

18 advertisements in 18 days



18 Advertisements in 18 Days: A Case Study by Rachel Sevy

Show, don't tell. In this project, I made a new advertisement every day for 18 days in a row. My ads were photography-based, and the purpose of each of my photos was to communicate a message to an audience. In the past, I've done product photography that looked beautiful - nice setups with props, studio lighting, and backdrops. This time I had a goal beyond making products look pretty: I wanted my photos to tell a story.

I'm a graphic designer and photographer with a particular interest in marketing and advertising. In my work in the marketing field and in my studies, I have learned that some things will entice people to buy products more than other things. One of those things is eliciting emotion, and another is showing how the product will benefit their lives directly. In these advertisements, I tried to use both of those tactics to accomplish my objective of making effective advertisements.

I almost wish I could say that I improved drastically in those 18 days - that my day 18 was better than my day one, and that this project hanged the way I see and do things. But the way it happened was more up and down than that; there were good days and bad days, easy days and hard days.

There were days that I spent until nearly midnight trying to figure out what was wrong and how to fix it before I had to turn it in, and on those days I knew I'd probably start over the next day if I could. On other days I started early and finished quickly as ideas fell into place. Every day presented its own challenges, and I'll highlight a few challenges and successes throughout this study. I'll begin by highlighting a few of the projects to show a brief look into my process. I will then display the rest of the projects.

table of contents

Page 1 • Glade Ad Process

Page 2 • SodaVine Ad Process

Page 3 • Grandma's Ad Process

Page 4 • Hershey's Ad Process

Page 5 • Kraft Ad Process

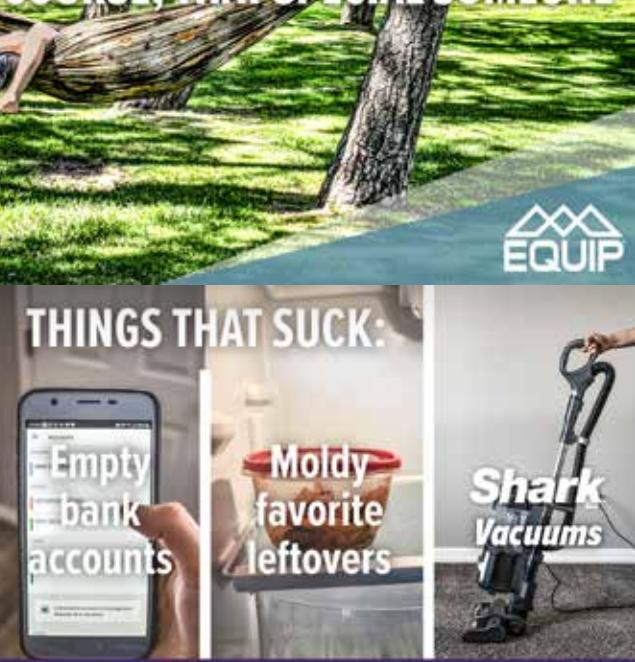
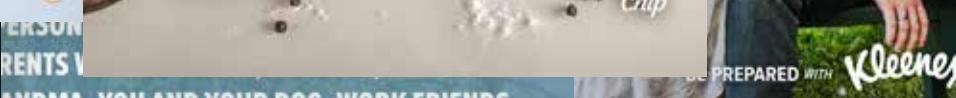
Page 6 • Alexa ads

Pages 7 - 10 • Other Ads

Page 10 • Conclusion

Page 11 • Contact

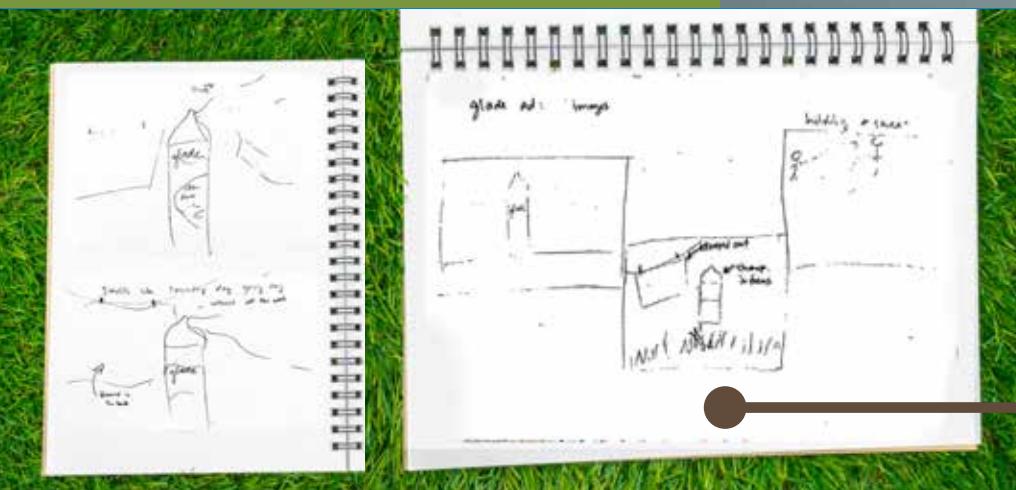
Attributions



GLADE

An effective advertisement will make a statement beyond describing the function of the product. When I decided to advertise Glade's "fresh linen" air freshener, I decided to make it look like the can of air freshener was spraying out a towel or a sheet.

Originally I had planned to take a couple of different photos and use Photoshop to bring them together, but I ended up doing most of it physically with some post-editing.



Sketches

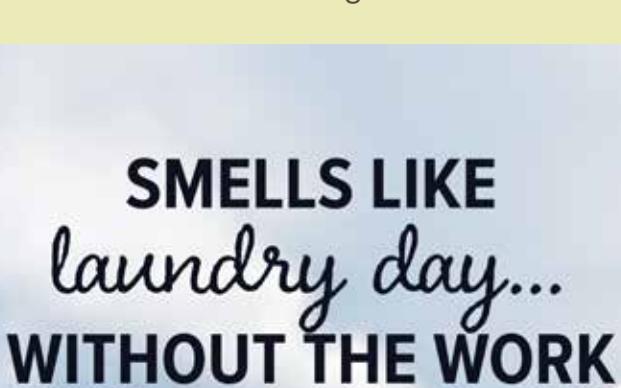
Sketching for photos is different from sketching for other graphics because I know I won't be creating each asset in a composition. Some of my sketches were more detailed, but I tried to focus on composition, angles, and leaving room for text placement.

For this ad, I also included sketches of different photos I planned to take to Photoshop together.

Photography

As I mentioned at the beginning, I didn't end up taking different photos. Instead, I rigged up a washcloth between a fence and my tripod, pinning the corner of the cloth into the nozzle of the can. I got a low angle to show the grass and to make the can look larger.

The first photo here is the one I used for the ad. In Photoshop I used the clone stamp tool, content-aware fill, and other small adjustments to get rid of the clothespins and fill in the cloth on the bottom right corner.



Final Ad

I learned three important things from doing this ad:

1. Having a call to action is vital to any effective ad. For several of my first ads, I neglected to include a call to action. I remembered to include it on more of the last few ads, including this one. This call to action simply informs people of their next step if they are interested in receiving the benefit of this product.

2. It's important to show the benefit someone will receive from buying a product, not just tell them what the product does. This ad plays to a common dislike for doing laundry while emphasizing the benefit of doing laundry. If you want the benefit without the work, buy Glade air freshener.

3. This ad wouldn't be nearly as effective if it had a nice can of Glade spray on a studio mat with white lighting and purple flowers around it. Having the towel coming out of the spray not only *tells* people that it will make their house smell like freshly washed laundry hanging to dry, it *shows* them.



Sodavine

This advertisement didn't turn out the way I pictured it in my head, but in some ways, I think it turned out better. The idea behind this ad was to show the idea that SodaVine is bringing the 40s/50s to you. I showed this by having the colors fade on the vintage side while having the girl's arm come into the modern-day side. There is still room for improvement, but with the one-day project timeline, I think I got it to a pretty good place!

SKETCHES

Sketches for this were, as you can see, different from the composition of the final ad. Again I tried to focus on composition for these sketches, but sometimes things just don't go as planned!

An oversight in sketching my ideas was text placement. I realized when I placed text that I hadn't left room in my composition for good text placement.



PHOTOGRAPHY

I worked with two models for this ad. I wasn't sure how good the lighting would be inside SodaVine, but it ended up being good enough for decent shots throughout the restaurant.

One thing that made it hard to follow the sketches when doing actual photography was hand placement. It turns out I should have sketched or practiced hand placement because it was trickier than I imagined!

The last photo shown was the winner!

FINAL AD

Finally, in post-production, I used Photoshop adjustment layers, Camera Raw filters, and masking to make each half of the image look different. Making the two images blend together was an interesting challenge. I tried making it a hard line at first, but then I used a brush on the masks to make them softly blend into each other instead.

I learned from making this ad that adaptability is key because sometimes things turn out better than you imagine!



Grandma's

With a brand name like Grandma's, I knew I had to convey the idea of homemade cookies, grandkids, and lots of chocolate chips. With the help of two models, I created this composition that would make people remember fond childhood memories and create an association of those memories with this brand.



Sketches

My sketches originally just included the idea portrayed in the first photograph below - a spread of chocolate chip cookie ingredients that would properly say, "homemade cookies." My mentor suggested I add a human element to it, so I added the grandma and grandkid's hands.

Photography

This photoshoot taught me a lesson about being prepared. I had an LED light and I had a battery, but I didn't charge my battery. So, only some of the pictures had the LED light, like the two on the left.

I used the bottom photo on the right, which is, frankly, not a good photo. Others are decidedly better, including the two on the left. However, it had the composition I was looking for, including having the child's head in the photo. I had to crop in and do a lot of editing, which illustrates the importance of taking high quality photos that allow for extensive editing.



Final Ad

In addition to cropping, some of my in-post edits included lightening shadows, raising the temperature, and adding contrast by changing blacks, whites, and highlights. These edits created the soft, warm, faded look that contributed to the feeling of being in Grandma's kitchen.

Things I learned:

1. Always charge your light batteries before a shoot.
2. If this project had not been limited to a day and if I were to edit this ad further, I would crop it to only show the hands and arms, ending the crop at the top of the table. My mentor pointed out that this picture wasn't flattering to Grandma, so just having the hands would have been better.
3. It's best to get your photo the best it can be while shooting but even a bad photo can turn into a great one.

HERSHEY'S hersheys

Sponsored ✓

[Shop Now](#)

452 Likes

hersheys Forget the diamonds, she wants a kiss. No, not like that! Like this.

HERSHEY'S hersheys

Sponsored ✓

[Shop Now](#)

346 Likes

hersheys Forget the diamonds, she wants a kiss. No, not like that! Like this.

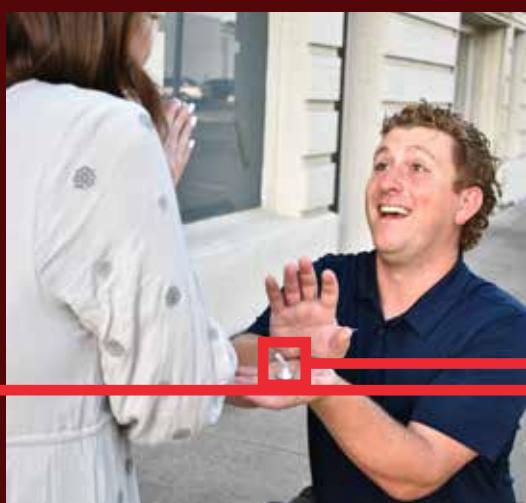
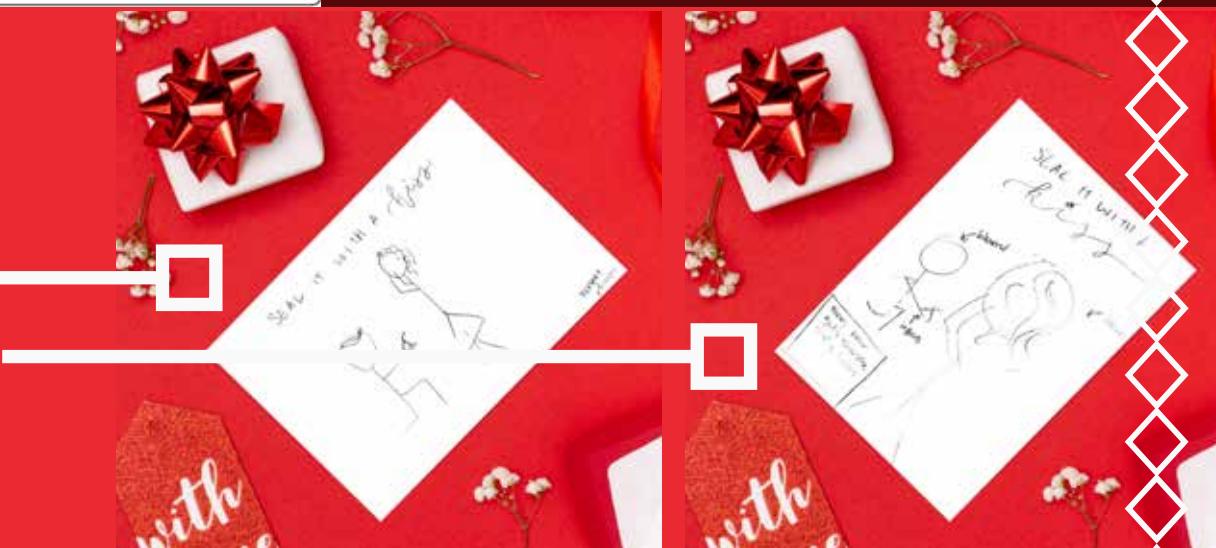
HERSHEY'S

This is one of my favorites. I had a great time with this couple, the lighting was beautiful, and I was able to do things in post to enhance the ads even more.

After I took the photos, I tried making the ad with both of these photos and ended up loving them both! So here's a mini ad campaign, "Seal it With a Kiss."

Sketches

These sketches were primarily to get the concept down and to brainstorm angles. The first sketch is from a side angle, and the second sketch is from an over-the-shoulder angle. I tried both, as shown in my photos below. I also brainstormed focus points and fonts in my sketches.



Photography

I took several photos with different angles, and I chose the two on the bottom. The photos were good overall, but I ran into a slight problem: the Hershey Kiss was getting lost in the rest of the photo.

In Photoshop, I selected the Kiss and made it bigger. I also used masking to apply edits to the Kiss alone, lowering the highlights, making it sharper, and lowering shadows and blacks.

All of these edits helped the Kiss stand out a lot more, as you can see below. I also did basic adjustments to the rest of the photo.



Final Ad

I made the final ads square with an Instagram campaign in mind, as shown above in my mockups. I'm pleased with how the message comes across in these ads! After looking at it later, I noticed some adjustments I'd make including adjusting the text placement to make it more visible and avoid tangents, but overall I am pleased with this result.

KRAFT

This was one of the first days of the project. When I think of Kraft macaroni and cheese, I think of my childhood and busy moms who need an easy meal. In coming up with this ad, I wanted to capture that essence. With paper, a macaroni necklace, colored pencils, and crayons I showed the idea that Kraft macaroni and cheese is the perfect food for kids. Not only is it an easy meal, it can also provide a fun craft activity for them.



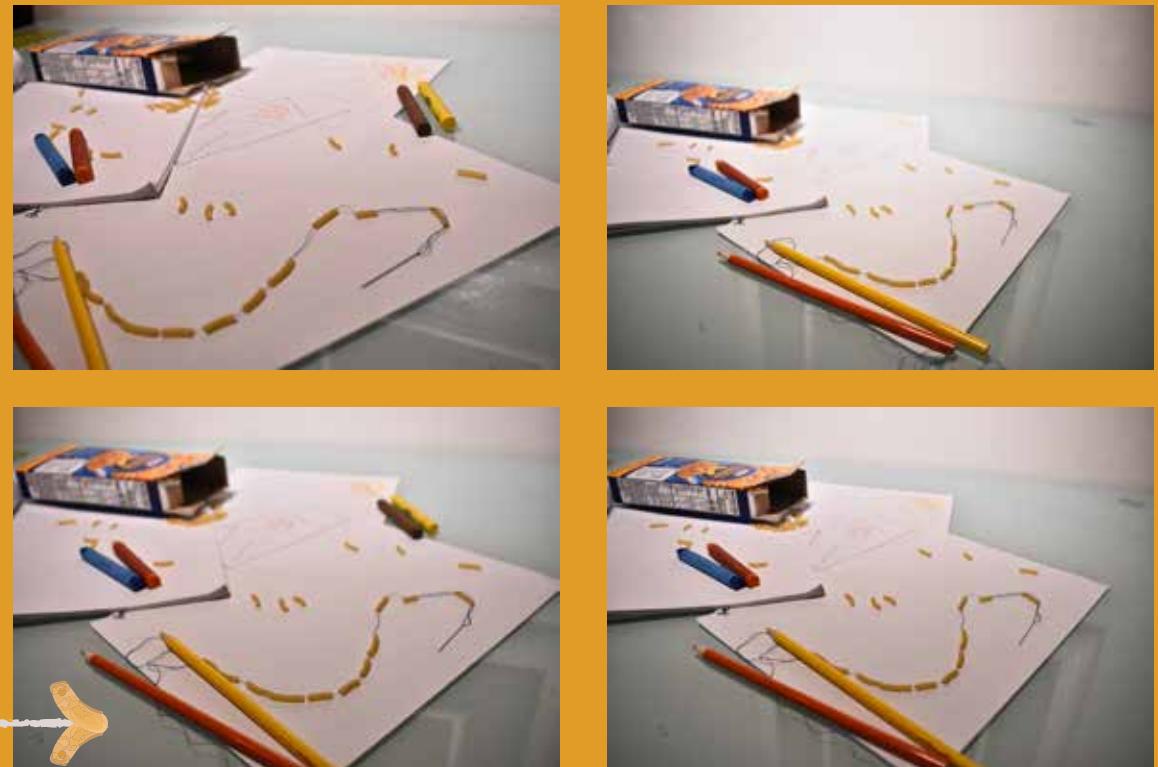
Sketches

My sketches were focused on creating a good composition for this photo and figuring out the best way to convey this concept. This proved to be useful when it came time to take my photos and add text!

Photography

This day was a perfect example of how helpful sketches can be! I had a very clear idea of what I was going to do for the project, and I implemented that idea following my sketches. I changed the angle a bit when I actually took the photos, but other than that, it was pretty simple to just photograph the layout I'd planned and sketched.

As I mentioned, this was one of my first days of projects, and it was my first time attempting an indoor studio. I have two LED lights and between those and the lamp I achieved a well-lit photo!



Final Ad

Although my lighting was good, I lightened shadows more in post. I also raised the vibrance and did other simple edits. Again thanks to my sketches, I had left room for text in my composition, so I put it in all the clean white space.

With this ad I think I accomplished my goal of sending a message that Kraft macaroni and cheese is a great food for kids. It says that Kraft is there to help out, which highlights a benefit rather than just a feature of the product.





Alexa ads

For two days of this project, I did a two-part ad campaign for Amazon Alexa. As I've talked about, I know it's most effective to show benefits rather than tell features. I also know that eliciting emotion is an effective way to help people remember your advertisement and feel a need for your product. With these, I showed that Alexa could help you in your hard times by calling Mom - or whoever it may be - for you.

Setup

Because I would need to set my camera to expose the phone screen well, I knew I had to light my background or else the phone screen would be bright and the background dark. I added a lamp as well as a box LED light to create a glow in the background of the photo.

I also set my camera on a tripod so that I could hold my phone with one hand and still have my camera steady.



Second ad



Photography

I had my friend come model for me, and I didn't think to tell her to wear a certain color of shirt - mostly because it didn't really matter; most colors would work. But she showed up wearing an orange shirt - yikes.

I decided I'd try to color change on Photoshop, and if that didn't work, I'd have her borrow a shirt. A few minutes later, with no borrowing, I had the result below.

Takeaways

Doing this mini-campaign was an interesting exercise in consistency. I had to make these ads look like they belonged in the same campaign, which I accomplished through a few things:

- The same font
- Similar text placement
- Similar placement of Alexa
- Similar colors (which were based on the blue and green in Alexa's light ring)
- Same message and slogan

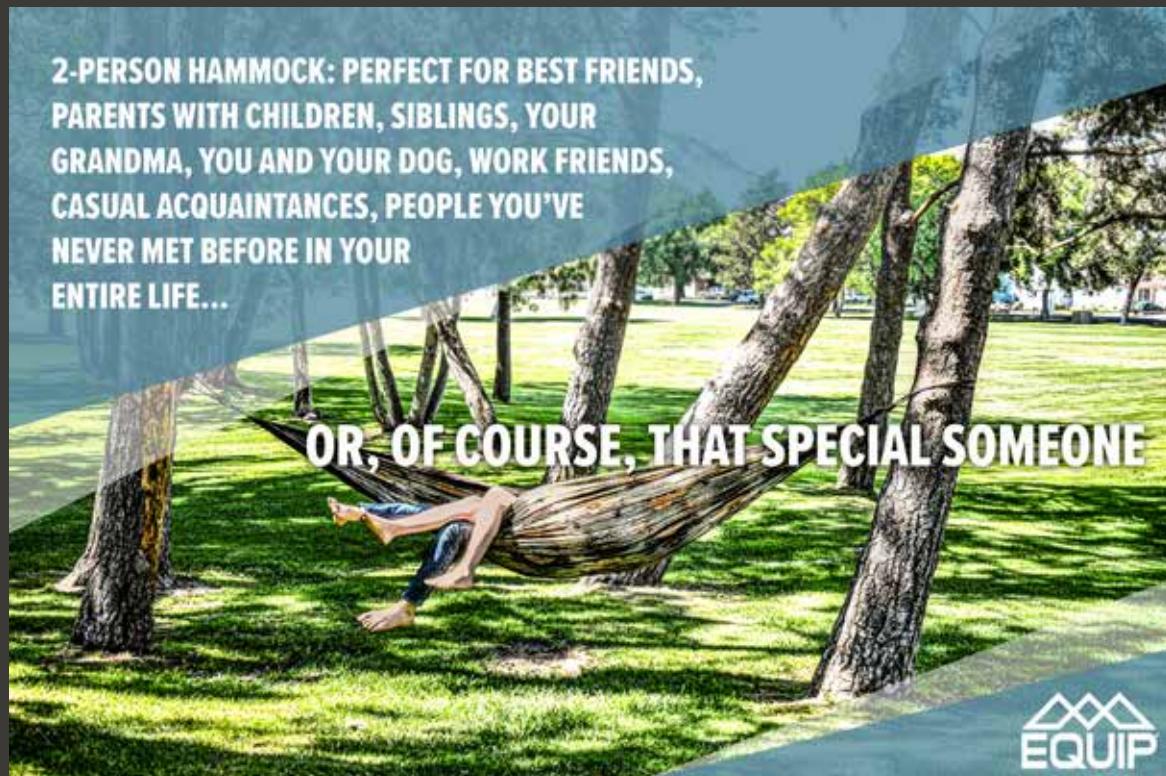
The logos did change, which was because I, unlike Amazon's graphic designers, didn't have access to their logo in a variety of colors.



STAX

This was the first of my 18 days. I wanted to say that Stax would make a good hiking snack by using chip Stax in a row of rock stacks.

While the message could be even clearer by putting the setup more in the woods, the composition of the photo is good and the setup helps my message come across.



FENIX

This day was another challenge because I had to wait for it to get dark outside in August, which left me about two hours to do the whole project (instead of my usual 3-5 hours). I had a plan and I had my sketches, but things didn't go as planned. I tried a long shutter speed first, with the thought that I could use a flashlight to illuminate the trees during the long exposure. However, this wasn't an effective way to capture the silhouette - the light around the hands spread out, nearly covering the hand shadow. I then tried a faster shutter speed, which proved to be more effective since it reduced the amount of ambient light in my photo. In post, I adjusted highlights and shadows to get a better silhouette. It turned out okay, but I wished I had more time.

EQUIP

I gave myself a challenge on this day: get my photo in ONE shot. My goal with this challenge was to make sure everything was as perfect as possible the first time, instead of having to shoot, check, and re-shoot several times (which is typical). I did take a test shot or two to adjust settings, but I made extra effort to frame the image, check the background, adjust my models' legs, adjust the hammock, etc. before taking the image to avoid having to take as many. I took four shots, so I didn't accomplish my challenge, but I reduced my number of shots significantly!



Here are the remainder of
the 18 days:

CASCADE



REALEMON

Fake Lemon.





Pros to Amazon Day Delivery:
-It's convenient.

Cons to Amazon Day Delivery:
-You may not be able to open your door when you come home.

Set your Amazon Day today with prime



THINGS THAT SUCK:

Mondays

Empty bank accounts

Moldy favorite leftovers

Shark Vacuums

SOME THINGS SHOULD SUCK. YOUR VACUUM IS ONE OF THEM. **Shark** SharkClean.com



FINAL AD - SWISS MISS

This was my final day! While I feel like there was general growth over the course of the 18 days, I don't feel that this was the best out of all of the projects. I do like the composition and the concept, but I struggled with the text. I tried several color combinations between the red fading ribbon, the main block text, the Christmas text, the cross-out

line, and the sparkles. The one that made it the most readable was this one. I left the calendar on April as a subtle hint that any time of year can be Christmas with Swiss Miss, but I have received feedback from multiple that it either goes unnoticed or the message is lost. Overall, however, this effectively communicates my message!

CONCLUSION

This project was a good test of my skills. My previous photography, graphic design, and advertising experience came together in creating these 18 advertisements. I learned a lot from the process. Here are a few things that I took away after completing these 18 projects:

1. I learned to think more deeply about the meaning behind my photos. Rather than focusing solely on composition and lighting and nice-looking props, I had a goal to communicate a message with each photograph. This has changed my mindset towards product photography.

2. It's always better to have time to review, receive feedback about, and revise projects, but it's possible to create quality things in just a day. If I need to create a lot of good quality content quickly, I can.

3. Most of the time, the photography was the easiest part. This was partly because I sketched out compositions for all my photos beforehand. I typically don't sketch for photos - after all, as I discussed briefly while explaining my process, there

isn't much point in making a detailed sketch of each object I photograph. But I learned how useful composition and angle sketches can be, especially on a tight schedule when there's not as much time for experimentation.

4. The hardest part was usually text placement, which revealed a flaw in my sketching process. Sometimes my sketches included text placement; I knew that would be a vital part of my final ad. However, other times my sketches focused solely on the photography and after I took my well-planned photo I found myself struggling to place text. I chose most of my fonts before starting the project, but sometimes they didn't work as well with my photos. However, I found solutions and most of the time they worked well!

This was a project full of highs and lows. Good days and bad days, hard days and easy days, and some designs better than others. Doing 18 projects in 18 days was a useful and fun experience, and it was an effective way to improve my skills.

Work with me!

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Socials:

LinkedIn:

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<https://www.behance.net/rachelnielson>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/RachelSevyPhoto>

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/rachelsevy_photo/

Mockup attributions:

Glade, Kraft magazine mockup: Mockup: <https://www.freepik.com/psd/magazine-mockup>

Magazine mockup psd created by user17882893 - www.freepik.com

Grandma's Cookies Sign mockup: Image by https://www.freepik.com/free-psd/city-food-billboard-mock-up_15595690.htm#query=store%20display&position=10&from_view=keyword Freepik

SodaVine Billboard Mockup: <https://mockupfree.co/product/free-billboard-mockup-psd-2>

Grandma's Cookies Sketchbook Mockup: Image by https://www.freepik.com/free-psd/bake-someone-happy-book-with-gingerbread-hearts_6073177.htm#query=chocolate%20cookbook%20mockup&position=6&from_view=search&track=ais on Freepik

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