

# SOFT BANNERS

**Design and Mock Up Review: 11/8**

**Due: 11/15**

## ASSIGNMENT

Students work in groups of 4. For the design process, each student group immediately elects the person who will record ideas by writing them down; this person will have the title of the Recorder. Another member will be sketching out ideas as they are presented, making sure ideas are documented visually (other members will naturally be drawing as well when explaining their ideas). This member is the Sketcher. Another member will be the Researcher, looking up information online (when necessary), looking for visual examples of what is being discussed, keeping track of all the visuals and text that is pertinent for each idea. Another member of the team will be the Advancer; they will be responsible for advancing the group through the assignment by reading out and following the assignment's instructions. This person will be responsible for initiating decision making and working towards consensus. All team members will listen to each others' ideas with respect and positivity.

Each student group receives a list of words with their definitions. These words are not common. Each group will design banners that either :

1. visualize the meaning of the word
2. express their opinion towards a theme that this word can point to
3. create a striking abstract design that can give visual meaning and a well designed backdrop to the chosen word

**Group 1:** Proud, Sarah, Heejin, Parish

**Group 3:** Eugene, Jocelyn, Julia, April

**Group 2:** Maggie, J, Reece, Elysha

**Group 4:** Gloria, Rachel, Abby, Phoebe

**GRADING:** Everyone in the group receives the same grade, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If problems arise within a group, I need to be notified ASAP.

## REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each group makes 4 soft banners; each student will keep one banner at the end of the assignment.
2. Team members must work together to design and work on the banners. This is not an individual journey! This does not mean that everyone must have a physical hand in making all four banners. Use each others talents to streamline the process and tap into each group member's strengths.
3. Each banner must contain the chosen word; whether it is centrally located or not is entirely up to the students, but the word must be incorporated in some way, even if it is hidden (think washing instruction tag on clothing).
4. The following techniques may be used to create soft banners: *patchwork, quilting, applique, silk screening with cut vinyl, block printing, resist dyeing, and dyeing fabric.*
5. Both front and back of the banners must be considered.

6. The hanging mechanism/display must be considered.
7. Shape and size of each banner must be decided upon by the team to complement the chosen designs and concepts.
8. The four banners can be variations of one visual design. The four banners can function as one piece, making sense only when put together. The four banners can represent four different ways to respond to the word.
9. Team members must have regular meetings with a minimum of three for the design process alone. The Recorder will document progress through images and overview notes in Slack. Each group will have their own channel to post regular updates of all meetings.

**STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. Weaknesses can be strengthened. Strengths should be shared.**

Each group member will have strengths and weaknesses when working on this assignment. Good teamwork relies on each members honest assessment of their own strengths and weaknesses. All of us are a wealth of knowledge and skills but all of us also have plenty of skills to improve upon.

If someone is excellent at using Photoshop and Illustrator, it is this student who should take the lead in adjusting images for vinyl cutting. Having said that, those who do not know Photoshop and Illustrator well can use this as an opportunity to learn by following the process and playing second fiddle. This is what I mean by strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses can be strengthened. Strengths should be shared. This is the motto for this assignment.

Another example, if the design of the Banners requires areas of tight craftsmanship, the team should identify students who have the best craft. If someone in your team can make an excellent tight seam, this is the person who should be working on complicated patchwork areas that require that level of craftsmanship BUT this does not mean that those whose seams are not as good cannot learn from that and cannot improve by working alongside. This is the opportunity for those students who do not have enough control over the sewing machine to learn, practice, and shine.

**DESIGN PROCESS**

No creative process is the same and everyone approaches the creative process differently. The design process that I outline below is only one way of approaching a challenge. Having said that, there are features that most creative processes share and those are: multiple cycles of **ITERATION** and **EVALUATION**.

**ITERATION** is the act of expanding possibilities for an idea, whether visual or conceptual; it is taking an idea and finding variety of ways to achieve its expression, for example. **EVALUATION** is the act of identifying which iteration is most successful. Repeating this process over and over is referred to by many names such as brainstorming, the design process, creating, artistic practice etc.

But how does one identify what is **SUCCESSFUL**? Such judgments always require criteria of what is being valued and sought after etc. What is valued and sought after can be driven by internal and private values (your personality, your heritage, your social, political, spiritual beliefs, your trauma, even your goals in life) and/or by the audience (the market, the teacher, the parents, the art world, the

craft world, the grant from the government, the grant from the museum, the one special person you want to impress etc). This encompasses formal and conceptual choices.

In the case of this class, the teacher sets a lot of the parameters for what should be sought after and you can use these to judge if your ideas are answering the call of the assignment. Yet, this assignment also leaves a lot of freedom to you, the maker, to set further criteria against which you will judge the outcome of your group's endeavors. You are responsible to identify what private and internal goals and values are important for you to achieve individually and as a group. In this design process, you will be prompted to identify what is important to you, what your values are. Please take this ask seriously.

## STEPS

1. Arrange tables so that each group sits around one large space and has plenty of room to draw, make mock ups and use electronic devices for research.
2. Identify strengths of all members.
3. Identify who will take on the role of the Recorder, the Sketcher, the Advancer, the Researcher.
4. Each group should go through the words on the list and discuss the words' visualization potential. Read out each word and discuss what comes to mind. Note descriptive words that come to mind, that could be the foundation for images or abstract designs in the banner. Feel free to do a quick internet search on the word. Click on images to see what visuals show up. If the word does not incite any ideas, descriptive words, MOVE ALONG. Work fast. Do not judge yourself. Say everything that comes to mind. If none of the words tickle your brain, ask Natalya for help immediately. Here are some helpful questions to answer when going through this process.
  - *Is this word easy to visualize?*
  - *Do you have something to say about the word and its connotation? Do you see how your opinion can be visualized?*
  - *Does the word lay a solid foundation for an abstract design?*
5. Choose three words from the list that everyone sees potential for visual representation and is excited to work with further. Answer the following questions:
  - *Which word lays solid foundation for a solid abstract design? Would this be a meaningful challenge to you?*
  - *Is communicating of a message, an opinion important to you? Which words are best suited for this endeavor?*
6. Once three words are selected, start brainstorming possible banners for each of the three words. Document all ideas. Set a time limit for each word, say 10 minutes, and do as many sketches as possible. The sketches do not need to be detailed, just good enough to document an idea. Try to come up with 2-5 ideas for each word. You should work both individually and as a group, molding and combining ideas.

7. Go over the generated ideas and do the following:
  - *Identify which ideas are more suitable for 4 individual banners, meaning 4 independent visual answers to one challenge.*
  - *Identify which ideas are more suitable for slight variations between 4 banners, basically same idea but expressed visually slightly differently.*
  - *Identify which ideas are more suitable for making 4 banners that communicate a message or visual effect as one, basically think of 4 banners functioning as one canvas.*
8. Discuss with the group and identify VALUES that you wish to guide you in the following steps of the design process. A simple way of saying this, “What are your goals? What is important to you?” Find visual examples from the art and design that express the qualities you find valuable, making sure that everyone in the group understands what you are referencing. As a group try to find a consensus of how you will approach the possibility of varied goals, varied aesthetic preferences etc. Remember, you do have 4 banners to work with.
  - *What is meaningful and challenging to you?*
  - *What aesthetic style are you attracted to? Some ideas are best expressed with a specific visual style. Are you comfortable to play with a different aesthetic language than what you are comfortable with? Are you comfortable stepping out of your comfort zone?*
  - *Do you have strong opinions that you wish to express? If so, how loud do you want to be? Do you want to be abrasive or polite? How do you want your grandmother to respond when she sees your creation? How do you want the person you wish to impress to respond when they see your creation?*
  - *Is it important to focus your efforts on purely abstract design? If so, how loud do you want to be? How do you want your grandmother to respond when she sees your creation? How do you want the person you wish to impress to respond when they see your creation?*
9. Look through the generated ideas and pick one. Create 5-10 variations on this idea now paying more attention to specific imagery, size, color, layout. Work fast. Your sketches do not need to be neat; they just need to be comprehensible to the group. Document everything with your phone, sketches, notes. If none of the designs are exciting, choose another idea and repeat the exercise.
10. Continue identifying best ideas and extrapolating them into further options. Repeat until you feel you have exhausted yourselves creatively. Use the criteria you have set out for yourselves to identify successful iterations.
11. By now, you should have an impressive amount of ideas and designs. Choose the design/approach for the four banners and begin making life size mock ups in paper and fabric, using pins, tape, thread. Adjust your designs when necessary. Make a plan of execution of the banners with team members. Balance time, your technical limitations and the limitations of techniques you will be using to create imagery.



**FILL OUT AND GIVE TO NATALYA**

	Name	Design Meeting 1 10/27-11/1	Design Meeting 2 11/1-11/3	Design Meeting 3 11/3-11/8
<b>GROUP 1</b>				
the Recorder				
the Sketcher				
the Advancer				
the Researcher				
<b>GROUP 2</b>				
the Recorder				
the Sketcher				
the Advancer				
the Researcher				
<b>GROUP 3</b>				
the Recorder				
the Sketcher				
the Advancer				
the Researcher				
<b>GROUP 4</b>				
the Recorder				
the Sketcher				
the Advancer				
the Researcher				