

Monogram

**WHITE
KING**



GWA

RENDEZVOUS



RoMart^{INC}

Initial research

I first looked at monograms or logotypes and found the ones that connected letterforms and played with negative space/counterforms appealing. They maintained visible letters while being interesting 2D compositions that demanded further observation. I then researched Clark Gable and found the transformation from him as a young boy to Hollywood's "King" notable. As a child he played in a band, repaired cars, and liked reading Shakespearean sonnets. He was also described as tall, loud, and shy. In preparation for his acting career, his acting coach trained him to lower his voice and paid for him to get a styled haircut and to repair his teeth.

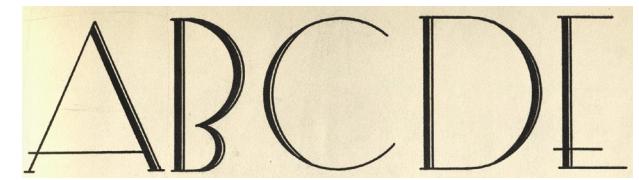
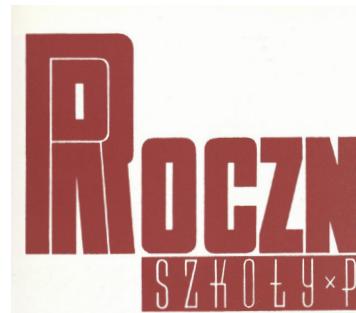
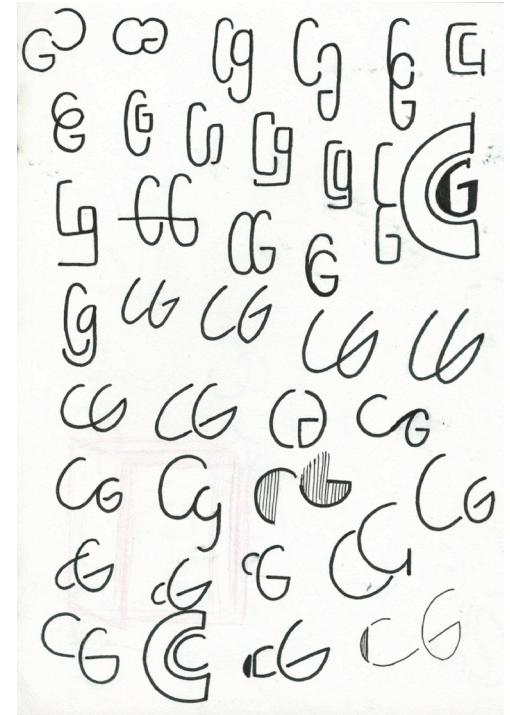
As an established actor he was described as having a "powerful voice and appearance." The main quote I pulled from for my concept was said by one of his co-actresses: "...as masculine as any man I've ever known, and as much a little boy a grown man could be." In my monogram, I sought to capture his masculinity and boyishness in an integrated rather than separated way.

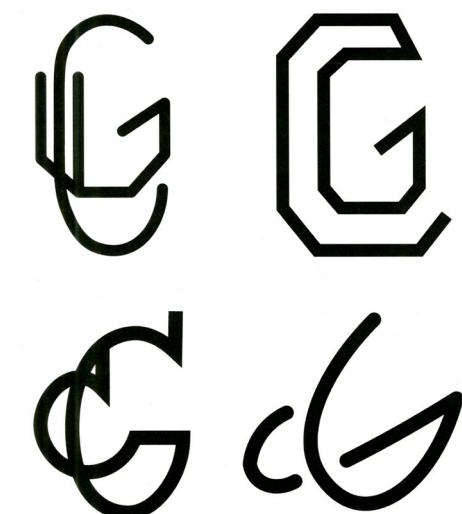
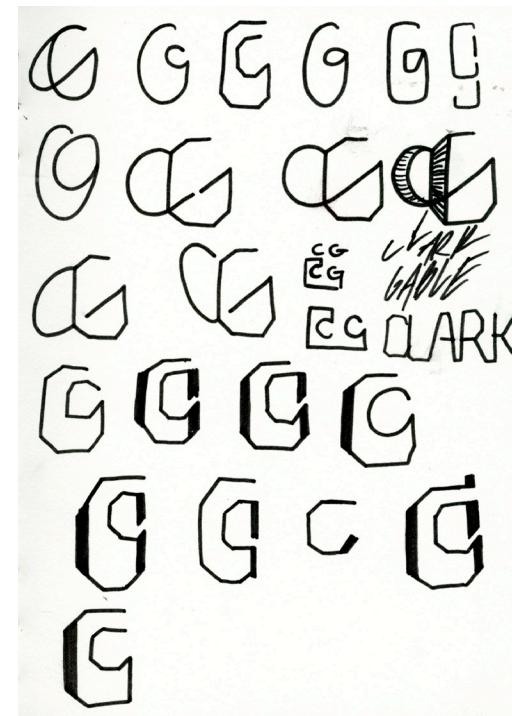
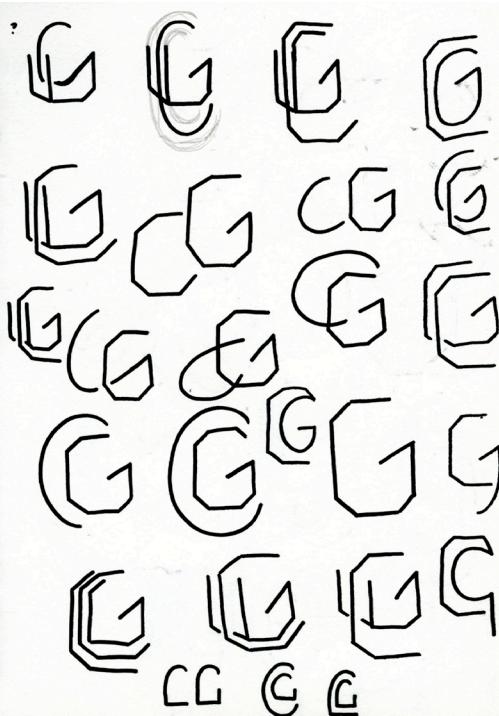
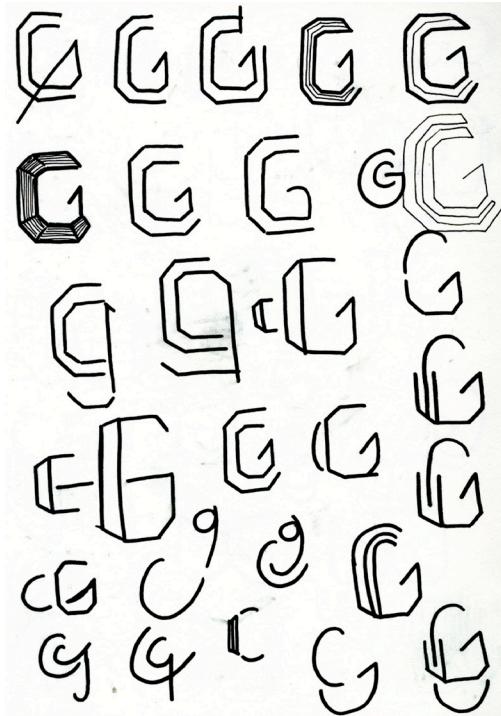
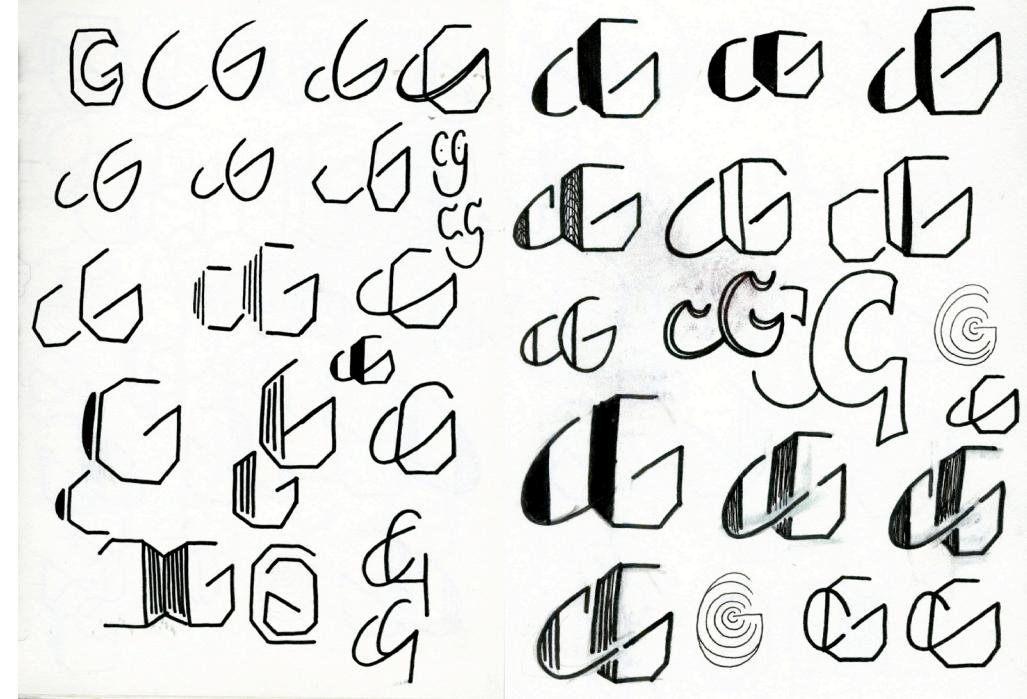
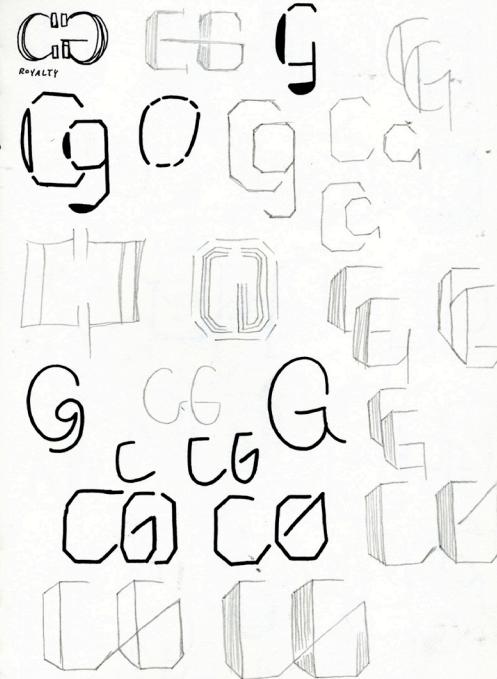
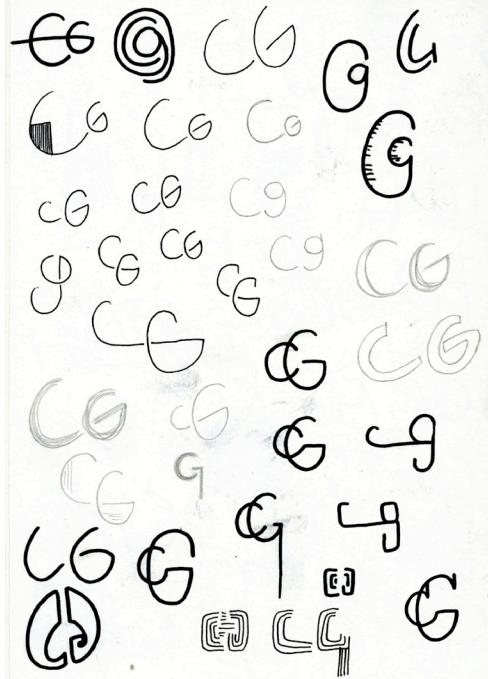
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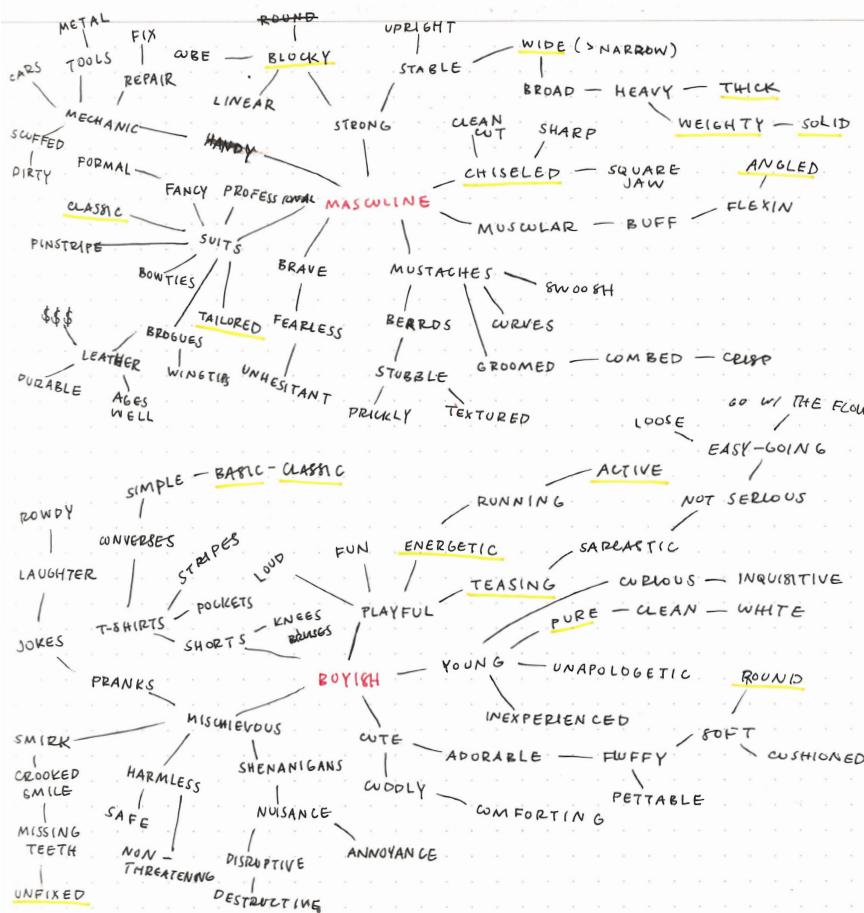
In my sketches I mainly played around letterform connection, cases, and scale and began to figure how that could relate to his masculinity and boyishness. A majority of the sketches were formal explorations of C and G's skeletons. I mainly looked at art deco faces since that was the era he acted in, so the geometry and lined style is evident in my sketches. After creating quick digital renders, I saw that the forms weren't substantial; they looked quite fragile and incomplete, especially at a larger scale due to the single line weight.

In crit people definitely got the art deco feel but not really a sense of masculinity because of the lack of weight and bold strokes. It was suggested that I focus in on my idea more: art deco or Gable's personality? My professor posed an important question: Does the quote I'm pulling from mention art deco at all? What's the role of art deco in Gable's personality?

My professor also saw mustaches in some of the curved gestures and a sense of a face. She also argued that geometric forms function more as decoration whereas rounder, more natural forms align with the idea of a person. Since my intent was to focus on Gable's personality, I tried to leave the art deco influence behind in my next iterations.







Monogram refinement

During the first crit we threw out words relating to masculinity, prompting me to revisit mind maps, which have often worked for me. Notions of stability and strength came up again along with suits—something formal and classic, timely. I also made one for “boyish,” and found points of differences and similarity between the two words. I looked through several typefaces to find one that was weighty and stable, something not too geometric and circular or with too much contrast in stroke weight. I found Los Feliz OT and Oxtail OT I to fit well, but looking back I should have tried out more instead of writing off unmanipulated fonts that could have worked better.

In my sketches the two letters were expressed differently, making it seem like the monogram was of two different people with the C attached to the G, like a child to his parent. On the computer I played around with truly integrating them to convey one complete person. The ideas of connection and scaling came together when I contained the C in the G. Once I did that, I focused on particularly one version and started considering how the C could be brought out more; I tried to make the G a frame for the C by focusing on the counterform. That monogram did feel slightly whimsical or mythical in a way because of the rounded form and tail shape in the center, so I had to be careful with how round or sharp I made the corners.



Black and white photos of a slightly-smug-looking Gable

People were drawn to the third version most because of the tucked in C and also because some saw the counterform as the C. My professor preferred the second version since it was theatrical and gestural and had a sense of motion in the italic but maintained its stability. I preferred the third one over the second since the C was the most integrated and because the stroke thickness formed a stronger counterform. The shape of the C also reminded me of the cup of Gable's cheeks and his smirk, and to my professor it reminded her of a mustache. Looking back the serif face for the third version suited the overall classic brand of Clark Gable more and the C could have been integrated in the same method (which I try later on). I think picking out what the monograms I looked at conveyed would have informed me of my type decision better.

I worked on carving out the counterform and smoothing out the curves to best fit around the C without disrupting the stability of the G. A lot of the time was spent in Illustrator messing with anchor points and handles to get the curve I wanted; I probably should have done that on paper then retraced it in Illustrator. In crit my professor found the bottom right corner of the counterform to be too high of a curve in comparison to the others and it needed to be adjusted just the smallest bit. After fixing it, it definitely made the monogram more balanced and stable.



Version 1: Least manipulation; shows the C the clearest but too athletic; reminds me of Gatorade



Version 2: Mustachioed G



Version 3: The bottom left one has the strongest counterform, but the C is too twirly



Refinement stages of the last monogram from version 3



Application refinement

The ones with the centered and smaller monograms worked better in reinforcing stability and timeliness. The larger monograms touching the edge made the cards too active and sporty. Another conflict I had was whether or not to orient the front and back the same. The horizontal orientation is generally more stable, and the single line name and flanking negative space reinforced that directionality. However the vertical orientation worked better with the contact information side since there was a greater amount of negative space. I also found that the ones with frames situated the content rather than letting it float without boundaries.

I worked in black and white to study value and added gold since it is the metal of choice for luxury, especially in the context of art deco and Hollywood. The black and gold reminded me too much of my high school's colors though, and the fact that it wasn't real gold made it seem gaudy rather than luxurious or established. The gray was also more masculine to me, as a lot of men's brands use black and silver. Gable's films were also in black and white. Increasing the contrast between the gray and black gave an effect of silver.



My professor also felt that the monogram and name needed to be on both of the cards, presumably to remind and reinforce the viewer of the identity and name of the person. I had to consider how to fit and appropriately scale those elements on both sides. In the class before the final crit, she suggested placing the monogram on the back at a smaller scale with ruled lines to the right and left of it to bring in the language of the lined frame in the next version. She also suggested trying to add the monogram at a smaller size as a decorative element to the corners of the frames, containing them in a scalloped cave.

I went with the vertical orientation since it allowed room for adding a monogram at a smaller size while maintaining a centered composition. My professor also argued that the change in orientation corresponded to Gable's duality of masculine and boyish. It also plays with short and tall as the monogram plays with small and large. Additionally, rotating a business card is not that inconvenient given its handheld size.

In this stage I was also paying more attention to the smaller text by fixing the leading, kerning, and other space-related factors. Throughout the whole project, I felt that the contact info was hard to read against the black. I was using Mrs. Eaves small caps which didn't come in bold, but as I learned in the book cover project, I could lighten the text to increase contrast rather than making it thicker. I also made Gable slightly larger to make its line length about the same as Clark.

I started iterating through using the monogram as a corner embellishment. In its final scalloped form, it works well with tying all of the elements together since the frame now contains both an edge and a curve, just as the monogram does. Although it is more decorative, I found it gave an effect of emphasizing the G, possibly by relating the frame's four corners to G's. They also seem like screws for the frame. Additionally, the clean lines and minimal use of adornment didn't make it feel too feminine.

Final

After crit I thought to remove the mini monograms and leave the scalloped frame. At first it seemed to make the frame feel too substantial and solid. But looking at it more, it works in a different way and reminds me of a movie ticket. In that sense, it may be stronger. To push that idea, maybe cutting the corners into the same shape as the scalloped edges would be pretty effective in implying that Gable is an actor. I hadn't thought to manipulate the 2" x 3.5" business card until I saw in the final crit what people in another professor's group did.

In the final crit, another professor did speculate if the name was needed on the front and if the C possibly needed a curve at the bottom of it, which was a question of keeping the G's shape or emphasizing the C's. I do agree that the counterform isn't the strongest it could be to suggest a C, particularly since I felt an earlier iteration did it better but was not as masculine. The inside curve next to the upper right slab of the G is also quite rounder than the others but I was never able to get it just right. At the scale I used it on my business card, it worked so I wasn't too worried about it. After experiencing after-images from messing with the monogram for a while, I think I had worked on it for a good amount of time.



Version submitted at final crit



Post-crit iterations



