

# AWAL

A C A D E M Y

BUILDING YOUR WORLD

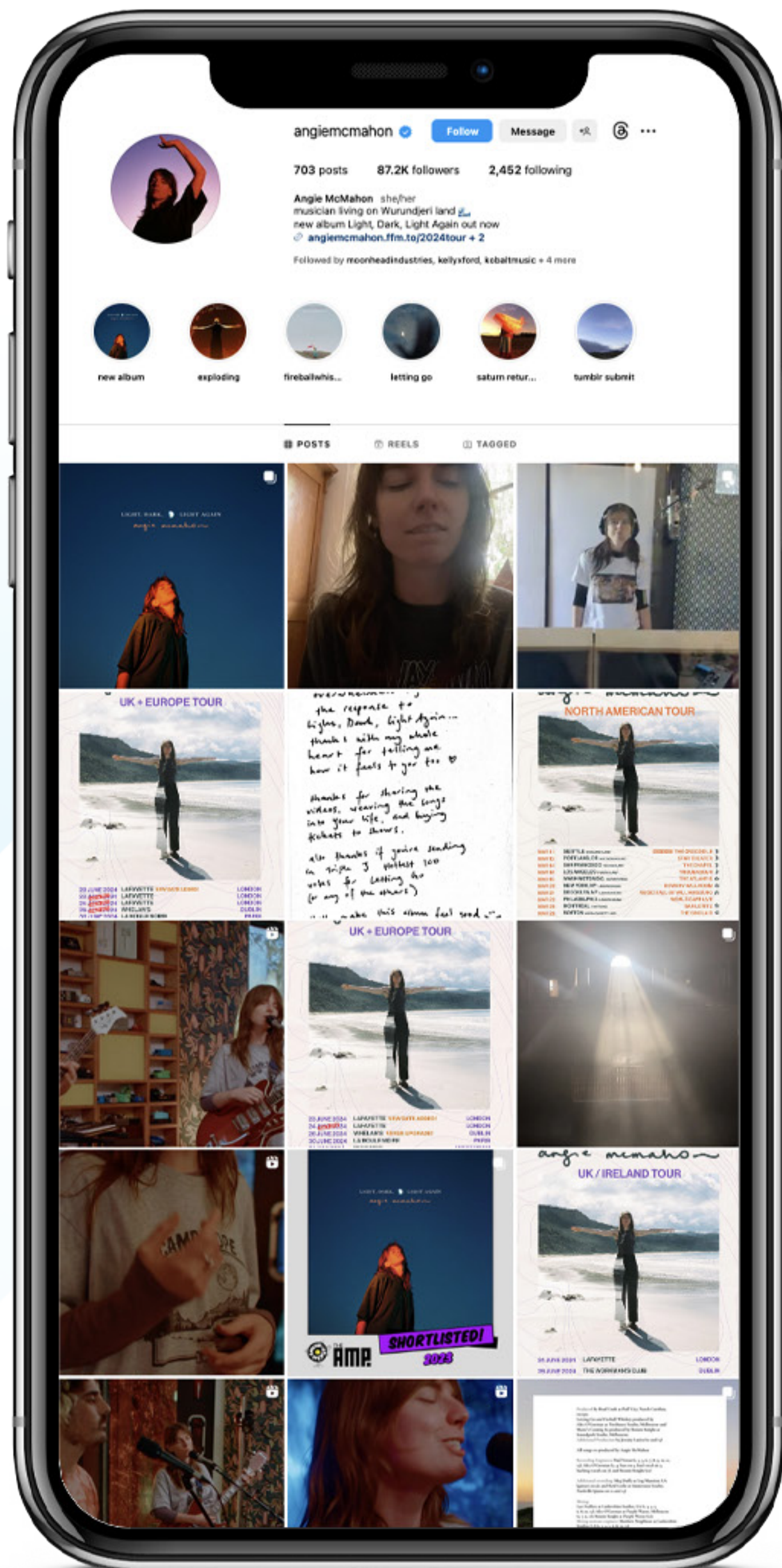


# EYES ARE THE NEW EARS

Thanks to MTV, visual media is now as important to your music career as a catchy hook and memorable lyrics. Having a cohesive visual aesthetic can be a key element of grabbing the attention of future fans, but it can be daunting to figure out where to start.

In this course we'll go over some methods to help get the ball rolling when thinking about the visual world of your music as well as some easy first steps to find a direction and style that you most likely have already been building, even if you didn't know it.





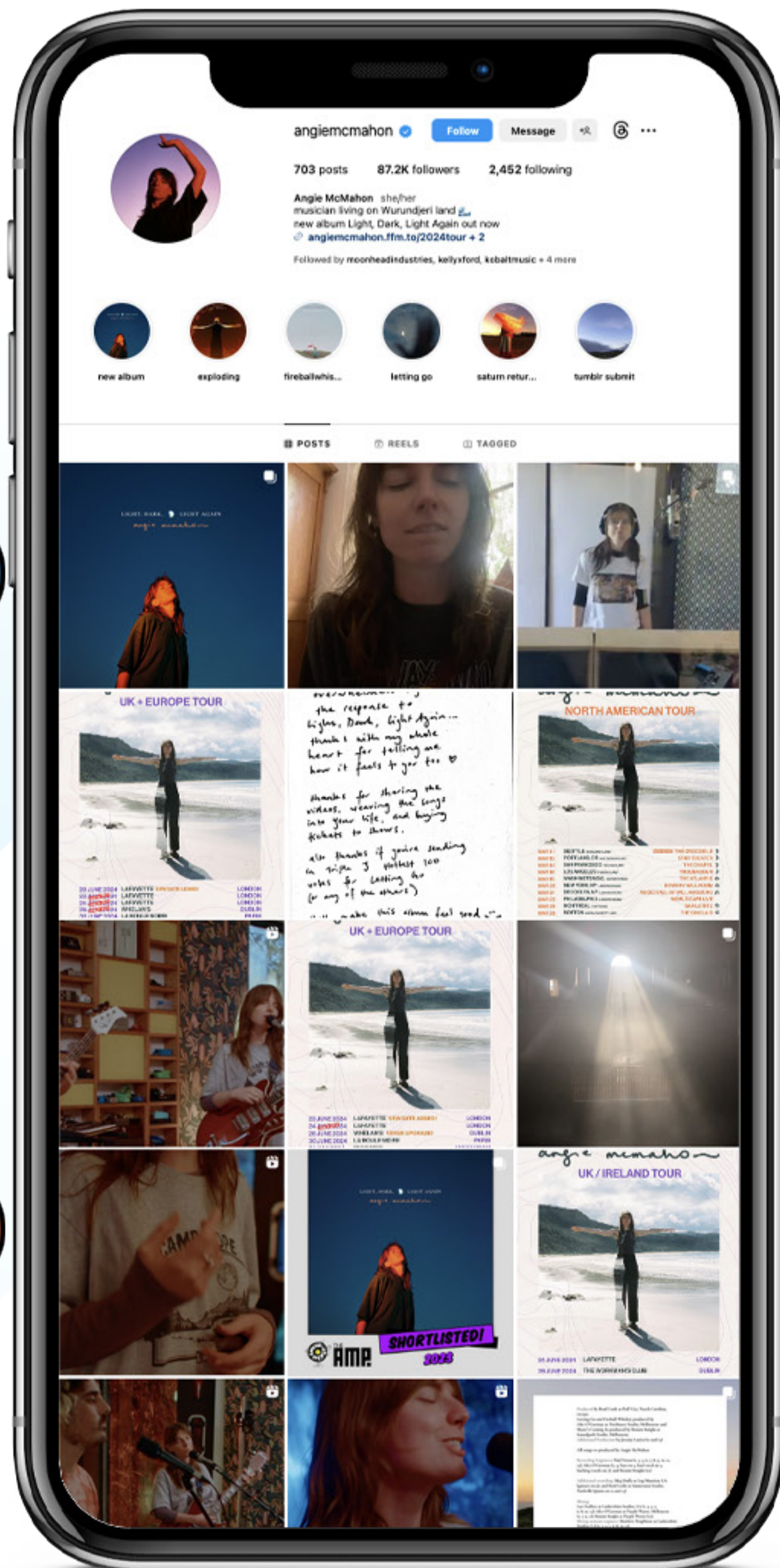
# CREATIVE AUDIT

A great place to start is to do a creative audit of all the visuals you've made up to this point, odds are you've probably been making some big decisions without even knowing it.

The creative audit allows you to take stock of your creative landscape and start looking for common themes and motifs that you can elaborate on, or change, moving forward.

Are there any recurring colors that could influence a color palette? Are you, the artist, the main focus or is it less focused on you and more on strong imagery? Are there any recurring locations or symbolism?

Let's take a look at Angie McMahon's Instagram page for any connections and ideas that could be recurring corner stones for the visual world we're creating.

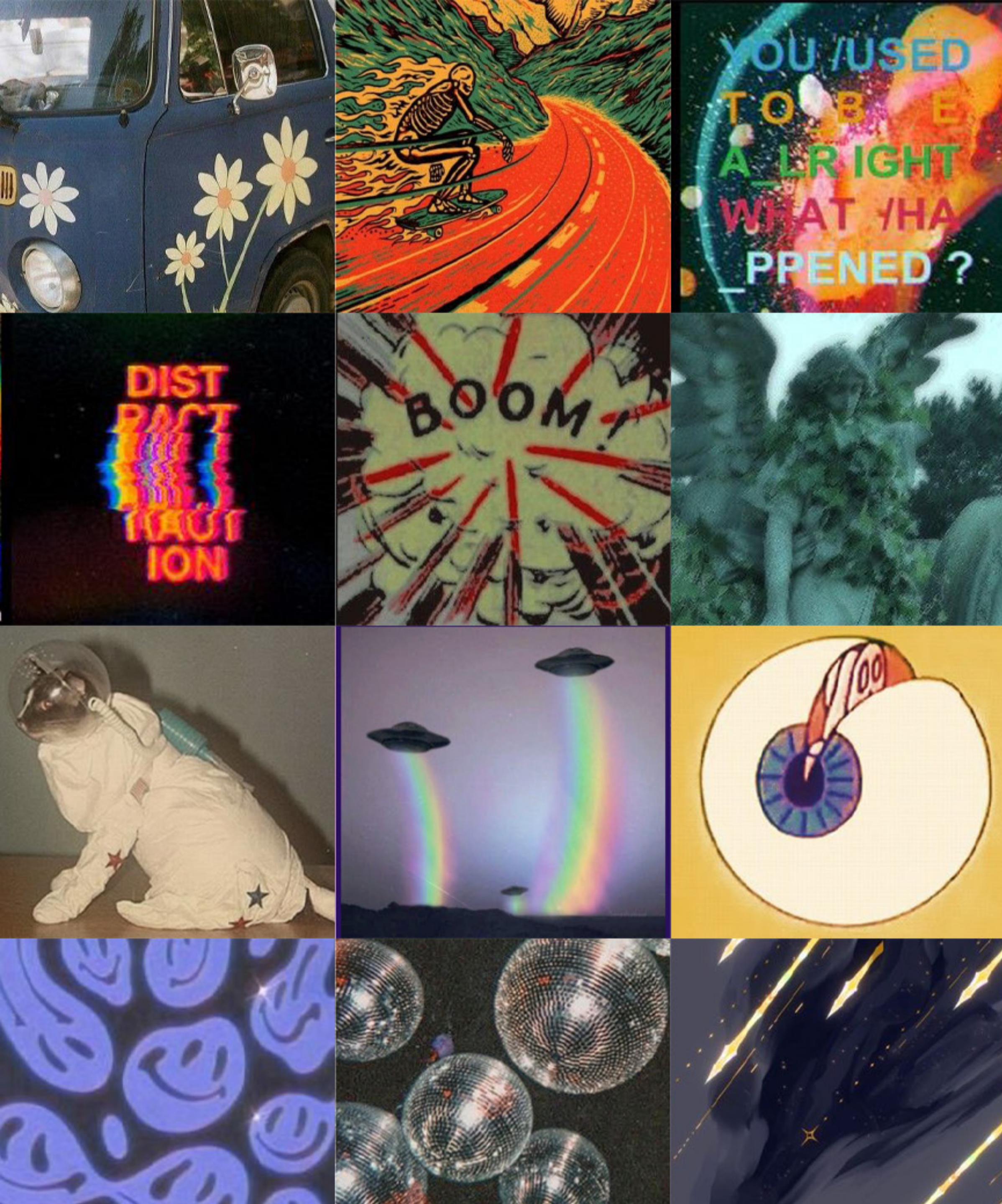


If we check out Angie's colors we see a recurring dark blue, a cream, and a few shades of orange. These could be great colors to start to build a visual language around and establish a color palette.

What else is a recurring element? Handwriting stands out, which can help influence font choice. There's also a recurring beach photo so maybe beaches, water and waves are other elements to build around.

There are no right or wrong answers when it comes to creative audits, if you don't like what you're finding, that can give you good guidance for a new direction. Similarly, if you're digging what you're finding then use that as a basis for evolution.

**Things to Look For:**  
Color, Iconography, Motifs,  
Styles, Fonts, Subjects



# IT'S A MOOD

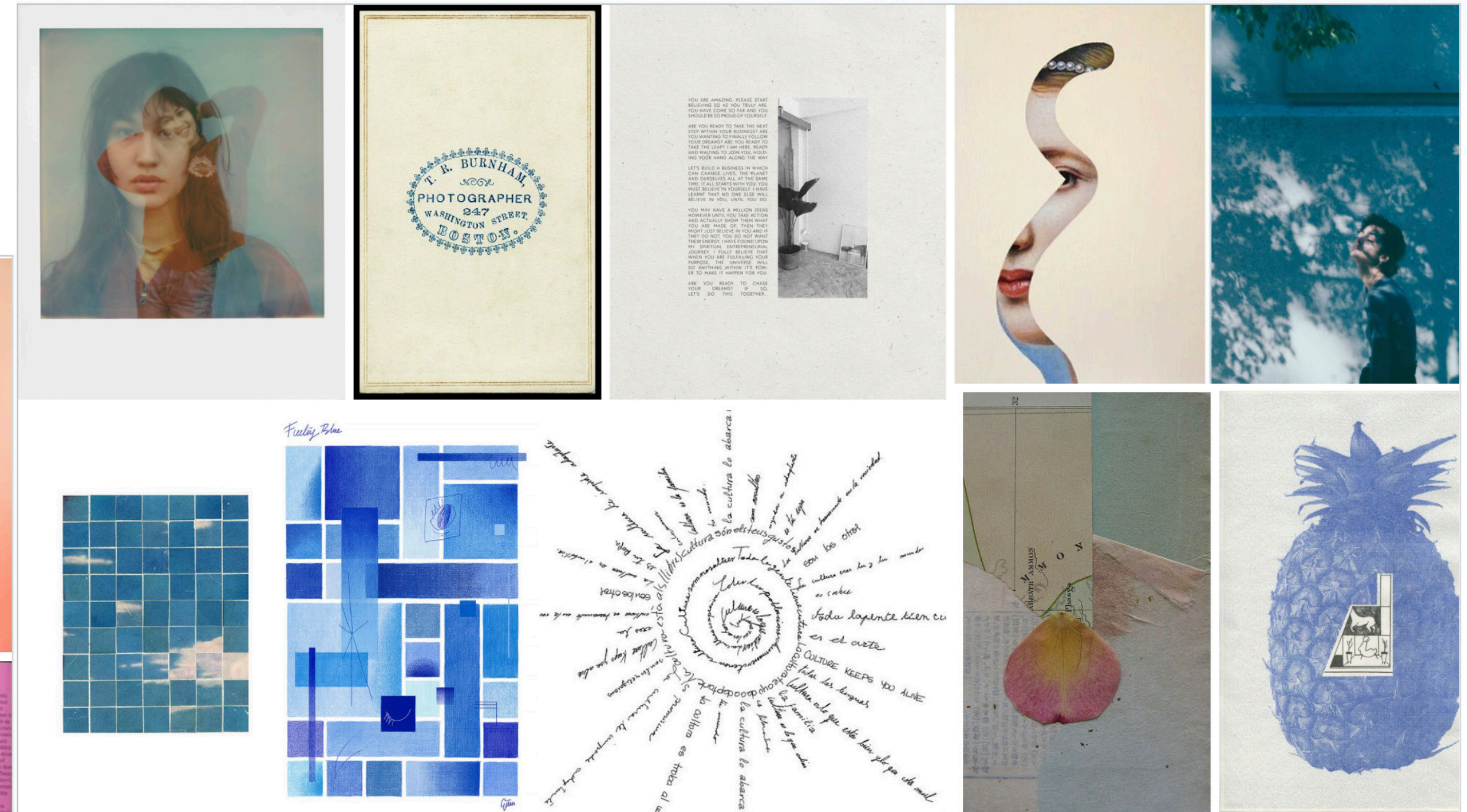
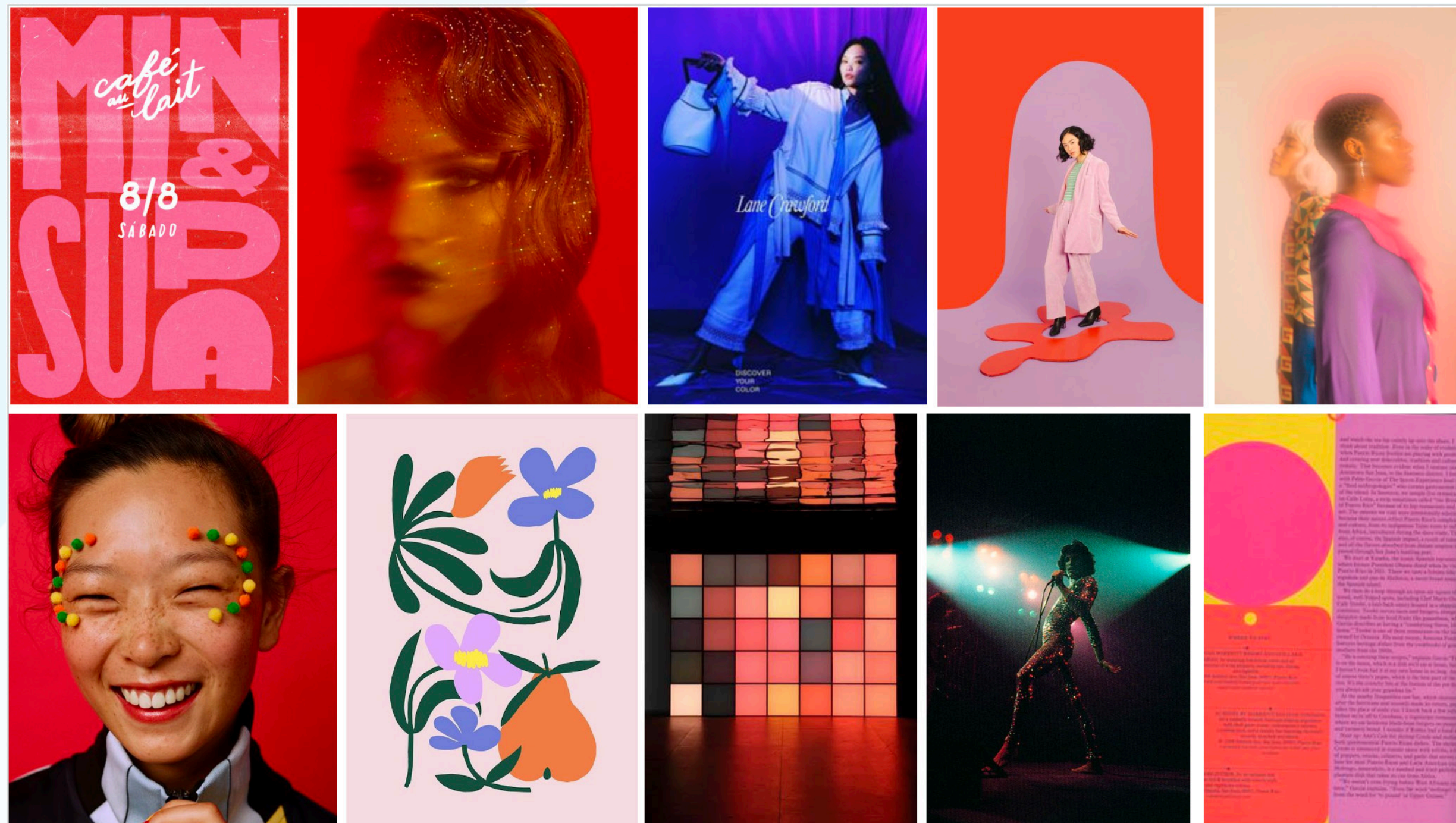
Once you've taken stock of where your visuals are, let's take a look at where they're going. A mood board can be a great starting place without the stress of big decisions right off the bat.

Mood boards are like big inspiration buckets, throw everything that peaks your interest in and don't worry about how it connects or relates, that comes later.

Pinterest is a great way to collect inspiration to assemble mood boards, when anything strikes your fancy or looks cool just throw it in to sort through later. When you start to build a board, the app will recommend more similar images helping to broaden and expand your search.

Let's check out some mood board examples and see what we can notice about them that might help define the visual direction we'd like to go in. Some things to look for can include; color palette, font choices, media styles, iconography, environments or settings, themes. Anything on a mood board that jumps out at you is a great place to start building around - and, a helpful tool to look back on to see if your later choices line up with the vibes created by your initial boards.

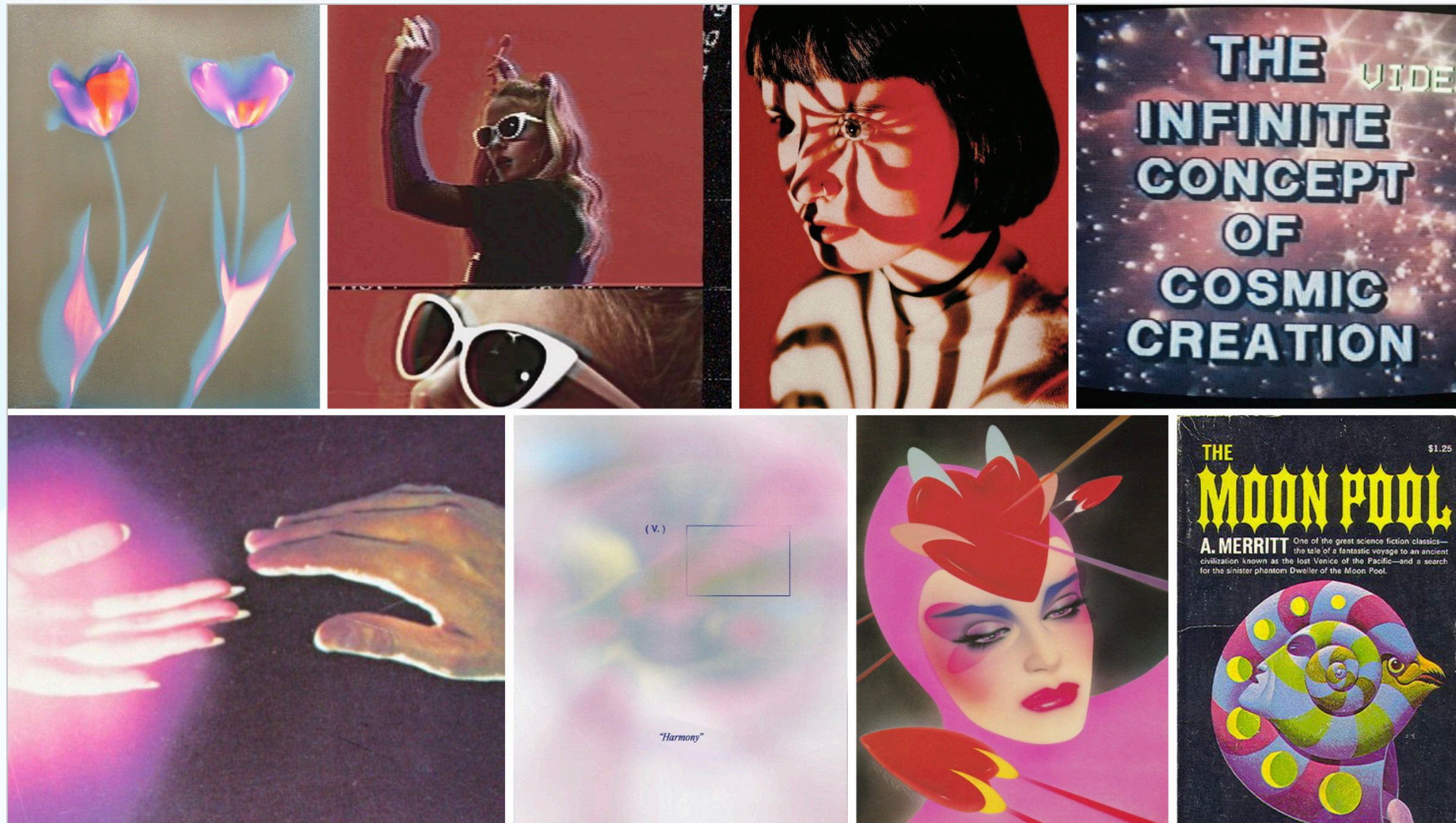
## MOOD BOARD 1



## MOOD BOARD 2

Which of these mood boards grabbed your attention first? What about that board do you think draws your eye more than the other?

MOOD BOARD 3



MOOD BOARD 4

Remember to look at mood boards as a whole, no need to worry if one picture isn't vibing with the rest of what interests you!



# FIND A SPARK

Now that we've got a little library of inspiration images, a good next step is to find a spark to begin building your visuals around.

A spark can be anything, a lyric, a melody, a single note, a theme or topic that you feel connected to; the list goes on and on.

This spark is what all of your visuals connect to, the sun they all orbit around. It allows your viewers to have something to hold on to while they bounce between your visuals, as well as being your North Star to help guide your decision making from here on out. Ok that's enough with the space metaphors.

**Is it a decade or moment in history?**

What colors, trends, and shapes were popular during the time you are trying to evoke?

What was the fashion? What is the state of technological advancement - modern or vintage? A popular 70s example would infer the color orange, 4:3 rations, VHS grain textures or warped audio.

**Is it something unique to your story?**

*A place, a person, your zodiac sign?*

For mxmtoon’s “rising”, a visual world was born around the zodiac and her rising sign. Did you know each astrological sign has colors, planets, themes, energies, numbers and symbols associated?

**Is it a lyric?**

For Angie McMahon, the lyric “light, dark, light again” became a central creative thesis.

This inspired a visual world of opposites, the contrast of light and dark, seasonal influences, cycles, natural objects, the moon, etc.

**Is it an animal or an object?**

Are you inspired by the energy of a animal - like a wolf? What colors would that evoke? What is their environment? Do they inspire or induce fear? What textures come to mind - soft or hard edges, chaotic or calm motion?

**FIND A SPARK**

# SET ACHIEVABLE GOALS



Now that you've got your visual inspiration and spark defined it's easy to get a little too hyped and find yourself setting off down a road of too much ambition. A CGI VR retro interactive cartoon where you pilot a space ship through an infinite universe sounds amazing, but is it doable?

It's important to set achievable goals, the worst thing that can happen is to find yourself too far in the weeds and lose all momentum leaving your half finished projects to waste away in the void.

Starting small and accomplishing achievable goals is the best way to keep your energy and enthusiams up when creating what can sometimes seem like an infinite list of visual needs.

A person wearing a white ghutra and sunglasses stands in a field of purple flowers at night. The scene is dark, with the person's white clothing and the purple flowers providing the main visual elements.

# JUST DO IT

While it's good to take your time, assess, and plan, at the end of the day all that really matters is finishing and sharing your visuals. Just like with music there are no right or wrong answers.

Sometimes storyboarding is an invaluable tool, other times it bogs down the process and saps your energy and that's ok. You are completely free to customize how you make visuals so that it fits you and your work style.

Trust your gut and have fun creating your visuals, if you think a visual is cool, fun, and engaging odds are your audience will as well!