Storytelling through Expressive Typography
Which vendor sells fresher eggs?
Storytelling through Expressive Typography: The interpretive and illustrative nature of visual-verbal compositions.
Why storytelling?

It is fundamental to our sense of self.

It is a popular method of passing knowledge.

Spoken word has led to memorization.

Over time, it has taken form in many shapes and forms.
I Love NY 3D Poster by Oded Ezer

Source: http://s3files.core77.com/blog/images/lheart_milton_01.jpg
Condoms, condoms, condoms
The purpose

To explore how meaning is constructed through transmitting the graphic value of written texts.

To identify the interpretive and illustrative nature of communicating in text and visuals.

To understand the visual-verbal creations of non-design students.
The students operate under the framework that famous people can inspire us through their words.

The "behind-the-scenes" design processes to reveal the students’ ideation process.

Through an examination of storytelling with fundamental elements such as setting, character identification, plot, mood and movement, students identified and analyzed how storytelling can be theoretically used to guide the creations of an expressive typography.
The method

Quotes are chosen by the students: alive, dead or fictional.

12 (four male and seven female) undergraduate sophomore students.

Continuous assessment mode.

Lasted for four weeks in a 3 hour tutorial session per week from September 7 to October 5, 2010.

Delivery: A2 (420 mm x 594 mm) vertically or horizontally.

The students answered 5 questions to “qualitatively” reveal how they ideate...
Background

According to French theorist Roland Barthes, the author is dead.

An image is an “open text.”

Jacques Derrida asserted that meaning is arbitrary.

Images have more than one meaning.
Which one is correct?

A

B
TRAVELER’S REST
ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK
My childhood memories
Eye for an eye makes the world go blind

- Mahatma Gandhi
A literal interpretation leads to literal drawings
A blind-folded earth
Braille came to mind in exploring the word “blind”.
兵者，詭道也。故能而示之不能，用而示之不用，近而示之遠，遠而示之近。

- 孫子

“War is also about deceptions. When you are capable, feign incapability. When you are good at deployment of units, feign that you are incapable. When you are near, feign that you are far. When you are far away, feign that you are near.”

— Sun Tzu
Translation: All war is deception.
Shadows are often associated with sinister themes... mystery and... ambiguity
Thick lines for a sense of dynamism.
The red evokes an emotional response and sets a mood of menace.
ALL WAR IS
The climax of the plot is when the shadows are deciphered as the word ‘deception’, thus resolving the conflict of ambiguity and suspense.
An intelligent hell would be better than a stupid paradise

– Victor Hugo
The type is arranged and placed at an off-center position to allow light rays to stream in through the window, illuminating the dark surroundings, adding a somber and pensive mood.
The large black background allows the viewer thinking space by de-cluttering the image as well as focusing the viewer’s attention on the quote.

A sense of contrast is added to the overall image, creating a focal point.
An intelligent Hell would be better than a stupid paradise.

Victor Hugo
Elegance is refusal

– Coco Chanel
Imperfection of the skin is an intentional choice because the student interprets that Coco Chanel believed that elegance was for everyone, not just for perfect women.
The nude back with a prominently half exposed buttock “does a terrific job of disconcerting our still conservative society”
Disproportionately small font and almost obscure with its asymmetrical placement forces the viewer to assess the image not as a picture but as a visual construction of meaning.
The meaning of the quote can only be brought out when one looks at the composition as a whole.
The varieties of lines

vertical

horizontal

diagonal

curved

zigzag
Positive / Negative space

Foreground / Background
Figure-ground segregation for optical illusion
Elegance is refusal. - Coco Chanel
How to visualize through visual elements such as the Unite and Punch exercises
Key takeaways

Expressive lettering is about how text becomes pictorial in appearance.

Meanings can be open/direct or concealed/ambiguous.

Ideas can be attractive if we observe them from new, interdisciplinary and suggestive angles.

The students developed their own “voice” which is a combination of skills, desire, experience, mistakes, as well as challenges.

Communicator to form-maker.
Challenges

Students have dealt with:
- Comprehension, interpretation and execution
- Critical, analytical and execution skills
- Dichotomous text and images
- Coded messages
- Semiotics
- Elements and principles of design
- Sleepless nights...
Greetings from Singapore
The best diploma is your passport.

– Kok Cheow YEOH

Thank you. 謝謝

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