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My chosen words: Typography, Branding & Colour

Style – festival posters

Introduction

In this essay I will explore the significance of typography, branding, and colour in the context of festival posters. By choosing these words I can identify how visual elements influence the music genre. Festival posters often have a unique visual language that

communicates the vibe and culture of the music. By focusing on typography, branding, and colour, I would be analysing into how design choices not only attract attention but also reflect the music's energy and community. This would give me insights into how these design elements are used thoughtfully in the music industry to create an impact. Typography, branding, and colour are not decorative choices; they serve as powerful tools that shape the viewer's emotional response and engagement with the poster. Through an in-depth analysis, I will find out these design choices work in attracting attention, bring forth specific feelings, and establish a connection with the audience.

Typography

Career Foundry describe typography as "Typography is the art of arranging letters and text in the way that makes the copy legible, clear and visually appealing to the reader" (*Hannah*, 2023). The key function of typography is to make the letters visually attractive and create a device message. This helps the reader understand the text facts (*Whited*, 2011). A design's message can be emphasised or strengthened with the use of typography. The typography used in image-focused designs, such as posters or advertisements, should be striking enough to draw the eye. Choosing a legible font is crucial for designs that contain a lot of text. You can also use essential words or phrases and divide parts. The arrangement of text on a page to indicate its importance is known as text hierarchy. To make it easier for the view to read and comprehend the text, it serves as a visual guide. This is accomplished by emphasising important information with various font weights, sizes, and colour (*Design*, 2021). The typography you choose should match the mood and style of your music. Many new artists just use default fonts from whatever software they are using and constantly change their style, which can

impact on their branding. “Artists like *The 1975*, *Kendrick Lamar*, and *Tyler, The Creator* use typography to make bold statements that align with their sound” (Freund, 2025).

Typography has long been one of the most recognizable visual elements for music artists, with custom type-based logos often used to represent their sound. This can be seen in the work of the artists like *Metallica*, *AC/DA*, *Eminem*, and *Blossoms*, among many others. Musicians make the most of typography to express the style and mood of their music by adjusting letter shapes and spacing, creating a strong connection between the visual design and the music itself (Launch Studio, 2017).



Fig. 1: Launch Studio (2017) Typography’s relationship with music genres

These festival posters mainly use typography to grab attention instead of relying on a central image. A common feature is the way artists or performer names are displayed – headliners usually take up more space on the poster to stand out and draw people in. Fans often follow their favourite artists from show to show, so organisers use this as a branding tactic, making sure the biggest names are highlighted to attract more attention and boost interest in the event (Word Press, 2015).



Hangout Music Festival poster design features a typographical appealing concept due to the way in which the text is laid out inside a guitar created from some of the words itself which is then used to display informative text to help the reader understand who is performing in this festival and what date it is happening.



Firefly Music Festival poster is similar to the previous poster since this one also features a lot of artists names used to help promote this festival, normally they would have the biggest acts or performers in large text above the rest to display that those main acts will be performing at this festival.



Lewes Fc Beer Fest is a different type of poster because it does not advertise big acts or performers since it is a beer festival so the main display would be prices for the drinks, location for which this beer festival is held and the date.



Shambhala Music Festival poster displays a lot of big acts which will attract attention of viewers which follow such performance and thus intise them to attend this music festival, i like how they used different text typography for the big performers names and their own for the title of the music festival.



Buku Fest poster displays a mix of various performers with different shades of colours to highlight the individuality between each set, the text is clear to read for any reader and the typography used for the title is rather funky.



Download Festival poster features similar aspects as the others since this too highlights big acts/performers that feature in this festival, their big names are used for advertising advantages.

Fig. 2: Word Press (2015) Festival poster research

A common design method is to display the headlining acts in large, bold text, while the smaller or lesser-known artists are shown in a smaller font. This approach not only highlights the main performers but also helps make better use of the available space in the layout. Using bright and playful design styles works well for electronic music

festivals, but for jazz or classical events, it makes more sense to choose a design that feels more refined and artistic. (Adelina, 2024).



Fig. 3: Adelina (2024) The art of the music festival

Choose fonts that match the vibe and personality of your festival. Typefaces work well if they are modern, bold, and trendy, however a more classic or traditional festival would suit elegant serif fonts that reflect its history and style. Creating an effective music festival poster is all about finding the right balance between colour, illustration, and

2012

BONNAROO

MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL

OVER 150 ACTS IN MANCHESTER TN!!!

JUNE 7-10 2012

TICKETS ON SALE!
BONNAROO.COM

CINEMA TENT

TENT CITY!

HOTELS

TRAVEL PACKAGES & MORE

MINI-BAR

SHOWER

FOOD

COMEDY TENT

THE SILENT DISCO

BROOKER'S FESTIVAL

AND MANY MORE!!

EMINEM · ARCADE FIRE · WIDESPREAD PANIC · THE BLACK KEYS · BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD
FEAT RICHIE FURRY · STEPHEN STILLS · NEIL YOUNG · RICK ROSAS · JOE VITALE · MY MORNING JACKET · LIL WAYNE
STRING CHEESE INCIDENT · ROBERT PLANT & BAND OF JOY · MUMFORD & SONS · THE STROKES · THE
DECEMBERISTS · RAY LA MONTAGNE · BASSNECTAR · IRON & WINE · GIRL TALK · PRIMUS · DR. JOHN WITH ORIGINAL
METERS & ALLEN TOUTSAINT PERFORMING DESTIVELY BONNAROO · ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION FEAT JERRY DOUGLAS ·
PRETTY LIGHTS · FLORENCE · THE MACHINE · SUPERJAM WITH DAN AUERBACH AND DR. JOHN · EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY · NOFX
ST59 · GOGOL BORDELLO GALACTIC · BEIRUT · BIG BOI · SCISSOR SISTERS · GREGG ALLMAN · RATATAT · GLOBAL GYPSY PUNK
REVUE CURATED BY EUGENE HÜTZ · ROBYN · WARREN HAYNES BAND · DEERHUNTER · OPEATH ATMOSPHERE · OLD CROW
MEDICINE SHOW · BOOTSY COLLINS & THE PUNK UNIVERSITY · WIZ KHALIFA · MATTHEW KIM · GRACE POTTER & THE NOCTURNALS · THE
DEL MCCOURRY BAND & THE PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND · MAVIS STAPLES · BELA FLECK & THE FLECKTONES CHIDDY BANG ·
JOVANOTTI · BRUCE HORNSBY & THE NOISEMAKERS · LORETTA LYNN · G LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE · BLACK UHURU · COLD WAR KIDS · THE
WALKMEN DEVOTCHKA · WANDA JACKSON · NEON TREES · PORTUGAL THE MAN · SLEIGH BELLE · AMOS LEE · BEST COAST ·
DAM-FUNK & MASTER BLAZTER · THE SWORD · SHPONGLE PRESENTS SHPONGLETRON EXPERIENCE · THE DRUMS · THE BLACK
ANGELS · DANIEL LANOIS' BLACK DUB · SCHOOL OF SEVEN BELLS · J. COLE · NICOLE ATKINS & THE BLACK SEA · WAVVES !!! · JUNIP
ANTHONY B · FREELANCE WHALES · JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE · RYAN BINGHAM & THE DEAD HORSES · DEER TICK · BAND OF SKULLS
SHARON VAN ETTEN · ABIGAIL WASHBURN · BLACK JOE LEWIS & THE HONEYBEARS · OMA SOULEYMAN · THIN SHADOW · KYLES
MAN MAN · THE LOW ANTHEM · ALBERTA CROSS · RAILROAD EARTH · JESSICA LEA MAYFIELD · BEN SOLLEE SMITH WESTERNS ·
GRAVEYARD · THE HEAD AND THE HEART · KAREN ELSON · BEATS ANTIQUE · FORRO IN THE DARK · THE KNUX · NAOMI SHELTON & THE
GOSPEL QUEENS PHOSPHORESCENT · CRAIG BALDO · FUTUREBIRDS · HAYES CARLL · HANGAI · AARON "WOODY" WOOD · ANDREA
BELANGER · APACHE RELAY · AUNT MARTHA · THE BAND OF HEATHEN BEAUTIFUL GIRLS · MAT MCHUGH SOLO & ACOUSTIC · THE BLACK
BOX REVELATION BOBBY LONG · CHEER UP CHARLIE DANIELS · CHANCELLOR WARHOL · CHRIS HARFORD AND THE BAND OF CHANGES ·
CIVIL TWILIGHT · CORY CHISEL & THE WANDERING SONS · CRISTINA BLACK · THE DAVID MAYFIELD PARADE · DEAS VAIL FENCES · FINE
PEDUNCLE · GARY CLARK JR. · GIVERS · GREENSKY BLUEGRASS · HANNI EL KHATIB · HE IS WE · HESTA PRYNN · INFANTRÉE · RODDY
WALSTON & THE BUSINESS · JAMIE MCLEAN BAND · JEFF THE BROTHERHOOD · KELLEIE MAIZE · KEVIN HAMMOND · KOPECKY
FAMILY BAND · LAUREN SHERA · LIONIZE · MINIBOONE · MISS WILLIE BROWN · THE PARKINGTON SISTERS · THE PIMPS OF
JOYTIME · THE REVEREND PEYTON'S BIG DAMN BAND · RIVER CITY EXTENSION · ROTARY DOWNS · SALLIE FORD & THE
SOUND OUTSIDE · SHAHIDAH OMAR · UNCLE SKELETON · TRISTEN · WALK THE MOON · THE WHITE BUFFALO

COMEDY THEATRE

LEWIS BLACK · 420 COMEDY BLAZE HOSTED BY CHEECH MARIN FEATURING RALPHIE MAY, THE STARS OF
WORKAHOLICS & MORE · JOHN WATERS · HENRY ROLLINS · HENSON ALTERNATIVE'S STUFFED & UNSTRUNG
THE GLOVE LIVE (PAUL SCHEER, NICK KROLL, JON LAJOIE, STEPHEN RANNAZZISI) · DONALD LEAGUE
THE GREGORY BROTHERS · KATHLEEN MADIGAN · EUGENE MIRMAN · TED ALEXANDRO · DENNIS COFFEY
TIG NOTARO · HANNIBAL BURESS · NATE BARGATZ

Fig. 4: *Niekerk* (2024) Around the world with music festival posters

Branding

As defined by Cambridge Dictionary, branding refers to “the act of making a product, organization, person, or place easy to recognize as different from others by connecting it with a particular name, design, symbol, set of qualities, etc” (*Cambridge*, 2025).

Branding is crucial since it makes your company more recognisable and clarifies what you have to offer. It highlights your unique selling points and distinctions within your field. A powerful brand embodies your business’s identity and influences how you want other people to see you. Successful businesses rely heavily on their branding since it shapes public perceptions of your brand, creates trust, and may result in new clients. It also raises the total worth of your brand and improves your reputation. On the other hand, a poorly designed or inconsistent brand might confuse your target audience and hurt your company (*Dandu*, 2015). As early as 2000 BC, when traders began considering strategies to increase the sales of their goods, branding has existed for thousands of years. In ancient Babylon, craftsmen printed their products with symbols to indicate their place of manufacture, and traders made compelling pitches to draw in customers. Even pub owners employed visually appealing placards to attract customers. It is possible that the term “branding” in marketing dates to the 19th century when cattle ranches in the American West marked their livestock with initials or symbols using hot irons. Although preventing theft was the primary objective, the concept of having a mark to indicate ownership later came to be associated with identity and marketing (*Kenton*, 2024). Since most people only go to one or two festivals a year, it is critical that you build an emotional connection with them in order to make your event seem like the greatest option.

Building a confidence and trust with a strong and consistent brand makes your festival appear more dependable. Additionally, it gives prospective attendees more confidence and excitement about investing in your event. Maintaining a consistent brand throughout the festival improves the overall experience for your audience, increasing the likelihood that they will return later and even bring their friends. Branding aids in conveying the character and tone of your festival through images. Because of this, festival branding is an effective way to express the spirit and vitality of the occasion so that people will immediately associate your colours, images, or logo with the upbeat ambiance you want them to remember. (Dee, 2021). The most effective and authentic festival branding does not just depend on things like typography, colour, logos, and photos, it also involves creating a full, well-rounded identity that is based on deeper, more abstract ideas and the overall experience the festival offers (Gosling, 2017). Picture thousands of festivalgoers acting as moving advertisements for your brand. Your brand is going to be visible long after the event is over thanks to striking and distinctive graphics on T-shirts, caps, and drinkware that double as mobile billboards. Useful and enjoyable merchandise helps people associate your brand with good memories. When attendees use your trendy tote bag or reliable reusable water bottle, it reminds them of the great time they had at your booth (Sycal, 2024).



Fig. 5: *Kelman.B* (2025) The desert sun

“The festival branding sets the premise of what the customer might expect of their experience. It reads into the mood, sets the atmosphere, shares the beliefs and the possible socio-political agenda, and most importantly makes a promise of the unique experience one might only experience at that specific festival”. With so many different types of festivals out there, there is just as many varieties in their branding. Some are bold and playful, others are sleek and modern, but all of them are creative and visually striking in their own way (*Design & paper*, 2022). Below are some examples of festival branding.



Fig. 6: *Design & paper* (2022) 16 exiting festival branding concepts full of energy and compelling charisma



Fig. 7: *Gleeksman.B* (2023) Music festival branding

Developing a distinct visual aesthetic that reflects your festival is the primary purpose of festival branding. This covers everything, from your website's appearance and social media content to your logo, colour scheme, and typefaces, as well as any promotional materials you employ. One of your brand's most important components is your festival logo. It must be obvious, memorable, and immediately identifiable. Your festival's spirit and personality should be reflected in the design. Each element such as your website, social media accounts, flyers, posters, and goods, should be consistent with your brand's identity. Keeping uniformity contributes to a strong, cohesive appearance that makes an impression on your audience (*Walker, 2023*).

Colour

According to Britannica, the definition of colour is “the aspect of any object that may be described in terms of hue, lightness, and saturation” (*Britannia, 2025*). Everything we look at has colour, and it plays a big role in how we understand and experience the world around us. However, colour does not actually exist in the objects themselves. Take a red apple, for example – under a blue light, it will look bluer, and not complete

darkness, you will not see any colour at all. Colour is just how we perceive energy and certain wavelengths of light that enter our eyes. Because everyone's eyes and brain process these signals a bit differently, it is possible for two people to see the same object but perceive slightly different colours (*HunterLab, 2024*).

A music festival poster's mood and feel are mostly dictated by its colour scheme. Softer pastel colours create a more peaceful and calm ambiance, while bright, strong colours may suggest a vibrant mood. Designers meticulously consider the festival's topic and target audience while selecting colour schemes, ensuring that the poster is eye catching and makes a lasting impression (*Editor, 2024*). The colours you choose should work well with your logo and reflect the overall personality of your festival. It is important to keep your colour choices consistent across everything such as your website, social media, and any promotional content, this will create a unified and recognizable brand (*Walker, 2023*). Colour is one of the most crucial aspects of visual design. A well-chosen colour palette can capture the viewer's attention without overwhelming them with too many clashing hues. Using colour in your poster design also helps with branding (think Coca-Cola its signature red). The colours you choose can also influence how people feel or react emotionally (*Prior, 2025*). To create this poster shown below, two acrylic paint tools were used, along with samples taken from brush strokes to add texture. An orange overlay was applied over a light blue background, resulting in an abstract design that captures the vibrant, creative feel of the fictional summer sound festival (*Spoon Graphics, 2025*).



Fig. 8: *Spoon Graphics* (2025) How to create a music festival poster design in photoshop

As is often the case with design, simplicity is key. Even if you are dealing with a larger poster, it is usually better to keep with just two or three colours, even though employing a lot of colours could make sense for some designs. One of the best ways to create a simple and functional design is to start with the colour scheme that your brand currently uses. It is critical to strike a balance between the messages that colours may be sending and how they complement one another on the colour wheel (*Snap print solutions*, 2022). (*Instant Print*, 2016). In my opinion, the poster below demonstrates a harmonious blend of colours that echo the festival's coastal artistic essence. The sky blue dominates the background, representing the clear Cornish skies and the ocean horizon. The sunset orange used for the sun and waves, this colour adds warmth and

energy, symbolizing the festival's vibrant atmosphere. As for the seafoam green, this applied to the waves and surf elements, reflecting the surf culture and the natural beauty of the coastline. Lastly, the white highlights the sun and waves, adding contrast and enhancing the poster's visual appeal.



Fig. 9: *Boardmasters* (2024) Get to know your Boardmasters open surf

To conclude, festival poster design involves more than just aesthetic decisions when its typography, branding, and colour. They are crucial instruments that effect how people view and experience a festival. Together, these components convey the tone and individuality of a music event, drawing in potential guests and creating a memorable impression. A poster's typography gives it structure and voice, directing the viewer's gaze establishing the festival's genre and mood. A sense of identity that people can relate to both before and after the vent is created through branding, which increases

recognition, trust, and emotional connection. Colour has a significant psychological impact, establishing the mood and setting while creating feelings that are consistent with the festival's theme. When carefully and consistently applied, these design elements produce more than simply a poster, they create a visual experience that draws viewers in and remains in their minds long after the music has stopped. It is evident from this research that effective festival posters do more than promote an event, they also engage the audience, tell a tale, and capture the essence of the festival.

The research I have done has brought me to ask the following question how does typography have an impact on festival posters?

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