

CREATE IMPACT

with TYPE, IMAGE & COLOR

CREATING THE VISUAL EXPERIENCE
STORYLINE PROVIDED BY EMILY PRODUCTIONS
STYLING BY JESSICA HARRIS
HAIR BY JESSICA HARRIS
MAKEUP BY JESSICA HARRIS
SCENARIOS BY JESSICA HARRIS
COSTUME DESIGNER JESSICA HARRIS
COSTUME DESIGNER JESSICA HARRIS

www.requestforadriam.com



STORYLINE PROVIDED BY EMILY PRODUCTIONS
STYLING BY JESSICA HARRIS
HAIR BY JESSICA HARRIS
MAKEUP BY JESSICA HARRIS
SCENARIOS BY JESSICA HARRIS
COSTUME DESIGNER JESSICA HARRIS
COSTUME DESIGNER JESSICA HARRIS



THANKS

There are many people and organizations who have helped us during the writing of this book and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their support, interest, and assistance. We have particularly appreciated the patience and encouragement from RotoVision, The University of Wolverhampton, our families and friends. A big thank you must also go to all the designers who have so kindly submitted work whether or not it has been included within the following pages.

A ROTOVISION BOOK

PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED BY ROTOVISION SA
ROUTE SUISSE 9
CH-1295 MIES
SWITZERLAND

ROTOVISION SA
SALES & EDITORIAL OFFICE
SHERIDAN HOUSE, 112/116A WESTERN ROAD
HOVE BN3 1DD, UK

TEL: +44 (0)1273 72 72 68
FAX: +44 (0)1273 72 72 69

EMAIL: SALES@ROTOVISION.COM
WEB: WWW.ROTOVISION.COM

COPYRIGHT © ROTOVISION SA 2005

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NO PART OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE REPRODUCED, STORED IN A RETRIEVAL SYSTEM, OR TRANSMITTED IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS, ELECTRONIC, MECHANICAL, PHOTOCOPYING, RECORDING OR OTHERWISE, WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT HOLDER.

WHILE EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO CONTACT OWNERS OF COPYRIGHT MATERIAL PRODUCED IN THIS BOOK, WE HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN SUCCESSFUL. IN THE EVENT OF A COPYRIGHT QUERY, PLEASE CONTACT THE PUBLISHER.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN: 2-88046-810-8

ART DIRECTOR LUKE HERRIOTT

DESIGNED BY BRIGHT PINK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY XAVIER YOUNG

REPROGRAPHICS IN SINGAPORE BY PROVISION PTE. LTD.

TEL: +65 6334 7720
FAX: +65 6334 7721

CONTENTS

04/05
INTRODUCTION

06/07
SECTION ONE
TYPE DRIVEN

16/17
EX01
EXERCISE ONE
CUT-AND-PASTE VISUALIZING

36/37
EX02
EXERCISE TWO
PROXIMITY, CONTINUANCE, AND
SIMILARITY

50/51
EX03
EXERCISE THREE
TYPE AND COLOR

64/65
EX04
EXERCISE FOUR
SEQUENCING QUANTITIES OF TEXT

82/83
SECTION TWO
IMAGE DRIVEN

98/99
EX05
EXERCISE FIVE
CROPPING AND CHANGE OF SCALE

126/127
EX06
EXERCISE SIX
HIERARCHY AND MANIPULATION
WITH IMAGERY

150/151
EX07
EXERCISE SEVEN
DIVERSITY WITHIN LAYOUT
USING TEXT AND IMAGE

158
THANKS2

159/160
INDEX



INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been confronted with shelf upon shelf of soap

powders and washing potions and been totally unable to find the one that you want? Every packet, bottle, bag, and box is covered with vivid, colorful graphics vying for your attention and seeking to secure your purchase. This riotous assembly of text, image, and color, with each element appearing to have equal prominence, can be too much to take in at once. When everything is presented in this way, all on one level, whether bright and loud or restrained and quiet, it is difficult to know where to look first, and the design fails to maintain your active interest and concentration.

Over time, most product categories have acquired a distinctive and somewhat synergic appearance, but the soap aisle provides an excellent display of designs that have the same visual emphasis throughout. To create efficient graphic design, individual compositions need to be more sophisticated, to break down information into accessible, appealing levels that engage the audience and ensures its attention and interest. *The Graphic Designer's Guide to Effective Visual Communication: Creating Hierarchies with Type, Image, and Color* looks at the different ways in which designers organize content to reflect varying degrees of importance and relevance, and examines how their results are achieved.

What do we mean when we talk about breaking information down into levels? We mean creating hierarchies by which certain elements are made to appear very evident and others less prominent, with some to be perceived only upon closer examination. This becomes a form of layering information, not physically overlapping elements, although this technique may be used, but a sequencing of different visual ingredients to ensure that the viewer can access each, one by one. Interestingly, it is not necessarily the most important piece of information that is presented in the most distinctive manner, but whatever is considered appropriate as an attention-grabbing device.

The concept of the designer building up layers as if forming a "graphic sandwich" can be helpful in appreciating the process of creating hierarchies. Basic, simply expressed information equates to the bread, while punchy, vital, and intriguing content represents the filling. They complement each other and work as a whole to provide variety, interest, and above all, accessibility. A sandwich of all bread or all filling is unlikely to be enjoyable or satisfying; a mix of differing characteristics will encourage the reader to relish and retain the facts presented in any design.

Creating different levels of information is of paramount importance when you want to "drip feed" the viewer easily digestible amounts. In many instances, designs for such things as Web pages, brochures, and posters are charged with communicating a great deal of information. It is not merely to provide visual interest that these hierarchies are created, but also to ensure that the audience is effectively imbibing as much as possible. Image and text are categorized according to a desired order of significance; each category is given individual visual prominence in order to direct the viewer subconsciously from one to the other. To attract attention is the first aim. The order in which levels are viewed could be considered of less significance, so long as one level is sufficiently attention-grabbing to lead the reader to more detail and, ideally, on to subsequent content. There are many and varied methods of drawing attention, from using large type, bright colors, and dramatic imagery, to highlighting more frivolous or obtuse information, or appearing distinctive or unusual. However, regardless of the designer's skilled efforts, there remains the uncontrollable aspect of the viewers' personal perceptions, experiences, and



preferences. If their favorite color is pink and they adore dogs, a pink dog, however pale or obscure, can still be the most arresting element within a design!

In some instances, levels of information are not included because their content is essential, but rather to introduce ambient subject matter in order to set the scene or create a mood. This means it is included purely to help construct viewers' dispositions, thereby making them more receptive to the real message of a piece. For example, adding a humorous element not only attracts the reader, but also puts them in a happy frame of mind, leaving them more likely to feel open to the data in the remaining composition. Taking another approach, a subtle persuasion might be included; the luxurious use of space suggests to viewers, on a subconscious level, that the content of a layout is more valuable and desirable.

The Graphic Designer's Guide to Effective Visual Communication showcases and discusses acknowledged and interesting examples of visual hierarchies produced by designers from around the world. Section One concentrates on work that is typographically driven while Section Two focuses on pieces that use imagery to control the sequencing of information. In both sections, practical exercises are included to comment on and highlight certain principles. Good design shows a balance between esthetics and function; creating successful visual hierarchies is an important element in satisfying both.



ONE

SECTION ONE

POWER

ELECTRICITY

POWER

ELECTRICITY

POWER

ELECTRICITY

TYPE DRIVEN

Section one examines the fascinating and complex realms of

hierarchies that are typographically expressed. This does not mean that designs do not include imagery, or that images do not play a part in the order in which the content is perceived, simply that the most significant elements are constructed typographically.

Typographic hierarchies are predominantly governed by relationships of texture and tone. Letterforms, words, and lines of type come together to form different tonal values as well as varying characteristics of patterning; depending upon the darkness of tone generated, together with the scale and nature of texture, a viewer is attracted to a greater or lesser degree. Choices of typeface, point size, tint, weight, tracking, line spacing, and general spatial distribution affect the density of the type, and consequently, create differing degrees of light and dark. Similarly, these distinguishing characteristics impact upon the kind of pattern that is made. However, when composing differing varieties of texture and tone, designers should be prepared to make visual judgments. Logically or incrementally based changes can be a good place to start, but will not necessarily result in sufficient, meaningful change or noticeable visual difference.

Position and orientation within a layout have far less significance than density of texture and darkness of tone; key information will still be recognized as having primary importance wherever it is located, providing that it has sufficient intensity. As far as the sequencing of subsequent information is concerned, ever-decreasing tonal values will operate in tandem with Western conventions of reading from left to right and from top to bottom. Designers impose structures and style, but must always recognize the Western viewers' instinctive response to return to the left edge, and to "work their way down" a layout.

It is important to recognize that all typographic tonal and textural qualities are relative, both to each other and to the supplementary text and image on the page. Composition inevitably has a powerful influence; space around type will set it apart and give it more prominence. For example, large, bold, black, sans-serif type is not necessarily more evident or powerful than small, lightweight lettering. If the black type fills an area and bleeds off at the parameters of the page, then the reader is likely to interpret this text as image; position the smaller information in the remaining generous space and the reader's attention will almost certainly be drawn to it. Add the option of reversing type through a black box and the smaller, lighter copy takes on an even greater significance and impact. Imagery, in close association with type, can also make it possible to mute the impact of bold, large, black copy. When letterforms overlap imagery of a similar tone, or intertwine with images, they become less like parts of words, and more significant as shapes within the picture content.

THE BIG HOUSE IS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL



In considering the role of type as a regulator and controller of hierarchies, it is necessary to keep in mind that letterforms make words and words have meanings. Scale, tone, and texture are always going to be relevant, but the actual words that are used also have influence. For example, highly topical subject matter, challenging language, and shocking statements are more likely to attract attention, even when represented with little dynamism. These comments apply to situations such as subheadings and main headings, but also to words and phrases that can jump into the focus of the reader from within paragraphs. Looking at the example shown, it is likely that the meanings of the highlighted words, as well as the emboldening, add to their salience.

Choices of typeface can also influence the ordering of typographic information. For example, certain families are associated with expected contexts and levels of priority. A word generated in bold, sans-serif type, all caps, may well create a strong texture and tone, but it can also have connotations of warning signs, severity, and importance, and therefore manifest more significance within a layout. Conversely, a complex or decorative typeface creating a very similar texture and tone on the page might well attract the reader initially, but because the text is difficult to read, an audience is likely to quickly move on to more accessible words. Some typefaces encompass more subjective interpretations, having personal associations or familiarity, and this too can impact upon progression, whether this be to attract or deter.

The inclusion of color in a layout brings another dimension, another modifier, to the ordering of visual data: luminosity and vibrancy are enticing; softer, paler colors appear to be knocked back; certain colors have connotations that provide meaningful relevance; small amounts of color act as highlighters. However, within the numerous roles that color

CLIENT	DESIGN	TYPOGRAPHY	ART DIRECTION
IDENTIKAL	ADAM AND NICK HAYES	ADAM AND NICK HAYES	ADAM AND NICK HAYES

can play in terms of hierarchy, one particular characteristic should not be overlooked, and that is the tonal value. Once again, it is not merely the hue that needs to be selected appropriately, but also the tone. Viewing colored typographic relationships in grayscale gives an excellent indication of prominence and priority. If color lasers function correctly when viewed in grayscale, they will certainly be equally strong in color.

As with all principles of design, those presented here serve merely as general rules and guidelines; there are no definitive dos and don'ts. The following pages in this section include examples and exercises that demonstrate some of the intricacies, fine balances, and anomalies that designers face when creating visual hierarchies.

CLIENT
LO RECORDINGS

DESIGN
KJELL EKHORN
JON FORSS

TYPOGRAPHY
KJELL EKHORN
JON FORSS

ART DIRECTION
KJELL EKHORN
JON FORSS



NON-FORMAT
RED SNAPPER CD COVER

Non-Format's design for this CD cover uses type only, generated in a manner more usually seen on clothing labels. The reader's attention is instantly drawn to the white letterforms—delicately constructed from hundreds of strands of fine thread—which are intriguing, not only because of the bright colors in the piece, but also because of their scale, contemporary approach, and tactile character. The viewer is given a glimpse of what is conventionally recognized as the reverse of a label.



CLIENT	DESIGN	ART DIRECTION
YEAR OF THE ARTIST	DOM RABAN	DOM RABAN
ARTIST	PAT WALKER	

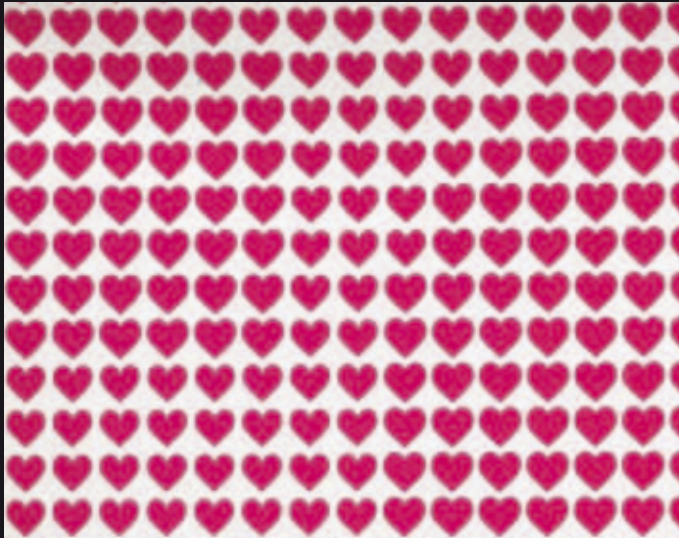
Eg.G

YEAR OF THE ARTIST BROCHURE

This spread from a brochure produced for Year of The Artist functions in an

esthetic capacity, displaying allover abstract imagery in the background while the minimal text, seen first, is displayed prominently, demanding more involvement of the viewer, in order for them to understand the complex sequencing that is at its heart. And how does the sequence function? “1, 4, 12, 52, 365, 4,170, 8,760, 525,600 and 31,536,000—representing 1 year, 4 seasons, 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 4,170 beverages (average number of hot drinks we each consume in a year), 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes, and 31,536,000 seconds,” explains Dom Raban, Creative Director of Eg.G.





RADFORD WALLIS
RADFORD WALLIS VALENTINE MAILER

This striking mailer, sent out by Radford Wallis on Valentine's Day, uses

"30,000 little hearts," says Stuart Radford. When viewed close to, the reader sees nothing but a mass of heart-shaped dingbats. However, if you move a short distance away the hidden message "Radford Wallis Design XXX" becomes evident. "All the hearts that form the letters have a 0.03pt keyline around them," says Radford.

CLIENT

RADFORD WALLIS

DESIGN

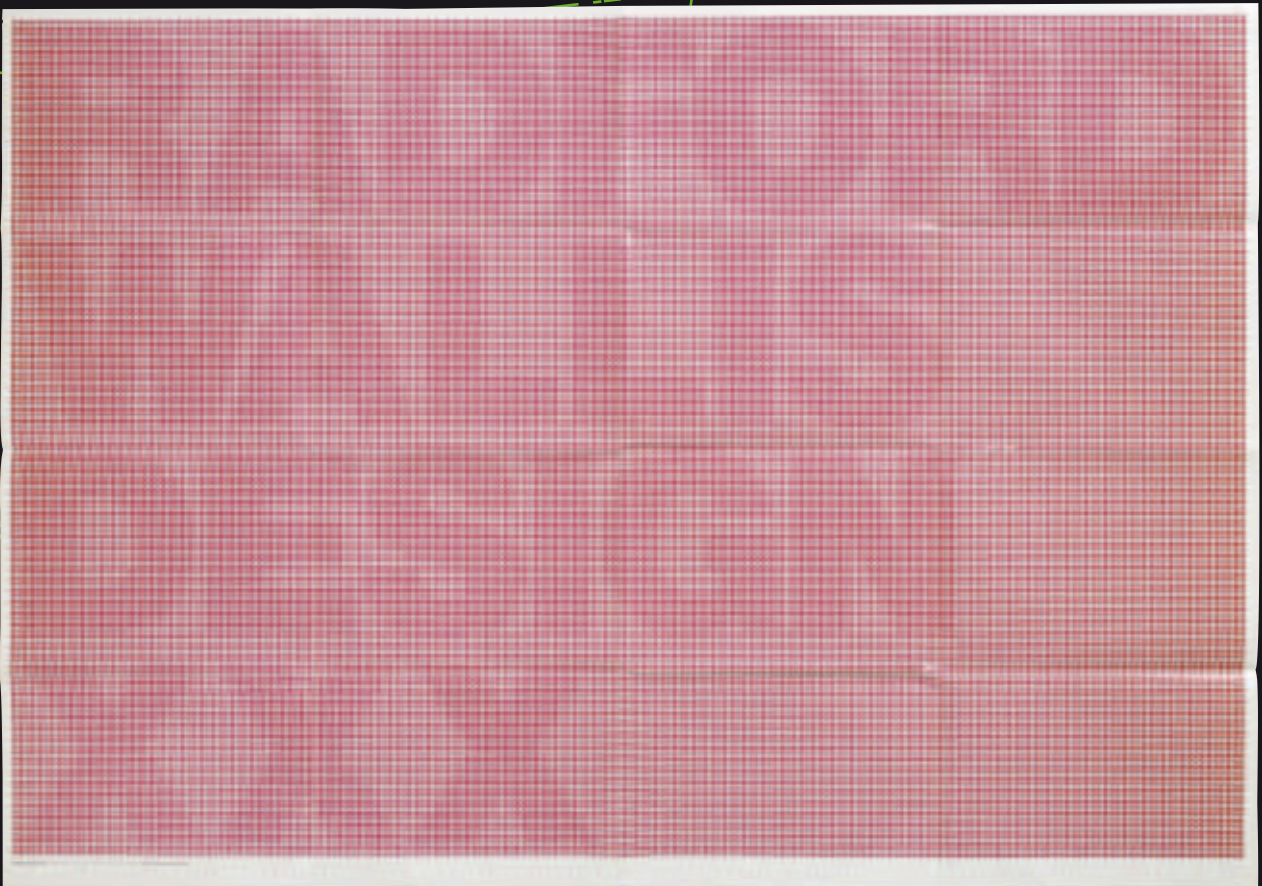
STUART RADFORD

TYPOGRAPHY

STUART RADFORD

ART DIRECTION

STUART RADFORD
ANDREW WALLIS





NON-FORMAT

THE STATE OF SONG
MAGAZINE SPREAD

This striking piece of all cap, sans-serif type really demands to be read first.

Not only does its weight, scale, and color draw the reader in, but its central positioning, its placement on top of fine black illustration, and its white background add to the density of letterforms and prominence on the page. After taking in this title, the next level to be seen is that of the illustration, the delicate detail of which gradually appears—more and more song birds become noticeable. The smaller, lighter paragraph of text is the third and final level to be seen.



CLIENT

THE WIRE
MAGAZINE

DESIGN

KJELL EKHORN
JON FORSS

TYPOGRAPHY

KJELL EKHORN
JON FORSS

ART DIRECTION

KJELL EKHORN
JON FORSS

ILLUSTRATION

KJELL EKHORN
JON FORSS



SPIN

HAUNCH OF VENISON GALLERY
PUBLICITY AND IDENTITY

This purely typographic ad for the Haunch of Venison show makes interesting use of color. Text, in light cyan, overprints areas of the gallery namestyle. So what is seen first? If the reader were sitting in the optician's chair, should it not be the "black" copy on red?

CLIENT
HAUNCH OF
VENISON GALLERY

DESIGN
TONY BROOK
JOE BURRIN
TOM CRABTREE
HUGH MILLER
DAN POYNER
IAN MCFARLANE

TYPOGRAPHY
TONY BROOK
JOE BURRIN
TOM CRABTREE
HUGH MILLER
DAN POYNER
IAN MCFARLANE

ART DIRECTION
TONY BROOK

CLIENT	DESIGN	TYPOGRAPHY
SMALL CITY ART MUSEUMS COLLECTIVE	GILES WOODWARD KELLY HARTMAN	GILES WOODWARD KELLY HARTMAN

COPYWRITING	ART DIRECTION
DAVID GARNEAU	GILES WOODWARD KELLY HARTMAN



FISHTEN

BIENNIAL SCAM
(SMALL CITY ART MUSEUMS) 2003–4
EXHIBITION CATALOG

This catalog was created by Fishten to showcase the work of 10 artists. The budget was limited, but all

work had to be featured in full color, extensive copy had to be accommodated, and details concerning a six-venue tour included. To overcome these challenges, Woodward and Hartman have devised a clever, full-color wraparound cover that doubles as a poster. This shows the work of all the artists, giving equal emphasis and weight to each.

The catalog itself makes dramatic and economic use of a single color. The opening spread has an impactful, solid red background that throws forward the white, slab-serif typography. Particular attention is drawn to the "Biennial Scam" heading that is positioned, on a white bar, near the bottom of the page. Contrasting with this, the next spread adopts the same unusual grid, but utilizes a white background with red text. Interestingly, although images are present within this second spread, their impact, due to halftone reproduction in single color, is very subdued.

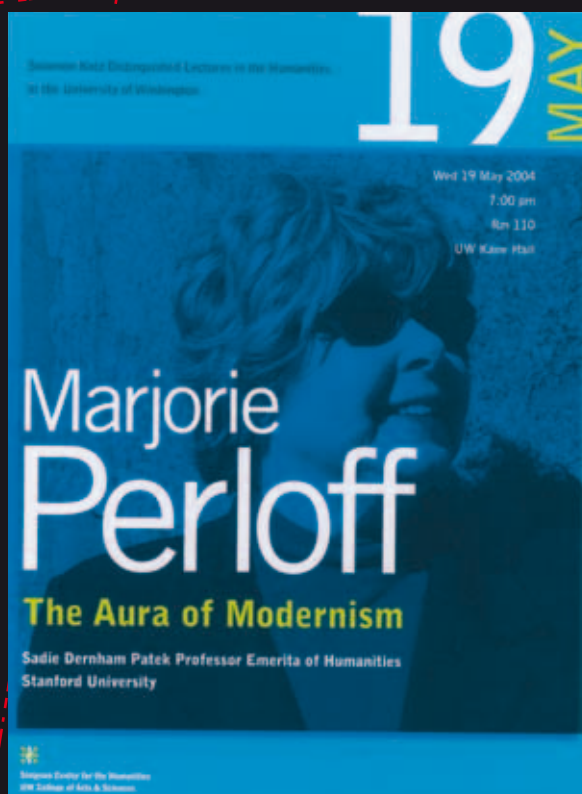
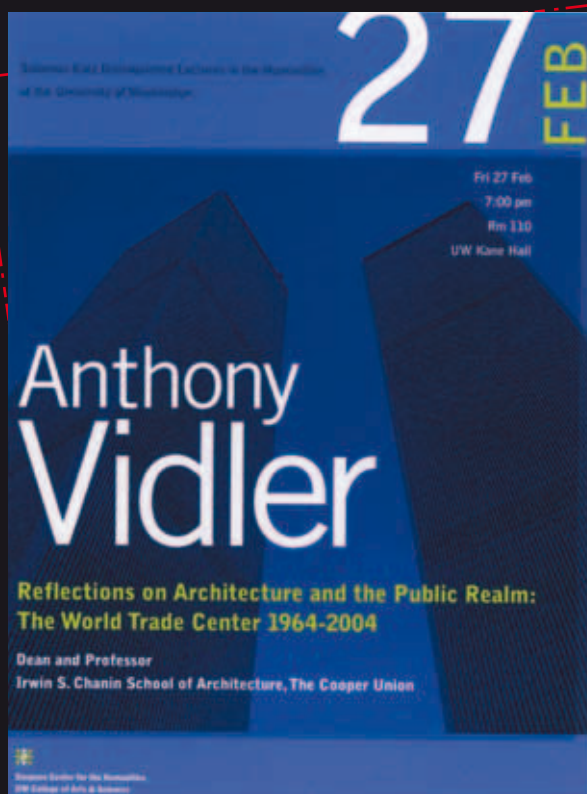




STUDIO VERTEX
KATZ PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES 2004
POSTCARDS AND POSTERS

Studio Vertex have again produced a series of publicity cards for the

Katz Lecture Series. This set of three postcards and accompanying posters make distinctive use of bright color, type as image, and muted photography. Commenting upon the hierarchical aims of his designs, Lindsay states that "in this series, the client wanted to focus foremost on the speaker, title of the lecture, and credentials, followed by date, time, place, and then the Katz and Simpson Centre sponsorship." The objectives have been clearly achieved by changing the scale and color of type, placing the speakers' names in dominant positions, and adding muted photography in a recessive background layer. Michael continues, "The addition of photography creates more visual interest and brings forward the name of the speaker."



CLIENT
WALTER CHAPIN
SIMPSON CENTRE
FOR HUMANITIES

DESIGN
MICHAEL LINDSAY

TYPOGRAPHY
KAREN CHENG

COPYWRITING
LESLIE JACKSON

PHOTOGRAPHY
LINDSAY,
MARIANSKY,
PERLOFF

EX01

EXERCISE ONE

CUT-AND-PASTE VISUALIZING

It can be extremely
difficult to achieve
sufficient variety and

visual interest when creating different levels of information at the “thumbnail” stage of design. If sufficient accuracy and detail are to be captured, the mark-making process of pens and pencils is limited and very time-consuming. An interesting and unexpected alternative or addition to this initial stage involves cutting and pasting “found” samples of type and image into groupings and compositions, treating type and image in a comparatively abstract manner, and viewing the collaged elements for their qualities of texture, tone, and color rather than for making any literal sense.

In order to push the possible design options into less common and less predictable relationships, it is essential to collect a palette of samples, with a wide breadth of textures and tones, from a good selection of publications. Focus on relationships within groupings at first, and leave decisions concerning framing and ultimate scale until later. Ideally, there should be a correlation between the sampled text and image and the information that is to be included in a design; this creates realistic starting points for translating the thumbnails into the final design. It is important to appreciate that cut-and-paste samplings are likely to generate a wider selection of typefaces than will combine well in the final design. You must be prepared to rationalize; use the visualized material as an indication of whether to use a serif as opposed to a sans-serif font, and as a guide to leading, scale, color, tone, and positioning.

There is no doubt that this process of visualizing is particularly helpful in creating at least three levels of information. It will also assist you in developing variety within each level. Because of the assortment of source materials, even after rationalization, final solutions are likely to retain greater diversity and vitality.

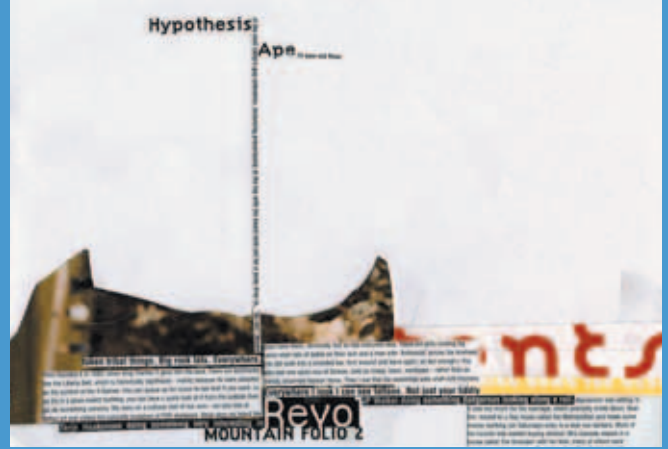


FIG. 1



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4

FIG. 5



FIG. 6



This exciting selection of cut-and-paste visualizing evidences a number of design decisions that may not have been easy to make using pen or pencil alone, or, for that matter, by designing straight onto screen.



FIG. 7

Looking at Fig. 7, combinations of cropped letterforms, lines, colored type, and image have been brought together around a striking angled axis to establish a dynamic and unusual layout. Clearly, the image and “New Serie” catch the viewer’s eye first, with “LA prison psychologist ...” and the three lines of red, all caps, being seen next. The viewer is then left to access the remaining information. In each level there is variety and unexpected detailing that has been enabled by this hands-on process.

GRANT MEEK

LAYOUT CONCEPTS

DESIGN
GRANT MEEK

TYPOGRAPHY
GRANT MEEK



SAS

BT BRAND BOOK

SAS have produced this document to explain the shift in BT's brand values. The

blue section allocates a spread for each value, using large, bold type to make sure the main text is seen first, and remembered. Secondly, illustrated inserts, reminiscent of Post-it notes, are used to enforce each value. When turned over, these yellow sections allow the reader access to the text which is the third level in the hierarchy.

The final section in this design brings in real-life photography and the use of large areas of solid color. In the example shown, the reader cannot help but be drawn to the large area of bright red, and of course, the cute picture of the duck!

CLIENT	DESIGN	TYPOGRAPHY	COPYWRITING
BT (BRITISH TELECOMMUNICATIONS)	GILMAR WENDT	GILMAR WENDT	PETE BROWN

ART DIRECTION	ILLUSTRATION	PHOTOGRAPHY
GILMAR WENDT	CHERRY GODDARD	LEE MAWDISLEY BT STOCK IMAGERY

CLIENT	DESIGN	TYPOGRAPHY	ART DIRECTION
JOHNSON BANKS	MICHAEL JOHNSON	MICHAEL JOHNSON	MICHAEL JOHNSON



JOHNSON BANKS
ADVERTISING DESIGN POSTER

This poster, designed by Michael Johnson of johnson banks to promote his talk There's Not Much Difference Between Advertising

and Design, makes use of bright, contrasting colors, and bold, closely spaced, condensed type. The overlapping areas of the cyan and magenta letters are white, and stand out prominently from the black background. Using the principle of similarity, the reader is able to place all cyan letters together, creating and reading the word "Design." Following a similar method, they can then make out the word "Advertising" from the mix of magenta and cyan letters. Smaller, all cap letterforms are seen next, centered at the bottom of the poster, and these explain the theme of the talk.

BLUE RIVER DESIGN LTD

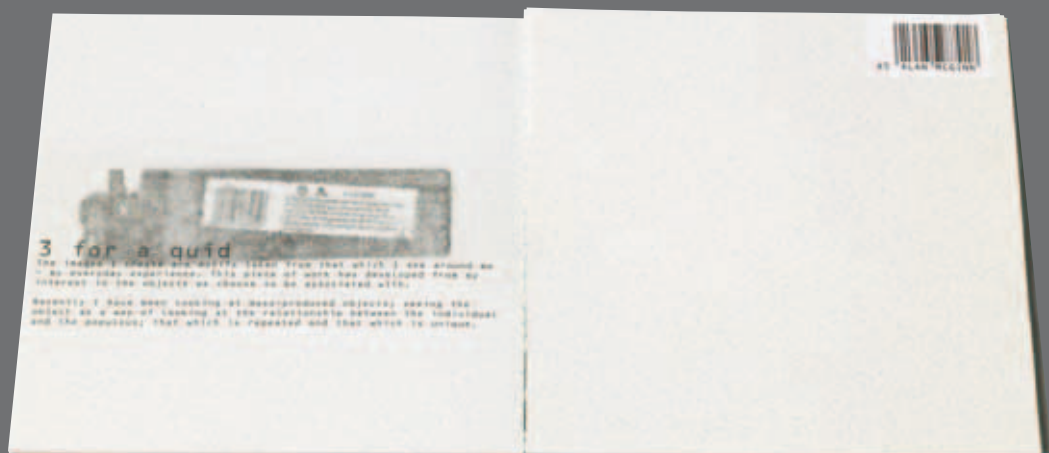
WALL ARTISTS CATALOG

Displaying the works of a number of artists, *Wall* uses a mix of imagery and type to capture the substance of each individual's

work. In each sampled spread, Lisa Thundercliffe has carefully crafted supporting text in a manner that is appropriate to the artist's work and interests. For example, on Nina Byrne's spread, type is mirrored, emulating this same feature within her shot of red roses in a white room. On Alan McGinn's page, Thundercliffe has selected a textured background and typewriter-style text to echo his fascination with mass-produced objects.

CLIENT	DESIGN	TYPOGRAPHY	COPYWRITING
WAYGOOD GALLERY STUDIOS	LISA THUNDERCLIFFE	LISA THUNDERCLIFFE	LISA THUNDERCLIFFE

ART DIRECTION	ILLUSTRATION	PHOTOGRAPHY
LISA THUNDERCLIFFE	LISA THUNDERCLIFFE	VARIOUS



CLIENT	DESIGN	TYPOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA GALLERY OF ART	PHILIP FASS	PHILIP FASS

PHILIP FASS
2002 FACULTY EXHIBITION POSTER

In this
exhibition
poster, Philip

Fass has selected the numerals in “2002” as a vehicle to draw in the viewer. Although they do not present the most important information, their bold, large, pink type bleeds off at both edges of the layout to create an eye-catching, attention-grabbing centerpiece. Contrasting background imagery is grayscale and divided into three sections of varying scale; much smaller black-and-white type sits within horizontal and vertical bands. “The structure is a vertical triptych,” says Fass, “and the rest of the typography forms a cruciform roughly in the middle of the composition. The design is meant to stop an individual drawn in by its boldness.” Initially there appear to be only two distinct levels, but the viewer moves from pink type to the black and white level—horizontal text is read first, then vertical text—and finally to the third level, the fairly abstract imagery that fills the remainder of the space.

