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GIT 334

Creative Project 1

WWF 'Act Now' Campaign Poster: Love it or Lose it

## What I made:

I chose to design a PSA poster for the WWF 'Act Now' campaign because I feel it's important to explore the potential of design as it impacts issues like global warming. I also wanted to explore off-the-wall uses for simple objects, which I have found to be one of the most influential methods of advertising. More specifically, my inspiration is derived from The Fused Metaphor era of graphic design, which is all about combining symbols to tell a bigger story and communicate an idea in a simpler, more thought-provoking way. This approach is powerful to me because it forces designers to think outside the box, while it forces viewers to spend more time decoding/interpreting it, often allowing them to remember it better. In my project, a lightbulb acts symbolically as an iceberg that barely supports a lonely polar bear stranded in the middle of the Arctic Ocean. The lightbulb simultaneously represents both the reason he is stuck there – the heat from global warming – and the beckoning idea being generated that we should do something about it.

In 2020, WWF spent \$40,381,048 on fundraising efforts, a significant portion of which was directed towards their creative ad campaigns. WWF reported their printing & publication expenses at \$13,655,098 and their advertising expenses at \$6,494,065. These efforts enabled them to raise \$276 million in 2020, 13% more than in 2019. WWF posters are world-renowned attention-grabbers, making people stop to look twice with captivating and often symbolic visual messages. Their campaign pieces always come with a call-to-action and are often directly linked to a donation form. WWF hires designers from all over the world to create impactful posters and contribute toward their PSA campaigns. By designing a poster that communicates one of their central themes and uses methods familiar to their advertising style (i.e., fused metaphors that evoke an emotional response), I think WWF would have a good reason to allocate a fraction of their advertising fund in exchange for my design.

## File Properties:

- Color Space: RGB
  - Though you may expect to see CMYK for poster design, I wanted to work in the RGB color space because poster-style advertisements these days are often seen more online than they are in person. I also wanted more flexibility in my workflow, and certain features, such as the Exposure adjustment layer and Sky Replacement, are not available when working in CMYK.
  - Sources: *Know Online Advertising, Printing Industry Exchange, LLC*

- Color Profile: sRGB with ISO Coated v2 300% (ECI) alternate
  - I chose to work with the sRGB color profile because it is the world's default color space, and I would want everyone viewing my design to see its colors consistently. I thought about using Adobe RGB for a wider color gamut, but I want to be able to convert to CMYK for print, and using Adobe RGB is one of the leading causes of colors not matching between monitor and print.
  - I felt I'd be remiss if I designed a poster without a high-quality print alternative, so I tested how my design would look in the ISO Coated v2 300% (ECI) color profile (it still looks great). I won't be turning in my project with this color space, but if I were submitting this to WWF, then I would create a copy of my PSD converted to this space and flattened to preserve appearance. I chose this CMYK alternate because it's the most common printing profile in Europe, and the WWF International headquarters is based in Switzerland. It is also a high-quality profile that sets the standard in proofing, enables quicker post-processing due to fast-drying capabilities, and is great for offset printing on glossy surfaces, which is preferable for posters.
  - *Sources: Ken Rockwell, Betz*
- File Formats: JPEG and TIFF
  - A JPEG would be the best format for internet (sRGB) delivery because it is the most convenient for the transmission of compressed images online, taking up less space than other formats. There would be no need for transparency to be preserved with a PNG. I would also send a TIFF embedded with the ISO Coated v2 profile for printing. Since TIFFs are lossless, they offer the truest representation of the original piece and are typically the standard format in the printing industry.
  - *Source: Nehring & Polden*
- Resolution: 300ppi
  - To make this design work for both RGB and CMYK, I needed to use the CMYK industry standard of 300ppi, otherwise the quality would diminish for print. You only really need 72ppi for internet content, but it doesn't hurt to have a higher resolution, and it is better to compress an image later than to require a higher resolution.
- Dimensions: 7.875x10.5"
  - I made the dimensions based on what WWF has used in the past for their campaigns. Since I want this piece to work for both digital and print, I decided bigger is better because it is always better to scale an image down than it is to scale it up. When you scale up an image, it adds new pixels by interpolating color information (of the pixels already existing), and the image will become blurry. When you scale down an image, it removes pixels, thus removing some image information. A larger image allows for flexibility in working between RGB and CMYK versions.
  - *Source: Davis, WWF PSAs*

## Techniques Used:

### 1. Technique #1

- a. Masking
- b. I needed to hide parts of images in certain areas while revealing others in order to create a seamless image composite.
- c. I masked the background of the lightbulb, the overlay of the sky to show through the lightbulb in the foreground, the sky included in the original ocean image, and the polar bear to isolate it from its background. To show the effect of the sky in the foreground of the lightbulb, which was still appearing a bit too gray, I duplicated the sky and used a mask to isolate the area of the sky showing through the lightbulb. To create a subtle overlap of the ocean over the lightbulb and make it look like it's underwater, I duplicated all the background layers, masked out the sky, merged them together, and placed them above the lightbulb layer. I also masked the paper texture to show through the text layer.

### 2. Technique #2

- a. Adjustment Layers – Levels, Exposure, Hue/Saturation
- b. I needed to match colors of certain elements to fit in their environments, especially since the images I used all had significant variations in lighting.
- c. I applied a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to the polar bear because its temperature was extremely warm, making it look out of place. I also applied a Levels adjustment layer to darken the polar bear and get the result I wanted from the Hue/Saturation adjustment. Wanting to make the scene look less Caribbean and more Arctic, I used Sky Replacement to render dark clouds and alter the mood of the scene. This automatically created brightness and temperature adjustment layers. Then I used a Levels adjustment layer to make the ocean match the sky. After those modifications, I felt the composition as a whole was too dark, so I applied an Exposure adjustment layer to the entire document to bring some contrast and visibility back in.

### 3. Technique #3

- a. Blending Modes
- b. I needed my images to blend together in unique ways to make them work as foreground, background, and midground elements.
- c. The Levels adjustment layer used to darken the ocean didn't give me the full effect I needed, so I created a black rectangle with the Soft Light blend mode to enhance its influence. The Sky Replacement needed to use the Pass Through blend mode so that all adjustment layers in that group would affect all the layers below them, including layers not inside that group. To show the effect of the sky in the foreground of the lightbulb, I used an Overlay blend mode with low opacity on that mask to exaggerate highlights and shadows inside the lightbulb. This made the lighting match the sky in tone while allowing for some highlight exaggeration to account for the flicker of light coming from the bulb itself. Next, I used the merged

copy of the ocean in the foreground with the Hard Light blend mode to deepen the blues while maintaining contrast from the lightbulb, making it look like it's floating underwater. Finally, I duplicated and merged the Sky Replacement group so I could bring a copy to the foreground, and then darkened it to create a stormy effect with the Linear Burn blend mode.

## **Creative Process:**

When it comes to advertising, I've always been most impacted by work rooted in The Fused Metaphor era (from 1945-1970), which is all about combining symbols to tell a bigger story and communicate an idea in a simpler, more thought-provoking way. This approach is powerful to me because it forces designers to think outside the box, while it forces viewers to spend more time decoding/interpreting it, often allowing them to remember it better. When brainstorming project ideas, I often gravitate toward this style and begin by finding simple objects around me, then making lists of other, often sillier, ways I could use them. I was originally thinking I wanted to make an ad for Shoes for Crews, a company that makes nonslip shoes for workers. My idea was to tell a story on the bottom of the shoe with depictions of a chaotic restaurant weaving through the grip (i.e. servers running around with trays, various foods woven into the grip like a maze, etc.) but the more I played around with the idea, the more I saw it as a vector illustration. I decided to move on to something simpler that used transparency in an interesting way, and the lightbulb by my desk was rather thought-provoking, so I ran with that.

## **Challenges:**

It was very difficult to find a good half-underwater image that showed a decent amount of sky. I actually could not find that, so I eventually created it myself with the Content-Aware tool, replicating and expanding the closest image I could find. I also had a tough time with lighting, which is partially because Photoshop is moving away from 3D and lighting render effects, making them have unexpected results. The other reason was that lightbulbs are difficult to fully mask out because you need to keep some level of the original background color in order to keep the highlights and reflectivity of the lightbulb intact. This was something I had to solve with careful masking, duplicated layers for foreground/background use, and most importantly, the appropriate blend modes.

## Appendix

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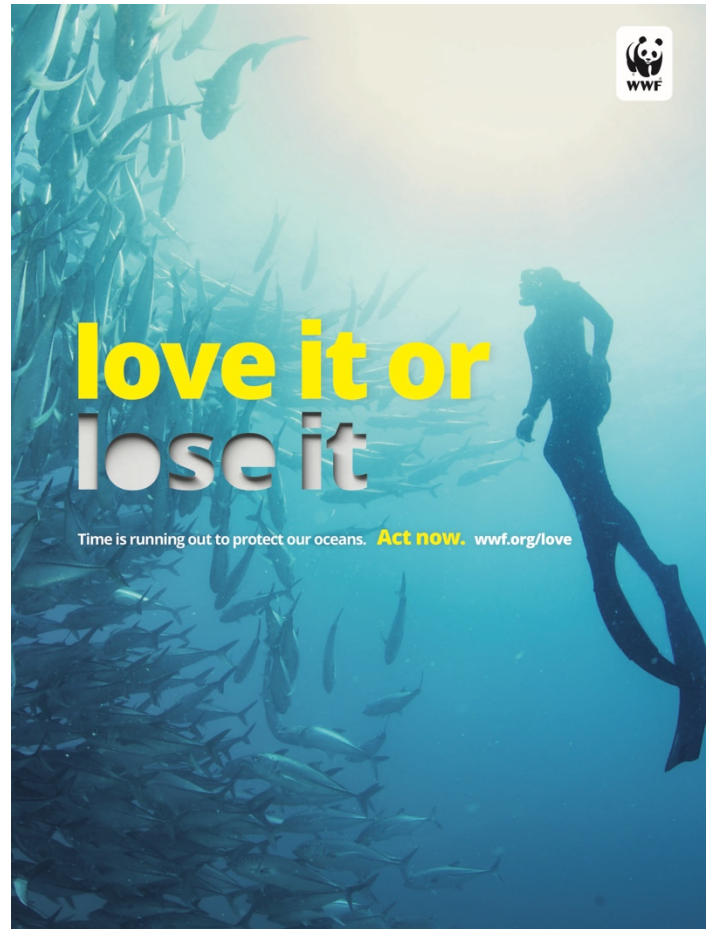
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### 3 Examples of Commercial Jobs



## Before and After Images



[Adobe Stock URL](#) I found this image on Adobe Stock by searching for “half underwater”



<https://unsplash.com/photos/R53t-Tg6J4c>

I found this on Unsplash by searching for “polar bear”



<https://unsplash.com/photos/d9yOg5zP-oQ>

I found this image on Unsplash by searching for “lightbulb”



<https://unsplash.com/photos/R53t-Tg6J4c>

I found this on Unsplash by searching for “paper texture”



<https://www.logolynx.com/topic/wwf>

I found this image on Logo Lynx by searching for “WWF Logo.” It was hard to find a perfect logo without any extra artifacts, so I cleaned it up in PS.



## Final Output



**love it or**  
**lose it**

Time is running out to stop the climate crisis. **Act now.** [www.wwf.org/love](http://www.wwf.org/love)