Design Papers

5

A joint project with
The Herb Lubalin Study Center
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The Cooper Union
for the Advancement of
Science and Art

Rhetorical Handbook

An Illustrated Manual for Graphic Designers

Hanno Ehses/Ellen Lupton

"The impact caused by the collapse of the Modern Movement and its doctrines confirms remarkably well an old wisdom: 'There is nothing more practical than a good theory.' The high energy of Modernism, released over many decades and energizing generations of designers, is declining. The resulting disorientation, together with the maturing of design as a profession, has led to a renewed interest in theoretical issues." *Hanno Ehses*

This publication evolved out of the catalogue for the exhibition "Hanno Ehses: Innovative Teaching/ Experimental Typography," held by the Herb Lubalin Study Center at The Cooper Union, April 1987. This expanded version, published by the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, includes examples of rhetorical principles found in student work and in the general design environment, as well as a bibliography and a pair of essays by Hanno Ehses and Ellen Lupton.

Hanno Ehses is Head of the Department of Visual Communication at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. He has developed a method of teaching graphic design which uses rhetoric, the ancient art of persuasive language, as a tool for generating design concepts.

For Ehses, design theory should not give fixed stylistic rules, but should build an open conceptual vocabulary for confronting communication problems. His approach is innovative because it focuses on meaning over form. Whereas other teaching methods stress manual skills, personal style, and theories of perception, Ehses centers on the culturally determined, linguistic aspect of graphic communication.

The Herb Lubalin Study Center of Design and Typography was founded as a living memorial to one of The Cooper Union's greatest design alumni. The Center aims to elucidate the past and future of graphic design through exhibitions and publications on influential designers, like Lubalin, and on issues in design history and theory.

The Lubalin Center honors Hanno Ehses as a significant contributor to the design profession, whose work should be brought to the general attention of our community.

Ellen Lupton, Curator
George Sadek, Director
The Herb Lubalin Study Center of Design and Typography

1877

1946

1970

1980s

These logos use the Quakers, a religious group with liberal political beliefs, to symbolize American integrity and individualism. The concept is the same in all four marks, but the visualization has changed— and when form changes, so does meaning. All communication is rhetorical: the meaning of an idea can't be separated from the manner in which it is expressed.

The Modernist "International Quaker" of the 1970s is reduced to a minimum. This austere design style, which developed out of the avant-garde of the 20s and 30s, represents the effort to create a purely informative language, free of rhetoric. In tune with the neo-conservative 80s, the logo has reverted to traditional realism. The TV-shaped frame lingers on as the only sign of modernity.

Rhetoric and Design

Hanno Ehses
Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1987

Figure 1
Diagram from a 15th century rhetorical primer for school
boys. The table of logical terminology is coded with more or
less arbitrary images. The pictures are a memory device:
abstract verbal terms are recalled by means of a familiar
image. They form a pictorial signage system distributed
throughout the text.

The current disorientation in design caused by the collapse of the Modern Movement has sparked a renewed interest in theoretical issues. The Modernist approach to form-giving is based on the possibility of a universal language of abstract forms: for example, the theory and practice of Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, early Jan Tschichold, Max Bill, and the Swiss and Ulm schools of design. Since the 1960s, however, movements in the studies of literature, language, aesthetics, and architecture have brought into question all efforts to define a universal, rational, scientifically purified language. In this climate of search for a new common ground, I would like to encourage reassessment and serious discussion of rhetoric as a potential platform for the study and practice of graphic design.

The exhibition at the Herb Lubalin Study Center includes "work in progress" by my students, the result of studies in which a semiotically modified rhetorical framework has been applied to the teaching of graphic design. The aim of this exhibition is to demonstrate how rhetorical procedures and devices can be transferred to visual design.

2500 years ago the Greeks were already concerned with proficiency in communication. Having studied the practice of successful orators, and firmly believing that some of the skills involved in making a speech could be taught, they brought together a set of precepts to aid other people in acquiring those skills. They called this wholistic approach to communication *rhetoric*. Aristotle defined rhetoric as the "faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion," and he pointed out that all people have a share in rhetoric because they all attempt to persuade one another of various ideas and beliefs. To find the reasons behind successful efforts of communication is to discover the art behind persuasion.

For rhetoric, language is never simply a form of expression: it is a functional tool that is manipulated to achieve desired ends. A common prejudice and misunderstanding associates rhetoric with the bombastic and hollow, with fraud and seduction, with deceit and sheer ornamentation. The long history of this art, in contrast to popular assumptions, tells us that rhetoric has been concerned with imagination, with form-giving, and with the appropriate use of language to facilitate human affairs.

3

The prejudice against rhetoric is as old as Western philosophy; Plato condemmned language as the mere outward form of an essential inner thought, while other thinkers held it to be a necessary instrument of social expression. The Renaissance humanists revitalized rhetoric after centuries of distrust by scholastic logicians, and applied it to painting, architecture, and music, as well as to oral and written discourse. The rhetorical tradition fell into decline, however, by the eighteenth century, because of the restricted identification of rhetoric with elocution (style, novel effects, ornamentation), and the increasing prestige of a formally and semantically strict language of science.

In the mid-1500s, the French scholar Peter Ramus divided the wholistic art of rhetoric into separate disciplines: rhetoric and logic. Discovery and arrangement of material he assigned to the province of logic; elocution and the other parts, however, were subsumed under rhetoric. Whereas logic was assigned to the intellect, rhetoric was assigned to the imagination. Logic was scientific and exact; rhetoric was peripheral and decorative.[1]

At about the same time, the English scientist and philosopher Francis Bacon fostered this view by claiming that imagination and reason were two distinct faculties. Because he considered imagination and emotion subservient to reason, he advocated the precedence of *res* (what is said) over *verba* (how it is said). Consequently elocution for Bacon and his followers is to logic what clothing is to the body. Style becomes the "garb of thought," or the rhetorical wrapping. This kind of judgment was expressed in statements like "Truth loves the light, and is most beautiful when naked" (Figure 3).[2]

The seventeenth century was concerned with the development of a simple, utilitarian, scientific style, advocated particularly by a committee formed by the "Royal Society" to improve the English language. The aim was to determine linguistic symbols that would have univocal and constant meanings not unlike mathematical ones.

The contemporary distinction in design between "information" and "persuasion" reflects historical

Figure 2
The traditional phases of rhetorical production and their parallel in the design process

The rhetorical process	The design process
Invention The discovery of plausible arguments and supporting material relevant to the situation	Research, development of a concept
Disposition The arrangement of arguments. This phase was also called *disegno* during the Renaissance.	Organization, layout, planning
Elocution The fitting of proper language to the argument, including use of rhetorical figures, in consideration of the following criteria: *Aptum* — appropriateness *Puritas* — correctness *Perspecuitas* — comprehensibility *Ornatus* — deliberate adornment	Stylistic choices, visualization of the concept
Memory Firm grasp and understanding of the material to be presented	Skill, decisiveness of presentation
Delivery The control of the voice and body in the actual presentation of arguments	Execution and choice of media

NATURE

Figure 4
The international signs for
"man" and "woman" aim, in
their style, for the status of
pure information stripped
of persuasion. The image is
ultimately culturally
determined, however:
"man" is naked; "woman" is
signified by the addition of
a customary feminine
garment.
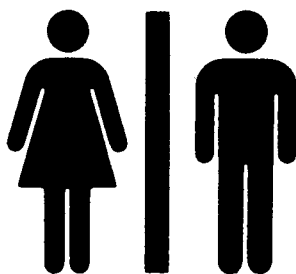
discussions about plain and ornamental style,
stemming from the ancient distinctions between
content and form, logic and style. Many designers
believe that information can be presented without
ever referring to modes of persuasion (Figure 4). Yet
all communication, no matter how spare and simple,
has meaningful stylistic qualities which exceed the
stated "content" of a message. Consequently, the
question that designers must face relates not to
persuasion or the lack of it, but rather to the
intentions behind it. In other words: designers cannot
avoid discussing the moral issue; they must question
the ends of design, to ensure that the work
disseminated does not persuade its public for
undesirable ends.

There have been some fruitful endeavors over the
last thirty years to make rhetoric respectable again, to
free it from the prejudice that regards it as a cunning
and morally questionable technique. According to the
Italian scholar and semiotician Umberto Eco,
speaking for the "New Rhetoric":

*almost all human reasoning about facts, decisions, opinions,
beliefs, and values is no longer considered to be based on the
authority of Absolute Reason, but instead is seen to be
intertwined with emotional elements, historical evaluations,
and pragmatic motivations. In this sense, the new rhetoric
considers the persuasive discourse not as a subtle fraudulent
procedure, but as a technique of 'reasonable' human
interaction, controlled by doubt and explicitly subject to many
extra-logical conditions.* [3]

Since all human communication is, in one way or
another, infiltrated rhetorically, design for
visual/verbal communication cannot be exempt. The
potential value of the rhetorical system within a
semiotic framework was discussed by Gui Bonsiepe
who published the article "Visual/Verbal Rhetoric"
in 1965, probably inspired by Roland Barthes's essay
"Rhetoric of the Image" which appeared the previous
year.[4] Bonsiepe demonstrated that a visual rhetoric is
possible on the basis of verbal rhetoric by focusing on
the relation between image and text in contemporary
advertisements.

A similar interplay was central to the *emblem book*, a
genre which proliferated during the sixteenth and
seventeenth centuries (Figure 5). The typical emblem
is composed of three parts: the image (*pictura*), and
two text elements, the motto/title (*inscriptio*) and the
narrative text (*subscriptio*). The combination of image

Figure 5
*This emblem is based on
Cesaro Ripa's 1603*
Iconology, *a catalogue of
allegorical symbols for use
by painters and writers.
The translation of the
allegory reads:*
*"The compass indicated that
design is based on measure,
and that it holds to single
proportions; the mirror
indicated that design
reproduces not the external
world, but the internal
organ of the soul. . . "*
(Schöne)

D I S S E G N ,O.

diuerfi coſtumi di tempi , è
Il compaſſo dimoſtra che
e nelle miſure,le quali ſon-
, quando fra loro ſono pro-
o le ragioni del doppio, niet
to, che ſono commenſuabi-
e , & quattro , nel quale nu-
mo tutte le proportioni , co-
:ll'Aritmetica , & nella Mu-
euenza tutto il diſſegno, on-

tiua perfetta, non maculata
oſcurata, ma netta, chiara,
te di tutte le coſe ſecondo la
perche figuifica huomo be
quella parte , dalla quale pe
ra dell'intelletto , però agic
huomini chepoſſiedono il di
molta lode , & l'iſteſſa lode
ſi cerca per queſta via , co
la natura hà poche coſe per:

Notes

1. See Walter Ong, *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue*
(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958, 1983).
2. R. Adolph, *The Rise of Modern Prose Style* (Cambridge, MA:
MIT Press, 1968), 209.
3. U. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana
University Press, 1976) 277-288.
4. G. Bonsiepe, "Visual/Verbal Rhetoric," *Ulm 14-16*, 1965:
23-40. R. Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image," in Barthes,
Image/Music/Text (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).
5. A. Schöne, *Emblematik und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock*
(Munich, 1964).
6. P. J. Vinken, "The Modern Advertisement as an Emblem,"
Gazette 5, Number 2, 1959.

and narrative usually results in a riddle, the solution
of which comes about through an explanatory third
part, the narrative text. An emblematic image is not
simply a mute representation but refers to didactic
and moral meanings.[5] Many modern advertisements
have a similar three part structure: a picture and a
motto are explained by a discursive text.[6]

The relationship between the image and text in a
Baroque emblem book tends to be highly abstract:
objects are linked to concepts by almost abitrary
associations, similar to the relationship between a
word and the object to which it refers. The
effectiveness of a rhetorical design methodology
depends on the use of symbols and patterns which are
familiar and alive for a given audience. When an
image is able to communicate a message without the
aid of a lengthy verbal key, its meaning is nonetheless
socially determined. Thus, meaning is not an innate
quality of visual forms: it is a matter of relationships.
A legible message is one that succeeds in connecting
with the habits and expectations of a particular
culture. Insofar as design has wit or emotional
impact, it surprises those expectations.

Shaping the appearance of any visual object
involves rhetoric. To propose a rhetorical paradigm
for graphic design is to suggest a new attitude of
thinking about design, the way we see it, and
consequently, the way it should be taught: it implies a
shift away from a formalistic, aesthetic/stylistic
imperative towards a functional, aesthetic/ethical
imperative. The former tends to offer perfect models
only to be imitated and technically refined: imitation
instead of invention. The latter accepts that all design
has social, moral, and political dimensions, that there
is no sphere of pure information, and accepts the
challenge to make designs that are conceptually,
visually, and functionally appropriate for particular
clients and audiences in particular environments.
And this, in my opinion, requires designers who show
more respect for visual symbolism than for aesthetic
doctrines.

Rhetorical Handbook

Ellen Lupton, Curator
Herb Lubalin Study Center of Design and Typography
The Cooper Union

The human hand has furnished a flexible and convenient medium to innumerable social codes, from physical gestures to printed symbols. As Hanno Ehses has written, "A sign is not an empirical object." It is not a physical entity with an intrinsic, "natural" value, but only has meaning when backed by a larger system.

Q: What is rhetoric?

A: *Rhetoric* is a vocabulary which describes the effective, persuasive use of speech. Invented by the ancient Greeks, rhetoric is the oldest theory of language in the West. It is a theory, however, which is always directed towards practice: it describes the living, social function of language, not its abstract grammar. Rhetoric is theoretical *and* practical, a tool for describing existing statements and for designing new ones.

Rhetoric is not a set of fixed stylistic rules, but an open description of the patterns and processes of communication. The rhetorician chooses a style, or a mode of appeal, which will be powerful and appropriate in a given situation.

Q: What are rhetoric's "modes of appeal"?

A: *Logos*, or the appeal to reason, aims to instruct. The rational appeal often employs signs of intellectual authority— statistics, hard edges, scientific drawings, quotations— to promote a product, an idea, or a way of behaving.

B: *Pathos*, or the appeal to emotions, aims to move. It provokes non-rational, yet more or less predictable, responses from its audience. The "emotions" are at once deeply personal, and shared with a community.

C: *Ethos*, or the ethical appeal, aims to delight or win over. "Ethos" refers to the finer emotions of sensibility, taste, and philosophical belief, whereas "pathos" names violent feelings like love, hate, and revenge. The ethical appeal focuses on the decorum and aesthetic qualities of a design, often addressing the traditional values and moral tendencies of an audience.

D: *Some of the above*. Most persuasive discourse combines some or all of these appeals, usually stressing one over the other. Each mode encompasses many visual and verbal styles of argument.

Rational appeal

Medieval and Renaissance preachers used hand gestures to make their orations more legible. The same gestures often recur in paintings; they cue the meaning of a scene. This sign, "to inform," is often used in annunciations, where the angel Gabriel tells the Virgin Mary that she will bear a son.

Emotional appeal

The clenched fist inspired fear and passion. As defined in a 15th century preacher's manual: "whan thou spekyst of any cruell mater...bende thy fyst and shake thyne arme."

Ethical appeal

The extended open hand, palm raised towards a vertical position and fingers fanning slightly downwards, was a sign of welcome which is commonly found in Renaissance paintings. It is an elegant precursor of the modern "hello." (Baxandall)

expression

content

expression

content

expression

content

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X
Y	Z		
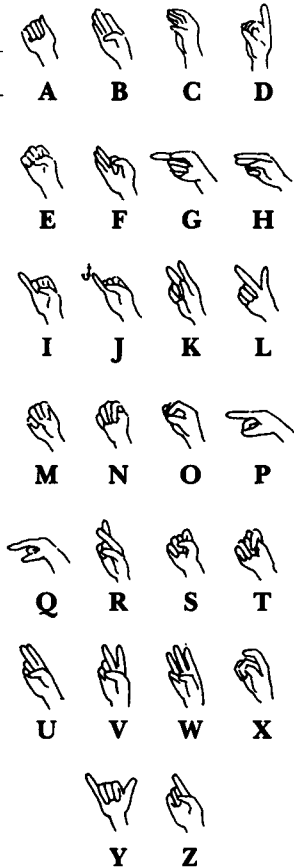
Q: Rhetoric sounds like a very underhanded art. Why not speak simply and directly, presenting the straight, unadorned facts?

A: The common prejudice against rhetoric stems from a tendency to associate it strictly with style. Since the birth of Western philosophy, some thinkers have defamed rhetoric as the mere "garb of thought," a decorative coating for hard facts. Yet others have maintained that rhetoric is the vital and pragmatic condition of human experience. There is no "thought" unclothed by rhetoric. Thought takes form through signs, which are our only access to interior consciousness. All communication aims to direct the response of a particular audience in particular circumstances: even the most precise, scientific language has a rhetorical element. Any effort at representing an "idea" affects our understanding of it: vocabulary, style, viewpoint, the selection and arrangement of details, the choice of examples, illustrations, and parallels.

Twentieth century theories of language, notably semiotics, have integrated rhetoric into the center of communication, rather than relegating it to an ornamental exterior.

Q: What is semiotics?

A: *Semiotics* is a vocabulary for describing modes of communication; it has been used to describe cuisine, fashion, architecture, and visual imagery as systems which are similar to language. As a general theory of signs, semiotics is a kind of interface between visual and verbal discourse.

One of its central principles holds that a sign is not an autonomous, self-contained entity— it is not a physical object— but only exists in relation to other signs. The material part of the sign is called the *form of expression*; its meaning is called the *form of content*. The expression is able to signify its content only because it belongs to a larger system. The material expression, taken out of its context, is only a mute, uncommunicating thing.

None of the images at the left means "hand." Hands are the *expressions*, but not the *contents*, of these signs.

Q: Name a list of features you would need to include in a sign that means "hand."

A: There are no absolutely necessary, unexpendable, universal, transhistorical features that must be included in every sign that means "hand."

8

¹hand \'hand\ *n, often attrib* [ME, fr. OE; akin to OHG *hant* hand] (bef. 12c) **1 a** (1) : the terminal part of the vertebrate forelimb when modified (as in humans) as a grasping organ   (2) : the forelimb segment (as the terminal section of a bird's wing) of a vertebrate higher than the fishes that corresponds to the hand irrespective of its form or functional specialization **b** : a part serving the function of or resembling a hand: as (1) : the hind foot of an ape   (2) : the chela of a crustacean **c** : something resembling a hand: as (1) : an indicator or pointer on a dial   (2) : a stylized figure of a hand with forefinger extended to point a direction or call attention to something   (3) : a cluster of bananas developed from a single flower group   (4) : a branched rootstock of ginger   (5) : a bunch of large leaves (as of tobacco) tied together usu. with another leaf **2 a** : personal possession — usu. used in pl. ⟨the documents fell into the ∼s of the enemy⟩ **b** : CONTROL, SUPERVISION — usu. used in pl. ⟨management of the estate is in the ∼s of the executor⟩ **3 a** : SIDE, DIRECTION ⟨men fighting on either ∼⟩ **b** : one of two sides or aspects of an issue or argument ⟨on the one ∼ we can appeal for peace, and on the other, declare war⟩ **4** : a pledge esp. of betrothal or bestowal in marriage **5 a** : style of penmanship : HANDWRITING **b** : SIGNATURE **6 a** : SKILL, ABILITY ⟨tried her ∼ at sailing⟩ **b** : an instrumental part ⟨had a ∼ in the crime⟩ **7** : a unit of measure equal to 4 inches used esp. for the height of horses **8 a** : assistance or aid esp. involving physical effort ⟨lend a ∼⟩ **b** : PARTICIPATION, INTEREST **c** : a round of applause **9 a** (1) : a player in a card game or board game   (2) : the cards or pieces held by a player **b** : a single round in a game **c** : the force or solidity of one's position (as in negotiations) **10 a** : one who performs or executes a particular work ⟨two portraits by the same ∼⟩ **b** (1) : one employed at manual labor or general tasks ⟨a ranch ∼⟩   (2) : WORKER, EMPLOYEE ⟨employed over a hundred ∼s⟩ **c** : a member of a ship's crew ⟨all ∼s on deck⟩ **d** : one skilled in a particular action or pursuit **e** : a specialist in a usu. designated activity or region ⟨an old China ∼⟩ **11 a** : HANDIWORK **b** : style of execution : WORKMANSHIP ⟨the ∼ of a master⟩ **c** : the feel of or tactile reaction to something (as silk or leather) — **at the hands of** *or* **at the hand of** : near in time or place : within reach — **by hand** **1** : with the hands or a hand-worked implement (as a tool or pen) rather than with a machine **2** : from one individual directly to another ⟨deliver the documents *by hand*⟩ — **in hand**   **1** : in one's possession or control **2** : in preparation — **on all hands** *or* **on every hand** : EVERYWHERE — **on hand** **1** : in present possession or readily available **2** : about to appear : PENDING **3** : in attendance : PRESENT — **out of hand**   **1** : without delay or deliberation; *also* : in a summary or peremptory manner **2** : done with : FINISHED **3** : out of control

hand
——————————————————————

| No Entry | Please Wait 5 Minutes | Hello |

(Intended Meaning)   *(Possible interpretations)*

Q: **But wouldn't a sign for "hand" absolutely need to have fingers, a palm and a wrist?**

A: The word "hand" has none of the features you just described, but it is the most commonly used sign for "hand" in the English-speaking world. The word "hand" is able to signify its object only because it belongs to a larger linguistic system. It has no physical resemblance to actual hands.

It is impossible to list a set of absolute rules for making a sign that means "hand," based merely on the characteristics of physical hands; the relationship between a sign and the object it represents can only be explained in terms of other signs.

Q: **All words are abstract. A universal sign, however, that could be understood by all people of all cultures, would have to be a picture, and it would need to have fingers, a palm, and a wrist.**

A: The "hands" of the man at the left have no fingers, palms, or wrists. They are only legible as hands because they are part of a larger figure, which we agree to be a human body although it has many unusual qualities. These hands are only recognizable because of the larger figure which includes them.

And that overall sign is not universal, either, but is socially determined. Its rational style makes it look "universal," but we are able to read it correctly only because of our cultural training. Similarly, the hand signs below could be easily interpreted in several ways. A sign only exists as function, not as predetermined form.

When the verbal sign "hand" is deployed in a rhetorical *figure of speech*, it can take on secondary meanings, standing for other objects entirely.

Q: **What is a figure of speech?**

A: It is a departure from the ordinary use of language. *Tropes* are figures which alter the customary reference of signs, and *schemes* alter their normal arrangement. The following discussion focuses on tropes, because they more commonly occur in pictures.

The tropes described by Aristotle were primarily "dead metaphors," what we call cliches. Because classical culture had not thoroughly assimilated writing, it valued repetition as a form of social memory. Modern Western taste usually disdains cliches: the invention of printing opened a vast language warehouse with a constant supply of fresh stock.
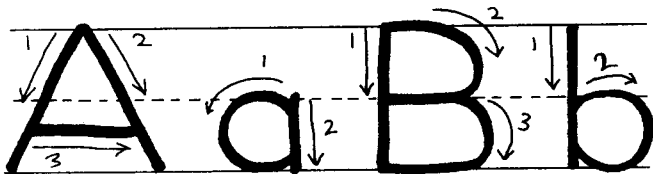
Metonymy

This drawing refers to the hand by describing its path, rather representing it pictorially.
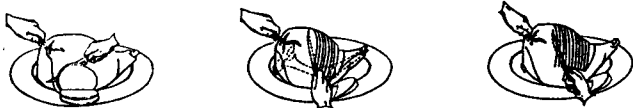
Synechdoche

A disembodied pair of hands represents an entire person. Unlike the diagram above, this image describes time cinematically, with separate images.

1   2   3   4   5

Amplification
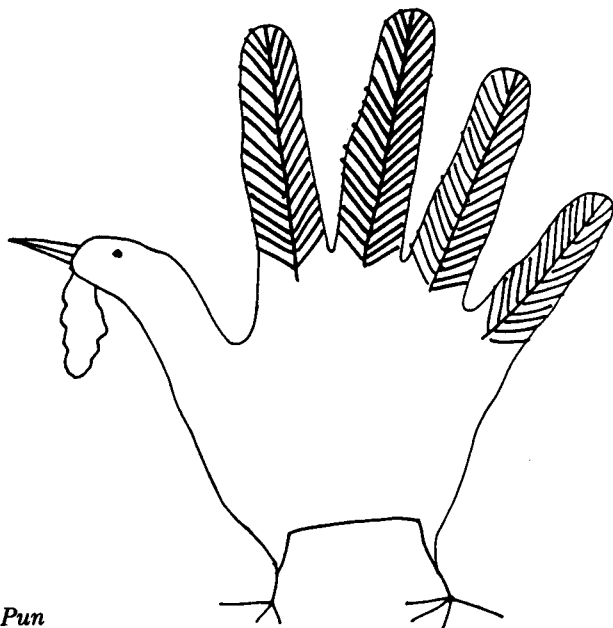
Pun

Q: Name some rhetorical figures.

A: *Antithesis* juxtaposes two unlike ideas, as in the proverbs "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" or "Don't bite the hand that feeds you."

B: *Irony* uses a sign to mean its opposite, as in a left-handed compliment.

C: *Metaphor* compares two unlike terms, elucidating one by what is familiar in the other, as in the expression "My hands are tied," which compares bureaucratic helplessness to physical bondage.

D: *Personification* is a metaphor which attributes human qualities to inanimate objects or institutions, as in the "hands of a clock" or the "hands of the law."

E: *Metonymy* represents one term with another which is related to it by temporal, spatial, or causal proximity, rather than by resemblance, as in the expression "a hand of cards" or a "ring finger."

F: *Syncechdoche* substitutes a part for a whole, as in the phrase "helpful hand"; or a whole for a part, as in "hand in marriage," a phrase referring to the ring finger.

G: *Periphrasis*, or circumlocution, uses well-known attributes or euphemisms to talk *around* a subject rather than naming it directly, as when the phrase "it's in God's hands" substitutes for "there's nothing we can do."

H: *Pun* plays on two words or images that are similar in sound or shape, but different in meaning, as in the title "Rhetorical Handbook."

I: *Amplification* expands a topic by listing its particulars, for example to enumerate the parts of an argument, using the ten fingers to keep visual score.

J: *Hyperbole* is an incredible exagerration or under-exagerration, as in "a handful of students."

K: *Some of the above.* Many figurative phrases or images combine several different patterns at once.

Q: How can figurative speech be used?

A: Rhetorical figures can serve any of the three modes of appeal: they can move, delight, or instruct. "Information" is commonly understood as a purified state of communication, stripped of figurative associations. But even information can be presented in figurative terms. In addition to producing wit, beauty, or emotional response, rhetorical figures can have an instructional, explanatory purpose, or they can be the basis of a mystical or scientific theory. Rhetoric infiltrates the language of everyday life, helping us to explain and create the world.
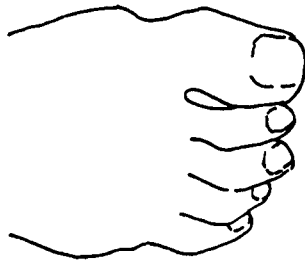
This little piggy went to market
This little piggy stayed home
This little piggy had roast beef
This little piggy had none
And this little piggy cried wee wee wee wee all the way home

Metaphor, periphrasis
Toes are compared to a family of piglets raised for slaughter: only the largest has market value. Like many "nursery rhymes," this verse has a violent content, referred to indirectly.

bronchial tube
back of head
ears
shoulder
solar plexus
liver
gall bladder
adrenal glands
kidneys
transverse colon
ascending colon
hip joint
thigh
knee
sciatic nerve
appendix
coccyx
bladder
small intestines
vertebrae
pancreas
thyroid
stomach
throat
neck
pituitary
sinuses
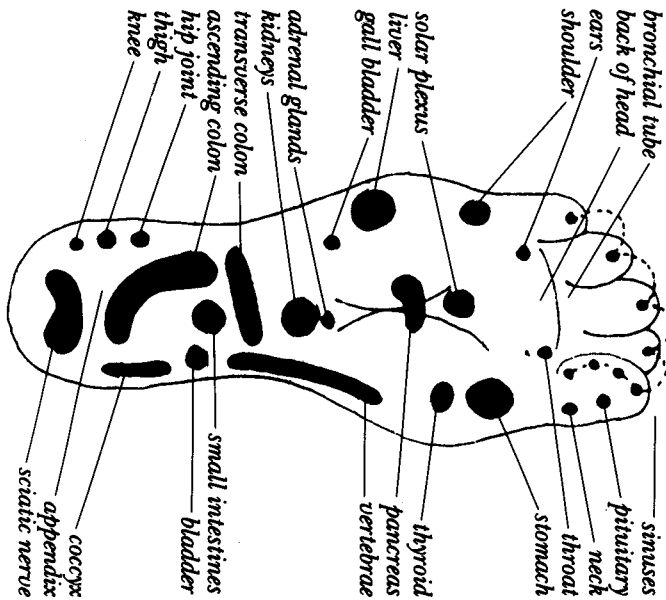
Metonymy
The medical art of chiropractic (from the Greek cheir, meaning hand) includes a theory which reads the foot as a microcosm of the entire body. The sole stands in a causal relation to other body parts: tensions elsewhere in the system are recorded in the feet.
Medicine often involves the interpretation of signs: the discipline of "medical semiotics" studies the relationship between symptoms and their causes.

R.1	R.2	R.3	R.4	R.5

L.5	L.4	L.3	L.2	L.1

Synechdoche
Dactyloscopy is the science of classifying fingerprints, used by organizations like the FBI to catalogue criminals and other civilians. The fingerprint, when documented as a mark of identity, represents an entire person with a fragmentary trace. A fingerprint that has not been made an object of investigation is called a smudge.

11

Rhetoric and Semiotics:
A Selected Bibliography for Graphic Designers

Adolph, R. *The Rise of Modern Prose Style*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968. Historical quotes and comments on the plainness-ornateness debate in literary history.

Baldwin, C. S. *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic*. New York: MacMillan, 1924. Outlines the rhetorical approaches of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintillian, and points out the difference between instrumental and form-oriented rhetoric.

Barthes, Roland. *Image/Music/Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977. Essay "The Rhetoric of the Image" discusses the primary, denotative meaning of an image, and its secondary connotations. Barthes's writing is dense, but not terribly technical.

——. *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977. Describes a variety of cultural products, including detergent and the Eiffel Tower, in linguistic terms.

Baxandall, Michael. *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition*.Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1971. About the influence of classical rhetoric on Renaissance art theory.

—. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972. Discussion of early Renaissance painting in terms of other modes of communication, including rhetoric, dancing, and applied geometry.

Blonsky, Marshall. *On Signs*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985. Anthology of essays which use semiotics as a tool for analysing popular culture. Contributers include Milton Glaser, Umberto Eco, and Thomas Sebeok.

Bonsiepe, Gui. "Visual/Verbal Rhetoric," in Ulm No. 14/15/16: 1965. Applies semiotic and rhetoric to graphic design.

Culler, Jonathan. *Ferdinand de Saussure*. Middlesex: Penguin, 1976. A clearly written introduction to the linguistic theory of Saussure, who founded the European traditions of "semiology" and structural linguistics in the late nineteenth century

Corbett, E. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. Second Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971. A guide to expository writing, with clear explanations of rhetorical terminology.

Curtius, E. R. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953. Discusses the influential role of rhetoric in the Middle Ages and beyond.

Dyer, Gillian. *Advertising as Communication*. London: Methuen, 1982. Examination of advertising which uses concepts from rhetoric and semiotics, with helpful suggestions for future work.

Eco, Umberto. *Travels in Hyperreality*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985. Essays ranging from pop culture to philosophy, from McLuhan to eposition design.

Espy, Willard R. *The Garden of Eloquence*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1980. A manual listing over one hundred rhetorical figures; includes portions of the first "Garden of Eloquence" published by Henry Peacham in the 16th century.

Fiske, John. *Introduction to Communication Studies*. London: Methuen, 1982. Covers the main concepts of semiotic theory.

Forty, Adrian. *Objects of Desire: Design and Society from Wedgwood to IBM*. New York: Pantheon, 1986. Case studies of designed objects and environments in social, economic, and cultural terms.

Harper, Nancy. *Human Communication Theory*. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden, 1979. A synthesis of thinking about human communication as the process of message making from 500 B.C. to 1900 A.D. A book about rhetoric, logic, and grammar.

Hawkes, Terrence. *Structuralism and Semiotics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977. Clearly written introduction to the influential theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Roland Barthes.

Innis, R. E., ed. *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985. Major essays by Peirce, Morris, Jacobson, Sebeok, Langer, Eco, etc.

Jamieson, G. H. *Communication and Persuasion*. London: Crown Helm, 1985. Explores persuasion from a variety of viewpionts, from media manipulation to the place of learning and resistance to persuasion.

Kince, Eli. *Visual Puns in Design: The Pun Used as a Communications Tool*. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1982. Illustrated with many examples.

Lanham, Richard A. *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms: A Guide for Students of English Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968. A reference guide to rhetorical terms from antiquity to the twentieth century.

Lee, R. W. *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting*. New York: Norton, 1967. A classic art history text which discusses the relation between painting and poetry in Renaissance and Baroque art theory.

Morgan, John and Peter Welton. *See What I Mean*. London: Edward Arnold, 1986. An excellent introductory text about the way visual messages are produced and interpreted.

Morris, Charles. *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938. Morris represents the American tradition of "semiotic," based on the writings of Charles S. Peirce; many graphic designers have related their work to this tradition.

Ockerse, Thomas, and Hans van Dijk. "Semiotics and Graphic Design Education," in *Visible Language*, Vol. XIII, No. 4: 1979. Application of the semiotic theory of Charles S. Peirce and Charles Morris to design teaching.

Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Methuen, 1982. Non-technical account of the impact of writing and printing on styles of human thought. Includes discussion of the rhetorical tradition.

—. *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958. A detailed, scholarly account of the impact of Ramus, a sixteenth century pedagogue of immense influence and dubious intellectual gifts. Ramus is largely responsible for the current prejudice against rhetoric.

Charles S. Peirce. *Collected Papers*, Volume II. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1941. Peirce founded the American tradition of "semiotic" in the late nineteenth century. Peirce, fascinated with the invention of new terms, is a difficult writer.

Ripa, Cesare. *Baroque and Roccoco Pictorial Imagery*. The 1758-60 Hertel Edition of Ripa's *Iconologia*. Ed. Edward A. Maser. New York: Dover, 1971. Ripa's *Iconologia* is a sixteenth century dictionary of allegorical images used by numerous painters and writers through the eighteenth century. This is a particular artist's rendition of Ripa's formulas, with translated text.

de Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Ed. Charles Bally, Albert Secheyaye, and Albert Reidlinger. Trans. Wade Baskin. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959. Saussure's lectures, delivered at the end of the 19th century in Switzerland, founded the European traditions of "semiology" and structural linguistics.

Sless, David. *In Search of Semiotics*. London: Crown Helm, 1986. A concise, challenging introduction to the field without the usual jargon.

Thompson, P. and P. Davenport. *The Dictionary of Visual Language*. London: Bergstrom and Boyle Books, 1980. Over 1700 examples illustrate the iconography and rhetoric of contemporary graphic design; some references to rhetorical figures.

Vinken, P. J. "The Modern Advertisement as an Emblem," in *Gazette*, 5, No. 2: 1959. Compares the ad to the three-part structure of the traditional emblem: image, motto/title, and narrative text.

Warner, Marina. *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*. New York: Atheneum, 1985. Charts the socially meaning female representations, from antiquity to Margaret Thatcher.

Williamson, Judith. *Decoding Advertising*. London: Marion Boyars, 1978. Analyses underlying social and sexual messages of advertisements.

Publications by Hanno Ehses

Appropriateness of Design: Studying Visual Communication Design at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Halifax, Nova Scotia. Originally published in *Frankfurt Idea*, 1981.

Design and Rhetoric: An Analysis of Theater Posters. Halifax: Design Papers 4, NSCAD, 1986.

"Design and Semiotics: Some Aspects Concerning the Design Process." *Icographic* 12, 1978.

"Representing Macbeth: A Case Study in Visual Rhetoric." *Design Issues*, Spring 1984.

"Rhetoric and Design." *Icographic* Vol.2, No.4, 1984.

"A Semiotic Approach to Communication Design." *The Canadian Journal of Research in Semiotics* Vol.IV, No.3, 1977.

Semiotic Foundation of Typography. Halifax: Design Papers 1, NSCAD, 1976.
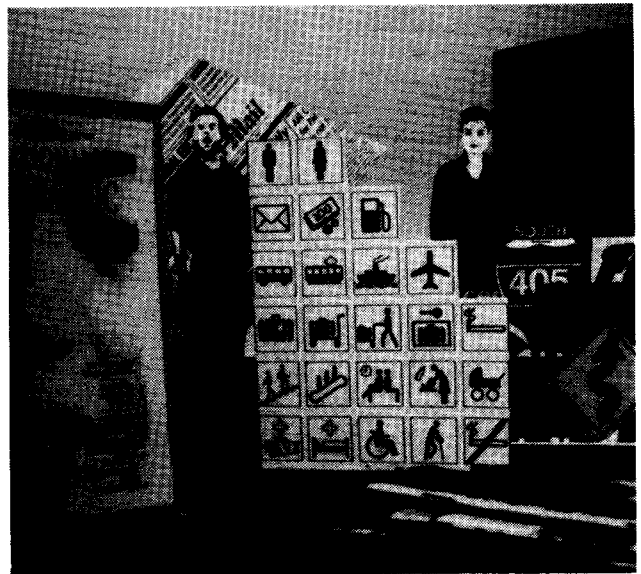
Model for a graphic design exhibition. The design of the exhibit was inspired by the rhetorical figure "hyperbole," which dramatizes the effect of the products.

Applying Rhetoric to Graphic Design

In the following pages, Ellen Lupton and Hanno Ehses relate various rhetorical principles to images from contemporary and historical design and to student projects.

1. The three modes of appeal in classical rhetoric

The rhetorical "modes of appeal" describe the way a speaker's argument engages its audience: the speaker might accuse, flatter, offend, impress, anger, or amuse. A designer's "mode of appeal" is expressed through the choice of words, images, format, style, color, type, and materials.

Modes of appeal	Their stylistic connotations
Ethos (Ethical appeal) Aims to delight	morally appropriate, beautiful, ornate, tasteful, likeable
Pathos (Emotional appeal) Aims to move	passionate, vehement, discordant
Logos (Rational appeal) Aims to inform	factual, plain, logical

The ethical appeal addresses the moral and aesthetic values of an audience; it invokes trust and respect, asking one to identify with a product or idea. All design, unless it purposefully aims to offend, has an ethical dimension.

   The ethical appeal dominated early designs for radios, which used recognizable furniture types to integrate new technology into the traditional home.

The emotional appeal attempts to provoke a passionate response (sensual, political, spiritual).

   In the 1930s and 40s the emotional appeal made the machine a symbol for a glamorous future. Many radios from this period imitated shapes from a romanticized urban landscape.

The rational appeal addresses an audience's respect for controlled, logical thinking. Beyond its stated content, "information" can have stylistic cues: hard edges, diagrammatic lines, authoritative language, numerical data.

   The rational appeal suits the contemporary attitude towards technology which accepts the machine as a routine aspect of daily life. The many dials and displays of today's radios enhance their "technological" image.
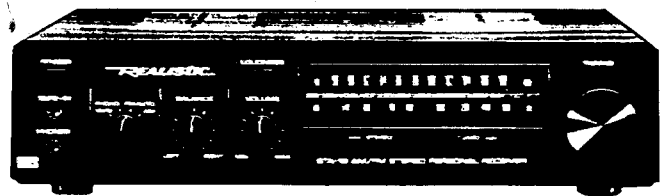
This stylistic analysis of radios is based on an essay by Adrian Forty in his book *Objects of Desire: Design and Society from Wedgwood to IBM* (NY: Pantheon, 1986).

2. Rhetorical operations

"Rhetorical operations" are a set of procedures that can be performed on a given structure. A speaker might begin with a familiar sentence pattern and alter the order of its elements for a special effect. Similarly a designer might take a familiar image and use it in a new way.

Standard (an established norm that is altered for a new meaning)	X Y Z
Adiecto (Addition)	X Y Z (+ K)
Detractio (Subtraction)	X Y (– Z)
Transmutio (Inversion)	X Z Y
Immutatio (Substitution)	X Y Z'

Standard
The original Hershey bar is a classic, recognizable norm.

Addition
Almonds produce a variation on the traditional theme.
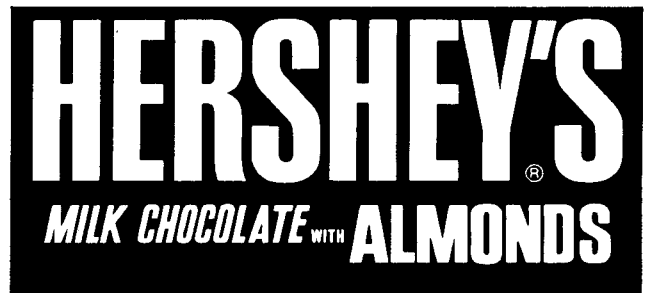
Subtraction
The Hershey "miniature" is a reduced, toy version of a larger object.

Substitution, inversion
Here the traditional Hershey's graphics are wrapped around an entirely new product (chocolate milk), an example of substitution. This package also shifts the normal orientation of the graphics, an example of inversion.
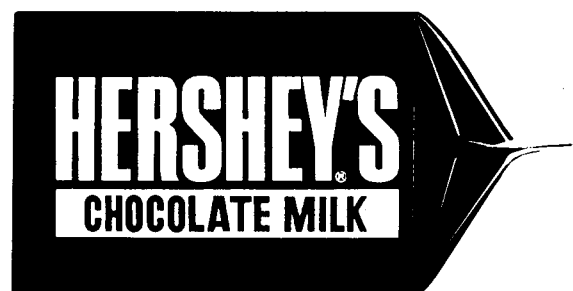
Tropes

Rhetorical figures fall into two groups: "schemes" and "tropes." Schemes alter the normal order of elements in an expression; tropes alter the normal reference of the elements. The historic ornamental fonts below each add a secondary reference to traditional letterforms.

Metaphor is an implied comparison between two unlike objects that have some structural similarity. This rustic alphabet (Paris 1843) appears to have emerged from Nature like trees in a forest.

Personification is a kind of metaphor which assigns human characteristics to inanimate objects (human alphabet, Frankfurt 1596). Type terminology contains many personifications: face, character, body, arm, leg, the ear of the *g*, and the eye of the *e*.

Synechdoche uses a part of an object to represent the whole, as in outline characters, which look like "empty" letters.
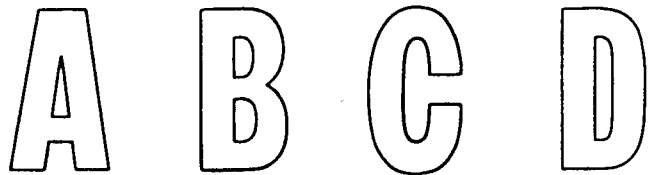
In this example of **synechdoche** a recognizable characteristic of Chinese writing, the ink brush stroke, has been attached to Roman characters. "Chineseness" is thus represented by a commonly known attribute.

Metonymy represents one term with another which is close to it in time, space, or causation. The letters in this font are "invisible," defined only by the shadows around them (Ombra, 1933).

Antithesis contrasts two opposing objects or ideas, as in this art deco alphabet, which layers a slim italic over a heavy roman.
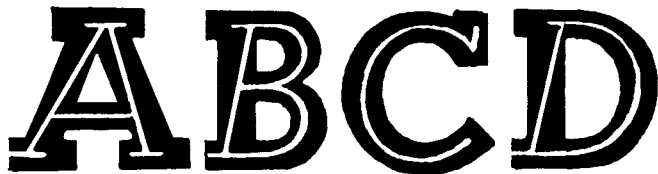
The elements in this **antithesis** have radically different connotations as well as opposing formal characteristics, producing an ambiguous, ironic message (Helvetica Antique, J. Abbott Miller, 1985).

Amplification discusses in detail the parts of an object or argument, as in this calligraphic alphabet, which expands on and repeats the elements of each letter.

16

*These wordmark images are from a class project given by
Hanno Ehses. Students altered a basic pattern according to
rhetorical schemes.*

Ellipses deliberately omits elements from a statement.
"Letters used in words are letters not wasted" instead of
"Letters that are used in words are letters that are not wasted."

Alliteration repeats the initial parts of elements
in a sequence.
"The loose use of language is lamentable."

17

Polyptoton involves the repetition of elements from
the same root.
"A word can become useless by overuse."

ADVANCE

ADVANCE

ADVANCE

AdvanCe

Climax and **anti-climax** arrange elements in
order of intensity.
*"Letters are the particles of language, which is the vehicle of
knowledge, which is the opiate of the masses."*

ADVANCE

advance

ADVANCE

Parallelism involves a similarity of structure in a series of related elements.
"She tried to find words that are clear, precise, and appropriate."

ADVANCE

Advance

ADVANCE

Chiasmus symmetrically arranges elements so that one side reverses the order of the other.
"Waste words before words waste you."

ADVANCE

ADVANCE

ADVANCE

Anaphora involves the repetition of an element or series of elements at the beginning of a sequence.
"Words, yes words, do ignite the imagination."

ADVANCE

Advance

Anastrophe inverts normal grammatical order.
"One letter does not a word make."

∀DV∀NƆE

ad-ᵥAnce

Apposition is a qualifying term inserted into a
larger statement.
*"Letters, the particles of language, can be quite entertaining
when they are combined into words."*

AD→VANCE

ADVANⅭ→E

Parenthesis inserts an element which is independent
of the grammar of the whole statement.
*"The 'Scarlet Letter' (in Hawthorne's novel) was embroidered
in a typeface which has never been identified."*

ADVA̸NCE

AD̸ANCE

ADV A NCE

Pun

ADV~~~~E

+VANCE

Amplification

ADVANCE

Metaphor

ADVANCE

Irony

ADVANCE

Advance

ADVANCE

Oxymoron

ADVANCE

Antithesis

ADVANCE

Metonymy

advan E

AD,VAN.CE

Hyperbole

ADVANCE

ADVA E

21

The following four pages give an overview as to how rhetorical operations can be used to alter the meaning of a given body of information.

Schedule for Anna Leonowens Gallery

Point of departure was a written schedule.

Addition:
Torn paper edge devices, rules, tilted photo with drop shadow, and triangular shapes are introduced.

Subtraction:
Rules, triangles, photo, and one torn paper edge device were omitted; reference to affiliation with College has been removed, as this can be inferred from other information present.

Inversion:
Exhibit information has been rearranged from monthly dates to gallery space; remaining copy is reversed out.

Substitution:
Concept of autonomous gallery is substituted for gallery as an integral part of the College. The facades are shown in a lighter tone, while the gallery is left solid to aid in location.

Poster Series "Student Exchange"

Point of departure was the currently used announcement with typewriter copy and large headline in Helvetica.

Addition:
Graphic tools are introduced, participating institutions are grouped into Europe, Canada, and USA.

Subtraction:
Pen, pencil, grouping of institutions, and city names are omitted; brush and headline are enlarged.

Inversion:
Participating schools are emphasized; tools and information have been rearranged.

Substitution:
Concept of graphic tools is substituted for metaphorical bird image.
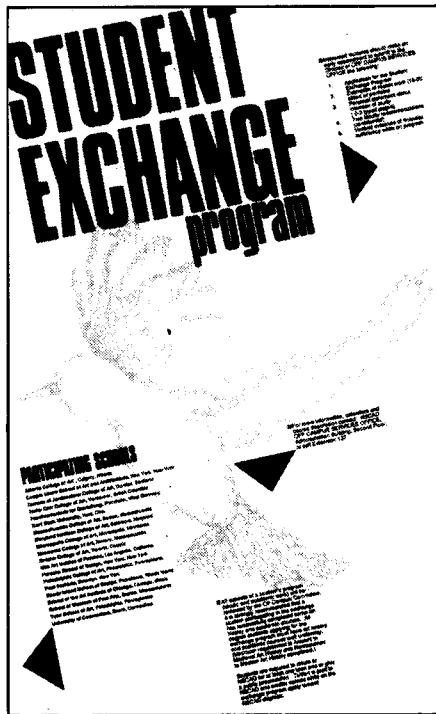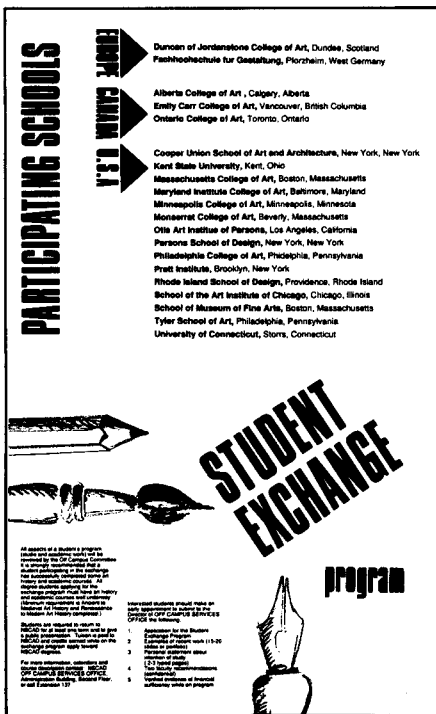
Addition:
NSCAD (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design), squares, and compass are added, expressing different orientational and study options.

Subtraction:
Squares and positioning angles are omitted: headline and compass are both strengthened.

Inversion:
Entire layout is shifted to 45 degree angle.

Substitution:
More figurative visual interpretation of original concept.

Student ■ Exchange Program

Student Exchange

Student Exchange ■ Program

Student Exchange 𝕏 Program

Addition:
Rudimentary graphic elements, separation of institution from its city location, slanted orient-ation, and calligraphy are introduced.

Subtraction:
City locations are omitted, institutional names are strengthened.

Inversion:
Entire layout is inverted.

Substitution:
A suitcase, indicating travel, is substituted for city locations of partici-pating institutions.

Rhetorical Appeals

Using the same information given in the previous project, the three "modes of appeal" are employed, addressing different attitudes and imaginative experiences.

Set A: *(left to right)*

Rational appeal:
Facts are presented in a straightforward, logical manner.

Ethical appeal:
Acclaimed painting and a formal layout are used to establish respect and induce interest in the program.

Emotional appeal:
Dynamic image is used to invoke and to reinforce excitement and desire to go on exchange.

Set B:

Within one basic layout the background images, the headlines "Student Exchange" progressing from medium to light to extra light, and the actual words in different arrangements balance the flavour of each "mode of appeal."

The design of these logotypes was aided by the use of rhetorical "tropes." Top to bottom: left — oxymoron, amplification, amplification, metonymy; right — metaphor, metonymy, metaphor, hyperbole.

The Book Room

The Book Room

ROOM

THE BOOK ROOM

THE BOOK ROOM

The Book Room

The Book Room
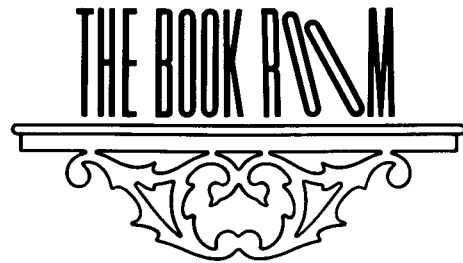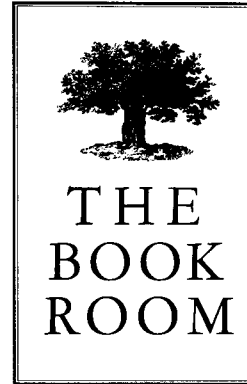
BOOK ROOM

THE BOOK ROOM
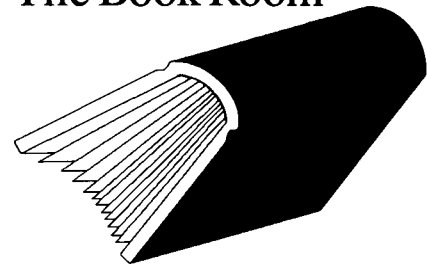
Mural Designs

Four collage images developed for a building housed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Conceptualization and visualization of these images was aided by the use of rhetorical "tropes."
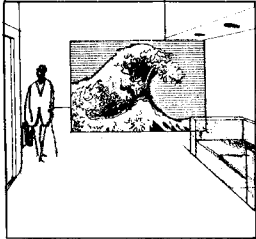
Hyperbole:
A single huge wave indicates the over-powering nature of the sea. (Modification of Tsunamis by Hokusai.)

Synechdoche:
Beach rocks represent the ocean environment.
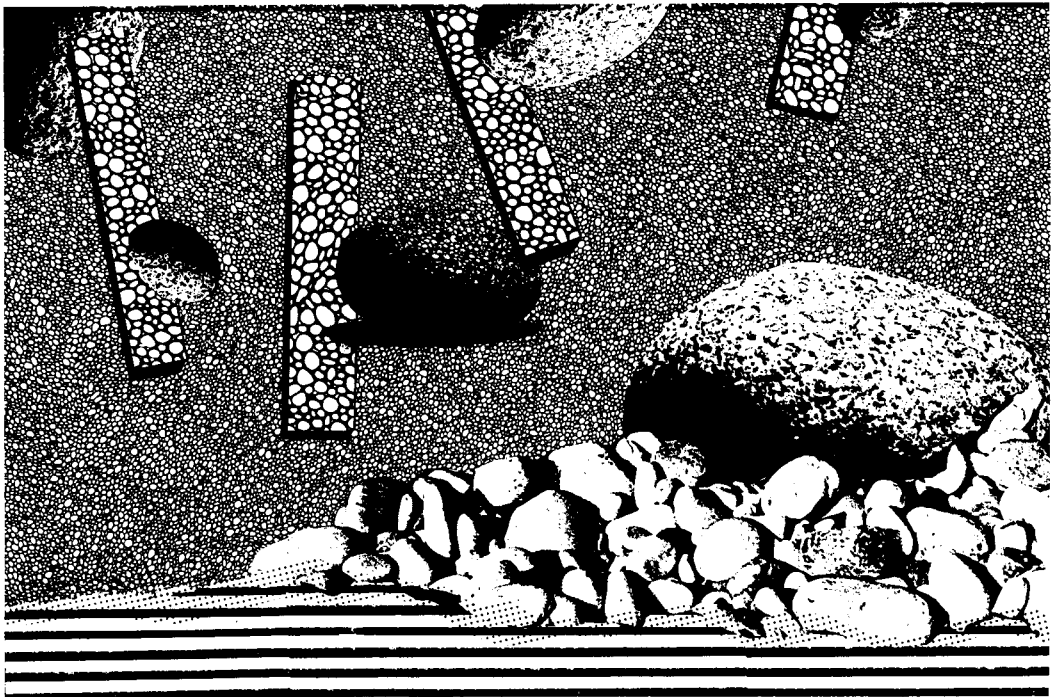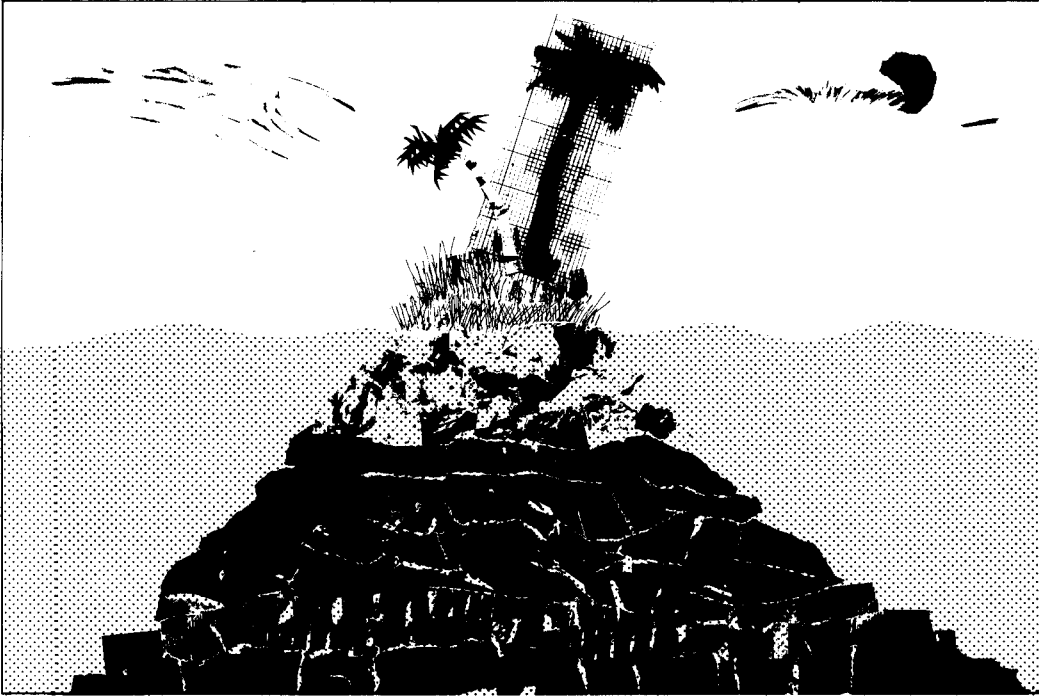
Antithesis:
An island of low elevation is also a volcanic mountaintop.

Amplification:
The variety of the inhabitants of the underwater world are shown through a school of fish species.

Oxfam ads

This study uses "tropes" in three different ways: in the first set tropes are copy and image based; in the second set tropes are mainly copy; and in the third set they are image based.

Irony:
The land provides nothing for the family.

Litotes: (understatement)
The largest problem of the world is played down.

Paradox:
A "Catch-22" situation.

Pun:
Play upon the words "weak" and "week."

Hunger kills 13-18 million people a year, 35,000 people a day, 24 people per minute.

Save an endangered species.

Tough luck.

Food for thought

Food for thought

Amplification:
A detailed listing of particulars.

Metaphor:
"Save starving people" is implied.

Periphrases:
A well-known saying.

Antithesis:
Two nursing mothers, one with a starving child and the other with a healthy child.

Metonymy:
An actual relationship between starving woman and the dry soil she is throwing in the air.

Visual Studies

This visual study developed out of a series of photographs taken by a student at Greenham Common Woman's Peace Camp (England), between April and August, 1986. Greenham is a military base which houses cruise missiles, and for five years women have been resisting the the weapons and obstructing the movements of military personnel. The design follows the pattern set forth in "emblem books," and was also inspired by Berthold Brecht's "Kriegsfibel." The combination of headline, photograph, and explanatory text serve the double function of representation and interpretation and helped the student to convey her personal convictions.

KEEPING THE PEACE

"According to social values, women need a man to protect us from other men; and we need an army to protect us from invading armies . . . Indeed, who will protect us from our protectors?"

The Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group, UK

DRESS REHEARSAL

"A nuclear war could alleviate some of the factors leading to today's ecological disturbances that are due to current high-population concentration and heavy industrial production."

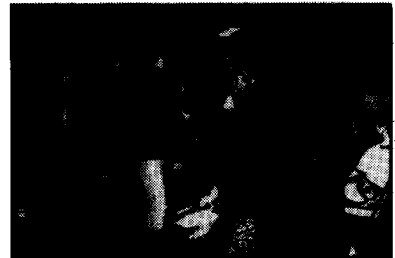Official of the U.S. Office of Civil Defence

AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

"Violence against the state is instantly portrayed as both unacceptable and illigitimate, and those people who struggle against violent injustice, as in Poland, South Africa, or Northern Ireland, are labelled 'terrorists."

Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group

CAN'T KILL THE SPIRIT

"Women are the real left. We are rising with a fury older than any force in history. This time we will be free or no one will survive."
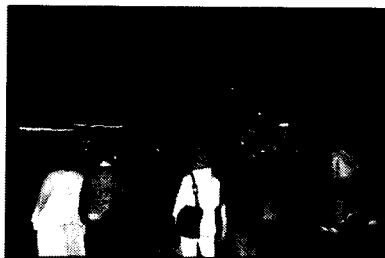
Monica Sjöö

LONG TO REIGN OVER US GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

R.A.F. Greenham Common is one of 160 U.S. military bases in Britain, an island only two-thirds the size of Newfoundland.

IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS

American cruise missile convoys consist
of 4 launchers (each of which can fire 4
missiles), 2 control vehicles and up to 16
support vehicles. Each cruise missile can
have the explosive power of 16
Hiroshima bombs. The total yield of the
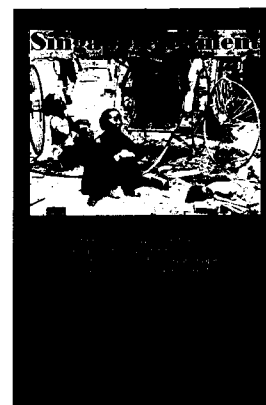convoy is therefore equivalent to
256 Hiroshimas.
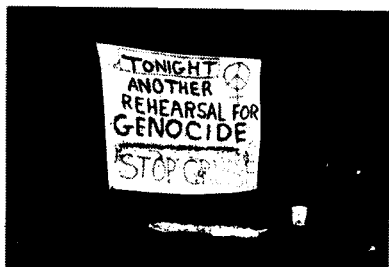
Cruisewatch, 1985

CIVIL SERVANT

"The police are policing and protecting
illegal activities. Nuclear weapons are
illegal by the Nuremburg principles,
and after the second world war they
banned all these weapons of
Mass Genocide. They don't see that.
They don't think about it."

Alison, Greeham Common

*Page from Brecht's
"Kriegsfibel"*

USAF GREENHAM COMMON

There once were two cats from Kilkenny
Each though there was one cat too many
So the fought and they fought
and they scratched and they bit
Til excepting their nails
and the tips of their tails
instead of two cats, there weren't any.

Mother Goose

QUIET, WEAK, SUBMISSIVE

They've taken this land and put a fence
around it, put cruise missiles on it and
these signs saying "MOD Property",
"No Unauthorized Admission". And they
expect you to be controlled by this fence
and this horrible wire, like the
boundaries of their fences making the
boundaries of our lives.

Indra, Yellow Gate

QUESTION AUTHORITY

"If peace is subversive,
in God's name, what is war?"

Margaret Laurence

"The form of a message can
 affect its interpretation.
 There is an infiltration of
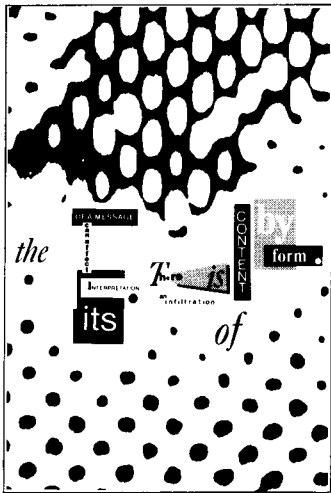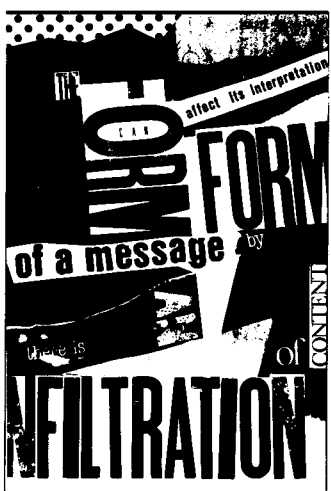 content by form."

Semantic Studies

*This semantic study was
devised to interpret the
statement and to improve
form-giving and technical
skills.*

Using the statement
quoted, students designed
a series of four pieces.
The variations were
generated through
changing problem
parameters. For the
examples shown the
parameters were as
follows:

a). Type and rudimentary
graphic elements

b). Type dominant, image
secondary (introduction of
original image)

c.) Image dominant, type
secondary
(contextualization of
image)

d). Type and image
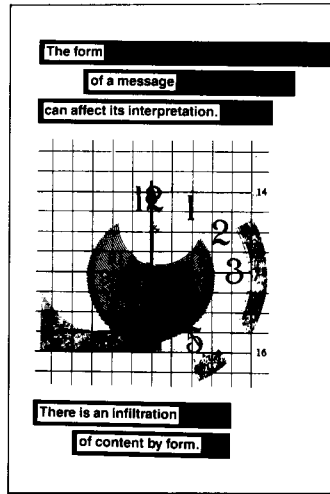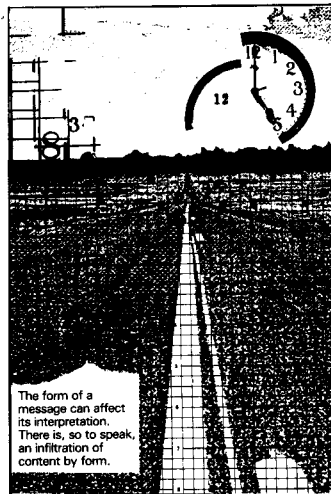balanced (graphic
modification of image)
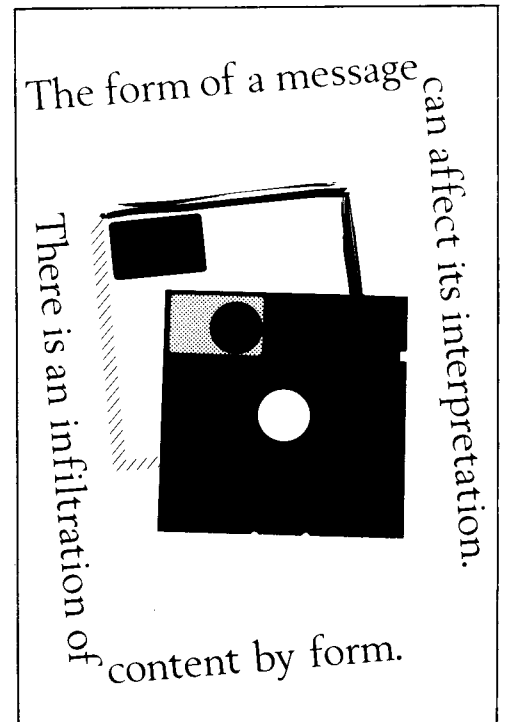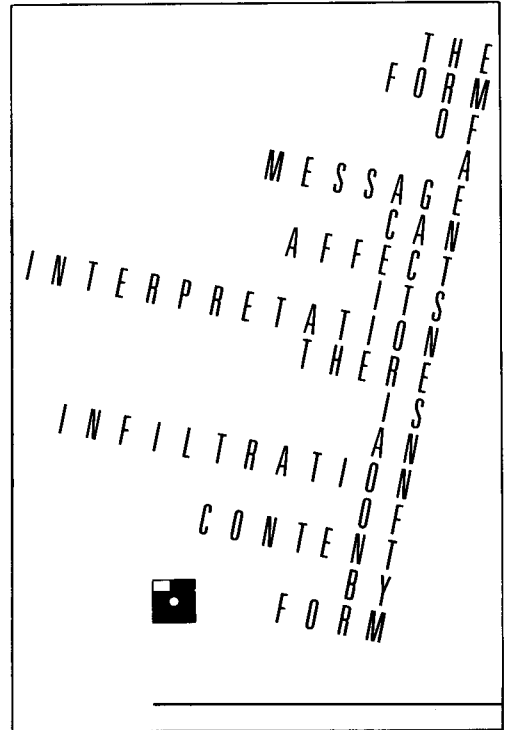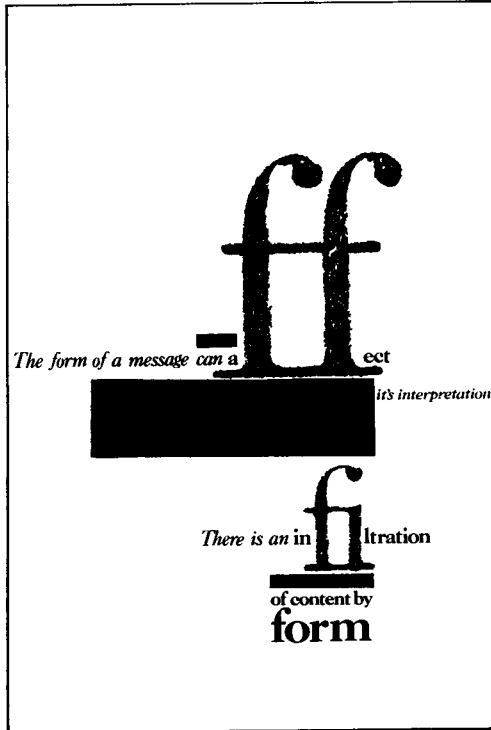
The form of a message can affect its interpretation. There is an infiltration of content by form.

THE FORM OF A MESSAGE CAN AFFECT ITS INTERPRETATION THERE IS AN INFILTRATION OF CONTENT BY FORM

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here is an infiltration of content by form

The form of a message can affect its interpretation. There is an infiltration of content by form.

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The form of
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the form of a message can affect its interpretation
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The form of a
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the form of a message can affect its interpretation
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*A series of poster designs
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Step One concentrated on
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additional rudimentary
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of the mechanical.

Step Three introduced
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colour and required a 3-D
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trope "amplification."
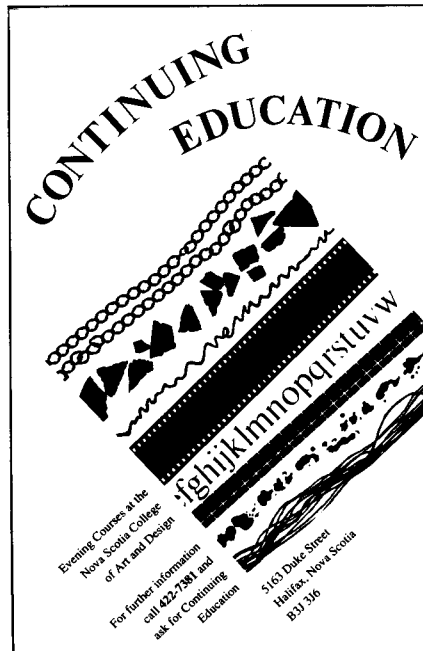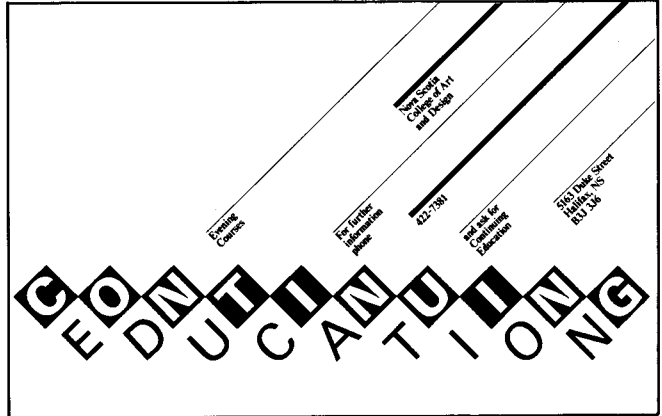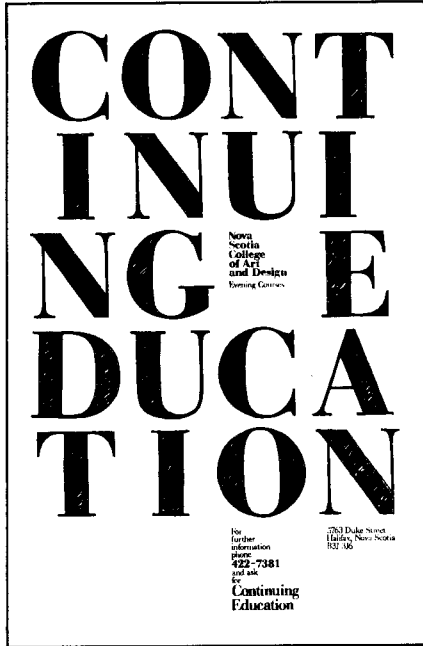
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3 EVENING
8 COURSES
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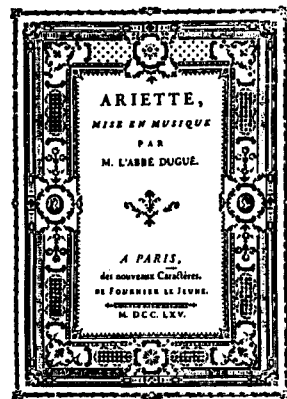
Bookcover
"See What I Mean"

Many rhetorical handbooks promoted conscious imitation in order to increase the students' syntactical resources, to discover available options, and to refine skills, with the ultimate goal of freeing the students from existing models. In this exercise Fournier Le Jeune, Herb Lubalin, and the Open University proposal by BRS Premsela Vonk Design served as points of departure.
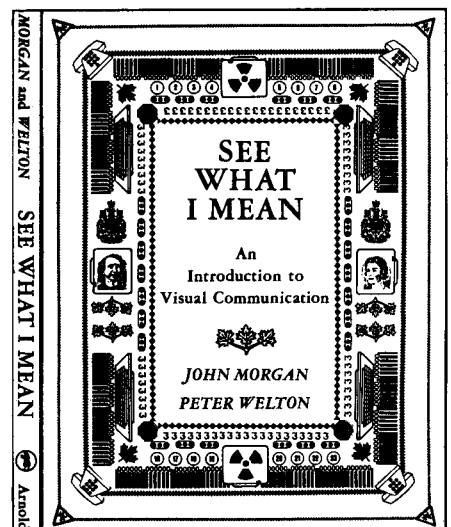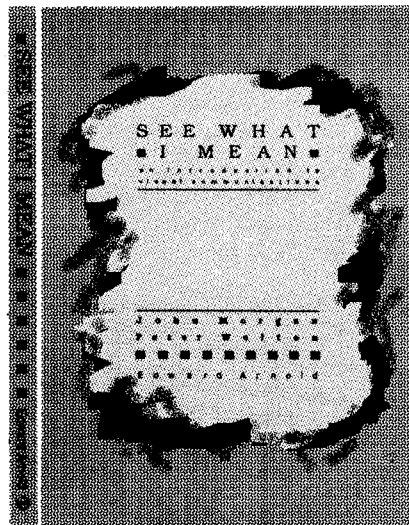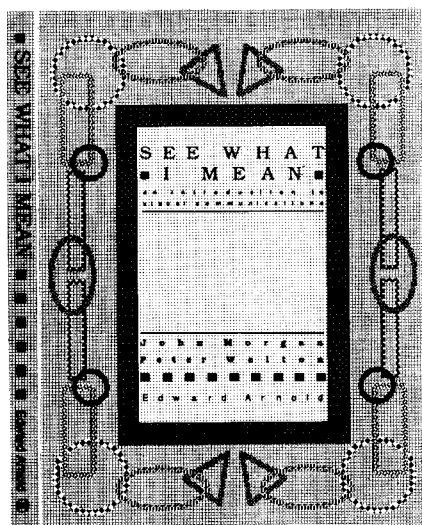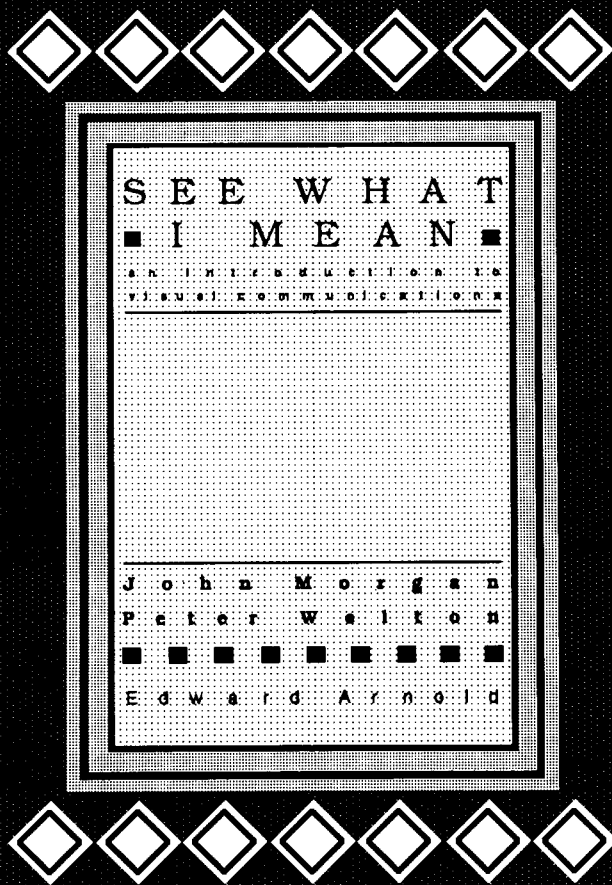
An Introduction to Visual Communication

See What I Mean

John Morgan and Peter Welton

Morgan and Welton — See What I Mean — Arnold
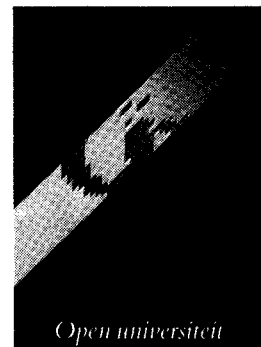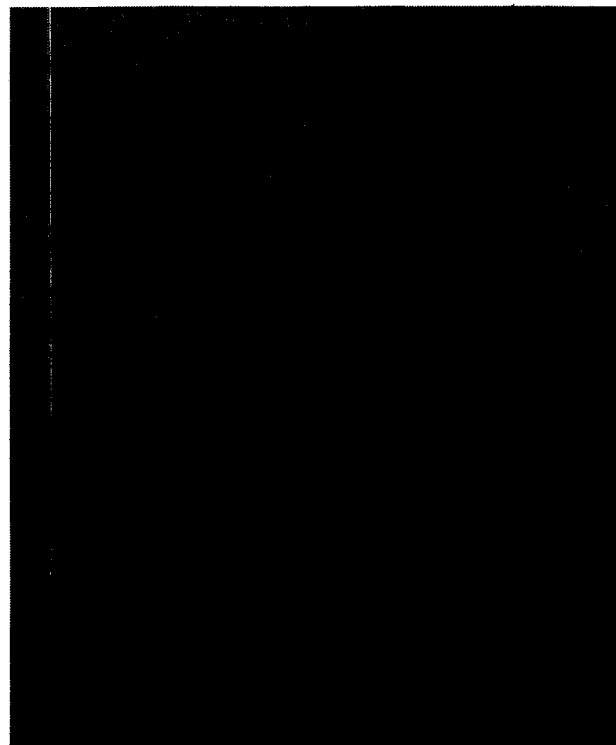
Open universiteit

SEE
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JOHN
MORGAN
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SEE WHAT I MEAN — MORGAN·WELTON — ARNOLD

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An Introduction to
Visual Communication

John Morgan
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Edward Arnold

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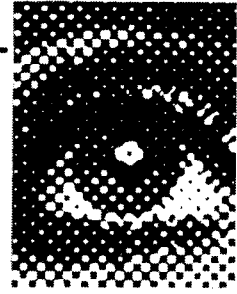
Uncle.
COME
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Style Studies
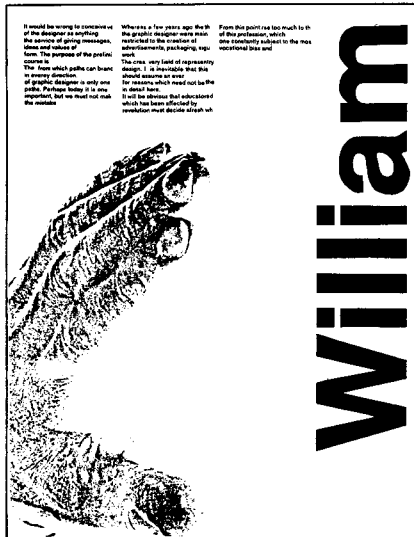
To exercise visual analyses and facilitate understanding of design styles, students in the design history course produce works to indicate a firm grasp of the essential features of various styles. Shown here are Neo-Constructivism, International Style, and Art Deco.