

We are Students But it's Okay !

Personal Project

Request

To create an illustrative project that reflects my personal graphic universe. This could be a Package Design, Illustration, Branding Project, Website or Video.

Client

Personal Project

Timeline

2 weeks

Problem

The precariousness of student life is a reality that is widely shared but still too little represented in the mainstream visual field - and rarely in a light-hearted way. The challenge was a major one:

- *How to transform these common experiences into visually desirable, saleable objects, without watering down their meaning ?*
- *How do you talk about the hardships without lapsing into pathos, while remaining true to a strong, expressive and instantly recognisable aesthetic ?*

Target

The project is aimed at students aged between 18 and 27, most of whom live in urban areas and attend higher education establishments. These students are connected, ironic, internet-savvy, sensitive to absurdist humour, pop references and a kind of graphic nostalgia. They seek to identify with what they wear, to convey messages with what they consume, and to laugh at what they experience.

Solution

The aim was to tell the real story of student life through a series of T-shirts, with humour and sincerity. To talk about precariousness in a comic, absurd and colourful way, which is not the norm for this subject.

I've come up with a mini-collection of illustrated T-shirts that take a humorous, colourful look at the trials and tribulations of everyday student life. Each visual depicts an aspect of student life, transformed with an expressive mascot to tell the story of a precarious situation in an absurd, casual tone.

Far from the miserabilist rhetoric, the solution chosen was to laugh about it and get across the message that it's OK to be a student, but you have to accept the situation, by wearing it on the T-shirts. This strong message is reinforced by expressive colours, short, striking slogans and a graphic style that makes no apologies for existing.

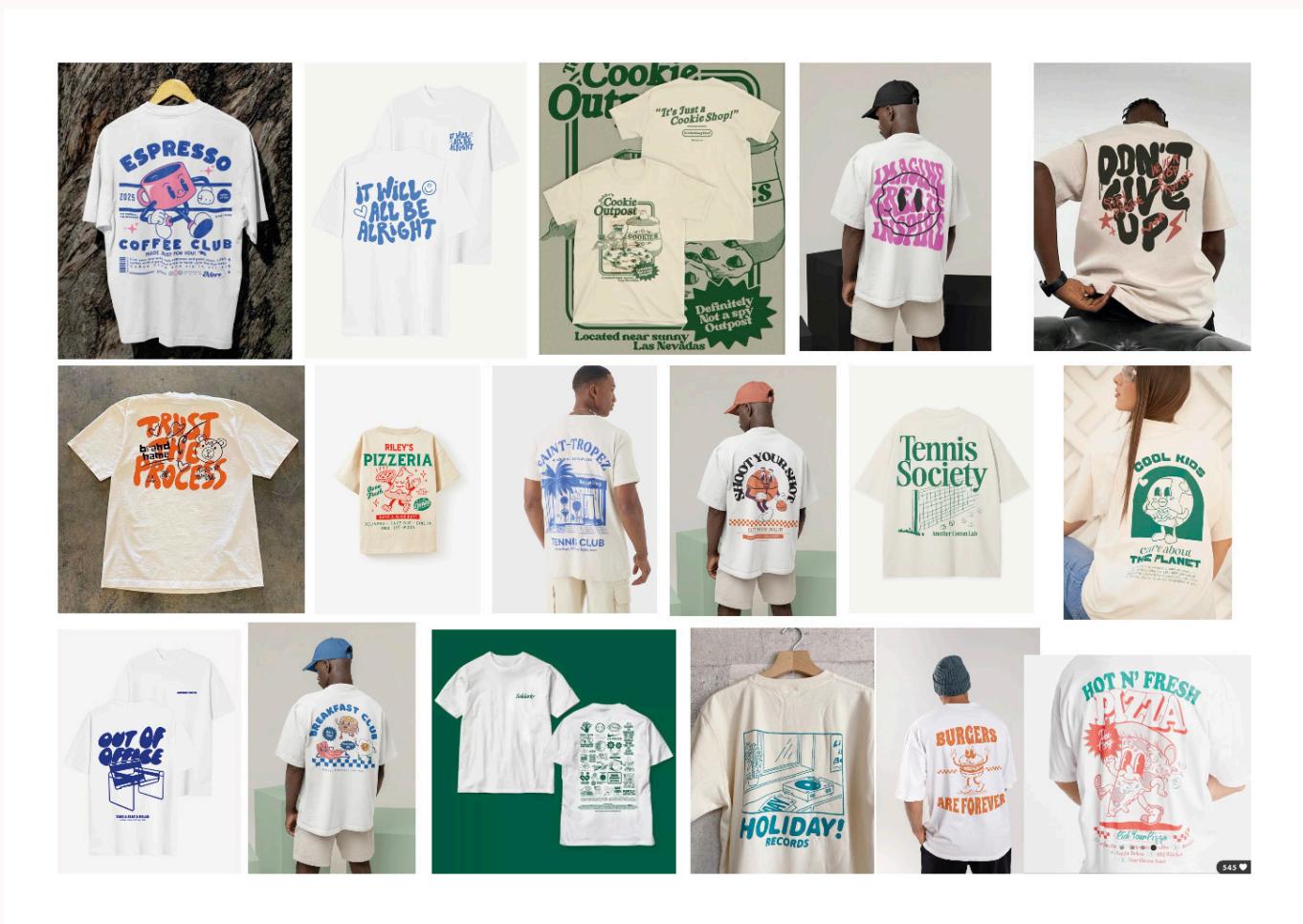
My role

Find the concept and choose my illustration style. Then find each element for each T-shirt theme and create the entire graphic universe as well as the mockups.

The process

Research & Inspiration

To inform my artistic direction, I began by creating a visual moodboard around graphic T-shirts with a vintage, colourful, quirky aesthetic, with a strong presence of playful elements such as mascots, retro typography and compositions inspired by old packaging or advertising posters. The aim was to capture this nostalgic, happy atmosphere while maintaining a contemporary tone.



In terms of competitive analysis, I looked at a number of brands that create textiles around committed or humorous messages (such as Maison Château Rouge, Uniqlo UT, and some of Lazy Oaf's capsule collections). I noticed that very few of their projects dealt with the precariousness of student life in a frontal and humorous way, particularly in a wearable format, which reinforced my idea that there was a space to invest visually and narratively.

To ensure that my approach resonated with my target audience, I also spoke to a number of student friends in France and abroad. These informal exchanges fed into my creative process, helping me to identify universal situations, recurring phrases and feelings shared by many students. This helped to anchor the project in a shared reality, while retaining an absurd, quirky tone that suits me.

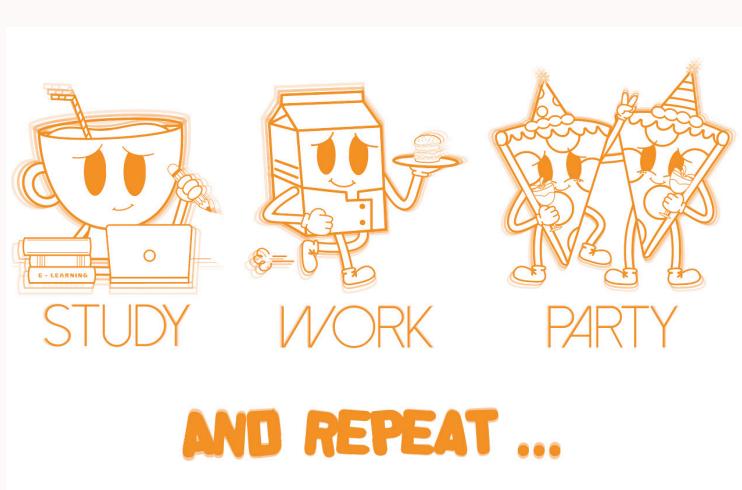
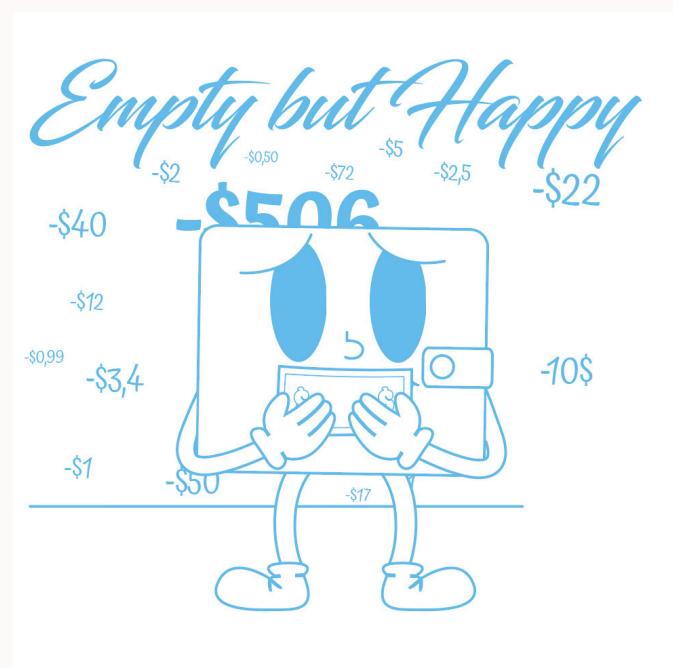
Design Process

Initial sketches / Concepts

First drafts on paper to lay the foundations for the ideas. Each T-shirt illustrates a situation from everyday student life, with a touch of humour:

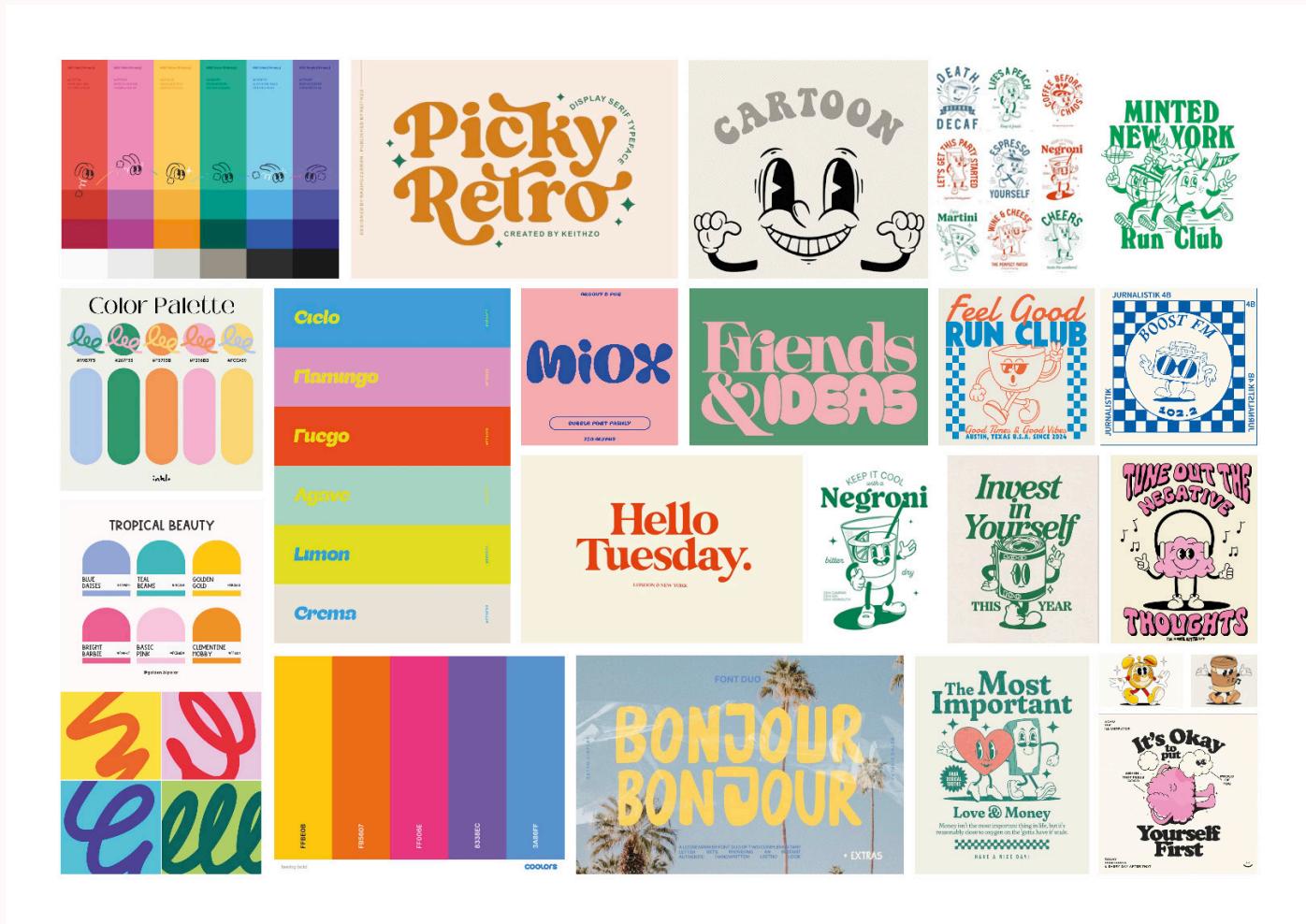
- **Burnout Loading' T-shirt:** A tired brain accompanied by an unfinished loading bar.
- **Empty but Happy' T-shirt:** An empty wallet surrounded by spending icons.
- **Pasta Again?' T-shirt:** A bowl of pasta in the centre, surrounded by different pasta shapes.
- **Study, Work, Party, and Repeat...' T-shirt:** Three mascots representing study, work and parties respectively

These sketches were used to visualise the composition and arrangement of the elements in each visual.



Visual Research & Moodboard

Search for graphic elements that best represent each theme. Creation of an inspiration bank focusing on mascots, everyday student objects, fun typography and illustrative styles in keeping with the project's universe.



#dc6992

#f5c849

#65beec

#e59744

Blacksword

BUBBLEGUM

Birch Std

DM Serif Display

DOLCE VITA

Atma

ALPHAFRIDGEMAGNETSALLCAP

Creation of visuals

- Illustrations created in Adobe Illustrator.
- Testing different compositions and layouts for each T-shirt.
- Definition of a colour palette specific to each visual.
- Choice of typefaces to match the general atmosphere and humorous tone of each design.

Refinement process

Following feedback from my student friends:

- Addition of more explicit references to student life.
- Insertion of funny phrases, puns or slogans to support the concept.
- Adjusted the colours to improve legibility and visual impact.

Enriching the visuals: adding small comic details and secondary elements to avoid empty spaces and reinforce the visual narrative.

Slogans layout

Creation of the graphic direction of the slogans for each T-shirt '**We are Students but it's OKAY !**' :

- Choice of striking typography.
- Work on the layout of the texts for better integration into the overall design.

*We are Students
But it's Okay !*

*We are Students
BUT IT'S OKAY !*

*We are Students
But it's Okay !*

Mockups

- Creation of mock-ups to visualise the final look of the T-shirts.
- Checking the graphic consistency and artistic direction through these realistic scenarios.

Final Design



The final visuals in this collection are not just aesthetically pleasing: they tell a story. Each T-shirt becomes a narrative medium that illustrates a real student issue, with a well-measured touch of humour. The aim is to create a strong sense of identification, in which students can recognise themselves, smile at their own reality and wear it proudly.

The four designs explore distinct facets of student life: the mental overload of "Burnout Loading", the financial woes of "Empty but Happy", the repetitive rhythm of "Study, Work, Party... and Repeat", and the everyday monotony of "Pasta Again?". Each one tackles a different, often heavy subject, but treats it with a light, almost liberating tone. Here, humour becomes a tool for de-dramatisation, social bonding and self-deprecation.

What also makes these T-shirts effective is the attention paid to visual detail. The expressive mascots bring abstract ideas (burnout, lack of money, routine, food repetition) to life, making them human, relatable and even endearing. The carefully chosen typefaces amplify the tone of the message: fun, ironic, yet sincere. Monochrome pastel palettes (pink, blue, orange, yellow) bring unity and freshness, while enhancing clarity and visual impact. Slogans such as "Burnout Loading", "Empty but Happy", "Pasta Again?" and "And Repeat..." act as catchy, punchy phrases that stick with the audience.

Finally, these designs work because they target their audience precisely. They speak the language of students, reflect their lived experiences, and use visual codes they easily connect with. Their simple yet expressive graphics make them perfect for screen or digital printing, and their viral potential is strong: these are T-shirts students want to share, wear and comment on. By combining visual storytelling, humour and social relevance, this series successfully transforms clothing into a bold, expressive medium.



We are Students
But it's Okay !

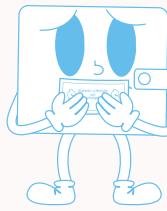
'Pasta Again'

A mascot bowl of pasta, surrounded by different shapes of pasta, is a humorous illustration of the repetition of food in student life.

- Palette: A warm, appetising yellow, evoking the colour of pasta and bringing a sense of familiarity and comfort.
- Key elements:
 - A 'bowl of pasta' mascot with tired but compassionate eyes, surrounded by various shapes of pasta.
 - Small ironic notes such as a pasta schedule for the week or premium pasta that you can't get access to
 - Secondary slogans: **'One day, I will eat something else ... but not this week !'**
- Slogan: **'Pasta Again ?'** (back) + **'We are Students but it's OKAY !'** (front).

This design highlights, with self-mockery, a shared daily routine: the often-repeated low-budget meals. Relatable and funny, it plays on the tenderness of routine.





*We are Students
But it's Okay !*

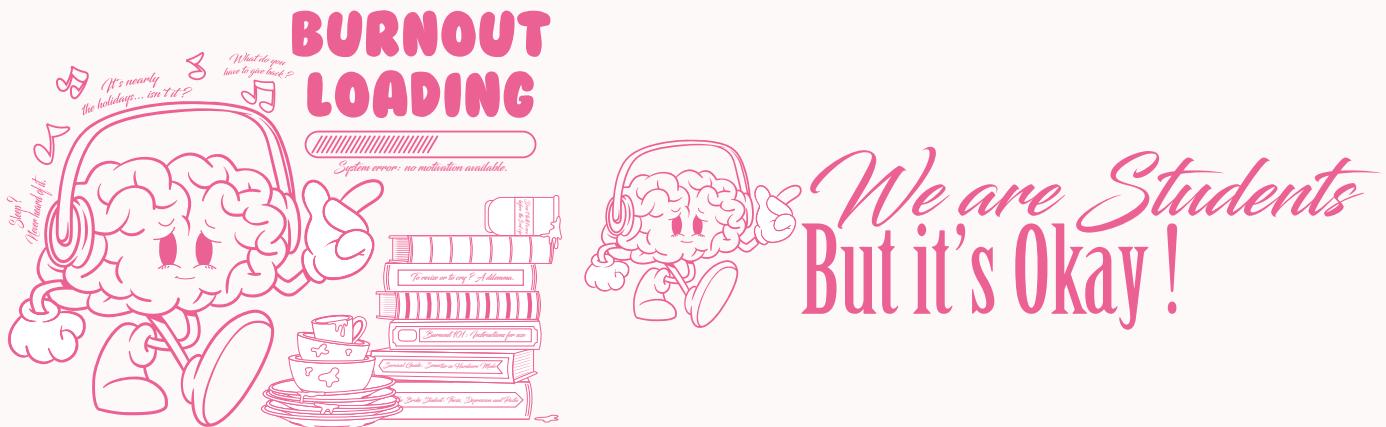
'Empty but Happy'

An empty wallet, faced with a hefty bill, symbolising financial hardship.

- Palette: Soft blue, evoking a form of joyful resignation.
- Key elements:
 - Representation of a receipt with sums giving a staggering total.
 - Expressive mascot with a look of both embarrassment and amusement.
 - Added details such as the cost of rent or electricity.
- Slogan: **'Empty but Happy'** (back) + **'We are Students but it's OKAY !'** (front)

A tribute to hard times at the end of the month, but with a touch of good humour. The self-deprecating humour makes this T-shirt comical and appeals to many students in this situation.





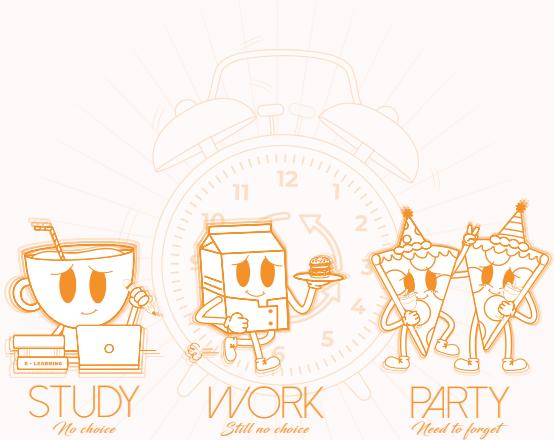
‘Burnout Loading’

A burned-out brain with an incomplete loading bar, embodying the mental overload of students.

- Palette: Bright pink on a white background, evoking tension but with a gentle touch.
- Key elements:
 - Brain mascot with headphones, in multitasking mode.
 - Books and coffee cups illustrating academic pressure.
 - Small handwritten annotations to reinforce the 'student note-taking' aspect.
- Slogan: '**Burnout Loading...**' (back) + '**We are Students but it's OKAY!**' (front).

This design speaks directly to students juggling deadlines, lack of sleep and constant pressure. It blends irony and realism, making the piece relatable.





We are Students But it's Okay !



'Study, Work, Party... and Repeat'

Three mascots representing the recurring cycles of student life: study, work, party... and repeat.

- Palette: Dynamic orange, conveying energy and a frenetic rhythm.
- Key elements:
 - Three characters: an energy drink (study), a carton of caffeinated milk (work), and a festive cocktail (party).
 - A clock in the background to symbolise repetition.
 - Secondary slogans: '**No choice**', '**Still no choice**', '**Need to forget !**'
- Slogan: '**Study, Work, Party AND REPEAT...**' (back) + '**We are Students but it's OKAY !**' (front).

This design expresses the endless loop of everyday student life with a festive wink. It depicts an infernal rhythm that is shared by many.



Conclusion

This project allowed me to explore graphic design well beyond its aesthetic dimension. It turned into a real means of personal and collective expression. As a student, I drew on my day-to-day life, that of my friends, our discussions in class, our problems, our laughter - to create visuals that reflected us. So this collection is also a nod to them, a way of representing them and bringing to life those little moments we shared through funny, colourful and meaningful T-shirts.

I really enjoyed making it. The subject spoke to me deeply, and I loved being able to deal with the precariousness of student life in a light-hearted and humorous way. I think that this approach, which is lively, accessible and sincere, can really reach a wide audience - while providing an original perspective on realities that are often kept quiet or trivialised.

This project is like me. It reflects my approach to design: a little overloaded, but always very organised, colourful and expressive. It's a little piece of my personality that I wanted to convey: my dynamism, my attention to detail, and a desire to make people smile while making them think.

Technically, I've also learnt a lot: I've learnt about illustration, I've worked on page layout, graphic coherence between several visuals, the choice of colours and typography. I understood the importance of harmonising each piece, while maintaining a strong identity for each one.

Finally, this experience has given me the desire to go further in narrative design - why not through stationery, stickers, or formats designed for social networks. One day I'd like to turn this project into a capsule collection or a collaboration with other creative students.

To sum up, this series of T-shirts is a real showcase for my creative approach: a design that's committed, colourful, a bit comical... but designed to speak to people - and that's very much like me.

*We are Students
But it's Okay!*