

# Illuminator Graphic Design Media Guide

This document is meant to serve as a style guide for collaborators. Time spent in the field has taught us what works and what doesn't. We hope this will help you design for the most symbolic impact.

## *Graphic Design for Projection*

- We have two projectors, but our most powerful projector has a native **resolution of 1400(w) x 1050(h)**. Please make your illustrator/photoshop canvas this size, unless we have specified that we are using our 7k projector, in which case the native resolution is 1024(w) x 768(h). We can also work with standard HD resolution on all our projectors. At minimum, make sure all of your slides have the same dimensions.
- In general, **design using a black background and white text/graphics**. In projection, white is light, and black is the absence of light. We want your message to shine! The black background won't show up, so your text will shine alone. Using a boxy white background is much less aesthetically pleasing.
- **Be clear and concise: Use as few words as possible.** An image with two to six words is best. The text should fill most of the canvas, to ensure it can be read from long distances. If it helps, think of what you might put on a protest sign or sticker.
- **Colors should be very limited.** We tend to say that it should work in black and white. This isn't only due to technical concerns, but also because strong contrast grabs the attention of passersby. Many people choose to include a third color such as a bold red or yellow. Certain surfaces (white and light grey) allow for much more color than others.
- **Fonts:** Try to use font sizes 140 pt and larger. Small text is hard to read! Avoid textured fonts - use solid fonts for maximum readability. **IMPORTANT:** If you're making a series of slides meant to be read together, keep the font on the same lines of the slides, to keep the text from jumping around.
- If possible, include animation that draws the eye. Think about adding a few frames of animation when projecting the same image for a long time, e.g. a 5 frame animation looping every 5 or 10 seconds, something to catch people's attention. Keep in mind complexities may be lost due to aforementioned concerns.
- We encourage you to keep the hashtags on social media and off of buildings. If your organization has a hashtag or URL that you absolutely need, make it bold, or perhaps include an image in which this identifier is in the forefront.
- **The best format is a .mov file and a folder of images** (jpeg or png, preferably). This makes it easier for us to loop your content, or hold a particularly powerful slide for a photographer.
- **Show us an early draft!** We can give solid advice as to the composition and design.

We know what works and what doesn't. **Don't produce content last minute**, we want this to succeed as much as you do.

- **Photo/Video Content:** We can't project photos or video at all locations, due to factors involving distance, light pollution, and surface viability. That said, location allowing, we can do full color projections, but please allow some extra lead time for us to review and edit content with you to make sure everyone in your project will be visible on the building.

### *Scouting Locations*

We have a few favorite locations, but you may wish to discover your own location, or place the projection on a building of symbolic importance. The following are very important to keep in mind.

Best:

- Mostly blank, flat walls with light colored surfaces
- Little or no light pollution at night
- Near active pedestrian and traffic visibility
- With a suitable spot for van parking or projector setup

Not good:

- Dark colored buildings, glass buildings, walls w/ busy ads on them - nothing really shows up on these surfaces that can be easily read.
- Windows – projections go through glass, which means that both the image won't show up, and that you may very well be disturbing the person who lives behind the window.
- Surfaces with a lot of light already cast on them (street lights, building lights, etc)
- Buildings with a lot of texture or nettings make projections only visible to people within about 15 degrees viewing angle behind the projector (because the edges/protrusions break the light beam). Everyone else just sees abstract light, which can be beautiful, but not great for getting a message out.
- Trees or other tall objects (telephone or electric poles) that obstruct the projector beam
- Beaming across traffic – it's important to keep the projector high enough so as to not blind drivers.