# Geographies of Graphic Design

## A journey through the discipline's most interesting trends

— Alessandro Bonaccorsi for Pixartprinting

**pixartprinting**

Contents

# 1. Defining graphic design

**Graphic design** is the organisation of information and the creation of images for visual communication, applied to any context.

The word 'graphic' is derived from the Greek *grafèin*, which means both writing and drawing. Graphic design therefore involves **finding a logical way to structure words and images,** with the main aim of **providing information**. The term was coined in 1922 by William Addison Dwiggins, a highly successful American designer.

The original definition, which still applies today, restricts graphic designers to the design and preparation work carried out before advertising, informational and editorial products are sent for printing. Graphic designers are often confused with visual designers: people who design visual communications (using both graphic design and other tools such as illustration, data visualisation, visual art, animation, video making, etc.) and who are therefore not limited to the field of traditional printing.



↑ William Addison Dwiggins

# 2. A brief history of modern graphic design

**Modern graphic design** began in around the **early twentieth century**, when printing and prepress techniques were giving printing companies increasing scope for experimentation. **Advertising** had already taken root in the nineteenth century, when it developed to help sell the many new products produced by the first factories or imported from far-flung locations such as Africa, Latin America and the Far East following colonial conquests: tea, spices, exquisite timber, textiles and various artefacts.

In the early twentieth century, Europe experienced a period of large-scale, and often revolutionary, cultural turmoil: the first avant-garde artistic movements like **Dada** and **Futurism** looked to the written and printed word for their artistic experimentation and dared to **break the rules** of typography,

which had previously been very mechanical and incapable of producing striking visual effects. Texts were always set in rows, and the only way to liven up layouts was to change the typeface or font size. Some original solutions were found, but they were always inflexible and restricted by the limitations of the letterpress system.

Around the early 1910s, artists such as **Marinetti** in Italy, **El Lissitzky** in Russia and, later, **the Dadaists** in Zurich experimented with new ways of writing and organising words. **They revolutionised books and the way pages were laid ou**t, introducing geometric shapes and new dynamic forces to what could now undeniably be called the graphic design of the page. This period, **100 years ago, was arguably when typography turned into modern graphic design**.



↑ Cover of *Zang Tumb Tuuum*, F.T. Marinetti (Italy), 1914



↑ Cover of *Merz*, El Lissitzky and Kurt Schwitters (Germany), 1924

And it would be another 80 years at least before the next revolution in the way words and images were organised, when computers began to be used on a large scale by a new generation of graphic designers, with new options offered by software, digital printing and prepress processes.

Today we are still in the midst of this revolution, and have not fully exploited all the possibilities offered by digital tools, yet at the same time we are still bound to printing processes that have developed and become entrenched over the course of 500 years.

This e-book aims to explore the graphic design trends that have emerged in various parts of the world in the last 30 years, with the hope that they will inspire all readers, whether they are professionals, students, designers, enthusiasts or simply curious to find out more about the subject.

## 3.  Recent trends

In the **2000s**, graphic design became ever more closely intertwined with the **digital** world.
A **new approach to graphic design** emerged, where the new opportunities provided by digital design and illustration, through programs like Photoshop, Illustrator and Painter, allowed designing fonts to become an integral part of the design process, no longer the sole domain of artists and illustrators. The range of different grids and layouts increased rapidly thanks to myriad options for experimentation offered by increasingly sophisticated software and printing techniques. Finishes and packaging became ever more varied in line with the ongoing innovation in manufacturing processes and the use of new materials, techniques and equipment.
Despite the changes brought about by this innovation, we still appear tied to a concept of graphic design linked to centuries of history. While we can't predict the future, the experimenters and innovators at the cutting edge of the field are already exploring the new possibilities offered by the modern digital world.

## 4.1  One discipline, many approaches - a short catalogue of styles

It is difficult to shoehorn graphic designers' styles into neat categories, as they tend to create their work without worrying too much about how to define it. These definitions therefore should not be taken as gospel, and certainly do not provide an exhaustive list of the different styles. However, they should help you to find your way around the world of graphic design and to understand the approach each designer takes.
You will see that each section is split up into subsections that illustrate **variations on a particular approach or style**, giving you some idea of how varied graphic design can be while retaining its aim of communicating information.
In recent years there has been exponential growth in the number of good, well-trained graphic designers on the

market, and therefore a similar rise in the amount of well-designed, innovative and beautiful graphic design. At the same time, however, the amount of poorly designed, confused, haphazard, proudly kitsch and mediocre design seems to remain stubbornly high, a sort of popular visual communication that digital media seem to have taken to new levels of ugliness.

Things that were impossible with typography, which gave **poor taste** limited room to express itself, are now easily achievable with digital tools.

This e-book will also touch on this type of graphic design, to ensure readers do not feel excluded by an overly theoretical, highbrow and niche discussion, and so they can find tools, inspiration and motivation to improve their work, even if only marginally.

Each section contains a short description of the graphic design trends in question, along with visual examples, some hints and tips, and technical descriptions of the type of graphic design displayed.

The styles were chosen based on my observation, particularly online, of the most common international approaches to graphic design. The names I have given to them are completely subjective, and are used only to aid understanding of each trend.
Bon voyage!

## RATIONAL GRAPHIC DESIGN

The first style we will look at can be defined as rational graphic design. It is **dominated by the (always sans-serif) font**, makes use of lines, geometric shapes and limited colours, follows clearly defined grids, shuns decorative touches and tends towards minimalism.
This approach is arguably a classic, which never goes out of favour: indeed, it is often seen as being the only true form of graphic design.
Let's have a look at the various results that can be achieved.

# MINIMALISM

For some, this is the epitome of graphic design. The only rule is **'less is more'**, and the style is based on the **Helvetica font** and favours combining just a **few colours**, with **monochrome backgrounds**, preferably white, or perhaps a photographic background.

It can be considered **the oldest form of modern graphic design**, with its origins in the early twentieth century. It is the direct descendant of El Lissitzky and Russian constructivism, the teachings of Bauhaus and De Stijl, the repressive and unimaginative graphics of twentieth-century political regimes, and the austerity of the Swiss School of graphic design. It is often featured alongside architectural designs, goes well with industrial design and has recently also garnered a reputation for elegance.

*"Simplicity is about subtracting the obvious and adding the meaningful",* designer John Maeda stated in his book The Laws of Simplicity, a veritable modern handbook for those who want to understand the philosophy of minimalism, inspired by Japanese Zen and the need for quiet.

**One of the architects** of this so-called **modernist** approach was **Massimo Vignelli**, who will forever be remembered in the history of design for his map of the New York Subway and for his iconic designs, including the logo for American Airlines and Knoll's brand identity, which always made use of his **favourite font, Helvetica**.

In The Vignelli Canon, an e-book full of advice for graphic designers available readily and free of charge online, he states that there is only one type of design, a logical creative process with extremely precise objectives.

This type of approach to graphic design may seem easy to understand and adopt, but it requires skill, good taste and creativity to **remove anything superfluous while maintaining balance, precision and beauty.**

← Design for *Ikea Annual Report*, Kylie Leuthold (USA), 2014

**VIEW DESIGN >**



↑ Poster for *Knoll*, Massimo Vignelli (Italy/USA), 1967

**VIEW DESIGN >**

"There are too many people with no education in graphic design. And because they have access to computers, there's no end to what they create – signage, newsletters and so forth. It's pollution! They have no idea whatsoever about the dignity of type. If they were pharmaceutical companies, we'd all be poisoned. But we are poisoned anyhow, visually."
— Massimo Vignelli

— From "Massimo Vignelli, celebrated designer whose work included NYC subway map, dies at 83" by Emily Langer, Washington Post, May 2014

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/massimo-vignelli-celebrated-designer-whose-work-included-nyc-subway-map-dies-at-83/2014/05/27/6cd685aa-e5b7-11e3-a86b-362fd5443d19_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.93fe5d33d16f
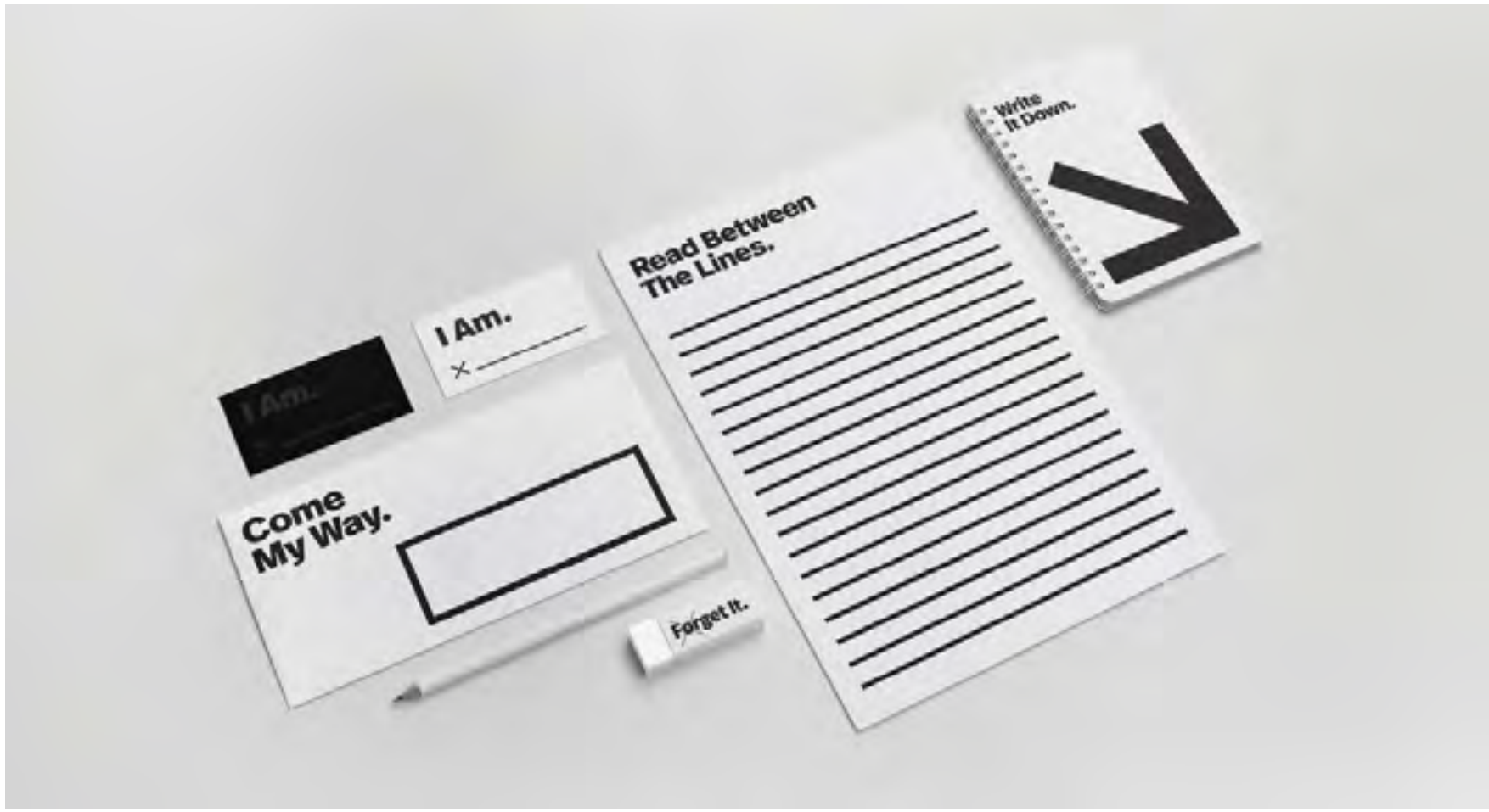
↑↑ Brand identity for *Lester&Lucy*, Segura Inc. (USA), c. 2010

    VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Packaging for *Helen Hausman*, Sergi Ferrando (Spain), 2018

    VIEW DESIGN >



↑↑ Catalogue for the *Futureproof* exhibition, Frank Chimero (USA), 2017

    VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Brand identity and logo for *Dante 6*, Buro (Netherlands), c. 2016

    VIEW DESIGN >

# ADVICE

→  Play around with composition.
→  Use no more than two fonts, with the main
   one a sans-serif font.
→  Use simple layouts.

This type of graphic design can easily be handled using **Adobe InDesign or Illustrator, CorelDraw** or open-source graphics software like Inkscape.
**You should opt for fonts with a uniform design** that work well in large sizes (there are some fonts with tapering and 'irregularities' in their shapes to make them easier to read in certain situations or at certain sizes). It is best to go for **tried and tested** fonts like **Helvetica, Futura and Univers** if you prefer sans-serif fonts or **Garamond, Sabon and Goudy** if you prefer serifs.
However, it can also be rewarding to look for other, more recently designed fonts to give your project a more unique feel: the possibilities are endless, with countless fonts to choose from.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC MINIMALISM

Within the sphere of minimalist graphic design, in recent years **work based on the interaction with photography** has become increasingly popular, favoured by large luxury goods and interior design companies and certain fashion, cosmetics and perfume labels.

The font is adapted to the spaces and style of the photograph, in simple combinations that clearly derive their strength from the **beauty of the photography**.

**Stylish fonts** in colours like **white, gold and black** are normally preferred, to ensure they are completely **legible over the photos**.

As stated above, this type of graphic design is widespread in the world of fashion and design, and is often used for art exhibitions, theatre performances, magazines and book covers.
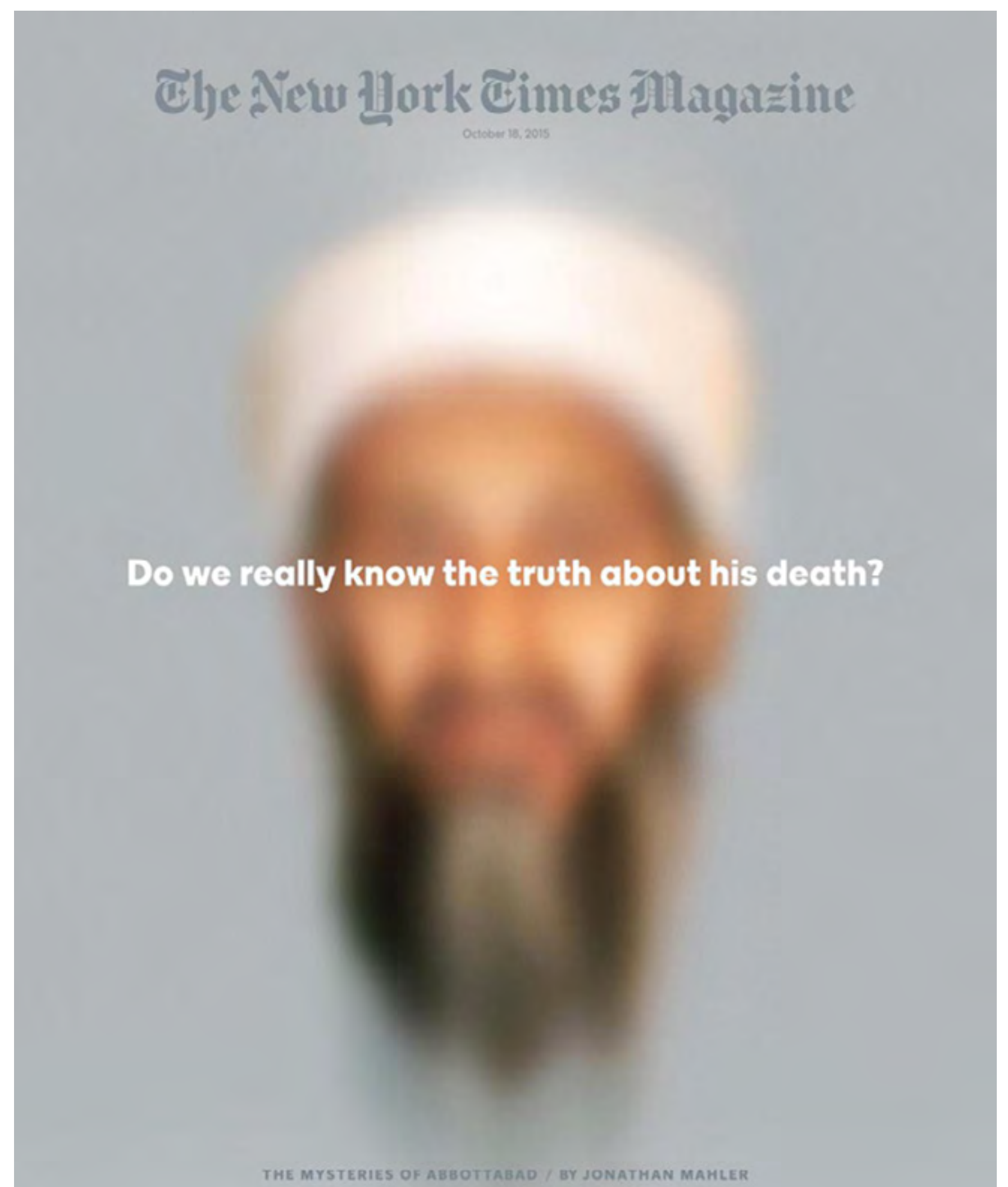


↑ **Front pages of** *The New York Times*, **Ben Grandgenett (USA), 2015-2016**

VIEW DESIGN >

**↑ Album cover for _The Next Day_ by David Bowie, Jonathan Barnbrook (United Kingdom), 2013**

This example references Bowie's earlier career, because the portrait of the artist on the cover of the album Heroes, one of his most important releases, was also covered by a plain white square.

VIEW DESIGN >

**← Poster and brand identity for the city of Delft, Rejane dal Bello/Studio Dumbar (Netherlands), 2009**

A variation on this type of graphic design involves using blocks of colour or collage to hide a part or all of a face.

VIEW DESIGN >
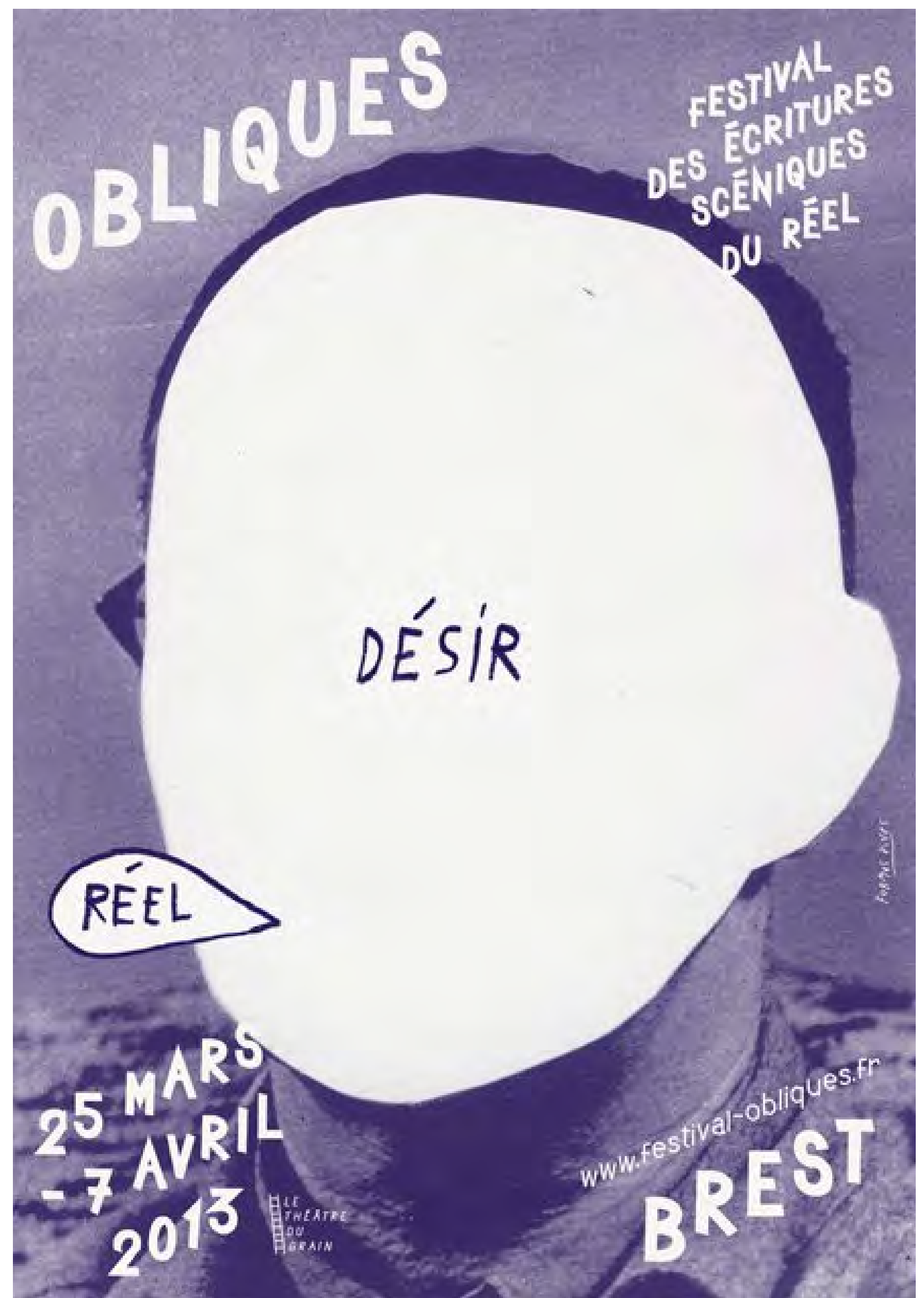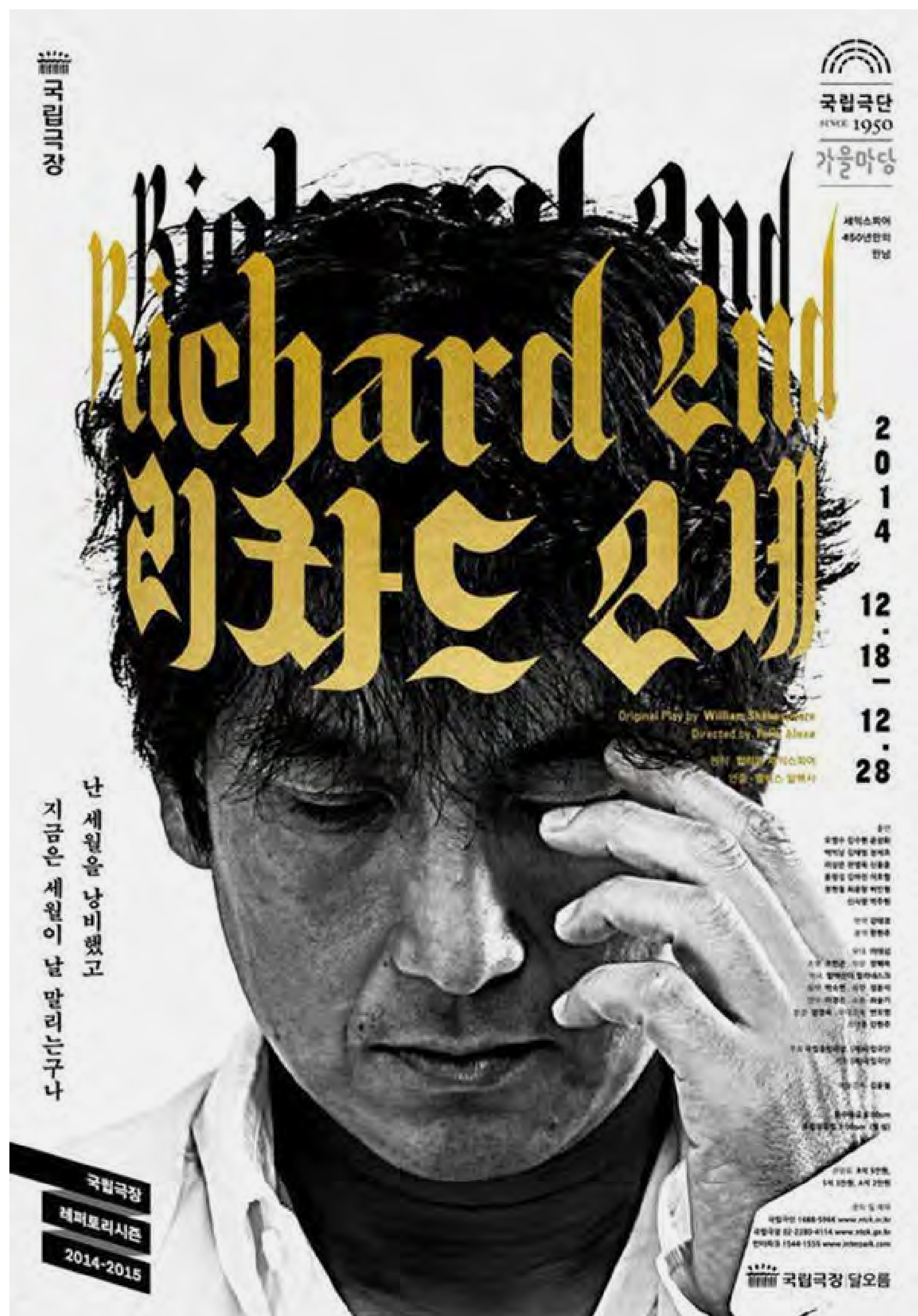
↖ Poster for *Richard II*, Jinwooo Lee with Art Direction by Jin Jung, National Theater of Korea, 2014

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Poster for *Oblique Festival*, Formes Vives (France), 2013

VIEW DESIGN >

← Poster for *Festival Arsene*, Brest Brest Brest (France), 2016

VIEW DESIGN >

← Catalogue for *Melissa Shoes*,
Pentagram Design (USA), 2016

**VIEW DESIGN >**



← Poster for *Bo:m Festival Seoul*, Sulki Min
(South Korea), 2013

**VIEW DESIGN >**

## ADVICE

It's important to **crop the photo** in a way that adds dynamism and character to the design, as seen on the covers of top magazines and in the brand identity of major art exhibitions. This type of graphic design can easily be handled using **Adobe Photoshop** or **Illustrator**, **CorelDraw** or open-source graphics software like **Inkscape**.

There are no rules when it comes to the choice of fonts and their composition, but it is important to bear in mind the shape and dynamics of the photo, so the **graphics** suit and **match the image**. Otherwise you will always end up with the 'magazine-cover' effect of rigid text (headline and subheadings) superimposed over an image.

## SYMBOLIC MINIMALISM

Another variant of minimalism, and therefore of the style universally recognised as graphic design, is what could be defined as symbolic minimalism: here, instead of favouring austere typefaces, **designers opt for complex symbols**, deconstruction, modular combinations and cropped or broken-up fonts.

This is one of the most fashionable trends of recent years: logos are divided up into many pieces, like Lego or Meccano, and reassembled in a different way each time. The symbols used are often the result of painstaking research into the project, and encapsulate its spirit and main features; they can be highly evocative, and the **mystery** involved grabs the public's attention, as the **symbol must be encoded and deciphered each time**.

**One of the best examples** in recent years, and one of the most enigmatic, is the design for **David Bowie's final record Blackstar**, created by Jonathan Barnbrook. Minimalist, deconstructed artwork, based on various shades of black, sits on top of **fonts and symbols** that together form a system or **code that can only be understood by fans**. To reinforce this concept, the designer provided anyone who wanted it with a free set of the font designed for the record.

↑ **Album cover for *Blackstar* by David Bowie, Jonathan Barnbrook (United Kingdom), 2015**

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Variations on this style involve the addition of **abstract elements** (mostly shapes and lines, with a nod to Memphis design), and the insertion of **colourful patterns and pop elements.**

↑ **Brand identity for *MUDEC*, Milan, Studio FM (Italy), 2015**

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Another example is the brand identity for MUDEC, the Museum of Cultures in Milan, designed by Studio FM: here the museum's logo is a symbol that can be divided up and put back together again, giving rise to many different variations in a range of colours, and therefore representing the institution's openness to diversity and multiculturalism.

↖ Poster for *Sagra Musicale Malatestiana*, Tassinari Vetta (Italy), 2013

↑ Poster for the *Percuotere la Mente* festival, Tassinari Vetta (Italy), 2011

VIEW DESIGN >

A similar approach can be seen in the work of Studio Tassinari/Vetta, and particularly those devised by Leonardo Sonnoli, or in the playful creations of Mauro Bubbico.

↑ **Poster for the *A Letter Doesn't Resemble Anything* conference at the Tipoteca Italiana, limited print run (Italy), 2016**

VIEW DESIGN >
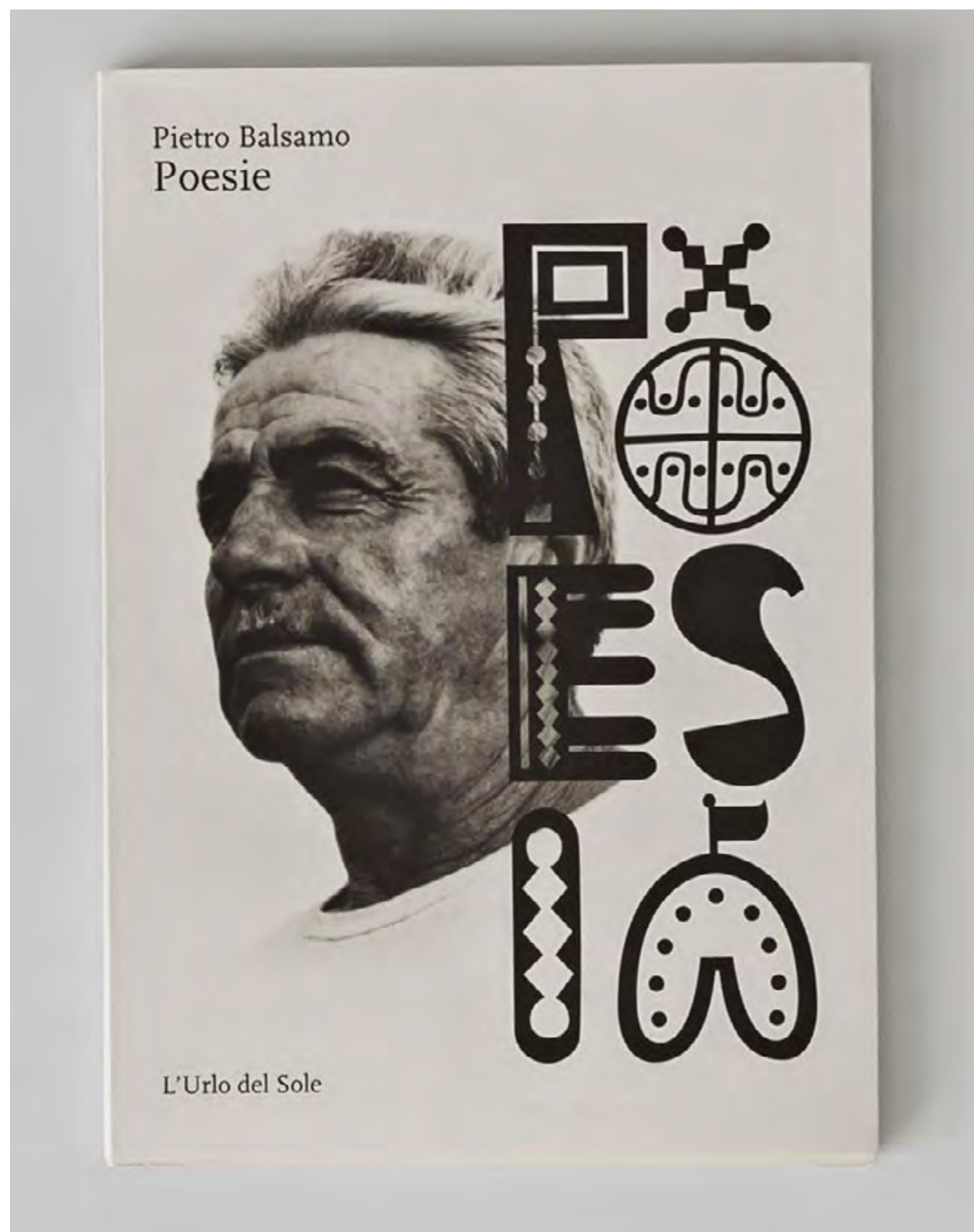
↖ **Cover for *Poesie* by Pietro Balsamo, L'Urlo del Sole, Mauro Bubbico (Italy), 2011**

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↑ **Poster created for the competition marking the third centenary of the birth of Carlo Goldoni, Mauro Bubbico (Italy), 2007**

**VIEW DESIGN >**

EXPLORING COMPLEXITY IN A DIGITAL WORLD

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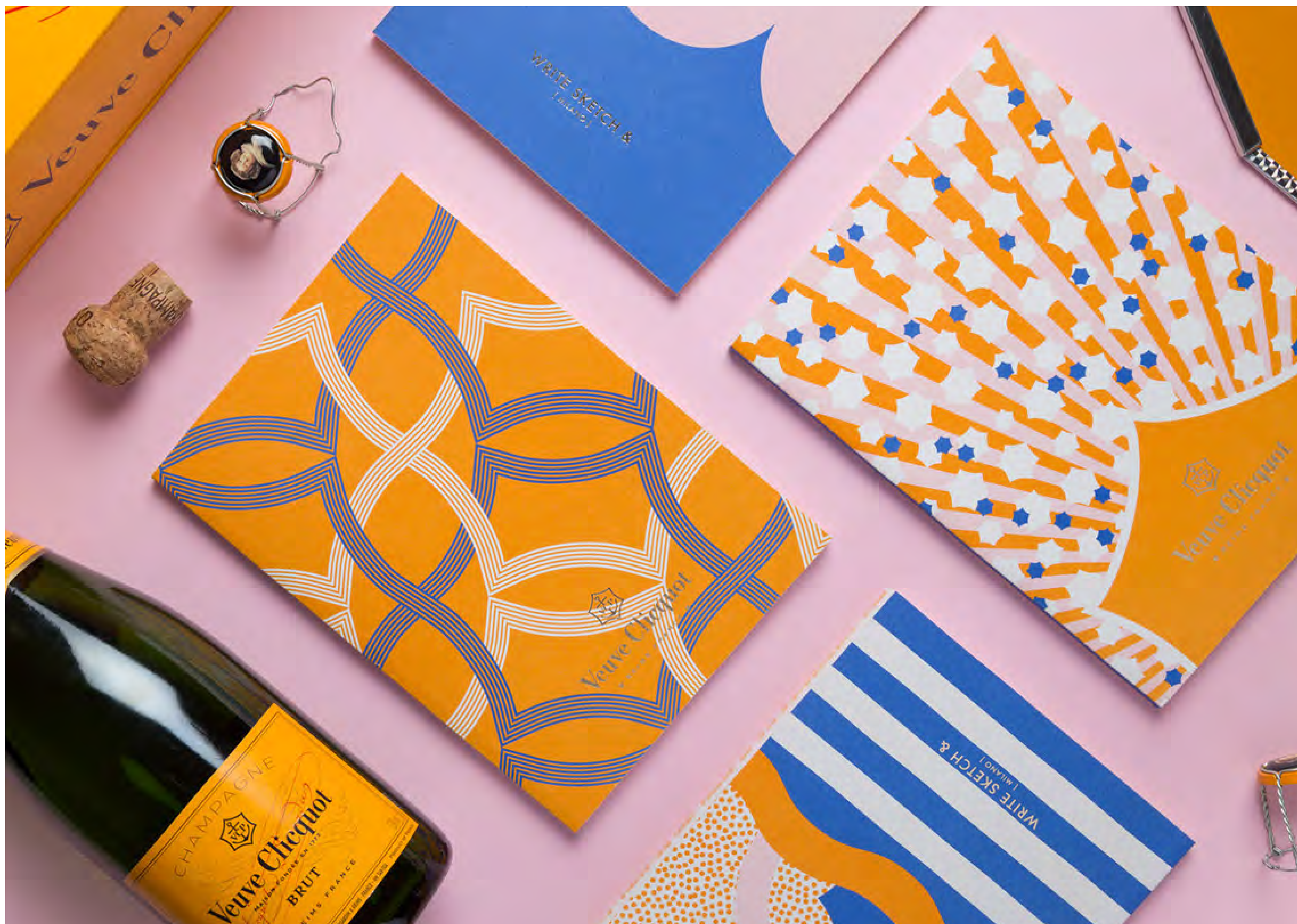MALMÖ • SWEDEN • AUG 16-17
www.theconference.se



↑ **Poster for the *Passages Insolites festival*, Jeremy Hall (Canada), 2016**

This work combines experimental use of font with patterns and illustrations typical of the organic style we will examine later.

**VIEW DESIGN >**

← **Poster for *The Conference Malmo*, Hvass & Hannibal (Denmark), 2016**

**VIEW DESIGN >**

↑ Notebooks for *Veuve Clicquot*, OfficeMilano (Italy), 2018

VIEW DESIGN >

← Corporate identity for *Manna Noto*, Studio La Tigre (Italy), 2014

VIEW DESIGN >

## ADVICE

In order to use symbols and typefaces correctly, you need to get to know them and study them, including understanding their meaning and origins. Typefaces can be broken up, transformed or reassembled using vector graphics software such as **Adobe Illustrator, CorelDraw or Inkscape.**
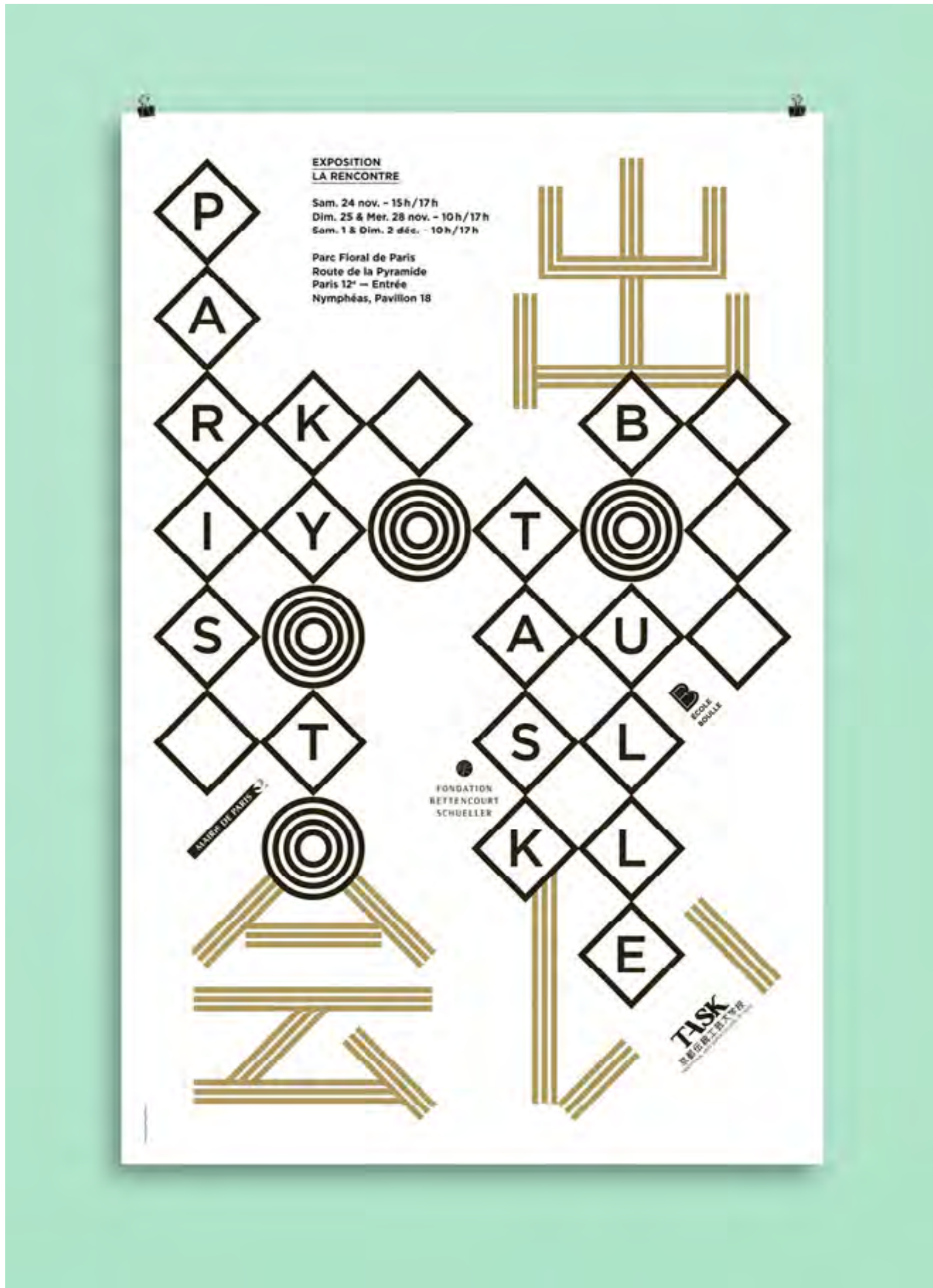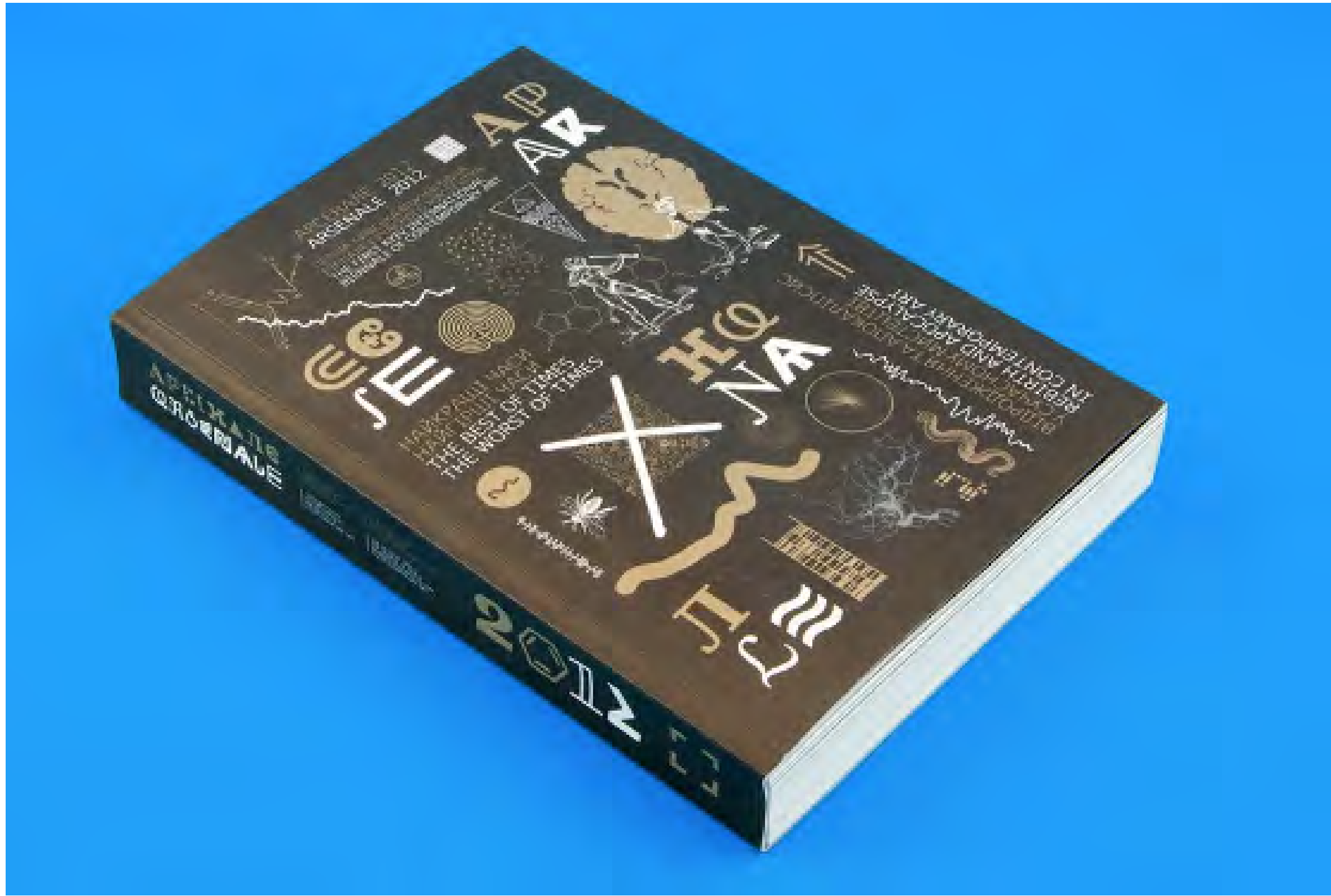
↖ Catalogue for *Mystetskyi Arsenal*, Jonathan Barnbrook (United Kingdom), 2012

**VIEW DESIGN >**

↑ Poster, Katya Velkova (Bulgaria), 2013

**VIEW DESIGN >**

← Poster for the *Paris-Tokyo* exhibition, Atelier Muesli (France), 2012

**VIEW DESIGN >**

## TYPOGRAPHY (VINTAGE AND FOLK)

Graphic design mostly boils down to **typography**, the use of characters and their organisation into grids, as we saw above when discussing minimalist graphic design. However, there is another, more imaginative and often flamboyant way of using typography, sometimes flying in the face of common sense, where you can even use more than three fonts at once! This form of graphic design recalls old shop signs, packaging from the beginning of the last century, Victorian posters and even classic bill posters: in a word, it is **vintage**.

It is not just **the fonts** chosen that make the difference but also **the use of pale and pastel colours, the lack of photographs** and the use of a few **line drawings** instead of illustrations. Some graphic design studios, especially in America, love this type of graphic design, bringing back a style that was hugely popular 100 years ago, when countless talented sign artists worked across Old Europe. Today it has been modernised thanks to vector graphics software and the extreme accuracy offered by computers.

It can be seen as closely related to, and indeed sometimes overlapping, the trend we call hand lettering in this e-book.



← Corporate identity for *Brasserie Balthazar*, Mucca Design (USA/Italy), 2006

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Design for the Rizzoli RCS publishing house, Mucca Design (USA/Italy), 2009

VIEW DESIGN >

← Brand identity for *L'arte del Gelato*, Louise Fili (USA), c. 2013

VIEW DESIGN >

## ADVICE

Look for the right fonts, try to fill the spaces in your layouts elegantly, and perhaps add textures to give the appearance of dirt or age to your product (photos of old, yellowed paper are ideal).

⬉ Cover for *FSG Books*, Jessica Hische (USA), 2013

↑↑ Labels for *Monarchia Matt*, Louise Fili (USA), c. 2009

VIEW DESIGN >

## 4.2. Decorative graphic design
## ORGANIC

This is a form of graphic design that is gaining more of a foothold thanks to drawing software like Illustrator becoming very popular over the last ten years.
Here the shapes are **rounded** instead of geometric; the **colours are bizarre**, the **colour pairings are daring** and bold, and gradients are sometimes used. In some cases, **abstract shapes** are preferred, while other designs recall a **cellular or microscopic world.**

A striking example of this type of approach is Futurebrand's rebranding of the German pharmaceutical giant Merck.
The result is an extremely innovative brand identity, especially as the pharmaceutical sector is usually deeply conservative in its visual communication: it verges on pop, with **brightly coloured elements** that recall the world of chemistry.



↑ **Corporate identity for** *Merck*, **Futurebrand (Italy), 2015**

VIEW DESIGN >

A classic illustration of this approach is Havaianas' adverts and typically Brazilian graphics, which make a lot of use of **illustrations as rich and colourful** as the jungle itself.





↑↑ Advertising posters for *Havaianas*, Almap BBDO Brazil (Brazil), c. 2017

↑ Brand identity for *Masika beer*, Emanuele Serra (Italy), 2018

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Poster for *Secret Society*, Liam Madden (Ireland), 2016

VIEW DESIGN >



↑ Poster, Jane Bodil (France), 2015

VIEW DESIGN >

A variation on this style involves the use of abstract shapes and symbols, and is often chosen for festivals and musical events, particularly those linked to club culture and electronic music.
It is very similar to the style we termed symbolic minimalism above.

## TROPICALISM (OR FLORALISM)

This trend has gained ever more traction in **recent years**, and now represents a considerable proportion of graphic design production – it is also used by some of the leading clothing brands. This type of graphic design can be called **tropical or floral**, and seems to derive from the minimalist approach: the typefaces (and often other graphic elements) are intertwined with images of lush vegetation or brightly coloured birds. The images tend to come from collections of botanical and naturalist illustrations or from old, rediscovered prints, creating a stylish combination of new and old in **the drawings and minimalist graphic design** (with lots of white, wide borders, geometric shapes and uppercase, sans-serif fonts).



← Poster for *Oslo Design Fair*, Blelke&Yang (Norway), 2016

VIEW DESIGN >
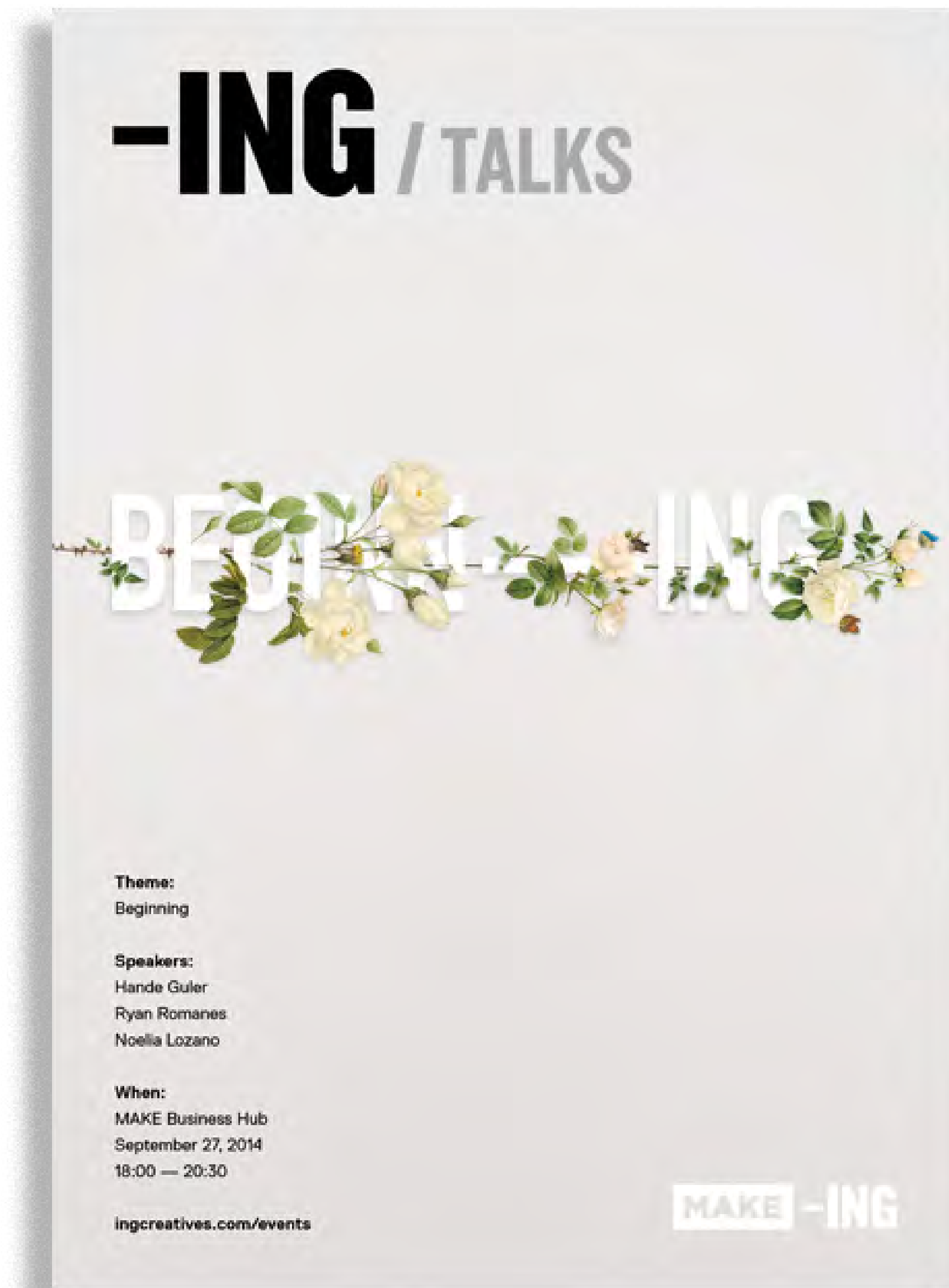
## ADVICE

Always choose attractive images: they really make a difference. A poorly drawn flower or bird will ruin the effect of this type of artwork. And don't go over the top: it is better just to choose a few beautiful elements than to include too many.

↖ Poster for *-ING Talks,* ING (Dubai), 2014

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Poster for *Rendez-Vous aux Jardins*, Studio Des Signes (France), 2013

VIEW DESIGN >
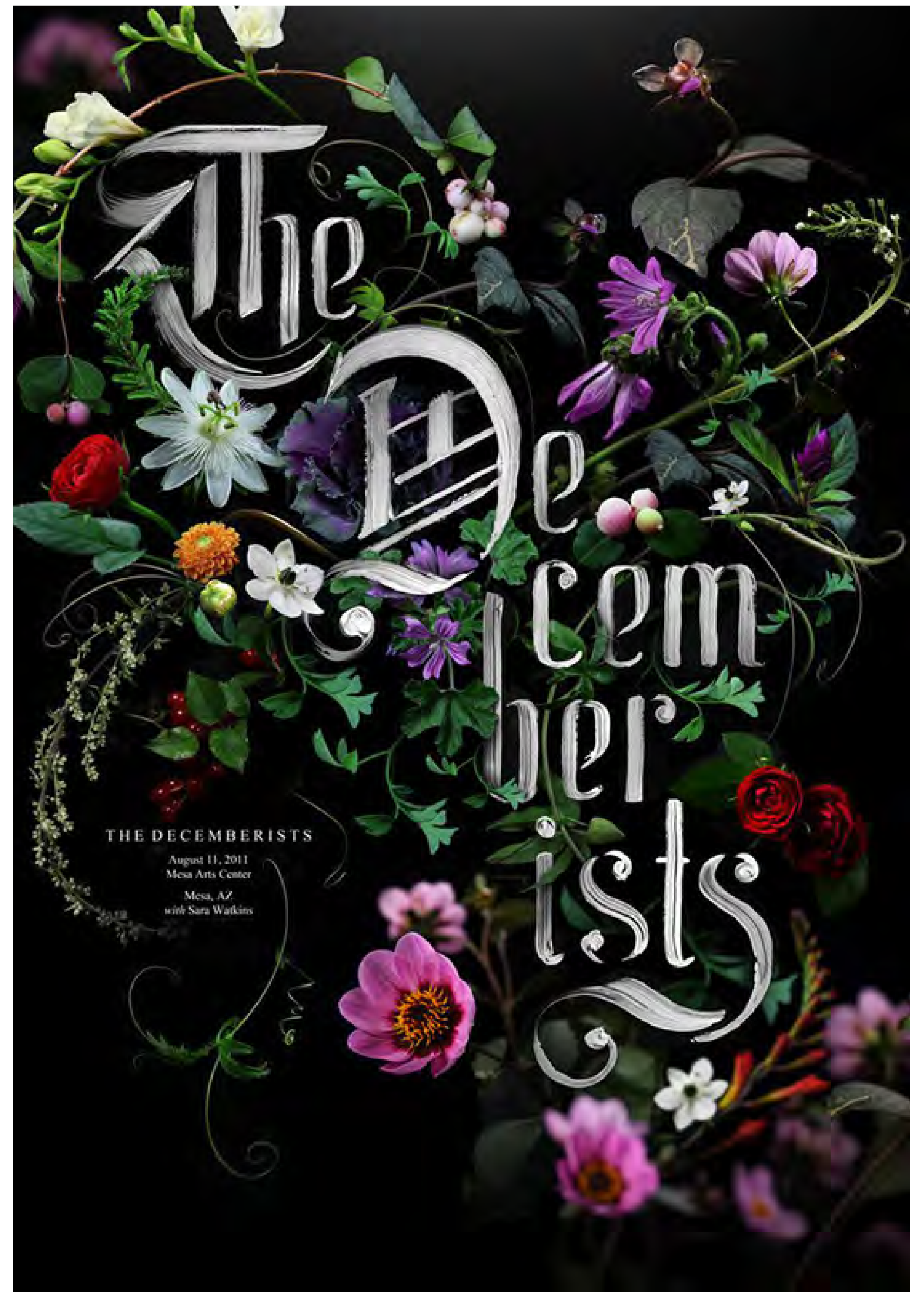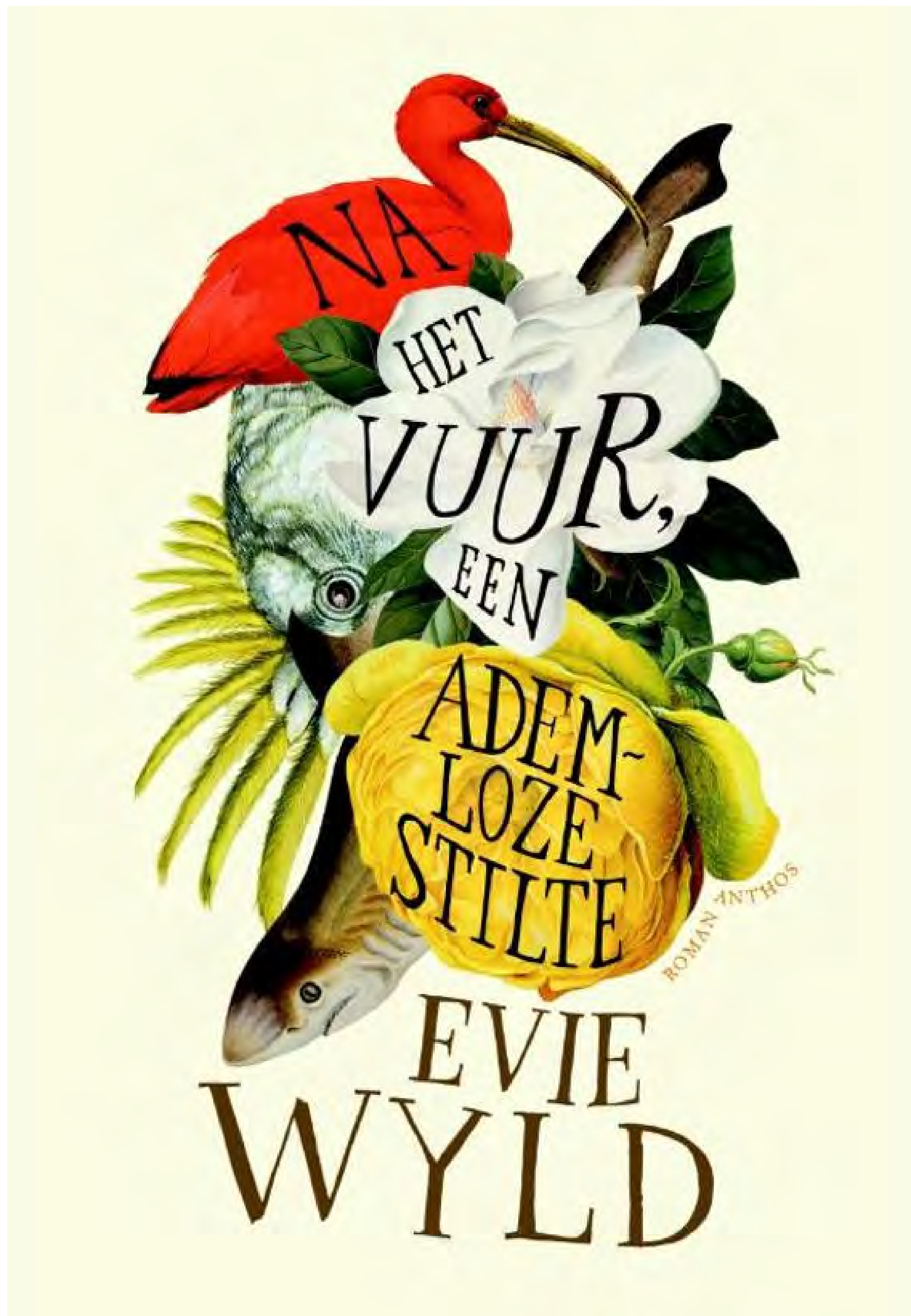
↖ Book cover, Ambo Anthos (Netherlands).

↑ Gig Poster for *The Decemberists*, Sean Freeman (United Kigdom), 2011

VIEW DESIGN >

← Poster for *Macy's Flower Show,* Alexis Elisa Caban (USA), 2015

VIEW DESIGN >

The final two examples of this type of graphic design show how it can also be used with **hand lettering** or collage and **extremely ornate images** with lots of detail. In both cases, the fonts and graphic elements have been reduced to the bare minimum, hidden as much as possible behind the various elements in the image.
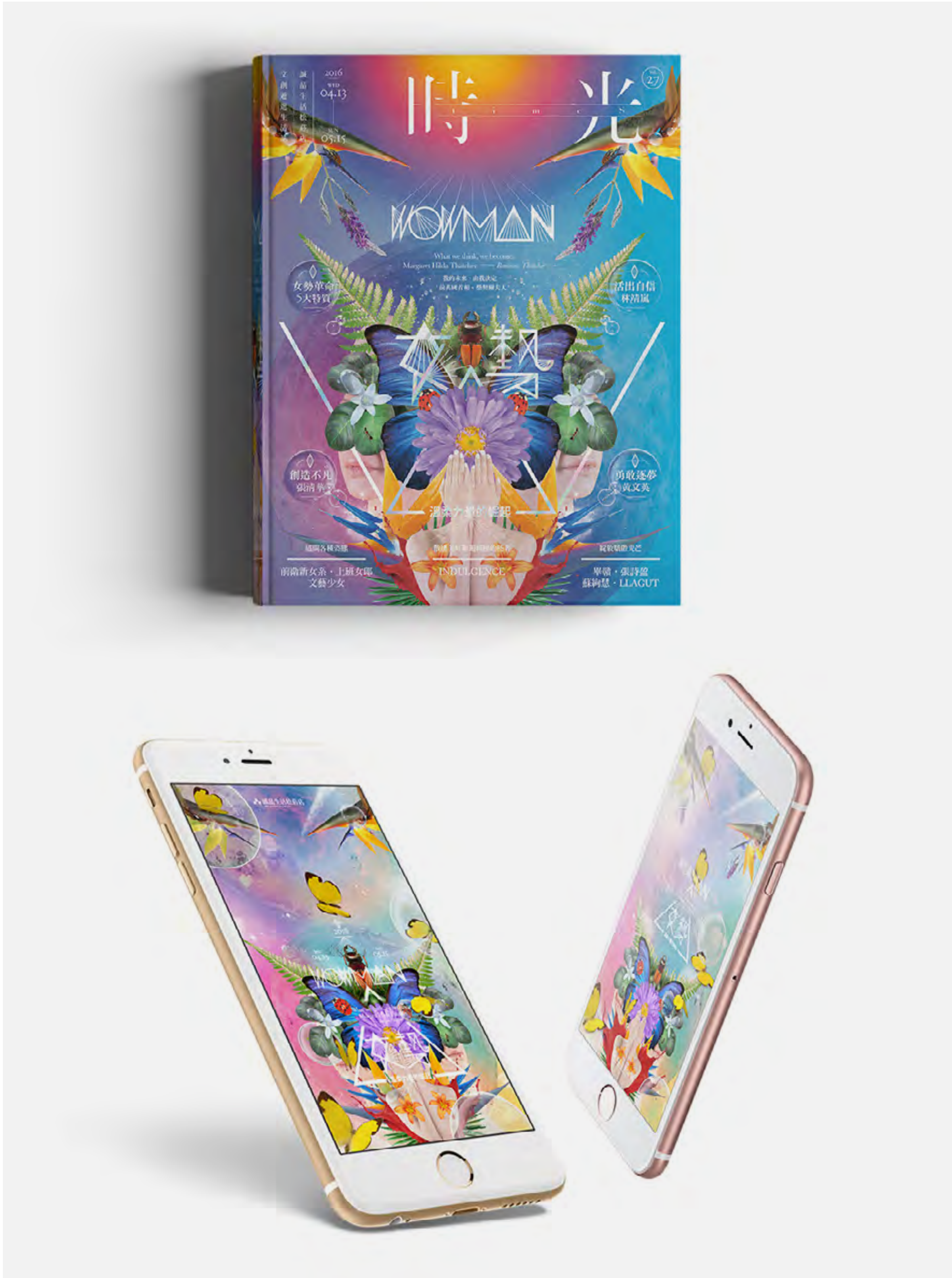


↑ **Book and brand identity for** *Wowman*, **Keson (Taiwan), 2016**

VIEW DESIGN >

## 4.3 Handmade

In a world that is increasingly high-tech and digital, a **manual, handcrafted approach** is becoming ever more popular, often obtained by mixing analogue and digital tools, or using digital design in a way that makes the image look like it was created by hand.

With digital tools there is always a risk of communication becoming cold and ubiquitous, meaning the public ends up yearning for a return to more natural, organic, unbalanced and asymmetric styles. When things are too perfect, we therefore **seek imperfection** that bears witness to human intervention, to the fact that there is still **human creativity** behind the technology.

Have you noticed how frequently those outside the world of graphic design and photography have the impression that everything can now be done with computers and that, most significantly, everything *is* now done with computers? Strangely, we have lost our trust in the accuracy of work created by hand, and so things that are very precise, orderly and symmetrical are seen as high-tech and industrial, whereas things that are not are considered more 'human' and handcrafted.

In this chapter of the e-book we will explore the contemporary **graphic design trends** that welcome, incorporate and **utilise decoration**, craftsmanship and **handmade designs**.

As you will see, there are many of them, and, most importantly, they are achieving some impressive, highly striking aesthetic results.

## ILLUSTRATIVE DESIGN

**Combining illustration and graphic design** is perhaps the oldest trend of all – indeed, the graphic designers of over a century ago did nothing but design and create images. It's a type of graphic design that derives from the *affichistes* of the early twentieth century and has continued through to the present day, particularly in the fields of cultural and artistic promotion. Many poster designers can be described as following this trend, as well as some book cover designers and illustrators who double as graphic designers.

The fonts in the designs are combined with the illustrations, in often complicated compositions. This type of approach can actually be seen in many sections of this e-book, wherever images and graphics complement one another, for example in hand lettering.

## ADVICE

The trickiest aspect of working on this style is ensuring that the **illustrated part does not dominate the graphic design** and that the **graphic design is on a par** with the illustration. The risk is that a good illustration could be spoiled by poor graphic design choices. There is no limit to the software you can use to create illustrations, nor does this type of graphic design have to be produced entirely digitally.

↖ Poster for *Austin City Limits Festival*, Non-Verbal Club (Portugal), 2014

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Poster for *Guimarães Jazz Festival*, Non-Verbal Club (Portugal), 2012

VIEW DESIGN >

## HAND LETTERING

Hand lettering refers to text produced by hand: instead of using fonts, for this type of graphic design **the characters are handwritten**, often along with other elements of the design too (lines, boxes, icons, etc.) You need to be able to draw characters by hand to explore this form of graphic design, **which sits halfway between calligraphy and illustration.**
In some of the following examples, the hand lettering has been converted into vector graphics and thus made more precise and symmetrical, while in others it has clearly been produced using drawing or painting instruments, making the design more immediate or rough around the edges.
Hand lettering has the big advantage that it can fill up every space – it is flexible and can be adapted to any layout. It is highly valued for the **sense of familiarity** it conveys, taking us back to an idealistic world before the advent of technology, when craftsmanship was really appreciated.
One of the most popular sub-trends in this genre of graphic design is linked to **vintage and hipster styles**, recalling a 'folk' style of lettering which is still used today in the United States on signage or posters and for decorating objects of any type.



← **Poster for play, David Plunkert (USA), 2011-2013**

**VIEW DESIGN >**
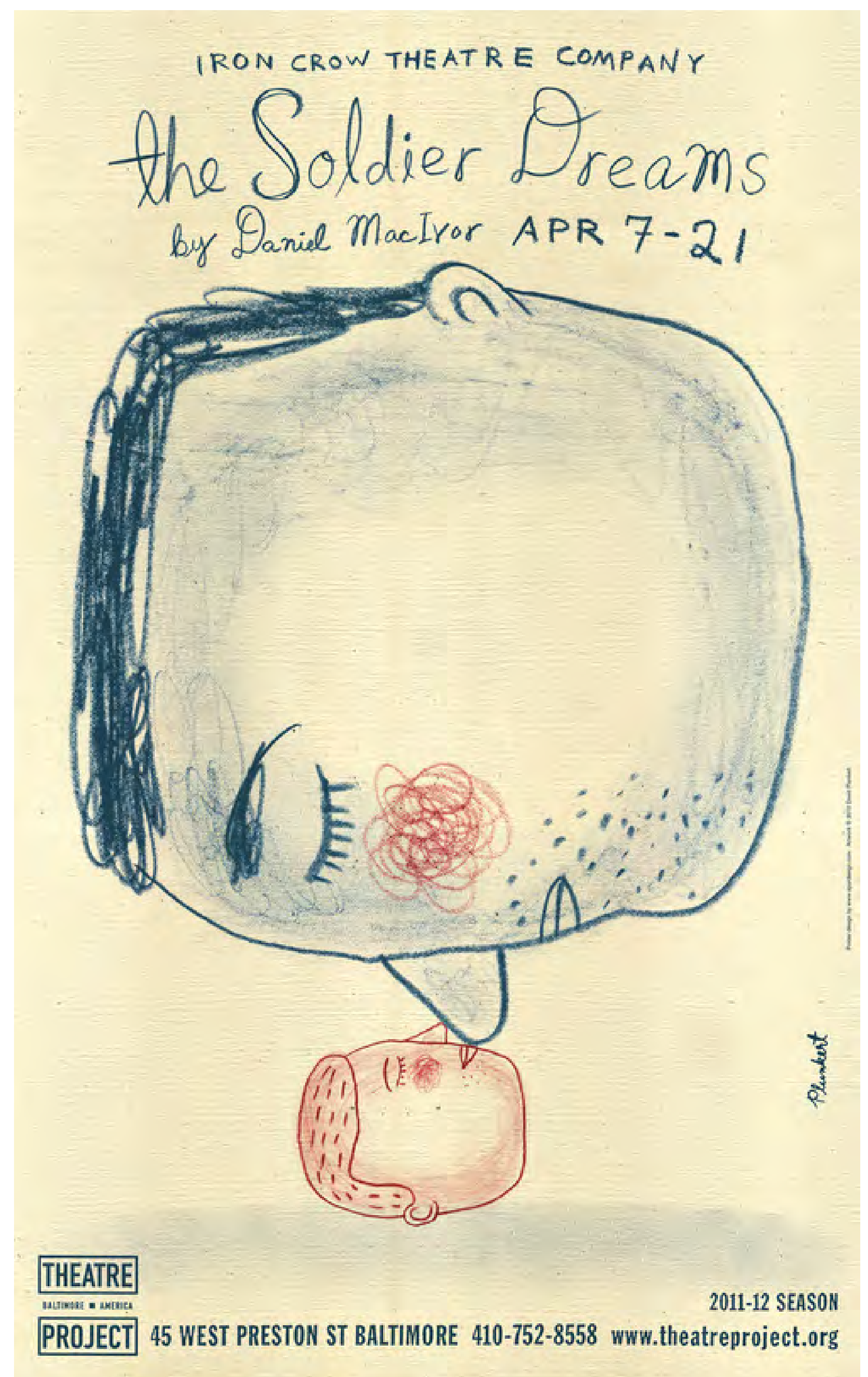
## ADVICE

Always begin with **sketches in pen or pencil on paper**, then **scan them** and transfer them to a vector graphics program, **vectorising the lettering**. This allows you to **tweak it digitally**: removing any obvious imperfections, lining up the letters, changing the thickness of the lines and, of course, adding colour.

↖ ↑ **Posters for plays, David Plunkert (USA), 2011-2013**

**VIEW DESIGN >**

↖ *Torment/ Cement-NY*, Doug Alves (Brazil), 2015

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Poster for *Detachment*, Showbeast (USA), 2011

VIEW DESIGN >
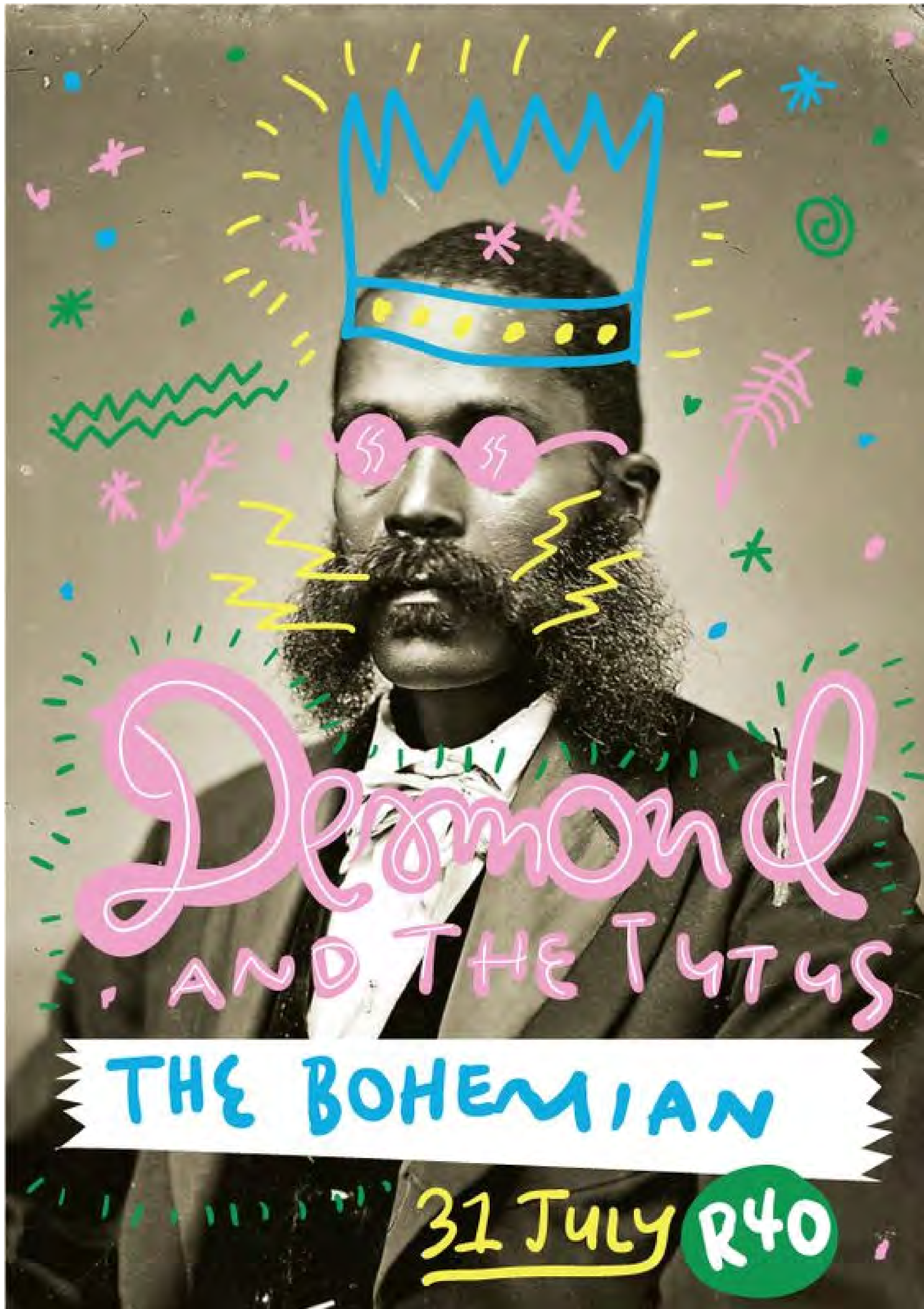
↑ **Gig Poster, Shane Durrant (South Africa), c. 2010.**

VIEW DESIGN >

## READY-MADE OBJECTS

Graphic design and **objects** have always been natural bedfellows. The widest possible range of objects have been photographed (or scanned) and added to designs, especially for posters and book covers, becoming the key feature of the work.

In some cases, the objects are linked to the project (to produce an association of ideas, or the exact opposite, surprise and alienation). In others, meanwhile, these objects are specially built, assembled or modified, most often with Photoshop, to increase the disorienting and bizarre effect produced by the image.

This type of approach is used very frequently in the culture sector, and in recent years has become more and more popular in advertising and editorial projects.



↑ **Poster for** *AIGA Colorado*, **Stefan Sagmeister (Austria/ USA), 2008**

VIEW DESIGN >

Centro Dramático Nacional
Dirección
Ernesto Caballero

Teatro
María Guerrero

Sala
de la Princesa

Del
30 de octubre
al
29 de noviembre
de 2015

## BANG-KOK

Texto y dirección de
Antonio Morcillo López

Reparto
Carlos Álvarez-Nóvoa
Dafnis Balduz

Escenografía
Paco Azorín
Vestuario
Gimena González Busch
Iluminación
Kika Planas
Espacio sonoro
Ramón Ciércoles
Caracterización
Toni Santos

Producción
La Villarroel,
Grec 2015 Festival de Barcelona



Actores:
Jorge Usón
Carmen Barrantes

CABARÉ DE CARICIA
y PUNTAPIÉ

Música:
Miguel Ángel Remiro
Compañía de teatro el Gato Negro
en coproducción con
el Centro Dramático de Aragón

Dirección:
Alberto Castrillo-Ferrer



Centro Dramático Nacional
Dirección
Gerardo Vera

Comediants
**PERSÉFONE**

Teatro
María Guerrero

Variaciones
mortales

Del 1 de noviembre
al 4 de diciembre
de 2011

Dirección
Joan Font

↖↑← **Festival and theatre posters, Isidro Ferrer (Spain), 2011-2015**

**VIEW DESIGN >**

## ADVICE

**Pay a lot of attention to the photograph**, using a good camera and lights to illuminate the object.

Also, try to use **natural shadows**, i.e. those that appear in the photograph, instead of resorting to post-production, which can create an artificial feel (generally due to imperfect cropping or overly even shadows).

Unlike a few years ago, images can now be created with objects found anywhere, using your smartphone or iPhone as a camera, provided the lenses have a good resolution; in this case, it is important **to ensure the image size** is compatible with the size of print you want.



↑ **Festival and theatre posters, Isidro Ferrer (Spain), 2011-2015**
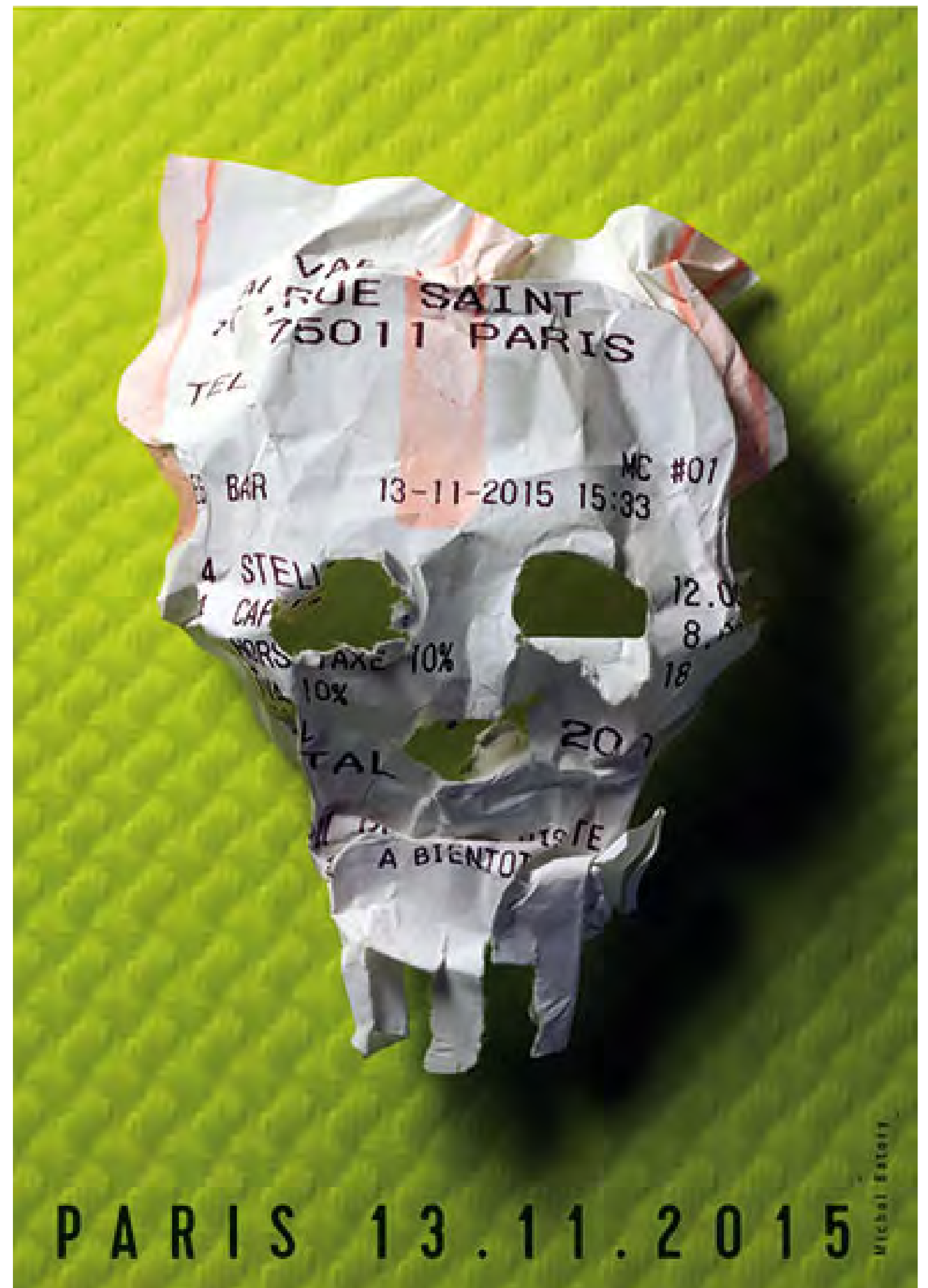
**VIEW DESIGN >**

↖↑ **Festival posters, Michal Batory (Poland), 2015**

**VIEW DESIGN >**

## 3D GRAPHIC DESIGN

This type of approach seems to be more about the images used in graphic design projects than the graphics themselves. It could be defined as a sub-trend of illustrated design or typographic design that makes heavy use of 3D and its aesthetics.

In recent years, both 3D modelling software and photographs of real models (made of paper, wood, plastic, etc.) have been used to obtain images with this effect, and indeed sometimes it is difficult to tell one from the other.

This form of graphic design tends to be very colourful, and very often incorporates abstract or organic elements.

It is not suitable for communications that provide information, but is well suited to advertising and **posters** for festivals and music events.
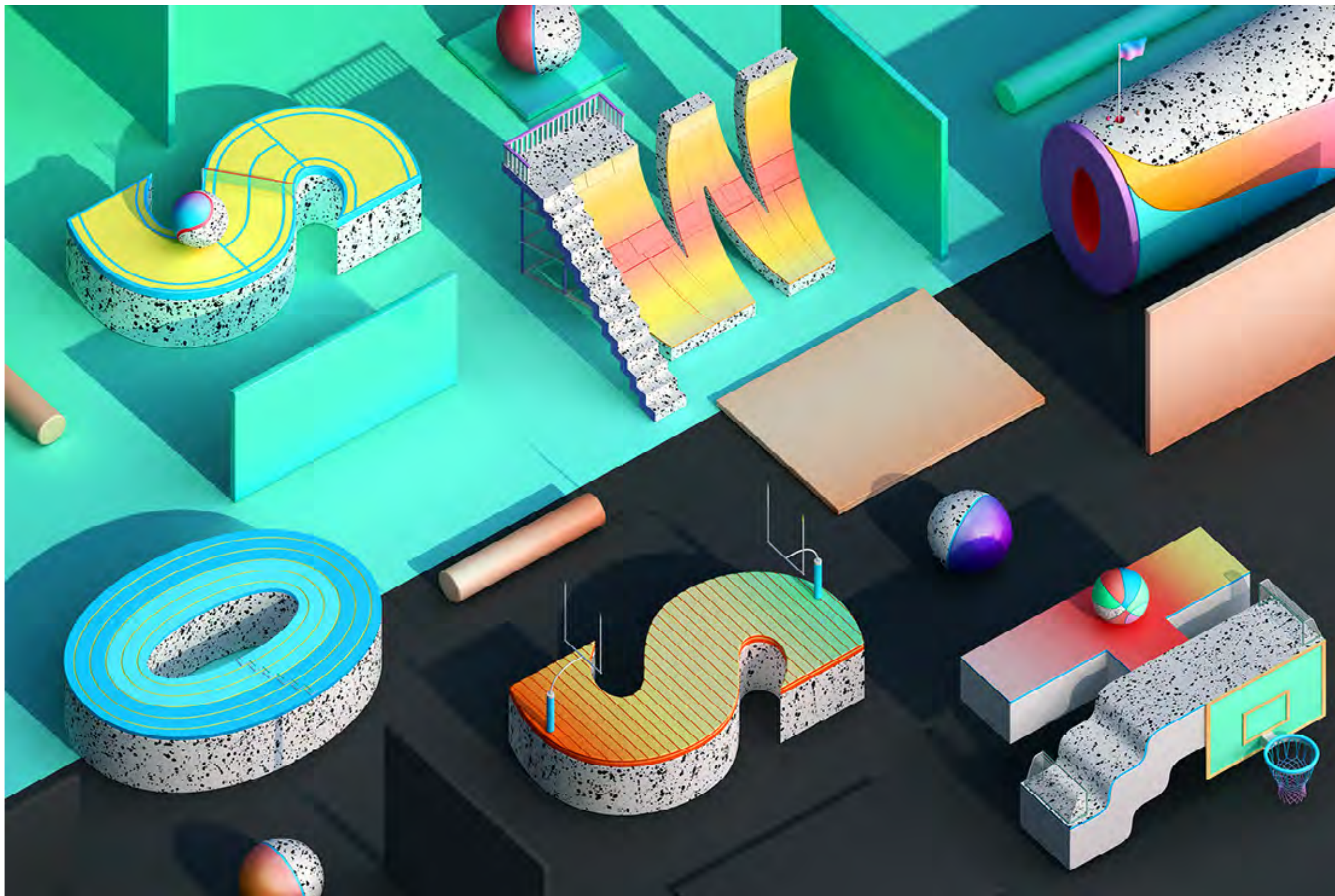


↑ *3d type collection 1*, Ilovedust (United Kingdom), 2017

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Poster for *We are the 90's*, Alexis Persani (France), 2017

**VIEW DESIGN >**

↖ Cover for *L'Album by Shortlist* for CB News, Benoit Challand (France), 2017

**VIEW DESIGN >**

↑ **Brand identity for the Rio Olympics, Fred Gelli/Tàtil (Brazil), 2015**

VIEW DESIGN >

## ADVICE

First get to grips with the most basic 3D modelling software (such as the free programs **Blender and SketchUp**) and the 3D tools in **Photoshop and Illustrator**. Then learn how to use the images obtained in the correct context (i.e. the composition of the layout and the use of colours and lettering).

**There is no need to go over the top** with the details or realism: simply using any old shape (whether geometric, organic or invented) will create an interesting result. 3D models look realistic when the perspective is calibrated correctly and the angles and size of the shadows are correct.

Even a basic 3D model of a sphere could therefore still form the basis of an interesting graphic design project.

## HANDCRAFTED 3D DESIGN

The final style in this section is a handmade, craft-based alternative to 3D modelling, and involves **cutting up paper, building models, illustrations and lettering, and then photographing them**. Although the clean lines and accuracy of the models are difficult to tell apart from similar graphic designs created digitally, **paper has something 'human'**, warm and fun about it that digital design as yet cannot reproduce. There are many examples of this type of graphic design/illustration: some people design their 3D models first and then build them, some create elaborate compositions just by cutting up paper, while others seek to use digital tools to reproduce these effects.



↑ **Campaign for *Pro Delight*, Hochburg Design (Germany), 2017**

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Poster for *Fête du Livre de Villeurbanne*, Louis Rigaud (France), 2013

VIEW DESIGN >

↖ Graphic design, Vault49 (USA)

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ Poster for *We love fantasy*, Julien Valée (Canada), 2009

VIEW DESIGN >

↖ Poster for *Hyundai Creative Lab*, Happycentro (Italy), 2012

VIEW DESIGN >

↖↑↑ Campaign for *Malmö Festival*, Snask (Sweden), 2013

VIEW DESIGN >

Arm yourself with **scissors, paper, glue, precision**, a lot of willpower and a good **camera**. Alternatively, try to reproduce these effects using Illustrator and Photoshop: expert use of shapes, colours and, above all, shadows can produce a good result. Indeed, the regular shapes of cutouts and paper models cast shadows that are also regular, and therefore easy to reproduce digitally.

## 4.4   Hybrid graphic design

There is also a type of graphic design that aims to achieve a **mixture of everything**. And when I say everything, I mean *everything*.
It is the polar opposite of minimalism – it is superfluous, exaggerated, ornate and sometimes chaotic.
It can recall either underground and alternative styles or more pop-inspired aesthetics.
It can be disturbing or fun. And it can be elegant or beautifully anarchic.
Not many designers dare to use this type of approach, but, thank God, it continues to survive in a world dominated by technology and digital skills.

**ADVICE**

None. Everything goes.

← Cover for *The New York Times Magazine*, Sagmeister & Walsh (USA), 2017

↓ Campaign for *Frooti*, Sagmeister & Walsh (USA), 2015

VIEW DESIGN >

↑ **Photographic design entitled** *Having Guts Always Works Out For Me*,
**Sagmeister & Walsh (USA), 2017**

**VIEW DESIGN >**

## 5.  Conclusions
## HOW TO ADOPT A MORE CREATIVE APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT

**There is more than one type of graphic design**: indeed, there are probably as many types of graphic design as there are graphic designers. However, graphic design has followed some clear paths throughout its history – in recent years new technology has favoured hybrids of every type, but also, as we have seen above, it has promoted a move towards rediscovering analogue, handcrafted and low-tech methods. **Contemporary graphic design** is all this and much more: it is continually feeding on everything produced by art, cultures and countercultures, fashions and rebellions. Modern graphic design quotes, revisits and transforms all aspects of visual culture.
Graphic designers should therefore observe, study and squirrel away as much as possible from the world of visual culture. There are thousands of images produced by a multitude of artists and designers available online.

My first piece of advice is to **create archives to help you find inspiration, ideas and stimuli,** using platforms like **Pinterest** or apps like **Diigo**.

Secondly, **experiment** with something new and different in every project you work on, even if it's just a small, insignificant detail.

And third, **use a range of styles** depending on your clients and projects; as each chapter in this book makes clear, some types of graphic design are suitable for certain industries, and others are not. Choosing the most suitable style can be the key part of the design process.

## DEFINING CREATIVITY AND PRACTICAL WAYS TO STIMULATE IT

**Creativity** is a skill that **needs to be trained**, through both practice and study.
It has nothing to do with talent, and is not the preserve of a select few, but instead is an innate human trait. The definition given by mathematician Henri Poincaré perhaps best sums it

up: "creativity is uniting existing elements with new, hopefully useful connections."

It therefore means **creating new and useful things with existing elements**. Anything beyond this passes into the realm of invention or imagination.

Striving to be creative should be a mission for us as human beings, not just a target for graphic designers.

To stimulate creativity during the graphic design process, I recommend:

→ **Always experimenting with multiple solutions.**

→ **Mixing up the various elements, even if you do so without rhyme or reason.**

→ **Creating grids and then ignoring them.**

→ **Analysing the key concepts that underpin a project.**

Creativity is a thinking process, and you should therefore **take time to think**, including time spent away from your computer monitor. Several studies have confirmed that **drawing and writing by hand** has a calming and stimulating power on your mind, so it is worth arming yourself with a pen or pencil and a sheet of paper or notebook and getting used to analogue ways of coming up with the initial ideas for a project. You can buy tools specifically designed for this type of **creative brainstorming**: notebooks for designers, pads with preprinted grids for designs and scanning, and action notebooks to develop and manage projects. And, of course, pens, markers and pencils of all types.

## TIPS ON WHERE AND HOW TO APPLY THESE METHODS AND APPROACHES IN EVERYDAY GRAPHIC DESIGN

A common complaint heard from graphic designers is that they cannot apply their chosen approach to the graphic design they are commissioned to produce: in general, the blame is placed on rogue clients or stingy employers, who in both cases force the poor graphic designer into unlikely and aesthetically disastrous decisions.

While this situation is certainly not uncommon, at least in Italy, it is also true that graphic designers have plenty of

opportunities to apply what they have learnt and the styles they want to try out.

**There is the right client for every type of graphic design, and the right type of graphic design for every type of project**. You just need to learn how to recognise it, develop it and offer it in the right way.

Designs are almost always created for clients, not for personal gratification: you therefore have to learn to listen to, understand and anticipate the client's demands, needs and tastes, and try to **mediate between your approach and their expectations.**

This e-book contains some hints that may help graphic designers choose the most suitable type of design for each project. But there are no fixed rules, and in any case some of the best results are often achieved when the rules are broken.

## 6. Technical advice
## TIPS ON USING SOFTWARE CREATIVELY

Graphic design software now offers a huge range of possibilities, as do tools such as scanners, cameras and smartphones, and you should always try to get the best out of them and to understand how, when and why to use each one. For example, Adobe's three main pieces of graphic design software (Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign) have different characteristics, and it is important to know how to combine them, using each of them for the things they do best.

**Photoshop** is perfect for **creating and modifying images**. It is one of the best image-editing programs around, and it is also brilliant for **digital painting and drawing** (especially when you purchase the right set of brushes). It is certainly not designed for handling long texts or creating vector graphics, and it can't produce files with more than one page.

**Illustrator** has become **highly versatile** over the years: you can use it to **build images** (vector graphics) and to **handle texts and files with multiple pages**, which can then be sent for printing. It's the best program for **creating and modifying PDFs**, and is therefore suited to creating individual images and print files, especially with only one or a few pages (posters, flyers, postcards, book covers, folded leaflets etc.), multimedia

files, files for use online and illustrations.

It's not so good for handling publishing tasks or long texts.

**InDesign** is the **ultimate desktop publishing** software – its strength lies in its ability to **handle many pages and long texts**, but it's perfect for handling all publishing projects, whether they contain one page or 1000.

It is not a drawing program, but it does have vector drawing tools and tools for creating shapes. It could be described as the **ideal graphic design composition program**: a typical workflow is to prepare an image in Photoshop or Illustrator and then insert it into an InDesign file to develop the graphic design, i.e. the fonts, colours, graphic elements and text. It is better at **creating PDFs for printing** than Illustrator, it offers **error-checking functions** and precise handling of the formatted text (kerning, tracking, hyphenation etc.), and you can **create and manage indices** and enjoy lots of other functions that make it an essential tool for the publishing sector (for both paper books and e-books).

The **best-known free alternative to Photoshop is GIMP**: it excels at photo editing but it can also be used for digital drawing and painting. It is completely open-source, and every year developers from all over the world create new functions, plugins and tools to improve it.

A second image editor definitely worth considering, although more limited than Photoshop and GIMP, is **Paint.net**.

Another **free** and open-source program worth trying is **Inkscape**, which is an excellent piece of **vector graphics software**. Think of it as Illustrator's younger brother: it has some limitations and does not work quite so smoothly, but once you get your head round it, it is excellent software for beginners, and it can even handle complex files. It is undoubtedly the only serious free alternative to Illustrator.

**Canva** is another excellent alternative for **creating individual images with text**: it started out as an online service for creating headers and images for social networks, but it has gradually expanded its range of functions, and is now ideal for people who want to create images quickly, offering well-balanced composition, nice fonts and plenty of inspiration.

There are also alternatives to InDesign for desktop publishing. **Scribus**, for example, is open-source and **completely free desktop publishing software**. It is not as versatile or powerful as InDesign, it is a little more complicated to use and the interface is not particularly intuitive, but it is the only real free alternative for publishing books, and so it is worth noting, particularly for students or those only dabbling in graphic design on an amateur basis.

## 7.   Short bibliography

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(RotoVision, 2002)

**Atlas of Graphic Designers**
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(Rockport, 2009)

**Critica portatile al visual design**
Riccardo Falcinelli
(Einaudi, 2014)

**100 Ideas that Changed Graphic Design**
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(Laurence King Publishing, 2012)

**Just My Type. A Book About Fonts**
Simon Garfield
(Profile Books, 2011)

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Steven Heller
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**Free graphics. La grafica fuori delle regole nell'era digitale**
Dario Rossi
(Lupetti, 2006)

**Things I Have Learned in My Life so Far**
Stefan Sagmeister
(Abrams, 2003)

**How to Use Graphic Design to Sell Things, Explain Things, Make Things Look Better, Make People Laugh, Make People Cry, and (Every Once in a While) Change the World**
Michael Bierut
(Thames and Hudson Ltd, 2016)

**How to be a Graphic Designer Without Losing Your Soul**
Adrian Shaughnessy
(Laurence King Publishing, 2010)

## 8.  Additional links

Links to various resources, graphic designers and other graphic design-related topics available online and not previously cited within this e-book.

**The Vignelli Canon**
https://www.vignelli.com/canon.pdf

**Shape of Design - Frank Chimero**
https://shapeofdesignbook.com/chapters/01-how-and-why

**AIAP - Italian Association of Visual Communication Design**
http://www.aiap.it

**AIGA the professional association for design**
https://www.aiga.org/

**Alliance Graphique Internationale**
http://a-g-i.org/

**Graphis Magazine**
http://www.graphis.com/

**Eye magazine**
http://www.eyemagazine.com

**Design Matters**
https://www.designmattersmedia.com/designmatters

**Visual creativity blog**
https://www.creativebloq.com

**How Design Magazine**
http://www.howdesign.com

**Print Magazine**
http://www.printmag.com

**Behance: the network of creative professionals**
https://www.behance.net

## About the author

Alessandro Bonaccorsi is a visual designer, graphic facilitator and illustrator.
He has worked for clients including Save The Children, Renault Italia and Max Meyer since 2003.
His illustrations have been published in Il Sole 24 Ore, La Stampa, Internazionale and Diario Europeo.

He was listed by Lürzer's Archive as one of the '200 best illustrators worldwide 14-15' for the American Illustrator Annual and the Italian Illustrators Annual.

He created a course entitled Corso di Disegno Brutto ('Ugly Drawing Course'), which he has toured around a large part of Italy since March 2017, aiming to remind people how to draw.
His blog, SHIVU.it, explores creativity, inspiration, visual culture, illustration and graphic design.

His book *Illustrazione, l'immaginario per professione* was published by Alkemia Books.

He believes in "a non-competitive world, in sharing ideas and in visual culture as a powerful means of bringing wellbeing to society."

His website is www.bonaccorsiart.com.

**Geographies of Graphic Design**
A journey through the discipline's most interesting trends
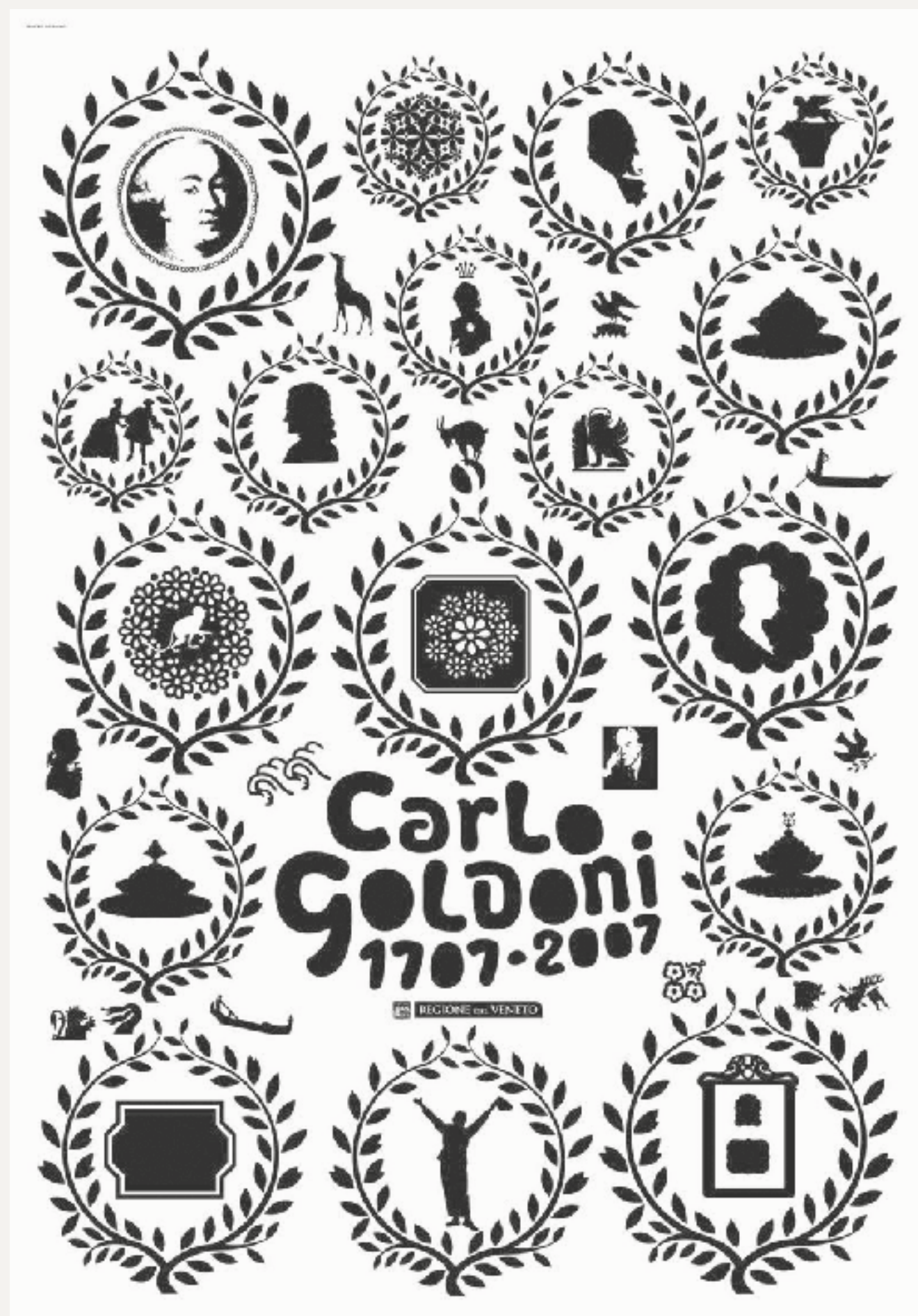
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