

# *Recognize Me?*

Digital Design Thesis 2020

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# Introduction

‘Recognize Me?’ is a motion piece that addresses the fact that even though women outnumber men in the design field, women earn less than their male counterparts. My thesis, ‘Recognize Me?’ focuses on celebrating historic female designers and facilitating education on gender related issues in the design field. My target audience is graduating designers who could benefit from learning about gender-related problems in the field. My hope is that the audience also gain inspiration from the incredible women highlighted.

My thesis problem was born out of my own experiences as a designer. I have struggled with being underestimated by clients and facing challenges my male peers do not deal with. Historically, female artists have always been overlooked and they continue to be overlooked today. I wanted to create something that celebrated female designers and remind graduating designers of gender inequalities in the field that still exist today.



# Thesis Question

“

How can empathic graphic and motion design be used in the effort to celebrate overlooked female designers throughout history and shed light on gender-related issues in the field?

”



*Research*



# Problem Definition

‘Recognize Me?’ addresses the lack of female representation in the workplace and the challenges graduating women face trying to break into male-dominated workforces. Female designers, and women in general are not given as many opportunities to grow in their fields, and they are underpaid compared to their male counterparts.

With a lack of female leaders in the workplace, women often feel like they are not good enough for a job, that their skillsets are inadequate, and they are valued as less. With this, I wanted to acknowledge a handful of trailblazing female designers for viewers to potentially look up to and at the very least recognize their impact in a small way.



# Research

## INTRODUCTION

A simple Google search led me to my thesis focus. I googled 'famous graphic designers' and was faced with a sea of male designers with a mere two female designers listed on the roster. I was disappointed, but not surprised as I scrolled through the list. But something occurred to me right in that moment.

I realized I could name at least a dozen male graphic designers, but I could only name two or three female ones. My research and thesis was born then and there.



## RESEARCH

My research has mainly focused on finding statistics and quantitative data on gender imbalances among male and female designers and the extent of those imbalances. It is well-known that there are gender inequalities in the majority of fields in the U.S., but it would seem that progressive, creative fields like design would have less of a gender imbalance.

## AIGA DESIGN CENSUS

An article from the AIGA summarizes findings from a 2016 census

study focusing on pay inequality in the design field. The census confirms that as of 2018, women outnumber men in the design field and still make less money than they do. For every dollar a man earns, women earn 81 cents.

When comparing the top 50% of male and females in their respective design fields, the top men make almost \$14,000 more a year than the top women do. Looking at the top 25%, women earn almost \$22,000 less than men (Bagnall).



This census was key in showing that there is a huge discrepancy in pay compared to men and women in the design field. The article also discusses possible solutions like offering education to women on negotiating their salaries and on a policy driven level as well which.

The current 2019 Design Census created by companies Google and the AIGA give insights into the demographics and discrepancies in the design world.

On its gender portion of the census, the numbers showed that, "When it comes to gender, men are more likely to make more than \$150,000 annually. This tracks with national data that shows women hold just 11% of leadership positions in the design industry and make 80 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts" (Design Census 2019).

This current data combined with the sample data taken from this census show that there is currently a discrepancy in how much



female designers earn compared to their male counterparts. Along with the fact that women hold a minuscule fraction of design leadership positions as well. There is clear and relevant data to show that there is an uneven playing field when it comes to gender in the design world. Women are not in leadership positions and they make far less money than their male colleagues and this relevant and current information will play a clear role in strengthening my case for my thesis problem.

“If changes in the wage gap continue at the same rate, it will take until 2059 for women to earn the same as men”

- Janet Zaretsky



## OTHER FIELDS

Lean In, an organization dedicated to helping women in the workplace through research, groups, and public policy. This report discusses how women are still struggling to break into corporate America. The study discusses how "corporate America has made almost no progress in improving women's representation. From the outset, fewer women than men are hired at the entry level. And at every subsequent step, the representation of women further declines. Women of color are the most

underrepresented group of all- behind white men, men of color, and white women" (Key Findings). This is an excellent source showing statistically that women are not being hired, especially WOC. This article validates that there is statistical evidence to show how women are more likely to face challenges with hiring, promotions, harassment, and discrimination at work.

A Forbes article discusses how one can support women in the workplace and also shares some key facts



about the current workforce in America. They discuss how "Less than 5% of Fortune 500 company CEOs are women. While women enter the workforce on the same footing as men, the further up the corporate ladder you go, the fewer women you find" and they also discuss how that "if changes in the wage gap continue at the same rate, it will take until 2059 for women to earn the same as men" (Zaretsky). Due to these kinds of statistics, women often feel like they do not belong in leadership positions and they underestimate themselves.

They label themselves with negative language and often describe familial responsibilities as a reason they do not belong or deserve leadership positions. This source shows the large discrepancy between female and male CEOs and the wage gap between men and women. This source shows that fewer and fewer women are given opportunities to be higher-ups and that if we continue down the path we are currently on, then it will take decades for women to earn the same as men. This shows urgency for addressing



the problem.

My research also included an article that highlights some key insights from a Thomson Reuters Foundation poll focused on women's experience in the workplace. The findings state that work-life balance, equal pay, harassment, career opportunities, and children & career are the top concerns women face ("The Top Five").





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DESIGN

BY LIBBY  
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**Process**



# THESIS

IDEA: HIGHLIGHT KEY WORDS IN DESIGN & THEIR IMPACT + HIGHLIGHT STATS IN WORKSHEETS ON DESIGN & SHARE ADVICE ON HOW TO START IN YOUR CAREER

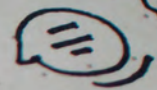
DELIVERABLES: APPROX 1 MIN MOTION + LEAFLET ON STATS + ADVICE

STORYBOARD! 

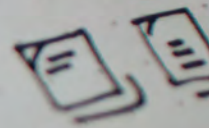
MAR 6

EIO + PROLESS BOOK ROUGH + INFO ROW

MAR 12

SME + DME FEEDBACK 

MAR 19

PROJECT REPORT 

MAR 26

QUESTIONS

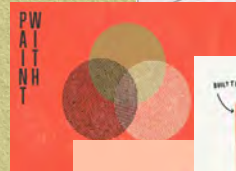
QUESTIONS: WHAT ARE THE KEY WORDS IN THE DESIGN? HOW DO THEY RELATE TO THE IMPACT? HOW DO THE STATS RELATE TO THE DESIGN? HOW DO THE STATS RELATE TO THE CAREER? HOW DO THE STATS RELATE TO THE FEEDBACK? HOW DO THE STATS RELATE TO THE PROJECT REPORT? HOW DO THE STATS RELATE TO THE QUESTIONS?



# Visual Inspiration

‘Recognize Me?’ utilizes a rough, retro style to convey its message. I strived to incorporate interesting textures and loose, sketchy elements to grab the viewers’ attention and present the information in a modern way.

The information discussed in the video can be uncomfortable to listen to, so I strived to use a style that was modern and visually appealing for my audience. I strayed from flat vectors and clean, sterile images and styles so that the message could be more palatable as to resonate with the audience.





# Timeline

Feb 18 SME / DME Meeting  
Feb 21 Progress Report #1  
Mar 13 Finalize Research | Research Paper |  
Book Rough Draft & Storyboard  
Mar 19 SME & DME Meeting & Feedback  
Mar 29 Progress Report #2 | Installation Design  
Proposal & Process Book Rough Draft  
Apr 3 Process Book Rough Draft #2  
Apr 6 Order Process Book & Thesis Book | Motion  
Piece 80% Done  
Apr 8 SME & DME Meeting & Feedback  
Apr 10 Process Book Due | Gallery Label Info  
Apr 17 Progress Report #3 | Presentations  
Apr 24 Startup Routine  
Apr 26 Shelf Installation  
May 1 Thesis Review  
May 8 Thesis Reception  
May 9 DeInstallation

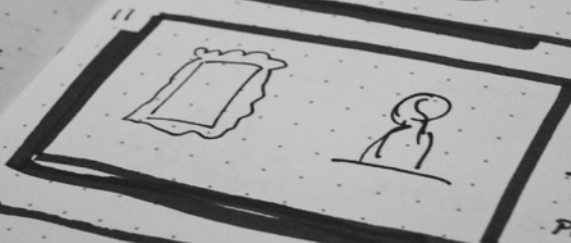


... FIRST  
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... BLACK MODEL

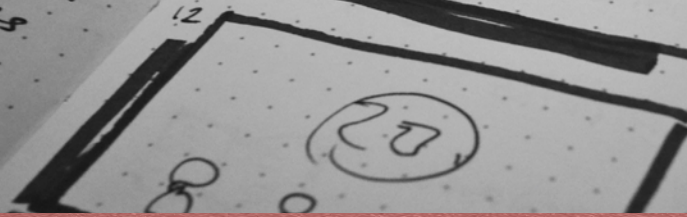
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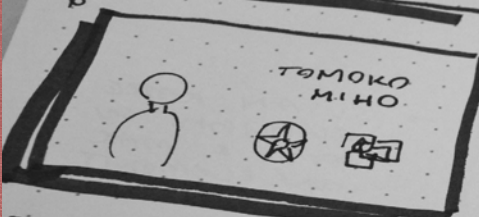
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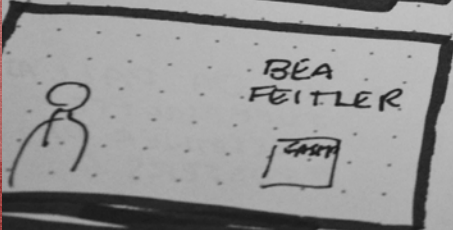
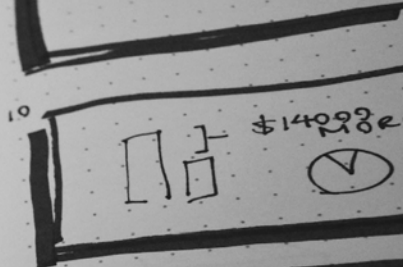
→ "WHY HAVE THERE  
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→ HISTORIC & INSTIT  
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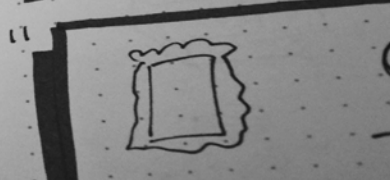
→ LINDA



→ TOMOKO MIHO  
JAPANESE AMERICAN  
DESIGNER, ALMA  
MEDAL WINNER



→ BEA FEITLER  
BRAZILLIAN, FIRT  
DIRECTOR TO FEATURE  
A BLACK MODEL









## PROCESS

I drew inspiration from retro-style illustration with lots of textures, interesting abstract shapes and forms, and a colorful and slightly muted color palette. I wanted each frame to have texture, whimsical color combinations, hand-drawn elements, and a fairly retro feel that is highly stylized. Since there are historical elements and designers highlighted, I strived to incorporate the highlighted designer's style with the retro style.

## PRE-PRODUCTION

I narrowed my selection to six women and crafted a pre-production with help from my industry mentors. I split my piece into three components centered around the quote from feminist author Linda Nochlin that reads, "Why have there been no great women artists?"



# Designers



**SUSAN KARE**

1954–Present

User Interface

Graphic Artist; created first Apple's Macintosh interface elements, icons and typefaces in the 80s



**TOMOKO MIHO**

1931–2012

American Japanese designer, known primarily for her posters inspired by Swiss international style



# Featured



**BEA FEITLER**

1938–1982

Brazilian designer for  
Harper's Bazaar, Ms.,  
Rolling Stone, and more



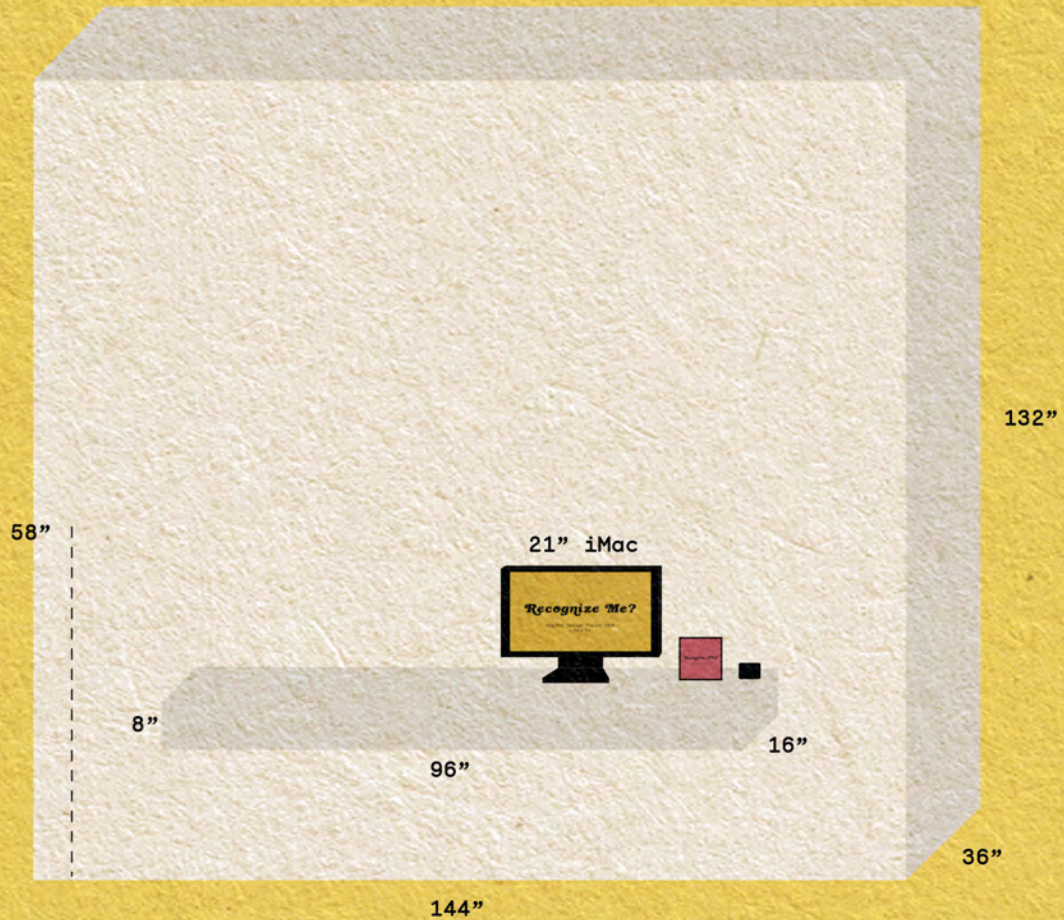
**SÖRE POPITZ**

1896–1993

German graphic designer and  
painter; often called the  
Bauhaus school's best known  
female graphic designer



# Installation





# Installation Proposal

The 'Recognize Me?' piece will consist of vinyl decals, a 21" iMac monitor to display the motion piece, personal business cards as takeaways, and the process book for the project. On one side of the wall, vinyl decals will display the title of the piece as well as a short tagline briefly describing the piece. The monitor will be placed on the right side of the given shared shelfspace. Beside the monitor, a stack of

business cards will be available for viewers to take, as well as a stand-up display for the process book for viewers to look through.

The monitor power cord will run down from the ceiling on the side of the wall and underneath the shelf and be as hidden as possible as it connects to the monitor. Tape and a casing will be used to hide the exposed cord up along the shelf and potentially to the ceiling.



# Still Frames





**Here are 6 female  
graphic designers  
you should know:**

**tomoko miho**





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Watch 'Recognize Me?' at  
[libbyyidesign.com](http://libbyyidesign.com)

Thank you to the incredible professors  
who helped me put this piece together.  
Your wisdom and support have truly  
impacted me.

I'd like to also give a special thank you  
to my mentors for this project: Maria  
Buszek, Hollee Winans, and Shuhan Teoh.  
Your advice and help made this project  
possible.

Libby Yi | [libbyyidesign.com](http://libbyyidesign.com)



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