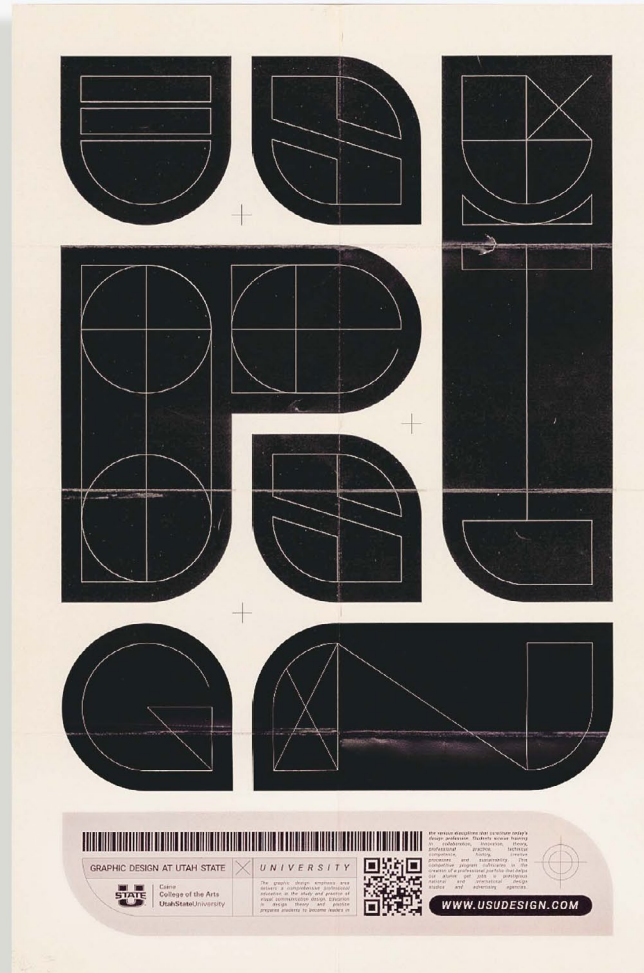
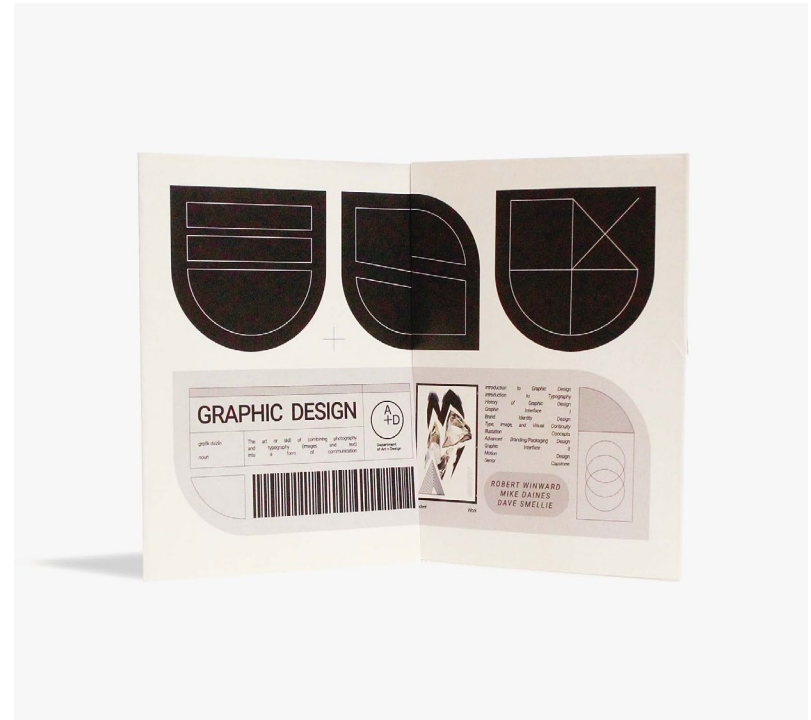


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HOW BANNING BOOKS MARGINALIZES CHILDREN
by Paul Pettingill

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, children's literature writers largely ignored the needs of the children of low-income families. Before the Civil War, the prevailing opinion was, "No lines." Accordingly, librarians and magazines addressed the educational concerns of children without worrying much about readers' interests. From emancipation onward, the focus shifted toward impoverished, but a greater effort to register children's identities by naming them "for whom" publishers focused more on engagement, they carefully selected subjects that drew the parents who bought the books.

In assessing my book *Communicating Childhood*, publishing the children's books and magazines during the 18th century were indeed diverse. I don't think I should be regarding the historic literary tradition as any more diverse in the early 1800s, as might New England-based audiences understand it, and the magazine collections within 10 months. The outcome had a chilling effect on other publishers. The subject of slavery had a brief revival during the war (when it served to highlight the irony of American patriotism), but afterward the topic remained peripheral within the industry. Indeed, the review of *Communicating Childhood* over two books' duration of *Abner's* has indicated that publishers have not been diligent to how to address the subject for younger children to help their youth historically accurate and appropriate to parents.

When librarians and teachers meet works that may be "historically inappropriate" for children (a common reason), they're referring to the historical and mostly promoting over the children's literature about more controversial topics. It's understandable that adults want to maintain children's safety, and schools are often under intense social and financial pressure to maintain established standards. But it's also important to recognize that the tradition was established in the 18th century to serve the needs of the white, wealthy Protestant audiences and consumers who have dominated the field of American children's literature for much of the past 200 years.

The diversity of children's books has been recognized and for contemporary (including across the North and the South) (I don't think I should be regarding the historic literary tradition as any more diverse in the early 1800s, as might New England-based audiences understand it, and the magazine collections within 10 months. The outcome had a chilling effect on other publishers. The subject of slavery had a brief revival during the war (when it served to highlight the irony of American patriotism), but afterward the topic remained peripheral within the industry. Indeed, the review of *Communicating Childhood* over two books' duration of *Abner's* has indicated that publishers have not been diligent to how to address the subject for younger children to help their youth historically accurate and appropriate to parents.

Every year since 1982, an event known as Banned Books Week has brought attention to literary works frequently challenged by parents, schools, and libraries. The books in question sometimes feature scenes of violence or offensive language uncommon in the typical or original versions. In the case of both *Mary Poppins* and *The Hobbit*, but one reference is made to the 18th century of the books challenge or banned in the last 10 years before we called "banned content" what it, they require scenes such as sex, religion, gender identity, racial stereotypes, mental illness, and disability. As a result, the organizers of Banned Books Week, which started Sunday, chose the theme "Celebrating Diversity" for 2016.

THE HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHING ... OFTEN ENDED UP MARGINALIZING THE LIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF MANY YOUNG READERS, RATHER THAN PROTECTING THEM.

Since the inception of the American children's industry in the 1850s, publishers have had to grapple with the question of who their primary audience should be. Do they focus on parents and adult culture gatekeepers, or to young readers themselves? In an era when the address issues of diversity have a growing number of challenges, the related question of who children both the industry and educators should serve has become more complicated recently. Who benefits when *Shimmer House's The Abolition*, *The Diary of Paulina* topics, which deals with racism, poverty, and disability, is banned for language and "anti-Christian content" about a boy who reads to Harriet and last teenage girl's book *I Am Not*, about a transgender girl, is banned? The

Keeping books about certain types of children out of libraries perpetuates a vision of a sheltered American childhood that has rarely existed.

After publishing *The Search*, *Wesner* received several messages from librarians and parents concerned about the topics he book dealt with. One elementary school librarian explained why she wouldn't check *Wesner's* book with her students: "For me," she began with, "I just need the 10 and 11-year-olds to be able to be about race, violence, crime, and death. But I'm proud of it. I don't appreciate the emphasizing a broader obligation that parents, teachers, and librarians should address. 'We don't serve only our children,' *Wesner* said, "we serve children in the real world."

This message of realistic, consistent, and affirmation aligns with the values of Banned Books Week, as well as with the needs of children's literary studies ranging from *Luce* *Wesner* and *Tom* *Wesner* to *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. The shared emphasis is grounded in respect for young readers, which doesn't mean providing them with unhelpful advice in navigating the literary studies. Instead, it means that librarians, teachers, and parents secure children's access with the goal of inspiring rather than obscuring imagination. But an emphasis alone isn't enough. How to navigate imaginary worlds filled with attachments, with the fact that they may apply these lessons to their own lives.



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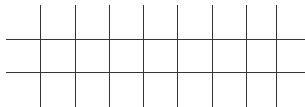


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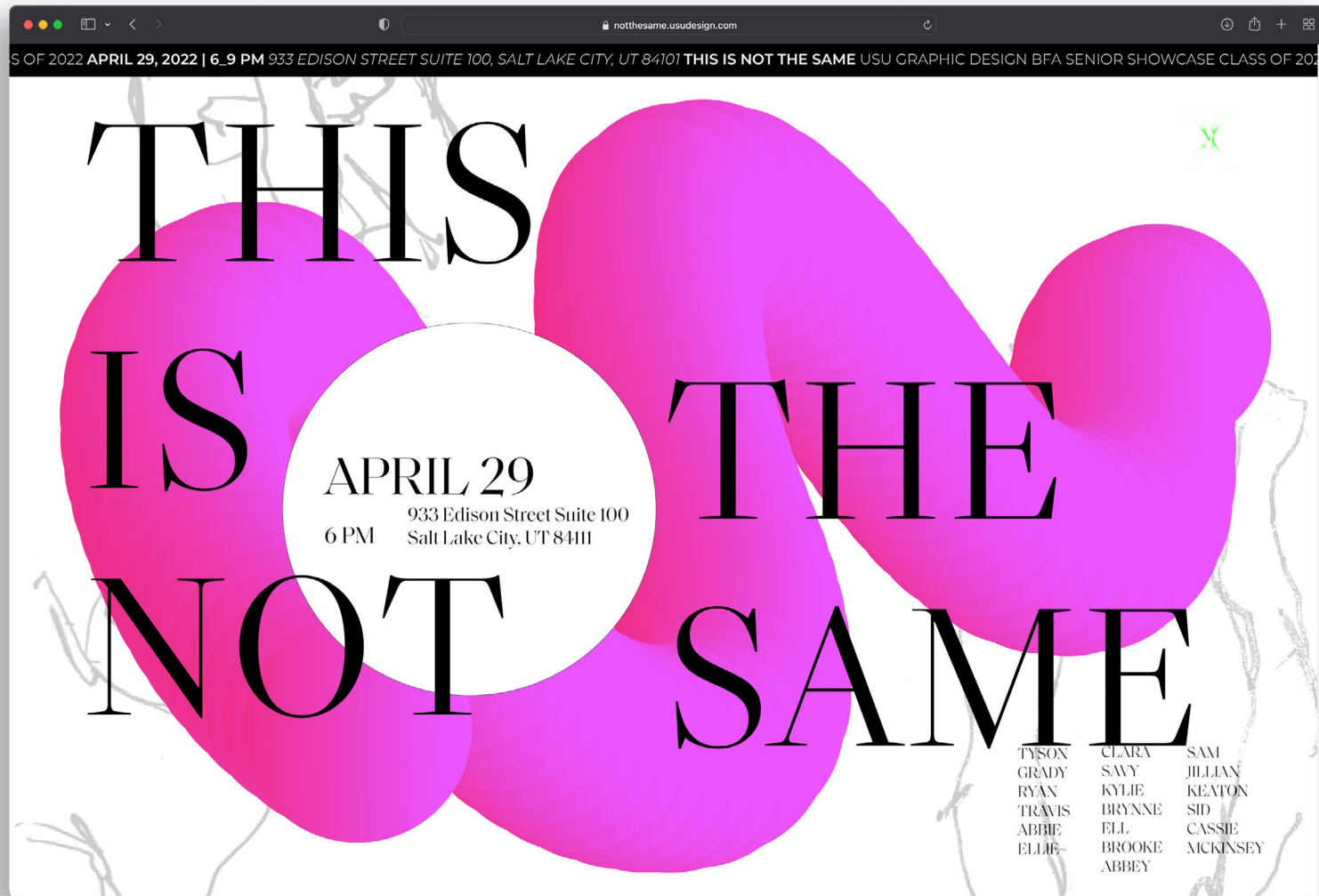


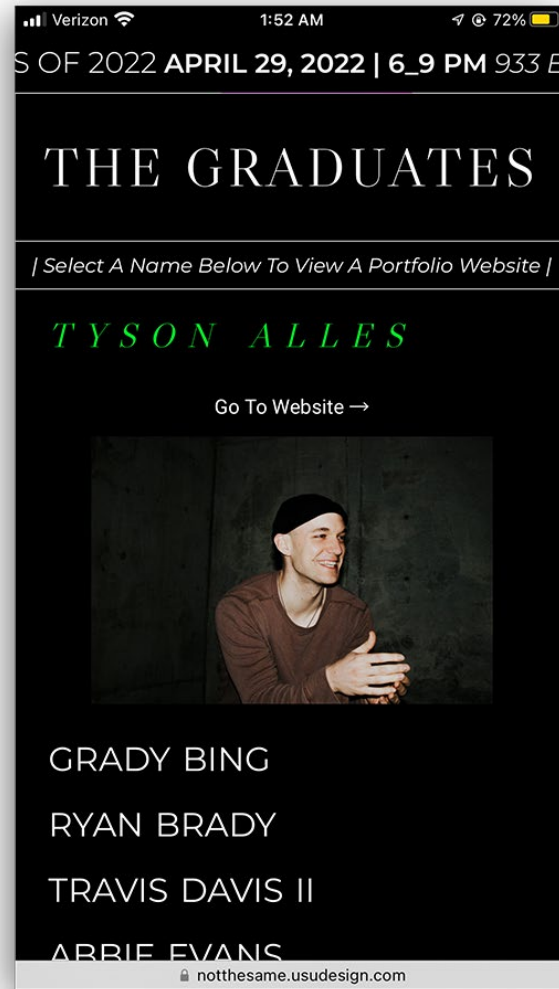
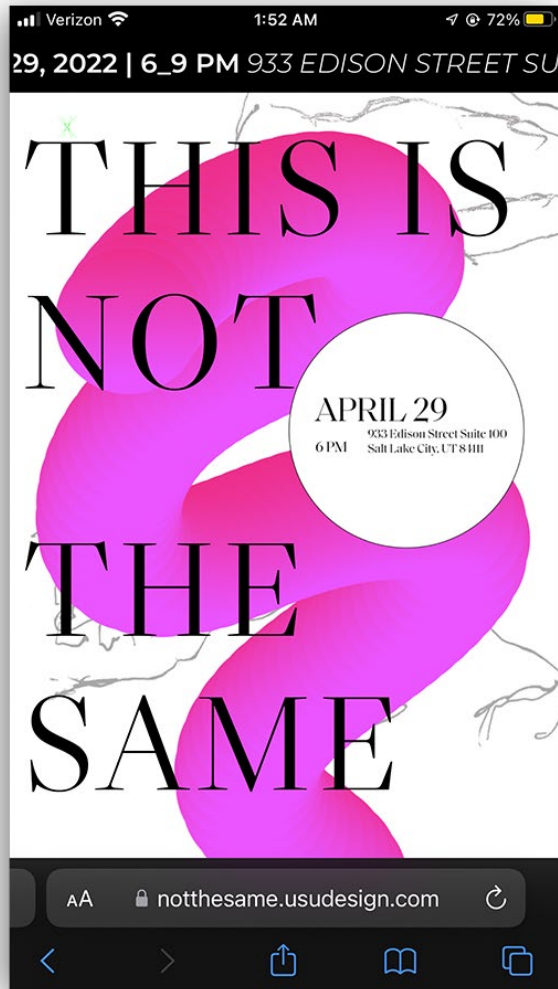


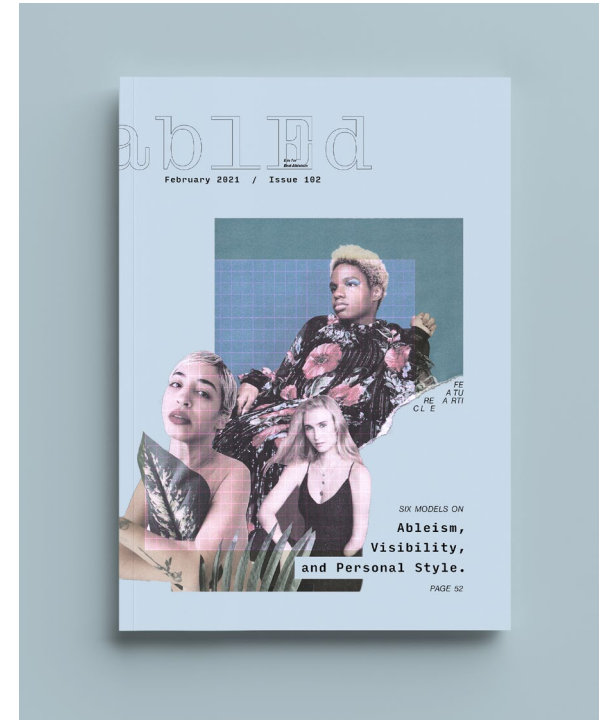
















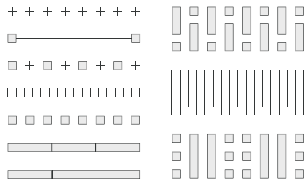
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