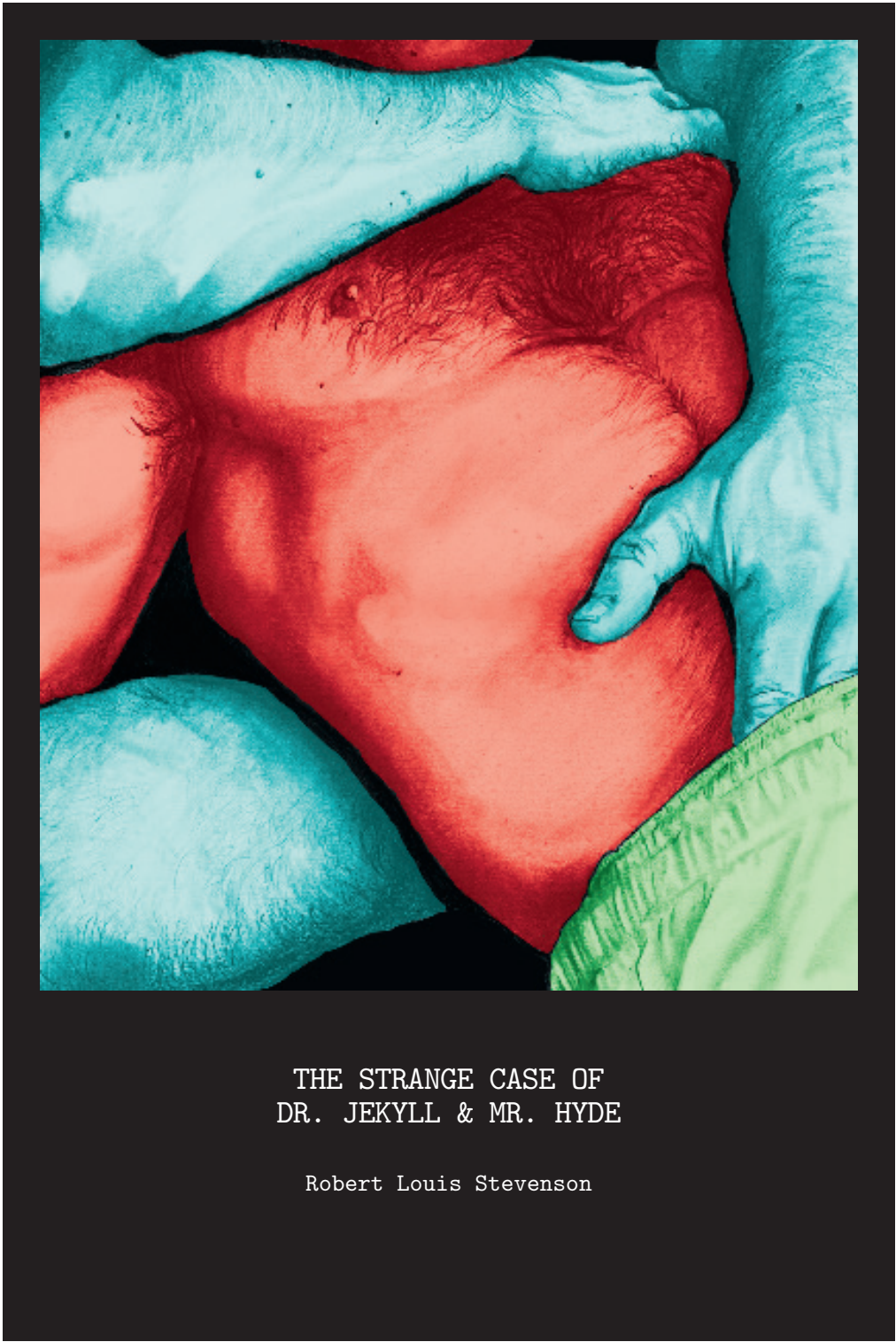
In fall of 2023, Matthew took a book design course, the homework for which was to design a new edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The cover design was inspired by the novel's time period, Stevenson's Scottish heritage, and modern horror to create a contemporary take on Scottish art nouveau. A typographic cover treatment uses the font ST Ultra Condensed to create an elongated, eerie logotype for the dichotomous title character(s). In an editorial choice, the title's public domain status was embraced and the title was shortened to just its more colloquial two names.



JEKYLL & HYDE

Concept Cover Design 2023

In researching alternative cover designs for the book design project, it was identified that some fringe scholars of Stevenson’s novel suggest homoerotic undertones to the tortured relationship between the two men of Jekyll and Hyde. These cover designs play into the subtext by featuring figural imagery of two men in intimate poses suggesting both care and frustration. (Left art credit: painting by the artist Paul Anagnostopoulos; right art credit: colorized rendering of drawing by unidentified artist on Etsy)



DESIGN PORTFOLIO

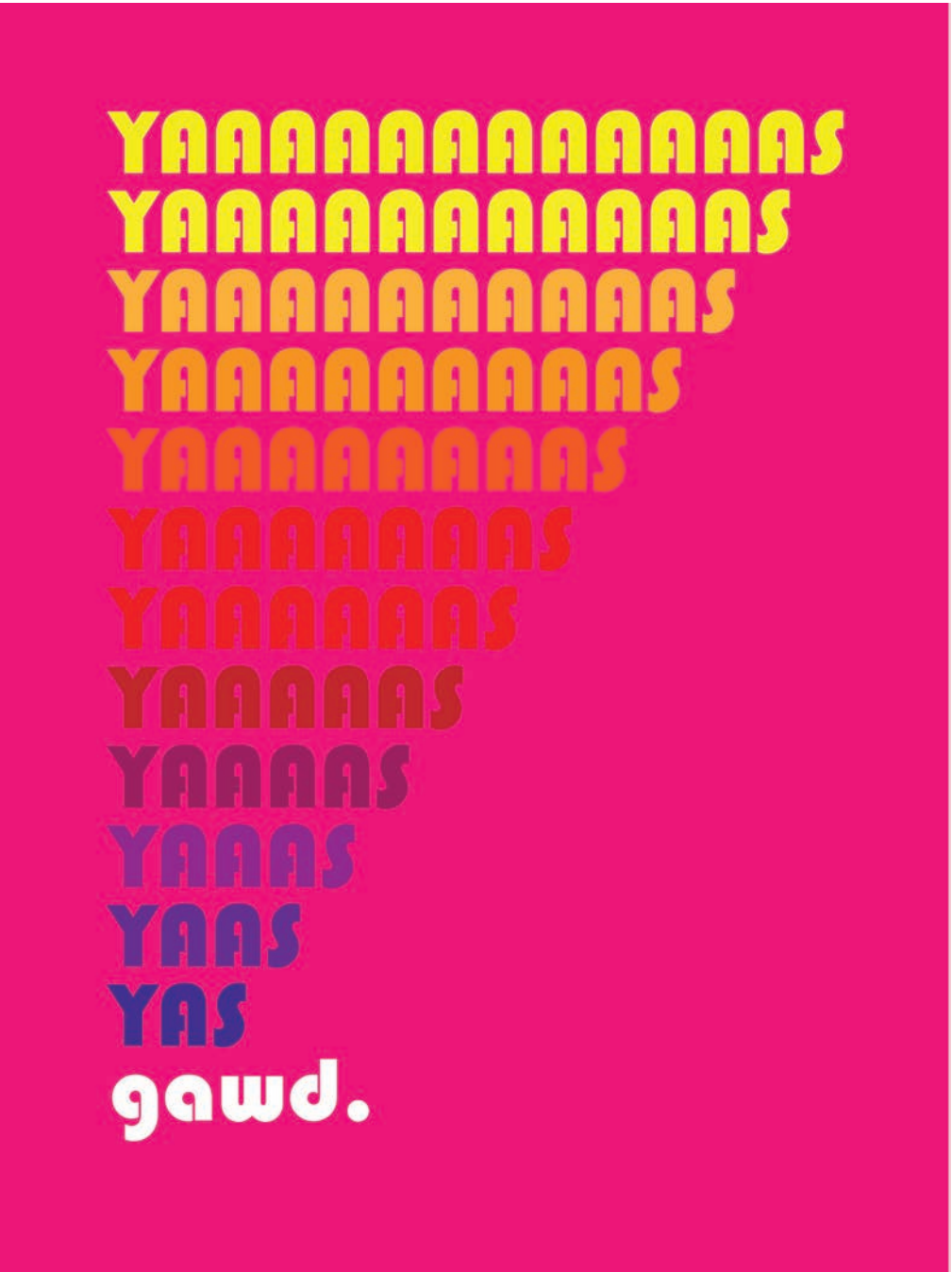
Matthew J. Kennedy

Just for Fun

YAS-O-METER

Instagram Graphic & Poster
2018

This graphic captures through typography the exuberance of a person exclaiming the word “yas!”
Developed originally for a friend as an Instagram post, the concept was also adapted into a potential poster.



WERK MARQUEE

Instagram Graphic & Postcard Collection
2018

This graphic captures through typography the shimmer of a person saying “werk”. The rhythm of the color change is further influenced by the song “Work” by Rihanna.

Developed originally for a friend as an Instagram post, the concept was also adapted into a potential collection of postcards.



1-800-DANIA

Digital Poster 2020

This digital poster was born from a joke Matthew coined with colleagues navigating a toxic managerial situation. Dania was the name of the institution's ombuds (an impartial party employed to help navigate interpersonal conflict), so whenever toxic behavior was experienced Matthew would encourage colleagues to call the fictitious number of "1-800-DANIA". In the poster, the different flows and colors of typography represent different people's anxiety and sense of urgency when seeking such help.

