Proposal

Research Problem Statement
For this project, I was tasked with creating product packaging based on a character from a TV show, movie, or book. The product had to relate to the character in some way, and every detail of the packaging, including the name of the brand, was to be inspired by the character. This meant that everything from the character's background, nationality, clothing style, achievements, flaws, and personality traits went into the visual conception of the product and product packaging. As a result, the character could not be a simplistic one-dimensional character with no history and no motivations. I had to know the character well and the character had to have a life that I could research past the surface.

For the final visual solution, I produced an identity system, which included the logo and logo variations, the colors of the brand, and the typefaces. The second piece I produced was a series of three physical products and their packaging. The three physical pieces had to be the same product, just with different variations on style, flavor, scent, or whatever was applicable, depending on what the product was. The product series also had to appear retail-ready, as if they could be immediately placed on store shelves for sale. This meant I had to construct the products and the boxes they would be sold in.

Communication Objective
With this packaging series, I was trying to communicate my chosen character's attributes and personality, as well as the message of empowering women in the workplace. The character I chose was Kara Danvers, the main character of the TV show Supergirl. Kara serves as a role model for her city in the show, and so I wanted to create something that would inspire and motivate people, particularly women, as well. Supergirl as a hero represents kindness, community, teamwork, courage, and making a positive difference. The Kryptonian symbol for hope, worn on both Supergirl and Superman's chests, means “stronger together.” My goal was to incorporate these attributes into my packaging. I wanted to show that every job matters, because we are stronger when everyone is working together to make a positive difference in the world, and not just leaving it up to the most powerful people. Even Kara’s day job of getting her boss coffee is important, because Kara uses it as an opportunity to suggest ideas that will improve the lives of others to her boss who can actually do something about it. Like Kara, I hoped my products would inspire women to use every opportunity they could to do good in this world, because they are nothing less than excellent, they work twice as hard, and they have the hearts of heroes.
Visual Solution
In light of Kara’s role as an assistant to a media conglomerate executive, where one of her main jobs is to get her boss coffee, I decided to create mugs and mug packaging. I wanted these products to be something that women could use every day at work to be reminded of their strength and their potential to do good, so I named the brand “The Girl Project” because these mugs are specifically made to inspire females. The name also plays off of the naming of “Supergirl” in the show, as opposed to “Superwoman”, showing that girls can be heroes too.

The three mugs are based off of three aspects of Kara’s personality: her Kara Zor-El persona, her Kara Danvers persona, and her Supergirl persona. Kara Zor-El is Kara’s given name when she was born on the now-destroyed planet Krypton. She was part of the noble house of El, which meant she was looked up to as a daughter of nobility, even as a child. She was even given the responsibility of helping her cousin Kal-El adjust to life on Earth and preserving the memory of her home planet. The paraphrase “she works twice as hard” is printed on the face of the mug, and an illustration of a planet is printed on the other side. The illustration, the logo, and the edges of the box are all designed in gold tones to represent the noble aspect of Kara Zor-El’s character.

When Kara comes to live on Earth, she is adopted by the Danvers family and becomes Kara Danvers. As an adult, she gets the job working for Cat Grant, who serves as a sort of mentor to Kara. Cat’s office is very feminine and full of pink flowers, so the color scheme of the second mug and box is pink. The paraphrase on the mug is “she is nothing less than excellent”, and the illustration on the other side is a bouquet of pink flowers.

The final mug and box package represents Kara’s Supergirl side. Thus, the color scheme is red, yellow, and blue, just like Supergirl’s uniform, and the S on her chest is illustrated on one side of the mug. On the other side, I printed the quote “she has the heart of a hero,” something Kara’s adoptive sister told her when Kara was going through a tough time. All these elements came together to produce a series of mugs that would inspire “girls” to be heroes.

How It Was Produced
My first step in the process of creating this mug packaging was to choose my character. I had recently watched the first season of the show Supergirl and was myself inspired by her, so her personality and character attributes were fresh on my mind. Once I had my character in mind, I had to do visual research. I looked at what types of products were out there and how they were packaged. I collected dozens of images into a moodboard that provided a look into the visual direction of my project. I came up with the name for the product brand, and then I sketched several logo ideas before settling on one. Even after I digitized the chosen sketch, I had to refine the shapes and colors of the logo several times.
Once I decided to design mugs, I had to figure out what to put on the mugs and what to put them in. I did some more sketching, re-watched a few episodes of the show, prayed about it, discussed the project with a friend, and finally came up with the idea to put the paraphrased quotes on the mugs. Deciding to have each mug represent a different part of Kara’s personality also helped me produce the supporting illustrations.

I designed the typed quotes, the illustrations, and the product information on the bottom of each mug in Adobe Illustrator and printed them on clear label paper that I then cut out and pressed onto the plain white mugs. I also designed the boxes in Illustrator and printed them out on cardstock paper. I cut and folded the printed boxes and glued them to the outside of plain white cardboard boxes I had purchased. I wanted the inside of the boxes to have some visual interest, so I covered the inside with colored cardstock that matched the color schemes of each mug, and then placed the mugs on matching colored tissue paper in the boxes. The final solution was three mugs with printed text and illustrations on them and three matching boxes with printed labeling.