

**LN ELEN
AVETISYAN**

PROCESS BOOKS

OFF THE GRID

Process
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FINAL LAYOUT &
FINAL LAYOUT

DESIGN AS ART

BY

BRUNO MUNARI

&

WAITING FOR PERMISSION

BY

MICHAEL BIERUT

Design as Art

DESIGN AS ART

Today it has become necessary to demolish the myth of the 'star' artist who only produces masterpieces for a small group of ultra-intelligent people. It must be understood that as long as art stands aside from the problems of life it will only interest a very few people. Culture today is becoming a mass affair, and the artist must step down from his pedestal and be prepared to make a sign for a butcher's shop (if he knows how to do it). The artist must cast off the last rags of romanticism and become active as a man among men, well up in present-day techniques, materials and working methods. Without losing his innate aesthetic sense he must be able to respond with humility and competence to the demands his neighbours may make of him.

The designer of today re-establishes the long-lost contact between art and the public, between living people and art as a living thing. Instead of pictures for the drawing-room, electric gadgets for the kitchen. There should be no such thing as art divorced from life, with beautiful things to look at and hideous things to use. If what we use every day is made with art, and not thrown together by chance or caprice, then we shall have nothing to hide.

Anyone working in the field of design has a hard task ahead of him: to clear his neighbour's mind of all preconceived notions of art and artists, notions picked up at schools where they condition you to think one way for the whole of your life, without stopping to think that life changes – and today more rapidly than ever. It is therefore up to us designers to make known our working methods in clear and simple terms, the methods we think are the truest, the most up-to-date, the most likely to resolve our common aesthetic problems. Anyone who uses a properly designed object feels the presence of an artist who has worked for him, bettering his living conditions and encouraging him to develop his taste and sense of beauty.

When we give a place of honour in the drawing-room to an ancient Etruscan vase which we consider beautiful, well proportioned and made with precision and economy, we must also remember that the vase once had an extremely common use. Most probably it was used for cooking-oil. It was made by a designer of those times, when art and life went hand in hand and there was no such thing as a work of art to look at and just any old thing to use.

I have therefore very gladly accepted the proposal that I should bring together in a volume the articles I originally published in the Milanese paper *Il Giorno*. To these I have added other texts, as well as a lot of illustrations which it was not possible to publish in the limited space of a daily paper. I have also made a few essential changes for the English edition.

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I hope that other designers will make similar efforts to spread knowledge of our work, for our methods are daily asserting themselves as the fittest way of gaining the confidence of men at large, and of giving a meaning to our present way of life.

Design came into being in 1919, when Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus at Weimar. Part of the prospectus of this school reads:

'We know that only the technical means of artistic achievement can be taught, not art itself. The function of art has in the past been given a formal importance which has severed it from our daily life; but art is always present when a people lives sincerely and healthily.

'Our job is therefore to invent a new system of education that may lead – by way of a new kind of specialized teaching of science and technology – to a complete knowledge of human needs and a universal awareness of them.

'Thus our task is to make a new kind of artist, a creator capable of understanding every kind of need: not because he is a prodigy, but because he knows how to approach human needs according to a precise method. We wish to make him conscious of his creative power, not scared of new facts, and independent of formulas in his own work.'

From that time on we have watched an ever more rapid succession of new styles in the world of art: abstract art, Dada, Cubism, Surrealism, Neo-Abstract art, Neo-Dada, pop and op. Each one gobblets up its predecessor and we start right back at the beginning again.

What Gropius wrote is still valid. This first school of design did tend to make a new kind of artist, an artist useful to society because he helps society to recover its balance, and not to lurch between a false world to live one's material life in and an ideal world to take moral refuge in.

When the objects we use every day and the surroundings we live in have become in themselves a work of art, then we shall be able to say that we have achieved a balanced life.

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DESIGNERS AND STYLISTS

What is a Designer?

He is a planner with an aesthetic sense. Certain industrial products depend in large measure on him for their success. Nearly always the shape of a thing, be it a typewriter, a pair of binoculars, an armchair, a ventilator, a saucepan or a refrigerator, will have an important effect on sales: the better designed it is, the more it will sell.

The term 'designer' was first used in this sense in America. It does not refer to an industrial designer, who designs machines or mechanical parts, workshops or other specialized buildings. He is in fact a design engineer, and if he has a motor-scooter on the drawing-board he does not give a great deal of importance to the aesthetic side of things, or at the most he applies a personal idea of what a motor-scooter ought to look like. I once asked an engineer who had designed a motor-scooter why he had chosen a particular colour, and he said: because it was the cheapest. The industrial designer therefore thinks of the aesthetic side of the job as simply a matter of providing a finish, and although this may be most scrupulously done he avoids aesthetic problems that are bound up with contemporary culture because such things are not considered useful. An engineer must never be caught writing poetry. The designer works differently. He gives the right weight to each part of the project in hand, and he knows that the ultimate form of the object is psychologically vital when the potential buyer is making up his mind. He therefore tries to give it a form as appropriate as possible to its function, a form that one might say arises spontaneously from the function, from the mechanical part (when there is one), from the most appropriate material, from the most up-to-date production techniques, from a calculation of costs, and from other psychological and aesthetic factors.

In the early days of rationalism it used to be said that an object was beautiful in so far as it was functional, and only the most practical functions were taken into account. Various kinds of tool were used as evidence for this argument, such as surgical instruments. Today we do not think in terms of beauty but of formal coherence, and even the 'decorative' function of the object is thought of as a psychological element. For beauty in the abstract may be defined as what is called style, with the consequent need to force everything into a given style because it is new. Thus in the recent past we have had the aerodynamic style, which has been applied not only to aeroplanes and cars but to electric irons, perambulators and armchairs. On one occasion I even saw an aerodynamic hearse, which is about as far as the aerodynamic style can go (speeding the departing guest?).

We have therefore discarded beauty in the abstract sense, as something stuck on to the technical part of a thing, like a stylish car body or a decoration tastefully chosen from the work of some great artist. Instead we have formal coherence, rather as we see it in nature. A leaf has the form it has because it belongs to a certain tree and fulfils a certain function; its structure is determined by the veins which carry the sap, and the skeleton that supports it might have been worked out by mathematics. Even so, there are many kinds of leaf, and the leaves of any single tree differ slightly among themselves. But if we saw a fig-leaf on a weeping-willow we would have the feeling that all was not well. It would lack coherence. A leaf is beautiful not because it is stylish but because it is natural, created in its exact form by its exact function. A designer tries to make an object as naturally as a tree puts forth a leaf. He does not smother his object with his own personal taste but tries to be objective. He helps the object, if I may so put it, to make itself by its own proper means, so that a ventilator comes to have just the shape of a ventilator, a fiasco for wine has the shape that blown glass gives it, as a cat is inevitably covered with cat-fur. Each object takes on its own form. But of course this will not be fixed and final because techniques change, new materials are discovered, and with every innovation the problem arises again and the form of the object may change.

At one time people thought in terms of fine art and commercial art, pure and applied art. So we used to have sewing-machines built by engineers and then decorated by an artist in gold and mother-of-pearl. Now we no longer have this distinction between fine and not-fine, pure and applied. The definition of art that has caused so much confusion in recent times, and allowed so many fast ones to be pulled, is now losing its prestige. Art is once more becoming a trade, as it was in ancient times when the artist was summoned by society to make certain works of visual communication (called frescoes) to inform the public of a certain religious event. Today the designer (in this case the graphic designer) is called upon to make a communication (called a poster) to inform the public of some new development in a certain field. And why is it the designer who is called upon? Why is the artist not torn from his easel? Because the designer knows about printing, about the techniques used, and he uses forms and colours according to their psychological functions. He does not just make an artistic sketch and leave it up to the printer to reproduce it as best he may. He thinks from the start in terms of printing techniques, and it is with these that he makes his poster.

The designer is therefore the artist of today, not because he is a genius but because he works in such a way as to re-establish contact between art and the public, because he has the humility and ability to respond to whatever demand is made of him by the society in which he lives, because he knows his job, and the ways and means of solving each problem of design. And finally because he responds to the human needs of his time, and helps

The designer
now is the
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people to solve certain problems without stylistic preconceptions or false notions of artistic dignity derived from the schism of the arts.

'The form follows the function.' (Jean-Baptiste Lamarck)

The designer works in a vast sector of human activity: there is visual design, industrial design, graphic design and research design.

Visual design is concerned with images whose function is to communicate and inform visually: signs, symbols, the meaning of forms and colours and the relations between these.

Industrial design is concerned with functional objects, designed according to economic facts and the study of techniques and materials.

Graphic design works in the world of the Press, of books, of printed advertisements, and everywhere the printed word appears, whether on a sheet of paper or a bottle.

Research design is concerned with experiments of both plastic and visual structures in two or more dimensions. It tries out the possibilities of combining two or more dimensions, attempts to clarify images and methods in the technological field, and carries out research into images on film.

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Pure and Applied

Once upon a time there was pure art and applied art (I prefer to use these terms, rather than 'fine' and 'commercial', because 'commercial art' does not really cover enough ground). At all events, forms were born in secret in ivory towers and fathered by divine inspiration, and Artists showed them only to initiates and only in the shape of paintings and pieces of sculpture: for these were the only channels of communication open to the old forms of art.

Around the person of the Artistic Genius there circulated other and lesser geniuses who absorbed the Pure Forms and the Style of the Master and attempted to give these some currency by applying them to objects of everyday use. This led to the making of objects in this style or that style, and even today the question of Style has not been altogether disposed of.

The distinction between pure art, applied art and industrial design is still made in France, a country that at one time was the cradle of living art. What we call design, the French call 'esthétique industrielle', and by this phrase they mean the application to industry of styles invented in the realm of the pure arts.

It therefore comes about that in France they make lamps inspired by abstract forms without bearing in mind that a lamp must give light. They design a Surrealist television set, a Dada table, a piece of 'informal' furniture, forgetting that all objects have their exact uses and well-defined functions, and that they are no longer made by craftsmen modelling a stylish shape in copper according to their whim of the moment but by automatic machines turning out thousands of the things at a time.

What then is this thing called Design if it is neither style nor applied art? It is planning: the planning as objectively as possible of everything that goes to make up the surroundings and atmosphere in which men live today. This atmosphere is created by all the objects produced by industry, from glasses to houses and even cities. It is planning done without preconceived notions of style, attempting only to give each thing its logical structure and proper material, and in consequence its logical form.

So all this talk about sober harmony, beauty and proportions, about the balance between masses and spaces (typical sculpture-talk), about aesthetic perfection (classicism?), about the charm of the materials used and the equilibrium of the forms, all this talk our French friends go in for, is just a lot of old-fashioned claptrap. An object should now be judged by whether it has a form consistent with its use, whether the material fits the construction and the production costs, whether the individual parts are logically fitted together. It is therefore a question of coherence.

Beauty as conceived of in the fine arts, a sense of balance comparable with that of the masterpieces of the past, harmony and all the rest of it, simply

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everyday
"art" rather
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make no more sense in design. If the form of an object turns out to be 'beautiful' it will be thanks to the logic of its construction and to the precision of the solutions found for its various components. It is 'beautiful' because it is just right. An exact project produces a beautiful object, **beautiful** not because it is like a piece of sculpture, even modern sculpture, but because it is only like itself.

If you want to know something else about beauty, what precisely it is, look at a history of art. You will see that every age has had its ideal Venus (or Apollo), and that all these Venuses or Apollos put together and compared out of the context of their periods are **nothing less** than a family of monsters. **A thing is not beautiful because it is beautiful** as the he-frog said to the she-frog. It is beautiful because one likes it.

'The basic teaching error of the academy was that of directing its attention towards genius rather than the average.' (Bauhaus)

Design as Art

A Living Language

'Good language alone will not save mankind. But seeing the things behind the names will help us to understand the structure of the world we live in. Good language will help us to communicate with one another about the realities of our environment, where we now speak darkly, in alien tongues.'

(Stuart Chase, *The Tyranny of Words*)

'... And after whan ye han examined youre conseil, as Ihan said beforne, and knownen wel that ye moun perfome youre emprise, conferme it thane sadly til it be at an ende.' Can one now address the public in the language of the fourteenth century? It is most unlikely that the public would understand.

Just as there are dead languages, it is natural that there should be modes of expression and communication that have gone out of use. It is a well-known fact that to get a message across we can use not only words, but in many cases also images, forms and colours, symbols, signs and signals. Just as there are words which belong to other ages, so there are colours, forms, signs and so on which in our time have come to mean nothing, or would convey a wrong meaning.

What does a blacksmith's sign mean to the children of today? To children in 1900 it meant a lot: it meant excitement. When they saw it they ran to watch the blacksmith hammering the glowing iron on his anvil, heating it every now and then in a furnace that threw off sparks like a firework display, nailing the finished shoe to the horse's hoof. Imagine the pungent stench of the hot iron, and the huge impassive horse tethered to an iron ring set in the blackened wall of that smoky cavern...

Maybe a city child of today doesn't even know what a horseshoe is, and for this reason an object that was a symbol and a sign that evoked many images and meanings is now reduced to the status of a lucky charm.

We can point out similar changes in the colours used for visual communication. Looking into the past we find certain periods dominated by certain colours and forms: periods in which all the colours are earthy and the forms hard, some in which the whole range of colours is put to use, others in which everything is done with three or four colours. And so on down to our own times, when thanks to chemistry, plastic materials and other inventions, the kingdom of colour is governed by total chaos.

Certainly if we now used the colours of the 'art nouveau' period for roads signs, these would fade magnificently into their surroundings. At that time they used some really refined combinations of colour. A faint idea of them can still be had from Robert's talcum powder boxes and the labels on Strega bottles. They used to put pink and yellow side by side, or brown and

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blue, coffee and chocolate, pea-green and violet. Then they would make unexpected leaps from one shade to another, putting red with pale blue (instead of dark) and so on. Can we imagine a 'No Overtaking' sign with a coffee and chocolate car on a violet background? Well, yes. We can imagine it for fun, but we cannot use it for a roadsign in real life.

At some times in the past a certain series of colours, let us say all of dark tone, were indiscriminately adapted to all branches of human activity. The colours used for furnishings did not differ much from those for clothes or carriages. But today different colours have different uses. For roadsigns we use only red, blue and yellow (apart from the green light at traffic lights), and each colour has its well-defined meaning. In advertising we use bright brash colours or very refined ones according to our purpose. In printing we use the dull four-colour system which reduces all colours to a norm, while women's fashions make use of all the colours in rotation.



A double-bend sign in the style of Louis XIV. There have always been dangerous double bends, even in the time of Louis XIV, but then there were no roadsigns. They had heraldic arms instead. As the speed and volume of traffic increases, decoration is proportionally reduced, until it reaches the bare essentials of our present-day signals. **Visual language changes according to the needs of the day.**

In the past, images were nearly all painted, drawn or carved, and they reproduced visible and recognizable reality. Now we can even see the invisible. We have a host of machines exploring for us what we cannot see with the naked eye. We have X-ray photos, the world of the microscope, and the abstract inventions of artists. We have machines that enable us to see music and sounds in the form of luminous waves, machines that show us photo-elasticity in colour by means of polarized light, machines that slow up pictures of motion until we get as it were a blow-up of each instant. Then there are the lights which already form an accepted part of the night-scape,

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fluorescent lights, neon, sodium vapour lights, black light. And we have forms that are beautiful and exact because they are true forms: the forms of aeroplanes and missiles are dictated by the demands of speed, and were inconceivable in the past. These are forms we see every day, the colours and lights of our own time. **To accept, to know and to use them is to express oneself in the language of today which was made for the man of today.**

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The Shape of Words

Not only does each letter of a word have a shape of its own, but all its letters taken together give shape to the word. We are of course referring to printed, or at least written, words; for the words we hear in speech or on the radio do not have a visual form. They have what might be called sonic form, but we are not dealing with this at the moment. When you read the word MAMMA you see at once that it has quite a different shape from the word OSOLO. The lines (straight or curved, upright or at an angle) and the blank spaces between one letter and the next all contribute to giving the word its overall shape.



This is especially the case with words we are used to reading — or forced to read — every day: the names of newspapers, of big firms, foreign countries, film stars, the names dinned into us by assiduous advertisers, words that greet us wherever we look, such as 'sport', and the 'in' words of the moment, such as 'pop'. These we seize at a glance, without having to spell out each letter or syllable. That is, we recognize their overall shape, a thing we cannot do with unfamiliar words such as tetradecapodus or tryanlynononodont, especially when these are written in the tiniest print on a minute scrap of paper rolled round a medicine bottle, for example.

Some words, such as the names of well-known firms or products, are so familiar to us that if we block out most of the letters we can still read the name correctly at first glance and only notice afterwards that something is slightly unusual. But this can only happen if we preserve the general shape of the word.

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Design as Art

DAMO

IL GIORNO

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An experiment anyone can make is to cut out the letters of a newspaper title, for example, and push these closer together until the upright stroke of one letter also does duty for the next. This gives a clearer idea of the shape of the word. One can go even further, and superimpose one letter on another, as in one of my illustrations I have made an M do duty also as an A in the word DAMO (the trademark of an ancient Roman brick factory).

Knowledge of the shape of words and the possibilities these offer for communication can be very useful to the graphic designer when he comes to make warning signs that have to be taken in quickly, like the ones on motorways, that one cannot stop to decipher.



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WHY?

Munari's essay explores how design can move beyond mere functionality and become an art form. His focus on simplicity, clarity, and the belief that design should enhance everyday life resonates with the idea that design is not just a technical exercise but a way to enhance human experience. Munari's vision suggests that good design has the power to positively impact society on a broader scale.

Waiting for Permission

3

It almost seems like a dream now. Big budgets. Fat, happy, suggestible clients cruising happily along, with fat, happy design firms feeding greedily in their wake. Lavish corporate identity manuals. Hardcover brochures promoting office space in shiny buildings by brand-name architects. Annual reports for non-profit clients—non-profit!—with a little picture on the cover, a flyleaf with nothing printed on it, then another page, new paper stock, with just one or two words in 8-point type, then another page, another paper stock—with nothing on it—then a piece of coated paper with another little picture on it, and then—maybe—the thing would finally start, after the atmosphere had been properly created...

I began my career as a graphic designer in the 1980s. That decade seems far away now, so far away, so much farther than the calendar tells us. To young designers entering the field today, those days will surely seem like an impossibly golden age, one of almost unimaginable excess and bravura. Even to those of us who lived through it, it takes the incontrovertible evidence of a flashy portfolio piece—circa, say, 1986—to remind us how much things have changed.

And they have changed. Design today sees a renewed awareness of environmental issues, much of it lip service abounding with soy-based images of squirrels and pine cones, but for the most part deeply felt. It doesn't necessarily mean that graphic designers have ceased to trade in excess for its own sake, but the examples of that excess are just as likely to provoke embarrassment as envy.

Designers also demonstrate a new social consciousness as well. The voice this consciousness takes is sometimes cracked and halting (perhaps due to years of disuse) but genuine nonetheless. Ten years ago, it seemed as though a typical pro-bono piece was a lavish six-color production of a clever visual pun: today it's just as likely to be something down-and-dirty that at least looks as though it was designed to truly help the client's cause rather than add awards to the designer's trophy cases.

All in all, designers now seem to want more than ever to create work that's appropriate, that's relevant, that challenges the client's brief, that's aimed at more than the next design competition. In short, the spirit is willing. But the flesh, for the most part, remains weak. While these issues dominate designers' consciences, they still remain peripheral to most of our practices. Designers continue to work dutifully (probably, in fact, more urgently than ever these days), wishing that they could do what they think is right, rather than what they're told to do, all in the name of "professionalism." The fundamental idea of truly challenging the client's expectations, of getting outside the grinding process of filling the orders and shipping the goods, of "being bad," (as Tibor Kalman exhorted us at the 1989 American Institute of Graphic Arts Conference in San Antonio) still seems an elusive goal for most designers.

Is it hard to see why? As Milton Glaser said at that same conference, "Friends are friends, but a guy's gotta eat." Most of us would say that our ideals, whether newfound or long held, give way at the end of the day to the pressures of running our businesses; that the sanest course of action is to push environmental activism or social consciousness as far as you can and then back off to fight another day; and that a client's a client and an invoice is an invoice. In the end it's all about money, isn't it?

Well, maybe not. Maybe it's about something else, something that hasn't changed, something to do not with money but with the very structure of the relationship between designers and their clients.

Most relationships in daily life are defined, at least in part, by hierarchy. Someone is in charge and someone is following orders. Often these relationships are immutable: parent and child, student and teacher, employee and employer. Occasionally the roles are more interchangeable, as in the case of marriages or partnerships.

If you believe what you read in most designer's promotional literature, that's what the designer-client relationship is meant to be: a partnership. Sometimes even clients themselves (at least new clients) enthuse about this idea as well. But privately, most designers would concede that most of their client relationships are anything but partnerships, a fact that's seen as both frustrating and basically unchangeable.

MICHAEL BIERUT

In the early sixties, a psychologist at Yale University named Stanley Milgram did a series of notorious experiments that explored the dynamics of hierarchical relationships, ones where someone was in charge and someone else was following orders. He wanted to find out how far someone would follow the orders of another person if he perceived that person's authority as legitimate.

The experiments had many variations, but they all basically went like this. Milgram asked people to volunteer for an experiment they were told was about the relationship of learning and punishment. The volunteers, who came from all walks of life, were each paid \$4.50 and were shown the same setup when they arrived in Milgram's lab.

They were introduced to another person they were told was a fellow volunteer. The second person was to serve as the "learner" and the subject was to act as "teacher." The teacher would be directed by the experimenter to read a series of word pairs to the learner, and then test the learner on his memory. For each answer the learner got wrong, the teacher was to administer to him an electric shock. This was done with a control panel with thirty switches ranging from 15 to 450 volts, labeled in increments "slight shock," "moderate shock," "strong shock," and on up to "extreme intensity shock," "danger: severe shock," and finally the cryptic and presumably frightening label "XXX." For each wrong answer, the volunteer teacher was to increase the shock level by one notch.

Of course, the whole setup was an illusion. The shock panel was a convincing-looking but harmless prop; the fellow volunteer, the "learner," was an employee of Milgram's who was particularly good at screaming in agony when receiving the imaginary shocks. The purpose of the exercise was not to study learning, but to study obedience: Milgram wanted to find out how far people would go up the scale, how much pain they would inflict on a fellow human being, just because someone else told them to.

Before he began, Milgram asked his students and fellow psychologists to predict how many people would administer the highest shock. The answers were always the same at the most, one or two out of the hundred. Milgram himself, then, was surprised when almost two-thirds, 64% of the subjects, did as they were told and went all the way to the top of the scale.

Milgram did a lot of variations in the experiment to try to drive the number down. He moved the setting from Yale to a tawdry-looking storefront; he had the learner complain of a possibly fatal heart condition; he fixed it so the subject actually had to hold the learner's hand down on a "shock plate." None of it made much of a difference. No matter what, about half of the volunteers administered all the shocks to the helpless learner.

These experiments are fairly well known to the general public, and the most common moral drawn from them is something like, "People are capable of

SEVENTY-NINE SHORT ESSAYS ON DESIGN

anything if they're given an excuse to do it." However, this is a misinterpretation: most of the subjects, even the fully obedient ones, were anything but cheerful as they followed the experimenter's commands. In fact, it was common for subjects to protest, weep, or beg to break off the experiment. Still, the obedient majority, prodded calmly by the experimenter, would pull themselves together, do what had to be done, and administer the shocks.

Of course, designers are regularly paid a lot more than \$4.50 to do things a lot less overtly heinous than administering a 450-volt shock to a fellow human being. Occasionally they help promote a cause or product they truly don't believe in or design something to intentionally deceive the public. But these dilemmas are fairly rare.

Most commonly, what most of us have done at one time or another is make something a little stupider or a little uglier than we really thought it ought to be. We've had good reasons: we need the money, we need the experience, we don't want to jeopardize the relationship, we know it's wrong, we have no choice. This would sound familiar to Dr. Milgram. "Some subjects were totally convinced of the wrongness of what they were doing," he observed, "but could not bring themselves to make an open break with authority. Some derived satisfaction from their thoughts and felt that—within themselves, at least—they had been on the side of the angels. What they had failed to realize is that subjective feelings are largely irrelevant to the moral issue at hand so long as they are not transformed into action." We too somehow remain on the side of the angels.

So is it all about money? Probably not. The subjects in Milgram's experiments often wanted desperately to quit, but they just couldn't get up and walk away. What kept them at the shock panel wasn't the \$4.50 they were being paid but their idea that the experimenter, and not they, and certainly not the helpless subject at the receiving end of the wire, was in charge. Designers, even in a climate that finds us more and more driven to question the social and ethical underpinnings of our work, cede the same authority to our clients.

Most of us enter the field of design filled with individual passions and unrealized visions, and learn quickly that the other people know better: first teachers, then bosses, finally even the judges of design competitions and editors of design annuals. We put aside our doubts—none of us want to be prima donnas anyway—and become comfortable professionals in just another service industry. And when we're roused to our feet by a call to action, second thoughts set in. "That's easy for him (Tibor, Milton, fill in the blank) to say, "but my clients won't let me do that." But of course that's not true. In fact, we don't know what would happen if we tried. We take too much pride in the quality of our "service" to find out. So business as usual remains business as usual.

Who's in charge here, anyway?

MICHAEL BIERUT

The designer-client relationship can and should be a partnership. It's time to stop blaming the client when it's not. Our work can and should serve society. It should serve an audience beyond ourselves, beyond our clients, and beyond the next design annual. Otherwise, the member of that audience, the users of the products and messages that we produce, will remain wired to their seats, awaiting the next shock.

And we designers, wanting to do what's right but afraid to make trouble, will keep sitting, maybe just a little more nervously, our fingers on our control panels, waiting for permission.

WHY?

Bierut addresses the common hesitation among designers to take bold, creative risks without seeking external validation. He explores how many designers often feel the need to wait for approval from clients, superiors, or societal norms before they pursue innovative ideas. He argues that the best design emerges when designers stop seeking approval and instead focus on pushing boundaries and exploring new ideas.

THE CONNECTION

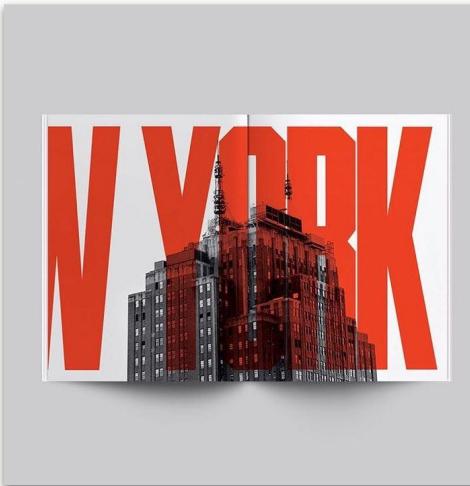
Both essays suggest that impactful design emerges when designers embrace freedom—whether it's the freedom to blend art and design, or the freedom to trust creative instincts without waiting for permission. Both authors argue that trusting their own instincts and breaking away from external constraints, whether societal expectations or the fear of rejection, allows designers to fully express their vision and create work that is bold, innovative, meaningful and impactful.

WHAT MAKES A
GREAT
BOOK DESIGN
OR **LAYOUT ?**



VISUAL RESEARCH





POINTS OF **FOCUS:**

- Bold but Minimalistic
- High Contrast
- Hierarchy
- Negative Space
- Movement
- Accents of Color
- Layered Elements
- Experimental Typography

STATEMENT OF INTENT

INTENT

I intend to create a book that empowers, and inspires, the readers, making them feel confident, and optimistic. By combining bold, minimalistic layouts and meticulously placed quotes, I aim to encourage moments of curiosity and self-reflection. In this book, typography is not just a functional element but an artistic expression that works alongside imagery to create an immersive visual experience.

I intend to balance restraint and creative freedom to create a lasting impact. Inspired by the philosophies of Bruno Munari and Michael Bierut, I aim to show that impactful design emerges when designers trust their instincts and embrace the freedom to blend art and design, without waiting for external validation.

FINDING THE CONCEPT

THE CONCEPT OF GRIDS

Everyone has heard the expression “think outside the box”, for designers, this box often takes the form of a grid. For some the grid can represent structure, order, and reliability, providing a framework within which creativity operates. However, sometimes it can also become a limitation, confining creative freedom. Each person’s grid is different—it could be the literal lines on a design document, the expectations of society, or the demands placed on them. Some people feel safe and supported by the grid, while others may not even realize they are constrained by it.

For those who feel held back, this book will serve as a wake-up call. Both Munari and Bierut will “speak” to the reader through accent quotes and will call out an invitation for the reader to recognize their own grid, to see where those boundaries exist, and to understand that in order to grow creatively, they may need to step off of it. Like everything else in design, this step cannot be accidental—it’s a purposeful, courageous leap that takes awareness and intention. I will create a book that not only encourages but educates on the need of stepping “off the grid.”

EXPLORATION AND PLANNING

FORMAT
FORMAT
FORMAT
FORMAT
FORMAT
FORMAT
FORMAT

LN

8.5 x 14 in. landscape

WHY?

offers enough space for the text and imagery to be displayed harmoniously. This will also allow for typography experimentation while creating an open space to further represent the feeling of freedom. Large texts can be showcased while allowing for white space to create hierarchy. Furthermore the unconventional layout of the pages enhances the ability to embrace the non traditional approach to design by allowing the reader to view the book as a portable exhibition.

BINDING

BEFORE

Method: Saddle Stitch Binding

Reason: This way it is ensured that each page of the book will open completely and will lay flat allowing for a smooth reading experience. As the book will incorporate full spreads and type that goes across pages it is crucial for the reader to engage with the full layout.

AFTER

Method: Perfect Binding

Reason: The original idea would not work because I had no available way of printing 28 in. long pages to fold. The perfect binding will still allow for the book pages to open clearly enough to ensure a smooth reading experience without disrupting the full spreads.

MATERIAL

COVER

- Paperback
- Gloss Finish
- 350 gsm

PAGES

- Gloss Finish
- 120gsm



TYPE AND COLOR STUDIES

TYPE STUDIES

This is Title

“Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.”

This is the decorative text

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Title: Bodoni Bold

Body: Garamond Regular

Quote: Playfair Display Bold

Decorative: Baskerville Display Bold

Drop: Bodoni Extra Bold

TYPE STUDIES

This is Title

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Title: Helvetica Neue Bold

Body: Avenir Book

Quote: Gill Sans Italic

Decorative and Drop: Lust Display

TYPE STUDIES

This is Title

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Title: Adelle Extra Bold

Body: Caslon Regular

Quote: Freight Display Bold

Decorative: Lust Extra Bold

Drop: Lust Extra Bold

TYPE STUDIES

This is Title

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A large, stylized letter 'L' logo, likely representing the letter 'L' in 'Lust'.

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This is the decorative text

“Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.”

Title: Abril Display Extra Bold

Body: Proxima Nova Regular

Quote: Futura PT Bold

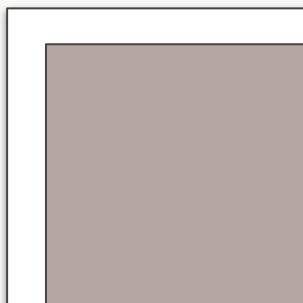
Decorative: Lust Script Display

Drop: Lust Script Display

COLOR STUDIES



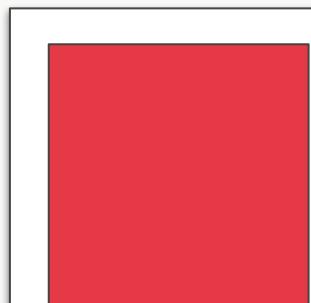
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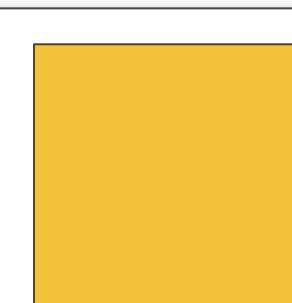
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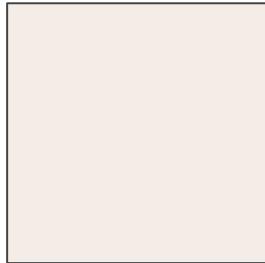


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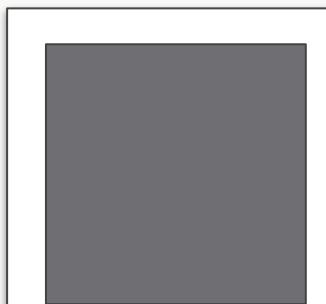


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COLOR STUDIES



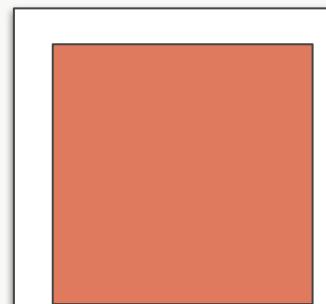
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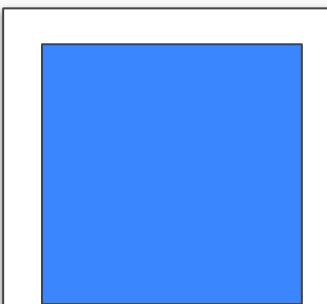
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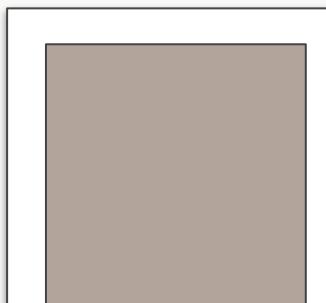


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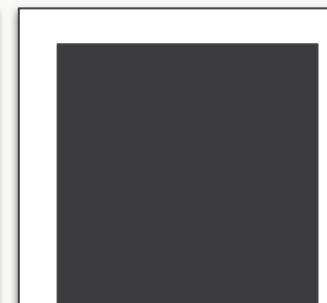
COLOR STUDIES



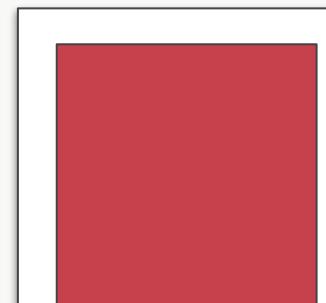
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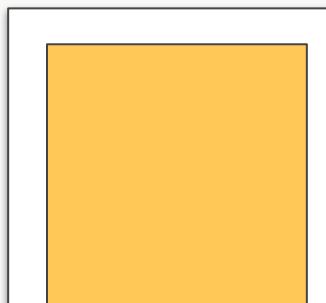
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FINAL SELECTIONS

ROC GROTESK

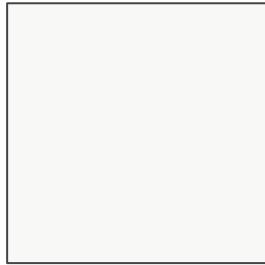
Roc Grotesk Compressed Thin
Roc Grotesk Compressed Extra Light
Roc Grotesk Compressed Light
Roc Grotesk Compressed
Roc Grotesk Compressed Medium
Roc Grotesk Compressed Bold
Roc Grotesk Compressed Extra Bold
Roc Grotesk Compressed Black
Roc Grotesk Compressed Heavy
Roc Grotesk Condensed Thin
Roc Grotesk Compressed Extra Light
Roc Grotesk Condensed Light
Roc Grotesk Condensed
Roc Grotesk Condensed Medium
Roc Grotesk Condensed Bold
Roc Grotesk Condensed Extra Bold

Roc Grotesk Thin
Roc Grotesk Extra Light
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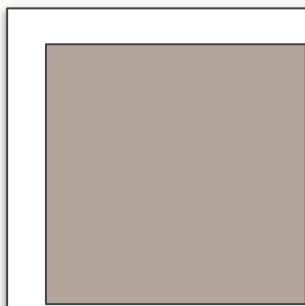
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Roc Grotesk ExtraWide Extra Light
Roc Grotesk ExtraWide Light
Roc Grotesk ExtraWide
Roc Grotesk ExtraWide Medium
Roc Grotesk ExtraWide Bold
Roc Grotesk ExtraWide Extra Bold
Roc Grotesk ExtraWide Black
Roc Grotesk ExtraWide Heavy

Adobe Garamond

Roc Grotesk Medium Regular
Roc Grotesk Medium Italic
Roc Grotesk Medium SemiBold
Roc Grotesk Medium SemiBold Italic
Roc Grotesk Medium Bold
Roc Grotesk Medium Bold Italic



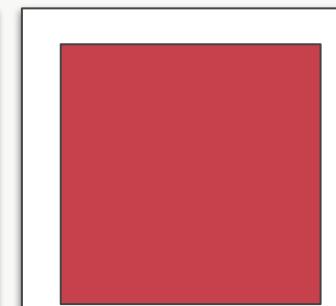
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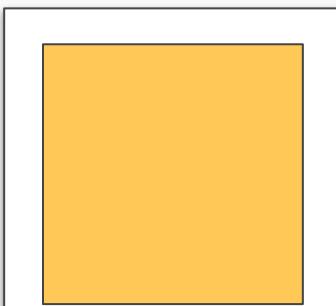
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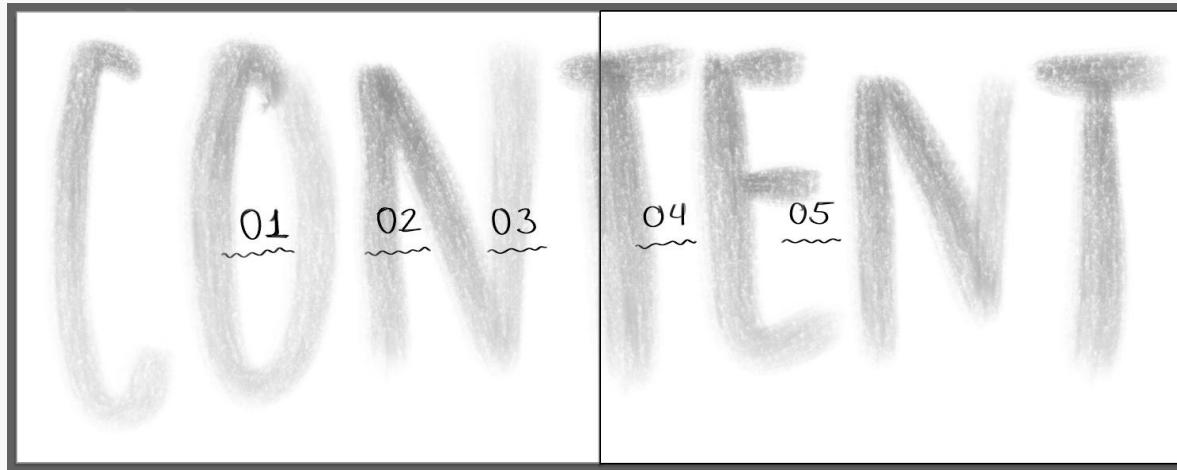


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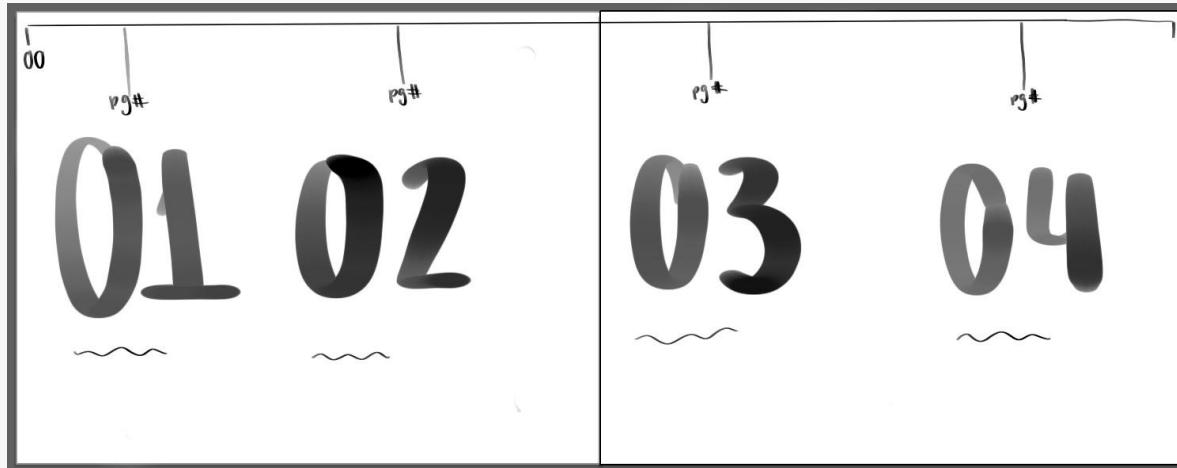


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SPREAD SKETCHES

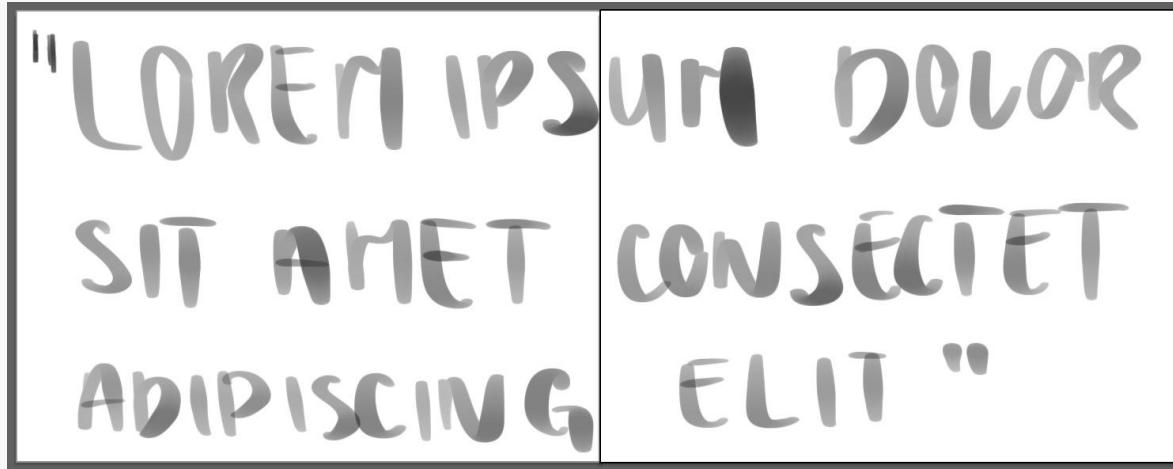


Spread Sketch 1

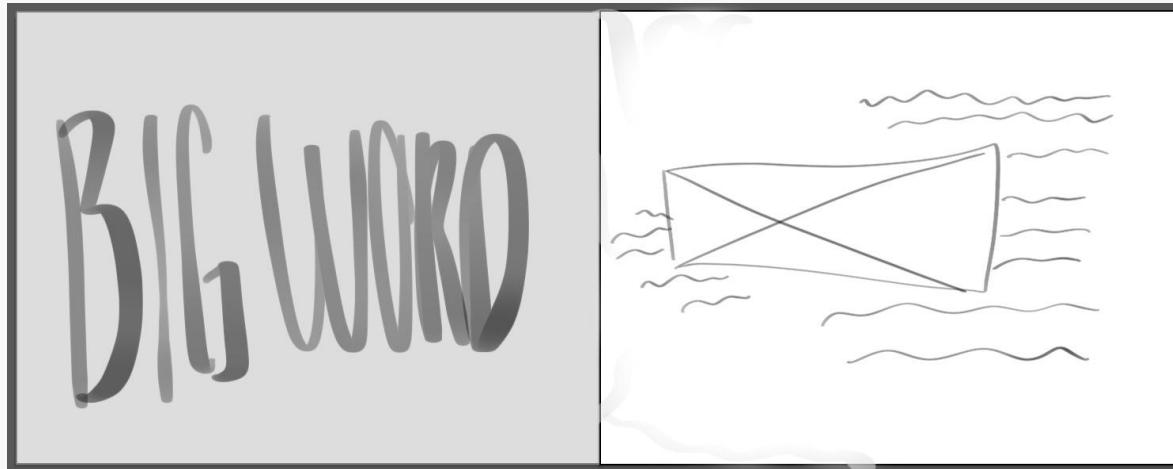


Spread Sketch 2





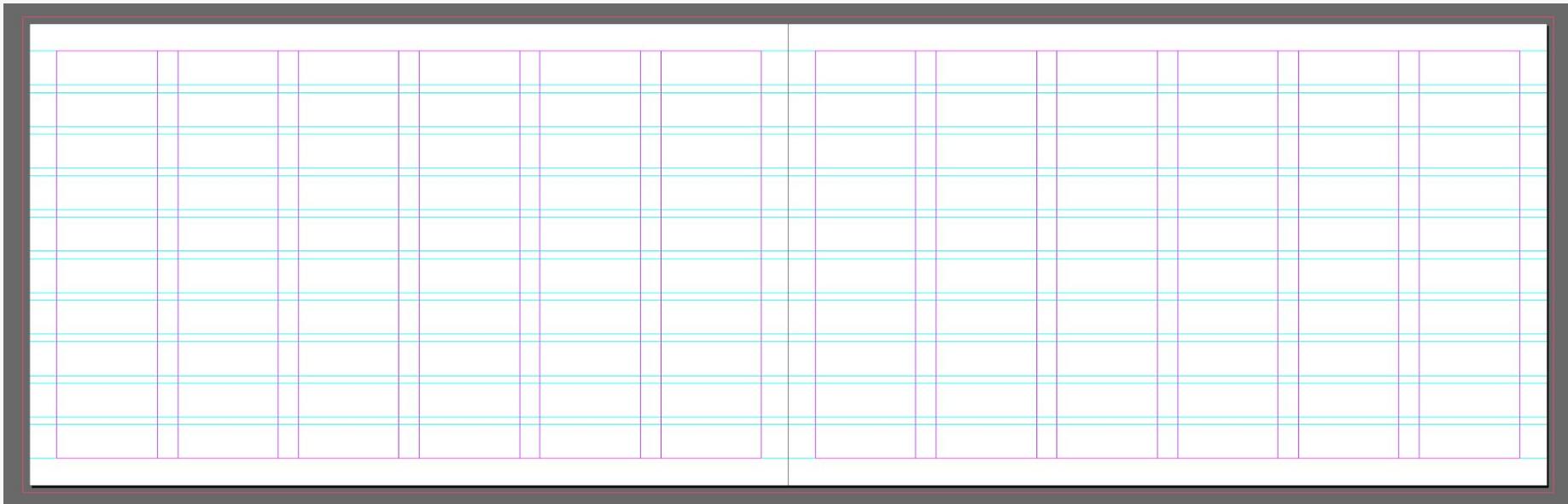
Spread Sketch 5



Spread Sketch 6

AYOUT RID

8.5 x 14 in. LANDSCAPE ORIENTATION, 0.125 in. BLEED, 0.5 in. MARGIN



LAYOUT PROCESS

COVER PAGE BEFORE

OFF THE GRID

Where Bold
Ideas Live

COVER PAGE AFTER

OFF THE GRID Where Bold
Ideas Live

BEFORE

Function Becomes Form

ART IN MOTION

In the early days of rationalism it used to be said that an object was beautiful in so far as it was functional, and only the most practical objects could take into account. Various kinds of tools were used as models for objects, and this is still done. Today we do not think in terms of beauty as a formal coherence, and even the 'decorative' function of the object is thought of as a psychological element. For beauty is the desire to have a certain kind of style, with the consequent need to force everything into a certain style because it is new. This is the aerodynamic style, which has been adopted by the automobile and can be seen in electric irons, penholders and so on. In the recent past we have seen an aerodynamic house, which is about as far as the aerodynamic style can go.

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AFTER

Designing Beyond Function

ART IN MOTION 01

Today it has become necessary to demolish the myth of the 'art' artist who only produces masterpieces for a small group of ultra-intellectual people. It must be understood that the artist is a social being, and that he must adapt his work to the needs of very few people. Culture today is becoming a mass affair, and the artist must adapt his work to the needs of the masses. The artist must learn to do what he knows how to do it. The artist must cast off the last range of consciousness and become active in the world. He must learn to work with the masses, and to use the masses as his tools. Without losing his innate aesthetic sense he must be able to respond with humility and competence to the demands his neighbors may make of him.

**HUMILITY
COMPETENCE**

BEFORE



AFTER



In the early days of rationalism it used to be said that an object was beautiful if so far as it was functional, and only the most practical functions were taken into account. Various kinds of tool were used as evidence for this argument, such as surgical instruments. Today we do not think in terms of beauty but of formal beauty, which is a more abstract concept, and we have thought of it as a psychological element. Formal beauty is the abstract image, or definition, of a style, with the consequent need to focus everything into a given style because it is new. Then in the next part we have had the aerodynamic style, which has been applied not only to aeroplanes and cars but to electric irons, perambulators and armchairs. On one occasion I even saw an aerodynamic hearse, which is about as the aerodynamic style can go.

We have therefore discussed beauty in the abstract sense, as something stuck on the technical part of a thing, like a stylus can be, or something tangibly clear as the work of some great artist. Instead we have formal coherence, either as we see it in nature, or as we see it in art. A leaf has a form it has because it belongs to a certain tree and it fulfills a certain function; its structure is determined by the veins which carry the sap, and the skeleton that supports it might have been worked out by mathematics. Even so, there are many kinds of leaf, and the leaves of any single tree differ slightly among themselves. But if we can *fix* a leaf on a weeping-willow we would have a feeling that all was not well. It would lack coherence.

BEFORE

PLANNER WITH AN AESTHETIC SCENE

The term *danger* was first used in this sense in America. It does not refer to an actual or potential hazard, but to a danger or risk of an intellectual, political, or social nature.

PLANNER WITH AN AESTHETIC SCENE

THE DESIGNER WORKS DIFFERENTLY

2

For beauty in the abstract may be defined as what is called *style*, with the consequent need to force everything into a given style because it is new.

writing poetry. The designer works differently. He gives the right weight to each part of the project in hand and he knows that the ultimate form of the object is psychologically valid when the potential buyer is making up his mind. He therefore tries to give it a form as appropriate as possible to its function, a form that one might say arises spontaneously from the function, from the mechanical part (when there is one), from the most appropriate material, from the most up-to-date production techniques, from calculation of costs, and from other psychological and aesthetic factors.

In the early days of naturalism it used to be said that an object was beautiful in so far as it was functional, and only the most practical functions were taken into account. Various kinds of tool were used as evidence for this argument, such as surgical instruments. Today we do not think in terms of beauty but of formal coherence, and even the 'decorative' function of the object is thought of as a psychological element

bouzy in the abstract, may be as well as is called with style, with the consequent need to focus everything on a given style because it is now the most part we have had. In the past style, which has been a non-dynamic style, which has been used not only to ameliorate and ease the situation, but to dominate, to dominate, to dominate, to dominate, to dominate. On one occasion I even saw a non-dynamic biome, which is about as aerodynamic as you can go.

and the skeleton that appears it might have been worked out by mathematics. Even so, there are many kinds of leaf and the leaves of *tree* differ slightly among themselves. But we saw a fig-leaf on a weeping-willow we had the feeling that all was not well. It was sick, it was dead. A leaf is beautiful not because it is healthy but because it is natural, created in its exact form by its owner function.

BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE

Of course designers are regularly paid for less than \$4.50 an hour. As a result, it's little surprise that a fellow human being would be willing to promise a cause or product they truly don't believe in or design something to intentionally deceive the public. But these dilemmas are fairly rare.

Most commonly, what most of us have done at one time or another is make something a little stupider or a little uglier than we really thought it ought to be. We've had good reasons to need the money, we need the experience, we don't want to jeopardize our reputation, and we don't have any other choice. This would sound like a reasonable argument, except that it's largely irrelevant to the moral issue at hand. The real issue is that we're forced into these actions. "We too sometimes remain on the side of the angels."

**WHAT MOST OF US HAVE DONE
AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER
IS
MAKE SOMETHING A LITTLE STUPIDER
UGLIER THAN IT OUGHT TO BE.**

48

In the beginning, Mr. Miltzman's opponents often worried desperately about the price. "They'd say, 'The stock panel wants the \$4.50 they were being paid for the design, but the experimenter and our clients and the receiving end of the wire, was in charge. That's fine, but we're not the ones that find it more and more driven to question the social and ethical underpinnings of our work, and the more authority to our clients.'

Most of us enter the field of design filled with individual **PASSIONS, and individual **VISIONS**, and learn quickly that the **PEOPLE KNOW BETTER****

49

AFTER

Of course designers are regularly paid for less than \$4.50 an hour. As a result, it's little surprise that a fellow human being would be willing to promise a cause or product they truly don't believe in or design something to intentionally deceive the public. But these dilemmas are fairly rare.

Most commonly, what most of us have done at one time or another is make something a little stupider or a little uglier than we really thought it ought to be. We've had good reasons to need the money, we need the experience, we don't want to jeopardize our reputation, and we don't have any other choice. This would sound like a reasonable argument, except that it's largely irrelevant to the moral issue at hand. The real issue is that we're forced into these actions. "We too sometimes remain on the side of the angels."

**WHAT MOST OF US HAVE DONE
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MAKE SOMETHING A LITTLE STUPIDER
UGLIER THAN IT OUGHT TO BE.**

48

So is it all about money? Probably not. "The subjects in Miltzman's experiments and the clients in his are not quite, but they just couldn't get up and walk away. They were paid for the stock panel wants the \$4.50 they were being paid for the design, but the experimenter and our clients and the receiving end of the wire, was in charge. That's fine, but we're not the ones that find it more and more driven to question the social and ethical underpinnings of our work, and the more authority to our clients.'

Most of us enter the field of design filled with individual **PASSIONS, and individual **VISIONS**, and learn quickly that the **PEOPLE KNOW BETTER****

49

BEFORE

“IT’S TIME TO STOP BLAMING THE CLIENT. OUR WORK CAN AND SHOULD SERVE SOCIETY.

50

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AFTER

IT’S TIME TO STOP

50

The designer-client relationship can and should be a **partnership**. Our work can and should **serve society**. It should **serve an audience** beyond ourselves, beyond our clients, and beyond the next design annual.

Otherwise, the number of short audience, the sum of the products and messages we create, will remain word to their ears, awaiting the next shock.

And we designers, wanting to do what's right but afraid to make mistakes, will keep our hands in the file more frequently, our fingers on our control panels, waiting for permission.

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FINAL LAYOUT

OFF THE GRID Where Bold Mass Live

Designing Beyond Function

ART IN MOTION 01

HUMILITY COMPETENCE

The designer works in a vast sector of human activity:

DESIGN

THE SPIRIT IS WILLING BUT THE FLESH REMAINS WEAK

In the end it's all about money, isn't it?

MAYBE NOT.

OFF THE GRID Where Bold Ideas Live

DESIGNER

"Anyone who uses a properly designed object feels the satisfaction that it has worked for him, bettering his living conditions and encouraging him to increase the time and sense of beauty."

BAUHAUS

"We wish to make him conscious of his creative power, not scared of new facts, and independent of formulas in his own work."

ESTHÉTIQUE INDUSTRIELLE

WHAT IS WHO IS A DESIGNER? 02

PLANNER WITH AN AESTHETIC SCENE

THE DESIGNER WORKS DIFFERENTLY

For beauty in the abstract may be defined as what is called **style**, with the consequent need to force everything into a given style because it is new.

A THING IS NOT BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE IT IS BEAUTIFUL
IT IS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE ONE LIKES IT

SHOCK GENERATION WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

WHAT MOST OF US LEARN DANE
AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER
MAKE SOMETHING A LITTLE STUPIDER
UGLIER

BEYOND SERVICE 06

CONTENTS

01 02 03 04 05 06

WHAT IS
ART

ARTIST OF TODAY

Why is the artist not torn from his easel?
Why is it the designer who is called upon?

WHY THE DESIGNER?

AN IMPOSSIBLY GOLDEN AGE
THINGS HAVE CHANGED

IT'S TIME TO STOP

The designer-client relationship can and should be a partnership. Our work can and should serve society. It should serve an audience beyond ourselves, beyond our clients, and beyond the next design annual.

LN

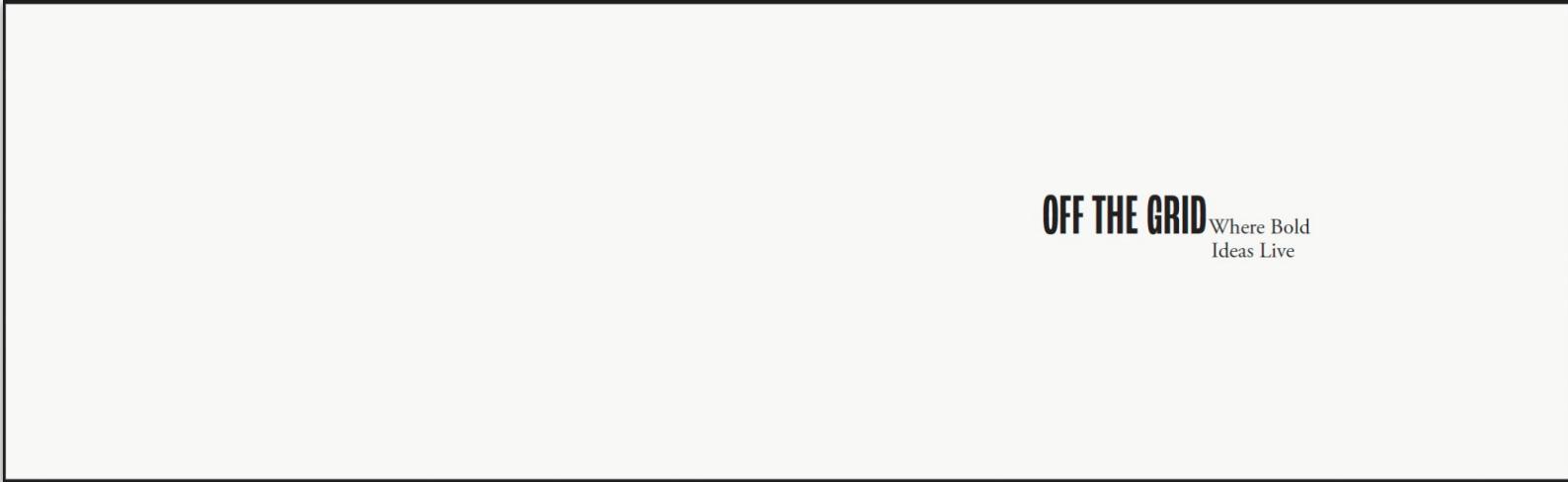
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FINAL SPREADS



OFF THE GRID Where Bold
Ideas **Live**

Elen Averyan © 2024



OFF THE GRID Where Bold
Ideas Live



OFF THE GRID Where Bold
Ideas Live

This book was designed by
Elan Astorayn
based on the work of
Bruce Mau
and
Michael Bierut

This book is an original design by
Evan Averinen.

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Design as Art
David M. Berman
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"Waiting for Permission" from
Sandy and Sheri Sager on Design
Michael Sager
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This book was designed by Evan Averinen, printed and bound by Axiom Print,
located at 4344 San Fernando Rd, Glendale, CA 91205.

The text face is set in Adobe Garamond Pro, a modernized version of the 16th-century typeface
originally designed by Claude Garamond and Revised by Robert Slimbach for
Adobe in 1989.

The titles, subtitles, pull quotes and page numbers are in Roc Gonçalves, a modern
sans-serif typeface designed by Thierry Kuntz. Kuntz Type Family, inspired by
the early 20th-century typefaces of the 19th century, when the typeface world
moved away from ornate designs in favor of functionality and simplicity.

The fonts used in this book come entirely from the library of Adobe Systems Inc..

"Most processes leave out the stuff no one wants to talk about: magic, intuition and leaps of faith."
—Michael Sager

If you're holding this, congratulations—you've just stepped **OFF THE GRID**. The safe path won't
lead you to greatness, and you know it. So, **Take the leap**, follow your intuition, and create the magic.
This book is your push—now it's your turn to **fly**.



Designing Beyond Function

ART IN MOTION

O1

Today it has become necessary to demolish the myth of the 'star' artist who only produces masterpieces for a small group of enlightened people. It must be admitted that the artist is not a star, but a person who can only be understood by a very few people. Culture today is becoming a mass affair, and the artist must stop being a star and start being a person who can only be understood by a very few people. The artist must cast off the last rags of romanticism and become active as a man among men, well up in present-day needs, interests and wants. The artist must be a man who can only be understood by a few people, and who is able to work with humility and competence to the demands his neighbours may make of him.

HUMILITY
COMPETENCE

LN

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DESIGNER

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The designer of today researches the longest contact between art and the public, between living room and drawing room, between things, instead of pictures for the drawing room, electric light for the table, the radio, the telephone, as such things as art dissolved from life, little by little, until there is nothing at and before things to use. If what we have to do is to make with art, and not thrown together by chance, then, then we shall have nothing to hide.

Anyone working in the field of design has a hard task ahead of him. He must free his mind of all preconceived notions of art, and must learn to pick up at schools where they condone you to think one way for the rest of your life, without stopping to think that life changes, and that art changes more than ever. It is therefore up to us designers to make clear our working methods in clear and simple terms, the methods we think are the best, the most up-to-date, the most likely to make our contribution to the world.

Anyone who uses a properly designed object feels the presence of an artist who has thought for him, honours his living conditions, and encouraging him to develop his taste and sense of beauty.

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"Anyone who uses a properly designed object feels the presence of an artist who has worked for him, bettering his living conditions and encouraging him to develop his taste and sense of beauty."

"We wish to make him conscious of his creative power, not scared of new facts, and independent of formulas in his own work."

—Walter Gropius

When we give a place of honour to the drawing room as an ancient Bazaar race which we consider as beautiful, well proportioned and made with taste, we must also remember that the vase once had an entirely different function, that it was used for cooking oil. It was made by a designer of the 19th century, and it was not made to be held and there was no such thing as a work of art to hold it and put any art thing to use.

I have therefore very gladly accepted the offer of the Bauhaus to publish this article in the series of articles I originally published in the *Werkbund* in 1919 and 1920. I have added other texts, as well as a few of my own, and I have also added a few texts published in the limited space of a daily paper. I have also made a few essential changes for the English version.

I hope that other designers will make similar efforts to spread knowledge of our work, for our work is not only a means of making us in the front way of gaining a confidence of men at large, and of giving a meaning to our present way of life.

Design came into being in 1919, when Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus at Weimar. Part of the prospectus of this school reads:

"We know that only the technical means of artistic achievement can be taught, not the style. We have given it to the art that has been given a new and important meaning which has saved it from being old, but it is almost forgotten that when a people loses memory and healthily."

"Our job is therefore to invent a new system of education that may lead by way of a new kind of specialised training to a new kind of art, which is a complete knowledge of human needs and a universal awareness of art.

"That our task is to make a new kind of artist, a creature capable of understanding every kind of need and because he has been educated in this way he can help to approach human needs according to a new and better way. This will make him conscious of his creative power, not scared of new facts, and independent of formulas in his own work."

From that time on we have watched as ever more rapid succession of new styles in design, art, Dada, Cubism, Surrealism, Neo-Plasticism, and so on. We have seen each one gobble up the predecessor and we have right back at the beginning again.

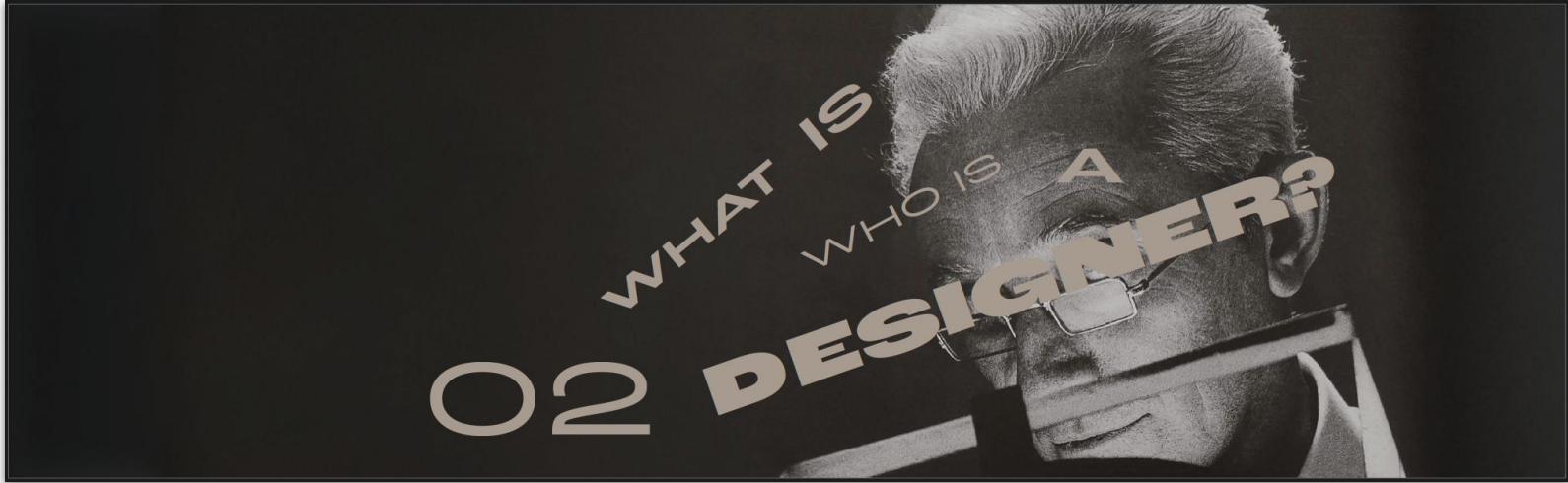
What Gropius wrote is still valid. His first school of design did tend to make a new kind of artist, and to add to society because he helps society to invent a new kind of art. The link between a false world to live on and an ideal world to live in must reflect in his words:

"When the objects we use every day and the surroundings we live in have become a new kind of art, then we shall be able to say that we have achieved a balanced life."

BAUHAUS

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THE DESIGNER WORKS DIFFERENTLY

PLANNER WITH AN AESTHETIC SCENE

The term 'designer' was first used in this sense in America. It does not refer to an industrial designer, who designs machines or mechanical parts, workshops or other specialised buildings. It refers to a design-engineer, and if he is a motor-aerostat on the drawing-board he does not give a great deal of importance to the aesthetic side of things, or at the most he applies a personal idea of what a motor-aerostat ought to look like. I once asked an engineer who had designed a motor-aerostat why he

The industrial designer thinks of the aesthetic side of his job as simply a matter of providing a finish, and although that may be more or less true, he is not aesthetic in the sense that he is with contemporary culture because such things are not considered. An engineer must never be caught with his designs in a box, and he thinks differently. He gives the right weight to each part of the project in his mind, and he knows that the ultimate for the object is psychologically vital when it is used. He must always keep up his mind. He therefore tries to give it a form as appropriate as possible to its function, a form that one might say arises spontaneously from the function, and the needs of the user (when there is one), from the most appropriate material, from the most suitable process, and so on. He has a catalog of common objects, from a psychological and, again, from a

For beauty in the abstract may be defined as what is called **style**, with the consequent need to force everything into a given style because it is new.

In the early days of satire it was felt that an object's function in so far as it was functional should be taken into account. Various objects were used as evidence for this, such as surgical instruments, which do not think in terms of 'esthetic' coherence, 'decorative' function or the like. The satirist thought of it as a psychobiological function.

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For beauty in the abstract may be defined as what is called style, with the consequence need to force everything into a given style because it is new. This in the recent past we have had applied not only to aeroplanes and cars but to electricians, parlementarians and armchairs. On one occasion I even saw an aerodynamic house, which is about as far as the aerodynamic style can go.

We have therefore discarded beauty in a sense meant as something much more than the technical part of a drawing, like a pretty girl or a delicate painting, tamely chosen from the work of some eminent artist. Instead we have chosen beauty as a quality in itself, in nature and in art, which is not to be measured according to a certain rule and fulfills a certain function; its structure is determined by the values which carry the sap.

A DESIGNER

A designer tries to make an object as good as possible. He does not smother his object with his own personal taste but tries to be objective. He tries to put it in as good a form as possible. If it is made itself by its own proper means, it will have just the shape of a ventilator, or a lamp, or a chair. If it is made of blown glass, as a car is inevitably covered with car-hair. Each object has its own means of expression. The designer's task is to find the right means. This will not be fixed and final because the designer's task is to find the right means, and with every invention discovered, and with every invention this problem arises again and the form of the object may change.

MAKES THE OBJECT, HELPED BY ITS OWN PROPER MEANS

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WHAT IS

ART

At one time people thought there was a fine line between commercial art, pure art and applied art. This was used to be seen as a line between engineers and them described as an artist in general and a craftsman-of-peal. Now we no longer see this distinction between fine and applied art as clear and applied. The definition of art has changed so much confusion in recent times, and art is now seen as a fast one to be pulled, to make a quick profit. Art is once more becoming a trade, as it was in the 19th century when the artist was considered a craftsman to make certain works of art for a certain population (called French) to inform the public of a certain genre, event.

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Why is the artist not torn from his easel?
Why is it the designer who is called upon?

Today the designer (in this case the graphic designer) is called upon to invent, to create, to design, to propose, to point to, to inform the public of some new development in a certain field.

Because the designer knows about the new development, he has the tools used, and he uses forms and colors according to their psychological effect. He has the ability to make an artistic sketch and have it up to the printer to represent it. He has the ability to take the form in terms of printing techniques, and it is with these that he makes his point.

The designer is therefore the artist of today not because he is a genius but because he is a craftsman who is re-establishing a contract between art and the public. He is a craftsman with the ability to respond to whatever demand is made of him by the society in which he lives. He knows his job, and the ways and means of doing it, and he does it well.

And finally because he responds to the human needs of the times and helps people to solve certain problems. He is not a romantic, pretentious or false notion of artistic dignity derived from the actions of the art.

ARTIST OF TODAY

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The designer works in a vast sector of human activity:

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DESIGN

FORUM

VISUAL

design is concerned with images whose function is to communicate and inform. It uses symbols, the meaning of forms and colours and the relations between them.

INDUSTRIAL

design is concerned with functional objects, designed according to economic and social needs and the study of techniques and materials.

RESEARCH

design works in the world of the Press, of books, of printed advertisements, and posters. In this the word 'design' appears, whether on a sheet of paper or a bottle.

GRAPHIC

design is concerned with experiences of form, plastic and visual structure in two dimensions. It tries out the possibilities of combining text and image, and tries to find ways to clarify images and methods in the transmission of ideas. It carries out research into images on film.



ESTHÉTIQUE INDUSTRIELLE

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A THING IS NOT BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE IT IS BEAUTIFUL IT IS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE ONE LIKES IT

Beauty as conceived of in the fore-
ver, a sense of balance comparable
with that of the masterpieces of the
past, harmony and all the rest of it.
If the form of an object turns out to
be the result of a combination of the
logic of its construction and to the
harmony of its various components.
It is 'Beautiful' because the combination
of its various components is 'Beautiful'.
The project produces a beautiful object,
beautiful not because it is like a piece
of art, but because it is like a piece
of art.

If you want to know something, like
about beauty, what precisely it is, look
at a history of art. You will see that
every age has had its Apollos (or
Apollos) and that these Venus or
Apollos put together and compared
not with the Venus of Milo, but with
nothing less than a family of mon-
keys. And you will see that the monkey
is the beautiful, as the hog-sow said
to the hog-dog, it is beautiful because
one likes it.

"The basic teaching error of the academy was that of directing its attention towards genius rather than the average." (Bauhaus)

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THE NEW ERA
of
DESIGN

04

AN IMPOSSIBLY GOLDEN AGE

It almost seems like a dream now. Big clients crisscrossing the country, driving into cruising happily along, with fast, friendly, and professional people in their wake. Look! corporate identity manuals. Hardcover brochures by the dozen. Buildings covered in drawings by brand-name architects. An entire industry of graphic designers, non-profit, with a little picture of the designer on the back of every printed on, then another page, new paper stock, with just one or two other pages, another paper stuck...with another paper stuck...with another paper with another little picture stuck...and then another page, the show would finally start, after the atmosphere had been properly created... .

THINGS HAVE CHANGED

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And they have changed. Design today offers a renewed awareness of environmental issues, much of it lip service though. The days of the great art of squirrels and pine cones, but for the most part, it's just lip service. It necessarily means that graphic designers have ceased to trade in excess for its own sake. The days of the great art excesses are just as likely to provoke environmental backlash.

Designers also demonstrate a new social consciousness as well. The voice this consciousness takes is sometimes crass and sometimes (though due to years of dismal) but genuine nonetheless. The days of the great art as though a typical pinhole piece was a 20th-century equivalent of a clever visual pun; today it's just as likely to be something down-and-dirty that looks like a bomb. It was designed to truly help the client's cause, and it's not just a reach to the designer's trophy case.

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THE SPIRIT IS WILLING BUT THE FLESH REMAINS WEAK

All in all, designers now seem to want more than ever to be seen as what's appropriate, what's relevant, what challenges them, what's meaningful, and at more than the next design competition. The days of the great art, the flesh, for the most part, remains weak. While these issues dominate design, they are also becoming omnipresent throughout most of our practices.

Designers continue to work dastefully (perhaps not as dastefully as they did ever those days), wishing that they could do what they think is right, rather than what they think is right, all in the name of "professionalism."

The fundamental idea of truly challenging the client's ideas, of getting outside the gridiron process of killing the ideas of the client, are gone. In fact, last year, Peter Kalmus exhorted us at the 1989 American Society of Appraisers (a conference in San Antonio) still seems an elusive goal for most designers.

In the end it's all about money, isn't it?

It is hard to see why Al McInnis, Quist and his team concur. "Business are friends, but a guy's gotta eat," one of us would say, and that's what we mean by the great old give way at the end of the day to the bottom line. The days of the great art that the current course of action is the best course of action, the days of social consciousness as far as you can and then back off to fight another day, the days of the great art (the issue in this instance is an invoice). In the end it's all about money, isn't it?

Well, maybe not. Maybe it's about something else, something that has changed, something to do with money but with the very structure of the client, the designer, designer and client.

More, if relationships in daily life are defined, as least in part, by love. Sometimes it is change and sometimes it is money that changes these relationships. In the days of the great art, designer and teacher, employee and employer, client and designer were more interchangeable, as in the case of marriage or partnership.

If you believe what you read in most designer promotional literature, that's what the designer-client relationship is meant to be: a partnership. Some even go so far as to say a partnership (or least an alliance) exhausts about this idea as far as it goes. Most designers would concede that most of their clients are not worthy of a true partnership, a fact that's seen as both frustrating and basically unchanged.

MAYBE NOT.

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The MILGRAM EXPERIMENT LEGACY of OBEDIENCE

05

SHOCK GENERATOR

HOW FAR WOULD PEOPLE GO ...

JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE TOLD THEM TO?

OUTPUT 15-450 VOLTS

In the early 1960s, a psychologist at Yale University named Stanley Milgram did a series of notorious experiments that explored the dynamics of obedience and authority. In these experiments, someone in charge would tell the subject to administer an electric shock to another person if he perceived that person as legitimate.

In experiments like many others, but ones all basically alike like this, Milgram asked people to volunteer for an experiment. They were told that the experiment was about the relationship between **learning** and **punishment**. The volunteers were told that they would be directed by the experimenter, and that they would be asked to administer electric shocks to another person, the learner, and then that the learner would be asked to learn a list of words. If the learner got wrong, the teacher was to administer to him an electric shock.

They were introduced to another volunteer. They were told a different volunteer would be the "learner" and the subject would be the "teacher". The teacher would be directed by the experimenter to administer electric shocks to the learner, and then that the learner would be asked to learn a list of words. If the learner got wrong, the teacher was to administer to him an electric shock.

OBEDIENCE
LEARNING AND PUNISHMENT

<img alt="A horizontal scale for the shock generator, ranging from 15 VOLTS to 450 VOLTS. The scale is marked with 15, 30, 45, 60, 75, 90, 105, 120, 135, 150



06 BEYOND SERVICE

Of, course, designers are regularly paid a lot more than \$4.50 to do things a lot less overtly heinous than administering a 450-volt shock to a fellow human being. Occasionally they help promote a cause or product they truly don't believe in or design something to intentionally deceive the public. But these ~~dilemmas~~ are fairly rare.

most common, what most of us do at one time or another is to make something a little stupider or a little uglier than we really thought it ought to be. We've had good moments, we've had bad moments, in the experiments, we didn't want to jeopardize the relationship, we knew it was wrong, we had no choice. This would sound similar to Dr. Milgram, on the side of the angels.

WHAT MOST OF US HAVE DONE
IS
AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER
MAKE SOMETHING A LITTLE STUPIDER
UGLIER THAN IT OUGHT TO

Most of us enter the field of design filled with individual **PASSIONS**, and individual **VISIONS**, and learn quickly that the **PEOPLE KNOW BETTER**

So is it all about money? Probably not. The most brilliant Milligan experiments often wanted dramatically to quit, but they just couldn't get up and walk away. What kept them at the shack panel was not the \$4.50 they were being paid, but their idea that the experiment, and not they, and certainly not the behavior subject at the center of the experiment, was the real star. Danger, even in a climate that funds us more and more driven to question the social and ethical underpinnings of our work, erodes the same authority to our clients.

call to action, second thoughts set in. "That's easy for him (Tibor, Milton, fill in the blank) to say," but my clients won't let me do that." But of course that's not true. In fact, we don't know what would happen if we tried. We take too much pride in the quality of our "service" to find out. So business as usual remains business as usual.

IT'S TIME TO STOP

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The designer-client relationship can and should be a **partnership**. Our work can and should **serve society**. It should **serve an audience** beyond ourselves, beyond our clients, and beyond the next **design annual**.

Otherwise, the member of that audience, the user of the products and messages we create, will remain wed to their status quo, fearing the next shock.

And we designers, wanting to do what's right but afraid to make trouble, will remain wed to our status quo, like the more nervously, our fingers on our control panels, waiting for permission.

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FINAL BOOK

OFF THE GRID

Where Bold
Ideas *Live*

OFF THE GRID

Where Bold
Ideas *Live*

OFF THE GRID

Where Bold
Ideas *Live*

has become necessary to demolish the myth of the 'aesthetic' man who only
looks as long as a small group of ultra-intellectuals provide it with a role for
very few people. Culture stands aside from the ultra-intellectuals. It is not the
man from his pedestal. Culture today is becoming a mass affair and the artist must now
know how to do it). The artist must learn to make a sign for a bunchet, a sign for
active as a man among men well up in present-day techniques of communication and mode
of methods. Without losing his innate aesthetic sense he must be able to adapt
with humility and competence to the demands his neighbours may make of him.

HUMILITY COMPETENCE

LN

The abstract may be
is called **style**, with the
ed to force everything
Style because it is new

CONTENTS

"Anyone who uses a properly designed object feels the presence of an artist who has worked for him, bettering his living conditions and encouraging him to develop his taste and sense of beauty."



ANIMAD POSSIBLY

GOLDEN AGE

As one time proposed
thought in some proportion
fine art and some
metal art, pipe art,
and applied art, art
we used to have one
engravers and had them
decorated by an artist
of gold, and now we no
longer have this division
and therefore fine
and neoteric, the per-
ception of art that has
caused so much confu-
sion in recent times,
and allowed to go many
far ones to be pulled
in now losing its pre-
stige. Art is once more
becoming a trade, as
when the artist was
summoned by society
to make certain kinds
of visual (called communica-
tion) to inform the public, or
certain religious even-

LN

In the end
it's all about
isn't it?

It relationship can and should
should. Our work can and should **SERVE**
SERVE an audience, and beyond our
our clients, and beyond our