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ART/ILLUSTRATION

90 JOHN MATTOS / USA

John Mattos: A Larger Than Life Point-of-View

JOHN DOES NOT DO ORDINARY. HE DOES MONUMENTAL, UNFORGETTABLE, HEROIC, DRAMATIC, BIGGER-THAN-LIFE IMAGES THAT DEMAND ATTENTION. IT'S BEEN AN HONOR TO HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH HIM.

Kit Hinrichs, *Designer, Studio Hinrichs*

JOHN IS ONE OF THE MOST INTUITIVE AND INSIGHTFUL ARTISTS I HAVE WORKED WITH. WHEN YOU GIVE HIM A BRIEF HE COMES BACK WITH IT BOTH ENHANCED AND DEVELOPED TO A LEVEL YOU HADN'T EVEN DREAMED OF.

Jeremy King, *Co-Founder and CEO of Corbin & King*

I HAVE ADMIRERD THE STRIKING DESIGN AND MODERN TAKE IN JOHN'S ART DECO INSPIRED IMAGES FOR MANY YEARS.

Dan Cosgrove, *Illustrator, Graphis Master*

MATTOS' ART DECO WORKS HAVE CREATED INDELIBLE RETRO-STYLE IMAGES FOR AMERICAN FILMS, MAJOR SPORTS EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS OF ICONIC INDIVIDUALS, ARCHITECTURE, PRODUCTS AND CELEBRATIONS.

John Asher, *Editor, Kentucky Derby*



(Page 89) Mickey Descending a Stairway / (Above) Rocketeer



JP Morgan Portrait

Introduction by Charles E. White III *Illustrator, Olio Inc.*

John Mattos and I go a long way back, and I mean a long way back. I have loved his work for a very long time. It seems his inspiration came from some of my favorite Illustrators and designers, two of them being Ludwig Hohlwein from the early 20th century, and Cassandre from the 1930's Art Deco period. Both of them are very famous artists in their own right. John has taken that inspiration and made it his own. With his elegant design sensibility, he creates beautiful images that have a hint of nostalgia, yet are very current at the same time, which makes his work seem timeless. In times like these, it is tough being an illustrator. I am proud of John and his being able to keep producing such a beautiful body of work.



Ampersand Amtrak

JOHN MATTOS' WORK IS VISUALLY ARRESTING.
IT IS BEAUTIFULLY ERA-DRIVEN AND TIMELESS.

B. Martin Pedersen, *Designer*



What inspired or motivated you into your career?

I've always drawn pictures. As a teenager, I did the typical evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, this led me to Art Center College of Design in Southern California. In that illustration program, there were 2 distinct groups; The "Westport School" -Peak, English, Fuchs, etc. , or the "Pushpin School" Glaser, Chwast, Paul Davis, etc. My desire to do airbrush led to a 3rd way for me. I saw this as a way to make pure photographs of ideas. This was 1971 and all that Chrome palm-tree bubble-gum bent-knuckle realism did not exist,... yet...

Part of my interest in Airbrush was generated by my comfort with the hardware surrounding this demanding craft. I was right at home with the odd equipment, hoses, compressors, knives, air regulators. It was very much like the hardware in my family's dairy barn in Empire, CA. In fact, the DeVilbiss company in Chicago made milking machines, and in down time made airbrushes and industrial spray equipment.

What is your work philosophy?

I keep a sketchbook going always. It has notes, sketches, jokes, recipes, observations, simple reminders of ideas that can be developed, later. When a potential solution to a project pre-exists in my sketchbook, I can bring greater enthusiasm to that project.

Who is or was your greatest mentor?

As a student, the Great Charlie White 111, as I became an adult working artist, Nathan Oliveira. White was conceptually sophisticated with remarkable craft & showed a way.

Upon graduation, I had the opportunity to work with the brilliant Peter Palombi, and later, the talented John Alvin these were sink-or-swim, take-no-prisoners learning experiences, these were not "Apprenticeships" or internships, these were "We're gonna get this done in the next 12 hours, and it's gonna be great" work marathons. I certainly learned to manage stress ,and got a priceless, up-close view of their professional high-standard, high -wire acts.

What is it about illustration that you are most passionate about?

Uh oh the word "Passion" implies a choleric approach to illustration that is just not in my tool kit.

What has been your most memorable project?

9 large-scale murals for a 5-star Hotel in Mayfair, London and 70 supporting caricatures. Got to work with Jeremy King of King/Corbin. Sir Jeremy certainly knew how to work with artists, He had more than one portrait of himself done by Lucien Freud, and wasn't like a character in a Pinter play, he WAS a character written into a play by Harold Pinter. He had

a brilliant way of Keeping the project on track, and bringing his necessary input. He invented a character named " Jimmy Beaumont" ,gave him a back story, so there were standards and rules, then we could have wonderful discussions and debates -for example -Would J Beaumont approve of dog racing? (Not really, but he would know where to place a bet on a dog race.)

What is the most difficult challenge you've had to overcome?

Transition from analog to digital. I was lucky in that I had an existing analog style, so I had a clear goal in the digital world.

Who were some of your greatest past influences?

J.C. Leyendecker, Norman Wilkerson, Ludwig Hohlwein, Donald Deskey.

Who among your contemporaries today do you most admire?

Robert Hunt for grit, wit, and sheer brush mileage determination. Brian Stauffer for brilliant original concepts- a Steinberg-like ability to find visual solutions that no one saw, but after Stauffer shows you, you think "of course". Mark Ulriksen - if illustration was baseball Mark always gets on base. Ward Schumaker and I have gone through the Graphis Annual page by page, and consistently our taste and comments about what we are seeing are diametrically opposed. I have great admiration for Ward, even though he's dead wrong in his crackpot opinions.

What would be your dream assignment?

Any project where my personal interests and the commission line up.

You've done work for film and corporate clients among others.

Is there a specific field you enjoy most?

Not really.

Who have been some of your favorite people or clients you have worked with?

Kit Hinrichs. By coincidence, he is a neighbor here in North-beach, SF., so he probably feels like he has to hire me every so often in case he runs into me at the grocery. Kit can draw, and think- he has a wonderful, indirect way of moving a project forward. He might say "of course you will get some reference for those hands in this sketch before you go to finish " or "is this merely indication, or do you intend to paint it like this? Better yet- "Are you working in a new style that is hurried and grounded in indifference?" I love working with this guy.

What are the most important ingredients you require from a client to do successful work?

Clarity and the ability to "Make the Leap" from sketch to final art.



(Left) Olympic commemorative stamp / (Right) 100 years of Racing



A Handy Horse



Flying Boat Races



Presidio Grand Prix



Martini Arrangement

What is your proudest professional achievement?

Right now it's probably 7 murals used in a Netflix series "The Good Cop" the Movie poster "Rocketeer" was selected as one of the 100 best movie posters of all time but I didn't get a statuette.

What is the greatest satisfaction you get from your work?

Aesthetically? Making a harmonious series of shapes that fit together in a beautiful and surprising way.

What part of your work do you find most demanding?

My medium, Adobe illustrator, is cold, simplistic, and wants to provide a sameness of edges and surface, getting some humanity and a "Touched by a human hand" feeling into the artwork is most demanding.

What professional goals do you still have for yourself?

I've never cracked that nut "The New Yorker"

What is something you wish you had known when you first started out?

Art Directors aren't always right.

What advice would you have for students starting out today?

Get a point of view.

What interests do you have outside of your work?

I play Bass locally on Thursday nights. I have a folding boat that provides some frightening and thrilling moments out on San Francisco Bay, and gives a unique perspective on my seaport home town.

What do you value most?

At this point, it's Time- having discretionary time.

What would you change if you had to do it all over again?

I would not waste time revising stillborn, bonehead projects.

Where do you seek inspiration?

Strangely, in reading, biographies, odd science journals, histories, I also like those little intros in coffee-table picture books.

How do you define success?

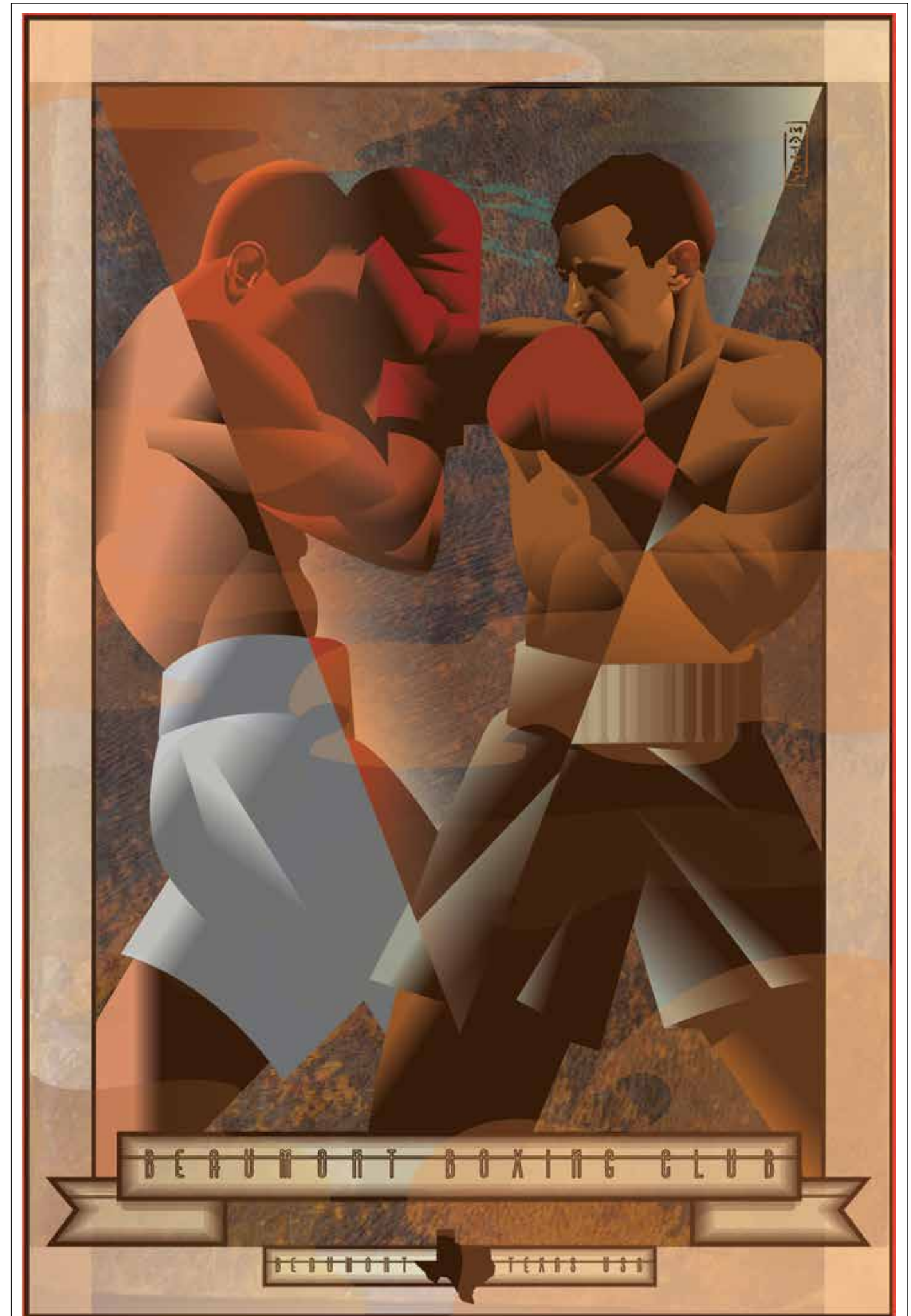
I'm not a freudian, but I do value most, love from intimates and family, and recognition from peers.

Where do you see yourself in the future?

I live on a hillside one-half block from Coit Tower in San Francisco. I did the "Preserve Coit Tower" Art. I have sweeping views that include the Golden Gate Bridge, I got to do the 75th anniversary bridge poster. I can see Alcatraz, I did the art for the GGNRA "Save the Rock" campaign and did the maps and illustrated the walk-around infographics there. I can hear nearby Joe DiMaggio playground, I did their logo. North Beach Library. -Logo and artwork .Every morning, I see kids on their way to school wearing sweatshirts and tees with my fundraiser art for Garfield school up the hill. I like it here and see myself here in the future.

John Mattos www.johnmattos.com

See his *Graphis Master Portfolio* on graphis.com.



Beaumont Boxing Club



Fox Oakland Poster



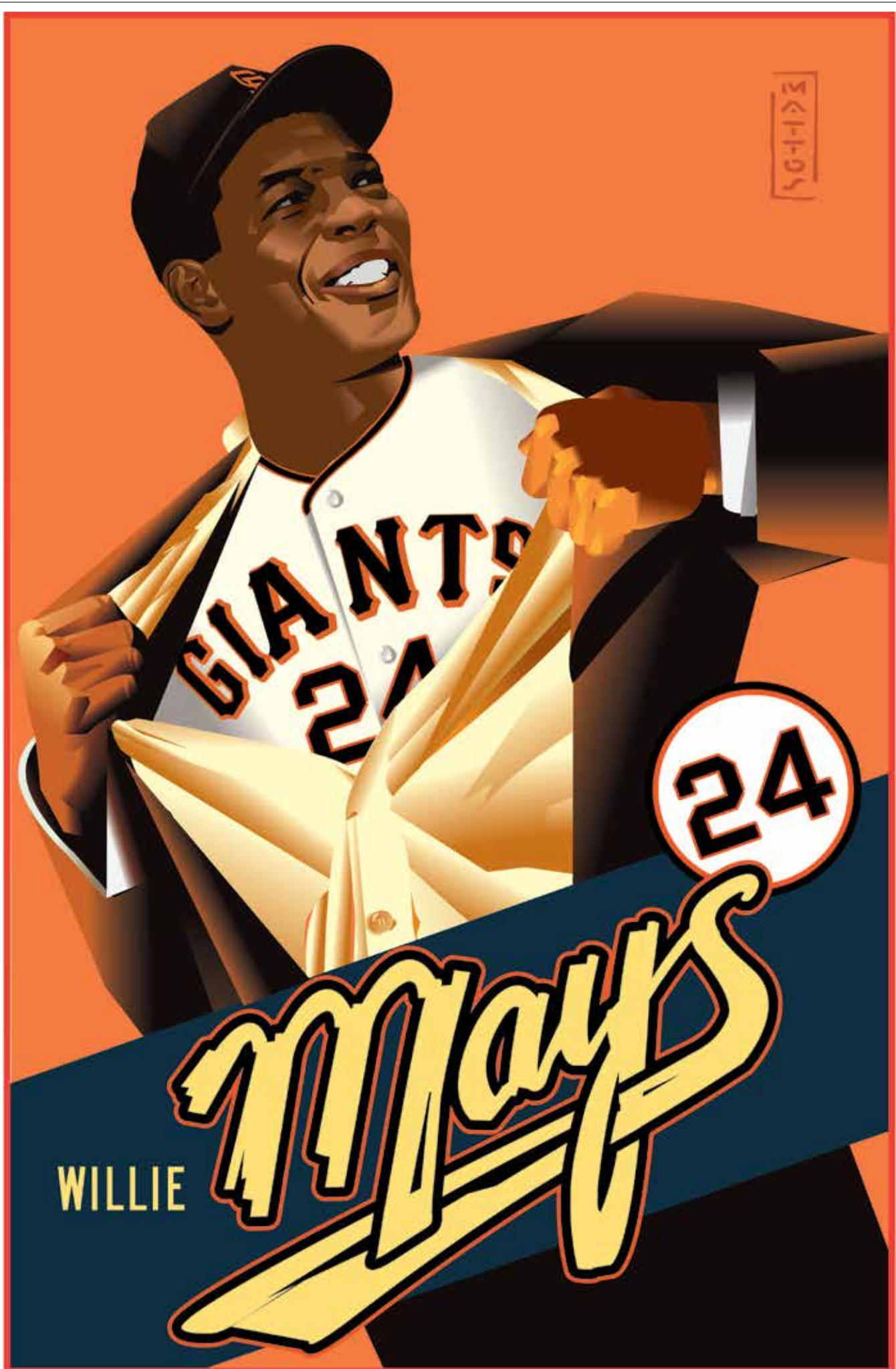
Louis Armstrong Portrait



(Top) Beaumont Marlin Mural / (Middle) Beaumont Wooden Boat Mural / (Bottom) Beaumont Polo Mural



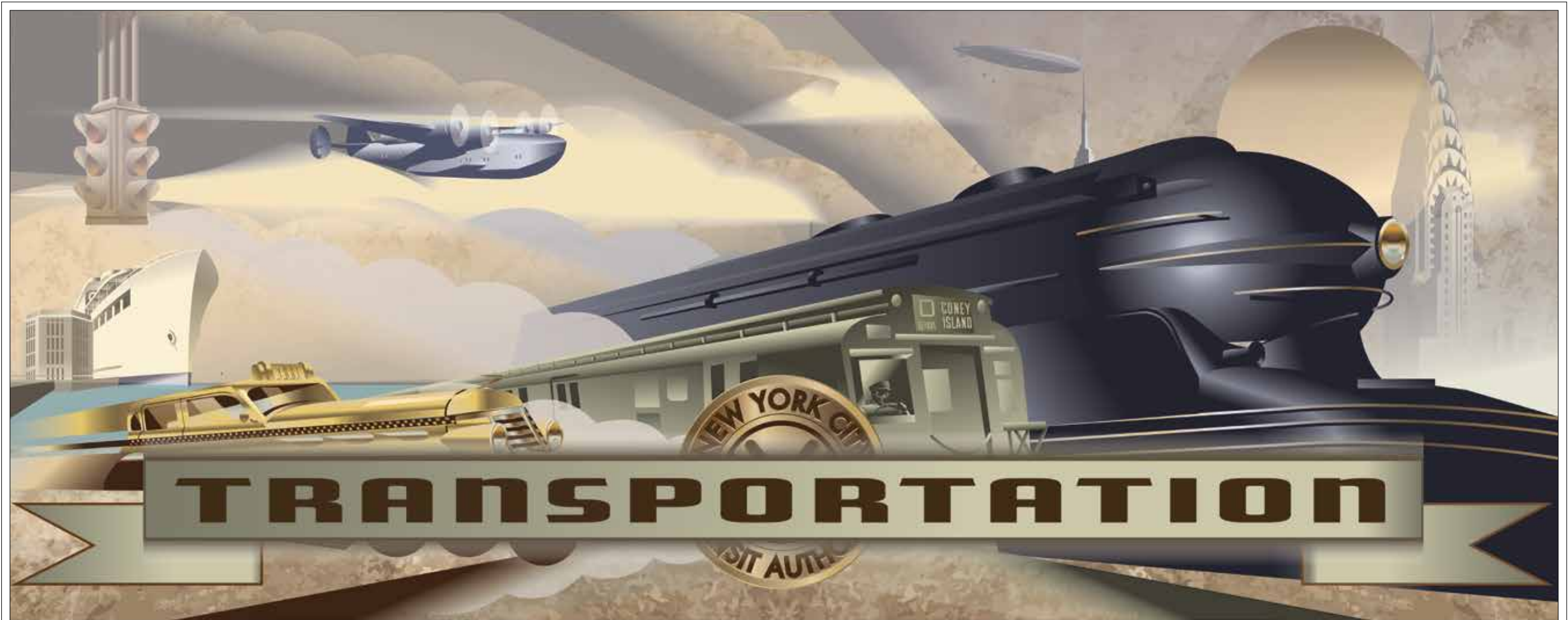
Italian Vogue



Willie Mays Portrait



Gary Moore Bentley



(Top) Netflix Transportation Mural / (Bottom) Netflix Commerce Mural

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Netflix Justice Mural / Netflix Power and Light Mural / Netflix Public Works Mural / Netflix Education Mural / Netflix Recreation Mural

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Golden Gate Bridge 75th Anniversary