

Graphic Design
Design Camp 2005

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Morning Discussion

Type and letterforms adorn the world and surfaces that constantly surround us. Have you ever thought about why certain letterforms are used to express these words and how each typeface communicates meaning? Today we are going to investigate seven distinct classes of typefaces and discuss the differences between them. Typeface families are composed of basic characteristics such as: roman / italic; bold / thin; and extended / condensed.

Getting Started

You will receive one 7-letter word bundle. Word choices include: Comfort, Confuse, Costume, Extreme, Fashion, Machine, Natural, Playing, Privacy and Working (feel free to trade). Next, cut each letterform in half either on the horizontal or vertical axis.

Search and Find (Sky's the Limit!)

Your challenge is to re-complete each letterform by replacing the "other" half that has been cut away (choose the top or right half only). To do this, comb through magazines and use found objects that you see around you. Generate a lot of images and consider what those images mean. Not only are these images a match to the missing parts of the letterforms, but they are also a comment on the meaning of the word. Do not worry about the size/scale of the found images that you find as you will have access to Xerox machines to reduce or enlarge the images as needed. (An example includes an image of or a pair of scissors open or closed to complete the letter "K" or "R".) Use your 'viewfinders' to reveal interesting crops by focusing on a piece of the image that may be a stronger choice than the whole.

Decision Time (Editing the Images)

Lay out each letter on the table along with your found images and discuss each of your graphic comparisons. Decide which ones work best and show the most sensitivity to each letterform's unique characteristics as well as the meaning of the word you are trying to convey. Next, you can proceed to the Xerox machines with TA's to create copies of your found images at different scales.

Making the Book (Construction and Production)

Work individually with your Xeroxes and magazine clippings to create the finished collages of each letterform and mount each collaged letterform to a sheet of cardstock. Each letterform should be 8.5"x 8.5" square, so you will need to trim down your final piece of cardstock for each letter. Your final goal is to have 7 separate letterforms that bind together into an accordion fold book that spells your original word. Your finished book will visually and creatively communicate the characteristics of your word while at the same time exemplifying the characteristics of different typefaces.

Show and Tell (Final Presentation)

The next morning, each of you will display your 8.5"x 8.5" accordion fold books. You will have about one minute to talk about your thoughts on the project and explain your decisions about image choice and juxtaposition. Which parts of the letterforms do you feel were most successful or difficult? How did image choice affect the meaning of the word?