

# Overview of Readings

Typography 3 • Fall 2015

## Good History/Bad History

by Tibor Kalman, J. Abbott Miller,  
and Karrie Jacobs.

Print Magazine, March/April 1991

- History filters the past through a lens. Distorts truth. Tells us what is important to remember, what is unimportant and can be forgotten (can create high/low design)
- Bad Design separates design from context—leaves us with styles to “take off the rack and see if they fit,” instead of understanding why things were done a certain way and what design decisions meant at that time.
- Bad Design History says: here, this is nice. Use it.
- Good Design History says: “this is how designers thought about their work then, and this is how that work fits into the culture. Now, what can YOU do?”

## The Crystal Goblet or Printing Should Be Invisible

by Beatrice Warde, 1932

- People read. “Only your wildest ingenuity can stop people from reading a really interesting text.”
- The typographer’s job is to create a lovely and enjoyable reading experience – but to honor the author’s words.
- Typography demands a humility of mind.
- An example of Typographer as Scribe. (Make the author’s words enjoyable to read, and people will read them.)

## The Principles of the New Typography

Translation of an excerpt from the Book  
Die Neue Typographie by Jan Tschichold, 1929

Note: Tschichold was passionate about modernism, (he converted from traditional to modernist back to traditional). Language is strong and can be offensive, so you’ll need to look beyond that to the message. Remember, this was written in a different time and place.

- People don’t/can’t read everything. The essence of the New Typography is clarity, necessary because of the extraordinary amount of print, and not enough time to read leisurely.
- “The typographer must take the greatest care to study how his work is read and ought to be read.”
- “Absolutely necessary to omit everything that is not needed. ... It is easy to [use] ornament to cover up bad design.”
- Form follows function. “Every piece of typography which originates in a preconceived idea of form, of whatever kind is wrong.” It is important to give pure and direct expression of content.

- It is important to express the essence of the time. (Thought: isn’t this a preconceived idea of form?)
- An example of Typographer as Editor (Use typography to help readers make their way through the text, reading what is important, skipping what isn’t important.)

## Soup of the Day

by Véronique Vienne  
Metropolis, 1995

- Authors are no longer authority figures. Unfortunately, computers have allowed art directors and designers to take over (designer as author).
- It’s better when authorship is a shared experience between author, designer, and reader.
- An example of Typographer as Author. (If I make it look more interesting, maybe someone will read it. But if they can’t read it, that’s OK.)

## The Rules of Typography According to Crackpot Experts

by Jeffrey Keedy  
Eye No. 11, 1993

- Change is good (and inevitable).
- Be aware of the past (“Rejection or ignorance of the rich and varied history and traditions of typography are inexcusable”) but remember that rules are meant to be broken (“however, adherence to traditional concepts without regard to contemporary context is intellectually lazy and a threat to typography...”)
- An example of Typographer as UX Designer. (Know the rules. Use them to create experiences authors and readers need. Use different rules as needed. There’s no such thing as only one right way to use type!

## On Typishness: This is my Theory. My Theory is Wrong

by Karrie Jacobs  
AIGA Annual no. 10, 1989

- We can’t draw real conclusions about design from fragments of a year.
- Every theory based on a selection of a year’s worth of design is bound to be wrong. Every round-up of trends in graphic design is a fiction.  
  
(Question: If she knew her theory was wrong, why did she take us through the process of having the theory and then realizing it was wrong? How is this related to backing up your own ideas when writing?)

Name:

# Reading Q & A

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Title of Essay

Author

Year Written

What was the author's thesis? (see Reading Overview – use your own words!)

What examples did the author use to support their thesis?

What work/artist did they cite? Find a picture to show us this example

What quotes did they use?

What objects or experiences did they describe?

Were their examples really examples? Or are they opinions masking as examples?

What, in your opinion, is the theoretical connection between the work of the assigned artists/designers and this essay?

Use one or more examples to support your opinion.