

POSTASIS



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Thesis Portfolio
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artist statement

I am a Maryland-raised graphic designer, currently living in Portland, Oregon. I have always been known for my deep sense of empathy for others, and have learned to use my thoughtfulness to my advantage when designing. My creativity flourishes when I am able to put lots of consideration into the concepts of my projects--which is why I thoroughly enjoy the problem solving aspect of being a designer. I can connect with people in a way that benefits me and the client, and allows me to translate their ideas into a logo, language or color palette.

I enjoy layering digital with analog pieces in my designs--there's always something hand drawn or written in my projects. I typically enjoy marketing and branding projects, but after my senior year at PNCA, I have developed a new found love for designing things with more ambiguous purposes; designing for fun if you will, and designing for myself. ✦

original proposal

Religion played an important role in my family growing up. The Catholic community helped bridge my parents over from their small-town, South American lives, to their new "American dream" world in the United States. God was at the center of everything I did, until around the age of 10 when I began to feel a sense of rejection and abandonment from the same community that once brought me so much comfort. I want to create an installation that encapsulates the duality of growing up in the Catholic church as part of a South American migrant family, and the devastating effects

of it's transition from a place of refuge to the source of betrayal. My plan is to create something that will resemble a church altar from a distance but as the viewer gets closer, traditional catholic symbols and iconography will be altered to create distorted imagery. I will print the manipulated images on delicate fabrics, an allusion to the intricate decor often associated with catholic churches. The fabric will hang from the ceiling, leading the viewers' eyes up from the altar and creating an intimidating, yet welcoming atmosphere. Votive candles and plants will surround

the altar, to help with the alluring scene. The candles and some plants that will be placed along the floor, will offer viewers a warm and inviting environment, the way the church once did for me. This engaging set-up combined with all of the manipulated symbolism and iconography, will play on the juxtaposition that I, and many others, have experienced in religious communities. It will also touch on the overlying religious theme of treachery, and good vs evil.

Growing up as a first generation student in Montgomery County, Maryland wasn't uncommon. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the year 2000, 45% of people living there were foreign-born. To compare, the Portland Tri-County area was 12% foreign-born that same year. What was less common in my hometown though, was being a first generation native-born, in an upper-middle class home. I was an extremely privileged and lucky kid, but transitioning from my Latinx community in Northern Virginia, to the suburbs of Maryland was lonely at times.

None of my close neighbors spoke Spanish. None of them watched novelas or read *Las Lechucitas*, or ate *salteñas y chicharrón*. It was primarily through our local church that we found and connected with other Latinx families. My mom, sister and I made friends at our weekly Spanish mass, and at other church-related events--these were the most comforting places to me.

My mom cried when I bleached and dyed my hair. She cried when I pierced, and tattooed my body. She cried when I stopped going

to church with her, and when I told her I didn't believe in God anymore. She didn't cry however, when I came out as queer, at least not in front of me. But she would never treat me the same. Friends and family members stopped talking to me and my family. They would say hurtful things, and gossip, and I resorted to horrible ways of coping with this sense of abandonment. I know I had it easy though. I didn't get kicked out of my home, I was minimally bullied compared to most; the worst part is really just the feelings of guilt and betrayal that I continue to carry.

I want my installation to be an experience; a physical space that evokes an emotion, or a memory. Most catholic churches are grand in structure--some would even say intimidating. But while intimidating, they are simultaneously alluring and inviting, not just in the physical structure, but in the community as well. This installation will be in a dark room, lit only by the glow of candles, the lighting combined with the floral plants, hanging fabrics, and gold-tinted graphics and decor, will create the dual atmosphere of intrigue and deceit. I will be using fabrics to print on, mainly

because the Catholic church uses a lot of cloth and garments in its buildings and ceremonies, but also to add another level of distortion to the images I will be printing. Different pieces of clergy apparel symbolize different things; the long strip of cloth worn around the neck of priests in Catholic churches indicate the state of ordained office, and can be a number of different colors depending on the day or liturgical season. I will use lace fabrics as a visual representation of the intricate architectural detail in most churches; the ornamentation,

and formality of antiquity can be a cause of intimidation for viewers in a Cathedral or church. Sheer and lace fabrics will also help create a visual metaphor, representing the "veil" that I experienced Catholic communities put on themselves in order to hide the uglier, more judgmental side of them. I will have an installation guide in the form of a book, which will be a reference to the bible, and will act as an invitation for viewers to walk up and interact with the installation. It will be on a platform or pedestal in front of the altar itself.

The graphic parts of my project will be printing on fabric for the triptych and dangling strips of cloth, sticker-making for votive prayer candles, and printing an installation guide. I will be printing using the resources given to us at PNCA, such as the inkjet printers in the digital printing studio. I will be purchasing some pre-treated fabric, made specifically for inkjet printing. This will save me lots of time and money, compared to purchasing my own fabric and treating it myself. The dangling strips of cloth will be approximately 15 feet in length, 18" wide. The

triptych will be printed on 36" x 24" fabric, and both the strips and the triptych will be double sided. I will cut the top of the triptych panel, in order for it to have arches on the top. I've heard that it's a difficult task--to create the top arches and make them symmetrical, but I think that my obsession for detail, and focused precision will come through for me here. For the votive candle stickers, I will buy 8 plain prayer candles online, and design 8 stickers to place onto them. The stickers will imitate typical prayer candle stickers, which are about 8 inches tall, and 2.25 inches

in diameter, and the stickers will cover the entire candle. All of the printed material will be graphically distorted Catholic iconography and symbolism, except for the strips, which will have a repeated writing pattern. I will be using gold paint to emphasize specific details in the printed works, and a frame around the triptych. For the installation guide, I will print a small booklet, about 5.5" x 8.5" that will resemble a bible in its interior and exterior design. Everything else in my installation will simply be acquired objects, that I will display in catholic-altar fashion: a table to lay

everything out on, battery-operated candles to place inside the votive candles, tablecloth, hanging wire, plants and florals, and pedestal for installation guide”

I have influences stemming back from past projects, and memories, along with inspiration from artists I have discovered while researching for this project. Last year I did a project on Walter Mercado, who was a Puerto Rican astrologer, performer, and a part of my childhood. I had a lot of fun with that project, and I think Walter’s ornate costumes

and capes really stuck with me because they reminded me of the decoration you may find in a large church or cathedral. Growing up I visited a lot of religious places. My family traveled to Italy for my 15th birthday to visit St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican City, along with many other churches. We also traveled once every few months to the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, to pray and get gallons of this sacred spring water. I was constantly surrounded by Catholic art--which isn’t the cheeriest--there were images of a crucified man and a mournful-looking woman

all over my home, and I think that definitely influenced my interests, and style a little--whether obvious or not.

While researching for this project I came across a few artists whose work really resonated with me: Laurie Beth Zuckerman, who refers to herself as an altar junkie, was one of them. Laurie creates altar installations that were originally inspired by the first time she ever entered a catholic church. Over the years, she has visited a multitude of churches in several Latinx American countries, and has gathered visual inspiration from all of the

different types of altars she's come across. Her work is intricate, and complex, which reminds me of the early historic styles of church architecture.

Soasig Chamillard is a French artist who restores and transforms religious, second-hand, statues of the Holy Mary. She began painting small statues of the Holy Mary in 2005, when her father gave her a figure he found in a thrift store. Her work is playful, often colorful, and it turns a religious figure into an idea about womanhood in a religious

context. Her work makes me think more playfully and boldly, because of her direct manipulation of a religious icon.

Another artist I came across was Christian Boltanski, whose mixed-media installations are quite dark visually and conceptually. He used a lot of candles, and other light sources to emphasize certain parts of his installations-- which were typically about death and the genocide that occurred during the holocaust. The low lighting, combined with abandoned clothing, wood and other materials create a

deep, dusty, depressing atmosphere, which I found uniquely compelling. The intentional use of lighting in his installations also makes me think about the whole notion of the church being "the light of the world."

Elise Wehle is a meticulous paper cutter who hand-cuts intricate patterns on paper, using X-acto knives. She combines photo manipulation, paper layering, and printmaking techniques to create delicate, and precious works of art. Her work also reminds me of the decorations found in historic churches and cathedrals. I also really like the dark, soft color

palettes that she typically uses in her pieces. The concept of layering different techniques and images to distort something, is definitely something I'm thinking about while working on my thesis.

And finally, Yvette Mayorga is a Chicago-based artist, who uses real and faux frosting to reference her mother's labor working in a bakery in the 70s. She applies thick layers of paint using cake-piping bags to create exaggerated, Rococo-inspired scenes that address everything from immigration, to

policing and labor inequities. In an interview with Amadeus Magazine, she talks about growing up Catholic as a first-generation Latinx in the U.S. and she says that Catholic art felt like the first art she ever witnessed—specifically the paintings on the walls of churches—which is exactly how I felt when beginning my research for this project. I've discovered so many similar artists throughout this process that draw inspiration from their lives within immigrant families in Catholic community.

While in school I have discovered that I really enjoy translating personal stories, and philosophies into thoughtful art and design. I wouldn't say I have a particular style, but my approach to design is always the same; empathetic, and sometimes overly-thoughtful. This is why I found myself really interested in branding and marketing design, because it's taking someone's story and creating a simplified identity for it through a logo, color palette, and/or type. I enjoy incorporating handmade, or analog pieces, with digitally made pieces, and I have been eager to make

something graphic and 2-dimensional, that utilizes a 3-dimensional space in order to fully tell a story. I tend to relish the darker side of things, and I like to talk about things that people don't often like to talk about--at least outside of art school--I believe that it's not only a way that I enjoy connecting with people, but it also selfishly serves as a form of healing for me. Healing plays a large role in our identity-finding process, and having something tangible--such as a work of art or installation--helps make the healing concrete. I think this project has, and will continue to,

allow me to be introspective and translate one of my personal stories into a work of art and design that hopefully someone can connect to. ✨

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project statement

Catholicism is a dominant force in Latin America, and when my parents immigrated to the United States, the Catholic community helped them transition from their small-town, South American lives, to their new “American dream” world. Because God was the center of my family life, it was especially painful when I began to feel ostracized for questioning the rules we were expected to follow, and the things we were forced to believe in order to be accepted. Apostasía, Spanish for Apostasy, is an act of refusing to continue to follow, obey, or

recognize a religious faith, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary—is an installation that plays on the visual and personal appeal of Catholic churches and communities, using vivid colors and engaging materials. The captivating set-up draws the audience up close, where they find that characteristics that would be charming on their own, have been maximized to the point where they evoke a sense of discomfort and feelings of deceit, just as the church once did to me. Religious symbols and iconography are heavily manipulated under layers of

textures and colors, in an alluring set up that tells my personal story of abandonment and betrayal by the Catholic community.

creative brief

PROJECT VISION

I am elaborating on my experience growing up in the Catholic church and the importance of the alliances it created for my Latinx family. The audience will either relate to my experience, or gain a better understanding of people who have been pushed away by a community they trusted.

AUDIENCE

Anyone who grew up in the Catholic church, or who was a part of any group or institution that rejected or invalidated

them at one point. Particularly people in the Latin American or LGBTQ+ community, or those with immigrant family members, or who are immigrants themselves.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This is a multimedia project, with an emphasis on hands-on creating. Preowned Catholic votives and props were gathered along with an abundance of craft supplies throughout the course of several weeks, in order to ensure that the theme of maximalism was perceivable. Most of the renovated pieces

are used in the final altar display, with the exception of a few larger pieces. The bigger religious objects were refurbished, photographed and digitally altered for use in the graphic elements of this project, which include three posters, a book, six stickers for candles, and two fabric prints. Long pieces of silk fabric with images resembling stained glass hang on both sides of the altar; an allusion to the intricate decor and grandeur of Roman Catholic structures. A triptych stands as the centerpiece of the altar, telling the story of my experience in the

church in three parts, with the middle section being the title of the installation--Apostasía--me leaving the Catholic community. The candle stickers all pay homage to Mary, as she was always the role model for the women in my Latin American family, and in most Latin American families where "the passive stay-at-home wife with the hard-working macho husband" is still the family blueprint. The installation guide is designed and laid out like a bible would be on a pulpit, or podium.

COMPARATIVE MEDIA

I'm taking the skills that I learned from my Marketing & Branding class and from Culture & Audience, about creating environments, experiences, and design systems and applying them to an immersive installation about a personal story. Restaurants, festivals, clothing stores, musicians, etc. all take different forms of design and combine them to bring a concept to life.

MARKETPLACE APPLICATION

Since general digital usage skyrocketed to extremes during the covid epidemic, tangible goods and experiences are on the rise again as we gradually return to clearer days. Being able to produce multi-sensory experiences is valued now more than ever. ✦

oral defense

Catholicism is a dominant force in Latin America, and when my parents immigrated to the United States, the Catholic community helped them transition from their small-town, South American lives, to their new "American dream" world. Because God was the center of my family life, it was especially painful when I began to feel ostracized for questioning the rules we were expected to follow, and the things we were forced to believe in order to be accepted. These expectations eventually felt restricting to the point where I felt like I wasn't being

myself anymore, and I had to stop attending mass with my mom every week.

The definition of apostasy is an act of refusing to continue to follow, obey, or recognize a religious faith. Apostasía, Spanish for apostasy, is the title of my installation. My installation plays on both the visual appeal of Catholic churches and the charismatic appeal of their communities, by using vivid colors and engaging materials. The captivating set-up welcomes the audience to come up close, where they find that

characteristics that would be charming on their own, have been maximized to the point where they evoke a sense of discomfort and deceit, just as the church once did to me. Religious symbols and iconography are heavily manipulated under layers of textures and colors, in an alluring set up that tells my personal story of abandonment and betrayal by the Catholic community.

It wasn't until researching potential topics of interest last year that I realized how important and influential the church was for me growing

up, and how much it affected me when my friends and family began to express very obvious sexism and homophobia, calling me disgusting for holding hands with another girl, and attention-seeking for wearing revealing clothing to school. Even certain music and other forms of entertainment were seen as satanic by my family and church friends.

I was taught to be kind through my religion, I was taught to be honest, and appreciative, to work hard, to love deeply, and always think of others before yourself--these were

all things that the church openly taught. But once I realized that people I loved and cared about were getting kicked out of their homes, and shunned by friends and family, bullied to devastating degrees, all because of some rules in this bible, it made me question what kind of love and positivity was it that the church was preaching about. My mom cried when I bleached and dyed my hair unnatural colors. She cried when I pierced, and tattooed my body. She cried when I stopped going to church with her, and when I told her I didn't believe in God

anymore. She didn't cry when I came out to her, but there were subtle things here and there that were different, and I constantly replayed the things that were said before I ever came out. Friends and family members stopped talking to me and my family and me after this. They would say hurtful things, and gossip. Everyone in the entire community that had once brought me comfort and radiated love and openness, had turned into my enemy; preaching hate and abandoning loved ones for reasons that I didn't understand.

Not only did I want this project to serve as a personal healing process, but I also wanted to connect with others who went through a similar experience of being rejected or invalidated by a group or institution that was important to them growing up. Especially people in the Latin American and/or queer community, and first generation immigrants. Besides relating to others, I wanted to inform or give others a new perspective on what it's like to be pushed away by a community you trusted.

This is a multimedia project, with an emphasis on wanting to create with my hands, and create a 3-dimensional experience, even though I still ended up in front of a computer screen most of the semester. Growing up in the church was an experience to say the least. Community and social groups in general are a key component to personal growth and they aren't something that lives 2 dimensionally—they are complex and part of who we are. I felt the best way to recreate a version of my experience was through an altar installation. It was my first time making

an installation, so it was quite the learning experience. Thinking about how people would interact with an art installation was something new to me, even for someone who is pretty regularly thinking about how other people feel. I realized even though I'm making things that I personally would really want to touch, once I put them in an empty space, where people are expecting to see "art," they are most likely going to be afraid to touch it. So I knew I was going to need some sort of direction for people to follow, which was one of the reasons I ended up making

the 8.5" x 10" folded bulletins that were in your chairs when you arrived. I wanted my audience to have clear instructions to pick up and touch things. Clear-ish because I wrote it in a very exaggerated tone—another reason why I made it; because I also wanted everyone to have a tangible reminder that this is supposed to be an installation that's using dark humor, mimicking the religion I grew up in, by using its basic structures and playfully disrupting them.

I started last semester thinking I wanted to have a playful take on a serious subject matter, and I began my research by looking at the way humor has historically been used in serious topics, particularly in Latin America. But before committing to the aesthetic I ended up going with, I thought I wanted a much darker and more muted color scheme. I connected with over 35 people through an online survey I conducted, about how they experienced the church, and because more than 80% of them had stories similar to mine, I realized how common these

painful feelings of rejection were, especially amongst my generation, so I figured it had to be a serious and eerie atmosphere I created. That, and I was also inspired by the creepy catholic art I grew up with. Somewhere deep down though, I felt that using dark colors was too similar to actual religious art, and I thought all winter break about how I could conceptually make things uncomfortable with a different color palette.

I knew I wanted to reiterate how welcoming the church community felt for a kid who

was in search of something familiar after moving from Virginia, which had a large Latin American population, to a suburb outside of D.C. where it was predominately white. The judgment I felt from this community when I got older made me feel tricked and I wanted to reflect these feelings by creating something recognizable—such as an altar—and having details up close be unsettling and strange. I wanted the overarching concept of my project to be the deception I experienced; a portrayal of hope and expectations vs reality and disappointment.

And as I continued to write and research, I realized one of the biggest differences between my Latin American church and my White American church, was that sense of warmth found in Latin American culture. White America is so focused on individualism as opposed to the family-oriented, societal structure of Latin America. But it's not just metaphorically—literally the colors used in my father's Bolivian, and my mother's Brazilian Catholic motifs were far more vibrant and saturated than any colors I had seen in the churches I went to with my white friends.

This led me to the idea of using bright colors in order to push the concept of trickery just a little bit further. I needed to make something that was weird and creepy on the opposite end of weird and creepy—something that would be unsettling but at the same time overexposed; something as bright and colorful as the culture I grew up in, and not the aesthetic I was originally leaning towards. I decided to use mainly pinks and blues, because I wanted to use the colors that are typically in our society tied to being "girly" and "feminine," which is especially

highlighted in Latin American culture, where machismo and patriarchal homes are very much a thing. This is also why I went with a lot of pearls, sparkles, jewels and gems, and I exaggerated these elements that the church especially would see as “feminine,” but blew them up so much so that it would turn into something the church would disapprove of.

I spent several weeks gathering pre-owned Catholic decor and props, along with an abundance of craft supplies, in order to ensure that the theme of maximalism was

perceivable. Many of the modified pieces are used in the final altar display (glittery crosses, rosaries, flowers, round angel thing), with the exception of a few larger pieces (cake). These objects were all acquired, spray-painted, decorated, photographed digitally altered, digitally altered some more, and a little more—all myself, for use not only in the final altar display, but to have assets to use in the graphic elements of this project which include: the three triptych posters, a book, a bulletin, six stickers for

candles, three fabric prints, digital and analog promotional posts, and stickers.

I was a director, designer, maker, photographer, collaborator, cultural worker, writer, and curator throughout this entire project. I conceptualized a memory I had into a 3-dimensional experience, using hundreds of pieces of details that I created either from scratch, or almost from scratch. I wanted to make sure that I could show that I have the skills to be the director of my own project, that I could not only

design advertising and marketing pieces, but emotional and tangible experiences as well, and that my creativity is not confined to 2-dimensional screens even though I am a graphic design major. However, the idea of an installation came to me first, before any 2D-design ideas, so I had to go back and decide how exactly I wanted to show what I've learned in school these past few years.

One of the ways I wanted to do this was through a wordmark and logo. I really enjoy marketing and branding, so I created

something I could stamp on things to brand this whole installation with. I was really inspired by a lot of custom fonts that I found throughout my research, and decided I wanted to create a wordmark that looked a little edgy--literally sharp like the crown of thorns that the church talks about Jesus wearing--and also have rounded curves that balanced out the spikes, so I sketched out a bunch of different versions of the typeface I was in search of, and I searched for one for quite some time, eventually ended up finding one that was almost exactly like

one of my favorite sketches that I had; it just needed a few tweaks here and there. But after trying to manipulate it, I gave up and just created my own font and that's what I ended up using. In the wordmark I made a little modern version of a cross, and I ended up using that as my official logo.

I also immediately knew that I could use the idea of a triptych--usually behind catholic altars--to create posters. Standing at 20" x 32" on the left and right, and 27" x 35" in the center, I made 3 posters that

tell the story of my experience in the church in three parts, with the first panel referencing my reaching out for community as a child living with my immigrant parents, the middle section being the title of the installation, me leaving the church, and the final panel representing me now, free from feelings of anger and resentment, and finding acceptance with myself.

The candle stickers are square collages dedicated to the seven sacraments---which are as described by Encyclopedia Britannica,

seen as mystical channels of divine grace, instituted by Christ. Each one of these is celebrated throughout your life, beginning with baptism happening as soon as somebody can put into a frilly white dress. Some sacraments are received only once, others require active and ongoing participation, like confession where you---every sunday---confess all of the sins you've committed this week. I chose not to include one of the sacraments known as the "Holy Orders" sacrament, since it only pertains to men. And in the collages I only used the manipulated

photos of items I had found and modified.

When I was remembering all the churches I had visited in my childhood, I decided on making these large pieces of fabric you see here; an allusion to the intricate decor and grandeur of Roman Catholic structures. You don't regularly experience large works of stained glass outside of churches, and I felt that I needed to have something that was just as awe-inspiring at least scale-wise. So I designed my own interpretation of stained glass and printed it on these 17" x 12' fabric

strips, plus one piece that's 17" x 7'. I couldn't just make a stained glass piece, because I needed the element of trickery; I wanted something that just looked like stained glass. I ended up choosing to print on strips of fabric, because fabric is something you see a lot of in churches. They use different fabric curtains and tablecloths for the altar setup, and colored stoles--the cloth strip that hangs around the neck of priests—for different catholic holidays and events. I also wanted something that represented the filter or veil that the church wears when they say one

thing, but act another way. I honestly thought this was going to be the most difficult part of my project, given that it would be the biggest, and on a medium that I've never used before, but I ended up loving one of the first fabrics I tested out, and the DPS staff were so helpful and made everything really easy.

Instead, the most difficult part ended up being all mentality. I spent a very long time the first half of this semester, if not more, trying so hard to prove to myself that I could make something that wasn't serious, and

that could be weird and trendy, because my self esteem was so low and the art world is so competitive--I mean every day designers are asked to be "proficient in..." a new program. Especially this west coast/Portland design world where it's an extra saturated field. This became such a mental block for me that I found myself frozen in front of a blank digital canvas countless times, and couldn't create anything.

I did a lot of fun cathartic explorations and experiments, which I put in the second half

of my little 5" x 8.5" bible-y book, which I originally just created so that I could have an installation diagram somewhere more interesting than on a pamphlet. And it ended up being perfect because I could make a single copy of a book which made it feel like it was important the way a bible is, and that way people would have to take turns looking at it, the way they take turns going up to an altar in a church. In the first half of the book I purposefully copied the layout almost exactly from a bible I found, and then just added my own twist to it. One of the biggest

learning experiences during this project was that even if you order to get a book printed 3 weeks in advance, the company you are getting it from might promise you that it will be ready in time, and then at the last minute tell you that the person who told you that was mistaken. You might have to print and bind your own book that was supposed to be finished a week ago, with no money remaining in your PaperCut printing account. But the people at PNCA and in the printing room might be really helpful and you might still get it done in time. So yeah, I learned

that life likes to F-you sometimes and you have to figure shit out at the last minute.

But the most pivotal moment throughout this entire process was when I found the right balance between being "experimental" and "weird," while using my own graphic design skills. I slowly and eventually figured out—with a lot of help—that instead of trying so hard to fit into the space I thought was the most accepted in the art world—these experimental, brutalist, sometimes illegible designs—I could lean into the fundamentals

of design that I learned my sophomore year here; what I was actually good at, hierarchy, structure, and functionality. I also learned that the subject or concept itself could be the weird/experimental component. I paired these realizations with what I learned in trying to play with maximalism, and I was finally brought to a place of peace and balance in my project, and began to find success. It's funny because while working on a thesis about the judgment and rejection from the church community, I also ended up overcoming some of my

mental struggles related to the judgment and rejection in the design community.

I mentioned earlier that contemporary graphic design is constantly branching out into other skill sets and I wanted this project to show that as a graphic designer I am a problem solver on multiple levels-- on paper, screens, and in 3D spaces. I think the world in general is also going through a time where we're reconnecting with each other after being restricted and isolated throughout this pandemic, and it's important

to be able to see what people want next experience-wise. This project was less about trying something new, and more about expanding my knowledge and improving the things I've learned in school. Combining fundamental design skills along with the things I've learned about myself along the way. I want to show potential employers (and myself) that I can do these things in a 3 dimensional space if I'm asked for it--I can conceptualize, gather, create, direct, build, market and advertise, and that I can make something really weird but and functional

at the same time, and feel confident about. And I would say I've done that successfully.

I didn't do it alone though. I've had so so so much support from soooo many people. Thank you so much Mallary for being the greatest thesis mentor, for teaching me a variety of different tools I will forever use in my professional and non-professional areas of life. Thank you for all the breakfast and coffee, and for being my therapist many times, and giving me an exorcism.

Thank you KRB for being an amazing teacher, for always seeing the best in everyone's work styles and pushing them further in that direction without scaring anyone. Thank you for helping me build my confidence as a designer, and for getting side tracked with me talking about dogs forever.

Thank you Phalange for being the best outside-of-school support, delivering me food whenever I needed it, and always hyping me up.

Thank you to my classmates for being an incredible fucking competition. You're all insanely talented, and it's been truly an honor seeing you grow creatively.

Thank you to Dewald for taking the entire freaking day off just to be here today. And for sending me pictures of your cat whenever I needed them. You're the best.

Thank you Emily for always making me laugh non-stop for hours whenever I needed a break, and for sending me

literally 100s of TikToks to watch, and for all of the words of encouragement you're constantly sending Sarah and I.

Fucking Sarah. Girl. Thank you for trauma bonding with me this entire semester. We've cried, we've laughed, we've screamed, we've had mental breakdowns together throughout this entire semester. I couldn't have done this without you spending 20+ hour days with me at school. Thank you for providing me with exceptionally mind-numbing industrial brutalist techno-house

music from the underground streets of Berlin, plus food, coffee, snacks, dogs, car rides to and from school when my car was stolen, and of course beverages to numb the senior year pains. We're so close.

Thank you the school security for keeping Sarah and I calm-ish at 3am when the building starts making weird noises.

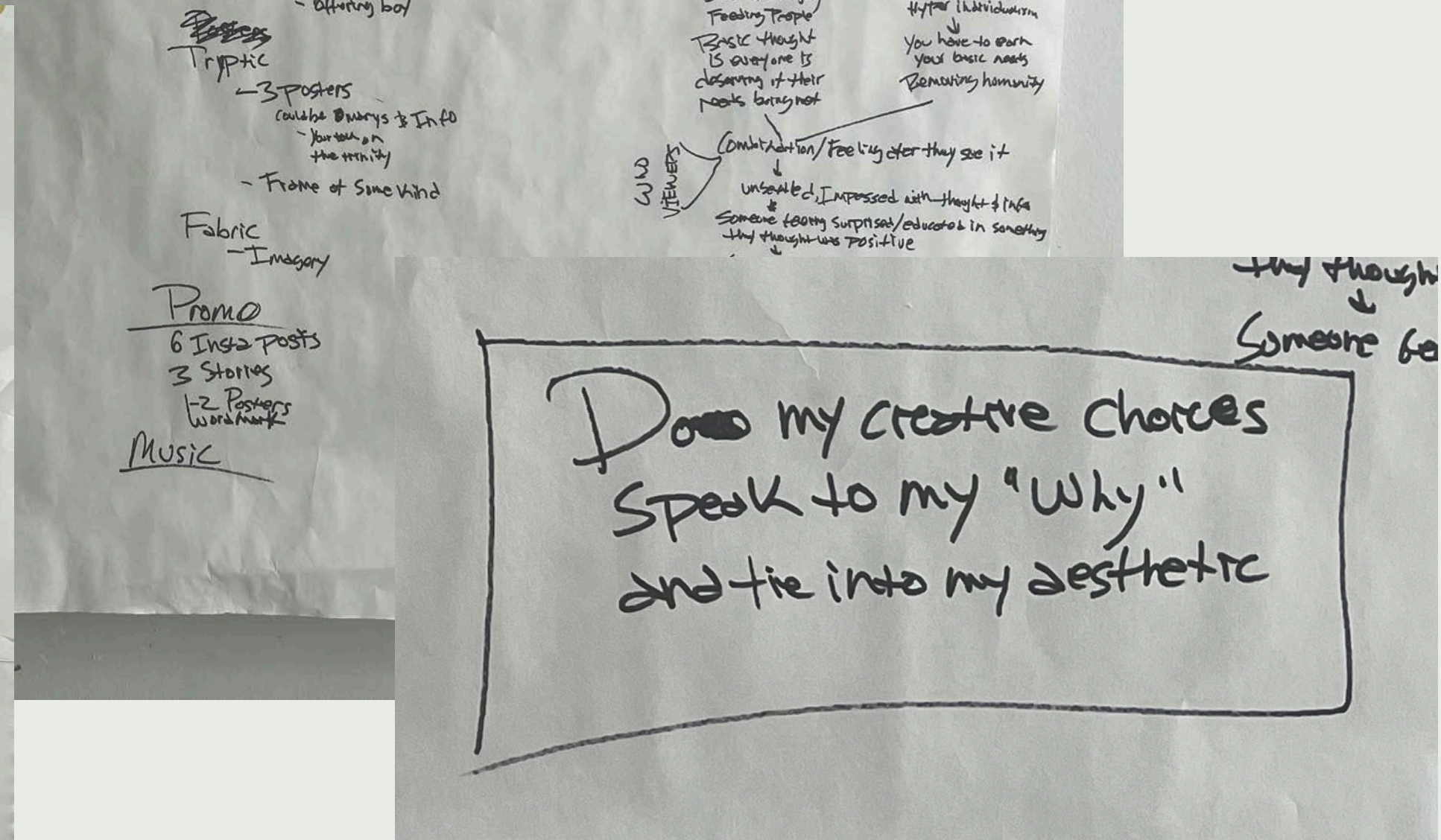
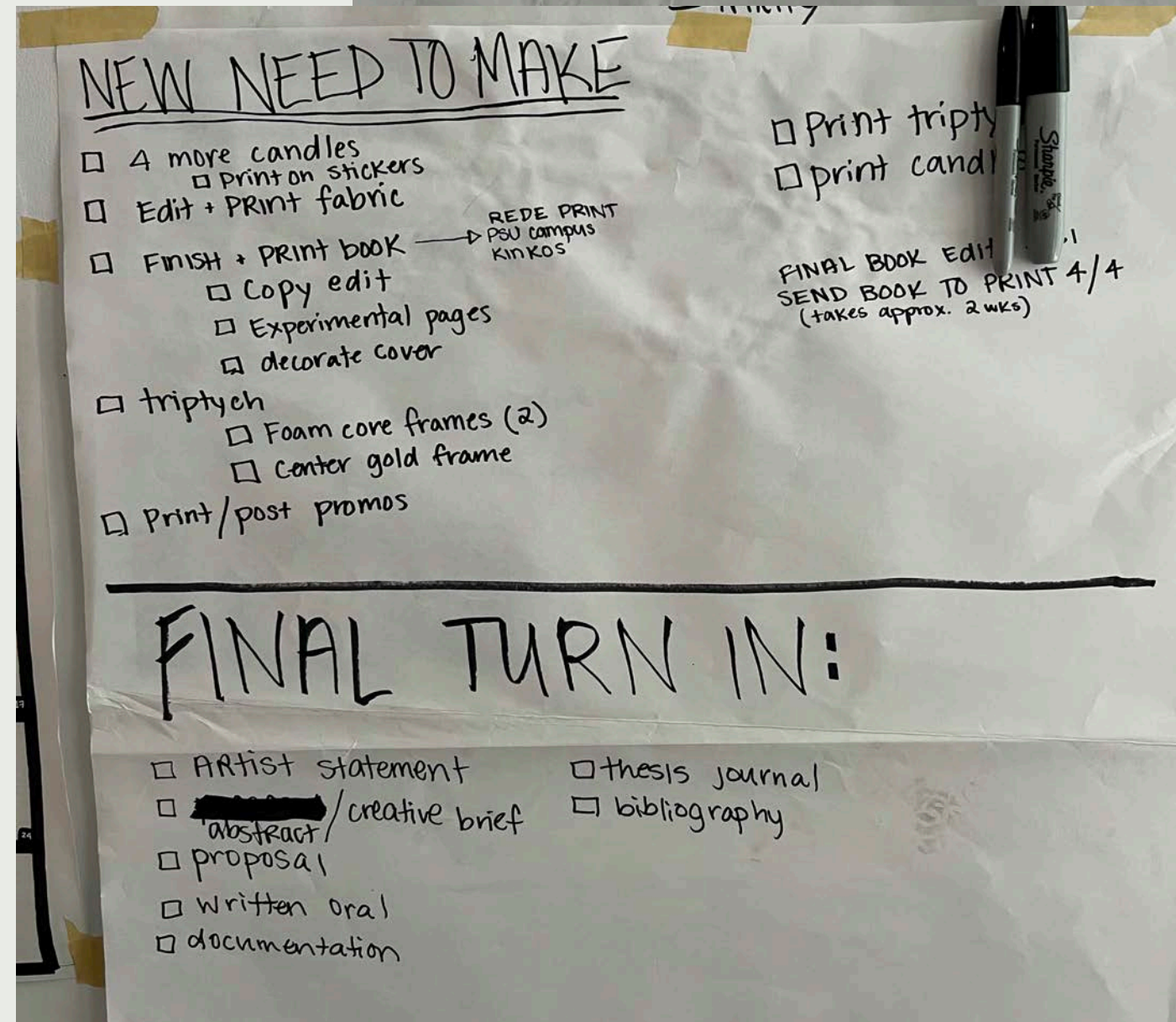
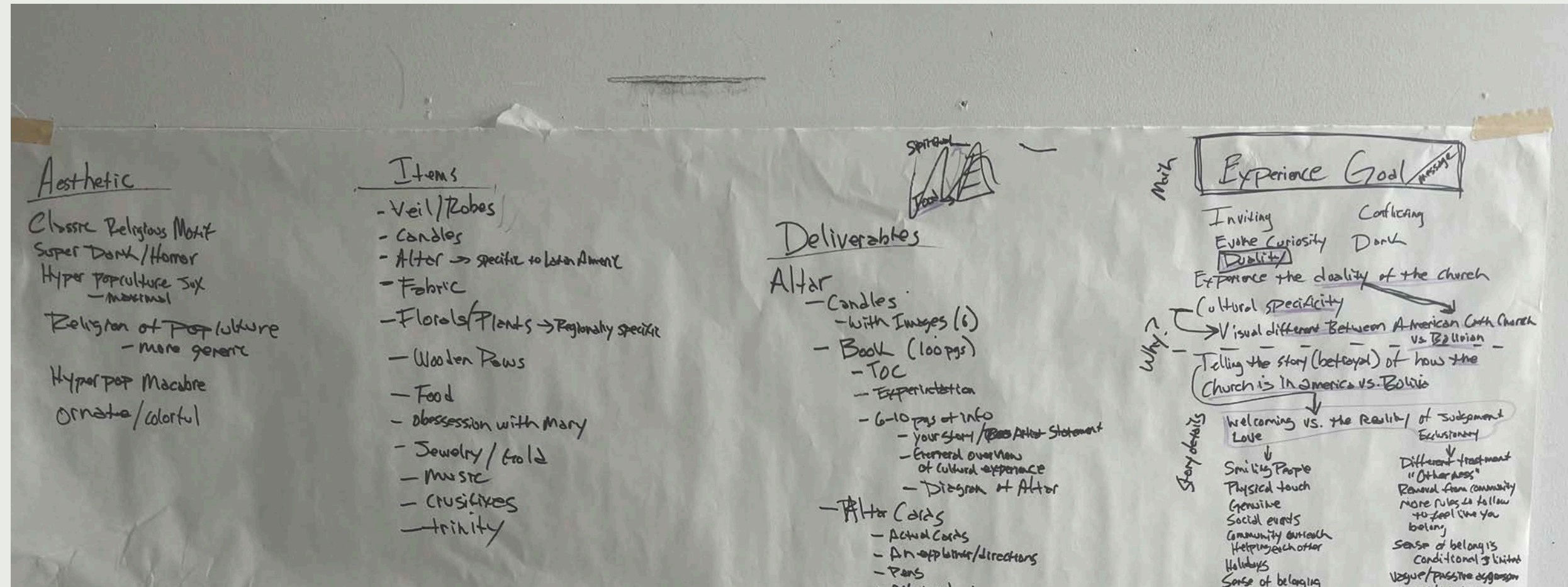
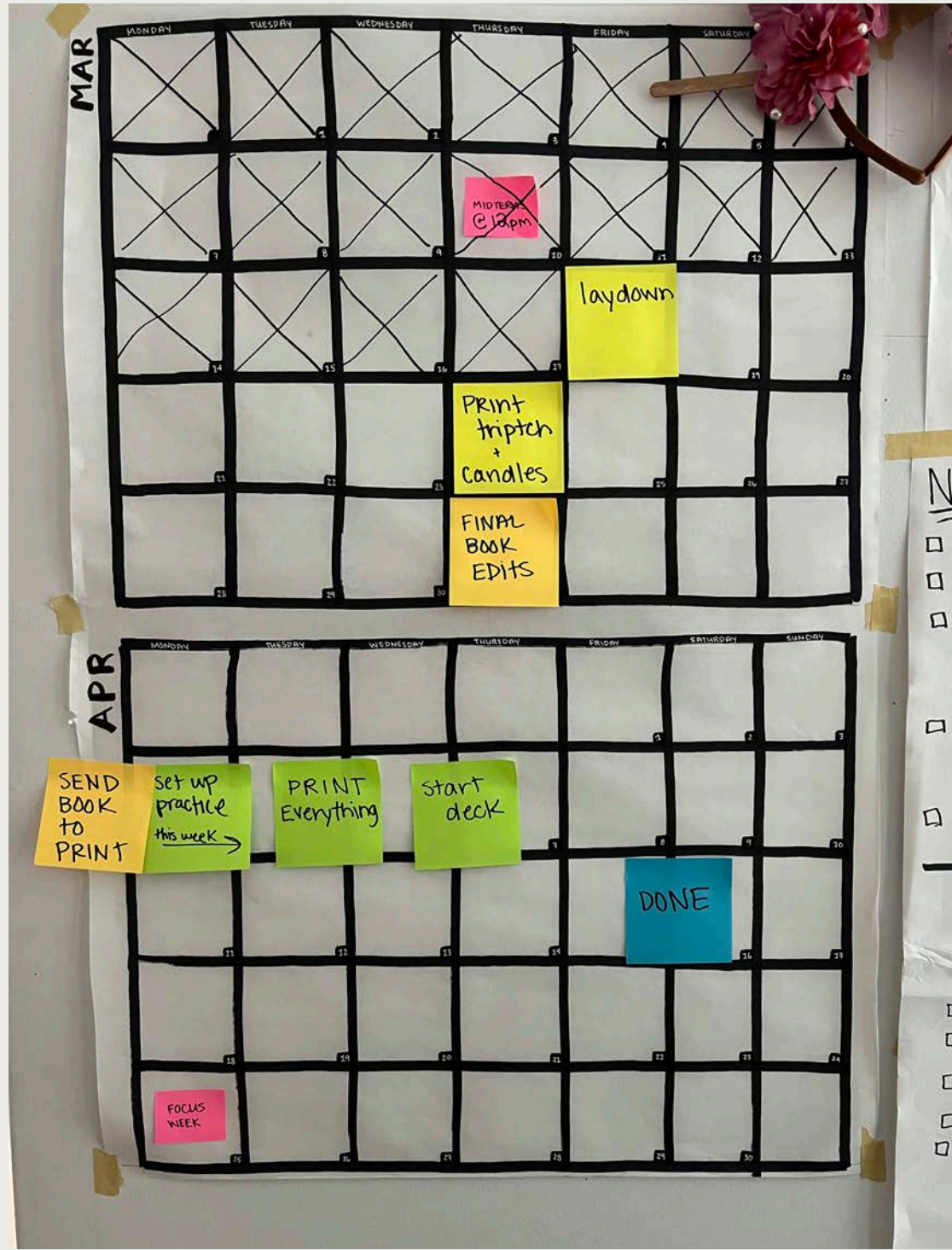
Thank you to Chelsea, Rory, Simone, Tiara, Linda, for helping me with all my thesis needs. Lifesavers. Truly

Thank you to all my professors for being so understanding when I didn't turn in any homework this semester. I promise I'll get right on that after my 15-hour nap tonight.

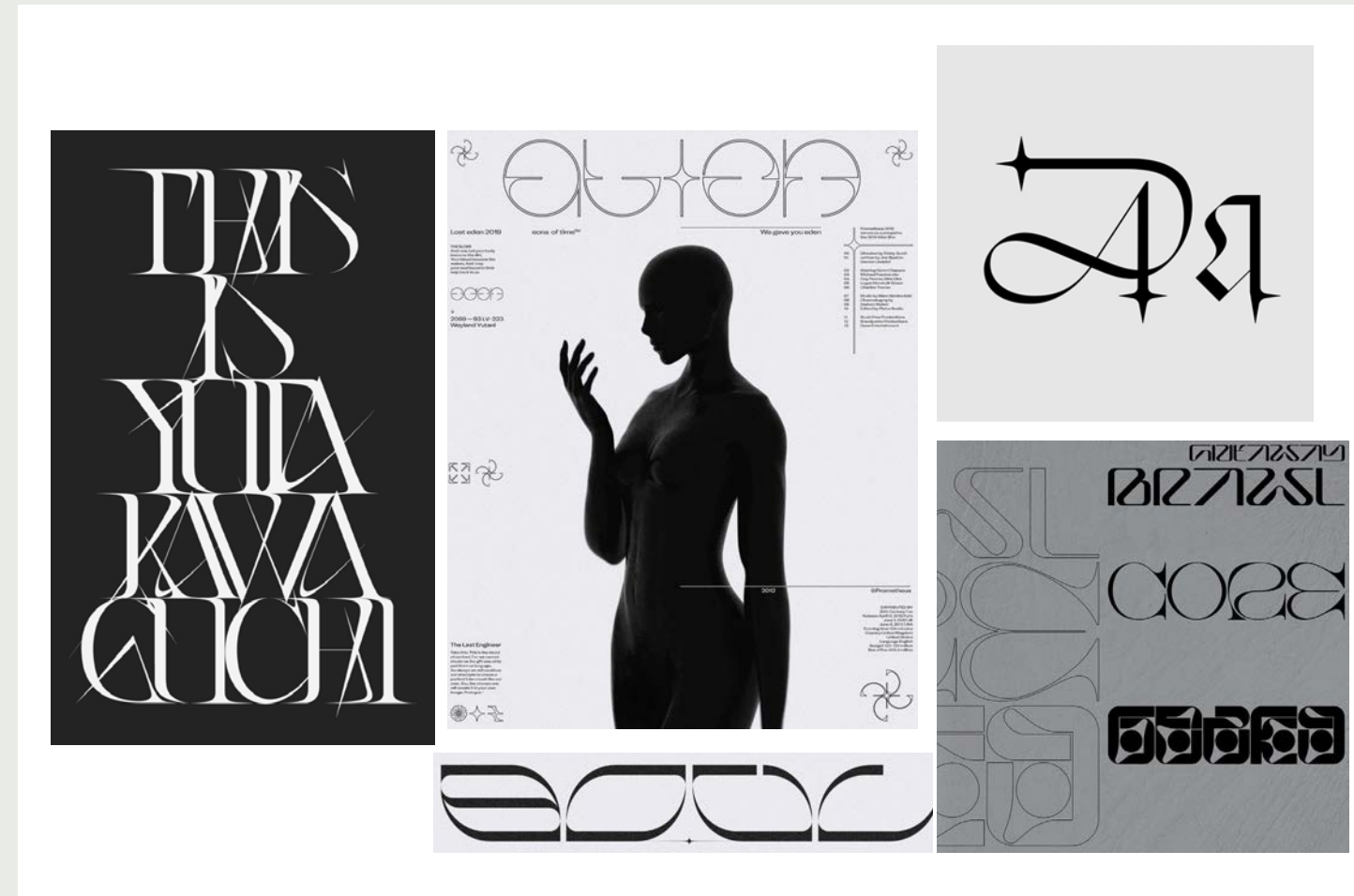
And finally, thank you to my parents, who will probably never see this project in its entirety, but no matter what bullshit we go through, have always been supportive of me going back to school for art.

journal
/ process

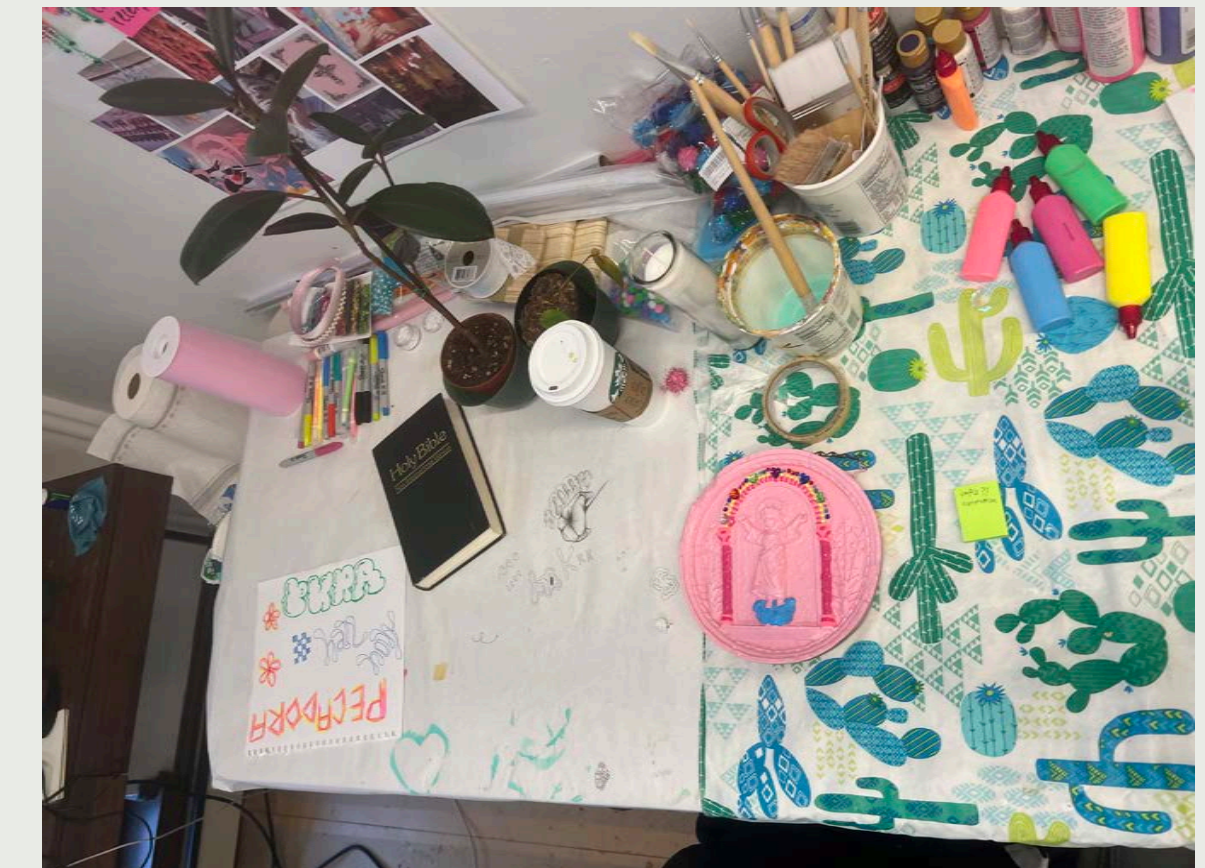
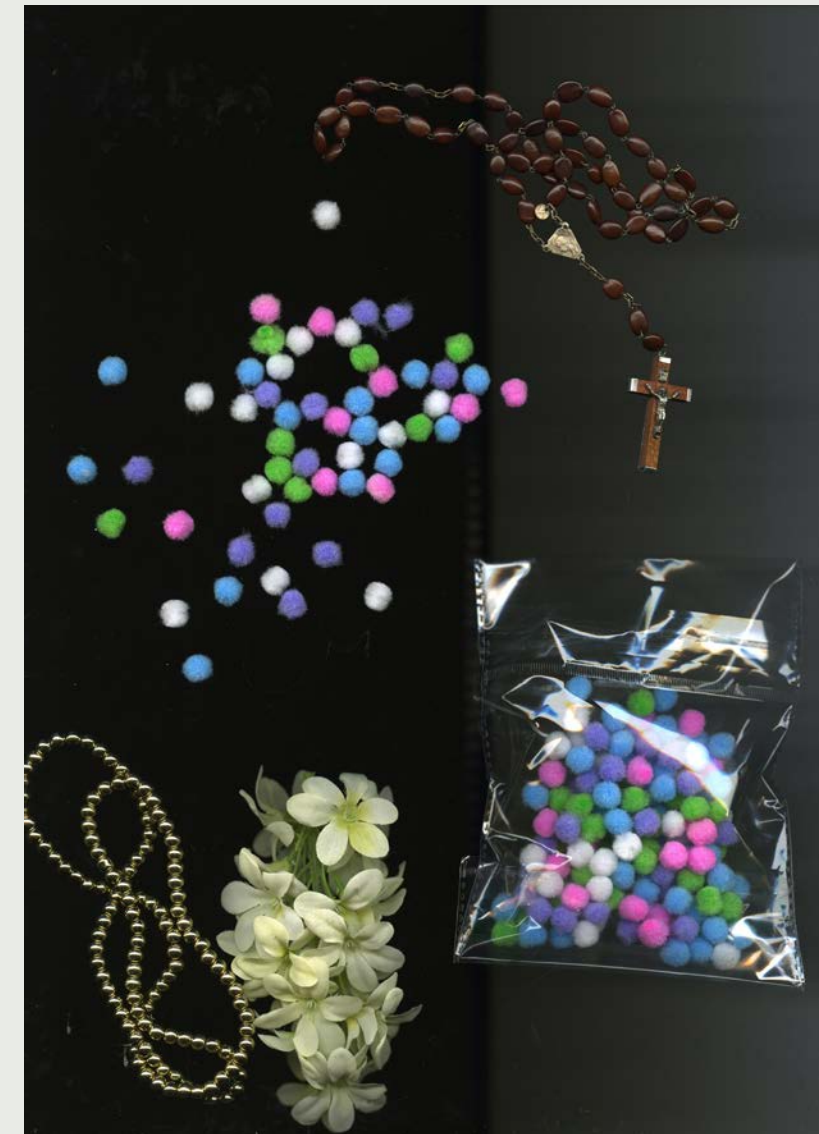
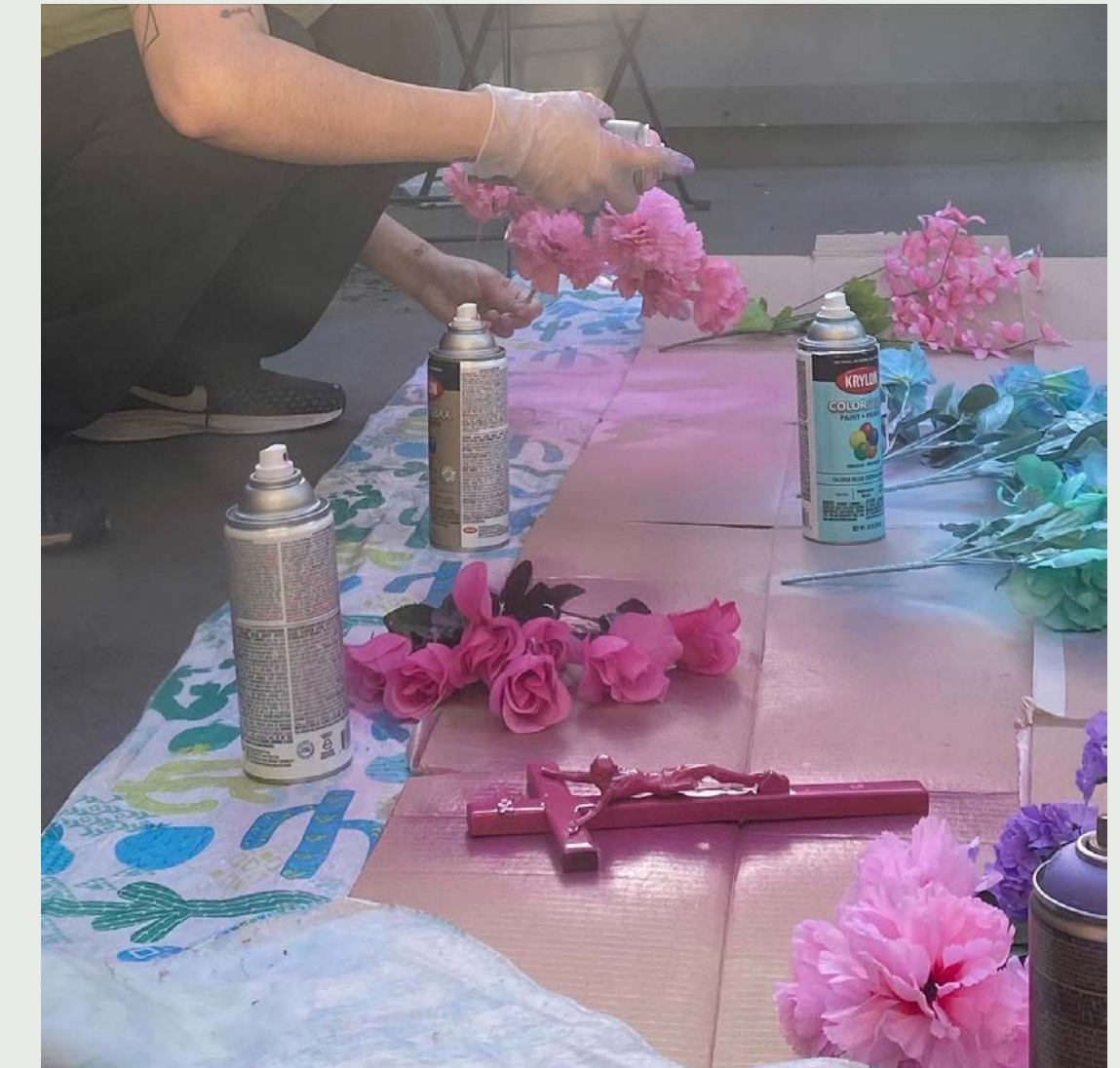
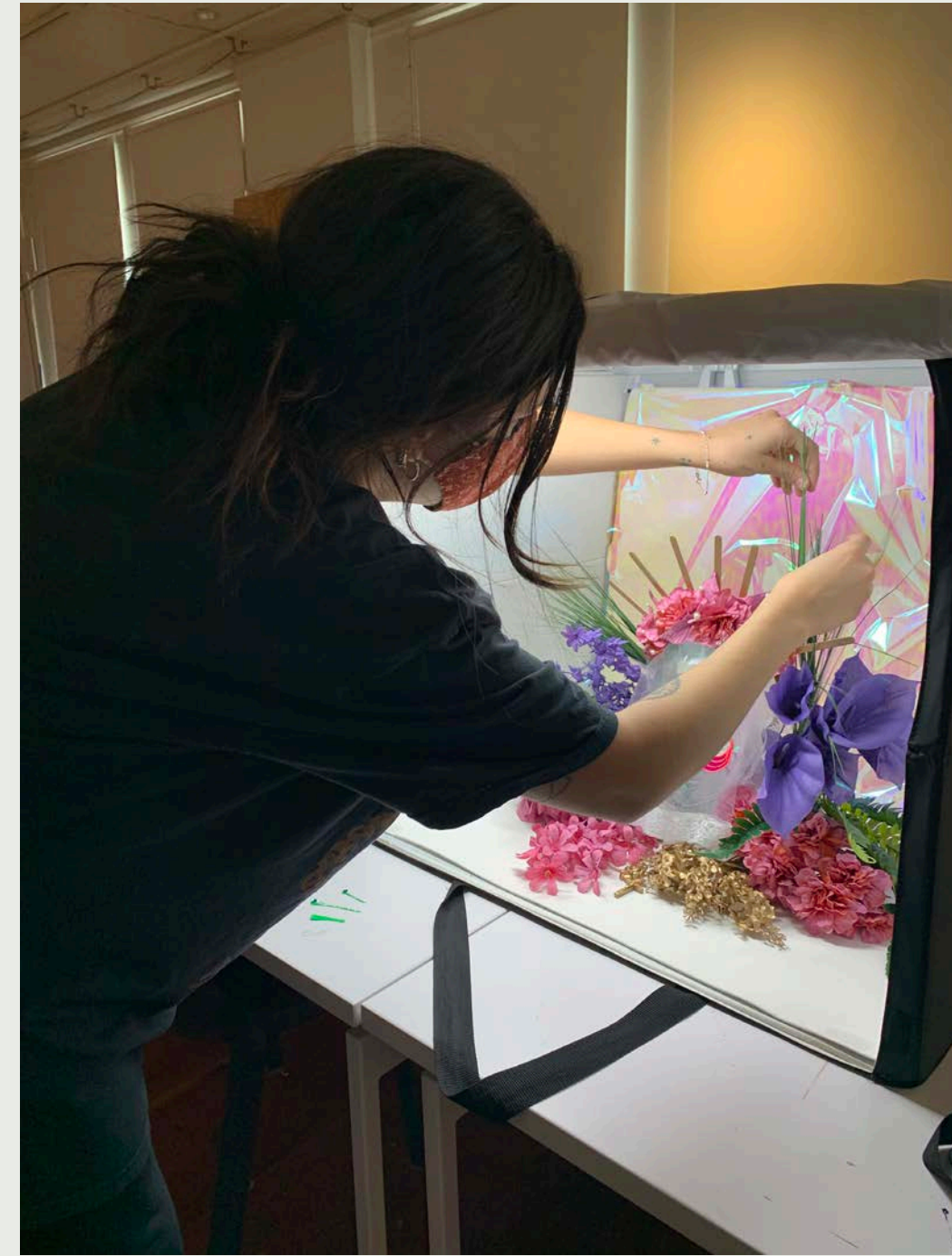
conceptualizing & planning



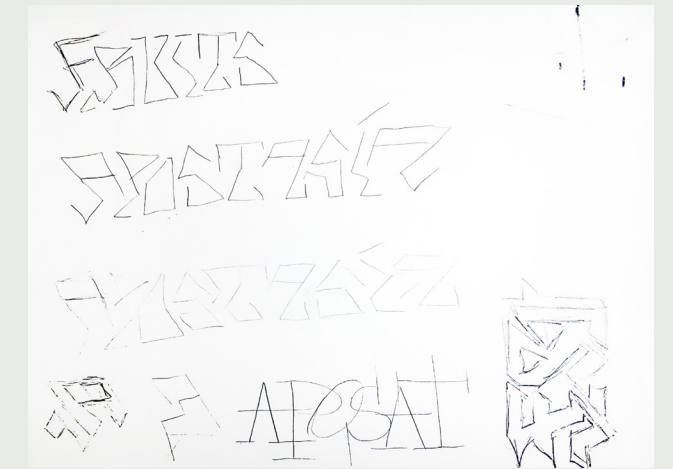
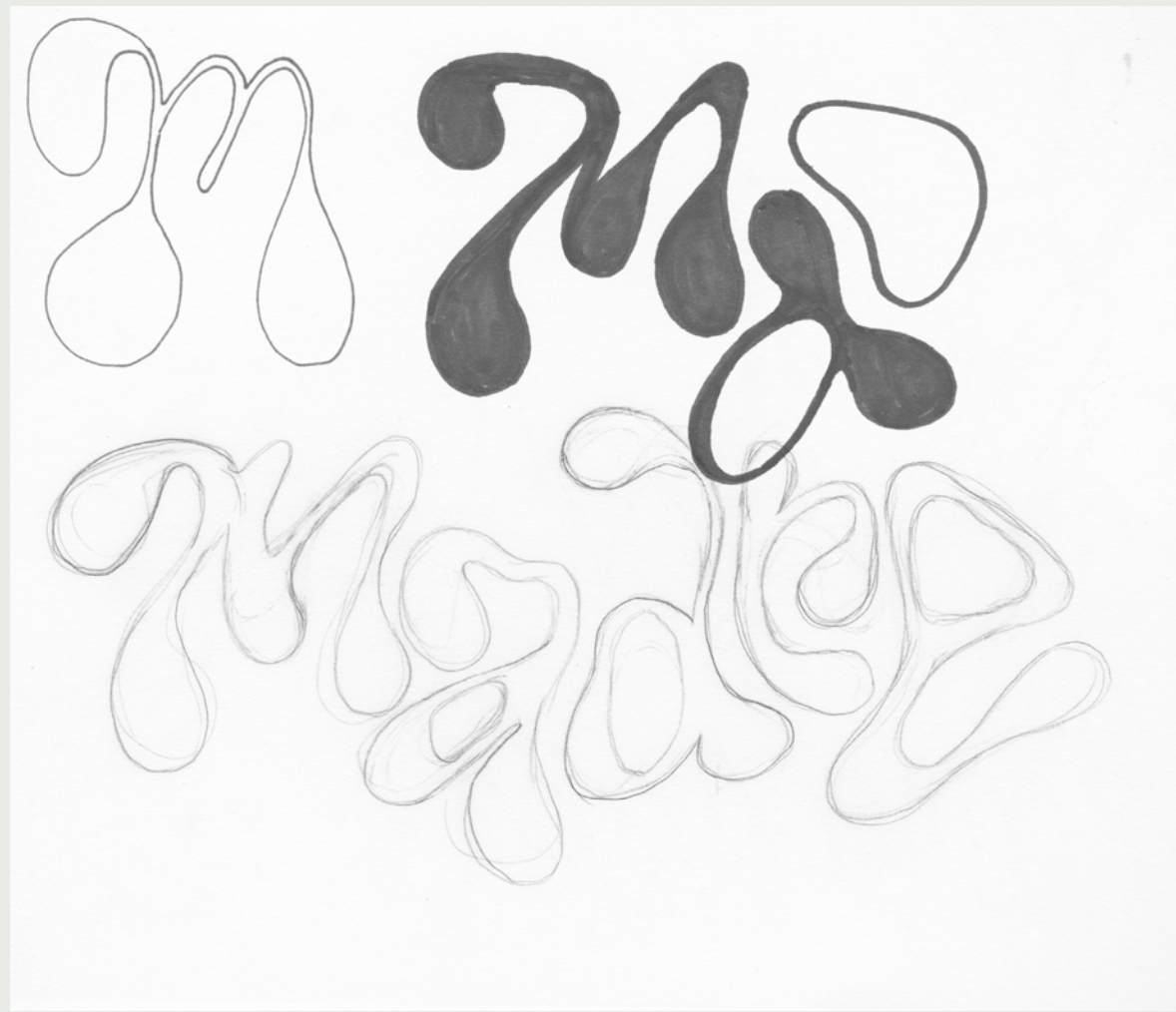
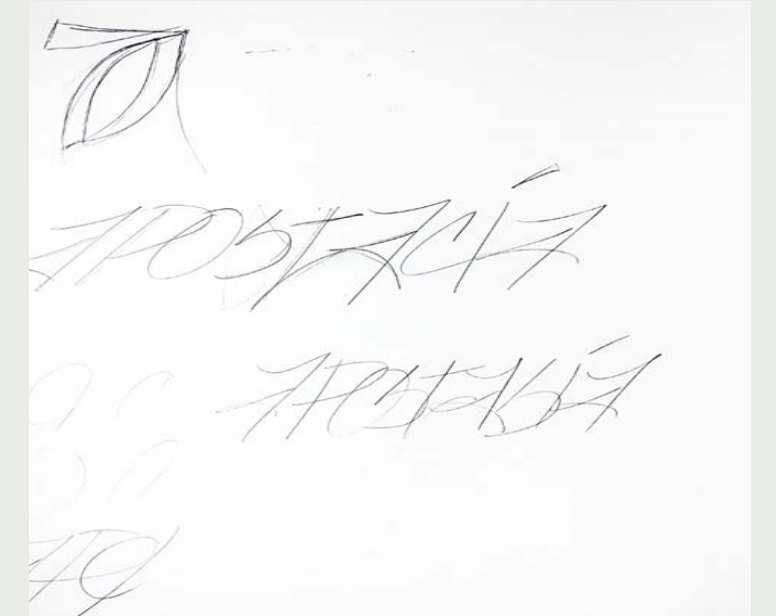
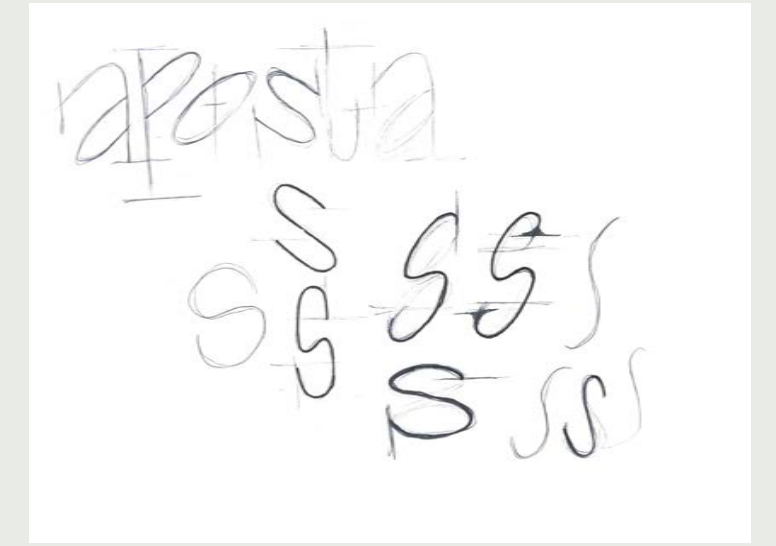
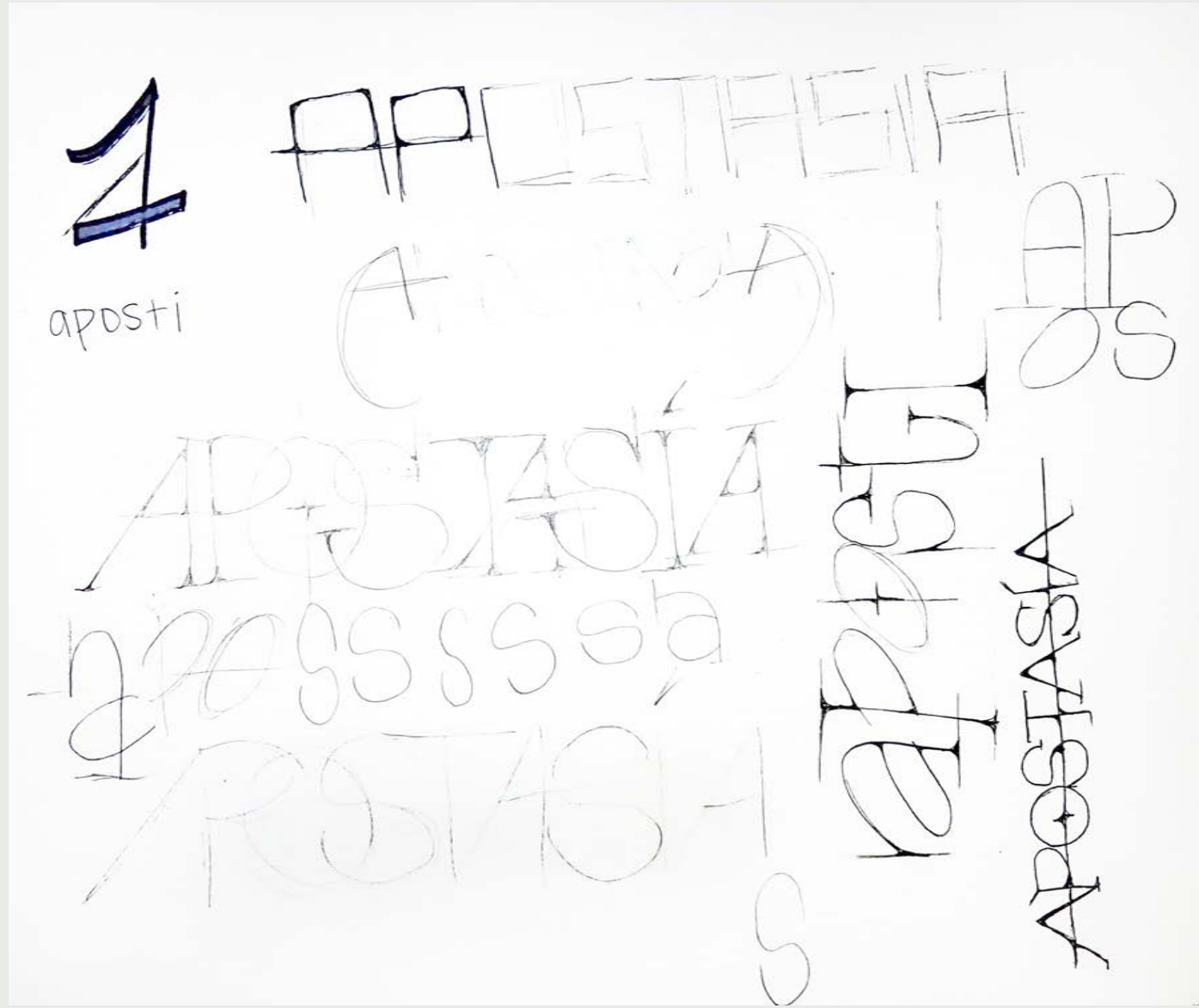
moodboards



general process



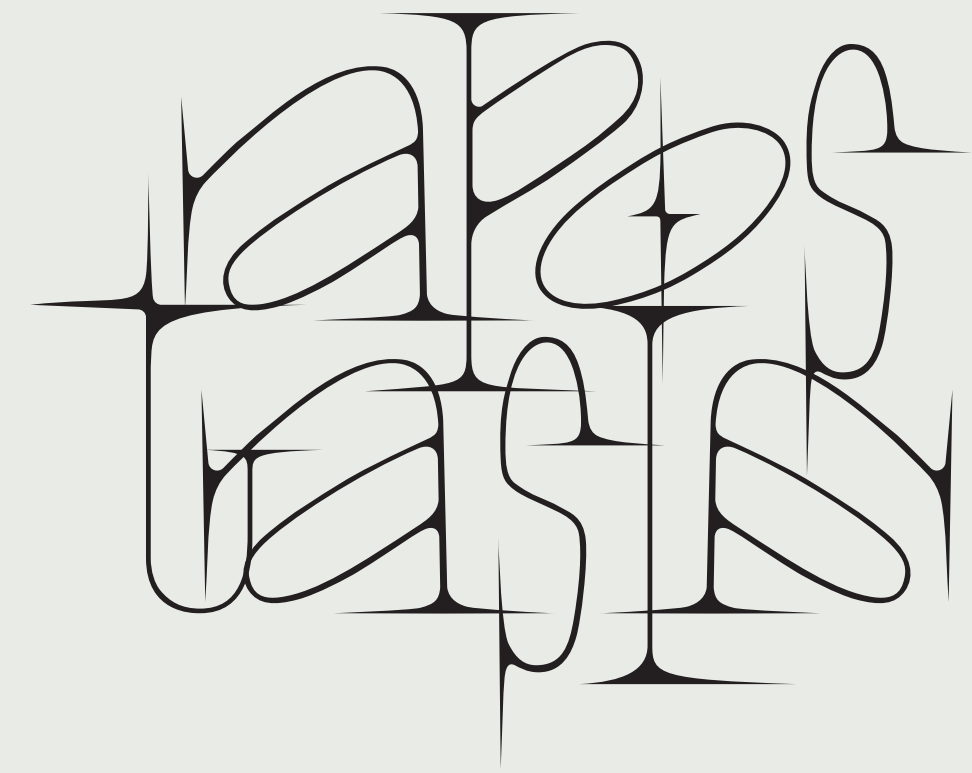
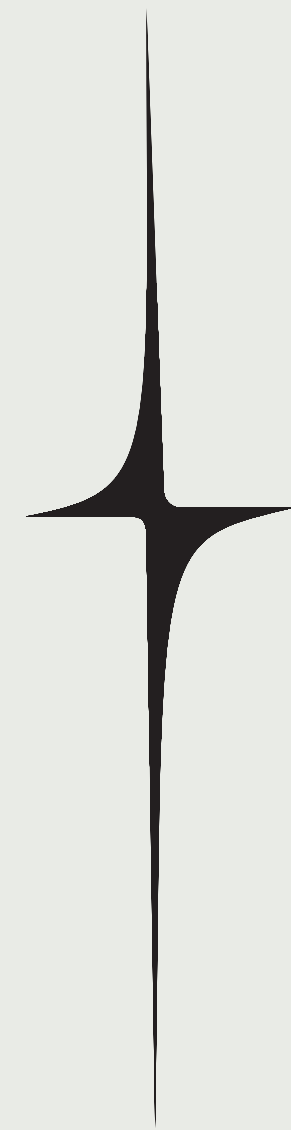
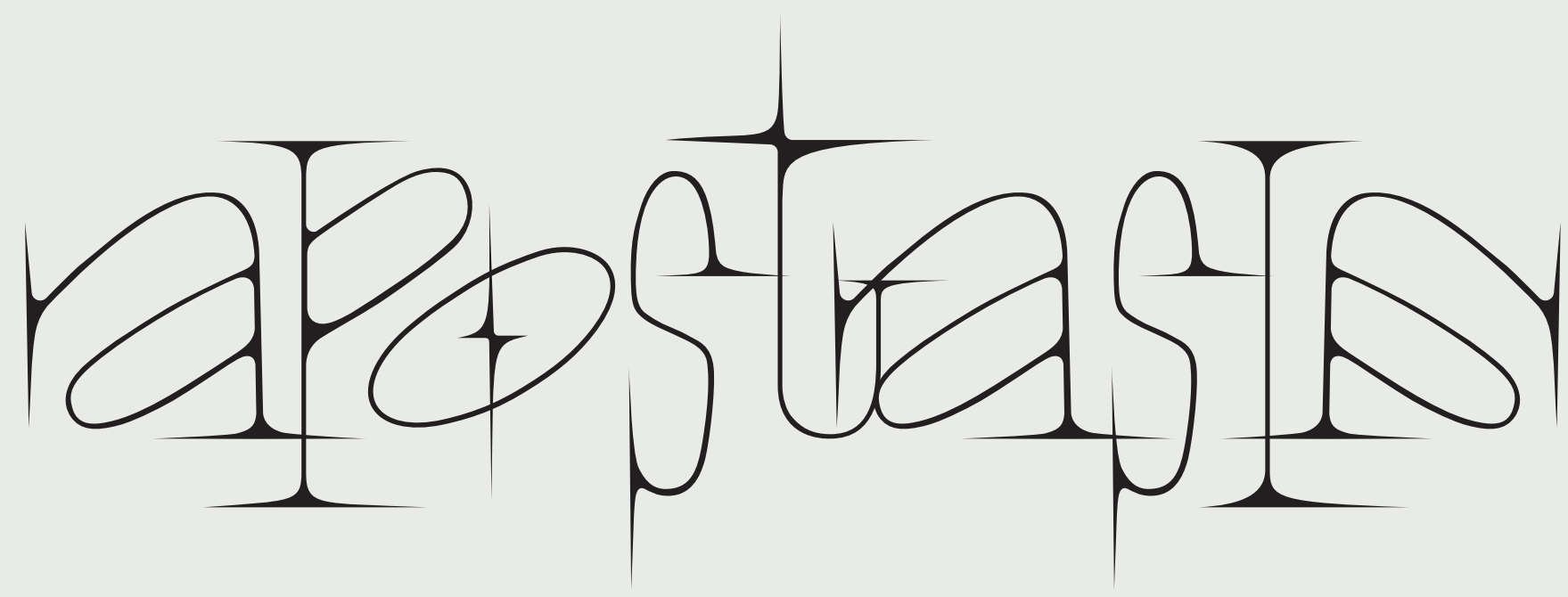
logo sketches



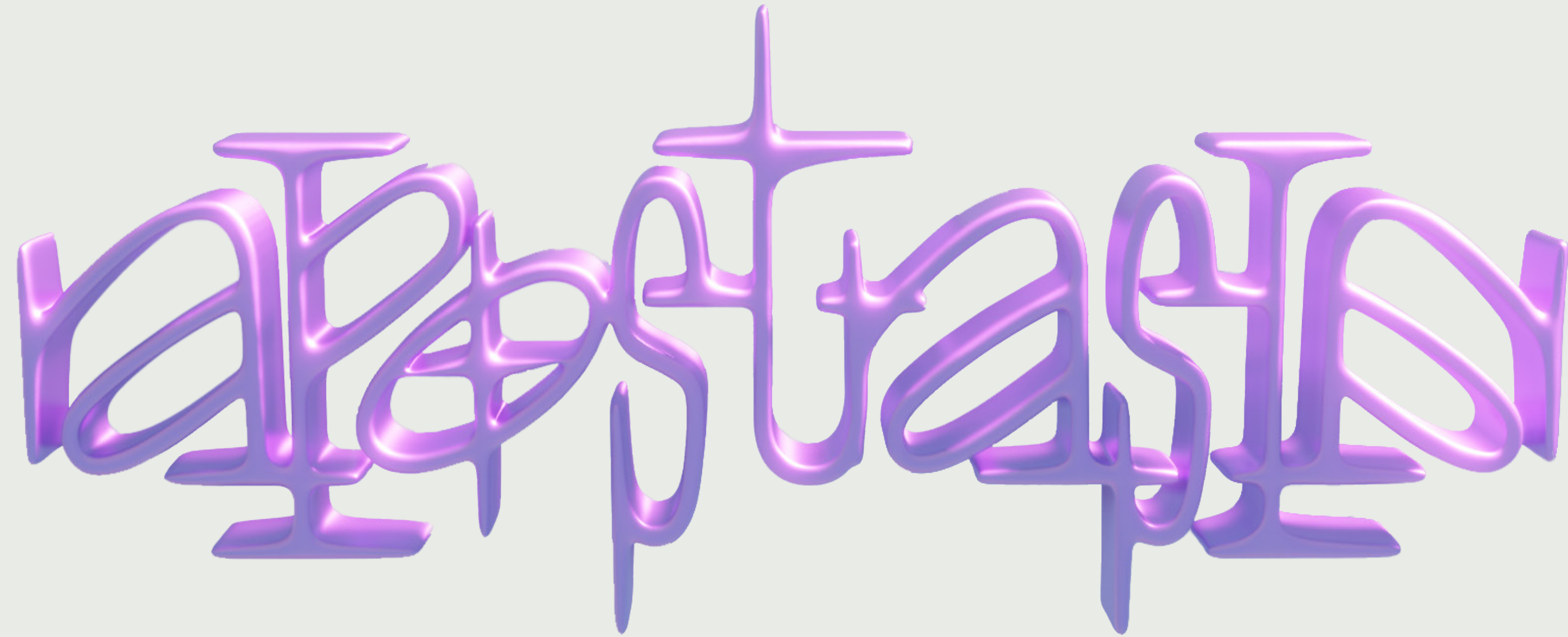
documentation

logo & wordmark

logo & wordmark



wordmark style
3D render



wordmark style
iridescent



documentation

print collateral

APRIL 25 9:00AM-11AM



UN ALTAR DEDICADO AL TRAUMA RELIGIOSO
AN ALTAR DEDICATED TO RELIGIOUS TRAUMA

ORDEN DE SERVICIO ★

- 8:30 - 9:00 AM**
Sirvanse la sangre y el cuerpo de Cristo en la mesa trasera.
- 9:30 - 10:00 AM**
Lectura de la Biblia de la Apostasia con Alicia Vidal y una introducción con Mallary Wilson.
- 10:00 - 10:20 AM**
Los miembros del clero (panelistas) hacen preguntas.
- 10:20 - 10:30 AM**
Los miembros de la comunidad (audiencia) hacen preguntas.
- 10:30 - 10:45 AM**
Los miembros del clero (panelistas) discuten la presentación en privado. Miembros de la comunidad (audiencia) son despedidos.
- 10:45 - 11:00 AM**
Los miembros del clero (panelistas) anuncian si son absueltos o condenados a las profundidades del fuego del infierno :(triste).

GRACIAS ★

- A Mallary por ser la mejor mentora de tesis / terapeuta / entrenadora de vida.
- A KRB por ser la mejor maestra / terapeuta.
- A Angela por apoyarme fuera de la escuela y por traerme comida cada vez que la necesitaba.
- A Sarah por ser mi compañera de crisis mental todo el semestre; por pasar más de 20 horas al día conmigo en la escuela y tocandome música de tecno brutalista industrial de las calles subterráneas de Berlín, además de comida, café, "esnacks", perros y bebidas para olvidarme de los dolores del último año. A la seguridad de la escuela por mantenernos seguros y relajados a las 3 de la mañana.
- A mis compañeros por ser una competencia creativa increíble. Todos ustedes son increíblemente talentosos y ha sido un honor verlos crecer creativamente.
- A mis amigos que no están en la escuela por hacerme reír sin parar durante las horas cuando necesitaba un descanso.
- A Chelsea, Rory, Simone, Tiara, Linda, por ayudarme con todas mis necesidades de tesis.
- Y a todos mis otros profesores por ser tan comprensivos cuando no entregué ninguna tarea.

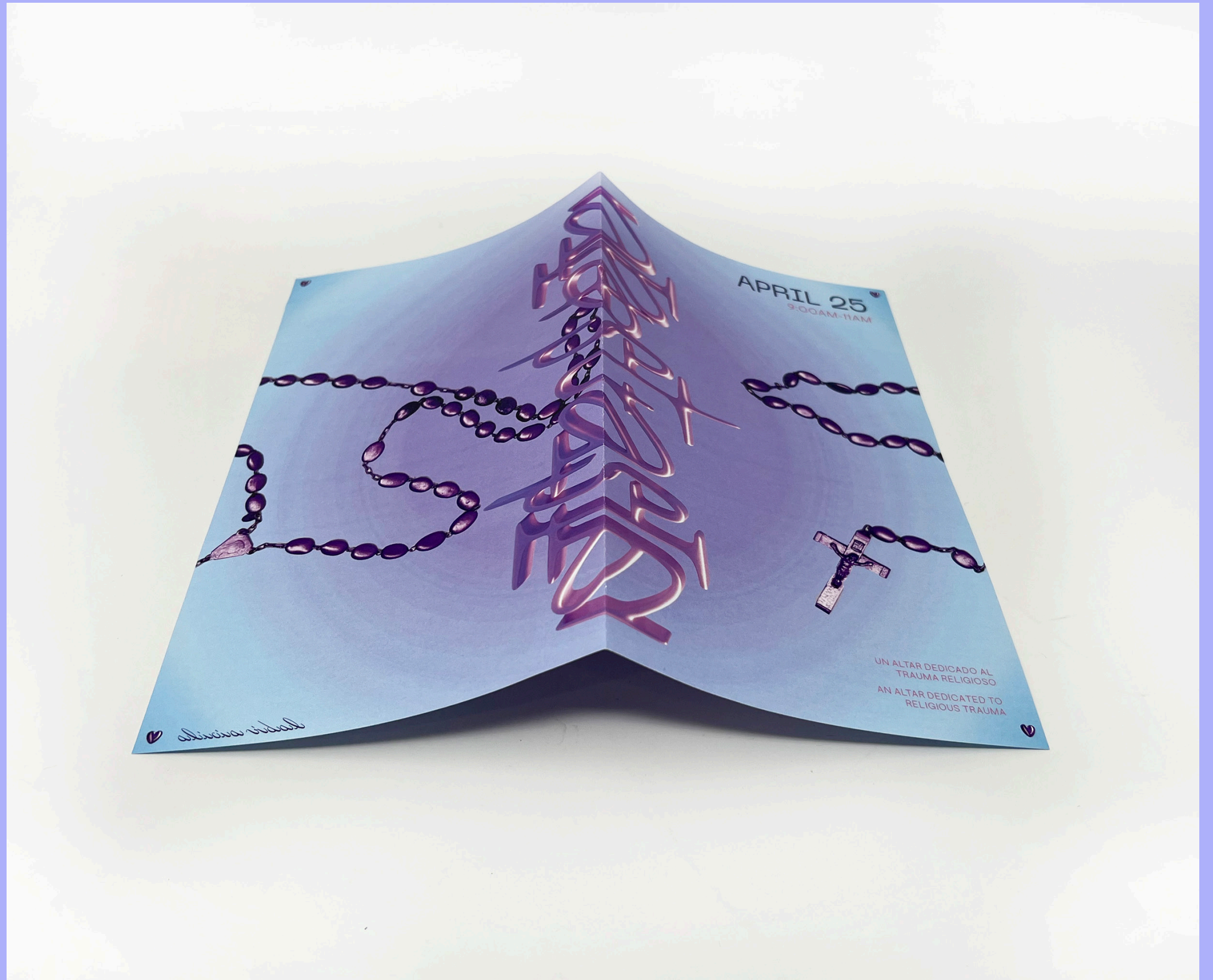
ORDER OF SERVICE ★

- 9:00 - 9:30 AM**
Help yourself to the blood and body of Christ on the back table.
- 9:30 - 10:00 AM**
A reading from the Apostacy Bible by Alicia Vidal with an introduction by Mallary Wilson.
- 10:00 - 10:20 AM**
Clergy member (panelists) ask questions.
- 10:20 - 10:30 AM**
Community members (audience) ask questions.
- 10:30 - 10:45 AM**
Clergy members (panelists) discuss presentation in private. Community members (audience) dismissed.
- 10:45 - 11:00 AM**
Clergy members (panelists) announce whether absolved or condemned to the fiery depths of hell :(sad).

THANK YOU ★

- To Mallary for being the greatest thesis mentor / therapist / life coach.
- To KRB for being the best teacher / therapist.
- To Angela for being the best outside-of-school support, and delivering me food whenever I needed it.
- To Sarah for being my mental breakdown buddy this entire semester; for spending 20+ hour days with me at school and providing me with mind-numbing industrial brutalist techno-house music from the underground streets of Berlin, plus food, coffee, snacks, dogs, and beverages to numb the senior year pains.
- To the school security for keeping us safe and chill at 3am.
- To my classmates for being incredible creative competition. You're all insanely talented, and it's been an honor seeing you grow creatively.
- To my friends who aren't in school for making me laugh non-stop for hours when I needed a break.
- To Chelsea, Rory, Simone, Tiara, Linda, for helping me with all my thesis needs. And to all my other professors for being so understanding when I didn't turn in any homework.

bulletin



writing spreads from book

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Preface

Thesis Abstract

Catholicism is a dominant force in Latin America, and when my parents immigrated to the United States, the Catholic community helped them transition from their small-town, South American lives, to their new "American dream" world.

Because God was the center of my family life, it was especially painful when I began to feel ostracized for questioning the rules we were expected to follow, and the things we were forced to believe in order to be accepted.

Apostasia, Spanish for Apostasy, is an act of refusing to continue to follow, obey, or recognize a religious faith, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary—is an installation that plays on the visual and personal appeal of Catholic churches and communities, using vivid colors and engaging materials. The captivating set-up draws the audience up close, where they find that characteristics that would be charming on their own, have been maximalized to the point where they evoke a sense of discomfort and feelings of awe, just as the church once did to me. Religious symbols and iconography are heavily manipulated under layers of textures and colors, in an alluring set up that tells my personal story of abandonment and betrayal by the Catholic community.

Artist Statement

My artistic voice comes with a lot of careful thinking and consideration, both concept-wise and aesthetically. Over the past 4 years in school, I've learned to use my empathy to my advantage, instead of allowing it to hinder my artistic process. My caring nature allows me to put myself in clients' shoes to come up with multiple variations of what think they'd envision. I enjoy layering digital with analog pieces in my designs—there's always something hand drawn or written in my projects. I typically enjoy marketing and branding projects, but after my senior year at PNCA, I have developed a new found love for designing things with more ambiguous purposes: designing for fun if you will, and designing for myself.

November 2021
(Revised April 2022)

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Genesis

Creative Brief: Project Vision

I am elaborating on my experience growing up in the Catholic church and the importance of the alliances it created for my Latinx family. The audience will either relate to my experience, or gain a better understanding of people who have been pushed away by a community they trusted.

Audience

2 Anyone who grew up in the Catholic church, or who was a part of any group or institution that rejected or invalidated them at one point. "Particularly people in the Latin American or LGBTQ+ community, or those with immigrant family members, or who are immigrants themselves.

Method and Materials

3 This is a multimedia project, with an emphasis on hands-on creating. "Pronounced Catholic votes and props were gathered along with an abundance of craft supplies throughout the course of several weeks, in order to ensure that the theme of maximalism was perceptible." Most of the renovated pieces are used in the final altar display, with the exception of a few larger pieces. "The bigger religious objects were refurbished, photographed and digitally altered for use in the graphic elements of this project, which include three posters, a book, six stickers for candles, and two fabric prints.

Marketable Application

6 Skyrocketed to extremes during the covid epidemic, tangible goods

13

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Exodus

Original Proposal

Religion played an important role in my family growing up. "The Catholic community helped bridge my parents over from their small-town, South American lives, to their new "American dream" world in the United States." God was at the center of everything I did, until around the age of 10 when I began to feel a sense of rejection and abandonment from the same community that once brought me so much comfort.

2 I want to create an installation that encapsulates the duality of growing up in the Catholic church as part of a South American migrant family, and the devastating effects of it's transition from a place of refuge to the source of betrayal. "My plan is to create something that will resemble a church altar from a distance but as the viewers get closer, traditional catholic symbols and iconography will be altered to create distorted imagery. "I will print the manipulated images on delicate fabrics, an allusion to the intricate decor often associated with catholic churches. "The fabric will hang from the ceiling, leading the viewers' eyes up from the altar and creating an intimidating, yet welcoming atmosphere. "Voice candles and plants will surround the altar, to help with the alluring scene. "The candles and some plants that will be placed along the floor, will offer viewers a warm and inviting environment. The way the church once did for me. "This engaging set-up

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Exodus

combined with all of the manipulated symbolism and iconography, will play on the juxtaposition that I, and many others, have experienced in religious communities. "It will also touch on the overarching religious theme of treachery, and good vs evil.

3 Growing up as a first generation student in Montgomery County, Maryland wasn't uncommon. "According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the year 2000, 45% of people living there were foreign-born. "To compare, the Portland Tri-County area was 12% foreign-born that same year. "What was less common in my hometown though, was being a first generation native-born, in an upper-middle class home. "I was an extremely privileged and lucky kid, but transitioning from my Latinx community in Northern Virginia, to the suburbs of Maryland was lonely at times. "None of my close neighbors spoke Spanish. "None of them watched novelas or read *Laslechicatas*, or ate *salsitas y chicharrón*. "It was primarily through our local church that we found and connected with other Latinx families. "My mom, sister and I made friends at our weekly Spanish mass, and at other church-related events—these were the most comforting places to me. "My mom cried when I bleached and dyed my hair. "She cried when



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EXODUS

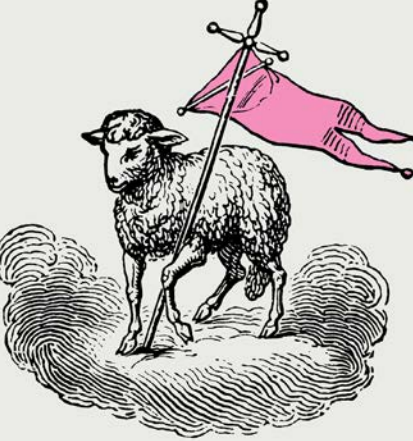
I pierced, and tattooed my body. "She cried when I stopped going to church with her, and when I told her I didn't believe in God anymore. "She didn't cry however, when I came out as queer, at least not in front of me. "But she would never treat me the same. "Friends and family members stopped talking to me and my family. "They would say hurtful things, and gossip, and I resorted to horrible ways of coping with this sense of abandonment. "I know I had it easy though. "I didn't get kicked out of my home, I was minimally bullied compared to most; the worse part is really just the feelings of guilt and betrayal that I continue to carry.

5 I want my installation to be an experience; a physical space that evokes an emotion, or a memory. "Most catholic churches are grand in structure—some would even say intimidating. "But while intimidating, they are simultaneously alluring and inviting, not just in the physical structure, but in the community as well. "This installation will be in a dark room, lit only by the glow of candles, the lighting combined with the floral plants, hanging fabrics, and digitally tinted graphics and decor, will create the dual atmosphere of intrigue and deceit. "I will be using fabrics to print on, mainly the floor panels, in order for it to have arches on the top. "I've heard that it's a difficult task—to create the top arches and make them symmetrical, but I think I can be printing. "Different pieces of dressy apparel symbolize different things; the long strip of cloth worn around the neck of priests in Catholic churches indicate the state of ordination; and can be a number of different colors depending on the day or liturgical season. "I will use lace fabrics as a visual representation of the intricate architectural detail in most churches; the ornamentation,

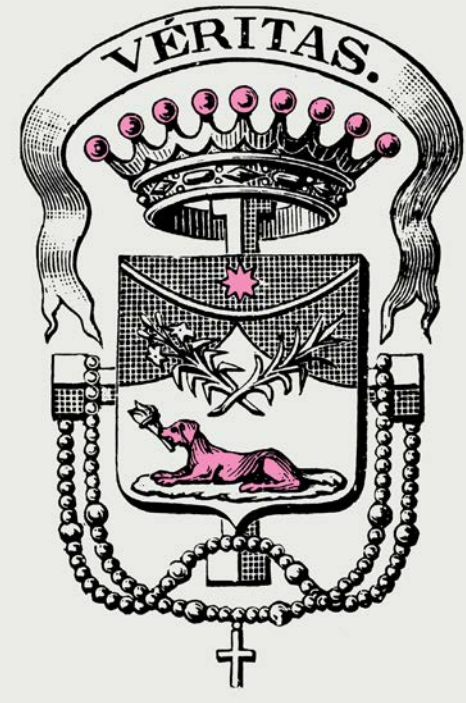
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and formality of antiquity can be a cause of intimidation for viewers in a Cathedral or church. "Sheer and lace fabrics will also help create a visual metaphor, representing the "veil" that I experienced Catholic communities put on themselves in order to hide the uglier, more judgmental side of them. "I will have an installation guide in the form of a book, which will be a reference to viewers to walk up and interact with the installation. "It will be on a platform or pedestal in front of the altar itself.

6 The graphic parts of my project will be printed on fabric for the triptych and dangling strips of cloth, sticker-making for votive prayer candles, and printing an installation guide. "I will be using the resources given to us at PNCA, such as the inkjet printers in the digital printing studio. "I will be purchasing some pre-treated fabric, made specifically for inkjet printing. "This will save me lots of time and money, compared to purchasing my own fabric and treating it myself. "The dangling strips of cloth will be approximately 15 feet in length, 18" wide. "The triptych will be printed on 36" x 24" fabric, and both the strips and the triptych will be double sided. "I will cut the top of the triptych panel, in order for it to have arches on the top. "I've heard that it's a difficult task—to create the top arches and make them symmetrical, but I think I can be printing. "Different pieces of dressy apparel symbolize different things; the long strip of cloth worn around the neck of priests in Catholic churches indicate the state of ordination; and can be a number of different colors depending on the day or liturgical season. "I will use lace fabrics as a visual representation of the intricate architectural detail in most churches; the ornamentation,



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Leviticus

Thesis Influences (Semester Two)

At the beginning of the second semester of my thesis process, after a good month or so of a much needed break, my vision for my final work had drastically shifted. "I thought I wanted an ominous installation with dark and moody graphics—similar to the ones you find in a church—but that didn't feel like it was making the statement I wanted it to make. "After talking to my mentor on the first day back at school, we both agreed that maybe we could still make everything feel uncomfortable, but on the opposite end of the spectrum of creepiness.

2 Bright colors and beautiful objects can be paired together to create images just as uncomfortable, if not more so, as dark images. This would also allow me to play more with the concept of something looking appealing, but as you get closer, is a little off and unsettling. It would also allow me to create something that is the complete opposite of what a church would show, or how the church expects people—women particularly—to express themselves. At least in my experience growing up in a Latin American Catholic family.

3 Because of this drastic shift, I began to research artists with a different style than most of the artists I explored last semester. "One artist that really struck a chord with me last semester was Yvette

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Mayorga. "I became somewhat obsessed with her work and the context of her work, mainly because I related to it so much and I think also because she creates things the way I think and process things. "I think growing up and doing something that had to remain really serious, maybe because I decided I wanted to pursue it really early in life, and career choices were very serious in my family. "Art is already seen as a "silly" path to take as the child of immigrant parents, so I wanted to make sure I was good at the fundamentals of fine art. "I made sure I could capture an image exactly the way it appeared in real life. I made sure I got the colors perfectly, or at least tried really hard to, and started spending hours in a single square inch of a painting.

4 I became such a perfectionist with my art that I completely forgot about what contemporary art could be. "I'm not some renaissance artist that was commissioned to paint a portrait of the wealthy royal I worked for. "I am a goofy person who thoroughly enjoys being silly and having fun but can still be really serious about while creating things that express my mental processes.

5 Yvette Mayorga and all of the other artists I researched this year, and my mentor, and my classmates, and everyone at PNCA, all really

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LEVITICUS

helped me find how much I love creating again. "Here are some of the artists that heavily influenced my thesis project this semester: Kristyna Kulkova, Greta Thorkels, Suzy Chan, Mark Bobbe & Raffael Kormann, Ram Han, The Rodina design studio, Angela Anh Nguyen, Veika Reus, Many more...

Thesis Influences (Semester One)

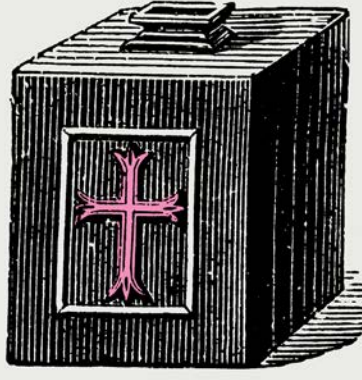
6 I have influences stemming back from past projects, and memories, along with inspiration from artists I have discovered while researching for this project. "Last year I did a project on Walter Mercado, who was a Puerto Rican analogist, performer, and a part of my childhood. "I had a lot of fun with that project, and I think Walter's ornate costumes and caps really stuck with me because they reminded me of the decoration you may find in a large church or cathedral. "Growing up I visited a lot of religious places. "My family traveled to Italy for my 15th birthday to visit St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City, along with many other churches. "We also traveled once every few months to the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, to pray and get gallons of this sacred spring water. "I was constantly surrounded by Catholic art—which isn't the cherries—there were images of a crucified man and a mournful-looking woman all over my home, and I think that definitely influenced my interests, and style a little—whether obvious or not.

7 While researching for this project I came across a few artists whose work really resonated with me: Laurie Beth

Zuckerman, who refers to herself as an altar junkie, was one of them. "Laurie creates altar installations that were originally inspired by the first time she ever entered a catholic church. "Over the years, she has visited a multitude of churches in several Latin American countries, and has gathered visual inspiration from all of the different types of altars she's come across. "Her work is intricate, and complex, which reminds me of the early baroque styles of church architecture.

8 Soisang Chamallard is a French artist who restores and transforms religious, second-hand, statues of the Holy Mary. "She began painting small statues of the Holy Mary in 2005, when her father gave her a figure he found in a thrift store. "Her work is playful, often colorful, and it turns a religious figure into an idea about womanhood in a religious context. "Her work makes me think more playfully and boldly, because of her direct manipulation of a religious icon.

9 Another artist I came across was Christian Bolanaki, whose mixed-media installations are quite dark visually and conceptually. "He used a lot of candles, and other light sources to emphasize certain parts of his installations—which were typically about death and the genocide that occurred during the holocaust. "The low lighting, combined with abandoned clothing, wood and other materials create a deep, dusty, depressing atmosphere, which I found uniquely compelling. "The intentional use of lighting in his installations also makes me think about the whole notion of the church being "the light of the world."



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LEVITICUS

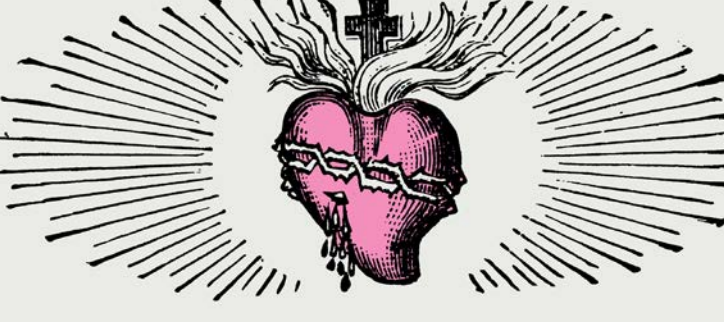
Elise Wehle is a meticulous paper cutter who hand-cuts intricate patterns on paper, using X-acto knives. "She combines photo manipulations, paper layering, and printmaking techniques to create delicate, and precious works of art. "Her work also reminds me of the decorations found in baroque churches and cathedrals. "I also really like the dark, soft color palettes that she typically uses in her pieces. "The concept of layering different techniques and images to distort something, is definitely something I'm thinking about while working on my thesis.

11 And finally, Yvette Mayorga is a Chicago-based artist, who uses real and faux frosting to reference her mother's labor working in a bakery in the 70s. "She applies thick layers of paint using cake-piping bags to create

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me to be introspective and translate one of my personal stories into a work of art and design that hopefully someone can connect to.

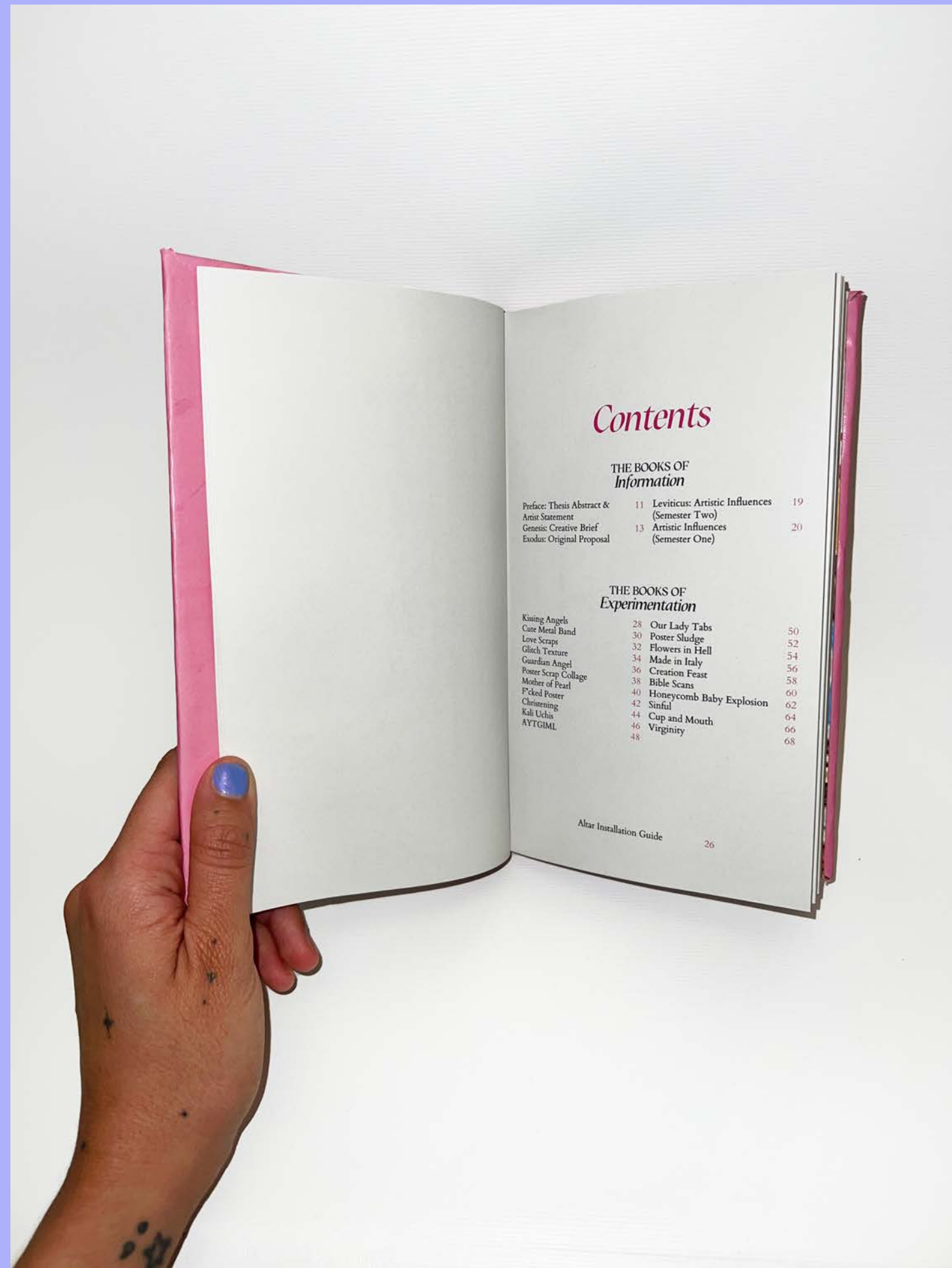
7 While in school I have discovered that I really enjoy translating personal stories, and philosophies into thoughtful art and design. "I wouldn't say I have a particular style, but my approach to design is always the same: empathetic, and sometimes overly-thoughtful. "This is why I found myself really interested in branding and marketing design, because it's taking someone's story and creating a simplified identity for it through a logo, color palette, and/or type. "I enjoy incorporating hand-drawn or analog pieces, with digitally made pieces, and I have been eager to make something graphic and 2-dimensional, that unites a 3-dimensional space in order to fully tell a story. "I tend to shy the darker side of things, and I like to talk about things that people don't often like to talk about—at least outside of art school—I believe that it's not only a way that I enjoy connecting with people, but it also selfishly serves as a form of healing for me. "Healing plays a large role in our identity-finding process, and having something tangible—such as a work of art or installation—helps make the healing concrete. "I think this project has, and will continue to, allow



book cover & installation guide



example spreads



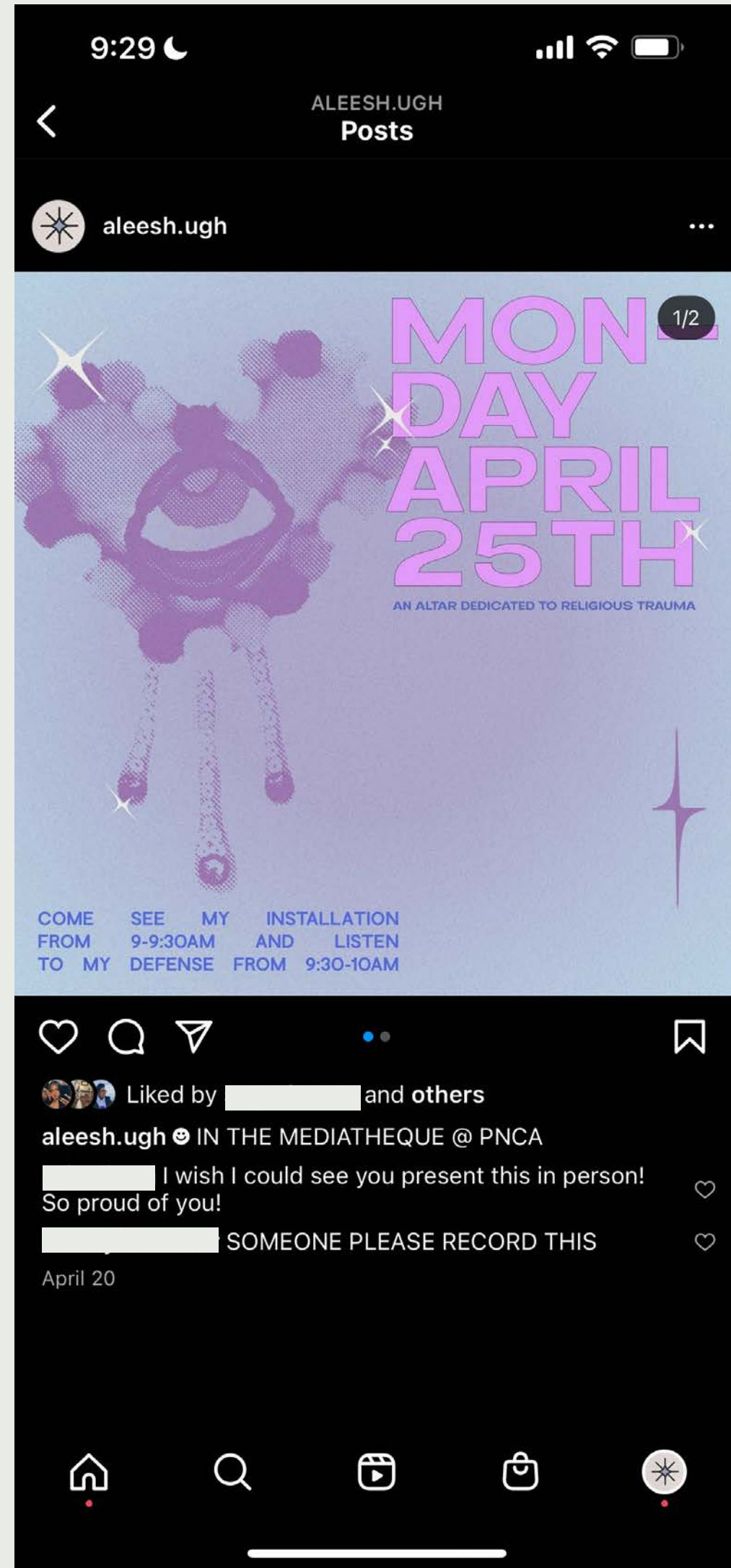
example spreads



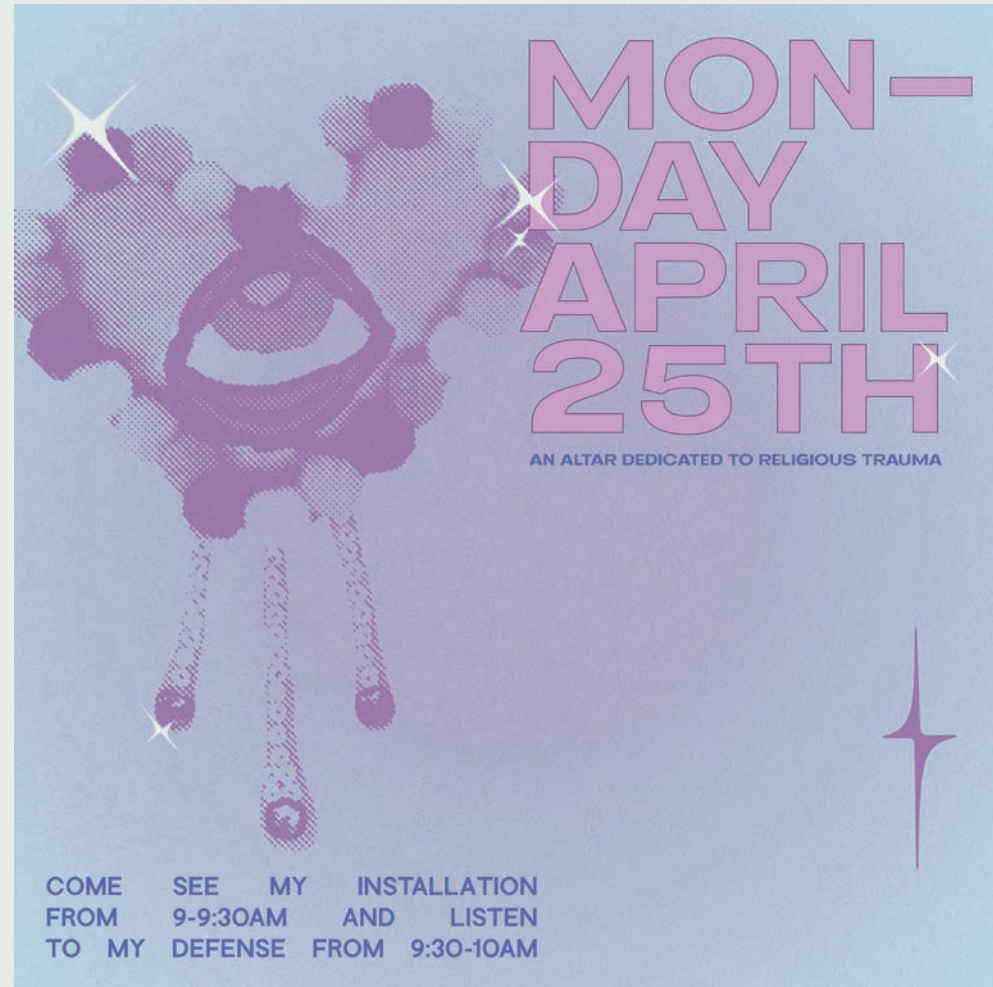
documentation

promotional

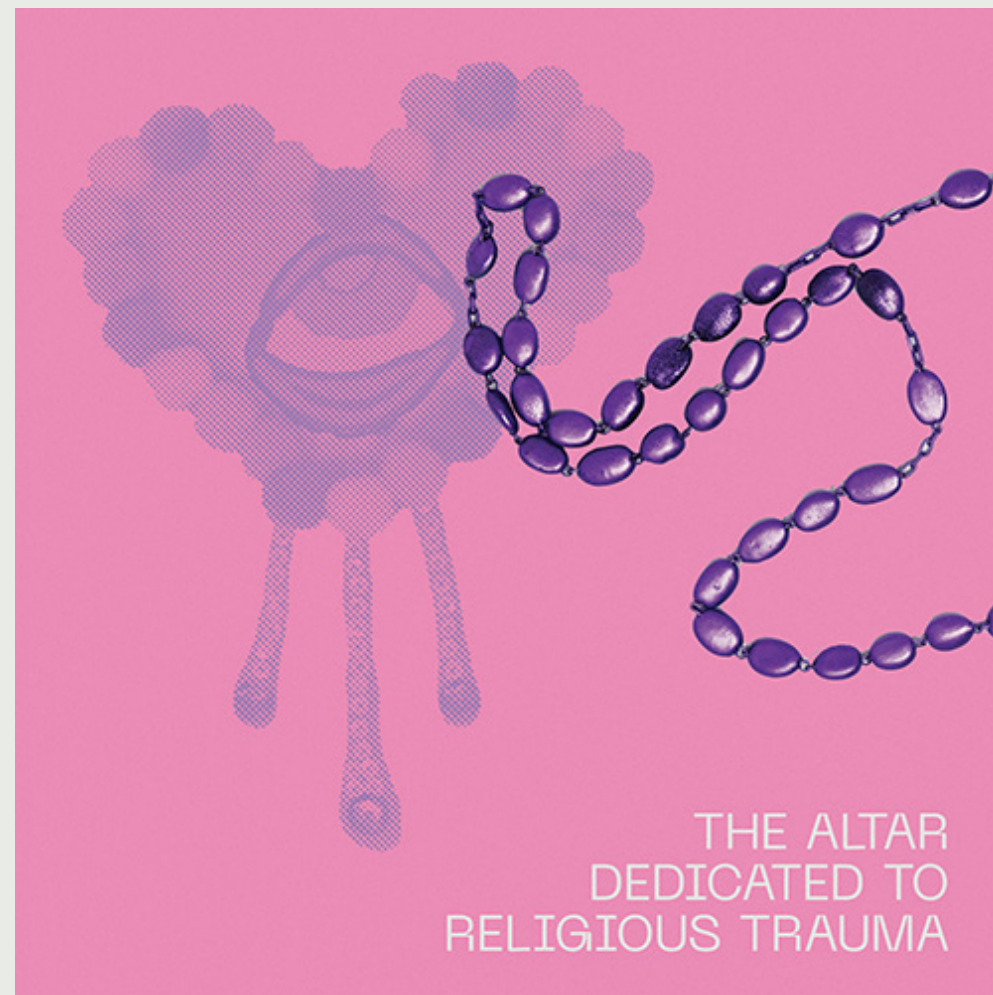
instagram promos



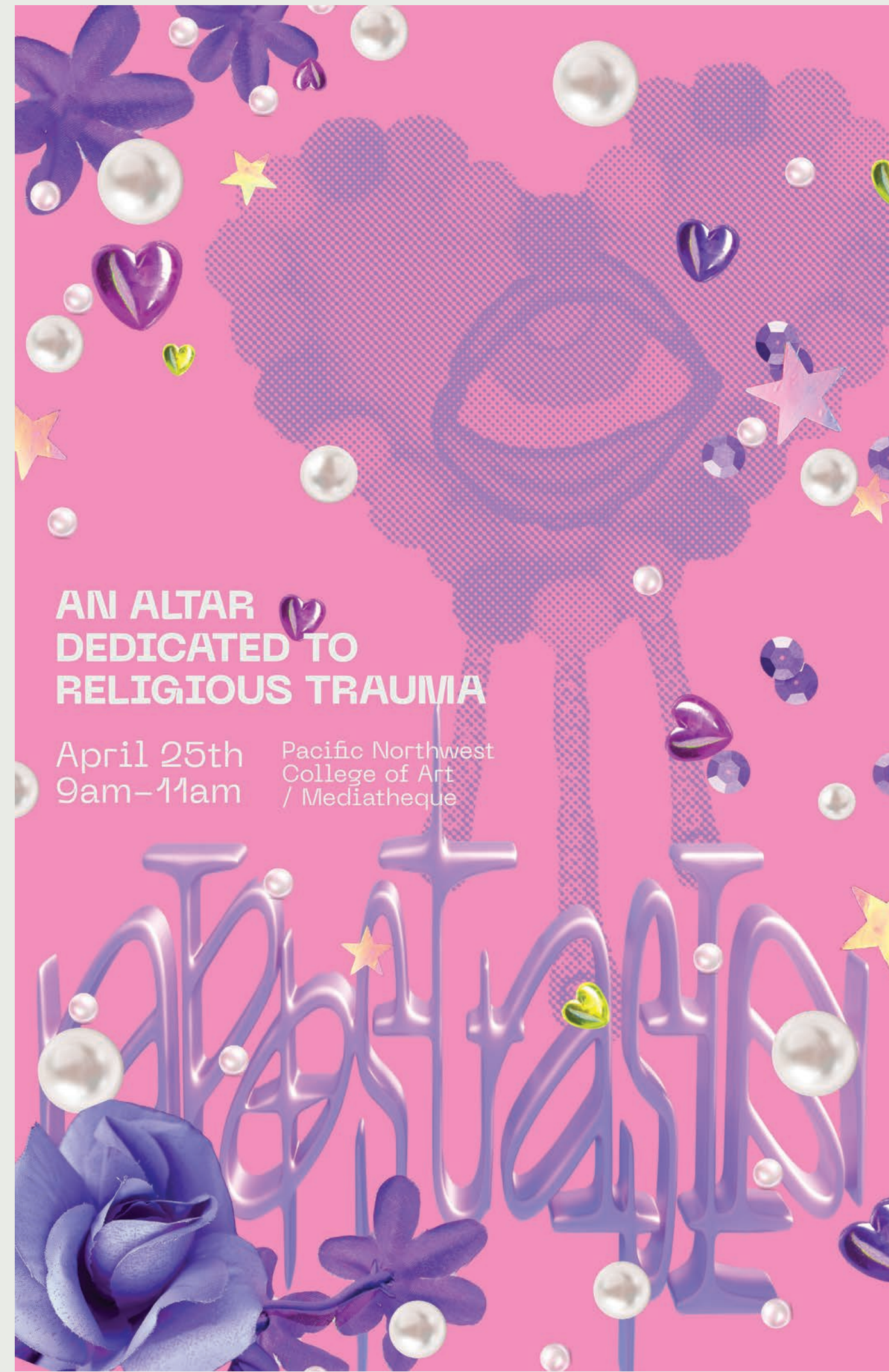
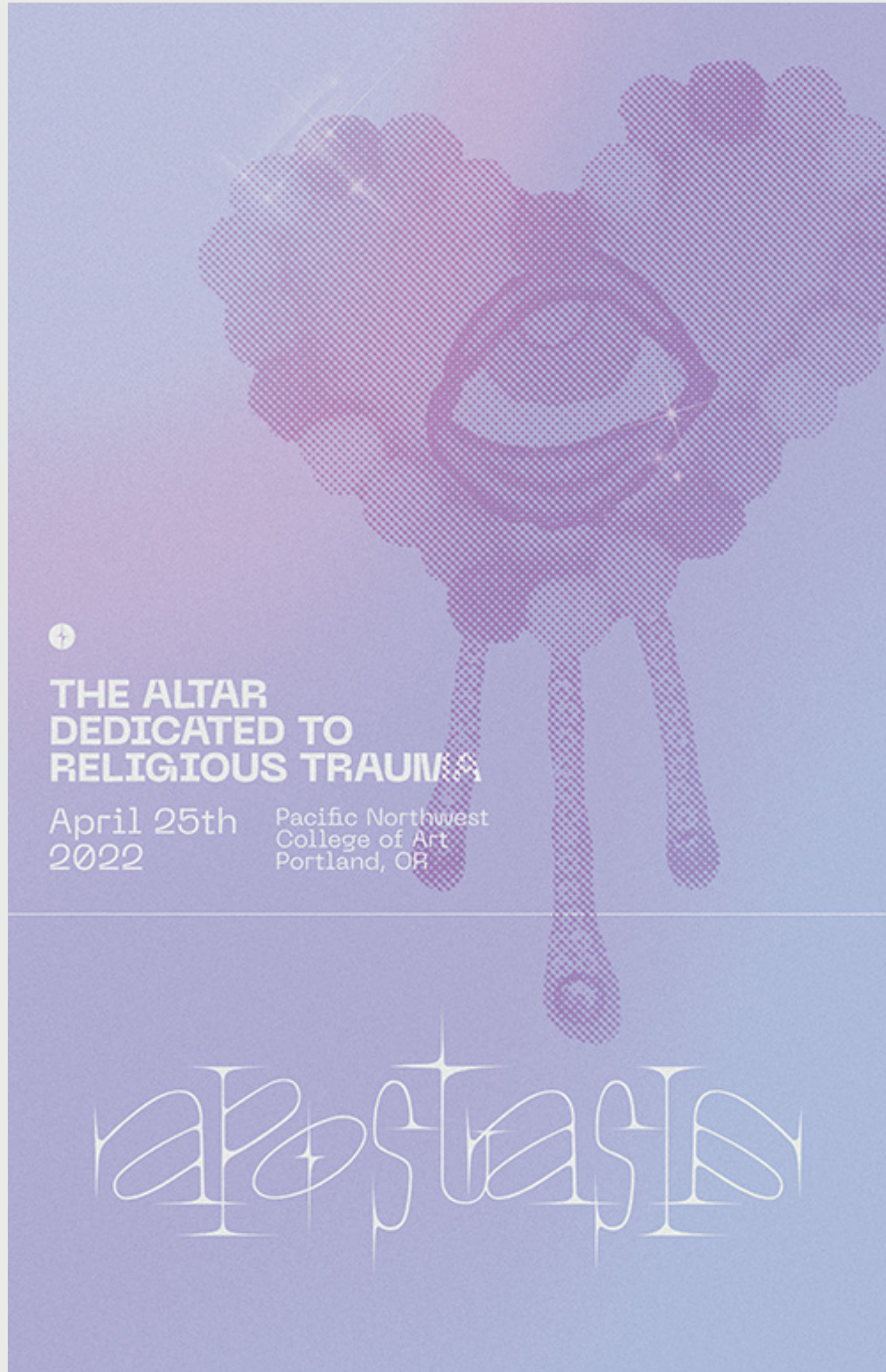
instagram promo alternatives



48



poster promos



documentation

altar items

candles



51



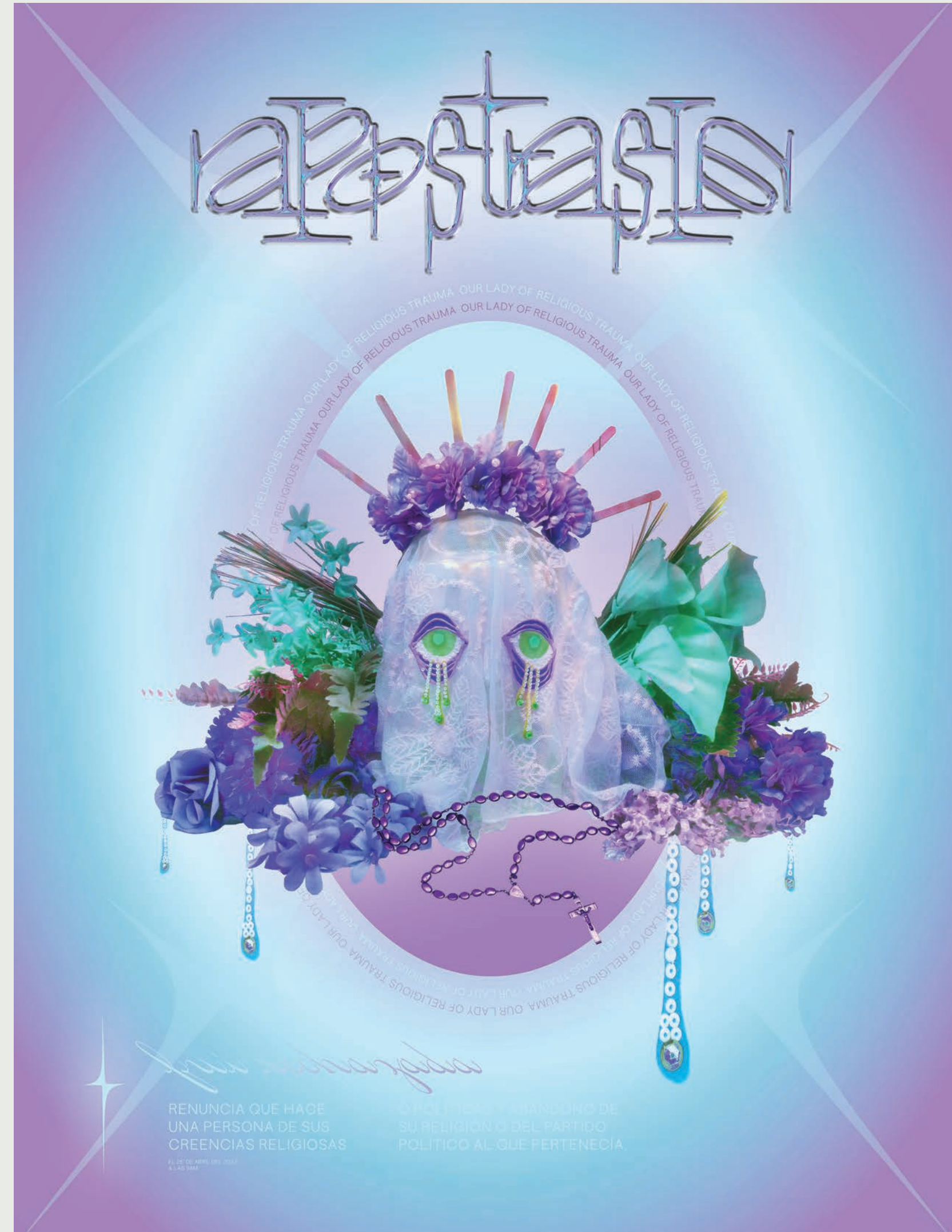
fabric prints



fabric prints



trptych posters



documentation

final installation

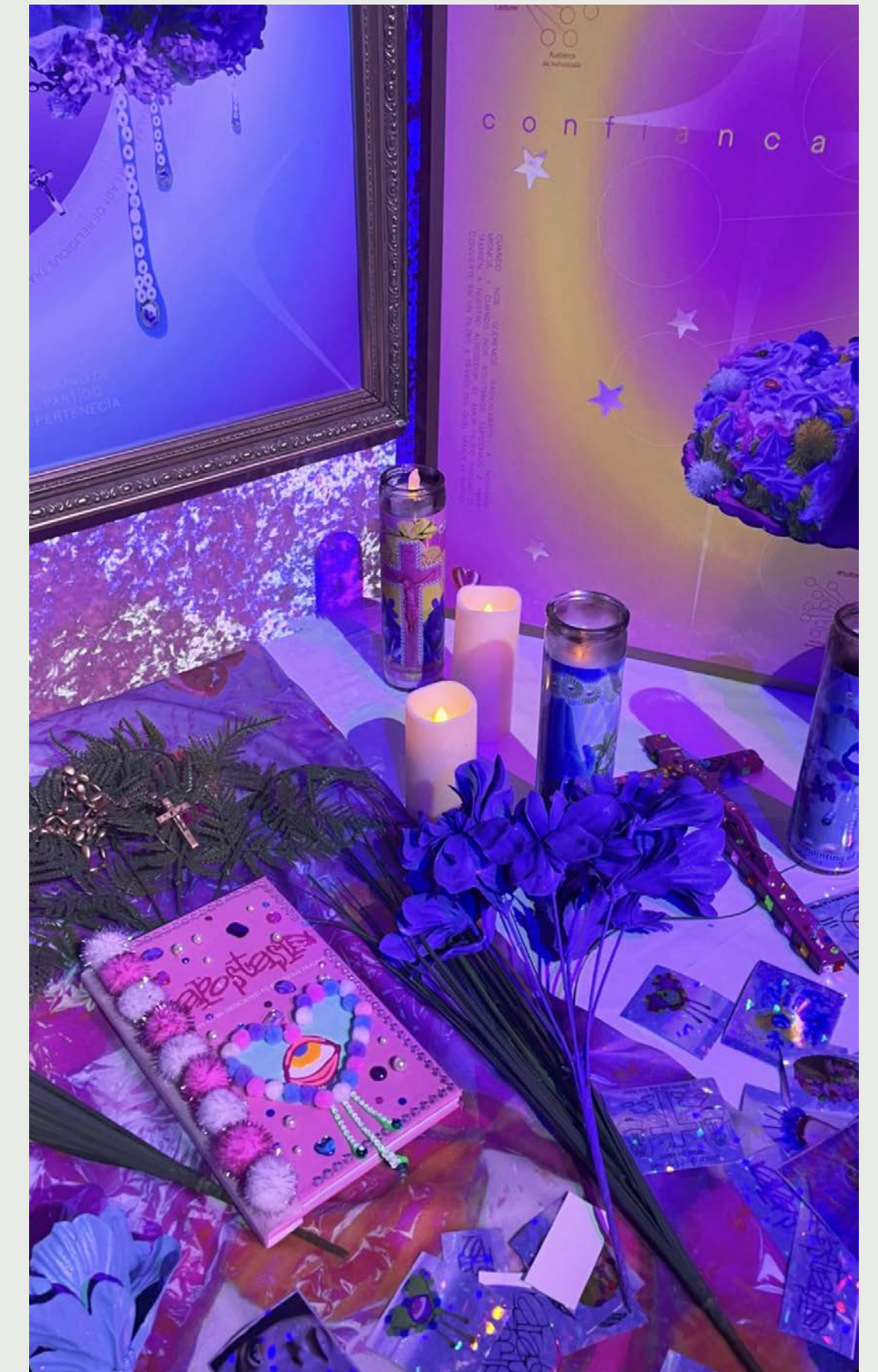
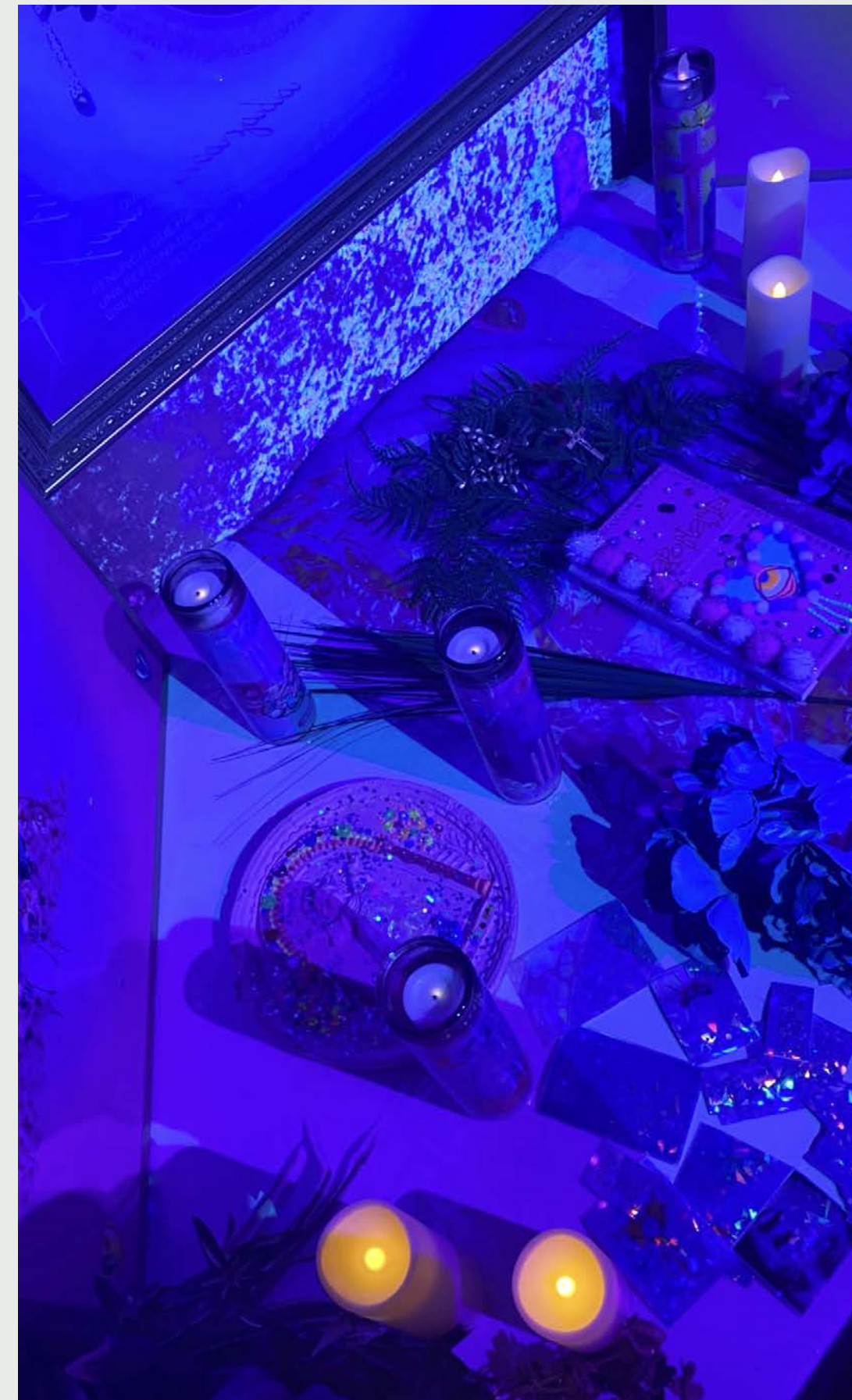
final presentation



*final presentation
with lights on*



*final presentation
details*





Thank You :)