

Typography I

TYPE PROTOTYPES | 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 *pixelated* 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.
- Window > Pathfinder > Shape Modes > Add to shape area: for combining forms
- Turn off "Snap to Grid" to optically adjust your kerning.
- Use the arrow keys with selected points or forms to move elements incrementally.
- Print your letterforms early to *really see* what you have. The screen distorts and lies!

Typography I

TYPE PROTOTYPES | PART III

Introduction

Regular people can have conversations about this stuff [TYPOGRAPHY]—it's no longer this mysterious sacrament that only the high priests know how to manipulate. Michael Bierut

Since you have gone through the travail of birthing your typefaces, your joy should be made even more full by letting these little ones express themselves with all the distinct personality you have invested in them. This is the goal for this third part of your project.

Part III

You will design two advertisements, one for each of two of your three typeface designs. Choose the two you are most pleased with, or which seem to bring to mind the most visual possibility. The format is a vertical half page, and will conform to the specifications in *EYE* magazine. Set up an illustrator document that is 99 x 267mm, or use the one I've linked to in the class blog.

The elements you must include in these ads are:

- the vector drawn typeface name
- a unique vector graphic element you have designed (NO LIVE TRACE or AUTO TRACE!)
- at least three letterforms showing your pixelated beginnings
- some means of identifying yourself and how you, the designer, can be contacted

One design will be in grayscale, and the other in color (remember CMYK!). You might consider building your vector graphic from elements of your typeface (ie. using serifs to create a textured pattern). Explore the "Object > Transform > Rotate/Reflect/Scale" palettes, but *please do not stretch or squash* your letterforms. I suggest you look at back issues of *EYE*, and peruse some of the digital type foundries I've linked to on the blog for more inspiration. Allow the character of your typeface to influence the concept for your design. You may incorporate original photography, pattern, texture, scale shifts, etc... but remember that simplicity often speaks louder and clearer than complexity.

Form

Print your designs one per page, making sure your *designed edge* is clearly visible (use a hairline if the "background" is white and bleeds into the white of the paper).