

APOLLO RISING

PRESERVE THE LEGACY. BUILD THE DREAM.



B. Proposed fundraising poster for Apollo Theater. Designer: Gwen Haberman/Suka Design; client: Apollo Foundation.

WHIP-SMART

Deanne Cheuk, New York, NY

The word “prolific” doesn’t begin to describe Deanne Cheuk. The 29-year-old has art-directed 13 magazines, including *Tokion*, a bilingual style bible, and catalogs for Urban Outfitters, as well as the self-published sampler of original artwork, *Neomu*. Mike Joyce, an art director at MTV, wonders aloud, “I can’t understand it—she really does do everything.” In addition to contributing illustrations to magazines such as *Flaunt* and *Nylon*, she has exhibited art from Tokyo to London. On top of that, she has dabbled in clothing design, contributing art for Levi’s Japan and street-wear purveyor 2K.

Cheuk, whose background is Chinese, was born and raised in Perth, Australia, “the world’s most isolated city,” she says. “Australia is so far away that a lot of designers there can be easily influenced by what everyone else is doing. All my favorite magazines have come from Europe and America.” Cheuk is calm and quietly confident, and she has a distinctly international outlook. As part of a global subculture that thrives on collaboration, eclecticism, and unfettered creativity, she has a determined D.I.Y. sensibility, something she acquired early on. “You just literally have to make your own thing to do something cool—which is how I started.”

Her formal training is in art and photography; she graduated with a B.A. in graphic design from Perth’s Curtin University in 1994. After an apprenticeship of sorts at the Aussie contemporary-culture bimonthly *Revelation*, she decided she’d learned all she could. In 1997, she started designing and publishing *Mu*, an ambitious journal that brought together the work of Australian and international writers and artists. With donated services including her own, the primary expenditure was printing, which she paid for out-of-pocket. As the magazine was distributed across Australia and eventually made its way to Tokyo and New York, her work began to get noticed.

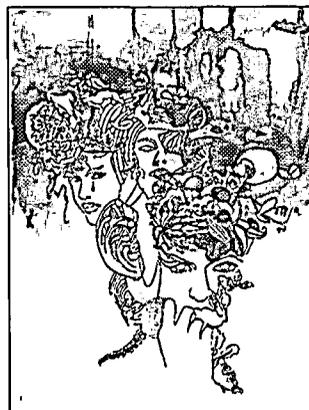
“In Perth, I had a poster on my wall above my computer that said ‘New York: The Wonder City,’” she says. And so on to the Wonder City, where she arrived on—of all days—July 4, 2000. She shares an apartment/work studio with her boyfriend and an idiosyncratic cat named Leonard in a sleek new sliver of a building that sits amid the gritty remnants of Manhattan’s Lower East Side.

Since her arrival in New York, and an early stint working with David Carson, Cheuk has built her own practice with an impressive client base. In addition to taking on art-direction projects for *Tokion* and Urban Outfitters, one of her most visible and laudable projects to date is the self-published *Neomu*—the “graphical progression of *Mu*,” she explains. Now in its sixth issue, it’s a labor of love that she publishes as a charitable cause. The diminutive sampler appears three times a year and is distributed worldwide, with proceeds going to global charities.

Cheuk offhandedly mentions that she is busy compiling work for her first book, a collection of illustrations. Her illustration style, which she’s dubbed “Mushroom Girls,” is a distinctive, organic layering of composite images and hand-drawn elements, kind of Aubrey Beardsley by way of ’70s record-album art.

With her penchant for multitasking, there’s no telling what other five or ten projects must be in the works as well.

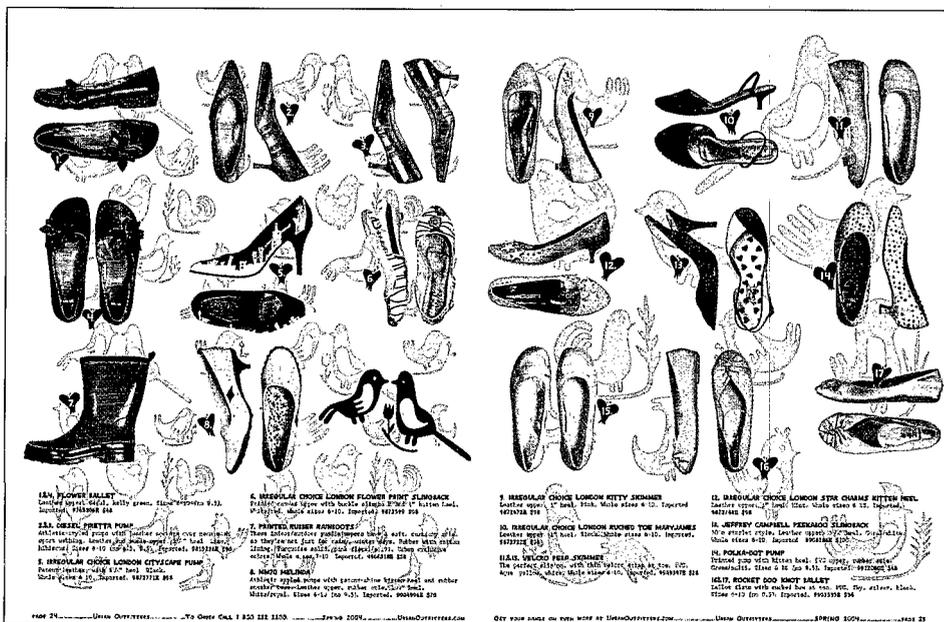
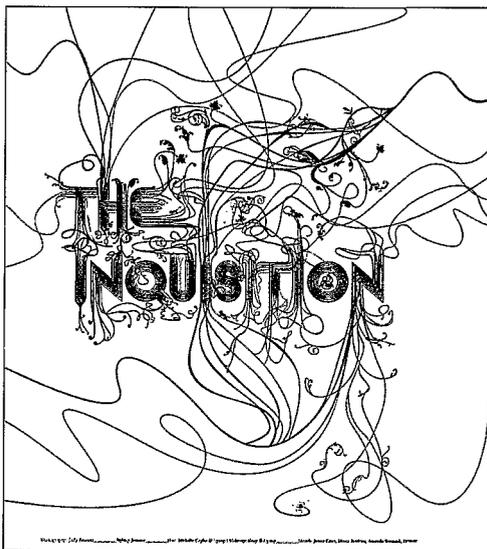
—Angela Voulangas



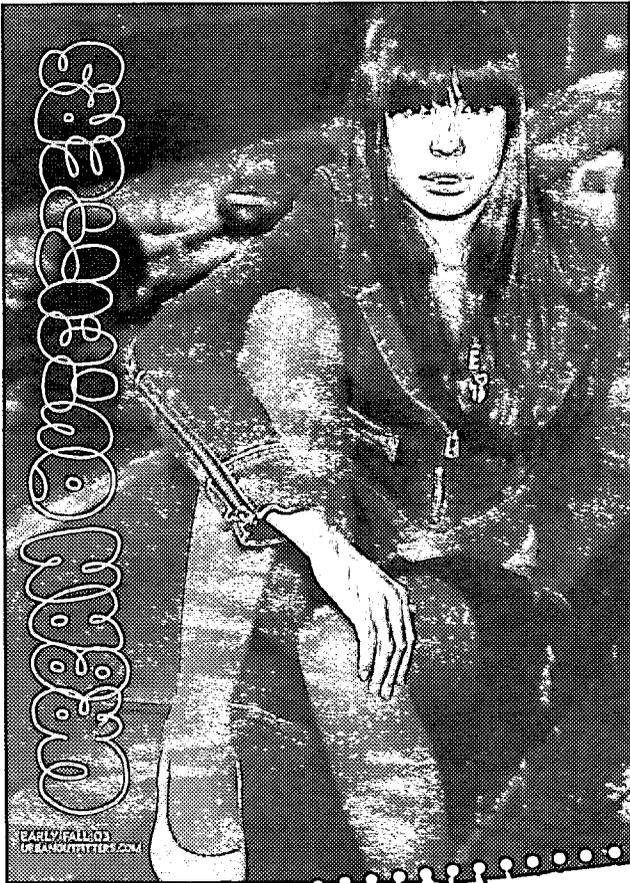
All work by Deanne Cheuk, unless otherwise noted.

1. Illustration for clothing line Abahouse.

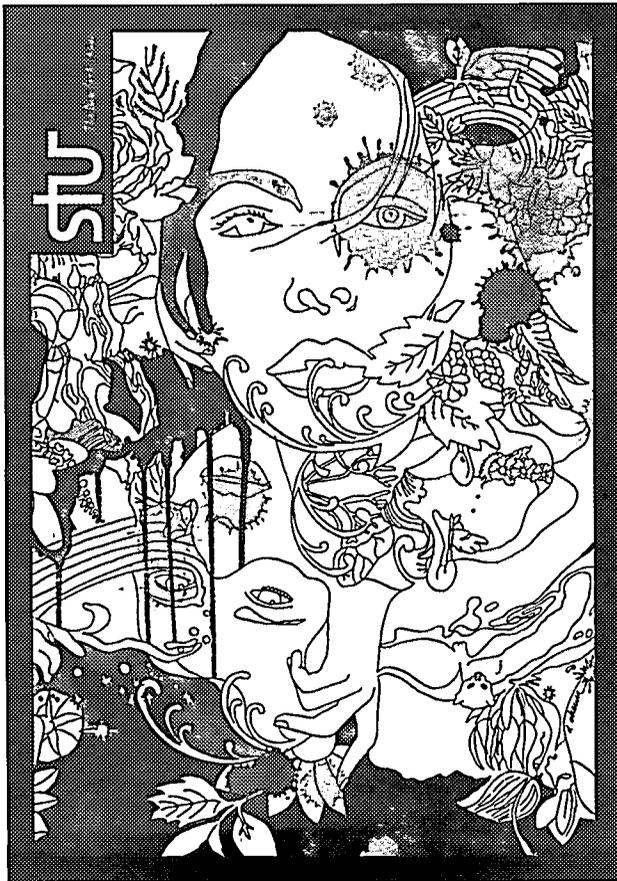




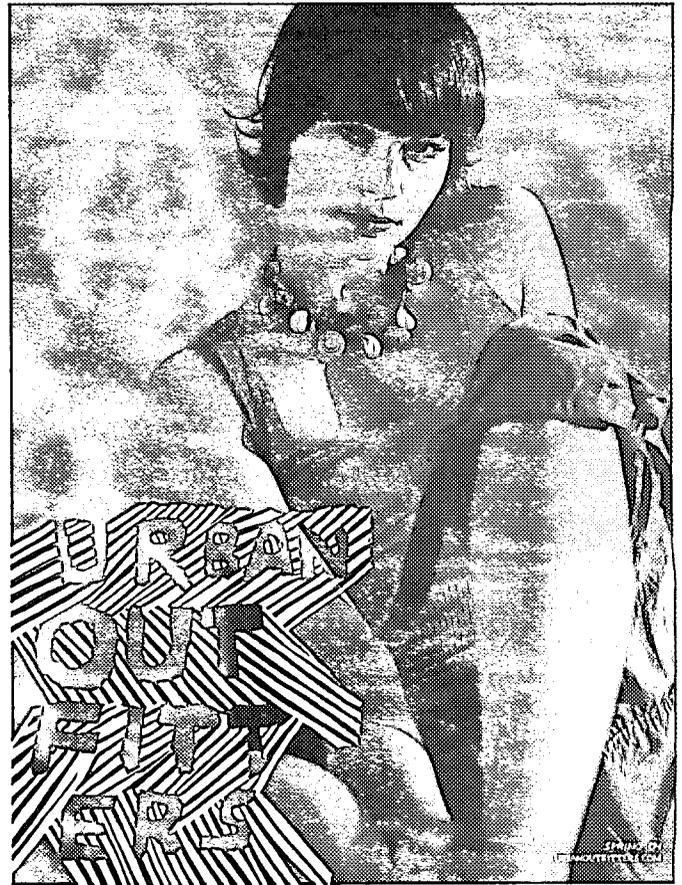
- 2. CD cover and illustration for Ghostly International Records.
- 3. Spread and illustration for Tokion magazine.
- 4-6. Spread and covers from 2003 and 2004 Urban Outfitters catalog. Photographers: Tom Betterton, Coliena Rentmeester, Justine Parsons
- 7. Design and cover illustration for the Australian magazine STU.



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