

PRINT



New



Artists

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GOODS&MISC.

A STAR IS ADORNED

FOR CREATIVES WHO SPEND THEIR DAY JOBS designing and crafting for clients, the after-hours struggle to develop fulfilling personal projects is very real. Raphael Geroni, a New York City-based designer with Louise Fili Ltd., understands this all too well.

That's why he used The Judy Garland Film Title Project to turn his passion for classic films into an initiative celebrating his favorite actress. Drawing inspiration from the original titles and promotional ephemera from Garland's films, Geroni designed and lettered retro title cards using historical typography, deep research and Art Deco style to inform his black-and-white pieces.

"I wanted to develop a project that I was passionate about, that involved my personal interests and that I could share with fans of Garland, historical typography and Hollywood history," Geroni says. "I thought a great deal about how special title designs are to fans, and about their increased importance because they literally flash before your eyes. Before home video and the internet, the titles could only exist for fans in the form of their memories, and revisiting long out-of-print films could be incredibly difficult."

Geroni wanted to pay homage to this by documenting and presenting a cohesive visual representation of Garland's filmography on his website (www.rafaelgeroni.com), beginning with her most popular movies, and later working chronologically.

While the 34-title project progressed three title cards at a time, Geroni's appreciation for Garland's talents began as a child when he became enchanted with *The Wizard of Oz*.

"It was the coolest thing I'd ever seen. I was enamored with the artfulness of that movie," he says, noting that it wasn't until much later that he discovered the full extent of Garland's career.

"*A Star is Born* is my all-time favorite movie and one of the greatest films ever made, even though it was snubbed during awards season. Another one of my favorites is *The Pirate*, although it's not widely loved because it was intentionally campy before camp was cool."

Geroni's love for Garland successfully translates to the project. In addition to ensuring the pieces matched the 4:3 aspect

ratio of the majority of the films, Geroni wrote detailed blog posts about each film and title card and snuck in visual Easter eggs for other movie buffs to appreciate.

"The typeface I used for the captions under each card is set in a font called Meyer Two—an intentional misspelling of [film producer] Louis B. Mayer's last name—which was one of five fonts that Linotype cut to Mayer's personal specifications to be used at MGM in their film titles and silent film subtitles. It was drawn in 1926 and digitally revived by David Berlow in 1994."

The completed project is printed on metallic stock at the one-sheet poster size of 27-by-41 inches, enhancing its filmic quality. Geroni says the ultimate goal of the production is to "remind you of a vintage silver gelatin portrait you might have received after writing to your favorite MGM star."

The poster is currently available for purchase at www.rafaelgeroni.com. For more on Geroni, who was selected after the initial writing of this article to be a *Print* New Visual Artist, turn to page 56.





RAPHAEL GERONTI



"My cover is inspired by the unique and diverse roles the NVAs play in the world of design, which are represented by custom-lettered signage typography set up in lights for all to see."

Age: 28.

From: Perkasië, PA.

Current city: Brooklyn.

Education: Tyler School of Art (BFA).

Earliest creative memory: Making cut-paper portraits of Bert and Ernie from "Sesame Street" when I was 2. I insisted they be hung at my height on the refrigerator and that I be photographed between them, wearing a vest and bow tie, giving a thumbs-up.

Path that led you to design: When I was accepted into Tyler School of Art, I had every intention of becoming a fine artist. I hadn't realized that many of my interests were graphic design-based or that typography was a thing I could learn more about or do for a living. Growing up, I loved music, and my favorite part of getting a new CD was reading the inserts. I read the small type and saw who designed them, then noticed their work in other places. I valued design very early, and that never went away.

Career in a nutshell: Growing up in the suburbs, every weekend I traveled with my family, competing as a professional drag racer from age 8 until 18. While dominating the dragstrip, I secretly wanted to become an artist, so I applied to art schools. To pay for my apartment, I worked as a background actor and started a T-shirt business with a friend where we screenprinted out-of-copyright quotes about wine on shirts that got into

stores in Napa, CA. In my last semester at Tyler I worked as the Heads of State's first intern and designed an exciting typographic project about *The Great Gatsby* with them. After winning top portfolio and graduating from Tyler, I worked at Headcase Design as a book designer and illustrator for five years. I wanted to focus more on typography and lettering, so I applied for a position with Louise Fili in NYC, and a few short weeks after that, my husband and I packed up our 1,100-square-foot loft to move into an apartment half the size in Brooklyn, with our anxious cat and boxes of irreplaceable books.

The key to good design: I'm drawn to people and work that are authentic, personal and sincere.

Motto/design philosophy: "Always be a first-rate version of yourself, not a second-rate version of somebody else."
—Judy Garland to Liza Minnelli

Work of which you're most proud: I'm especially proud of *The Gershwins and Me*. During this project I realized I wanted to do more with historically based typography and that having an interest in the nerdy or obscure could be an asset. It made me want to learn more and truly invest myself in subjects that I can't get enough of. It also led to my recently completed film title project [Ed. Note: See page 37].

Design hero: Doyald Young. (I have a tattoo of one of my favorite pieces of his,

which is very elegant and simply says: "I fuss a lot.")

Biggest influence: I'm always looking for undiscovered typography and ornament in vintage printed ephemera.

How you would classify your style: Typographically focused, historically inspired and never the same.

Favorite artist: Alex Steinweiss.

Favorite typographer: Mark Simonson.

What defines you: I'm known for being a wearer of dapper hats with color-coordinated feathers, and I usually have a glass of wine in my hand—and if I don't, I'm certainly looking for one.

Cause that means the most to you: LGBT equality.

Your idea of happiness: I would be absolutely thrilled if someone contacted me to create something for them simply because they wanted my personal take on it. It sounds so simple, but that's it!

What you think the future of design is: I hope it will involve more storytelling rather than the perpetuation of internet memes and "going viral." I'm hoping things will advance like they did during the "print is dead" phase. Many outside of the print industry bought into that phrase, but those within it rose to the occasion, asserted the value of physical objects, and some of the most exciting print pieces now exist because of it.

Website: www.raphaelgeroni.com



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1. Art Nouveau-inspired birth announcement. 2. Cookbook cover that combines the author's passions. 3. Monogram for an investment advisory firm in New York (designed with/art directed by Louise Fili). 4. *The Gershwin and Me* CD designed to reference vintage record labels. 5. Identity and illustrations for a natural foods market in Clinton, NJ (designed with/art directed by Louise Fili). 6. Spreads from the official companion book of HBO's "Game of Thrones" (designed with/art directed by Paul Kepple at Headcase Design).