

PROJECT THREE: THE ALMIGHTY POSTER PROMPT

"As time goes on, you'll understand. What lasts, lasts; what doesn't, doesn't. Time solves most things. And what time can't solve, you have to solve yourself."

—Haruki Murakami

Description:

You started with an exercise from Lynda Barry and created a zine based on someone and situations from real life. From there we will fast forward into the future, and imagine if you will... a little character zine you did way back in university leads to you creating a hit graphic novel. Someone from a production company picks it up, loves it, and contacts your agent, who helps you work out the extra usage rights necessary to make your story an even bigger success. Now, there is a real-actor production underway of your graphic novel, and they want you to design the official poster for it. You just need to decide which live-action outlet it's going to be: a major motion picture, a Broadway play or musical, an opera, or travelling circus (like Cirque du Soleil). Your task is to work up a poster that speaks to the audience of the genre and country producing, which will include a likeness of a person or actor playing the role of the main character.

Format: a one-sheet *promotional poster* for a movie, theatrical play, musical, circus, or opera.

Dimensions of the Final: 27 x 40 inches (standard one-sheet poster dimensions), vertical orientation

Job Type: Promotional Advertising

Deadline: 3 Weeks (Due before class on Week 12)

Final Deliverables:

- 1) Final Artwork in three files:
 - 300 dpi, RGB colour profile, TIFF image
 - 75 dpi web-quality JPG or PNG
 - 75 dpi web-quality JPG or PNG with mock titles/text included
- 2) Thumbnail and rough sketch documentation

Process:

Thinking back to the visual research and resources from Edward Kinsella's presentation a couple weeks ago, you're going to be looking for similar inspiration from the early designers of performance posters from around the world. Here are a few places to get you started:

- [Harry Ransom Center: Digital Collections of Movie Posters](#)
- [Victoria and Albert Museum: An Illustrated History of Theater Posters](#)
- [Collectors Weekly: Vintage Circus Posters and Ephemera](#)

Keep going. Look into the ephemera of different cultures around the world and ask questions: What art and design movements have shaped the culture you grew up in? What kinds of posters did your parents have? Your grandparents? How has theatrical performance in your culture been portrayed? How is it consumed? Write down for yourself cross-cultural references, and how this works (or doesn't work). Based on your completed "Character Zine" exercise, build on some basic information that a one-sheet poster job needs:

- Where is this story taking place?
- What country's film/play/opera/circus board is producing this adaptation? (It can be the same as the narrative itself).
- What actors/performers will be cast in the given roles? (Do photo research here.)

Decide where the location the film/performance will be disseminated from. What do you notice in terms of trends, cultural references, narrative focus, style, etc. Do any of these speak to you, or otherwise reflect an aspect of your narrative?

Part 1: The Story's Origin

Complete the provided "Character Zine" exercise by Lynda Barry. Do not move on to the next part until it is finished.

Part 2: Sketch Development

Working with the eight chapters from your zine, start sketching out how you want the poster to portray the overall narrative. Remember the goal of a one-sheet illustration: to tell the story in one shot! Consider all of the illustration tools at your disposal as discussed in this class and others over the last three years, as well as your poster research above. Annotate clearly and completely as to what you are trying to portray.

Part 3: Casting the Characters

The movie or performance features real-world actors (think Big Blue Will Smith in the movie version of Aladdin...or better yet, don't....) Imagine possible translations and distance from your original, and coming back to them and relating them to a new audience. What changes? What remains the same? How do you play with/update/revise your own ideas for a different medium? And remember: we've seen with Edward Kinsella's posters that he is *inspired by* poster styles of the past, but does not seek to *emulate* their exact look. This is your task as well.

NOTE: You are required to have one likeness of someone as part of the poster design. Who that person is will be your choice. They could be a celebrity, a stage actor, a friend, or a model. They don't have to be recognizable, but nevertheless you must include a likeness of at least one person in your poster. As you saw in Edward Kinsella's

presentation, characters are an important part of selling a story. Who will play the person you wrote about in your character Zine? Who will play the supporting roles?

After further thumbnail exploration, move on to three strong sketches based on the most successful aspects of your various thumbnails. Bring these sketches and your research with you to discuss in class NEXT WEEK (Week 10).

Part 4: Final Artwork

After determining the best sketch direction and any adjustments that should be made to it, prepare a substrate that fits the format listed above, whether analog or digital. Analog finals must be scanned in and formatted to match the “Final Delivery Specs” listed above. Digital final artworks must be executed on a canvas matching the specs listed above.

Guidelines:

- 1) Colour palette and medium is your choice.
- 2) The prompt asks for a one-sheet poster for a film, play, opera, stage production, or circus. This does not include book covers, video games, animated series, or formats otherwise not listed.
- 3) You must include a likeness of at least one person in your illustration, using photo references.
- 4) Final artwork must be 27 x 40 inches, vertical orientation.
- 5) Upload all deliverables to the Project Three moodle interface before April 7th.
- 6) the following file formats must be provided (included as part of all deliverables):
 - 300 dpi, RGB colour profile, TIFF image
 - 75 dpi web-quality JPG or PNG
 - 75 dpi web-quality JPG or PNG with mock titles/text included

Important Dates:

Week 10 / March 24th — Parts 2 & 3 due: research, thumbnails, and three strong sketches

Week 12 / April 7th — Final illustration and all deliverables due