

Kaitlyn Maier

2026 Spring

Capstone - Graphic Design

Department of Art and Art History

**Artist Statement:**

To me, design is both a creative and communicative tool. It enables a variety of people to step into and connect with numerous ideas, stories, experiences, and information. Design allows thoughts, feelings, and ideas to be conveyed and take tangible form. As a result, my work often explores how design can communicate ideas, narrate stories, and foster human connection.

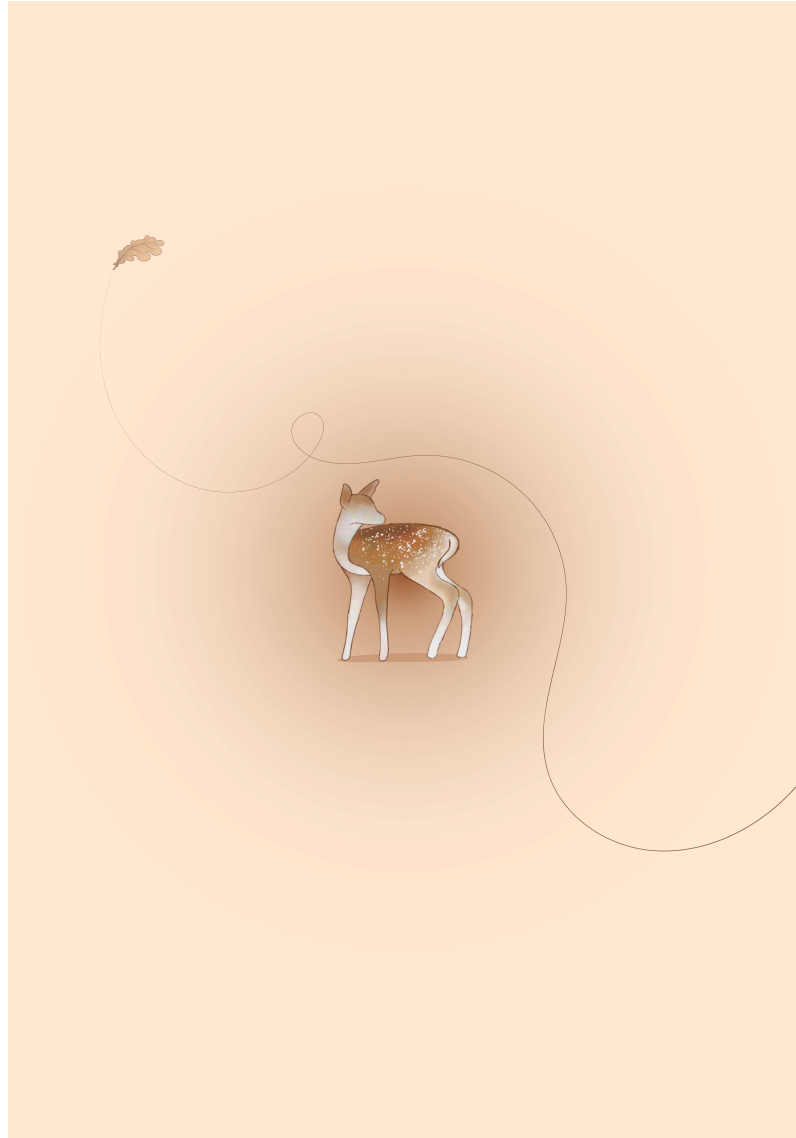
I work with both physical and digital mediums. Some include hand-drawn elements using various tools, paper manipulation, and Adobe Creative Cloud Suite. My process starts with meeting with the client to discuss multiple elements of the project, from the guidelines to the more abstract concepts. After I leap into the research and concept development, I draw inspiration from my findings and sketch out my ideas. While sketching, I experiment with typography and layout, and refine my designs through consistent feedback.

I value collaborating closely with clients and peers alike. I appreciate the ability to bounce ideas around, to be challenged, and to allow my work to evolve from its initial form. At the same time, being willing to explore and push ideas further, combined with strong attention to detail and problem-solving, are qualities I value and incorporate into my design approach. I aim to produce designs that not only look engaging but also communicate effectively.

**Title****Original Format**

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Figure 1: where's my home?	Illustrator, 70 cm x 100 cm
Figure 2: LA Wildfires Magazine Spread with Foldout	Illustrator, 11 in x 17 in
Figure 3: ACT Film Festival Poster: Horizontal	Illustrator, 11 in x 17 in
Figure 4: ACT Film Festival Poster: Vertical	Illustrator, 11 in x 17 in
Figure 5: Buzz & Bloom Farms: Logo & Brochure	Illustrator, 13 in x 17 in
Figure 6: Buzz & Bloom Farms: Magazine Ad	Illustrator/InDesign, 11 in x 17 - 25.5 in



**Figure 1: where's my home?**

# Devastating WILDFIRES

Burned Across Los Angeles

Story by: Marta Hill  
Illustrations by: Kaitlyn Maier



In the early weeks of 2025, one story dominated U.S. news: Wildfires were ravaging the Los Angeles area. From January 7 through 31, intense fires blazed, claiming 33 lives, burning more than 16,000 homes and buildings, and thoroughly scorching the landscape.

Fires burned across the Los Angeles and San Diego areas, but the two largest—the Palisades Fire at the west of Los Angeles and the Eaton Fire in Alhambra—together torched more than 38,000 acres.

The flames spread so fast and burned so aggressively because of the dry state California was in. At the start of the fires, the Los Angeles area hadn't had significant rain fall for months. Combined with record breaking heat in parts of the prior year, this dried out vegetation, creating a tinderbox for flames. The blazes were urged on by the powerful Santa Ana winds, with gusts surging 80 miles per hour.

Though officials declared the fires contained as the end of January, the longer term impacts of the disaster—on humans, animals and wild—are still becoming clear. In August, a research letter published in JAMA estimated another 440 deaths were attributable to the fires. They point to a combination of factors as potential causes, including poor air quality and health care delays.

As the fires burned through homes and buildings, they released toxic gases into the air and leached lead, arsenic and PFAS chemicals into the soil. Alongside official soil remediation efforts, some Alhambra residents have been exploring native plants as a solution.

The fires also had a disruptive effect on wildlife. Some fled, others hunkered down, and many faced longer term effects of contamination. Though the blazes have stopped, rebuilding efforts are far from over, and further scientific work will continue to unpack the fires' long term consequences.

35 Smithsonian Magazine 36 Smithsonian Magazine

# The Perfect STORM






**1 SANTA ANA WINDS**  
Santa Ana winds are a major reason wildfires in Los Angeles can become so intense and destructive. These strong, dry winds blow from inland desert regions toward the coast, warming up and losing moisture as they move downhill through choppy terrain. Santa Ana winds also fan flames and carry burning embers over long distances, causing fires to spread rapidly and unpredictably, often outpacing firefighting efforts.

**2 RECORD HEAT**  
The heat pulls moisture out of plants, soil, and even building materials, turning entire landscapes into fuel.

**3 HUMIDITY**  
Low humidity helps flames to burn hotter and more intensely, while lightweight, dried-out fuels ignite more easily and carry fire rapidly across landscapes.

**4 DRIED VEGETATION**  
This vegetation essentially turned into highly flammable fuel. Fuels like dry grass and leaves can ignite almost instantly, while larger shrubs and trees help fires grow bigger and burn longer.

35 Smithsonian Magazine 36 Smithsonian Magazine

Figure 2: LA Wildfires Magazine Spread with Foldout



Figure 3: ACT Film Festival Poster: Horizontal



Figure 4: ACT Film Festival Poster: Vertical



Inside Brochure

**Welcome to** **BUZZ & BLOOM** FARMS

Experience the wonder of the hive! Join us for an hands-on visit that reveals the fascinating world of bees—from pollination to honey making. Whether you're here to learn, explore, or simply savor, our bee farm offers a unique connection to the natural world and the hardworking bees that make it all possible.

**SUITING UP**

Suit up and enter the fascinating world of bees! Guided by our team, you'll safely meet the bees, learn how they create their golden treasure, and take part in the honey extraction process. It's a hands-on, unforgettable way to discover the beauty and sweetness of the bees.

**HONEY TASTING**

Embark on a sensory journey through nature's sweetest creation. Explore a variety of honeys, each with its own unique color, aroma, and flavor—shaped by the blossoms and landscapes from which it came. From delicate floral notes to rich, earthy undertones, learn to appreciate the subtle nuances that make every honey distinct. Savor, compare, and let your taste buds tell the story of the bees, the flowers, and the seasons.

**MENU**

- ACACIA**  
Very sweet, clean, classic taste
- ALFALFA**  
Light with a mild spicy note and floral aroma
- BLUEBERRY**  
Fruity, tangy, a hint of lemon, with a delicate aftertaste
- CLOVER**  
Mild, sweet, and floral taste
- COFFEE**  
Dark, rich, deep taste
- LINDEN**  
Delicate, with a fresh, woody aroma
- SOURWOOD**  
Buttery, caramel-like taste
- MACADAMIA**  
Sweet and nutty with a floral aroma
- NUT**

Outside Brochure

**TOUR THE FARM**

**EXPERIENCE THE BEES!**

**COME JOIN US!**

Figure 5: Buzz & Bloom Farms: Logo & Brochure

**ACACIA**  
Acacia honey is prized for its light, delicate flavor and crystal-clear appearance. It has a mild sweetness with subtle floral notes and a clean finish that never overwhelms the palate. It's perfect for drizzling over fruit, yogurt, tea, or toast without altering their flavors—just enhancing them with a gentle, silky sweetness.

**ALFALFA**  
Alfalfa honey has a pleasantly mild, lightly floral flavor with a smooth, gentle sweetness. Its profile is sunnier and slightly more herbaceous than other light honeys, making it feel fresh without being overpowering. With its pale golden color and clean finish, alfalfa honey is a versatile choice—ideal for sweetening tea, pairing with cheeses, or adding a delicate honey note to baked goods.

**CLOVER**  
Clover honey is known for its classic, familiar sweetness and bright, mellow flavor. It offers subtle floral notes with a hint of vanilla, creating a smooth and comforting taste that appeals to just about everyone. Its light color and balanced profile make it a go-to everyday honey—perfect for stirring into tea, spreading on warm biscuits, or adding a touch of natural sweetness to any recipe.

**COFFEE**  
Coffee blossom honey has a rich, aromatic flavor with deeper notes than many floral honeys. It often carries hints of caramel, cocoa, and warm spices, balanced by a gentle sweetness that lingers without being heavy. Its amber color and complex profile make it a standout choice—especially delicious drizzled over fruit, paired with cheeses, or used to add a sophisticated depth to desserts and beverages.

**LINDEN**  
Linden honey has a bright, distinctive flavor with a refreshing, almost minty finish. Lightly sweet and highly aromatic, it features citrus, herbal, and floral notes that give it a clean yet complex character. Its pale golden color and crisp taste make it especially lovely in tea, where its natural mint-citrus essence shines, or as a unique addition to cheeses and baked goods.

**BLUEBERRY**  
Blueberry honey offers a rich, fruity sweetness with gentle notes of berry and warm caramel. It carries a deep, rounded flavor with a hint of tang that sets it apart from lighter honeys. Its darker color and bold, velvety profile make it perfect for drizzling over pancakes, pairing with cheeses, or adding a touch of complexity to baked goods.

**FLORAL SOURCES MATTER TO HONEY**  
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**BLOSSOM TO BOTTLE**

**EXPERIENCE HONEY TASTING**  
**B&B**  
**BUZZ & BLOOM FARMS**

Figure 6: Buzz & Bloom Farms: Magazine Ad