Typography I *fall* 2008

TypeProtoTypes | part ii

Introduction

In comparison to details of such other callings as, say, keeping rabbits, small particulars of the alphabet can easily become an obsession. Gunnlaugur se Briem

Our goal is to take the highly *bitmapped* beginnings of your type designs and transform them into alternately more complex and simple, but ostensibly more satisfying letterforms. We will accomplish this in two exercises. The first will be to translate them into the smooth curved (vector-based) language of Adobe Illustrator. The second will come at you next week

Process

You will not necessarily need to completely obliterate the gridded quality of your letterforms, but you must change them in some way. Your new forms *should retain some of the quality of the originals...* how much or little is one of your design challenges.

In the digital realm (as in working with physical media) there are often many ways to the same end. If you are familiar with Illustrator and want to take a different route to the same place, it is fine with me. *It's a good idea to use the "save as" option, and to copy and paste what you are working on so you don't lose stages in your design you may want to return to.*

Vector Drawing Tips

· Build and lock your initial forms on their own layer; draw on a new layer above.
· Click "Snap to Grid" on and off in order to constrain placement of points and handles.
· Click and drag to create points with handles. This is how you create curved paths.
· Work with opacity set to less than 100% so you can see the initial forms and grid.
· Close all paths by clicking on your initial point.
· Add and subtract points on your path or convert them using the pen tool's menu.
· Use the shift key to constrain handle movement vertically, horizontally, and on diagonals.
· Copy and paste letters or parts of letters and alter them rather than remaking them again.
· Make sure your forms don't have strokes (outlines), but are simply filled shapes.
· Zoom in to see a single letterform to make the most subtle alterations.
· Window > Pathfinder > Shape Modes > Subtract from shape area: for cutting counterforms.
· Turn off "Snap to Grid" to consider letterspacing optically.
· Use the arrow keys with selected points or letters to move elements incrementally.
· Print your letterforms early to *really see* what you have. The screen distorts and lies!

Form

Place all three vector-drawn typeface names on a single horizontal letter page and print it out for our critique Monday, 6 October.

Didot Chamfer Reaction

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