LUMEN 2025

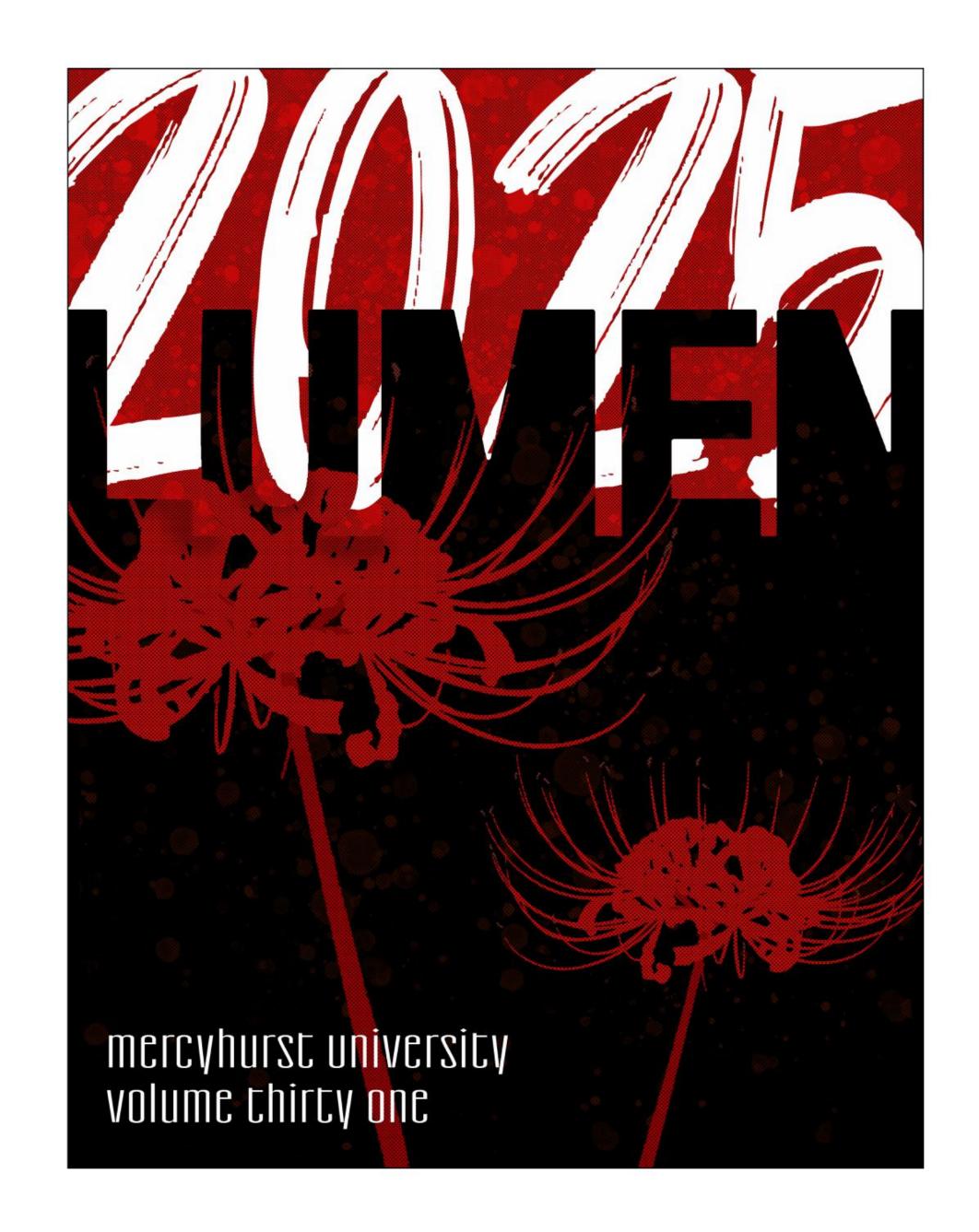


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SUMMARY

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.



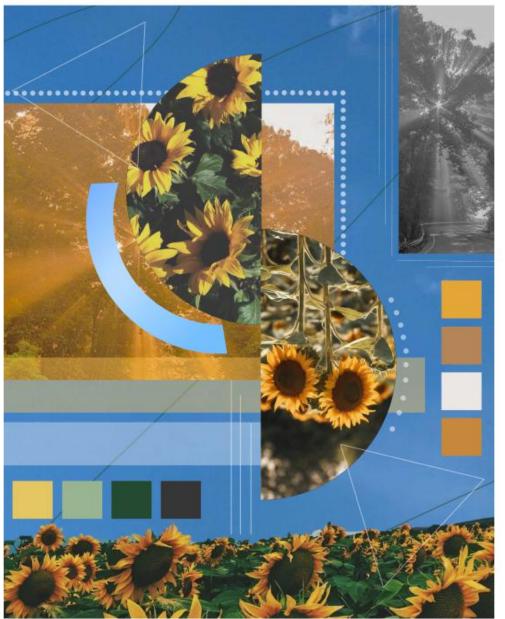
PROBLEM

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?







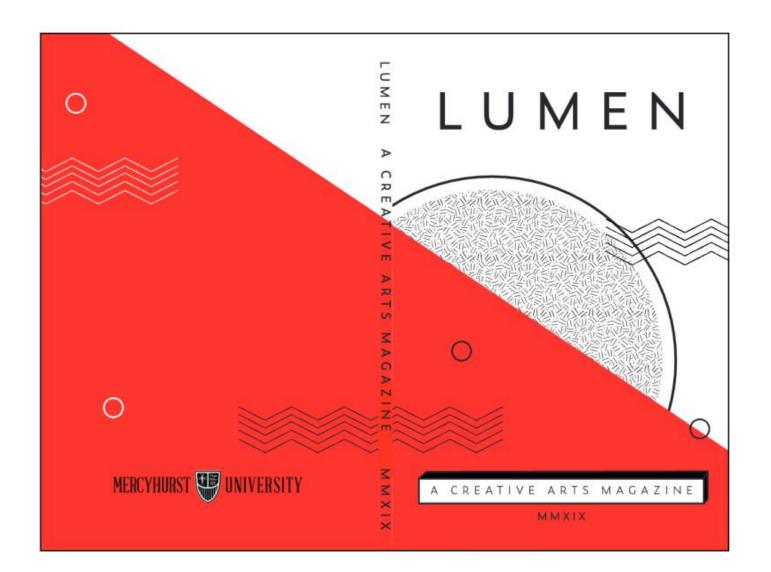


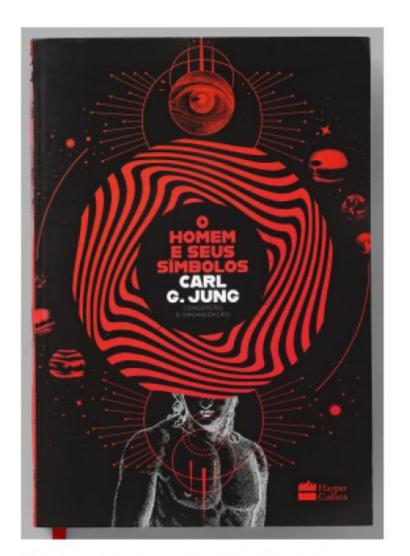
From ceramic sculptures to digital collages, we had to seamlessly incorporate them all

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 threedimensionality was rare in book design, opening a new possibility for the LUMEN.







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

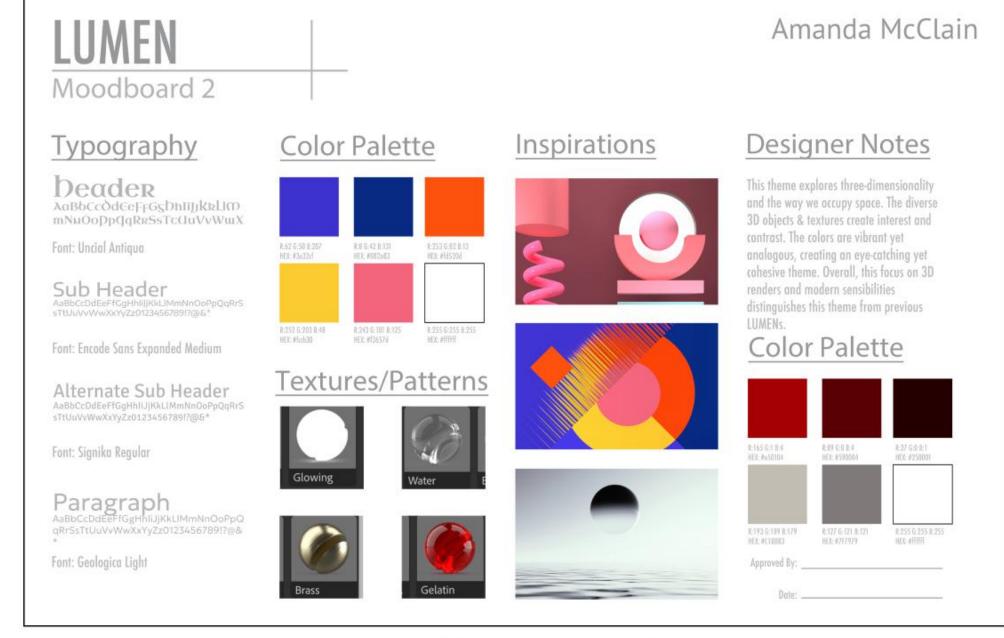
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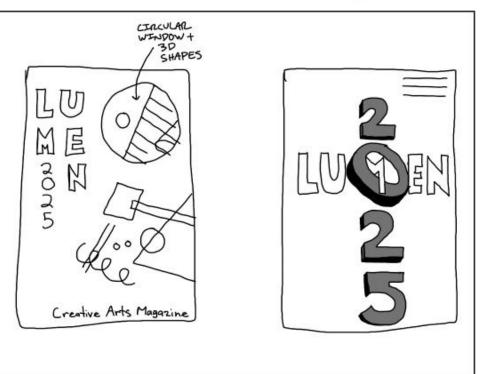
EXPLORATION

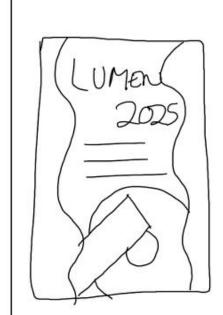
I created moodboards and sketches, developed them in Adobe Dimension, then mounted to foam-core for presentation.

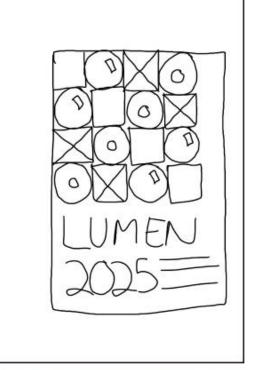
I iterated several concepts before recognizing simple objects and patterns had the most visual impact. These patterns could be viewed at a distance and added depth to the pages.











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.

SECOND LEADS

Rhys Pearson sets his alarm for exactly 5:56 in the morning, every day. It gives him time to fully wake up, get his thoughts together, and think something, anything coherent. And exactly four minutes later: Rhys Pearson receives some hint, every hour, on the hour, every day. By waking up slightly earlier than six, he maximizes rest while allowing him to think relevant thoughts. Another half hour just wasn't worth some cosmic entity telling him not to snooze.

Take a pen with you

Never let it be said that the hint he received was always critical. Rhys wiped his hand down his face, getting out of bed and heading to the shower. He wasn't actually sure when the hints had started, just that they were there, only he could hear them, and they didn't ever stop. None of the quick notes had ever helped him save the world, but nevertheless, each one was important and helpful. Anniversary reminders and present ideas and traffic avoidance and dodging simple annoyances. And that one time that the hints told him to tie his shoes and Rhys bent at the waist as an air conditioning unit shattered concrete a step ahead of him. He couldn't always see the results, but if seven am told him to set his cereal box down and pick it back up, he didn't question it. Maybe that extra second prevented a nine-ear pileup; Rhys knew about the butterfly effect.

He took a little longer in the shower. Call it compensation for what he had to do. Someone—Rhys—got an invite to his ex's wedding. And Someone—Rhys again—had RSVP'd yes because he was still good friends with the bride, and he couldn't think of a good enough reason not to go. He finished blow drying and left the styling creme on the counter, imagining a little dunce hat on top of it. The orange tub hadn't done anything to him. The little orange tub hadn't made him use it. And the little orange tub hadn't made itself work so well despite being a gift from his ex, his soon to be married ex. Rhys pressed his head to the cool tile of the wall, careful not to screw his hair. I said I would go. I said I would go. Why the fuck did I say I would go. I'm going to shoot myself: I am such an-

Attend Sara Li's wedding.

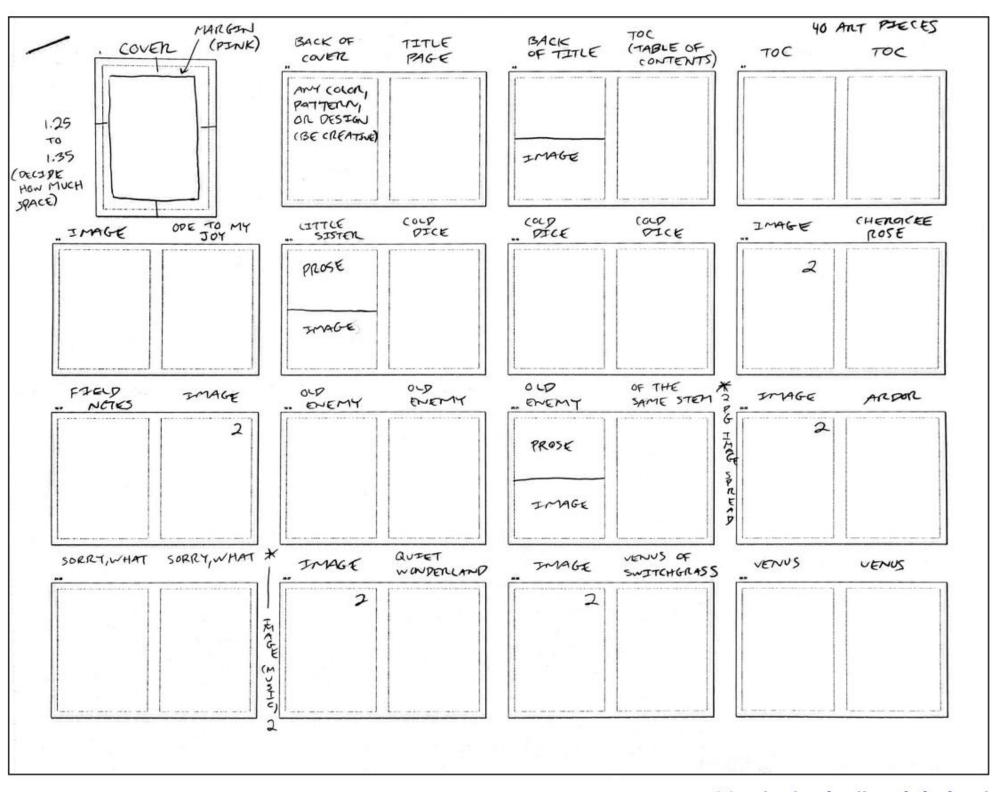
Rhys let out a heady groan. Now, I'm really going to shoot someone. I was going to go. The voice knew him too well. It would've been easy just to skip, but he really was friends with Sara. They'd broken up amicably. That was what he'd told his friends. Rhys told them that he was over her. He was, mostly. He went most days without thinking about her, and he was a different man than the one left at the booth in the corner they'd called theirs. Rhys hadn't had halibut since, and he'd gotten over Sara Li in the two years without her.



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 Afte

SECOND LEADS

Marley Ramon

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Take a pen with you.

67

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A king is typically gilded: Orphemeral is something else entirely. There isn't much of the man that isn't covered in some form of gemstone, crystal, or shining metal. He sits motionless on a plush throne. Olione watches from her place in line; she's counted the exact number of times he's moved in the past hour. Eighteen. Every time he moves even a wrist, the light refraction changes, bouncing from him to the many walls and fixure adorning his reception area. Nineteen. The king spins the band on his right ring finger and a man a few places up from her shuffles in his spot — moving the reflected gold light from his eyes. The king is very hard to look at for long.

Olione does not avert her eyes. Not once. She can't afford to. The man speaking to King Orphemeral gasps at something Orphemeral says. Orphemeral allows his eye to wander from the man to his waitstaff, his prosthetic remaining fixed in place, relentlessly boring into the devastated man. His right eye — a terribly cruel-looking icy blue chalcedony stone — is lined with iridescent white gems. Selenite, diamond, obsidian: his eye is beautiful, a force of nature to be under. The goldsmithing is incandescent. Olione wishes she could study the artist behind it.

The closest servant — shoes clicking evenly along the pearlescent floors — beckons the man only once before tugging at his sleeve. The peasant allows himself to be led from the floor, waterline heavy with something unwon.

A woman, shaking in a stained dress, takes her cue to advance. She bows quickly and lightly, feet moving with practiced ease. Olione can only barely see her feet beneath the low and ragged hemline but they cross quickly. Bouncing lightly, her body settles at the nearby table like skimmed cream, Olione doesn't think the woman's said one word before tucking herself into the seat.

Finally, finally, the king moves. He moves like a mountain, each clothing plane pushing against and out. There's enough weight to each fabric face that Olione should be half-convinced they'll split at the seams like tectonic plate proper, but they don't, and she feels a swell of pride through the base of her heels. The king rumbles with laughter, loud and confident like a hardly-realized sorcerer; he rumbles like the rolling thunder barely containe

The king moves, and the sun moves with him, light coiling every which way. He settles at the table a few paces from his throne. At least a degree, he shifts slightly from King Orphemeral to Appolyon. Olione can tell who will and won't be heard today by the few that step forward to see a better look and those that step back. The waiting, tilted on their axis, should just go home: they haven't any business with his brilliance. There is an ease induced by the still-unsettled light, a comfort that relaxes like dust against a painting.

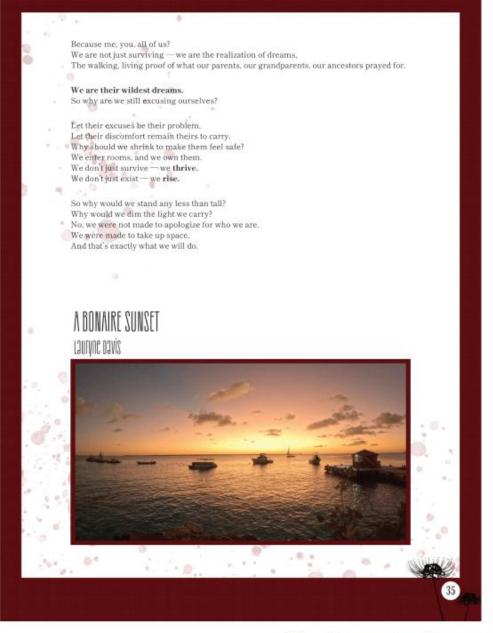
She's chosen seven suits, classic off-white.

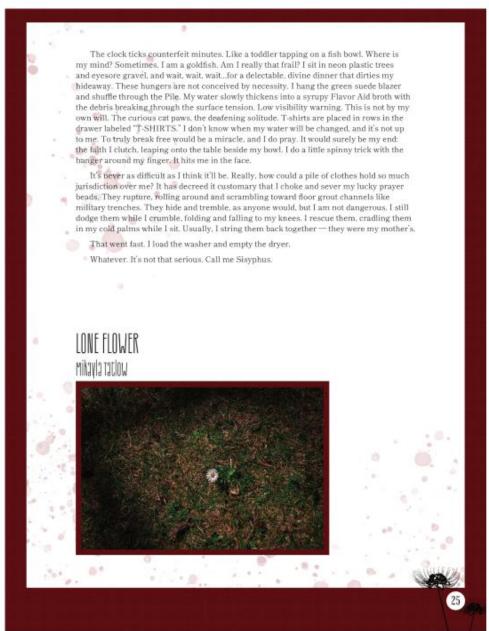
We changed all text to black for consistency

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





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.

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.



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After

Before

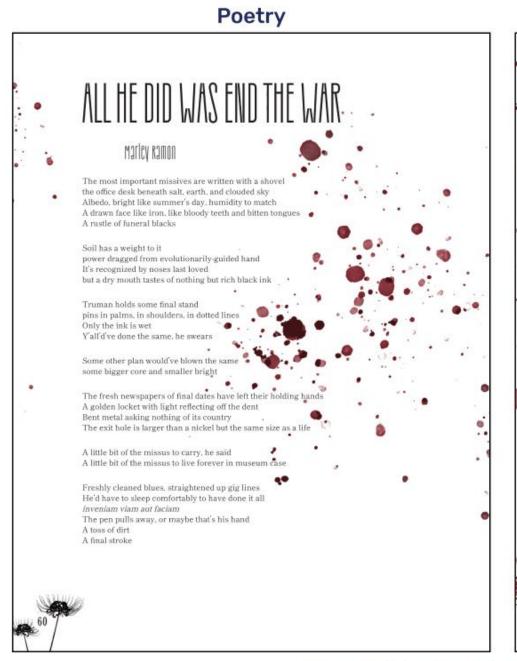
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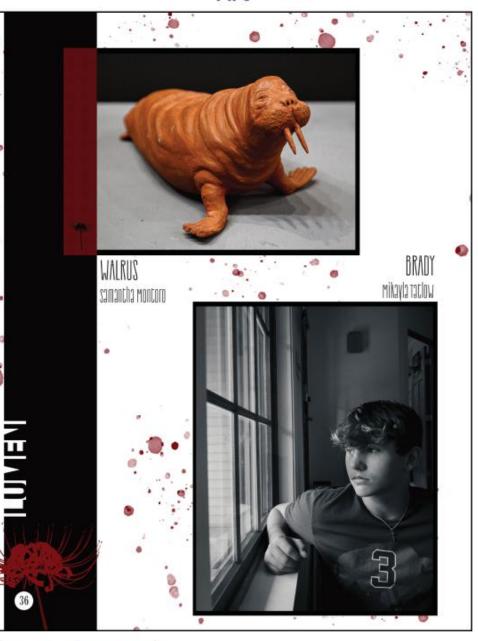
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LAUNCH

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.

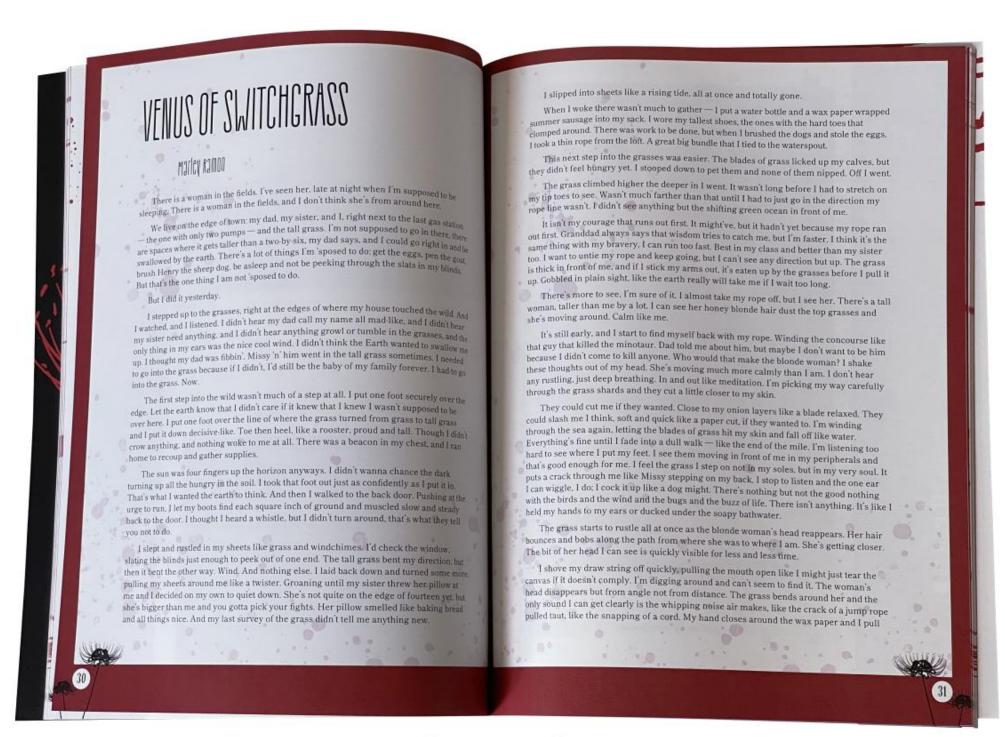




We published printed magazines and a web page with bonus content

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



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