

MUSIC PRODUCTION ACADEMY

Social Media Branding Guideline
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by Efe Özülkü

Welcome

This guideline will outline the design philosophy that MPA will follow on its social media channels in order to establish a strong visual brand identity that ultimately strengthens ties with the MPA community and new coming members. This guideline is specifically for the channels of TikTok, Instagram and Facebook, although heavier emphasis on Instagram and TikTok. The guideline is divided to different parts, based on the type of post. The last section deals with the curation of these said posts in order to balance them out and not have one type of post outweigh others in the social media feeds.

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1. Introduction to the MPA design philosophy

The main goal of this guideline is to attribute specific characteristics to specific types of posts, so that the users can easily identify the different types of content from one another and MPA's contents from competitors in a quick and easy way. We work with color and filters, templates and different media formats; ultimately posting what we already are, and adding more to it with a better presentation and more content.

The following design nuances apply to all the following sections:

Fonts

MPA in its social media branding only uses **two fonts**

CIRCULA is used solely for titles and slogans that are shorter than 7 words. You can download **CIRCULA** here.

Avenir is used for any other text, paragraph, infographic and slogans longer than 7 words. You can download **Avenir** here.

Occasional third fonts can be used for themed events and occasions (e.g. **BATTLE OF THE BEATS: HALLOWEEN EDITION**). Though, mostly prefer to use two fonts.

Less is more

A gimmick especially for Instagram, less is more is a philosophy we need to follow in order to balance the effort put into the posts and their catchiness. Having less in quantity but higher in quality posts will benefit us more than having lower quality and too busy content. Sleek, clean and higher quality designs will also help users recognize the design quicker. Also a simpler design is much easier to recreate and reproduce.

DO	AVOID
	

DO

- Simple with two fonts
- The compartments, especially once standardized, will immediately signal the user that any post in this format is an Event announcement/promotion by MPA to the user

AVOID

- Too independent design, not following a specific 'event banner' style
- Uncommon text used in the title
- Background image cool but not brand-friendly, also makes the image too busy
- Great on its own, but does not communicate that it's a Masterclass by MPA immediately

Balanced curation

A key aspect of presenting this content correctly will also deal with the frequency in which they are posted. While posting a specific type of content will do no good (e.g. two community posts in a row, more on next section); but mixing content will engage the user more as they will not get bored of the content since the type is constantly changing. The last part of this guideline will more clearly illustrate the type of balanced curation with a mock-up of what our feed could look like if it follows all of these guidelines.

In short...

... Keep it simple, sleek, standardized and high quality. Don't worry that it's going to get repetitive or boring, because:

1. Organized > Messy, and organization creates sense of legitimacy and prestige
2. Since the content types will circulate, the user will be seeing new types of content every day and
3. Creating simple yet recognizable visuals is more valuable in the long run to our ties with the community, than showing off flashy, busy visuals that don't follow guidelines. Flashy and over-the-top visuals are fun for one-time visitors; but they are very difficult to re-create, and hard to associate with a specific branch of our products since they don't follow any core design principles.

The following sections will give guidelines for all types of posts that MPA should work with. Remember that following all of these steps is necessary to achieve the bigger picture, so it's better to not post at all than to post without following these tips.

2. Community Posts

- Community posts include
 - Event recaps (photos and movies, see below),
 - Course content + graduation photos,
 - MPA location content that does not promote a specific product (e.g. a photo of the lounge)

Step-by-step guide on how to take and edit a photo for an MPA COMMUNITY POST

Ingredients

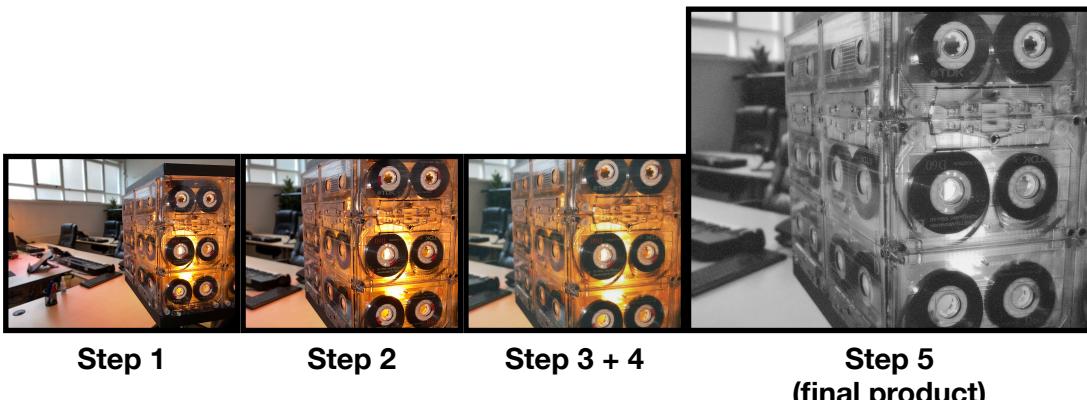
- DazzCam app (App Store & Google Play Store)
- Phone camera with flash on
- Something to take a photo of

Steps

1. Take a photo of your subject with flash on. Even if the photo is in daylight.
2. Crop the image to either 1:1 (square) **or** 5:4 (rectangle) aspect ratio.
3. Open the DazzCam app on your device and select the filter: “CPM35” 
4. Upload your photo and download it with the filter on. This filter is to give the image a vintage, grainy effect.
5. Go back to your photo gallery and select **edit** photo. Go to **saturation** settings and set the saturation to **zero**. This will turn the photo into black and white.

Done!

Example:



- Every community post must go through this process. You can still do this if there is a good photo but isn't taken with flash. Flash photos are always preferred since it makes the photo look more like a film camera image.
- Never two community posts back to back. It will disrupt the feed as a whole when two black and white photos are next to one another.

- The tutorial above applies for the first photo of the post. You may or may not follow this editing technique for the rest of the photos in the same post. But the first post must always look like this.
- Use the above tutorial to create **after movie thumbnails as well, since they are categorized under community posts (SEE 7. Long-duration circulating videos)**.
- When making a carousel post (one post with multiple photos in the slider), try to limit the quantity to 3-5, as people's attention spans are low and we want to show the very best photos.
- Never use any text on these photos or thumbnails. Instead, write it in the caption and let the photo speak for itself.
- If you can't edit the photo following the guide above, either contact Efe; or don't post until you find the resources/time to edit it properly.

3. Event and Masterclass Promotional Posts

- Event posts include:
 - Masterclass announcements and reminders
 - Community event announcements and reminders
 - Competition announcements, reminders and prize reveals
 - Open house announcements and reminders
 - Everything else that you think counts as an event post
 - **NOT** event recaps! They are long duration videos (see 7).

Design principles of Event and Masterclass Promotional Posts

- Event and Masterclass posts have key pieces of information that must be communicated clearer than anything else:
 - When is it?
 - What is it about?
 - The question of “where” isn’t as prominent since almost all of our events take place at MPA. Still, every post must include the company name.
- **Avenir** font for:
 - Date (**Bold**)
 - Time (Regular)
 - Event Title (**BOLD, ALL CAPS**)
 - if applicable, Masterclass Artist (REGULAR, ALL CAPS))
- **CIRCULA** font for company name and short slogans (REGULAR, ALL CAPS)

Visual Guideline

MPA EVENT OR MASTERCLASS POSTS ***

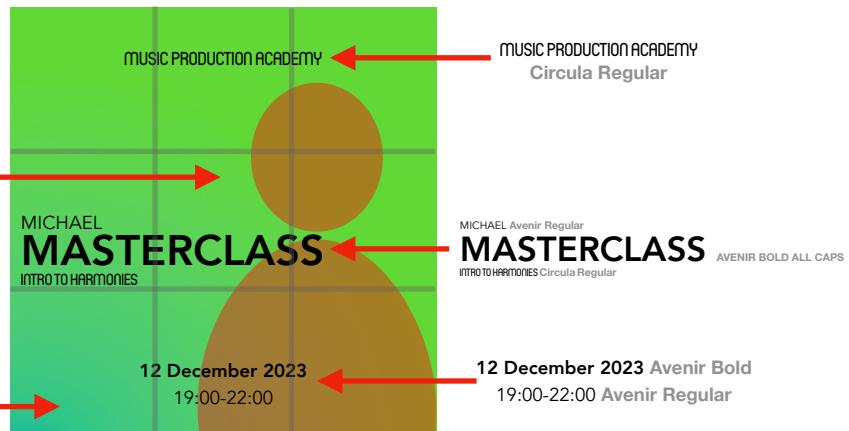
Instagram Post (Aspect Ratio: 1:1)

Place masterclass artist image to the opposite hand side of where the title is placed; for instance, the title here is on the left side so the artist is placed towards the right side. This creates balance in the image as a whole.

Use the *rule of thirds*, and place the artist on either one of the vertical grey lines shown in the example. This works with any aspect ratio.

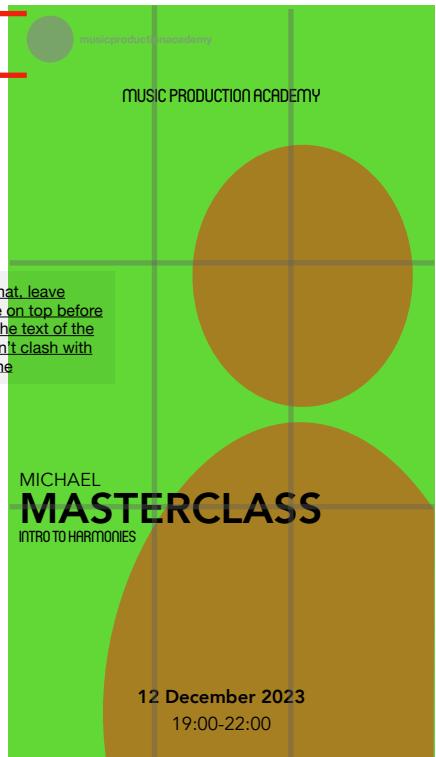
Try to place the face of the artist in between the "Music Production Academy" and "Artist name" "MASTERCLASS" texts to make sure there is no text covering their face. The intersections of the grey lines are focal points and are preferred for important features to be placed.

Color overlay with a gradient starting from semi-transparent to completely transparent, layer in between the photo and the text. This will add cohesion between different event posts on the feed and allow people to identify them easier through vibrant colors.



Instagram Story (Aspect Ratio: 9:16)

In story format, leave some space on top before the text so the text of the image doesn't clash with the username

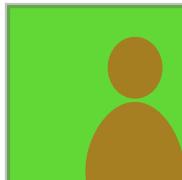


Instagram Post (Aspect Ratio: 1:1)

Even in event posts advertising something that doesn't need a person to be on the banner, the focal point of the image can still be placed to the post using rule of thirds (e.g. where the star is).



Bottom layer image



Middle layer color overlay



Top layer text



Examples



- All event announcement posts must go through the process to achieve a completely cohesive look for the event posts.
- If an event needs more variations (e.g. announcement of prizes, reminders etc.), different creative designs can be made as long as it includes the same middle layer of the first post for that event (same color overlay) and top text (Music Production Academy) and bottom text (Date, time) always in the same spots.
- Try not to post two event promotional posts back to back

Monthly Event Calendars

As an establishment that has frequent events, we should also be publishing an event calendar at the beginning of every month; showcasing the currently planned masterclasses, events, course registration deadlines etc. This will not only inform our followers about the happenings at MPA beforehand, but will also push us to make sure we have all of the upcoming month's events sorted out before the month begins. Also it's always a nice image to pin to our Instagram profile in showing abundance and vibrancy of the life at MPA.

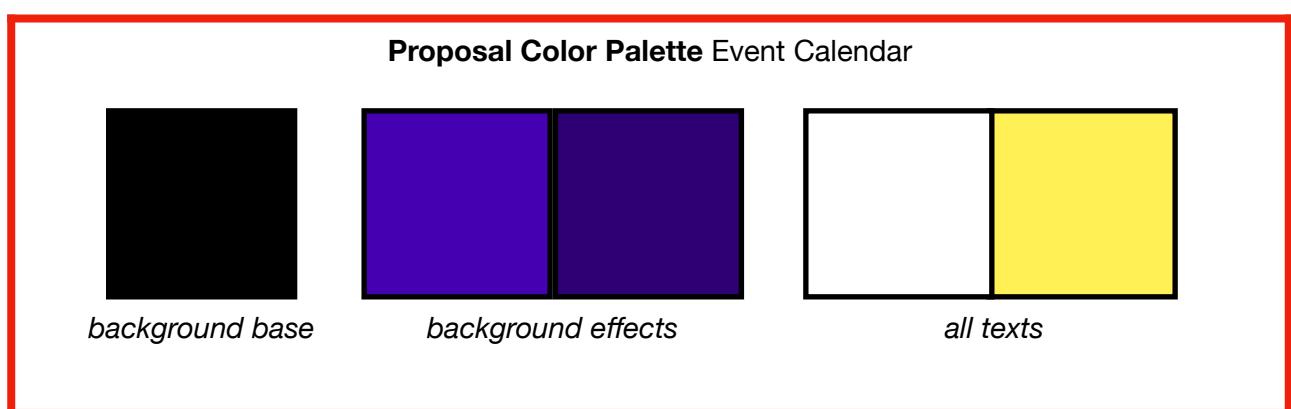
We have done this once very successfully for 2023 September events, and should continue doing it.



September 2023 Event Calendar

The layout and design of this Event Calendar is very clear and sleek. The few changes that need to be done in following the new design principles would be:

- USE CIRCULAR FONT FOR THE TITLE (EVENT CALENDAR)
- Avenir font for the rest (**Bold for dates**, regular for event names)
- Preferably choose and stick to one color palette, and decrease the number of extra visual effects from the background (e.g. only use either the smoke effect or line art)
 - *below you will find a proposal for the color palette for event calendars*



4. Product Promotion Posts

- Product promotion posts include:
 - Course promotional posts
 - Studio rent promotional posts
 - Deal/discount promotional posts

The promotional posts will showcase a more serious and legitimate side of MPA social media, where we will promote our trustworthy services in an elegant way to make a good impression on the user that's giving MPA services a chance. These posts must be reserved in "fun", and be more sleek in order to signal professionalism (and justify the pricing that they will soon learn about). The product posts in themselves should also hold a cohesive visual aesthetic, so that users going into our socials with the clear goal of getting information about classes, studios etc. know where to land their eyes quickly.

Below you will see a proposal for these product posts and how they may look like:

Proposal design for MPA product posts and examples



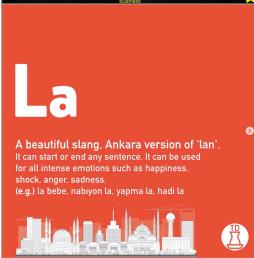
Color palette infographics



5. Infographics (aka. Producer Templates)

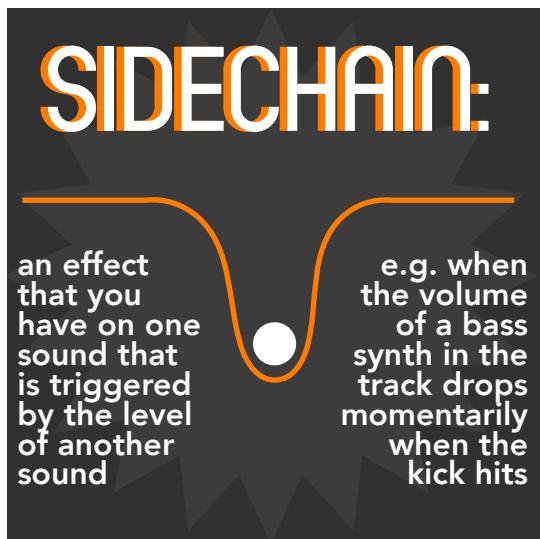
- Infographics are small bits of informative content on text presented in a visually appealing and captivating way
- These posts are used to engage with the audience, remind them of our services and music-led education, and preview the content of our greater products (courses, studio rent, events etc.)

Example infographics from Instagram

	<p>Infographics usually include small and captivating yet simple illustrations to signal the content of the infographic prior to the user reading it. This plays a key role in convincing the user to read it; as in the case of uninteresting use of images, they will simply pass without reading.</p>
	<p>Infographics are also very clear, with short text and captivating titles that are specifically designed to be seen from Instagram's grid view, which makes the posts appear smaller. The larger text enables users to see the content prior to expanding the post - which leads to them wanting to read more.</p>
	<p>Some infographics are in the form of carousel posts: where the first photo in the post acts as a cover for the content, and the post gets more in-detail with more text in the following photos in the carousel.</p>

- In the case of Music Production Academy, infographics can help reach new audiences by appearing on their explore feeds, without the need for paid advertisement. With the collaboration of MPA's teachers, this can become a low-cost yet highly productive form of content creation.
- In designing infographics, simplicity and effectiveness is key. Infographics are only appealing because they indicates snack-size pieces of information communicated quickly. Therefore it is key to not overcrowd an infographic, and keep it as simple as possible.
- The following page includes a potential infographic design for MPA's feed. The colors in this design can be interchangeable with the color palette - as long as it uses the colors from the palette. Using consistently the same colors and similar designs are vital in embedding the visual of an MPA infographic into the user's selective conscience.

Proposal design for MPA infographics and examples



- Clear readable text
- Big letters
- Contrasting colors and color blocking
- No paragraphs
- Pretty to look at
- Cohesive among themselves, color palette not exited
- Two fonts max:
 - Titles - CIRCULA REGULAR
 - Short slogans - CIRCULA REGULAR
 - Info sentences - Avenir Bold
- PNG images can be integrated in places that don't disrupt the balance and text
- These posts **must always be square for them to look good on the Instagram feed!**



Color palette infographics



- The infographics (producer templates) project will work hand in hand with the graphic designers (Marco, Efe) and teachers of MPA
- Whenever time is suitable, a meeting with the teachers will be held where they will provide with short, bite-sized interesting information regarding music production. It's even better if these information comes from the actual courses they are teaching: so we can also use these posts as teaser-style promotional material for these courses.
- After a list is made, designing process will start. It's best to make a large quantity of these posts at once and have them in our disposal whenever we want to heighten social media engagement.
- Moreover, once we have around 10 templates, we can start recycling the templates in different colors and post them as far as possible from the last time the same template is posted.

6. Short-duration disposable videos (TikTok + Instagram)

- Short duration disposable videos include any post in video form that is less than 1 minute long (excluding professionally shot promotional videos, see next section)
- The content of these short disposable videos vary, is open ended and constantly developing
- The aim of these videos are to source a low-effort high-quantity means of content creation that is suitable and optimized for the modern video-heavy content creation and marketing tactics.
- All of these videos will be posted both on TikTok and Instagram channels, preferably at the same time.
- These posts may or may not be added to the Instagram Feed, as the Reels form allows for such preference.
- The goal is to produce and publish 2-3 of these videos per week.
- These videos will be filmed and posted **exclusively in vertical phone format (9:16)**

Content

These short videos are characterized by their laid-back aura and low-budget pride: an attempt to connect with the day-to-day consumer and showing the human side of the company. Hence why it is essential to not overdo these videos, and not to show the same effort and budget as to that of long-duration circulating videos. This content is meant to be produced and consumed quickly, and not necessarily become a canon piece of MPA media. These videos will follow trends and be very up to date on what the consumers are interested at the time; and because of that, excessive awareness of TikTok and Instagram Reels trends is crucial. The content will showcase:

- life at MPA,
- quirky and fun activities and concepts,
- short edits of longer event recaps (or trailers thereof)
- short informative content by MPA teachers
 - and more!

Again, the content of these videos are to be pretty open-ended and in-the-spot, so if you have a fun video idea that is presentable under 60 seconds, it probably works!

The content is prepared mainly by Efe in collaboration with the rest of the MPA Team and Teachers.

Presentation on socials

Although these videos are fun and laid back in their content, they still must look in line with the rest of the MPA visual branding, especially for **Instagram**. And this cohesion will be achieved through the use of **thumbnails**. Instagram Reels gives you the option to upload thumbnails from camera roll prior to posting, which is the feature we will exploit here.

For every short-duration video, there must be a thumbnail that:

- Signals visually that this is a short video without use of any text
- Eye-catching and if applicable, funny
- Relates to the content of the video
- If possible, a bit clickbait-y!

The following page outlines possible thumbnail formats for short-duration videos.

Thumbnail ideas for short-duration disposable content

DO



- Capture the most interesting frames of the video as thumbnails
- Make sure they are colorful and easily understandable visuals



- Thumbnails should illustrate the video content, here the video is about the Jamback Masterclass, so works perfectly!
- For event recaps, make sure to make the thumbnail an image of the artist so the content is easily identifiable among others

AVOID



- Avoid filming these short videos in horizontal mode, and avoid even more selecting a thumbnail that doesn't work vertically. They will work on the main feed, but once the user enables the Reels feed, it appears like this. Instead, try to select thumbnails that work both in a vertical and square configuration to make sure they look pretty everywhere
- If the video is horizontal (in the case of a long-duration video), still upload a vertical thumbnail from own gallery. This can be a vertical screenshot of a cool scene from the video



- Avoid generating automatic thumbnails, these usually turn out pretty bad like this one that's in motion
- You can still select an image from the video itself, but make sure it's not blurry and is easily understandable

7. Long-duration circulating videos (Instagram + YouTube + Facebook)

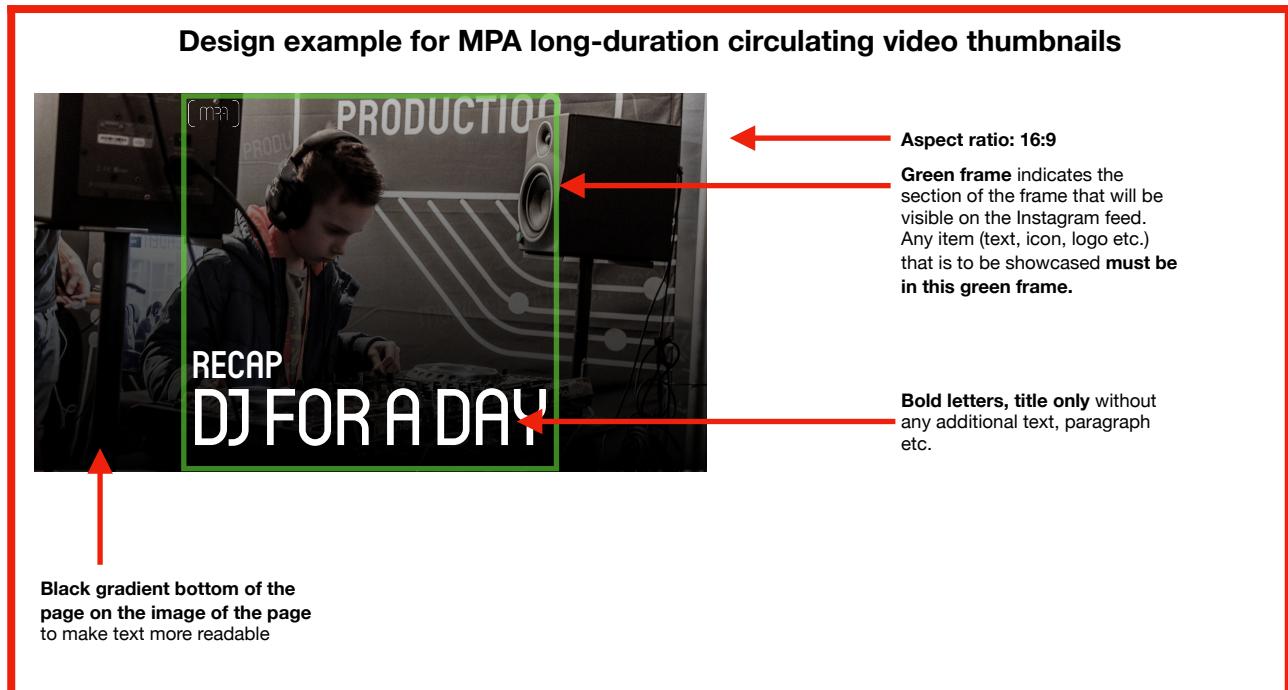
- Long-duration circulating videos include:
 - Full size event recaps >1 minute
 - Professionally shot promotional videos
 - Masterclass snippets
 - Interviews, Q&A videos (>1 minute)

The main distinguishing factor between short and long duration videos (besides well, *duration*,) is professional production. Unlike short-duration disposable videos, these long-duration ones are meant to make comebacks, be promoted and become part of the recurring MPA media. These are the videos that require professional camera filming, sound system if possible, and more detailed editing. There is no aspect ratio requirement for these, as most of them will be shot horizontally in order to be suitable for YouTube and Facebook advertising; but if needed can be converted to vertical forms as well for story-format advertising. These are also the videos that will be integrated to the MPA website.

The content of these videos are demand and project-based: based on if we need a promotional video for a course, if the teachers are available to make short interviews in preparation for a Full-Course registration season, if we should advertise the studios more etc. Since this is the only subcategory of social media content that requires a full budget, the details of this will be consulted with the core MPA team once performance research indicates that such professional video is needed in that moment. We are already quite experienced with these videos, seen especially with the last couple (e.g. EMA x MPA Jam Session recap & Group Activities video).

The one aspect of these videos that can be foreseeable in design would be, like every other entry in this guideline, their appearance on the social media channels. As will be completely illustrated in the next section, we will need to create a cohesive look for these type of videos in order to organize them visually among other content. And just like in the previous section, we will achieve this through using **thumbnails**.

Below you will find an example on how the thumbnails can look like:



8. Bigger picture, curating media and how to keep track

You've made it finally to the conclusion of this overly-done social media branding guideline! By this page you might be already overwhelmed after having gone through so many types of posts: *where do we start?* This is a proposal for a branding move that will take time and be built with every post, over time. The key here is to disperse the aforementioned media types evenly around in order to not be repetitive, and remain fun and interesting to visit. Some media types are easier to make than others, and hence some of them will be more in number on our feed than others (e.g. *the long-duration videos vs. community posts*). The first step to be taken is to prepare some of these posts, preferably from a variety of post types. Once we have a nice amount of content we're proud of, we will slowly start posting them and introduce the new social media design of MPA to our loyal followers. We will be organized with this, preferably having classified all of the content forms above in different folders on Google Drive; accompanied by an all-accessed frequently visited and updated posting schedule in the form of an Excel sheet.

Below you will find a mockup of what our Instagram feed should look like if this branding guideline is followed.

