

# **Key Conventions Design**

**El Lissitsky**

**David Carson**

**Corporate Design**

**Stressed Typography**

**Illustration (Cartoon)**

**Grunge (Collage)**

**Posterised (Montage)**

# El Lissitzky



Feature	Significance
<b>Foundation for New World Order</b>	Graphic design extension of Constructivism which seeks to reduce art to its most basic building blocks (Squares and lines) to then rebuild a whole new world without the corruption of traditional ways of doing things = The style of the Russian Revolution = New beginning.
<b>Influence of Mondrian</b>	Influenced by De Stijl – Mondrian = all vertical and horizontal with only primary colours = purity of essential ingredients for making images
<b>Influence of Bauhaus</b>	Influenced by the Bauhaus – Minimalism – only sans serif and lower case letters = Form follows function with no unnecessary decoration.
<b>Colour Symbolism</b>	Colour – Black white and red mainly = Strong graphic effect and also socialist symbolism with red being the colour of communism
<b>Use of Negative Space</b>	Negative Space - White on black in some areas balanced by black on white in other areas. The spaces around objects are carefully considered as shapes in themselves.
<b>Text as visual compositional element</b>	Letter pictures – Text not just placed horizontally. Letters curve around, stack on top of each other, go diagonally, and combine together to form triangles, arrows and other shapes.
<b>Collage Montage</b>	Collage – Alternative style of constructivism = more political using working class images from newspaper – anti the high class art-forms of painting. But still geometrically organised and arranged.
<b>Compositional balance</b>	Balance – Curves and diagonals = movement, dynamic are balanced against each other and against verticals and horizontals which a stabilising, static. Many smaller elements (like letters) are balanced against a single larger element. Many smaller light coloured elements are balanced against a larger single dark element.
<b>Simplicity</b>	Elimination of all decoration and unnecessary detail – only meaningful elements are included. Symbolic of a new society that would rebuild from scratch without any corruption from the old order.
<b>Sans Serif Fonts</b>	Block letters – Sans Serif – Clear communication with that is the same for all – Fancy letters mean some are more important than others which means some people are more important than others – Communism believes everyone is equal.
<b>Geometric</b>	All forms and even letters built from basic geometric shapes = Rebuilding a new society form scratch without any corruption from the old ways = Purity – form follows function.
<b>Golden Ratio</b>	1-1.618 – Developed by the Greeks in ancient times and is believed to be the most harmonious and beautiful proportion – used to create balanced compositions and relationships between elements.
<b>Formal</b>	Carefully ordered and arranged to create balanced and clearly communicate the message
<b>Official - Propaganda</b>	State approved official art style – Used to deliver a message about political ideology.

# El Lissitzky



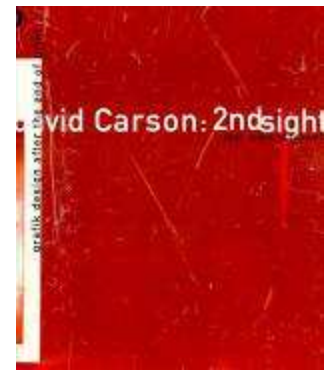
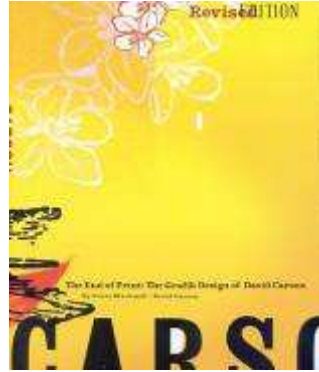
Russian Constructivism – born 1890 – died 1941

Russia, Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century - “Art is dead!...Art is as dangerous as religion as an escapist activity” Let us cease our speculative activity (painting pictures) and take over the healthy bases of art – colour, line, materials, and forms – into a field of reality, of practical construction.”

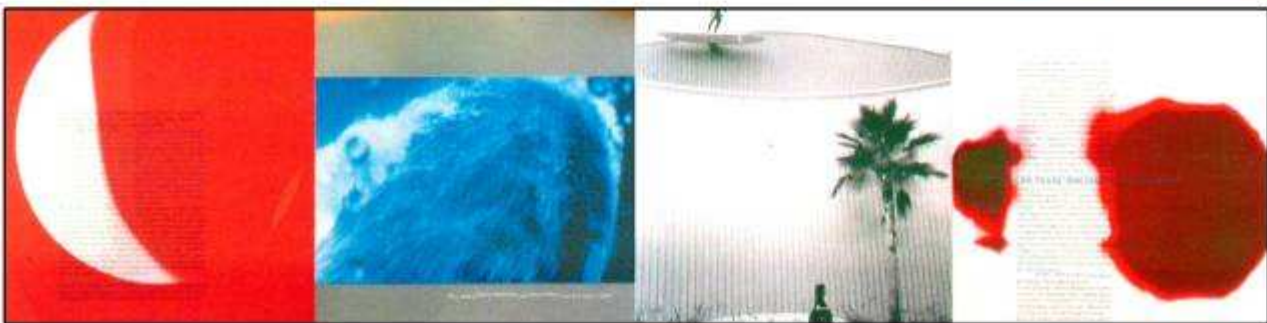
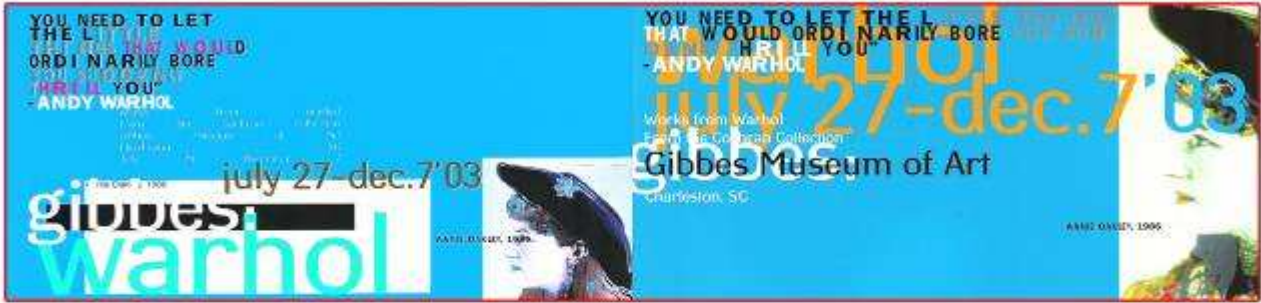
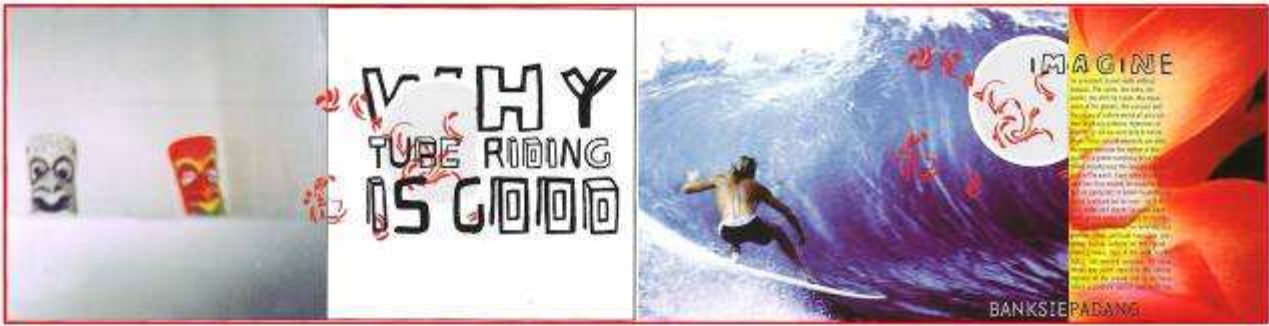
El Lissitzky was one of the most important and influential artists of the early twentieth century - he worked as an architect, designer, painter and photographer. A contemporary of Chagall's in the early 1910s, he later founded the constructivist movement with Naum Gabo, Tatlin and Rodchenko. 'Untitled (Pressa catalogue)' is an original photocollage with ink and paint additions. The 'Pressa' catalogue was designed by the artist in his role as the main designer and the Soviet Union's official commissioner for the international 'Pressa' exhibition in Cologne in 1928 which was devoted to the press, publishing and printing industries. Lissitzky's designs for the 'Pressa' exhibition marked a turning point in his career, when he finally succumbed to figurative and documentary imagery, making use of a combination of photography, typography, painting and design. Lissitzky's contributions to abstract art in the 1920s are well established, however his important experiments in photography, photomontage, graphic and exhibition designs in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s remain controversial



# David CARSON Contemporary International - Deconstructivism



Bold "Saturated" colour	Very intense to suit the sun drenched atmosphere of the subject matter and relate to trendy "pop" culture of the audience. Eye catching exaggerated colour makes life seem more intense and exciting.
Deconstructed Text	Overlapping, cut off by the edge of the page, different sizes, fonts, and orientations (horizontal, vertical) = difficult to read. The viewer has to stop and "work out" what is being said so they spend more time looking at and absorbing the design.
Illegible Text	Sometimes the text is just there to "look cool" serving a decorative rather than functional purpose. Becomes an interesting pattern in itself with only fragments being readable. The younger audience often doesn't need or want to read lengthy passages and is happy to get the message as "fragments" of meaning. Style more important than meaning.
Freehand	Freehand drawing and decorative patterns randomly distributed around the design to contrast with the very mechanical and formal letter forms. These give an anti-establishment effect of being free from the rules of established society.
Non-professional imagery	Blurry, out of focus images that look like amateur photographs used. Carefully treated to heighten ambiguity and create mystery. Contrast with slick professional photos of establishment glossy magazines = youth culture anti-establishment, cool, relates to the kind of photos the audience takes themselves. Celebrates the every day life of pop culture. Influenced by Pop Art paintings which are deliberately informal.
Periphery	Objects, images, and text placed on the edges of the design often going off the top, bottom and sides of the page. Deliberately breaking the rules, informal, unexpected = symbol for design that is on the edge of acceptability = Youth culture revolution.
Empty Spaces	Open areas of empty (NEGATIVE SPACE) spaces act as a contrast with crowded confused areas of text and image = Balance giving the eyes a place to rest when looking at the designs = Symbolic for youth culture with long period of boredom and then periods of intense action (Surfing, parties).
Hand Made Letters	Informal, anti-establishment – symbolic for freedom and breaking the rules. But balanced by sharp edges and elements of clean text.
Dirty	Grungy, dirty, scuff marks that are not cleaned up = anti-establishment symbolising breaking the rules. Used as decorative elements to add visual interest. Relates to MTV music culture.
Random	Linear and geometric elements randomly placed around the design. But these are carefully arranged in relation to the text and image to balance the total composition.
Text Sabotage	Filling in the enclosed areas of letters and distorting fonts as a deliberate way of making the text "wrong". Subversive anti-establishment act to show freedom and disrespect for established practice.



CD Cover inside spread - based on David Carson designs

## David Carson - DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Carson runs workshops and gives lectures all over the world. David Carson promotes his philosophy of keeping a subjective edge and capturing emotion in design. He acts as a catalyst by reminding designers that each can bring to design a personal statement, a commitment to finding more than a solution to a design problem. His talks are filled with images he has photographed, experiences that he shares, and an armoury of influences, all of which go into his design. His essential message is that design is intended to be emotional, to convey feelings and attitudes through the content. It is a form of expression, and a subjective approach only enhances what the design can be. Carson advocates that design should always be more than mere design.

## TYPE AND TYPOGRAPHY

Carson does not use type conventionally. Nor does he use, or believe in, grids. In fact, Carson says he has to remove all guidelines before working on a page. Type is not ephemeral or decorative in his designs. Instead, Carson forges and manipulates text to evoke emotions. One signature of Carson design is his use of truncated letterforms and unusual spacing. The audience is expected to get into the text and interpret the elisions. The posters designed for his talks, for example, show a free-form use of his name, but never allow a doubt that the speaker is David Carson.

In the reflective treatise on his work, *The End of Print: The Graphic Design of David Carson*, authored by Lewis Blackwell, the individual personal design that is essentially Carson affects every page. Carson approaches type and typography expressionistically. He expects his reader to empathize with the message. His text is often fractured, its typefaces can be jarring (and he has created his own), but the reader is captured and forced to respond to every word.

David Carson remains an icon to designers for his bravado in designing. Carson looks for "the next wave" -the unexpected.

WHEN THE MAGAZINE *Beach Culture* was launched a decade ago, the name of art director David Carson became synonymous with expressionistic, subjective design. Since Carson is a professional surfer, this lifestyle magazine for those who think life is a beach created an empathetic response. But Carson's next designing gig, the music magazine *RayGun*, forced the design world to sit up and take notice, too. Dubbed everything from "enfant terrible" to "anarchic genius," Carson prevailed. Both *Beach Culture* and *RayGun* continue to be associated with explosive magazine design.

Primarily, Carson became known for his irreverent use of type. His typographical layouts were an improvisational response to the content, and since the content was tied to the hot new bands and styles of music, Carson filled *Ray Gun* pages with excitement and freneticism corresponding to the releases. For his efforts. Carson was defined as both a "master of typography" and the king of non-communication."

Now, Carson continues his subjective interpretations of design without the hoopla. He is based in his Manhattan studio, which remains small so that he can work on projects that he "hand picks and specifically chooses." He has designed a cover for a magazine focused on surfing (one of his favourite pursuits), called *Surf in Rico*. Carson's typographic cover treatment captures the glamour of the sport.

His work for the band Nine Inch Nails is impressionable, fluid, and sensuous, with sedate type and strong colour. His affinity with the music is captured through the design.

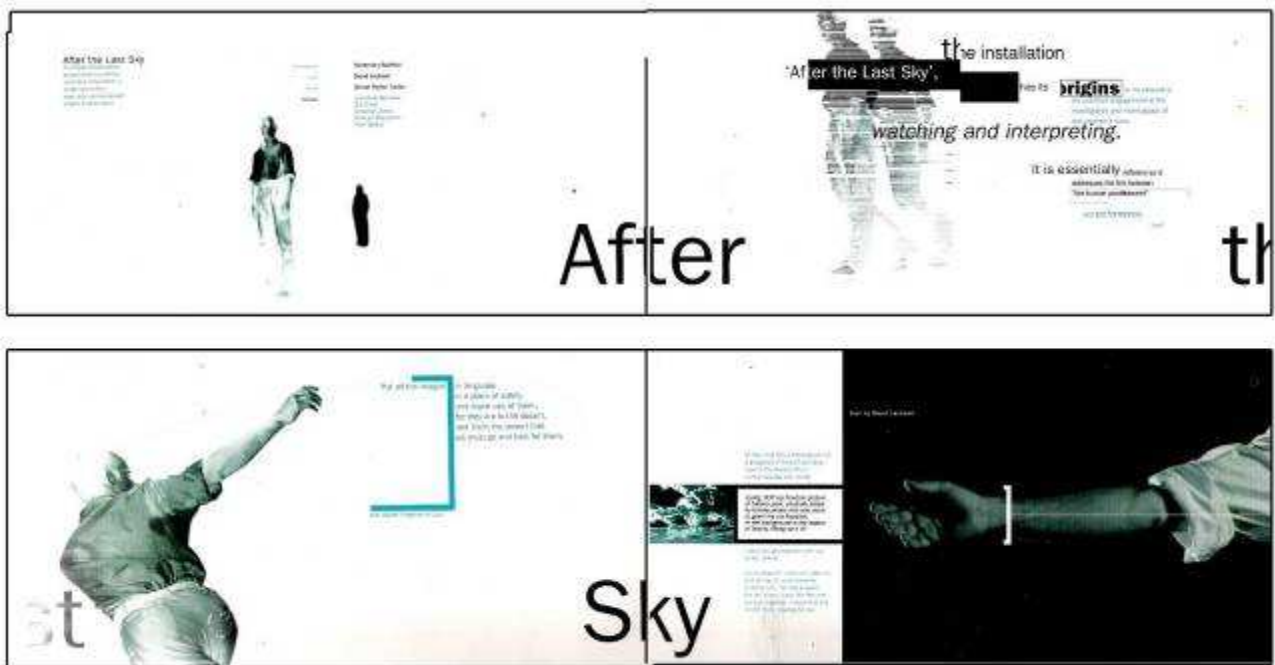
# Corporate Design

## Clean and sophisticated



### Key Features

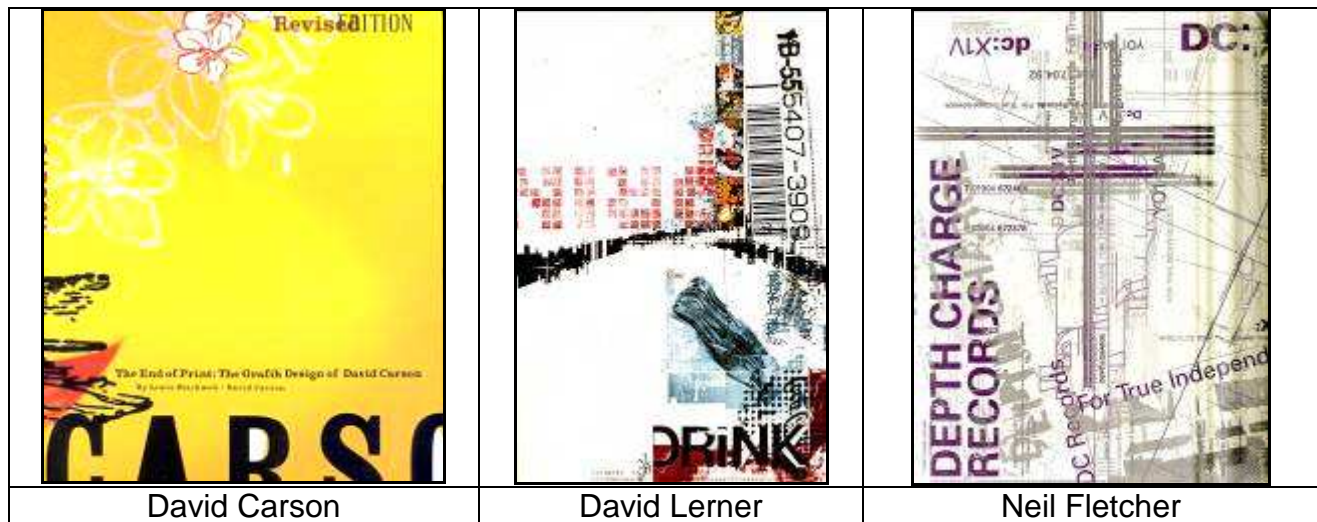
Feature	Significance
<b>San Serif Fonts</b>	Arial, Trebuchet, Universe, Century Gothic, Tahoma, and other fonts used that do not have “serifs”. These are more modern and clean. They have neutral connotations rather than fancy fonts like Matisse or Joker man. Often wider open and light to be more elegant and sophisticated.
<b>Text warp and wrap</b>	Often cut around images or arranged to create geometric or illustrative visual elements. Sometimes curved (warped) to create visual elements. Usually given greater kerning and leading to make more elegant, open, and sophisticated.
<b>Inverted Text</b>	Black text against white areas is balanced by white text against black areas. Also the colours used in pictures or patterns is picked out and used for text areas (particularly for heading and sub headings)
<b>Negative Space</b>	Large empty areas of white (sometimes black) acts as a contrast to intense areas of text or image. Balances busy against quiet.
<b>Linear elements</b>	Lines, linear patterns (curves, circles) and outlines of objects used to create visual interest.
<b>Geometric Elements</b>	Triangles, grids, and curved areas used to articulate the composition. Divides to page into different areas for different bits of information. Repetition of geometric elements creates movement and visual interest
<b>Grid Structure</b>	Very common way to divide the page into areas. Creates different areas for different pieces of information and visual interest that is balanced and stabilised.
<b>Limited colour</b>	Often black and white with small elements of prismatic colour. Creates a clean sophisticated impression.
<b>Flat Colour</b>	Patterns or pictures are balanced against areas of flat colour or tone.
<b>Monochrome Photographs</b>	Full colour photos sometimes used but images are often rendered in black and white (sophisticated) or monochrome (one colour only) which is often reflected in the typography colour in places.
<b>Isolated visual elements = clarity</b>	“Cut-out” objects separated from their backgrounds are often placed on a white ground and balanced against text elements. Sometimes text wraps are used also.
<b>Technical patterns</b>	Grids, lines, mathematical matrixes are used to create visual interest. Usually clean, precise and linear to give a high tech modern impression.



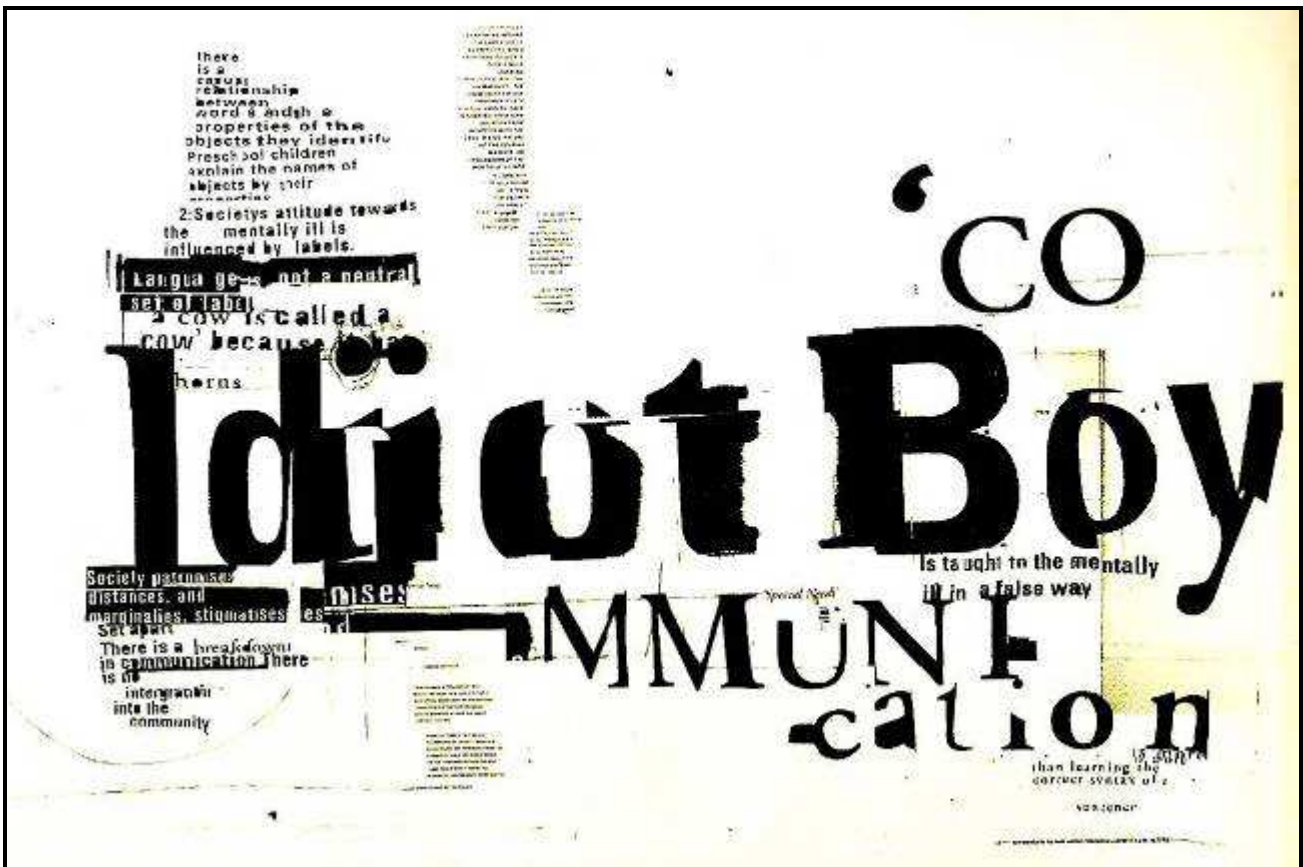
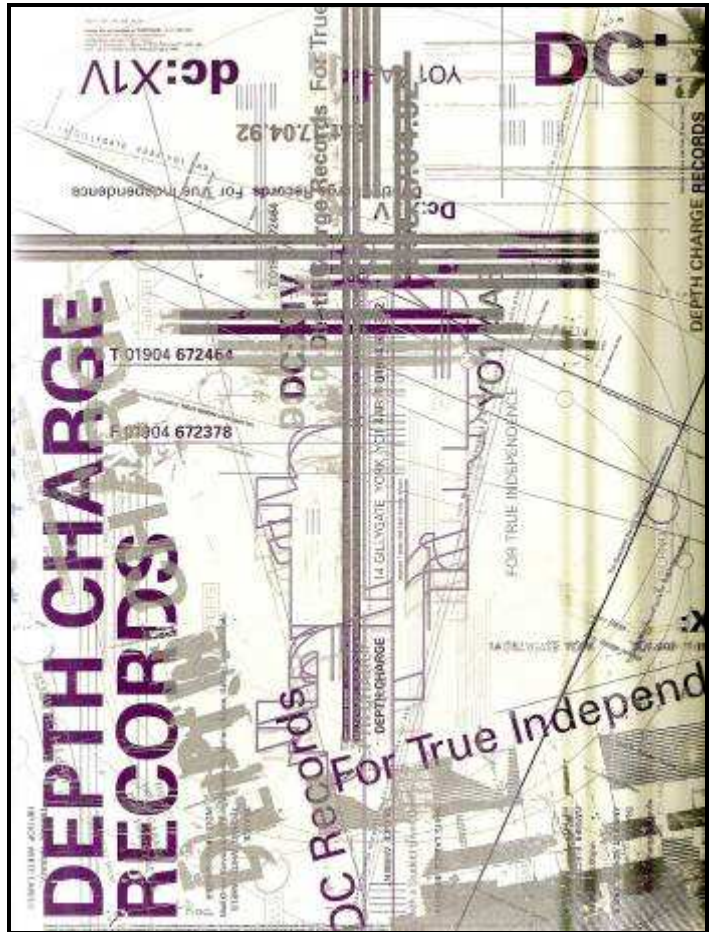
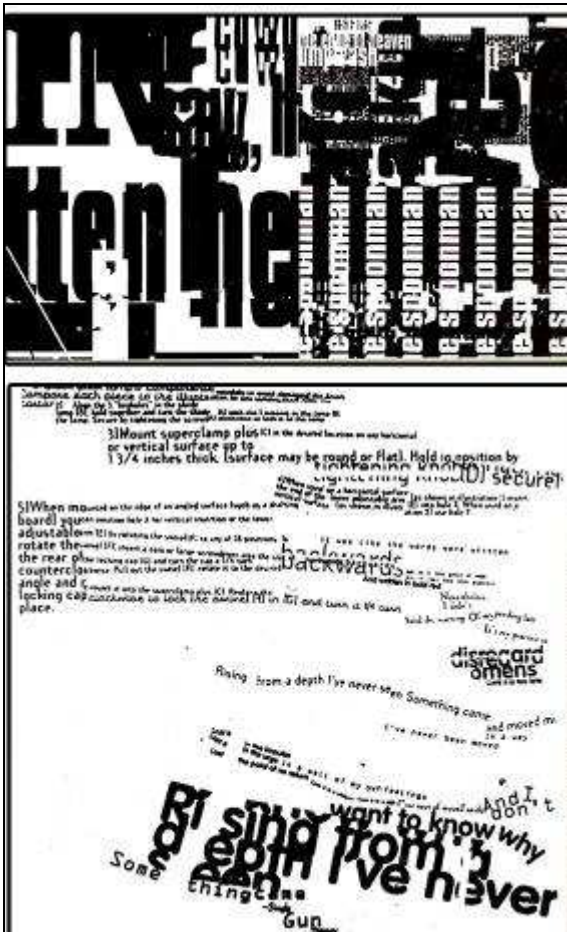


# Stressed Typography

“Legibility is not the same as Communication” David Carson


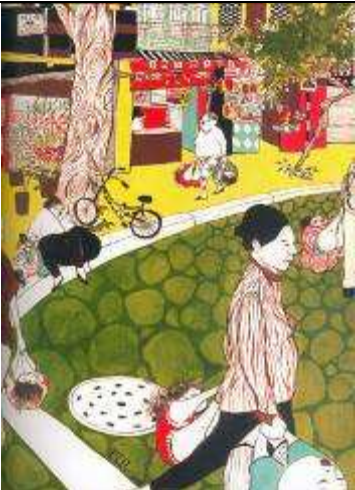



Feature	Significance
<b>Deconstructed Text</b>	Overlapping, cut off by the edge of the page, different sizes, fonts, and orientations (horizontal, vertical) = difficult to read. The viewer has to stop and “work out” what is being said so they spend more time looking at and absorbing the design.
<b>Illegible Text</b>	Sometimes the text is just there to “look cool” serving a decorative rather than functional purpose. Becomes an interesting pattern in itself with only fragments being readable. The younger audience often doesn’t need or want to read lengthy passages and is happy to get the message as “fragments” of meaning. Style more important than meaning
<b>Text Sabotage</b>	Filling in the enclosed areas of letters and distorting fonts as a deliberate way of making the text “wrong”. Subversive anti-establishment act to show freedom and disrespect for established practice.
<b>Non- Corporate</b>	Blurry, out of focus images that look like amateur photographs used. Carefully treated to heighten ambiguity and create mystery. Contrast with slick professional photos of establishment glossy magazines = youth culture anti-establishment, cool, relates to the kind of photos the audience takes themselves. Celebrates the every day life of pop culture. Influenced by Pop Art paintings which are deliberately informal.
<b>Emphasis on the Periphery</b>	Objects, images, and text placed on the edges of the design often going off the top, bottom and sides of the page. Deliberately breaking the rules, informal, unexpected = symbol for design that is on the edge of acceptability = Youth culture revolution.
<b>Empty Spaces Use of Negative Space</b>	Open areas of empty (NEGATIVE SPACE) spaces act as a contrast with crowded confused areas of text and image = Balance giving the eyes a place to rest when looking at the designs.
<b>Dirt and accidents</b>	Grungy, dirty, scuff marks that are not cleaned up = anti-establishment symbolising breaking the rules. Used as decorative elements to add visual interest
<b>Linear</b>	Linear and geometric elements randomly placed around the design. But these are carefully arranged in relation to the text and image to balance the total composition.



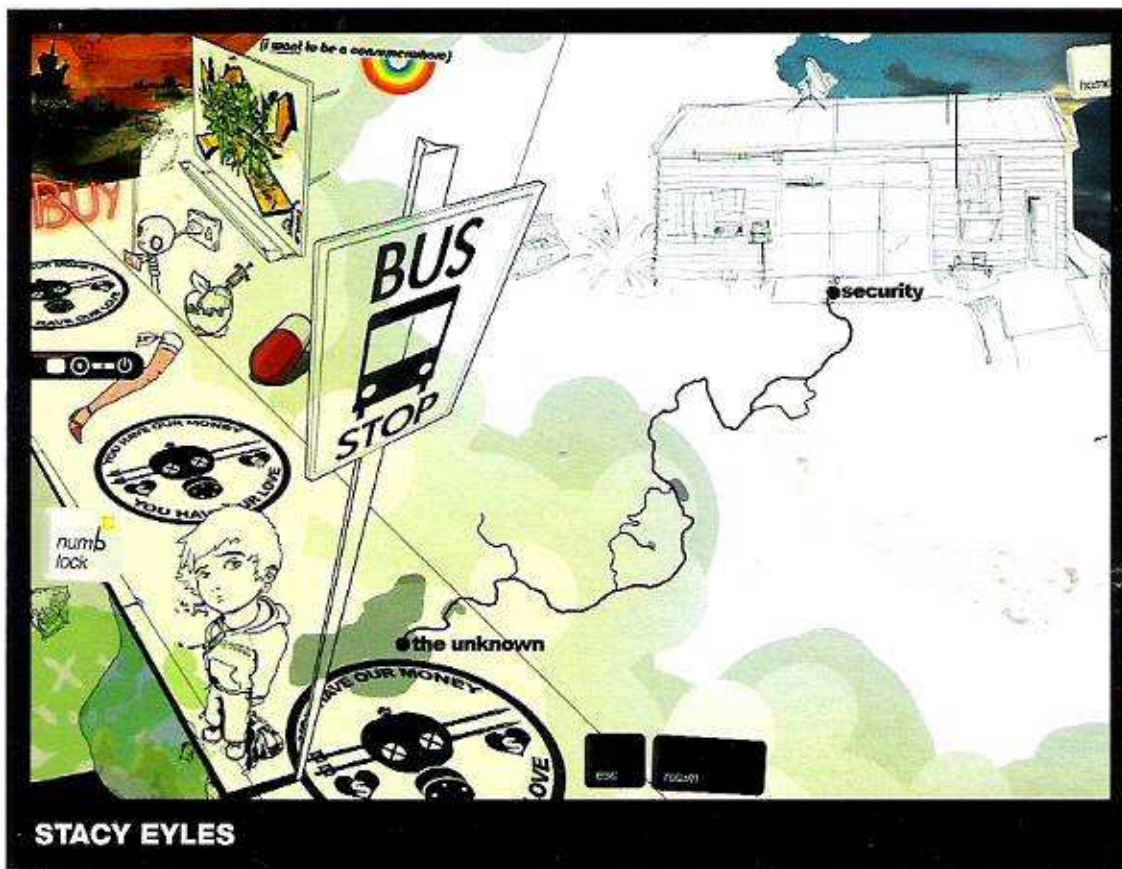
Geoff Harris, 2008 (no copyright) Contributions welcome ☺

# Illustration Cartoon

		
Eduardo Bertone	Fernanda Cohen	Marchos Chin




## Key Features

Feature	Significance
<b>Hand Drawn</b>	As apposed to photographic. Styles vary and can be based on Manga or TV shows. Or can be more subversive and deliberately crude and rough. Often drawn over the top of photographs and then scanned into the computer.
<b>Subversive</b>	Often deliberately subversive or provocative emphasising sexuality and anti-establishment approaches. Designed to appeal specifically to youth culture (radical, alternative, unconventional) Deliberately ugly, distorted, deformed characters used to grab viewer's attention. (attract/repel phenomena like a road accident)
<b>Humour</b>	Funny looking characters or events depicted to grab the viewers attention. Often slightly "sick" in the style of Jackass to have more street credibility.
<b>Flat Colour (Digital Fill)</b>	Drawn areas scanned and filled with flat colour or gradient fill. Acts as a contrast between the hand drawn (informal/organic) and digital (formal/mechanical)
<b>Outline</b>	Black outline from conventional cartoons and japans prints. Sometimes without any fill. Can be hand drawn so the line varies in thickness and tone/colour.
<b>Calligraphic Marks</b>	Use of scribbles, splashes, and stains that are the oppositie to mechanical computer elements. Very personal and expressive. Sometimes go across/over/under the other elements to subvert the orderliness of the design
<b>Hand Made Fonts</b>	Titles and key phrases are often done in hand made fonts or calligraphic fonts have been chosen. Although combining hand draw informal elements with formal fonts can be used to effect as well.
<b>Saturated Colour</b>	Frequent use of highly saturated intense colours to create visual impact. Primary colour often favoured.
<b>Incongruity</b>	Unusual juxtapositions of images (radio and cow), styles (hand drawn and photograph), and textures (wet media and computer). Creates a surreal otherworldly realm where the normal rules don't apply.
<b>Pattern and Detail</b>	Figures usually simplified with backgrounds often highly patterned, textured or left largely empty (Negative space to balance intense busy areas.



Geoff Harris, 2008 (no copyright) Contributions welcome ☺

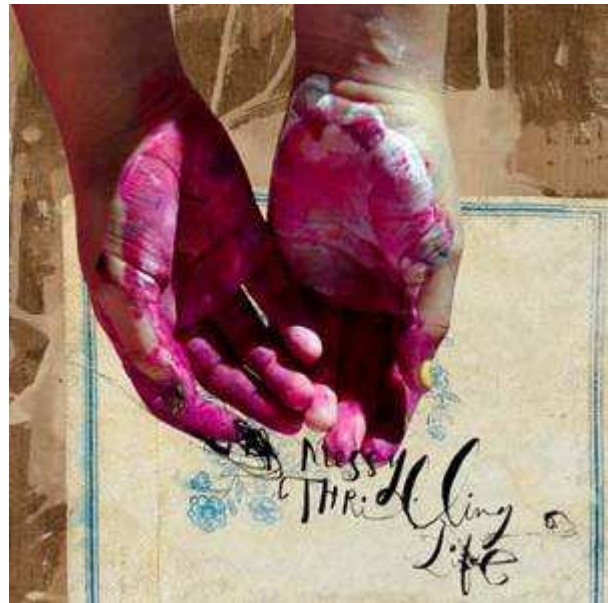
# Grunge Illustration

		
Michelle Ward	Sarah Ward-Harrison	Sarah Ward-Harrison

## Key Features

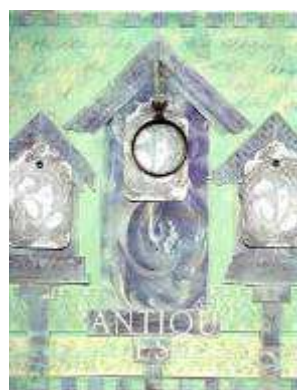
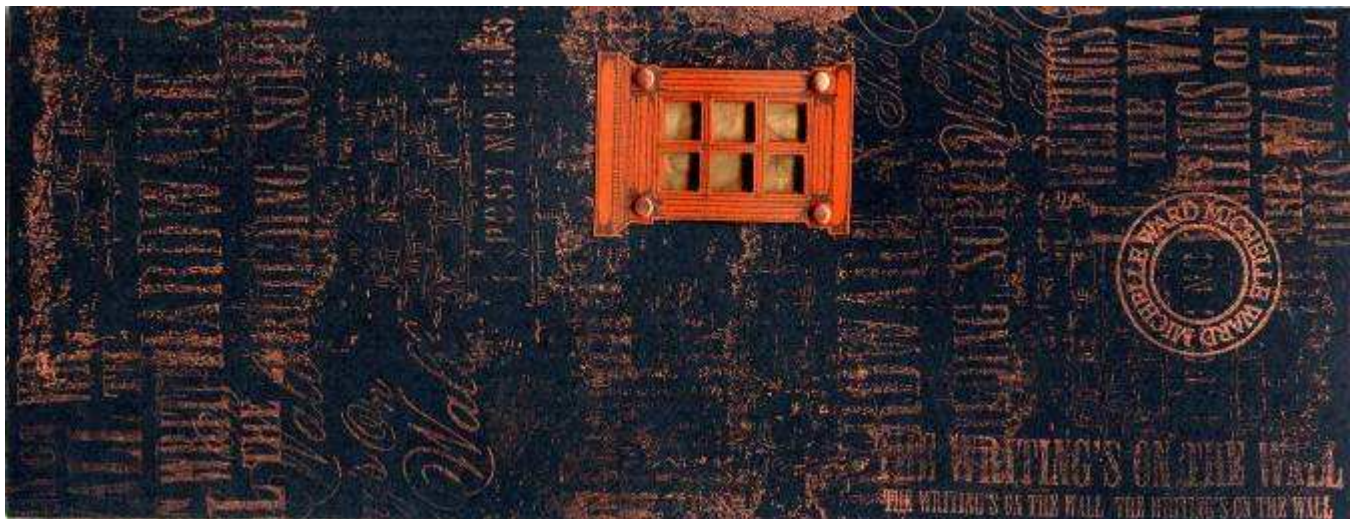
Feature	Significance
<b>Scrap book aesthetic</b>	Personal images, diary style text, collected images and clippings (tickets, feathers, patterns etc) = Rejection of formal design practice. Rough around the edges, with dribbles and splatters = Honesty not slick and polished which is corporate manipulation
<b>Honesty</b>	Political statement that hand made is more important than mechanical. Return to simple reality in the face of multinational marketing pressure to buy the same stuff as everyone else.
<b>Collage</b>	Real life found objects. Wall paper, feathers, newspaper, illustrations, flowers etc. Influence of Synthetic cubism, Dada, Pop Art where reality is integrated not imitated. Appreciating everyday objects, recycling discarded objects = appreciation and conservation. Also protest against conventional soulless design on computer.
<b>Photo-Montage</b>	Collage using photographs. Often artists own personal. Not slick studio photos but ordinary amateur type images with head cropped off, bad lighting, out of focus etc. Sometimes drawn over the top to integrate into the media of the rest of the work. Also cut out photographic elements are then integrated with drawn shadows or some other device.
<b>Hand drawn fonts</b>	Personal, calligraphic. Hand writing communicates rich meaning (Graphology). Not mechanical, automated = more real, honest.
<b>Textural mark making</b>	Experiments with layering, glazes, scratching, scumbling and other more painterly drawing effects. Emphasis placed on back to nature, made by hand which is more personal individual and has greater authentic "aura". Not impersonal mechanical mass produced.
<b>Tape exposed</b>	Cellotape and masking used to fix photographs and other elements are left visible as compositional elements. This symbolised the rejection of conventional design procedures where the construction of the work in not invisible in the solution.
<b>Domestic Personal references</b>	Personal photographs, signature style handwriting, personal objects, etc all used to generate imagery. Briefs often reflect personal philosophy on life and are opposed mainstream corporate culture
<b>Colour</b>	Wide range of colour effects although brighter colours are often slightly muted to reflect their handmade (organic produce) origins. Often recycled "manila" type colours (beige, ochre, stained look)
<b>Accidental</b>	Appreciation of the marks and textures made without deliberate contrivance. Intuitive rather than formal planning and construction.

# Sarah Ward Harrison



Geoff Harris, 2008 (no copyright) Contributions welcome ☺

# Michelle Ward



# Posterised Montage



## Key Features

Feature	Significance
<b>Silhouette</b>	Figures and objects rendered as flat black or coloured shapes
<b>Outlines</b>	Figures, objects, decorative patterns, and geometric shapes are rendered as linear outlines
<b>Organic Aesthetic</b>	Curves and spirals create movement. Very little use of straight line horizontals and verticals which create more stable static compositions
<b>Saturated colour</b>	Intense bright high saturated colour used to create positive high energy atmosphere and to be eye catching high impact solutions to grab the viewers' attention.
<b>Monochrome objects</b>	Individual objects are often rendered as a high key single colour (all blue or yellow) which is then arranged with objects that are other colours to create "simultaneous contrast" (Colours opposite on the colour wheel placed next to each other to increase intensity)
<b>Black and White</b>	Sometimes most of the design is black, white and grey with select areas of intense high key colour. This draws the eye to the coloured areas which act as a focal device and are more intense by being the only elements of colour in the design.
<b>Decorative</b>	Paisley, floral, hippy patterns used to create positive happy atmosphere. Slightly nostalgic, retro styling.
<b>Chaotic Complexity</b>	Layering of many different elements (but utilising linear and transparent objects) to create high energy effect. However these are carefully arranged.
<b>Negative Space</b>	Use of empty areas (usually left white) to balance out the intense complicated areas. Provide a breathing space of calm where the eye can rest from looking at the complication chaotic areas.
<b>Mixed Styles</b>	Photographic, geometric, and illustrative elements all mixed together. Reality and cartoons interchanged like "Who Framed Roger rabbit". Geometric elements (spirals, circles, stars) are placed next to organic elements (splash, splatter, dribble) to create visual interest.
<b>Popular Culture elements</b>	Where copyright allows there is frequent use of well recognised icons like SpongeBob, Nike, Jimmy Hendrix. Otherwise trendy images like flowers, butterflies, bubble and stars are used.
<b>Attitude</b>	Often feminine aesthetic is made to have broader appeal by generating a "staunch" attitude through pose and/or expression.







DESIGN: Editorial Illustration.  
CLIENT: GQ Magazine.



close



DESIGN: Editorial Illustration.  
CLIENT: Propaganda.

