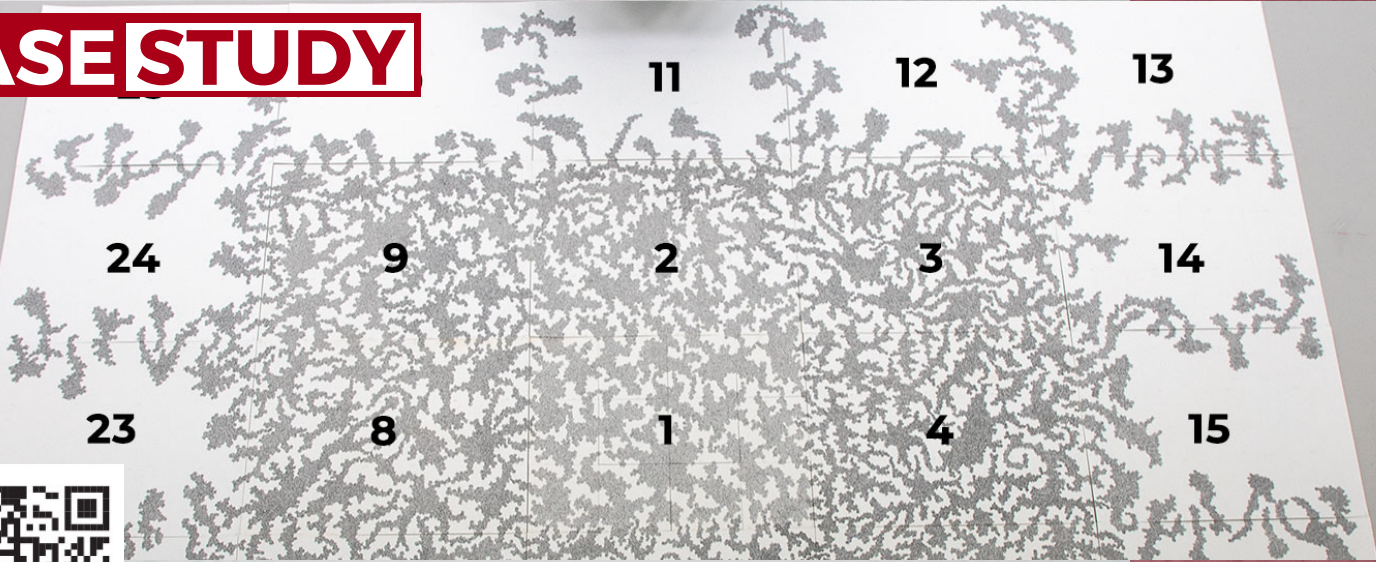


CASE STUDY



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Handmade Social Media

Studio Fiveiteen teams with Metalcraft to reimagine "social media"

BACKGROUND

It's safe to say pretty much everyone is on social media these days creating and consuming content and growing digital relationships. Some may argue we've gone too far and rather than connecting people, social media is actually disconnecting them. That's something Anna Clark pondered as she worked to bring her purpose-driven project, LLLinked®, to life. Clark, owner of Studio Fiveiteen — a digital design and production studio in Iowa City, IA — wanted to use her skills and love for puzzles to create a work of art that linked people.

OPPORTUNITY/CHALLENGE

Clark developed the concept for LLLinked® during a graduate drawing course at the University of Iowa when she wanted her drawing to continue beyond a single sheet of paper. "I didn't want it to stop. I wanted it to keep growing," Clark said. Taking her idea a step further, she also envisioned cutting her drawing into squares and creating a puzzle. So, Clark invented a process of butting sheets of paper together, using an XY grid to organize them, cutting them into squares, and selling the squares — essentially creating an ongoing work of art and a puzzle at the same time — and LLLinked® was born.

Clark wanted a way for owners of LLLinked® squares to discover one another as well as a permanent way to identify and authenticate each individual square and felt a QR code and Radio Frequency Identification, or RFID technology, was the way to go. She went online to research the right label to help complete her vision and found Metalcraft, a company based in Mason City, IA, specializing in durable, custom identification products. She appreciated Metalcraft, like her own company, is in Iowa.

"I would love to see LLLinked® squares in the hands of a diverse group of people from around the world. We are all pieces of an interconnected web of creation and that is something I learned while drawing LLLinked®."

ANNA CLARK

Owner, Studio Fiveiteen

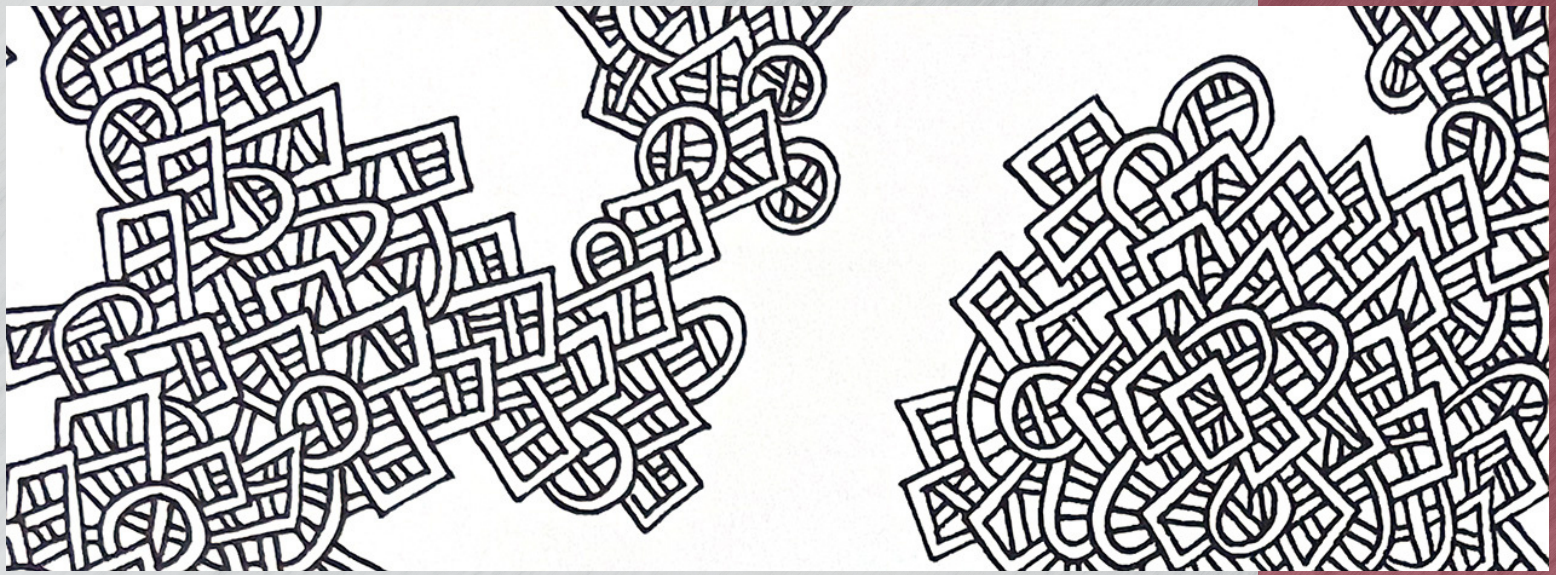


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SOLUTION

When it comes to labeling a piece of art, no ordinary label will do. LLLinked® itself is printed on archival paper to resist yellowing, etc. with age. Consequently, the label needed to meet archival standards as well. In addition, the label could not exceed 2" to ensure it would fit within a designated space on the back of each square. Working with the Metalcraft team, Clark decided on a QR code printed on a semigloss paper label with a Smartrac Circus SLix2 RFID inlay and an acid-free archival adhesive to protect the integrity of the piece. The Metalcraft team also helped to perfectly size the LLLinked® logo so that it would blend seamlessly within the matrix barcode.

After purchasing and receiving their artwork, LLLinked® owners can register their square online at www.LLLinked.art, create an owner profile, and, if they choose, connect with other LLLinked® owners.

"LLLlinked® uses ink to link people both digitally and physically and is a catalyst for social interaction. Not only in the present, but as time goes on it links people to the past and the future," explains Clark. "It is up to each individual owner how much they share about themselves and if they choose to connect with other owners online and/or in person."

What's the goal of this project for Clark? "I believe there is an epidemic of loneliness in our world today. That social media is making us anti-social, anxious, and disconnecting us from what makes us human. My goal is to redefine 'social media' and create art that physically exists when random people choose to meet in person and create it together. If LLLinked® creates new relationships and stories to share, my vision will be realized," Clark said. "The ultimate goal of LLLinked® isn't to see the entire puzzle put together. The goal is to see what happens and to see what is created when people choose to come together."

She hopes the individual squares become part of an overall legacy – passed down from one generation to the next. On the back of every LLLinked® square is a message from Clark that asks the owner to journey to Iowa City on May 18, 2077 and every 10 years thereafter, meet other owners, and bring it to life. Why that date? It's Clark's 100th birthday. However, given feedback Clark has already received from some LLLinked® owners, she may start organizing events for the not so distant future.

Officially launched in October 2021, Clark has big dreams for her self-proclaimed "purpose project." Increased visibility, a shareable video that explains the process and the vision, and exposure at art festivals will certainly help get the word out. "I would love to see LLLinked® squares in the hands of a diverse group of people from around the world," Clark said. "We are all pieces of an interconnected web of creation and that is something I learned while drawing LLLinked®."

For more information about the LLLinked® story or to own a square of the art yourself, visit www.LLLinked.art

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RESULT



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