

Abstract

The Importance of Graphic Signs and Typography in Visual Communication

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This thesis contains an analysis of selected aspects of typography, seen through the prism of its historical development, with the aim of presenting my approach to exploring and understanding graphic design. My motivation for selecting this particular topic stems from my extensive experience as a graphic designer and educator as well as from the Czech typography tradition. Aiming to put my experience into use and inspired by having studied and worked in the Czech Republic, I also drew on the experience of my fellow countrymen, Jan Solpera in particular, in reference to the theory of typography. The text presents certain general aspects of graphic design as well as problems, generally deemed to be of universal nature, I encounter in creative work. The objective is to show the starting points for designing characters and symbols used in logo design, choosing the fonts, and, where applicable, correcting the selected lettertype. In addition, the thesis examines problems faced by all visual style designers in regard to the optimization of the legibility of lettering used in a logo. The text also presents selected opinions of experts on the topics under discussion.

Even though typography as a field might have been explored and described extensively, particularly as regards the Latin typeface, my work examines the differences in the approach to typography that stem from experiences other than those relating to the Polish tradition. The text presents the history and development of the Latin typeface from the original Roman capitals, and reflects on present-day lettertype use, its transformations from the monumental fonts used in Roman architecture to lettertypes employed in current visual communication and on the Internet, and the importance of emotions and aesthetics in the process of designing fonts and in how they are perceived. The thesis consists of two sections, the dissertation and a logo and visual style manual.

The dissertation contains six basic parts. The first analyzes certain aspects of Roman capitals as well as the ensuing development of the Latin typeface. The second part focuses on the classification of Latin typefaces by the Czech typographer Jan Solpera, which I consider the most comprehensive and accurate effort compared to similar attempts made by other authors. The third part examines the issue of font legibility under different conditions and in consideration of different factors. The fourth part describes the aesthetic properties of specific sans-serif fonts and the feelings and emotions they are liable to evoke in the reader.

The fifth part contains the core of the thesis, where all of the considerations and analyses from the previous sections are integrated. The text describes the creation of a new visual style for Travel Service, the largest airline of its kind in the Czech Republic, the owner of the SmartWings low-cost brand and the traditional Czech Airlines brand. The thesis elaborates on my work done during 2002–2003, when I created the logo and visual style of the SmartWings brand, which was emerging at the time. In the context of the current global changes in the tourism industry caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the worldwide economic crisis, this part of the thesis can be seen as an overview of an era of advertising and graphic design. The subject matter targeted by the thesis was selected in consideration of my observations and experience I have made and gained over the course of many years.

The project of a new visual style has the potential to be a visual remedy of sorts for the general lack of coherence and aesthetic consistency. The presented style embodies a planned strategy that aims to evoke certain positive associations, impressions and feelings in the recipient.

In addition, the thesis examines the prospects of using elements of such new approaches as ephemeral advertising, which has the potential to become an option for communication in the changing conditions of ecological technologies that emphasize sustainability and reduced consumption of energy and raw materials. Likewise, the text presents my observations regarding the creation of designs for airlines in the context of marketing communication.

The thesis is concluded with the Visual Style Manual itself, where focus concentrates on the overall presentation of the new design of the visual style that identifies the company and on examples of its use.