28th, 29th February and 1st March 2020, Amman, Jordan

Typographic Dialogues: Local-Global

http://www.typoday.in

Experimental typography on micro and macro level

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Abstract:

Robert Bringhurst - "Typography is a craft of endowing human language with a durable visual form." There are **typographers** on one end and the **reader** on the other. They directly or indirectly are meant to have a relationship, wherein the typographer is the encoder and the reader is the decoder. The facets of typography are codes that typographers use to corroborate or add meaning to words, which is delivered by the reader. This is what the process looks like when we talk about typographic dialogue, it advocates to build a relationship between the typographer and the viewer.

Rhythm and contrast keep coming up when we discuss good music and good typographic design. Every now and again the audience needs to be shaken, either by a change in voice or pitch which is possible by experimental typography. **(Typography style establishes voice).**

There are three dimensional expressions on facades, pavements, plazas and similar public areas. The **specimens** include the 'ABC3D' typography pop-up book by Marion Bataille, music video for "Dream," by Husbands to Malika Favre's Kamasutra letterforms. Spanish art collective Boa Mistura painted passage ways in a Brazil slum with bright colors and white forms that, seen from the right angle, resolve into letters spelling words like "belleza" (beauty) and "orgulho" (pride).

Discovery and experimental behavior has been seen through the design history. **Experimental typography opposes monotony and uniformity.** According to this, concept should be handled as arranging lettering with more artistic and unusual approach. Experimental typography is a rich design totality with different application methods and usage of different techniques such as illustration, abstraction, collage, size effect and hand writing. Even though it can be ignored on readability aspect, emotion can also affect the works.

Consequently the research will include: Experimental discoveries, researches and interpretation of typography and images incorporating persuasive approach process, its result and effects in an unconventional way to empower communication. Designers choosing to do attractive and marketable designs which

was once envisioned as an experimental (persuasive) approach now lay the foundation of wide range of global workable paradigms.

Keywords- Typographer and reader, encoder-decoder, typography styles impact on local and global level, specimens, legibility come into play, Different is always appealing.

1.0 *Introduction- Underlying the creator-reader correspondence*

Writers, typographers and readers construct messages together. Some linguistic theory uses the terms "encoding" and "decoding" to describe the process. "Coding" however implies one-to-one connection –a direct cause and effect between the intention of typographer and interpretation by the readers. As part of the perception process that precedes these interrelated activities, we can differentiate between three stages: a) the cognition of data (registration of signals); b) the recognition of information (classification of information) and c) the process of decoding (reading and understanding). These three stages usually happen in close succession and will often be felt as instant.

An epistemology of the word 'experimental' as it applies to design and type, contrasted with its scientific connotations. In the scientific context, an experiment may be a test of an idea; a set of actions performed to prove or disprove a hypothesis. In this sense, a typographic experiment could be with the material, medium or the technology used. Thus experimental typography is an attitude or a technique used to challenge the parameters of any given time or a conceptual approach. The contemporary context of the word "experiential/ experimental typography" is always seen in the form of digital or electronic medium to present typographical media (lettering, editorial, typographical or others uses) in a challenging way. Messages are conveyed using dynamic typography may be two- or three-dimensional, and tend to operate as multimedia applications. By applying these practices it's more about the user experience rather than focusing on aesthetics or meaning.

2.0 _The technology play._

Now, when it comes to user experience the quality of typography and font choices affects the mood of the reader hence directly affecting the senses. This means that the 'encoder' can manipulate the way people feel and can change their emotional state even. Now that's a real superpower! Recently Swedish retail label 'Carlings' wanted to use augmented reality to add another layer to the viewer's experience and enable every person's interaction with the work to be distinct. The wearer can choose from range of graphics created especially for "The Last Statement T-shirt" and is accessible through social media apps, where it works on the same principle as face filters (fig. 1 and 2).

Fig. 1. Created by Copenhagen-based Virtue Nordic, Vice Media's creative agency.

Fig. 2. The designs are built using Spark AR, Facebook's augmented-reality platform.

Using the authorized way of communication as tools for experiencing the design and process to discover new horizons in visual cultures, experimenting with

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typography is what a designer would do. Typography inherently stands between the visual space and aesthetics, between the grammar and the linguistic consciousness, between the inner voice and the appearance. This state of typography creates proximity for the designer to be a message creator and also an expressionist. Thus making the status of typography open to exploration and suitable for experimentation along with other visual components.

2.1 *Conscious effort of combining calligraphy, typography with graffiti*

Consider referring Teal Triggs book: 'The Typographic Experiment: radical innovation in contemporary type design' which manifests renowned typographers and their viewpoint on what experimental typography is all about! Malcolm McLaren amongst those writes: "All great artists have been failures. Not miserable failures but tremendous brilliant failures. Experimental typography in a sense; is a conscious failure with a hope that something beautiful and new will be born".

Even though many linguists have begun to explore this new field, we do not yet have a systematic framework for the analysis of the communicative work done in typography today. Although, much of the world cannot understand the dialect nevertheless, the supporting elements and the ornate beauty surrounding it are more than enough to make people stop, tune in and think! May it be a wall mural by eL Seed in Ajman (The quote comes from Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan) **(Fig. 3)** to Pokras Lampases calligraffiti artwork created on the famous rooftop of the 'FENDI' headquarter in Rome representing the modern Cyrillic and Latin calligraphy. His artworks are based on his self-developed style termed as "Calligrafuturism" (**Fig. 4**) From these individual artists to Spanish art collective Boa Mistura's 'cultura, sveglia, Popolo' are flourishing in bringing people, culture, and generations together through expressive, harmonious, and skillful traits.

Fig. 3. Free hand calligraphy by eL Seed.

Fig. 4 Largest calligraphy in Rome.

2.2 _Experiential typography via experiments_

In the second decade of the new millennium, typography is again modern, integral to the physical and intellectual world from exhibition halls to corporate headquarters and the world of publishing. (The specimen for the three are as follows): Paulina Olowska's "Alphabet" combines rhythmicity with a constructivist fascination for typography and points to the rhetorical function of dance. The act illustrates formalized choreography by the artist in a red dress, blue scarf, and tights. When it comes to corporate space design taking typography into

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consideration, 'Laces' by Andreas Uebele intends to reflect a networked, dynamic world, interlinks light and movement and bounds across the walls and balustrades. Thus experiential typography can develop a distinct atmosphere for the design center which in addition responds to the brand (Adidas) and focuses on the key architectural features. Lastly, when it comes to the publishing as a frame of reference let's take into account the book that comes from the mind of PewDiePie, the #1 YouTuber in the world with 10 billion views- "This Book Loves You", a collection of beautifully illustrated inspirational quotes via typography and visuals. When we go through all the above specimens we realize that an innovative approach to typography is not confined to any specific medium to convey the story or interact.
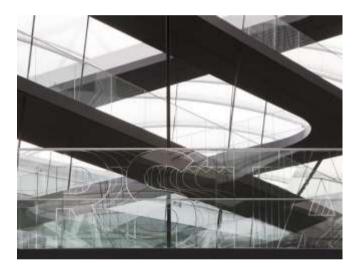

Fig. 7 Unit of space design-"Lace"

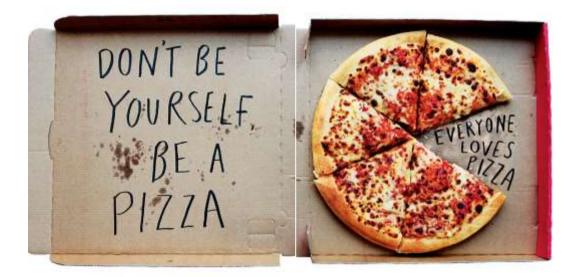Fig. 5 & 6 Performance act by Paulina Olowska

Fig. 8 "This Book Loves You" by PewDiePie was made available in several languages other than English.

2.3 *Phases of Typefaces*

* Going back to type design, Ogaki is an ultra-fat display typeface. Instilled with traits representing calligraphy and graffiti, Aron Jancso has created an experimental display typeface that is simply sublime and delicately extravagant.

(Inspiration)

Calcula is an experimental display typeface by Shiva Nallaperumal inspired by the idea of exploring the grey areas between typeface design and lettering. It embodies two different features of architectural Kufic: the integration of its intra and inter-character white space and the geometric modularity of letterforms.
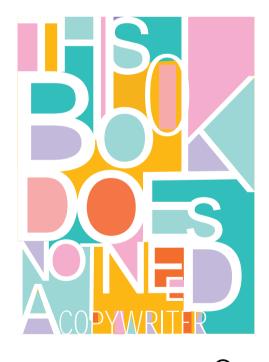
2.4 *Testing individual capacities*

Undertaken in 2019, the book: "Helvetica.com" is a compilation of wordplay with typography. Which accounts for the typographical terms and illustrating it digitally. It was a self-initiated project that looks beyond the possibilities by using 'only' the typeface-Helvetica. The book includes gimmick elements and experiments pertaining to rudimentary typographic expressions in an interactive visual form. From counters to kerning it includes experiential learning for every design tutee to go through.

DISCLAIMER:

'All the characters and terminology in this book-even if based on reality is entirely creative. It contains flashy colors with new attitude. It could be traumatizing and offend you. Thus the content should not be viewed by sensitive people.'

A glimpse of illustrations from the book: 'Helvetica.com'- Prachi Dalal.

3.0 _Conclusion_

In certain circumstances, elements need not be composed in strict correspondence to typical writing sequences. Typography and words have a way of cutting through the noise. We can show an image that can capture a thousand words but when you say something using typography, the subtleties of a letter can change the word entirely. If readers are reasonably familiar with the words in use, and if the typography provides sufficient directions as to how to proceed, they'll search for connections to construct meaning, taking cues from the visual order to make linguistic sense. People can link their identity to typography, literally wearing it on their sleeve. Thus, the type can be an extension of who we are. For the younger generation, it's a way of connecting to their roots.

It's not only experimenting with the technology/medium but also there are few experiments that need a strong research base to arrive at conclusion. As seen in the long lost 'molecular typography' that highlighted the chemical and biological strength of a type. This proves that it's always easier to experiment with we are thorough with (with a rudimentary knowledge of the field of work). It's like you know how to draw realistic and then we get into abstract paintings.

(Once Michelangelo was asked- How do you carve such beautiful sculptures? To which he answered… It just removes the unwanted part of the stone. The sculpture is already there. The same is the case with perceiving typography around us.)

All in all, it's impossible to predict every potential factor that could impact/work best for the environment. There will be a certain amount of trial-and-error, keeping in mind the experimental practices that have been acknowledged, while further technological developments are in progress.

> _"I always mix up words like typography, topography and typology. Is that experimental or just a useful misreading?"_
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> _-Paul Elliman_

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