
Jennifer Seward

PROJECT 1: Digital Magazine Design

Editorial Design

Spring 2020

Editorial Design (ARTC 53601)
Prof. Claudia Roeschmann
Texas State University / MFA

Project Overview

Design a currently printed magazine's online publication. Analyze current demographics, layout, and type hierarchy of the print piece. Propose modification of design based on research outcome details. Proposed modifications will include landing page, table of contents, and lead article.

Chosen Magazine: MONSTER CHILDREN

About Monster Children Magazine

Monster Children is a quarterly lifestyle magazine featuring surf, skateboarding, music, travel, art, design, and photography. Primarily based out Australia, MC has been creating cutting-edge cultural content since 2003.

Monster Children Creative, the minds behind *Monster Children* magazine, is a full service design agency with a focus on creating culturally relevant and inspiring work. Working with brands including Vans, Corona, Nike, Adidas and Converse, they seem to use this publication as an avenue for advertising not only their own personal agenda, but also their client work.

Reminiscent of *Ray Gun* magazine under David Carson's direction, *Monster Children* explores experimental typographic and layout design. With consistent inconsistency, *Monster Children* seems to visually reinvent itself with every issue.

Cover Analysis

Each issue of *Monster Children* explores a different theme. The bar code seems to be the only ever-present item on the cover. Often the name of the magazine isn't represented in full text. The issues aren't dated, merely numbered and the cover image isn't necessarily connected to the interior content.

Issue Cover Designs



current issue #65



issue #63



issue #62

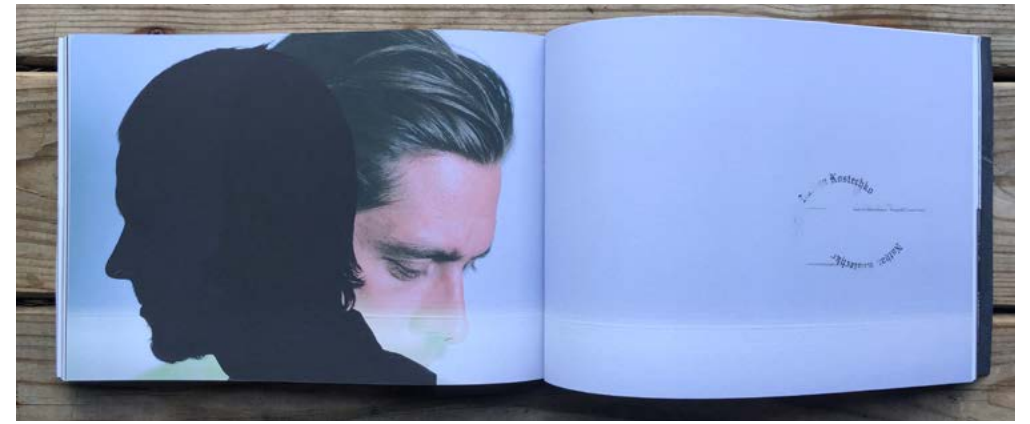
<http://www.monsterchildren.com/>

Chosen Magazine: MONSTER CHILDREN

Analysis Continued

The interior design is fairly consistent with the cover design. Some of the interior pages are quite elegant, while others seem to be designed to tip the viewer on their ear.

I was particularly drawn to the table of contents page in this issue. I like the vertical design, they almost appear like fly-outs for a digital publication.



<http://www.monsterchildren.com/>

Digital Publication Inspiration: UNCUBE

Content Analysis

Founded in 2012, *uncube* was an award-winning digital magazine for architecture and beyond. According to its website, its format combined the virtues of print with the convenience of digital publication.

The magazine is no longer in publication, though the website is still maintained with all archived issues available online.

I was particularly drawn to it because of the photo-based material and the navigation. With *Monster Children* in

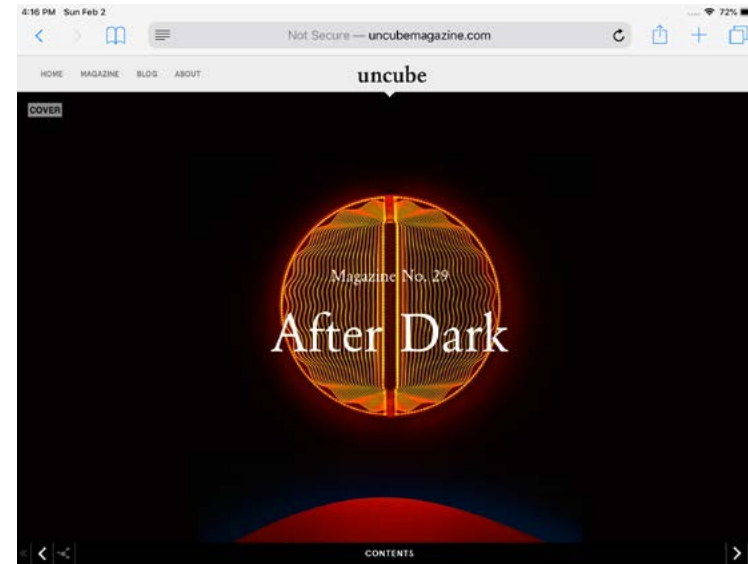
mind, I chose to view it horizontally to check the responsiveness and ease of navigation.

This was actually a very pleasant viewing experience. I felt like I could navigate my way through the content without the navigation being too intrusive. I did like that it was always present and easy to access.

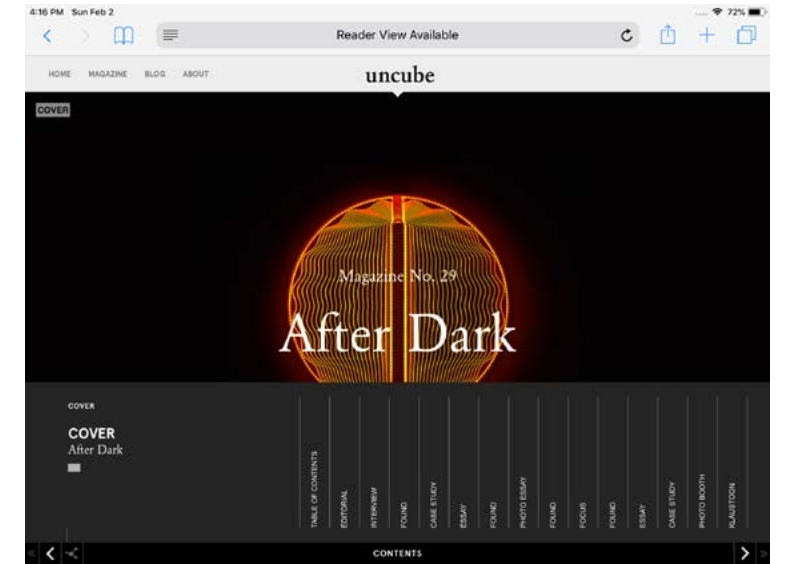
The way the text floated on the images was good, but it would have been nice to be able to remove it from some of the pages so that the image below would be on full display.

The logo for 'uncube' is displayed in a large, bold, black, lowercase serif font against a white background.

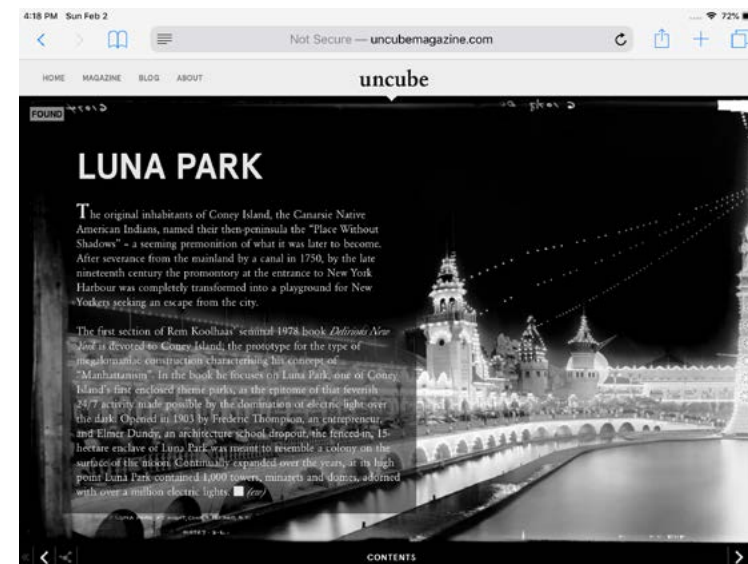
uncube magazine video introduction on youtube



landing page



horizontal navigation



article with text

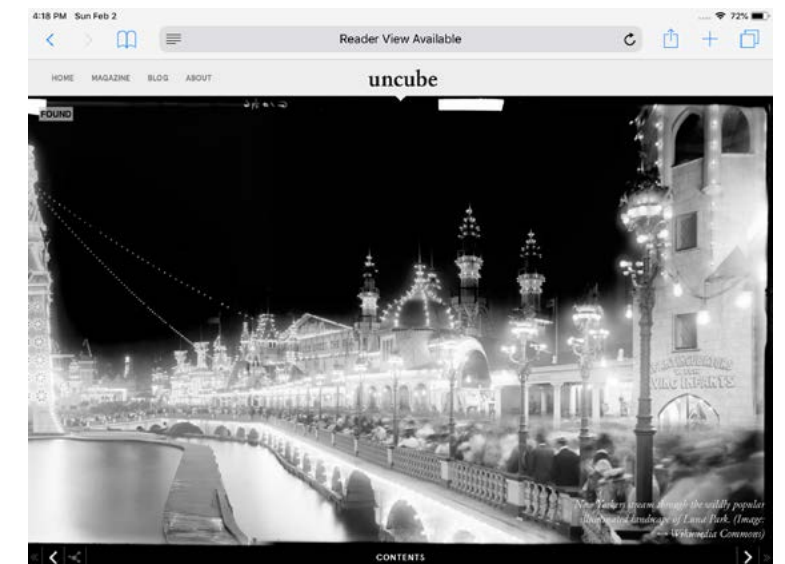


photo-based article

<http://www.uncubemagazine.com/>

Digital Publication Inspiration: KROMA

Content Analysis

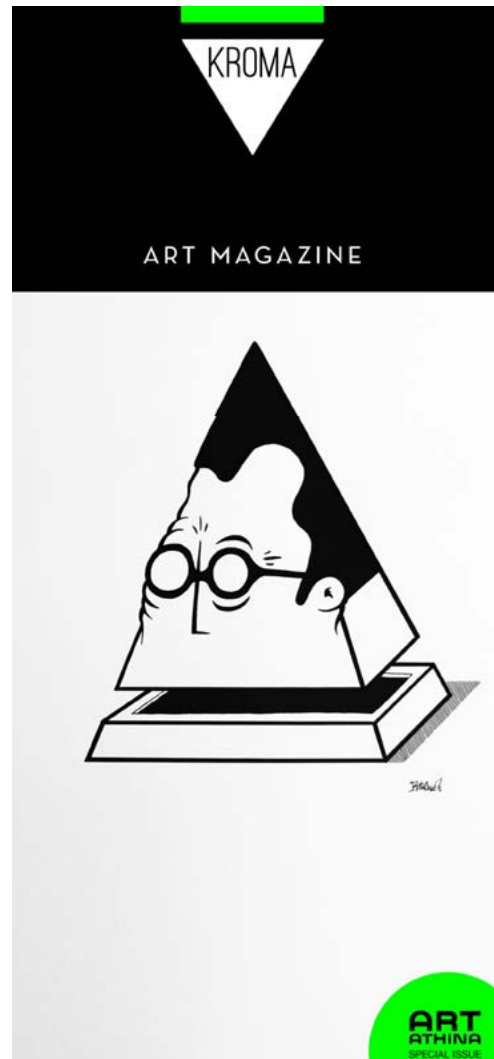
KROMA magazine is a free digital art magazine from Greece. You can only view this magazine vertically and only on a mobile device. I was drawn to this publication for the image-based material as well as the image-based navigation.

The format of this magazine is very straight-forward. Once you land on a page you are encouraged to scroll down to view the rest of the images and articles.

Once you open KROMA you are met with an instruction

page which gives you tips on how to navigate the pages. I don't know if this is a standard procedure with online content, but I thought it was an interesting choice.

Image-based navigation works well for a publication that is primarily art and photography.



landing page



instruction page

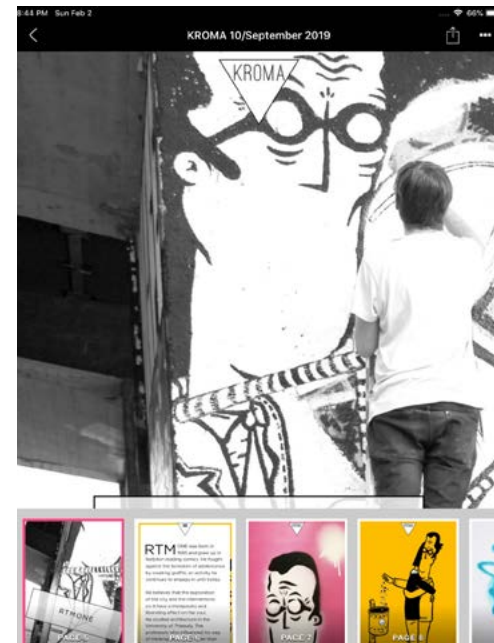


image-based navigation



article intro



article call-out



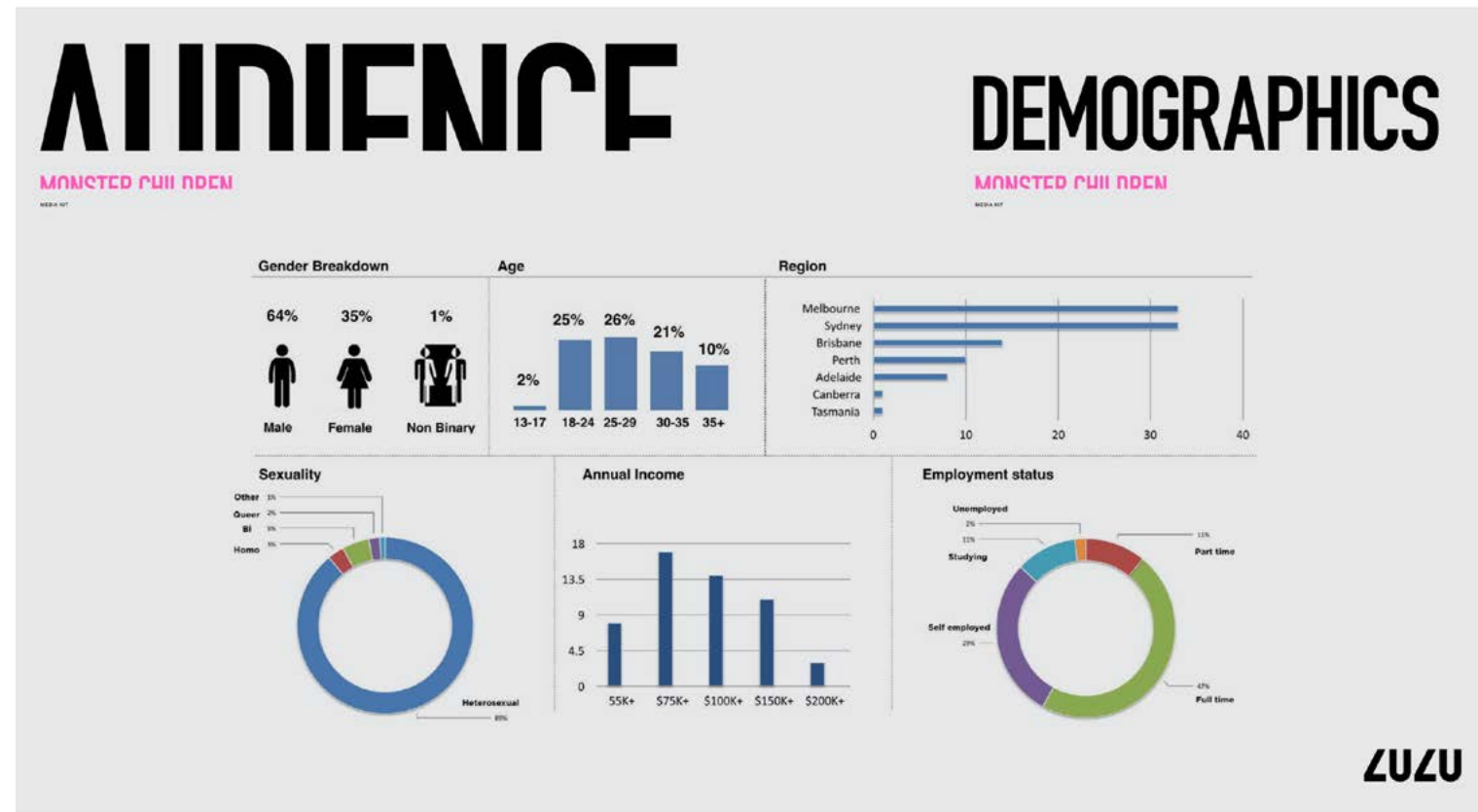
article with web link

<http://www.kromamagazine.com>

Monster Children Reader Demographics

Jamie Brewer, the Commercial Director at Monster Children shared his 2020 media kit. I am sharing some screenshots from the kit, but you can also view the full kit.

Monster Children 2020 Media Kit



Competition Demographics



Tracks Magazine

"Tracks is Australia's leading Surfing magazine with 40 years of credibility. Each issue takes you to the most exotic surfing locations, fills you in on what's happening on the pro-circuit and at your local beaches. Our demographic isn't dictated by numbers, isn't measured by age, or by one's propensity to wear scarves to the beach during summer. We're purely a mag for surfers. Full stop. Our stories come from the surfing heartland. They're topical, soul-searching, inspirational, and occasionally very stupid."

Publisher: Published quarterly, 1960 to present
Price: \$12.85
Print Readership: 90,000

Tracks Magazine Media Kit
<https://www.surfer.com/>



Rationale

Tracks magazine has to be one of the biggest competitors content-wise for Monster Children. Since they are both Australian publications, I would imagine they are competing for the same audience.

The biggest difference is, Tracks seems to focus primarily on Surfing and Monster Children has more diverse and eclectic topics.

From what I could find, the layout and design of this magazine is similar in that in style to Monster Children, if not more reserved. Unconventional page layouts and type treatments do make this magazine stand out from others, but it doesn't push the envelope as much as MC.



Transworld Skateboarding Magazine

Transworld Skateboarding was an international magazine on skateboarding that was based in Carlsbad, California. They were stated as the number one resource for skateboarding news, skateboard videos, skateboard photos, skateboards, athletes and events."

Publisher: Published monthly, 1983-present
Price: Free, offers in-app purchases
Print Readership: (was) 50,000

Transworld Skateboarding Print Media Kit
Transworld Skateboarding Digital Media Kit
<https://skateboarding.transworld.net>



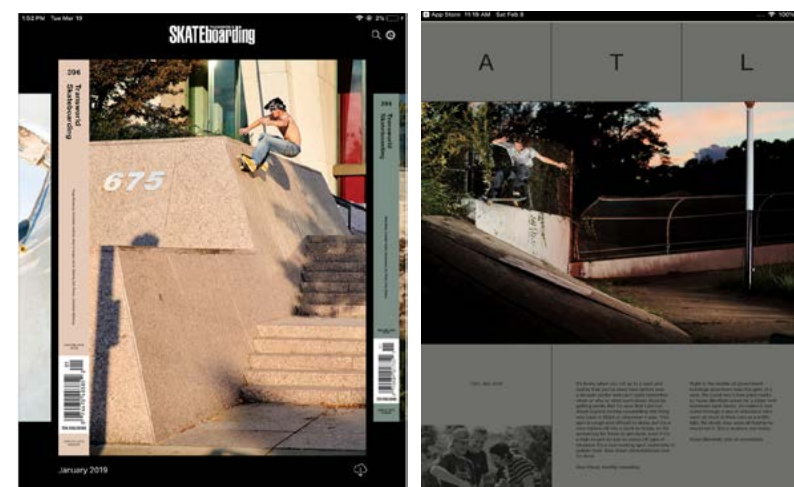
Rationale

In March 2019, the print edition of Transworld magazine was discontinued. This publication is only available for digital download.

Even though this publication is no longer in print, I still thought it was a good comparative. Their online viewership seems to be doing very well. They are still rolling (pun intended) with quality content and photography and still have a fresh eye and edge.

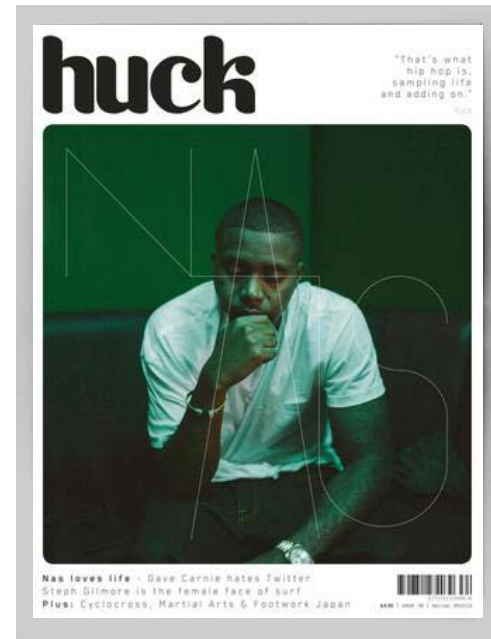
This publication has a large following. It is one of the oldest skateboarding publications out there. It was hard to find interior pages of old publications, but from what I could tell the design was pretty standard. Large photos with simple column text.

The digital publication isn't interactive. It simply seems to be the print publication uploaded in full with an image based navigation at the bottom.



Competition Demographics

MOST SIMILAR COMPETITOR



Huck Magazine

"Huck celebrates independent culture - people and movements that paddle against the flow. Inspired by DIY principles and rooted in the rebellious heritage of surf and skate, Huck roams the globe to document grassroots counterculture as it unfolds, seeking out freethinkers who are a wellspring of new thoughts and ideas."



Publisher: Published bi-monthly, 2006 to present
 Price: £8.50 or \$11.99
 Print Readership: 60,000 (data from 2016)

Huck has 'brand partnerships' with many large companies including Nike, Van's, Microsoft and also features advertising from smaller/niche companies such as specialist printers to reflect the independent, counter cultural nature of the magazine.

Huck Magazine Media Kit
<https://www.huckmag.com/>

Rationale

Huck is more than a surf or skate magazine, though it started off as one. Huck is published by TCO London and has a different feel and aesthetic. It still feels rebellious and edgy like Monster Children, but there is a level of hard-edge journalism that MC seems to be lacking. Both are irreverent, and wonderfully designed, but Huck feels like a grown-up version of Monster Children even though it has been around less time.

Design Assessment: MONSTER CHILDREN

Publication Analysis

Size

This magazine simply doesn't fit the norm. Every issue has a horizontal format with an A4 paper size making it stand out from the other publications on the newsstand.

Aesthetic

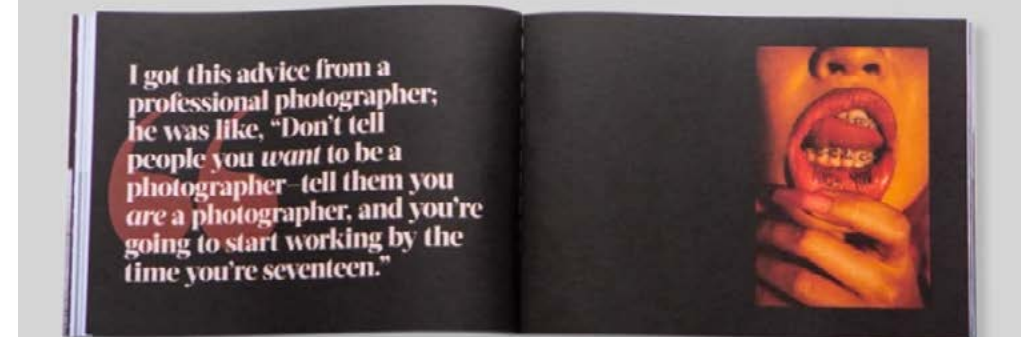
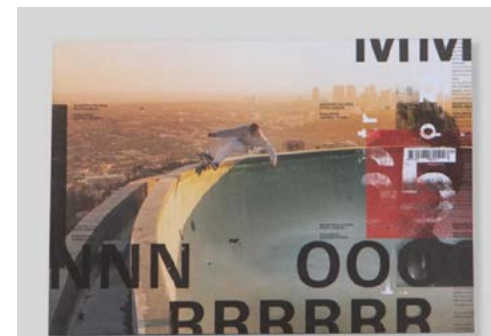
The word I would use to describe this MC's aesthetic would be layered. The photographs, article text, and page elements are layered on top of one another creating a sense of depth. Which I think subliminally transfers to the viewer. This magazine is just "more". The covers are pieces of art (the annual publications are printed with two cover options), giving this magazine the look and feel of a coffee table book.

Paper

This magazine is hefty. The cover stock is very tactile and feels like a 160 lb. bristol cardstock. The interior pages are printed with matte maybe 65lb. cardstock.

Color

The whole publication has a sophisticated, muted palette. Some of this is because of the matte paper, some seems like a purposeful desaturation. All-in-all the feeling is dreamy, almost like a secret you've been let in on.



ISSUE 65

\$14.95 AUD (Annual Price) \$11.99 (Individual Issue Price)

How we made 65 issues of this thing is beyond us. It's beyond Neil DeGrasse Tyson—and that guy is smart as shit! Anyway, we did it, it's beautiful, and it contains features and interviews and stories with... Kate 'Miss Cactus 2019' Bellm, Nana 'Youngest Person on Magnum Ever' Heitmann, Julian 'Get Your Own Last Name' Klinecicz, Quentin 'Mr Awesome' de Briey, Nathan 'Tough-Stamps' Kostechko, and Slow 'Slowthai' Thai among others—plus the winners and runner's up from the 2019 Photo Competition, aka tomorrow's photography legends. It's a rad issue, and if you don't have it you're nutty.

<http://www.monsterchildren.com/>

Design Assessment: MONSTER CHILDREN

Sample Article Layout Analysis

Grid

Many articles are set like this one in a four column grid. But this is not consistent throughout. Many are set with a 5 or 6 column grid. Though all pages have an underlying grid structure.

Bleed

Most pages in all of the issues have a full bleed.



Design Assessment: MONSTER CHILDREN

Type Analysis

I've discovered that issues (well in the few that I have seen) feature Helvetica as the main typeface.

Each issue features a different secondary typeface. In my current issue (#65) the secondary heading is Acta Display Bold. Articles featuring this typeface have body copy that is set in Times New Roman, which I thought was an interesting more traditional choice. Issue #62 is set with an interesting mixed bitmap font. I can not find this typeface, but it is very similar to Caliper Wide.

Body text, subheading, and heading sizes vary by article. However, most article text is set in a 7pt type with exaggerated leading. (This is definitely for a younger viewing audience.) Some articles have left justification, while others have full.

In issue 65 articles with a feminine feel are set with a combination of Acta Display for the headers and pull quotes and Times New Roman for the body text. Subheads are set the same size as the body in Times New Roman Bold.

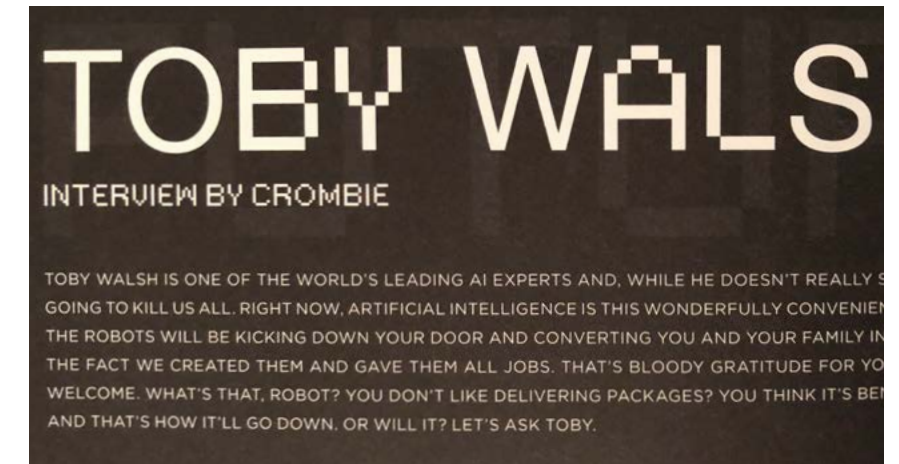
Most articles in issue 65 are set with a large hand-distressed Helvetica Bold for the headings and Helvetica Regular for the body text.



issue 65 article heading: helvetica bold



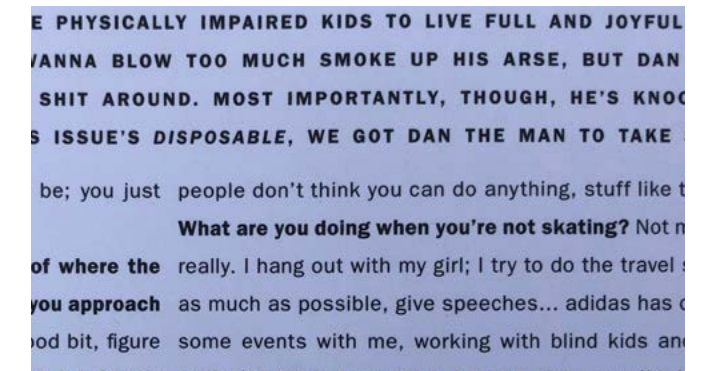
issue 65 article heading: acta display bold



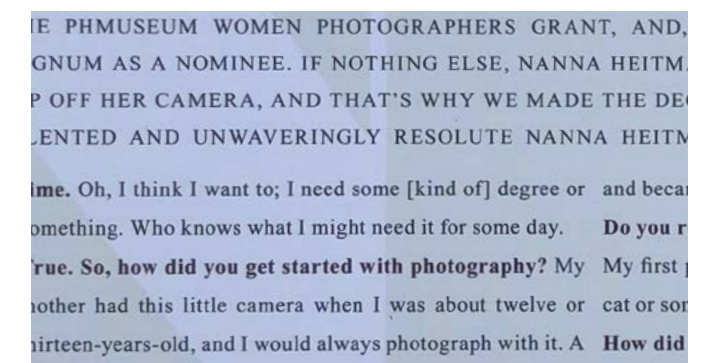
issue 62 article heading: mixed-bitmap typeface similar to caliper wide



issue 65 article heading and body text: helvetica regular and helvetica bold



issue 65 article body text: helvetica regular & helvetica bold



issue 65 article body text: times new roman and times new roman bold

Design Assessment: MONSTER CHILDREN

Layout Analysis: Page Re-Build

I chose to re-build the TOC and lead article so that I can use these elements in my final digital layout.

Cover

The cover design of Monster Children Issue #65 was created by Chris Ashworth. Most covers, especially the annual covers, are works of art, though usually photography. Helvetica Bold ins used in the mixed-media cover art.

Lead Article

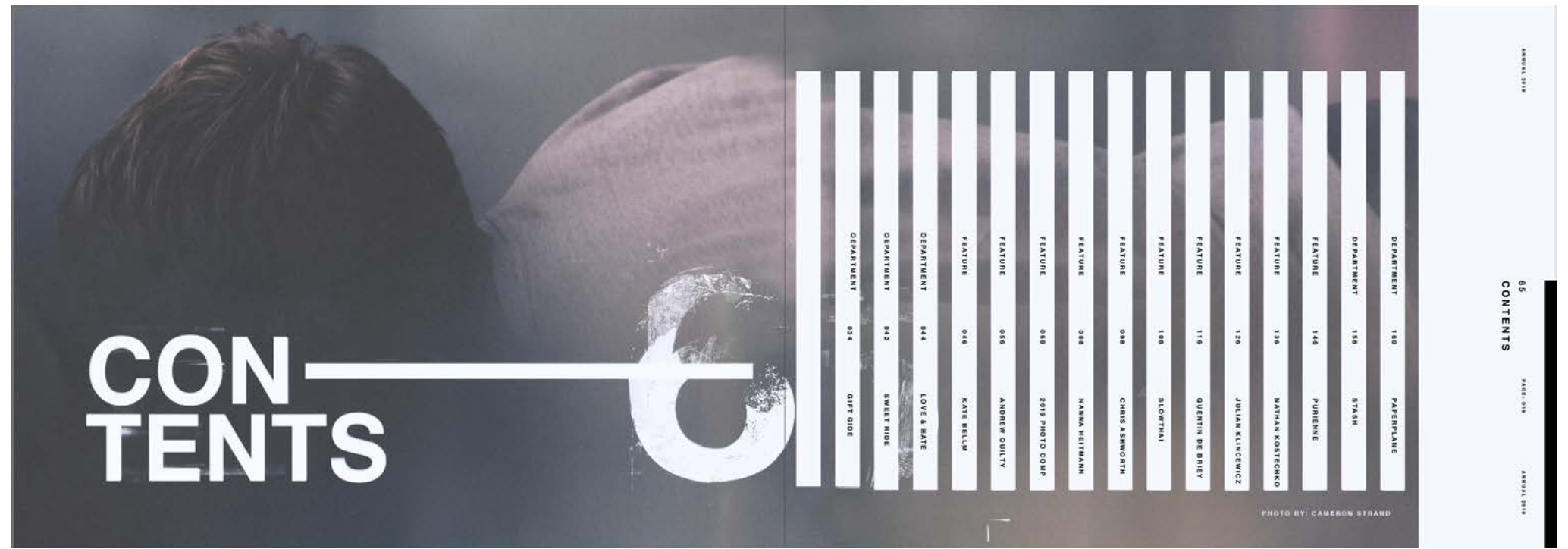
The lead article was created with a modular grid only used for this article. Images are layered with the type. The type is set at 6pt with 11pt leading, which goes against all of the rules. Though that seems to be MC's MO.

Table of Contents

The TOC is unique. This vertical white bar menu design is utilized in the few issues that I have. I am not sure how standard this is for most of their publications. I like that this obscures the image behind it, again letting us "peek" into the issue ahead.

Pagination

Page numbers are placed on the outside edges of the page which seems to be consistent with the other issues, however the type treatments are different per issue. I like this element and plan to incorporate it somehow into the digital design.



issue 65 table of contents with vertical menu



issue 65 cover design by chris ashworth



issue 65 interior spread using modular grid

Design Assessment: MONSTER CHILDREN

Assessment Conclusion

I believe the real challenge ahead with creating the digital version of Monster Children will be in capturing the aesthetic.

The element layering of content will especially help in this attempt. Page elements in the *uncube* example fly-onto the page and layer as the elements settle. Video content and interactive components are added to give the online magazine a versatility that the print publication lacks.

Individual and specialized layout design for each article and photo essay will be key. I believe this is what makes Monster Children more than a simple print publication, but a visual and immersive experience.

A horizontal format is atypical for a digital publication, but I feel that it would be appropriate here because of the orientation of the print publication.

A photo-based interactive table of contents that allows for a feeling of flipping through the publication could be an interesting feature. Layering image and type on the pages could also create the same design aesthetic. I would also like to see individual articles with the same air and space that the print issue has.

DIGITAL MAGAZINE LANDING PAGE & NAVIGATION ASSESSMENT

OPTION 1

The cover of Monster Children does not have a lead article associated with it since each issue is unique. This version would best be read on a tablet. You would swipe through this layout. You would tap to enter.

Once you tap to enter, you would be led to a TOC which would serve as the main navigation for the magazine.

Each white bar on the contents page would lead you to a self-contained article that would horizontally scroll in the frame in the middle of the window.

To return to the table of contents, you would simply tap the background image.

Advertisements would swipe and scroll through like the articles. I chose to make them slightly smaller so that they would be set apart from the main content.

Ideally, this TOC would be very responsive. When you drag the white bars, the next article would drag open. This is hard to show and I don't know how to program it, though I am working with animations in InDesign, so maybe I can figure it out. Any help on this would be great.



landing page with limited menu choices

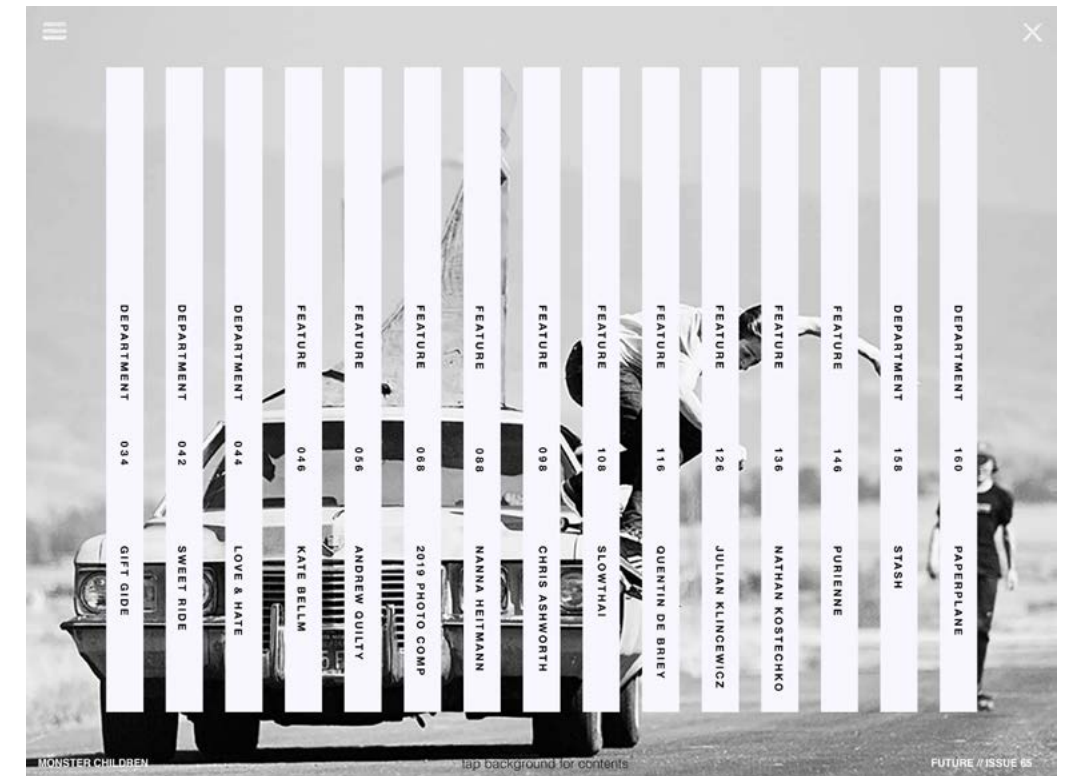
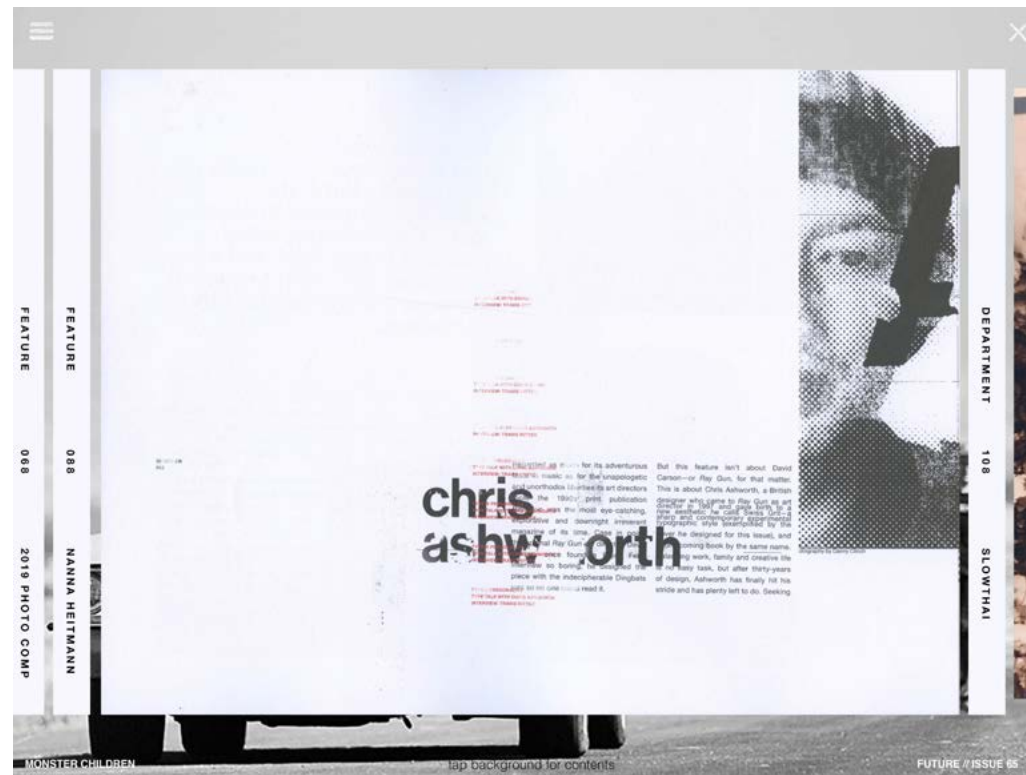


table of contents page with interactive/linked navigation



article with self-contained horizontal scroll in window frame



example of advertisement scrolling in window

DIGITAL MAGAZINE LANDING PAGE & NAVIGATION ASSESSMENT

OPTION 2

The cover of Monster Children does not have a lead article associated with it since each issue is unique. This version would work well on a tablet as well as a monitor.

I would like to do a fade from the cover to this secondary landing page image that would offer up the contents menu items at the bottom. This could also be a page with a "how to use" document like I have seen some digital magazines provide. I don't know if this audience would need to be trained, but who knows.

There are also left and right nav buttons to allow for easier viewing on a computer.

The top menu would offer a drop down for additional items.

The contents at the bottom would pull up a list of articles so you could go directly to the individual articles.



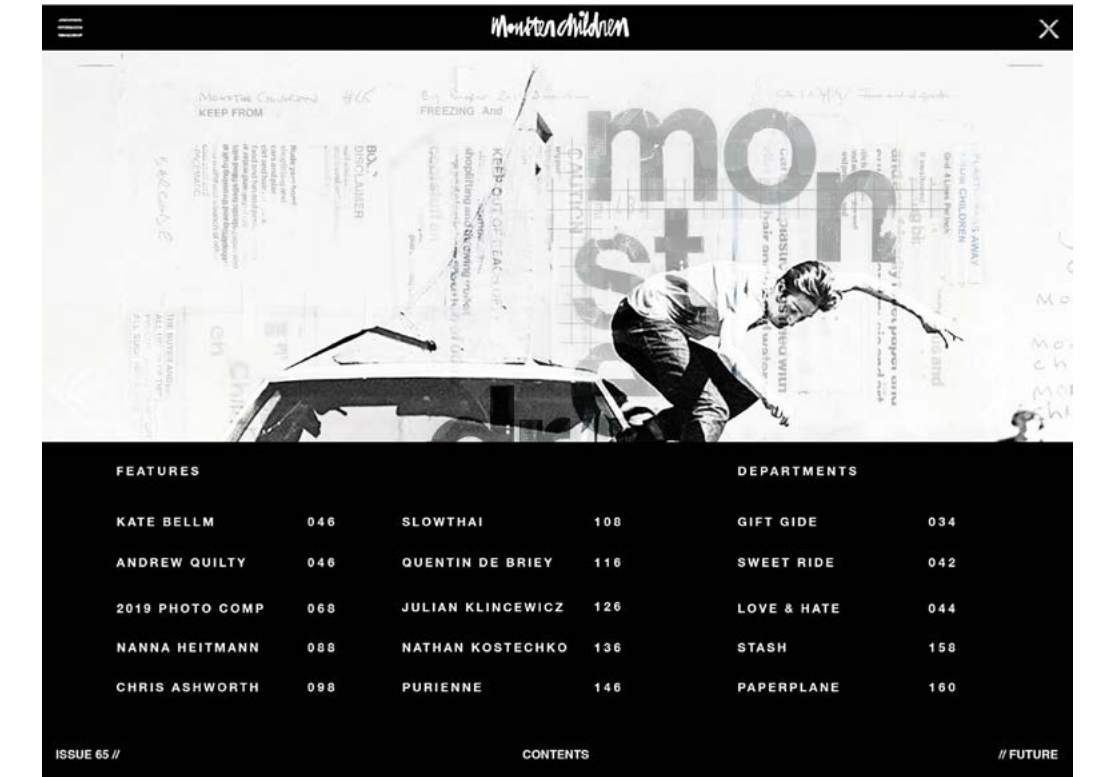
landing page with limited menu choices



slightly transparent nav buttons on each page



drop-down menu from menu button



pop-up menu from "contents" selection at bottom of screen

DIGITAL MAGAZINE PROTOTYPE

Option 1 Prototyping and Functionality

I chose to move forward with option one because it feels the most true to the original publication. I also wanted the digital experience to be similar to flipping through the physical magazine.

The white bars on the table of contents are key elements in this design. They serve as basic navigation as well as an interesting graphical element.

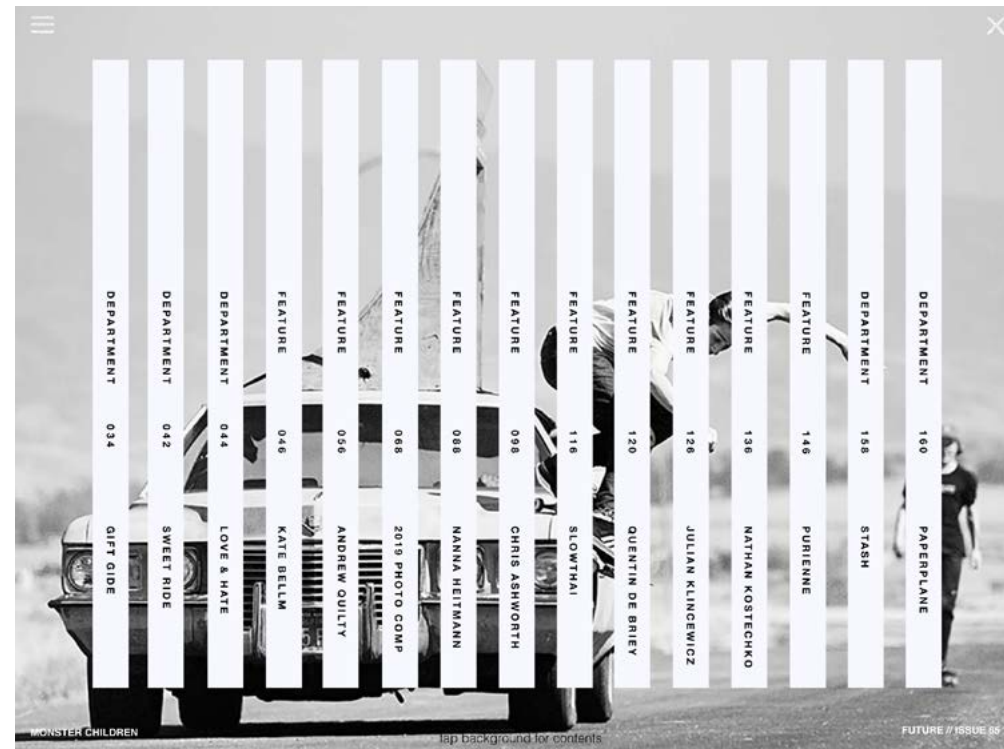
Ideally, once selected, the white bar will expand open encasing the article, which would allow you to scroll horizontally through the article contents. The article text will scroll vertically in text boxes that blend with the photos and graphics.

The white nav tabs also allow you to jump through entire articles as you browse.

Tapping on the background image will bring up the table of contents screen. There is also a small text box stating *tap background for contents* on the background image to assist in this navigation.

I can see this basic structure working as a template for future issues. Content could easily be adapted to a content management system allowing for quick deploy.

Some time would need to be spent re-arranging feature articles that spread across multiple pages to work with the horizontal scroll, but much of the information could be copy and pasted into a basic template.



white tab navigation bars & tap background for contents text



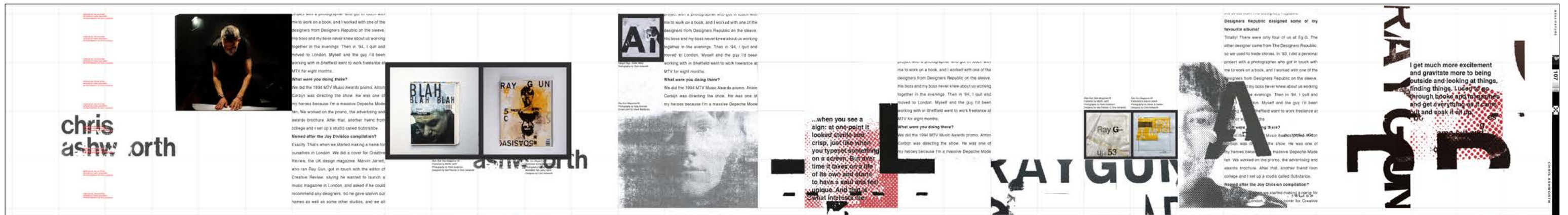
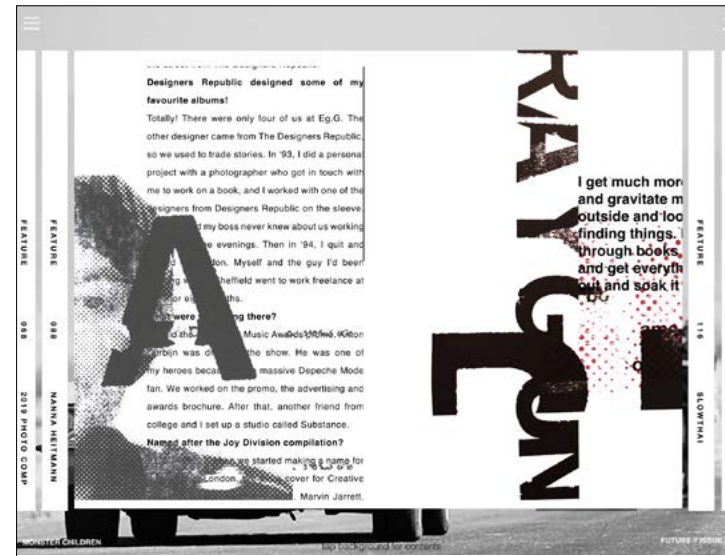
expanded tab with interior article

DIGITAL MAGAZINE PROTOTYPE

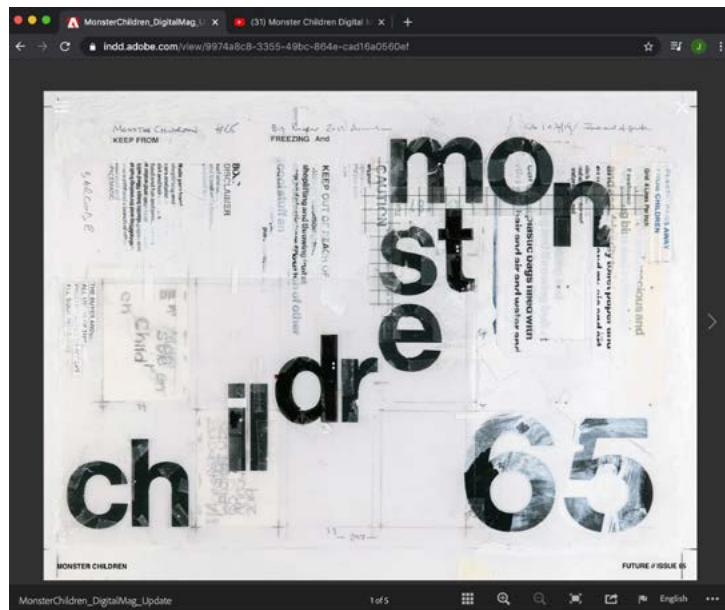


INTERIOR ARTICLE STRUCTURE

Feature articles in Monster Children span multiple pages. This Chis Ashworth article is 10 pages long. By combining the type into vertical scrolling frames the graphic imagery and photography become a larger feature in the design, but still maintain the same layered integration as the print issue.

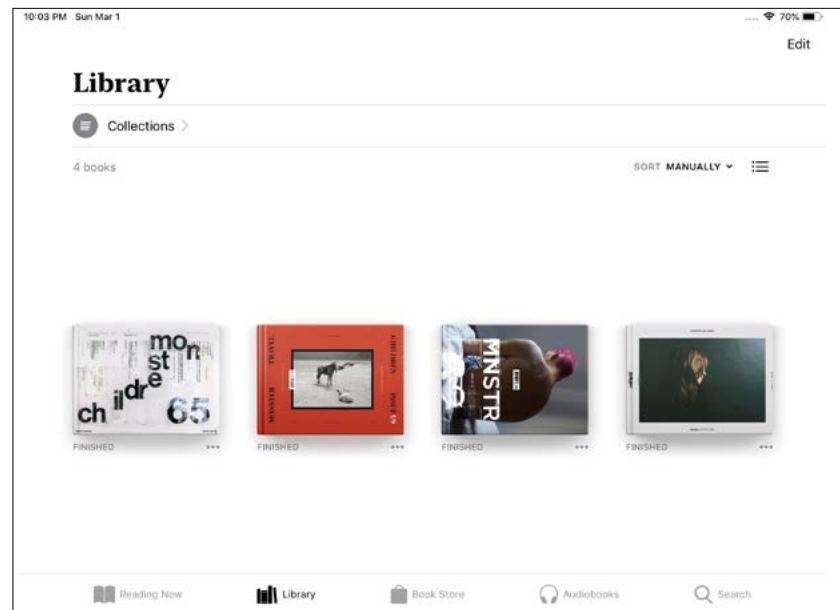


DIGITAL MAGAZINE FINAL



I published the digital prototype of Monster Children as an interactive InDesign document online. This format works pretty well on most devices, but you can only test it in a web browser.

[Adobe InDesign Document](#)



I also saved the document as an EPUB that could be opened as a publication in "Books" on a mobile device. This was a little slow and glitchy, though it may have been because of the older iPad I was using.

[EPUB Document \(35MB\)](#)



Once the EPUB was downloaded to my mobile device, I was able to open it and navigate the digital magazine. I made a quick walk through showing the interactivity.

[Interactivity Video Walk Through](#)