

Behind the scenes of

AD-TIVISM

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Project Brief

To **curate an exhibition of graphic design work** based on a chosen theme, and to subsequently design all the material for it – from the catalog to relevant collateral.

Objectives:

- **Identify a theme** that is inherently rooted in graphic design with sufficient material to curate from
- **Design a catalog** for the exhibition that is true to the theme and displays the curation in the best way possible
- **Create relevant collateral** that supports the narrative of the exhibition

Deliverables:

Exhibition curation
Printed exhibition catalog
Collateral

Problem Statement

I began by thinking about themes that were of interest to me, but ones that I didn't know too much about, so that I could learn and explore.

The conservation of wildlife and preservation of biodiversity is a cause I care about deeply and one that is now in desperate need of attention.

Several creative agencies and non-profits have created powerful, evocative efforts to promote awareness and drive action for wildlife conservation, but their audiences are limited and divided.

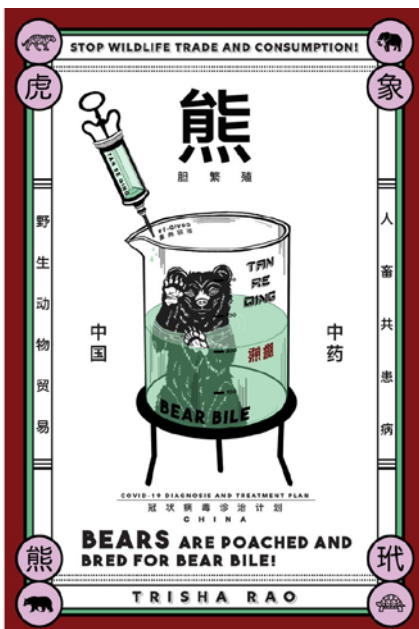
Curating conservation efforts in one place would maximise their impact.

Exploration

I looked into various design efforts that tackled the theme of wildlife conservation. Among them posters, books, and advertising campaigns caught my attention. I **studied each medium** in further detail to assess which category would be most suited to an exhibit of graphic design.

I finally **chose advertising campaigns** as my focus area because:

- It had the **widest collection** of examples that I could curate from
- I found them to be a lot **more visually evocative** than posters and books
- Each campaign had within it 3-7 visuals, thereby providing **more content**



Posters



Books



Advertising campaigns

Solution

An exhibition conceptualised to **showcase the world's most impactful advertising for conservation**, by:

- **Creating a memorable and immersive experience**
- **Helping people understand the environmental implications of their actions**
- **Leaving the audience with a desire to act**

This exhibition would target people interested in conservation, graphic design, or advertising, or better yet – all of the above.

Research

Critical analysis

I read multiple articles and essays that touched upon key themes related to my exhibition. From those, I selected as my main resource an essay by James A. Swan (the Father of Environmental Education) called 'Transpersonal Psychology And The Ecological Conscience'. The essay dealt with various methods of forming strong connections with nature. This felt right because conservation advertising employs many such methods to the same end and to drive action.

I critically analysed this essay and formed my opinions about the author's viewpoint and my own.

Transcendental vs. Visceral Experiences in Developing an Ecological Conscience

This essay delves into the article 'Transpersonal Psychology and the Ecological Conscience' written by James A. Swan (Ph.D) in 2010. Swan believed that to nurture society to care for the environment, it was crucial to make citizens aware of problems and motivated to be part of the solution. Swan's article was the result of decades of research and his own personal experiences. His interactions with Abraham Maslow prompted him to interview many ecologically concerned people, read biographies, and explore the beliefs of Native Americans, Inuit, Ainu, Polynesians, and Australian Aborigines.

There were many environmental disciplines surfacing at the time and Swan identified the need for synergy between them as he said, "To be truly effective, we must find areas of common agreement to bridge disciplines and efforts, as well as encourage multiple points of view and theories" (21). He wrote this article to advocate the integration of transpersonal psychology with environmental disciplines to better understand how to encourage conservationism.

While the need to restore ecological balance was evident, the means to achieve it weren't. Swan proposed five pathways that would aid in nurturing an 'ecological conscience', placing an emphasis on transcendental experiences. He also questioned the use of fear to motivate action, and said, "When you subject people to fear-filled messages, in time they turn off" (20).

Research

Conclusions

Having formally analysed the essay, I was also able to pull out recurring themes from within it. Swan repeatedly referenced the **emotions that were typically used as strategies to encourage conservationist behavior**. He concluded that **empathy was the strongest strategy** to this end, condemning fear and shame as poor motivators.

This made me look at the advertising campaigns through the lens of the emotions they used to motivate conservation action in their audience.

“

The Achilles Heel of the environmental movement is the need to use **shame** to continually motivate people to take action.

”

“

When you subject people to **fear-filled** messages, in time they turn off, especially when they can do little about it.

”

“

Experiences with an **empathetic** quality are important to develop love for nature that translates into conservation action.

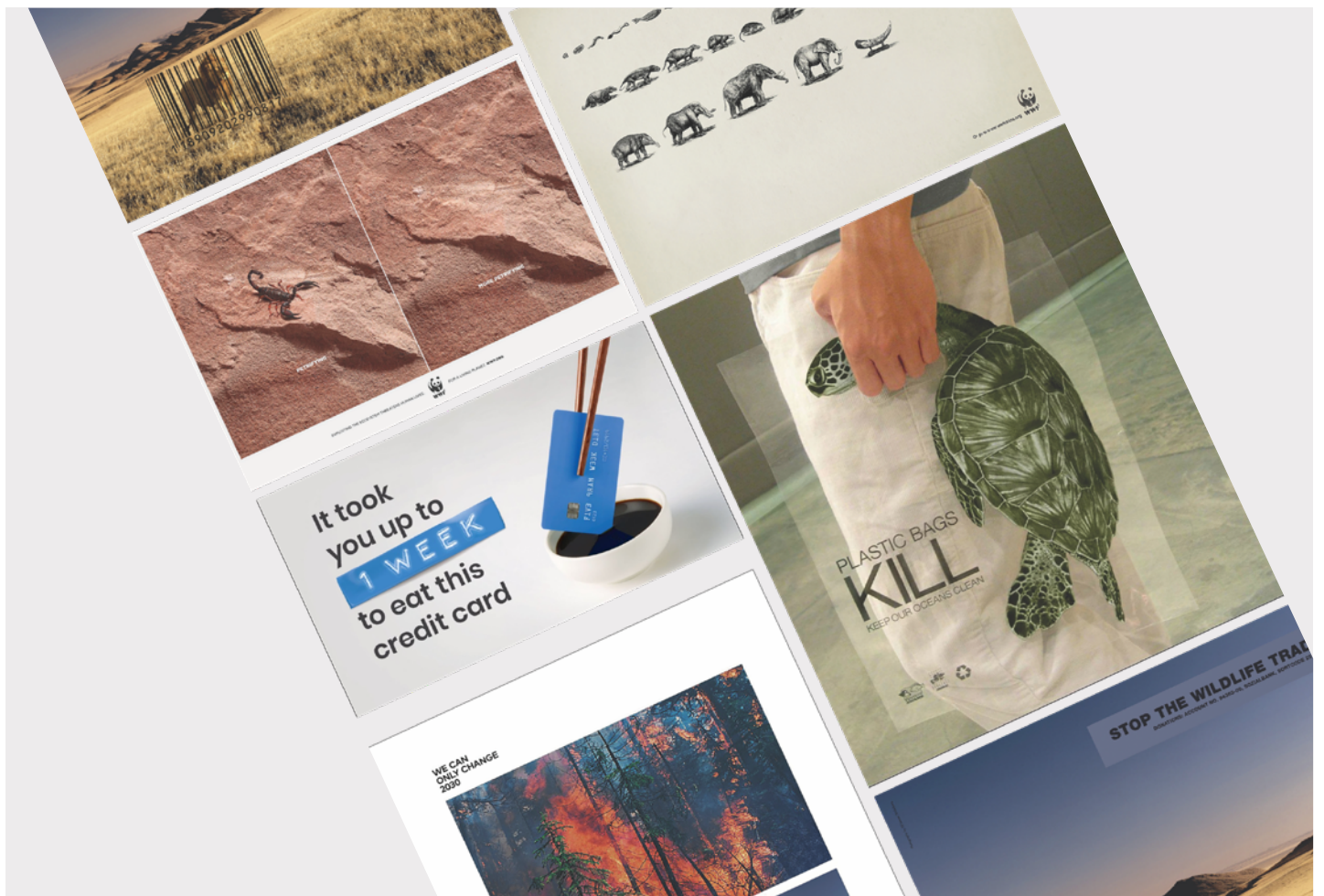
”

Curation

Campaigns

I started to look for all the advertising efforts that fit my theme and identified multiple campaigns that addressed wildlife conservation. I narrowed down the selection to the **15 most powerful ones**.

Upon further evaluation, I modified the curation to ensure that sufficient information and high resolution images were available for each.



Curation

Themes

Based on the learnings from my research and constant engagement with my material, I thought it would be interesting to **divide the exhibition and catalog into sections based on the emotional strategies** that the campaigns employed to appeal to their audience. I studied each campaign and found its core emotion, arriving at a total of **five emotions that would form the five sections of the book.**

EMPATHY

The Barcode Cage
Last Ones Left
Evolution
Sewing Patterns
Don't Suck The Life Out
Plastic Bags Kill

FEAR

Clean Air Now
What's More Horrifying?

HOPE

White is the New Green
Your Turn Now

SHAME

Climate Name Change
We're Looking To You

SHOCK

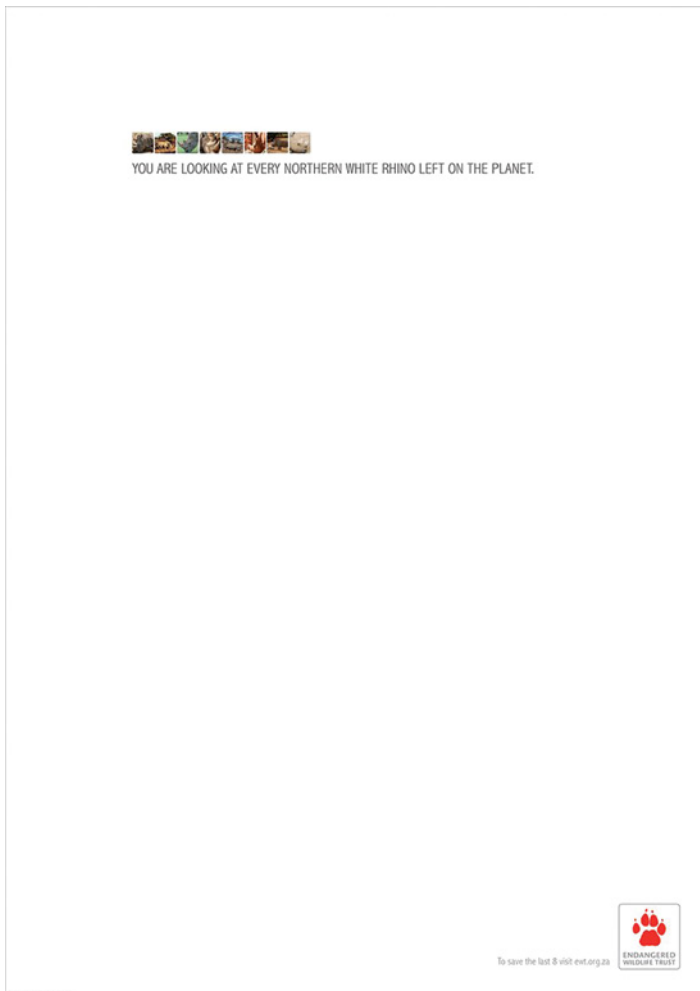
Plastic Diet
Urban Outraged
Behind the Leather

Idea

Final concept

It then occurred to me that a common theme prevailed amongst all the campaigns. Whether through fear or empathy, they **all alluded to a future dystopic world bereft of all wildlife.**

This led me to **the idea of 'absence'**, and I decided to use this metaphor throughout the book and collateral.



Content

Captions

I found **basic information about each campaign**, including the agency responsible, the client and the year created and wrote captions for them.

I then retrieved further information about each campaign including the **campaign objectives, creative insights and design processes**. Analysed the campaigns in light of my theme, trying to draw out the emotional triggers used in each and how the execution achieved this.

Basic caption



1

The Plastic Diet


Agency: Grey
Client: World Wildlife Fund
Year: 2019

It took you approximately
1 WEEK
to eat this
credit card

Tiny bits of plastic are in our food, water and air.
Find out how much plastic you eat at
PLASTICCHANGE.HK



Extended caption



Your Plastic Diet (Agency: Grey, Client: World Wildlife Fund, 2019)

The use of shocking statistics and horrifying imagery of animals affected by plastic pollution has desensitized people to the crisis. Research by WWF showed that of the 150,000 tons of plastic entering the oceans each week, 5g were entering a person's diet. WWF employed Grey to make these statistics tangible and more engaging. The Plastic Diet breaks the mold of using fear by recognizing the simple insight that people would respond if they realized that they were the eventual victims of plastic pollution. Powerful analogies relating the data to everyday objects are made even more powerful by depicting the act of consumption through setting and interaction. Subtle backgrounds and bold copy direct focus to the brightly coloured plastic objects — the crux of the ads.

Design

Naming

Based on the theme, I toyed with name options for the exhibition, ultimately choosing 'Ad-tivism' as it was an interesting and unique combination of the words advertising and activism. It was also significantly shorter and more catchy than the others.

Name options:

Call to Activism

The Call of The Wild

The Fight for the Forgotten

Final

Ad-tivism

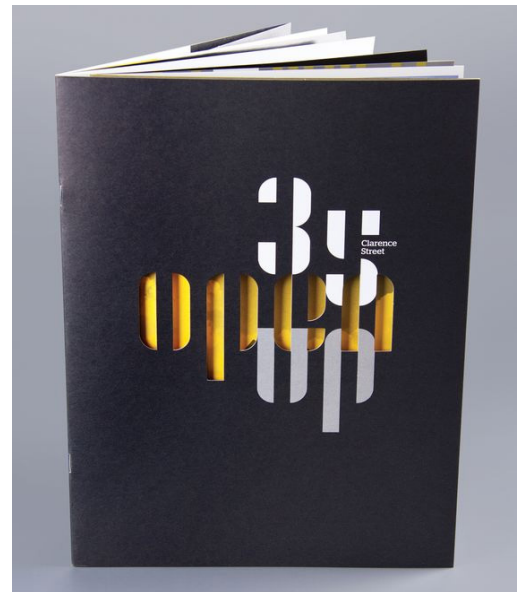
The Wild World of Advertising

Conversations on Conservation

Design

Exploration

I scoured through, collected, photographed and saved oodles of **inspiring book design** to learn how to approach my own. I **brainstormed ways to introduce the metaphor of absence** throughout the experience of the book. I identified campaigns from my curation that had potential to be developed in this way to highlight their uniqueness. By **making prototypes**, I was able to test how my ideas might work.



Design

Layout

I identified **recurring spreads** including titles, campaign hero spreads, and more that would be used throughout the book and tried out layout options for these, after many trials and considerations of image aspect ratios and information structure.

Page layout ideas

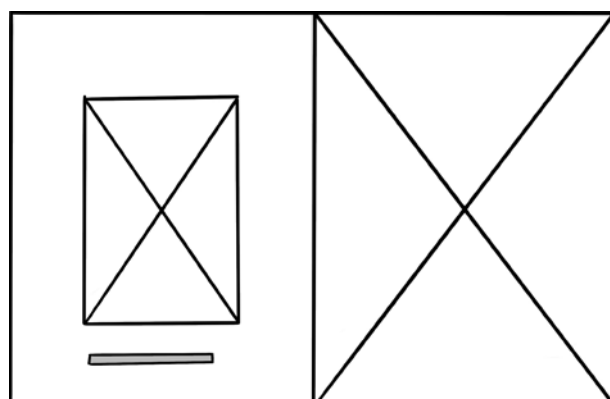
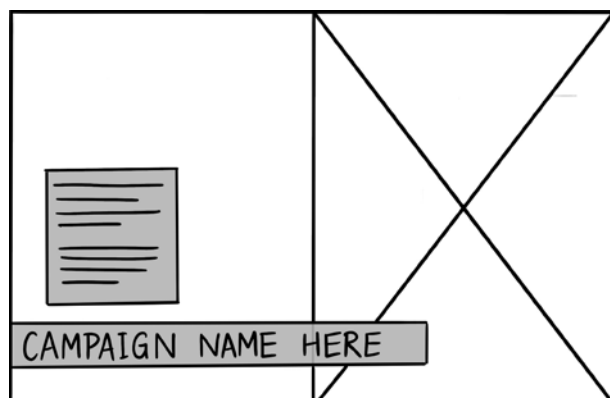
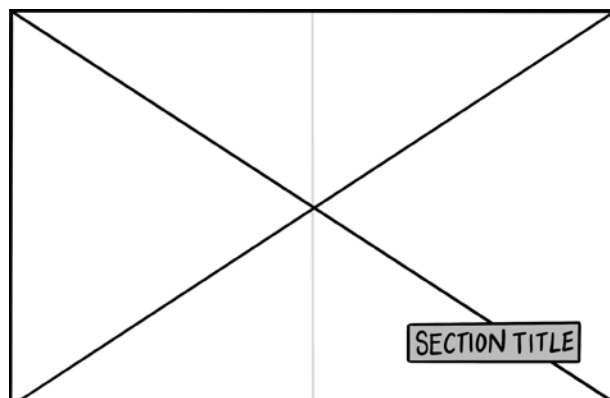
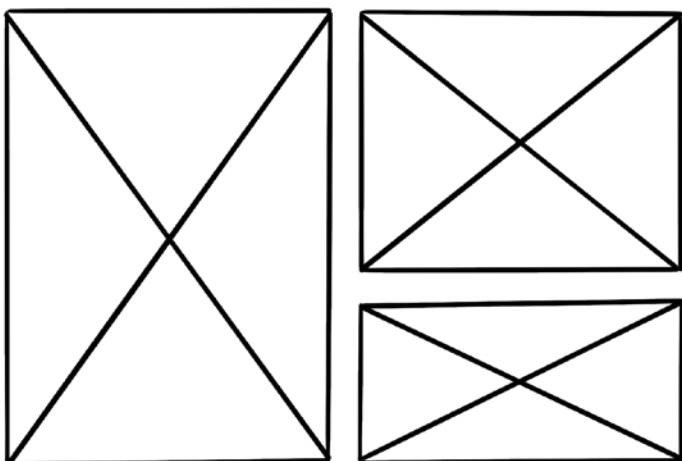


Image aspect ratios



Design

Pagination and planning

I created an initial plan for the pagination of the entire catalog to estimate the page requirements for each exhibit and section.

Endpaper	Endpaper		Exhibition Title		Timeline	Timeline	Timeline		Foreword	Foreword	Foreword
Section	Opener (Plastic)	Campaign Title 1	Hero image	Image	Image	Campaign Title 2	Hero image	Image	Image	Campaign Title 3	Hero image
Image	Image	section	Opener (Wildlife)	Campaign Title 1	Hero image	Image	Image	Campaign Title 2	Hero image	Image	Image
Campaign Title 3	Hero image	Image	Image	Campaign Title 4	Hero image	Image	Image	Campaign Title 5	Hero image	Image	Image
Campaign Title 6	Hero image	Image	Image	Campaign Title 7	Hero image	Image	Image	Campaign Title 8	Hero image	Image	Image
Section	Opener (Climate change)	Campaign Title 1	Hero image	Image	Image	Campaign Title 2	Hero image	Image	Image	Campaign Title 3	Hero image
Image	Image			Endpaper	Endpaper						

Design

Typography

I knew that the information that would be featured throughout the catalog would include titles, captions, statistics, and long-form descriptions. With this in mind, I studied various typefaces and pairings in search of ones that would best cater to these needs and embody the tone of the theme.

The Plastic Diet

BWV 1007-1012

Agency: Grey
Client: WWF
Year: 2019

Awareness of plastic pollution was widespread, but the use of shocking statistics and horrifying imagery of affected animals had desensitized people to the message, a phenomenon that Swan warned about. Research by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) showed that of the 8 million

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Final

Design

Typography

I chose Roc Grotesk Wide as the display font for its **gravitas and seriousness**, with Gotham as the supporting secondary typeface for its **friendly, empathetic letterforms**.

ROC GROTESK WIDE

Light

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Medium

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

GOTHAM

Book

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Design

Typography

I played with these typefaces in different ways to **finally conclude the usage, weights, sizes and leading for different components in a page.**

Navigation
Gotham Book
Uppercase
6pt | 120 | 19

Campaign Title
Roc Grotesk Wide Bold
Uppercase
38pt | 40 | 140

Campaign Number
Roc Grotesk Wide Bold
Numeric
225pt | -20 | 1240

Basic Caption
Gotham Book
Title case
6.5pt | 120 | 19.5

Pull Quote Style 1
Roc Grotesk Wide Light
Wide Medium for highlights
Uppercase
10pt | 40 | 114

Body text
Gotham Book
Sentence case
8.5pt | 10 | 112

Pull Quote Style 2
Ric Grotesk Wide Medium
Uppercase
16pt | 40 | 119

ADTIVISM

01 THE PLASTIC DIET

Agency: Grey
Client: WWF
Year: 2019

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN CONSUMES **5G OF PLASTIC** EVERY WEEK.

Awareness of plastic pollution was widespread, but the use of shocking statistics and horrifying imagery of affected animals had desensitized people to the message, a phenomenon that Swan warned about. Research by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) showed that of the 8 million tons of plastic that were entering the oceans each year, about 2,000 microplastics or 5g were entering a person's diet every week. They employed agency Grey to make these statistics tangible and create awareness about the amounts of plastic people were inadvertently consuming.

5G OF PLASTIC EVERY WEEK

The Plastic Diet broke the mold of using fear, by recognizing the simple insight that people would respond if they realized that they were the eventual victims of plastic pollution and not just the culprits. Grey created powerful analogies by relating the data to everyday objects, made even more powerful through the act of consumption.

23 / PLASTIC

Design

Section openers

Section openers featured the key emotion of that section, showcased through a cut-out that revealed just a sneak peek of the story. Text was written to accompany these titles including how the emotion is leveraged and the physical reaction of the body when experiencing it to give the reader a deeper and more visceral understanding of the issue.

23

SH!
OCK



A powerful emotional response to unexpected events or information. It can prompt the desire to take action and make changes, which is why it has been employed as the primary motivator by the campaigns that follow.

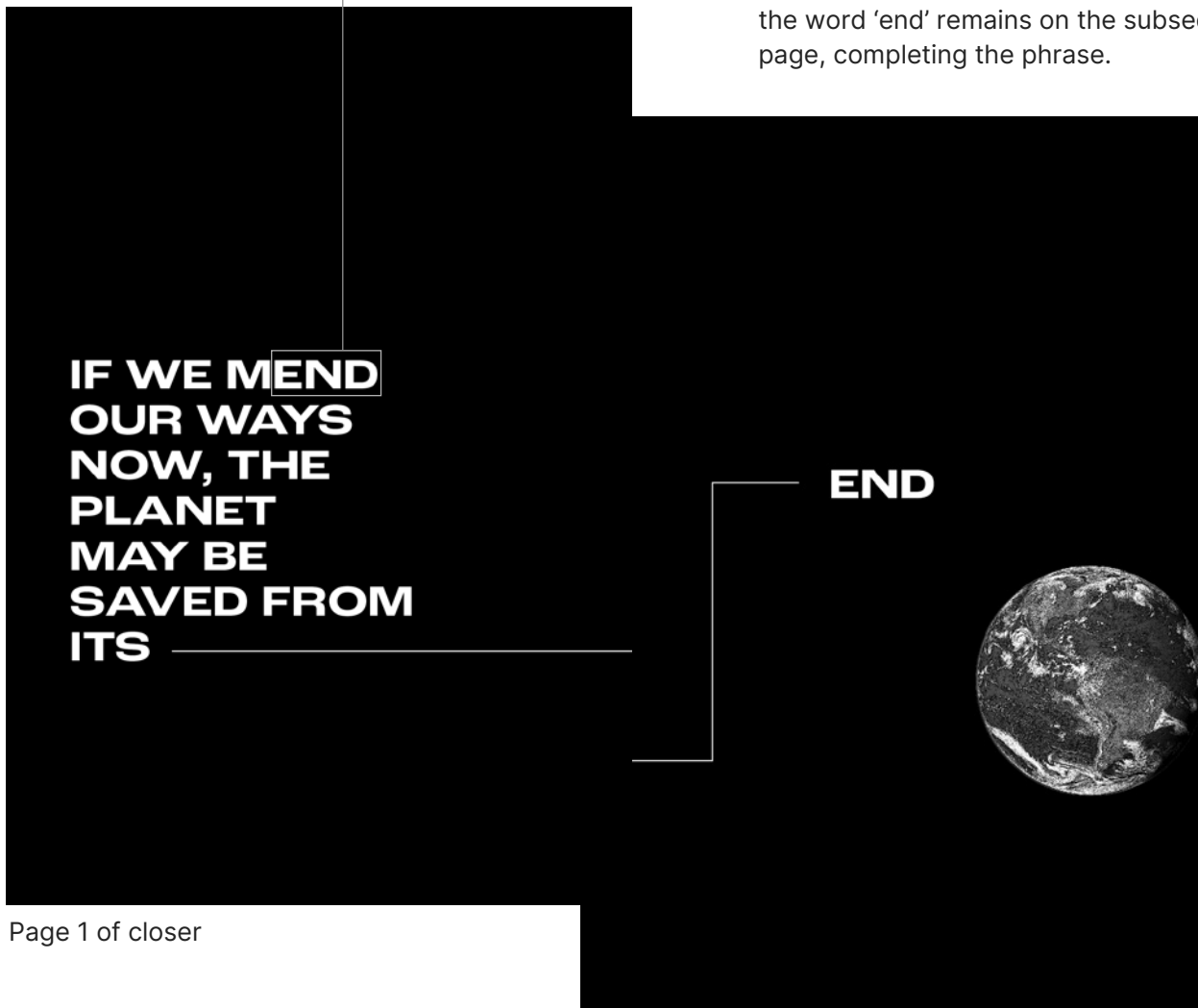
You will sweat. Your pupils will dilate. Your breathing will hasten.
And you'll feel physically sick.

Design

Section closers

Each of the five sections ended with an **impactful positive quote** written by me, and constructed in such a way that it used a **cutout and staggered reveal**. This allowed the last word of each message to be derived from the first page and land powerfully when the page was turned and other words stripped away.

Cut-out revealing the word 'end' from the next page, placed carefully to fit the phrase. When the page is turned, only the word 'end' remains on the subsequent page, completing the phrase.



Page 1 of closer

Page 2 of closer

Design

Campaign title spreads

I put the book design together by **assembling all my content into the container spreads and variables**. Campaign title spreads were all designed with the key visual on one side and the campaign title, details and analytical body text on the other.



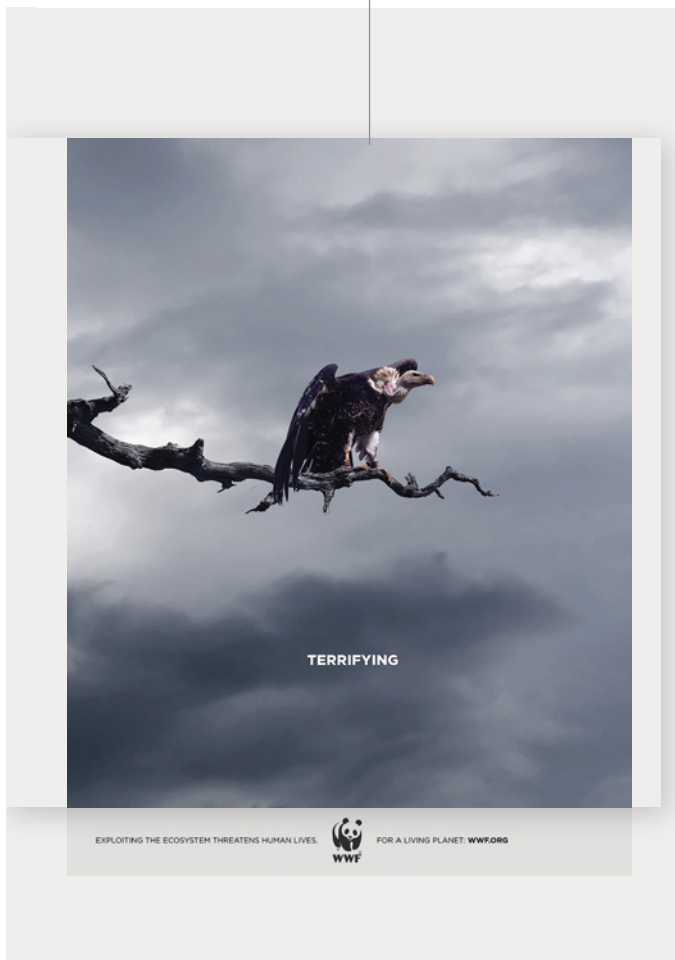
Design

Special pages

For specific campaigns, I found ways to **emphasise their uniqueness and message using special techniques**. For some campaigns, a 'short sheet' was used to make the second part of an ad land more impactfully than merely showing the whole ad at once.

A smaller sheet that could be turned to reveal the next page without leaving the spread

The next page lands like a punchline when the short sheet is turned.



Design

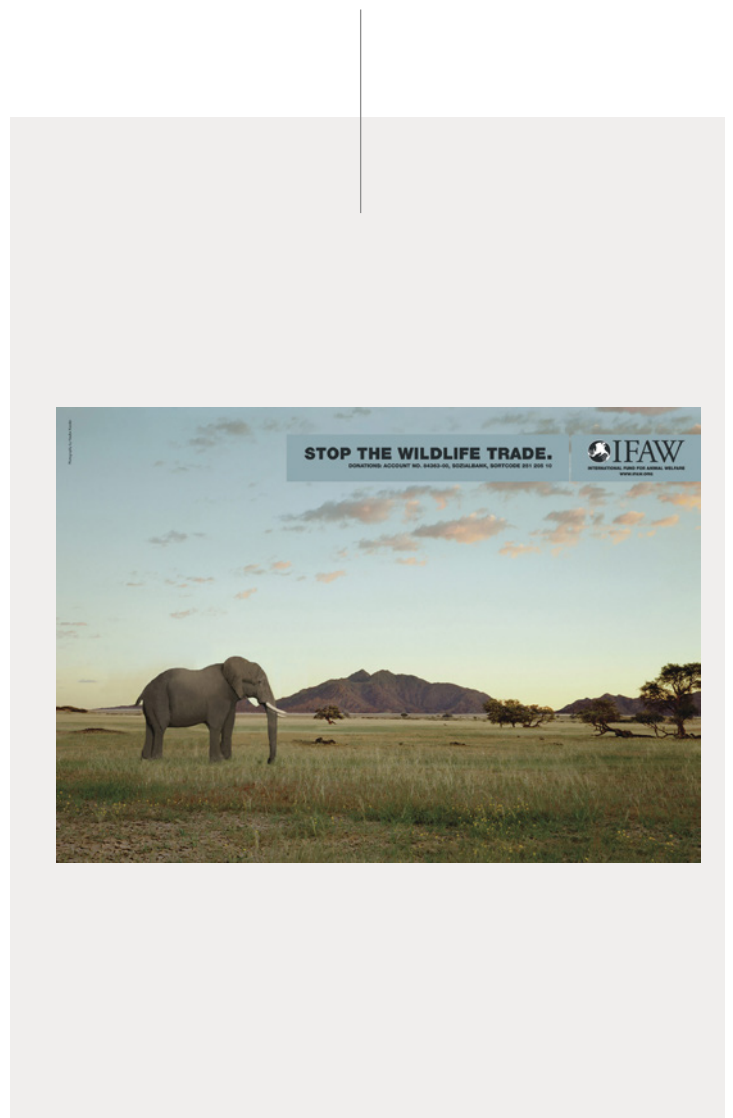
Special pages

For this campaign that showed animals caged by a barcode, I realised that allowing the audience to uncage the animal would be a **powerful experience**. To this end, I decided to break down the ad, using a transparent sheet with the barcode layered on top of the image of the animal in the ad.

A smaller transparent sheet with the barcode



The next page with the rest of the ad visual

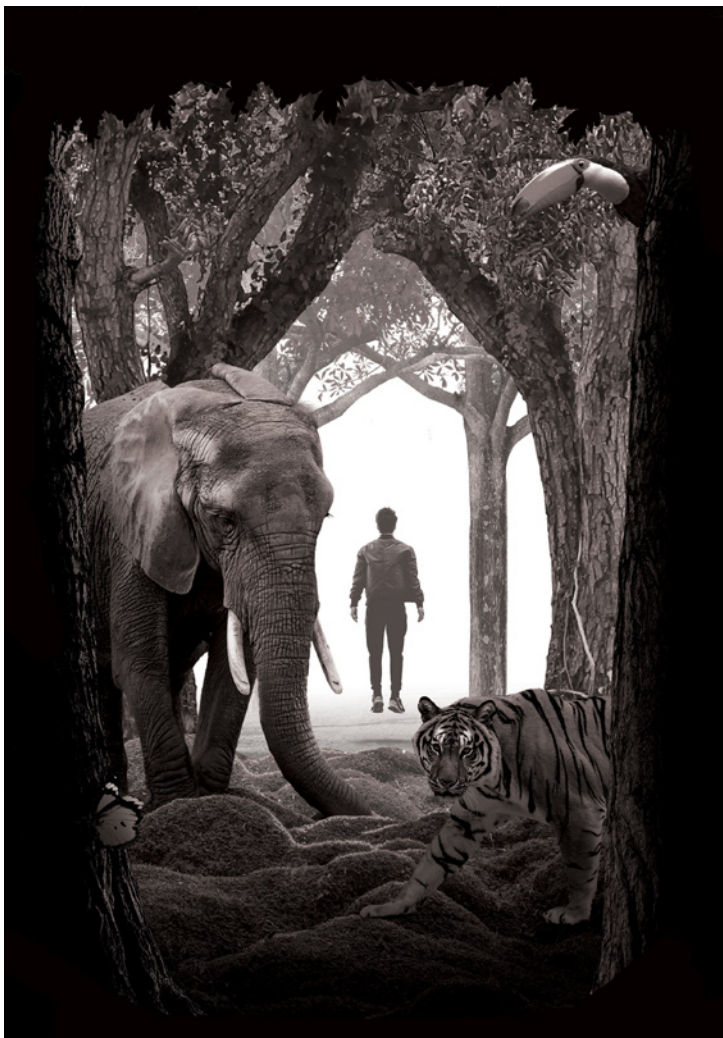


Design

Cover

I wanted the cover to be an experience that embodied the essence of the entire catalog. It was designed as a **multi-page cover, each layer with a cut-out so that stacked together, it created an almost 3-D like effect, and turning each page would strip away one layer of the environment until only the human remained.**

There was the pivotal message of the exhibition and the catalog and most profoundly used **the metaphor of absence.** The process of designing this was complex involving numerous trials and errors, photo editing, precise measurements, and colour treatments.



Appearance of catalog cover with all layers



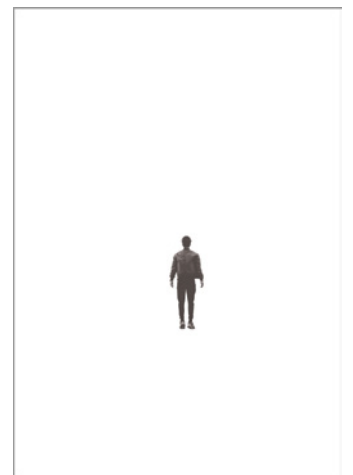
Layer 1 (outermost cover)



Layer 2



Layer 3



Layer 4 (the final visual)

Design

Collateral

Minimal banners and posters are created that tease the audience with the theme of the exhibition, **using cues from the catalog cover and powerful typographic spreads from the book**. Wherever possible, the staggered reveal experience from the book is recreated using repetition in these instances.

The key piece of museum collateral was the hallway entry experience into the museum. I designed this to **recreate the catalog cover in a physical space**, leading visitors through the staggered arches of environmental depletion to become that very same lone human from the cover.



Design

Collateral

Every piece of collateral was carefully considered to implement only **the most thoughtful, environment-friendly solutions**. The design and communication were crafted to be positive so that people would **feel proud of their purchases and the habit of conservation is inspired**.

The concept for each piece was based on **real statistics** but presented through interesting parallels between the products and their environment-unfriendly counterparts.



Production

Research and enquiry

I visited ABC Imaging to confirm that my catalog artwork was created correctly, find out their **turnaround time**, **assess paper samples**, **take some test prints** and **check if my ideas were feasible**.



Production

Printing and assembly

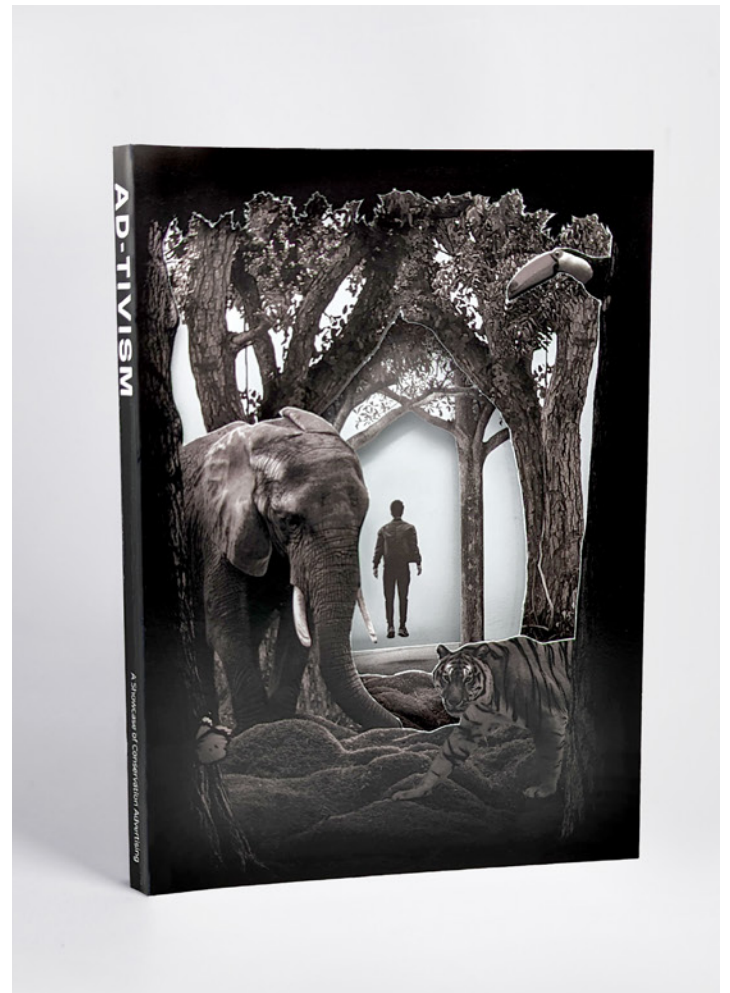
After 12 hours, 5 helpful staff, 200 pages printed, and 25 intricate die cuts, I was left with 1 finished catalog and myself a very relieved designer.



Photography

I **photographed the cover and key spreads in the book**, having learned new techniques for securing and setting up a book for shooting using fishing line and artist tape.

I also **shot the catalog cover as a stop-motion animation** so that I could effectively communicate the experience of opening the book in the digital space of my portfolio.



The End

of the world doesn't have
to be near, if these campaigns
can do anything about it.