



WildSide Style Guide

This final collection of rules and approaches, represents the look & feel decisions that were made during the production phase of the Schell Games WildSide project for the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium.

“Delightfully Fun!”

The was our visual development mantra for the WildSide experience.

Fun fact, this was actually a quote for a Zoo staff member, mentioned during our preliminary staff interviews.

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Related WildSide Docs

- [Style Guide \[Wildside\]](#)
- [Making WildSide Art \[WildSide\]](#)
- [WildSide Art Implementation \[Wildside\]](#)
- [Visual Development \[WildSide\]](#)
- [Zoo All Hands Meeting](#)



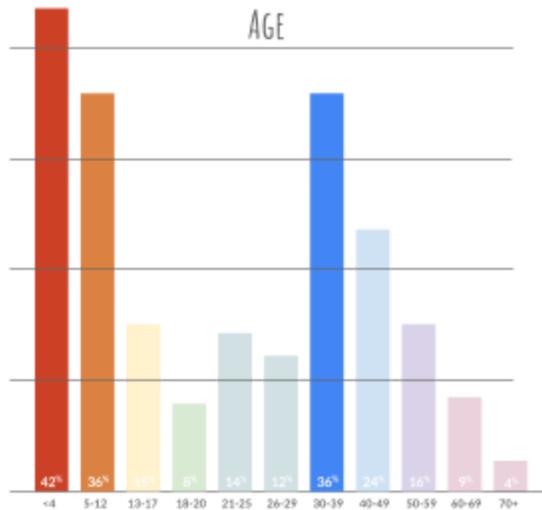
Guest Profiles

In this document, we are going to explore the guest profiles or personas, that have been developed during the WildSide preproduction. This is not to be confused with the profiles developed for the Zoo Staff. For a full breakdown of the profiles we developed, see the [Guest/Staff Profiles presentation](#).

The profiles we developed represent a variety of groups that commonly visit the Zoo.

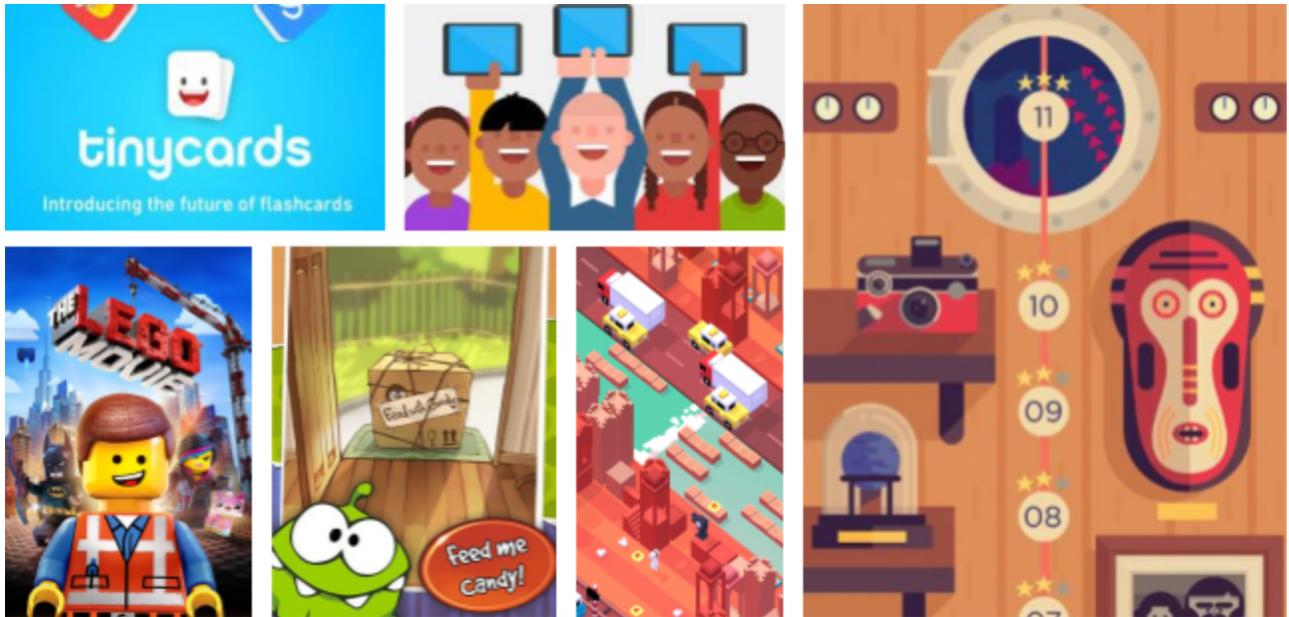
- The Walker
- The Family Outing
- Entertainment for Young Adults
- The Photographer
- School Groups

PERCENTAGE HOUSEHOLDS WITH AT LEAST 1 PERSON OF AGE



In addition to this study we surveyed the zoo guests for specific demographic information. The largest age group represented at the zoo is 4 years old and under. This is then complemented by what we believe to be older siblings in the 5-12 year age, as well as parents or guardians approximately 30-39 years old. The takeaway from these results is that, we would like to target families with kids ages 5 and older to come back to the zoo more than 3 times a year. We feel that this will lead to increased membership. For a full breakdown of our results, see the [Guest Survey Results presentation](#).

The win seems to be in making an experience appealing for children in the 5-12 years old range. Kids tend to yearn for styles and experiences that are above their age range, and with another filter of reading level, we end up targeting 8-10 year olds. Media and games that are most popular in this demographic are creative building and puzzle experiences, along with games containing simple completionist mechanics and simple art styles. Bold colors and minimalist shapes, tend to have a strong presence in this demographic. Below is media popular with the demographic.



Above Examples: Tiny Cards by Duolingo, Lego Movie, Cut the Rope, Crossy Road, and Two Dots



Themes & Styles

Our **theme** has been developed to drive the conceit of our experience, and gives aid or rules to the experience's function. Our **style** then layered on top of this theme, and is the artistic rendering we want the experience to convey. If styling is the form of the app, or theming is the function. These are engineered to empower the interactive opportunities for our previously defined guest profiles.



Initial Theme + Style Chart. For full review see the [Theme & Styles presentation](#).



Mood Board for elements we gravitated towards

We quickly came across a concept we titled as **stylized expeditions**. This was in line with the Zoo's Creative Services department, which was also entertaining a similar conceit while exploring a remake of the Zoo's map. This was based on maps by artist [Steven Stankiewicz](#).



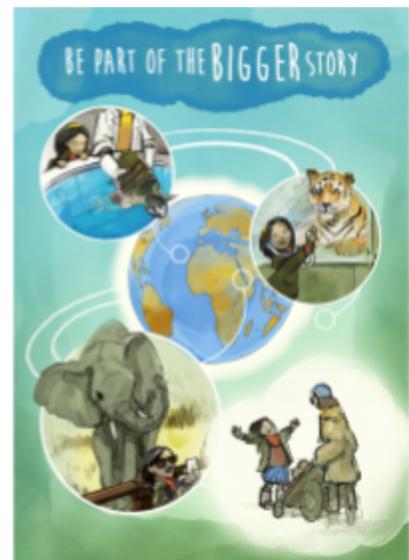
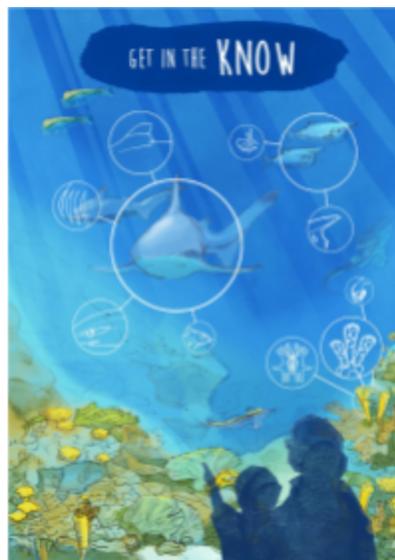
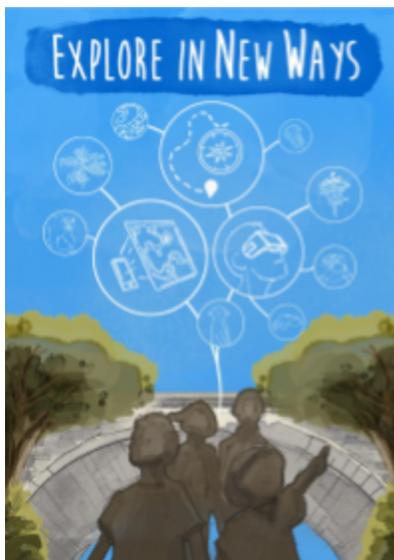
Watercolor Maps by Steven Stankiewicz



Found Pennsylvania park badges by the Pennsylvania Patch Coalition

Style Exploration through Pillars

With all the watercolor influences we were impressed by, we opted to do our first real style exploration for our pillars with a watercolor approach. We found great success in the layering of our brush strokes, with details being rendered as white negative lines.

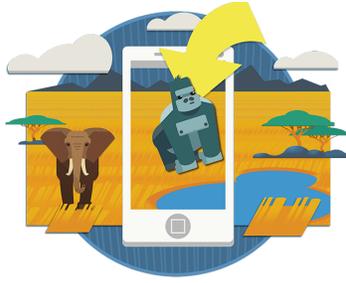


For a full documentation of our pillar progression, [click here](#).



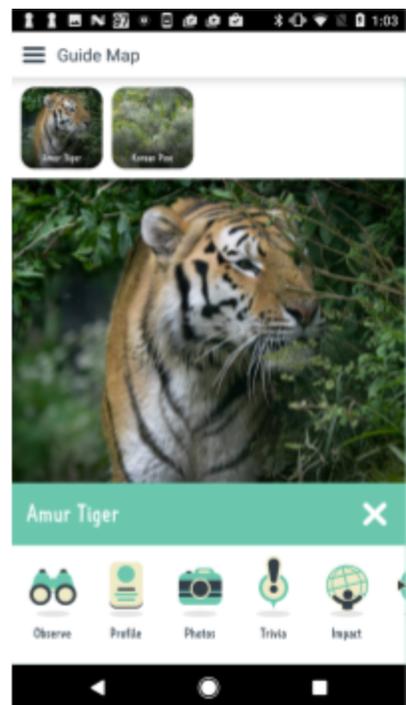
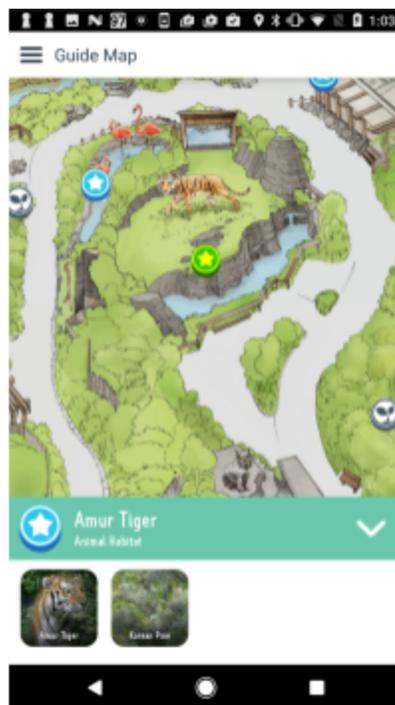
Our major brush styles, that make up the majority of our watercolor assets.

For a full breakdown of our application process, [click here](#).



Layout & Styling

As we bring these elements together, the details in the styling have led us towards open canvases with watercolor details, and contrasting saturated colors on our stark background. With the simple framing approach, the focus can remain on the content, with appropriately sprinkled accents.

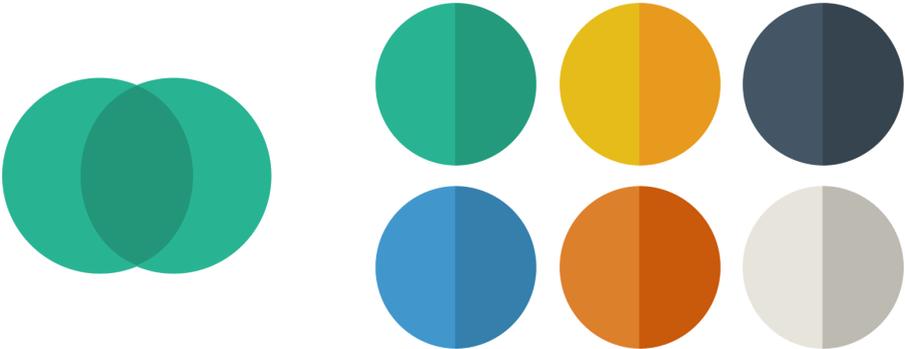


We broke our thinking down into layers of the experience. The map was the base, then the UI layer, followed by the interactive games layer. The way that we approached our thinking about the aesthetic breakdown of these layers, became cyclical in nature. The map was really the core of our interaction and was based on a watercolor approach. The UI layer used many of the same colors, but was very simple in nature, as to not compete with the map. The constraints we established to best simplify our UI style, later influenced the amount of detail in the characters. Lastly, the mini-game assets echoed back the watercolor vibe of the map.

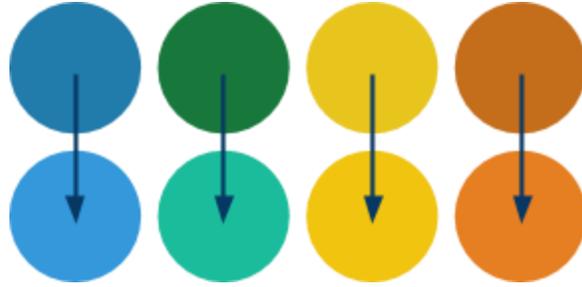


Palettes

We decided to marry a traditional medium with a slightly desaturated version of a modern color palette. The result has given us the feel of energy, inside a traditional framing. We have arranged colors that are more vibrant versions of what you might find in a natural setting. Greens and oranges for the Zoo proper, with blues and yellows for PPG Aquarium. Payne's grey and off-white cream colors for a paper feel. The approach is to frame the animals with a palette that complements them, not competes. Simply put, **slightly desaturated versions of modern colors.**



To best complement the palettes already in the Zoo, we took their core palettes and translated them to an approximation that fits within our color options. See the below image for this transition.



Fonts

For our title text, we've aimed to complement the watercolor approach with a font that has a hand drawn feel. We found that our first font, Moonflower, didn't have the legibility in smaller situations. We searched for a font that would be able to read better at different sizes, and could better complement the style of our mini-game animal assets. The below example is of Argone, which we see being used for most headers and standalone text strings. For content in paragraph format, we are looking to use a simpler sans serif such as Roboto.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 1234567890

Argone was used for headers and subheaders

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 1234567890

Roboto for body copy

Map Visuals

The map was a great starting point for the team to rally around. After solidifying that watercolor approach and shifting the colors of the Zoo's traditional branding palette to something more modern, we worked to find ways to complement the layers of UI that would end up bringing the map's function to bare. From the get go, we focuses on simple silhouettes and interior shape language to allow the UI elements to stand off the map. The Area Marker and UI art both fit this bill, and ended up being a creat complement to the more rendered style of the map. For more information on our thought process on asset creation, check out the [Making WildSide Art presentation](#).



Iconography

As our systems formalized, we found that the mini-game and UI aesthetics began to complement one another more and more. Our goal with icon assets was to make visuals that were both playful yet simple. Our elements tended to be more physical in nature, with dimension through the rendering of actual objects, complemented by either shading or shadows for anchoring. Elements of Google Material Design, provided initial constraints for our exploration, which influenced our preliminary layer and shape language, though we finally ended up going with less depth.



Highlight iconography



Digital Signage iconography



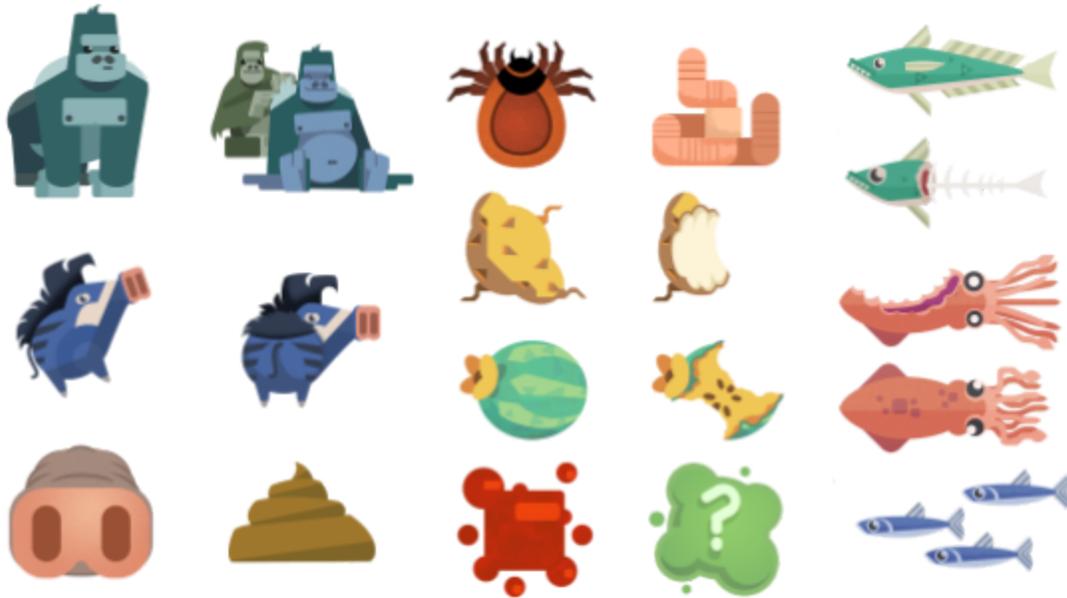
Adventure iconography

Mini-game Assets

Much like the route that map assets went, elements of our mini-games were simpler in silhouette and inner detail, with narrow color palettes. This was primarily due to the quickness in which people needed to digest these iconic game elements and the feedback they were giving. Below are some of the key elements from a few of our mini-games, many of which went on to be the basis for Area Markers. For more information on our thought process on asset creation, check out the [Making WildSide Art presentation](#).



The soundboard from Zooreka



Assets from Gorilla, Warty Pig, and Sea Lion mini-games



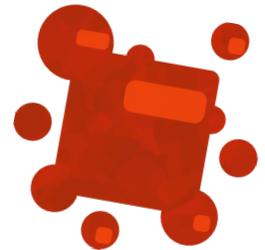
Audio

It was clear early on that this app was going to be large, so we approached audio very carefully. Our previous experiences taught us that users expect sound effects when interacting with a game, and they tend to NOT want sound effects when interacting with an app. Since the bulk of this project leaned more towards an app, we decided to keep our audio efforts focused on the special moments and the “micro-games”, which helped us to keep our audio footprint relatively small.



Since this app is meant to be primarily experienced outside, at the zoo, with your family, the sounds needed to be able to be easily heard and quickly understood. While hyper-realistic sounds could be a nice approach, it became clear to us that a more playful and exaggerated style would communicate to the users best.

The exaggerated squish sound of the ticks in the tick-picking game got a real visceral reaction from players that was simultaneously filled with disgust and joy. Beyond the fact that pigs sound like horrifying demon monsters when recorded, we came to realize that more cartoony animal sounds were more easily understood by players, so I worked to combine realism with the exaggerated, for example combining realistic Rhino sounds with cartoony mud splatters.



In the GPS-based microgames, we needed to give the player feedback even when they weren't looking at their phones, which lead us to use more gamified and playful sounds and less realistic animal sounds. With Zooreka, we gave the power of the sounds to the players by providing them with a sound bar. Again, the focus here was to create playful sounds that communicated their meaning quickly.



For the more musical-based sfx (success, failure, and Zooreka title), again the focus was playfulness rooted in the zoo/wildlife theme. I chose percussive instruments for both their cultural implications and their ability to be easily heard and understood and then paired them with playful and cartoony sounds (i.e. sparkles). The Zooreka Title went the other way, I recorded a playful vocal and paired it with some silly animal sounds to ground it in the zoo experience.