SK8 & RAMP

LEV VEL

Rull med oss i Gågata

MANDATORY ASSIGNMENT 03: PRODUCT ADVERTISING

INTRODUCTION

In this assignment I have created a poster to promote a skate park as a pedestrian area of my hometown. For this I needed to closely consider the photography, and I had to come up with a logo as well as other graphic elements to reach my target group. The poster is strong in its contrasts, has elements and a slogan to quickly draw attention, and is comfortable to the eye.

Interpretation of Task
I understood this assignment as having some freedom when deciding which pedestrian area to use; since there is no actual pedestrian street in my hometown, I thought of other areas in which cars are not allowed, and soon came up with the idea of using the skate park. I then needed to give much thought to the photography, as this was one of the most important parts of the assignment. In addition, I would have to come up with a logo, and whether or not I used Gågaten (pedestrian street) or came up with my own name, was up to me. I decided to come up with my own name, and rather include Gågaten in a byline, as the skate park is not an actual street, and this might confuse people.

Concept and Target Group
The concept of this assignment is to create a poster which promotes, and reflects the values of, the skate park I chose to name Sk8 Ramp. By using photography, a logo, a slogan and other graphic elements I need to reach my target audience in order to successfully advertise the area.

My target group is in the age between 13-21, will mainly be boys, and will of course enjoy skating. They are interested in graffiti, and in expressing themselves through this, and will have a bit of a tough attitude.

Message/Achieved Action
By using strong photography, and coming up with a logo that should easily reach my target group, I think I have created a poster that would draw attention to the skate ramp.

Layout/Design - The layout and design of this poster is quite simple, as not too many elements, nor fonts or colours have been used. It is relaxing to the eye, yet still visually interesting and appealing.

Colour - I have used two different blue colours, as well as grey, black and white in both the graphics and photography.

Photography - The photograph used is unique, and has strong contrast which creates the atmosphere I'm aiming for. Some editing in Camera RAW helped to further achieve this.

Typography - For the logo I have used the script font A Dripping Marker, and for the slogan and byline I utilise the fonts Philly Sans and Arial Black.

Elements - My elements have been kept to a minimum as I've been thinking "less is more," and have also wanted to keep the focus at the photograph and the logo.

RESEARCH AND WORK PROCESS

Beginning my work process for this assignment, I had to find a definition of the term "pedestrian zone," find a target group, look at posters and successful designs, and get down inspiration and thoughts on both a mind map and a moodboard.

Research and Analysis

Defining Target Group and Pedestrian Zone - Sk8 Ramp is a skate park in Levanger, Norway, located right outside the heart of the city centre. This is a park in which people can be social and get some activity, whilst also enjoying being outside. It is a pedestrian zone, which according to *Wikipedia* is an "area of a city or town reserved for pedestrian-only use and in which most or all automobile traffic may be prohibited."

Ramp does indeed refer to an actual skate ramp, but this word is also a Norwegian word which translates to Hooligan - "A violent young troublemaker, typically one of a gang" (*Oxforddictionaries*). In Norwegian this word will not only be used when this violence or troublemaking is very serious, but may also be something parents say to their kids when they're being a little bad.

Sk8 Ramp's target audience are teenagers and up, in the age between 13 to 21. The average skater is a boy, with a bit of a tough or cool attitude. His personality is a little rebellious, and in addition to skating he enjoys graffiti and will often have an opinion about society and pretty much everything else. Skating is a way for him to spend time outdoors, both as a social activity, but also because he likes the possible danger around it. He sees this as another way to express himself and his rather careless attitude towards duties and expectations.

He will be in school, but will not be the one who pays the most attention in class. Since Sk8 Ramp is located in Levanger, the boy will live in this area. He is likely to spend more time on the ramp than at home doing his homework, and is the ultimate "skateramp" (skater hooligan).

Posters - Posters are usually quite large in size, although the size may vary. They are generally posted (hence the name) at places where there is maximum visibility expected. Posters need to easily grab the attention of people, as they are usually read from a distance, often in passing. The key here is to have a catchy line and attractive visuals, and to not have it contain so much information that people stop reading. A poster needs to be both attractive to look at and contain either text or imagery or preferably a combination of these.

For this assignment I knew I had to work with an A2 portrait oriented poster, and that I needed to include photography, a logo, a slogan, and possibly other visual elements.

It didn't take me that long to come up with the idea of using the words "LEV VEL" as my slogan, as this is a term often associated with my hometown Levanger. This translates to "live well" and I think that's something the target group should live by, and probably already do. This is a short slogan, meaning it's catchy, and the words actually mirroring each other makes it quite interesting. Then, for those interested, reading the byline "Rull med oss i Gågata" (role with us in Gågata), will help them understand where to go to join in on the fun with the other "skateramps."

Skateboard Posters - To get inspiration before really getting started, I did a Google search on skateboarding posters, as well as having a look at other posters that were successful.

Mind Map - Thinking of possible areas, I wrote down Sjøgata (a street), Ny-parken (with the skate ramp), and Parken (our old park) and what I associate with those. I also put down what was needed for the poster, and what to think about regarding the photography needed.

Moodboard - My moodboard is mostly meant to describe the target group, which I think is very important when trying to create a design for this group. So this gave me inspiration in terms of the photography, colours, icons, etc.

Coming Up With Ideas

I had to think of the logo, photography and the layout of the poster for a successful design.

Logo - I had a very clear idea of the logo's style from the beginning, as this is a style I've been interested in trying out for ages, but just hadn't found the right project for. So I was so excited when beginning the work of Sk8 Ramp's logo. As always this process began with sketches, trying out a few different ideas; quite a few that are in the style that I wanted to try (the skulls), and also some others just to try keeping an open mind. I tried using a horse because that's what is used in my hometown's coat of arms – and did some tribal drawings of this to better reach the target group. However, I quickly saw that my favourite ideas were those using a skull.

I produced five different skulls in Illustrator (so excited that I managed to illustrate them the way I wanted here as well), all based on the same drawing/head, but with different elements. So I uploaded these five ideas to Moodle for feedback, and was really glad to see my idea and concept seemed to work on others as well.

We agreed to keep working on the first idea, and I also kept using the third for a little while, whilst trying out new fonts and font placements.


And finally, after some playing around with font placement, fonts, colours, etc., I have come up with a design I'm super happy with myself. I really feel like this logo speaks to my target audience, and it definitely communicates my message. Using the white outline is also great when placing it on a busy background.

I knew from the start that I wanted a strong main colour, and since blue is a "boy" colour, I ended up with this as it quickly gets your attention.
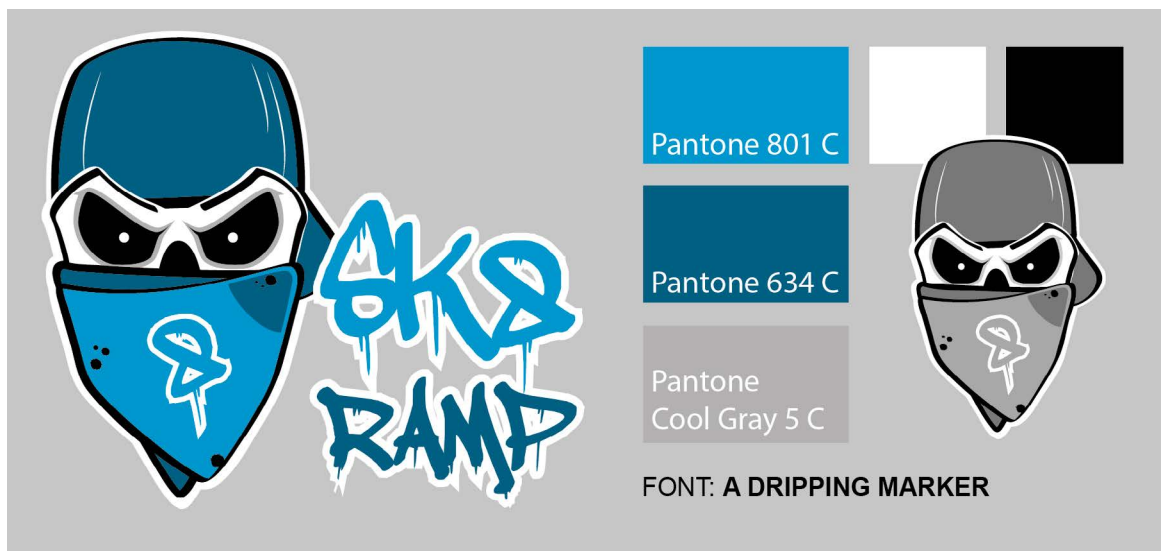
Sketches - A very important part of the assignment is the photography. In the brief it is stated that the assignment's goal is to "get to grips with photography and how to use your camera creatively as well as experimenting with lighting. It is important to think about what works together to create the right atmosphere using model/view/lighting etc." and that we should "brainstorm and have a clear understanding of the idea" to be able to take creative pictures. So before I brought my camera out with me, I did a few simple sketches to get an idea of what kind of angles I could try and photograph my skateboard at. Before drawing I also went to the park to see what the ramps really looked like (I have been there a few times, but never really paid much attention to the actual lines and everything).
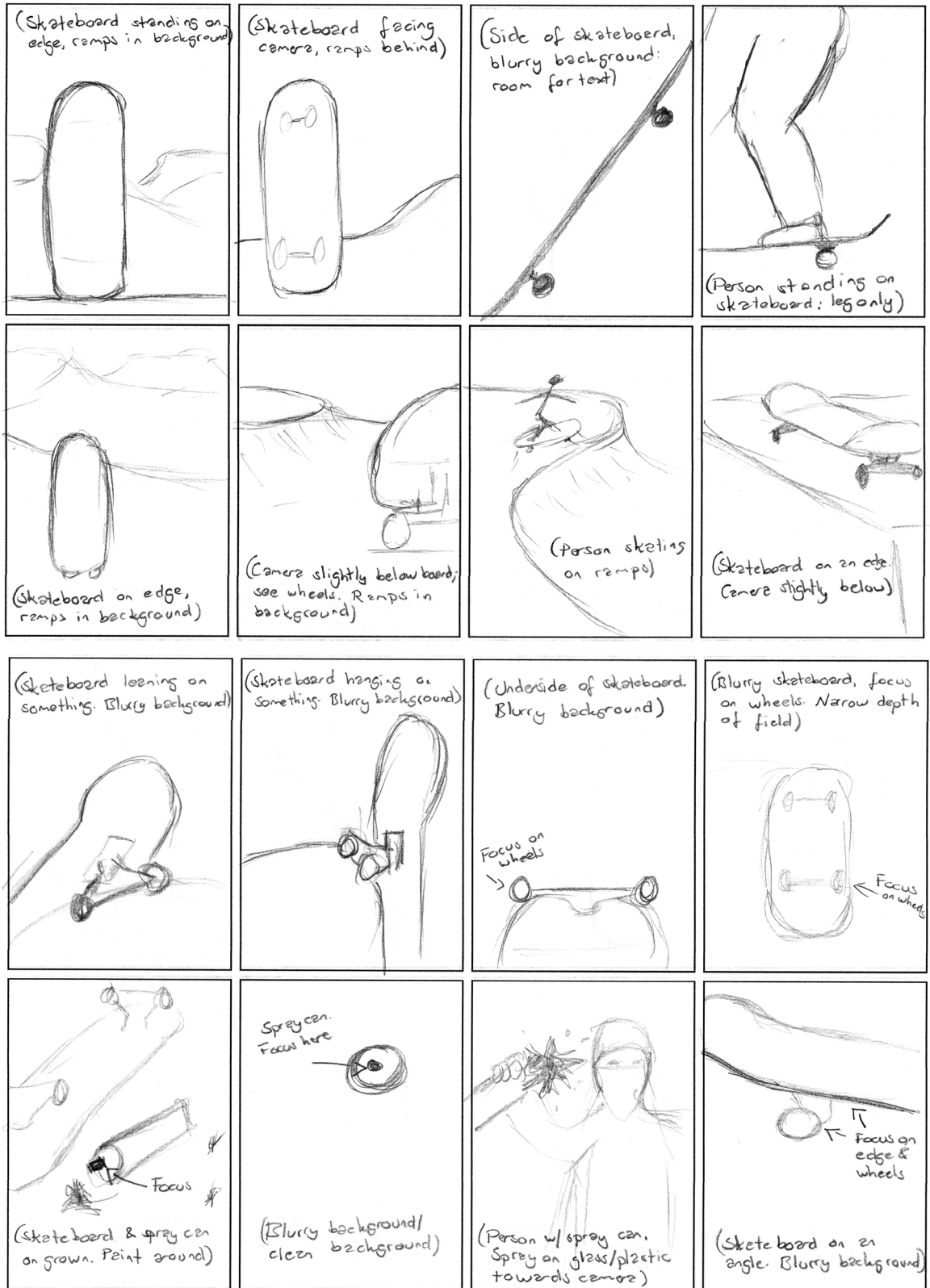
Photography - With the ideas from the sketches in mind, and knowing that more angles and views etc. would come to me as I was out there, I went to the park one evening. Coming back I had over 90 photos, and edited and chose my favourites out of these. Some had too many disturbing elements such as street lights or people in the background, whilst others just didn't work with the idea I had in mind.

I quickly saw whilst editing that I wanted to turn down the saturation quite a bit, pump up contrasts, and also add a bit of a HDR effect to some, as this really fits my concept of it being a little rough.

These photographs are all taken right around sunset, which gave me really good and beautiful light to work with. The shutter speed is set to either 1/125 or 1/250, the f numbers vary from 5 to 11, the focal length between 35 and 58, and the ISO was set to 100. I used f5 when I wanted the background to be quite blurry, as seen on the photos at the bottom below. In doing this I get a much better focus on the actual skateboard, and make sure I get rid off any disturbing elements that might be behind.

I was also really happy with the way the photos got a bit of an orange tone over them, as the sun was setting. This created a more atmospheric mood. I was, however, not entirely sure whether or not that fit as well with my topic.

Since I still wasn't sure if I was completely happy with either of these photos, I did some more at home. One idea I had was to use a spray can and sort of spray towards the camera: this, although I find it an interesting idea, turned out to be pretty hard. I made myself a frame I put plastic on, and then had quite the workout being both behind and in front of the camera. The problem however, was that the plastic looked too much like that; the reflection from the light around showed in the folds (which I, without luck, tried removing both in real life and in Photoshop), which just didn't work. If I had had a big piece of glass instead, that probably would have worked better. But it was still fun to try out. And even though I didn't use that idea, I did bring my spray can with me for other photos as well.

I used a 50mm lens for all these photos, which is a lens that allows me to use a pretty large aperture. So my f stop varied from 2.8 to 5, my shutter speed was set to 1/100-160, and I mostly had an ISO of 100. I love this lens as it really helps me get the focus on the part of the photo that I want. With a large aperture the light usually isn't much of an issue either, which makes the process a lot easier.

Whilst editing and finding my favourites, I kept turning down the saturation quite a bit, pumped up the contrasts, and added even more of a HDR effect. With especially these photographs I think this is perfect. What I also quickly saw with some of the photos was that the colour scheme was more or less perfect and in line with my logo's colours.

Digital Sketches - After choosing my favourite photos, I sketched out a few layout ideas for the poster in Photoshop. I thought it would be easier to do the poster digitally from the beginning, and work my way around the different photos and their elements. As mentioned, the texts "Lev Vel" and "Rull med oss i Gågata" translate to "Live well" and "Role with us in Gågata." I did not want more text than this, as first of all, the assignment brief didn't say we needed more, but I also want it to be a quick read, and don't feel like more information is needed. People understand what Sk8 Ramp is about because of the name and the photo, and the byline tells them where to go to join in.

I tried keeping the colour scheme using blue and tones of grey, as I think this integrates well with the logo and then also the target group. I believe this is the main reason I think the photos I took at home quickly became my favourites when combining them with the logo.

I always knew I didn't want to add too many extra elements, so I rather played around with different ways of displaying the typography, and also adding some simple elements such as splashes, frames, different opacities on the text, font sizes, font placements, alignments, and text angles.

I feel like the photographs I ended up working with were strong enough on their own, plus the logo is what I would like to focus a bit on. Had I brought in many elements, both of these would have disappeared more than they do without. Besides, as I mentioned earlier, a poster should easily grab people's attention, and needs to consist of catchy and attractive visuals: and once again we come back to the rule of "less is more."

After asking for feedback on these ideas on Moodle, I was glad to see my tutor agreed with me on which two designs were the strongest. So I kept working on these two, trying out some other fonts, and making sure the slogan and byline are readable and draw enough attention.

Poster 1 Fonts

What I like about this poster is how the photograph communicates more than just one thing about the area; it is not only about skating, but really also about being a little rebellious. The colour scheme works perfect with the logo, and the splash behind the word "LEV" really brings this out, and draws more attention to the slogan.

Poster 2 Fonts

I like the darkness, and the really strong contrasts in this photo. To me, this captures the exact mood that I wish to communicate, and I love how the focus is on the blue in the front of the skateboard, whilst the rest is blurry. This makes for a neater background to place the logo and other text on, and I also feel like there is a nice connection between the different (although few) elements.

I was recommended to try adding a white stroke to "LEV VEL" on particularly the first poster, as it got a bit lost on the ground. As I was working with this though, I realized that neither of these fonts really worked for me, so I tried out even more.

These four fonts are all found on *Dafont.com*, under the category of comic. Since the logo has a bit of a comic feel to it, I figured the slogan might use a font like that as well. I think all these fonts are much closer to what I had in mind from the beginning; they are readable, yet they are not too strict or boring. I use Arial Black for the byline, and this is what I first used for the slogan as well, but experimenting more with other typefaces definitely benefited my work and the poster as a whole.

A few more adjustments, and I was finally where I wanted to be with both posters. To the first poster I have added a gradient (black to transparent) at the bottom, behind the slogan and byline, to make these better visible, and have also cleaned it up a little. The second poster I was more or less happy with as was after choosing my font, so for this I only cleaned it up more, and made sure everything lined up the way I wanted and so on. Having both of them ready and good to go made it a lot easier to finally come to a decision on which one to use as both myself and my tutor agreed both were pretty strong candidates.

I ended up asking a few other people which one they preferred before finally deciding to go with the second poster.

DESIGN CHOICES

Style/Genre
The style of this poster is very inspired by its target group: it's tough, it's cool, and it has a bit of a "young" feel to it. It is meant to engage skaters, and I think it does so in using strong graphics and photography, a catchy slogan, and a logo that catches attention. Strong contrasts make the poster a little dark and thus more mysterious.

Layout/Design
There is a quite simple layout in use, where the rule of thirds has been considered: the slogan part is placed on the bottom horizontal line, while the edge between the wall and the skateboard goes along the other. The slogan and byline are left aligned, however the slogan is justified, almost giving it the feeling of being centred on the page, as the logo is.

The photograph itself uses symmetry, which means the elements "are balanced or mirrored" (Graphic Design School, page 41). This symmetry isn't perfect, but it's close enough for the eye to be able to rest and enjoy the composition.

Typography
To bind the logo with the graffiti style I wanted, I used a graffiti style typeface. This quickly helps give the logo an identity closely related to its target group. The typeface is called A Dripping Marker, and belongs to the script family class. *Sitepoint* explains that this means that its appearance reminds of hand lettering, and is therefore not as strict as serifs and sans-serifs typefaces often are. It is a font best used in a large size, as its readability is greatly affected at small sizes. A Dripping Marker is a free font, designed in 2011 by Wick van den Belt (*Fonts2u*), and is described as a semi-bold font. A Dripping Marker, 18pt:

Although I did try using the same font for my slogan, I did not feel like this got the look I wanted, so I needed another script, and found Philly Sans, which performs as an all uppercase font. There is a slight difference between the letters C, G and S, as the lowercase version loses the diagonal line in the top right corner, but apart from that most letters are basically the same. It is a bold

typeface, and was according to *Fontpalace* designed by Kosal Sen in 2013. Described as part of Fontpalace's graffiti fonts, this is yet another typeface with the right style for the poster and my target audience, and I think it complements A Dripping Marker well. Philly Sans, 15 pt:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

I usually avoid using a third typeface, but since neither of the scripts would work well for the byline and its small size, I used Arial Black for this. This is a heavy sans serif font, and one I think works well together with Philly Sans. Arial Black, 12 pt:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890 !"#$%&/()=?

Photography
There is quite a big difference between my before and after images, but I really do believe the edits I did in Camera RAW did well. The photo is much sharper, it's a lot nicer to look at, and has a much better atmosphere now than as shot.

My settings for this photo were set to 1/100, f3.2, ISO 200, and focal length 50mm. It was taken inside a garage where it was a little dark, so that's why I even with an aperture that large set my ISO to 200. Since this doesn't create any grain or noise at all though, I did not see this as an issue. Using a large aperture lets me put the focus on the front of the skateboard, where the paint is starting to come of, which I think makes it very interesting to look at.

I tried considering both the rule of thirds and symmetry whilst taking and editing this photo, trying to keep about the same amount of space on each side of the skateboard's front wheels (it

is on a bit of an angle, but this breaks it up in an interesting way), and getting the line where the ground and wall meet aligned to one of the horizontal lines. I personally believe the skateboard being on an angle in the back creates some contrast, which again benefits the photo and its composition because more seems to be happening. Since the back wheels are so dark and out of focus however, they don't distract the eye so much that they end up competing with the front.

Colours

For the graphic elements I only used two tones of blue, where one doesn't have any black to it (CMYK), and the other has 50% to it. I have a grey which is quite neutral in colour, and then there is pure black and white to complement. These are the main colours of the photograph as well, but of course with more variations between the different tones.

RGB	CMYK	RGB	CMYK	RGB	CMYK		
R: 0	C: 100 %	R: 0	C: 100 %	R: 177	C: 32 %		
G: 157	M: 0 %	G: 98	M: 0 %	G: 176	M: 25 %		
B: 224	Y: 0 %	B: 136	Y: 0 %	B: 175	Y: 26 %		
	K: 0 %		K: 50 %		K: 5 %		
Web		Web		Web		Black	White
#009DE0		#006288		#B1B0AF			

I personally love my colour scheme. I find it relaxing to look at, while still maintaining a visual interest and enough variation to create contrast.

Elements

I don't use many elements, but I think those I have used are enough and so strong that I don't need more. To the right is the poster stripped to the graphic elements only, without the photo, to better showcase. I use a black frame set to an opacity of 80%, and used the vector drawing tool in Photoshop to create three splashes that I cut and fit to this frame. This has then been set to an angle of -4.61 degrees - I just think this fits to the poster being about skating, and also makes it more interesting. And then of course it is the logo, which alone is a strong graphic.

SELF EVALUATION

Reflection Around Finished Product
I'm glad I can say I am very happy with my finished product; including the logo, the photograph, and the final poster as a whole. This is the first time I made myself such a specific target group, and I'm glad I finally got around to doing so, as this is also the first time I feel I have a product that really speaks to the targeted group. So all in all, I believe this has been the biggest lesson learnt from this assignment; try to narrow down the audience as much as possible.

I love the colour scheme used, as it's harmonic and visually appealing. The hues work great together, and are consistent over all graphics and the photograph. All typography is also legible and there shouldn't be much confusion as to what or where the skate park is.

Development and Process
My process has in my opinion been very thorough. Maybe I should have done more hand drawn sketches for the actual posters, but as explained I thought it would be just as easy to do this in Photoshop, where I had the logo's shape, and easily could move elements around. Especially since I had so many photos I wanted to try out at first, to see which would work best as a poster, I think this was a good way of going about it.

Having such a clear idea from the beginning, I think developing the poster has gone much smoother than it could have, had I not had a very thought through idea. I always knew which fonts and colours not to use. Since photography was also one of the key elements in this assignment, this is what I focused on the most, and feel fairly confident in having achieved well.

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