

Furious Flower Poetry Center Digital Archives

Design Team Case Study
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What is it?

Furious Flower Poetry Center is the nation's first academic center for Black poetry. Furious Flower was established on the James Madison University campus to serve creative writers, literary and cultural scholars, and poetry lovers everywhere. We were tasked with designing and developing a digital archive for the resources in the Poetry Center relating to the 1994 Furious Flower Poetry Conference.

What was the challenge?

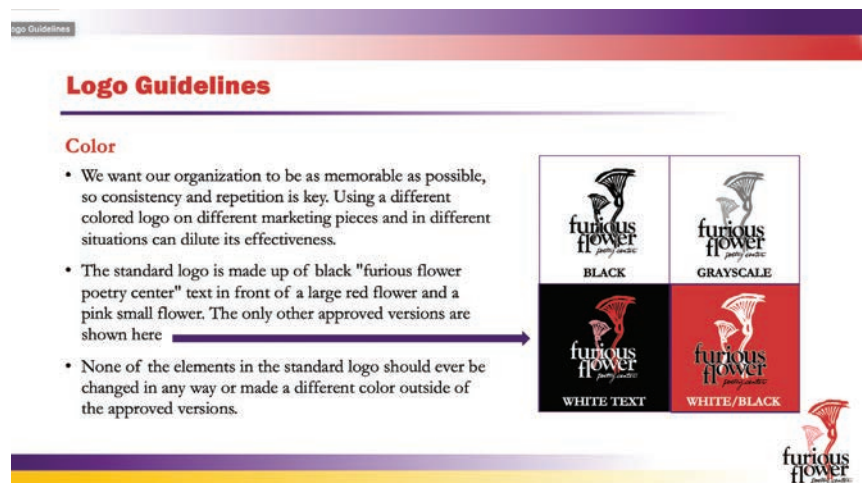
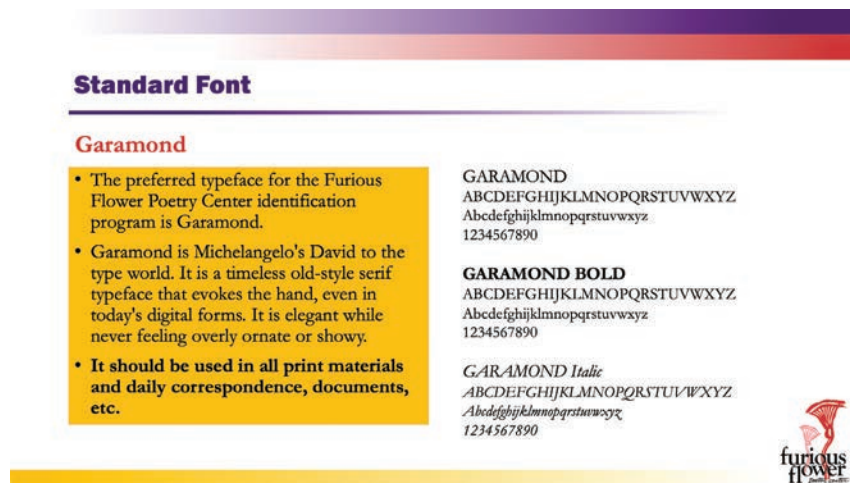
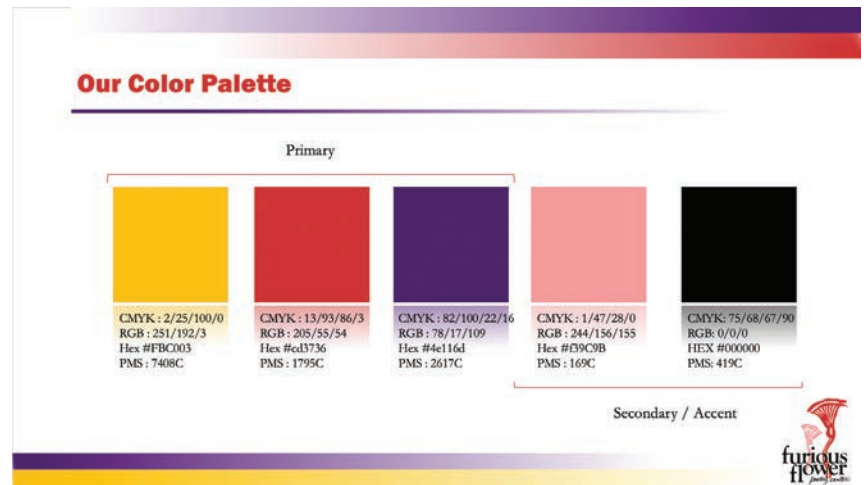
There were multiple challenges with this project. The main challenge with this project was communicating between different teams all working on different tasks while still working towards one common goal: the digital archive. Another challenge was the time component: To design, collaborate, and build this archive, we only had 12 weeks.

What was the goal?

In the end, the goal of the class was to design and develop a working archive for the Furious Flower Poetry Center that could be used as a resource for future students and the general public. Another goal was to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for African American Poetry.



Original Style Guide



The original style guide developed by an outside source for this project was geared more towards the poetry center so we updated it to work more with the new archive. The colors didn't work well in a composition, the chosen fonts felt disconnected, and the logo felt outdated.



Archive Style Guide Development

Furious Flower Poetry Center Archive

Style Guide

Colors

Fonts	Playfair	Spectral	Open Sans
	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
	Uses: Headings	Uses: Body	Uses: Subheadings & Menus

Logo

The logo features a stylized red flower with multiple petals and a central stem. To the right of the flower, the words "furious flower" are written in a lowercase serif font, and "ARCHIVE" is written in a smaller, uppercase sans-serif font.

We began by working on different type studies focusing on three different fonts. Each member developed different type studies, and in the end we decided on one set:

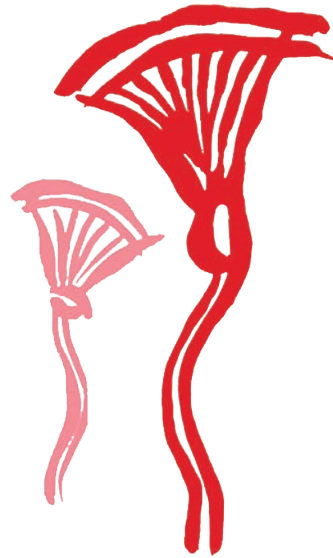
- Spectral (body text)
- Playfair (headers)
- Open Sans (subheads, body text)



Original Logo



main logo

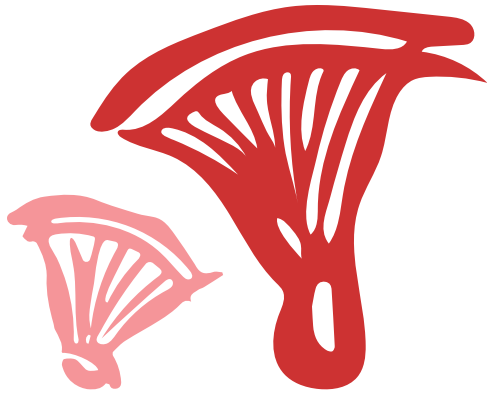


alternate logo

The original logo developed before this project featured two large flowers, serif and script text, and bad kerning. The alternate logo dropped the text so it could be used on a smaller scale.



New Archives Logo



main logo



alternate logo

furios flower ARCHIVE

The new logo specifically for the digital archive takes the original logo for the poetry center and simplifies the shape so it will work better in a smaller, square lockup.

We also created a longer version with 'furios flower archive' so it could be used in the header for the digital archive. The type features a serif and sans serif typeface paying homage to the old logo while also bringing it into the present.



Design / Creative Brief

Creative Design Brief

Project Summary:

1. What are the primary and secondary goals of the project?
The goals of the project, Innovating the Archives, are to make the Furious Flower Archive more accessible to users; to make it attractive so that users will want to come back to it on multiple occasions; to make it interactive so that users will be engaged in the website; and to prompt the users to visit the actual archive to explore the materials.
2. What are the long-term goals?
The long-term goals are to strengthen the resources of the archive by attracting donors who will support the archive with material culture and to insure the value of the first major collection curated at the JMU Libraries.
3. What are the core requirements we must accomplish?
Accuracy, clarity, and usability are the core requirements for this website.

Audience Summary:

1. Who is your target audience? Choose a typical user and profile in detail. Include age range, tasks / activities and any other relevant information. List more than one if applicable. EX: those in secondary education. What might they interact with or search for on our site?
The target audience is made up of college students, literary scholars, and poets.

Teachers in colleges and in high schools will be an important audience.

Perception / Tone / Guidelines:

1. What do we want the users to think and feel? What is the first thing that visitors should react to? I want the users to be blown away by the beauty of the site, drawn into it by the boldness of the photography, kept at the site by dramatic statements coming from the poets and scholars, and interested in making it a regular place to visit for information.
2. What adjectives can be used to describe the way the Furious Flower Archive should be perceived? Impressive, accurate, engaging, attractive, lively, interactive are few adjectives I hope will be used to describe the Archive.
3. What are some specific visual goals the project should convey? The website project should convey a clear and consistent design. It should be sophisticated without being

The design team developed the design / creative brief to send to Dr. Joanne Gabin. The brief focused its questions around audience and communication goals, the project summary, and project tone. This provided the team valuable information on how to progress forward with the site design.



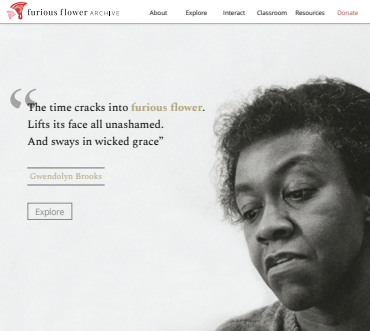
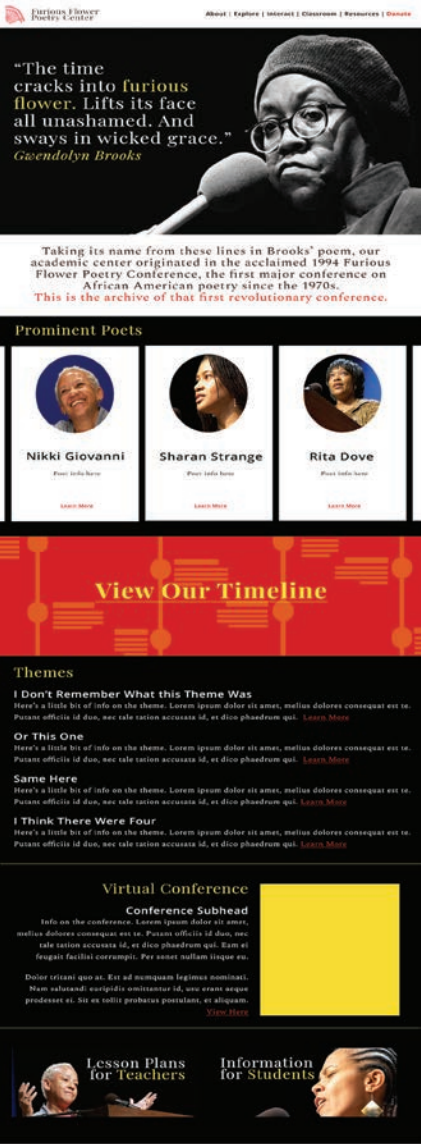
Basic Wireframing



We started with very basic wireframes not using any color or image, just focusing on space and layout. We then progressed to more advanced layouts with placeholders.



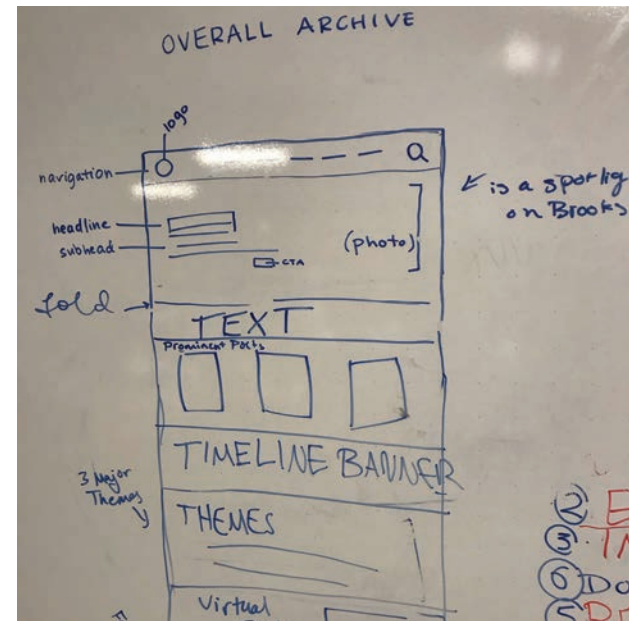
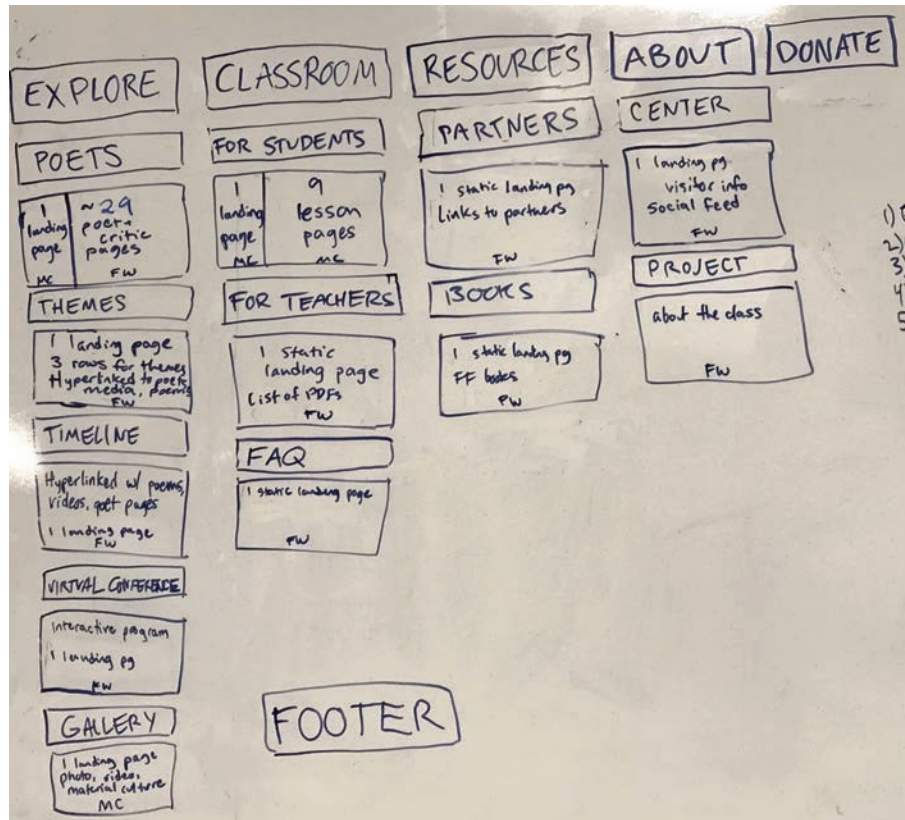
Advanced Wireframing



The wireframes then went into final stages utilizing the updated styles, actual text and image, and proper web styling.



Presenting the Designs



About halfway through the semester, we presented our wireframes, initial designs, and style guide to the larger group to get feedback and decide how we should progress moving forward.



Coding the Archive



furious flower ARCHIVE

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Educate. Celebrate. Preserve.

Taking its name from a line in Gwendolyn Brooks's poem, "The Second Sermon on the Warpland," our academic center originated in the acclaimed 1994 Furious Flower Poetry Conference, the first major conference on

Home Page Slider

After presenting the designs, we began coding the site, and I either contributed to or created the following pages:

- Contributed to home page
- Created donate page
- Contributed to theme pages
- 10+ Poet Pages
- 20+ Interviews, Talks, Readings Pages
- Reworked messy code on some of the classroom pages
- Contributed to about pages



Coding the Archive



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Donate

When you [make a financial contribution](#), you help make these and other important programs possible:

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. **Our flagship event, the Furious Flower Poetry Conference convenes once every 10 years** for scholars and writers from around the world to explore contemporary trends in Black literature, culture, and thought.

NATIONAL POETRY CONTEST. **Furious Flower's Poetry Prize is given annually to an emerging writer**, who receives a monetary award and reads with the esteemed contest judge at JMU during April, National Poetry Month.

REGIONAL THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS. **Our tribute concerts and staged readings, held in premier concert halls**, honor Black cultural icons and writers.

CHILDREN'S CREATIVITY CAMP. **More than 1,000 children have attended our annual integrated arts experience** for kids aged 7 to 13. Workshops on writing, movement, music, and visual art emphasize expression, inclusion, and fun, and nearly half of the attendees receive scholarships each year.

Donate Page



Coding the Archive

Sonia Sanchez

“Where is our beautiful fire that gave light to the world?”



Example Poet Page



Coding the Archive



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Elizabeth Alexander

Interviews, Talks, and Readings

Talks

| Elizabeth Alexander presents at the panel on African American Poetry and the Vernacular Matrix

Furious Flower 1994 Conference



Example Interviews, Talks,
and Readings Page

