ROCKPORT

REGARDING DESIGN

OBSERVATIONS ON GOOD DESIGN

RegardingDesign

June 01, 2010

Only Design Can Engage the Senses: An Introduction

A picture (or any image or illustration for that matter) has the ability to immediately arrest the viewer's attention. A picture elicits an emotional reaction, not entirely a rational one. It suspends logic if just for a moment. It's easy to grasp, you recognize it as something, but the meaning is fleeting as soon as you try to begin to describe it.

The English language, if you believe it, is the result of logic (or some Latin magic). There are hard and fast rules to follow, and woe to those who break them. Woe to me, the creative writing undergraduate.

Whoa to dénouement, to the dramatic arc, and to the rest of <u>Freytag's pyramid theorem</u>. I'd burrow my head in Bukowski. I'd hide away with Hemingway. I revisited Classic American Literature for a while. But a <u>narwhal</u> was never a <u>Warhol</u>, and as meticulous as Melville was in his descriptions of all things nautical, *Moby Dick* was a plain nuisance to follow.

I wanted to take the reader somewhere different, someplace unexpected. So I ditched the formula and experimented with form. My writing instructors called my short stories "impressionistic." I called them prose poetry painting an enigmatic experience. I didn't want the reader to fully understand what they were feeling. I wanted it to be a collective case of déjà vu.

I noticed that my writing mimicked the collages I used to make on colored construction paper when I was a kid. I'd tear apart the *<u>Transworld Skateboarding</u>* magazines I had a subscription to, creating my own laborious layouts (this was before I knew who <u>David Carson</u> was, and obviously before I had a full fledged appreciation for what he was doing). I was trying to visualize what I couldn't using words. I tried doing this for four years. And as different as my work was from everyone else's, my attempts were always futile. Only design could engage the senses the way I wanted to.

I rationalize those four years by calling them a learning experience. I'd say that I was exorcising the demons, but I'm not overtly religious. Design is what I do. Design is where I belong. It was a realization well worth the fifteen years I'll be paying off in student loans. It was a realization I'm constantly thankful for.

The opportunity to write this blog, and to share my passion for graphic design with others is something for which I'm also thankful. <u>Rockport Publishers</u> plays an integral role in chronicling good design with their extensive library of books on the subject. They are truly committed to helping shape the future of the field, as is evident in their support of this blog as an additional design resource.

A picture is worth a thousand different words, and even then, that's probably not enough.
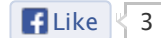
Cheers,
David

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RegardingDesign

June 02, 2010

HOW Design Conference: June 6–9

This year's conference is being held in Denver, and it's bigger and better than ever.

Noted Rockport authors/designers Justin Ahrens, Steve Gordon Jr., and Armin Vit are just three of the more than fifty featured speakers at the event.

Justin, author of _The Best of Business Card Design 9_ (images below), will be conducting the "Life Kerning: Where Life and Creativity Meet" session on Monday, June 7, from 2:00–3:15 PM. He will also be on the "Creativity Q+A" panel on Wednesday, June 9, from 9:45–11:00 AM. Justin will be signing copies of his book on Tuesday, June 8, beginning at 2:00 PM.

Steve, author of _100 Habits of Successful Freelance Designers_ (images below), will be presenting at the "Networking Lunch" on Sunday, June 6, from 12:15–1:45 PM and signing copies of his book immediately following.

Armin, author of _Graphic Design, Referenced_ (images below), will be headlining the "From Jr. Designer to Design Firm Owner" session on Tuesday, June 8, from 10:45 AM–12:00 PM.
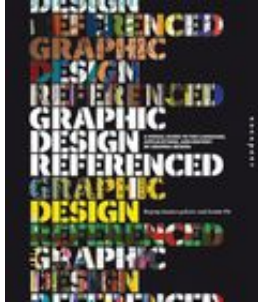
If you've registered, be sure to stop by and say hello.

In the meantime you can check out the video below, starring Steve himself.

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RegardingDesign

June 03, 2010

Deserving Design Contest: The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

Whether it's that savory sandwich shop—the best kept secret in Somerville's trendy Davis Square—you frequent, or a charitable cause close to heart, there are potential clients everywhere deserving of good design. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, a limited pool of resources, or other reasons, some just don't have the art acumen to pull it off.

In this regular feature we'll champion for good design. We'll critique current logos, branding material, and other would-be fun side projects, and add our suggestions for improvement because that's what real designers do. Some might call us the philanthropists of presentation. We might look at it more as a potential portfolio builder. Either way, it's a win-win.

Photo by The Associated Press.

According to some estimates, up to <u>100,000 barrels</u>* of oil are being leaked into the Gulf of Mexico per day. Today marks the 44th day without a solution in place.

Who's to blame for the lack or urgency regarding the Deepwater Horizon oil spill? Is it the bumbling BP executives on the brink of certain bankruptcy? Is it our precarious, pushover president? Maybe, as an oil-dependent nation, we should fault ourselves. You decide.

Design a poster that you think captures the overall poor response effort, the lack of information being provided to the public (intentionally or not), and/or the obvious ecological repercussions of the spill. Maybe it's a public service announcement for the <u>Environmental Protection Agency</u> or <u>The Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming</u>. Be creative. For inspiration, and like projects, you might look at <u>The Hurricane Poster Project</u> or <u>Design for Haiti</u>. Feel free to use the comment function on this blog as a way to open up the discussion and collaborate with other designers.

Submissions must be in .JPG format and e-mailed to regardingdesign@gmail.com. Entries will be voted on by the <u>Rockport</u> design team, with the top three winners each receiving a free copy of the book, *<u>Graphic Design, Translated</u>* by Peter J. Wolf (images below). All entries are due by **midnight EST** on **June 18, 2010,** and will be featured on the blog the week following. Good luck!

Posted at 02:00 PM in Books, Community Service, Contests, Current Affairs, Giveaway, Graphic Design, Illustration, Photography | Permalink

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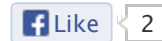
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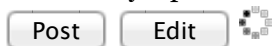
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RegardingDesign

June 04, 2010

How Do You Do? // Joel Gendron, and How He Does Gaming

Joel Gendron is a book cover designer for Pearson Education and part time faculty instructor at The New England School of Art and Design at Suffolk University. In his spare time, when he has spare time, Joel enjoys doing freelance design. One of his most recent projects, Anomia, was featured in the May 19, 2010 Boston issue of _Metro_. You can visit his Web site _here_.

What is Anomia? Where does it get its name?

JG: Anomia is a card game invented by Andrew Innes that challenges your brain on many different levels. Several people have commented that it's like "yoga for your brain." Anomia means: "A problem with word finding or recall." It also means: "Chaos."

How were you approached for this project? Did you work on anything like this before?

JG: Once upon a time I went for a walk with my dog at the local dog park. I ended up walking next to some guy (Andrew Innes) who was walking his dog and we started to chat about our beloved four legged friends. As the conversation progressed, I mentioned that I was a graphic designer. Andrew said, "That's funny, I've been looking for a graphic designer!" He mentioned that he had a rough prototype of this card game he was working on and asked if I wanted to help him out. We met later in the evening for a cool beverage at a local watering hole and he showed me the game. The project took off from there.

Where did the inspiration for the design come? How much research of other card games did you do?

JG: The game is a fast paced one with lots of symbols and words fluttering about. Andrew wanted to incorporate a pattern that involved the 8 symbols that could be seen on the cards. I came up with a little more than 15 different layouts for the packaging before arriving at the final design. As far as research went, Andrew did most of it. He had been playing with the idea for a few years before developing his prototype. Any time I had a question, Andrew had the answer. He knew what he wanted from the beginning and he knew a lot about other card games.

Game design seems like a very specific niche in the overall world of design. Do you think this made it easier or harder for you?

Can you explain some of the challenges you faced?

JG: I felt a little intimidated at first since this was my first game design. I made a trip to a toy store and looked at boxes of board games, puzzles, and card games. I made a mental note of which games caught my eye and I also made an extra effort to look for the games that didn't jump off the shelf. Games almost have a personality, and in designing the packaging you almost need to visually represent the personality of the game. I think the final design for Anomia is a little bit reserved for the "personality" of the game, but now that I know the game so well, I wouldn't change a thing about it.

Surely, Anomia is a big hit. The article in the *Metro* says it was named a Mensa Select winner. Did you ever expect to see a design of yours in the fifth largest circulated and the most read free daily newspaper in the U.S.? That's kind of a big deal.

JG: The Metro article was actually the SECOND time the story made the papers. Anomia was featured in the <u>Boston Globe Magazine</u> on February 28, 2010. It's been so much fun being a part of the Anomia project. Andrew put a lot of work, time, and energy into his game and I'm happy to have my name attached to the project. As a designer it's really cool to ride the subway and watch people read an article about Anomia. It is a big deal and it certainly can go to your head.

What would you attribute this success to?

JG: I think the success of Anomia is mostly attributed to the driving force of Andrew Innes. He pre-sold 500 games before the first card was ever printed in an effort to pay for production costs. I was amazed that people (including myself) were buying a game that didn't exist yet. These people that bought the game were just friends of friends who knew Andrew, or Andrew's friends. I remember leaving a post on Facebook telling all of my friends that they needed to buy this game. Of course, I like to think that the package design is part of the success. I think we all have some sort of God-given talent. So I have to thank God for that talent.

Are you any good? If we were to play, could I beat you?

JG: I'm pretty good at Anomia. I think we should play ASAP to find out.

For more on Anomia, or if you want to know where you can pick up your own copy of the game. visit: <u>anomiapress.com</u>.

Posted at 10:00 AM in <u>Branding</u>, <u>Freelance Design</u>, <u>Graphic Design</u>, <u>Interviews</u>, <u>Logos</u>, <u>Packaging</u>, <u>Product Design</u> | <u>Permalink</u>

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RegardingDesign

June 07, 2010

Mass Marketing: Coca-Cola Wows for the World Cup

Every week or so I scour the streets of Boston (and other nearby cities and towns in Massachusetts) for memorable marketing material. Collectively, we'll compare what I've captured with other convincing work across the country in an effort to preserve current trends and practices. Consider it culture commentary via creative collage.

I am not a huge fan of soda, but I am a huge fan of soccer. So every four years when Coca-Cola unveils their new series of World Cup inspired cans and bottles, I must ashamedly admit that I crave the caffeine-filled concoction like a junkie needing their fix. For one, the cans become coveted collectibles for design and fútbol fans alike.

The nerd in me can appreciate the design for what it is. It's colorful. It's different—nothing mindbogglingly original, but nothing we're used to seeing either. Especially on a can. In fact, it's the re-purposing of the packaging that I find irresistibly refreshing. It's an ever-changing artist's canvas, and it's always recyclable.

The coordinated athlete in me appreciates Coca-Cola's attempts to publicize "The Beautiful Game" (granted, they are one of the major sponsors of the event). It's nice to see them tap into the American conscience—one so consumed with the other football. And they're able to do so, since their influence is wide spread. They're the curators of culture. They're the unofficial ambassadors of the single biggest sporting event in the world.

Needless to say, the experience of drinking a can of soda is made suddenly different for me. Emptying the can to procure it for safe keeping for something more than a deposit is not now a chore, it's a series investment.

Still haven't had your fill? Deconstructing Product Design by William Lidwell and Gerry Manacsa has a wonderful two-page

spread that examines the iconic Coca-Cola "contour" bottle. Check it out!

Posted at 10:00 AM in [Branding](), [Color](), [Current Affairs](), [Graphic Design](), [Marketing Communications](), [Packaging](), [Product Design](), [Sports]() | [Permalink]()

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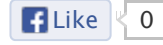
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After reading this, I admit, I need a can of Coke. Why is that?

Posted by: [Joel]() | [June 07, 2010 at 11:11 AM]()

Hi there fellow Quayside blogger (the author of the Craftside one here) Stefanie. I am thrilled to see another lover of alliteration out here in blog land. I am not a fan of either coke or soccer but am a huge fan of good design. I tend to buy cans of liquid product just for the packaging. Some I drink, some the plants in the yard do :) and then generally under the knife, scissors and Sizzix machine it goes!

Posted by: [Stefanie]() | [June 09, 2010 at 05:16 PM]()

Joel, I think it's because we all need that pick-me-up at the start of the work week.

Posted by: [David]() | [June 10, 2010 at 01:26 PM]()

Stefanie, it's true: I adore alliteration. I think it's absolutely amazing.

It's scary some of the things I've tried based solely on packaging. The marketing people at these places are perfect at turning profit this way. Think of all those energy drinks.

But with these Coke cans, I've actually been thinking of creating some sort of hang-able aluminum collage. I need to do a bit more collecting, though, before I'm ready.

Posted by: [David]() | [June 10, 2010 at 01:39 PM]()

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RegardingDesign

June 10, 2010

Well Done: A Review of The Designer's Graphic Stew by Timothy Samara

As someone who owns Timothy Samara's _Making and Breaking the Grid_, I was very excited to read this latest book of his. For those who have not read it, _Making and Breaking the Grid_ (_MBG_ for short) combines a history of the grid in graphic design and the anatomy of the various types of grids that exist, with stunning visual examples (see below) of these grids being used by real-life artists in real-life projects. It can easily be used as just a reference book or, if layout is a clear interest of yours like it is mine, read all the way through in one sitting. I highly recommend that you take a look at it—it's worthy of a place in your personal library, I assure you.

Needless to say I had some high expectations for _The Designer's Graphic Stew_ (or _TDGS_ for short). And, not surprisingly, it did not disappoint. Although it is an entirely different book altogether—_TDGS_ is a smorgasbord of information that highlights the overall design process—the same Samara sensibility that we (the royal we) all know and love still remains.
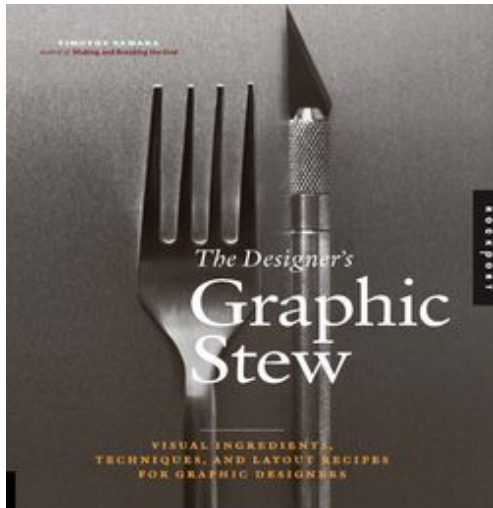
It's the clear, thoughtful organization of content that I appreciate. Samara boils the book down into three main sections: "Basic Techniques," "Graphic Ingredients," and "Project Recipes." What I first enjoyed about _MBG_ was the non-assuming approach the writing took. As is the case, here, with _TDGS_. While brief, the "Basic Techniques" section prepares graphic artists by giving them the tools and the general know-how they'll need to eventually whip up some decadent design. And though this might not whet the palate of the self-described foodies (the more experienced graphic designers), the nuggets about using color to code elements are a real treat (see below). I actually found the whole bit on color quite appetizing since the use of color in my own work is the result of some subconscious and abstract decision-making process. It sounds worse than it is.
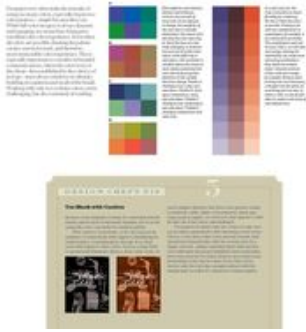
The "Graphic Ingredients" section may be my favorite in the book. In this section Samara tempts the reader with trays of delectable sample images, patterns, textures, color combinations, type, other editorial elements, and more to be added to our pot. There are even a couple of pages on different styles of folios and runners that we can let simmer in our minds. These thumbnails, which are featured prominently (and quite beautifully) by talking up 3/4 of the page, actually look like boxed chocolates. The various elements that go into successful design become visually apparent. Surely, there is a lot to think about at this stage—but never does it once feel too overwhelming. It becomes more of a selective browsing process. You can weigh and examine each piece. There's time to scrutinize over complimentary color palettes or analogous ones. (Again, with the color!)
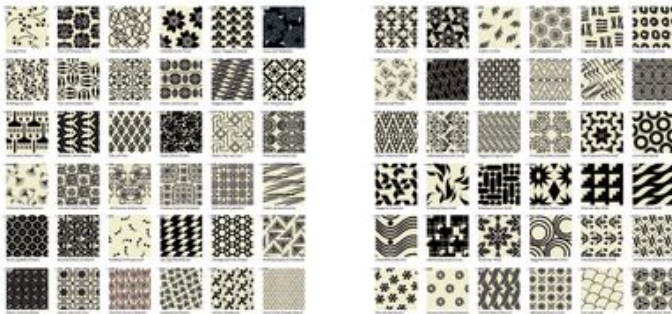
The final section or the reveal, the "Project Recipes," is a combination of all of these ingredients. Much like *MBG*, this is where the art comes to fruition. No, we can't take the credit for these designs ourselves; they are the work of master chefs. However, the understanding is that given the samples we've been allowed access to and the knowledge of what they're used for and how to use them, we can cook up something just as tasteful. And if we need assistance, the exact recipe for each of the designs in the section is listed next to the design itself with the location of each element referenced. This cheat-sheet is a helpful addition, but Samara never loses sight of his ultimate goal for us: to be able to start our own fresh design from scratch.

Bon appetit!
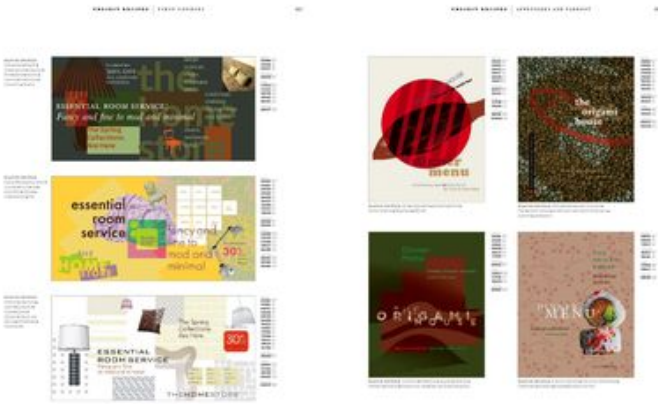
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Don't know what is wrong what is rite but i know that every one has there own point of view and same goes to this one..

Posted by: company logo design | July 26, 2010 at 09:12 AM

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RegardingDesign

June 11, 2010

Good Design! Good Cause! Free Books!

There's only one week left to get your entry in for the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Deserving Design contest. You could win a copy of the _Rockport_ new release _Graphic Design, Translated_ by Peter J. Wolf. Click _here_ for details.

Pretty, huh?

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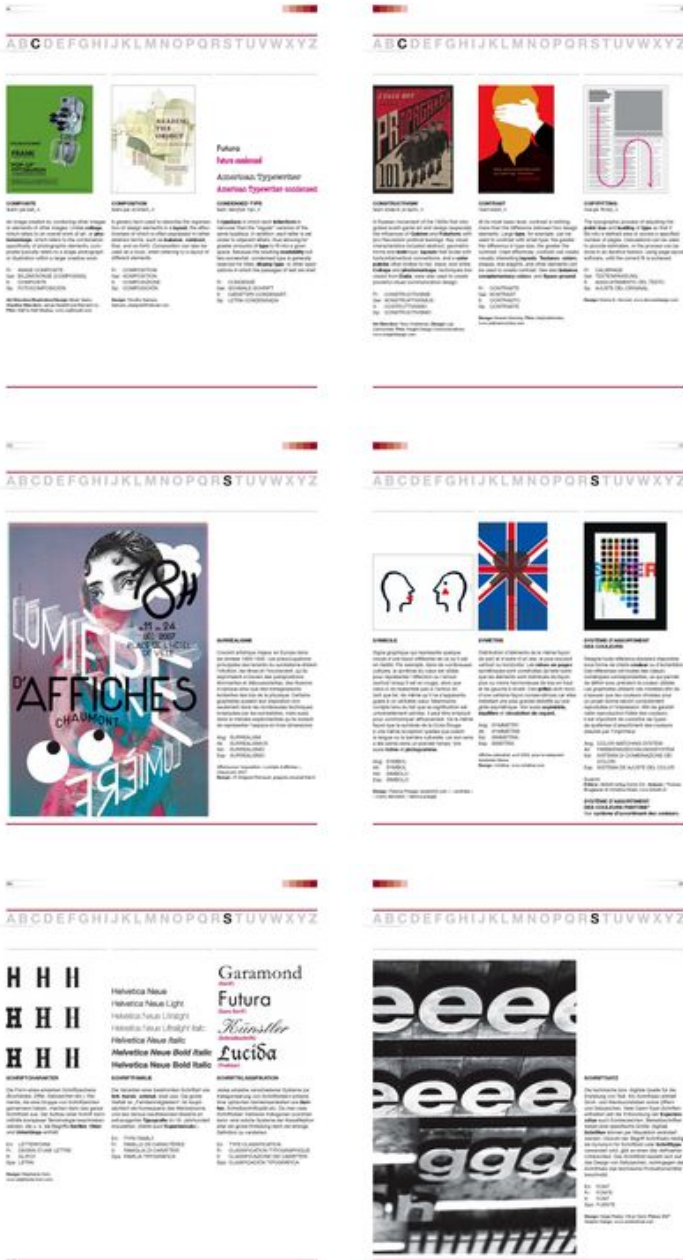
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RegardingDesign

June 15, 2010

The Great Debate: Objectivity in Design

Is there a way to view design objectively? Or is what makes design "good" subjective, based solely on the opinion of design professionals and authorities in the field?

If there is one thing I've learned, design cannot be made to appease one person. It must appeal to an audience, and it must mean something to its creator. (Concepts cannot be tailored to the likings of an instructor, for instance, who can sometimes be mistaken as the client on a project. Otherwise one hesitates to experiment across projects, their style bearing a mark of one-dimensional quality.) In other words, design is not an entirely artistic endeavor. It's a business-like venture. Quantitative. "Good" design has calculated standards that are obvious to the trained eye.
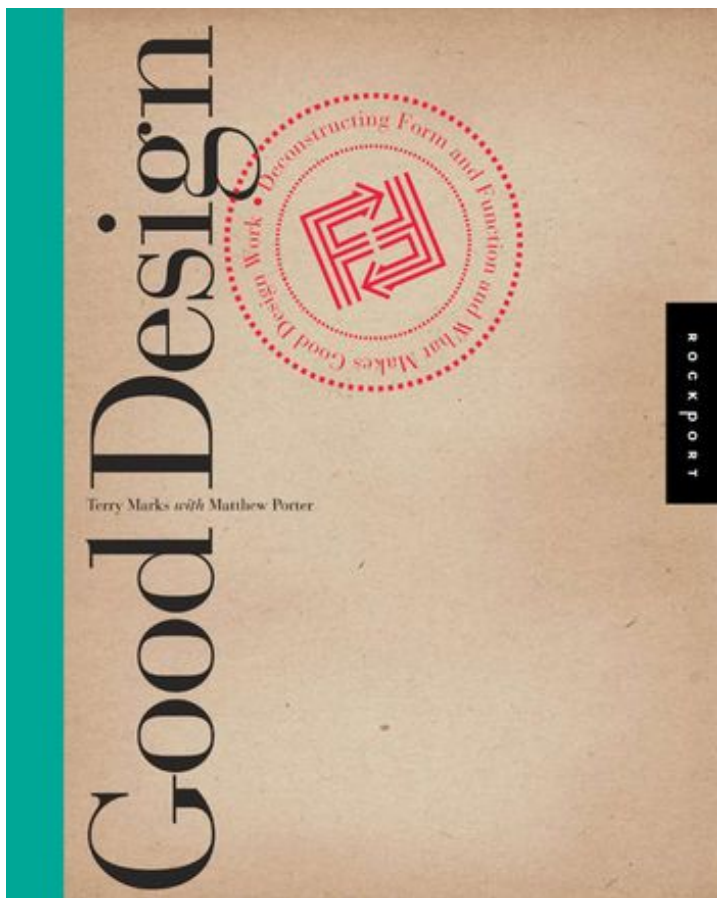
Good Design, the aptly named Rockport title by Terry Marks and Matthew Porter, attempts to explain these various criteria. In a collection of interviews with more than twenty-five of the most influential practitioners of the day, the authors try to answer the ever-elusive question: what is "good" design? Although their backgrounds are diverse, the insight of these contributors touches upon a common theme. Following is a popular definition of what the term means to them.

"Good" design communicates a message. It is timeless. It affects positive change. It is cross-disciplinary. "Good" design serves a purpose, is intentional, and relies heavily on function (less on form). "Good" design builds on the foundation of design principles and expands on those principles to create art.

So, what does "good" design mean to you? Be sure to comment below by **midnight EST** on **June 25** for a chance to win a copy of _Good Design_ by Terry Marks and Matthew Porter. One winner will be chosen at random. Good luck!

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Good design communicates both cleanly, and clearly... it's both eye catching, and holds the viewers interest.

Posted by: Ella Rue | June 16, 2010 at 10:04 AM

I consistently fall back on the Charles Eames definition of design: "Design is a plan for arranging elements to achieve a particular purpose."

"Good" design, then, can be thought of as a good plan (strategy) resulting in a good arrangement (composition) of good elements (content) and which achieves good results. If all of these are present, AND the purpose is a good one, well then you have good design.

Posted by: Cchs | June 24, 2010 at 08:24 PM

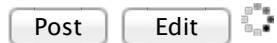Good design is not "Form Over Function", it is "Form within Function."

Posted by: Ryan | June 24, 2010 at 08:31 PM

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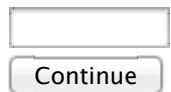
RegardingDesign

June 17, 2010

Last Call for Entries

Just a reminder that the deadline for the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Deserving Design contest / humanitarian effort / someone should be held responsible for this mess is **tomorrow** at **midnight EST.** You could win a copy of _Graphic Design, Translated_ by Peter J. Wolf. Click here for more information.

Photo by The Associated Press.

**Note:** Artists will retain all original rights for their work and will be credited appropriately on the blog. Rockport agrees not to use any artist's work, or permeations thereof, in any other format or medium or collateral material without the expressed written consent of the artist, with the exception of the rules set forth in the contest. Artist agrees to have their work featured on the blog by entering.

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RegardingDesign

June 23, 2010

You'll Never Walk Alone: A Review of 100 Habits of Successful Freelance Designers by Steve Gordon Jr. and Laurel Saville
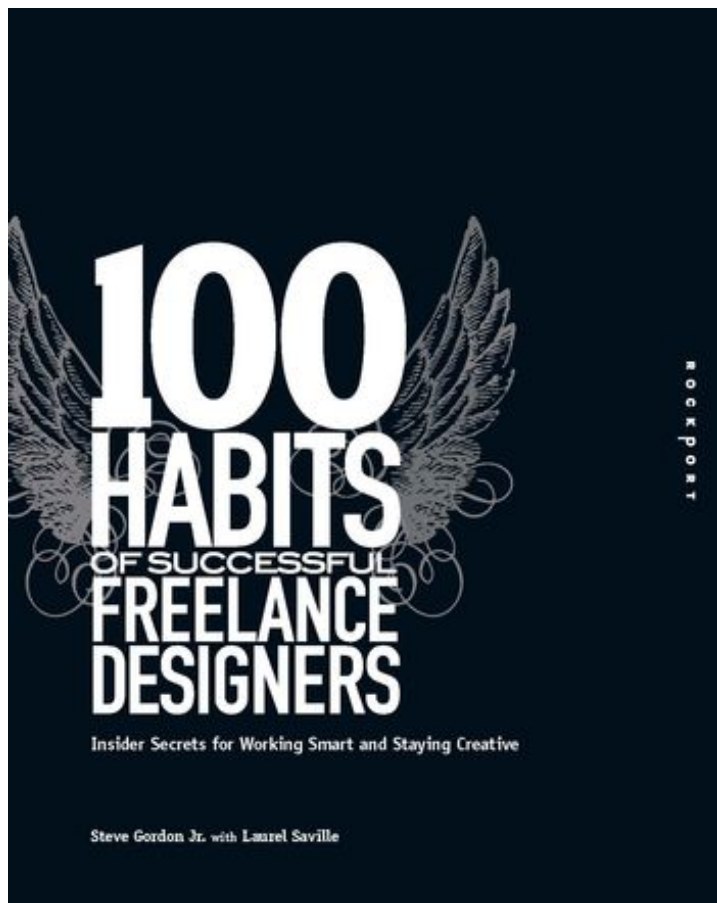
Graphic designers are some of the most ingenuous individuals I know.

They are trained translators, talented in tackling the most traditional requests (read: drunk demands) from clients and turning them into tantalizing truths. They are meticulous message makers, clearing away the clutter to carefully and concisely communicate a concept — even if it is a subliminal one. They are financially fluent and savvy small business owners free from the confines of creative constraint and constant worry.

Well, sort of.

Being a freelance designer can be a rewarding and cathartic experience for those who are capable in carving out their own careers, but it requires a resourcefulness not exactly rampant in the restricted workplace.

The Rockport title, _100 Habits of Successful Freelance Designers_, details the multifaceted, MacGyver-like qualities necessary to survive a solo (hopefully soulful) foray into freelance design. In it, authors Steve Gordon Jr. and Laurel Saville — successful freelance artists in their own right — offer up years of learned wisdom for those waxing an entrepreneurial spirit. They selflessly share the secrets of the select few who have seen the other side in all its stunning glory. From formulating finances to cultivating relationships and reaping the results of good rapport, these scintilla barely scratch the surface; there are ninety-seven other healthy habits to harness.
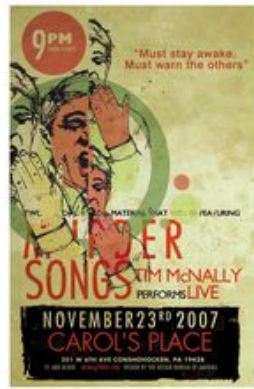
Are you a freelance designer? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Use the comment function below to tell us about your own personal adventure by **midnight EST** on **June 30,** and automatically enter yourself to win a copy of *100 Habits of Successful Freelance Designers*. What are your techniques? Tips? One comment will be chosen at random.

Increase your support system instantly!

Posted at 10:00 AM in <u>Books</u>, <u>Business</u>, <u>Freelance Design</u>, <u>Giveaway</u>, <u>Graphic Design</u> | <u>Permalink</u>

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Never, ever, ever walk around with an iPod, iPhone (or Android, whatver), or iPad without having a neatly designed portfolio on it. Sometimes, having your work right there with you is the best sales tool.

Posted by: EnergonCube | <u>June 29, 2010 at 03:50 PM</u>

What I have learned in my freelance years is you need to prove your importance to the Company/Agency so that you become that valuable member of the team for however long you may be there. An example of this is really knowing and understanding all of the design programs in & out. You would be surprised how many people in a professional setting do not know all the tricks and time-saving ways to use the programs. When employees start asking you technical questions along with design decisions you prove yourself to be an all around pro and real asset to the team, most of the time this will also help with getting your freelance time extended, which is always a good thing! All the best!

Posted by: Ryan | June 30, 2010 at 06:56 PM

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RegardingDesign

June 23, 2010
Last Call for Comments

Just a reminder that the deadline for the Objectivity in Design giveaway is this **Friday** at **midnight EST.** Tell us what "good" design means to you, and you could win a copy of the book _Good Design_ by Terry Marks and Matthew Porter. Sound good? Click here for more information or to leave a comment.
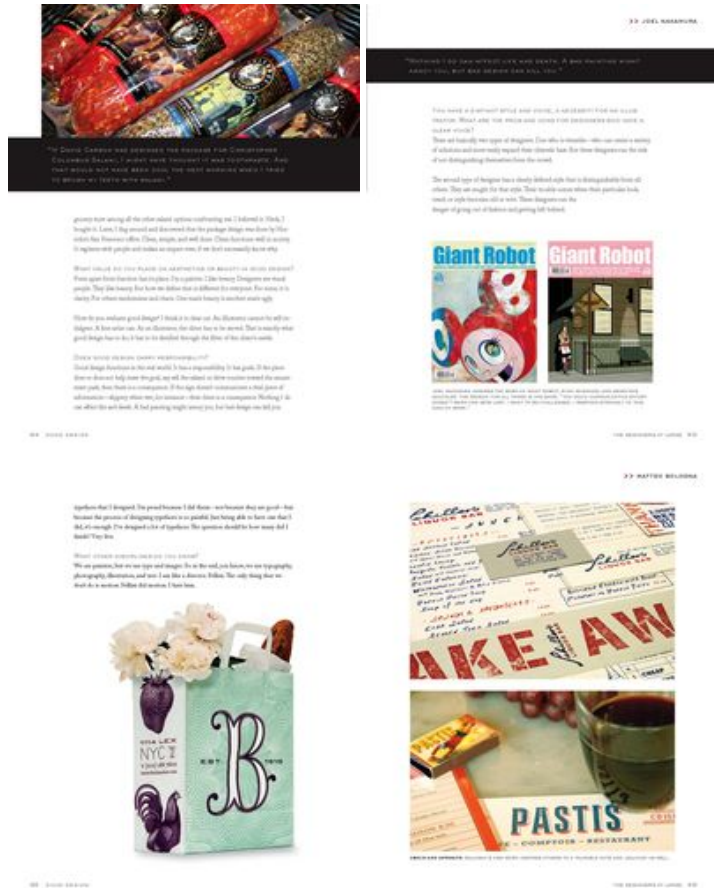
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RegardingDesign

June 25, 2010

Deserving Design Contest: The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Winners

The results are in!

But first, thank you to everyone who entered. Together, as designers, we *can* make a difference and have our voice be heard.

Congratulations to **Emile S., Ryan R.,** and **Beverly S.,** who each received a copy of *Graphic Design, Translated* by Peter J. Wolf for their efforts.
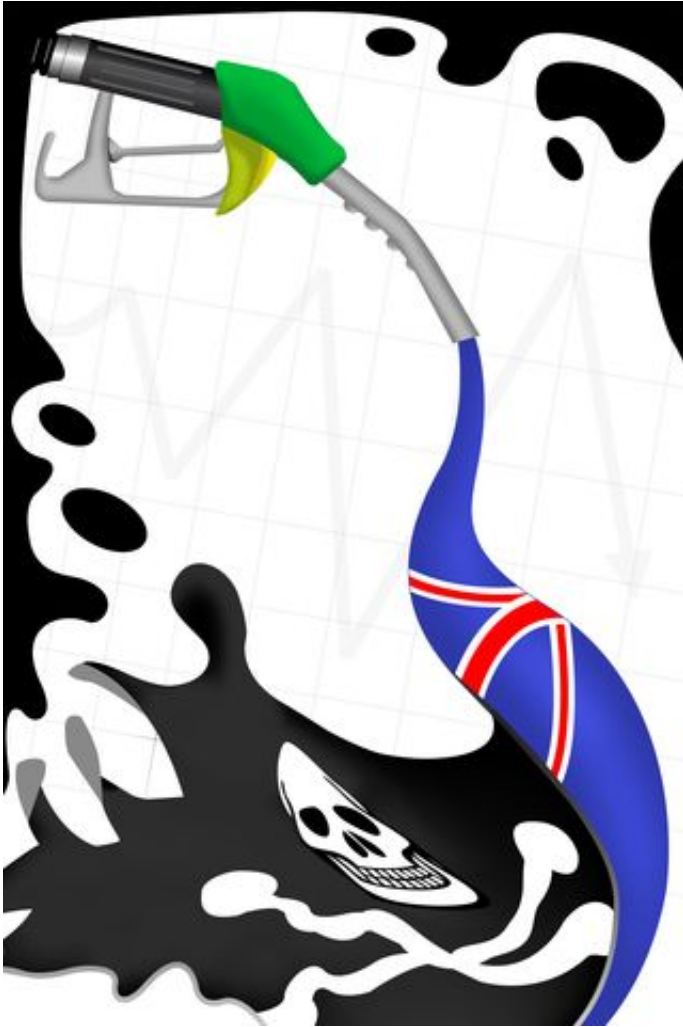
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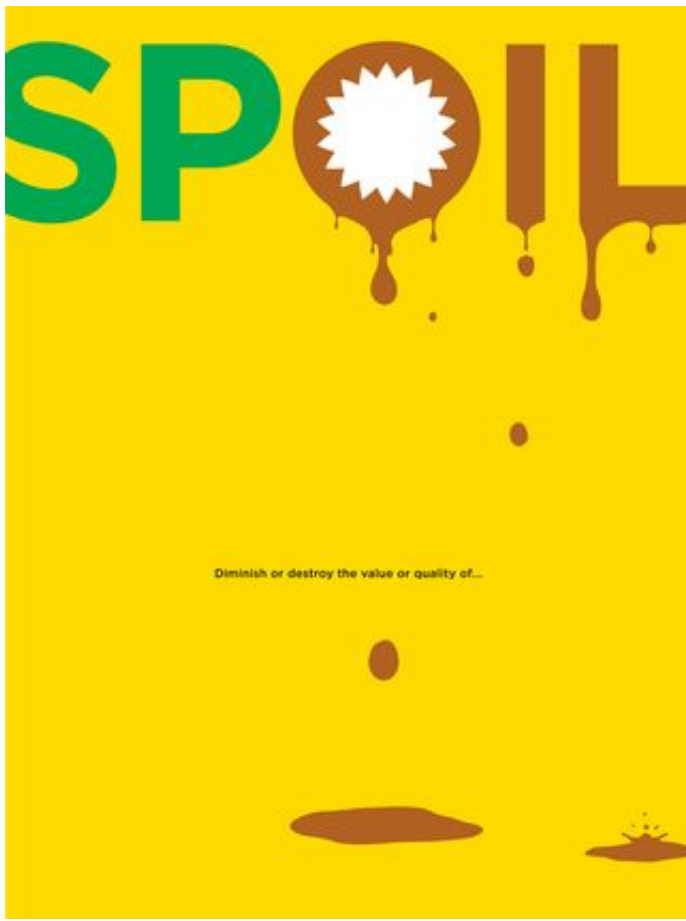
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RegardingDesign

June 28, 2010

Mass Marketing: Legal Sea Foods Navigates Uncharted Waters

Every week or so I scour the streets of Boston (and other nearby cities and towns in Massachusetts) for memorable marketing material. Collectively, we'll compare what I've captured with other convincing work across the country in an effort to preserve current trends and practices. Consider it culture commentary via creative collage.

I love the whimsical nature of these posters. They remind me of my grandfather, of musty basements full of boxes of brown boxing gloves and broken tennis rackets, and of the poor paneling job in my first bedroom in my family's first-ever (and only) house. The latter of which clearly being no coincidence.

This juxtaposition of the aged texture in these posters with the clean, sterile tile that frames them is a clever concept that the marketing executives for Legal Sea Foods were conscious of / keen to capitalize on. For one, this is not the conventional method of advertising in the subways of Boston. Posters are usually only visible from the platform *stop* (posted to the sides of the subway car or across or above benches in the tunnel itself), never in the lobby-like areas where the fare machines are located. Secondly, and as a result of this different location, these posters are not composed of the heavier cardstock material comparable to the traditional subway poster, nor are they bound by plastic or metal to keep them in place. Instead, they are made of an adhesive matte finish that allow them to hang flush against the wall. Finally, as a culmination of the first two points, there is no formal recognition that these are, in fact, advertisements. There is a lack of hardware involved, very little or no maintenance on behalf of the subway crew, and no visible competition vying for viewers' attention. After all, they could just be a collection of over sized lunchbox stickers.

The viewing of these posters becomes a nostalgic experience, then, something honest and genuine. The advertising association no longer apparent, the posters transport the average non-assuming commuter to a different time in their alteration of these widely-accepted aphorisms. However, these posters are perhaps most successful in how they use contrast to physically transform the environment immediately surrounding them. Legal Sea Foods ultimately earns the trust of the cautious consumer.

Go Logo! by Mac Cato, is the excellent new Rockport title that critically analyzes some of the world's most recognizable logos and marketing collateral. In it, he details the twelve keys or emotional attributes to creating successful global brands. Check it out!

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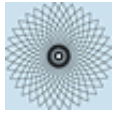
i've seen these on the red line and i absolutely love them. do you happen to know which agency or studio is responsible?

Thanks

Posted by: ag | <u>August 13, 2010 at 04:23 PM</u>

ag,

I love them, too.

I wish I knew, but I have no idea. If you somehow find out, would you mind sharing with the rest of us?

Best,
David

Posted by: <u>David</u> | <u>August 30, 2010 at 01:46 PM</u>

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RegardingDesign

June 29, 2010
Last Call for Comments

Just a reminder that the deadline for the You'll Never Walk Alone freelancer giveaway is **tomorrow** at **midnight EST.** Tell us what helpful habits you've finagled as a fledgling freelancer, and you could get your fingers on a copy of the book *100 Habits of Successful Freelance Designers* by Steve Gordon Jr. and Laurel Saville. Click here for more information or to leave a comment.

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RegardingDesign

July 02, 2010

Design is (Not) Dead: A Review of Idea+ology by Stanley Hainsworth

Idea+ology is a collection of vignettes—each one different than the one before—that proves author Stanley Hainsworth's point that (a) personal experiences vary from artist to artist, and (b) these experiences are the catalyst for unique and gratifying work. The one unifying theme through them all, however, is the notion that orig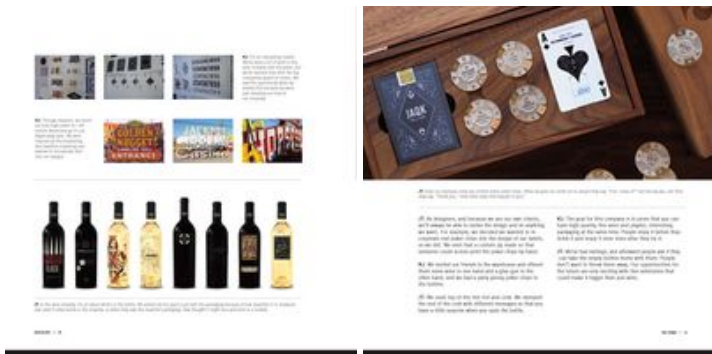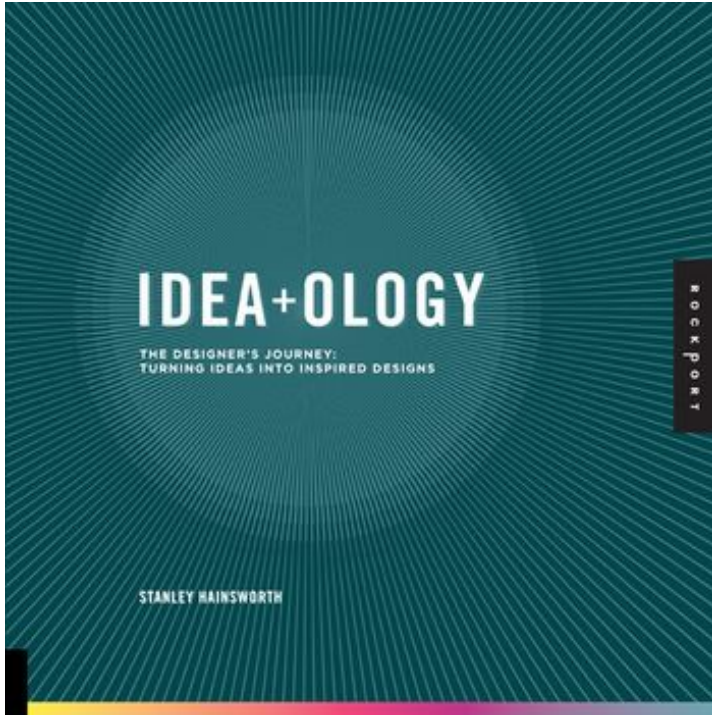inality is organic. Success in our work is contingent upon an awareness of what inspires us. And what inspires us may not inspire everyone. Indeed, it should not. Otherwise we risk complacency and, worse, conformity.


These stories are particularly encouraging from a student's perspective. I cannot recall a time where one of my professors might have honorably admitted that they did not reference design annuals, either as a regular source of inspiration or as a means to scope out the current state of the industry. The majority of the artists featured in _Idea+ology_ do not feel shame about making said announcement. They are inanely human. And their interaction with the author is comfortable and honest. This is not to discredit these types of publications. Many of them have a reasonable sample of current work to peruse, and not surprisingly, they're laid out beautifully—a cheap trap that snares the visually inclined. Still, they cannot claim to be an accurate representation of the design _world_—that would be a futile and impossible undertaking. Their popularity among design professionals is a little unnerving to me, since they tend to assume such a position of authority within the industry.

The classroom is more explicit about making this differentiation between good design and bad design. Surely, the problem lies within the vague and abstract definition of "good" and "bad" itself. (For a better understanding of the principles of "good" design, check out _Good Design_ by Terry Marks and Matthew Porter.) The impressionable demeanor of the budding designer

is probably a very likely issue as well and ought to be taken into consideration. The true cause for concern, though, is the biased nature of the faculty that students learn under (and so it goes for any editorial review board in their selection of what to publish). Yes, individuals are chosen to teach based on their design acumen. They are also almost certainly chosen for their overall philosophy concerning design in an effort to easily acclimate them with the mission of the school (or publication).

It should go without saying that good design is at least partly subjective. Most often than not it is accompanied by the letter grades "A" and "B," a few exclamation points for emphasis, and the envy of other students. Artists are not scientists. Artists are not interested in being classically conditioned. When we begin to think of what works and what does not in terms of some universal graphic design standard, we forfeit the overall ability to think creatively. The *design* process is interrupted. The direction of the project follows a seemingly predictable path. The result is an unavoidable form of imitation, and there is nothing flattering about that.
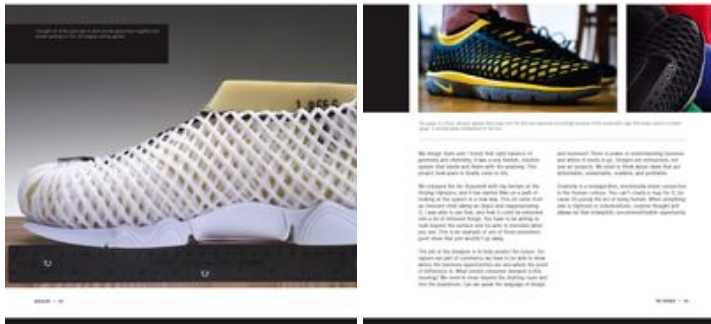
The manner in which Hainsworth crafts his argument—with the confessional like support of his peers—feels rather revolutionary. It is judicious. It is a challenge to designers to think and act like designers. He provides readers with inventive tips—from the everyday to the extraordinary—to combat idleness in each sectional redux. Whether it involves looking at seventeenth-century wallpaper, like artist Greg Hoffman did for help in designing the Nike ID Studio, or noticing one thing being re-purposed as another, as John Hoke III did when his son found a new use for polystyrene nets—shinguards! The latter eventually becoming the idea behind the Nike Air Rejuven8 sneaker. There is inspiration all around. It comes in many forms and in many ways. We have an obligation as graphic artists to capture it. It is time we take ownership of our craft. We need to counteract the status quo.

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RegardingDesign

July 13, 2010

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RegardingDesign

July 14, 2010

The Science of Things: A Review of Visual Language for Designers by Connie Malamed

Primordial human beings were a literal lot. The Lascaux cave paintings in southwestern France, for instance, are as a realistic representation of Paleolithic invertebrate you will see some 16,000 years old. Their historical significance rightly reserves a place in the world of art. The seventeen foot long bulls in the "Hall of the Bulls" are beautiful; they are both stoic and serene to look at. But it's the accuracy in the paintings' storytelling ability that's especially astounding. Reliance on game was essential for survival, and predators were to be watched wearily from a distance. The respect for both being quite obvious. Given the means (there are no reports that the Lascaux cave people used brushes, but they used the pre-determined patterns in the rock to give to their subjects shape), their message is concise and clear. It is apparent that motivation and ingenuity were paramount in capturing the correct form of communication then. And today is no different.

Visual Language for Designers by Connie Malamed is a groundbreaking text (pun most certainly intended) with new takes on communicative design that are carefully embodied in empirical evidence. It unearths our primitive pasts, our hard-wired habits and tendencies that initially helped us interpret images years ago, and in some ways laments the loss of our intrinsic simplistic nature in a modern exchange for a circus of aesthetics and a lengthy lexicon. The exhausted phrase, "design with a purpose," is examined with the same unerring understanding as our earlier forebears. The book is a no-frills fight against the peripheral forces counteracting meaningful design.
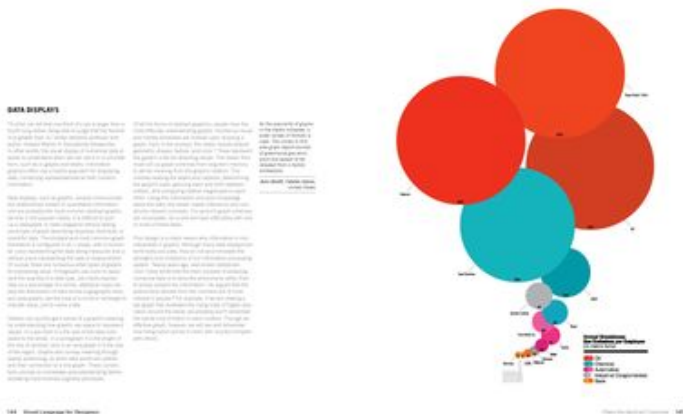
Malamed's professional background in art education and cognitive psychology is particularly refreshing in these rehashing of design principles—it has not been done before, or it's the first unique instance I've come across anyway. Conversations on texture, object size, foreground and background—all terms or concepts we're familiar with—are explained in exquisite detail alongside ebullient visual examples. However, it's the author's aforementioned expertise in something more than the epidermal that exposes the reader to association, preattentive viewing, and grouping, and their significance within the realm of design. It's an overview of how we process visual information. It's a field guide to the folds in our brain, and how we can map the thoughts or perceptions of others. It's an enlightenment of sorts, frankly, with an emphasis on artistic responsibility and record keeping. What is the work saying? Is there value in economy? Did we account for the inherent assumptions of our audience? Malamed arms us with the anticipatory ammo needed in an ever-increasing image-dependent culture. Anno Domini aside, there can be no afterthought about our intentions. We need to be assertive, not aesthetically ambiguous.
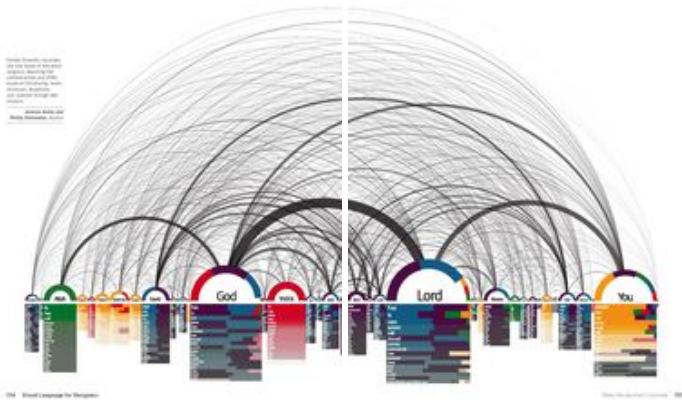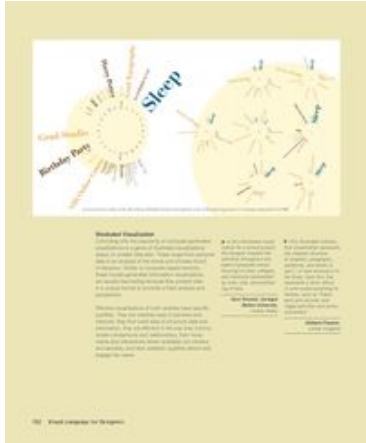
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RegardingDesign

July 16, 2010

How Do You Do? // Steve Gordon Jr., and How He Does Self-Promotion

Steve Gordon Jr. is a self-proclaimed "creative mercenary." For the better half of a decade, Steve has worked in-house at internationally recognized Fortune 1000 companies, done agency and studio work, and most recently spends his time as a successful freelance designer. His entrepreneurial spirit is enormous—it's evident in everything he does. You'll cry yourself to sleep at night wishing you had half of his disciplined work ethic. I do. Seriously. Tears.

A lot of graphic designers like their work to speak for itself, and they think self-promotion is a bad word. As a freelance artist, though, the ability to market oneself is an absolute necessary skill for survival in a competitive and competent marketplace. Is there ever a point where it becomes too much?

SG: Letting the work speak solely for itself is a dangerous thing in my opinion. I know the talent that is out there. I'm a huge fan of a lot of it! But to think that I am so fantastic that, in a field of potential millions, I will simply shine would be foolish. I'd like to think I'm that good, but c'mon, right? I still have to be my own best advocate. I come from a place and cultures where to be seen you have to make a little noise and then back it up. We say you've gotta "show & prove."

SG: Yet, there is indeed a point where it can cross the line into being boastful and even annoying in a stereotypical used car salesman way to constantly berate the public with your message (no offense to those chill heads out selling rides). The key for me is authenticity. Is this truly who I am? Am I living this and not "posing" as anything other than myself? There has to be a very large amount of me in this or I am missing the mark, in my own humble opinion. So to that end, when I promote, I like to create and tell stories of what I'm up to. Engage the casual onlooker, fan and potential client alike in an atmosphere of discovery rather than an up-sell.

Is that really a tattoo on your hand?

SG: Straight up . . . it sure is! I've got my "Hvy Crwn" (pronounced "heavy crown") on my mouse/drawing hand. My design identity is heavily woven with personal pedigree. It's a portion of my identity that has it's own pedigree and backstory. That's how much I believe in and care for what it is I do and represent. That's how much I believe in me. Not in a cocky way, in a truly self-assured "this-is-my-life-and-I-love-it" sort of way.

I like your moniker, RDQLUS. I think it's a clever way to separate one's professional life from their personal one. It also seems to be more easily identifiable as a brand. Was that the intention? Where did the name come from?

SG: Thank you. It was almost too clever in the beginning. The spelling is obviously a bit bizarre, so it caused a few issues at the start. Where did it come from? It was my habitual catch phrase that was my typical reaction to something amazing: "Yo, that's ridiculous!" I still say it! [Laughs.] So I was jokingly going to put it on a license plate, but obviously had limited space to work with. But as it had become a personal identifier, I kept it and ran with it, knowing almost immediately—and naturally—that I had to populate the name with enough goodness to be memorable and more than just a funny anecdote.

SG: As a brand, it's very identifiable—thanks in part to the strange spelling and the identity design that has accompanied it over the years. But it has always been a mix of personal and professional life, and I'd have it no other way. It has substance beyond selling a product or service. It goes back to that storytelling aspect I dig so much. Even to the point where now, if someone sees me or meets me, I get called RDQLUS more so than my name anymore. That's a huge compliment and testament to the brand and my own personal identity. I have many facets and all of them fuel the other. It's not by happenstance. I did that on purpose, recreated myself as a perpetual motion machine. [Laughs.]

What one bit of advice would you give today's aspiring freelancers?

SG: Know your role. Find your lane and roll hard in it! Find what it is you can offer, balanced with what it is you truly want to offer and aim directly at it. We ride a very unique rail in the creative community where we work solely for ourselves or partner with other entities, such as studios, agencies, or other indie creatives. The world is specializing everyday and only those who aim confidently and stay true to a vision or goal benefit from that. Otherwise it's scary enough to make you grab at any and everything, and that's when you start to hate what you supposedly used to love so much. It has little to do with your skills and much with truly knowing what you want to do and communicating that to part of the world who might need you to rock it!

Any chance I could rock one of your famous "Stash" tees for free? Show some love!

SG: I think I can hook that up. I have a couple new ones in the works. I'll keep you on the list for the promo pack!

For more on freelance design, check out Steve's book, *100 Habits of Successful Freelance Designers*.

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RegardingDesign

July 20, 2010

Mass Marketing: Downtown Crossing No Longer a Detour

Every week or so I scour the streets of Boston (and other nearby cities and towns in Massachusetts) for memorable marketing material. Collectively, we'll compare what I've captured with other convincing work across the country in an effort to preserve current trends and practices. Consider it culture commentary via creative collage.

If what goes up must come down, then the reverse must also be true.

Such is the case with Downtown Crossing, a distinct sub-section of Boston that borders the Financial and Theatre Districts. Populated with pickpockets, prostitutes, and pistol-packing pimps, the once ominous passage way was an eerie eyesore prolific with promiscuity. However, recent revitalization efforts—including the development and renovation of high-priced condominiums, nearby arts venues, and a center for shopping—are leisurely luring in locals. The area has been praised by some of the more prominent publications as an up-and-coming neighborhood for young 30-somethings yearning to yield a powerful piece of Boston property. It's the ultimate urban renewal success story. No longer pitiful, the past's heinous hole has promise and potential. A lot of this pride is evident in the size and subtle intricacies of the Crossing logo itself.

The orange color signifies youth and vibrancy. It also reminds its viewers of Downtown Crossing's proximity to the Orange Line and other modes of major transportation, surely a boon to businessmen and businesswomen. The "t" in "tOWN" (smartly intersown with the "D" in "DOWN") is shaped like a plus sign. It acts as a focal point, aiding the audience's attention to the dual word-in-word design. On a more symbolic level it reads as an intersection of other neighborhoods, uniting all walks of life. It's meant to advertise the area as one of the metropolis' main arteries. The heart of the city is warm and welcoming—Holmes's "hub" is just a healthy helping of hubris.

For more lavish samples of logos, check out *LogoLounge Master Library, Volume I* by Bill Gardner and Catharine Fishel. The first in a new series of books, *LogoLounge Master Library, Volume I,* is a collection of over 3,000 logos solely concentrating on the craft of crests and initials. You can also visit the online compilation at www.logolounge.com.

Posted at 10:00 AM in Branding, Current Affairs, Graphic Design, Promotion | Permalink

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RegardingDesign

July 22, 2010

Books: The Best Birthday Gift You Can Buy

I never know quite how to bring up the subject of my birth, its umpteenth anniversary, and the complexities of being a cusp child. I think it tends to make people feel uncomfortable. And I think it pegs me as an adroit reader of astrology—which, to admit, I am absolutely (who couldn't use the accessory advice?).

I told you, uncomfortable. Suffice it to say that today is my birthday. Let's leave the soothsayers out of it.

Beyond the occasional card bound with cash, there isn't much that catches this chap's concentration. Compactly packaged caparison are out of the question (I don't even know how to fold my own clothes.) My point is that extravagance feels like a frippery frock filled with feathers—I'm not picky, I just like personal items and the purest intentions behind them.

I still remember the first Valentine's Day gift my girlfriend gave me. It was Timothy Samara's *Making and Breaking the Grid*, actually. We had only been seeing each other for a few weeks at that point. However, through my actions or my absent-minded aberrations, I made it apparent that graphic design was a passion of mine. And pasta. And pizza. And pie. On the inside front cover, in perfect penmanship, it read, "For the inspiring designer in you." Now, that's amore.

While today's tokens are still a surprise (there will be treasures, for sure), I'm really hoping that some heart-filled prize hits my eye. I'd look forward to digging up "dormant" design with *Dirty Fingernails*, a book containing graphics created solely by hand. [Hint.] I'd hoist *The Best of The Best of Brochure Design* high above my head in hysteria. [Hint.] No, dear reader, it's not necessary that you get me anything, but I do invite you to check out all of the current and backlist titles at Qbookshop.com.

Because nobody likes a big bear bigger than themselves. Not even babies.

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Posted at 11:00 AM in Books, Graphic Design | Permalink

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RegardingDesign

July 29, 2010

Art-iculated: A Review of 1000 Ideas by 100 Architects by Sergi Costa Duran and Mariana R. Eguaras

Rome wasn't built in a day, but it's very likely that development down the street from you was.

In a society as snappy as ours, it's often difficult to find pointed, purposeful pursuits—anything acknowledged as an attempt at asymmetrics would be an astonishment (Acute angles? Forget it!). It's the same homogeneous horror story: homes being honed as huge, hulking habitats. Where's the humanity in that?

New Yorkers can burrow in their boroughs of blandness. But the answer for non-aeonian antiques, I tell you, is abroad.

1000 Ideas by 100 Architects by Sergi Costa Duran and Mariana R. Eguaras is America's absolution. Not since the father of furnishing, Wisconsin wonder Frank Lloyd Wright, has the fancy for architectural freedom seemed more authentically fixed. Cascading cantilevers made capable caves. Gorgeous and graceful geometric glass grooves more than grazed the gold standard. Given this fall from glory, though, it is not shocking that today's gainful giants hand pick their gimmicks from a grab bag of gaudy goodness.

Forgive us, Frank, for we are fearful (but do we ever make a fortune for it).

The 1000 ideas in this book restores our faith and our foothold. They are a retreat from the treatment of architecture as an abscess, as a malicious infringement on our integrity where immunity is idle and infection is imminent. We can tread an articulate career path. We don't need gauze or straws to soften our sensitivity to sterile structures. We just need the encouragement to enunciate our enormous enterprise.

Guess that's easier said than done.

Posted at 09:00 PM in Architecture, Books | Permalink

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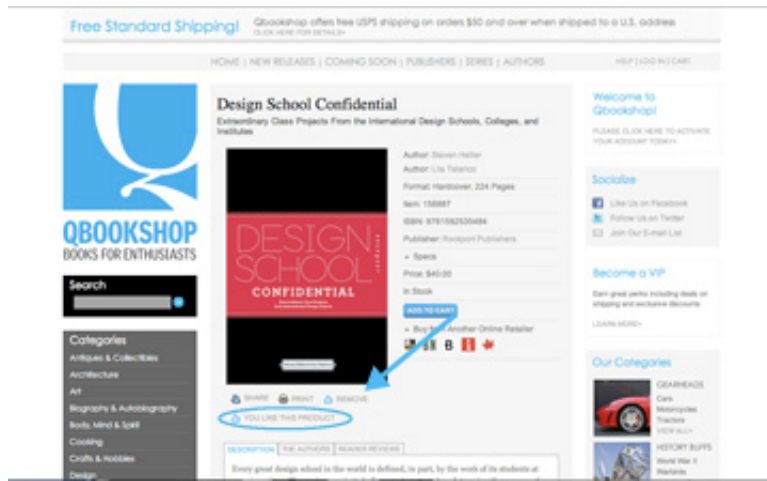
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RegardingDesign

August 05, 2010

"Aaay!" // Qbookshop.com Launches New "Like" Feature

That's right. Now you can give your biggest Fonzarelli thumbs up when you like a book on the premier virtual bookshop.

Connect with colleagues all over the world by collectively voicing your opinion. Your personal recommendation is influential in the development of a fresh and fun frontlist that caters to the current needs of the industry. Be heard!

Keep in mind that you can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter. It's just another way that Rockport, and the smart minds at Quayside, are trying to help foster an online community for designers, *by* designers.

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RegardingDesign

August 11, 2010

School's Out For . . . : A Review of Design School Confidential by Steven Heller and Lita Talarico

A few more weeks of flickering display; Summer's Dog Days are a spectacle of fiery finish before the freezing inauguration of Fall.

Sigh.

And so, in anticipation for all of the pencils, books, and teacher's dirty looks, Rockport has culled a choice collection of class projects from college campuses circling the globe. Sorry, Coop.
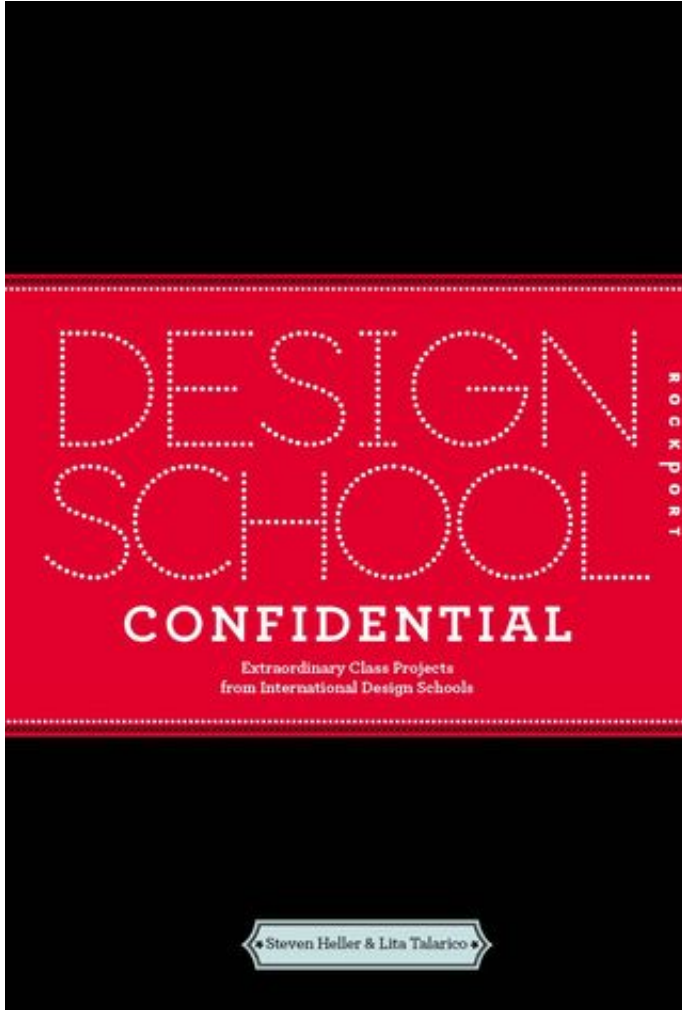
Design School Confidential, by Steven Heller and Lita Talarico, contains 53 of the most unique, polished, and, up until now, unrevealed undergraduate undertakings in design. The students in these pages—hailing from internationally recognized visual arts programs at institutions such as the Rhode Island School of Design, the School of Visual Arts, the Maryland Institute College of Art, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago—are talented to say the least. But aside from the wonderful works produced, it's interesting to see the impetus behind each individual idea.

For every project in the book students provide a statement of purpose, similar to something one would see in a portfolio review. They're descriptive (not defensive). They're brief (not blunt). They're a very good example of what one should write as a complement to a piece presented in an academic or exhibition-style setting.

Take note.

Paired with the instructor's instructions and goals for the assignment, these excerpts of information truly illustrate a train of thought that is tactile and tangible. Yet, the assignments, alone, are a great source of inspiration for those stuck or starving to strike out on their own and start anew. Student or not, see how you stack up. It's time to give it the old college try!

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RegardingDesign

August 23, 2010

Mass Marketing: Pahk the Cah in Hahvahd Yahd!

Every week or so I scour the streets of Boston (and other nearby cities and towns in Massachusetts) for memorable marketing material. Collectively, we'll compare what I've captured with other convincing work across the country in an effort to preserve current trends and practices. Consider it culture commentary via creative collage.

I'm a life-long resident of Massachusetts.

I've seen the curse reversed. I know that "dynasty" is a three-syllable word synonymous with the moniker "Pat-ri-ots." The truth—if you can handle it—sometimes hurts. But we're made of miles of Irish smiles, and in this region Celtic pride will never die.

For someone whose parents were born in Boston, it's tough to stomach the famed "Hahvahd Yahd" catchphrase. For one, crimson was not a color reserved for the classless non-corporates. My father was a blue-collar brawler, a grease monkey, a seventeen-year-old slugging it in "Slumaville." My mother was a product of the Lynn ("City of Sin") public school system, the second youngest of six, with a scarcity of food stamps to share with her siblings.

These Fiber One advertisements come to identify with the Boston dialect in a way that is not entirely obnoxious or inaccurate, ignorant or exaggerated. There seems to have been *some* research involved, as each of the posters delve a *little* deeper into the lexicon. They are—dare I say it—somewhat tastefully done. But it's not the overall execution I'm impressed with. It's the idea behind the execution, rather. It's the concept of making a national brand local.

This is a prime example of a new phenomenon currently sweeping the advertising world. Call it "localization," call it "regionalism," or call it "smaht." What it is is companies targeting a specific regional demographic, and that, based on former models of excluding a certain class, age, race, or gender is a revolutionary marketing tactic. It's a progressive train of thought. It's unifying in sentiment. It's a commitment to our common *cultural* quirks.

Red would be proud.

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RegardingDesign

August 26, 2010

How Do You Do? // Connie Malamed, and How She Does Sense

The ability to reasonably combine science and art is rhetorically reminiscent of the ancient Greek philosophers. [Connie Malamed's](#) temperate demeanor and thoughtfulness is a tasteful throwback to the theologian form. She is, by all definitions of the word, a logic. A rational, sensible, brilliant savant. If you're not yet convinced, you'll soon be. Her penchant for sound design will singly persuade you.

Your book, _Visual Language for Designers_, makes a strong case for Art as Science. In other words, there is a credible and conclusive explanation for doing things a certain way. But what, exactly, is the importance of having these hard facts in evaluating design? Is it not enough to have something look "pretty" if it communicates an idea and the client is pleased? What's the relevance of this supporting evidence?

CM: I think art as science is an interesting way of looking at it, but that's not the intention of the book or what I believe. One of the key purposes of visual design is to communicate a message or idea, so it's vital that one's target audience senses or comprehends the message correctly.

So understanding how people perceive and process visual language is a way to help ensure a message is communicated to as many in your audience as possible, not just the client. If designers get this, they can use their creativity and design knowledge to more effectively design for the human mind.

In this context, art and science are two sides of the same coin. Design theory provides the principles and cognitive science tells us what works and why. Visual Language for Designers attempts to be a synthesis of the two.

Speaking on behalf of my generation (one so obsessed and bombarded with instant access to information), this sounds like a relatively antiquated concept. Unfortunate though it may be, how do you convert this crowd of newly minted and attention-deficit designers—designers, who, in turn, must compete with one another (on deadline) for the attention of a garish global audience? Sounds like a collision course of ceaseless consumption (without compromise) to me.

CM: Rather than being an antiquated concept, the theories that arise from cognitive science research are relatively fresh and new. And research on the brain often corroborates these theories.

If designers are concerned with getting the attention of their global audiences, they'll find that a little science of the mind can help them learn how to get a message across quickly and efficiently.

I've devoted a few chapters to these types of topics, such as Organize for Perception, Reduce Realism and Charge It Up. As I mentioned earlier, when designers begin to learn more about how the mind deals with visual information, I think they'll see it's very intertwined with design theory and complements it nicely.

Is the recent boom of social media to blame for our collective lack of concentration? Are we just another lazy, spoon-fed segment of society? How does this bode for the future of graphic design, both as a forum for communication and as an art form?

CM: I guess I'm not convinced that one generation has a lesser ability to concentrate than another. I'd have to see lots of research over time to be convinced. Certainly, digital communications and social media can split a person's attention, but I'm guessing that when people of any age find something that intrigues, interests and fulfills them, they'll pay attention to it.

If it's true that younger readers of websites scan through them quickly, perhaps they are just able to glean information more efficiently. I think that the resources and tools available to young graphic designers are increasing, a wealth of information and knowledge surrounds them and that there are great mentors out

there. If they love what they do, they'll do great work. I feel very positive about the future!

Socrates may have said it best when he positively admitted that "I only know that I know nothing." Is it possible to persevere in a field that constantly evolves? Are these scientific factoids our tools for firmly treading the changing landscape? Is it a start? Or as designers should we always expect to be slightly discouraged in our pursuits, hopelessly chipping away at perfection?

CM: Actually, I think the only fields worth paying attention to are the ones that constantly evolve. Life is all about change and growth and if you're not engaged at a visceral, creative and intellectual level, then you start to stagnate.

I do think understanding how the mind works is not only fascinating, but as you say, it can provide a grounding force, which is one of many forces of influence in design. It's not the only one, but understanding how we comprehend visual language brings about a new level of awareness that could influence the way designers approach their craft. If my book contributes to this awareness, then I've done my job.

Posted at 10:00 AM in <u>Blogs</u>, <u>Books</u>, <u>Design Education</u>, <u>Graphic Design</u>, <u>Interviews</u> | <u>Permalink</u>

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Art and science are two sides of the same coin--well-said. As graphic designers, we struggle with the natural tension between design that is visually appealing versus design that is educational/informative. Contemporary "science of the mind" helps us achieve both at the same time.

Posted by: H. S. | <u>August 30, 2010 at 11:46 AM</u>

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RegardingDesign

September 10, 2010

Redesigning is Hard to Do: A Review of Recycling & Redesigning Logos by Michael Hodgson

Twenty years ago it was the most serendipitous of meetings. Movie-like. A perfect marriage of film noir that mixed and mingled with the majesty of a mightly Marlon Brando marquee. From the depths of your innermost being, you knew that *this* logo was that *it*. The blue hues. The carefully carved calligraphic text. The confident, self-reliant client. Maybe your best work yet.

But never once playing the critic, this ego centric love affair spawned a series of not-so-special sequels. Over time you became self-absorbed. Defiant. The original logo—stunning, smashing, splendid—swelled to an obese brute that struggled to remember its own lines. No longer pertinent. No longer treasured. A masterpiece massacred.
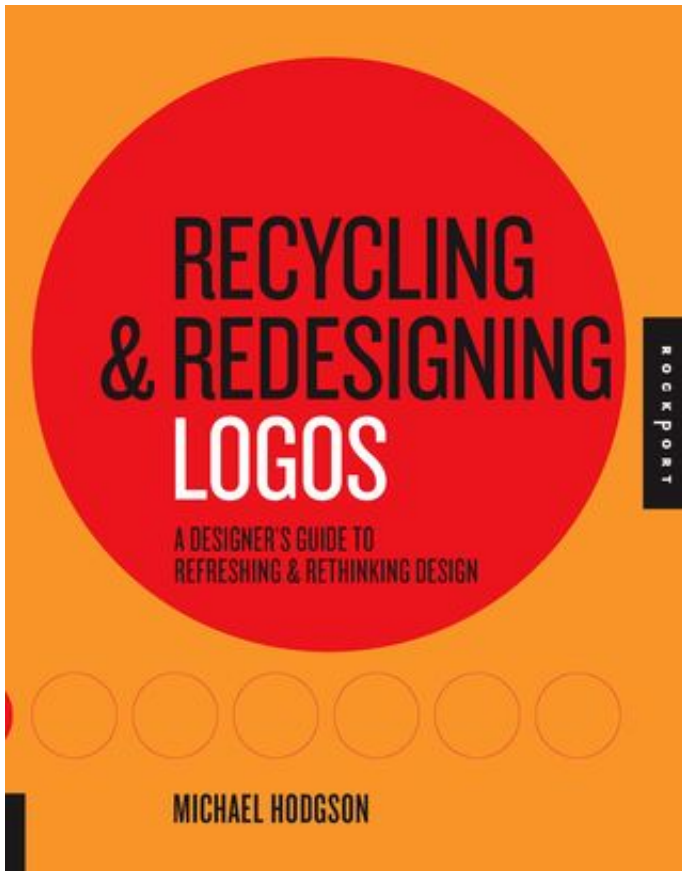

Recycling & Redesigning Logos by Michael Hodgson is an important reminder about the relevance of reinvention. It's a call for objective analysis and research in our own work—an honest evaluation of what works and what doesn't. It's an evolutionary album of logos extraordinary, with an empathetic (sometimes conservative) approach toward the execution of our own amateur endeavors. In fact, it's Hodgson's demand for discretion that's most discerning.

Hodgson explains the difference between recycling a logo and redesigning one with ingenious illustrative intent. The samples of work selected covers the gamut of quick fixes to lengthy, labor intensive re-dos. Often times, though, after a proper and diligent study of the preexisting elements, a design can be saved with very little intervention. It's a simple readapting of pieces, usually from a minimalist perspective. Recycling a logo might mean a retooling of the color palette—from four to two-color. Or it might mean converting to a more contemporary and common sans-serif like Helvetica. But never a combination of the two. It's an update to the popular predecessor. A version 2.0.

A redesign, then, is that all consuming undertaking that is almost always accompanied by a sense of dread. Endless rounds of revision. Ungrateful non-design types. It is never a cooperative process, but it is a learning one, and redemption can be found in the fact that with a new design one is equipped with a new set of design (as well as personal communication) skills and certainly a more diverse portfolio. Rough sketches not ultimately used in the final product might spur several side projects. There is an opportunity in redesigning for us to express our personal style and creative abilities, which, given the constant push-and-pull from clients, we might not have been able to reign in alone.

We need to create distance between ourselves and our work if we wish to be successful. Redesigning is hard to do, but sometimes it's absolutely necessary.
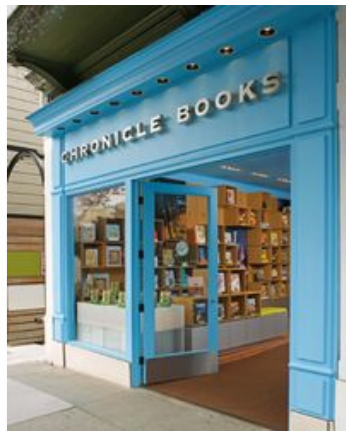
Have your own idea for a redesign? Maybe it's for the cover of a favorite book of yours. Are you brave enough to dismantle the widely successful Penguin emblem as a way to test the mercurial water? Or perhaps it's those iconic golden arches you want to fry. Large or small, we'd like to hear it. Post your suggestion using the comment feature below before **midnight EST** on **Wednesday, September 15** for a chance to win a copy of *Recycling & Redesigning Logos* by Michael Hodgson. One lucky winner will be chosen at random. Good luck!

Posted at 12:00 AM in Books, Branding, Business, Graphic Design, Logos | Permalink

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Recently saw the book at a local bookstore - a great resource for any identity designer, especially one involved in brand redesigns or evolutions.

Posted by: Jeff Fisher LogoMotives | September 10, 2010 at 01:09 PM

Absolutely, Jeff.

The evolution of logos is something most of us happen to be conscious of and/or sensitive to, being detail-oriented and all. When one is new we either "like it" or "hate it," depending on the relationship we had with its predecessor. Hardly do we ever consider the changes themselves by placing ourselves in the shoes of the designer.

This book does exactly that.

A great addition to any library!

Posted by: David | September 10, 2010 at 01:33 PM

Logo design to me is the hardest thing and the most fun thing to do at the same time. This book definitely belongs on my bookshelf... after I read it over and over, of course!

Bill Dussinger
Penny Lane Graphics
http://www.plgraphics.com
bill@plgraphics.com

Posted by: Bill Dussinger | September 10, 2010 at 01:43 PM

Bill,

Rockport is giving away a FREE copy of the book!

All you need to do is propose your own idea for a redesign (preferably for a national brand/something the majority of us are familiar with).

Please use the comment function on this page to enter. The winner will be chosen at random.

Posted by: David | September 10, 2010 at 01:49 PM

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RegardingDesign

September 13, 2010

AIGA Lecture Series: The Professional Craft of Design

Rockport Publishers and AIGA have teamed up together to put on a series of author lectures from some of the most relevant and influential graphic designers of our time. These artists—at the forefront of their craft—will discuss the finer points of the industry from a wide range of topics gathered from their own personal experiences. All lectures will be followed by a Q&A session and book signing.

NEW DATE ADDED!

In addition to the **Columbia College Chicago** dates below, Rockport and AIGA have confirmed a third lecture at **Philadelphia University** on **September 27**. Steven Heller, author of The Anatomy of Design, The Design Entrepreneur, and Design School Confidential will be presenting at 7 PM at the Kanbar Performance Center. The event is open to all students, faculty, and designers living in the Philadelphia area.

More dates / locations / authors to be announced!

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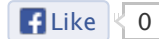
RegardingDesign

September 14, 2010
Last Call for Comments

Just a reminder that the deadline for the Redesigning is Hard To Do giveaway is **tomorrow** at **midnight EST.** Tell us what product you'd like to redesign if given the chance (and what that redesign might entail), and you could win a copy of the book Recycling & Redesigning Logos by Michael Hodgson. Click here for more information or to leave a comment.

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RegardingDesign

September 15, 2010

Video Exclusive!

Steven Heller, who will be making an appearance at Philadelphia University on September 27 (see previous post), has kindly provided us with links to several of his videos from the School of Visual Arts Web site. The first link covers matierals from his book *The Anatomy of Design*. The second link is a series of videos that disects the ideas behind his book *The Design Entreprenuer*.

Steven is also the author of *Design School Confidential*, a wonerful text that showcases top talent from some of the premiere visual arts programs around the world (see review).

Enjoy!

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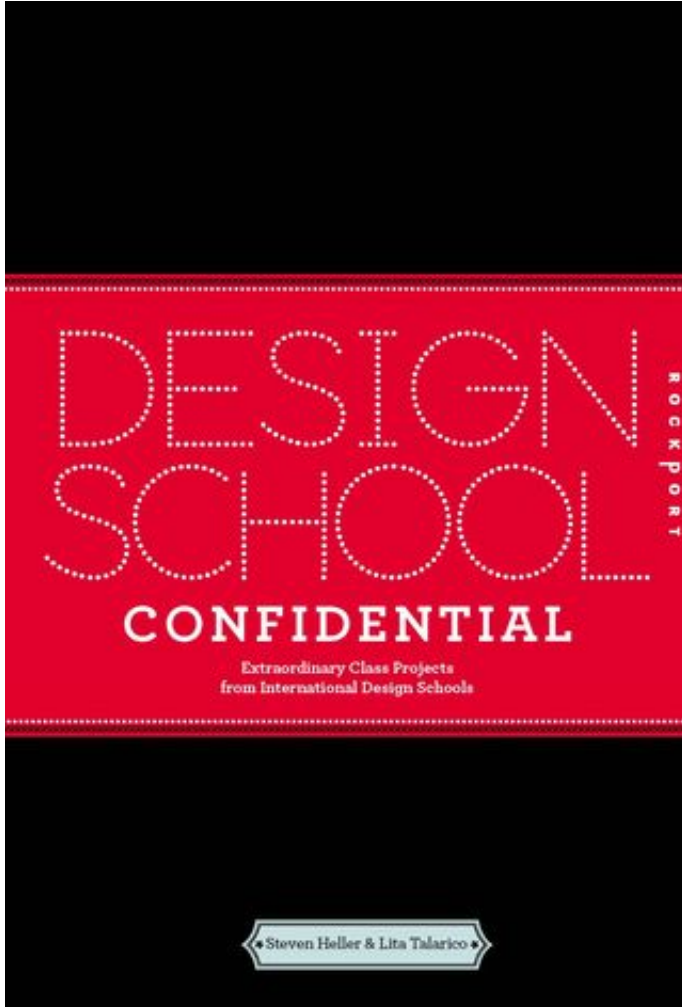
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RegardingDesign

Show Me The Money: The Dollar Redesign Project

Chances are you may have already seen this. Chances are I'm the last to know. In the event that neither are true, I advise you to read on.

[Richard Smith](), a creative strategy consultant in New York, has taken on the ambitious and arduous task of redesigning the dollar bill. But not without your help. Aptly named [The Dollar Redesign Project](), Smith has called on professional graphic designers from across the country to design newer versions of the familiar greenbacks in what he calls a means to stimulate the troubled economy. It's a tender topic.

Legal matters ought to be taken into account, surely. And any graphic artist knows that there are limitations when it comes to printing, especially when there are federal security fibers and watermarks to consider. But aside from the simple criteria that need to be met. Aside from the politics, even. Why the need to redesign in the first place? What's wrong with the current look of currency? It's a cultural symbol. A universal language. It's a fully functional document that has achieved the very purpose it was meant to serve.

In this case function has to trump form. And while graphic design is, essentially, a problem solving field, I don't think the United States economy is that problem for us to solve.

It is a fun project, though, with some interesting results that might be worth replicating in a class (or other creative) setting.

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RegardingDesign

September 23, 2010

Simply the Best: A Review of The Best of The Best of Brochure Design (Vol. II) edited by Rachel Hewes and Allison Hodges

What does it mean to be the best of the best?

Well, I was once considered the best of the best at Magic The Gathering (a card game much like the classic RPG Dungeons & Dragons). Amongst my closest friends, of course. And that was before the advent of the Nemesis and Prophecy expansion packs when Fading, Foils, and free spells became all the fad. I was the envy of enemies with my enchantments and artifacts from the pre-pubescent Fourth Edition, handed down to me by my D&D-loving uncle, whose avatar, "Lord Stalkingwolf," was a level 19 Dwarf Rogue.

But that was a long time ago.
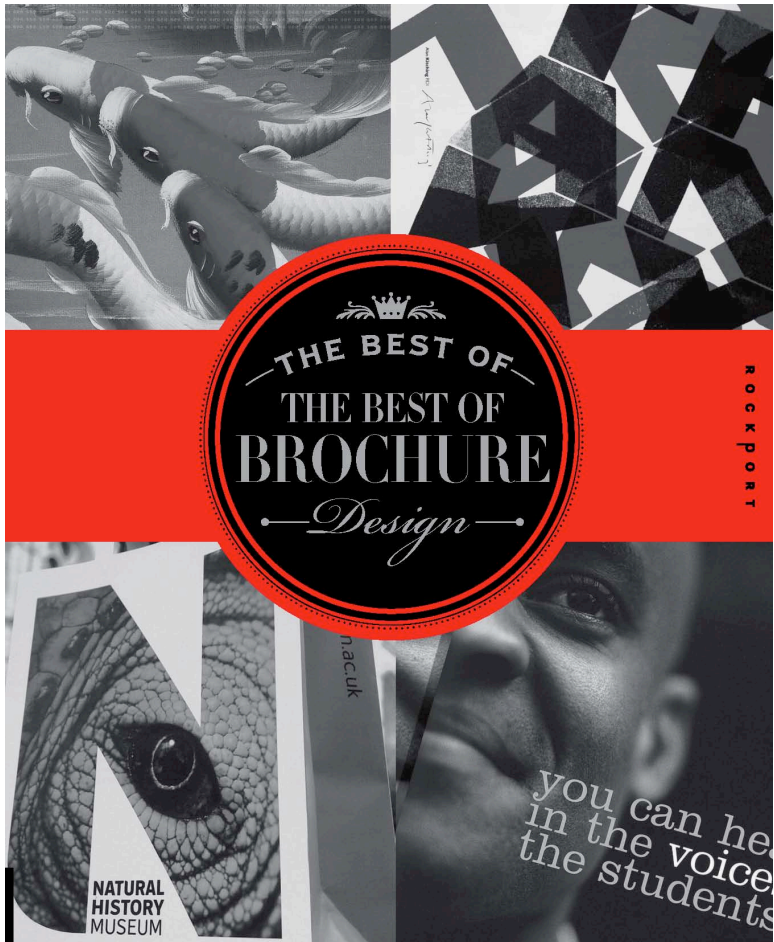
(No, that isn't me in the photo. And no, I never did win a plaque with my name on it. Minute details.)

What I do know is that the brochures included in Rockport's *The Best of The Best of Brochure Design* (Vol. II) are better than all of the rest. The book is a picture-perfect pictorial worthy of a place on your coffee table. It's a conversation starter, a creative reference, a complete visual tutorial—for those determined and resourceful enough—on successful brochure design with an exhaustive look at trends, treatments, and tonality. It's a modest precursor of even better things to come. These artists have nothing to be ashamed of.

My favorite section is undoubtedly the one on product and service brochures (see images below). The three or four pieces provided by each firm combine to make a distinctly robust identity system. There is a great deal of personality in the overall work, and a bit more artistic license than in some of the other brochure categories covered. Conversely, it's impressive to see

what the nonprofit, educational, institutional, and health care brochures accomplish given a more limited means of expression. It's a much more conservative approach to design as these types of organizations tend to rely—in large part—on the charitable donations of a scrutinizing public. The designs are clean and powerful; the impact, clearly, is in the execution. It's the relaying of an experience (usually positive) as opposed to a brand. Objective and impartial, they might be more aggressive in their search for the correct color palette (think more pastels, less primary). They almost always use photography.

It's nice to compare these different avenues of thought in what is a seamless and natural progression of strong conceptual devices. Combined, they strive for the title of the best of the best of brochure design.

Posted at 10:00 AM in <u>Books</u>, <u>Brochures & Catalogs</u>, <u>Graphic Design</u> | <u>Permalink</u>

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RegardingDesign

September 28, 2010

Perfect Harmony: A Review of The Beatles vs. The Rolling Stones by Jim Derogatis and Greg Kot

It sounds akin to a question I'd ask my own friends.

What would you rather be: a Beatle or a Stone?

No, this is not a deep philosophical inquiry on the theory of creationism. Nor is it a hotly debated viewpoint on reincarnation. It's a loaded question, surely, on one of the most regarded rock and roll rivalries in music history.

So, the mop tops from Abbey Road? Or the Glimmer Twins from Main Street?
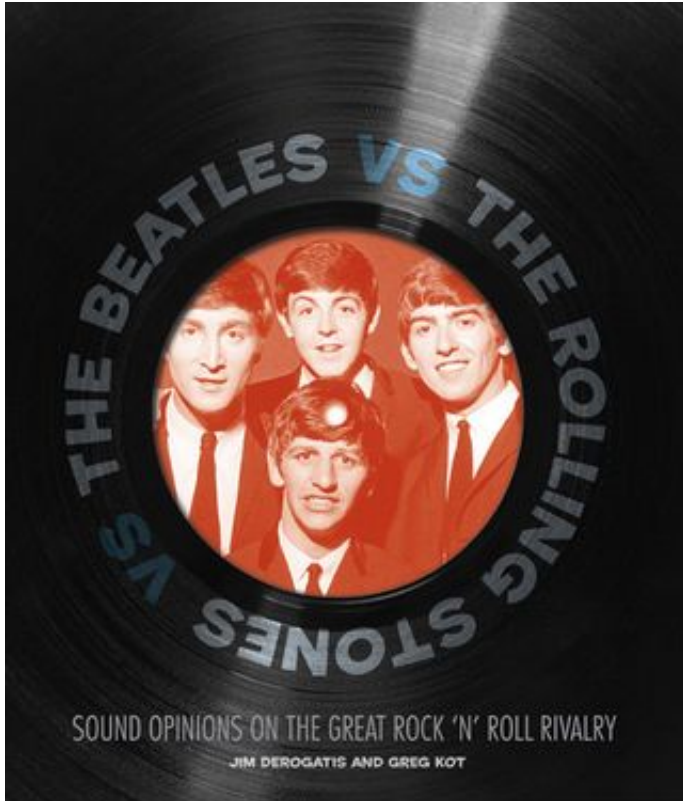
That's exactly the way Voyageur Press' new book, The Beatles vs. The Rolling Stones, opens up. An interesting premise, and an interesting book, that sustains this contagious question from beginning to end. With the same conversational tone you would actually have with your friends, authors Jim Derogatis and Greg Kot, respected authorities in the field of music journalism, write with precision and clarity in an interview-style editorial that is more than just a list of details and dates.

The writing, superb and lively, lends itself to a smooth narrative that does not compromise the weightiness of the subject matter or make it seem trite. The Hell's Angel incident at Altamont. Covered. The infamous Harrison falling out. Covered. There is no initial declaration about the book being a definitive documentary. It's the "opinion" of the authors with shreds of savvy music knowledge that allows the material to resonate. Let it breathe. Let it breathe. Light and airy, it's an enjoyable history—filled with two beautifully detailed pull-out timelines, intimate in-studio photography, and sidebar anecdotes—of the British Invasion of the mid-1960s.

But please, no more talk of rivalry.

It's only rock and roll (but I like it).

Posted at 10:00 AM in [Books](#), [Branding](#), [Business](#), [Music](#) | [Permalink](#)

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RegardingDesign

September 29, 2010

Perfect Pitch: A Review of 1000 Music Graphics by Stoltze Design

The music industry is a business just like anything else. It relies on a stable economy, both international and domestic. It is propeled by a steady stream of revenue, coming in the form of concerts, public performances, appearances, and CD or MP3 sales. However, unlike a lot of other businesses, the music industry is eternally married to its self-image where there can be no successful attempt at reinvention. Each artist has their own persona that feeds the public's fascination.
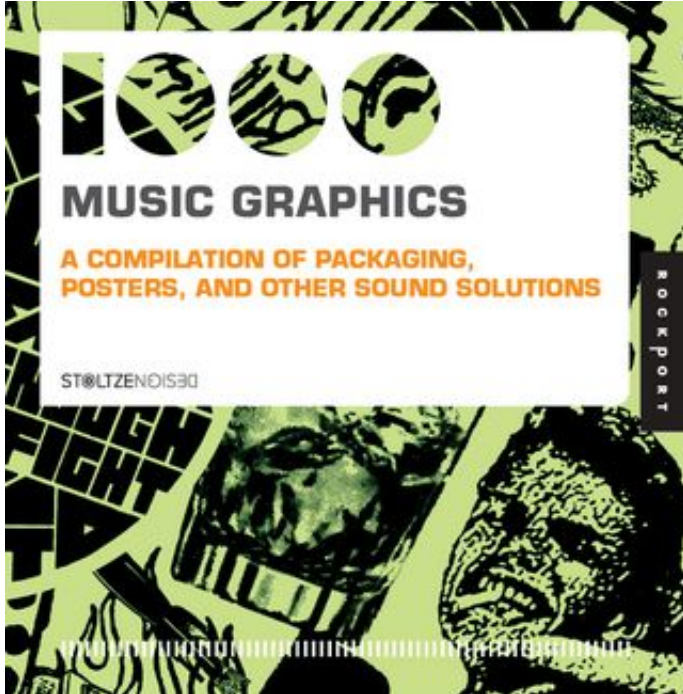
In an industry where identity and first impressions are vitally important, 1000 Music Graphics by Stoltze Design is a handy compendium of some of the best meet and greets. Stoltze, in a tasteful disk-sized sampling, shows how design defines personality in the form of t-shirts, posters, and CD packaging. The merchandise in these pages is intrinsically linked to a list of artist traits (introverted, extroverted, etc.). It's the designer's job to express these quirks without getting knocked off track.

Successful music graphics transcends the artist and becomes art itself. Truly, a unique situation where art promotes art. There is no host or parasite. It's a thriving symbiotic relationship within a charming creative cycle.

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RegardingDesign

October 06, 2010

Upcoming Events in the Boston Area

Fall tends to be a busy time for most. So, before all of the Black Friday madness and cases of candy comatose, I thought I'd call your attention to some noteworthy events.

Tomorrow is the opening reception for Graphic Intervention: 25 Years of International AIDA Awareness Posters 1985–2010. The exhibition—153 examples from 44 countries—runs until December 4, 2010. More information, and a synopsis of the event, is available on the Massachusetts College of Art and Design Web site. You can also preview the posters (including catalog essays) by visiting www.graphicintervention.org.

Beginning on Friday, Endicott College will be accepting online submissions for their New Voices, Unique Visions exhibition. The contest is open to all undergraduate students, graduate students, and those who recently graduated (Spring 2010). Finished pieces can be print or motion-based, and may be school projects, internship or pro-bono work. All entries must be submitted by November 19, 2010.

Mark your calendar!

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RegardingDesign

October 11, 2010

Bridging the Gap: A Clothing Company's Controversy

Clip art? Maybe. Lack of communication? Surely. Carelessness? Absolutely.

My initial qualm with the new Gap design is not with the new design itself (as bad as it is), but with the fact that the logo was redesigned in the first place.

Let's talk typography.

The old design utilized tall, condensed type with tiny slab-like serifs. There was a nice balance between thin and thick strokes that elevated the brand's elegance. And the bold blue box as backdrop that framed the three letterforms in a fittingly simplistic way was easily recognizable. The old Gap design was an international identity. Aside from the celebrity championing and the swingin' get-out-of-your-seat-and-dance commercials that inspired a craze, the logo was what acted as the brand's voice. It was, what we call in the industry, timeless—even outlasting the rebirth of a popular music genre.

Let's talk technology.

Chances are very improbable that the new logo is a combination of clip art and something created in Microsoft Word. It is also difficult to believe that Gap wouldn't have consulted a professional designer—either in-house or through a private firm—concerning the redesign. Let's debunk those two allegations right now (even if they are justified jabs at the junk produced).

All graphic artists know that for a logo to be mass reproduced (at many different sizes, for many different "canvases" [from clothing tags, to signage, to shopping bags]), it must be rendered in Illustrator as a vector graphic so as not to compromise the output quality. Also, given the current (dire) financial situation of the company, it is highly unlikely that they wouldn't value the input of a collection of creatives. Even if money is an issue, a top-notch design is almost a guaranteed good return on investments. In other words, they weren't designing within a box.

However, none of this is to say that the concept was sound.

Let's talk theology.

The use of Helvetica as a safety or cover is an absolute sin. It is one of the, if not the, most used typefaces throughout the world. Multifaceted and ambidextrous, it has garnered the reputation of a utility-type player in the field of logo design. But with little support from other elements, or an absence of context captaining the design, the use of Helvetica is nothing more than a handicap. And in the case of the new Gap logo it is starkly different from what we're accustomed to—the gap between new and old being a gorge. I won't even discuss the square that seems to be floating in space, revolving around the "p." It's heresy.

If the executives at Gap had read Michael Hodgson's _Recycling & Redesign Logos_, then they would have known to redesign sparingly, if they were to redesign at all. The changing of the logo was not a neccesity, and it really should have been one of the last options to consider if they still wanted to viably compete in a consumer-based market. It was a costly mistake for a company that ultimately dug its own grave—now _the_ corporate cautionary tale.

Posted at 12:30 PM in [Branding](#), [Business](#), [Current Affairs](#), [Graphic Design](#), [Logos](#), [Promotion](#), [Typography](#) | [Permalink](#)

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Knee-jerk corporate strategy. Companies dealing with challenging circumstances often call an old play from the corporate playbook. Believing there's a need to invigorate their business, executives decide to change the company's logo. It's a psychological thing for corporate executives. We need a shot of adrenalin, they believe. Redesigning our logo will help achieve that goal.

Posted by: <u>HarvPR</u> | <u>October 12, 2010 at 12:55 PM</u>

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RegardingDesign

October 12, 2010

Upcoming Strand Event in NYC

Didn't I say that this was a busy time of year? If you live in, near, or will be visting New York, take note.

This Thursday, October 14, 2010, the super sleek Strand bookstore will host Judith Salavetz and Spencer Drate*, authors of the new Rockport title *Creating Comics!* Accompanied by world renowned comic artists Keith Carter, R. Sikoryak, and Neil Swabb, the authors will open the event by discussing their book, which has been touted as an exploration of the imaginations of 47 of today's most respected comic book and graphic artists. Carter, Sikoryak, and Swabb will follow with a Q&A session.

The free event is from 7–8 PM. Twenty Strand bags designed by R. Sikoryak will be raffled away at the presentation. You can even pre-order a signed copy of the book from the Strand Web site if you are unable to attend.

For more information, visit: http://www.strandbooks.com/app/www/p/calendar/#1517.

Judith Salavetz and *Spencer Drate* are award-winning creative directors, designers, authors, curators, and packagers specializing in music and pop

culture books. Combined, Salavetz and Drate have designed for such artists as Lou Reed, The Velvet Underground, U2, Leonard Cohen, The Ramones, Talking Heads, Joan Jett, and Bon Jovi.

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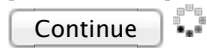This is only a preview. Your comment has not yet been posted.

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RegardingDesign

October 19, 2010

It's Grap: Consumers Complain to Corporate About Heinous Logo

And just as soon as it began, it was over.

The following is a statement released last week by the President of Gap Brand North America, Marka Hansen:

"Since we rolled out an updated version of our logo last week on our website, we've seen an outpouring of comments from customers and the online community in support of the iconic blue box logo.

Last week, we moved to address the feedback and began exploring how we could tap into all of the passion. Ultimately, we've learned just how much energy there is around our brand. All roads were leading us back to the blue box, so we've made the decision not to use the new logo on gap.com any further."

Banana Republic
Piperlime
Old Navy
Athleta

Design by Moeed Mohammad

Hansen goes on to say how it wasn't the right project at the right time for crowd sourcing. (After some initial irrate comments, and after having sprung the new logo on the public via the Web without any warning whatsoever, did they actually start to call this lack of communication "crowd sourcing." It was vile reaction, not constructivist critique). It's a sorry list of excuses. It's an almost-apology, abundant with apathy, that animosity had to pry out—the logo seems to have been an afterthought, really, with the reason for the press release being an attempt to save face with the loyal consumer base.

As a designer I have to say that I'm quite offended by all of this. No, I'm disgusted. To think that a design—something cleverly (and carefully) conceived—can just be completely thrown away and replaced with anonymous dreck undermines the complexity of our craft. In an ongoing fight for fair wages—since we often have to convince the client what our work is worth —this sort of stultiloquence stifles the strides we've made as a whole.

But in the melee, there were those who chose to restore dignity to our profession. Over 1,000 to be exact. In an open contest to design a newer, better Gap logo, 99designs received 4,660 logo submissions in just five days. You can view all of the designs here. Don't forget to vote for your favorite!

And in other, more uplifting news, check out the chic Strand bags that were given away at the *Creating Comics!* presentation:

Score!

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RegardingDesign

October 21, 2010

Corn & Peaches: Additions to the Rockport / AIGA Lecture Series

The Tea Party Express rolls on. And so do we.

Next stop:

Indiana University's Herron School of Art and Design (Wed., Oct. 27), where Jenn and Ken Visocky O'Grady, authors of _A Designer's Research Manual: Succeed in Design by Knowing Your Clients and What They Really Need_, will discuss the ideas of "leadership" and "network," and how these buzzwords pertain to the creative professional. Their presentation, "Eventually Everything Connects," is free and open to the public. Those who attend will be eligible to enter a raffle to win the "essential bookshelf"—20 inspiring graphic design titles!—courtesy of Rockport and AIGA . **The event begins at 6:00 PM in the Basile Auditorium, located in Eskenazi Hall.** Click the image below or go to Herron's Web site for more details.

Followed by:

Savannah College of Art and Design (Thur., Oct. 28), where John Foster, author of New Masters of Poster Design: Poster Design for the Next Century, Dirty Fingernails A One-of-a-Kind Collection of Graphics Uniquely Designed by Hand, and the forthcoming 1000 Indie Posters, will give a presentation on any of a myriad of design topics, and conclude with a Q&A session and book signing (books will be available for purchase). The event is open to all students, faculty, and designers in the Savannah area. Don't forget to register on-site to win a collection of essential design books from Rockport Publishers! **Registration is from 6:30 to 7:30 PM in the Arnold Hall Auditorium. Presentation begins at 7:30 PM.** For more information contact Joseph DiGioia at Savannah College of Art and Design at jdigioia@scad.edu or AIGA/SCAD at aigascad@gmail.com.

Take advantage of this amazing opportunity!

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RegardingDesign

October 25, 2010

Come on in, Stay a While: A Review of LogoLounge 4 by Catharine Fishel and Bill Gardner

Imagine a place where 130,000 logos live in a readily searchable database, organized by keyword, category, and company. Imagine a series of miniature, easy-to-carry print volumes, where logos can be looked up for quick reference and analysis. Now imagine a place where gum drops and lollipops line a lazy chocolate canal, and where sugar hills bloom delicious daffodils begging to be sipped.

It's not a world of pure imagination I tell you. Well, the first bit that is.
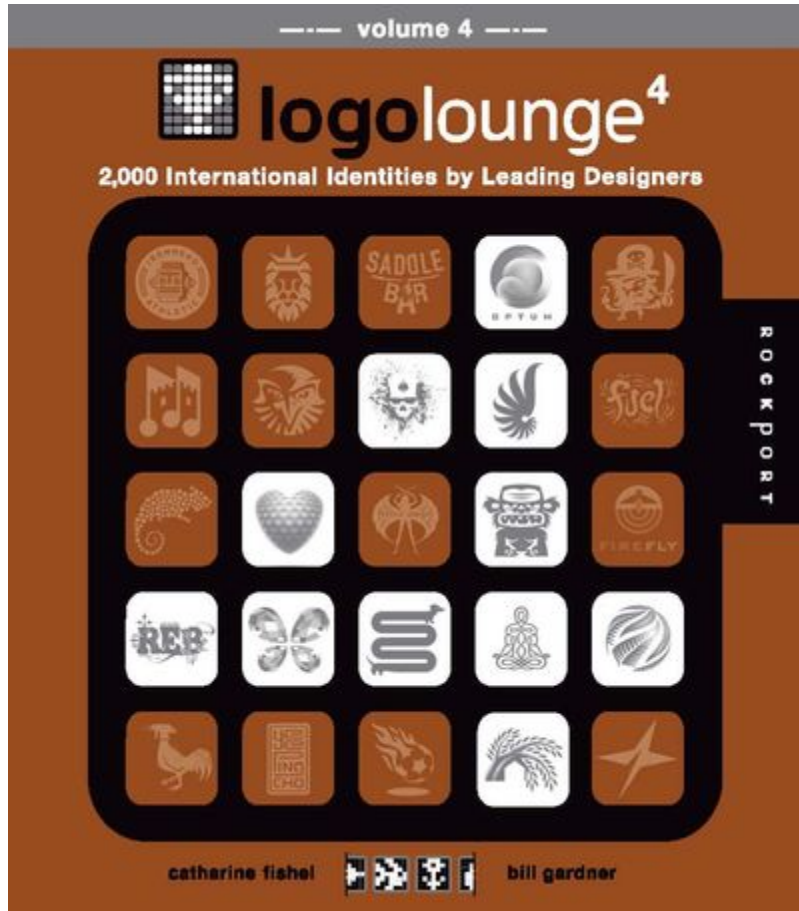
Welcome to LogoLounge.com and _LogoLounge 4_ (mini), the most comprehensive collection of logos around. The brainchild of Bill Gardner, with Catharine Fishel as editor, LogoLounge.com gives designers access to an array of international identities. But more than some HTML hangout, the Web site also allows graphic artists to expand to the ever-growing library by uploading their own work. It's a real-time reflection of current trends.

LogoLounge 4 (mini) is a rehashing of the best-selling fourth volume now in a smaller paperback format. The pages utilize a clever alpha-numeric table—a nod to the neat order online—that contains the best (judged by an accomplished panel of artists) of the emblems entered for publication. From food to nature, to mythology and sports, all sorts of brands are represented in this runt to the Internet edition.

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RegardingDesign

October 27, 2010

Look Who's Designing Now: Adobe Releases Digital School Collection for Students K–12

And I thought I was a young designer.

Adobe, who we all know as the company responsible for virtually killing off Quark and monopolizing the graphic design software industry, is now ready to add new applications to their already expansive arsenal (still haven't updated to CS5? Me neither). Aimed at adolescents, the Adobe Digital School Collection is a five-program package that teaches students Web publishing and Web site management, audio editing and podcast production, digital video, and more (read the Business Wire press release). These grammar school gurus can even create ePortfolios with the latest version of Acrobat Pro. That's right, ePortfolios. It's the Fisher Price for the pre-pubescent Paul Rand's that permeate our planet.

Growing up in the digital age, a part of the "Net Generation," learning the computer was second nature. Reports were expected to be typed. Research almost never involved going to the library to peruse a catalog, but instead involved large subscription-based databases to search. Staying in touch meant writing on a friend's "wall" or updating one's status. Desktop publishing, though, wasn't an intuitive concept. It was a skill, a trade, that took much practice. It was, after a conscious decision to study graphic design at the higher education level, an intense investment of time, money, and effort. But that's not the case anymore it appears.

How will professors stay a step ahead of their savvy students? And what will the value of a graphic arts degree be with the coming of this new technologically adept generation, when the emphasis seems to continually be more about the portfolio anyway?

Furthermore, is this an exploitation of children for profit? Is Adobe undermining the importance of an art school education? Or, conversely, would this encourage institutions to be more selective in their admissions process, pushing the plane of creativity? Are kids inadvertently being pressured to prematurely chart their career path (sooner than they are now)? Or are they just being pressured to be omnipotent entreprenuers, capable of exploring all electronic media?

Lots of questions. Lots of implications. Be sure to share your thoughts in the Comments field below.

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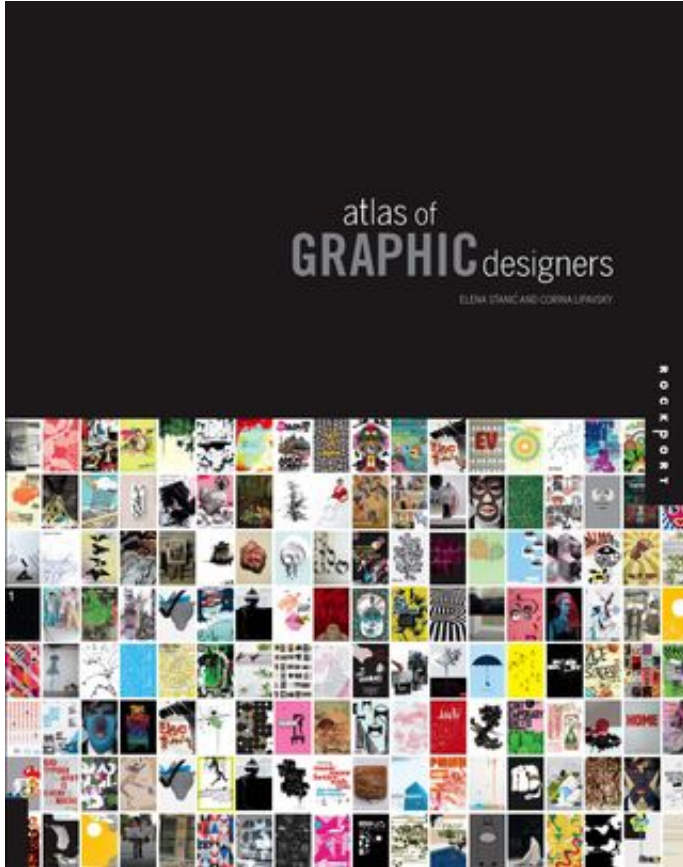
RegardingDesign

November 08, 2010

They've Got the Whole World in Their Hands: A Review of Atlas of Graphic Designers by Elena Stanic and Corina Lipavsky

And so can you.

From Oslo, Norway to Tokyo, Japan. From Bath, UK to Tehran, Iran.

And back again.

Atlas of Graphic Designers by Elena Stanic and Corina Lipavsky is your round trip ticket to graphic design's geographic gems. Including an all expenses paid, get-out-of-my-way buffet, serving up the best creative cuisine from sea to shinning sea. A steal-of-a stay at an exotic 2,000 foot tower, where you can take in the most superb sights for hours (unobstructed). And an expertly narrated tour—even better than the Louvre—that won't bore or berate or brake the bank.

Ninety-four graphic designers (there's a brief yet balanced biography for each), representing 206 sections of the globe, pervade this 600-page book. Multiple mediums are explored in detail and in depth that test our design headset and fixed frame of reference. The sample of work is substantial, both in volume and in breadth, especially for a cross-world collaborative such as this. It's the most complete guide yet.

This is one trek you'll never forget.

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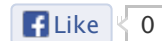
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RegardingDesign

November 10, 2010

The Perfect Package: A Review of The Packaging and Design Template Sourcebook 2 by Luke Herriott

I'm a graphic designer, but that doesn't mean that I'm technically inclined.

Truth is I can't fold a straight line, blind or with some visual rule to follow. I'm sloppy with scissors, clipping through cardstock like a game of drunken darts. I make excessive errant marks with Exactos, splitting the sides of board into small black eyelashes.
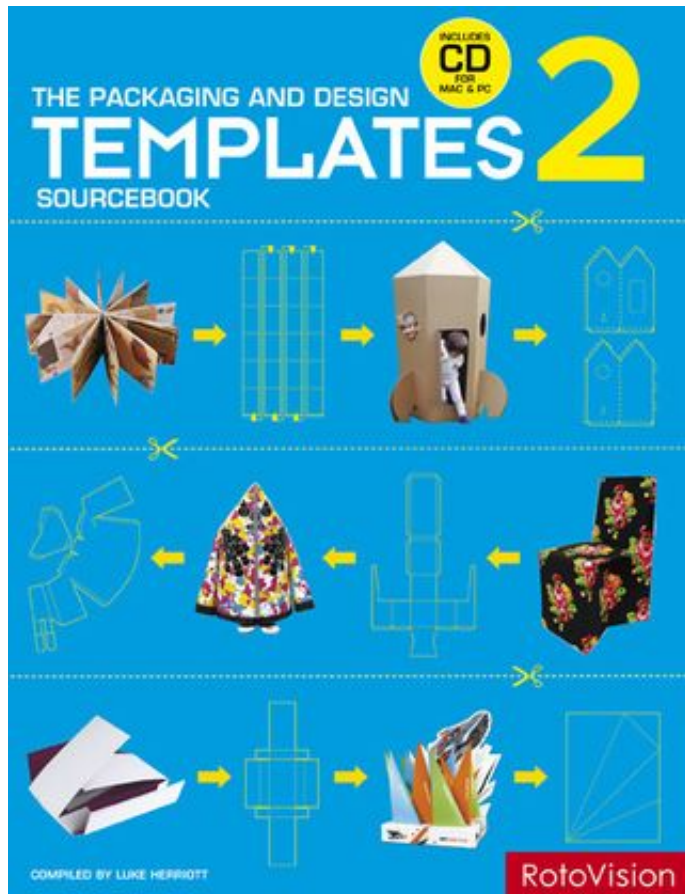

I always miss my cue, which is why _The Packaging and Design Templates Sourcebook 2_ by Luke Herriott is a dream come true.

The illustrative examples—ranging from invitation design to books, brochures, and catalogs—provide fool-proof instruction for us non-packaging people. There's some useful blueprints for creating CD cases, with the finished product for comparison alongside. This exercise is easy on the eyes, and could prove to be quite useful as a clever and convenient way to promote one's electronic portfolio. For those really ambitious artists there is even a diagram on how to build a five-foot rocket ship. Yes, a five-foot rocket ship.

But now for the best part.

Included with the book is a CD (compatible with Mac and PC) that contains all of the templates as editable EPS files. To repeat: Included with the book is a CD that contains all of the templates as editable EPS files.

How perfect is that?
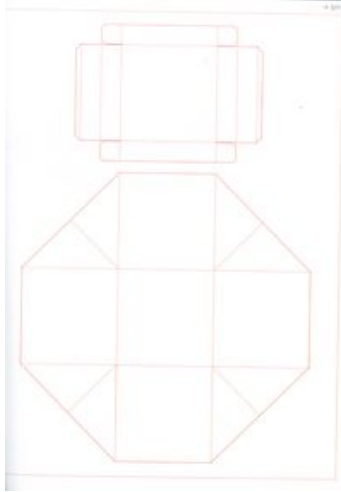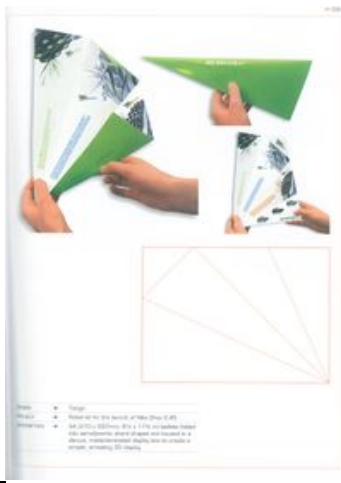
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RegardingDesign

November 24, 2010

Qbookshop Thanksgiving Sale!

This year the fine folks at Quayside are giving thanks by offering a cornucopia of craft books at a fraction of the cost.

Everything at Qbookshop is 30% off when you enter the promo code FEAST. That's all Rockport titles. All Quarry titles. All Fair Winds titles. And more. There is literally something for everyone on your holiday shopping list.

So beat the Black Friday lines (they've already started) and restore some peace of mind. But hurry, this offer ends midnight CT on Monday, November 29.

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RegardingDesign

November 29, 2010

Even Steven: A Review of 1,001 Symmetrical Patterns Book & CD by Jay Friedenberg and Jacob Roesch

Asymmetry bothers me—the haphazard use of acute and obtuse angels augments my anxiety. It's a conniving concept, abstruse and opaque, that begs the question: intention or mistake?

Symmetry, on the other hand, is stable and secure. It's a satisfying sight, calculated and serene (oh, the nerve), that makes asymmetry seem like an obscenity.
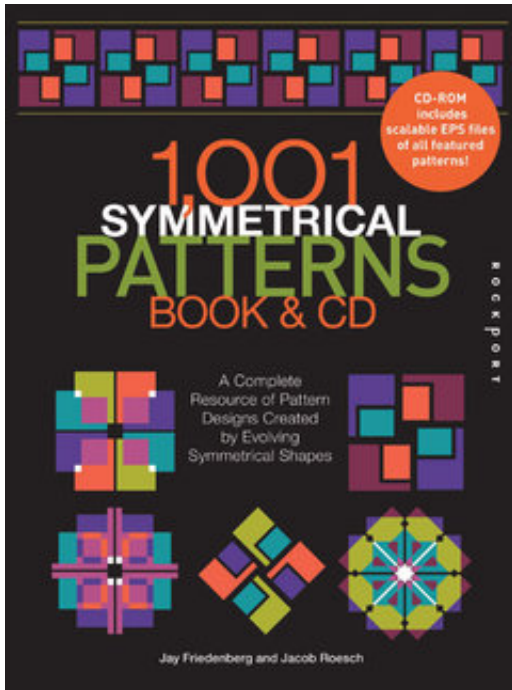
Case in point: 1001 Symmetrical Patterns Book & CD by Jay Friedenberg and Jacob Roesch. This book, aside from containing 1,001 symmetrical patters in print and on disk, is an argument for level, well-balanced design that utilizes simple shapes to procure more complex forms. In short, symmetry needn't be boring.

And in all of the 1,001 patterns it's not. In fact, one may be surprised to find some of the designs symmetric at all—they're that intricate (unlike grandma's dusty dollies). The looks are new and unique, ready to be adapted electronically for use in logos, promotional material, or publication design. From the "Ball & Spiral" to the "Leaf Vine," thousands of inspiring ideas will fill your mind.
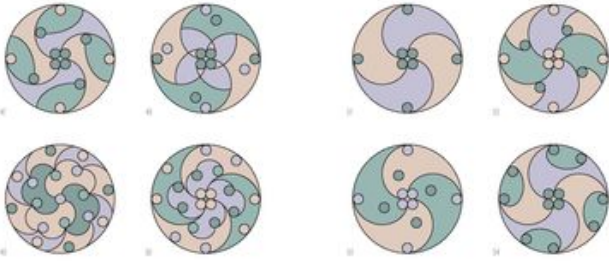
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Hi! I am the Sustainability Coordinator for Clackamas Community College in Oregon City Oregon. Would it be OK if I used one of the graphics from your website in the College's Sustainability Tour Brochure?

Please feel free to contact me to see how the graphic will appear.
Thank you!

Posted by: Mike | November 30, 2010 at 02:36 PM

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RegardingDesign

December 01, 2010

Red is the New Old

My girlfriend and I strolled down Newbury Street on Sunday to cement our yuppie status, and to acclimate (and attempt to relate) with the somebody's of popular society. To be prized. To socialize. To put on a professional guise with short drives to the corner store and the running of other chores. Our most cherished desire? Gourmet attire that would grab the ire of my blue collar father. A new North Face jacket: a $250 minimum investment.
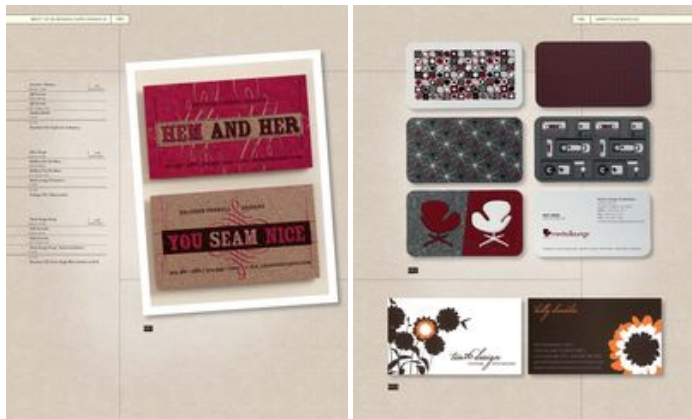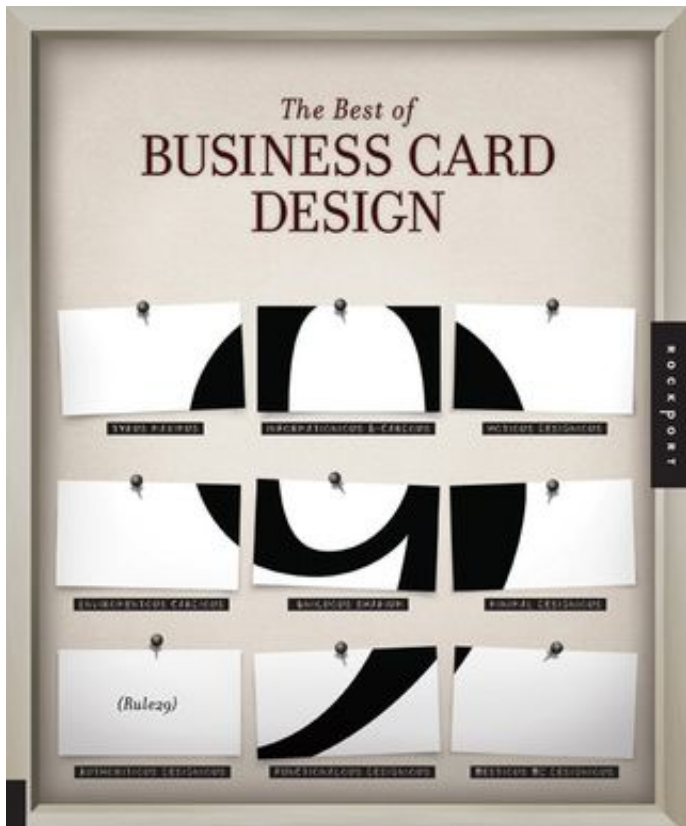
I may have spoiled her Christmas surprise completely. But it was a compromise I was willing to take to find the right coat size and shape. And though costly, I knew the company's unrivaled reputation for quality. It was a practical gift. A useful one. Part maternal and part material, satisfying the need for shelter, safety, and excess. But the business card they handed me had no appeal. It was stale and difficult to access. The terms of sale almost sacrificed over a slight oversight—their lack of design direction being their blight.

This was oblong and wrong. Who could find it in a flap of fold-up photos and packaged gum? It wasn't functional. It was too small, too trendy. It looked like a tag sagging from the end of a sleeve, a reminder of pricey frou-froué.

The business card is an important part of any stationary system. It is foremost a line of communication. It includes basic contact information, and in some cases a brief biography or abstract, all the while adhering to and accentuating the company's brand/identity. _The Best of Business Card Design 9_ by Rule29 is a collection of outstanding corporate and logo design that shows the worth of the business card as an extension of creative self-marketing.

And to prove how much you mean to us, Rockport is giving away a copy of their latest book in the "Best of Business Card" series. E-mail us at regardingdesign@gmail.com with an image of a business card that you think best exemplifies the purpose of this medium. You can also use the comment feature below to post a link to the work. Please remember to credit the artist. Submissions must be in by **midnight EST** on **Wednesday, December 8** to be considered. Good luck!

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ooh i need to read this book, i have a terrible business card, it's totally off centered!

ps. love the dr. seuss like quality of your post!
happy holidays!

sami

Posted by: samantha | December 01, 2010 at 10:32 PM

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RegardingDesign

December 08, 2010

Get Published: Advice from a Book Editor

What does it take to get published?

Well, if you were to ask me that question when I was an undergrad at Emerson my answer would undoubtedly be "thick skin." It would be "immunity from embarrassment." And I might add "continued persistence in the face of failure," though now I'm just being a little dramatic (or am I?).

Colleagues lined their dormitory walls with rejection letters because "it was a nice gesture." Because, after all, among the unsolicited manuscripts (called "slush pile" for a reason) they found, looked at, and even briefly read yours. Because, finally, you had a letter from the Paris Review addressed solely to you. Because, ultimately, you were touching greatness by competing with geniuses like Junot Diaz and David Sedaris—it was your brief and bowed but insipring brush with fame. Cue lame let-me-down.
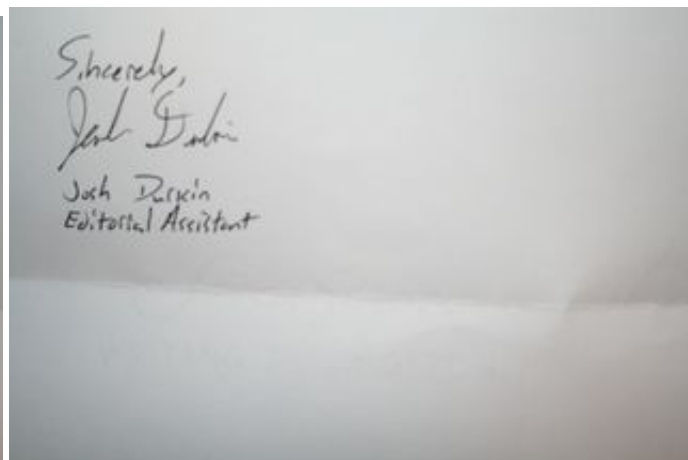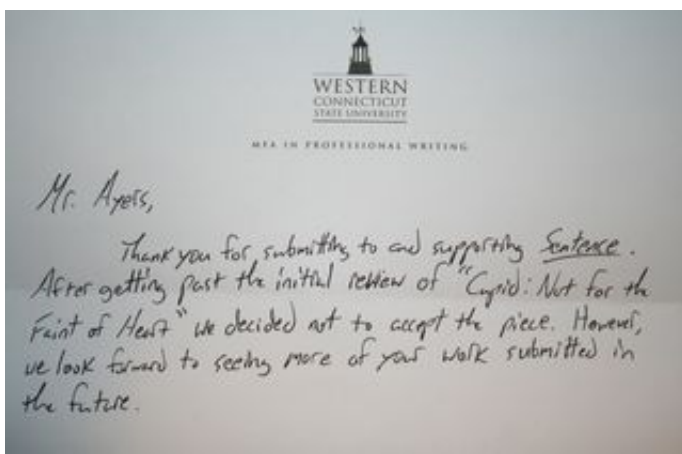
There's hope yet: handwritten and signed!

Did we know then how lucrative of a career this was? Sure. The unlikelihood that even one of us would become an accomplished author? You bet. But despite (or in spite of) our mother's coddling and our father's insensitivity to our artistic ability, we thought we were the next big-city Bukowski. Each and every one of us; we were in love with what we believed made us unique.

Maybe it's why, after feeling such defeat, I applied to one of the best graduate schools for education, trading in my grandiose dreams for nation-wide practicality. (Teachers are always in demand.) Maybe it's why, after rejecting BCs offer to martriculate, I settled on a paid internship that promised career ownership. (Let's pay off the loans before taking more out.) Maybe it's why, after working in a publishing house myself and interning for another on the side, that I have a hard time finally deciding on design, my true passion. (Another risky venture, another likely blunder.)

That's why—not to rationalize—it's wise to let those who know the industry best keep us abreast of the industry overall. Like Emily Potts, acquisitions editor at Rockport Publishers, who was recently featured on Felt & Wire for her on the ball advice. Pointed, resourceful, and shrewd—it's an article much overdue for us publishing panglosses. I strongly advise you check it out.

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RegardingDesign

December 09, 2010
Qbookshop Holiday Sale!

If you missed our Thanksgiving sale (and my ridiculous attempt at <u>cornucopia humor</u>), well, shame on you. It's nobody's fault but your own.

However, since no one should have to pay retail in the face of real recession, we're going to give you another chance. For the entire month of December (that's 31 days now), everything at <u>Qbookshop</u> is 30% off. Just enter promo code **DECEMBER** in your Qbookshop cart upon check out. This offer ends **midnight CT** on **Friday, December 31.**

Put that in your stocking.

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RegardingDesign

December 20, 2010

AIGA has VIDS

No, that's not some debilitating disease. Nor is it some trendy new social media device dressed in annoying acronym.

AIGA has videos, and lots of them. From Gain, the AIGA design and business conference. Featuring leading graphic design professionals Debbie Millman, John Maeda, Erica Eden, and more. Watch them contemplate the future of the industry, or read their thoughts in the accompanying PDF transcripts available online.

Do it. Now.

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RegardingDesign

December 22, 2010

Another Argument for Function over Form

You're as cold as ice—literally:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20101215/od_afp/russiamilitaryfashionoffbeat

Finally making strides (toward gender equality):

http://shine.yahoo.com/channel/beauty/army-finally-unveils-female-cut-combat-uniform-2401930

Photo courtesy of The Associated Press.

These articles (the titles above are my own, sadly) were posted to _Yahoo!_ a while back.

Quite some time ago I asked what good design meant to all of you. Now, I don't propose to be a fashion genius (on the contrary, I'm a walking fashion faux pas), but I'd like to add to Ryan's definition that good design—function within form— does not and should never put the subject at physical risk or possible death. Is this an extreme example? Maybe. Is it a valid argument? Without a doubt.

Unless Yudashkin (top) was planning on inventing some sort of invisible heat forcefield that not only protected soldiers from gun fire but also from the harsh Siberian elements, I think we should consider this a leason learned. "Asthetics," kids, is such a dangerous word.

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RegardingDesign

December 30, 2010

On My Own: A Review of Managing the Design Process: Implementing Design by Terry Lee Stone

Last week I entertained the epiphany: why not work for me? A recurring, persistent dream, mainly the result of unpleasant corporate reality.

Three years without a promotion. Three years with no direction or intent. My taking continuing education courses caused little commotion within the ranks of upper management. I wasn't content working weekends without pay. Spending all day, everyday, on supplemental design fray—art bands this, text retooling that. I deserved better. I was capable of manipulating letters and images into wily inventiveness. I had a way with form and function, but no way to put it in action. I knew how to use color and shade, but I didn't know how to finally make the gra—OK, you get it.

Managing the Design Process: Implementing Design by Terry Lee Stone is a book I wish I had come across sooner. It's a catch-all, crash-course guide to going freelance. There are no tips, no tricks, just honest, proven knowledge that one would have thought would have been taught in art school. Even in the way the book was designed (simple illustrations and bright, bold colors) one gets the impression that this information—very practical in scope—is fundamental and maybe even elementary (perhaps the authors own frustration with nation-wide curriculums and their overwhelming focus on theory, not practice).

For designers—who most often work for themselves or by themselves, anyway—such teachings should set the foundations for their careers. There is a section on determining a rate, for example. Another on scheduling. The book also details the inner workings of a design firm, and how to best manage or operate within one. Design is a business, and there is much needed advice in these pages to navigate it.

Managing the Design Process: Implementing Design is, by far, my favorite Rockport book of the year. Seriously. It is a must have for any budding designer.

[STAMP] Yup, I just officially endorsed it.

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RegardingDesign

January 06, 2011

Never Judge a Book by Its Considerably Heavier, Glossy Exterior: My New Year's Resolution / A Review of Pattern + Palette Sourcebook 4 by Kathie Alexander and Harvey Rayner

I'm a bad person.

I make deducations on split-second evidence. I reckon and rate within a minute's view—settling on percieved differences. I'm critical. I'm honest. I'm *not* self-righteously pious.
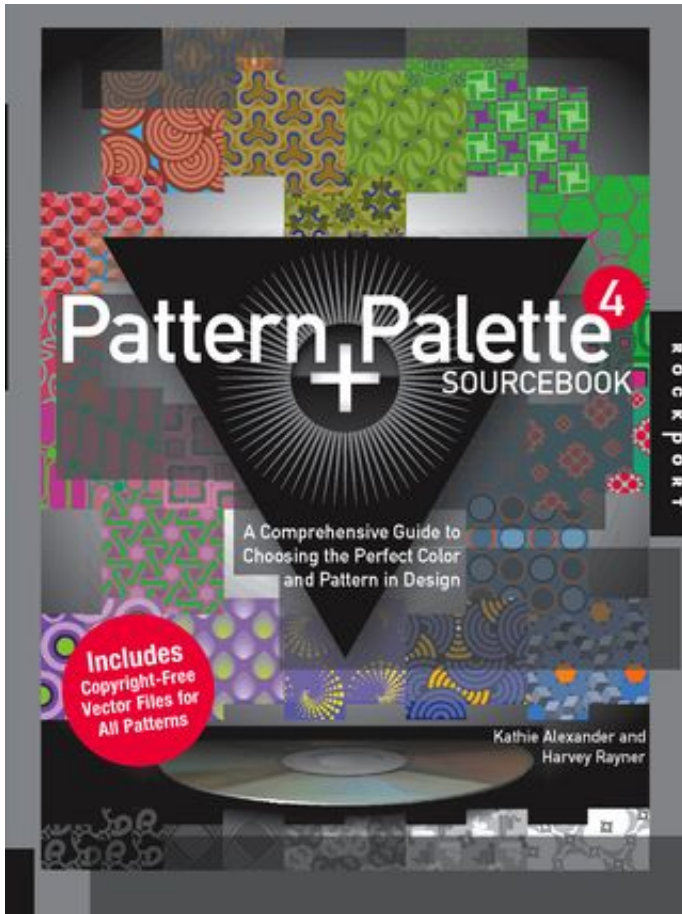
It's no surprise, then, that my strong dislike for _Pattern + Pallette Sourcebook 4_ by Kathie Alexander and Harvey Rayner came even before I realized the scores of tastfeul color combinations inside. That's before I noticed the exact CMYK percentages of the pallettes used in a functional swatch organization (cool). That's way before I saw the CD on the inside front cover containing copyright-free vector files for all the patterns. (Right, the patterns—they're pretty nice too.)

The truth is that this book is easily now one of my favorites, but I still hold my *opinion* that the cover detracts from the impressively clean interior. The outside is an inaccurate depiction of the material inside. It's dark and doom-like. It's forceful, serious, and mundane. From far away it looks like a medieval quilt—hilts and shields and all. The patterns—not to mention the vibrant color choices—show poorly beneath the myriad shades of transparent blacks. It's depressing, frankly, but I don't want you to be put off like me. Sometimes things are not what they seem. Just take a look at the images below or preview the book on Qbookshop to see what I mean.

Thankfully, for us all, I've got another 360 days to go.

Posted at 10:00 AM in [Books](), [Color](), [Graphic Design](), [Patterns]() | [Permalink]()

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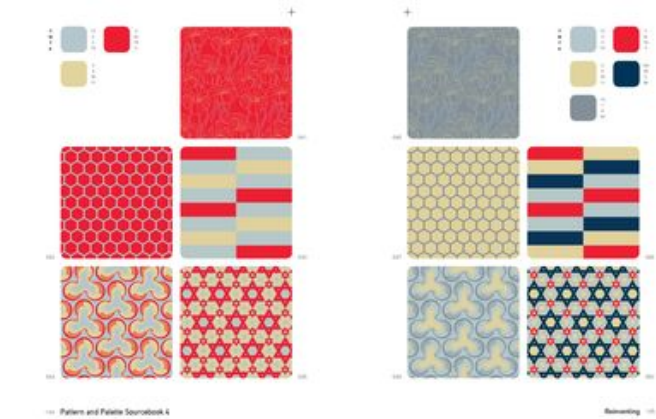
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RegardingDesign

January 13, 2011

Hello, Goodbye: A Review of 1000 More Greetings by Aesthetic Movement + My Last Day

It's only proper that I end my blogging stint the way it began: with an eye for design.

Yes, I regret to inform you all that Wednesday, January 19, will be my last day working with <u>Rockport</u>. It has been a pleasure and a great opportunity to help unite the graphic arts community. But as someone at some point in time must have said, "every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end." (I think that was Seneca, who also said, "An unpopular rule is never long maintained." Hmph.)

As I continue to tackle adulthood, its responsibilities, and its challenges, I find comfort in the fact that others, too, have struggled. Others who hastily admit without shame or guilt: "been there, done that." In an almost impossible feat—retreat is never an option—life progresses. Couples marry. Families extend. Children grow. Holidays come again and again.

1000 More Greetings: Creative Correspondence for All Occasions by <u>Aesthetic Movement</u> gives us a reason to stop and celebrate these good times. From the momentous to the quietly urbane, every quirk and every eloquent jot is captured beautifully on the page with more grace than we can bring to bear ourselves.

They're insightful, these cards. They offer a unique peek into the feelings we all hide, are reluctant to share, and find difficult to express. Feelings, maybe, that some have even learned to suppress. No, they're not overly romantic or nostalgic. Instead, there's sureness to each—confidence with conviction—that make these concrete gestures read like genius confessions. They're charming. They're "cute." They're genuine. They're better than our less astute fellow man.

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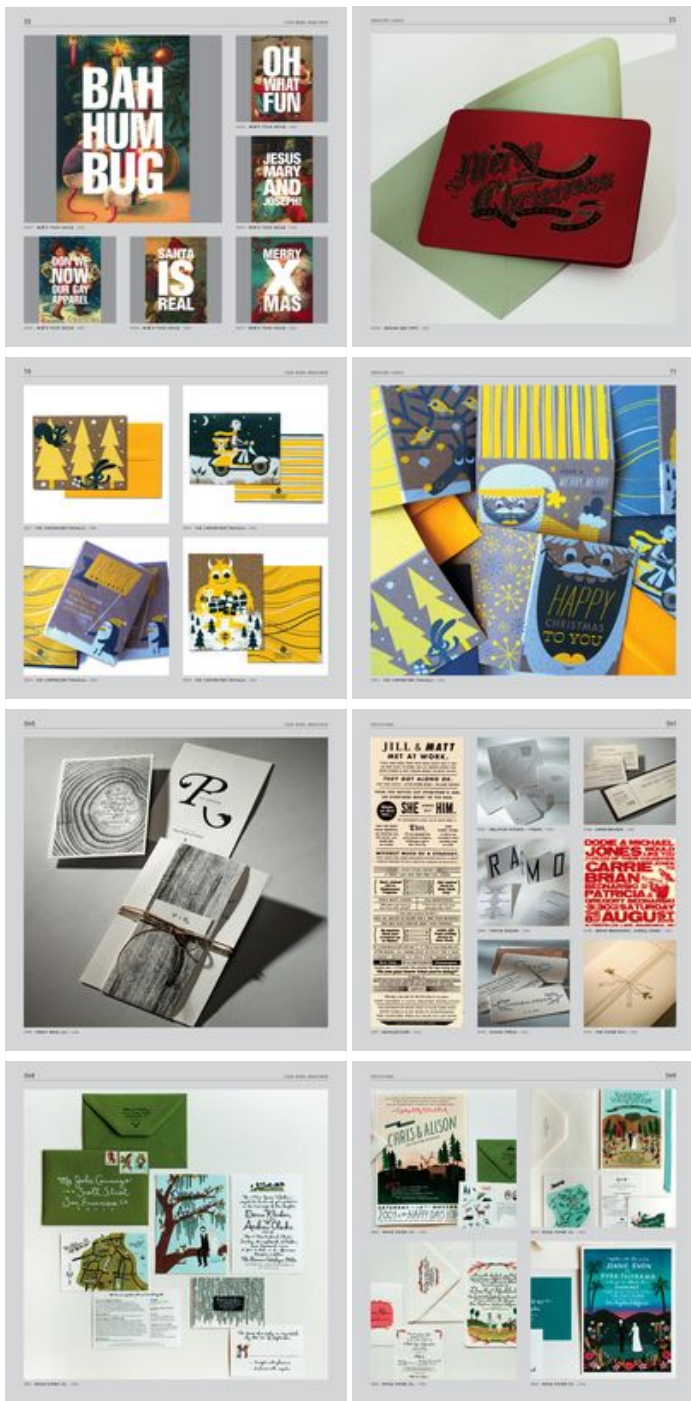Digg This | Save to del.icio.us | Tweet This!Tweet This! | Like   Like 0

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That's sad. But like you said, "every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end."

So, it's definitely not the end. Best of luck to you mate!

Posted by: Wordpress Development | January 13, 2011 at 05:02 PM

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