

MUCHA INK: A Case Study

THE PROJECT

Developed for a graduate seminar on graphic design, MUCHA INK is a series of digital media created to promote the public persona of a fictional contemporary tattoo artist. Items include a three-page website mockup, social media pages for Pinterest and Facebook, and an article for *Tattoo Culture Magazine*.

THE CHALLENGE

The class was asked to select a public figure or cultural icon who lived and worked between 1880 and 1960, and reinvent them in a contemporary context while creating a fully developed web presence to showcase their current work, services, or products.

For a subject, I chose Czech artist and designer Alphonse Mucha. I am a great lover of his work and I imagined the project would afford me an opportunity to recreate some of his lavish drawings and paintings. I also knew his work remains popular and is commonly reproduced by tattoo artists all over the world. I imagined that Mucha could be reinvented as a highly admired, much sought-after tattoo artist. He would have his own shop and be part of a large community of artists tattooing in New York.

We were to develop three different digital media items. I chose to focus on a website, social media, and an article to showcase skills as a designer and writer,

THE DELIVERABLES

WEBSITE:

Muchaink.com is a clean, bright website geared toward a contemporary tattoo studio. The HOME page is styled as a news blog; Alphonse Mucha, the shop's principal tattoo artist, is featured on the ABOUT page; the GALLERY page is a portfolio of Mucha tattoos (sorted into black/gray and color albums) which are real Mucha reproductions created by a variety of working tattoo artists and painstakingly culled from the web by me. The site also features a static side bar with a continuously updated list of Mucha's public appearances, a Mailing List sign-up widget, and a list of resource links. Although this site is devoted to a fictional persona, most elements of the website feature real people, places, and events. Hannah Aitchison, for example, is a real tattoo artist; now she is also a featured visiting artist at Mucha Ink. The Prague Museum of Decorative Arts is a real place, and the Tattoobåtten, part of the Huskvarna Rock & Art weekend, is a real boat that cruises around Scandinavia while its passengers get tattooed.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Mucha has a live Facebook page (one which continues to get likes on a regular basis) that features images of Mucha Tattoos and links to Nouveau design resources. The Pinterest board functions similarly. Because I wanted these pages to be live, they are

less marketing tools for a fictional person than showcases for the artist's work and an awareness builder for the Nouveau tattoo style in general.

ARTICLE:

“PINK meets INK” is a fictional story of Mucha’s partnering with an imaginary breast cancer survivor and real organization--Personal Ink. P.INK works to bring tattoo artists together with post-mastectomy breast cancer patients who are facing reconstruction. Tattoo artists donate their time and skill to create tattoos that obscure or ornament the often ravaged landscapes of these cancer survivors’ bodies. Mucha’s work is well-beloved by them for its organic, nature-oriented depictions of the female form. I thought this article would be an excellent way to place Mucha's work with the feminine form within a context of female empowerment and subjectivity, rather than objectivity.

The piece was written for a fictitious department (Pro-Bono) of an actual magazine (Tattoo Culture. The 8-page article is mocked up for an iPad and features post-mastectomy photography culled from P.INK’s Pinterest page.