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Introduction







My main interest in this thesis is to look into the expressive qualities in the work of Herb Lubalin. It was Herb Lubalin and others like him who saw that typography was an end in itself to express an idea and to communicate strongly. An image was not necessarily something that was needed to reinforce an idea or a statement. Setting type in an ordinary way was not the done thing with these new ideas. Words and letters were to be used to their full graphic advantage. The new way of designing with type was full of wit, innovative ideas and, of course, expression.

Herb Lubalin was an American designer, art director and typographer who made his mark in the design world from the 1940s until 1981 when he died. His work is characterised by his use of expressive typography, humour, thought provoking cleverness and use of strong images. He merged words and images successfully to express his ideas. Lubalin was involved in every facet of design throughout his forty years in the business.

It was realised at the beginning of 20th century that words and letterforms were shapes that could be used as visual communicators and this new idea began to replace the image as the main visual tool. This new way of using typography spread through the design world but there were only a select few whot could utilise these ideas to their full advantage. There had to be an idea and a concept to present the information. Information was no longer facts - it became an experience.

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In this thesis I will show how Herb Lubalin laid the foundations of a very exciting design and typographic world. He was renowned for his non-conformist ideas and his expressive use of typography. He was also gifted with the ability to excel in all areas of design from packaging to advertising.

Although his work was widely seen during his working life there is no solid written information directly related to his work except for articles that range from the early 1960s and a few are to be found from the last decade. By piecing together the articles I will be able to analyse Herb Lubalin's work and its expressive qualities.

His personality and methods of working were very interesting to those who knew him and these subjects are to be found in almost every article that was written about him. The book <u>Herb Lubalin</u>, is a good source for images of Lubalin's work but is still preoccupied by the person that Herb Lubalin was rather than an in depth study of his work. (Gertrude Snyder and Alan Peckolick, 1985).

Lubalin's work has not been throughly documented to the extent that there is any really constructive arguements concerning his work and his ideas. From my research I will try to show Herb Lubalin as one of the most influential designers of the 20th century and how he brought typography to a new level of expressive excitement.

By exploring Lubalin's more renowned work I will show that this is where his most expressive qualities lie. In his



most famous logos and mastheads the words looked exactly like what they meant. Realising that work like this could only be done by a typographical genius I looked at some of his less well known work and found it was also rich in design, quality, wit, and expressiveness.



Chapter One

Herb Lubalin's Main Interests and Expressive ideas.



Herb Lubalin wrote in a special Typography Issue of <u>Print</u> magazine, 'Graphic expressionism is my euphemism for the use of letterforms, not just as a mechanical means for setting words on a page, but rather as another creative way of expressing an idea, telling a story, amplifying the meaning of a word or phrase to elicit an emotional response from the viewer.' '79,pp41-85.

We will see how he put this method of thinking into practice from an examination of examples of his work. Alan Peckolick, who was a partner and friend describes him as 'a non verbal designer, fascinated by the look of words, and he explained their message with typographic impact.' (Peckolick, 1985, p8). Lubalin designed logos, corporate identities, magazines, typefaces, packaging, advertisements, postage stamps and even travelling exhibits for the United States Government.

Herb Lubalin was no artist; he was in fact supposedly terrible at drawing recognisable images and his teacher in school is said to have encouraged him in the area of design and lettering where he seemed to be talented. He then went on to the Cooper Union in 1935 where, he said modestly, 'For the first two years, I was the worst student in the school. In the last two years, I was about the best.' (Peckolick, 1985, p11).

After Lubalin graduated from the Cooper Union in 1939 the world of graphic design was in for quite a change.Here was a designer who would break all the rules, ignore the limiting technicalities that he had



been taught and work with what type really is: shapes,graphic symbols and expression of language.

It was during the late 1930s that Lubalin went out in the real world of graphic design. Those who had got there before him were obviously a great influence on him. There was the threat of war in Europe so this caused an influx of designers from abroad. Herbert Bayer, who was trained at the Bauhaus, Weimar, under Kandinsky and Moholy-Nagy, was working for Container Corporation of America at the time. Bayer was appointed head of the new department of typography and advertising when the Bauhaus moved to Dessau in 1925. He used the publications of the Bauhaus as a way of teaching new typographic ideas. He proposed such things as the abolition of capital letters. His commitment to new ideas can be seen in his use of photography and photomontage in advertising and design. Bayers alternative way of thinking was an example to Lubalin of how



FIG 2. An interior spread from the Saturday Evening Post. 1961.



a designer could become successful by breaking some of the conservative rules of typography and trying new ideas. It is seen in some of Lubalin's advertising work that he used strong photographic imagery to demonstrate the main point. FIG 2.

Another designer at the time who was breaking new ground was M.F Agha from Russia. He was working on American Vogue and was known for his creative use of language and modernist European design. He also worked on Vanity Fair and House and Garden. He was among the first to use images that bled off the page. Lubalin became known for his clever use of headline that filled pages and photography that was cleverly cropped using the boundaries of the paper. FIGS 3&4.



FIG 3. A page from the magazine <u>Eros</u> for an article caled 'Black and White in Color'. It was a photographic tone poem on the subject of interracial love. The images have an impact that is made stronger by Lubalin's use of cropping. 1962.





FIG 4. A spread from a booklet for Sanders printing company promotion.



FIG 5. The logo for CBS Television designed by Bill Golden in 1951.





FIG 6. Cover for <u>Apprarel</u> <u>Arts</u> designed by Paul Rand in 1939.



FIG 7. Cover for <u>Eros</u> magazine . Lubalin, 1962.



William Golden was very influential over Lubalin's way of thinking. He was the first art director to think not only visually but verbally and he treated words with the same importance as an image. It was this new concept that Herb Lubalin was inspired by; he worked with the same attitude towards type and brought to it his own inventiveness. Bill Golden was art director at the Columbia Broadcasting System, New York, for twenty years. He gave the station its corporate identity in 1951 which was the C.B.S 'eye'. This clever logo represented the viewer's eye and the lens of a camera. FIG.5.

The last great important influence on Lubalin was Paul Rand whose work stood out because of its simplicity, sense of humour and Bauhaus approach. One of Rand's most famous pieces of design is his logo for I.B.M which is cleverly pictorial and typographic. Lubalin as a young designer found himself borrowing most of his ideas and styles for his own work and so this new wave of expressionism grew. ' Paul Rand was the Pablo Picasso of graphics, his innovativeness encouraged our inventiveness.' (Lubalin, '79, pp41-85). A cover for <u>Apparel Arts</u>, 1939, shows a similarity between Rand and Lubalin's work. The simple use of an image with a single heading is also evident in Lubalin's work. FIGS. 6&7.

It wasn't until the 1950s that anything exciting started to emerge in the field of graphic design; this was the American School of Graphic Expressionism. Phillip Meggs used this term in his book the <u>History of Graphic</u> <u>Design</u>. 'Many designers saw themselves engaged in a distinctly American movement (as opposed to the



International style) although their work had broad roots and influence.' (Lupton, '87). This was to be the most important and influential time for graphic communication.

In the early 1950s the American School of Graphic Expressionism began to dominate graphic design on a worldwide scale. I have already mentioned Rand, Golden and Bayer but there were others like Bradbury Thompson, Bob Cage, Allen Hurlburt, Gene Federico, Henry Wolf, Saul Bass and of course Lubalin. These designers can be grouped together because they were all striving for something new by using typography and design in as many different ways as possible. This group of designers worked quite unaware that they were to become so influential. It can be seen from the 1950s how the work of Herb Lubalin progressed into a monumental body of graphic work which was to influence many people around him and students and designers who were to follow.

American designers began to take less notice of the Bauhaus and found different ways to create graphic images. A different attitude developed on how space was broken up and it was quite acceptable to use what some would call illegible type. After all as Neuenschwander quotes in his book 'Mere legibility is like mere shelter in architecture.' (Neuenschwander, p29, '93).

The 1960s brought an important change to graphic design which was the new technological wonder of television. This made designers work much harder


designing magazines and newspapers because they were competing with television which was taking over communication in the media. This leads us up to the 1970s when there was a technological revolution as phototypesetting became the new way of setting type. This influenced Lubalin to set up a company called the International Typeface Corporation. The main objective was to redesign successful old typefaces and create new ones using computerised phototypesetting.

With this new technology letter spacing, word spacing, and leading took on a whole new meaning. It enabled designers to become more creative in their use of type and the restrictions of metal type no longer cramped their ideas. Herb Lubalin's recalls an incident with a client after this technological change: ' a client severely chastised me for using 'illegible typography'. My answer to him was that ever since Gutenburg invented moveable type, with its built in drawbacks caused by the metal shoulders surrounding the letterforms, people have been reading illegible type. Now for the first time, type could be set in the right way, the way people speak - in a steady flow, without interruptions between the letters, words, sentences and paragraphs.' (Lubalin, '79, pp41-85). Lubalin recognised the qualities of the new way of setting type. It was a major breakthrough in design where experimentation produced innovative results and where nothing seemed to be right or wrong. FIG 8.

It was in the 1980s that designers started to use typography creatively in television. The mark that Lubalin left on design enabled them to be inspired by the potential



of television just as Lubalin was inspired by the arrival of phototypesetting. Type was an afterthought in television advertising; it was put at the bottom of the screen or at the end of a programme just for informative purposes. There was no expression. Now words fly at you, circle, float, explode and become images themselves. Today we can make type really talk which is nearly what Herb Lubalin did with what was limited technology. A new visual language has been introduced by the multimedia for example Music Television.



FIG 8. A spread from the Saturday Evening Post, 1961.



Chapter Two

The Magazines that Herb Lubalin Designed: <u>Eros, Fact</u> and <u>Avant Garde</u>. Typefaces Avant Garde and Serif Gothic.



Herb Lubalin was Art Director for three magazines during the 1960s. Although these magazines lived very short controversial lives, he won many awards for his design and layout including a gold medal from the Art Directors Club. He collaborated with the editor and publisher Ralph Ginzburg who was sentenced to jail for sexual `titillation and pandering',(Lubalin, May/June, p49), because of the contents of <u>Eros</u> magazine, which was the first of the publications.

Eros was launched on Valentines day 1962 and it was the first publication which responded to the changes taking place in America during the 60s and 70s. The magazine was larger than usual at 10" by 13" with a hard cover. It was advertised as the journal of love and sex. FIGS 9-11. Phillip Meggs wrote an article in <u>Print</u> about the design of the magazine and he thought that there was an overall sense of quality in the articles and the design. 'It seems more like a mildly erotic <u>American</u> <u>Heritage</u> than a precursor of <u>Penthouse</u> or <u>Hustler</u>'. (Meggs May/June,91, pp49-57). A writer at the time of its publication Horst W. Janson, thought that the taste shown in the magazine was one of a very high standard.

This is seen in the cover and spreads for <u>Eros</u>, Autumn, 1962. FIGS 11& 12. Marylin Monroe's last studio photographic session, six weeks before her death, is the subject of the article. The change, repetition, and rhythm over the piece is like a photographic essay. In one huge spread of Monroe with a necklace there are scratches and orange paint crossing over her face. This was of her own doing because she was not happy with





FIG 9.





FIG 10.

FIG 11.

FIGS 9-11. Covers for <u>Eros</u> . 1962.







the way she looked in some of the photographs. Herb Lubalin recognised the impact that these photographs would make. He thought that the scratches and marks were an expression of Marylin Monroe's personality. The large photo with the marks on it is shown beside a small row of shots on a contact sheet which have the poses in order of them being taken. In these shots Marylin Monroe gradually uses up the white space behind her becoming bigger as she turns around.

Eros had a mature approach to sex and was not a sleazy publication. It was the first of it's kind in content and in it's design and layout. Lubalin employed new methods of presenting articles which in the hands of another designer might have become distasteful. There were only four issues of Eros. The covers were elegant in design. They had a hard cover with Eros dominating the space. The word Eros appears small when Marylin Monroe is on the cover as if to express a mark of respect for her death (FIG 10) The last cover has the word Eros, set on a beach, as its main image but inside the 'o' of the word are two lovers. It is as if we are looking at them through a telescope or spying on them. (Fig 10). It is with covers like this and the layout design for Eros that Lubalin earnt himself high recognition in the area of magazine design.

On December 19th Ginzburg was sentenced to five years in jail and was fined \$42,000 for violating obscenity laws. It was said that the magazine would effect those with mental problems and that it was a general danger to the community. In the end, Ginzburg served only eight months in jail. As the seven years went by



between the accusal and imprisonment of Ginzburg, both he and Lubalin were not stopped from publishing other magazines of award winning success. They were slightly more toned down subject matters but, of course, with the same standard of design and layout.

Fact was the second magazine which was a bimonthly and was first published in January/February 1964 and lasted until July/August 1967. The broadsheet of the first issue said: 'This magazine is dedicated to the proposition that a great magazine, in its quest for truth, will dare to defy not only Convention, not only Big Business, not only the Church and the State, but also if necessary its readers.' Print, Mar/April, 1994, p69. FIGS 13&14.





FIG 13.



FIG 14.

FIGS 13&14. Covers from Fact from between 1964 and 1967.



<u>Fact</u>'s role was said to be an `antidote to the timidity and corruption of the American press'. (Meggs, 1994, p69). Fact also provided an opportunity for writers who wanted to speak out about politicians, race, police brutality or fraud but who could not get their work published elsewhere.

<u>Fact did not take on the usual appearance of an</u> underground publication. Instead, it was a magazine of high quality design. The typography was beautifully designed; Lubalin used a serif typeface and the illustration used was of a very high standard. It was printed in black ink on uncoated paper and had a glossy cover which was bound in a very stylish way. Lubalin wanted to make an impact. It was not just going to be a presentation of facts and arguments. The design would also express the issues raised in the publication.

Lubalin used an 18 point Times Roman Bold headline which was centred at the top of the page and the author's name was below it. There was two column 10/12 point Times Roman text which started under a 24 point subheading. Each article began on the right hand side of the spread with a full page illustration on the other page. FIGS 15&16. It was this consistency of layout thought the magazine that contributed to it's excellent design features.

Lubalin commissioned a single artist to illustrate all the articles for an entire issue. This made it possible for a considerable body of the artists work to be seen. There was a tight budget for <u>Fact</u>, so the group rate for the artwork made it more economical than if he had asked





FIG 15.



How a Middle-Class American Housewife **Goes About Getting an Abortion** By Francesca Milano

The operation itself is a breeze. The nightmare lies in finding a decent abortionist

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It takes an experienced doctor about half an hour to perform an abortion. The amount of pain involved varies from patient to patient, but the operation is roughly equivalent, in my experi-ence, to a bad half-hour in a dentist's chair. For

ence, to a bad half-hour in a dentist's chair. For the woman who, for whatever reasons, dreads the alternative to abortion, the operation—in ca-pable hands—is thus really not so bad after all. The nightmare, the horror, is finding a doctor. I am a New York housewife with three chil-dren. Last winter Hound myself expecting an un-wanted fourth. My husband and I decided that the least unpleasant way out of our dilemma would be for me to have an abortion. Our deci-sion was made when I was only a few weeks pregnant, so during the first part of our search for a doctro we managed to avoid the panie of

pregnant, so during the first part of our search for a doctor we managed to avoid the panic of fighting against the calendar. Plenty of time, we felt to find someone safe, and perhaps someone whose fee would not be too exorbitant. There was no possibility of my leaving the country: We don't have that kind of money. Our first problem was deciding where to begin looking, whom to ask. My obstetrician advance: immovably opposed to abortion on al-most any grounds. So we went through a list of our fird, bypassing those who seemed too im-nocent of these matters on the one hand, and too sordidly experienced on the other. For we wanted sordidly experienced on the other. For we wanted

something more than any abortionist. There were three conditions: we must find a qualified doctor, an M.D.; he must perform the operation nowhere but in his office; and he himself must perform the operation from beginning to end. We also tried to avoid asking those friends

We also tried to avoid asking those friends who might be inclined to talk too freely. After all, I intended to participate in a criminal act. But at no time did I have any feelings of guilt: My main emotion was anger at the United States for *mak-ing* what I was trying to do a criminal act. Well, at last we asked three people for in-formation and from them we got seven names. and seven telephone numbers. One emerged as the most promising. A friend knew of several women who had been to him and all were satis-fied, he met our three conditions; his price was only \$300; and, for a wonchr, he was almost casfied; he met our three conditions; his price was only \$300; and, for a wonder, he was almost cas-ual about that fee-"Pay me when you can." he reportedly told one girl. This man was the first I tried. And tried, and tried. Never an answer. The phone number was listed in the Manhattan direc-tory, and I tried it at all hours of the day and evening and for nearly 2 weeks. Never an answer. Later I learned that there had been no answer for over a year. The second doctor was, according to his nurse, ill and unavailable for a month. The third was on Lenox Avenue, and while I had not the slightest objection to a doctor who was Nethe slightest objection to a doctor who was Ne-gro, it was not a good year, it seemed to me, for a

FIG 16.

FIGS 15&16. Spreads from Fact from between 1964 & 1967.



a lot of artists to contribute to the issue. It also gave the magazine visual consistantancy.

According to Phillip Meggs, (May/Jun, 1991, pp49-51), the May/June issue is the most provocative in graphic and editorial content. The illustrations are by Etienne



FIG 17. Cover for <u>Fact</u> with illustration by Dellesart.

Delessart which were especially commissioned to suit the articles. The impact of the typography on the cover is very strong and compliments Delesart's two headed portrait of George Romney, who was a former governor and candidate for presidential nomination. FIG 17. Lubalin has cleverly used the typography as a kind of support or a neck for the two heads to rest on and undreneath this there is a decorated podium. The article deals with Romney's views as a mormon. It is provocative more in the illustration on the spread than



in the article which criticises his religiousness but leaves the illustration to point out there is another equally strong personality inside.

The word Fact is big, bold and in lower case with a colon resting neatly between the bar of the 't' and the round end stroke. This gives the cover an overall sense of anticipation. Lubalin fills the space inside the curve of the 'c' with the date and publication number of the magazine. The title of the main article is designed as George Romney's neck in capital san serifs. The words are justified and are between the two headed portrait and a podium. Lubalin gave the magazine a look that was alternative and prestigious at the same time. He did this by using the title as a main typographic feature and presenting a piece of information (a fact), or an interesting or contravertial illustration, on each cover. The design of the layout was kept consistent in its quality of illustration and layout to go with interesting articles that they were to accompany. He won many awards with this magazine for unique and influential design.

<u>Fact</u> folded and six months later another Ginzburg and Lubalin partnership in design and editorial was to begin with the publication of <u>Avant Garde</u> in 1968. Ginzburg was really looking for the qualities of Eros, which were the excellent handling of typography and images to suit the articles, and he wanted to publish a `lavish and sensuous magazine of art and politics'. (Meggs Mar/April, 94 p71). He was aiming at an elite group of readers instead of wanting to reach the masses.



The development of the logo for this new magazine was a complicated process and took a few tries to get the right image across. Ginzburg and Lubalin wanted one that was advanced, innovative and creative. One of Lubalin's first ideas was based on the Coca Cola logo; another used letters that were like the Hebrew alphabet. The title contained letterform combinations that were difficult to work with and spacing was also a problem. Lubalin solved all this by designing the letters with capital ligatures so that they would all fit together. FIG 18.



FIG 18. The logo for the magazine Avant Garde using capital ligatures.

<u>Avant Garde</u> was 11" by 14". The cover usually had a single image on it which made a strong impact. The logo was the only typography that appeared. The covers were often works by artists whose work was continued inside. Some of the cover art tended to be weird and erotic like the cover for issue 5, 'Seascape' by the pop artist Tom Wesselman which was a full page illustration of breasts. FIG 19.

Lubalin was one of the first to use full page titles successfully. One title lasted the length of the article which was spread across seven pages. This is evident in an article about the rock group The Fugs where the





FIG 19. Cover for Avant Garde with illustration by Tom Wesselman. 'Seascape'. 1968.



FIG 20. Spread using full page title for an article on The Fugs. 1968.



right side of the spread reads 'The Fugs, Nextness is Godlier than Cleanliness'. These words cover the whole page in blue on a black background and the three `i's' contained in the phrase are picked out as people (the band members) in white. On the facing page there is a blue tinted photograph of the band. This is a maximum impact start to any article. FIG 20.

When Lubalin and Ginzburg had agreed on the capital ligature logo design for Avant Garde there was a demand for Lubalin to design a whole typeface based on his capital ligature concept. Out of the logo for the magazine grew a whole new alphabet. FIG 21.Ginzburg had some erotic Picasso engravings and Lubalin thought it was a good idea to use the new typeface that he had designed with these images. It is thought to be one of the most successful typefaces of the twentieth century. A partner of Lubalin who worked on the typeface said 'The first time Avant Garde was used was one of the few times it was used correctly. It's become the most abused typeface in the world'. (Peckolick, 1985, p24). FIG 22. Some designers see the ligatures and the forms that Lubalin has designed as individual novelties rather than in relation to each other.

It wasn't until 1970 that the full family of ITC Avant Garde Gothic was released. The family consisted of Extra light, book, medium, demi and bold. Since then four condensed designs have been added and five with slab serifs. The slab serif face is known as ITC Lubalin Graph and there is also ITC Avant Garde Gothic Oblique, which is a group of five italics.



abcdefghijklmnopqrstuv ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR



FIG 21. The typeface Avant Garde that grew from Lubalin's capital ligature logo.

BAD

FIG 22. Sometimes the ligatures are not used successfully.



The Avant Garde family has quite a large x-height and is larger than Univers and Futura to which it can be compared in terms of design. It gives text a distinctive modern feel when used appropriately with the light weights working well for long blocks of text, especially if there is wide leading. (This thesis is set in Avant Garde regular and has 20 point leading). With this typeface Lubalin modernised ligatures, finding new uses for them and making them a strong design element. FIG 23. Ligatures had been ignored for centuries except by scholars of illuminated manuscripts and by Gutenburg. It was the perfect solution for characters with awkward shapes like those of the words Avant Garde.

While on the subject of Lubalin's successful typeface design, there is also another typeface that he designed called ITC Serif Gothic. This was first released in 1972 by International Typeface Corporation. Another one of Lubalin's partners, (called Antonio DiSpigna), worked on this typeface with him. Regular and Bold were the first in the family to be released the other five weights and the outline became available in 1974. FIG 24.

ITC Serif Gothic is very like ITC Bauhaus with its large lowercase x-height. FIGS 25& 26. There are some design features of Lubalin's typeface that stand out. Sans serif typefaces were called 'Gothics' when they were first introduced into America, so what we really have is a serif with no serifs. The 'c' and 'e' have very short terminals, the 't' has a short stem and the 'v' and the 'w' are quite wide. In the capital alphabet there are interesting features like the'B' where the bowls do not meet





FIG 23. A cover for <u>Avant</u> <u>Garde</u> showing the use of the typeface Avant Garde.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwx ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRST

FIG 24. ITC Serif Gothic designed in 1972.


abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwx ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRST

25. ITC Serif Gothic.

abcdefghjklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTU

26. ITC Bauhaus.

FIGS 25 & 26. ITC Serif Gothic is similar in some ways to ITC Bauhaus.



FIG 27. Interesting features of ITC Serif Gothic.



the stem, the `m' is wide and in the `w' a middle stem is very short. FIG 27.

This has a very distinctive design and is not appropriate for as wide a range of applications as Avant Garde. This is because it is too noticeable in its design and therefore has a gimmicky effect. FIG 28. This can be seen in the 1966 poster that Lubalin redesigned for a page in <u>U&LC</u>. Short blocks of text would suit this typeface rather than long ones but because of its very small serifs ITC Serif Gothic can be set very closely. This avoids overlapping and poor colour.

During the time that Lubalin worked on these magazines and typefaces he broke new ground in design. He did this by bringing ligatures back into use, using full page titles and even some that would cover a spread and using the shapes of the letters to express something. Lubalin went to externes sometimes using almost fully illustrative covers and then using fully typographic covers like those of <u>Eact</u>. FIGS 28&29. He also He was breaking the conventional rules of typography and giving himself no limits. The publications had very little limitations editorially and so this gave him the freedom to express himself through typography, layout and design for nearly a decade.

Through the magazines we can see a continuous strong impact through typography by employing such new novelties as ligatures and large headlines with quirky ideas contained in their design. Also Lubalin's choice of illustrations for covers and spreads were extremely striking. FIG 30. It is always straight to the point and shows



exactly what Lubalin means to express. Above all he sees letters as entities and treats them as individual subjects to create an expressive piece of design.

Tacta professor of ophthalmology says, "Everybody who puts on contact lenses will experience eye damage, and in many cases the damage will be permanent."

FIG 28. Purely typographical cover of Fact.



FIG 29. Mostly illustrative cover for Avant Garde.



FIG 30. Striking cover for Avant Garde.



Chapter Three

Lubalin's Most Interesting and Well Known Work.



'What makes Lubalin's designs so exceptionally fascinating, is it that each and every detail has its proper place in the overall design. He achieves a synthesis which continuously unites graphic and typographic elements by exploiting the pictorial elements of letters as fully as the graphic elements of the picture. And so Herb Lubalin's photos convey their meaning so clearly that no written comment is necessary, while his typography often directly embodies the object which the words express. In this way the picture is transformed into an interpreting gesture, while a graphicsign visually embodies the meaning which it is to convey.' (Heiderhoff, 1970, pp12-13).

By taking a closer look at Herb Lubalin's logos, posters and advertisements we can see the best examples of his using typography expressively. It is in this area that we find his most famous work.

Lubalin could make letters in a word appears as if they were having a relationship. His best and most famous examples are the logos that he made from the words; married, families and mother and child. The figures in the word married appear almost human in relation to each other and not as letters on their own. The simplicity of making the capital 'R's face each other and overlap is exactly what is needed to express the idea of marriage. This was designed in 1965. FIG 31.

MARSIED

FIG 31. An expressive logo that Lubalin designed in 1965.

COURTER

The word 'families' has a family of its own among the letters where he saw the 'i's as a figurative group of people of different heights. FIG 32. Lubalin gave the 'L' a head and shortened one of the 'i's to make a mother, father and child. This logo was published briefly by Readers Digest Associates Inc in 1980.

'Mother and Child' won awards for its excellence but was never used. FIG 33. It was originally for a magazine but it never got published. Here is another simple but highly effective solution to expressing the idea of an expectant mother. Inside the 'o' of 'mother is an ampersand (which is slightly shaped like a baby) containing the word child.



FIG 32.

METHER

FIG 33.

FIG 32. A <u>Readers</u> Digest logo. 1980. FIG 33. Magazine logo. 1965.

Lubalin liked to merge pictorial and typographic images. In a Sudler, Hennessey and Lubalin pharmaceutical advertisement Lubailn used a Slinky, ('a coil like toy that could 'walk' down stairs, slither across the floor, tumble end over end.') (Peckolick,1985, p18). FIG 34. Lubalin is said to have been fascinated with it, and could see it working well, because of its spasmodic movements, in an ad for a drug to help muscle spasm. 'See how it expands contracts. Sort of says 'spasm'.



We'll make it into a Spasm Campaign.' (Peckolick,'85, p18). Lubalin substituted the 's' in spasm for the Slinky to express an image of spasm. This was created in 1959.

Lubalin used the same type of idea for another Sudler, Hennessey and Lubalin designed an advertisement for a cough expectorant in 1959. The word cough is made up of torn paper to give the idea of coughing and the words 'Break Up' are above this. FIG 35.

In an ad for McCalls (1959) he lets 'leap' and 'year' share the same middle letters and the extra ones pictorially represent the movement of leaping. FIG 36. He called the new approach to picture and text the' typographic image.' It was clear from these advertisements that he could make typography speak for itself with a little help from imagery.

From Lubalin's work we can see that he had a fascination with the letter 'o'. One of his most memorable advertisements (1957) uses the letter 'o' to make its impact. In the Rock and Roll advertisement, the copy reads; 'Ever since Rock was a Stone and Roll was a Bun.' The 'o's are replaced with a rock and a roll. The viewer is made to mentally interact with the information before them. The first things that are noticed are the rock and roll, then the objects that are substitutes for the letterforms. Then the whole message is read. FIG37.

Lubalin made a promotional brochure for Sanders printing company (there is no date to be found for this). FIG 38. The object of the design was to show the printing





FIG 34. Sudler, Hennessey and Lubalin pharmaceutical advertisement where Lubalin used a Slinky toy to express the feeling of a spasm. 1959.



relax bronchioles, reduce histamine-induced congestion and irritation throughout the respiratory tract, liquefy thick, tenacious mucus. **PYRIBENZAMINE EXPECTORANT** with Ephedrine also available: Pyribenzamine expectorant with codeine and ephedrine (exempt narcotics). Pyribenzamine citrate (tripelennamine citrate ciba)

FIG 35. Another Sudler, Hennessey and Lubalin advertisement. An ad for cough expectorant where Lubalin has used forn paper to express coughing.1959.





FIG 36. An ad for McCalls where Lubalin has made the letters leap. 1959.







quality of the many printing processes that the firm provided. This was where Lubalin really took advantage of the abundance of 'o's. 'How to Become Successful Through an Art Director' was the name given to the booklet and the phrase inside. Lubalin invites the reader to 'Open your eyes, look around, perceive, observe. Expand your viewpoint, and above all, recognise the significance of a 'o'.' The phrase running through the book has all the 'o's replaced with a pictorial image. There are six spreads out of the eight where he did this. Some are replaced with eyeballs, others with medals, money, the globe and male and female signs. There are also 's's replaced with the dollar sign and magnets are used in place of 'u's.

Many of Lubalin's other most famous designs were done in what is known as Spencerian script which is often confused with calligraphy. 'Calligraphy really is hand lettering that begins in sketch form, its execution is a free single - stroke movement with a brush or pen. FIG 39.a. Spencerian script is lettering that is developed in sketch form, and is tightly drawn with a croquil pen.' (Peckolick, '85, p49). Lubalin would develop his ideas and sketch them, then he would give them to Tony DiSpigna, Tom Carnase or John Pistilli, who were said to have been three of the finest hand letterers in the world. Examples of this type of work are mainly logos. One of his first was when Sudler and Hennessey became Sudler, Hennessey and Lubalin. For his logo he intertwined the 'S' and 'H' and the ampersand with the 'L' which made the letters flow together showing a kind of unitedness in the company. When he left Sudler and Hennessey in 1964 he formed Herb Lubalin INC.





FIG 38. Spreads from a promotional booklet for Sanders printing company showing Lubalin's love for the letter 'o'.



Fig 39.a. Herb Lubalin INC Logo using Spencerian script. 1963.



The formation of his new company required, of course a new logo. This was also done in Spencerian script. The logo had flowing stems and ascenders and it was designed in a shape that made the Spencerian type look compact rather than too fussy. Lubalin acquired his partners Ernie Smith, Tom Carnase, Tony DiSpigna and Alan Peckolick and he turned to what he called the 'textual image.'

Most logos consist of a main graphic symbol or monogram and a small number of words which explain it. This logo for Herb Lubalin Associates INC, gives equal importance to all the information. FIG 39.b. Full words are used rather than the initials. The lines are justified with tasteful placing of letters and ligatures. He has made it all fit into a column by cleverly manipulating each letterform. He has placed the colon inside the curve of the 'c' like he did in the <u>Fact</u> logo. The 'o' and the 'c' overlap, perhaps expressing the togetherness of the partners in their work. The bar of the 'H' in 'Smith' is drawn out to meet with the justification. There is no





FIG 39.b. Textual logo. 1978 and FIG 40. Calligraphic logo for the film the Agony and the Ecstacy.1965.



empty space left and it looks like a solid column of text. Lubalin has overcome problems like including all the partners in the logo and it is an original idea for such a number of words. It is successful in getting the information across but it does not carry an immediate visual impact. It is purely to be read rather than to be recognised as a symbol like the majority of logos.

Although the logo that I have just mentioned might not be Lubalin's best piece of typographic work he made an interesting design from rather a lot of words. Often Lubalin was sensitive to when a certain style was appropriate hence his wide range of designs which are made up of a number of words but all very different from each other. Some of them are quite simple like 'Lets talk type, let type talk', where he used 'verbal symmetry of a pair of inverted sentences as a graphic image'. (Lupton, '87). FIG 41. Others are more complicated or calligraphic like the piece that Lubalin designed for the film 'The Agony and the Ectasy', FIG 40. Lubalin updated a historical style by adding in thin curves to the letterforms to express the historic nature of the film.

Lubalin did a design for Lubalin, Smith and Carnase INC which was also done in the Spencerian script. FIG 42.. 'It is distinctive because of it's contradictions; the lines are curvaceous yet of a fairly uniform thickness; they are fluid and baroque yet bold and black.' (Lupton, '87). This can also be compared to the Sound of Music logo, FIG 43, which has the thick and thin lines associated with steel engraving. The thin lines form the outside of the design leaving a strong black interior.







While considering this particular logo it is interesting to look at Lubalin's business sense which is said to have been poor - this is a money matter that he handled on his own. A film company wanted titles for a film and a book that was to be released across America and other countries. Instead of accepting a smaller fee with royalties he accepted his usual fee without. This turned out to be to his disadvantage as the <u>Sound of Music</u> sold millions of copies world wide.



FIG 42.

FIG 43.

FIG 42. Spencerian script for Lubalin,Smith Carnase. 1967. FIG 43. Sound of Music Logo. 1965.

Lubalin's advertisements were witty and cleverly designed. He had the ability to package an idea into a convincing piece of graphic art with strong impact. Lubalin on advertising: 'The most intriguing thing about advertising is writing the headline, I think more about creating an idea, writing the headline, than designing the ad.' (Peckolick, '85, p17).

Some of Lubalin's work uses intentionally simple type. He often employed familiar sayings or simple placement of text and image rather than concentrating on individual letterforms. One very humourous poster that



was designed for S.H&L (1963) is a photo of a nerdish looking man with the end of his nose cleverly cropped off. FIG 44. The copy line reads 'But he cuts his nose off to spite his face.' It has the information very simply in a column beside the photograph which explains how S.H&L got the most out of advertising. Here there was no need for Lubalin to show meaning by looking at an individual letter for expression. The simple cropping says it all with a small clever copyline beside it so as not to take away from the impact of the image.

In another S.H&L advertisement, careful cropping is used again. This was another self promotion. It is a photograph of the advertiser and the consumer whispering to each other. FIG 45. There is a line of type that runs from the advertisers mouth to the consumers ear and the copyline is; 'A straight line is the shortest distance between advertiser and consumer.' Again no mess, no fuss just the message coming across in a clever way. The idea that the words are being whispered gives the impression that S.H&L are special.

From looking at the wide range of Lubalin's design that I have mentioned in this chapter it is clear that he was able to express information through a wide range of formats. Most of his advertisements provoke an emotional response from the viewer. However, it is interesting that this is frequently where his typographical expression is very subdued and sometimes non existent because he was using images as individual pieces of expressive design. Typographically his expression is strongest in his clever manipulation of letterforms for logos and mastheads for magazines. Lubalin





"But he cuts off his nose to spite his face!"

the wind

FIG 44. Humourous use of cropping and copyline in a ad for Sudler, Hennessey and Lubalin. 1963.



FIG 45. A Sudler and Hennessey ad. 1955. Cropping and copyline cleverly used together to literalise a cliche as in FIG 44.



recognised the appropriate use of expressive typography and did not always need to have a stunning piece of type design in everything he did. Sometimes the use of a strong copyline was enough for him to demonstrate his ability as a great designer.


Chapter Four

Herb Lubalin as Art Director for <u>U&LC</u>.



From 1974 to 1981 Lubalin art directed and edited <u>U&LC</u> with Aaron Burns and Ed Roundthaler. It was a quarterly tabloid published by International Typeface Corporation. The Magazine was named <u>U&LC</u> by Lubalin as an abbreviation for uppercase and lowercase type.

<u>U&LC</u> was first published as a way to market typefaces for those in the design industry. Besides this they had other plans. Rather than just a sales device for typefaces, it was also intended that <u>U&LC</u> would 'educate, inform and entertain the graphic arts industry. They wanted to capture the moment in graphic design, examine serious professional issues and explore the thousands of things that influence and inspire the visual communicator: advertising, popular culture, fine art, corporate identity, ethics, technology, history - in short, life itself.' (Kaye, spring, '93, p9).

Here Lubalin could play with type to his heart's content. <u>Eros</u>, <u>Fact</u> and <u>Avant Garde</u> gave him opportunities to use type creatively but this was a magazine on typography itself. As reflected in the 20th anniversary issue, '<u>U&LC</u> was an assortment of quirky alphabets, design innovations and a variety of type treatments. (Heller, '93, p32). Or was it? It is reported by Stephen Heller in the same issue that ' the earliest issues of <u>U&LC</u> should be seen as both laboratory and playground and every bit as experimental as <u>Emigre</u> is today'. (Heller, '93, p27). FIGS 46&47. <u>U&LC</u> was indeed not as striking in design and not as elegant as the magazine work that I have already mentioned such as <u>Fact</u>, <u>Eros</u> and <u>Avant Garde</u>. This is understandable because

NGOURIER.

JURIER



1

FIG 46. Spread from early issue of <u>U&LC</u>. 1975.



FIG47. Spread from early issue of <u>U&LC</u>. 1978



as Art Director of <u>U&LC</u> Lubalin had to deal with new technology advances such as the change from hot metal to phototypography. He was also expected to use a variety of typefaces which might explain the 'cluttered' look according to Heller.'<u>U&LC</u> was a melange of typographic excess with various typeface's woven together in a polyglot patchwork.' (Heller, p27). This was not a magazine about love and sex like some of the other publications that he had previously been involved with. It was the first magazine of its kind dealing with the specifics of typography and it was also new for Lubalin. He had to put all his skills into one basket.

Lubalin's love for words and the challenge of designing with them was the subject for an article on his favourite 5, 6, 7, and 9 letter words. Lubalin could see that this article had potential for great graphic impact and was a way of expressing the strangeness of some of the words and their forms. This was also to demonstrate the effectiveness of ITC Benguiat Condensed in all its weights. The specifications were written by Lubalin and a designer friend of his, Rhoda Sparber and were as follows:

- ' 1. Short words fill a page better than long ones.
 - Words with a multitude of ascenders are more provocative than words with lots of x-height letters.
 - 3. Words with no vowels were especially interesting.
 - 4. Words you can screw around with making ligatures when there are none.
 - 5. Words (dear to the heart of Herb Lubalin) that contain 'x's, 'k's and 'z's.
 - 6. Words (similarly dear to the heart) that are not

commonplace and are largely undefinable and definitely unpronounceable.

- 7. Words with all vowels and no consonants, particularly if they were all ligatures or double o's.
- 8. And last but far from least, words that embody all of the above criteria and, and at the same time, take advantage of the unique characteristics of ITC Benguiat Condensed.' (Lubalin, p32, vol 5, no 4, Dec '78).

1,170 words were chosen for the project and they only needed eight to do the article. Those that were not graphically exciting were discarded in favour of those that were. Eighty words remained that met the listed criteria. Lubalin decided that in order to come up with the very best eight he would design them all and then choose. <u>U&LC</u> was published in other countries besides America so the words were also to appear in the translations into German and French. French was no problem but German translations were not as graphically pleasing because of their length eg. 'stifle' in French is etouffer but in German it is 'zuruckdrangen', (Lubalin, Dec, 1978,p32). The words chosen were: scarab, alfalfa, illicitly, gypsy, effigy, jiggly, oftly and dogma. FIGS 48-50. Some of the words chosen met the criteria more than others. The use of words with ascenders (gypsy, effigy, jiggly, offly and alfalfa), dominated the article as did the use of ligatures (dogma and scarab).

The eight words that were eventually chosen worked beautifully and made an interesting fun article to show off Benguiat to its best advantage. The words were blown up to the largest they could be on the page. The characters were cropped carefully and their shapes







FIG 48.

FIG49.



FIGS 48-50. Pages from an article that Lubalin did for <u>U&LC</u> called 'My Favourite 5,6,7 and 9 Letter Words'. 1978.



were used to house the dictionary quotation of what the word meant. German and French were incorporated into it in a smaller size and colour.

Lubalin recognised that the word 'scarab' (a large black dung beetle), had potential for a piece using purely ligatures and he made the letters flow into each other. FIG 51. It is as if the word is one unit of typography. The word is repeated opposite it so that it is symmetrical and the translations run through the centre in white. Both 's's are used to cradle the information inside their curves.

The whole design is very pleasing to the eye and it is nearly like a piece of Art Nouveau with its curving capital ligatures. This word was also used for a striking cover design for that particular issue. Other words such as 'effigy' with it's ascenders, 'dogma' designed with ligatures and 'alfalfa' for it's three 'a's and two 'f's, also worked very well on their own and as an article.

Another exercise that Lubalin undertook was an article on the longest sentences ever written in the English language. This consisted of a double page spread of an extract from the last chapter of James Joyce's <u>Ulysses</u>. There is a small note at the beginning where Lubalin explains that Victor Hugo's <u>Les Miserables</u> only contained a sentence three pages long and that James Joyce wrote two continuous sentences with no punctuation. The first is twenty one pages long and the second is twenty three.





that the article was in. <u>U&LC</u>, Dec, 78.





Whose is longer, Victor Hugo's or James Joyce's?

Up to 1921, the longest sentence ever to appear in literature was to be found in Victor Hugo's famous Les Miserables. This sentence, three pages long, contains 823 words, 93 commas, 51 semicolons, and 4 dashes. Then came 1921 and the great James Joyce stream-of-consciousness novel, Ulysses. In the notorious and splendid last chapter, beginning on page 738 and

5 -



FIG 52. A double page spread for <u>U&LC</u> taken from James Joyce's <u>Ulysses</u> to demonstrate that these two sentences were the longest ever written .





Following this Lubalin had put the forty four pages in small type onto the double page spread in blue. (Fig 52). The layout begins with a large 'YES' in capitals and the sentences are put in justified columns. There is one very large full stop at the end of the first sentence and the piece finishes with the final 'YES' the same size as before and it all ends with a large full stop. This article expresses just what Lubalin was talking about. The lack of punctuation is shown by the single large full stop in the middle and by the larger one at the end. It is something that would usually be visually boring to the eye but that is what makes it even more eye catching.

These articles are a good example of the lengths that Lubalin would go to in order to put forward an idea or to prove a point. Both of these articles were very work intensive to produce. Lubalin would go to any lengths to express the right message through his design.

U&LC was continuously full of new ideas in typography and Lubalin was expressing them in completely different ways in each issue. Designers turned to it for education and inspiration. It was as important then to have such a publication as it is now as there are not many publications that specialise in typography.

Herb Lubalin died while an issue of U&LC was at the printers in 1981. He left behind a magazine that was strongly structured for future art directors to work upon. U&LC is still in publication today. It has been slightly modernised but it still has that Herb Lubalin look to it.



Conclusion



Herb Lubalin was influenced by a group of designers who were extremely broadminded and exciting. In this way he was lucky to have been starting out while such changes were taking place in the design world. He brought to these developments his own creativity and inventiveness.

From my research it is clear that Lubalin brought magazine design to a completely new and higher level. He used purely typographical covers and quality presentation. One page or spread was filled with a title or a spread might only contain a few words and an image. This was a new way of doing articles and it certainly grabbed the attention of the viewer. He revelled in the controversy that surrounded the magazines by matching the articles that shocked with equally provocative images, typography and layout.

Lubalin was so obsessed by typography that he recognised niches that needed to be filled with a specially made solution. Take for example the Avant Garde logo. There was no ideal solution to his problem of making the letters express the personality of the magazine so instead of designing with just the words he took the individual letters and pieced them together to form ligatures. It was recognised that there were uses for this ingenious solution and there was born a new typeface that became on of the most popular of the 20th century. Another niche that Lubalin recognised was the gap between Roman and Gothic typefaces so he designed Serif Gothic which consists of a simple typeface with tiny serifs.



Lubalin personified type with his family of 'i's in the word families, his two 'R's married and his child in the ampersand womb of the phrase mother and child. What other than such simple solutions would have made such an impact on the viewer? There can be no better solution to these words in their appropriate situations.

From looking at the U&LC publications when Lubalin was art director it is evident that he was a man who was in love with typography and language. He worked continuously expressing himself typographically through hundreds of typefaces. What better salesman for typefaces that were new on the market?

Overall it seems that Herb Lubalin was very highly regarded as a designer. One strong conclusion that arises from my research is that he was the epitome of expressive typography and he could do no wrong in any area of graphic design. Lubalin entered the design world with gusto and constructive ideas that made viewers look, read and think about what they were seeing. He was a visual communicator in everything he did. Apparently he hardly even spoke to those around him Ginzburg said that, instead, 'Herb spoke with his pencil.' (Meggs, Mar/April,1994, p76).



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