national college of
art and design

faculty of design
visual communication

more than words

the emotional and literal connotations of letterforms.

Researched and compliled by Tony Gilchriest.
Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and Complementary Studies
in Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Design Communications, 1997.

I would like to thank the following people for their kindness, time and valuable help;

Dr. Frances Ruane, Faculty of History of Art and Design, The National College of Art and Design, 100 Thomas St. Dublin 8.

David Caron, Faculty of Design, The National College of Art and Design, 100 Thomas St. Dublin 8.

The librarians from the County Longford library and The National College of Art and Design.

more than words

This thesis is about the design of letters for a specific purposes. It is a study of the emotional and literal connotations of letterforms, which are made for and applied to particular designs. Clearly calligraphy, drawn letters and letters produced by other hand techniques are well within the scope of my study. But the new wave also depends heavily on manipulated type and on letterforms designed on the computer. These could not be left out. I have therefore used the term hand-lettering in its widest possible sense, covering any kind of letter specially designed for graphics with the exception of unmanipulated mechanical type used straight from catalogues or software.

The premise of this thesis is that specially made letterforms can achieve things that the mechanical forms of type (born from consistency, uniformity and precision) cannot do without manipulation. Hand-lettering like writing, like speaking, has personality and can provide directness and a sense of movement that is alien to type. It is an extremely flexible medium and can be tailor made to fill spaces in layouts that type could never satisfactorily occupy. Letters can be designed and made to suit the style of any image, and they can be carefully conceived to contrast in style with any typeface. Where legibility is not an important consideration, letterforms can create dramatic compositions of shapes and spaces with far more visual interest

than the highly legible forms of type. Most importantly, hand-lettering can powerfully convey emotions, associations and subliminal information that the restrained forms of type can communicate only in a limited way.

For the first time in over one thousand years, production and design are back in the hands of the designer. Modern developments in technology have made the use of hand-lettering in design a very simple matter. The personal computer allows any hand-made image to be scanned and included in a layout. It is even possible now to go straight from the screen to film and avoid paste-up altogether. The designing of letters on the screen or for scanning will therefore be increasingly important in the next few years.

The computer, like all other stages in the development of print technology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (lithography, photogravure, photo-lithography, four colour-process), has indeed facilitated the designer's access to hand-lettering and increased our ability to reproduce the ephemeral qualities of hand-made marks. However, modern technology has not been as beneficial, at least in the field of typography, as was first expected. The letter has not evolved with the machine, and the one thing that is often missing is the designer's abil-

ity to create and manipulate letters. The problem is that "some people see the new technology as a tool while others see it as an instrument; some can command it while it commands others" (Rea, 1992, p.22).
We must remember that letters are the purest communicative thing we have and that typography is an art not a machine.I feel that far too often the art of typography is not connected with the art of drawing. Educational opportunities are often to blame for this deficiency. Since the '60s the detailed study of letterforms and the principles of their construction have been marginalized in the curriculum of many design colleges. Up until then the study of calligraphy, drawn letters, classical inscriptions and other historical material formed an integral part of the training of typographers and designers. Experimentation and letter design could then be based on a sound knowledge of underlying form. "The handling of type is only the beginning of understanding letterforms; one needs to draw them", as the precision of the human eye along with aesthetic feeling can never be equalled by any mechanical device (Spencer, 1985, p.12). These studies and principles have been disappearing over the last few years, partly because subjects such as calligraphy suffer from a past which has so imbued the word with instant images of monks, leather sandals and quills, that it is difficult for today's new wave, cutting edge typographers to see its relevance to their discipline. With today's electric curriculum increasingly crowd-

ed with subjects of a technical nature and with the quantity of information which must, of necessity, be printed daily, designers feel there is no time for such apparent luxuries as the careful copying of ancient inscriptions or the study of the formal characteristics of the broad pen. The problem is that technology is so fast moving, designers feel they will be left behind. Experimentation has continued, but often without the education that could guide it and give it purpose.

Today's teachers need to understand how much of the old knowledge is valid for today's students. They also need to show students how much of the new technology is truly relevant. If there is one thing that design schools should do, it is to form a two track curriculum, assigning equal importance to the formal foundations of the alphabet (both written and typographic) and to free, experimental work using a variety of tools and techniques. This experimentation should follow the compositional principle of the fine arts such as painting and drawing. If pursued together, each of these areas, both formal and experimental, would provide a sort of running commentary on each other, bringing students into contact with what is changeless and immutable, such as a fundamental understanding of letter forms and their relationships.

We are now entering a period where everyone with two eyes and a computer is a type designer, and people are now beginning to question the purpose of the graphic designer. The personal computer has put leading and kerning options at the hands of many people who have never before recognised the design potential of letterforms. "While it once was ok for designers to just look good; today people are requesting theories to justify looking good" (Stiff, 1993, p.5). People are no longer impressed by 'fancy lettering' the way they once were, and are beginning to question the designer's education. People today are looking for something special from the designer, something clever which is not achieveable with just two eyes and a computer.

With this in mind, I feel now would be a good time for designers to review the place of lettering in graphic design with a corresponding urgent review of the place of the study of letterforms in design colleges. Yes, "the rigidity of metal type is gradually being replaced by film, dot matrix, or the digitation process", and, yes, we will have to come to terms with this technology, if we are to cope with the demands of our age (Mukherjee, 1982, p.11). But my questions are, is this possible without first having a firmly grounded understanding of the typographical issues involved? Is it possible to be a good designer and a bad typographer? Can one be a good typographer without

being aware of the principles of letter design? One of the aims of this thesis is to show that an understanding of letterforms and their relationships is an excellent way to teach and understand typography. I also wish to discover if letterforms that powerfully convey emotions and associations are being considered enough in graphic design today for their emotional impact, not just their visual impact and literal meaning.

In the opening chapter of this thesis letters are considered for their emotional impact. The examples I have chosen for this chapter are quite legible and play an important part in conveying literal information, thus they must balance the requirements of legibility with the need to communicate emotion and associations. The principles of legibility are examined in some detail in order to see how much manipulation lettering and type can undergo before it loses its ability to communicate literal information. The dilemma of style is also looked at, in an effort to try and find the reason why style has become such a bad word in today's graphic design world.

In chapter two, letterforms are considered as composition and elements in compositions. Legibility plays less of a role in the work illustrated here, and it is therefore possible to develop shape and line

more freely. The problem of choosing the right style of letter and composition to convey one's message is looked at through a number of examples. I have also included a personal project, a logo design with which some friends and I were presented. It is an example of a design which was not communicating its intended message. I have given suggestions on how a simple change in arrangement and letter style can make this design a success, in order to show how letterforms can be used to create powerful compositions and the important part composition, along with letter style, have to play in an overall design concept.

In chapter three I have looked at what governs the design of letters, studied the constraints of type in comparison with the freedom of hand-lettering and have considered the advantages of combing both. The principles on which the design of type is based are shown to be inadequate for the creation of hand-lettering with strong compositional impact. By analysing the formal and aesthetic charcteristics of some major type families, approaches for pairing hand-lettering and type are considered.

In conclusion, I have summarized my main points and assessed the results in an effort to identify the potential of specially made letterforms in the field of graphic design.

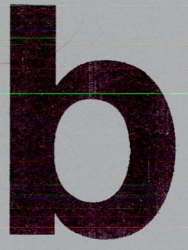
THE EXPRESSIVE POTENTIAL OF LETTERFORMS

Legibility.

Legibility or communication?

Bad word or badly used?

Examples.



chapter one | more than words

It is my belief that the main purpose of typography, as of care in spelling and punctuation, is to make communication of words as easily understandable and direct as possible for the viewer. I find myself questioning the words of one of our typographic legends, Stanley Morrison, who wrote: "the typographer's only purpose is to express, not himself, but words" (Haley, 1978, p.18). However, I see the designer's responsibility as more than just the expression of words. I see the designer as a communicator of feelings and emotions, even if it is not always personal.

This chapter will examine the emotional and literal connotations of letterforms, My aim is to find out if lettering and type that conveys essential verbal information in a legible way can, at the same time, be read on other, more intuitive levels.

Legibility

> Legibility is a dangerous - and interesting - word. It is dangerous because it is used as if it had a definitive or absolute meaning, which it does not have. It is a personal word, neither scientific nor precise. If you say 'that is legible', you mean only that you can read it: you do not know whether I can. 'Illegible' is worse, because it is nearly always emotive and expresses annoyance, rather than a fact (McLean, 1980, p.42).

In typography, 'legibility' is the term a designer uses to describe the quality or appropriateness of a typeface or style of letterforms for a particular design. When we say something is legible, we mean that it will convey the intended message to its intended audience, and will be clearly read and understood in the conditions in which we think the audience will see it. Therefore, to judge the 'legibility' of anything, we must know it purpose. Letterforms intended for use in school books printed in English can only be judged when so used. Letterforms designed for posters may have a completely different purpose. Their designer may want them to make an emotional connection, or grab the viewer visually, rather than just be clearly read.

From our ability to read the most dreadful handwriting, it is obvious that letterforms in context are easier to read than when seen alone. Provided we understand the language in question, we can figure out

from the context of a letter what a given form ought to be. This reminds me of the definition of legibility once made by the poet Robert Bridges: "true legibility consists of the certainty of deciphering; and depends not on what any one reader may be accustomed to, nor even on the use of customary forms, but rather on the consistent and accurate formation of the letters" (McLean, 1980, p.43).

> The 'certainty of deciphering' is an important element in true legibility; and in relation to typography, it bears the message that legibility, or ease of reading, is increased by letters that are clearly distinguishable from each other, and decreased by letters that look too much like each other. The 'certainty of deciphering' therefore brings a positive meaning to the word 'legibility' (McLean, 1980, p.43).

Legibility or communication?

But my question is, deciphering of what? Most designers will have fought with a client over the legibility of a proposed design. "The client, who may have in mind the clarity of the text type, claims that the design is not instantly legible. The designer may counter that, in the context, it is legible and that it conveys the appropriate non-literal messages as well" (Neuenschwander, 1993, p.25). One must remember that not all typographic design is concerned with straightforward text. Not all typography is concerned first and foremost with legibility; and let's

not confuse legibility with communication. This is a common problem which occurs when people become hung up on traditional rules of what they think governs legibility. Just because something is legible doesn't mean it communicates; it could be communicating completely the wrong thing. The designer and his client are, in fact, confusing legibility and clarity with communication. "The measurement of legibility and readability respects 'facts' but ignores sensory experiences - our reflex response to an image - and is, therefore, not a genuine communication" (Rea, 1992, p.18).

Bad word or badly used?

Communication does not come from the simple repetition of the same readable forms; it is something more intelligent that happens in our minds. In today's fast moving commercial saturated environment, people try to decide what messages are relevant to them before they commit themselves to the time consuming process of reading. This is where style comes forth. People recognise style; it's natural direct and honest. "When you hear someone's voice on the phone and he or she has a cold, you can still recognise who is talking. We can recognise handwriting, and even decipher how quickly a note was written, and sometimes pick up on the state of mind the person was in when writing the note", and even more than that (Blokland, 1991, p.30). We get a

feel for the personality of who is addressing us; modern or classical, confident or timid, authoritative or inviting, serious or playful, self-indulgent or minimalistic. We all possess a subtle vocabulary of style that compels us to read a composition involving letterforms on many levels.

Therefore letterforms, even mechanically produced, can never be treated as neutral elements in design. Even when only intended to convey literal information, they invariably convey emotional and associative information as well. The style of a design, whether intended or not, always reveals a message in itself. "It is the implicit story that precedes the explicit story, spelled out in words" (Rea, 1992, p.20).
The truth is, we see before we read, therefore the emotional impact of letterforms is communicated before their literal content.

Many designers dismiss style; they feel it is fashion with no future. Good designers, on the other hand, realise that style is language that can be used to help communicate. The important thing for designers to remember is that style only works if the aesthetic enhances the message, not discriminates against it. "There is nothing so disastrous to typography as beauty for the sake of beauty or change for the sake of change" (Haley, 1978, p.18). And in today's world where "the mac has

handed the design key to the cupboard for illiterate designers", many of whom possess no educational background this is a problem which has become altogether too apparent (Rea, 1992, p.20). Creating style is one thing, but style which is copied for its looks and applied inappropriately is a different matter. The problem is that the message gets lost in the style and the style then becomes the message. While computers are wonderful tools, people often begin using them in the typographical field when they have not yet mastered the art of letters. "The results tend frequently to be clumsy and the computer is often wrongly blamed" (Spencer, 1985, p.12).

While it is important for the artist to make use of the increasingly sophisticated technology, it is also important for the technology to make use of the artist. Examples of styles that suggest certain emotions in the public mind can be cited almost without end; some are successful while many fail. If we take the primary aim of graphic design as communication and understand communication as an expression of feelings and emotions which transmit understanding, then we should be aware that none of the decisions concerning type or lettering can be made without first considering 'the message' and the 'form' of the design. The question of letterforms must, therefore, be considered at the beginning; and a style which conveys the appro-

priate emotional and aesthetic information must be chosen (in the case of type) or produced (in the case of lettering) before the design can commence.

Without expertise in the complex grammar by which communication is possible, indeed inevitable, below the literal surface, no designer could ever expect to find the visual language that will be understood in the correct way by the market in question. Therefore, I feel style after all is not such a bad word in the world of graphic design. It has only become one because of today's confused, computer orientated designers inability to explore the relationship between content and form.

The following practical analysis of found letterforms and of lettering by some of the world's leading designers is an exercise to show how letterforms can be used successfully to communicate a designer's message in a clear and powerful way. You will notice while type can be successful, the letterforms created by hand allow for a greater development of freedom in approach. You will also notice that some of the letterforms, though not of the same style, nevertheless produce similar feelings, demonstrating that no one style represents exclusively one emotional state. I have included an example of a foreign design-

er's work in order to enforce my point, that letterforms communicate on many levels. The emotional impact is communicated without being able to read the literal. I have also included an example of one style of letter being used in two situations, in order to show the disastrous outcome of style which is stolen and inappropriately applied.

Emotional forms

Examples

Fig 1,2,3.

Graphic artist Paul Piech is internationally known for his expressionistic lino-cuts. The following examples are from his 'Abolish Torture' series, created for Amnesty International. I have selected these examples as I feel his fragmented text perfectly expresses and communicates the fears and horrors of its subject matter. This primitive quality text, sometimes combined with the photography of Gustavo Espinosa, is a great example of design as emotion to gain reaction.

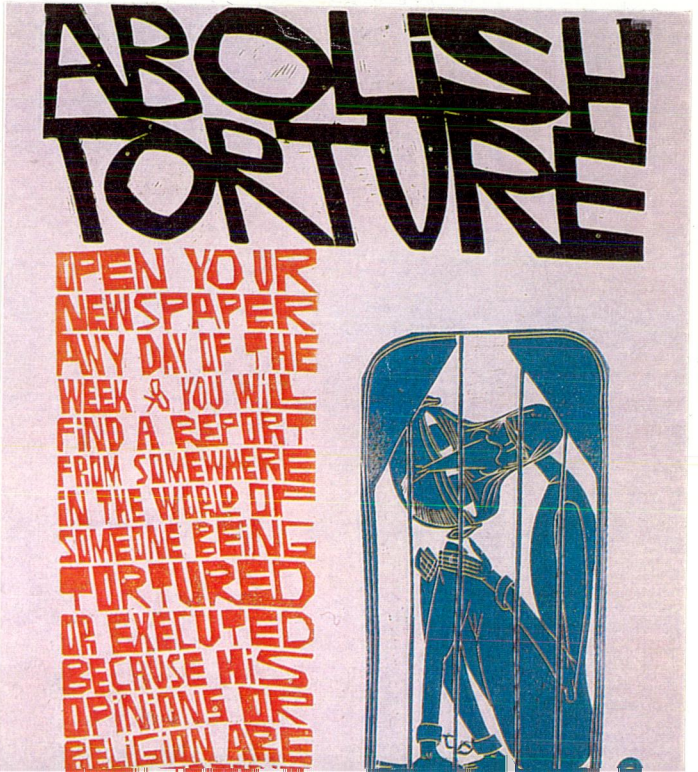


Fig 1.

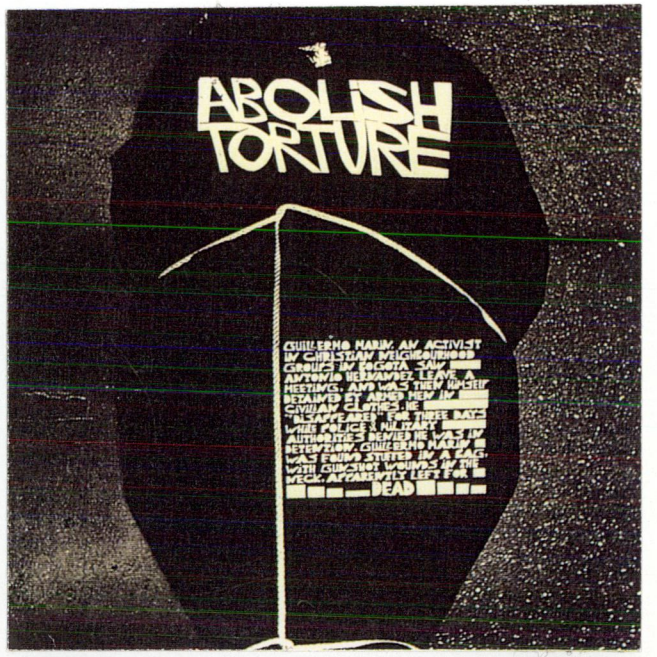

ABOLISH
TORTURE

Fig ,2.

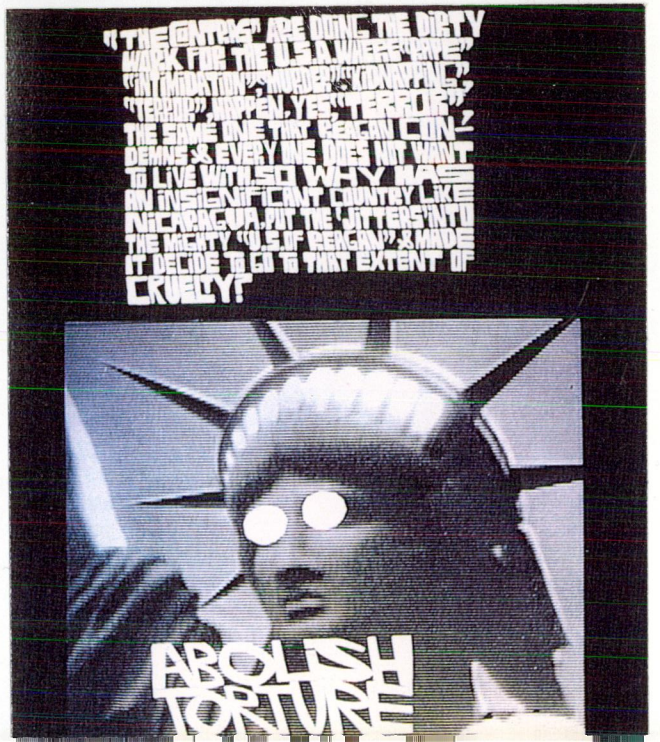

"THE CONTRAS" ARE DOING THE DIRTY
WORK FOR THE U.S. IN NICARAGUA"
"INTIMIDATION, MURDER, KIDNAPPING"
"TERROR" HAPPENS, YES "TERROR"
THE SAME LINE THAT REAGAN CON-
DEMNS & EVERYONE DOES NOT WANT
TO LIVE WITH. SO WHY HAS
AN INSIGNIFICANT COUNTRY LIKE
NICARAGUA, PUT THE "JITTERS" INTO
THE MIGHTY "U.S. OF REAGAN" & MADE
IT DECIDE TO GO TO THAT EXTENT OF
CRUELTY?
ABOLISH
TORTURE

Fig 3.

Dangerous forms **Fig 4.**

This is a clever piece of design created by David Carson. In this piece Carson has used the expressive quality of letterpress type to evoke the unfriendly environment of a dangerous surfing area. His heavy use of ink combined with his bold choice of typeface and crude uneven positioning of forms all help to enhance his statement.

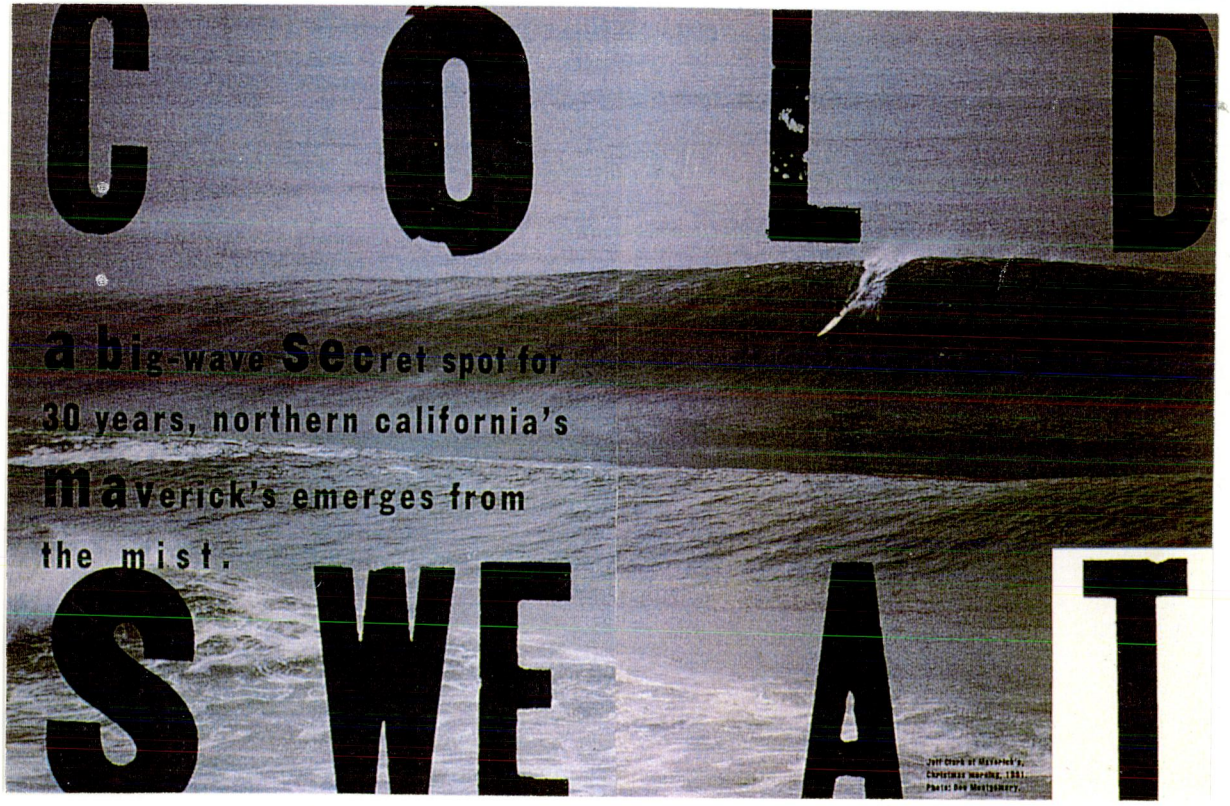


Fig 4.

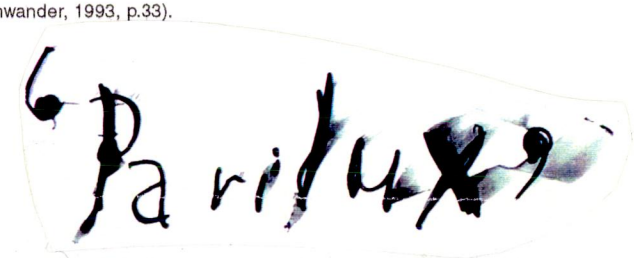
Crude forms

Fig 5.

Pierre Bernard undertook a project for Parilux, a range of papers recently introduced by ISTD Fine Paper. The advertisement design was aimed at consumers of fine quality paper, in particular, discriminating designers. The context, then, was that of design magazines packed with text, colour imagery and a range of highly designed advertisements. The audience is supposedly sophisticated, and yet is confronted here with a page nearly blank except for the scrawled, inky, smudged letters of the word 'Parilux'. The large amount of white space, containing nothing but what appears to be a scribble, is clearly intended to grab the reader's attention: the verbal 'shout' is an age-old technique. But it is the smudges and the childish, unfinished and undesigned quality of the letters that makes one take notice of this design.

The effect of the design and its message, is enhanced by the smooth finish of the paper, which suggest that the marks are freshly made on the page, perhaps still wet. This doodle, then, is a visual trick that causes the viewer to realise that Parilux paper is capable of holding the finest printing details. Though not very appealing to the eye, this design manages to communicate its intended message, clearly and efficiently (Neuenschwander, 1993, p.33).

Fig 5.



Disruptive forms

Fig 6.

The poster by Uwe Loesch (born 1943, Dusseldorf), "Survival during war" shows his distinctive flair for typography through his use of a clever graphic device. The text is broken to communicate the violent disruption of people's lives by war. Although the message is in a foreign language, I feel its treatment creates a strong sense of disruption without being able to read the text contained. This example, while showing the power of letterforms outside of their literal meaning, also confirms my point that we do actually see before we read.

Fig 6.

The examples of lettering just illustrated contain information well beyond the merely legible. In each case the non-verbal message is specific, and points to a transformation of the viewer's perceptions. A recent development in graphic design depends on less specific, more intuitive mental leaps to construct a full reading of an image. This development is known in some circles as 'deconstruction', and comes to graphic design from the worlds of fine art and literary criticism. Briefly put, literary deconstruction proposes that words have their meaning entirely from their context and not from their references to objects or ideas; the meaning of novels or poems resides in the system of words that make up the text.

The work of Joan Dobkin of the Cranbrook Academy in the United States and of David Carson also from the States both show the influence of deconstruction on the world of graphic design. An analysis of Joan Dobkin's campaign for Amnesty International and of two of Carson's layouts for his *Beach Culture* magazine which focussed on surf culture, will illustrate the concept.

Disturbing forms **Fig 7,8,9,10.**

Joan Dobkin's campaign for Amnesty International. This campaign's posters' distorted type and agitated drawing style, are meant to express the anxiety and terror experienced by victims of the repressive political and military system that has existed for many years in El Salvador.

Text and imagery are layered and fragmented in such a way that the reader must piece together both the verbal and the visual clues to understand the message. Key words are emphasised, and where these are not entirely legible, the reader must plunge into a mass of confused lines to decode them. The meaning of the poster is deconstructed by the designer in order that the viewer can reconstruct it in the language of his own experience. Such an approach to design requires a serious commitment to research into the meanings and images associated with the job in question.


AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
forced to run through a burning field
you are next

Fig 7.

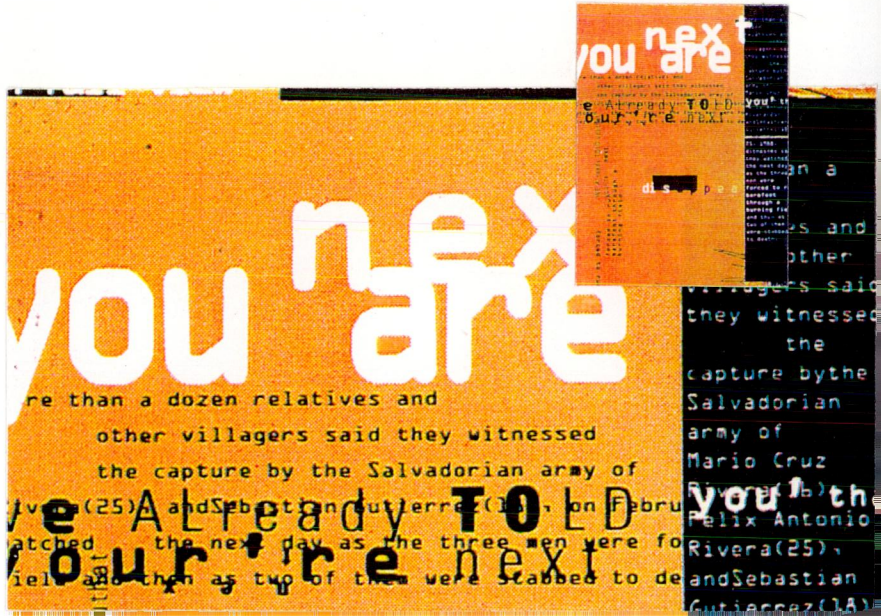

you are next
we Already TOLD
our're next
Felix Antonio
Rivera(25),
andSebastian

Fig 8.

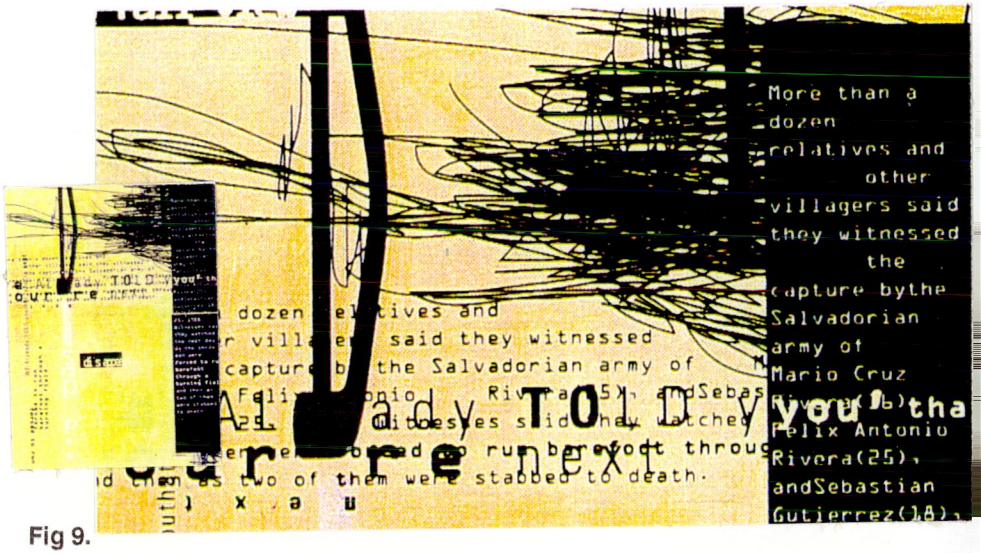

More than a dozen relatives and other villagers said they witnessed the capture bythe Salvadorian army of Mario Cruz Felix Antonio Rivera(25), andSebastian Gutierrez(18),
dozen
said they witnessed
the Salvadorian army of
two of them were stabbed to death.

Fig 9.

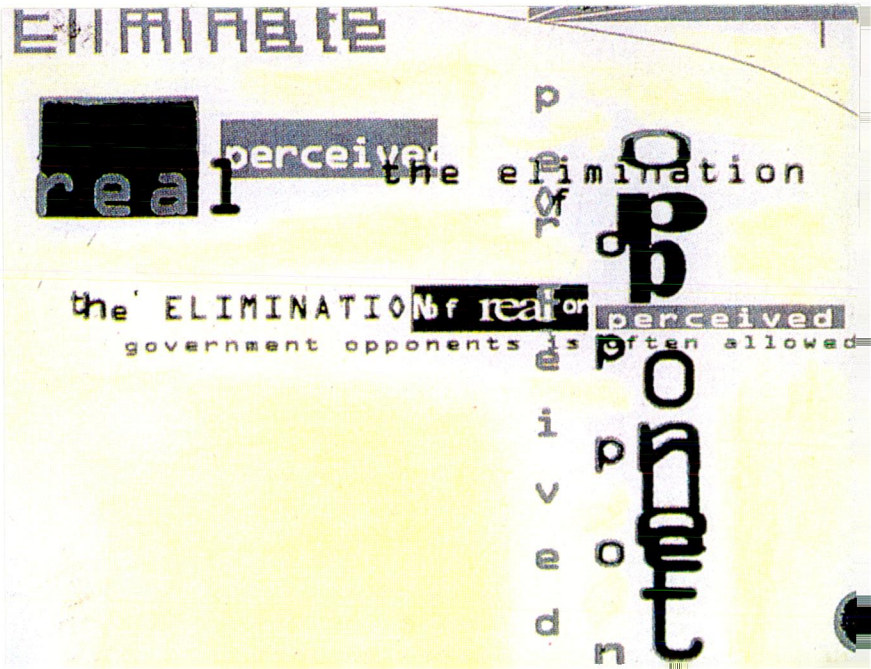

real
perceived
the elimination
of
the ELIMINATION of real or
perceived
government opponents is often allowed

Fig 10.

Action forms

Fig 11.

A spread from *Beach Culture* magazine, 1990, designed by David Carson. In this layout the headline which reads "laird hamilton", has been stretched on a photocopier to the very limit of legibility, as has the accompanying text in which the type has been set in various fonts and sizes, cut and pasted over each other with varying line lengths with disruptive breaks in words.

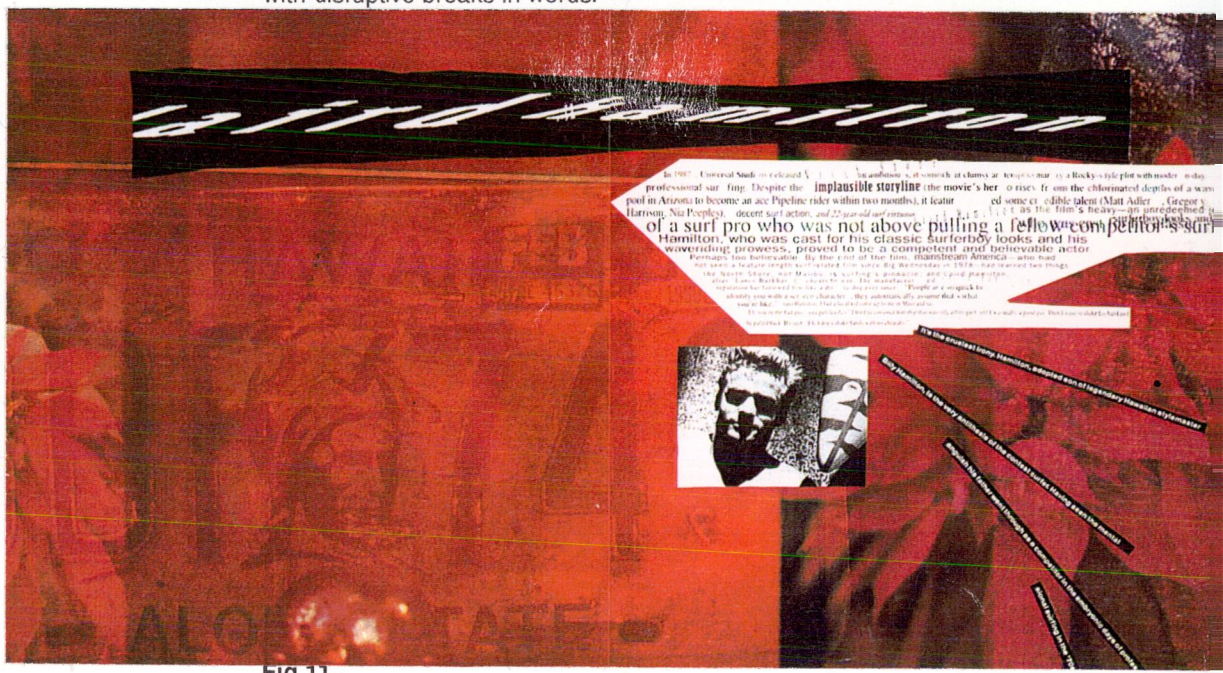


Fig 11.

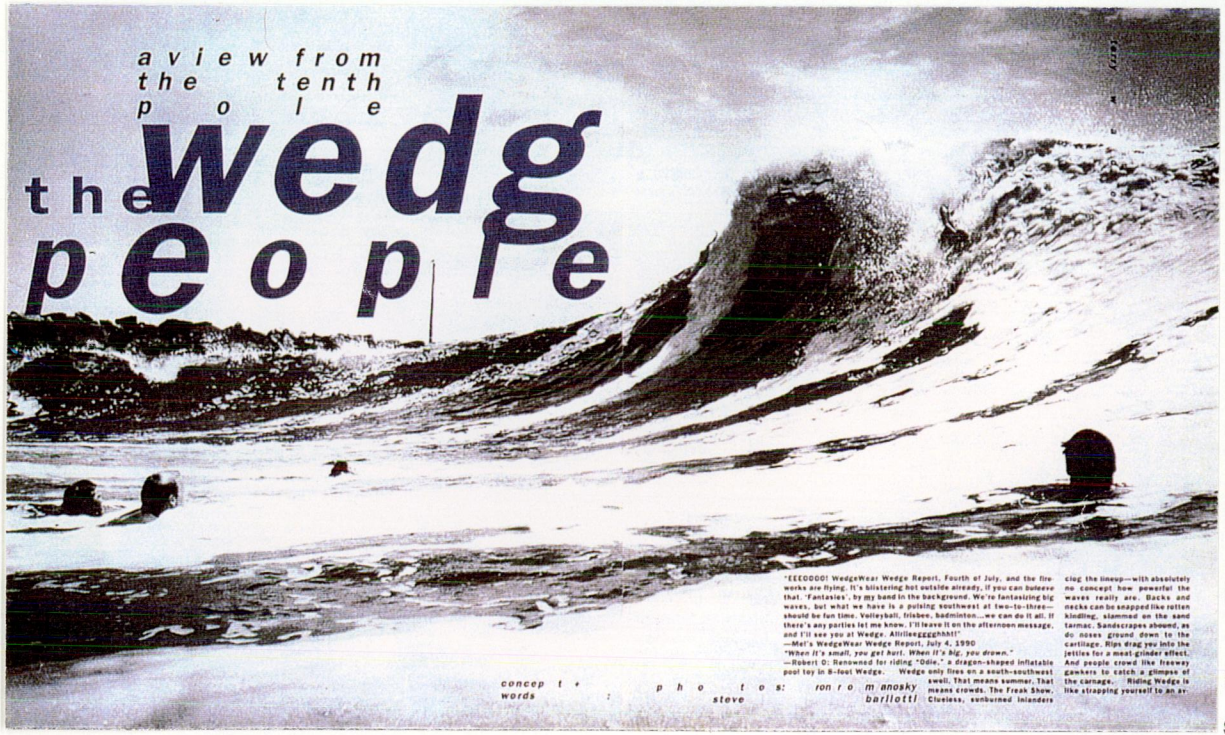


Fig 12.

Another spread from Beach Culture magazine, 1990, designed by David Carson. The title of this spread takes on a sweeping motion. The text, which is tightly set, somewhat forces the reader into a quick reading, while at the same time making one take sudden jumps and stops within the text.

Fig 12.

Both examples are articles on surfers. The contrast of tight and open spaced letterforms and the chaotic movements, the speeding up and the slowing down of the reader, the sudden, unexplained, seemingly random elements - are all features that connect the reading experience with the surfing one.

In both Dobkin's and Carson's work the viewer becomes aware of his own mental actions. He thinks and is aware of receiving information. A good deal of lettering depends on communicating information at the subliminal level. Inasmuch as the viewer is unaware of receiving a message that is specifically encoded in the design, he is being manipulated. The following example demonstrates this manipulation.

Manipulative forms

Fig 13.

This Johnson's baby lotion advert is a great piece of lettering involving a subtle kind of manipulation. It's a design that is known by many consumers of many ages. I feel this is a design which conveys exactly its intended message, through a subtle use of colour and friendly, gentle, reassuring letterforms. The message is conveyed only at the subliminal level, however, and is not intended to surface in the viewer's mind.

Fig 13.

Fig 14.

Fig 13, is indeed a good example of the right style letterform in the right context, but if one was to take this caring brush stroke and adapt it elsewhere, as in **fig 14**, one can see that this style lettering is no longer the great success it once was. It now conveys all the wrong connotations (friendly caring or even cheap?), for a product aimed at a sophisticated audience in search of a serious no nonsense high quality piece of technology. This confirms my point that style only works when it's been created and not copied. This is an example which may seem obvious to some while highlighted, but as stated earlier, it is a problem that has become altogether too apparent in today's graphic design world.

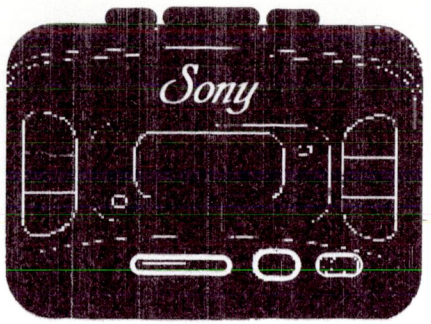


Fig 14.

A walkman design for Sony.

All the examples illustrated throughout this chapter confirm that lettering communicates on many levels and that the reading of an image is a complex operation involving intuition and intellect, conscious and subconscious processes. Therefore, the legibility that a designer or typographer seeks to achieve, is not unimpaired literal legibility, but the complete communication of a message, that will reach all levels involved in the reading of a design.

LETTERFORMS IN COMPOSITION

Compositional principles

The point

The line

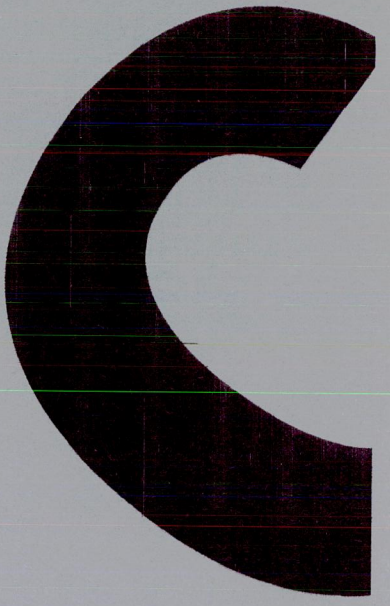
Shapes effect our feelings

Creating a composition

Examples

Miniture compositions

Case study



chapter two more than words

While my choice of examples in chapter one proved exciting, the fact that legibility was an important requirement placed a certain amount of restraint on each design. When designing letters that play a vital part in communicating verbal information, the emotional and literal aspects of the forms must be kept in balance. While these legible forms can create powerful compositions, there is a limit to the amount of manipulation these letters can undergo before they become illegible.

The theme of this chapter is letterforms that are used primarily as composition or elements in composition. I have looked at what composition is through a detailed study of the individual elements one uses in its make-up, and have studied the feelings conveyed by these elements and their positioning, because of their direct relationship with, letterforms and the feelings conveyed by letterforms in or as composition. I have included some examples which deal specifically with letterforms in a variety of styles, here unlike chapter one, legibility is of secondary importance; thus, the letterforms can be designed or used with greater freedom in approach. Reading gives way here to decoding: letters become abstract shapes or symbols with something more than phonetic content.

Composition principles

When we talk about composition we are actually talking about elements in space. And since space itself implies emptiness, in order to understand it we must study space in relation to other components. If we look at the shapes between forms as well as forms themselves, we can begin to understand the power of composition.

The point

A point does not occupy space. It is intangible, having neither length, with, nor thickness. It indicates nothing more than a position in space. A point is represented by a dot; yet the dot at the end of this sentence is not a point, because it has length, width and even imperceptible thickness. We can see it, which means it occupies space and therefore is composed of an infinite number of points. We can never actually see a point; still, we must accept this concept as a logical beginning.

The line

"A line is the extension of a point; it has neither width nor thickness only length" (Ravielli, 1967, p.41). Lines are as abstract as the moving points that describe them. Yet we must give them form if they are to be of any purpose in the world of design. Line is an energy force

which we use to express, divide, enclose, or otherwise occupy or define space. Every line we create like letterforms, has a particular character, some are strong and decisive, some are timid and quiet; nevertheless, they all function in relation to the space around them. Thus, without having any representational content, a line may still be descriptive of an idea or mood. It is these physical lines one must consider while we look at the study of letterforms and composition.

While each of us has a different idea of what line best represents a desired mood, certain similarities exist in many of our opinions. If we were to create lines representing sleep, for example, they would not be confused with our lines to express anger. Horizontal lines express quiet, restfulness, while oblique or vertical lines have a more dynamic aggressive character. This is because we repeat directions of lines in our own bodies. When we are sleeping we are in a horizontal position and when we rush or hurry, our bodies are vertically leaning forward. Therefore, we can create lines which will suggest movement as well as feeling. This movement can be slow or swift, flowing or jerky or it may have other intentions. If, for example, all lines in a composition are moving horizontally or in gradual curves of same direction, this will suggest unity and fill us with a feeling of contentment and ease. There is a restfulness that greets our eyes when we look at the

serene beauty of calm seas. If, on the other hand, we create a composition of lines which are continuously changing in direction, this will have the opposite effect. It is difficult, for example, to remain passive in the presence of a spiral.

In addition to these physical lines in a composition, there are also guidelines and grid lines which a designer can use to support and direct the more dominant lines or the placement of elements in a composition. In many cases these lines are invisible, such as those the eye projects to connect, but in any case the point is that all lines whether physical or invisible are powerful elements in composition and need a lot of consideration.

Shapes effect our feelings

As we are affected by line, one must remember that we are also affected in the same way by the shapes they can create, i.e. any forms which are used to construct compositions or indeed letterforms themselves, which I will discuss in detail in my next chapter. Endless variations of the basic shapes - forms that are not quite circles, squares, or triangles are possible. The thing is that these shapes are so much a part of our daily lives that their value in composition and development of form is often overlooked. In using shape as a tool for

exploring the wonders of composition and the development of form it is easy to forget that it touches every phase of our existence. "From birth we are surrounded by shapes. It is not surprising, therefore, that our feelings are deeply affected by the shape of things" (Ravielli, 1967, p.107).

Creating a composition

Since we read designs as well as the informational text they contain, a designer must not only be careful with his choice or creation of appropriate letterforms, but also with their placement and combination, if used, with other forms within a design composition. i.e. illustrations or photographs. All forms created by, or within a composition must be considered at all times if one is to convey the right message. For a composition to send the right message or retrieve the right reaction from an intended audience, a designer must first establish the message to be communicated or the desired response expected. Only then can he or she decide how the message will be conveyed.

In order to create a successful composition, a hierarchy of elements must first be established. The most important element in the hierarchy may be a photograph, an abstract shape, an illustration or a group of letterforms or a letterform alone. If the design is created using only

letterforms or a letterform alone, then the elements of the composition will be the abstract shapes and counterspaces of the letter or letters themselves. If photographs, paintings or illustrations are also included, their relationship to letterforms and typography must be carefully considered. Letterforms and images may be combined or kept separate, but in any case a hierarchy must be established. As well as the size and weight of forms determining their placement and importance in a composition hierarchy, it is important that designers consider colour, as it also plays a major part in deciding on the positioning of elements and their status within a balanced composition.

Although many compositions are symmetrical in shape, a good balanced composition does not depend on this device alone. A butterfly, for example, has two wings of equal size and shape; one is a mirror image of the other. Each individual wing, however, is not symmetrical, yet is still a balanced form. Its areas are so arranged that a harmony is achieved by the proportion, or comparative relationship, of one area to another. Asymmetrical forms that seem beautiful to us are said to have dynamic symmetry. Therefore, while balance is an important consideration when dealing with form, dynamic symmetry is the most pleasing type of symmetry and on most occasions it will allow one to create a more exciting solution. The contour of an egg for example is

more exciting than the contour of a ball. Both are balanced forms, but the shape of the egg reveals a dynamic symmetry when the shape of the ball is static.

Visual impact, is another important consideration to take into account when dealing with letterforms and composition. It is important that designers remember, just as a sound can only be described as loud in comparison with other sounds, so too, the visual impact of a design is determined by the context in which it is seen. It is not always the largest or most boldly coloured letterforms and composition styles that gain attention or attract an audience. In a context of loud, overstated designs, an elegant design involving a sophisticated use of colour and letterforms alone, can gain attention and speak effectively to an audience (see fig 16)(Neuenschwander, 1993, p.75).

Having looked at the various elements which make up a composition, it seems appropriate now to look at these elements in action. It is important to note that what has been said about lines and shapes in relation to composition, also relates directly to the shape of letterforms themselves and the lines they can create within a layout. The following examples of compositions deal specifically with letterforms, and look at how various designers have used the power of symmetry

and of the forms discussed in this chapter in a variety of ways. This, I feel, will demonstrate the endless possibilities available to a designer through the power of the letterform - in or as - composition, and illustrate the variety of ways one can connect with, and have impact on an intended viewer.

Examples

Fig 15.

A cover design by Tomato design group for the band Underworld (formed by two members of Tomato). This is a good example of a powerful composition made up entirely of letterforms. In this design Tomato have used the abstract shapes and counterspaces of the letters themselves to express the feeling of urban build-up, the subject of the music in question. This layered, bold, overcrowded composition of letterforms, combined with a clever distribution of white space, perfectly conveys the cityscape theme expressed by the band in their music.

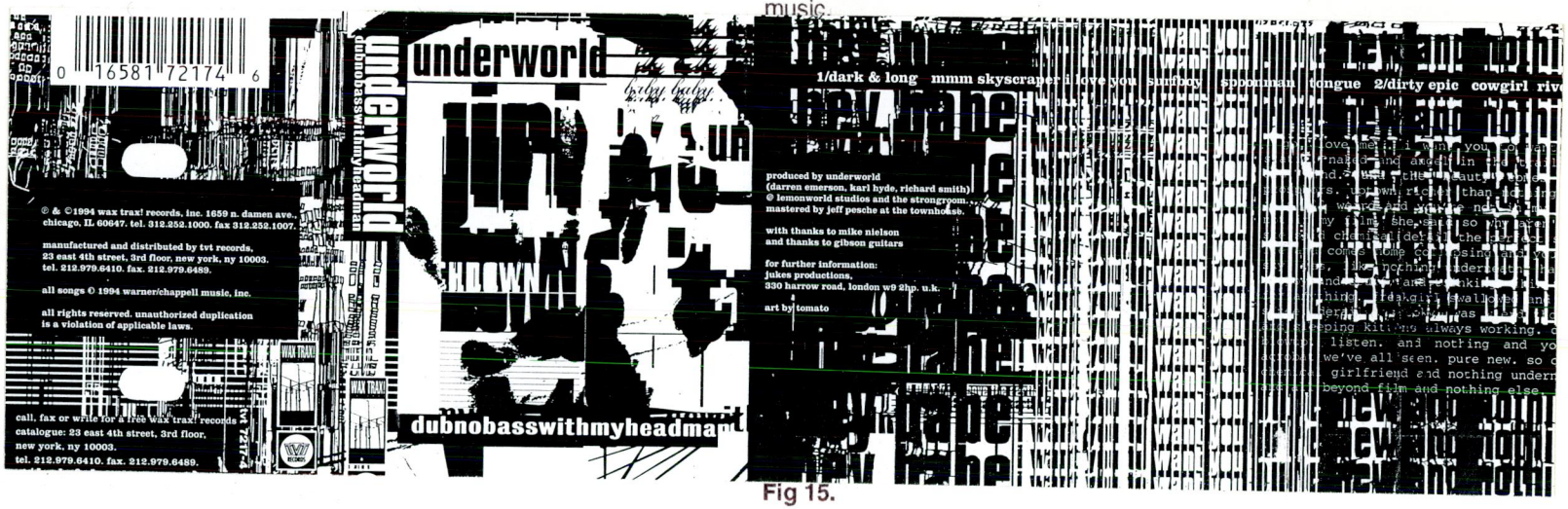


Fig 15.

Fig 16.

An Easter candle design, by Phil Baines, UK, 1996. This is a elegant design which shows how a sophisticated use of white space and letterforms alone, can speak eloquently to an audience.

This composition works, because of its interesting shape, use of red and white, open leading and generous kerning. Baines' use of a serif font and mix of letter sizes is a clear reference to the style used in biblical scriptures and ancient manuscripts. It is these references combined with the vertical and horizontal layout of text, that gives this design its religious feel, and hence its appeal to the audience in question.

Fig 16.

These two examples show that visual impact is indeed a valuable asset to composition, but they also indicate the importance of knowing one's audience and the context of a design, if it is to be used as a successful device.

Fig 17.

An invitation design by Alan Fletcher, UK, 1983. In this design for a friends 21st birthday party, Fletcher used fun colours and playful letterforms as a means to establish contact with his audience. Through his intimate intertwining and vibrant deconstruction of the word party, he captures perfectly the excitement and informality of the occasion. This is a good example of how one can create atmosphere, through the careful positioning of letterforms alone in a composition.

Fig 17.

Fig 18.

A promotional piece, designed by Alan fletcher,1993. This composition relates the name of the place to its built form. Fletcher has used visual reference in this design as a means to communicate his message. His use of black and white in this composition, is suggestive of viewing Manhattan from a distance. His clever use of elongated nar-

row forms creates a overall shape which perfectly conveys the size and structure of this city. The large amount of white space around these letterforms further emphasises the feeling of concentrated buildings and urban condense spaces. This is a good example of how letterforms and the shapes in and around them within a composition, can evoke concepts and associations that emphasise the meaning of a design.

For anyone these letterforms make up an interesting composition; to some, the feelings they suggest will be very clear, and for those not familiar with the city, this is a very simple design which illustrates the size of this location and demonstrates as in my previous example, how one can create the perfect atmosphere using, the right style of letterform in the right style of composition.

Fig 18.

Another style of composition which has become popular today due to the problems posed by legal restrictions on the content of cigarette advertisements, is the use of code in a design. Nearly all cigarette advertisements today have adapted this approach.

Fig 19.

A cigarette advertisement for *Benson and Hedges*, by Collett, Dickenson, Pierce and Partners, UK 1996. This composition shows the letters of the words Benson and Hedges scattered at random over a still life composed of irrelevent objects. The gold box despite being clean-shaven, identifies the product immediately; nevertheless, it is by making the public search for the product name, in images with no direct relation to smoking, that the creators of this design have reinforced this product's identity. The sharp if irrelevant wit of this advertisement subtly assigns a certain amount of intelligence to the product itself.

Fig 19.

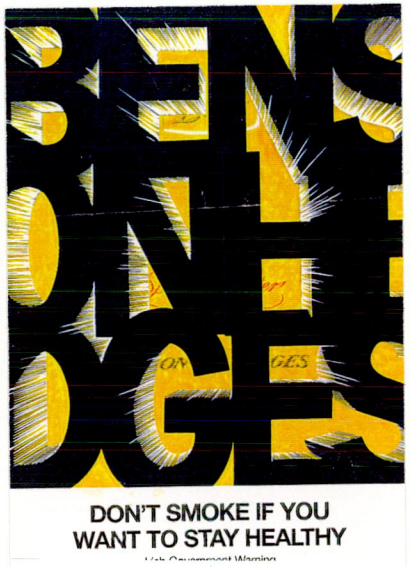


Fig 20.

Another cigarette advertisement for *Benson and Hedges*, by Hot Press magazine, Ireland 1997. This is a bold design which uses letterforms from part of the product name enlarged and cropped to create a composition with impact. Its use of yellow as a background, radiating between the other forms, connects the viewer with the product's golden package and suggests that there's something bright or special about this brand of cigarettes. A clever rendering of certain letterforms from the brand's box appears between the counters of the bolder forms, and further emphasises the brand in question.

Fig 20.

In both these examples the viewer is confronted with an abstract composition of shapes or objects and must unravel or decode obscure or partly legible letterforms. Each of these compositions, requires the viewer to supply necessary information from his or her own memory, thus through personal involvement the product identity is reinforced in each case.

Miniature compositions

Having established composition and talked in detail about how we are effected by the shape of things, I cannot leave this chapter without first emphasising the special place occupied by the logo in the field of letterforms - in or as - composition. Because after all, when we talk about logos we are actually referring to mini compositions, capable of use in several sizes on a variety of materials, to represent a company, event or product.

The designing of logos has always been the most ambitious and challenging task required of anyone working in the field of lettering and graphic design. But in today's world, where our commercial market has become saturated with symbols, the designer's task is even more difficult than before. One no longer has just the worry of creating the perfect representation. The challenge now is to represent, without resembling any of the millions of logos which are already in existence. This, I feel, leaves a great opening for the unique stroke of hand-lettering in the future of logos.

Because a logo must send out a clear and confident message that should be at once, simple, memorable, and strongly characterised. Its design must begin by establishing with perfect clarity the one idea to

be communicated. Once the message and audience is established, a designer can begin experimentation.

The following examples will look at some of today's more successful designs, to show the variety of approaches one can take to these miniture compositions, while trying to convey a message to his or her intended audience. Letterforms alone may be used as in figs 21, 22, 23, 24, or a combination of letterforms and illustration as in fig 25. Alternatively, a designer may opt for illustration alone, but this is a whole other thesis and in keeping with the subject of this chapter, letterforms in or as composition, I will deal only with examples which have a strong emphasis on letterforms.

Examples

Letterforms alone; hand-drawn, typeset, manipulated type, hand-lettering and type.

Fig 21.

A logo design for Boots pharmaceutical company. In this design it is the hand-drawn letters that create the desired effect, a feeling of caring sensitivity through their artistic italic form. The letterforms rise slightly, to convey a sense of optimism. The T-stroke above and parallel underline are wedge-shaped, which implies a sense of purpose and direction - all excellent qualities in a pharmacist.

Fig 21.

Fig 22.

A design for Co-op, producers of dairy products. In this design it is the smooth roundness of the letterforms which convey the message of a organised company with cleanliness in mind. The white background emphasises purity (as in milk), while the blue helps to convey a sense of cool freshness. The composition of the letterforms themselves creates a square, and through a clever placement of this square within a rectangle the overall design signifies that the whole structure is safe and solid.

Fig 22.

letterforms and illustration

Fig 23.

The John Lewis and partners logo design. Here it is manipulated letterforms alone that are used to produce this remarkable result. The J, L and P are intertwined which show union, linking together the management and his staff into one concept and single unit. Meaningful, flexible and unmistakable, this composition proposes an integrated approach, conveying perfectly a feeling of management and staff communicating and working successfully together.

Fig 23.

Fig 24.

An identity for Del Monte, distributors of fruit. In this composition a combination of hand-lettering and type are used to convey the message. The elaborate style of the hand-drawn forms combines well with the the overall shape of the composition to convey a sense of friendliness, and appears very inviting. The word quality on the other hand, appears cold, in a no-nonsense typeface which disturbs ones first impression of this design, and in contrast to the hand-drawn forms conveys a strong sense of value.

Fig 24.

Fig 25.

A logo design for the milk marketing board's, dairy products.
In this design the board have used a combination of illustration and letterforms as an identity for their products. A simplistic drawing of a cow in blue with a flower for a tail, conveys a fresh, friendly feeling with great appeal, especially for kids. This figure on its white background, encircled by a simple straightforward style of letterform, illustrates a strong sense of security, cleanliness, and produces a design with universal assurance.

Fig 25.

In any case, whatever the decision, letterforms/illustration alone, or a combination of both, it is important for designers to remember that logos are probably the most intense concentration of form and content in the world of graphic design. The following practical exercise which looks at content and form, is a personal project which examines a bad use of compositional elements. It is a study of a design which was not conveying its intended message, and through steps aims to guide one to a more successful solution. The point is that a successful composition needs more than just the right combination of elements and my aim is to show how a simple rearrangement of this logos forms can make it a success. The result is a successful logo which demonstrates the strength of the right style letterform in the right style of composition.

Case study

The company in question

The company in question for this study is Schumacher. Schumacher is a producer and distributor of a range of products like bandages and plasters for hospitals, physicians and pharmacies. The company started with the production of textiles for bandages, being situated in a German centre of textiles weavers.

The existing design

In 1970, the owner made an investment in a corporate design and created, with the help of a graphic designer, his own logo. This design has not changed ever since. It's seen and defended as valuable heritage in memory of the owner, who died some years ago.

The background of this design is that it was presented to me and some fellow students by one of our visiting lecturers during this year. We were asked to consider the existing design and define its status. We were also asked if we thought this was a successful logo, was there need for a new logo or did we feel a redesign of the existing one was in order? The approach and our findings were as follows.

Fig 26. 

The problems with the existing schumacher design

The existing Schumacher logo contains strong graphic elements - the name "Schumacher", and the abstract bandage design. These elements together embody the company, respectively conveying typographically and visually the name and nature of Schumacher. However, these two elements are being forced to co-exist in the same area, thus depleting each other's strengths.

Fig 27. 

The abstract bandage design - working as an immediate representation of the nature of Schumacher - is weakened through its competition with the first character in the type. It loses its own identity in this confusion. The surrounding circle completely enclosing the bandage design, restricts its freedom as a visual symbol, thus insinuating a lack of flexibility within Schumacher's corporate structure.

Fig 28. SCHUMACHER

The typeface used is heavy, condensed capitals, leaving large counterspaces within the name. This, firstly, discourages legibility and also gives a weighty industrial feeling to the overall logo. This is not an appropriate representation of Schumacher, a company which represents positivity through the nature of its product. This positivity is presently obscured through this treatment of type.

Fig 29. SCHUMACHER

The strength of the logo is further impaired by the bordering parallel lines. The positioning of these lines

1: Cramps and effectively imprisons the Schumacher name.

2: Restricts suggestion of movement within the name by allowing it only to move straight on, therefore denying any indication of growth within Schumacher.

LOGO COLOURS

The colours used (orange and black) are strong and dynamic but their application has resulted in a visual confliction and imbalance.Their heavy treatment throws them into competition against each other and so severely draws from their potential strength.

The way to improve Schumacher's present logo is to focus on all its positive elements. By retaining these elements the heritage of Schumacher's established identity is not only fully retained but also radically enhanced through the eradication of any negative aspects. I have therefore implemented a series of changes to the existing logo resulting in a logo identity, that, while visually considerably different, continues to embrace the key qualities of Schumacher's present corporate identity.

Schumacher

Fig 30.

The new logo type

A simple solution to the inappropriate type was to introduce Helvetica lower case, spacing between letters and the implementation of a lighter face weight. This results in an immediately friendly representation, combined with a pure and clean clinical feel.

Fig 31.

Circular bandage design

In my solution the bandage design has been retained as an essential element of the original logo. The circle encasing the bandage image is completely removed in order to **free the image.** It is replaced with a triangle which, combined with the now simplified bandage image, is revealed as the central element to the new Schumacher Identity.

The introduction of the triangle fuses Schumacher's respective aims, these being a basic corporate security and reliability whilst simultaneously combining movement upwards and growth outwards. The "S" bandage becomes a part of the triangle without appearing to be trapped, largely due to the positioning of the "S" shape to allow white space to flow in and around it.

Fig 32. .....

Parallel lines

The parallel lines used in the original logo design have been almost entirely erased due to their lack of function. The remaining indication of these two lines is a dotted orange baseline which through its new positioning, functions as both a guide and a support system. The even spaces between each dot of the line represents precision and its new positioning helps to balance and organise the overall structure. The existence of the line is no longer an unnecessary statement as its role is now to support, direct and convey a positive message.

Colour

The problems arising with colour in the existing design are solved by cancelling out the competition between orange and black. This is achieved through using white in a predominant role. White now eradicates the original confliction of colour. The neutralising effect of white promotes a general air of positivity, also visually highlighting Schumacher's medicinal and hygienic values. The red of the orange has been dropped by 50%, creating a warmer, more welcoming Schumacher orange (see **Fig 33**).

Fig 33.

..... schumacher

Findings

I have used this case study as an example of an unclear message which occurred, due to a bad use of compositional elements, or a designer's lack of knowledge. The power of the letterform itself is demonstrated through its use as an abstract shape. This new design, whilst retaining the strength of its heritage, demonstrates how one can use the abstract shapes of letters alone or in this case, combined with other elements (discussed earlier in this chapter) to create successful compositions, which will contribute to the success of any business or product.

In general, type and mechanically produced forms convey a sense of authority. The more hand-made the forms appear to be, the more they tend to convey a sense of human warmth, intimacy and immediacy. The emotional groupings made earlier in this thesis should remind readers of the less verbal connotations of various lettering styles. However, when dealing with composition, as this example proves, designers need to remember that its not just a matter of picking the right style of letterform, but it is also the positioning of these letter-forms, and other elements if used, that requires careful consideration if one is to be successful in this area.

LETTER DESIGN AND THE COMBING OF HAND-LETTERING AND TYPE

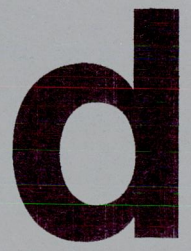
Principles of letter design.

Letterforms with different roles.

Why combine hand-lettering and type?

How can hand-lettering and type co-exist?

Hand-lettering and type combined



In this chapter I have examined the principles of letter design, I have looked at written forms in comparison to typographic, identified the different roles of each in the field of graphic design and looked at the possibilities of combining both. The aim of this chapter is to see if hand-lettering and type can co-exist in a design, what lettering styles are best suited to a particular typeface and how is sufficient contrast ensured within a harmonious design?

Principles of letter design

While it is my belief that hand-lettering should be based on principles closer to those of the fine arts than to the principles that govern the design of type, and that the strict geometry and even textures of typography cannot produce sufficiently dramatic shapes for most purposes. Owing to the requirements of legibility that will guide the making of most letters for graphic design it is rarely possible to take a completely free fine art approach. The graphic designers territory is somewhere between these two extremes. In establishing an approach to letter design, whether hand-lettering or type, the designer would do well to look to the fine arts and old typographic principles for guidance. This is not to say that any new creation should be a copy of earlier forms, but a knowledge of fine art principles and an understanding of the history of typography could give a designer a point to start from, and maybe give a warning of what not to do. A designer must achieve a balanced blend of form and function.

Letterforms with different roles

While mechanical produced typefaces can convey subliminal information, which can be used to add meaning to verbal content (as demonstrated in my first chapter), and can also be used to produce compositions charged with emotion (as demonstrated in my second chapter); it is interesting to note that it is indeed rare for type to produce the emotional and compositional impact of hand-lettering. The reason for this is that on most occasions, both forms written and typographic are seen to have different roles to play. Type, is usually designed with no specific job in mind, with a main objective of clarity and a suitability to uses in a variety of situations.

Therefore, legibility is usually the priority while designing typefaces, and as a priority places a restraining influence on these forms, as demonstrated by the numerous successful typefaces already in existence. Hand-lettering, by contrast, achieves maximum visual impact by altering the elements that govern type design. These forms can rely for legibility largely on context, hence, a greater expression of form is possible. It is important to remember that hand-lettering works best when it is created with a specific job in mind, and as illustrated earlier (see fig 14), it is equally important that these forms are not taken from existing designs, with no consideration to the message they are conveying.

Why combine hand-lettering and type?

The contrast in the ways that type and hand-lettering work makes them ideal partners in graphic design: together they can achieve maximum expressive value and total legibility. This potential, combined with the ease with which hand-lettering can now be worked into designs for print will ensure an increasingly important role for hand-lettering in designs involving type.

How can hand-lettering and type co-exist?

The formal characteristics of letterforms are each capable of manipulating: shape, weight, size, slope, colour, texture, edge, entasis (gradual thickening or thinning of the main parts of letters), serifs and decorative elements such as drop shadows and in-lines can be adapted to produce letterforms that sit well with a given typeface, as well as conveying the desired formal and emotional qualities. Built up element by element, letterforms can achieve an effective level of harmony and contrast. For example, if a typeface has classical proportions bracketed serifs and no slope, it might be paired with an italic letter with similarly classical proportions, pen made serifs but pronounced slope. Other contrasts could be achieved through colour, size and texture. The hand-lettering and the type would share certain features - classical proportions and serifs - and contrast in others slope, size, colour and texture. The more elements of contrast built into the combination, the greater the effect.

Hand-lettering and type combined

The following analysis of the formal and aesthetic charcteristics of some major typefaces, will look at approaches for pairing hand-lettering and type. This analysis highlights how points of harmony and contrast can be produced in hand-lettering when used in conjunction with type.

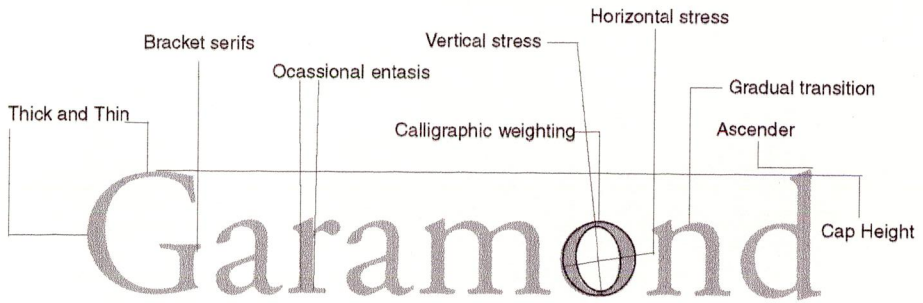


Fig 34.

Garmond, credited to Claude Garamond, 1540.

This is a typeface which falls into the 'old style' category. It has classical proportions, bracket serifs and a gradual transition from thick to thin elements with calligraphic weighting. Its capitals are slightly shorter than its ascenders and there is occasional entasis. With its calligraphic basis and classical proportions and spacing Garamond dis-

plays balanced horizontal and vertical stresses. The relationship of black and white is also balanced giving a timeless feeling of elegance and stability.

Other fonts that fall into the category of 'old style', and share the characteristics of Garmond, illustrated in fig 34, are Bembo, Times and Caslon. 'Old style' faces been products of the 16th and 17th century, were developed under the influence of the broad pen. Therefore, traditional calligraphic lettering displaying a rational distribution of weight would obviously harmonise most closely with old-style types - see the work of Tony Foster (**Fig 35**) and Julian Waters (**Fig 36**) for examples. Scrawls random marks and eccentric letterforms on the other hand would have little in common with this family and might be useful where strong dissonance is required.

Fig 35.

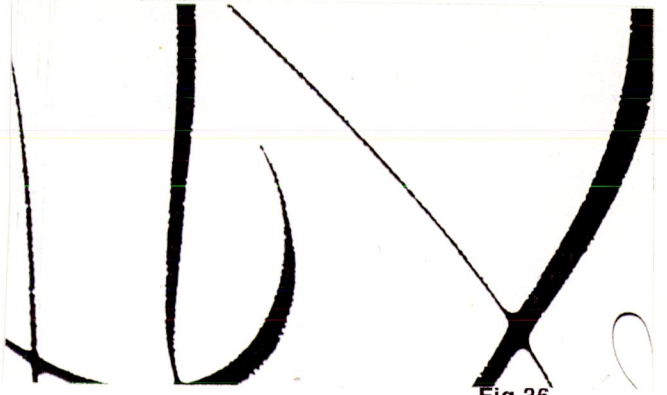


Fig 36.

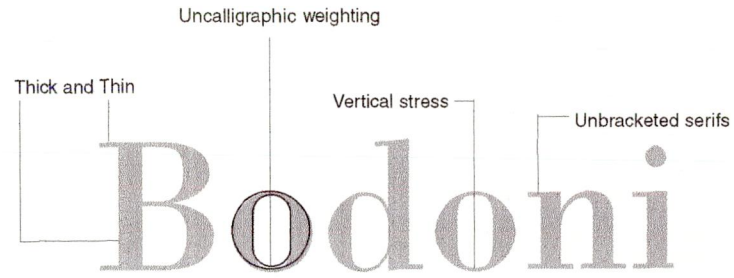


Fig 37.

Bodoni, credited to Giambattista Bodoni, 1800.

This is a typeface which falls into 'Modern, category. It displays fuller proportions than that found in old-style faces; this face has unbracketed serifs, an abrupt transition from thick to thin and a vertical distribution of weight that is uncalligraphic. This vertical stress leads to a condensed look despite the generous proportions. Though its proportions are not dramatically different from old-style faces, the vertical weighting and strong horizontal look produced by the unbracketed serifs make for text blocks with a grid-like quality. There is a stronger sense of geometry and black-white contrast than in old-style faces.

Other fonts that fall into the category of 'Modern' and share the characteristics of Bodoni, illustrated in fig 37, are Corvinus and Modern extended. It is important to note that other fonts designed in the peri-

od between 'old style' and 'modern', such as Baskerville, Bell, Caledonia and Columbia, which are classed as 'transitional' also share the characteristics illustrated in fig 00. Transitional and Modern faces were products of the 18th and 19th centuries, this was a time when improvements in printing presses made it possible to print finer lines. The classical balance of the broad pen gave way to the precision and power of the Industrial Revolution.

Hand-lettering, in order to harmonise with Transitional and Modern faces, would need to show abrupt transitions from thick to thin strokes, strong vertical or horizontal emphasis and a distribution of weight that does not conform to the logic of the broad pen - see the work of Glen Epstein (**Fig 38)** and Margo Chase (**Fig 39**) for examples. Transitional and Modern faces also combine well with imagery and are thus good partners for letterforms worked into shapes, colours, photographs or illustration.

Fig 38.

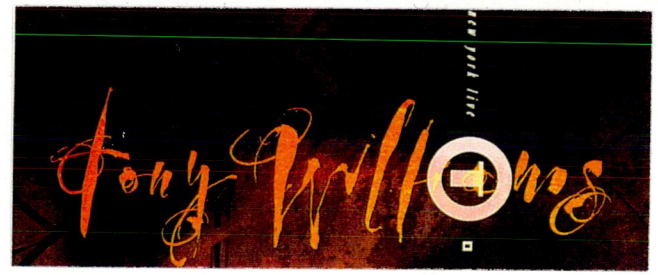


Fig 39.

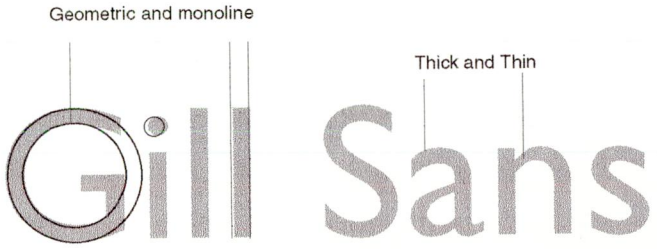


Fig 40.

Gill Sans, credited to Eric Gill, 1920.

This is a typeface, which falls into the 'Sans Serif' category. This font is geometric and monoline rather than calligraphic in inspiration. It has virtually no thick and thin elements, and displays a classical balance of black and white, which produces an even texture with a chunky feel.

Other fonts that fall into the category of 'Sans Serif', and share the characteristics of Gill Sans illustrated in fig 40, are Futura and Optima. 'Sans Serif' faces are products of the twentieth century and so parallel the introduction of photo-lithography and the integration of full-colour imagery and type, and for this reason have been tremendously important in modern design. They have an essential sympathy with the technologies now in use. Their solid geometric bases allows them to be used as abstract elements in typographic compositions.

Fig 41.

This same abstract quality combines well with random marks, scrawls and handwriting - see the work of Thomas Ingmire (**Fig 41**) and Mike Gold (**Fig 42**) for example. Carefully written traditional forms would in most cases produce a feeling of discord when juxtaposed with type-faces of this group.

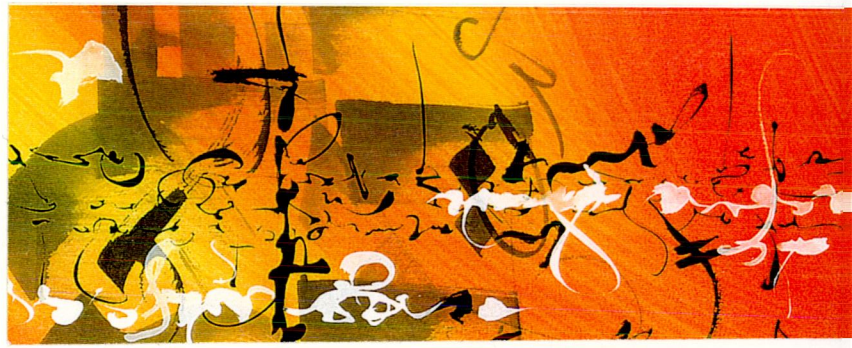
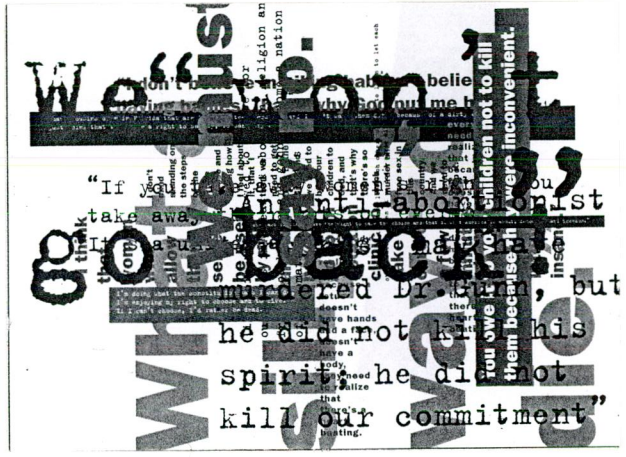


Fig 42.

This analysis of typefaces from categories, throughout the development of design only touches on some of the endless combinations possible. The following examples will illustrate a variety of other style combinations made by a variety of designers.

Fig 43. David Carson, a combination of hand-written scrawl and Helvetica.

Fig 44. Simon Johnston, a combination of letterforms and Franklin Gothic.



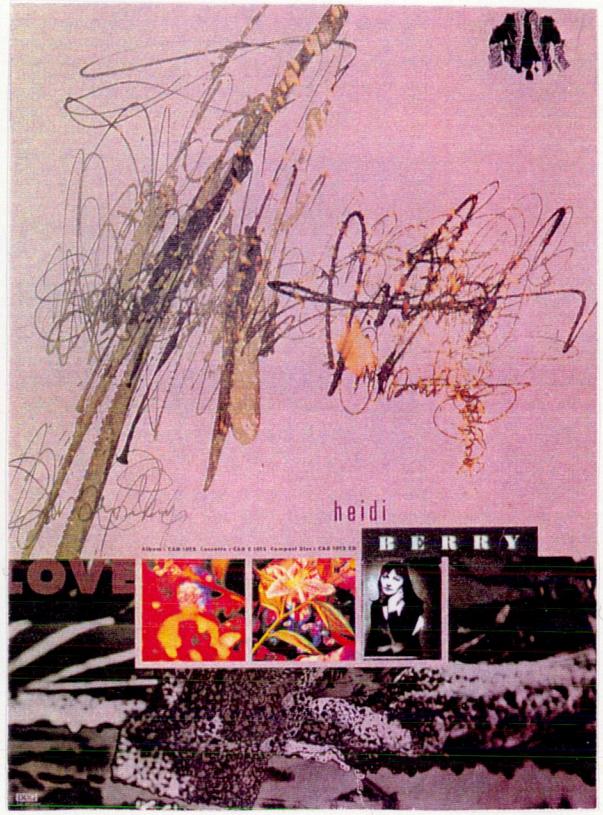


Fig 45. Chris Bigg, a combination of Futura extra bold, Arial Narrow and Bodoni, with intense handwritting.

If there is one thing to be learned from the examples just illustrated and the pairings made earlier in this chapter, it is that, no pairing of hand-lettering and type can ever be ruled out. Once again, as in the case of letterforms and compositions, its a matter of understanding content and form. A designer must first establish the message to be communicated, only then can he or she decide on how this message will be sent.

e

more than words

The theme of this thesis was the emotional and literal connotations of letterforms. The aim of my study was to prove that hand-lettering can achieve things that the mechanical forms of type cannot do without manipulation, and to show that an understanding of letterforms and their relationships is an excellent way to teach and understand typography.

In chapter one it was found that letterforms, both written and typographic communicate on many levels, and that, we all possess a subtle vocabulary of style that compels us to read a composition involving letterforms on many levels. Therefore letterforms, can never be treated as neutral elements in design, even when only intended to convey literal information, they invariably convey emotional and associative information as well. The question of letterforms must always be considered at the beginning of a design, if a complete communication of a message that will reach all levels is to take place. Through the study of my examples for this chapter, I found that while type did communicate its intended message in a clear and powerful way, the letterforms created by hand allowed for a greater development of expression.

In chapter two, the study of composition, it was found that as we are effected emotionally by the shape of letterforms, we are also effected in the same way by the shapes they can create due to their position-

ing within a composition. This chapter revealed that when dealing with composition, a designer needs to remember that it is not just a matter of choosing the right style of letterform, but it is also the positioning of these letterfoms, and other elements if used, that requires careful consideration if one is to be successful in this area.

As is the case with letterforms, in order for a composition to send the right message or retrieve the desired reaction from its intended audience, a designer must first establish the message to be communicated. Only then can he or she decide how the message will be sent. Through the examples used in this chapter I found that type, as in mechanically produced forms, conveys a sense of authority while more hand-made letterforms create a sense of human warmth, intimacy and immediacy.

In my third chapter, I discovered that it is indeed rare for mechanically produced type to convey the emotional and compositional impact of hand-lettering. It was revealed that type is usually designed for use in a variety of situations, and therefore, legibility is usually the priority while designing typefaces, and as a priority places a restraining influence on these forms. Hand-lettering by contrast, can achieve maximum visual impact by altering the elements that govern type design.

more than words

These forms can rely for legibility largely on context, hence, a greater expression of form is possible. I also discovered that type and hand-lettering combined are the perfect combination for any designer to communicate an intended message, together they can achieve maxium expressive value and total legibility.

On completion of this study I'm leaving this subject on a more optimistic note than when first starting. In the beginning, I like many others in the area of graphic design seen the computer as the enemy. I felt that it was responsible for destroying the last remaining manual skills of the graphic designer (calligraphy, drawing, paste-up...). I now having completed this study, see the computer as anything but an enemy, and feel that if anything it encourages rather than discourages the further development of manual skills. With the computer as a tool, it is now easier than ever before for hand-lettering to be worked into designs for print.

In both type and letterforms, remarkable work is being done. Following developments in twentieth-century painting, calligraphers are applying principles of abstract compositions to Western letterforms. Although claims have been made that the invention of printing in the fifteenth century relieved calligraphy of the burden of providing legible texts and freed it to become a true art form, it was not until the development of

abstraction in painting and sculpture in the twentieth century that developments in calligraphy were made.

Comparable developments are taking place in typography, such as the work of Neville Brody in his British avant-garde type magazine and software package Fuse, David Carson in his magazine Ray Gun, and the work of the Cranbrook group of designers. While this work is not the stuff of widespread commercial acceptance, it does provide a body of work that is a highly inquisitive response to the relationship between emotional literal meanings, between typographic and calligraphic forms, between type and art. These designers' are determined in their efforts to push the world towards new and ultimately better ways of communication. Their typefaces may be obscure and even elitist today, but if one is to look back, it seems curious that black-letter types which are illegible today were actually preferred over humanist types during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Similarly, typefaces which we perceive as illegible today may well become tomorrow's classic choice.

Language, then is, an area of intense artistic speculation. The graphic designer with an interest in letterforms would do well to explore the new areas that are opening up in the fine arts. Further technological

developments such as interactive television, hypermedia and virtual reality will also continue to alter the way in which information may be given visible form.

Through my own experiments, it is my belief that the best graphic design communicates on many levels: literal, emotional and aesthetic. The quality of a design resides in its ability to address the viewer in an intelligent, articulate and exciting way. Therefore I see hand lettering as having a vital role to play in creating a new approach to design. Handlettering unlike the restrained forms of type has to do with emotions, it has personality. You can see the breathing in writing and the kind of personality that made the letters. "Unlike such tools as pencils, brushes and chisels, the mouse is incapable of providing variable tactile sensations. It can, of course, be moved more or less swiftly, producing marks of a different quality. But that quality is never 'understood' by the hand as a physical sensation"(Neuenschwander, 1993, p.128)..

"Technology is like giving a loaded shot gun to a five year old... you may wish you hadn't done it but try getting it off him again" (Rea, 1992, p.23).

BARDEN, Mike, *Type '90,* TYPOGRAPHIC, No.42, 1991, pp.10-14.

BLOKLAND, Eirk Van, *Is Best Really Better,* EMIGRE, No.18, 1991, pp.30-31.

BOOTH-CLIBBORN. Edward and POYNOR. R, TYPOGRAPHY NOW, London, Booth-Clibborn Editions, 1991.

BRADSHAW, Christopher, *Lettering: Futher Views,* DESIGNER, No.5, 1975, p.12.

BRODY, Neuenschwander, LETTERWORK, London, Paidon Press Ltd., 1993.

CLIFF, Stafford, CUTTING EDGE TYPOGRAPHY, London, B.T.Batsford Ltd., 1994.

DAINES, Mike, *Calligraphy,* BASELINE, No.5, 1984, pp.16-18.

FISKE, John, INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION, London, Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1983.

GILMANN, LYNN,*An Interview With Margo Chase,*
LETTER ARTS REVIEW, NO.2, VOL.11, 1994, pp.36-46.

HALEY, Allan, *Stanley Morrison,* TYPOGRAPHIC MILSTONES, NO.7,
1978, pp.17-19.

HALLIDAY, Peter, CALLIGRAPHY MASTERS, London,
Bloomsbury Books, 1995.

HARVEY, Micheal, CREATIVE LETTERING : DRAWING
AND DESIGN, London, The Brodley Head, 1985.

HILLER, J. Abbet, *Word Art,* EYE, vol. 3, NO.11,
1993, pp.10-15.

HORSHAM, Micheal, *I Don't Use A Mac But I Know A Man Who Can*
EYE, vol. 4, NO.11, 1994, pp.6-8.

KEEDY, Jeffery, *Rules of Typography According to Cackpots,*
EYE, vol. 3, NO.11, 1993, pp.48-56.

KURTZ, Carl,*Trademarks, Logotypes, Letterheads, & Corporate*

Promotion, LETTER ARTS REVIEW, No.3, Vol.11, 1994, pp.14-.

LAWERENCE, Geoffrey, *Typography Today: Art or Science,* BASELINE, No.5, 1984, p.4.

MCLEAN, Ruari, THE THAMAS MANUAL OF TYPOGRAPHY , London, Thamas And Hudson, 1980.

MUKHERJEE, Trilokesh, *Marks, Handwriting and Language,* TYPOGRAPHIC, No.19, 1982, pp.10-12.

MYERSON, Jeremy, *Type In Context,* TYPOGRAPHIC, No.30, 1986, pp.14-18.

MYERSON, Jeremy, BEWARE WET PAINT, London, Paidon Press Ltd., 1996.

POYNOR, Rick, *INeville Brody,* EYE, Vol.2, No.6, 1992, pp.8-16.

POYNOR, Rick, *Information Sculpture,* EYE, vol. 4, No.11, 1994, pp.26-36.

RAVIELLI, Anthony, ADVENTURE WITH SHAPES , London,

Phoenix House, 1967.

REA, Peter, *To Be Clearly Read: Is This The First Consideration For Typographic?,* TYPOGRAPHIC, No.43, 1992, pp.17-26.

REES, Eirk, *The Doodle Business,* CREATIVE REVIEW, vol. 7, No.7, 1987, pp.24-25.

SPENCER, Mafalda, *Graphic Designers or Typographers,* TYPOGRAPHIC, No.28, 1985, pp.12-14.

STIFF, Paul, *Stop Sitting Around Start ..,* EYE, vol. 3, No.11, 1993, pp.4-5.

STIFF, Paul,*The Dictonary of Visual Language,* EYE, vol. 3, No.11, 1993, pp.8-9.

TOPALAIN, Alan, *'Corporate Identity' and Visual Identification,* BASELINE, No.5, 1984, pp.9-10.

VANDERLANDS, Rudy, *Phil Baines,* EMIGRE, No.18, 1991, pp.1-4.

WALTON, Roger, THE ART OF TYPOGRAPHY FROM DIGITAL

TO DYELINE, New York, Hearst Books Ltd., 1993.

WATERS, Sheila, *Foundations of Calligraphy,* LETTER ARTS REVIEW, No.3,vol. 12, 1995, pp.44-54.

WEST, Suzanne, WORKING WITH STYLE , New York, Watson-Guptil Publications, 1990.

WILKINS, Bridget, *Micheal Harvey,* TYPOGRAPHIC, No.41, 1990, pp.14-16.

WILKINS, Bridget, *INo More Heroes,* EYE, vol. 2, No.6, 1992, pp.4-7.

WRIGHT, Edward, *Conversation, Handwriting and The Poster,* TYPOGRAPHIC, No.37, 1988-89, pp.19-20.