

"Before using a beautiful word, one must give it the right context."

— Joseph Joubert (1754- 1824)

**LECTURE NOTES,
HANDOUTS & REFERENCES**

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TYPOGRAPHY AS COMMUNICATION

References

Using Type

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Magazines

- U&lc, International Typeface Corporation. (U&lc= Upper and Lower Case)

Typography

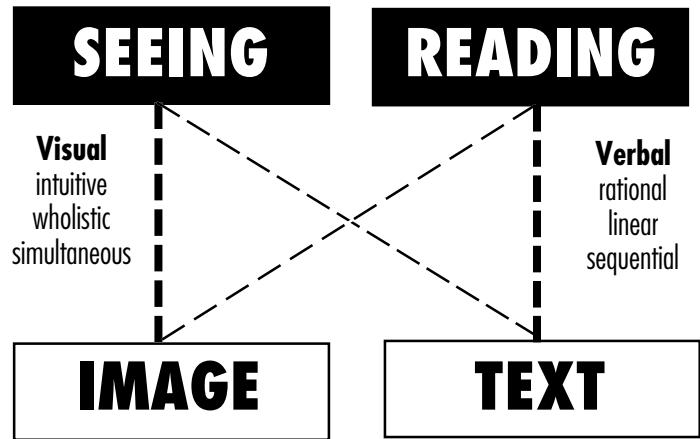
- has the potential to create personality for a message
- has the power to evoke responses not capable with just words
- makes the readers experience far more visual, therefor extending the meaning of word
- is an expressive art form
- affects readability and legibility
- is visual poetry
 - to be seen
 - to be felt
 - to communicate

The role of the traditional typographer has changed. Desktop publishing has placed the production of low-end print communications in the hands of untrained pseudo-designers. The simplest flyer is typeset with thousands of fonts available, raising the expectations of our audiences. (The Fall 1996 issue of U&lc estimated that between 50,000 and 60,000 typefaces exist) There is a new demand for highly personal, interpretive, design expression.

Words and Type

Words = read and interpreted

Type = seen, read, and interpreted



*Chart concept by Katherine McCoy
Design Quarterly 148*

The written word is generally seen before it is read. Typographical layout sets the mood before a single word enters consciousness. Type not only sets the stage for the words message, but becomes the message. Type can explain an idea and visually become the idea. Designers use typography not only to inform, but to express.

Content & Form

Content

"What to Say" = the message

Form

"How to Say it"

1. Typeface selection

A type face can express power, sensitivity, anger . . .

A type face can be organic, industrial, rustic, corporate, masculine . . .

2. Layout

A layout can be calm, cluttered, orderly, spontaneous, fun, serious . . .

Use type to provide visual organization of the information presented with the personality desired.

Designer as Typographer as Interpreter

The designer is not just the obedient deliverer of a message but

– an interpreter where interpretation is central to the idea of communication

– a visual communicator

to make information more attractive, more noticed, more read

to enhance the tone of a message

to make the message more legible, more readable

to improve comprehension, retention

to achieve emphasis of key points in a message

– a problem solver

employing the appropriate typeface and weaving it into a design well suited for the message, media, and audience

Readability & Legibility

Readability refers to type as it is set, and deals with typeface selection, size, spacing, column measure, leading and other page layout characteristics. Legibility is an attribute of the type and refers to the ease with which we can recognize a character or distinguish it from another. Whole books are devoted to the study of readability and legibility. It is the role of the typographer is to understand characteristics that affect readability, especially negatively.

Consider your Audience

1. Who is the intended reader of your message? What is their age, socio-economic background, educational level?
2. What are they reading? What is the content and difficulty of the material?
3. How much are they reading? Is it long, short, brief, extensive?
4. When are they reading? On the train, at work, during leisure time?
5. Why are they reading? Pleasure, business?

Typography Needs to be Felt

This editorial appeared in the June 1982 issue of Upper and Lower Case, the International Journal of Typographics, published by the International Typeface Corporation.

With all the current emphasis on technologies, one needs to be constantly reminded that typography is an essential and powerful force for increasing communication effectiveness. That is its essential role. Improved technologies are only means towards that end.

In this regard a provocative and very quotable editorial appeared in the March/April issue in 1981 of Typografische Monatsblätter, the Swiss journal of Typography. In it, Helmut Schmidt includes the following observations.

The message needs interpretation ...not interpretation as a masquerade of typefaces but interpretation as an evaluation of content. Interpretation in the sense of discovering the message which has been broken up into essential, minor and insignificant thoughts. Interpretation not only in advertising but also in literature, and ideally a close collaboration between form and content.

To bawl and to whisper, quickly and slowly, all these are expressions of verbal communication. Reading matter will also have to bawl and whisper, will have to run and to stroll, will have to emerge quietly and lovingly as esthetic experiences.

Typography lives its own esthetic life next to the functional typography, the typography of messages. We read words and sentences but are not aware of the formal qualities of typefaces as long as letters are lined up in order to convey a message.

Typography need not only be visible and legible. Typography needs to be audible. Typography needs to be felt. Typography needs to be experienced. Typography today does not mean to place, typography today means to portray.

At its best, typography today is a wonderful blend of art and technology. And that is nothing new. It was that way when ideograms were cut in tablets, or letters were chiseled in stone or penned on papyrus or scrolls. We just need to remember that long before today's technologies were just ideas, and long after they are obsolete, the artist will have to manipulate some technology so that typography will be seen, and read, and understood, and, to be truly effective, be felt.

Advice

- Don't depend on ready made layouts, but express the spirit, life and sensibility of the message
- Use caution with trendiness
- Contrast is perhaps the most important design element
- Express. The key to expression in any visual is the rendering of dynamic forces in fixed images
- Be your own critic. Design for your audience and yourself
- Remember that white space is an active participant in the total design
- Remember that establishing a layout grid helps bring order, without stifling the job visually
- Experiment. This is how we learn.
- Use a spell checker

History and Typography

Classical Era	1450 - 1800
Industrial Revolution	19th century
Modernism	20th century
Postmodernism	1960 -

Commercial Typography History

1435	Johannes Guttenburg	Removable type and the printing press
1886	Ottmar Mergenthaler	Linotype machine
1950	Photo typesetting	Photo compositing of letterforms
1984	Macintosh Computer	Desktop Publishing

**Fine Artists who use text as a major
element in their Work**

Jenny Holzer
Barbara Kruger
Carrie Mae Weems
Edgar Heap of Birds

**ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE
ALIENATION PRODUCES ECCENTRICS OR REVOLUTIONARIES
AN ELITE IS INEVITABLE
ANGER OR HATE CAN BE A USEFUL MOTIVATING FORCE
ANY SURPLUS IS IMMORAL
DISGUST IS THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO MOST SITUATIONS
EVERYONE'S WORK IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT
EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE DESERVE SPECIAL CONCESSIONS
FREEDOM IS A LUXURY NOT A NECESSITY
GOVERNMENT IS A BURDEN ON THE PEOPLE
HUMANISM IS OBSOLETE
HUMOR IS A RELEASE
INHERITANCE MUST BE ABOLISHED
KILLING IS UNAVOIDABLE BUT NOT SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF
LABOR IS A LIFE DESTROYING ACTIVITY
MONEY CREATES TASTE
MORALS ARE FOR LITTLE PEOPLE
MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT FIT TO RULE THEMSELVES
MOSTLY YOU SHOULD MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS
MUCH WAS DECIDED BEFORE YOU WERE BORN
MURDER HAS ITS SEXUAL SIDE
PAIN CAN BE A VERY POSITIVE THING
PEOPLE ARE NUTS IF THEY THINK THEY HAVE CONTROL OVER THEIR LIVES
PEOPLE WHO DON'T WORK WITH THEIR HANDS ARE PARASITES
PEOPLE WON'T BEHAVE IF THEY HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE
PRIVATE PROPERTY CREATED CRIME
ROMANTIC LOVE WAS INVENTED TO MANIPULATE WOMEN
SELFISHNESS IS THE MOST BASIC MOTIVATION
SEX DIFFERENCES ARE HERE TO STAY
STARVATION IS NATURE'S WAY
STUPID PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BREED
TECHNOLOGY WILL MAKE OR BREAK US
THE FAMILY IS LIVING ON BORROWED TIME
THE LAND BELONGS TO NO ONE
TIMIDITY IS LAUGHABLE
TORTURE IS BARBARIC
YOU ARE GUILTLSS IN YOUR DREAMS
YOU MUST REMEMBER YOU HAVE FREEDOM OF CHOICE**

Jenny Holzer, "Truisms" 1977

**Who is beyond the law
Who is bought and sold
Who is free to choose
Who does time
Who follows order
Who prays loudest
Who dies first
Who laughs last**

Barbara Kruger

Type Designers

Colin Brignall
Jovica Veljovic
Robert Slimback
Timothy Donaldson
Zuzana Lico
Eric Spiekermann
Tobias Frere-Jones
David Berlow
Mathew Carter
Gerard Unger
Mark Jamra
Adrian Frutiger
Jose Meddoza y Almeida
Herman Zapf
Gudrun Zapf von Hesse
Aldo Novarese
Carol Twombly
Sumner Stone
Just van Rossum
Erik van Blokland
Ed Benquiat
Kris Holmes
Jeffery Keedy

Contemporary Type Designers

Suzanna Licko
Jeff Keedy
Erik van Blokland
Just van Rossum
Neville Brody
Rudy Vanderlands
Sumner Stone