

Exercise 03

Visual Organization + Grid Structures



the typographic grid

“The grid and visual hierarchy are two of the best tools in design. The grid is a skeletal structure upon which a design can be built. The second tool, visual hierarchy, by definition “...means a group of visual elements arranged according to emphasis. This emphasis is achieved through contrasts which stress the relative importance and separation or connection of typographic elements.”

– *Typographic Design: Form and Communication*

the grid:
a modular system
for the design
and production
of newspapers,
reports, books
and magazines.

allen hurlburt

Objectives

Discover the variety and formal qualities of a typographic message.

Develop an awareness to typographic forms in the landscape.

Research typeface design and visual language.

Explore the expressive qualities of different type families.

Discover typographic forms and styles.

Learn how to cut and paste “found” typographic specimens so that they are ideally presented in a grid structure, designing the page and controlling the white space.

Learn how to organize type specimens according to a grid structure.

In this Exercise you will begin to explore the grid as an underlying structure and the concept of visual hierarchy.

As designers, we usually have to accept the nature of the typeface as it is designed. It becomes our responsibility to use typefaces in ways that make them easy to read. It is possible to use a very legible typeface in a manner that renders it virtually unreadable [by setting the kerning too tightly or by using the leading too generously]. On the other hand, a designer may choose a typeface that has poor legibility, and make it readable by adjusting the kerning and leading.

Learning to prepare and work with the grid is not as complicated as many of us would believe, nor as simple as some pretend. As Paul Rand, America's foremost graphic designer, points out, the explanation of a grid "may seem very simple on the surface, but working with a grid is not so simple. So much depends on the designs and the virtually endless surprises he or she encounters."

Exercise 03

We will complete Exercise 03 on Tuesday, February 28. The in class activity is intended to assist you with your explorations for Project 02. You were to gather printed material for you to cut and paste with.

You have spent time looking at typographic specimens and various shades of gray and have gathered, hunted and collected a wonderful assortment of found typography to design with.

3 final layouts are due :
Thursday, March 02

The pattern of a grid will be guided by the function of the content and the design concept. If the designer formulates a grid before a concept has been developed, he or she will find that she [he] has blocked the way to the correct solution. Because each grid is custom-made to fit the parameters of a specific project and because its design is governed by the particular working style of an individual designer, grids will take on an almost unlimited variation in form.

Typography is the visual representation of language, and just as it is hard to listen to an orator that speaks in monotone, it is equally difficult to read a visually neutral text. We need inflection in the messages we hear, and visual emphasis in those we see to make them accessible and clear. Identifying the syntax of a written message and visually reflecting that syntax is central to the communication designer's role.

Visual logic is a term used to describe dealing with two important issues through a visual emphasis, a text element can signal the reader that it is more important than the rest. By forming groups of related information, and separating them from the others, one can suggest another kind of relationship. These visual signals are logically-based and provide the reader with valuable cues to help them understand the organization of a message.

There is another equally important side to all of this. Even when the visual signals correspond perfectly to the relationships inherent in the message, they can fail to communicate clearly. Logically devised typographic solutions can fail for purely visual reasons, for example, when a typographic variable is employed too often, it loses its distinctiveness and therefore its power as a visual cue. Another example is when a typographic variable is too subtle within a given context, or when a typographic solution forms an awkward or inappropriate message shape. Yet, these are only a few visually-based errors that can jeopardize effective communication.

To achieve "visual logic" in a typographic solution, designers must simultaneously consider what looks right, and what makes sense. When given a body of information and a space to place that information, the designer has many considerations. What is the most important piece of the information? There are limitless possibilities for type arrangement and page layout so where does one begin?

Methodology

Working with text type, we cannot avoid the issues of legibility and readability. Legibility is determined by the shape or structure of each letterform and whether it is distinguishable enough to recognize easily. Legibility is the responsibility of the typeface designer, however, we are not so concerned with whether or not there is a clear textual message in the compositions. This exercise will allow you to create compositions with type as form that are visually engaging.

Final layout size"
10" X 10"
3 successful layouts

Use an 11" X 17" sheet to work with. Create the grid with guides and then print the pages with the guides.

Layouts are to be designed using cut and paste techniques, then scanned, or flattened and then reprinted for optimal viewing.

Exercise 03 is due :
Thursday, March 02

visual organization + grid structures / more exercise objectives

- 1 to learn that an infinite number of possible solutions exist for each problem.
- 2 work with type that has a variety of point size, leading, kerning and layering to create value and texture of text.
- 3 demonstrate an understanding of the various alignments of text.
- 4 use the format [grid] to create an appropriate composition.
- 5 consider contrast, structure, positive and negative space, balance, texture and tone, and rhythm as design properties.

Develop linear grid structures. Create a series of plates, organizing found typographic materials and solid shapes into spatial compositions based upon your understanding of underlying linear grid structures.

type specifications + requirements

Locate found typographical material from discarded print [old magazines, books, newspapers, etc.] you may not include images, color, simulated texture etc. Texture and "color" are to be created using type only. [type + solid shapes in solid black, you cut from black paper.

To help you organize your compositions keep in mind that the copy does not have to "read" as a logical message. This is for layout and composition design purposes only! We are investigating formal relationships with shades of grey, exploring visual hierarchy and how to organize form in a grid structure. Do not concern yourself with a logical read. Have fun designing a page without this function.

This project introduces the grid structure as a formal design element. The grid module is the basic compositional unit, bringing order to an arrangement. students consider contrast, structure, positive negative space, balance, texture and tone, and rhythm as design properties.

Typography
Course Projects
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