

Client Brief: Pants Fish Studio

History



Pants Fish Studio is a small, custom order craft company located in Milwaukee, WI. It was founded by me, Jeanne Salmon, in April, 2020 in response to the immediate and growing need for fitted fabric facemasks. I had a sewing machine, a variety of cute 100% cotton quilting fabric, and newfound time after being laid off and locked down during quarantine. My specialty was custom mask sizing, ranging from youth XS to adult 2XL, and I offered 175+ fabric patterns to choose from. During the following year, I sewed roughly 650 masks, donating nearly 300 of them, reaching as far as Colombia.

While I do love sewing and making things like dog jackets, dog collars, small purses, and doing occasional tailoring or garment repair, I have many crafty hobbies and enjoy creating custom gifts and finding creative solutions for my client's needs. Custom t-shirts, etched glassware, mugs, home decor, paper cut lightboxes, ornaments, creating party themes and accompanying invitations and party favors are just a few of the different types of custom items I've made for clients in the past.

Many people wonder about the name of my business, and it's quite simple to explain, as it is an old nickname. Jeanne like the pants, Salmon like the fish. Several of my family members who own small businesses also use the word "fish" in their business names, so it was fitting to follow suit in naming mine. My graphic design work falls under my other small business, Salmon Design Co., and since the two businesses are design based but have very different offerings, they have been kept separate.

I was born and raised in Milwaukee, WI, the daughter of an interior designer and a mechanic. I have always been very crafty, spending hour after hour in the craft shop as a kid at summer camp, joining the drama costume and tech crew in high school. I even later worked in the same craft shop at camp I frequented as a kid. In adulthood have taught myself skills such as knitting and crochet, needle felting, embroidery, miniature dioramas, duct tape artistry, paper craft, custom box building, vinyl work, custom cards and ink stamps, not to mention a lot of peripheral skills needed to create over 100 handmade ornaments for my treasured Harry Potter holiday tree. I enjoy using a Cricut craft cutting machine to assist in making precise cuts on all kinds of projects. I even hand made several hundred duct tape flowers for my wedding. My favorite activities are traveling, spending time with friends and family, and hanging out with my two rescue dogs.

Past Marketing Strategies

My business has primarily been word of mouth. I made a few posts on my personal Facebook Page to promote my masks, and was featured on a local list of face mask makers, but that is the extent. Many of my clients have been friends of friends who saw a gift I made for them and wanted to purchase one of their own. I am also known in my area for being able to make quick last minute custom t-shirts, so I get random messages from acquaintances every so often wanting to place an order.



Values

Above all, I value following my dreams, and surrounding myself with people, things, and experiences that make me happy. Crafting is my love language, and I find immense joy and satisfaction in making beautiful custom items that make people feel good. I believe humor and swearing are excellent ways of coping with the world, and strive to reflect that in my art. I borrow my personal core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility from the YMCA, and try to live by the mantra, "love life, travel far." Life is too short and precious to not follow your heart and passions.

What Separates Pants Fish Studio From The Competition?

Since I do not have an online store or site where I list my goods and services, except occasionally a private local Facebook sales group or responding to volunteer requests for crafty things needed in my community, most of my clients approach me with a project or idea and ask for my help making it a reality. Pants Fish Studio is also not my full-time job, it's more of a passion project, so my clients receive very personalized customer service and are part of the design process from start to finish.

Who are Pant Fish Studio's main competitors?

Everyone and no one. Technically anyone selling handmade goods is a competitor, but in a way I don't view any of them as competitors because my clients seek me out rather than me trying to seek them out. When the pandemic eventually ends, I would like to do some seasonal craft fairs, which would require making a stock of inventory ahead of time to sell. At this time however, I have all the materials I need to fulfill most orders people might come up with, and if not I have the internet at my beck and call.

What does Pants Fish Studio offer that the competition does not?

Excellent customer service, hands down. I guarantee all my products against defects or dislike, though with the exception of a few masks that didn't fit right and needed to be altered or remade, no one has ever returned anything. I also take extra care when shipping products; I "gift wrap" items in colored tissue paper with a satin ribbon, and send them in cute poly mailer bags, which cost the same as plain white mailer bags. If someone does a local pick up, I don't seal the bag for them so they can reuse it again.



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What can be used to show separation or superiority?

Being authentic to my style and tastes will bring this mug package and the brand itself to life. Everything I make looks very much like I made it, and trusting my instinct on design and color will serve me well. Though I do occasionally make baby onesies and gifts for small children, I would like to cater to my more mature clients, the kind who enjoy dirty limerick, irreverence, and adult rated content. This packaging will focus on my line of "Oh Shit" mugs, featuring characters in bizarre situations saying the words, "oh shit."

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Demographic Groups

Gender: My clientele is generally female, though some of them are buying gifts for men. I also ran virtual crafting classes for a group of my female neighbors during the pandemic, we made a leather-bound journal, and a series of Valentine's Day Cards.

Age: 25-65, though I am currently working on a cookie cookbook for my 80 year old grandmother-in-law.

Race: My clients are fairly diverse, though white clients make up the largest group.

Income Level: Low to high, I have something for everyone! My least expensive items usually start around \$5 such as greeting cards, and my more expensive items like custom paper cut lightboxes can be upwards of \$100 depending on the level of detail in the design.

Geographic Area: As I mentioned before, local craft fairs will be a way for me to enjoy selling my items and getting to meet a lot of people in the near future.

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What can be leveraged in terms of creative approach with the knowledge of demographic groups that Pants Fish Studio appeals to?

I will channel my inner vintage occult style to make some really exciting mug packaging. The scene on my mug shows a wizard and a top hat wearing skeleton, so it's safe to assume reality has been suspended and magic exists. I would like to create a product package that is appealing to men and women, and that draws in the comically irreverent crowd.

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Any other information that may help inform the concept of the imagery, colors or overall style.

This is such a unique opportunity for me to make something that I would personally pull off the shelf and pay decent money for. I will use my favorite colors and draw on styles from the past to create a contemporary, fun design. I will dig into the story of how this wizard and skeleton came to be here, and pull out little details that bring the box to life.

Looking forward to finally deciding what I want to do with my logo, too!

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Concept Sketches: Pants Fish Studio

Sketch 1

Concept: "Halftone Spooky Bois." This design would use halftones and fun colors to give this box a retro feel. The sides and top of the box would feature a photograph of the mug; The back of the box would feature the story of our skeleton and wizard in limerick form. This box opens from the top.

Media Type: Photographic.

Typography: Combo of display and sans serif.

Notes: This design will have a bit of a pop art feel.

Limericks:

There once was a Wizard named Bitbit,
Who practiced magic then quit it.
He tried one last time,
To bring the skeleton to it's prime,
When the dancing wouldn't cease he said "oh shit."

There once was a skeleton called Steve,
Just a pile of bones, so naive.
The Wizard Bitbit cast a spell,
But it didn't go very well,
And now we can't get Steve to leave.



Sketch 2 ★

Concept: "The Black and White Box." This is a black box with white text and graphics. A retro border will flank each panel of the box, with small graphic embellishments to give it some pizzazz. The left and right panel will each feature one of the characters (respectively) with their limerick. The inside side panel will show the Pants Fish Studio logo, and the bottom will have a black and white star pattern.

Media Type: Illustrated.

Typography: Vintage display + typewriter font.

Notes: Open box design. See Sketch 1 for limerick lyrics. This box could easily be updated to feature different mug designs.



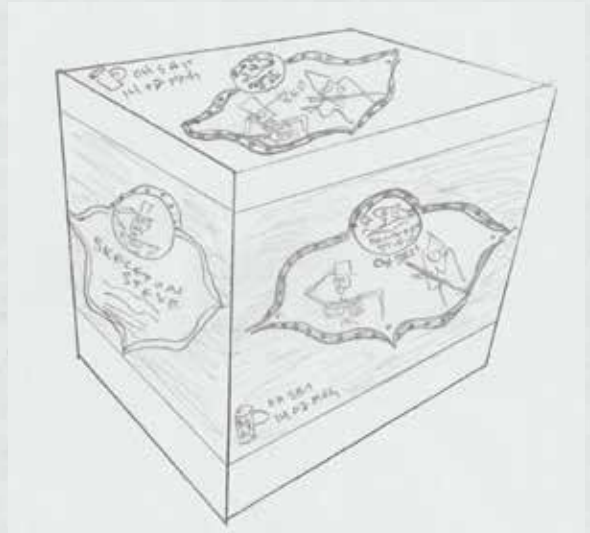
Sketch 3

Concept: "The Apothecary Label Box." This box is designed to look like an old potion box. The box will look like it's been wrapped in a band of cloth with apothecary labels on each panel. The left and right panels will each feature one of the characters with their limerick.

Media Type: Mix of illustration and photographic elements (like the fabric and box texture).

Typography: Vintage typesets and serifs.

Notes: This design is meant to look old and worn, like you're finding something cool in the back of an oddity shop. See Sketch 1 for limerick lyrics.



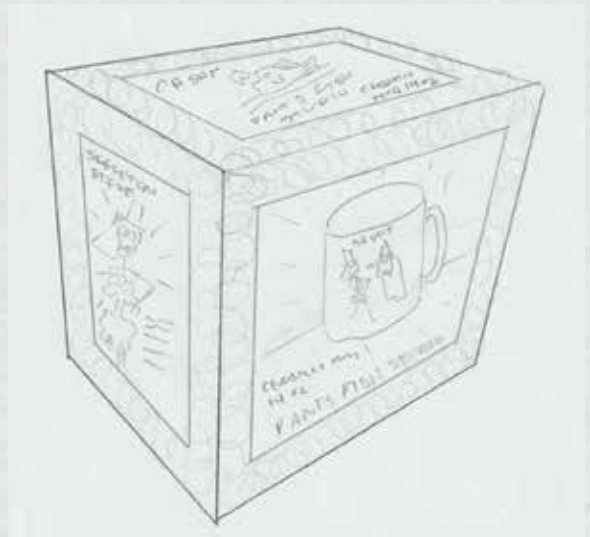
Sketch 4

Concept: "The Patterned Frame Box." This is a pretty simple design, the box panels would be framed out in a bold, colorful pattern. The front panel would show a picture of the mug with the mug info, and the sides would feature each character and their limerick. The back panel would mirror the front.

Media Type: Photographic but made to look illustrated.

Typography: Sans serifs.

Notes: This box is meant to be really pretty and fairly simple. See Sketch 1 for limerick lyrics.



Sketch 5 ★

Concept: "The Jewel Box." This ornate gold foiled box is an homage to some of my favorite graphic designers, MinaLima of the Harry Potter film magic. This would be incredibly detailed, with each little circle containing a different icon of something I like. The side panels would feature each character and their limerick. The Pants Fish Studio logo would fill the top panel.

Media Type: Illustrated.

Typography: Vintage serif and script all the way.

Notes: This is a fancy box, not technically speaking, but art wise. The idea is that you're looking into a little world through the frame of the jewel box. This box could be updated easily to feature different mugs in the collection.



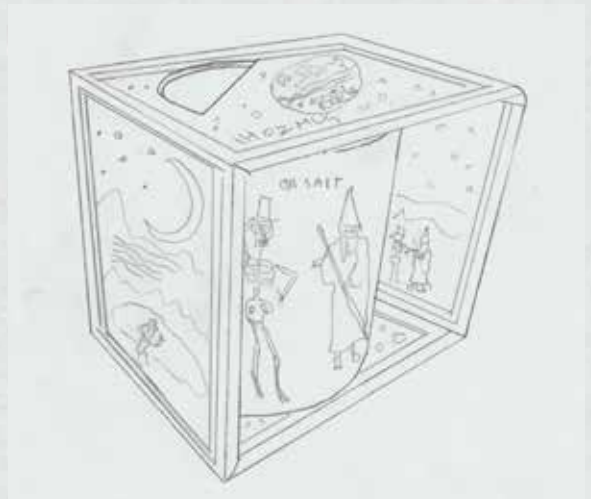
Sketch 6 ★

Concept: "The Lightbox Box." This box features the art from my New Zealand Campervan lightbox, but with the characters from the mug. The side panels would feature a single character with their limerick, and the inside panel would show both of them together. It would be fairly easy for me to switch out my own silhouette in the lightbox with the skeleton or wizard. The top panel would feature stars and the Pants Fish Studio logo.

Media Type: Photographic, though the effect looks almost like it's illustrated.

Typography: Maybe a typewriter font or serif would work.

Notes: If I go with this design, it would be really fun to modify the lightbox design I already have to photograph for the project. There is a picture of the lightbox in the moodboard. See Sketch 1 for limerick lyrics.



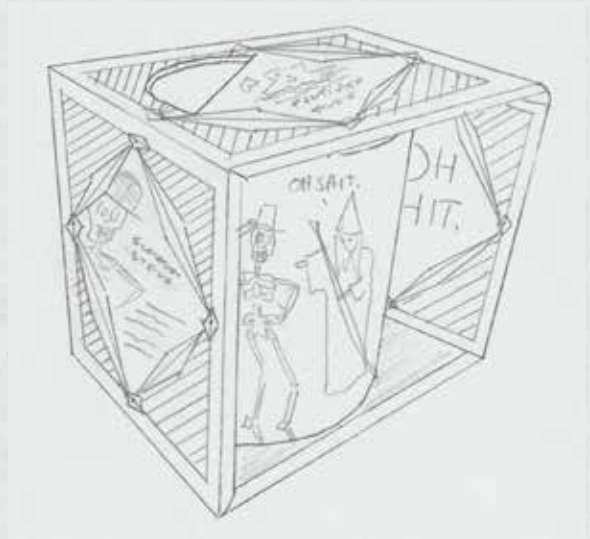
Sketch 7

Concept: "The Vintage Line Art Box." I was struggling with the perspective to add the level of detail I wanted to, but this is an Art Deco inspired line art design. It features cameos on each panel which will show the different characters and their limericks, the Pants Fish Studio Logo on the top, and "OH SHIT" on the inside panel.

Media Type: Illustrated.

Typography: Vintage sans serif.

Notes: Textured backgrounds and using special brushes will give this package the umph it needs. See Sketch 1 for limerick lyrics.



Sketch 8

Concept: "The Arches Box." I used to live in an apartment called "The Arches at the Arts" in Minneapolis, it was originally a hotel built in the 70s, and had big arched windows in the lobby. This design is meant to look like you're looking through arched windows. The background (without the arches) could be a brick pattern, or some other kind of textured material. The content inside the arches would use bold colors and typography to really pop. A cutout in the front would show the art on the mug inside.

Media Type: Illustrated and photographic.

Typography: Retro typefaces.

Notes: This is meant to have a vintage advertising feel. Halftones could be used as well in the art. See Sketch 1 for limerick lyrics.



Sketch 9

Concept: "The Wooden Logo Box." This is a generic Pants Fish Studio Box that could be used for a number of mugs in the "Oh Shit" mug line. The background would be wood paneling, and the logo would be prominent on each panel. Pretty standard boiler plate box for the overall brand rather than a specific mug.

Media Type: Photographic.

Typography: Script for logo name, sans serif for other text.

Notes: This is meant to look like a wooden box, showcasing the product.



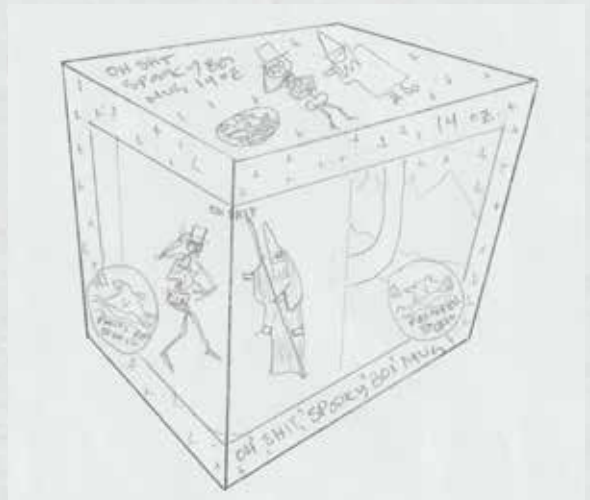
Sketch 10 ★

Concept: "The Exhibitionist Box." This box LOVES to show what it has inside. It features a cut out on two panels with cellophane covering the opening. The box will have a star pattern (created from the stars in my logo) with an additional printed insert inside the box so you can see a mountain background (maybe the paper cut lightbox image) and also have the star pattern on the bottom of the inside of the box

Media Type: Illustrated.

Typography: Vintage typography.

Notes: As I was drawing this, it dawned on me that a square box would be perfect rather than a rectangular one because the mug would be forced to sit diagonally, showing the image on the mug perfectly in the open corner of the box. Limericks (lyrics found in Sketch 1) and characters would go on back of box. This would be easy to swap out different characters for other mugs in the collection.



Sketch 11

Concept: "The Art Deco Box." I was unable to do this box justice in the sketches, but it would have a vintage art deco border taken from my beloved leather bound 1925 Barnhart Brothers & Spindler typeface/border/graphics/print equipment catalog which contains some fabulous vintage border specimens. The type and graphics would be very clean and balanced.

Media Type: Illustrated

Typography: Vintage serifs

Notes: There would be opportunities to incorporate some of the other vintage clip art and graphics from the typeface catalog. Turns out this book is one of the main sources where Minalima gets clip art from for their Harry Potter graphic design, and I couldn't believe I found a good quality copy for >\$100. Regardless of if I use this book in this project, it's such a fantastic reference and wealth of copyright free elements.



Sketch 12 ★

Concept: "The Gallery Box." I absolutely LOVE ornate gilded frames, and this box would be designed to look like it was an art gallery. The upright panels of the box would look like a textured wall with golden frames hanging on them, the bottom inside of the box would have a wooden (probably parquet) "floor." This design would be the easiest to create additional versions for other mugs in the series, just swap out the images in the frames and change out the limericks. The back of the box could feature other mugs in the series.

Media Type: Photographic.

Typography: A very subtle serif.

Notes: I love building miniature worlds, and this box scratches that itch of creating a little ecosystem where the mug lives.



Refined Sketches: Pants Fish Studio

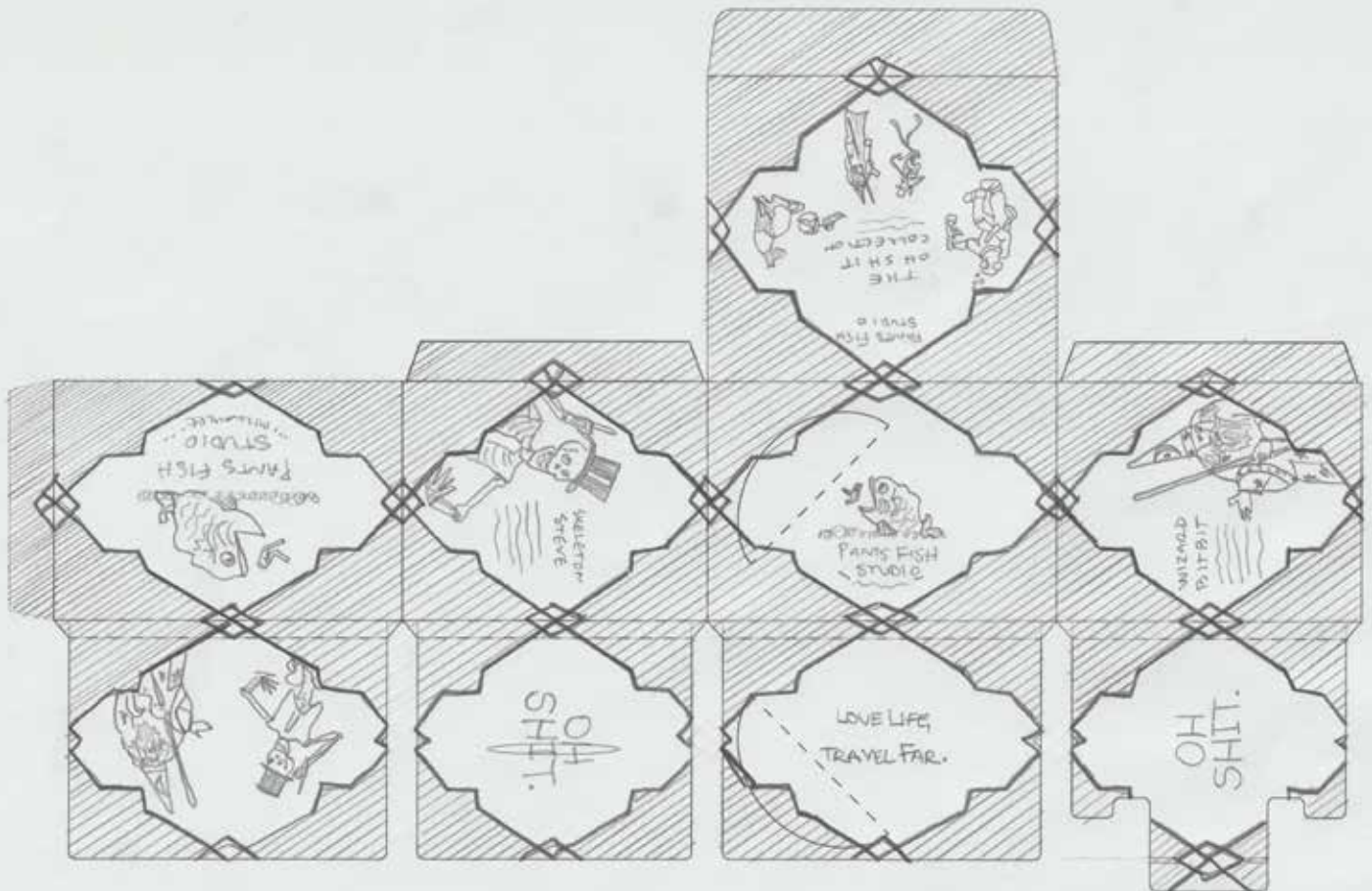
Refined Sketch 1: The Blackline Box

This art deco inspired box uses black linework and simple pattern to create a geometric design. This is an open faced box, displaying the mug front and center. This vintage design would be black print on a subtly textured background. The back panel features the other mugs in the collection, and the design could very easily be interchanged for other mugs in the collection. The side panels will feature close ups of our spooky boys with their limericks.

Typography: Vintage typefaces all the way. A subtle serif would look amazing with the linework.

Media Type: Illustrated all the way. Since it is more or less a repeating pattern, it would be easy to create it once and then transform them to fit each panel, making sure the diamonds and line pattern match up.

Special Packaging Considerations: This package would be made from 1mm corrugated cardboard with one side lamination. It will be printed with a matte finish to fit with the vintage feel of the design. "Love Life, Travel Far" is the name of our travel blog, so that's potentially a placeholder for something more interesting.



Refined Sketches: Pants Fish Studio

Prototype Sketch 1: The Blackline Box



Front



Inside



Left Panel



Right panel



Back Panel



Top Panel

Refined Sketches: Pants Fish Studio

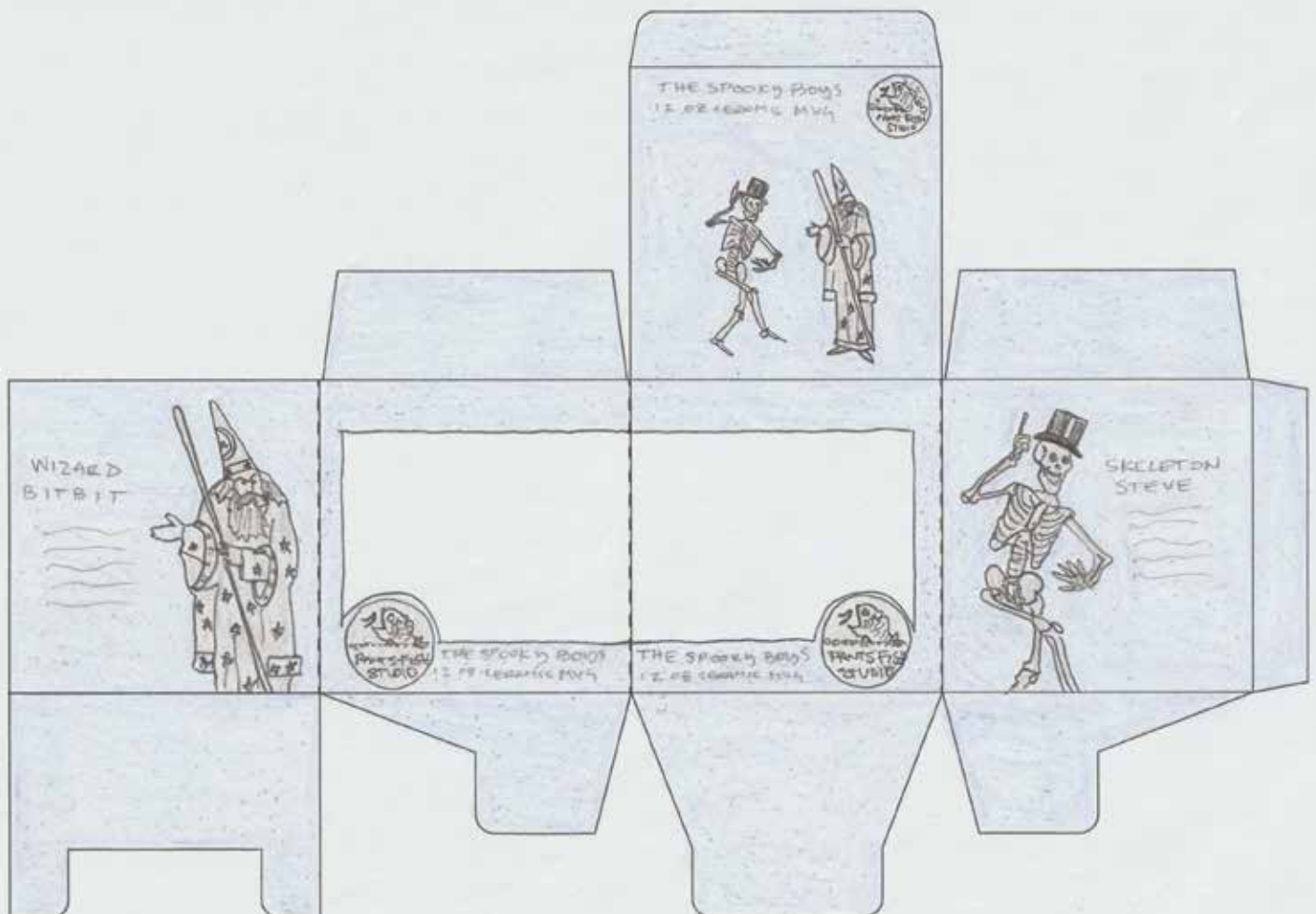
Refined Sketch 2: The Exhibitionist Box

This square box features a cut out on the front and left panel, covered with cellophane. The mug sits diagonally in the box, showcasing the design in the corner through the cut out. Though it is now shown here, an additional insert would be printed to fit inside the box, showing a scene of some kind, maybe a lightbox image. This design would use metallic foiling to give it a nice pop against the light blue background. Something should be added to the bottom.

Typography: Fun vintage fonts. They're my favorite. Likely matching the fonts I use for my logo.

Media Type: Illustrated, though could use some photographic elements that look illustrated such as a photograph of a lightbox scene.

Special Packaging Considerations: This package would be made from 1mm corrugated cardboard with one side lamination. It would be printed with a glossy finish. The cut out is covered with a piece of cellophane. An additional piece of printed corrugated cardboard will be placed inside box for added stability and to give the visible inside panels a nicer look.



Refined Sketches: Pants Fish Studio

Refined Sketch 2: The Exhibitionist Box



Front



Left Panel



Back Panel



Right panel



Top Panel



Bottom Panel

Refined Sketches: Pants Fish Studio

Refined Sketch 3: The Gallery Box

This package is designed to look like you are looking at an exhibit at a gallery. Blue painted "wall" panels hold gold and silver gilded frames featuring the characters from the Oh Shit Collection. On the left and right outside panels, we see our spooky boys with their limericks, and the back panel shows the additional designs available. The inside of the box features a herringbone floor, a hammered tin ceiling, and the side walls have red velvet ropes in front of more frames. This box could easily be modified to fit any of the mug designs.

Typography: This might be a case for Futura.... or a subtle serif would probably work too. Something fun for sure though.

Media Type: This really could go either way. Photographic elements could be fun, but illustrated elements could really bring it to life since the vectors are also illustrated.

Special Package Considerations: This package would be made from 1mm corrugated cardboard with one side lamination. A semigloss finish would be nice for this package design, not too shiny, not too dull. This is meant to be very playful, and to look great sitting on the shelf at an arts and craft fair, or in a boutique shop.



Refined Sketches: Pants Fish Studio

Refined Sketch 3: The Gallery Box



Front



Back Panel



Left Panel



Right panel



Inside Bottom



Inside Top

The Prototypes: Pants Fish Studio

The “Oh Shit” Collection

The Oh Shit Collection has come to life in this 12 oz ceramic mug set, currently available in three designs. The gallery style, open faced box has been customized to tell the story of each mug's characters, and can easily be modified when additional designs join the Oh Shit family. These surprisingly secure mug boxes will creste a minature world for the mugs to live in until they find their forever home.



The Life Size Dieline Prototype



This box will be made from 1mm thick coated corrugated cardboard, printed on one side.

Despite being open in the front, the box keeps the mug inside quite securely. The mug must be inserted into the box from the back, with the right inside panel securing the handle.

The box has one glue flap, and an extra security sticker on the glue flap, and the back closure flap.

The half circle flaps on the top of the box are crucial for keeping the mug securely in place inside the box. It prevents the mug from falling out the front. Other shapes don't seem to be as effective at keeping the mug in place.

Additional scale prototypes will be created for mock up purposed to be able to display all three mug boxes silmutaneously.



Left Outside Panels



Right Outside Panels



Back Panels



Top Panels



Left Inside Panels



Right Inside Panels



Bottom Panels

