

Creative Brief

Problem

Our team was tasked with creating a free-range project based off of the four pieces of literature we have been analyzing in class, and from these pieces, tie together the effects of 9/11 on modern day society.

Project

Our primary purpose for this project is to generate a series of eye-catching posters that feature a visual representation of a line from each literary piece, encouraging public interest in the works. The client, Dr. Lund, wants these posters to demonstrate our understanding of the connections that can be drawn between the literature we have been studying in-class and life as we know it today. The client, Dr. Lund, is an English professor for Longwood University. The desired outcome is a series of visually interesting posters that highlight each piece of literature uniquely and distinctly. To achieve this desired outcome, team members Angeli Leong and Lauren Quezada will brainstorm a variety of concepts to display each given work, and from here, be able to explain the significance and symbolism captured in each poster as well as the intended message it communicates.

Target Audience

Our targeted audience consists of admirers of each given work, fans of graphic or poster design, and the general public (who may or may not be familiar with the pieces we are showcasing). Our posters are, in theory, being thrust into the middle of these three large categories, and must have the ability to catch the eye of audiences that belong to them all. For example, a university student may have been assigned Anthony Doerr's *All the Light We Cannot See* in class and become completely enthralled by it. After completing the novel, they may choose to showcase their support for the book by purchasing a meaningful poster to hang on their dorm wall. Or, perhaps a single mother searching through a store for decorative pieces may stumble across a poster advertising Jennifer Egan's *A Visit From the Goon Squad*. After the poster catches her eye, while she may have never read it before, the poster could pique her interest, driving her to look up the book on her phone or at her local bookstore to read in her free time. Or, to gift to someone close to her who she feels would enjoy the novel.

Competition

Our competition consists of a variety of artists and design companies that also cater towards audiences of television and books fans.

User Experience

The aim of this project is to intrigue the audience and to bring interest to the literature that we are studying in class. We want to make them curious as to what the posters are referring to and how they are relevant to the books or show. We want to perceive the books and show in the most compelling way possible by using interesting lines or visual motifs from each work. Visually, we seek to create simple and memorable designs that will appeal to our target audience and to apply what we've learned in our Graphic and Animation Design classes. While we want the posters to be relatively simple in appearance, we want the posters to carry a deeper meaning that alludes to the literature.

Problem-Solving Strategy

The overall message that we want to convey with our posters is to highlight particularly interesting lines in each piece of literature so that the viewer would be interested in purchasing or learning more about them. To do this, we went through each piece and picked out the most captivating lines or sections that we could represent visually. We then unpacked some of those lines or words to get various ways we could recreate the emotion and meaning behind it. We took into account our use of color and typography in setting the mood about the sections we picked, and made sure that the visual elements were appealing. We used what we learned in Surface Space & Time I and II about design elements and principles to create the composition of each poster. Some elements from the posters were hand-drawn and scanned, using what we learned in Handcraft & Design to give elements a rougher, more human feel to them. In order to measure how successful our final products are, we will gauge the audience's initial reaction upon seeing our posters, and then ask them if our products would make them more compelled to investigate the respective piece of literature.

Key Message

Our posters seek to promote each piece of literature that we are studying in ENGL 215-50 by representing interesting sections in a visually appealing way.

Summary of User Takeaway

With our posters, we want our audience to ponder over the designs, and wonder what they are supposed to mean. In wondering this, we want them to remember the title and author of the pieces of literature and read/watch them in order to find out what it means. For those who have already studied this literature, then we hope to let them find it interesting to see those specific parts of each piece represented in this way.

Project Specifics

The people involved in this project is the creative team, consisting of Angeli Leong and Lauren Quezada, as well as the professor of ENGL 215-50, Dr. Lund. We want each set of posters to vaguely represent each piece of literature through use of typography and color, so that they can be recognizable to the covers or overall appearance of their respective literature. The visual system for the posters will have the title, author, and other necessary type to be in a similar typeface to the cover of the book or of the title of the show. The graphics, colors, and other visual elements will also be reminiscent of the respective show/book. For example, poster for "In The Shadow of No Towers" by Art Spiegelman will have more illustrative graphics than the posters from "Persons of Interest". Deliverables will consist of the eight posters, as well as a presentation in front of the ENGL 215-50 class. We don't plan on having the poster printed out on 11x17 paper as a requirement for the project, but if we choose to print them, it would be outside the allotted time frame for this assignment. To pay for the posters, we would pay out of pocket.

Case Study

Summary

Our team was tasked with creating a project that revolves around four pieces of literature, from which we decided to create posters advertising each piece, simultaneously tying together the effects of 9/11 on modern day society.

Backstory

This promotional posters project is for ENGL 215-50 and spans about the last month and a half of the Fall 2018 semester. The creative team is Lauren Quezada and Angeli Leong.

Problem

In coming up with concepts for “All the Light We Cannot See,” several symbols were considered for the poster such as: a radio, representing a communicational connection between the novel’s main characters, Maure-Laure and Werner; a hand, representing the ‘tool’ with which Werner has elevated beyond the life he had initially been destined for in the mines of his town, as well as the ‘tool’ Marie-Laure uses to survive daily without the reliance of sight; a foot, which could be interpreted as either a symbol of power (or, desired control) or a symbol of grounding; a whelk shell, which had been referenced multiple times throughout the novel by Marie-Laure as a source of underestimated power as well as a source of safety and reclusion; an eye, which is brought up throughout the entire novel as a sort of window or passage to understanding that is either drawn shut in circumstances that prove to be challenging to the main characters or opened in moments of enlightenment. In the end, the symbols of the eye, foot, and whelk had been chosen, along with the symbolic color of blue, representing both the ocean that the novel is set most often as well as its purpose as a recurring color reference throughout. All of these ideas and concepts were deemed most prevalent throughout the novel and held the most meaning in relation to the characters as well as their interactions and motivations.

In coming up with concepts for “A Visit from the Goon Squad”, the symbols that were interesting are as follows: the pale green wallet in the Lassimo hotel, the orange screwdriver, the “I BELIEVE IN YOU” note in Alex’s wallet, a concert stage, the gold and silver record albums and a thousand electric guitars on Lou’s walls, frogs of different greens, green school uniforms, a thousand closed eyes with the two on Rhea’s face crying, a rifle, a camera, the body of the lioness on Chronos, X’s and O’s, a fish, the soft blue general’s hat, Robert Freeman Jr. Drowning, Sasha’s red hair, or Italy. All of these were significant in the chapter that they showed up in or would have been interesting to make a poster for. Some of these were interesting when just reading it, and some were discussed in class and how they are relevant to language and sometimes eyes. At first, Angeli picked out the fish and the screwdriver because it was two important objects to people who were in trouble spots in their life but were making efforts to make the situation better. Sasha stole the screwdriver, but went to therapy to try to get her thieving habits under control. Scotty brought the fish to Bennie as a gift of sorts, even though Bennie is far more wealthy and known in the music business than he was. He was attempting to make his situation better by visiting Bennie and establishing power over him. While the two of them may not have actually made their situations better or their attempts failed, highlighting the characters through the posters would have brought light to their urge to get better somehow. However, representing these concepts visually weren’t as compelling as choosing the thousand closed eyes/two on her face were crying and the X’s and O’s concepts. Sketching out these concepts came easier and were a lot more interesting than simply a fish and a screwdriver. To someone who has read the book, the fish and the screwdriver are interesting and make sense. To viewers, they might not get it and not feel a want to figure out why they are on the posters. In choosing these poster concepts, Angeli had to figure out how she wanted to make

the graphics, and decided on drawing them by hand. Doing this would make the graphics feel more human than computer-generated, giving it a more personal feel. The scratchiness of the graphics may also provide the uncomfortableness and rawness of the context of each concept.

In coming up with concepts for “In the Shadow of No Towers”, the visual motifs that were interesting are as follows: the mouse and pig characters, cigarettes and smoke, heads in the dirt and ostriches, doves and war hawks, things upside down, and gas masks. Initially, Angeli wanted to experiment with ambiguous figure/ground with the doves and war hawks concept, but it was incredibly challenging if at all possible. She wanted to take inspiration from designs by Shigeo Fukuda, but having two birds as the subjects made it difficult to make a smooth transition between the two of them when abstracted. Angeli chose to scrap that idea, and chose to do a poster with Art Spiegelman’s mouse character combined with the cigarettes motif, and another poster that focused on his use of gas masks. To fit the aesthetic of the book, Angeli knew she would have to draw most of the elements for these posters except for the gas mask. Whenever the gas mask showed up in the book, it was pretty realistic compared to the rest of the book. She also wanted to do some hand-lettering and decided to use the typeface from the first set of panels for her posters.

For the “Person of Interest” poster, there were three main visual motifs considered: security cameras, the color red (implying either bloodshed, malevolence, or passion), and people (who are the key focuses of each episode). In creating these posters, Lauren wanted to focus on the main and overarching concepts given by the show, being that surveillance holds both life-saving and life-ending power— but, that redemption is also possible. In trying to illustrate this concept, she decided to balance out the dark undertones generally implied by the color red with the color of a calm blue. This balance, especially in the second poster which displays John Reese clearly, was meant to imply that his intentions are not necessarily all malevolent or good, but rather in the search for redemption.

Solution

For the posters for “A Visit From the Goon Squad”, Angeli decided to go with the concepts that visually represented “my thousand eyes were closed, but the two on my face were crying” and the chapter “X’s and O’s”. For the “thousand eyes” poster, because of the uncomfortableness of the situation that Rhea was in with Lou and Jocelyn, she decided to draw the eyes and tears on paper and scan the drawing to be colored in Adobe Photoshop. This would give a roughness to the eyes and tears that a computer-generated shape would not have. The eyes and tears were made the largest and only colored elements on the poster so that they would stand out against the texture of the “thousand closed eyes” behind it. The margins are thin on all sides but the left so that the title and author could lay in the left margin. This is to bring interest than just having the title and author horizontal and centered in the piece. The eyes cut into the left margin and were not cropped because it almost seems to pop out of the frame. The thousand eyes were originally white, but were made a dark gray so that they would sit more in the background and wouldn’t distract the viewer from the two eyes crying. The typeface used for the title and author is Helvetica Std Regular, because it is what is used on the book’s cover. The background color is dark gray, because black was too intense and almost seemed to advance past the rest of the piece. The eyes and tears were made red because red is typically a color used to show that something is dangerous or it’s a bad situation.

For the poster about “X’s and O’s”, the scene depicted is supposed to be that of Bennie looking out the window of his office at the top of Sow’s Ear Records. In this chapter of the book, Scotty mentions that we are all just made of X’s and O’s, and how Bennie isn’t that much different from him due to that. The X’s and O’s that make up his figure were also drawn and scanned, then made red. In picking the same visual system and layout as the other poster, this makes the two seem to belong in a set together. The legs were not cropped at the bottom to make Bennie seemingly pop out of the frame. He is positioned to be facing the left edge of the poster in order to draw the viewer’s eye to where he could be looking, either at the city or towards the title of the book. The X’s and O’s inside of Bennie’s figure were

placed at random, and then tiled across the shape. This way, it's a little harder to find a pattern in the lines and viewers can look at the piece longer to see that there isn't much of a pattern.

For the posters for "In the Shadow of No Towers", Angeli chose to use the visual motifs of Art Spiegelman's mouse character and his use of the gas mask. In doing the mouse poster, the mouse was drawn by hand and then scanned to be colored in and placed in Photoshop. She used the book for reference as to how the mouse is drawn, and then positioned him to rest upon the bottom margin of the poster. She scribbled the smoke on a separate sheet of paper and scanned that as well, so that the entire poster would have an illustrative quality about it. The background was made a soft blue to give it that comic-y feel. The title was hand-lettered, scanned, then refined in Adobe Illustrator. The typeface chosen for the byline is to represent the way he signed his name at the bottom of the cover. While not exactly as he had written it, it still gives the handwritten feel to the type. The smoke behind the typography was blurred so that the texture wouldn't distract too much from the title and author, as well as make it more readable.

For the gas mask poster, the gas mask has a realistic, photographic quality to it because that is how it is represented in the book. Knowing this, the mask was kept fairly realistic. The values of reds and yellows were adjusted and the photo was made black and white so that it would be easier to discern that it is a gas mask. The eyes of the gas mask were cut out and filled with smoke, which could be interpreted as either the reflection of what the mask is facing is smoke or that the mask is filled with smoke. In the book, the class discussed how the mask hides the eyes and it's kind of unsettling as well as showing that the person wearing it loses who they are. Filling the eyes with smoke keeps up the air of mystery about the wearer of the mask. The background color was made red to show that there is an issue, the issue that Spiegelman brings up is the air quality after the fall of the Towers. The orientation of the title, byline, and gas mask is skewed to bring interest and make the poster more noticeable.

Outcomes

At the end of the project, the creative team created eight posters that covered the literature that was studied in ENGL 215-50, as well as a creative brief and case study that discusses the design process. The literature studied was "All the Light We Cannot See" by Anthony Doerr, "A Visit From the Goon Squad" by Jennifer Egan, "In the Shadow of No Towers" by Art Spiegelman, and the Netflix series "Person of Interest". Two posters were created for each piece.

The two posters for "All the Light We Cannot See" is based off of two separate ideas from the novel, the first from a quote brought up often throughout chapters with Werner saying "Open your eyes and see what you can with them before they close forever." The poster (Fig. 1) features a geometric hand featuring a small portion of the Nazi symbol (implying a German soldier, perhaps Werner, perhaps Volkheimer, or even Von Rumpel depending on how it is interpreted by the audience) forcibly pulling a vector eyelid up from a realistic eye in its center, making sure the eye stays open regardless of how much the person may or may not want to acknowledge the truth behind what is happening, much like how Werner often tells himself lies so he does not truly acknowledge the atrocities he has contributed to.

The second poster for "All the Light We Cannot See" (Fig. 2) showcases a whelk shell, which could also be seen as the face of a younger person (perhaps Marie-Laure or Werner), or perhaps a hand reaching for a stone—the Sea of Flames. In the background, we see the ocean, setting the poster in Saint Malo along the coast, where Marie-Laure held close to her heart.

The two posters for "A Visit from the Goon Squad" is based off of Rhea's thousand closed eyes while the two on her face were crying (Fig. 3) and Scotty's X's and O's (Fig. 4). The posters feature a largely gray-scale palette using red as an accent color. There are hand-drawn elements in each poster, as well as Helvetica to mimic the cover of the book. The roughness of the eyes and tears are to show the uncomfortableness of the situation Rhea was in in this part of the book. The X's and O's that make up Bennie are to be a literal representation of what Scotty says about how everyone's made of X's and O's.

The two posters for "In the Shadow of No Towers" is based off of Spiegelman's mouse character

smoking (Fig. 5) and his use of gas masks (Fig. 6). The posters feature a lighthearted, news comics palette, hand-drawn graphics, and hand-lettered typography for the title. The mouse poster depicts the character leaning casually on the margin while surrounding himself and filling the poster with cigarette smoke. The gas mask poster emphasizes Spiegelman's concern for the bad air quality with the use of red around the gas mask, as well as filling the mask's eye sockets with smoke.

The two posters for "Persons of Interest" was based off of the central idea of the TV series, which follows a machine that distinguishes the population of those about to die as either worthy of saving or unimportant/irrelevant. Those who were "important" had initially been targeted for saving or interrogation by the government, who had initially been the intended user of the machine. However, after feeling a sense of guilt for the lives that would be tossed aside and deemed unworthy of saving, its creator, Harold Finch, seeks redemption in saving these discarded lives before they meet their estimated death. The posters both illustrate a key theme of surveillance, seen in the first poster (Fig. 7) as security cameras overlooking a large crowd in the city (of New York), and in the second (Fig. 8) by the small security camera featured as the left eye of John Reese, the series' main character, showing that he is watching over these people alongside Finch (also in a search for redemption).

Insights & Hindsight

We learned how to apply our skills and problem-solving strategies learned from our Graphic and Animation Design program into a 'real-life' situation outside of our classes, and how to break down elements from literary works into a message that can be communicated visually to audiences of all ages, backgrounds, and interests. The team ran into minor challenges regarding how to translate elements, particularly from "Person of Interest" into a visual message that could still draw an audience in while communicating the show's main topic. If we were to do the job again, the team may have split up the literary works so that each person designed four posters demonstrating each four piece rather than two posters on two works per person, but are overall pleased with the products.

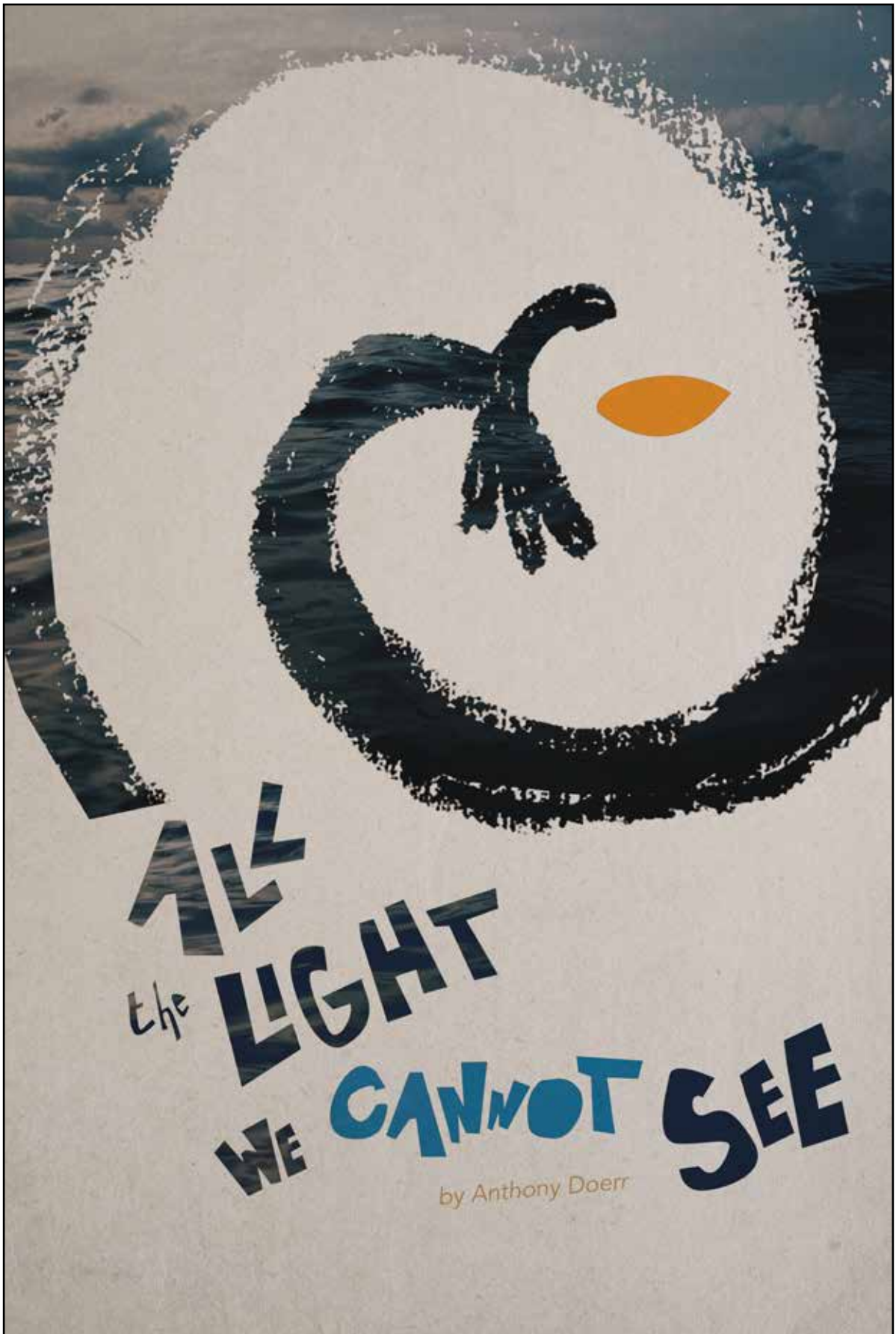


Fig. 1: "All the Light We Cannot See" Poster 1, by Lauren Quezada

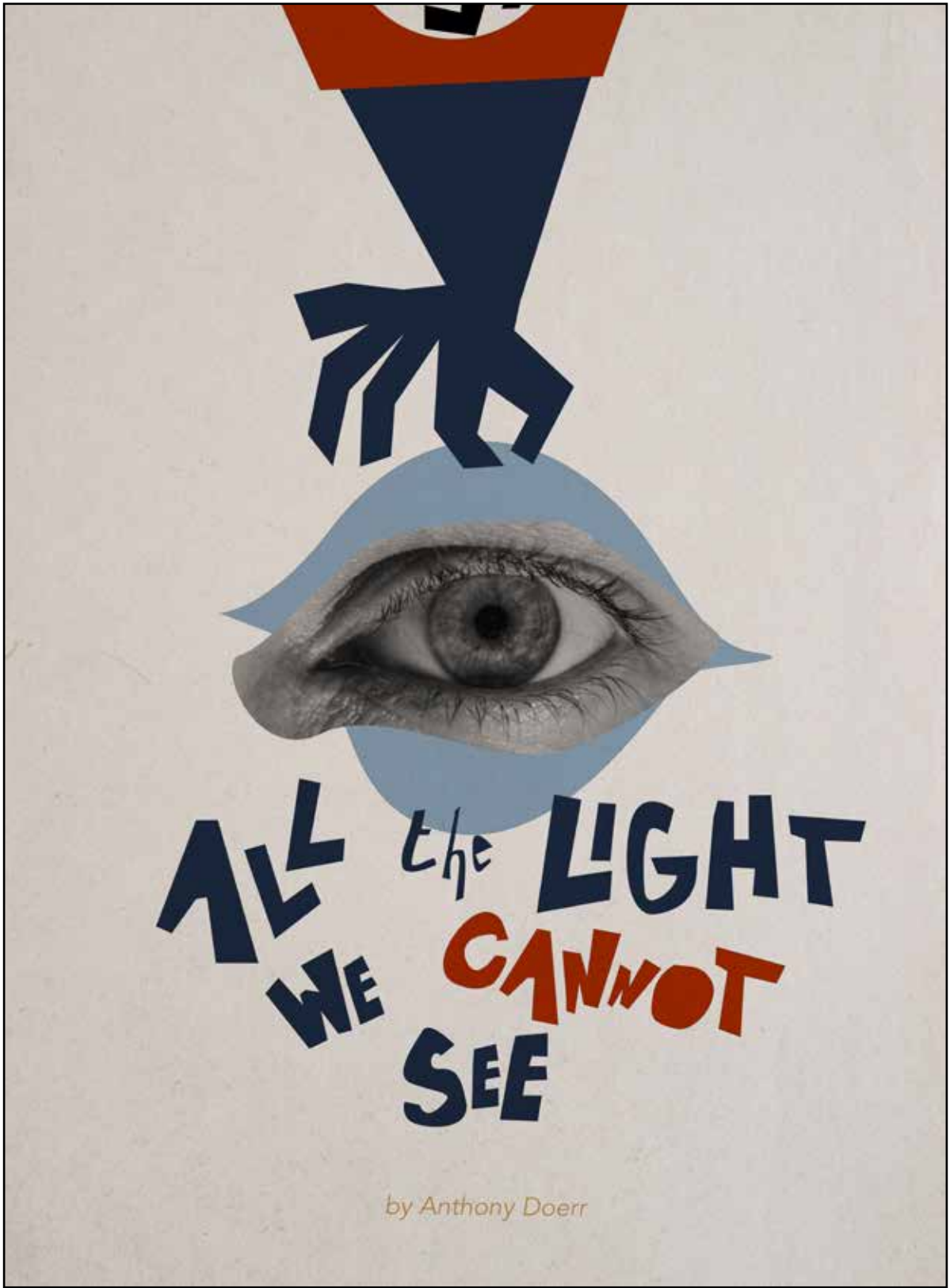


Fig. 2: "All the Light We Cannot See" Poster 2, by Lauren Quezada

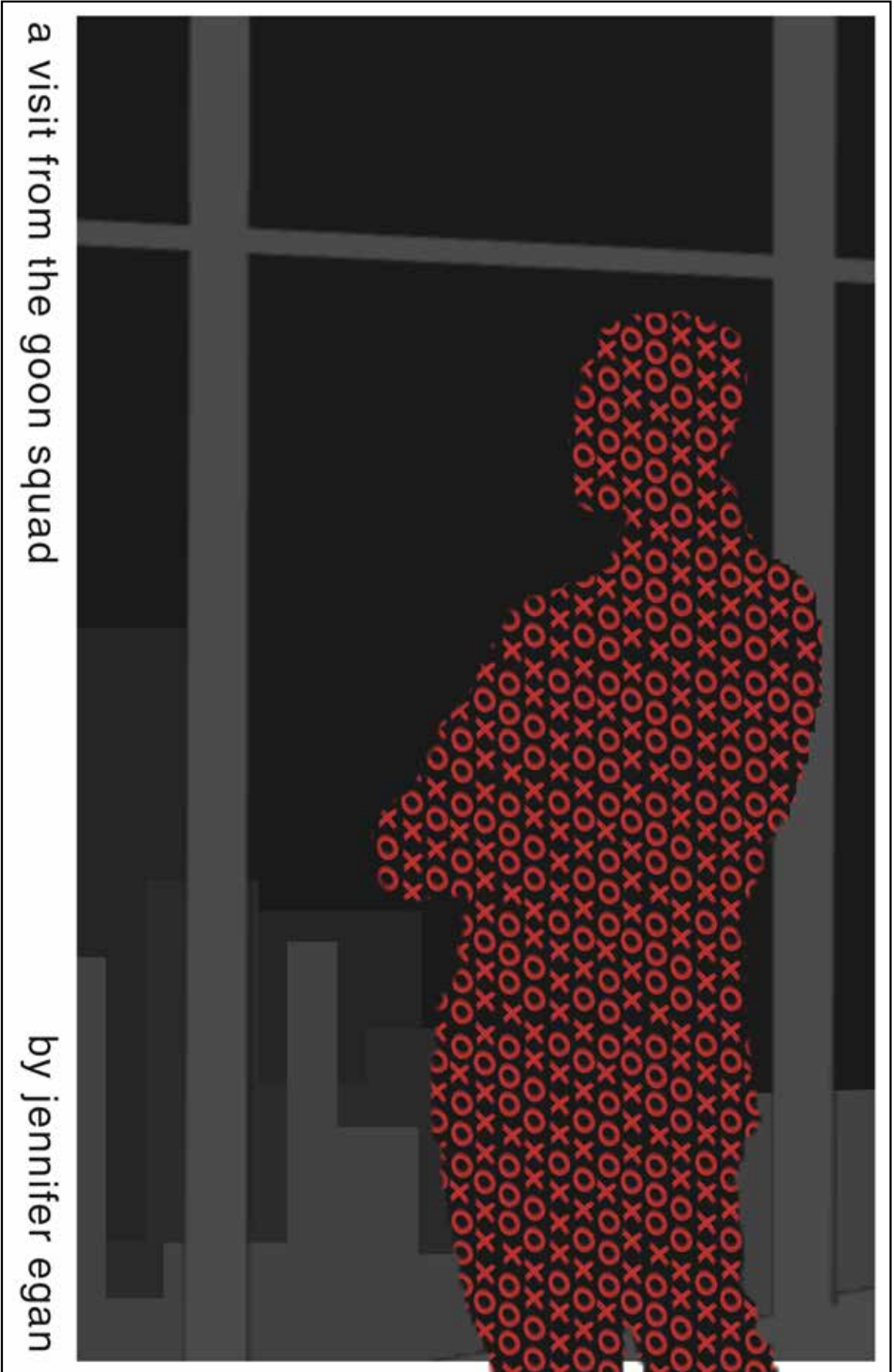


Fig. 3: "A Visit From the Goon Squad" Poster 1, by Angeli Leong



Fig. 4: "A Visit From the Goon Squad" Poster 2, by Angeli Leong

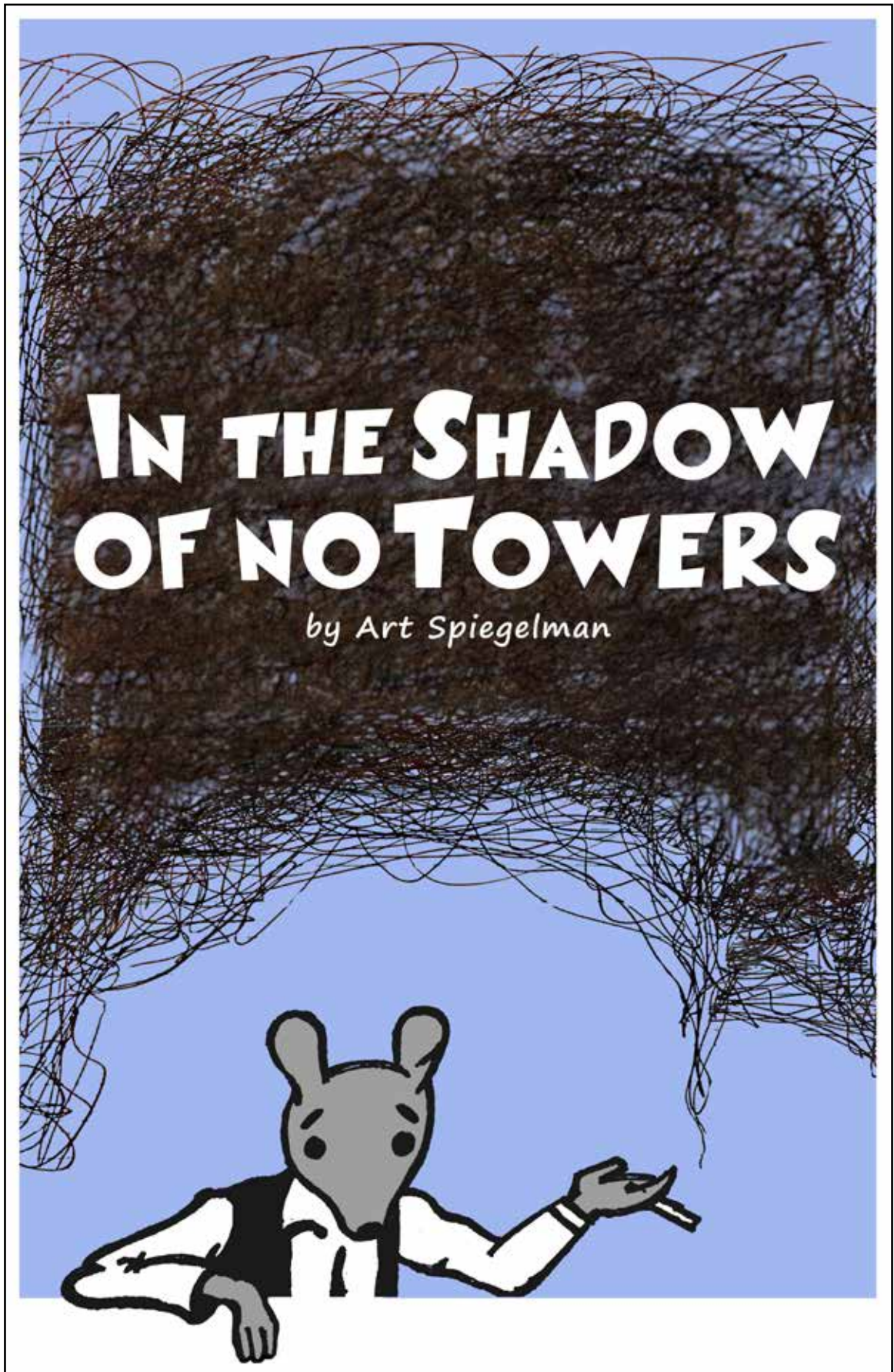


Fig. 5: "In the Shadow of No Towers" Poster 1, by Angeli Leong

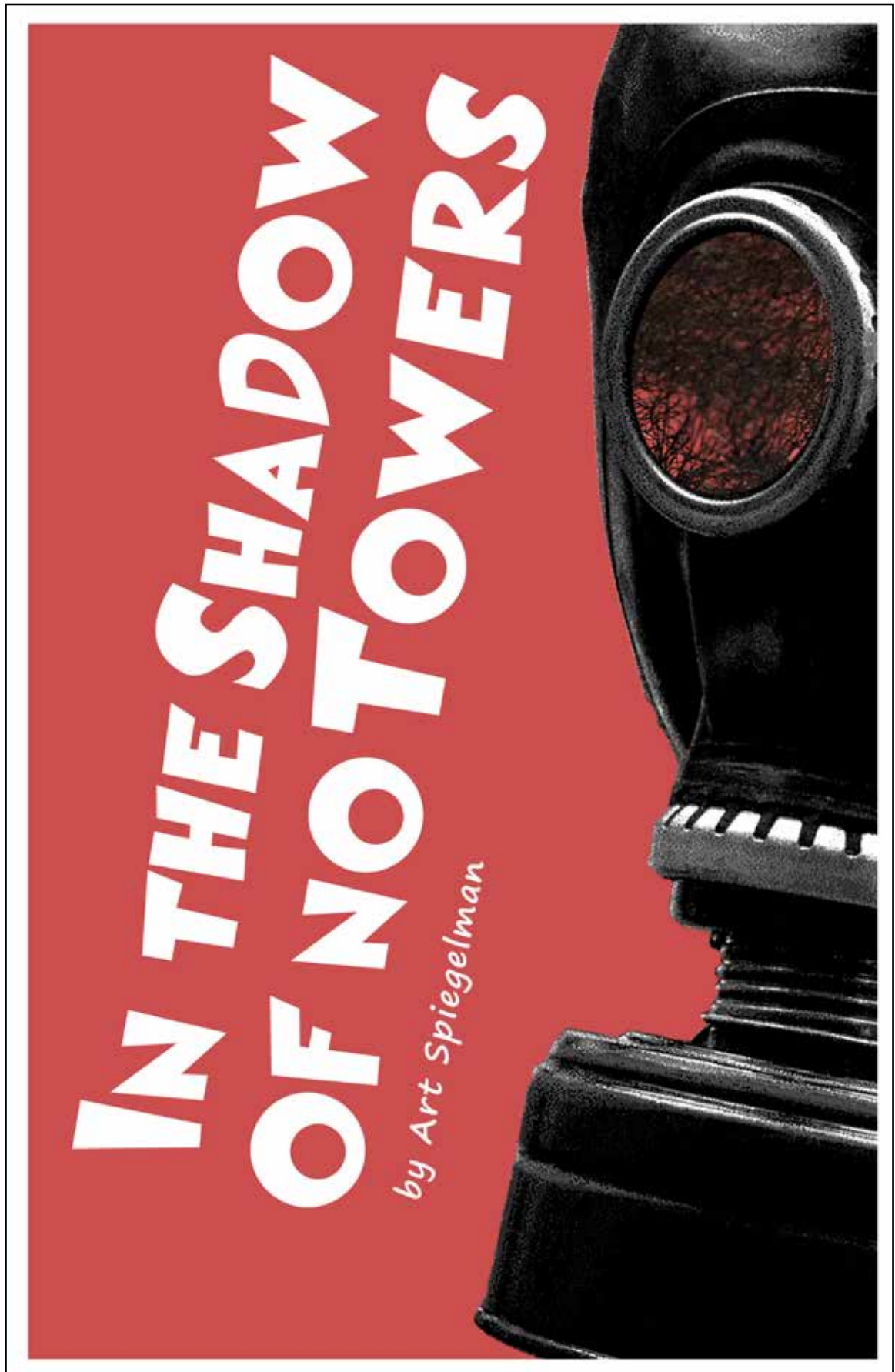


Fig. 6: "In the Shadow of No Towers" Poster 2, by Angeli Leong

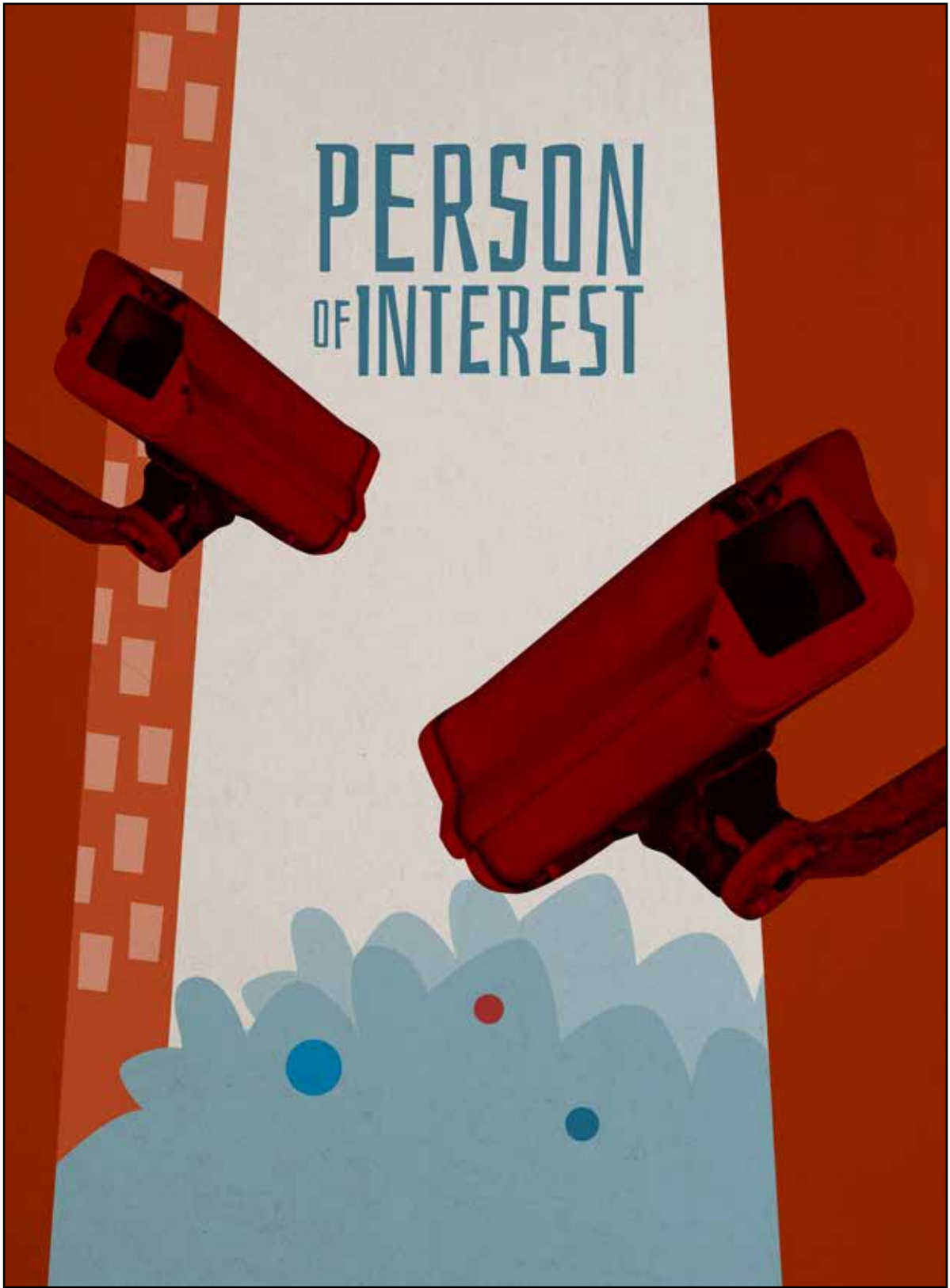


Fig. 7: "Person of Interest" Poster 2, by Lauren Quezada

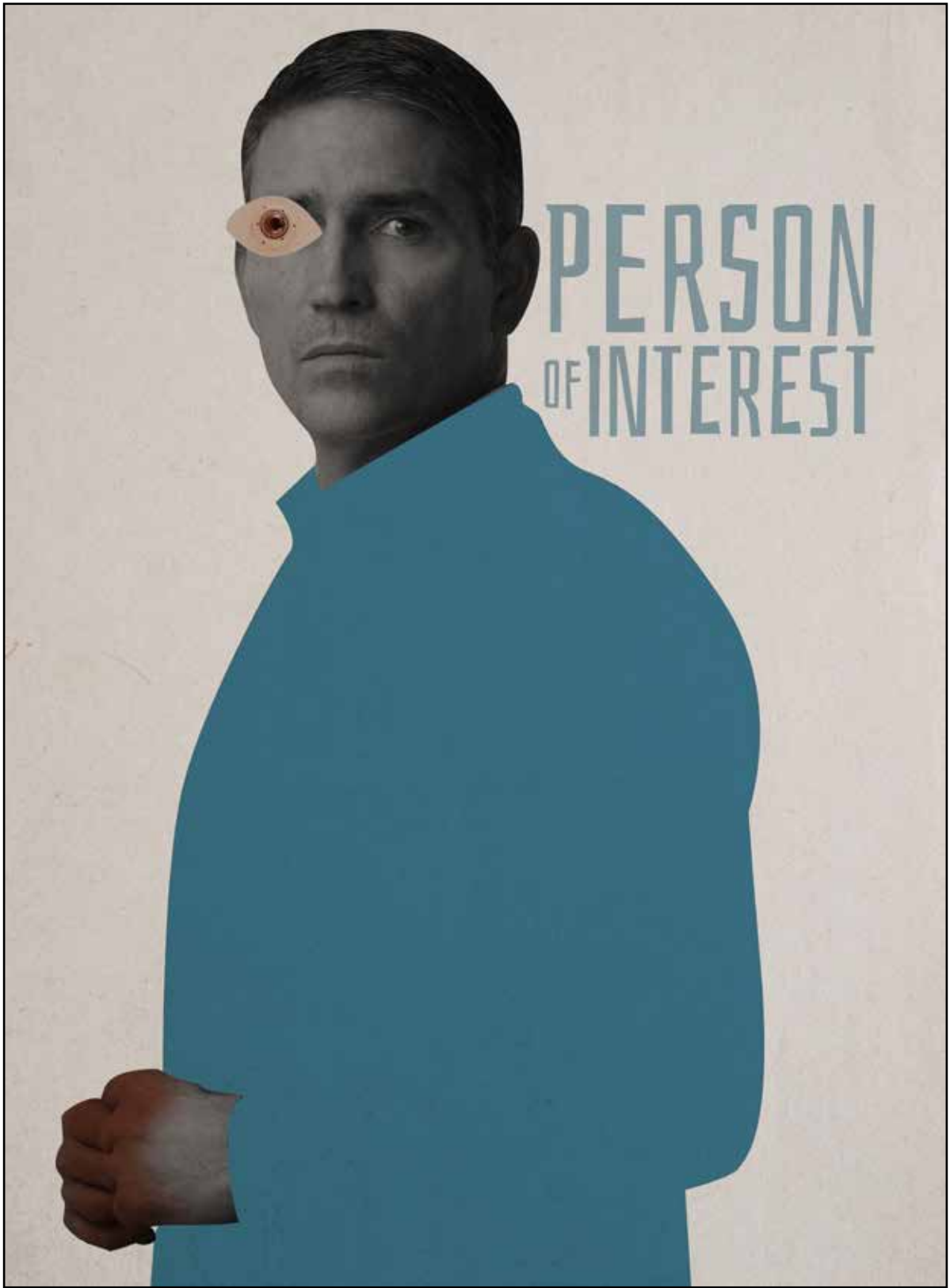


Fig. 8: "Person of Interest" Poster 1, by Lauren Quezada