



For my newest Pillar Point album "Marble Mouth," I wanted to change things up by collaborating with an outside designer on the cover art. I hired Jerrod Landon Porter, a very talented graphic designer and visual artist.

What follows here is the concept statement/moodboard that I sent him initially, followed by our subsequent rounds of co-development -- he as Illustrator and me in the role of Art Director and client -- that led to the refinement of our final draft and the manufacturing of the vinyls and record sleeves.

Pillar Point - “Marble Mouth”

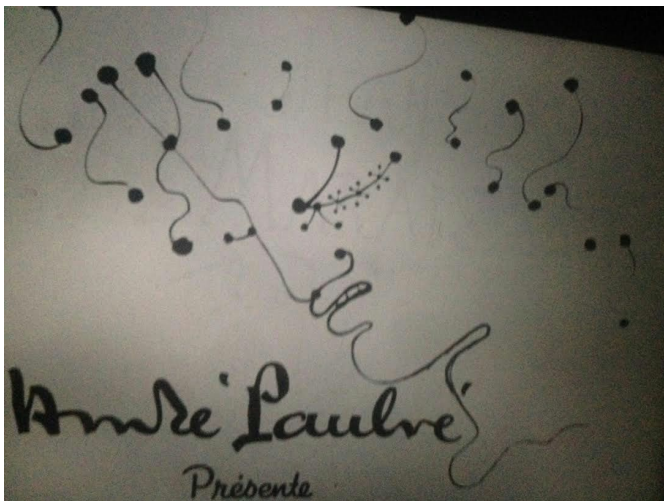
ALBUM ART : *Concept Statement*



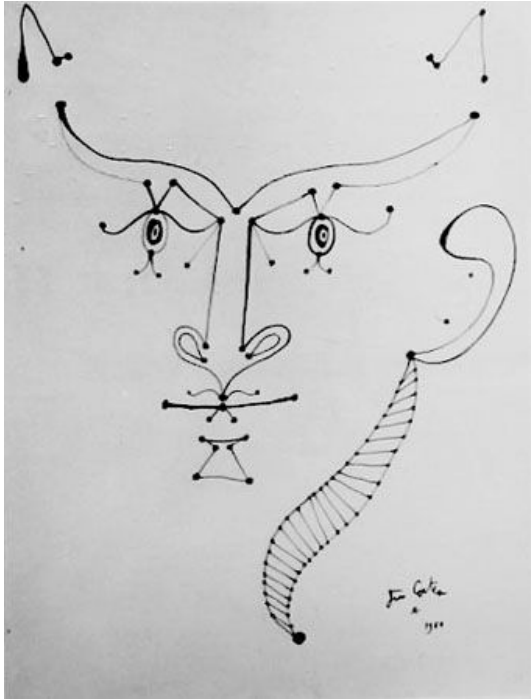
This album is called “Marble Mouth,” partly because I made the record in the South (where the saying “talks like he’s got marbles in his mouth,” refers to thick accents), and because my vocals were produced with the idea of a character in mind, one with a distinctly digital, gruffer, and perhaps larger-than-life persona. Because of this, I imagine that the album cover should feature a character. Here are some examples to get a moodboard going for what that character looks like.

Here’s a Matisse lithograph of a woman. I like the idea of a slate/chalkboard colored background, with the main figure articulated in white line drawing.

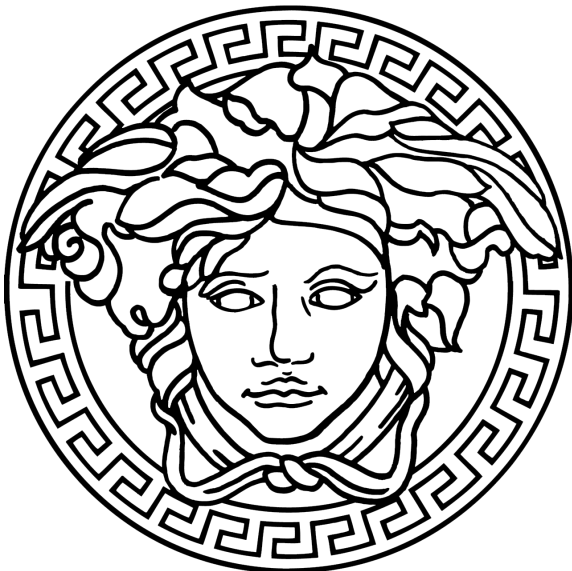
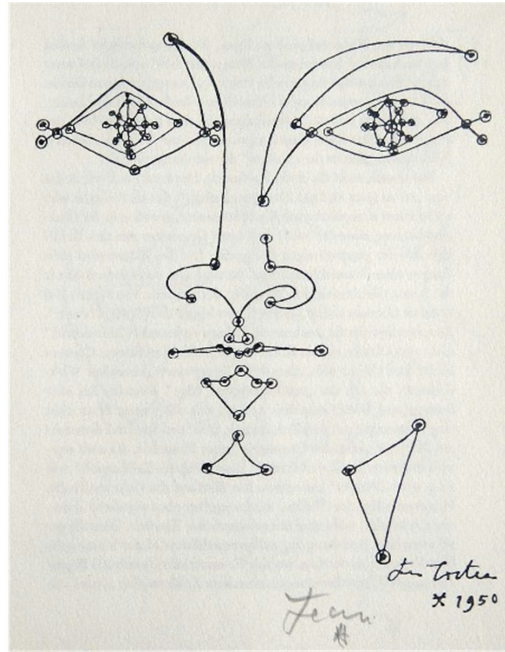
And here’s a slate background from the opening credits of Jean Cocteau’s *Orpheus* with the nice line quality of his white script.



I also like the idea that our figure is a mask, or feels mythological (e.g., greek mythology, neoclassical imagery), or is essentially some character’s face. I like Cocteau’s drawings here - another scene from the intro to *Orepheus*. The line quality of the brushwork, perhaps a good ref for our drawing and album title lettering.



Here are some more Cocteau drawings. I love the suggestion of constellations with the decorative dots, and these could be places that we inject color into the album art.



The Versace logo also comes to mind. A strong image.

The cover art shouldn't read this much like a brand logo though, but rather more like a painting you'd see hanging on a wall. Nonetheless I thought I'd include this..

VERSACE



A photo of Cocteau from the movie set of Orpheus. I like the idea that our cover's central figure is accompanied by an angel, perhaps like she appears here as his companion/protector. As a 2-D line drawing though, this kind of angel might start to look like a rolls royce hood ornament -- something to avoid..



The Matisse cutouts are so fun and decorative, which speaks to the imaginative liveliness of the album. Objects within the cover art that could have color -- the character's hair, eyes, etc.

Other images may work around or within the character's face, a la this Polish film poster for Jacques Tati's *Playtime*. Objects could reference and thematically reinforce bits of imagery from the album's lyrics. See next page for examples.

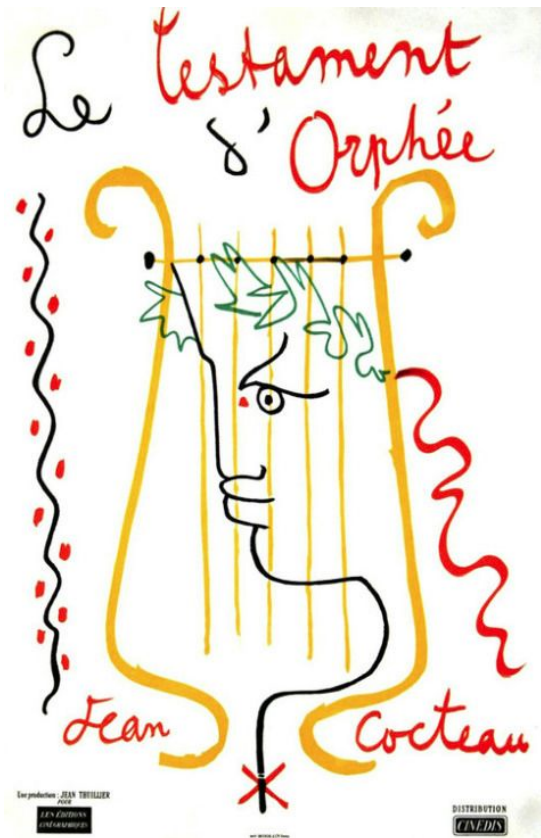


Images from the record's lyrics that could be turned into iconography within the art:

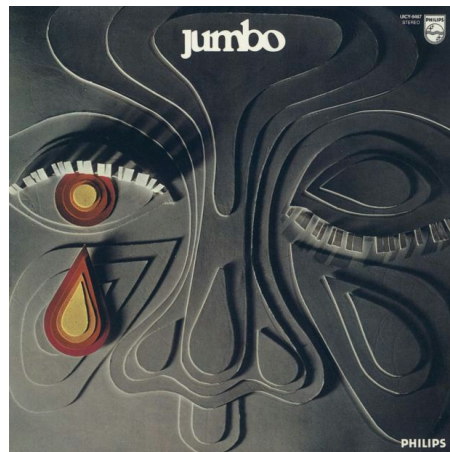
A black fly. A tombstone. A watch or a clock. A golden apple. A shipwreck.
Rain. A jungle, or palm trees. A jukebox.



This is probably a too-famous Matisse cutout to reference closely, but I like organic quality of the plant imagery shapes. A palm frond could be an appropriate image to work into our album art.



A film poster for *Orpheus*. I'm in love with Cocteau's slightly naive line quality, and in this one particularly fond of the casually hand drawn alignment of the title over the top of the frame. The way that "Jean" and "Cocteau" are split symmetrically at the bottom is an endearing touch.



And here's an old Italian Prog Rock band's album cover. Nice use of paper cutout and mask/character themes.



A couple Matisse cutout panoramas. Something to keep in mind if the record label will greenlight the extra printing costs of a gatefold LP jacket.



ROUND 1: DEVELOPMENT

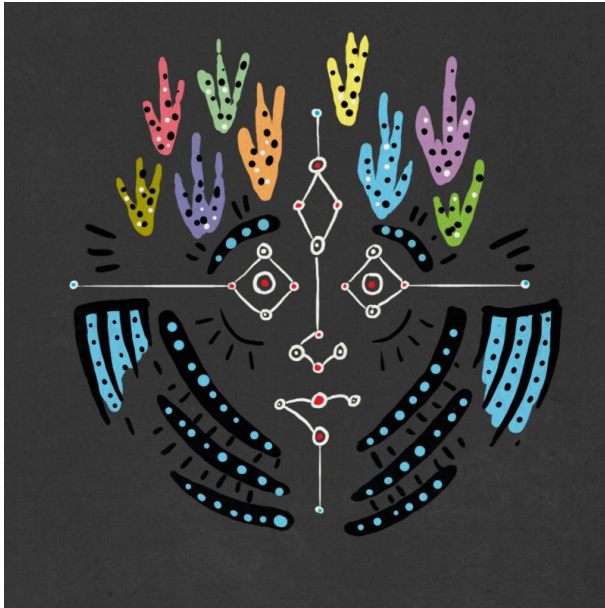
Jerrod Landon Porter took my moodboard and concept statement and created these initial looks at where we could go with the album cover. I liked colors and the quality of the line he had working, but I didn't like the angel, and the cutouts were way too referential to Matisse. The line drawing (roughly a portrait of my face), felt a bit too romantic.

With this too there was also a similarity to the electronic artist Disclosure's visual branding that I thought we'd be wise to avoid, and I had in mind something more like a larger than life character anyhow.

Porter had also done a nice job with the Cocteau-style lettering that I'd suggested, and we agreed this was close to the right answer. So we kept developing.



ROUND 2: DEVELOPMENT



In the next round of mock-ups I got back from Porter it was clear we were getting closer. He'd used the Matisse reference more subtly, elegantly combining it with the constellation-like dots of the Cocteau drawings which I'd reiterated I wanted to see. He tried using feathers as the main colorful objects in the drawing: a reference I had suggested to the Mardi Gras Indians of New Orleans, a city I had just spent 6 weeks in putting the finishing touches on the album.

He also threw in a Keith Haring-inspired sketch, which made me realize how much I liked the idea of using a fairly strict primary color pallet. My previous record and it's promotional campaign had been presented in a black and white pallet, and I really was drawn to changing that up this time.



At this point I wanted to introduce some new references into our conversation to shake things up and steer us away from being too tethered to my initial concept statement. I sent him some images of the paintings by Merello. The playfully imaginative qualities of those were in line with my conception of the album's songs and the production of my lead vocal identity.



ROUND 3: DEVELOPMENT

Porter turned in four attractive drafts, but i knew when I saw the one in the lower left that we were really onto something that was most original and most appropriate for *Marble Mouth*.

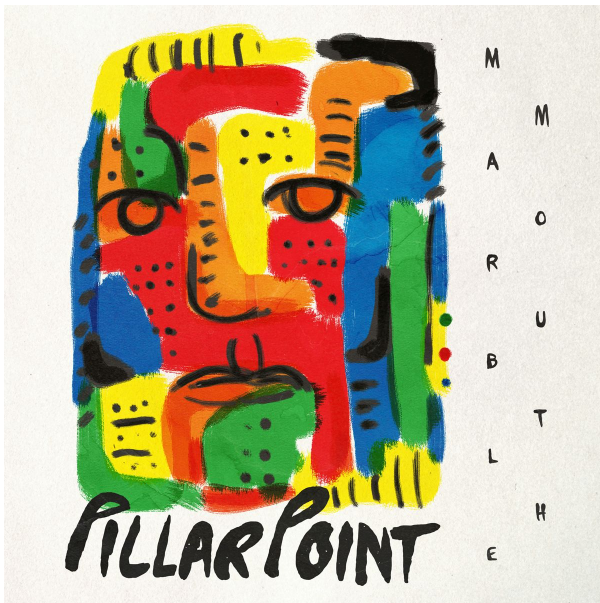
Instead of stopping with one of these other three -- something I think we could have done and been ok with -- I pushed him to refine the lower left design one step further.



FINAL ROUND: DEVELOPMENT

When Porter turned in these three final options I was really happy with where we'd arrived. I preferred to stay with the primary color option, and chose the enlarged image at bottom middle in which the character is centered with the album titles running vertically on either side.

It was a very satisfying collaboration with a very talented graphic artist, and I think we achieved what we'd set out to do - make a colorful, imaginative and inspired piece that matched the persona of my album.



Marble Mouth -- It now exists!

Set for worldwide release in late January, 2016, I'm happy to include these pics of my album (albeit from a slightly blurry cell phone by someone at my record label) fresh from the pressing plant.

This photo of the vinyl with three color splatter is a limited edition we'll sell. I convince the record label to spring the extra money for that, and I think it turned out wonderfully!

