

LUMEN 2025



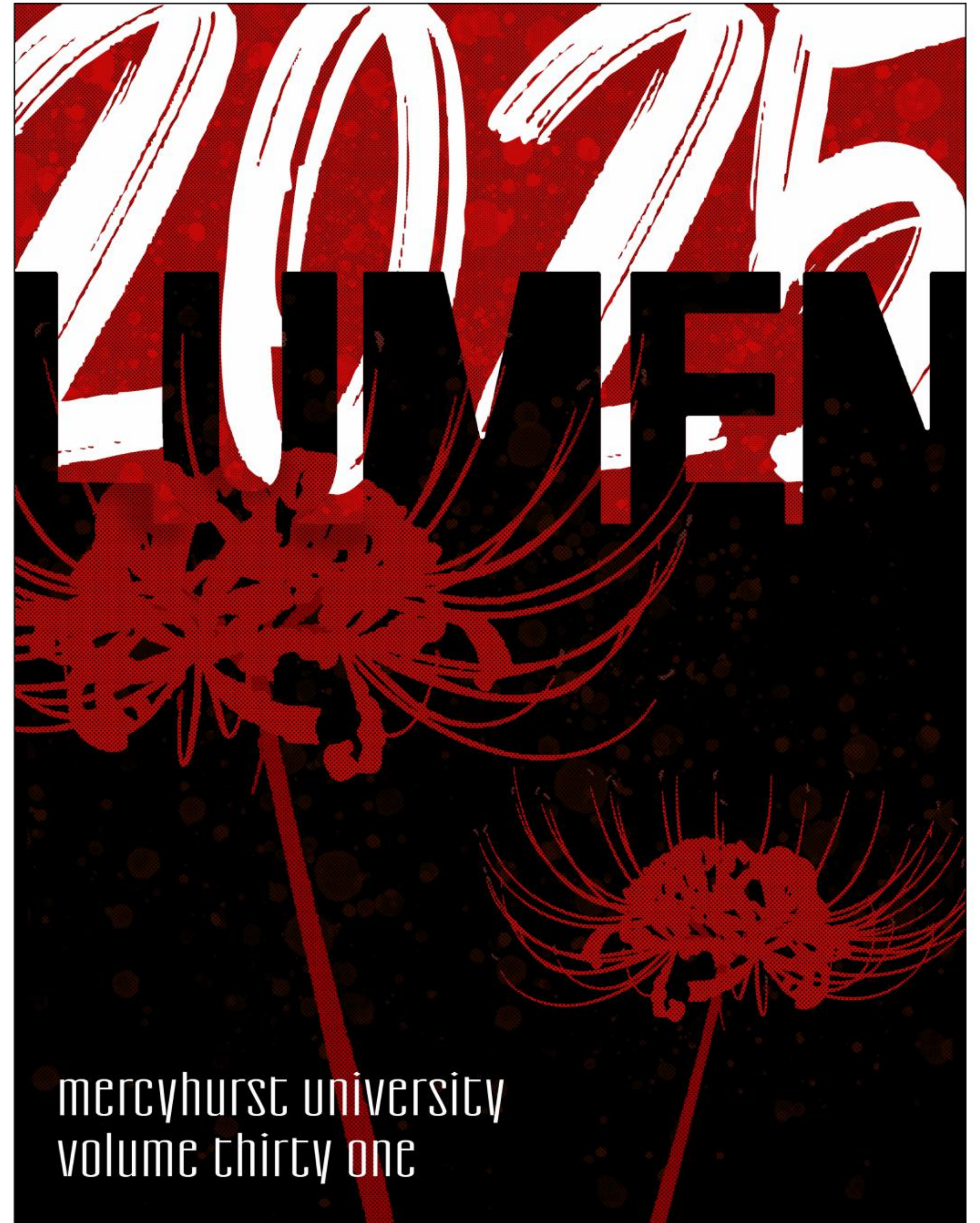
AMANDA
McCLAIN

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SUMMARY

Our staff created the LUMEN over four months. This creative arts magazine features award-winning student work from Mercyhurst University. **As the lead designer, I created the primary layout and oversaw design production.**



PROBLEM

The LUMEN's thirty-first edition had to be **distinct from previous volumes, display more visual works than prior years, and do so with limited pages.**

With more art submissions than ever, they risked competing with the written works for space. This posed the question: **how do we showcase both written and visual works in a unique, balanced way?**

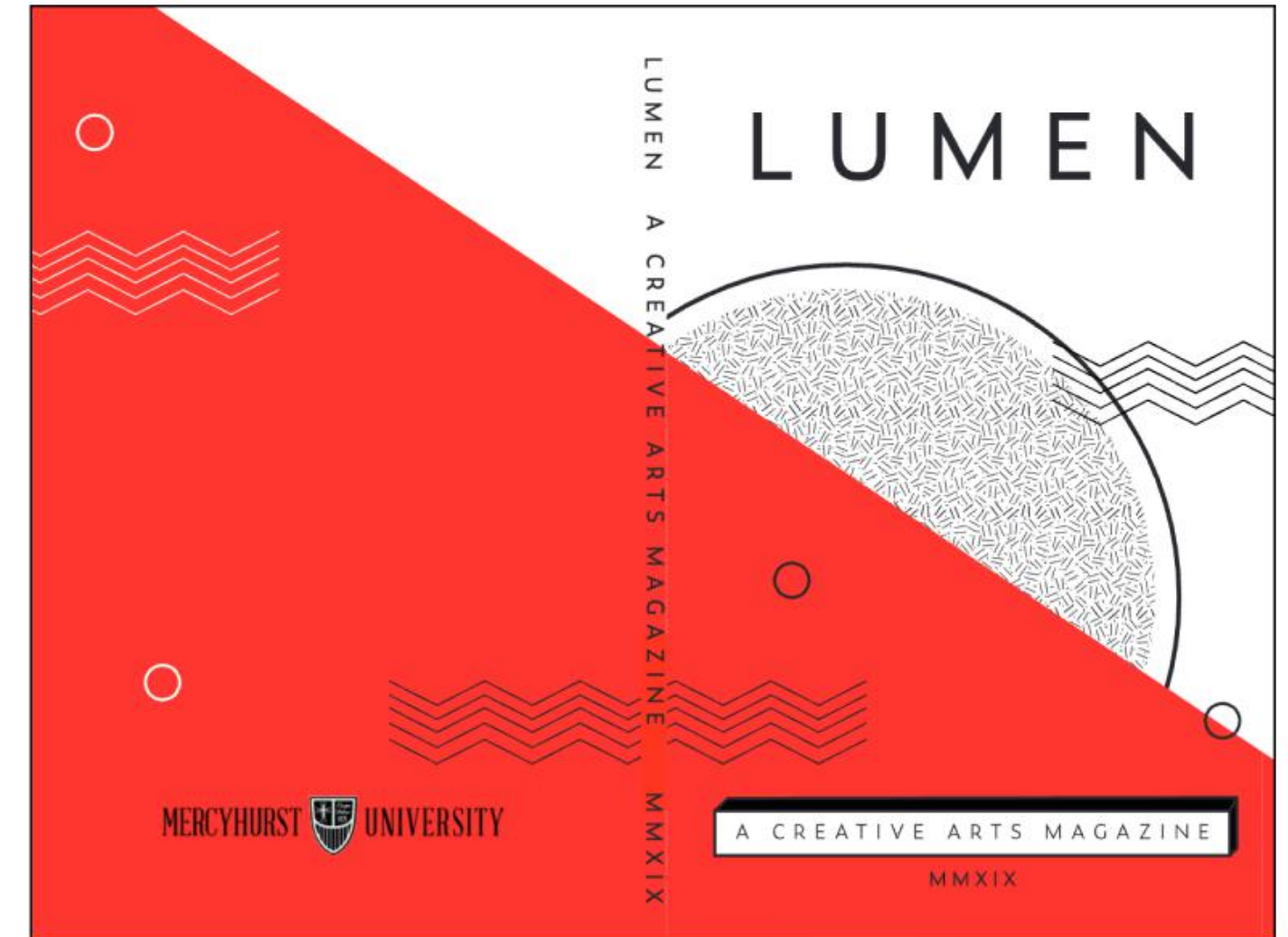


From ceramic sculptures to digital collages, we had to seamlessly incorporate them all

RESEARCH

My fellow designer and I explored diverging concepts, then presented our ideas to the Writing Department for final approval.

During my research, I noticed **three-dimensionality was rare in book design, opening a new possibility for the LUMEN.**



"O homem e seus símbolos (Man and his symbols)"

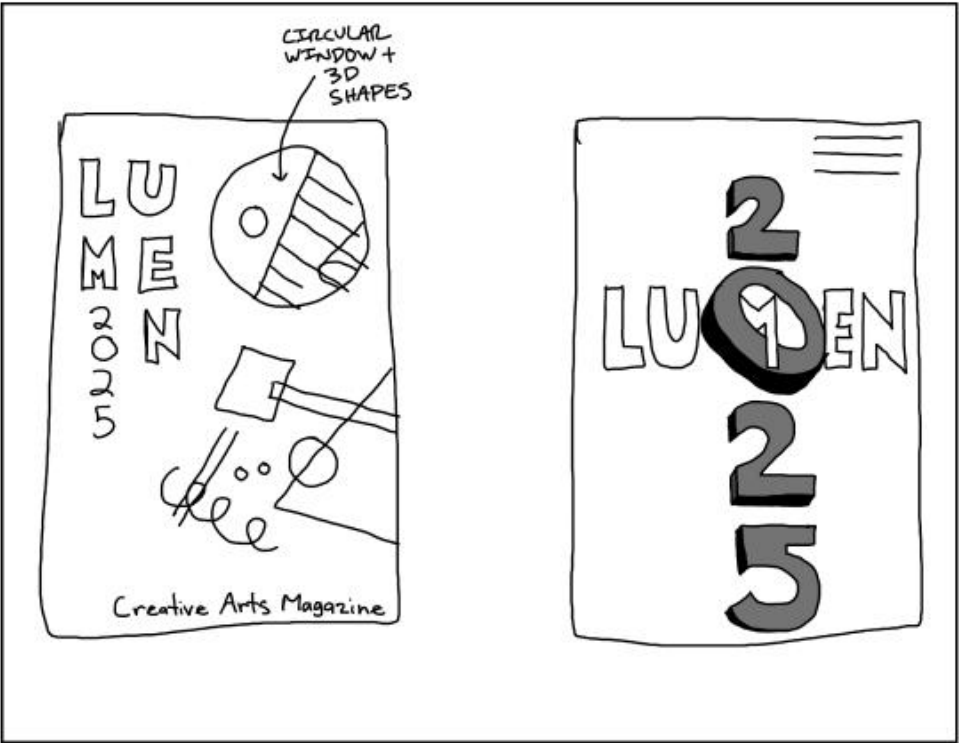
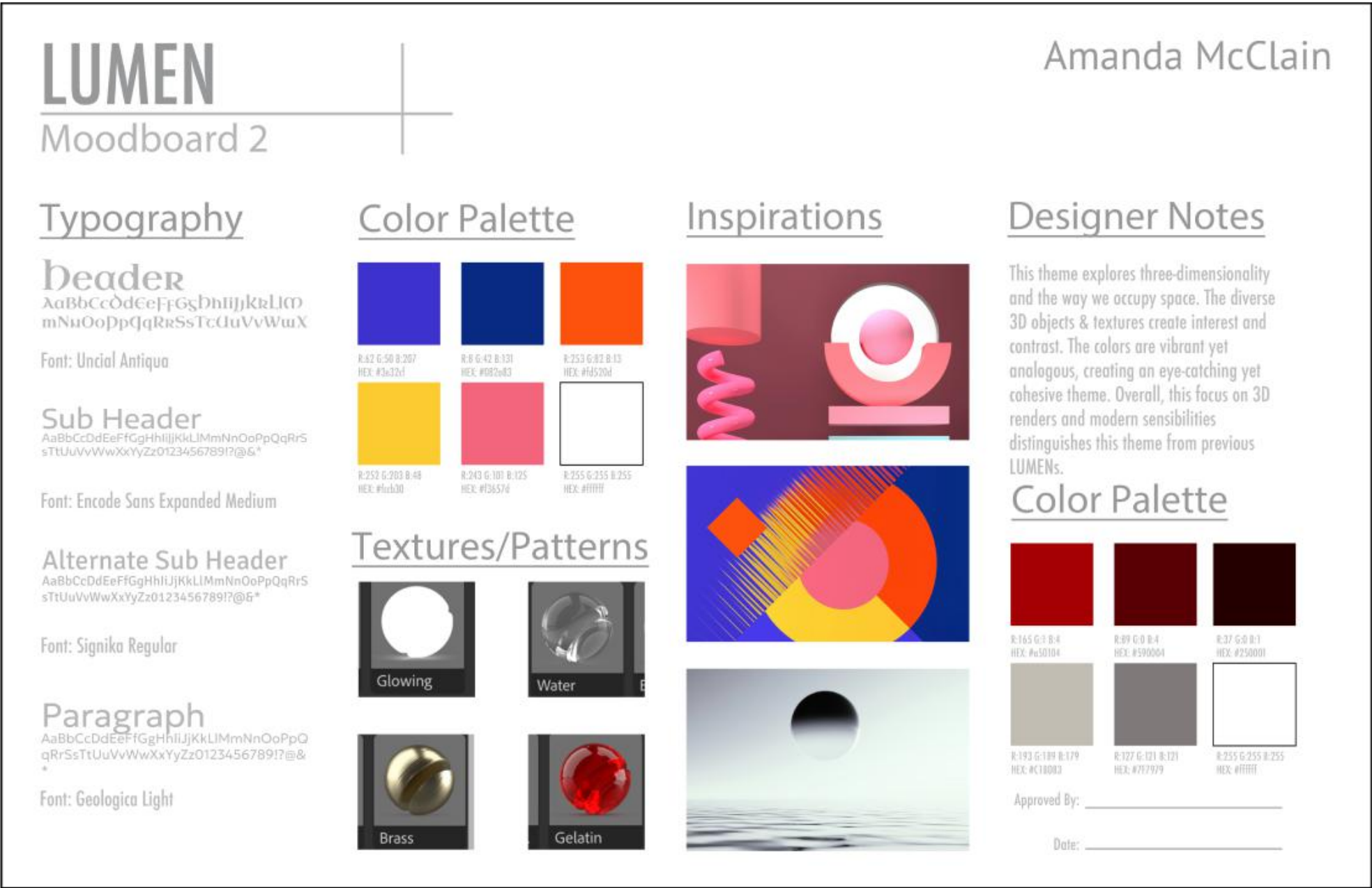
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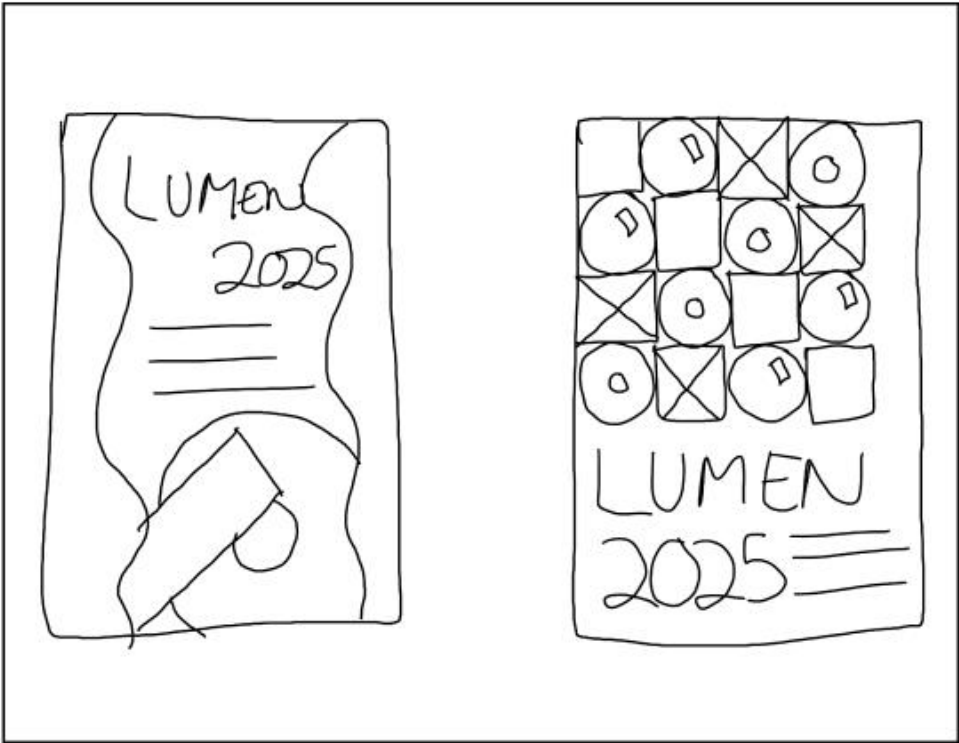
EXPLORATION

I created moodboards and sketches, developed them in Adobe Dimension, then mounted to foam-core for presentation.

I iterated several concepts before recognizing **simple objects and patterns** had the most visual impact. These patterns could be viewed at a distance and added depth to the pages.



A sample of several pages of thumbnails



This far right thumbnail became the basis for my proof of concept

EXPLORATION (cont.)



This vibrant orange-blue theme was designed first to grab attention



The red-white variant followed to reference previous LUMEN covers

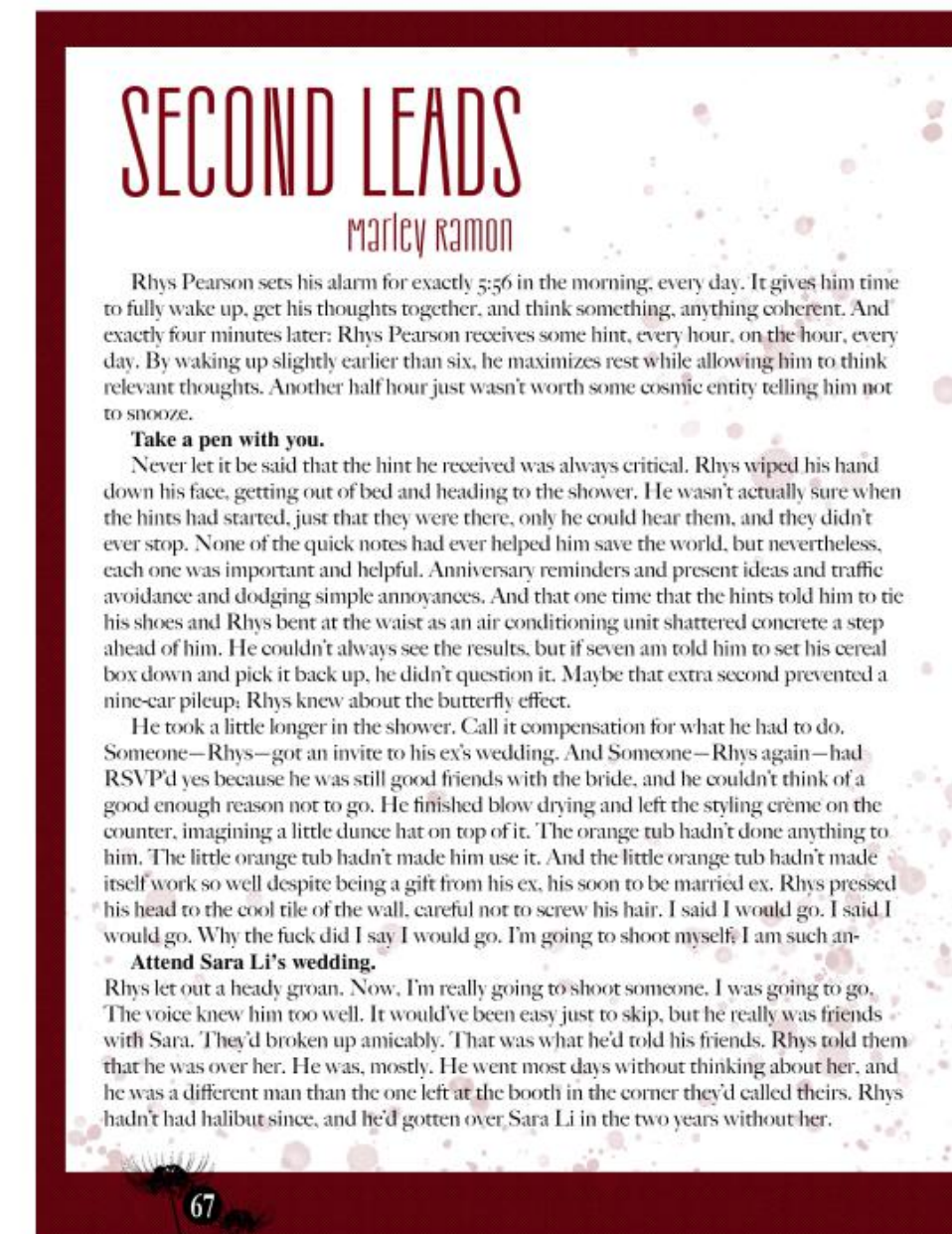


These mounted foam-core boards showed depth and dimensionality

CHOSEN THEME

The writing staff chose my teammate's **red lycoris design** because of its **artistic expression, distinctiveness, and tailored approach to writing and art.**

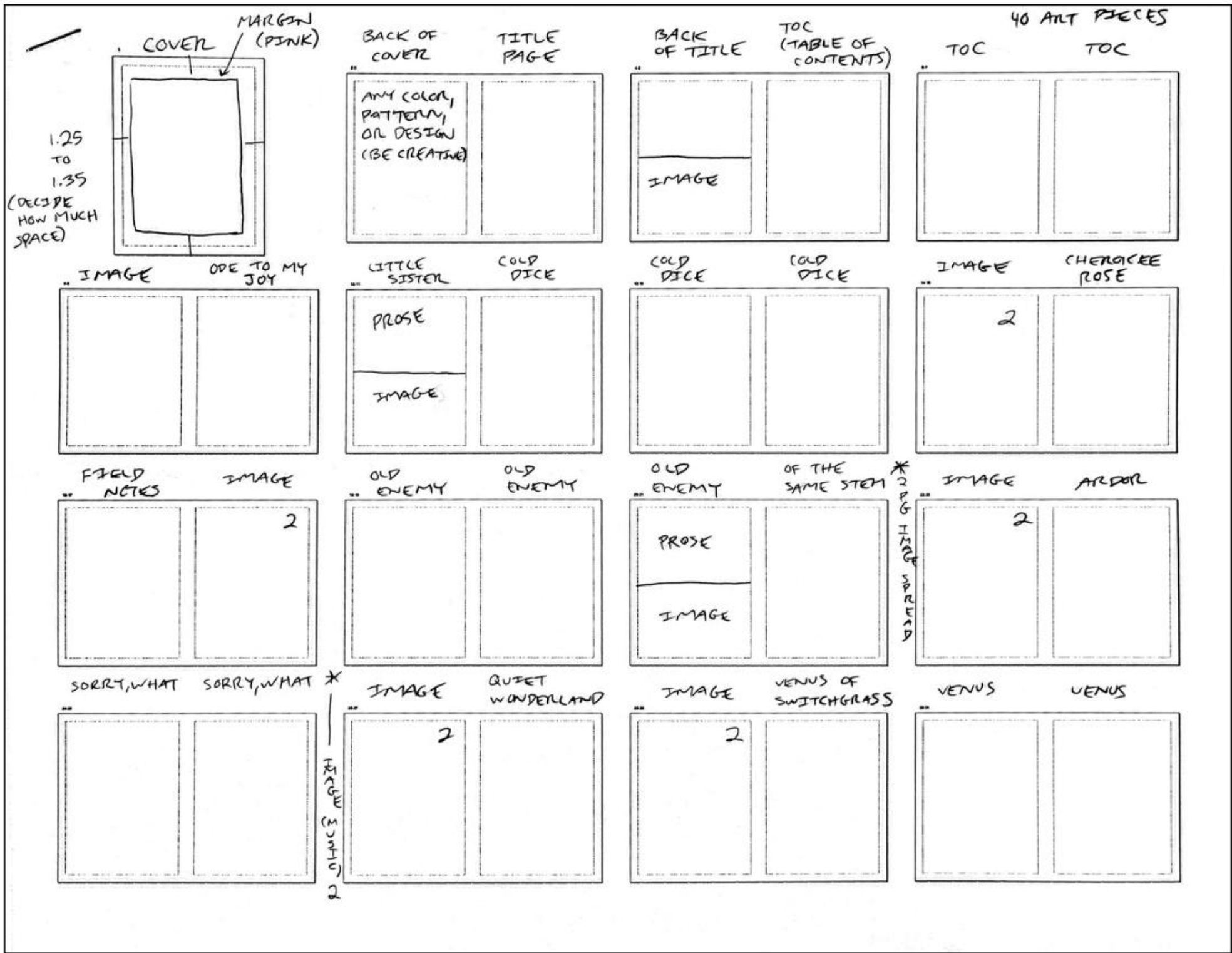
They liked the unique and playful nature of my three-dimensional concepts. Some key areas to improve were **text legibility and balance**: the darker backgrounds made reading difficult and the 3D shapes overshadowed the text.



This art page remained largely unchanged in our final design

PLANNING

After choosing the theme, we planned the layout and noticed **visual and written works had to share pages for budget constraints**. We carefully balanced the art and writing to vary the reading experience.

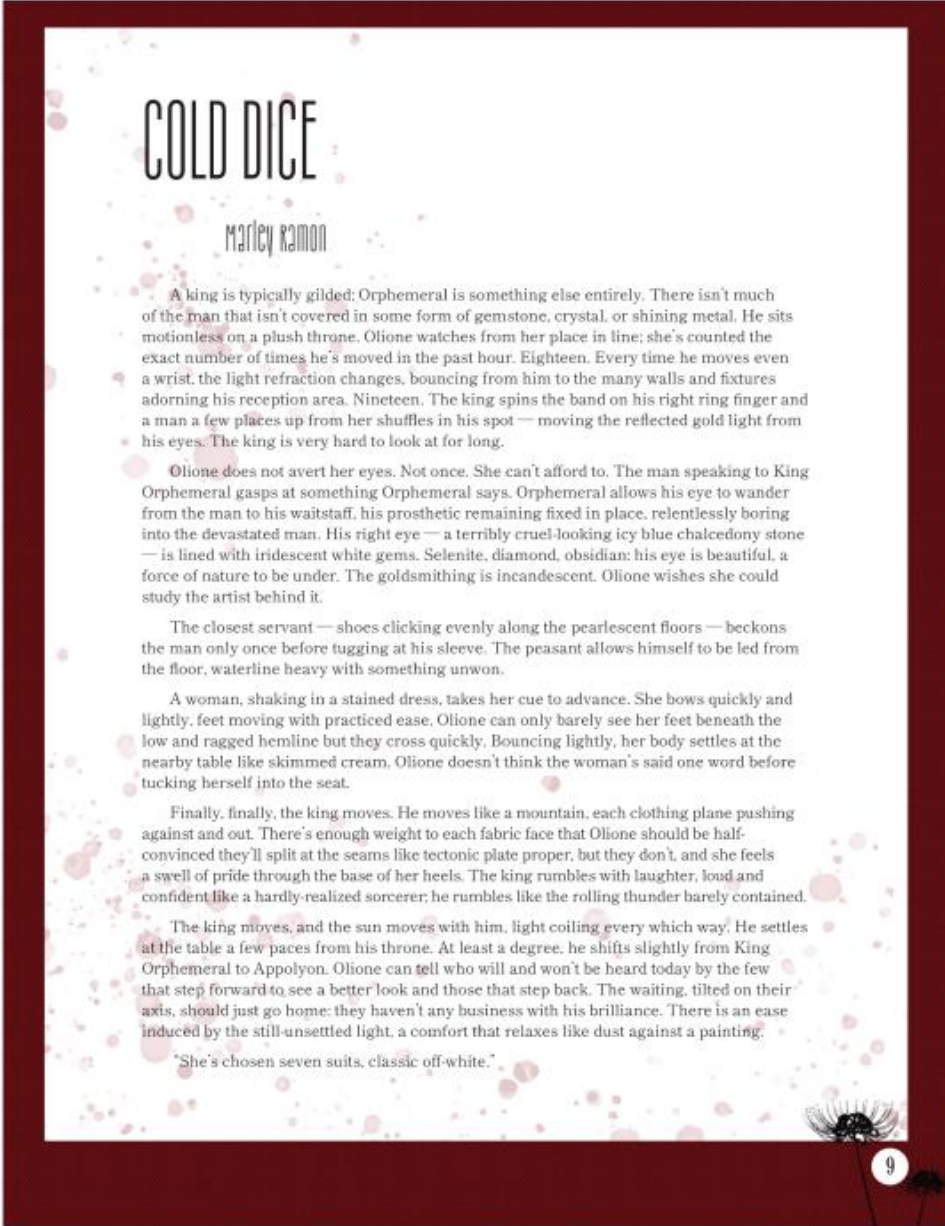
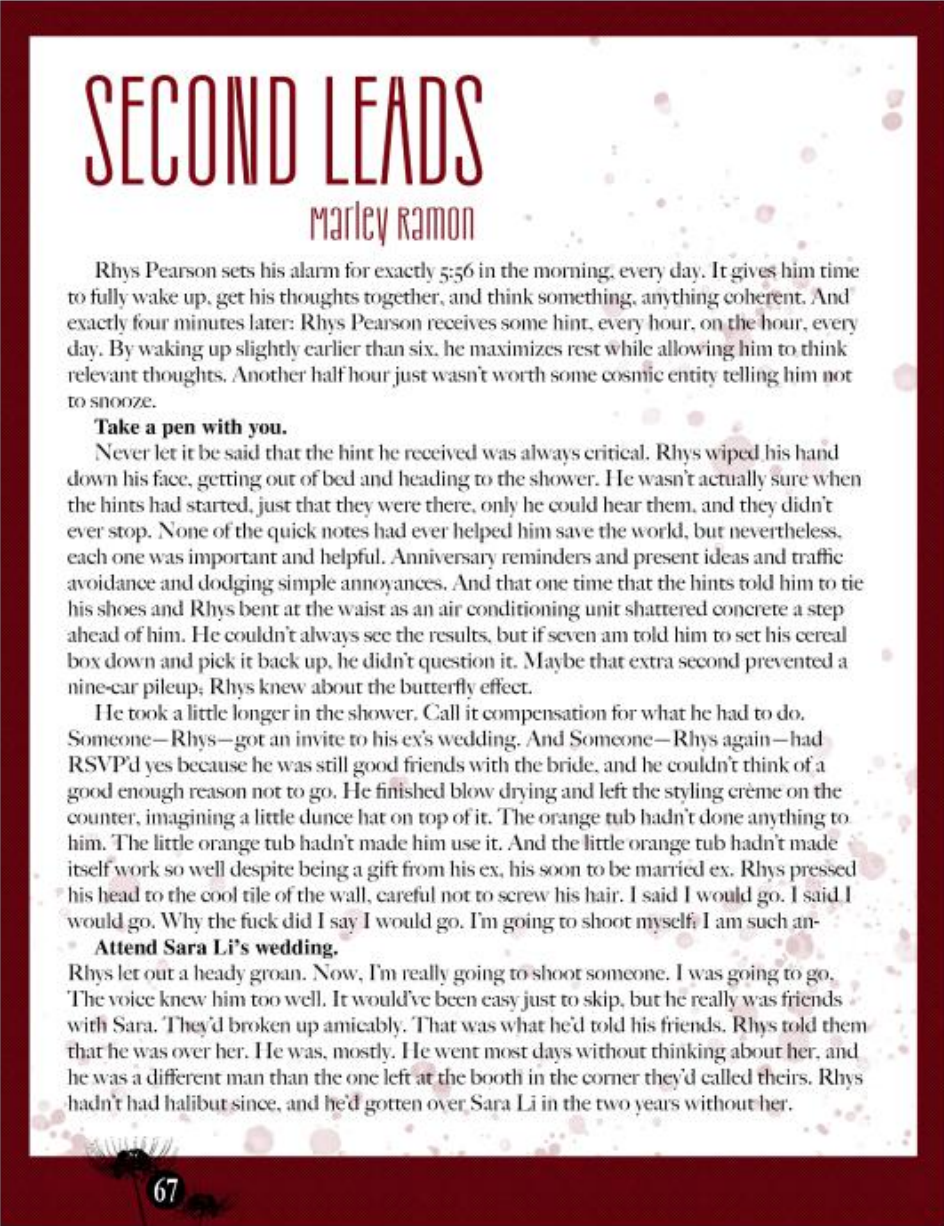


We strategically minimized back-to-back art pages

DEVELOPMENT

Our first step was to edit the written works. The most important change was **increasing the space between the paragraphs and margins**. This improved legibility by making text easier to scan.

Before  After



We changed all text to black for consistency

DEVELOPMENT (cont.)

We inserted art after text with prominent **white space and narrative resolution, justifying the combination.** This allowed us to effectively fill the limited space.

Poetry

Because me, you, all of us?
We are not just surviving — we are the realization of dreams.
The walking, living proof of what our parents, our grandparents, our ancestors prayed for.

We are their wildest dreams.
So why are we still excusing ourselves?

Let their excuses be their problem.
Let their discomfort remain theirs to carry.
Why should we shrink to make them feel safe?
We enter rooms, and we own them.
We don't just survive — we **thrive**.
We don't just exist — we **rise**.

So why would we stand any less than tall?
Why would we dim the light we carry?
No, we were not made to apologize for who we are.
We were made to take up space.
And that's exactly what we will do.

A BONAIRE SUNSET
LAUTYN DAVIS



35

Prose

The clock ticks counterfeit minutes. Like a toddler tapping on a fish bowl. Where is my mind? Sometimes, I am a goldfish. Am I really that frail? I sit in neon plastic trees and eyesore gravel, and wait, wait...for a delectable, divine dinner that dirties my hideaway. These hungers are not conceived by necessity. I hang the green suede blazer and shuffle through the Pile. My water slowly thickens into a syrupy Flavor Aid broth with the debris breaking through the surface tension. Low visibility warning. This is not by my own will. The curious cat paws, the deafening solitude. T-shirts are placed in rows in the drawer labeled "T-SHIRTS." I don't know when my water will be changed, and it's not up to me. To truly break free would be a miracle, and I do pray. It would surely be my end: the faith I clutch, leaping onto the table beside my bowl. I do a little spinny trick with the hanger around my finger, it hits me in the face.

It's never as difficult as I think it'll be. Really, how could a pile of clothes hold so much jurisdiction over me? It has decreed it customary that I choke and sever my lucky prayer beads. They rupture, rolling around and scrambling toward floor grout channels like military trenches. They hide and tremble, as anyone would, but I am not dangerous. I still dodge them while I crumble, folding and falling to my knees. I rescue them, cradling them in my cold palms while I sit. Usually, I string them back together — they were my mother's.

That went fast. I load the washer and empty the dryer.
Whatever. It's not that serious. Call me Sisyphus.

LONE FLOWER
MIKAELA TAYLOR



25

We also paired images based on writing's tone, which connected the two

FEEDBACK

We swiftly applied feedback at every stage, thus completing the LUMEN ahead of schedule.

I worked closely with the Copy Advisor to apply edits, such as adjusting punctuation. This continued until launch.

Before

hands like a faucet, and she is quite sure she is neither. From where she's standing— several paces ahead after a few left for the beginning of a game—she can see cards that the blonde woman is holding. She can watch the king barely move and she knows exactly what she would do in the woman's place. Olione itches to move the cards herself, to sort through the horrendous organization the woman's using and carefully pull the numbers down. But seven suits is a fool's game against Appolyon, and it's made all the more clear by another failed trick punctuating her thoughts.

The woman is crying, though trying very well to not let it interrupt anything. She moves one wrist to hurriedly push away some tears, before going right back into the game, biting her lip as she does so. Appolyon, for all his flaws, does not antagonize the woman. It's likely the game isn't engaging enough for him to bother. Seven suits for all its chance in drawing cards, is a game of skill. Carelessly, Appolyon takes trick after trick. He quickly loses cards.

The woman is no longer subtly weeping, she doesn't bother to brush her cheeks and she struggles to sort through her cards. Appolyon moves in clear mistake. Olione is dumbfounded, he has—quite intentionally—provided the blubbering off-white with a chance. He wants to see if she will take it. She never sees it clearly, nearly picking up a three of iron. The weight in Olione's hands move before the thought crosses enough axons to reach her brain. Olione has left the line, and the eyes of the room have found her.



After

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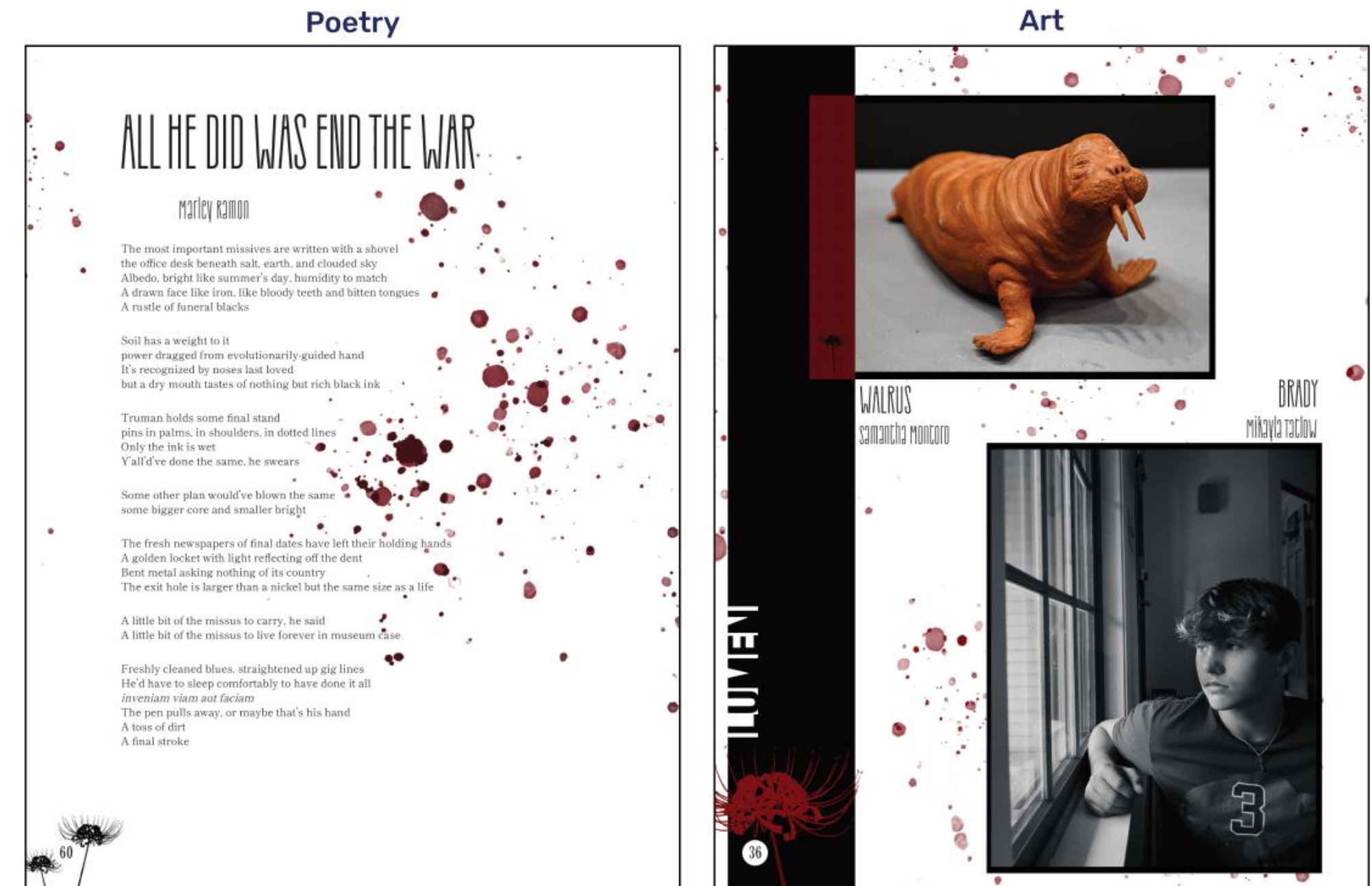
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The Copy Advisor requested spaces around the em-dashes for breathing room

LAUNCH

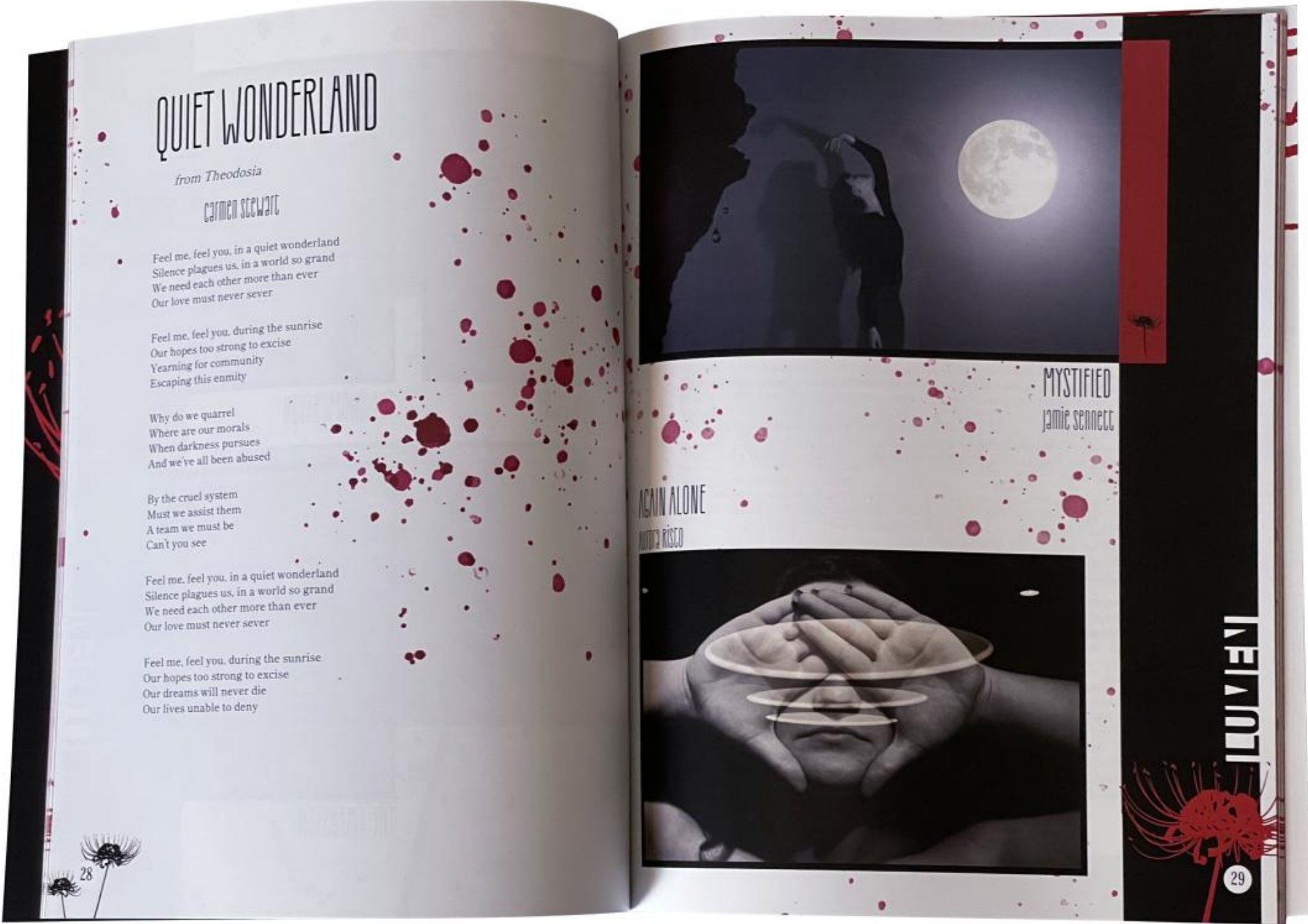
We hosted a LUMEN unveiling ceremony where we invited contributors and the general public. I presented the design decisions behind the theme.

The lycoris symbolizes partings and loss, which embodied the LUMEN's featured works. **We then distributed several of the 250 printed copies.**

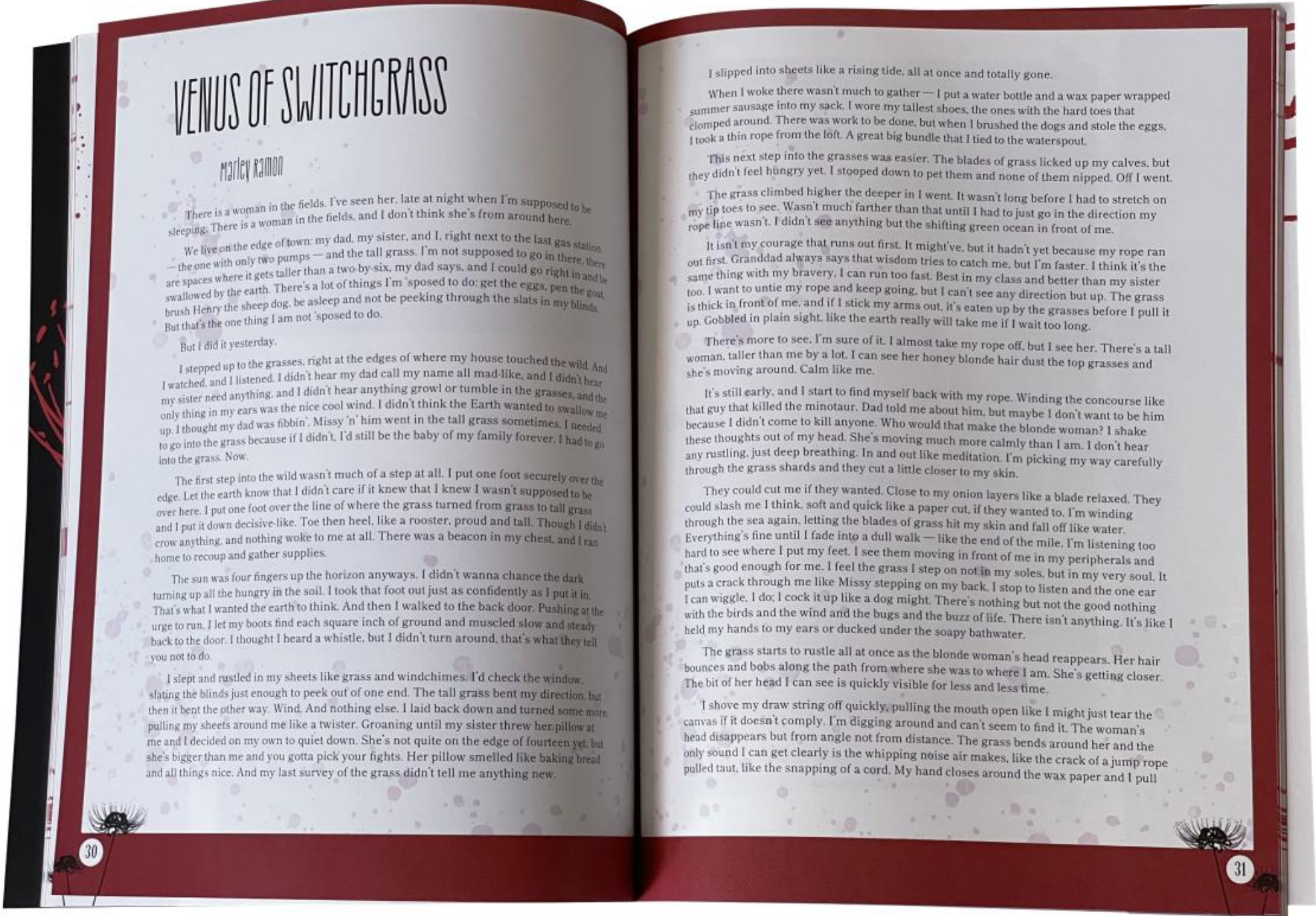


We published printed magazines and a web page with bonus content

LAUNCH (cont.)



Poetry/Art spread



Prose spread

OUTCOMES

- Since we minimized our page count, **we printed 25% more LUMEN copies than originally projected.**
- **The unveiling ceremony created positive public reception.**

TAKEAWAYS

- **Communication is everything**
- **Be ready to adapt quickly**
- **Address process pain points early**





ORANGE
choreographer: ainsley dunning

Music: "Plan & Elevation: I. The Herbaceous Border" and "Plan & Elevation: V. The Beech Tree"
Composed by Caroline Shaw
Performed by Attacca Quartet
Courtesy of Nonesuch Records
By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film & VT Licensing
Text: "The Orange" by Wendy Cope
Speaker: Marley Ramon
Dancers: Mia Semieraro and MiKayla Sharp

Music: "Hey Mami" and "Come Down" by Sylvan
Costumes and design in collaboration with Belle Perkins
Dancers: Isabella Johnson, Nadia Stronkowsky, Madison Wanamaker, Elodie DeVos, and Kenzie Krommes

REMOVING THE PEDESTAL
choreographer: moira sullivan



View online at mercyhurst.edu/lumen

Since we weren't provided dance images, I chose moments from the videos instead