

The Sand Mandala of the Tibetan Monks - Documentation

I. Concept Note

The Tibetan Sand Mandala site was an approach at Interactive Message Design. The site was a group project that explored the integration of various media elements in composing an effective message. We chose the Tibetan Sand Art topic because it is a virtually unknown art form. The sand Mandala is a sacred art form created by Tibetan Buddhist monks from millions of grains of brilliantly colored sand. Each Mandala is made with the motivation to create a work of art that will generate compassion in the viewer and therefore help to end suffering among all beings.

Our objective was to communicate this concept through a multimedia experience. The Mandala is a road map of the universe. It explores the interrelationship of the heavenly bodies, the human body, and the working of the mind. It also describes the stages of meditation followed by an individual or a community on the path to inner piece and/or world peace.

Every sand Mandala is filled with the intricately detailed sand figures of known and fantastical animals, humans, and Tibetan symbols. All who are involved in the process of creating the Mandala accumulate merit: the monks who are creating it, those who are watching the work evolve, and those who have provided the space for its creation. Each Mandala is made of millions of grains of sand that have been ground from larger stones, sifted into three different sizes, and then colored.

We intended for the site to remain consistent with the Buddhist culture in order to maintain a certain degree of credibility. We achieved this through the use of conventional Middle Eastern colors such as brown, beige, and gold. This treatment is accented by the use of traditional Buddhist imagery. The site offers the users a step-by-step example of the actual Mandala creation. The user is also extended the option to create their own Mandala in an interactive experience that furthers the site's concept.

My role in the creation of this project was to design an attractive splash page that would pull the user in. I also created the "Create Your Own Sand Mandala" section, using Flash, which allows the user to create their own Mandala. In this section of the

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site, the user can color in the Mandala with symbolic colors, and then destroy it when they're done.

II. Visual Comps

Visual comps are graphical representations or visuals that transform the information architecture into a set of fully designed user interface pages. By applying and refining the initial design ideas, the Designer will define the user interface, including color use guidelines, typographical standards and visual hierarchies. The process will create innovative and usable images and icons to enhance the site's navigation and brand.



Figure #1: Visual comp for homepage

III. Site Map

A site map is a visual representation of the navigation and content of a site. It is a diagram showing how elements of the site are grouped and how they link or relate to one another. A site map organizes all the pages within a website or web-based application, illustrating the big picture of the overall structure.

