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WORD COUNT: 6,260

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Chapter _____ one

Introduction 01

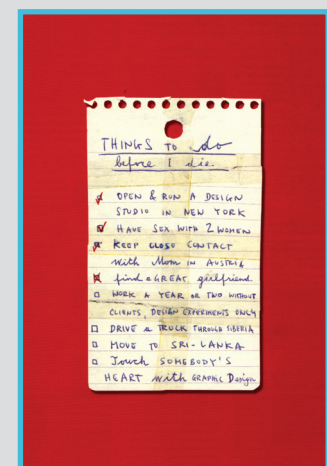
[Design for the Heart / Stefan Sagmeister]

p.02-06

I n t r o d u c t i o n

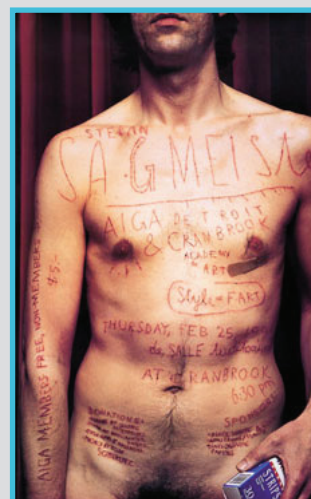
A graphic designers' job is to promote and sell something that already exists and to establish a clear effective way to communicate its message and motivate the consumers to carry out a task. Normally, an audience tends to engage with any visual element in a design for a very short time frame. Posters, billboards, and ad-commercials are visual mediums that only captivate us for a few transient moments, and we soon forget them as we walk away. Whenever we go to see a movie, the movie magic entertains us in our seat for at least ninety minutes; however, if the movie touches us emotionally then we might even end up in tears at the end of it. The images on the screen remain with us and touch our heart on a profound level; we experience what some may call a moment of catharsis. The same can be said about a piece of music, which takes us back to older fragments of time that we have made through our memories; or help us to create new ones as we listen to it over and over again. But can the same be said about graphic design? Is it really possible to captivate someone within this very short time frame of visual communication? Is 'time' our greatest enemy in the field of graphic design? Can graphic design touch someone's heart and reach our emotional core? Stefan Sagmeister, in his book 'Made You Look' concludes with a check-list on "things to do before I die". The list comprised of many things but what interested me was the last item on it: to "touch someone's heart by graphic design"; which significantly became my topic of dissertation as I wanted to know if it was truly possible.

Stefan Sagmeister's check list from his book "Made You Look" (p.275)



“Design for the Heart”

Stefan Sagmeister is an award winning graphic designer and always pushes the boundaries of his designs; apart from running his own studio—‘Sagmeister Inc.’—he is also a lecturer at design schools in New York City and Berlin, including the School of Visual Arts (SVA), the Cooper Union and the Universität der Künste. For more inspired designers, he devised a course that redefines their role. For the aspiring designers, the goal is to ‘touch’ three different audiences: Friends and family, community and lastly, humanity. Sagmeister motivated many of his graduates to design from the heart that has an impact on the target audience, rather than design to fulfil a mundane role of selling and prompting products.



According to Stefan ‘*The desire of an emotional impact is often (and rightfully) perceived by the audience as pretentious.*’⁵ Even though this is a course at design schools but the students have to actually produce them in the real world as oppose to showing a concept as a class work presentation and a final summative work. Based on the audience level they selected the success of the project relies on if the audience is touched and the fellow student is graded. Sometimes creating something for friends and family can conflict with the project as it could be something personal and most people don’t want to share personal matters with the rest of the class.

In context of designing for friends and family, Karin Soukup chose her mother to be the target audience, whom at the time was struggling with the loss of her father. (fig.1) Soukup’s grandfather was a flawed man, so instead of focusing on his shortcomings, she wanted to remember him as a magnificent singer. So she went through historical archives from the 1920s to the present and collected numerous audio recordings, handwritten letters, choral photographs and performance documents to piece together a portrait of him as an entertainer. The project’s final outcome was a 7” custom cut vinyl album with only four songs; a record sleeve with re-contextualized memoirs of his life as a singer from old letters; and a small booklet showcasing various accomplishments in his early life.¹



1. Available at <http://design.sva.edu/site/projects/show/196>
Accessed: [10th dec'2011]

STEFAN SAGMEISTER
Poster for AIGA lecture in Cranbrook, Michigan, 1999

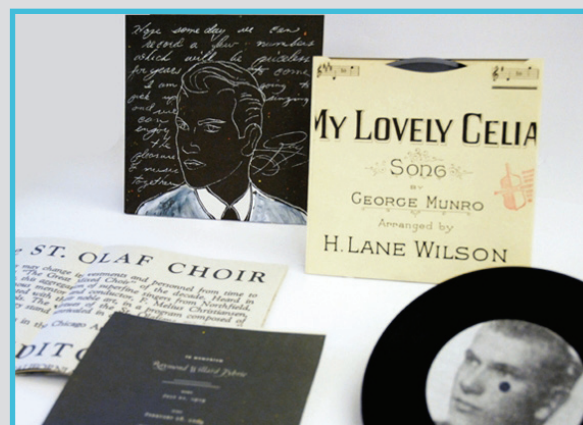


fig.1 A memorial (Touching One Person's Heart) by Karin Soukup, Academic Year 2009

Graphic design is a versatile subject and it branches out to a lot of different areas in the design field. These different areas of the design include advertisement, brand-identification, editorial, and motion graphics. Each of these are convenient in their own ways to solve design problems in everyday life, however, in order to reach out to the heart of the target audience is near impossible in all the application simultaneously. Despite the fact that visual communication stays longer in our minds than verbal communication, using these areas of design to instigate a precise emotional response becomes challenging. However, if the focus remains on visual communications, we may yet find a logical way to inspire the subconscious mind to prompt those emotions. This is known as 'Emotive Design'.

"Emotive design engages people in a focused way which strives to evoke the specific feelings the emotive brand seeks to own. Emotive design is not overtly emotional design. Operating at a subtle and subconscious level, these design cues work to reinforce and enhance other dimensions of the way people interact with the brand." ⁴

In today's world more than ever, great design matters. It has to stand out in the avalanche of posters, ads, flyers, direct mail pieces, books, magazines, Websites, etc. Sagmeister, in a 2006 interview for 'Communication Arts' (carried out by Carolyn McCarron Sienicki), revealed a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Though he had raised his thoughtful question to the design world almost 11 years ago, to this day it remains unanswered. The question itself perplexed its meaning where the "heart" aspect literally implies to love, caring or affection and therefore confuses many designers to answer it in personal projects, rather than in everyday-client work.

4. Available at <http://emotivebrand.posterous.com/what-is-emotive-design>
Accessed: [10th dec'2011]



But Stefan is asking for more than that meets the eye here; according to the author's interview:

'what he is really asking us is: Can design do more than sell products for our clients? Can design move someone enough to change the course of events? Can design play a bigger role in solving societal problems? "You could also say, do something that matters," he explains. "It's a pity that the majority of what we do is promote or sell products for clients. I have nothing against selling. I do it, too. But I also think design can do so much more. It can inform, delight, provoke, support and simplify someone's life." The answer must come from your own heart. This takes an innate understanding of where your particular passions and design skills can make a difference to someone else. It takes soul-searching. 'So what really encouraged Stefan to ask the question in the first place?; after his visit to the 1997 AIGA National Conference in New Orleans he got bored with promotional goodies that was professionally designed for conferences and to him these designs felt a bit cold even though much of it designed flawlessly. Either way these designs have very little meaning or anything personal to the maker or the receiver but mundane designed things that nobody cares about. He felt design is literally losing its deeper meaning and what is left of it is an empty shell that is just there. The main reason for all this stuff is that most designers don't believe in anything. When your conscience is so flexible, how can you do strong design?' ⁵

⁵. Available at http://www.creativeforacause.org/web_casestudies/SVA_CaseStudy.pdf (Carolyn McCarron Sienicki, 2006, Communication Arts November Design annual)

Stefan remembers about Marcello Minale explaining in a book by British corporate Identity firm minale tattersfield;

"In my experience, every designer whose prime aim in going into business was to make money while at the same time producing good design, failed on both counts. I believe that designing is something that you have to do for love. If you are committed first and foremost to producing good design then you'll make money as a by product because good design is something people are willing to pay for. But that financial reward will be a bonus gift." ⁶

⁶. Available at <http://sagmeister.com/node/276>



Even for the man who initiated the question, it remains highly improbable that he had been able to succeed in answering it. Sagmeister, even after 20 years of professional designing, hardly believes he has been able to reach out to the audiences with his design the way he wanted to. One of his many works was a personal project for a friend named 'Reini' who came to visit New York City for the first time and was not really sure if any of the sophisticated women in the city would talk to him. So before his friend's arrival, Sagmeister ran a poster campaign through the lower east side of the city where his friend was due to visit. The poster read 'Girls be nice to Reini' and upon his friend's arrival there was a party held in his honour; the poster campaign became the topic of conversation and Reini the star. Eventually all the beautiful girls in the party surrounded to talk to him and he even grew closer to someone from that party. It shows us that composing the right content is as important as choosing the right audience. Stefan quotes Katherine McCoy that -

*"design can never rise above its content. He adds, if I have nothing to say, the best design won't help me."*⁵ (p.3)

Sagmeister believes that such heart touching designs will be the only means of visual communications by the creative practitioners in the long run. All the generic designs will be something coming out of a design vending machine designed by something such as Apple, where even non-designers could just type in the client, select a format and a style and allow the program to offer a plethora of downloadable stock photos. With a final click of a button, the design goes straight to the printers and a lifeless, non-creative design is produced. In order to avoid such a dystopian future, Sagmeister came up with a list of qualities that guides aspiring designers to push their creative minds toward emotive design.

He recommended that emotive design must include-

1. *New Perspective* – The ability to make audiences see things differently.
2. *Trigger of Memories* – Experiences from childhood, life or loved ones.
3. *Passion and Guts* – Passion and commitment towards the subject.
4. *Surprise* – Shocking and something that is overlooked or unseen.
5. *Virtuosity* – Inspirational and outstanding ability in design skills.
6. *Beauty* – A perceptual experience of the viewer from the design.

Stefan Sagmeister's list of qualities from his book
"Made You Look" (p.278)

A design-piece with all the above six qualities is hence the definitive graphic design that answers Sagmeister's question. But is it quite possible that such piece of work ever exists? I can only assume that most designs are likely to contain two or three of such qualities in a single piece at the most. Moreover, trying to achieve all six qualities in a single piece would become overwhelming for a designer, especially when at least one of these qualities is able to answer the problem of evoking an emotional response.



Chapter _____ two

[Acts of Kindness / Michael Landy]

p.07-09

[Legacy of Steve Jobs]

p.10

"Acts of Kindness"

In the London underground tube station, there was a poster which visually looked like children drawings of stick figures in orange and red colour. On the top it read: 'Acts of Kindness' (fig.4) that quickly captivated me to look further into it. The poster didn't have much information except for a web link to the London underground website and found out more about the campaign.

"Acts of kindness" is a project conducted by Michael Landy; he aims to celebrate everyday generosity and compassion on the subway system. Everyday millions of people commute through the underground tubes and throughout their journey they do experience acts of kindness. Perhaps being aided by someone, or even witnessing someone being kind-hearted on the tube as well. But the truth of the matter is that these random acts of kindness are forgotten the minute they have been carried out; and often they are even taken for granted. They do not get the level of recognition that they deserve. Therefore, in order to pay a tribute to the unsung heroes in their everyday generosity and compassion on the tube; Landy invited passengers and staff to collaborate on his project by sending in their own stories of kindness. The project began in June 2011 and almost 300 stories have been sent by the public in response to it. Upon receiving the stories Landy would select the best ones and put them up on the campaign poster so that others would know about it; the stories on the poster would change in a monthly basis and continue till the end of June 2012.

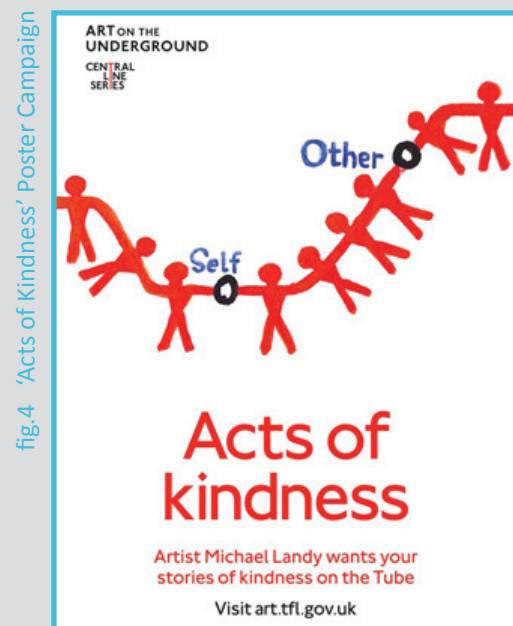


fig.4 'Acts of Kindness' Poster Campaign



fig.5 Michael Landy on Underground tube

Michael Landy (fig.5) is best known for his work Break Down back in 2001 where he destroyed all his belongings, from his birth certificate to down to his car. This experience led him to reflect on what we are aside from what we own as an individual. His motivation arose from the question of 'what makes us human more than just being consumers'. Maybe Landy wanted to feel what it means to have nothing at all but humanity and divulge into reincarnation of the self, which led to his second project 'explore what value kindness has, what it means, and what kind of exchange is involved in giving someone a helping hand.' 6

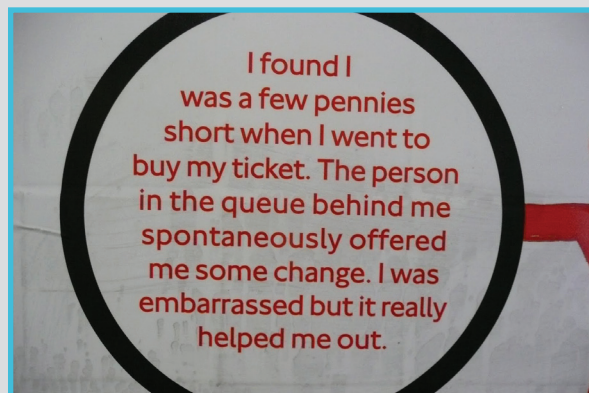
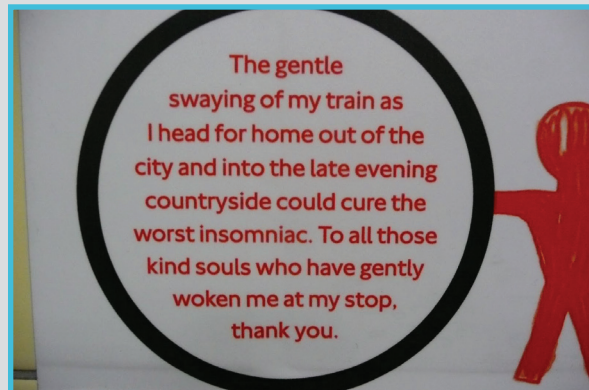
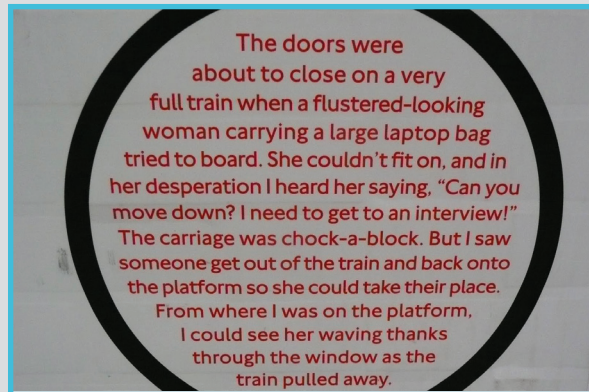
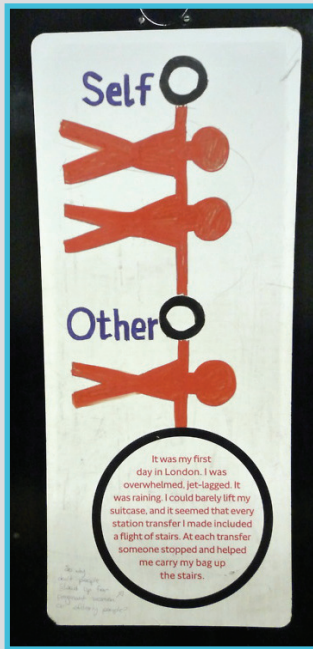


fig.6 'Acts of Kindness' Campaign artworks



According to Landy its fascinating how commuters tend to disappear into their own bubble on the tube, disconnected from people despite sharing the same transport system in the same society. And one day sitting in a tube train absorbed in his own world, he suddenly witnessed two strangers trying to help each other out. Then it hit him that these two strangers could have minded their own business like everyone else does but yet this random act of kindness made him inspired to ask *“what motivates someone to step out of their bubble and go out of their way to help a person they don't know? He created this project as a way of capturing and exploring what happens during that moment.”* ⁶

6. Available at <http://art.tfl.gov.uk/actsofkindness/about/>
Accessed: [5th Jan 2012]

There is also an interview with Michael Landy with the curator Cathy Haynes which gives an insight about the artist and the project.

Related Links: <http://art.tfl.gov.uk/file-uploads/fck-files/Michael%20Landy%20Interview.pdf>

Kindness is an act to acknowledge someone's need and feelings and it is especially hard when you share this sense of connection with a total random stranger; as you do not know how this person feels about your involvement in their personal matter, things could be misinterpreted or could be inadvertently made worse. There is an invisible trust, or a shoulder to cry on, which plays a role in situations like these. It becomes a way to touch someone's heart when they need really need it. It is fascinating how these short stories become a kind of 'artwork' (fig.6) for this project and is being interpreted as a means of visual communication to the general public; so that these 'stories' reach out and gets acknowledged in our shared humanity. So, does visual aesthetics really matter in touching someone's heart? Or is it the content that fills our hearts with emotional flood and rise above the design medium?



“ S t e v e J o b s ”

So, theoretically speaking in winning over someone's heart requires more than designing a poster for someone, it would rather require more than just acceptance to humanity's necessities; It's a designers job to come up with solutions to existing problems by creative thinking and execution, and speaking of making everyday life easier I can't think of a better mind who's recent passing away made us look back into his innovative design solutions that he has left behind for us in his legacy- 'Steve Jobs' a visionary in consumer design, his motives were to design devices that could connect with people in an emotional kind of way and become part of their daily lives. It's intriguing how he thought of simplicity in a chaotic world we thrive, the brains behind one click song downloads to the breathing light on a sleeping Mac Book; adding human sensibilities to mass produced electronics. Jobs wanted to bridge the gap between man and machine and indeed he did it through his innovation and for him it was never a matter of quality over quantity. When Mac computers hit the market all the hardware cables were reduced down to a single power outlet and who said computers needed manuals to get you started? Apple's iPod allowed you to buy MP3 music with a single click, and an android technology smart phone built around only one central button leaving only the beauty of its simplicity- "less is more" philosophy. And let's face it without their "designer computers" which gives an edge for its excellent graphics, font capabilities and handling of colours especially when going from screen and file to print; role of a graphic designer would not be at ease. Steve Jobs understood that design must touch every aspect of the user experience and with this in mind lead to his creations that changed our lives forever.

"What makes something simple or complex? It's not the number of dials or controls or how many features it has: It is whether the person using the device has a good conceptual model of how it operates." -

(Donald A .Norman, Author of Emotional Design 2004 Basic Books,387 Park Avenue South, New York N Y 10010-8810)



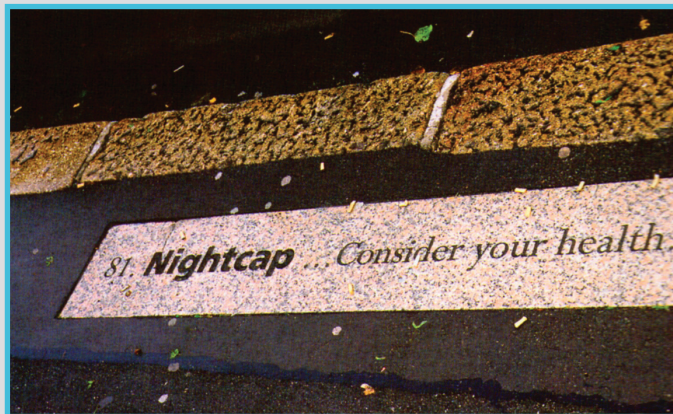
“Why Not Associates?”

David Ellis, Andy Altmann and Howard Greenhalgh founders of the legendary London Studio; ‘Why not associates’ the studio’s love for anything Typographic and their personal creative integrity rapidly won them high praise and somewhat of a rebellious reputation and dubbed as ‘the wild boys of typography’. The team’s work has evolved and diversified over more than two decades in producing prints, motion, identity, installations, and books. Whatever the studio designs their only common denominator is typography; they apply the principles of typography to almost all of their design solutions using works-space, positioning and composition from type.

Back in 1999 they created public art and signage (fig.7) to guide people to walk around the 10 mile coastal path passing Plymouth on the Devon coast. Their intentions for this project were to inform and intrigue them while improving the environment.

‘Code Words was inspired by the book “The Nautical Telegraph Code and Postal guide by captain D.H Bernard, Back in 1907, one of the ways to communicate from a boat to the mainland was by telegram, but the longer the message the more expensive it was, so Bernard developed the nautical telegraph code in which a single word conveyed a sentence; for example ‘scrawler’ meant ‘have today sent cheque payable to father’. It was only possible to decode the words however, if you had access to the book which was widely sold in Britain’s ports. So WNA took twenty-four of these coded words and their meanings and sandblasted them into granite, installing them at various points along the way.’ 7 (p.52)

fig.7 ‘Code Words’ 1999 Plymouth Waterfront Walkway



(Why Not Associates, 2004. 181A High Holborn London WC1V 7QX, Tate Trustees by Thames & Hudson Ltd) . 7



fig.8 'Sherlock Holmes'

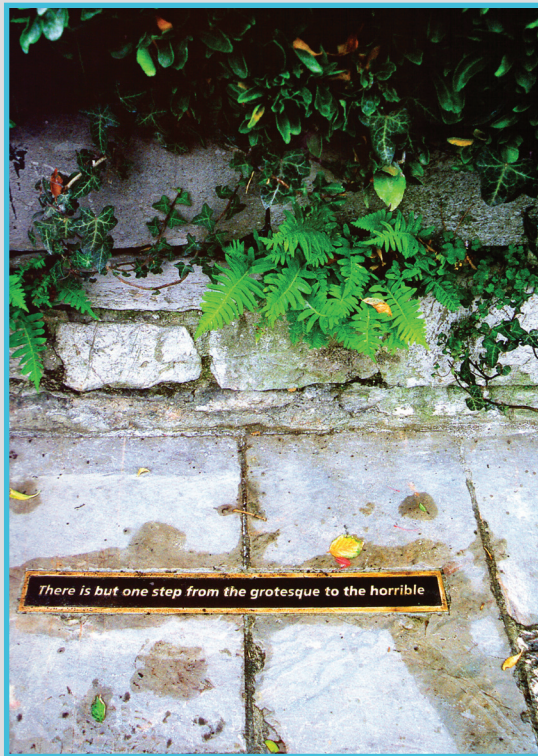


fig.9 'Poem Wall'

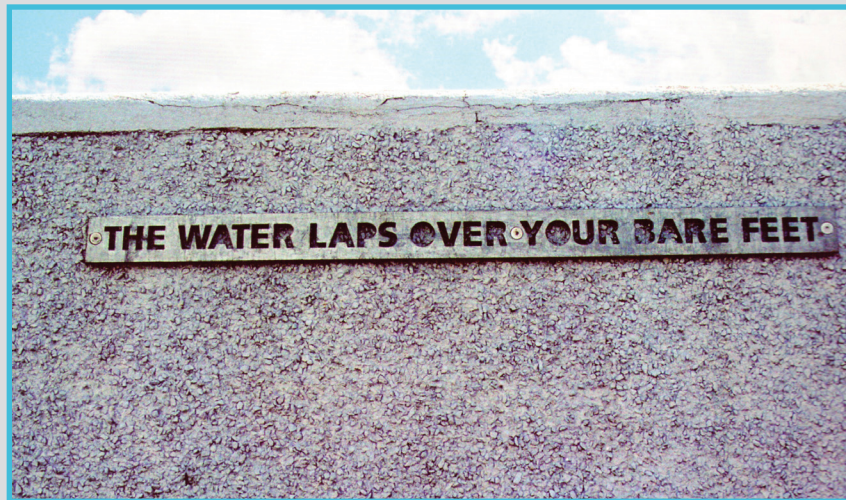


fig.10 'Millibay Docks Railings'



Sherlock Holmes (fig.8)

'Sir Arthur Conan Doyle author of Sherlock Holmes; who lived in Durnford Street Plymouth for a short period of his live when he was writing the novels. Since the walkway runs down the same street they decided to cast in bronze various quotes from the book and set them into the existing limestone pavement.' 7 (p.54-55)

Poem Wall (fig.9)

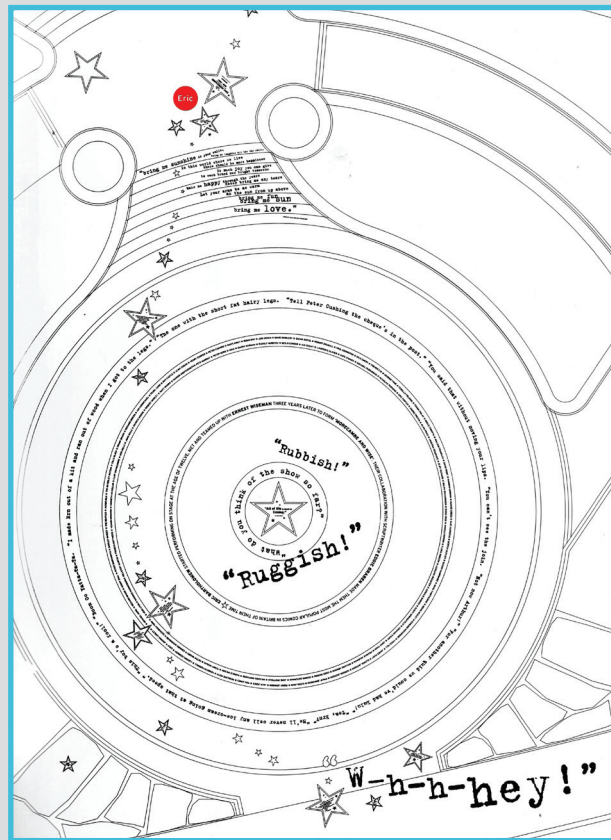
'A wall of poetry created by fixing laser cut steel text to an existing wall, the poems were written by several local poets specifically about the walkway.' 7 (p.56)

Millibay Docks Railings (fig.10)

'Local hero Admiral John Hawkins (1532-95) served in the British Navy and frequently sailed out of Plymouth harbour as he addressed his men thus, 'Serve God daily, love one another, preserve your victuals, beware of fire, and keep good company', His statement was squeezed onto tubular metal railings that ran along part of the coastal path near Millibay Docks.' 7 (p.57)



fig.11 'Eric Morecambe Memorial'



Why Not Associates also worked on a memorial project in 1999 on 'Eric Morecambe' for the Lancaster city council. (fig.11-12) Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise are Britain's most beloved comedy double act and they have been working together for forty years in music halls and films and on radio and television; They became very popular figures in the in the late 1970s. So when Why Not Associates got to work on the Morecambe memorial, they designed typographic layout texts based on their famous jokes or catch phrases and the names of the celebrities who appeared on their shows. They also sandblasted the lyrics to their famous closing theme tune 'Bring me Sunshine' on all over the polished granite steps. A statue of Eric Morecambe was also placed at the top of the steps sculpted by Graham Ibbeson. Such a graphic design work that can only make an impact if you are British and old enough to remember their television work, one can only imagine how the younger generations would be completely vacant to this as they hardly even know who Eric Morecambe is, let alone his jokes. However, it is easy to understand the emotional impact this can trigger on older audiences who see tokens from their childhood memories brought back the emotional impact this can trigger from their childhood memories.



fig.12 'Eric Morecambe Memorial'



(Why Not Associates, 2004. 181A High Holborn London WC1V 7QX, Tate Trustees by Thames & Hudson Ltd) . 7



In 2001, Why not associates did an interesting public artwork 'Cursing stone and Reiver pavement' (fig.13-14) for Carlisle city council. Based on the words of archbishop of Glasgow, Gavin Dunbar originally directed these curses toward the Reiver families; the curse was more than a thousand words long and is often referred to as 'Mother of all Curses'. English and Scottish sheep rustlers and robbers who terrorized the border lands between the two countries. The text was sandblasted onto a polished fourteen ton boulder's surface and it sits on an eighty-metre granite walkway that has surnames of River families sandblasted as well. One has to walk around the stone in an anti-clockwise direction to read the engraved curse. The Installation of the Stone created lot of controversy from local councillors. Some of them called it 'a shrine for devil worship'; it eventually became blamed for the foot and mouth crisis and many asked for its removal and destruction. But according to Why Not Associates 'design projects like this proves that graphic design can be powerful if the content is strong.' (p.132)

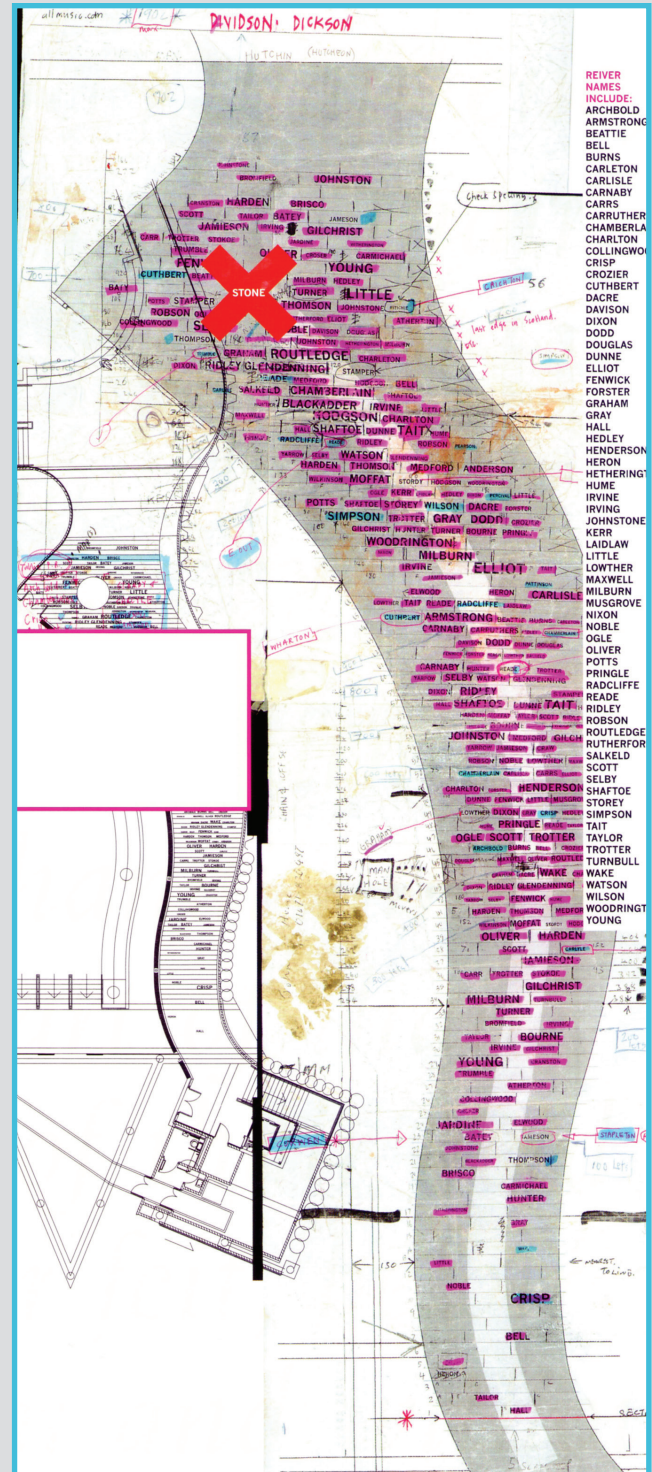


fig.13 'Cursing stone and Reiver pavement'



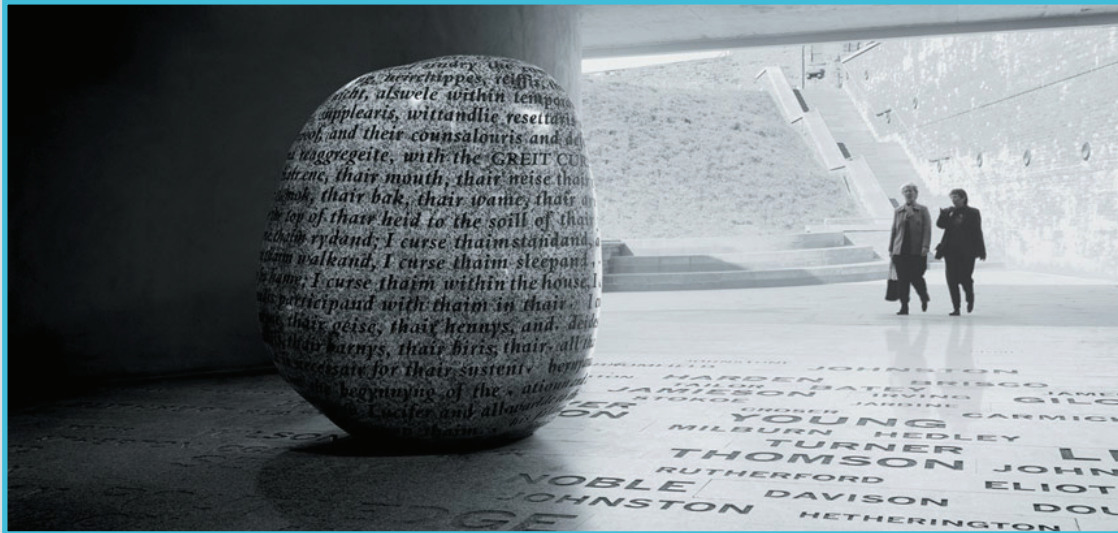
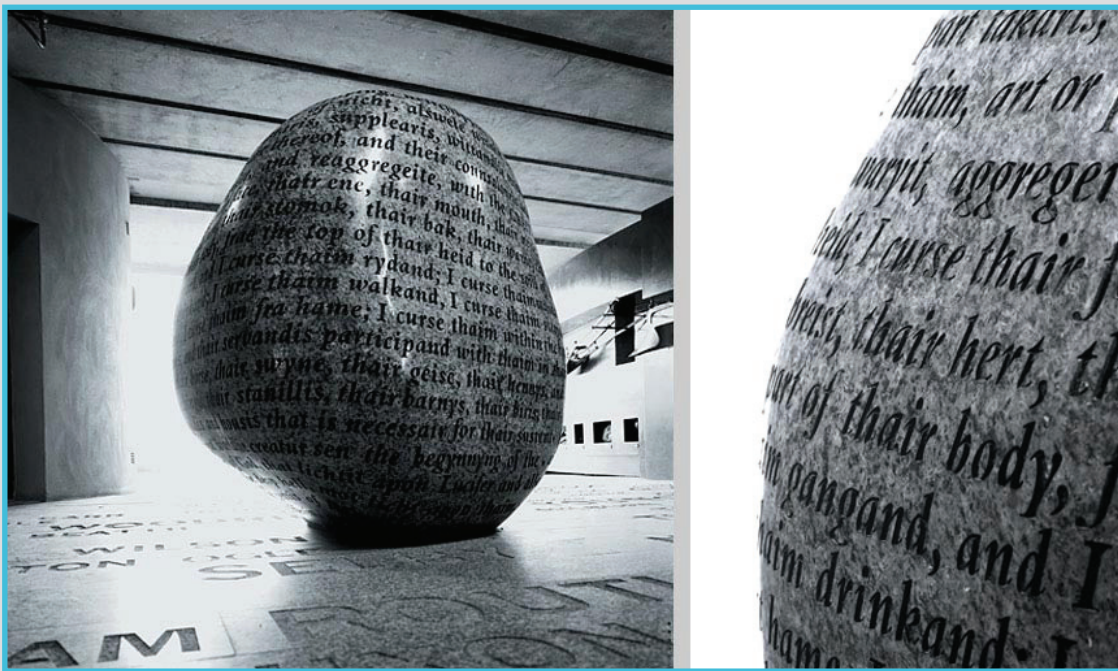


fig.14 'Cursing stone and Reiver pavement'



A section of the curse reads; "I curse their heid and all the harts of thair heid; I curse thair face, thair ene, thair mouth, thair neise, thair tounge, thair teith, thair crag, thair schulderis, thair breist, thair hert, thair stomok, thair bak, thair wame, thair armes, thair leggis, thair handis, thair fette, and everilk part of thair body, frae the top of their heid to the soill of thair fete, befor and behind, within and without." 7 (p.132)



“Landor Associates”

Landor Associates are well known for their excellent branding strategies; established by branding pioneer Walter Landor in 1941 and they own 21 creative agency offices around the world in 15 countries. Landor Associates have created iconic brands for some of the biggest names in the industry so far such as :Coca- Cola, Levi's, Alitalia Airlines, Del Monte, the World Wildlife Fund, FedEx, Volkswagen, Microsoft, Rolex and quite recently they have re-branded DC comics Identity to give them the edge they deserve in a mass media market.

One of their most evocative designs, however, exists in the Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH). GOSH provides the highest medical care for children and has been established for over 150 years. But over the years the topology of the hospital became difficult for visitors, patients and staff to find their way around due to the increasing number of buildings across a single location. Generally Hospitals are the least fun places for children, and often a very intimidating environment for them. This led to the redevelopment of GOSH for better finding and signage strategy. So—with the idea to make things easier for the visitors, staff and young patients—GOSH approached Landor Associates to provide a theme; a naming solution and guideline for the floors and wards in order to aid in finding one's way around the hospital. They wanted to achieve a bit of an emotional response to the feel of a long term alluring environment. (fig.15)

The hospital values any child as their first priority and this led to Landor's key strategy to work in conjunction to that they needed for the theme so that everyone could relate to it and yet find a playful and fun experience for the children. So after looking into a vast array of themes that went beyond cultural implication, and was not too abstract for the children to understand, they finally decided to stick to the world of nature in creating a pleasing environment for the hospital. They brought the concept to life by splitting the hospital floors into natural habitats where the lower floors represent the Ocean, of living among aquatic animals; and the top floors signify the Skies, of living with the birds; rest of the floors exist with environmental themes so that children feel more at home than stuck in a boring environment with frightening experiences. Finally, by carefully selecting a wide range of animals that kids can have great potential in learning and playing around with, the designers from Landor Associates created the animals with a bold illustrative style along with their habitats. The result looked far-fetched that changed the whole perception about hospital wards; now instead of being stuck in a clinical maze, kids could navigate from wards by just following the animals or a trail of footprints that leads them to the next ward.



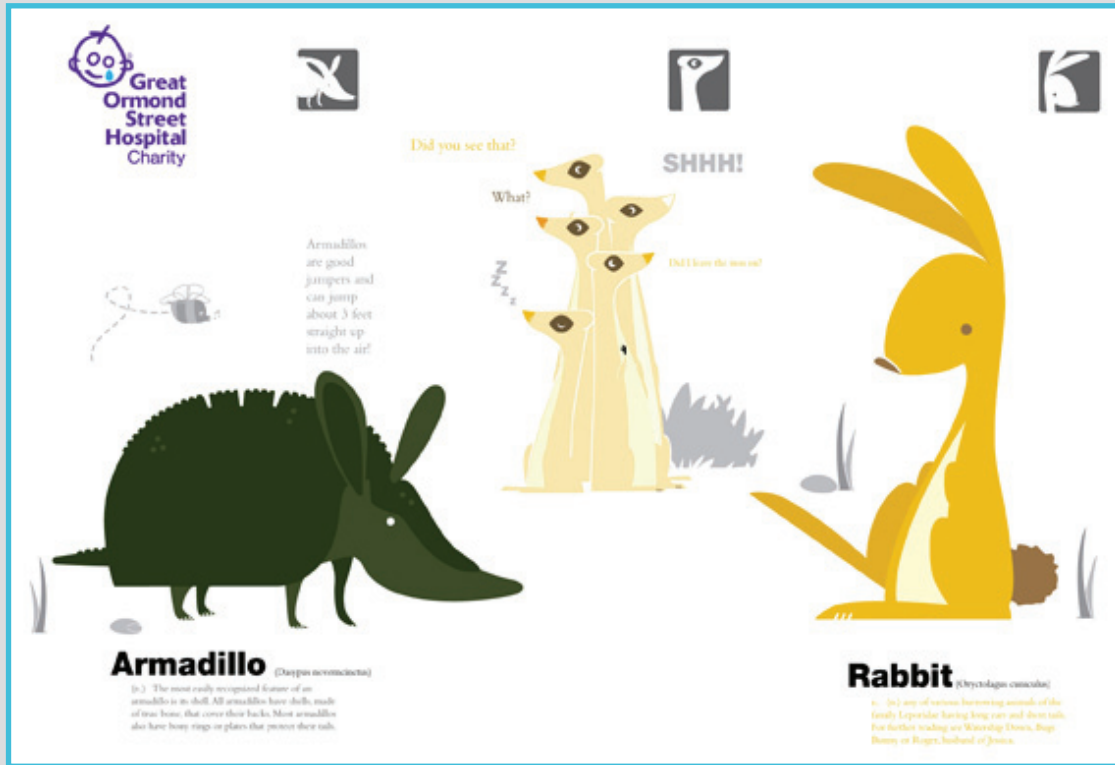


fig.15 'Animals in GOSH'



Lesley Miles, Director of Marketing, Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity, commented, "We are delighted with the 'Natural World' way-finding system that Landor has created for Great Ormond Street Hospital. It met the exact brief we supplied in that it provides clear direction for visitors to find their way around the hospital and a charming and welcome distraction for our very young patients and their families. It engages adults and children on various levels and the personalities of the animals that Landor has created really shine through. Everyone we have shown the work to has been incredibly impressed and enthused - including our supporters, architects, staff and, of course, our patients." 8

8. Available at <http://landor.com/#1/work/case-studies/great-ormond-street-hospital-for-children>
Accessed: [20th Feb'2012]



8. Available at <http://www.togetheragency.co.uk/blog/2010/12/13/the-animals-take-over-great-ormond-street/>
Accessed: [18th Feb'2012]

Chapter _____ four

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[How I've Touched my Work Colleagues' Hearts] p.23

"Medium is the Message"

Marshall McLuhan understood that the world that we live in exists in a paradox. He explained his theories in "The medium is the message", which three decades later now is remarkably accurate and disturbingly clear; but to what extent do we actually understand this enigma? Accordingly we all presume that 'medium' is the mass-media communication such as radio, television, newspaper and the internet, and the contents or the information as the 'message'. These so-called messages have a propensity to apply subliminal changes to our minds. Marshall McLuhan tells us that we are unaware of these subtle changes and we as passive receivers focus largely on the obvious and on the long run it creates an environment where things are manipulated and we believe in them. Classically, he suggests, the medium is nothing more than an extension of ourselves; for instance a hammer extends our arm, clothing is an extension of our skin, and the wheels extend our legs and feet; enabling us to reach out and do things that would not be possible without them. Similarly the medium of any spoken language brings out our thoughts to others. In a way so is creativity that brings out an individuality of a designer. Traditionally, it is the message—or the content—that has its impact on the audience, not the medium. Therefore the message of any design content has to be powerful enough to make an impact emotionally, it is evident that we all go through myriads of emotions everyday and these emotional responses affect us in different ways based on our locations

cultural influences, politics and religions. Something that is appealing to someone could be appalling to others and vice versa. But what we all have in common is the ability 'to feel' emotionally, despite the differences between our opinions and beliefs. This sudden change in emotion from everything we perceive from everything we conceive or create, all our intentions, innovations, and ideas are what McLuhan calls his media. Thus, the meaning of 'the medium is the message' relies on the nature and characteristics of anything we conceive or create (medium) by virtue of the changes. So even when the motive is clear to design in response to emotional significance, it raises the question to why we ought to create emotional responses in the first place. ? Is it for financial gain, power, and control; but what of ethics? If we look into charity organisations and the visual communication mediums they produce we see that they are completely based on the emotional impact they create on the target audience. And they are heavily dependent on such graphical outcomes;(fig.16-19) these non-profit organizations are solely dependent on the donations from communities and individuals who see their work, and their main intention is to help others who are less fortunate. Their philanthropic goals are often clear, and the subjects are already emotionally engaging such as; poverty, human and civil rights, disability, death and funerals, animal welfare prejudice and discrimination in places like this visual communication acts as a catalyst for making the message personal enough for someone to act upon it. 9.





fig.16 'Unicef' World hunger Campaign



fig.17 'Amnesty International' Land-mines Campaign



fig.18 'Peta' Fur is dead Campaign



fig.19 'GreenPeace' Give me your hand Campaign

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"Music as a Visual Language"

We express emotions in a wide array of forms and one of the most abstract expressions is through 'Music'. Music is has been always open to individual interpretation and helped us through physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic, and spiritual facet. It is a stimulus to our sense of hearing, and it is clear that music can and inevitably does, convey information. What is the nature of that information? What does it express? We all know that music is an abstract expression of emotions let it be sadness or happiness or something which is of mixed emotion. The western music system is divided into two sections scales and modes and these modal tones depict the overall tonality of any music piece. Similarly human emotions are categorized into six different moods- Happy, excited, tender, scared, angry and sad. So in my final honours project I decided to explore the possibilities of music as a communicating language, let it be music as semiotics, information or an expression of emotion.

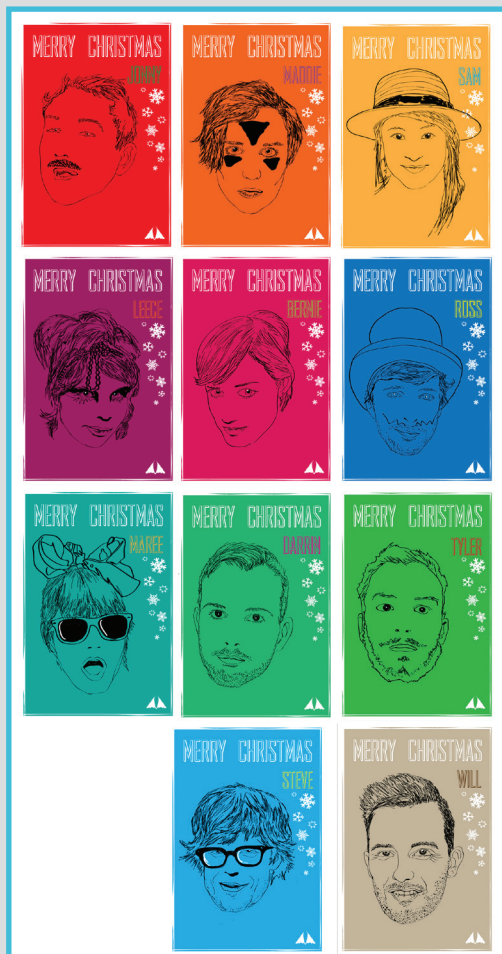
Music lies within the reach of semiotics because it is a kind of communication which has both organization and significance. Moreover, music may seem the most appropriate and gratifying object for evoking emotion, because it is the purest system of abstract relationships presented in concrete form, and the most immediate expression of meaning. After my visit to the British Museum I discovered the significance of the Rosetta stone and was fascinated how it helped decipher understanding the modern Egyptian Hieroglyph translation. In similar sense a new sort of code or semiotics for music could be analysed with the help of semiology and decipher the abstract art of musical language. It's difficult to visualize emotions as it is something we experience everyday but can't really put to a visual theory. Hence music could be the bridge to what we reflect in ourselves and form the link of auditory response to an optical resolution. Music conductors use their hand gestures to indicate melodic shape to the performers during a performance, conducting is the only way by far we can prove that conversations and feelings can be conveyed to people without ever having to say a single word. So, I've been carefully studying these hand gestures to come up with visual elements to represent a musical piece. I'm not certain as to how creating a communicative language in music will help decipher the link in human emotions but it definitely will give us another means of expressing the complexity of the human mind musically and deal with our emotional core in a visual aesthetical form.



“How I’ve touched my work colleagues’ hearts”

I enjoy Christmas seasons; it changes me to an optimistic person and makes me feel anything is possible; for some time I really wanted to do something special for my work colleagues but never got around it. So with that enthusiasm last year I found an opportunity to create customized Christmas cards for my work colleagues. The idea hit me when one of my colleague handed me a ‘card’ on Christmas eve and for me it meant something that someone out there cares that they’ve specially selected this card and mentioned my name on it, but the illustration on the front of the card didn’t mean much to me and later I found out that everyone got the same illustrated card with their name on it, But no one seemed really content with their card as it didn’t mean personal to them. So I decided to design customised Christmas cards for all my work colleagues with their face illustrated on it.-something special they would hold on to and be blissful for not just the norm of exchanging any greeting cards but a card that actually mean to them in personal level.

fig.20 Customised Christmas Cards



The design on the card was created with the individual’s ‘facebook’ profile picture along with their name written on the front and different colours were chosen for the cards intended to how I see my colleagues based on their personality. (fig.20) After working for countless hours on the cards I took them to the printers to print and handed them out in the evening on our Staff Christmas Party; everyone was astonished to receive the cards, and the thought of someone took the time to design these cards while personally thinking about them was heartfelt for everyone. At the end of the party one of my colleagues asked me why I designed these cards for everyone as oppose to buying cards. I replied- ‘It’s not because of I have a responsibility to hand out cards for holidays; for me it’s the joy on someone’s face that light up upon receiving something like this, regrettably in my knowledge there is no one out there who will go to that length and design something for me with my face on it and that look on their face makes me realize that I will never know how it feels like but I can always treasure that person’s heart-felt emotional moment and be proud of myself that I have touched someone’s heart with my design.



Chapter _____ five

Conclusion 24

[Traditional versus Digital] p.24

[The Death of the Author/ Roland Barthes] p.25

Back in the mid-1980s before the computers took over, graphic designers created design works by means of manual process. Every single element of a piece was painstakingly handcrafted from sketching an idea on a paper to sending the final artwork to the printers. Technology has helped shape the evolution of design in the industry, but at the same time it has taken something back from the pioneers; their tangibility, sensuality and personality from their creative process; like selling your soul to the devil for a better idiomatic language. People hardly remembers the joys of getting their hands dirty with paint scalpels and glue which these days can be achieved with a mouse and keyboard for a predictable and passionless design solutions. In traditional process there is no room for error as everything is done in one take. Thus designers would delicately work on their pieces and the level of enthusiasm is unmatched of what we achieve today. The reliance on digitisation a recession-fuelled 'make do and mend' philosophy pushed us to design lifeless design works. In a world where digital technology and virtual reality are ubiquitous, it's hard to say if design created in software applications can truly reflect its makers' personal touch, and maybe it's these delicate impacts which are missing from the equation to touch someone's heart through graphic design.



According to French literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes in his essay 'The Death of the Author'; he summaries that 'the birth of the reader must be at the death of the Author' meaning 'text's unity lies not in its origin from the reader and what are his/her influences are derived from but in its destination to whomever will read the content and determine the meaning of the text that he or she sees fit foremost.' Same can be assumed, for graphic designers where the designer is dead the minute the design is out to the world and reaches the respected target audience, and it's up to the audience to justify its true value and ramification. Like Katherine McCoy said 'design can never rise above its content' similarly Why Not Associates agrees-'Design can have powerful impact if the content is strong'; and perhaps it is true that we cannot judge a book by its cover or beauty comes from within then it's clear that the beauty of design can only touch someone's heart through its message not by its aesthetics. It's crucial that the designer's will to create an impact is concrete in the first place as this serves the motive of what is it that they are trying to communicate? So does this conclude the answer to the quest for emotional impact? Is this something we look forward to in the future? Or are there no answers to this and ultimately we are asking too much in one simple question? Maybe the answer lies within each of us and can only surface itself from our longest to the shortest moment of gratification through visual communication. 10

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