SKA
A Brief History
Thesis

The goal of this project was to create a series of naturalistic portraits combined with more two-dimensional backgrounds in order to showcase my design skills, and solidify a portfolio as a naturalistic portrait artist. The end product is envisioned as a high quality coffee table book, including full sized posters.
SKA

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By Jacob Melena
SKA

The word is a tricky one. What could it mean? What even is it? Ska is a music genre, named after the guitar sound that is often created in its execution. It has at least five people who claim it as their favorite, and another five who actually know what it is. It could be described as an up-beat synthesis of Jazz and Reggae, but it’s older than Reggae. In fact, Reggae is a musical spinoff of Ska. And it’s not always upbeat. The only “constant” with the genre is a swing-like base line and the inclusion of horns. Yet, these rules are often broken. Frankly, ska can be easily compared to certain... crude material. It can’t be defined, but you’ll know it when you see it.

Toots Hibbert

Pictured to the right, Toots Hibbert is one of the founding fathers of Ska. In his early days, Hibbert was a vocalist and songwriter in the hit group Toots and the Maytals. He also managed to play a major role in the creation of Reggae.

Ska began during Jamaica’s infancy as an independent nation from Britain. It was popularized on Jamaica’s streets through giant speakers known as “sound systems”. The shared listening experience as well as Ska’s emphasis on dance reflect an aspect of Jamaica’s soul, in an activity still practiced today.

Ska was an inherently political genre, due to the climate of its inception. Hibbert was not only an accomplished musician, aiding in the creation of two genres, he was also an activist, who spent years in prison for his beliefs.
The Specials

During the 1960’s Ska’s popularity grew, eventually making its way into the collective consciousness of British audiences. After two decades, Ska resurfaced in the early 1980’s.

Known as the second wave, the new breed of Ska evolved from its jazz roots, this time leaning into Punk Rock influences. Just like its predecessor, the second wave inhabited the realm of the political.

The specials are without a doubt the most influential second wave ska band. Dubbing their form of Ska two-tone, they wanted to emphasize unity between lower income black and white people. This is often reflective within their promotional material and album covers, which are always black and white to cement this idea of unity.
- Rose
- Beer can
- Cigar
- Sun
- Dog
- Flowers
- Tube
- Sun
- Palm trees
- East coast
- Bench
- Bum
- Dogs posted on shade
- Rose
SUPER MARKET SHUFFLE

By: Jacob Melena
The goal of this project was to create a portfolio of character designs that showcase my technical proficiency as a naturalistic illustrator, as well as a draftsman and storyteller. There is no specific end product in mind, but the demographic is young adults between 13 and 25. Most likely this property would be used for video games, but it could also be used for cartoons, board games, or even feature films.
FRANKIE

CLUB/CAST

DECENT HELMET

ELBOW HAMMER

SMASHER

SPLINTER MARKET SHUFFLE
GRUMMAN F19 PYRO

- Cockpit
- After Burners MOAB
- Fuel tank
- Jet intake
- Ailerons
- Hornet Missle
Chief Gooblegowiski

Tactical Vest

Tactical Sword

Tactical Shotgun

Tactical Knife

Tactical Knife 2000
BIG BAD