CHARACTER
CLASH!

BY THAO NGUYEN
Thesis

My second BFA is called Character Clash, which is a series of six theatre-inspired posters of public figures that are juxtaposed into scenes from pop culture in an unexpected and contradicting way.

I’ve always had a passion for hand-lettering and I really enjoy simplifying people’s faces into a more stylized, geometric style. I knew if I focused on portraiture alone, I needed to push and exaggerate them, so I decided to put them in a narrative setting. I focused on incorporating my love for geometric shapes, hand-lettering, color harmony, and the use of texture in these.
MARKET

Through this project, my goal is to enter into the editorial and publishing market. Not only can these posters be applied to illustration work, but also hand-lettered work. They can be applied to magazines such as TIME magazine, The New Yorker, and Rolling Stone because they do a lot of portraits of famous people. My work can also be used in publishing companies such as Harper Collins and Penguin Random House by doing book covers with my illustration and hand-lettering.

I chose to concentrate on editorial and advertising markets because they focus on captivating an audience quickly. I also want my work to leave a lasting impression.
The first public figure in the series is Barack Obama as Othello in the play Othello by Shakespeare.

This story is about a character named Othello, who is a heroic black general in Venice. Individuals that were jealous of Othello wanted him to suffer, so they falsely accused Othello’s wife of being in a love affair.

I chose to do Obama because I wanted to have this unexpected time parallel. They are also both very similar in terms of being intelligent, respectful, and diplomatic.
The second public figure in the series is Steve Jobs as Han Solo from Star Wars. Han Solo is a smuggler and hero.

He was captain of the Millennium Falcon and a leader of the Rebel Alliance. His co-pilot was Chewbacca that fought against The Empire.

I chose to do Steve Jobs because he has made such an impact on technology. He is also like a hero and made Apple into what it is today. I chose to juxtapose Han Solo with Steve Jobs because Han Solo is an entrepreneur. He built a smuggling business from the ground up with a business partner named Chewbacca.
The third public figure in the series is Marilyn Monroe as Cruella De Vil from Dalmatians 101.

Cruella De Vil was a fictional villain that kidnapped and killed Dalmation dogs for their fur. I chose to do Marilyn because of the iconic facial features of her lips, eyebrows, and mole. She was a famous sex symbol and actress back then. I wanted to contradict Marilyn’s femininity with a villain and I felt that Cruella’s rude personality and luxury lifestyle would contrast that.
"Marilyn Monroe as Cruella De Vil"
The fourth public figure in the series is Lady Gaga as Medusa.

Medusa is from Greek mythology and is best known for having hair made of live snakes. She turns anyone who looks at her face into stone. Perseus, a hero of Greek mythology, ends up killing Medusa by cutting off her head.

Lady Gaga is a famous singer and actress. I thought she would be perfect for Medusa because she is very bold with her music concepts and clothing. Medusa is a concept that I could see her doing in the future.
The fifth public figure in the series is Michael Jackson as Captain Jack Sparrow from the movie Pirates of the Caribbean.

I chose to do Michael Jackson because of his facial features and timeless music. I thought he would juxtapose nicely with Captain Jack Sparrow because when Jack walks, it’s like he’s dancing, but is slightly drunk with flailing hand gestures. Michael and Jack are also both very eccentric people.
The sixth and seventh public figures in the series are Cher and The Rock.

They both represent Sandy and Danny in the movie Grease. This musical movie is set in the 1950s and is about a high school summer romance.

I thought Cher would be perfect for this role because of her singing, sharp features, and personality. The Rock is an American professional wrestler and actor who is very charismatic. I thought it would be interesting to have a super buff man such as The Rock with his personality in place of a high school greaser.
PROCESS
SKETCHES
SKETCHES
COLOR STUDY

MARILYN MONROE

As Clevver Li Vol
SKETCHES
SKETCHES
Thank you!