

# Research in Practice

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## **Past present and future within design communities**

This essay has been constructed based on 3 key words, which I have broken down and defined. I have chosen Typography, Cross-culture design and Trend. The first word “typography” is an important aspect to any design work ,whether it’s personal or commercial. I want to understand the importance of typography within graphic design and its effect on individuals and the relationship it has within society. This led me on to my second choice of word which is Cross-Culture design. I am curious in finding out how collaborative work is completed and the process of bringing communities from afar, together combining cultural design and inspiration. From this came trends within design. This is an area that is constantly evolving and adapting. I wanted to research how designers push their skills to higher levels and how they explore and investigate new methods of persuasive design; how trends interact with consumers and how they react to trends developing within our society.

## Typography

The Cambridge Dictionary explains the word typography as “the style and size of letters used in printing: the art of arranging printed letters and numbers so they are ready for printing” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). The majority of typography has its own set of bespoke fonts that includes all styles such as bold, italic, medium, light, extra light and many more. Typography within a graphic environment as described by the Creative Cloud team refers to “the style and appearance of printed text...the art of designing and arranging text visually” (The Creative Cloud Team, 2017). The designer uses a particular font or style of text that is ready for print and can be rearranged to be visually appropriate for the piece of work. The font in turn becomes a defining element refining the tone of the piece and creating a brand identity.

Typography becomes the visual representation of the brand; “Type choice is critical. A brand’s typography is as important as any other element associated with an identity. In many cases, it’s the vessel for that brand voice” (The Creative Cloud Team, 2017). Typography is a visual element incorporated within a brand style; some brands may have larger, cleaner and more creative fonts with each distinctive to them. “The fonts you choose for both your content and logo portray who you are as a brand. This is why big brands are careful and extremely particular about the fonts they choose” (Farnaz, 2020). An array of font styles would be used to reflect an identity based on its visual meaning and brand representation; the reason brands have such diverse logos is because it creates something memorable for the client as well as being recognisable (Design Rush, 2022). The typeface used by a brand can additionally create an emotional connection with the consumer which results in that

brand identity becoming more recognisable as a result (The Creative Cloud Team, 2017).

# Helvetica



Fig.1: Logos that Use Helvetica Typeface Font

Typography is important within graphic design as a way to reach out to a specific target audience; typography is constantly in our daily life, whether on billboards, posters, signs or front shop windows. The arrangement of type is not just about putting it onto a blank canvas but the way in which it's constructed, worded, used and most importantly visualized. Communication through type is important for every day information and knowledge which the human race can't avoid, therefore "The purpose of a good piece of type design is to promote legibility and the second is to help communicate a design through clever messaging, tone, and sentiment (Corrigan, 2022). Typeface needs to reach out to the individual whilst being memorable.

The essential part of designing or choosing a typeface is making sure that the typeface chosen is legible and can be scaled to appropriate sizes dependent upon the subject; this would then create something practical and prepossessing. For example, the Helvetica typeface has been used extensively across numerous brands such as *Target*, *American Airlines*, *The North Face*, *BMW* and a vast number of large corporations. Helvetica was created by Max Alfons Miedinger, a graphic designer who has been assigned the task of creating a new font by the director of the Haus foundry known as Eduard Hoffmann. In 1957, Miedinger launched a new set of letter types named Neue Haas Grotesk. The type was set in a sans serif font that created good balance, legibility and boldness while keeping it elegant. By doing so this meant that the majority of readers and designers would be able to use this typeface without having any difficulty with legibility. As Sarah Cantavalle explains “It was a sans serif font with a linear, simple and elegant design, and this no-frills look meant it was extremely legible” (Cantavalle, 2021). This made it a font that was easily understood through its simplicity of design.

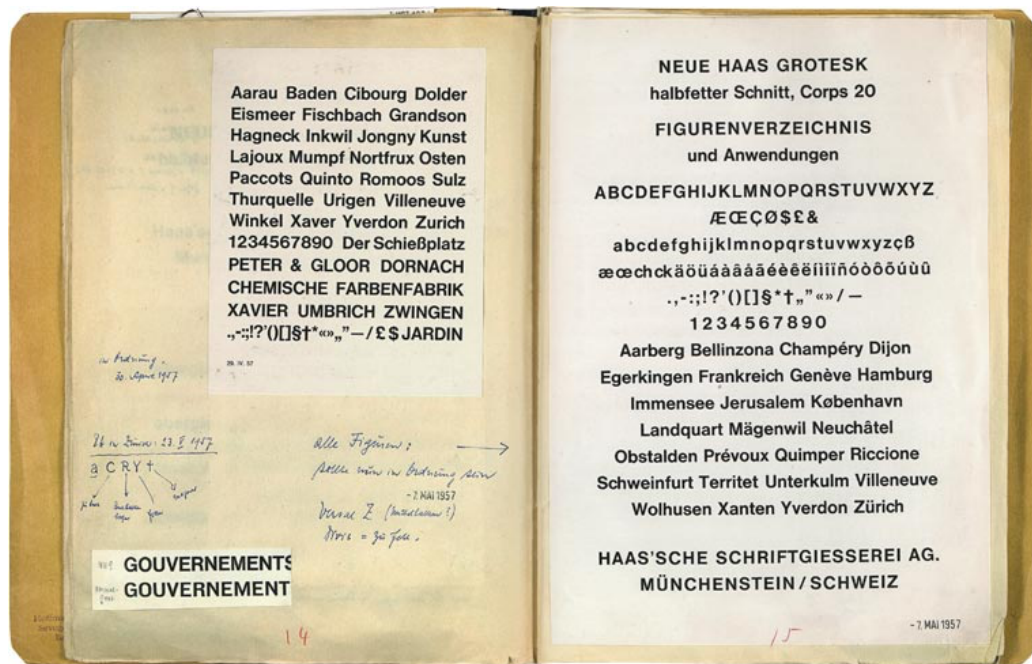


Fig.2: *The history and evolution of the font Helvetica*

Helvetica is one of the most commonly used typefaces as it is bold, clean, and instantly identifiable; its legibility makes it easily understood, creating elements of modernism and cleanliness. Frank Wildenberg argues "It's durable. It comes from natural design forms. It doesn't have an expression of fashion. It has very clear lines and characters, it looks like a very serious typeface" (Burkhard, 2010). Legibility in terms of Helvetica and all typefaces has been an essential element to their success in promoting whatever they are trying to communicate. Typeface continues to be an essential element in communication within graphic design and many other areas.

## Cross-cultural collaboration



Fig.3: *Celebrate Year of the Mouse with Disney x Gucci Collection*

Cross-cultural is defined as “involving two or more different cultures and their ideas and customs: involving two or more different countries or cultures” (Cambridge, Dictionary, 2022). Cross-cultural collaboration within design is actively happening across the globe. There are many collaborators within the world of graphic design; most of these designers are spread from various countries and have inspirational cultural backgrounds. “Collaborative design is a complex process that involves different team members, roles, and ideas with the purpose of coming up with the best solutions to specific problems or tasks” (Madalina, 2021). Collaboration work is becoming more of a trend as two communities or designers with very different styles and backgrounds in design come together and produce various pieces of work whether installation pieces, digital pieces or traditional design.

Cross-cultural design in graphic design is the process of designing graphic elements that are effective across cultures. This includes taking into account the different ways that people from different cultures perceive visual information, and design accordingly. It can also involve designing specifically for a target audience in a particular culture, or different language audiences in order to better communicate with them. Cultural collaboration within design is also a feeling of being part of a design family where you all make important choices as well as looking out for each other. It's almost a sense of reliability and trust. "If that is mixed with an environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their opinions, every team member will feel they're actively participating" (Madalina, 2021).

Having cross-cultural design means having access to new ideas and research methods; it also enables the designer to find new techniques and ideas along the way. There are many methods and ways of collaborating creatively whether it's through design, fashion, products or even food products. A number of high end brands have collaborated with famous artists or celebrities for example Gucci X and Disney's Mickey Mouse (see figure 3) which celebrates the year of the rat, and what could be better than using Disney's original Mickey Mouse character,

Gucci has launched its collaboration with the global juggernaut, Disney, for the Year of the Rat. Walt Disney's original Mickey Mouse is the star of the new Gucci x Disney capsule collection featuring more than 70 items available at our Gucci boutique, ahead of Lunar New Year, January 25 (South Coast Plaza, 2022).

Through joining forces these two major design houses have created a highly identifiable product range.

Diversity within the multicultural collaboration movement has also changed the way in which we approach social politics such as diversity within the field of design which then contributes towards multicultural collaboration through partnership. Creative designers and design communities are approaching new methods of working and creating an equal environment for all.

In the age of globalization and internet of things, managers are not restricted to one particular type of employee. Instead, they head culturally diverse teams (from all over the world) that cultivate opportunities in innovation and creativity, and alongside challenge one's leadership capabilities (Suleman, 2018).

Diversity in Design collaborative (2022) is on a mission to address and change the absence of Black creatives in design. Their leadership creates a space where companies and industry partners acknowledge that diversity is a creative advantage and can work together to bridge the racial gap (Gordon, 2021). A multi-cultural workforce provides the opportunity for cross cultural collaboration to be realised throughout.



Fig.4: Nike Air Jordan 1: A complete Guide

An example of this is the Nike X Jordan 1 formed as a collaboration between Nike and basketball star Michael Jordan from 1985. Originally, Michael Jordan wasn't optimistic about going into partnership with Nike as he believed that the shoes Nike were producing weren't comfortable enough. Nike paid Jordan a large financial figure of \$2.5 million dollars over the duration of five years, which he accepted and this was the beginning of his career with Nike and the formation of *Air Jordan 1*. Nike created a specific logo depicting Michael Jordan aiming for the hoop and this became symbolic to the brand identity. Each pair of Jordans sold would provide commission to both Michael Jordan as well as Nike, and this is how the Air Jordan range was born. Through forming an alliance with Jordan, Nike was engaging in cross-cultural collaboration and encouraging diversity within the Nike brand. Michael Jordan was given the opportunity to be the face of the company, and today the classic Air Jordans are selling for high margin prices as well as being collectables.

### **Trend**

Trend is defined as "a general development or change in a situation or in the way that people are behaving: a new development in clothing, make-up, etc." (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). This could manifest itself in many ways, such as a change in the style of clothing that people are wearing, the way that people are communicating, or the way that people are interacting with technology.

Trend design is a large area that covers a vast range of creative occupations, such as art and design, graphic design, fashion, interior and more design based jobs. Graphic design always has evolving trends within the field. What is important to

consider as a designer is understanding what came before, so that better choices can be made. Understanding historical design trends can be beneficial to predictions for future trends; “how we interpret what’s happened before, to help us try and understand and predict the future. The idea is that we want something different than we have now, but not too different” (Ellison, 2015). In order to reach out to the consumer, historical trends must be considered first.



Fig.5: *Cath Kidston could fetch up to £250m*

The majority of designers usually stay with a style in which they are comfortable with or have been doing for a long period of time, such as Cath Kidson whose designs focus on handicraft and the ideals of vintage British life (see figure 7). Whether this is based on multiple projects or commercial work a common theme is identified that unites all products with a specific brand identity; in doing this it can limit the creative diversity which they can explore however it retains brand recognition. “Good design should, at the end of the day, be honest and have a long-lasting appeal. This means transcending the immediacy of current trends while still employing the important

elements that they bring to the design world” (Creative Market, 2021). In the example of Cath Kidson, whilst her designs may stay the same the products or styles she produces may follow up to date trends to keep her products in line with the contemporary fashion scene.

2D and 3D mixed element designs are one of the design trends in 2022 (Digital Present, 2022). Previous years had seen a concentration on 2D design to express thoughts and showcase new designs however evolving trends and design demands resulted in 2D and 3D merging together.

the 2D design could not express the complexity of the products. Hence, the need for a new design trend was born – 3D design. This evolved design was able to go where 2D design could not. New forms, shades, gradients, the 3D method has it all (Digital Present, 2022).

This technique has been gaining popularity in recent years. This approach can be used to create more realistic and engaging designs, as well as to add a sense of depth and dimensionality to otherwise flat images (see figure 6). Mixed design has been particularly effective in the world of advertising and product packaging, where it can help to make products stand out on store shelves or provide character to a piece of design.



Fig. 6: *Rehabilita.cat*

Figure 6 depicts the technique of combining 3D render blocks with shadows in the background providing depth of spacing and the overall shape of the design thereby reflects buildings. The addition of 2D drawings provides the overall design with character and a playfulness, making the design stand out and unique. However, the limited use of colour within the design, makes the design not overwhelming or messy. This 2D and 3D render mixed method can be used effectively within illustration, graphic design, animation and more.



Fig. 7: *Ocean#babe*

Trend in design also includes colour and another trend design in 2022, was candy colour. By adding candy colour into a design it makes it appealing giving it a positive impact as well as a playful element. With candy colour the target audience is not just for children but is equally popular amongst adults. However, this can be a great way

to give your design a lasting impression as the colour catches the viewer's attention and makes it stand out from the competition (Confetti Design Studio, 2022). Using the 3D and 2D render technique and the addition of the candy colour displayed in figure 7 is also an effective design trend.

After researching into the three keywords and having analysed them and broken them down into sections, this has provided me with insight into areas I had no previous knowledge. Learning about the history of typefaces and how they are still being applied today due to their past and present success, in addition to the meaning and impact a typeface has on an identity and its consumers, I was then inspired to consider the role of cross-cultural design. It is interesting to see such great diversity within design and the fact that design helps support and encourage different cultural backgrounds to come together and create pieces of outstanding collaborative work, whether it's small or large scale. Trends is another key word which I am fascinated by. I wanted to investigate how trends within many different subjects including graphic design changes the way people work and design. It is interesting to see how we develop as a society based on evolving trends. Considering my three key words and the knowledge they have brought, has allowed me to explore new ideas and inspiration for my own dissertation and graduate portfolio. As a designer it is important to gather information within my field of expertise, therefore my dissertation question will be: How is design today affected by past and present trends?

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### List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Chris, S. (2020) *Logos that Use Helvetica Typeface Font* [digital image].

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Figure 3: Laughing Place Disney Newsdesk (2020) *Celebrate Year of the Mouse with Disney x Gucci Collection* [photo]. Available at:

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Figure 4: Perry, L. (2021) *Nike Air Jordan 1: A complete Guide* [photo]. Available at:

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Figure 5: Garside, J. (2013) *Cath Kidston could fetch up to £250m* [photo]. Available at:

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Figure 6: Cristianmg. (2021) *Rehabilita.cat* [digital image]. Available at:

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Figure 7: Wu, P. (2021) *Ocean #babe* [digital image]. Available at:

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