

THE
Night
Circus

PROCESS BOOK

Concept: Life as a Cuckoo Clock

The Night Circus is a book about a magical circus. A magical cuckoo clock is always stationed at the circus' entrance. Many of the characters' fates are magically determined by the circus itself, so I've turned the characters and main elements of the story into mechanically controlled cuckoo clock characters.

Night Circus Themes:

- Magic
- love
- Rivalry
- Passage of Time

Symbols + Motifs

- a ring
- a circus
- clock
- feather

educate
tick tock
antique

back + form
wings
feathers
death

rewind
alarm

Celia = Toy in hands of her father

Clock: time, gears, grandfather clock, cuckoo clock, midnight, alarm

Time Construct, past, present, DVD player, clock mustache, count down, new years

Gears industrial revolution, design cliché, metal, momentum, oil, bike

Grandfather clock haunted house, tick tock, dust, antique

Cuckoo clock Annoying, bird, prey, cat, spring, door

I want to use a clock as the storyteller

Clock = Narrator

Construct
Society, norms, educate, evolution, expectations

Past: yearbook, history, older days, regret, golden years

Present: anxiety, wishes, deadlines, meditation, awareness

DVD Player: VHS, menu, disc, technology, entertainment, Hollywood

Clock mustache: Alice in Wonderland, minute hand, hr hand, numbers, beauty, beast

Count down: new year's, dead O, summer break

New Year's: resolution, times square, ceremony, international, mitterin

Your move
clock strikes 12
↳ are they clock characters?

I'd like them to be puppets...
puppets + clock

Puppets on stick → controlled
who has ~~control~~ control?

Who is the show for?
journey through circus?

puppets used as masks
go inside them

go inside Celia + you get illusions

go inside Marco + get symbols/manipulations

2 styles → puppets vs.

On stage → go into puppet masks.

tents
black + white
fire

Cuckoo clock spring xxxxxxxx
Cuckoo sound

Each border are like the charac's
closet, diary, house, brain, head, dreams

wood texture

note
revers
red scarf
heaven (they die)
the clock should

Clock marker
revers
red scarf
heaven (they die)
the clock should

clock = extra circular motion
what else is a circle?
Their rings
have the circle of the clock morph into a ring?

clock chains gears
teeth
chains w/ aloms
have those throughout

different w/ have days opening
teeth
have circus

1st = Celia / Marco

Then it's the tents they make

wishing tree
ice garden
Carousel
jars
fire pit

Puppet / widget
Bailey
A.H. Enchanted

Character should have different pattern

Celia is the flowers
Celia is birds
feathers + glass shards

puppet/widget are stars

The Night

clock: clock hands, midnight, alarm, gears, time

clock hands: winding, tells time, mustache, angles, moving, changing, repeating
circles

midnight: Cinderella, new day, start over, times up, midnight mass,
wishing how, spell is broken

alarm: wake up, dreams, starting, new day, sun rise

gears: industrial revolution, machine, automatic, gas, energy

time: social construct, afternoon, morning, evening, different greetings

ies → wishing tree

1st = Celia / Marco

Concept: Life as a Cuckoo Clock

I kept the concept, but I decided to portray it differently. Through this redesign, I wanted to start with the clock face and travel into the clock—to make the clock much more of the focus. I wanted the clock to feel more magical than functional, so I started by redesigning the gears.

~ much more clock-like

~ start with the clock face + the title cards

~ move in, out, over the clock

~ move with things that move for a scene transition
example: the red balloon floats up and the camera follows.

~ use small wires to contrast heavy gears

~ go through cage

~ when you zoom in, the movement stops or starts. It's not really continuous

~ background is way pushed back

what if the themes are pt. text?

A Series of Unfortunate Events

~ do I want to outline the main characters w/ a stroke?

~ maybe zoom out + realize you were zoomed into a character?

~ different paint textures

candle, cloud moon, pool of tears, wishing tree, ice garden, labyrinth, smells

~ blooming garden made only of ice

~ add in clocks ticks

~ the characters have lots of contrast detail, contrasted by very simple movements

~ warped body structure (I like, makes it creepy)

~ the scenery has a combination of shadow + texture/detail

~ things are out of perspective → some things are very big, others not so big ✓

~ some movements are human, others are not

~ music is creepy but like a carnival

~ text is all caps, has a texture → it works

~ big details + small details
↳ main characters cheering, birds flying in the background

~ 2 space, 3D

~ type interacts w/ movements

~ simple characters — more detail on the inside

~ the gears are sharper

~ background is very simple — out of focus shapes

~ camera moves through scene seamlessly

~ camera = fast movement contrasted w/ pause

~ music box

~ what if the ~~noise~~ knobs are actually gold?

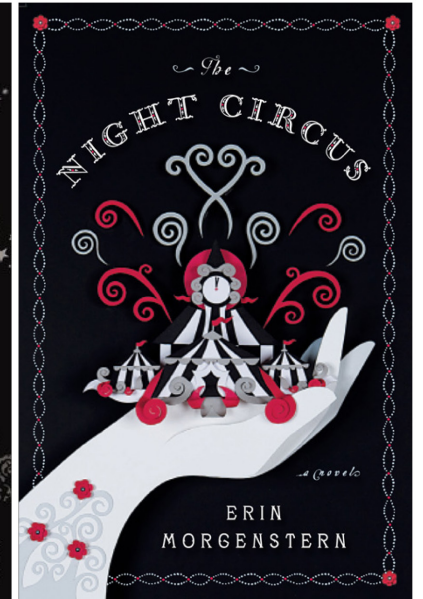
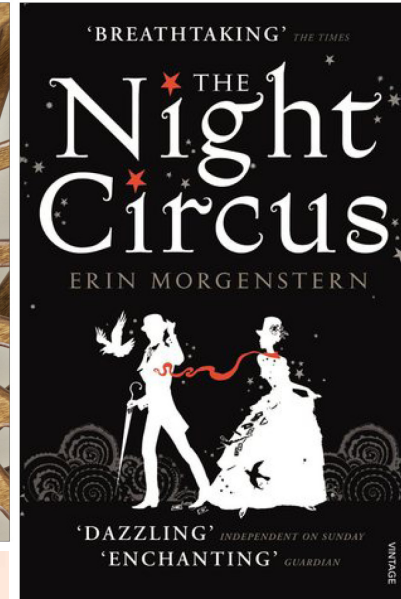
~ bring in a little 3D to this?

~ add in clocks ticks when close up

is there central w/ we we adjust heart / do we have access to backstory

Kinetic Sculptures:

I discovered David C. Roy's kinetic sculptures, which portrayed the whimsical, magical aesthetic I needed for the clock gears. The sculptures also worked well with the original cover art for *The Night Circus*. I pulled type inspiration from Victorian posters.



03 Re-Sketching

Finding the Aesthetic:

I based my sketches for the characters and main elements of the sequence off of the kinetic sculpture gears (see New Inspiration) to find a cohesive aesthetic.



Why this Font Choice?:

I based the font choice on Victorian posters to evoke the time period of *The Night Circus*. This highly angular font calls to the geometric shapes within the piece.

Brothers

**AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKk
LlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUu
VvWwXxYyZz**

Kopius

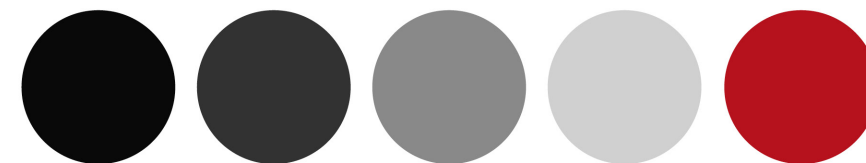
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Why this Palette?:

The circus in the story is known for only using black and white for all costumes, circus tents, pamphlets, and tickets. The avid circus-goers within the story always wear red. I therefore based my color palette on what a night at the circus would look like.



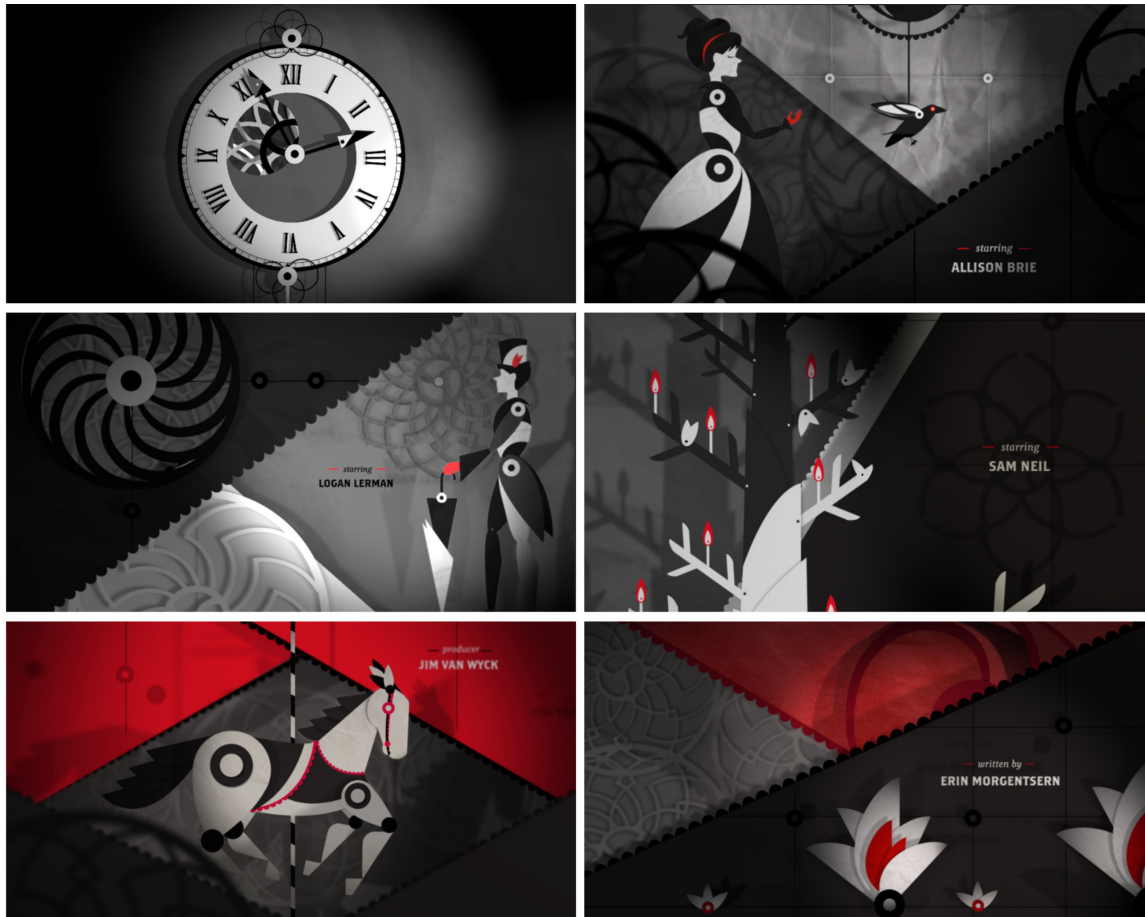
(Final Round)



(First Round)

03 Revised Style Frames

First Round: In the first set of revised style frames, I used a darker palette and had gears scattered throughout the scenes. These gears did not serve a purpose and felt distracting. This version also had a less developed “wishing tree” design.



Final Round: In the final style frames, I added a yellow light to create a sepia tone effect. I reduced the amount of physical gears but increased the amount of gear shadows. I also added noise for an aged look. I revisited the “wishing tree” design.

