

Unit 3: assigned week 5 (October 13, 2015)

Unit 3: Title: Word As Image / Unit Leader: Tom Ockerse

Unit 3: Question:

How can the graphic medium **enhance and enrich** the verbal message?

Unit summary:

In our engagement with the world around us, and our routine to “make sense” out of complexity, we take for granted the perceptual and holistic principles this interaction involves. That perception of parts and **configurations** as a **holistic system**, or **language**, depends greatly on the use of so-called “gestalt” principles (i.e., figure-ground, similarity, closure, etc.) and how these serve the purpose to communicate. Since graphic design presents ideas primarily via graphic means, awareness of these perceptual principles is critical for designers to help their products stimulate clarity and unity, curiosity and interest, inquiry and insight. We will look into this power of graphic design to discover how an abstract (non-visual) object like a “word” (a verbal means to represent an idea) can be enriched significantly toward a deep sense of poetic insight due to its graphic/visual delivery, and thus provide a lasting impression of value for the ideas it holds.

Learning objectives:

- Develop visual sensibilities
- Learn about “gestalt” principles and their holistic system as “language”
- Observe the power of the visual to affect the non-visual
- Develop mind-mapping skills
- Become aware of the practice to design for experience

Phase 1: Find your word:

After introducing this unit each participant is given an object (same for all). Return to your studio. There, work individually to mind map your identity with the object (what it means to you).^{*} After about 15 minutes of mind mapping **select a single word from your map** (subjectively, for whatever reason, or needing to connect to the object).

Note: work only with this word for the next two weeks.

Continue to work in class on the next phase (below) to write/typeset/draw the word.

Unit 3: for week 6 (October 20, 2015)

Using only the word and its letters (but **do NOT add images or words, etc.!**)

Phase 2: experience the writing/typesetting/presenting the word: see, feel, **experience** the letterforms, and tools, materials; inquire into options for “writing”: tools, methods, structures, space-time, dimensions, letter/forms, qualities and gestalt principles.

Work **quickly** to explore visual form, and to generate a variety that uncover options.

Again: **use only this one word:** its letters, forms, structures, configurations.

Also: inquire into “gestalt” principles (web sites) and their applications in your work.

Phase 3: after your studies of visual forms **explore the meaning of your word** via a NEW mind map; i.e., define an expanded sense and depth of meaning that is **of interests to you**.

Phase 4: then (still only **using ONLY the word**) continue to explore how the visual means can embed the meaning of interest to you into the word’s graphic presentation via: **visual qualities for its elements** (letter/forms), their per/**form**/ance, and the experience others can have with it. Begin in simple ways. Write the word (with an adjective in mind) and search to harmonize meaning of the verbal and visual. Consider actions, visual expressions, configurations of parts, gestalt principles, etc.

At the start of next week’s class (**week 6, October 20**) present your ideas and your process for inquiry in an organized fashion via in a quick, efficient method to help the group get into the depth of your work, the value of your search, and appreciate the results.

Phase 5: After reviews continue to work in class on the next phase to further experiment with the means **for your word to represent a depth of meaning and heightened (poetic)**

potential. Work to optimize results to truly invite others to experience the word for its most meaningful, poetic potential.

Reflect: during each week's process take pause to reflect. Make written notes. Become aware of your curiosities, interests, and questions for inquiry. Especially note the many ways the visual implicates the verbal, and how the medium and graphic qualities influence, enriches, and deepens the message.

Unit 3: for week 7 (October 27, 2015)

At the start of class (**week 7, October 27**) present your results in an organized fashion to help the group get into your work and appreciate the value of your inquiries.

NOTE: Due the day after (October 30, 2015):

Prepare a simple reflective document on your process of inquiry for all phases to help you become more self-aware of the scope, efforts and value of results. Create a document of this (with visual samples) to share with section leader. Remain simple with the format and design, and focus on content and communication of your process, insights and what you learned.