

# Portfolio

Emma Johnson  
2025

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# Résumé

## Contact Information

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## Education

**Bachelor of Fine Arts, Graphic Design**  
**Minor in Art History**

University of South Dakota  
Vermillion, South Dakota  
Dean’s List, Aug 2022–present  
Graduation expected May 2026

## Memberships

- USD AIGA Secretary, 2023–2024
- Saint Thomas More Newman Center  
Advisory Council, Aug 2024–present

## Honors & Awards

- 39th Annual Juried Stilwell Student Award  
Exhibition, Jan 2025
- Stilwell des Refusés, Jan 2025

## Experience

**Freelance Designer** | Vermillion, South Dakota | Aug 2024–present

- Create advertising materials for important events
- Generate brand identities
- Develop environmental graphics and outdoor advertising  
materials for fundraiser events

**Design Intern** | USD Marketing & Creative Services,  
Vermillion, South Dakota | May 2023–present

- Design university materials
- Print, trim, mount, and laminate materials
- Partner with clients to understand and achieve vision

**Design Consultant** | USD Coyote Business Consulting,  
Vermillion, South Dakota | Aug–Nov 2024

- Collaborated with a team of business students
- Updated website for South Dakota Trade using HubSpot
- Constructed standard operating procedures for how to use  
WISERTrade Database and manage data in Excel

## Software

- Adobe Photoshop
  - Adobe Illustrator
  - Adobe InDesign
  - Adobe After Effects
  - Adobe Acrobat
- Adobe XD
  - Audacity
  - Figma
  - HubSpot
  - Microsoft Word
- Microsoft PowerPoint
  - Keynote
  - Miro

# Emma Johnson

I grew up in the very small town of **Montrose, South Dakota**. I've always had a **love of art** and **creativity**, but most **especially storytelling**—whether that was in the form of movies, books, or video games. I was always **immersing myself in different worlds** as a kid. I think there is something so fascinating and beautiful about being able to experience and insert oneself into a different, vast universe.

I am proud to say my grandpa is a farmer, and I was able to spend a lot of my childhood outside on the farm. My siblings, cousins, and I could always find a way to **entertain ourselves with our surroundings**, no matter how mundane they were. When we put our imaginations together, there was nothing we could not do or no one we could not be.

Family is one of the most important and inspiring things in my life. I am lucky enough to have grown up with three incredible siblings. As the **youngest member of my family**, I have always **looked up to my older siblings**. Looking back, they have inspired me in numerous ways and have had an enormous **influence on who I have become**. My imagination and creativity thrive when I am around them. They have a way of increasing my enthusiasm and bringing out my creative side.

# Zaplutîca

## Scope

The scope of this project was to create a cohesive brand identity and visual style for a fictional telecommunications company named Zaplutîca. This included developing a logo, color palette, and other graphic elements such as a pattern that reflected the brand's values, mission, and target audience. The project involved designing key brand assets, stationery, ephemera, collateral materials, and a brand standards guide.

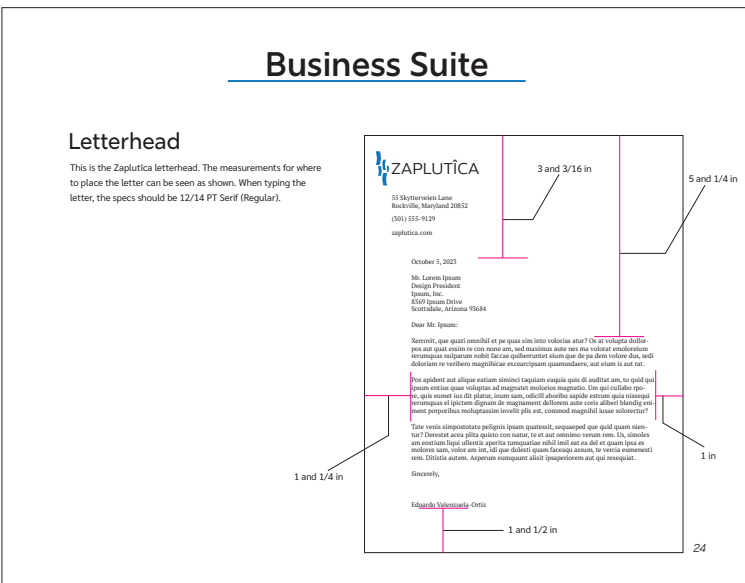
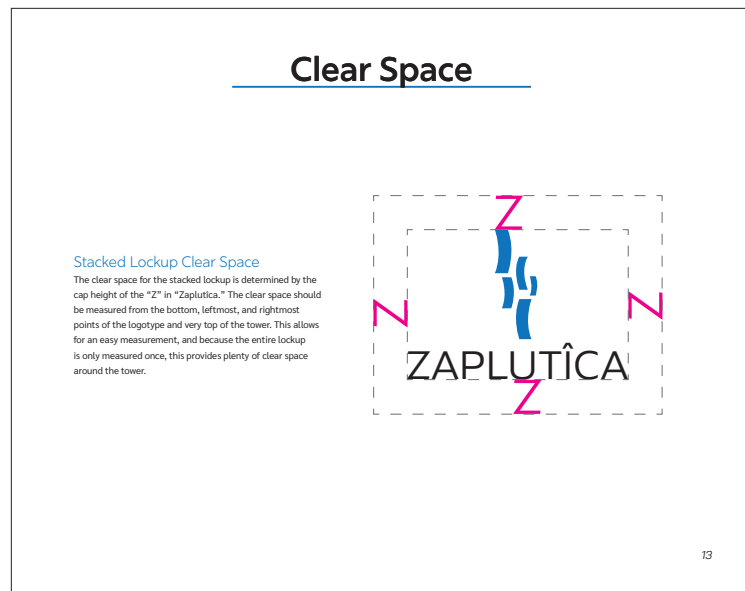
## Methodology

The first part of this project consisted of re-searching the telecommunications market and creating a competitive and visual audit. Next I started sketching and ideating logos. From there I developed design assets to brand materials. Lastly, guidelines were created to prevent improper use of the brand elements.

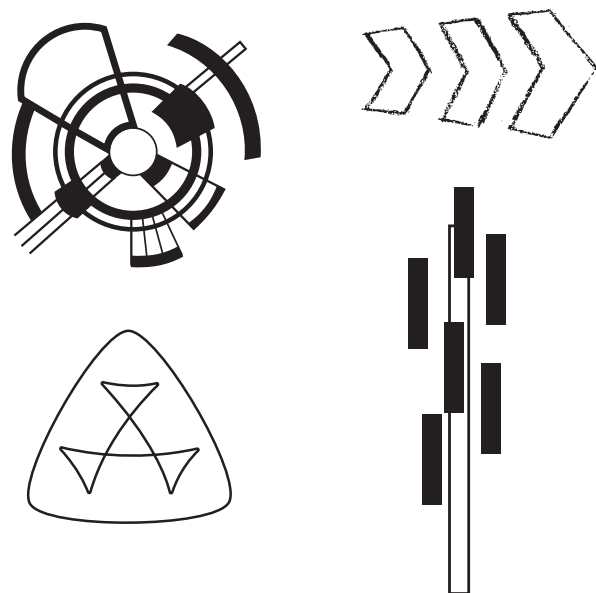
## Results/Learning

I learned what the process of developing a brand consists of and how much time, energy, and thought it takes. My main take away was that the logo itself is not the brand.





Early Logo Iterations



## Identity Design

# ORIS

## Scope

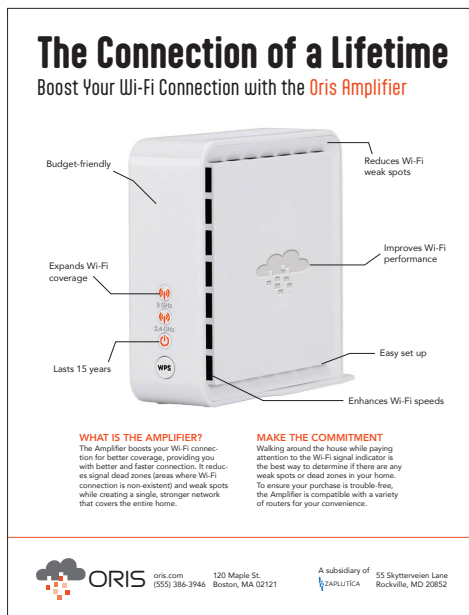
The scope of this project was to create a subsidiary for Zaplutica. I was given a cloud storage company called On-Ramp Internet Services. After developing the brand identity, I needed to create a product marketing sheet for the company.

## Methodology

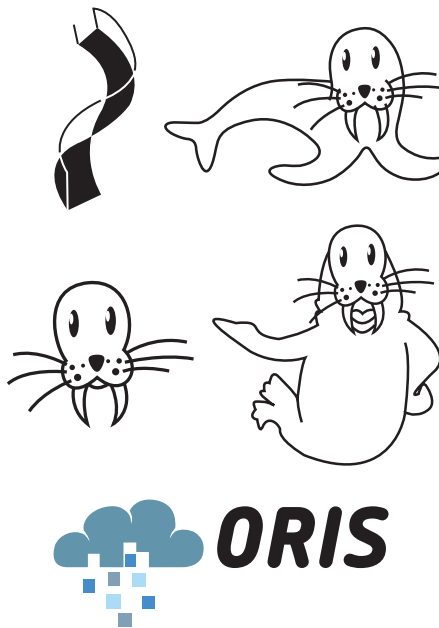
The research process consisted of researching the market and creating a competitive and visual audit. Next I began sketching logo ideas. Luckily, I was able to shorten my company name to ORIS. Once a logo idea was solidified, I began tweaking the logo and making numerous iterations. After my mark, type, and colors were finalized, I created and branded the product marketing sheet.

## Results/Learning

I learned how important ideating and iterating is when creating logos. This project was a great opportunity to work on making decisions about which design directions to pursue and which to abandon.



Early Logo Iterations



# 2025 Dakota Days Button Designs

## Scope

The purpose of this project was to design a button pin for the University of South Dakota’s Dakota Days. This button was for people of all ages from kids, to college students, to alumni, and beyond.

## Methodology

The University of South Dakota recently updated their coyote logo so I used this to my advantage in this project. I started iterating until I could not iterate anymore. Then came the difficult part: making a decision.

## Results/Learning

This was another project where I got to practice and continue to learn which designs needed to be abandoned.



# 2025 USD Olympics Logo Design

## Scope

The scope of this project was to create a logo for a new game competition at the University of South Dakota called USD Olympics. This competition will annually take place during USD’s homecoming week.

## Methodology

Before I began sketching, I researched the Olympic torch and I looked at what kinds of shapes are used for sports tournament logos. I wanted this project to have the look and feel of a competition. While I was sketching I thought of different ways I could show a torch or convey that this is a competition. I also experimented with how “USD” was incorporated—whether that was inside objects, or becoming the objects themselves like the flames or the torch.

## Results/Learning

I had fun with this project but I also got frustrated. My biggest take away was relearning that liking the look of my design is not the same thing as a design that works.



# Mental Health Matters (MHM)

## Scope

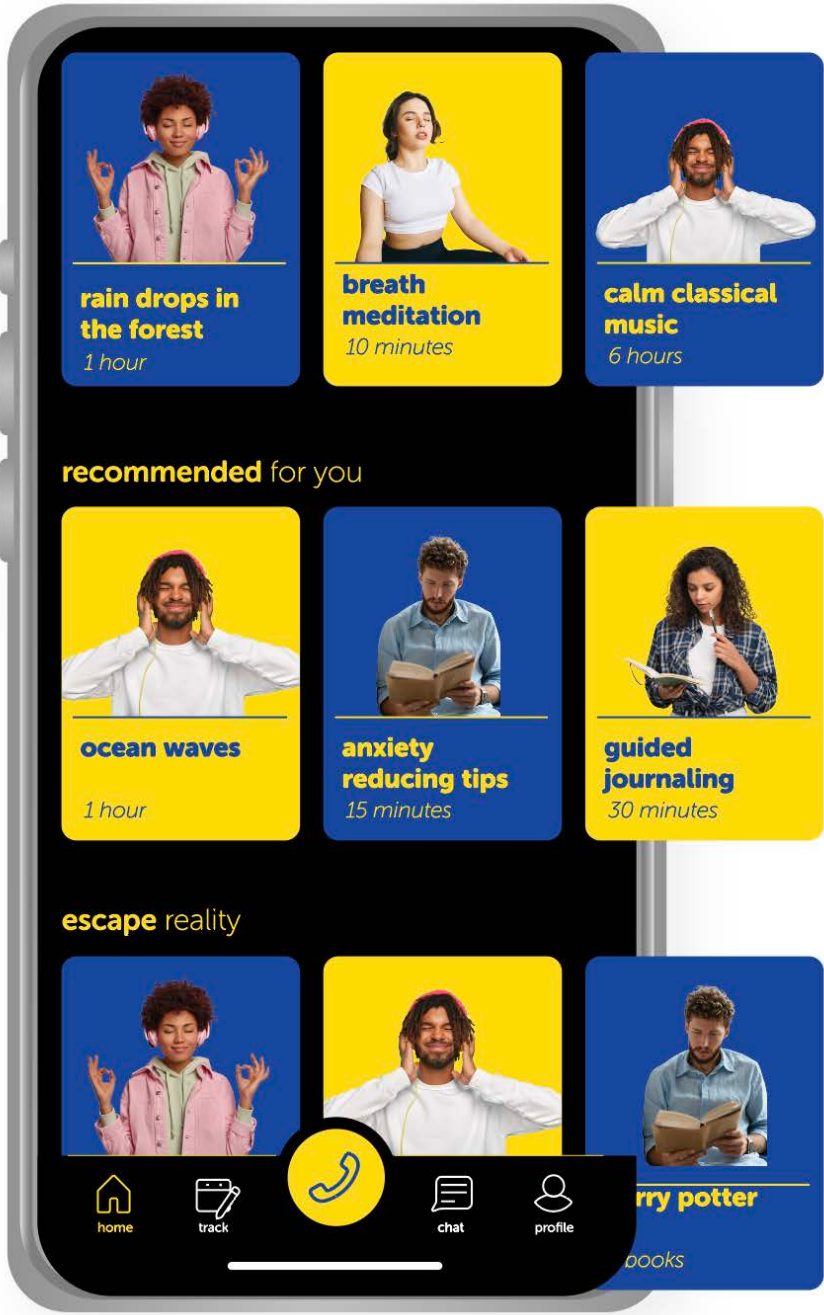
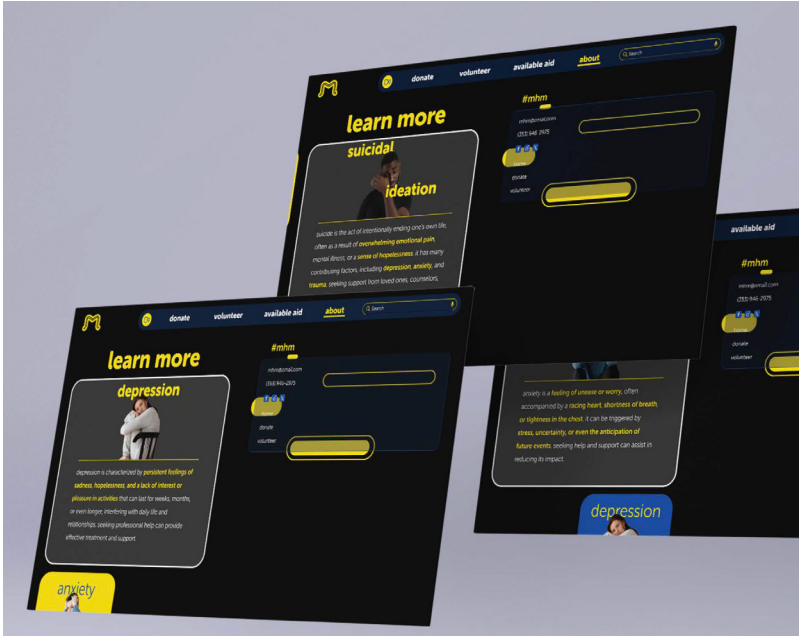
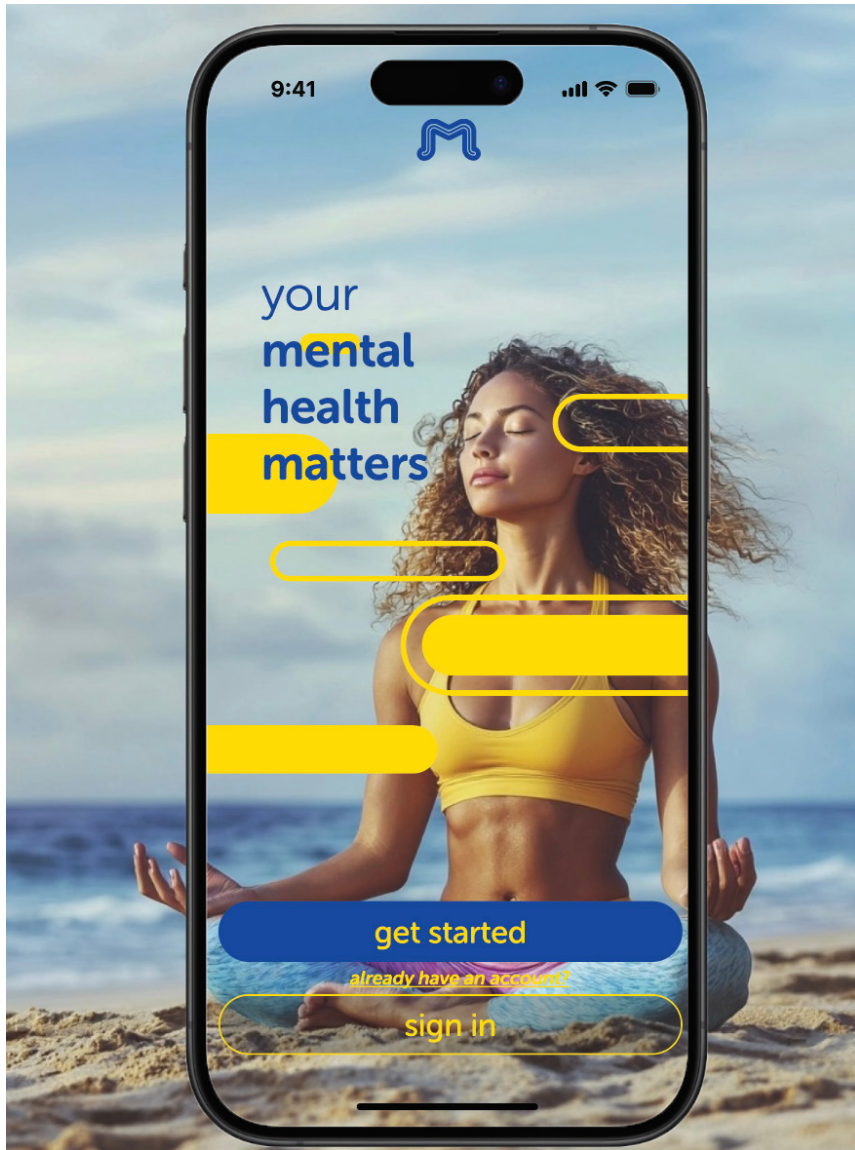
The scope of this project was to create a website and app about a topic related to Gen Z and show how to navigate them with prototyping. The topic I chose was mental health.

## Methodology

The process for this project started with researching the topic, deciding what the app and website would offer, and creating an affinity map by brainstorming all the different pages the app and website would require. Then I began developing a logo and design assets. After putting together the website and app in Figma, I prototyped them to show how they would be used.

## Results/Learning

I found this project to be informative. It made me think about and wrestle with type and picture treatment. Not only did the design need to be appealing, but it needed to be functional as well.



# Connection

## Scope

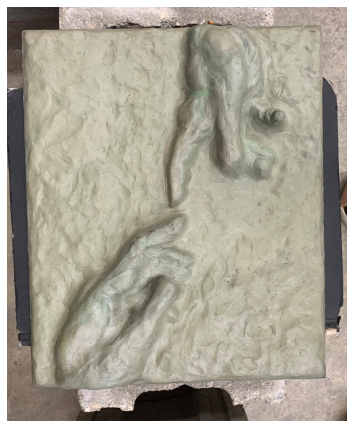
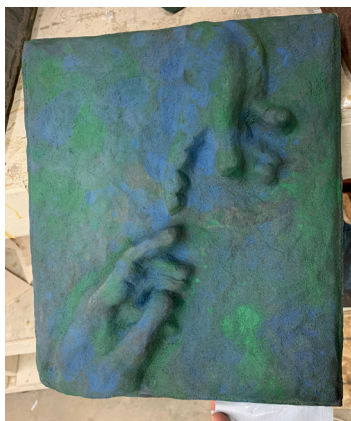
The purpose of this project was to create a self portrait made of iron. The first part of this project was covering an entire plate with clay, ensuring there were no overhangs (sections that extend outward over the material underneath it). Next, I had to create a sand mold of the sculpture to pour hot, liquid iron into. Finally, the portrait needed to be patinaed.

## Methodology

I approached this project by brainstorming everything I believed formed my identity. I thought about my humanness, my relationship with God, my fundamental need for connection and relationship with others, and the sense of loneliness I felt when I first entered college. I was inspired by Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* and how God and Adam's hands were not touching. Next, I created a sand mold of the sculpture, took it apart and removed the clay, put the sand mold back together, and poured in the iron. Finally, I patinaed it with diluted acrylic paint under a clear top coat. I chose blue and green to try and convey an old, mossy, neglected look.

## Results/Learning

This project helped me to reflect on myself and my identity. It gave me an opportunity to be honest with myself about who I am and what my values and passions are.



Early Sketch Idea

# GIF Screenprint

## Scope

The scope of this project was to create a video made up of twelve frames that would be repeated on a loop. The design could be anything.

## Methodology

For this project, I wanted to choose something that evoked an emotion within me. I chose to depict one of Zach LaVine's dunks from the 2016 NBA Slam Dunk Contest. This contest, and specifically this player, will always have special place in my heart because they hold memories which are precious to me. I remember watching the contest in 2016 as a sixth grader with my older brother. I will never forget how Zach LaVine's dunks always blew us both away.

## Results/Learning

This project revealed to me why I fell in love with art in the first place. I get passionate and inspired by the things that are important to me. This GIF was a reminder of why I chose an occupation in the creative realm in the first place.



# Rekovr

## Scope

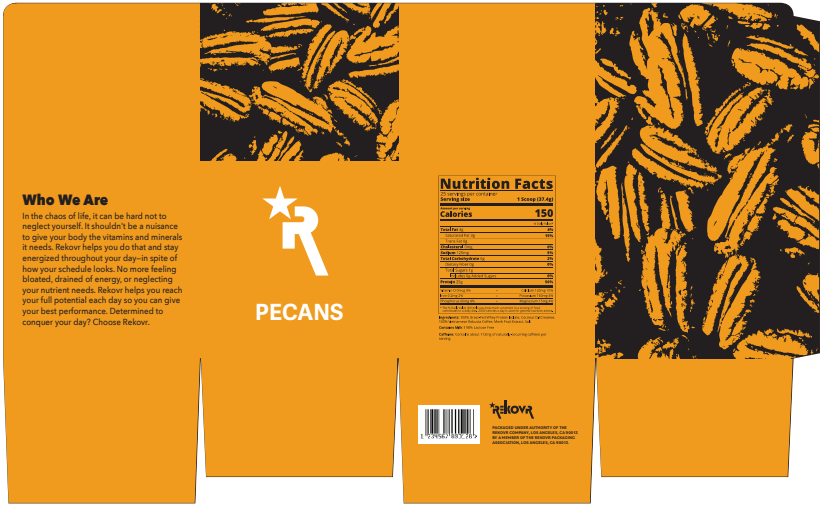
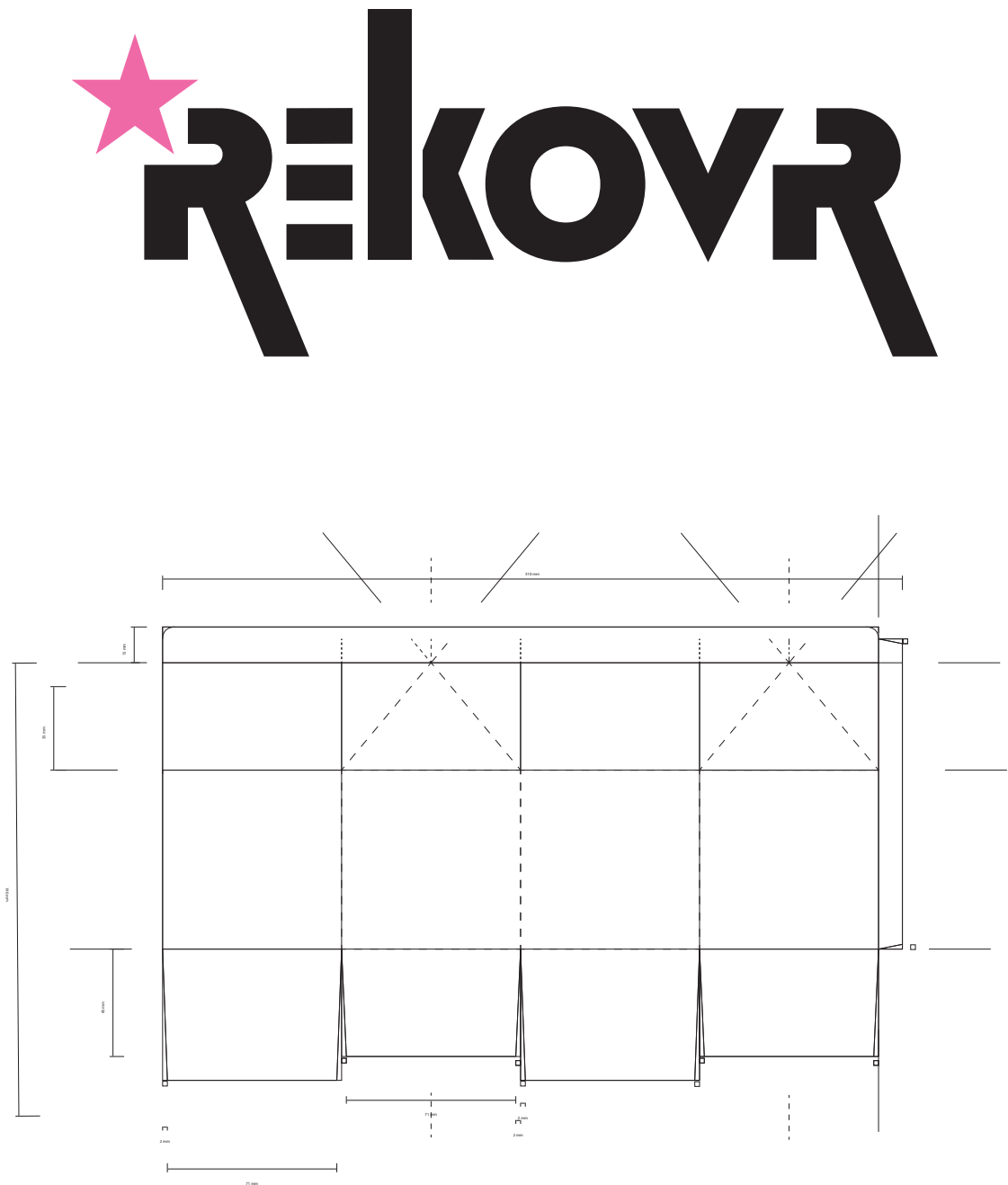
The scope of the project was to create sustainable package designs for three different kinds of drinks, nuts, and fruits. We needed to create dielines and surface graphics for each product. Then, we needed to construct and photograph them.

## Methodology

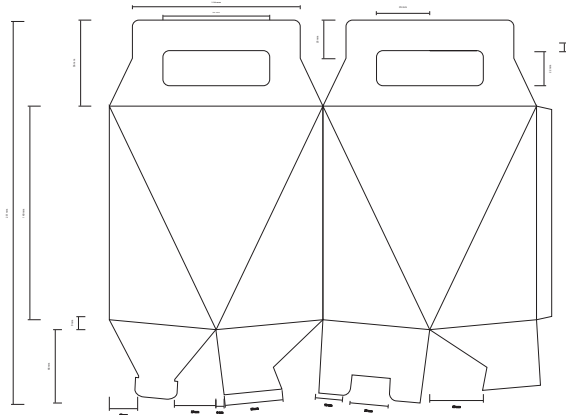
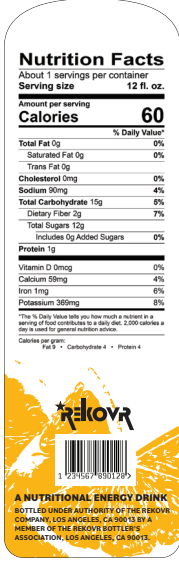
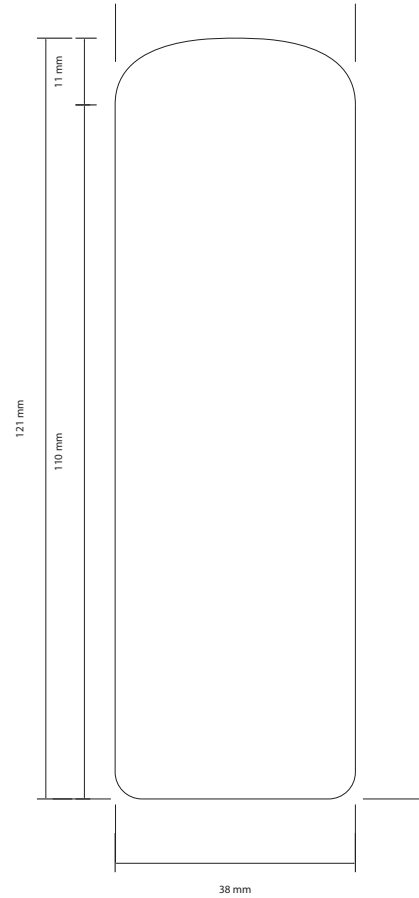
Similar to the other projects, this one started with researching, sketching and digitizing. Once I had a concept down, I researched unique dielines and created the surface graphics. After printing the surface graphics out and putting the containers together (or purchasing the containers), I set them up to take pictures.

## Results/Learning

My biggest takeaway from this project was how designs need to be supported by research. There must be a reason for why you choose to design in a specific way, not just because of how it looks.



# Rekovr Cont.



# USD Art Department Promotional Booklet

## Scope

The scope of this project was to create a promotional booklet with a group for the USD Fine Arts Center on campus. The goal was to be able to hand this booklet out to touring high school students so they could learn about what each specialization USD offers.

## Methodology

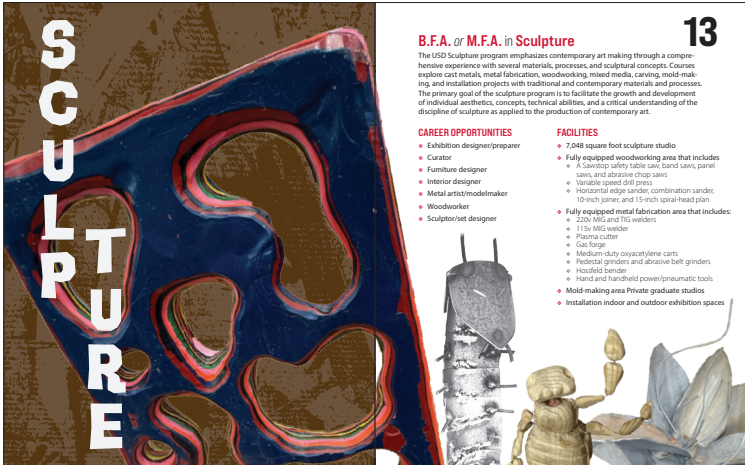
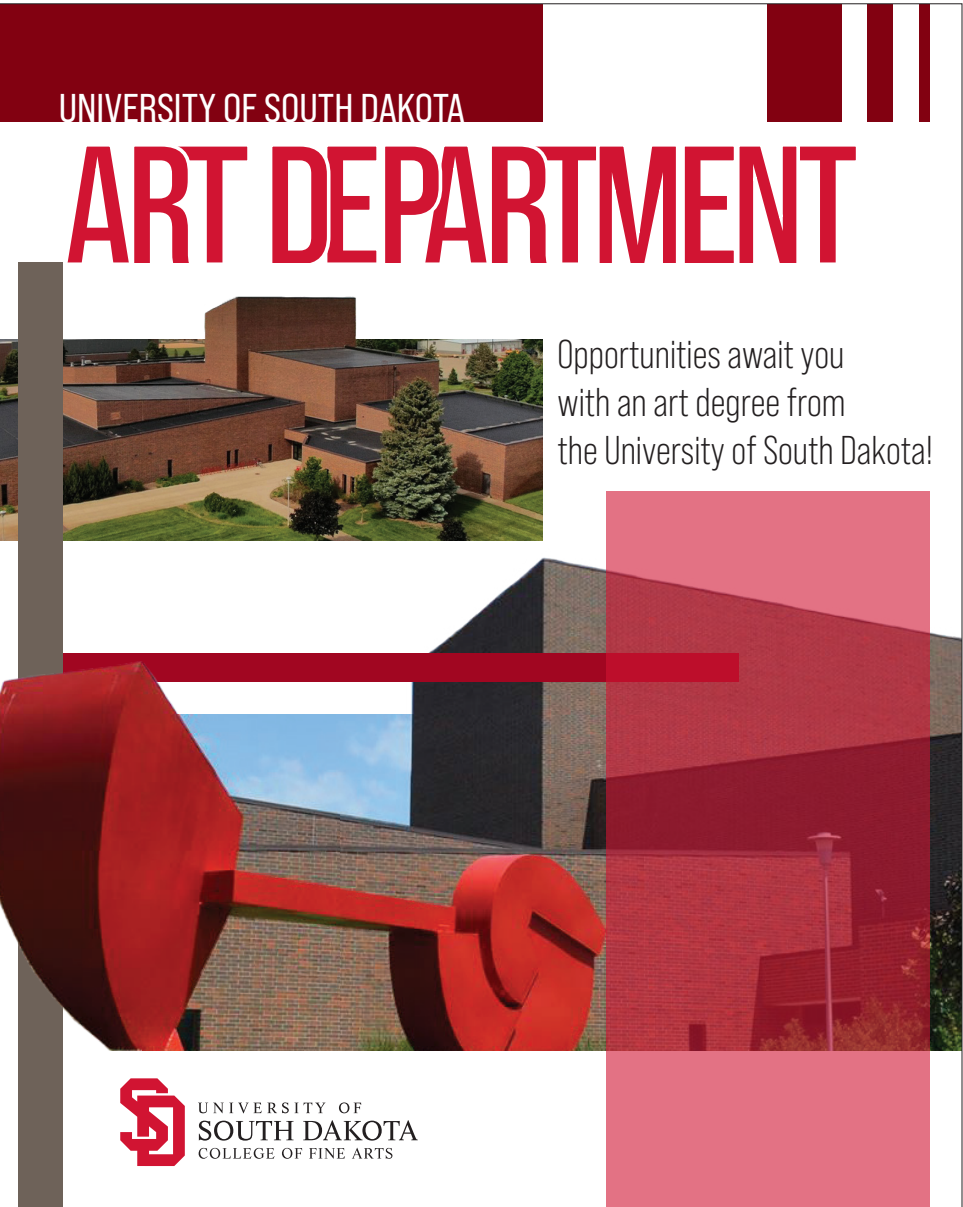
We approached this project by dividing the pages among our group of three. Before designing, we sat together researching and discussing what we wanted our magazine to look like and how we were going to ensure the design remained cohesive throughout the magazine. After finalizing the design, I ordered a handful of our booklets from USD’s copy center.

## Contribution

My contribution to the magazine consisted of designing the spreads for ceramics, sculpture, and the table of contents. After solidifying our designs for the inside spreads, I created the covers.

## Results/Learning

This project gave me the opportunity to practice my communication skills and manage a group. Keeping a cohesive look with two other designers was not easy. Another thing I learned was how to impose pages for booklet building.





*Thank you!*

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