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Typographical lessons from  
retail, the subway & the campaign trail

# Typography: Big bu\$ine\$\$

- \$300 million business in 2007
- approximately 40,000 typefaces
- busy type factory will produce maybe three type families per year
- the effect of the personal computer

*Pid Script*  
AMBICASE  
**acorde**

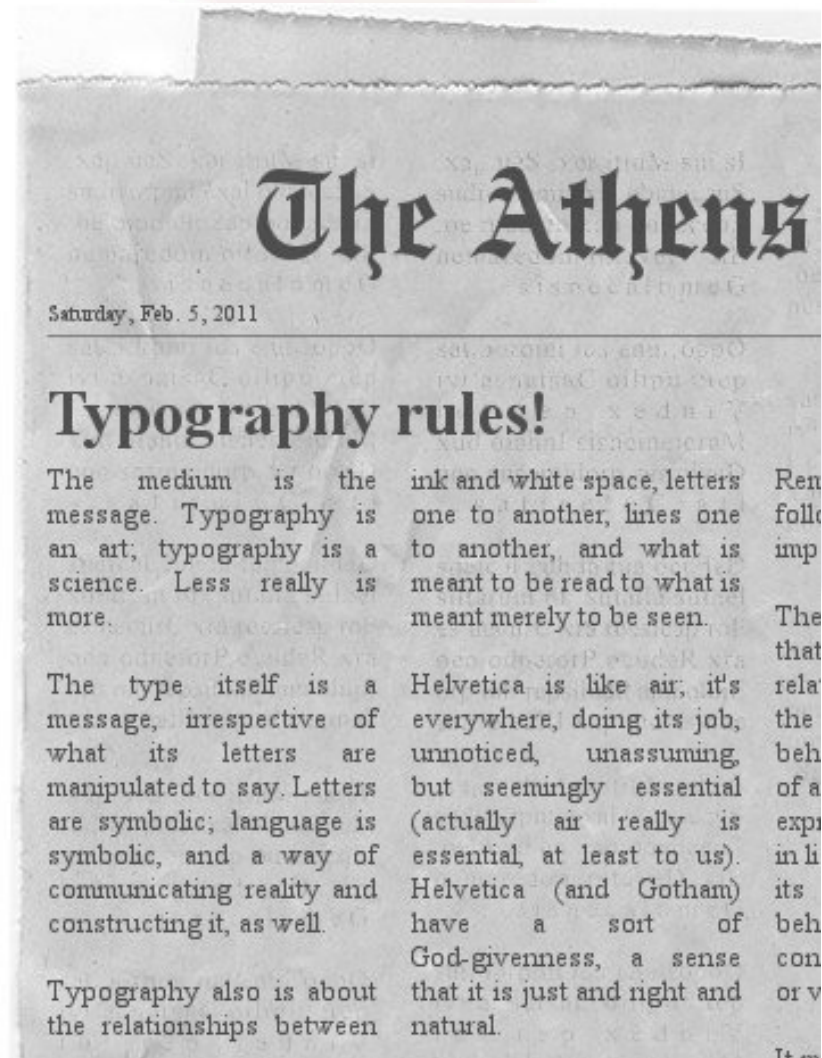
*Fan Script*  
Darjeeling  
**FORZA**

*Declaration*  
**COOTER**  
Πολυμορφ  
Estilo Script

# Typographical lessons from retail, the subway & the campaign trail

## Three main points

- Type is symbolic (semiotics)
- The medium is the message
- Less is more



**Typography:** Is it textual or visual?

*Beware of false binaries!*

MIND THE GAP

to speak with  
**CONVICTION**  
to say what **you** believe

M

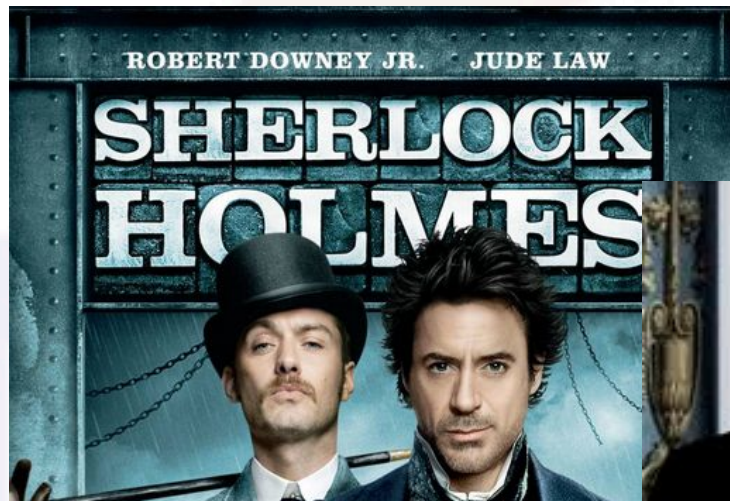
# TONNAGE

GAP

When is a heavy weight of advertising better than a smaller one? And what is "Tonnage" based on? It is the answer  
 to the question of the size of the budget of you look at the results of advertising, you will observe the following fact:  
 There are advertisers who "conserve" or "economize" their efforts, sometimes at critical times, and the results can be  
 seen in the largest advertisements of the year. On the other hand, there are advertisers who mounted massive advertising  
 campaigns, costing many millions of dollars, and have failed to increase their sales. The question of the advertising  
 expenditure should always be preceded by these questions: Do I have an *idea* which will sell my product? Has my  
 agency been thorough enough to arrive at a sound selling strategy, and vigorous enough to express it in an exciting  
 and convincing way? If the answers to these questions are "yes," advertising tonnage can be regarded as an exact  
 measurement of an expense. Everything depends on the *idea*, then, and products because *advertising* by *idea*.

Don Egenstein, 1960

it's textual *and* visual!





Type is symbolic, and symbols are learned (all of them), right guys?





Right, ladies?

The Louis Vuitton logo, featuring the stylized letters 'LV' in a bold, black, serif font, set against a light gray rectangular background.The DKNY logo, consisting of the letters 'DKNY' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, set against a white rectangular background.The Gap logo, featuring the letters 'E GAP' in a white, sans-serif font, set against a light purple rectangular background.The Chanel logo, consisting of two interlocking 'C' characters in a bold, black, sans-serif font, set against a white rectangular background.

# What does this *mean*?



In New York?  
In the Bronx?  
In Queens?  
In Georgia?  
In Ireland?

**The medium is the message**

On the doctor's wall

*A wedding invitation*

**The Holy Bible**

**Welcome to Moes!**

*A wedding invitation  
(hard to read, but pretty!)*



**Universitatis Dominice Nostrae a Tacu**

Praeses, Fiduciarii et Professores  
 Omnibus has praesentes litteras visuris salutem  
 Nos ad id munus decreto publico delegati notum facimus et  
 testamur dilectam nobis  
**Iie Jayne Wu**  
 ita bene meruisse ut aperte et sollemniter renunciaretur  
**Philosophiae Doctor**  
 Cuius rei testes nomina nostra subscripsimus ac sigillum  
 Universitatis nostrae apponi curavimus  
 die III Mensis Januarii MCM

Jeffrey C. Kantor  
 Edward A. Malloy, csc.  
 [Seal of the University of the Holy Spirit]

# The Power of Type

From retail: The Gap

From underground: Mind the Gap

From the campaign trail: Obama's "O"



# The medium is the message

Why the new logo sucked:

- Not enough contrast
- Overlays = overlooked



- Sharp edges unsettle
- All caps = logo; lowercase = a word, or part of a word
- Serifs honor the past



MODERN. SOUTHERN. STYLE.

*Belk*®

MIN

AP

# The medium is the message

Why the new logo sucked:

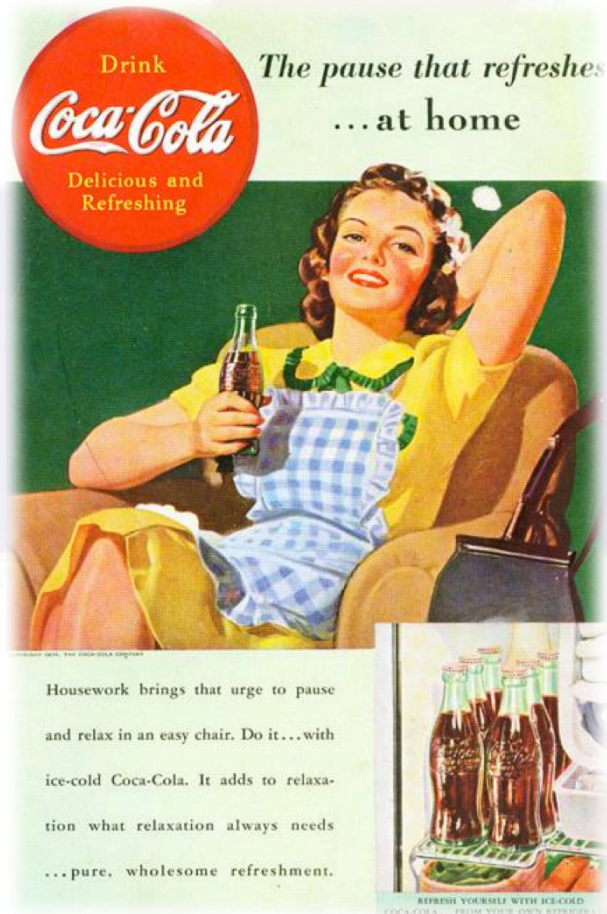
- Not enough contrast
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- Sharp edges unsettle
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# The medium is the message



Drink  
**Coca-Cola**  
Delicious and Refreshing

*The pause that refreshes  
...at home*

Housework brings that urge to pause and relax in an easy chair. Do it...with ice-cold Coca-Cola. It adds to relaxation what relaxation always needs...pure, wholesome refreshment.

REFRESH YOURSELF WITH ICE-COLD COCA-COLA... FROM YOUR OWN REFRIGERATOR

This advertisement features a woman in a yellow dress and blue checkered apron, sitting in a brown armchair and holding a Coca-Cola bottle. The background is a simple green wall. The text is arranged in a clean, classic layout with a red circular logo at the top left.

1950s



This time of year the food is varied, rich—good-tasting. Isn't it great that one soft drink has a special taste of its own that goes with everything you eat. The unique taste of Coke complements everything from ham to hamburger, imported cheese to roast beef. That's another reason why they call it the real thing.

**It's the real thing.  
Coke.**

This advertisement features a bottle of Coca-Cola and a glass of Coke with ice, surrounded by various fruits and a wedge of Swiss cheese. The background is dark, making the products stand out. The text is in a clean, sans-serif font, with the slogan at the bottom.

1990s

# The medium is the message



2010

# Mind the type

New York subway system type re-done in 1966.  
It is still in use today. Helvetica. > G. a. horse



Mind the type:  
How expressive should it be?

I love Helvetica!

I love Helvetica!

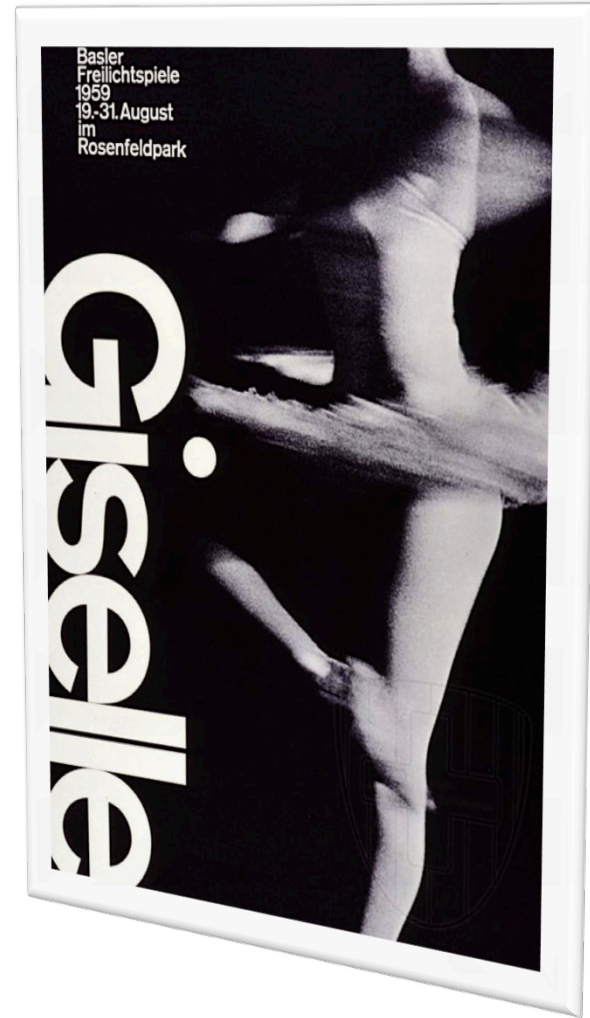
**I love Helvetica!**

or



# Helvetica and Gotham





REGULAR

NARROW

EXTRA NARROW

CONDENSED

**Declarat**

**Hightowe**

**Photograp**

**Manhattanvi**

**Independenc**

**Broadwa**

**Powerpla**

**Incandesce**

**Perpendicula**

**Mephiste**

**Rosemary**

**Bargeboar**

**Impressionis**

**Kandinsl**

**Douglast**

**Romanesqu**

**Biogeographi**

**Remedic**

**Embowec**

**Magnetogra**

**Rhododendro**

**Edgewat**

**Lampshad**

**Kaleidoscop**

**Independencie**

**Francesc**

**Hydrolysis**

**Rauschenbe**

**Maneuverabilit**

**Prehistor**

**Brunellesc**

**Knightsbridg**

**Electromagneti**

*Columbia*

*Universida*

*Southeaster*

*Conservatorshi*

*Goodhue*

*Oppenhei*

*Collaborativ*

*Quadruplicate*

*Cinemat*

*Greenwic*

*Ultramoder*

*Semiconducto*

*Sanctuar*

*Quetzalcc*

*Observatori*

*Crystallograph*

*Ultrama*

*Canterbu*

*Grammatic*

*Overspeculati*

**Quatrefo**

**Orientalis**

**Stringcours**

**Governmental**

**Chinaton**

**Sculpture**

**Quantitati**

**Construction**

**Greenfie**

**Umbrella**

**Cobblesto**

**Quadruplica**

**Summertime**


# Gotham

# Electing a president





















# Electing a president



**OBAMA MOBILE**  
TEXT HOPE TO 62262

**OBAMA EVERYWHERE**

 Facebook	 BlackPlanet
 MySpace	 Faithbase
 YouTube	 Eons
 Flickr	 Glee
 Digg	 MiGente
 Twitter	 MyBatanga
 Eventful	 AsianAve
 LinkedIn	 DNC Partybuilder



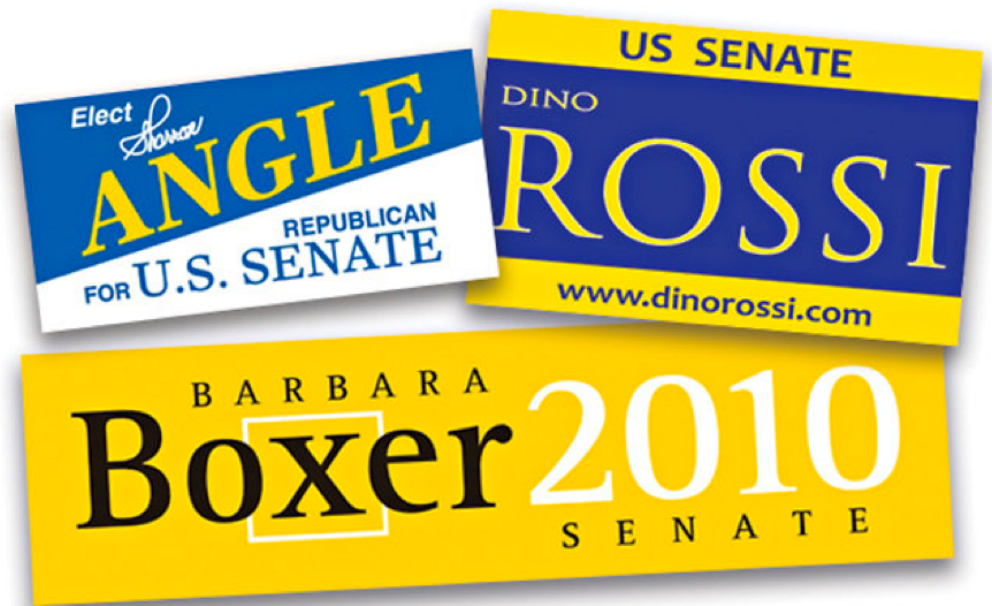
# Electing a president



The screenshot shows the MyBarackObama.com website. At the top, there is a logo with the word "my" in a handwritten-style font, a blue square containing the Obama "O" logo, and the word "COM" in a handwritten-style font. Below this, the URL "MY.BARACKOBAMA.COM" is displayed in a blue, sans-serif font. The main heading reads "ORGANIZE LOCALLY WITH OUR ONLINE TOOLS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Underneath, there are four menu items: "Talk to Voters", "Join a Local Group", "Find an Event", and "Fundraise", each followed by a bullet point and the word "Blog". At the bottom, there is a white button with the text "LOGIN TO MyBO" in a blue, sans-serif font.

- Type that looks like handwriting for “my” Obama.com
- Gotham for branded URL
- Serif for menu items (??)
- Back to Gotham for LOGIN

# Electing a president



Ken  
**Buck**

MIND



# Less really is more

The Google logo, consisting of the word "Google" in its signature multi-colored font (blue, red, yellow, blue, green, red) on a white background.

# Less really is more



## Museo Sans 500

Information about the typeface Museo Sans 500 and where to buy it.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

QRSTUVWXYZÀÁÊËÏÏØ

abcdefghijklmnopqrst

uvwxyzàáéî&12345678

901234567890(\$£€.,!?)

# Less really is more



# Some final thoughts

- Type is saying things to us all the time – expressing a mood, an atmosphere, coloring the words
- Every typeface has connotations. For Helvetica, think clarity, transparency, rationality, neutrality (Swiss!), purity, post-WWII idealism
- But typefaces are also like people. Helvetica is heavy in the middle (it shouldn't wear stripes!). It needs a lot of white space. So, in choosing type you aren't unlike a casting director.



# Some final thoughts

- You also are like a doctor fighting disease, the visual disease that is all around us. Type is the cure. Type can create order. --Massimo Vignelli
- We see black marks. Type designers see white space interrupted by black marks. The missing notes. Learn to listen. Learn to see!
- Typography is a servant art, like architecture.
- With the democracy of the personal computer and easy-to-obtain typefaces, these are exciting times!



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