



Background Research for Back Issues

Submitted By:
Carrie Shetler
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Submitted To:
Dr.. Ameeta Jadav
The Art Institute of Atlanta



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Overview

Back Issues, a compilation of prose and poetry by Ann Kline, gets its name from the effect a back injury had on her life. The title is also a play on publications; their old issues being “back issues”. The poems are titled by the date they were written.

Through the use of animation software and my own interpretation of the poems, I would like to take this poetry and turn it into a multimedia presentation that would allow the user to experience each poem visually and immerse them emotionally. Each piece will have an individual message that ties into the theme.

The purpose of the project is to create a visual experience that appeals to the user’s emotional side. All elements of the project are aimed at that goal. At the same time, this project should encompass the highest quality in order to showcase myself as a conceptual designer.



Target Audience

- **Intellectuals**

- 14-65 years of age
- Low to middle income
- active readers, interested in literature
- * understand symbolic meaning
- * seek out other forms of expression
- broad range of computer skills
- use internet for literature resources
- like to watch literary films and programs

- **Complex Intellectuals**

- have favorite authors
- go to spoken word performances, visual arts, poetry readings.
- watch independent films

- **Motion Graphics Buffs**

- interested in Motion Graphics
- conceptual thinkers
- interested in Multimedia



User Profiles & Scenarios

Cara Moore - Average Literary Intellectual

Profile

Cara is a 27 year old writer who likes to watch independent movies and reads a book a week.

Attributes

- 14-65 years of age
- Low to middle income
- active readers, interested in literature
- * understand symbolic meaning
- * seek out other forms of expression
- broad range of computer skills
- use internet for literature resources
- like to watch literary films and programs

Scenario: Cara comes to the site because heard about the unique way poetry is interpreted in a visual experience. Cara wants to view the pieces in order by date.

Relevant Features: time line display of navigation gives Cara a sense of order while clicking the pieces to view them.

Behavior: Cara will spend some time familiarizing herself with the navigation and it's order before finally clicking the first piece. She will watch the piece in its entirety before clicking on the next one. She will understand the division between the two parties in the piece.



User Profiles & Scenarios

Randy Blazak - Complex Intellectual

Profile

Randy is a freelance writer who attends poetry readings and spoken word events. He ran a literary magazine at one point.

Attributes

- have favorite authors
- go to spoken word performances, visual arts, poetry readings.
- watch independent films

Scenario: Randy heard about this site from a friend at a poetry reading. He is interested to see how the poems were interpreted from words on the page to ideas on screen.

Relevant Features: text versions or narration only audio files, multimedia pieces of the poems he reads.

Behavior: Randy reads the text versions of the poems before watching one of the pieces. Upon viewing, Randy is able to see how the poem was interpreted visually.



User Profiles & Scenarios

Brian Smith - Motion Graphics Buff

Profile

Brian is a Visual Communications Designer who specializes in motion graphics.

Attributes

- interested in Motion Graphics
- conceptual thinkers
- interested in Multimedia

Scenario: Brian came to the site because of a link on a developer forum. Not one for poetry, Brian just wants to see what the motion graphics are like.

Relevant Features: The interface's ambiguity, the 4 pieces.

Behavior: Brian locates a (random) piece and watches it. He notices many elements that tie the piece to the interface.



Business & Communication Goals

The following goals provide understanding of what Back Issues will accomplish. The overall goal is to tap into the user's emotions by using multimedia elements to convey the meaning.

Communication Goals

- To appeal to the user's emotional side.
- To take the selected pieces from Back Issues and make them into a collective experience that taps into the users emotions through imagery and sound.
 - To convey an unstable yet somewhat hopeful emotional experience.
 - To portray concepts that are in sync with the emotional context of each piece.
- To create the perception that Back Issues is more than just poetry, it's an emotional existence.
- To allow the user to form their own interpretation of the piece while conveying the central message.

Business Goals

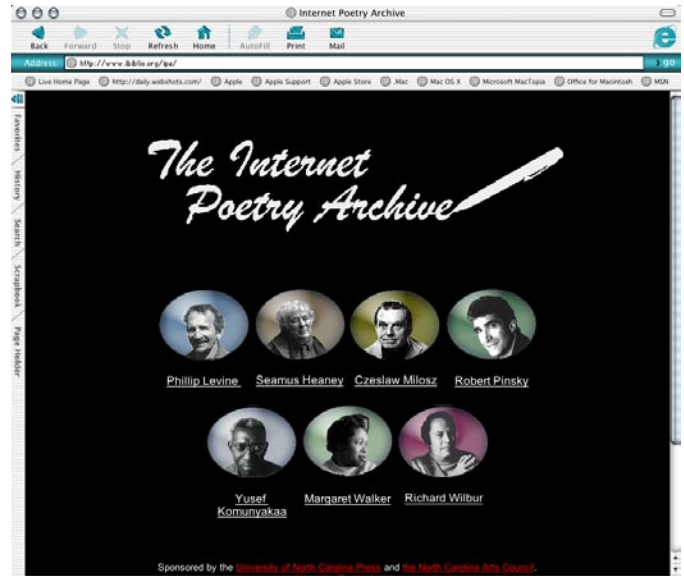
- To create a project situation that draws on creativity while incorporating applied skills that I have learned at AiA.
- To drive users to the site by with keywords and submitting to search engines.



Competitive Analysis

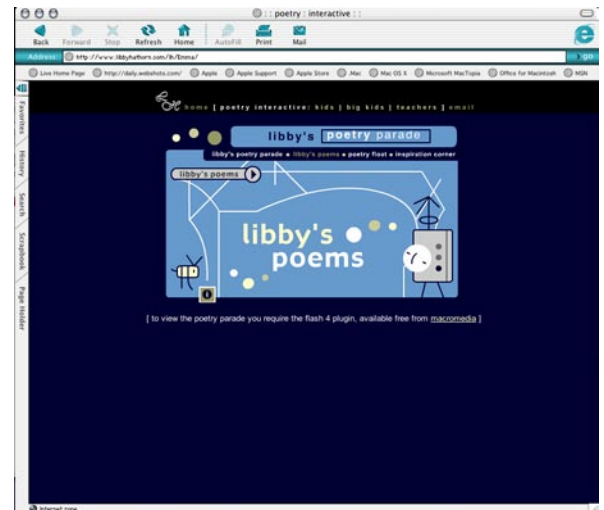
The Internet Poetry Archive - <http://www.ibiblio.org/ipa/>

This site serves as an archive of Poets. It is arranged in alphabetical order according to Poet. The reason I chose this site as a competitor is because it provides audio narration of each poem, allowing the user to experience the poem by listening “to the Reading” through Real Audio. I feel that this site is a good competitor for accessibility, in that you can read the poem on screen or listen to it through Real. This site however provides no visual design standards or any motion multimedia experiences.



Libby's Poetry Parade - <http://www.libbyhathorn.com/lh/Emma/>

Libby has provided poetry for kids in a fun, interactive flash interface. This site's look and feel is cute and inviting. These qualities are carried over into the presentation of the poetry, which are click throughs. I chose this site because of it's overall presentation. The branding is repeated through out the interface. Most of the animations are simple and short, but very effective in that they highlight elements of the poem.

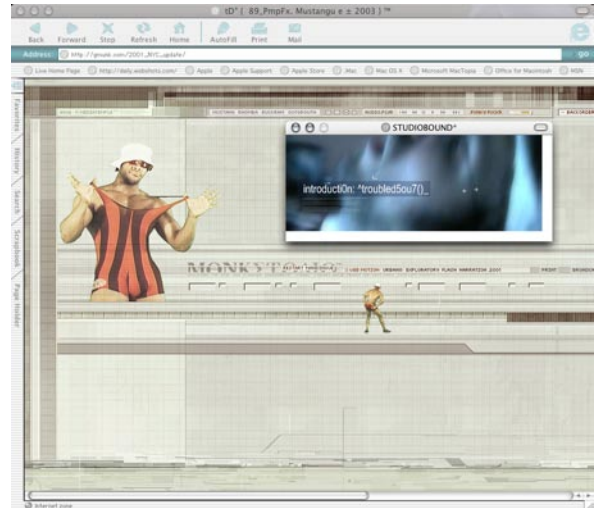




Inspiration

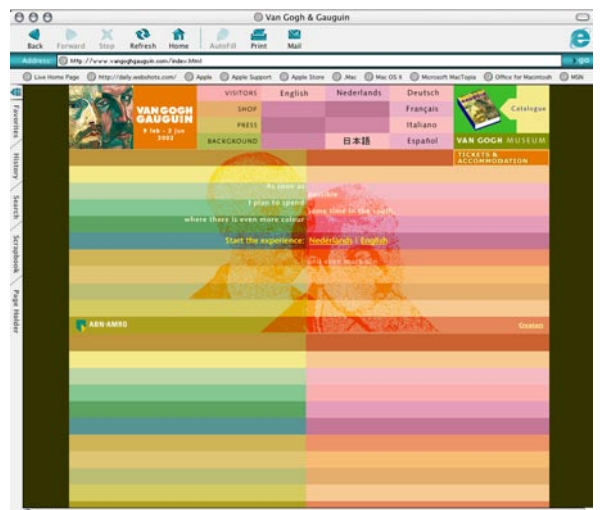
“STUDIOBOUND” - gmunk.com

This motion graphics piece has a really clean, concise look and feel. It's fast pace make you feel like you're watching something you shouldn't see, like you are peeping into someone else's world. There is no video; only images and animated text, as the piece moves in sync to the audio. I think Gmunk sets the highest standard for motion graphics in that his work is innovative visually and conceptually. His portfolio, and “StudioBound” in particular, is high quality and still viewable over DSL connection.



The Experience - vangoghgaugain.com

The Experience is a journey through the lives of Vincent Van Gogh and his friend, Paul Gauguin. Audio and animation are combined with symbolic, ambiguous navigation, allowing the user to experience their lives personally with quotes, paintings and letters. The first time I saw this I knew I wanted to experiment more with motion graphics. I felt like I had stepped into a little world that revolved around these two artists. I feel that this will provide strong inspiration for Back Issues because it has a very strong message, succeeding in enticing and educating the user, while making them into a third, silent party in the experience. The site that houses The Experience has the branding of the project and an extremely colorful and vivid presentation.





Supporting Resources

- **Video Production: Tim Knight**

Tim has many years experience behind the video camera. He will assist me in gathering the footage I need for the pieces by providing camera expertise.

- **Audio Production: Toma Oliver**

Toma will assist me in the recording of the narration for each piece. He will also be providing music for one of the pieces.

- **Music Resources: Toma Oliver, Elliott Augustine.**

Both are long time musicians with interest in digital music. Each have been commissioned to provide original music to be used with permission.

- **Content Consultant & Writer: Ann Kline**

Ann wrote Back Issues and will be consulted on symbolism and feel for the experience.

- **Back Issues (July 2000). By Ann Kline**

Original poetry published by the writer. Ann commissioned friend and artist, Ford, to create the Back Issues logo, which appeared on the cover.

- **Music loops from Thom Collins - www.tdcollins.com**

Thom Collins provides music loops through his “media temple” but request that you ask permission. I contacted him by e-mail and let him know that I was a student interested in using his loops. He granted me permission by e-mail and showed interested in the final product. His site will also serve as inspiration for creating an environment that evokes feeling.



Essential Features

Business

- Indirectly promote the skills of Carrie Shetler as the creative lead on this project.
- Promote the brand, Back Issues, as a trademark of the zine and of Ann Kline.
- Give credit to all parties involved: advisors, artists, writer, musicians, video and audio assistance.

User

- Provide personal experience with broad messages.
- Slightly ambiguous navigation that is related to the content in a clear way.
- Edge-y, Intriguing Interface.
- Appeals to the target audiences.
- Allows the user to experience the poetry through sound and imagery.

Design

- Edge-y, Intriguing Interface, with ambiguous navigation that is related to the content.
- Overall branding of spinal theme, tied into all aspects of the presentation.
- Creates an environment that echoes the emotional state of the poems.

Functional

- Allow user to share experience with via a contact page.
- Play movies within the interface

Technical

- Fast download on dsl/high speed connection.
- Flash Player (6/7)
- Quicktime



Conclusion

Based on this research, Back Issues will entice users with innovative, cryptic design that creates a buzz to get users to the site. Back Issues should be housed in a interface that is dynamic in that it creates emotion through it's interface design and reinforces that emotional state with pieces. The user should be manipulated into feeling the enigmatic sensation of nothingness that is indefinite.