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Title

From Revolution to Revenue: A Critical Analysis of the Political Dimensions in the Works of Paula Scher and David Carson

Primary Alignment

Question 5. Design Thinking and Material Practices: *How are contemporary practices of design and making reshaping ideas of authorship, agency, and materiality in response to shifting technological, ecological, and philosophical paradigms? Consider how approaches such as speculative design, generative systems, or post-digital craft are contributing to these developments.*

The Research Question

From the Proletariat to the Boardroom: How has the visual language of Russian Constructivism been recuperated by Paula Scher to serve the ends of Late Capitalism, and does the post-political illegibility of David Carson represent a genuine 'Line of Flight' or the ultimate victory of Capitalist Realism?

Abstract.

Graphic design is often viewed as a neutral tool for communication, but this essay argues it is the primary visual language of political economy. Focusing on the concept of “recuperation”, originating from the Situationist International, the research explores how radical aesthetics are stripped of their political danger and absorbed by the capitalist marketplace. To illustrate this mechanism, the essay examines the work of two defining figures in contemporary design: Paula Scher and David Carson.

Traditionally, Scher and Carson are viewed as ideological opposites, representing the binary of ‘Order’ versus ‘Chaos’. However, utilising the lens of Mark Fisher’s Capitalist Realism, this essay argues that both designers perform the same function: the commodification of history or dissent for capitalist ends. The analysis begins with Paula Scher, demonstrating how she has appropriated the visual language of the 1917 Russian Revolution to validate the authority of global corporations like Citibank. It then turns to David Carson, arguing that his 1990s ‘grunge’ aesthetic was not a genuine escape from the system, but a stylistic rebellion that was immediately adopted to sell lifestyle products to a cynical generation.

Through a comparative analysis of their careers, the essay concludes that the design industry has entered a stage of ‘Hauntology’. Unable to invent a new political future, the discipline is trapped in a loop of recycling the past. Whether employing the rigid grid of Constructivism or the fragmented chaos of illegibility, the political result remains the same: the maintenance of the status quo.

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Chapter 1: Introduction.

Graphic design is never neutral. It is frequently dismissed as a service industry dedicated to decoration or clarity, yet it functions as the visual language of the dominant political economy. As Guy Debord observed, ‘the spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images’ (Debord, 1967, p 12). Every typeface, grid system, and colour palette carries on ideological weight, serving to organise not just information, but society itself. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the primary function of the discipline has not been to reveal the truth, but to translate power into aesthetics. Whether serving the state or the corporation, graphic design acts as the interface between the ruling ideology and the public subject. It turns the raw mechanics of authority into a consumable image.

The central tension of this era is the survival of Capitalism in the face of constant radical challenges. From the workers uprisings of the early twentieth century to the counter-cultural movements of the 1990s, the system has faced repeated calls for its destruction. The question arises: how does Capitalism survive these threats? The answer lies in its unique capacity for absorption. The Situationist theorist Guy Debord defined this process as 'recuperation', creating a world where “everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation” (Debord, 1994, p. 4). This is the mechanism by which a radical idea or aesthetic, originally intended to destroy the system, is stripped of its danger, commodified, and sold back to society as a safe lifestyle choice. Under recuperation, the imagery of revolution becomes the branding of the status quo. The raised fist becomes a logo; the chaotic scream of punk becomes a slogan for software.

To understand the mechanics of this absorption within the field of graphic design, this essay examines two seminal figures who appear to represent opposing ideologies: Paula Scher and David Carson. Paula Scher stands as the archetype of Order and Assimilation. Her work, defined by rigorous grid systems and monumental typography, represents the successful repurposing the radical language of Constructivism to validate modern corporate stability. In her hands, the aesthetics of the Bolshevik uprising are transformed into the identity of global banking. Conversely, David Carson stands as the archetype of Chaos and Fragmentation. Rising to prominence in the 1990s, his work rejected the rules of the academy, the grid, and legibility itself. He represents the post-modern rejection of order that coincided with what Francis Fukuyama termed the 'End of History' "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xi). Carson's aesthetic mirrors the fragmentation of the societal contract, channelling the angst and nihilism of a generation that believed change was no longer possible.

However, the central thesis of this essay argues that while Scher and Carson appear to be aesthetic opposites, one representing the grid and the other the glitch, they both function within the same political logic: Mark Fisher's concept of 'capital realism'. Fisher describes this as "Capitalist realism as I understand it cannot be confined to art or to the quasi-propagandistic way in which advertising functions. It is more like a pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action." (Fisher, 2009, page 34). This essay will chart the trajectory of this recuperation, demonstrating how the revolutionary impulse is systematically converted into revenue.

Chapter 2. The Capitalist Constructivist.

The birth of the Constructivist movement was the direct result of the 1917 Russian Revolution. With the establishment of the Soviet Communist State came a radical new vision of the future: one where the common worker held power, the aristocracies of old were a memory, and the bourgeois trappings of the upper classes were discarded. In keeping with the rejection of 'art for the gallery', pioneers such as Lissitzky, Rodchenko, and Klutsis, developed a new philosophy for the arts. This positioned the designer not as an artist, but as an artist-engineer. As Lodder notes "…an 'artist-constructor' who would possess both the artistic and the technical skills required to produce an object completely adapted to its total function" (Lodder, 1983 p. 75). They sought to encapsulate the rapid forward momentum that the Revolution promised. This figure was no longer tasked with decorating the world but organising it.

Facing a multilingual population with an illiteracy rate of 60%, the Bolshevik Government needed an effective method to communicate the ideals of the socialist utopia to the proletariat. Consequently, a visual language was engineered to bypass the lack of education within the population. Aligned along strict grid structures and featuring bold geometry, minimal text, and strong colour coding, this language utilised aggressive visual elements to command attention. Motifs such as upward-shooting diagonal lines or El Lissitzky's famous red wedge impaling a white circle (see figure 1) we not merely aesthetic choices; they were psychological triggers designed to imply inescapable forward momentum and the inevitable defeat of the enemy.



Figure 1: Ivan Picelj, Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge (after El Lissitzky) (1969).



Figure 2: Aleksandr Rodchenko, L'Art Décoratif et Industriel de L'U.R.S.S. (1925).

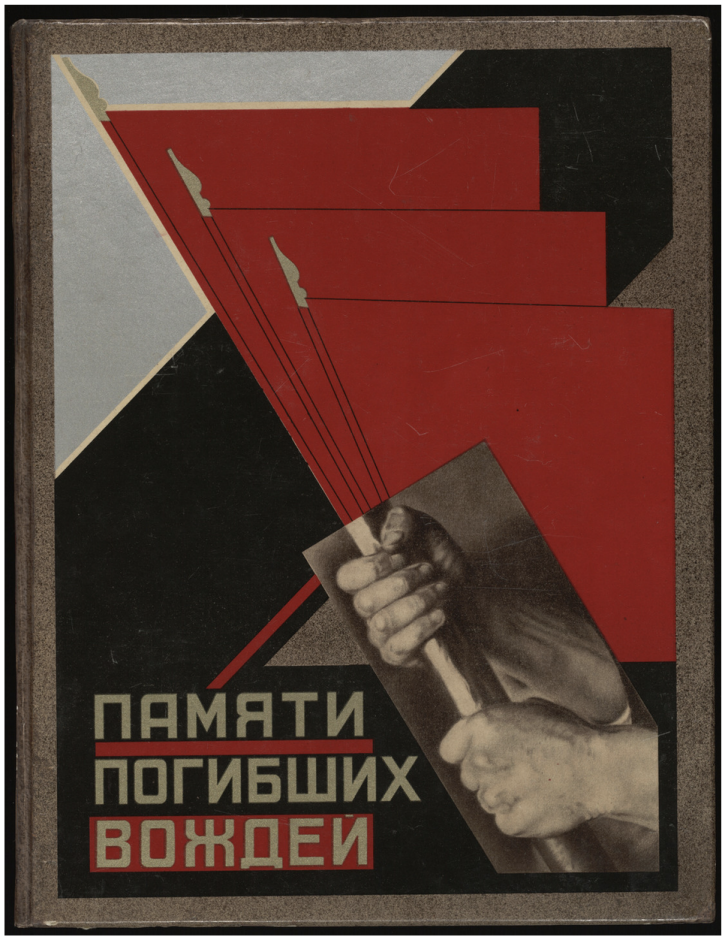


Figure 3: Gustav Klutsis, Memorial to Fallen Leaders (Pamiati pogibshikh vozhdei) (1927).

While the Constructivist of Soviet Russia used geometry to command the Revolution, Paula Scher uses the same imperative geometry to command the consumer. The aggressive diagonals, photomontage, and the strict colour palettes, once engineered to socially programme an illiterate Russian peasantry into a disciplined workforce, have been recuperated by Scher to engineer the obedient consumer. By applying these techniques to corporate branding, Scher utilises the twentieth century's most effective propaganda tools not to build a socialist utopia to manufacture consumer consent for late-stage capitalism.

Scher's design for the Citibank logo (1998) serves as a prime example of this recuperation. Historically, a bold sans-serif typeface signified that the designer was an engineer building text like a machine builds products, rejecting the "human touch" of the artist. This favours, in Lodder's terms, "the 'construction' of the object, rather than the 'composition' of the artwork" (Lodder, 1983, p. 83). With the Citibank logo, Scher uses the same constructed type to signify frictionless banking (see Figure 4). It suggests a bank that functions like a well-oiled machine: modern, efficient, removed from the bourgeois sense of "old money", and immune to human error. The engineer becomes the service provider.

Furthermore, looking at the red arc, a simplification of the umbrella logo from Travelers Group, we see a profound semiotic shift. In the works of Lissitzky, a red vector floating in white space signified a force for change or a violent disruption of the old order (see Figure 1). Here, Scher uses the same signifier, but the signified has been inverted. The dynamic vector is tamed. Scher adopts the Constructivist method of reduction, stripping the bourgeois ornamentation of the Travelers umbrella down to a pure vector.

Figure 4: Pentagram, Citibank Identity Logotype (1998).



Figure 5: Pentagram, Citibank ATM and Environmental Graphics

However, it no longer disrupts; it covers. It signifies the merger of two companies. The use of colour is equally significant; the trusted blue of financial institutions is offset by the striking red of the arc. While in Constructivism, red was the colour of the Revolution, here it is stripped of ideology, treated merely as a humanising element to distinguish the bank from its “cold” blue competitors.

Scher's repurposing of Constructivism is not a betrayal of capitalism, but a demonstration of its flexibility. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, pp. 461–462) observe, the “axioms of capitalism' are not rigid beliefs but 'operative statements' that constantly multiply to absorb new markets”. By converting revolutionary visual language into corporate branding, Scher is simply adding a new axiom to the capitalist machine.

Scher’s methodology has evolved to address the digital landscape. Her recent work for the Expedia Group, uniting a fragmented conglomerate into a single platform identity, maintains the structural logic of Constructivism while adapting it for the digital age. This identity features a lowercase ‘e’ constructed as a continuous looping vector line. The arrow, once the vector for progress signifying the revolutionary advance of the working class, retains its kinetic energy but loses its context. Its direction is transactional, pointing to a destination rather than a political future. Similarly, the circle represented the ‘international’ uniting workers; Scher reinterprets this as customers united by credit. Originally signifying *tektonika* – which Lodder defines as “…emerging from the ideological tenets of communism on the one hand, and, on the other, from the appropriate use of industrial materials” (Lodder, 1983, p. 94) - the removal of clutter to reveal structure, the minimalist lines now signal the removal of barriers to purchase. It mirrors the clean interface of the app, hiding the messy labour of service staff behind a frictionless digital line.



Figure 6: Pentagram, Expedia Group Identity (2018).



Figure 7: Pentagram, Expedia Group Custom Iconography (2018).

Titled *Open World*, the Expedia Group identity signifies infinite choice. In reality, the Expedia Group is an oligopoly controlling that choice. Scher uses the Constructivist language of internationalism to brand a gatekeeper; the visual language suggests open borders, but the transactional nature of capitalism ensures they come with a price tag.

The reality of corporate design is not artistic creation, but bureaucratic management. Regarding the Citibank identity, Scher reveals that "The design of the logo is never the hard part of the job. It's convincing a million people to use it." (Netflix, 2020, 34:17). This perfectly illustrates Fisher's concept of 'market Stalinism' - the artwork is secondary to the administration required to impose it upon the market. Ultimately, Paula Scher's work demonstrates the evolution of recuperation. If her Citibank logo used Constructivism to represent the protective Sheild of finance capital, her Expedia identity uses it to present the invisible control of platform capital. The heavy steel beams of the 1920's have melted into the liquid data streams of the twenty-first century, yet the mechanism remains the same: radical geometry shorn of its politics to build monuments to corporate power. Scher's work exemplifies Debord's assertion that "the spectacle is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image" (Debord, 1967, page 24).

Chapter 3: The Politics of Illegibility

If Paula Scher represents the System, embodying the order of Modernism and Capital, David Carson represents the collapse, embodying the entropy of Postmodernism.

Uniquely, Carson is not a trained graphic designer. Coming from a background as a sociology teacher and professional surfer, he approached graphic design without the baggage of history. He did not know the rules of the grid or Swiss Style; consequently, he broke them without hesitation. His unconventional design philosophy, "Don't mistake legibility for communication. Just because something's legible doesn't mean it communicates." (Carson, 2003, 14:30), gave him the freedom to explore the world of design ‘off grid’, using feeling and intuition to guide the work. "I have no formal training in this field. I've never learned all the things I'm not supposed to do... I just do what makes sense to me." (Carson, 2003, 04:10). The emotional message was prioritised over reading the text. If the music was loud and chaotic, then the typography should be loud and chaotic.

To understand Carson’s politics, one must understand the context of the 1990’s. The Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Capitalism had ‘won’, and there were no more ‘Great Wars’ left to fight. The grand narratives of Capitalism and Communism had fought each other to an inevitable end. The prevailing mood was one of nihilism and irony; this was the era if Nirvana, Slacker Culture, and Gen X. The prevailing feeling was that ‘the system’ was corrupt, but there was no point trying to replace it. Unlike the Constructivists who sought to build a new world, the only option for Gen X was to drop out or make noise.

Carson's work reflects this fragmentation. His layouts look like a society falling apart. Unlike Scher, who tries to build a 'New Order', Carson celebrates this lack of order. His work represents post-political apathy. It challenges the authority of the grid but offers no solution. It is the aesthetic of political exhaustion, screaming 'nothing matters' while dismantling the page. Carson's work was exclusionary, acting as a gatekeeper. If you did not get it, it was not for you. It created a subcultural 'In crowd' of the young are cool, and the 'Out Crowd' of the corporate are old.

Ray Gun (1992 – 1995), Carson's alternative music and lifestyle magazine, exemplified this feeling of nihilism and societal decay. With the deconstructed columns overlapping until they were unreadable, ignored margins, and an embrace of accidents like blurred photographs or distorted scans, he created a magazine that became the manifesto of the 1990's 'grunge' design (see Figure 8). The most famous example of this is the Bryan Ferry interview. Carson found the interview so uninteresting that he printed the entire article using Zapf Dingbats. It was completely illegible, rendered as pure visual texture (see Figure 9). This publication was a direct attack on the modernist contract, the idea that the designer serves the author. Carson asserted that the designer was the co-author; he held the power to silence the text if he chose.

This trajectory finds its conclusion in the collaboration between David Carson and Converse, the heritage American footwear brand. If Paula Scher can evolve from solidity (Citibank) to fluidity (Expedia), David Carson evolves from disruption (*Ray Gun*) to decoration (Converse).

His collaboration with Converse features brighter, cleaner, and high-contrasting colour combinations suitable for fashion retail, rather than the muddy, 'decaying'



Figure 8: David Carson, Ray Gun Magazine Cover, Issue 1 (1992).

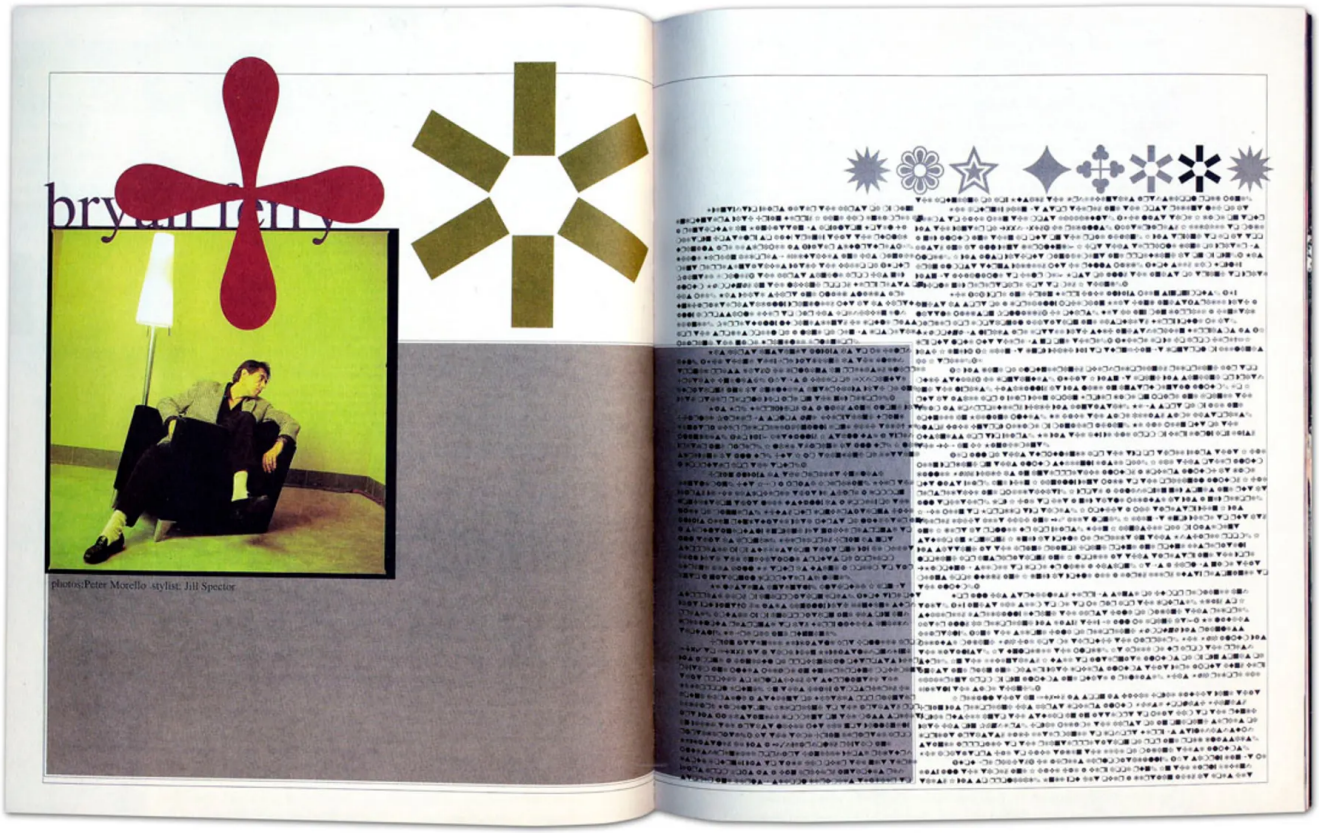


Figure 9: David Carson, Bryan Ferry Interview (Set in Zapf Dingbats)

colours of *Ray Gun*. The work is still fragmented and collaged, but it is no longer illegible. The chaos is contained. It is carefully composed to fit within the billboards and magazines, sitting alongside other massive corporate fashion brands. It does not break the container; it decorates it. The aesthetic becomes a durable commodity, a £100 shoe meant to be worn and displayed, confirming that “the spectacle corresponds to the historic moment at which the commodity completes its colonisation of social life” (Debord, 1967, page 29). The anti-consumerist aesthetic is cemented into a consumer object.

Ray Gun’s aesthetic was immediate. Printed in a disposable magazine, it was fleeting and ephemeral. It was reacting to the music and culture of the time, morphing and undulating to the pulse of the month. It was dangerous because it felt like it was happening right under your skin. The aesthetic of Carson’s work with Converse is nostalgic. It references the *idea* of the 90’s. It uses Carson’s signature style not as a reaction to the present, but as a ‘heritage texture’. Whereas *Ray Gun* signified a refusal to communicate clearly with authority, a barrier to entry, Converse signifies the lifting of the barrier. It becomes a texture designed to call back to the aesthetic of a bygone age. It is curated imperfection, representing the ‘human touch’ in a mass-produced world. In an era if AI perfection, the ‘glitch’ becomes a luxury signifier of ‘analogue soul’. As Fisher observed; "The 'alternative' or 'independent' cultural zone... [was] not something outside mainstream culture, but a permissible zone of play within it... the 'alternative' and 'independent' don't designate something outside mainstream culture; rather, they are styles, in fact the dominant styles, within the mainstream." (Fisher, 2009, p. 9).



Figure 10: Works Studio, Converse x David Carson Product Detail (2020).



Figure 11: David Carson, Converse Heritage Campaign Collage (2020).

Just as Scher's Expedia logo represents platform capitalism, Carson's work represents Retromania and Lifestyle Capitalism (Reynolds, 2011). In the 90's, Carson disrupted the product (the magazine). In 2025, Carson *is* the product. Capitalism has realised that 'disruption' is a brand value. Converse uses Carson not to destroy their brand, but to validate it as 'edgy'.

Chapter 4: The Apparatus of Capture

David Carson's 'anti-design' was not a threat to the system; rather, it was the exact aesthetic injection the system needed to transition from the rigid corporate culture of the 1980's to the "flexible", "cool" neoliberalism of the 1990's. In rejecting the rules of the profession, Carson unwittingly created the means by which he was recuperated. His trajectory exemplifies what Jameson identified as "the disappearance of the individual subject, along with its formal consequence, the increasingly unavailability of personal style, engender the well-nigh universal practice today of what may be called pastiche." (Jameson, 1991, p. 16). While his work mimics the visual language of 1970s Punk and Dadaist collages, the political intent is fundamentally severed. Punk utilised that chaotic style to scream 'Anarchy in the UK' and attack the establishment. Carson used it to whisper, 'Buy Microsoft' and service the establishment. This is the definition of Fredric Jemeson's concept of pastiche. As Jameson distinguishes, while parody has an ulterior motive, "pastiche is, like, parody, is the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of the parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse…" (Jameson, 1991, p. 17). Carson's work fits Jameson's idea of the "blank parody, a statue with blind eyeballs" (1991, p. 17). It is the hollow shell of a

revolutionary aesthetic, worn as a costume by a Fortune 500 company to signal relevance without risking actual subversion.

To understand how this appropriation occurs, one must look to Deleuze and Guattari, who argue that the State, or in this case Late Capitalism, functions as an 'apparatus of capture' which constitutes a "mechanism of direct appropriation" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 448).. The system does not merely repress its enemies; it internalises them. It operates by appropriating the 'war machine', the outside force of chaos, and putting it to work for the state. Carson's illegibility functioned as this machine. It attacked the established laws of communication and the grid, which represented the rigid bureaucracy of the previous era. However, when Carson partnered with large corporations like Nike, Pepsi, and Microsoft, they did not censor him. Instead, they put him to work, realising that the order of Paula Scher's style looked 'old' to the teenagers of the 1990s. To sell products to Gen X, the system needed to appropriate the chaos of the war machine.

Carson believed he was being alternative; however, corporate giants saw in him a means to capture a new, cynical demographic. Corporations realised that to sell products to a generation that hated advertising, they needed advertising that looked like it hated advertising. Carson provided the perfect visual language for Capitalist Realism to capture the 'Rebel' market. His aesthetic validated the consumer's feeling of alienation while simultaneously selling them the solution to it.

Carson's Deleuzian 'line of flight' ultimately failed because it was immediately recuperated by the capitalist apparatus of capture. While Carson's work attempts to break the grid, it risks falling into what Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 229) describe as

the 'fourth danger' of the line of flight: "But there is a fourth danger, and this is the one that interests us most, because it concerns the lines of flight themselves... instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, turning to destruction, abolition pure and simple, the passion of abolition". The major corporations of the 1990s understood that cynicism was just another demographic to commodify. Carson's own client list serves as the primary evidence of his capture. Microsoft, the company of 'windows', rectangles, and office productivity, hire Carson, the 'king of chaos', precisely because they need to soften their image. At the height of their monopoly of power, they used Carson's human, messy, and expressive aesthetic to make a cold technology giant look like one for individual creativity. The chaos of the design masked the rigidity of the software.

Similarly, for Ray-Ban, Carson created advertisements that looked nothing like what the brand had published previously. The aesthetic of social decay and horror was used to sell sunglasses. This serves as a definitive example of Capitalist Realism; there is no 'outside' to the market. Even the feeling of being an outsider, of social collapse, is a market demographic that can be monetised.

Consequently, Carson is no longer creating the 'End of History', he is stuck in it. He is repeating the gesture of 1994 for a generation born in 2005. As observed by Mark Fisher (2009, page 22) 'Witness, for instance, the establishment of settled 'alternative' or 'independent' cultural zones, which endlessly repeat older gestures of rebellion and contestation as if for the first time. 'Alternative' and 'independent' don't designate something outside mainstream culture; rather, they are styles, in fact the dominant styles, within the mainstream'.

His rebellion has been fully metabolised into a legacy asset, a nostalgic texture for heritage brands. David Carson's line of flight was a loop. He ran away from the Grid but ran straight into the arms of the big brands. In doing so, he proved that in the 1990s, illegibility was not a refusal to transact. It was simply a more exclusive form of currency.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The perceived opposition between Paula Scher's 'System' and David Carson's 'Chaos' is a false binary. Ultimately, both designers illustrate the fate of the 'war machine' in the face of Capitalist Realism. Whether it is Scher becoming the 'disciplined, military organ' of corporate identity, or Carson turning the design discipline against itself, they are trapped in the alternative described by Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 356): "Is it the destiny of the war machine, when the State triumphs, to be caught in this alternative: either to be nothing more than the disciplined, military organ of the State apparatus, or to turn against itself, to become a double suicide machine for a solitary man and a solitary woman?". Viewed through the lens of political economy, they do not function as enemies, but as two necessary gears in the same economic machine. Although they present opposing ends of the aesthetic spectrum, they work together to uphold the system of Late Capitalism. Debord (1967, page 22) notes that "the spectacle thus unites what is separate, but unites it only in its separateness". This system requires two distinct signals to survive. First, it requires stability; it needs banks, insurance giants, and digital platforms to function reliably and project an image of permanence. This role is fulfilled by Scher. Second, it requires novelty; it needs trends, the 'cool' factor, and the illusion of individual freedom to keep the population consuming. This role is fulfilled by

Carson. In this metaphorical structure, Scher is the architecture of the prison, while Carson is the graffiti on the walls. They look different, but they are part of the same building.

Paula Scher operates as the active agent of Recuperation. Her career demonstrates the process by which the market reanimates historic, dead political movements, such as Russian Constructivism, to serve modern commercial ends. By stripping the radical geometry of the 1920s of its original political weight and social purpose, she repurposes the 'language of the revolution' to give institutional authority to corporations like Citibank and Tiffany & Co. She proves that within the framework of Capitalist Realism, history ceases to be a sequence of political events and becomes a clip-art library, a repository of aesthetic skins waiting to be wrapped around a commodity. Here the discipline is forced to endlessly recycle the ghosts of the twentieth century. As Fisher argues, "cultural time has folded back on itself" (Fisher, 2014, page 29).

David Carson, conversely, acts as the recuperated commodity. He represented the recuperation of dissent itself. His work drains the political urgency from the aesthetic of Rebellion, Punk, and Decay until they are safe enough to sell running shoes or soft drinks. His trajectory from the dangerous illegibility of *Ray Gun* to the heritage decoration of Converse proves that in Capitalist Realism, resistance is just a demographic. The market does not fear the 'outsider', it actively courts them as a lucrative market segment.

This analysis validates the central thesis of Mark Fisher's *Capital Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (2009), in which he famously states that "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the age of capitalism". This essay has provided visual evidence for Fisher's claim. Even the visual language of the Russian Revolution, intended to overthrow

capital, and the visual language of social decay, intended to signal the end of industrial society, were easily absorbed by the market. Designers can no longer claim to be politically radical simply because their work looks radical. If Citibank can look like a Constructivist poster, and Microsoft can look like a grunge fanzine, then style has definitively lost its political power.

While it would be reductive to claim that no new forms are being invented on the margins of the design discipline, Scher and Carson represent the hegemony, the ruling class of the industry. Their enduring dominance and the market's continued reliance on their specific strategies serve as a primary symptom of what Fisher (*Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*. 2014) termed Hauntology, the slow cancellation of the future. The design industry rewards these figures not because they are inventing the twenty-first century, but because they are operating within a cultural logic where, as Jameson (1991, p. 18) observes, "...the retrospective dimension indispensable to any vital reorientation of our collective future – has meanwhile itself become a vast collection of images, a multitudinous photographic simulacrum". It is safer for a global brand to buy the proven aesthetic of the '1920s' or the '1990s' than to risk investing in a new, undefined future.

Consequently, the role of the designer in this context shifts profoundly. The designer ceases to be a revolutionary creator or a cultural avant-garde and becomes an archivist of ideologies. They are tasked with rearranging the ghosts of the past to mask the cultural stasis of the present. Scher offers the ghost of Order; Carson offers the ghost of chaos. Yet both are merely aesthetic simulations, masks worn by a market that has no ideology of its own other than infinite growth. The dialogue between Scher and Carson is

not a clash of design philosophy; they are two sides of the same coin. This coin is the essential currency of the design economy. Whether the market chooses to spend the currency of absolute Order or the currency of absolute Chaos, the transaction remains the same. They prove that in the economy of the image, the face on the coin matters far less than the value it generates for the system. "Capitalism is what is left when beliefs have collapsed at the level of ritual or symbolic elaboration, and all that is left is the consumer-spectator, trudging through the ruins and the relics" (Fisher, 2009, p. 4).

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