

Design in Film:



Thesis Process Book

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Project Overview

Thesis Description:

“The Chet Show” is a short film series created by Michael Losquadro and Candice Leach. The series follows Chet, a puppet-college student living alongside his roommate and good friend Todd. The series had an active two-year production cycle with three episodes produced: “Chet Goes to the Doctor”, “Chet Goes to a Party” and “Chet Falls in Love”.

While working on this project a lot of problems arose that needed a specific skill set of a designer. How problems were handled, how time was managed, as well as prop production, storyboarding and color theory all benefited from a designer’s perspective. This project provides documentation on the pre-production, production and post production of The Chet Show.

Chetsite Pages Overview:

Home - Overview page, this page was designed to be both eye candy and confirmation for people who may be looking for the site to find the show. The home page utilizes a 100vh fixed + absolute background element to cover the back of the page, with a scroll element set to increase opacity and blur over the image for reading the on-site project description.

Episodes - The episodes tabs include a customized youtube embed with links to the individual episode's imdb pages. Underneath the videos are descriptions formatted to match a movie credits page. Paired with the descriptions are a per-page unique on-scroll background element asset that fills the sides of the pages with unique background elements (this interaction is desktop exclusive).

Production - Production pages act as write-ups, with minimal css to ensure legibility for those who are either curious about our process or wanting to learn about the basics of film production.

Chetsite Pages Overview (cont.):

Jo's Blog - Jo's Blog is the most unique page on the site, themed after a 90's geosite. Jo's Blog acts as the place on the site to find some fun wallpapers and crew stories.

Meet the Crew - Meet the Crew page is a snap-scrolling page that includes portraits of the core 8 members of the Chet Crew. All photos for this page were taken by Michael and were lit to match the lighting in the show. This page also includes a large thank you to everybody involved in the project as the final scroll element.

Thesis 1 Research

Research Overview:

Thesis 1 research was very focused on visual references for the individual pages and the look for the ChetSite. From the beginning the final product for thesis was always going to be thechetshow.com, a majority of content for the site was already organized from working on “The Chet Show” itself, so for Thesis 1 the goal was figuring out and deciding what the website would look like and include.

Thesis Party:

The thesis party, consisting of a mix between Chet Crew and Non-Chet Crew alike was where the ChetSite began to take form, everything that ended up being placed on the site was in the writeup from this party in some way, shape or form.

Everything from the writeup made for this party that did not make it onto the final product was consolidated into some form of the site. Jo's Blog for instance changed a good deal, while keeping the identity of the original concept fully in-tact.

Chet Site Discussion

Site Name:

chetgoestothedoctor.com or thechetshow.com

Site Content:

- WATCH CHET NOW - 4 categories, small pages all devoted to the individual episodes, with hyperlinks to each episode
 - "Chet Goes to the Doctor"
 - "Chet Goes to a Party"
 - "Chet Falls in Love"
 - "The Chet Show"
- Jo's Blog - A character bio page that goes over all the characters and some fun in universe stuff
 - Coolest Blog
 - Cool(ish) People
 - Wallpapers
- BTS
 - Pre-Production
 - Production
 - Post-Production
 - Marketing
- The Chet Crew
 - About Us
 - Cast and Crew
- Contact
 - Tasty Pictures
 - Michael Losquadro

Deliverables

- DVDs - Custom Interface; has episodes + blooper reels
- Stickers
 - Logo
 - Fake ID
 - End of Chetvangelion Sticker

Chetcha Kutcha:

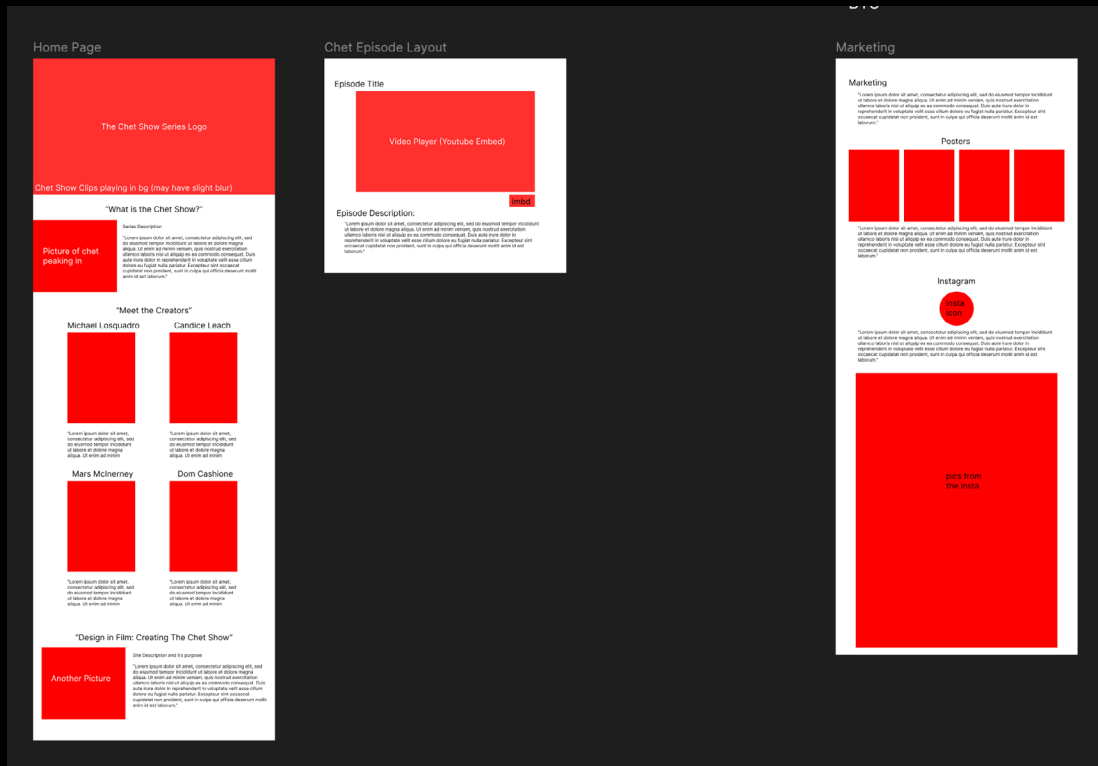
For Petcha Kutcha I had the honor of ending off the show. While my presentation was overall pretty simple, I was able to utilize the imagery from the series to captivate the audience while keeping things simple overall. The best part of this project was the beginning, where Chet's actor, Candice Leach had appeared to puppet Chet and create a little bit of banter before the show had started.

The feedback received from the Petcha Kutcha was very positive, and left people overall excited to see the final project. During the thesis show multiple people came up saying they specifically were excited to see where my project would end up after seeing the Thesis 1 presentation, which was a great thing to hear even several months later.

Sketches / Brainstorming

Original Wireframing:

While really great for starting, the wireframes for the ChetSite quickly began to become unrecognizable as the project went on and the site gained its own identity.



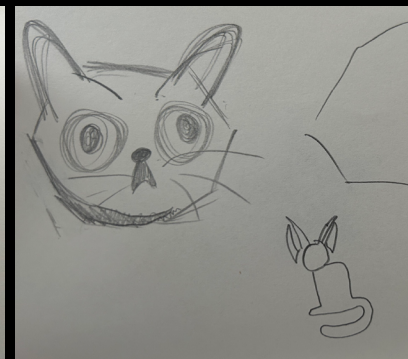
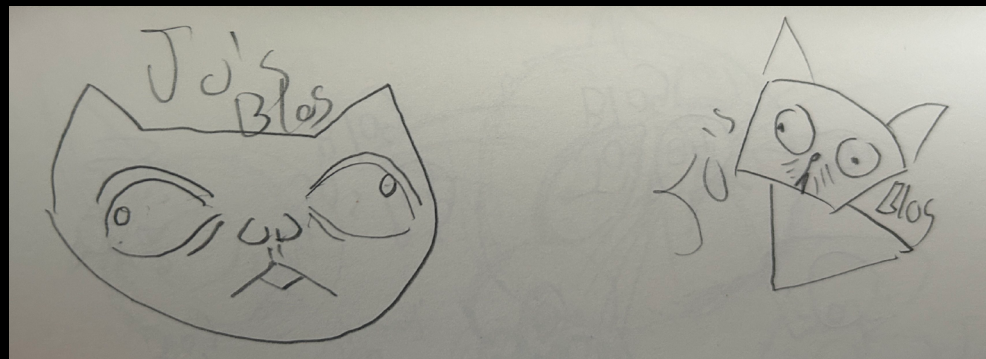
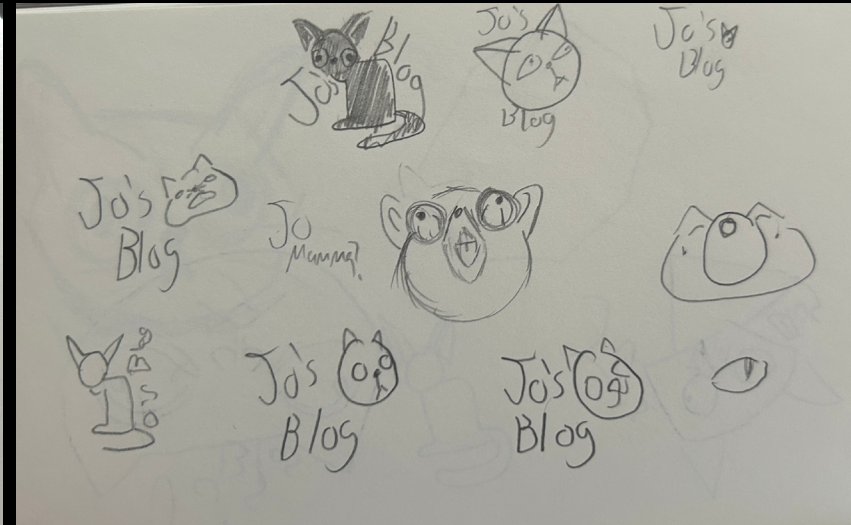
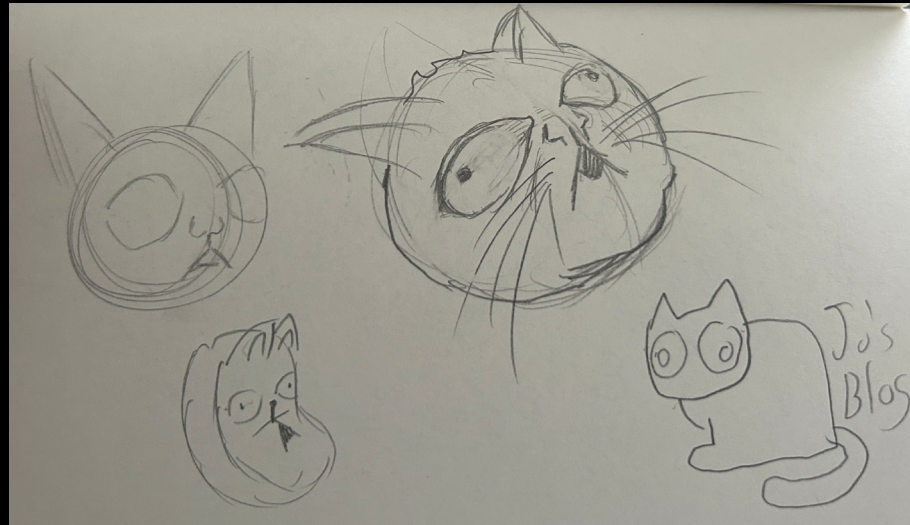
Thesis Party:

Jo's Blog was easily the portion of the site that required the most individual visual research and unique asset creation. A lot of outside sources were used to gather assets, cooltext.com was used to make the era-accurate word art on the webpages' buttons, with the logo and wordart for said logo being made in photoshop using various style packs.

Everything else for the blog was created using era styled css/html or sourced from geocite archives/created in photoshop to mimic the old style.



Jo's Blog Concept Art:



Resources

Visual Research:

During the Thesis 1 research period there were two main methods of study. The first being literary pieces such as books and articles, among these the most useful by far was *Marvel by Design*, a book documenting the different design philosophies of Marvel comics through the years. From typefaces to iconography, *Marvel by Design* acted as a demo piece to how multi-media design can be demonstrated and utilized in places you wouldn't first expect.

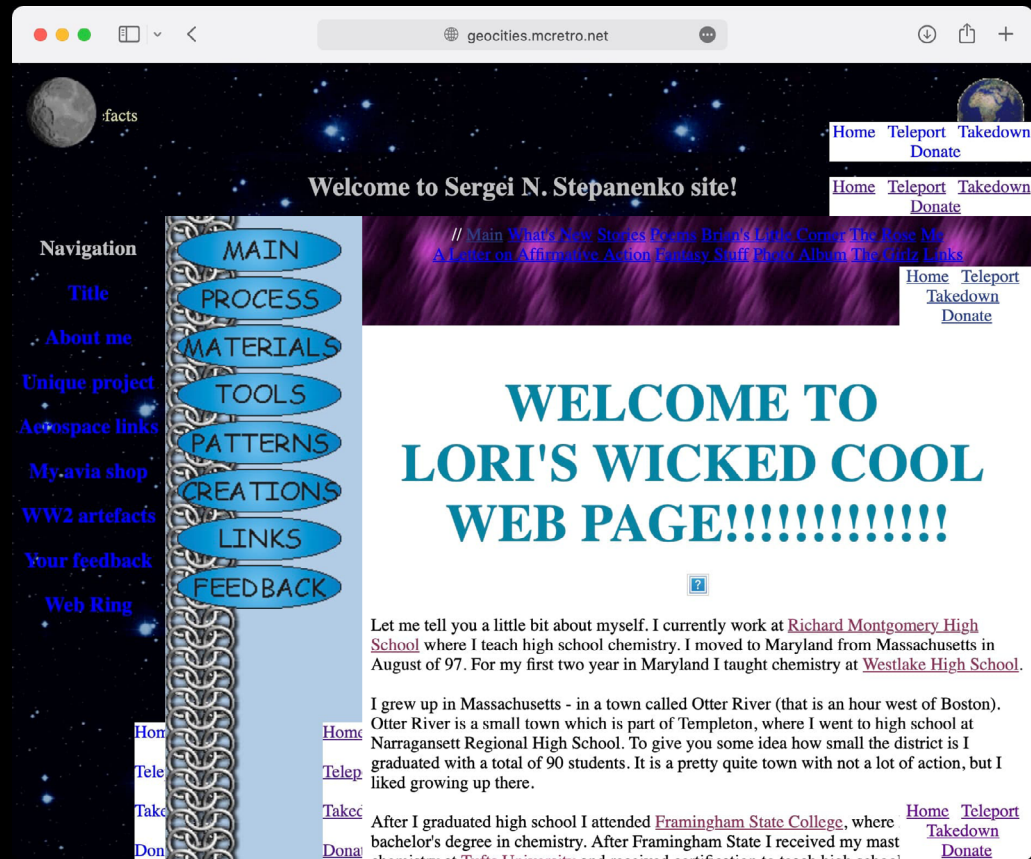


Visual Research (cont.):

The second method of visual research was websites. Within this section there were 3 that ended up being very large influences on the ChetSite. **A24's** website was definitely a very large influence, the simple and refined nature of the site was very pleasing to look at and acted almost as a blueprint for the ChetSite. **Bittercreek Studios'** page, specifically the director's page, was a huge inspiration for the meet the crew page, specifically the unique scroll elements. Finally, the sitcom **Community's** website was direct inspiration for Jo's Blog, an in-universe webpage that reveled in its own absurdity and outdated layout.



Jo's Blog Visual Inspiration:



Outreach / Feedback

Design Feedback:

Feedback from this project came from 2 places, designers and consumers. A majority of design feedback was organized around trying to avoid bland layouts. Typically these concerns came from the typography of the site.

“The Chet Show” used Times New Roman as its primary font, with Courier New being used as the occasional secondary font. This was done for thematic reasons within the show itself, but for the site it proved difficult to make it work out well. Eventually a balance was struck with font choices varying from page to page, with Times New Roman being used as the heading on every page for visual consistency.

Consumer Feedback:

As the site was being programmed, it would be sent out for testing from as many people as possible. Typically feedback would come back positive, however a lot of formatting bugs were found and fixed in this manner in a very short period of time.

Thesis II Midterm Review

Midterm Review Notes:

The midterm review went fairly well, it was around the point where I had gathered a majority of content for the website. A big turning point for the project came at this point with the idea to shift Jo's Blog towards a more community focused area of the site. From this review the site's identity got pushed away from being more involved in the identity of the show itself and more about the people who made it, which really helped wrap the whole site better around the ideas behind the thesis project.



Obstacles

Meet the Crew - Snap Scrolling:

While working on the Meet the Crew page a unique asset was needed to separate it from the rest of the site. Snap scrolling was quickly chosen as the defining element of the page, as it allowed all the crew members who had their photo taken to have their spot/frame to stand out without any excess visual noise. Getting the snap scroll itself to work wasn't a problem at all, however the scaling on the page to work well proved difficult. In the end around 7 different scaling sizes were made to optimize the page as best as possible in time for the design show.

Launch Page DNS Breaking:

The night before the shoot, around 1am launch.michaellosquadro.com had broken, this was the site that was linked to the back of the Michael Losquadro business cards. Something about the way the page was sourced through Netlify to Porkbun had broken. Originally set up as a second ALIAS in porkbun, separate from the michaellosquadro.com ALIAS, the page needed to be moved to a CNAME structure to properly function within the page itself.

This would have been a very simple fix. However, alongside this problem was the fact that spectrum wifi had gone out in the New Paltz area. A phone hotspot was used for getting a temporary fix to the problem. The fix had taken until 4am, way longer than originally anticipated, but the page was working in time for the thesis show.

Thesis Blog

Weekly Posts:

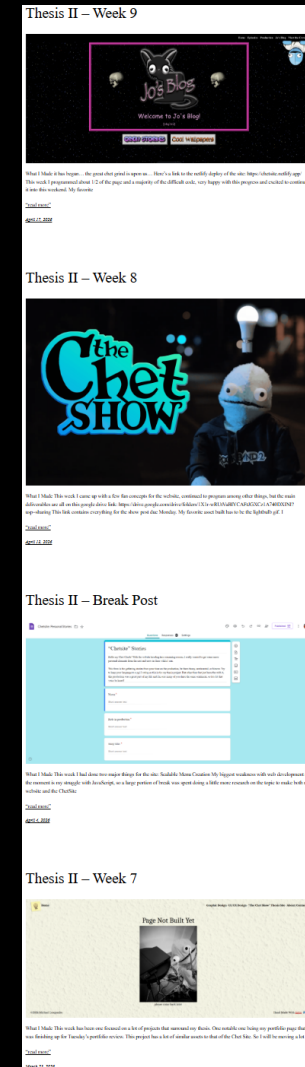
The blog provided a place to let everything Chet out, acting as a filter of ideas and figure out what the project wanted to become. The theme of Chet imagery was very exciting to play with, with each weekly post showing off work from that week.

Michael's GD Thesis Blog

Blog Posts



Thesis II – Week 9



Final Work

thechetshow.com

The Chet Navs:

Since each page was so unique visually from one another the nav needed to be special and unite the entire site together under one roof. This roof of course takes the form of Chet himself, sliding down and showing you everything the site has to offer right at the top of the page. The nav was built to be as accessible as possible despite its odd behavior and also allow for full keyboard support with tab-key focus support. On mobile he is replaced with a hamburger Chet, carrying the personality of full chat into a tiny little mobile package.

The nav also has a pause button for all visuals on the site, improving accessibility for any potential viewers!



Home:

The home page as mentioned previously was built to be visual eye candy. The webm playing in the background is the most defining element on this page, with a montage of some defining Chet moments from the series. On scroll the page has a nice dark and blur effect on the background leaving it barely visible, allowing the page bio to be fully legible.



"What is The Chet Show?"

"The Chet Show" is a student short film series created by Michael Losquadro and Candice Loech. The series follows Chet, a living puppet college student living in a college dorm with his roommate and best friend Todd. The series was produced over the course of two years with a team almost entirely consisting of students from SUNY New Paltz. Three episodes have been completed and released to date: "Chet Goes to the Doctor", "Chet Goes to a Party" and "Chet Falls in Love".

However, there's something very, very wrong with our titular Chet. Puppets aren't supposed to come to life. Underneath, there's something very, very wrong with our titular Chet. Puppets aren't supposed to come to life. Being trapped as a puppet, an image, a character in a show, is it a life worth living at all? This ongoing identity crisis is the core of "The Chet Show," and Chet escapes to his idyllic, stress-free TV life, where he always gets to play his role perfectly and make everyone laugh. Cracks begin to form, and Chet is violently, horrifyingly, torn back to reality, only to end up back in the show. "The Chet Show" reveals itself finally to be a horror-comedy series about self-actualization.

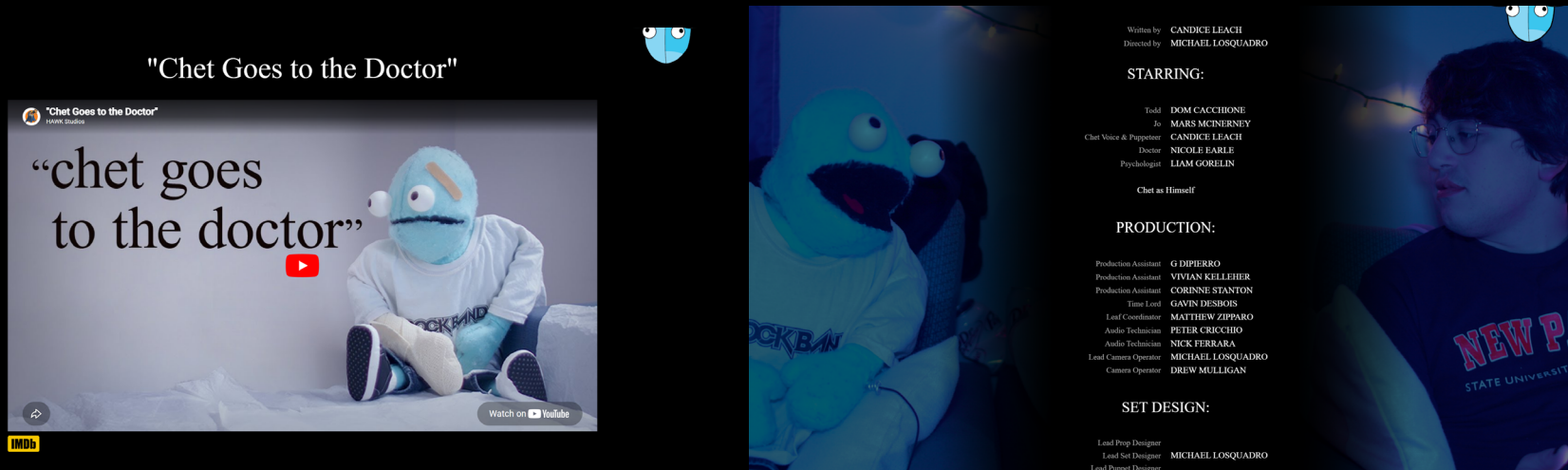
Why the ChetSite?

A large amount of the work required to make "The Chet Show" possible on a small scale and smaller budget demanded the mindset of a designer. How problems with the puppet as a character were handled, how time was managed on and off set, and a lot of specific, visual design work: Prop production, storyboarding, character design and color theory, editing, marketing, all of these were improved by approaching them from a designer's perspective. This project provides documentation on the pre-production, production and post production of "The Chet Show." The "ChetSite" is not only built to share the perspective of the people involved and the experience that working on the project provided, but to share everything that made it such an important memory for those people as well. This site's primary purpose is documentation and appreciation for the project and all of those involved.

Episodes:

The Episode pages start with the youtube embed against a blank background, nothing but the episode, the description and on smaller screens the beginning of the credits. On scroll, each page has 2 images placed on the furthest points on the sides on the back of the page, where upon activation, they slowly fade from 0% to 100% opacity, surrounding the credits. Each episode page has a unique image to match the episode, specifically from some of the crew's favorite moments from the episodes.

On mobile view the page has a much simpler view without the scroll asset.



Production:

Production pages are by far the simplest in terms of design. The purpose of the production page was purely to act as a writeup for every aspect of the series. This task was not a one-man project however, to cover all bases and make sure everything was as thorough as possible Candice Leach and Mars McInerney were brought on to cover everything that was not possible to cover alone in appropriate detail.

This page is also the first instance of the secondary font - Courier New being put into use to differentiate the writing on this page from the writing on the Home page, allowing first time viewers to understand the purpose of the pages without needing to have it be explained.

Production

Production is both the largest and smallest part of an episode's timeline. For the average episode of "The Chet Show" production takes around 1-2 months of filming, typically running concurrently with the end of pre-production and the beginning of post-production. This is where all of the magic really starts to take shape.

Cinematography

Cinematography led by Michael Losquadro follows a complementary approach to the storytelling at hand, utilizing quick cuts and heavy use of swipes, the camera work of Chet is meant to complement the pacing at hand. When the scene wants to feel hectic and loud, the cinematography complements that, when it's time for a quiet scene of Chet talking with someone, the camera slows down alongside it. The primary goal of Chet's camera work is to complement the story and sit alongside the feeling of the episode.

Some of the primary influences for the cinematography of Chet are "How I Met Your Mother", "Community", "The Babadook" and the work of Sam Raimi.



Jo's Blog:



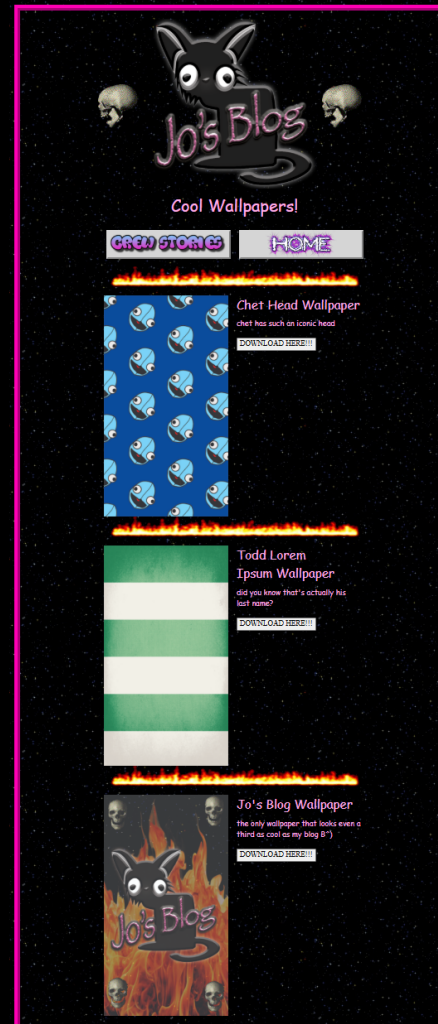
The page that shifted more than any other from concept to execution, Jo's Blog is the most unique page on the site. Modeled after several historical geocities, Jo's Blog aims for three main goals: accuracy, accessibility, and fun. Accuracy required the most work and research but was a very easy and smooth process, mimicking old-school css and html is not very difficult by modern standards, but a lot of old practices don't work in a modern landscape.

A lot of old geocities were built using tables for layouts, at the time this was fine, but today with the advancements in screen-readers this is not an option. So every table-like layout in Jo's Blog is a series of divs layered out to mimic the look of tables as closely as possible.

Every other decision was made to match the fun, goofier vibe of Jo as a character from the show. The bio was written by Candice Leach the series writer, with comic sans being chosen for the body text for obvious reasons. All colors were chosen to follow WCAG guidelines even despite the funky background, with all gifs and non-logo word art being sourced from geocities archives and cooltext.com respectively to keep the era-aesthetic as accurate as possible.

Jo's Blog Pages:

Jo's blog also features some unique content, Crew stories was gathered from stories submitted from the crew and used astro's component elements to make the transition from submission to page as seamless and quick as possible. And Cool Wallpapers was just a fun page to add some extra in-universe themed deliverables to match the theme of the blog.



Meet the Crew:

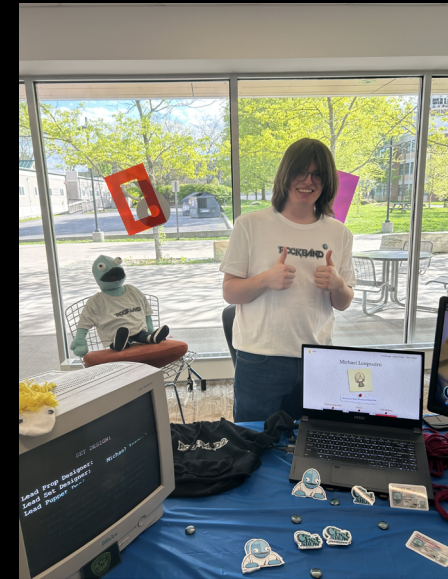
The most difficult page to build and organize for the final, Meet the Crew offered a chance for the most vital crew members to get their photos taken and edited for the site. Taken in SUNY New Paltz's Old Library Lighting Studio, the lighting used in the photographs were meant to mimic the lighting from the show as closely as possible, while not messing with skin tones and allowing each person to stand out as much as possible from the dark background. Each model was given a specific item to match their role, so that even though the roles are stated, anybody can tell what that specific person's role was in the show.

The snap scrolling for the page was also very difficult, as I discussed heavily in Obstacles. The font and background choice were chosen to make the photos page both stand out and also offer visual elements to match the themes and lighting on the page itself

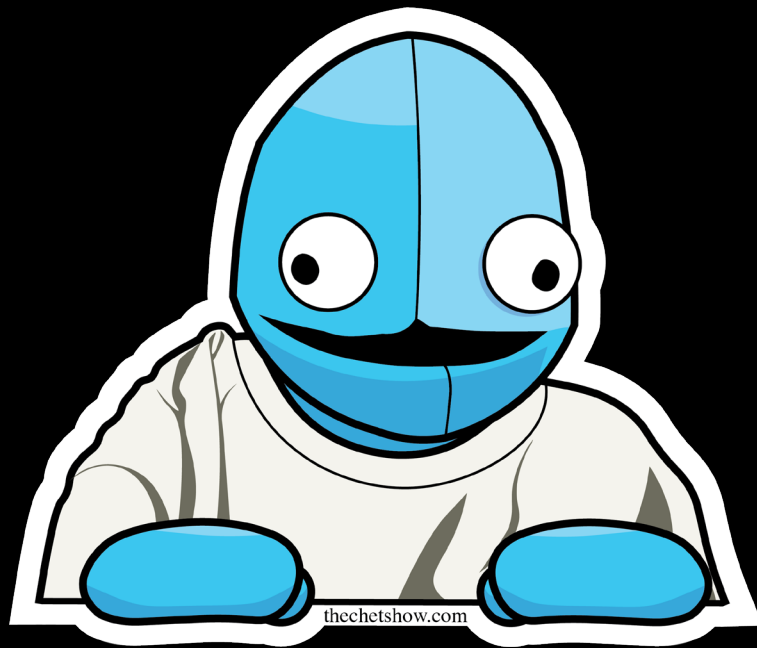


Design Show Documentation

Booth:



Stickers:



Reflection

Looking Back on Thesis and Chet:

“The Chet Show” has been a project I had worked on for over two years, dating all the way back to my second semester sophomore year. The project is currently in a place where we don’t know where we want to take it. But even if the series doesn’t continue this project will memorialize all the work I did with the amazing crew behind the project. It’s not everyday you’re able to find a group of dozens of people who are willing to work on your project for no other reason than they love the idea and want to see it happen.

Honing back in on the website and the last year of thesis work, I am very happy with how it came out. I had a lot of tough nights trying to schedule a packed workload alongside my thesis, but seeing it all come to fruition is fantastic. While building the Chetsite I felt I had improved tenfold as a web designer throughout the process. I’m really excited to throw in the final touches on the website itself by making Meet the Crew truly scalable and add a few more late addition crew stories into the mix.

Overall I am incredibly satisfied with my time here at SUNY New Paltz and my thesis as a whole. From the project to the experiences working alongside my classmates, I am truly thankful for being able to work on this project and see it out to such a completed state. And I absolutely cannot wait for the next project I take on, I can only hope the scale will be even larger!