THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF COVER DESIGN

KATIE GARLAND

Q: "SO WHAT, ARE YOU GOING TO TEACH ME HOW TO DIY MY COVERS?"

A: NOPE!

OK, THEN WHAT'S THE POINT OF THE CLASS?

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I WANT YOU TO FEEL CONFIDENT IN YOUR COVER CREATION JOURNEY. WHETHER YOU ARE CHOOSING A DESIGNER, SHOPPING FOR A PREMADE, OR DIY-ING YOUR OWN COVER, THERE IS VALUABLE INFO FOR EVERYONE!

WHAT WE'LL COVER

• Aspects of a Good Cover

• Market Research

• The Cover Design Process (for both DIY & Commissions)

    • Hiring, tools, sourcing assets, choosing art styles, etc

• Tips for publishing via POD (print-on-demand) models

THE MAKINGS OF A GOOD COVER

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DISCLAIMER: THIS CAN BE VERY
SUBJECTIVE, BUT IN GENERAL...
KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN MIND:

THE MAKINGS OF A GOOD COVER

- Strong composition
- Easy-to-read typography
- High contrast
- Consistency (within and across)
- Balance & breathing room
- "Fits the genre"

- Appeals to the target audience
- Personality
- Proper sizing
- Clear/unified message
- Ethically sourced assets
- Appropriate licensing

PERSONALITY MEANS
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WRONG!!!!

I MEAN, TRENDS HAVE TO START SOMEWHERE, RIGHT? BUT IF YOUR GOAL IS TO CONSISTENTLY MAKE MONEY, YOU GOTTA PLAY IT SMART: YOUR COVER NEEDS TO COMMUNICATE TO READERS EXACTLY WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN THEY PICK UP YOUR BOOK!

HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH THIS?

MARKET RESEARCH!

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HONESTLY, THIS IS YOUR
MOST IMPORTANT JOB
WHEN WRITING YOUR BOOK
>> KNOW YOUR COMPS
>> KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

WHAT SHOULD YOUR COVER LOOK LIKE?

REAL PEOPLE PHOTOS?
VECTOR/ILLUSTRATION?
LANDSCAPES?
OBJECTS?
TYPOGRAPHY-ONLY?
HOW ARE ELEMENTS LAID OUT?
WHAT TYPES OF EFFECTS ARE USED?

THE EASIEST WAY TO
CHECK FOR TRENDS?

LOOK AT THE BESTSELLER PAGES ON AMAZON.

STAY TUNED – MORE VISUAL EXAMPLES WILL BE SHOWN SEPARATELY! ;)

COVER DESIGN PROCESS

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- Market research
- Choose an art style
- Source assets
- Determine sizing
- Create the design

- Check design for grayscale & thumbnails size
- Export all formats needed
- Order proofs-recommended
- Publish!

WHAT SHOULD I HAVE NAILED DOWN WHEN HIRING A DESIGNER

- Budget
- Exact Genre
- Comp titles
- Trim size
- Page color + cover finish

- Est. page count
- Character/location details
- Book synopsis
- Art style/vibe
- Examples of things you like

TOOLS & RESOURCES FOR DIY

- For designing:
  - Adobe Photoshop
  - Adobe Illustrator
  - Affinity Photo
  - Affinity Designer
  - Canva Pro
  - Adobe Express
- YouTube: follow some tutorials
- Platform help pages/Templates

- For stock photos:
  - Depositphotos
  - Adobe Stock (can filter out AI)
  - Arcangel (PREMIUM photography)
  - Bookish Photography
  - Period Images
- For fonts:
  - Creative Market
  - Creative Fabrica

PREMADE COVER SHOPPING TIPS

- Consider your book title
- Test it for grayscale
- Vet the designer/company
- Make sure it's sold only once
- Reverse image search
- Check available formats

- Ask designer for stock images used/proof of licensing
- Pay attention to turnaround time
- Find out if there is series continuation potential
- Verify the deliverables
- Get appropriate licensing

COVER DESIGNER SHOPPING TIPS

- Choose a designer who has the style you want in their portfolio (or evidence that they can do it if not)

- Watch turnaround times/ waitlists - you may need to hire them early on!

- Find out their process

- Be vigilant about contracts & payment methods

- Check their Gen AI policies

- Make sure in budget - or find out about payment plans

COVER DESIGNER SHOPPING TIPS

- Check their portfolio against the cheatsheet given

- See what extra services they might provide

- Determine the deliverables they provide

- Confirm licensing options

- Ask about policies for changes and series continuations

- Find out where they source their assets / whether you need to provide them

- Look for potential add'tl fees

ARTIST SHOPPING TIPS

- Choose someone in budget!

- Vet them for plagiarism/AI

- Make sure they do the style you want (DO NOT ask them to mimic another artist's style)

- Make sure they offer appropriate licensing now or

that it's available to add on later

- Make sure you can have another designer can add typography to the design

- Work with contracts and proper payment methods

CONSIDER YOUR PRINTING PROCESS

## IF YOU USE POD: TEMPER YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS!

POD PROVIDERS HAVE GENEROUS PRINT ALLOWANCES

INGRAMSPARK: 1/16" (2MM)
AMAZON 1/8" (3.2MM)

BEST PRACTICES FOR POD COVERS:

- Avoid borders in the design
- Use full-wrap images when possible
- Avoid hard lines along the spine edge
- Use provided templates
- Follow measurements exactly
- Choose colors/finish wisely
- Expect variances
- Plan for the barcode
- Don't forget the bleed
- Use generous margins
- Don't be lazy, keep it looking professional!

ACCESS THE SLIDES + RESOURCES AT: SAPPHY.BIZ/TWG-COVERS
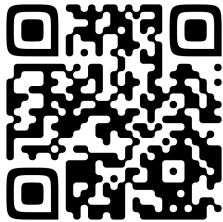
NEED HELP? GRAB MY CONTACT INFO ON THE NEXT SLIDE!

GET IN TOUCH WITH ME

PSST, YOU CAN SCAN THIS TO ADD ME TO YOUR CONTACTS!

(Assuming the resolution is good enough!)