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Questioning the hand-made letterform as a preferred visual language for environmental consciousness

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**QUESTIONING THE HAND-MADE LETTERFORM AS A PREFERRED
VISUAL LANGUAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS.**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

**MASTER OF CREATIVE ARTS (RESEARCH)
GRAPHIC DESIGN**

from

**SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, ENGLISH AND MEDIA
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

by

DANIELLE HOOKER, BA HONS GRAPHIC DESIGN

Thesis Certification

I, Danielle Hooker, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Creative Arts – Research, in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Danielle Hooker

29 May 2014

Abstract

This research examines the attributes of hand-made graphic design, in particular lettering design, when communicating values specifically associated with environmental concern. The study is especially interested in establishing whether, rooted in the notions of sustainability, the hand-made letterform is the most appropriate conceptual form for the branding and communication of environmental and sustainability issues in the not-for-profit sector. The research aims to develop broader methods and approaches of working with environmental concern through graphic means and asks questions about the sense of urgency and the values, effective or otherwise, transmitted using hand-made lettering. In brief, the strength of this research is in addressing current tensions within visual communications practice in an atmosphere of debate over sustainability and global warming.

Creative practice has in the past been somewhat absent from environmental discourse. Slowly, the role of graphic design is being acknowledged as a contributing factor in environmental awareness but less attention has been specifically made to the role of hand-made and traditional graphic typographic techniques such as letterpress printing. The recent popularity of the hand-made movement has both economic and environmental roots, and this study suggests that the inspired engagement of hand-made lettering has the power to attract and involve new audiences in discussion of environmental concern.

To help make a case for the hand-made letterform as a preferred visual language for environmental consciousness and to form a model for contemporary practice, this research pinpoints past incidents where hand-made lettering, outdated technology and typographic styles with reference to the past have been used in a response to advances in technology, consumption and consequently environmental concern. This study suggests that the hand-

made letterform may help audiences question their place in nature and their responsibility for the environment. The creative project attached to this study aims to test and examine the ways that the hand-made may help to raise awareness of environmental issues using accessible and engaging hand-made lettering in the branding and communication material for ‘The Seed Library’, a not-for-profit seed saving organisation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Creative practice has an important role to play in a sustainable future and this study suggests that graphic design is capable of communicating and visually inspiring change, by capturing and engaging those who might not otherwise be interested. In this role, hand-made visual communications output may help question our place in nature and highlight our responsibility to the environment, whilst the ubiquity of the digital age has promoted and enhanced the appeal, honesty and romance of hand-made graphic design elements. The evolution of the hand-made letterform is largely due to technological change, as the majority of all pre-twentieth century handcrafted techniques and skills have been superseded, first by the machine era and then by the digital age. Paradoxically, being superseded has freed the hand-made from its previous obligations and the intimacy of these graphics is now able to create reassuring groundings. Mike Press (2007, p. 252) notes that the hand-made can provide “a set of culturally and economically relevant practices that could help to humanise this dangerous new century”. For the purposes of this study hand-made lettering is defined as typography that bears evidence of being made by hand or low-fi machine with as little use of digital technology as possible.

The research reported here examines the use of hand-made typography within graphic design that relates to the environment or more broadly sustainability. It is of particular interest to establish whether, embedded in the very concept of ecology and sustainability, there is a specific approach to assist its communication. The accompanying studio project aims to demonstrate the application of the hand-made letterform as an appropriate conceptual form for the branding and communication of environmental and sustainability issues in the not-for-profit sector. This will be achieved through applying a hand-made concept to a standard branding model for a not-for-profit seed library.

The next chapter in this study aims to establish the fundamental motivations that inform the current resurgence in hand-made lettering and survey connections between artistic style and the environment at various moments since the late 19th century. The chapter begins by assessing the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century, led by reformer William Morris (1834-1896) who advocated a return to a medieval style in reaction to the industrial revolution. Several decades later and in counterpoint, the avant-garde Italian Futurist movement, with its rejection of past styles and aim of powering into the future, dismissed the decorative and stylistically anachronistic, if not technologically superseded, nature of the Arts and Crafts movement. In the late 1920s, ideas of modernism were voiced by Jan Tschichold (1902-1974), whose work introduced discussion of the growth of modernism in graphic design up until the late 1950s and the shift toward eclectic typographic design in the 1960s that saw revived lettering used rebelliously.

Three case studies of specific projects that use hand-made or outdated/revived typography are analysed to help form a historical representation of the field. This begins with illustrated covers from American *Vogue*, seen between 1910 and 1930 under the ownership of Condé Nast (1873-1942). Nast developed a template for the magazine's cover designs that consisted of full-page, signed illustrations by a small selection of artists who incorporated the word 'Vogue' in typographic experimentation, instead of using the typeset Bodoni which had been the style under previous editors. During the remainder of Condé Nast's association with *Vogue* its preferences were reflected in the decisions of Edna Woolman Chase (1887-1957), who was editor between 1914 and 1952. *Sniffin' Glue* magazine, a handcrafted 'fanzine' created by Mark Perry in 1979 in the United Kingdom, is then studied to form an understanding of the 1970s punk DIY ethos, its relationship to mass consumerism (and by

implication environmentalism) and how this was reflected in graphic design as a visual style. Lastly, in Australia between 2009 and 2012, sales figures during the rebranding of *G* magazine with a clean digitalised cover and masthead to *Green Lifestyle* with a more organic cover design and hand-made style masthead are reviewed, which is used to suggest that the hand-made style of design is more inclined to attract audiences with environmental sensibilities.

The fourth chapter of this study focuses on hand-made graphic design in the current age, aiming to establish the appropriateness and effectiveness of the use of analogue techniques and visual styles in the communication of environmental consciousness. This chapter documents the ethos of current environmental movements, and gives examples of creative practice's engagement with sustainability issues. This investigation examines the ways that graphic designers who work by hand are today using digital technology to provide innovative design solutions during a time of heightened environmental awareness. The communication benefits and the appeal of the incorporation of hand-made graphics are also explored. Conclusions are drawn in the final chapter.

The next chapter of this study documents moments in history that have sparked connections between artistic style, environmental or sustainability issues and hand-made lettering using an integrated literature review format. This has been written to synthesise existing literature to establish new stances and insights for this project.

Chapter 2: The craft contra technology polemic – a survey of literature on the development of letterform from the late 19th century to the late 20th century

The use of hand-made techniques in graphic design is traced in this chapter as a component of an integrative literature review. The purpose is to determine the extent to which hand-made lettering has the ability to form relationships with environmental concerns, technological change and mass production. Existing literature on the topic is reviewed and synthesised with the aim of generating new knowledge and perspectives. An analysis of selected eras when outdated production methods and styles were utilised in response to technological change is necessary to reconceptualise a model for contemporary practice. The literature review method aims to challenge and examine the effectiveness of hand-made graphics in the communication of values associated with sustainability and the environment. It is of particular interest to establish whether, embedded in the underlying concept of sustainability, a hand-made visual approach is the most effective means of communication and why. At various stages in more recent Western cultural history the effectiveness of analogue techniques and outdated production methods has been reconsidered. This chapter reports on shifts in direction in the use of hand-made graphics and critically examines the main ideas and relationships between existing literature on the topic.

Common interpretations of modern hand-made design can conjure up notions of morality and the joy of creating beautiful objects. This point of view can be traced back to the Arts and Crafts movement (1834-1896) that flourished at the end of the 19th century when the first phase of industrialisation caused widespread social upheaval brought on by rapid urbanisation and environmental destruction. Emerging as a reaction to the capitalist

industrialisation and degradation of labour caused by the industrial revolution, the movement questioned how we should live collectively and sustainably. Predominantly led by William Morris, who was influenced by John Ruskin (1819-1900), a printing revival took place with the aim of taking up the “fight for high standards” and for an “awareness of aesthetic qualities” (Kinross 1992, p. 52). As part of this ‘fight’ William Morris aimed to revitalise British decorative arts; he established Morris and Co. who produced high quality household decorations and printed fine quality books at his Kelmscott Press. The ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement, accompanied by anxiety over industrialisation, relates directly to our current concerns for sustainability, with globalisation and with over-consumption. It is therefore not unexpected that our reaction is similar.

Morris was an environmentalist and conservationist, with his work drawing heavily on nature using traditional methods (Figure 1). Morris believed that good design did not have to die as a result of industrialisation. The Arts and Crafts movement reacted against the ugliness of commercial printing, and in doing so promoted traditional handcrafted methods and advocated social, environmental and economic reform as a way of attacking the industrial age.



Figure 1: *Wreath*, William Morris (1876)

Rosalind Blakesley (2006, p. 7) notes how the Arts and Crafts Movement promoted antiquated handcrafted methods instead of the more up-to-date industrial processes which were then available:

It was a movement about integrity, it was about respecting your materials, and the way you used them, it was about showing how things were constructed, so that they never looked different from what they really were. Equally it was about respecting the maker. Against a background of the filth and degradation of industrialisation ...

Within print production, new technology replaced block printing and hand copying, allowing for the mass production of print and as a result a degradation of quality occurred (Watts Lee 1982, p. 54). Morris held an “anti-industry position” and believed that “the only way to stem the tide of urbanisation and industrialisation was through a return to cottage crafts” (Alfondy 2008, p. xvii). The Arts and Crafts movement proposed an oppositional ideal by promoting moral design; the industrial revolution had come with great cost to the environment as cities polluted and destroyed the British countryside. John Ruskin (1890, p. 193) in *The Crown of Wild Olive* writes of this:

Our cities are a wilderness of spinning wheels instead of palaces; yet the people have not clothes. We have blackened every leaf of English greenwood with ashes, and the people die of cold; our harbours are a forest of merchant ships, and the people die of hunger.

The industrial revolution saw a large-scale switch from the production of goods in small-scale independent and rural environments to mass production in factories. For centuries, typography and printing had been limited to the publishing of books. The modern era brought a new demand for eye-catching typography aimed at stimulating a desire for the

increasing availability of ready-made goods (Figures 2 and 3). Type-founders tried to “invent every possible design permutation by modifying forms or proportions and applying all manner of decoration to their alphabets” (Meggs & Purvis 2012, p. 149). With the borrowing of styles from past eras, a visual diversity was established in the marketplace that aimed to capture a slice of public attention. The same situation occurs today with many companies and producers competing for shelf space.

The industrial revolution had given rise to unlimited dreams of progress and to a huge increase in the exploitation of natural resources and the production of expanding volume. After some period of time, this style of advertising became cluttered, commercial and banal. Revolutionaries such as William Morris realised that this type of design was not good for the environment, nor did it aid the value of design, therefore new sensibilities began to emerge. Through the Kelmscott Press, Morris turned his attention to designing revival typefaces and he particularly admired and studied the letterforms of Nicholas Jenson, who in the 15th century developed movable type during the economic expansion of the European Renaissance (Figure 4). He believed early printers “availed themselves of models which were the result of the age-long perfecting labours of monastic and professional scribes” (Watts Lee 1982, p. 54). Although, as Eskilson (2007, p. 32) points out, Morris “was unable to offer a workable solution” to modern methods that were both cost-effective and efficient. The Arts and Crafts movement emerged as a nostalgic longing for the past that had suddenly been lost and it seems that Morris was interested in what constitutes the ‘good’ life. Today, it could be argued, this ideal of a ‘good’ life remains a central value for many seeking to obtain a sustainable future.



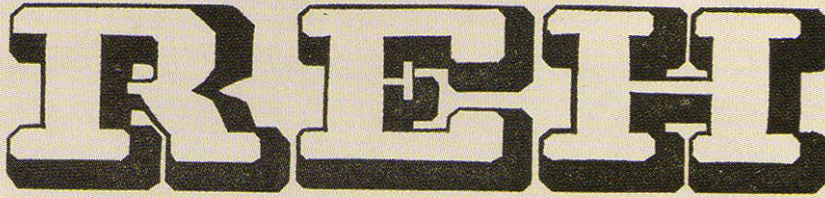
Figure 2: Anonymous Specimens of Decorative Typefaces (c.1850)

Schriftgießerei von Gottlieb Haase Söhne in Prag.

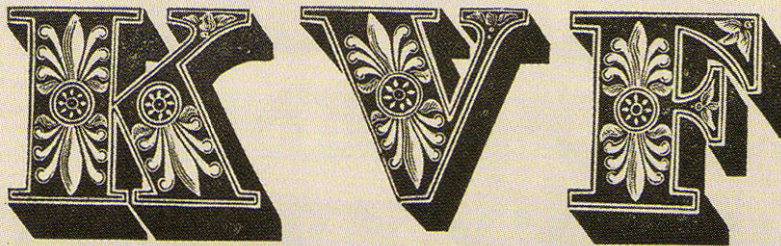
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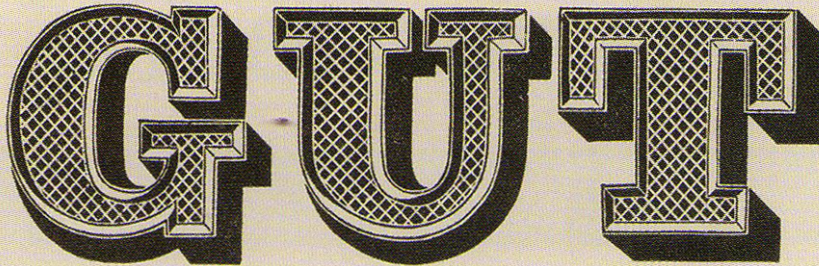


Figure 3: Decorative fonts by Johann Heinrich Meyer Foundry (1835)

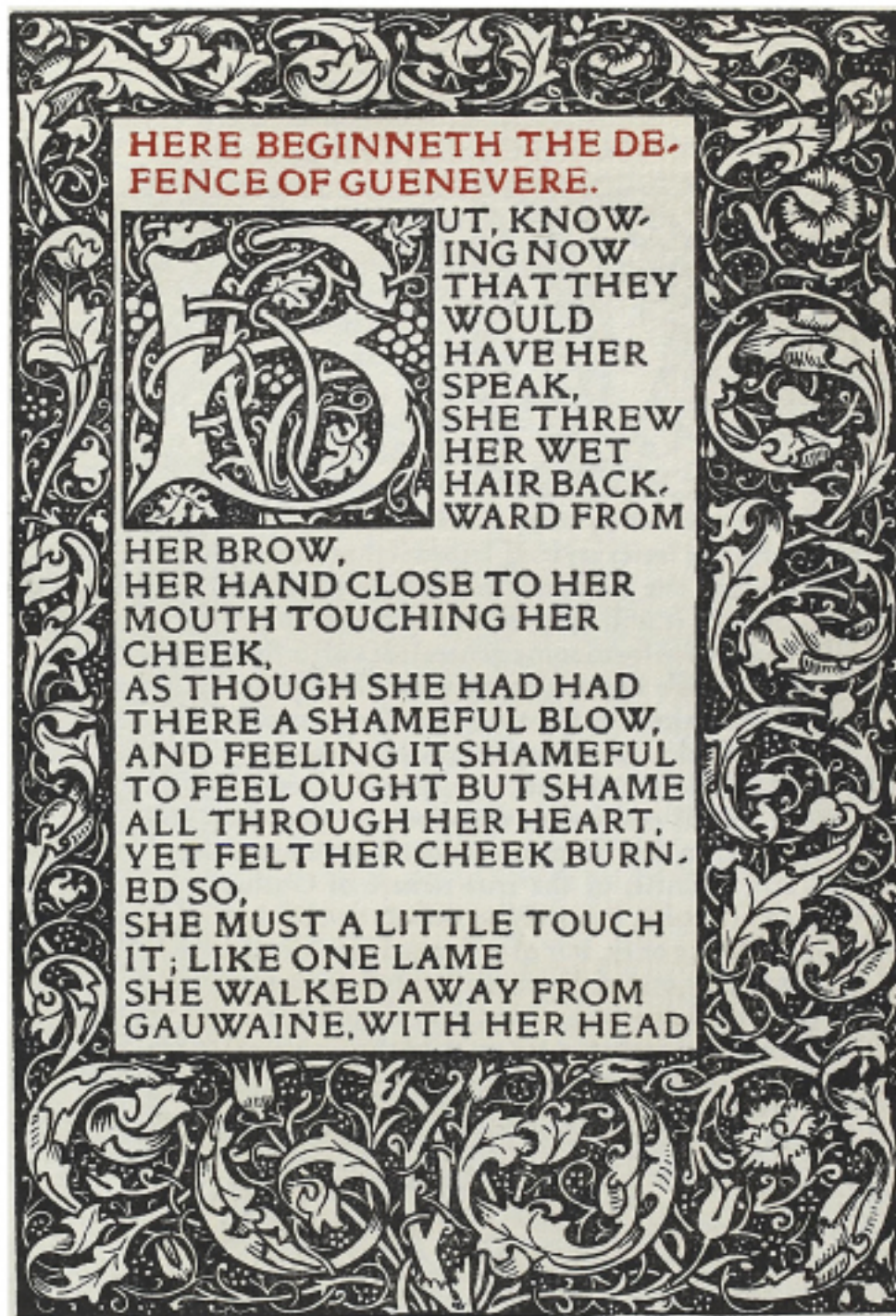


Figure 4: *The Defence of Guenevere and other Poems*, William Morris, Kelmscott Press (1892)

Watts Lee (1892, p. 59) notes the nostalgic longing, mentioned above, when discussing the work produced from Morris' Kelmscott Press, and explains:

The books of which five have already been issued and two more promised, not only do much to remove the reproach under which printers have so long lain, of having neglected the traditions and methods handed down from the early days of the art; but they show to how high a point beauty of form can be carried at the hands of a man of artistic perceptions by the employment of the simplest means only.

Yet despite Morris' vision, for most people "any lingering doubts over the benefits of mechanised typesetting" had vanished (Kinross 1992, p. 56). The advantage of efficiency and economy of the new technology could not be denied and so the machine was accepted, although type foundries still looked to typographic designs from the past for inspiration. Morris' visions were admirable, but his solutions were inconsistent with the problems, resulting in the narrow creation of art affordable only to the upper classes, as Ashbee (1987, p. 389) explains:

As capitalist culture shifted from a culture of production to a culture of consumption, these idealised producers in romanticized and recharged medieval guilds spent most of their time producing beautiful works of art for the middle and upper class consumers.

It could be argued that by the late 20th and in the early 21st century, solutions to Morris' concern with cost-effective yet high quality design at affordable prices for all levels of society are now more achievable. In the computer age the assertion rings out: "Wired by digital technology and fired by new conceptual directions and passions, contemporary craft connects with the technological and cultural challenges of its age" (Press 2008, p. 252).

However, the conditions of 21st century industrial capitalism and mass production are causing widespread environmental disaster. Unfortunately, in these circumstances, the hand-made is in danger of becoming a marketing strategy for something it originally opposed. The Arts and Crafts movement achieved longevity, continuing into the 1930s, but by this time its forms had become a stylistic trend rather than fulfilling its original intentions of social change. It could be argued the current 'Green' and hand-made design movement is heading for the same outcome.

As a whole, what is most interesting is the objectives Morris had for the Kelmscott Press. He hoped to re-awaken the lost ideals of typography and inspire higher standards design as a reaction to the environmental damage caused by the industrial revolution. Under current circumstances Morris' ideals might be called a 'green' vision for the future. Morris' position is admirable but could not compete with the productivity of the industries he opposed. However, Morris' approach may be more successful if applied to digital technology, as we are now able to do. For instance, new technology has made it cost and time-effective to replicate traditional typography such as calligraphy, hand-rendered lettering and letterpress printing with the speed, production and distribution advantages of digital technology. The digital typeface 'Zapfino', notoriously over-used in stationery design, is one example among many (Figure 5). Nevertheless, a negative result of the migration of popular hand-made movement into digital production is that lettering designs that mimic the spirited quality of pre-digital forms are often regarded as a retro pastiche.



Figure 5: Top: Zapfino typeface by Herman Zapf (1998)

Bottom: Wedding Stationery (2013)

The internet has made the history of type design readily accessible for all designers to use as a reference and inspiration, and facilitates the revival of analogue styles coupled with digital experimentation. Whilst improvements in digital technology make it easier to create and reproduce a more ‘individual’ style, paradoxically the ‘hand-made’ is invariably sent to digital mass-production to be circulated widely in print and this does not sit well with Morris’ legacy. Today we surround ourselves with objects that are vehicles for self-expression, including a combination of heightened green awareness, brought on by media coverage, and a desire for diversity in design. In mass and personal consumption patterns, hand-made approaches can become a symbol of certain points of view, evocative of a more personal response to pressing social issues.

The Arts and Crafts movement, as already noted, instilled a sense of distrust in technology that lasted into the 20th century. Yet in contrast, the strong and forward-looking Italian Futurists of the early 20th century did not want a return to the medieval style that Morris advocated. Irina Costache (1994) notes that the Futurists brought a new understanding to the goals of applied arts as they redefined their tendency to match the times, rejecting the traditional approaches of the Arts and Crafts movement. The beginning of the Futurist movement occurred when Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944) published the *Manifesto of Futurism* in 1909 in Paris newspaper *Le Figaro*. The Futurists were a radical group of Italian artists who associated themselves with the speed, aggression and noise of the early 20th century and rejected anything old. Marinetti (reprinted in Danchev (ed) 2011, p. 5-6) makes clear Futurist propositions in this lengthy and evocative quote from the *Manifesto of Futurism*:

We shall sing of the great multitudes who are roused up by work, by pleasure, or by rebellion; of the many-hued, many-voiced tides of revolution in our modern capitals; of the pulsating, nightly ardour of arsenals and shipyards, ablaze with their violent electric moons; of railway stations, voraciously devouring smoke-belching serpents; of workshops hanging from the clouds by their twisted threads of smoke; of bridges which, like giant gymnasts, bestride the rivers, flashing in the sunlight like gleaming knives; of intrepid steamships that sniff out the horizon; of broad-breasted locomotives, champing on the wheels like enormous steel horses, bridled with pipes; and of the lissom flight of the aeroplane, whose propeller flutters like a flag in the wind, seeming to applaud, like a crowd excited.

A movement predominantly founded by writers, Futurism proposed that art should celebrate technology and the future, and as a metaphor in futurist writings, typography was employed to visually simulate the sounds of machines and the energy of modern life. Marinetti called for graphic design to jump off the page with kinetic energy, and he bent and twisted typography breaking the symmetrical grid. One of the most prominent examples of “words in freedom” is from *Zang Tumb Tumb* (Figure 6), Marinetti’s written and visual expression of the siege of Turkey during the Balkan War in 1912 (Moma 2009). Bold and highly contrasting wood type, dating from the fifth century and succeeded by Gutenberg’s movable type in the 1450s, was used here and revived by the early 20th century avant-garde as a form of experimentation (Cundy 1981, p. 350). Whilst it lacked connection with industrialism, Marinetti used letterpress as an immediate form of experimentation.

The possibility of free experimentation is one of the key qualities that make hand-made processes appealing to us still today. The Futurists advocated huge industrial growth and in turn this became one of the most environmentally destructive times in history. These two



Figure 6: *Zang Tumb Tumb: Adrianopoli Ottobre 1912: Parole in Libertà*, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1914)

forces, the socially and environmentally conscious Arts and Crafts movement and the Futurist movement, have comparative oppositional values equivalent to those of the current 'Green' movement and the economically driven consumer focused digital age. If the digital age were to write a manifesto, perhaps it would not be too dissimilar to Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto.

Unlike later work from the German Bauhaus School of Design (1919-1933), Futurist artists, performers, and poets did not demonstrate (in any truly advanced form) modernist concerns with engaging fabricated proficiency and simplicity (the exceptions being the Futurist architects and filmmakers). In general terms, modernism took hold in the popular imagination of advanced nations (especially those free of totalitarianism) during the 1930s, with its main principle being to turn its back on the past and press forward into a new future. The establishment of the post-World War I (1914-1918) international style during the 1920s and 1930s neutralised the discourse of communication design. The Bauhaus, for instance, sought and focused on values of rationalism and functionalism.

Magdalena Droste (2006) suggests that the Bauhaus (1919-1933) sparked the beginnings of modernism. The school's representative, Walter Gropius, established fundamental characteristics of functionality that defined the Bauhaus, but also called for collaborations between artist and craftspeople. His successors Hannes Meyer (1928-1930) and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1930-1933) continued with the basic style established by Gropius, while also challenging and redefining the Bauhaus style (Droste 2006, p. 7). Meggs and Purvis (2012, p. 335) have also noted:

Much of the creative innovation in graphic design during the first decades of the twentieth century occurred as part of modern-art movements and at the Bauhaus. The person who applied these new approaches to everyday design problems and explained them to a wide audience of printers, typesetters and designers was Jan Tschichold.

Jan Tschichold became the principal advocate of new typography when he published *Die Neue Typographie (The New Typography)* in 1928. The book became a handbook for the modernist movement in which he laid down the rules modern typographers should follow. In essence this was clarity that included grid structures, asymmetrical layouts, sans-serif typefaces, the use of photography and the elimination of decoration, which was very different from the chaotic Futurist style (Figure 7).

In the 1920s, proficient guides were widely adopted and the concept of the graphic designer as someone who rationally approaches a brief on behalf of the client was established. In short, the modern architectural idea that ‘form ever follows function’ (Sullivan 1896, pp.403-09) gained traction in a variety of design practices of the 1920s, that is further extended by a commensurate enthusiasm for Taylorist and Fordist industrial efficiency. Essentially modernist typography was categorised by a formalist visual language that could be applied to all manner of situations, as Tschichold (1928, p. 15) states:

It is impossible for both the old and the new typography to continue to exist together, as some think they can. The great period of design that is coming would not be one if the Renaissance style continued to exist beside the modern.

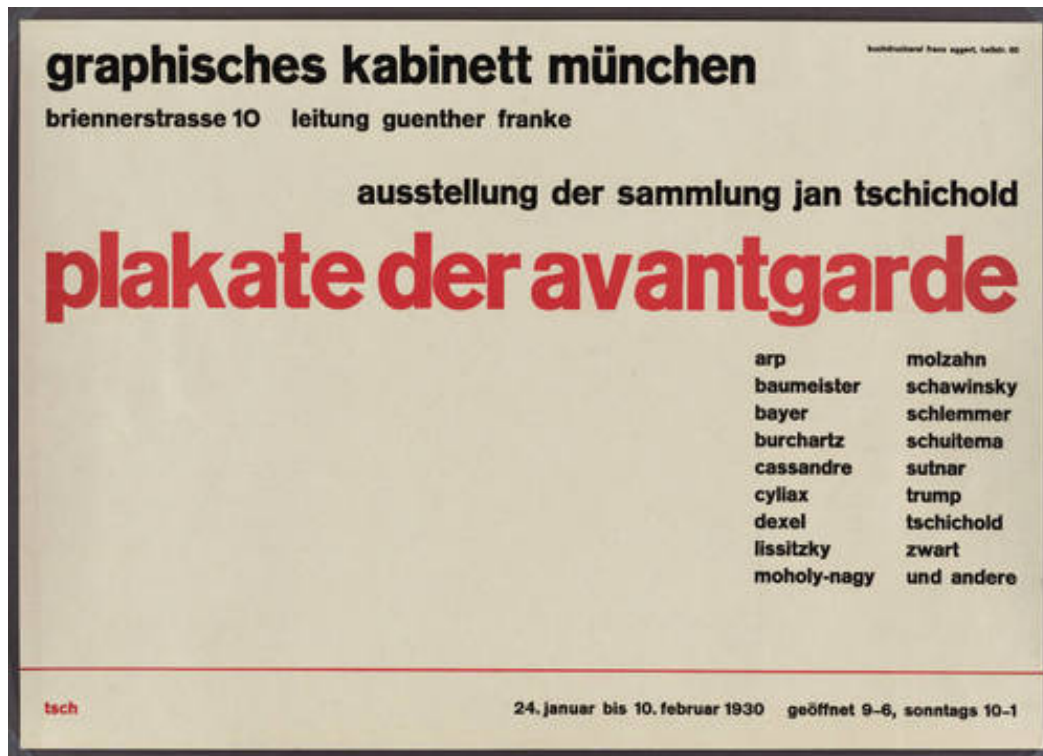


Figure 7: Plakate der Avantgarde (Posters of the Avant-Garde) (1930) Jan Tschichold

Modernism did not end with postmodernism: they exist side-by-side. As Jencks (1989) states postmodernism is both the “continuation of modernism and its transcendence” (p. 20). However, in the mid 1960s, as a response to decades of conformity, a number of eclectic movements began to challenge Tschichold’s legacy, giving rise to a reactive and/or nostalgic form of postmodernism. During the 1960s and well beyond, modernist design was interpreted as the conventional norm and the reaction to (if not rejection of) rigid modernist conformity created underground movements that challenged modernism.

Nevertheless, Tschichold’s ideas have not faded completely and have been widely adopted by contemporary design professionals, who predominantly work to achieve the most efficient means of interaction using current digital technology. Postmodernism, often simplistically defined as a break with modernism, saw graphic design switch from a concern with reductivism to a focus on complexity, contradiction and decoration. New technological, social and economic challenges redefined graphic design with several of the most prominent features of postmodernism being the erasing of boundaries between high art forms and pop culture as well as challenging ideas of timelessness often associated with modernist design aspirations, as Poyner (2003, p. 11) notes:

Where modernism frequently attacked commercial mass culture, claiming from its superior perspective to know what was best for the people, postmodernism enters into a complicitous relationship with the dominant culture. In postmodernism, modernism’s hierarchical distinctions between worthwhile ‘high’ culture and trashy ‘low’ culture collapse and the two become equal possibilities on a level field.

The typographic design development of postmodernism is tied to significant advances in technology, such as the invention of the Apple Macintosh computer, the internet and design

software packages, that increase the potential to engage directly in production and consumption. The stripping of modernist formalities and revitalisation of past letterforms by the computer knowledgeable youth challenged values laid down by previous generations. Arguably, the outcome was a “shift from ‘depth’ to ‘surface’, from a sense of mission – however ill-judged this may seem now – to a sense of fashion” (Heward 1999, p. 21). What was once designated as low culture by the elitist attitudes of modernists was transformed into a higher culture by experimental postmodernists. As a consequence, postmodernism is often characterised as undisciplined self-indulgence, although in numerous cases the stylistic devices of postmodernity displayed new ways of thinking.

Through the impact of computerisation, postmodern graphic design engages in a culture of representation that plays with graphic styles, stylised representations and complex design images. The principle of representation is important to this study, especially as it suggests that hand-made graphic design, even when only simulating analogue methods of production, provides visual experiences that connect with values of being environmentally friendly. The postmodernism marked a departure from tradition, as it dissolved and combined the past, present and possible future often in a combination of styles. For instance, the Push Pin Studios, although established in the mid 1950s, from the mid 1960s combined Victorian Arts and Crafts ideas and Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles with contemporary typography. Conceptually the eclecticism of Push Pin Studios “was based on the idea that historical forms could be revitalised and given new currency” (Heller & Anderson 2007, p. 13). Drew and Sternberger (2005, p 74) on this point also claim that:

Push Pin studio advocated a more pluralistic and eclectic approach to design. The Push Pin group embraced traditional illustration and historical typefaces, and were willing to create *Mélanges* of styles that would have been virtually unthinkable to their modernism colleagues.

Push Pin's use of revived typography can be seen in Seymour Chwast's 1964 *Art Tone Studio India Ink* packaging design (Figure 8). Here a large 'A' reflects the fluidity of Art Nouveau lettering as new trends and ways of thinking saw designers endeavour to "reinsert meaning and expression into design while at the same time applying a juxtaposition of styles and layering of images" (Drew & Sternberger 2005, p. 136). Meggs and Purvis (2012, p. 460) assert that the "social activism of the late 1960s gave way to more self-absorbed, personal involvement during the 1970s". During this period there was a huge shift from consumer goods being produced by labour to the domination of new technology. In design, the environmental art movement emerged as a result of heightened activism. The consequence of this was eclectic and hand-made typography, often "assembled out of bits and pieces of art history, popular culture and personal experience" (Lupton & Miller 1996, p. 198).

As part of the emerging American environmental consciousness Robert Rauschenberg created the lithograph poster 'Earth Day' (1970), to popularise and celebrate the first Earth Day where Americans campaigned across the country for environmental concerns (Figure 9). The poster was the first of its kind and the focal point, an American bald eagle, was on the verge of extinction. Past styles were and still are used to create surface experiences that "appear friendly, reliable, and trustworthy in contrast to [their] high-tech competitors"



Figure 8: Art Tone Studio Ink Packaging, Seymour Chwast (1964)



Figure 9: Earth Day poster, Robert Rauschenberg (1970)

(Heward 1999, p. 189). An important switch in postmodernism is when designers began to be more than simply “mediators of information, but individuals who think creatively and visually about our culture” Keedy (2013). Typically designers search for the new and the next, yet increasingly the new has become old, and revived typefaces, dating back over a century, have been used both to enliven the presence and to produce user friendly visual experiences that contrast to the harshness of high modern styles.

In the 21st century optimistic ideas of modernism have failed to counteract negative events: “visions of the future have not stood the test of time, the hope for better things to come has receded” (Heward 1999, p. 31). Consumers and designers alike may reminisce wistfully over better times, the bygone, that is then reinvented in design. The nostalgic impulse is arguably a major contributing factor to the resurgence in the widespread use of hand-made graphics. When using past production methods and styles, Keedy (2013) highlights the turns of fashion in postmodern culture:

Designers today are representing our present era as if they were using a kaleidoscope to do it. Or more precisely, a constantly mutating digital collage machine, filled with a bunch of old “sampled” parts from the past, and decorated with special effects. Ultimately what we are left with is a feeling of aggravated and ironic nostalgia. This electronic Deja-vu-doo is getting old, again.

Through the fusion of genres and styles the notion of originality is put into jeopardy and, in many cases, the recycling of past styles and genres leads to repetitive unoriginal design. On the other hand to many designers and consumers the hand-made can provide an assortment of alternative styles that form references to times where life seemed to be much simpler. The hand-made letterform has become a branch of postmodern trend and could be (if not

already) referred to as a stylistic cliché, a response that reduces the credibility of the hand-made when used to communicate environmental issues. The impact of advanced technologies such as the Apple Macintosh computer and accessible software packages, has resulted in many designers reconsidering and reconnecting with older or traditional methods. With the aim of diversity in product output, not to mention the satisfaction of more personalised skills acquisition, designers have sought to investigate work characterised by a greater level of craftsmanship yet merge qualities of the hand-made with digitalisation (Figure 10). It has been argued that the allure of hand-made graphics has gained in popularity in spite of and as a reaction to significant advances in digital technology. The sleekness of digital technology has renewed an interest in hand-made design with the ornamental becoming fashionable again.

Grant Carruthers of *Eye* magazine explains that this may be because digital technology “edits out all the imperfections, the unfiltered emotions, the unpredictabilities and the vagaries of the human touch” (2005, no page). The craft argument is that digital precision has removed the flaws and inconsistencies of touch once evident in analogue processes and that these analogue imperfections of technique are registers of the unique human experience. In a presentation entitled “Loving the Machine” (2011), Sarah Angliss, an award-winning composer, engineer and historian of technology forcefully argued that increased levels of new technology (and in her opinion dehumanisation) have made hand-made work appear extraordinary to us. Angliss (2011) suggests that this visual style can help attract and engage audiences through its ability to evoke feelings of warmth and nostalgia. She suggests that when selecting hand-made products we are drawn to those that are obviously unbalanced, those that emphasise having not been made by a machine.

NOTED

In the first of her regular columns for Varoom, **MARIAN BANTJES** unveils relationships in layers of beauty and the pain. The heart is a palimpsest of feeling



Up Front

Figure 10: Varoom: Relationships, Marian Bantjes (2010)

To further this point Ellen Lupton (2006) explains in depth reasons why the hand-made is so attractive to both consumers and designers. She states that the hand-made provides an alternative, contrasting visual style and moral values that express a unique distinctiveness, free from pedestrian mass production. It is suggested in this study that a reaction to mass production is a specific element of environmental concern. Lupton considers that hand-made styles of design have emerged during events in history that have encouraged the reduction of consumption, such as the post-war shortages of the 1950s and its ‘make do and mend’ principles.

Perhaps there is a trend in hand-made design (in response to the global financial crisis of 2008-2010) with consumers seeking simpler lifestyles and the reduction of waste materials and financial cost. Discontent over the current financial climate, that has brought job losses and the cheapening of mass produced items, is manifest in a concern for the impact of capitalist production on the environment. For those who have lived in the digital era, analogue design and its stimulating physicality can provide profound pleasure associated with encountering the tangible and tactile. These qualities are able to counteract some of the unrest and anxiety over the direction of the global market, while drawing comparison to the Victorian Arts and Crafts movement.

Similarly, Atkinson (2006, p. 1) suggests that the most important reason for the popularity of hand-made design is that many people wish to experience a more “individual aesthetic unbound by the structure of mass production and passive consumption”. There are many instances where digitalised handwritten style lettering is heavily circulated and over used, but digital technology can also enable the reproduction and distribution of one off hand-

rendered lettering design (Figure 11). The domination of mass-produced and pedestrian products in the market has caused a large-scale social phenomenon where individuals are striving for alternatively made products.

Lance Hosey (2012) argues that there is an “aesthetic mandate” and an “imperative towards beauty, pleasure and joy” embedded in the concept of environmental consciousness. Hosey defines sustainability as a harmony between nature and culture, and states that style is deeply embedded in both. According to Hosey (2012), most attempts to bring a style to sustainability result in style clichés that all too often consist of “hemp shirts, rattan furniture, Un-bleached paper, wood-pulp walls, wheat-board cabinets and the like” that create an earthy look. Hosey (2012) suggests “If we come to associate sustainability with its trappings rather than its principles, then the designs that result will risk looking quickly passé (...) Sustainability should have style but not become a style”.

What is interesting about this view is Hosey’s suggestion that a hand-made or visual style standing as an ecological sign can become a popular trend and the most obvious, but not always the most efficient, response to design relating to environmental concerns. He suggests that what is needed is not a specific style to communicate sustainability that becomes some sort of cliché, but a “set of principles and mechanics for making design more responsive and responsible, environmentally, socially and economically” (Hosey 2012).

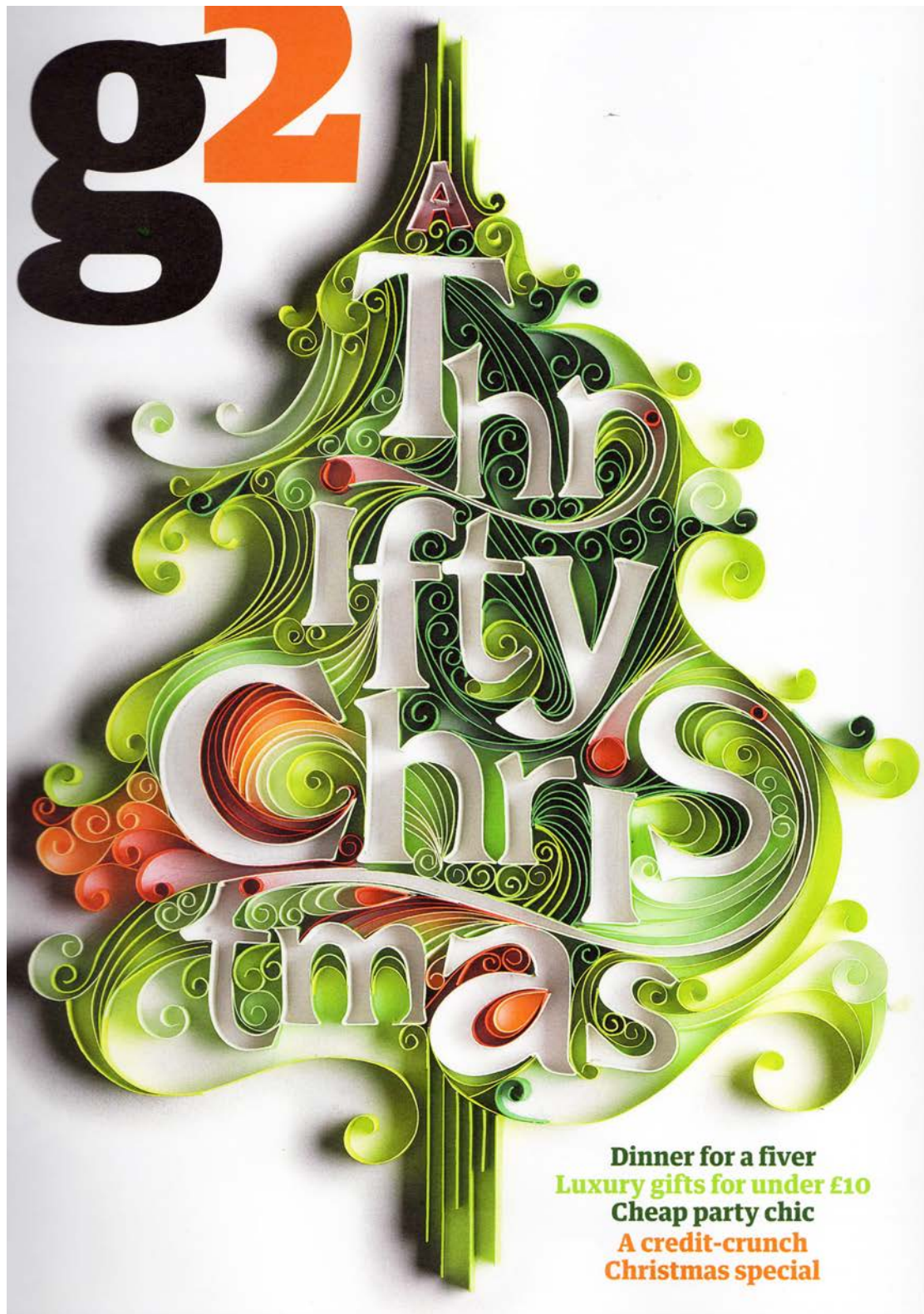


Figure 11: Yulia Brodskaya, Papergraphic Illustrations for g2 (the Guardian) (2008)

On a smaller scale and community level the hand-drawn letterform may still be suitable. If engaging in a popular trend is what it takes to stimulate a community into action, then perhaps this is the most appropriate means of communication. However, from a design perspective the creative project accompanying this thesis aims to steer clear from hand-made style clichés, whilst establishing new and engaging techniques. The creative project seeks to develop a design process for work that deals with environmental concern rather than suggesting that the hand-made letterform is the most appropriate style.

The next chapter of this project analyses three separate case studies where hand-made graphics have been used within publication design as a device to aid consumption. Two of the three examples use hand-made devices as a tool to communicate environmental concern and social issues. The case studies discuss why and how the hand-made was specifically used, to establish why the attributes of the hand-made were particularly useful.

Chapter 3: Case Studies

3.1 Case study method

The following case studies provide examples of outdated ‘hand-made’ design elements, typography and hand-lettering employed in production when other more technically advanced alternatives were available. In three separate incidences set apart by decades, the case study examples point to why and how hand-made techniques were utilised to increase consumption. The first case study is the cover design of *Vogue* magazine between 1910 and 1930, the second is the design of *Sniffin’ Glue* magazine produced in the 1970s by Mark Perry, and the third and final example is the re-branding of recent issues of the Australian magazine *Green Lifestyle*.

A case study method is an appropriate tool for this study, allowing for the development and identification of patterns of behaviour through individual and social theories across several instances of the use of hand-made graphics. Such an approach is also able to provide the opportunity to identify unique features and issues that require further investigation, whilst examining each case in relationship to each other case. These studies aim to arrive at an understanding of each occurrence studied and establish similarities between each of these cases. Predefined observations or practices (such as magazine cover design) available for analysis characterise the case study method, that is a flexible approach which in this instance seeks to explain how and why hand-made approaches were used. These studies should, where possible, examine the social theories of groups, subcultures and social changes and the impact these forces have had on graphic design. Each case study relates to the overall research objective, with the main purpose being to improve the function of the associated creative work.

It is an unintentional outcome that all three of the studies examined are of publications design. Yet these examples are useful, providing accessible information spanning a long time period that are of key representations of design trends of the time. The studies aid this paper in understanding the motivations behind using hand-made, outdated design and technology at various stages of the last 100 years. These studies may be able to establish several of the reasons for how and why the attributes of handmade design are appealing and may be useful when addressing people with environmental sensibilities. The case studies discussed also present a range of issues concerning quality of production, perceived value of design and in at least one instance hint at a critique of mass production and consumerism.

3.2 Case Study 1: Illustrated *Vogue* Covers (1910-1930)

Vogue cover designs between 1910 and 1930 are used to provide an example of outdated production methods prior to digital technology becoming widely available and used in the print industry. In the case of the *Vogue* covers, outdated methods were used in reaction to, but not in outright resistance to, the mechanical age. During the period between 1919 and 1930 it was not uncommon for *Vogue* cover designs and the ‘Vogue’ masthead lettering to be creatively illustrated by hand, even though there were more technically advanced alternatives available. This case study provides an example of how the appearance of hand-made production methods carried a perception of higher value in contrast to more modern alternatives.

The reproduced ‘one off’ illustrated *Vogue* covers led to them becoming collectable artworks with popular appeal, with a perception of higher value due to their appearance of hand-made production. The illustrated *Vogue* covers emphasised the play of a unique and contrasting style in hand-made graphics that was able to achieve and suggests that the magazine was more individual in nature than its mass produced reality would suggest. This gave *Vogue* a presentation of higher value and worth to match its editorial intentions and status on the newsstand in the newsagency for readers.

Vogue, originally a weekly gazette, was established on 17 December 1892. Its original cover template, designed by Harry McVickers, conformed each issue to a template consisting of a header of black and white illustrated figures in an Art Nouveau style, and typography formally set in Bodoni (Figure 12). The second era of the publication came seventeen years later in 1909, when the publication was taken over by Condé Nast, a young lawyer with a vision of turning the small publication around and transforming it into the most popular

fashion magazine of all time. He took the gazette from a weekly publication to a fortnightly magazine and at the same time revamped the cover style. “Nast meant to stamp his magazine’s distinctive identity on the public mind, and the cover was his best instrument” (Angeletti & Oliva 2006, p. 32). He achieved this through enlisting a range of artists to create exciting and never seen before one off illustrations.

Between 1910 and the early 1930s, *Vogue* covers were designed and illustrated by a small inclusive group of artists who created vibrant covers in various styles of illustration and painting, incorporating the word ‘Vogue’ imaginatively into the composition. The early 20th century was called the illustration era of magazine design, although photographic and typesetting technology was then available, but not used by *Vogue* until the 1930s. This was surprising, as most other typographic design of the 1920s and 1930s had been greatly influenced by the emergence of the Constructivist movement, which had the intention of creating a new technological society, promoting the language of science and the power of speed in the machine age of the industrial revolution. Typographic form of the time was angular and sleek, with a utilitarian form that embodied the tempo of machine and steam age. The exception here was magazine editors, who had been quick to take advantage of small emerging trends in illustration to promote fashion. Condé Nast set the following guidelines for the design of *Vogue*, described by Angeletti and Oliva (2006, p. 32) as:

Vogue covers had to be in color; use only drawings, not photographs; use a limited roster of artists, so readers would identify them with the magazine; bear the artists’ signatures; systematically incorporate the word ‘Vogue’ in the design; and transmit elegance, refinement, and social position.

During this time illustrations seen on magazine covers were particularly popular, and artists such as Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali used magazine illustration to build personal followings through popular culture publications. *Vogue* covers under Condé Nast featured some of the most beautiful examples of art of the era. Between 1910 and 1930 *Vogue* illustrators were given total creative freedom to draw the logo as they wished (Figures 13 and 14). Each issue would be different, unique and collectable, using interesting and playful techniques that formed part of the whole composition. Today the *Vogue* cover consists of a template that has hardly changed since the 1950s (Figure 15) and has turned full circle from the playfulness of illustration to the return of a simple logo set in Bodoni, similar to that of the original design at the end of the 19th century.

Today the covers of major magazines have a standard layout used issue after issue, usually with photographically illustrated images of celebrities printed on glossy paper. Our fast-paced consumer culture has resulted in cheap, efficient magazine design, rife with advertising campaigns. In the 21st century, magazines such as *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair* and *Cosmopolitan* have become huge brands, with monthly United States circulations of 1.1 million for *Vanity Fair*, 2.7 million for *Vogue* in 2013 and 3 million for *Cosmopolitan* in 2013 (Conde Naste 2014, *Vogue* 2013, *Cosmopolitan* 2013). Yet these magazines are hardly distinguishable from each other when stacked together on the newsagent's shelf.

It is important to note that *Vogue* covers under Condé Nast were successful collectable pieces of design that were seen to have a high value because their design method was time consuming and required in some eyes, higher skill to create. Nast's intention was to "transmit elegance, refinement, and social position" and this examination may imply that the hand-made or design achieved through timely and costly methods appeals to those with



Figure 12: *Vogue* cover 1892

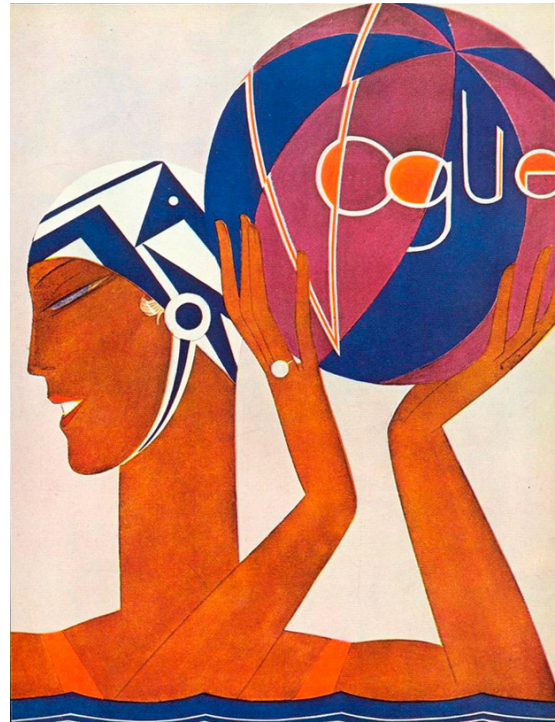


Figure 13: *Vogue* cover June 1927



Figure 14: *Vogue* cover July 1928



Figure 15: *Vogue* cover November 2012

higher sensibilities (Angeletti & Oliva 2006, p. 32). The design of *Vogue* covers under Condé Nast separated them from design of a lower value and used outdated approaches to achieve a higher value. In contrast to the example of *Vogue* is *Sniffin' Glue* magazine, discussed in the next case study. Established in the United Kingdom by Mark Perry, its production exploits the lower associated value of the hand-made as part of the punk DIY subculture of the 1970s.

3.3 Case Study 2: *Sniffin' Glue* by Mark Perry (1979)

During the 1970s *Sniffin' Glue* magazine was an important underground communication tool for the punk subcultural movement and became a representation of the overall style and DIY (do it yourself) ethos of the time. *Sniffin' Glue* magazine is discussed here as a representation of how the punk movement used hand-made graphic design as part of a social movement that aimed to combat commercialism and undermine the domination of large corporations. Punk subculture members displayed their individuality and unconventionality through their sense of style, which in turn formed part of their lifestyle. Style itself is a display of expression that shares part of its nature with something else, yet displays elements of existing codes and identities. The clothes punk subculture members wore, the music they listened to and the magazines they read (all consumer choices) formed a general lifestyle. Mikula (2008, p. 193) defines subcultures as “value systems, beliefs, customs, practices, cultural preferences and lifestyles distinct from, but interconnected to, those widely held in mainstream culture”. The punk subculture expressed and represented themselves through the combination of objects, activities and attitudes (Hebdige 1979, pp. 106-112).

Punk music arrived onto the scene as part of the subcultural movement of the same name in the 1970s. Characterised by its anti-establishment and DIY ethos, it created a disruptive force within society. Punk's resistance to current society, as well as its alternative views, led to the creation of several hand-crafted, self-published magazines, which became a significant underground communication avenue for the movement. *Sniffin' Glue* was a monthly fanzine founded by Mark Perry, a former bank clerk, in 1979 that contributed in forming an accurate representation of the British punk subculture. The fanzine achieved the same 'buzz' of punk music visually through the use of hand-made techniques that “had an impact on an overall idiosyncratic and distinctive visual style affiliated with punk zines”

(Triggs 2006, p. 69).

Teal Triggs (2006, p. 70) explains that the publication was deeply connected to the non-professional do-it-yourself ethic of the time that had been fuelled by “substantial cultural, social and political change”. *Sniffin’ Glue* was a communication tool for the thriving and liberating, underground and alternative punk music culture. The independent approach of this subculture helped to promote anti-consumerist ideals by encouraging the use of limited and primitive means throughout daily life. This is very similar to the current ‘Green’ subculture that sees people seeking simpler and less conspicuously wasteful lives. Punk defied convention and *Sniffin’ Glue* helped punk to establish its own graphic style and attitude. Its DIY appearance “critiques mass production through the very hand-made quality it embraces” (Triggs 2006, p. 69).

Sniffin’ Glue was hand-made and distributed by Mark Perry himself, using stapled A4 photocopied paper (Figure 16). Perry used his girlfriend’s work photocopier machine to reduce printing costs, and the urgency and relevance of its content was emphasised by its haphazard layouts (Perry 2000). *Sniffin’ Glue* creates a sense of radical bricolage through visual style and content that begins to characterise the visual language of the punk movement (Triggs 2006, p. 69). Graphics were created using a back-to-basics approach and the letterforms were often cut and pasted from magazines, headings were usually hand-scrawled in marker pen then scribbled out, and main body text

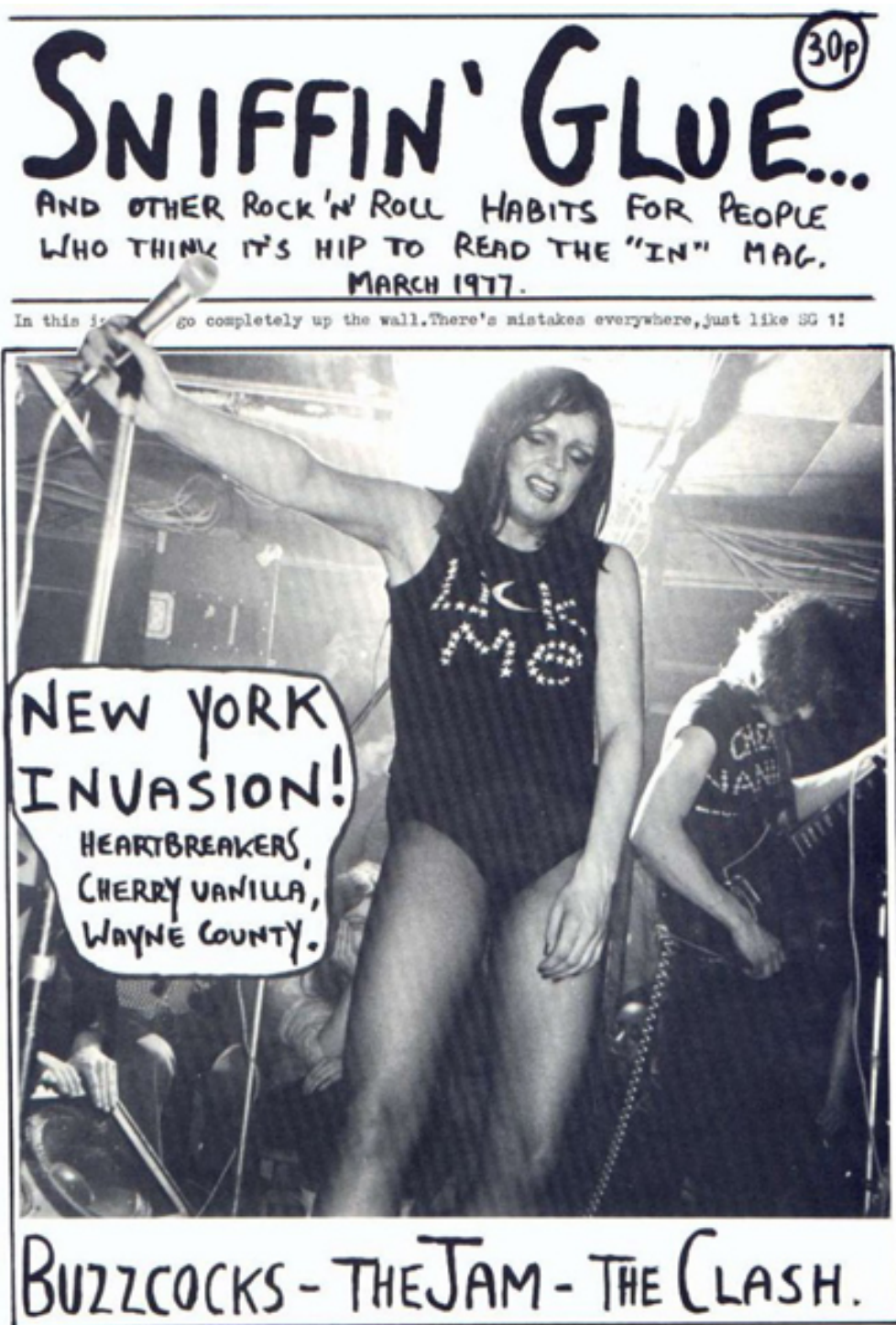


Figure 16: *Sniffin' Glue* (cover) by Mark Perry (March 1977)

was typed on a child's toy typewriter (Triggs 2006, p. 69). The liberating use of a typewriter can be seen as "homologous with punk's subterranean and anarchic style" (Hebdige 1979, p. 112). The typographic style helped stress the immediacy of its content and the fanzine itself established a highly recognisable design style for the entire British punk movement. Mark Perry's amateurish typography was essential in retaining the DIY style for the punk movement. The scrappy layouts took the whole punk ethos and applied it to magazine design that was then distributed to the fans. There were no guidelines in terms of layout and there was a complete disregard for graphic design rules as Perry was unaware of them. One of the magazine's main appeals was a real sense that the publication could have been created by anyone. Although it appeared chaotic, the style was in fact ordered and meaningful in the sense that it displayed signs and the style of the movement. The visual appearance of the magazine enabled consumers to feel actively engaged with its production process and expressed an individualistic approach free from mass production which was in line with their anti-consumerist ethos. The punk subculture influenced more than just music, it was deeply rooted in the identity of those involved and also evolved into a powerful political force.

Sniffin' Glue magazine represents a significant part of the punk subcultural movement, and its graphic elements, typography and illustration reflect the appropriated style, rejection of social norms and consumerism. It is useful to this study as it describes sensibilities, individual choices and modes of expression that became part of a lifestyle. Today wide ranging consumer choice means that we are seeing increasing pockets of style and collective expression and the punk movement was one of these expressions. This may indicate that the hand-made is popular amongst consumers with a disdain for the conventional that aligns with environmental sensibilities, as part of their consumer preferences and lifestyle choices.

In modern culture today there is a growing group of environmentally aware people who have formed a new 'Green' movement that has quickly become fashionable. Many individuals are collectively stepping away from fixed consumerist trends and are consciously making changes in pattern of behaviours to benefit the environment such as conscientious recycling of household rubbish. However, the Green movement has perhaps become an exceptionally stylised 'fad' and a commercialised trend in popular culture. The Green subculture represents itself in clothing, food, packaging, magazines and books, similar to *Sniffin' Glue*. For instance, as discussed in the next case study, the popular Australian magazine *Green Lifestyle* has become a representation of the Green movement, with its style represented in the graphics, photography and typography of the magazine.

3.4 Case Study 3: *G* magazine and *Green Lifestyle* magazine (2012)

This case study examines the transformation of *G* magazine to *Green Lifestyle* and focuses on its new, more sustainable look. This case study has been chosen to provide an example of how hand-made lettering can lend itself to graphic design for food, health and lifestyle products. The more natural visual nature of this ‘Green’ style leads us as consumers to believe that the products showcased are better for us than those that appear mass-produced. This study provides an example of the growing trend in ‘eco style’ graphics sweeping through consumer culture. In the early 20th century, the German sociologist George Simmel defined ‘style’ as “a general law of form that is also applied to other works” and that “it shares its nature or a part of its design with others it thus points to a common root that lies beyond the individual work” (Frisby & Featherstone) 1997, pp. 211-212). Taking into account Simmel’s definition, the eco style graphics of *Green Lifestyle* play a role in displaying the lifestyle, attitudes and ethos of the magazine itself and the current environmental movement.

The sales of this magazine documented within the study suggest that the ‘eco style’ graphics aided its consumption amongst consumers with a disposition towards healthy lifestyles and green living. The importance of this study is that it suggests that in contemporary culture, consumer purchasing choices form individual styles and experiences, and that consumers with environmental sensibilities will have been drawn to the magazine’s new hand-made design as part of a pre-existing style code. Likewise, this study also raises the question of hand-made design as the latest style fad, but suggests instead that it is becoming a cultural sign of the current environmental lifestyle movement.

In 2009 Australian publisher Nextmedia purchased the popular, leading publication *G* magazine (Figure 17) that had been launched in 2006. In August 2012, the publisher dramatically transformed the magazine into the now even more successful *Green Lifestyle* magazine. *Green Lifestyle* is the “essential guide to simple and sustainable living” that provides solutions to living lower-impact lifestyles and is also the dominant mainstream publication on the issue of sustainability (Next Media, 2014). The rebranding of *G* magazine to *Green Lifestyle* also came with a dramatic redesign including an updated masthead, a new style of cover imagery and cover layout, a redesign of the inside page spreads, a change in typographic style and a change in paper stock (Figure 18).

The publication now sports a hand-made style masthead consisting of printed style lettering layered on an image of textured and torn paper, which is a strong contrast with the original stark ‘G’ masthead. Although the lettering was created with the aid of digital technology, it clearly references the hand-made and the real design method is perhaps not obvious or of importance to the general consumer. The publication is also now printed on 100 per cent post-consumer recycled stock, and its texture is very obviously different to other titles on the newsstand, as is its cover imagery. The publication has yet to use photographs of humans, landscapes or multiple images on their covers. Instead they only use simple, highly detailed and heavily textured still life images. The features headings on the cover are either in a hand-printed style lettering or hand-written style. A showstopper on the newsstand, its design contrasts against many other titles. The publishers and designers embraced the latest style trend and this representation of simplistic living has become very appealing in today’s fast paced society.



Figure 17: G magazine (2011)



Figure 18: Green Lifestyle magazine (2013)

The effects of a new visual approach and re-branding are reflected in the publication's subscription sales. Based on information from personal email correspondence (2013) with a representative from iSUBSCRIBE, Australia's leading magazine subscriptions agent, *Green Lifestyle* magazine saw sales increase from 271 subscriptions the year before the re-launch to 345 subscriptions the year after the re-launch, despite a price increase from \$35 to \$49 for 12 months (Appendix 1).

Interestingly, between August 2012 and September 2013, *Green Lifestyle* magazine also saw an increase in readership from the younger consumer with purchasers aged 18-24 years increasing by over double. Appendix 1 shows that the refreshed look consisting of an updated hand-made masthead, textural photography and name change (now with specific reference to the environment) may have encouraged new audiences, and this was mostly in the 25-34 year age range and then secondly in the 35-44 year age range. The profound pleasure associated with encountering the tangible and tactile may be attracting new eyes and most prominently young working adults. Personal communication with the Customer Service Representative of iSUBSCRIBE suggests that 82% of *Green Lifestyle* readers are highly educated and 60% are in a higher income bracket.

The demographic subscribing to *Green Lifestyle* suggests that a young professional age range may be those most receptive to the current trend in hand-made design, which is valuable research when designing for the creative project of this study. The creative work aims to attract new audiences, particularly younger people who are able to carry with them the knowledge gathered from one generation to the next. The style of graphic design displayed in *Green Lifestyle* is appealing to consumers who are seeking to distance themselves from mass culture and consumerism. There is new awareness in healthy, green

living and this is reflected in graphic design. *Green Lifestyle* magazine has utilised hand-made design elements to create an individualistic appearance that distances itself from other publications. Despite being a current trend, in this instance the hand-made is used to suggest alternative, healthier lifestyles that in turn encourage ethical consumption from those who purposefully or passively are involved in the green movement. The longevity of hand-made style design as a trend or visual trope is questionable: when will the hand-made style simply become unfashionable? It is therefore important for the creative project associated with this study to very clearly avoid style clichés, especially those associated with obvious digitally designed ‘hand-made’ graphics for fear of becoming passé.

Chapter 4: Design Values

Beginning in the 1990s, we have witnessed a technological revolution on a scale similar to that of the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. The majority of all hand-crafted techniques and skills in graphic design have become outdated, first by the machine era that influenced the Arts and Crafts movement and then by the digital age. Therefore the hand-made is no longer the principle production method in graphic design nor does it have strict production requirements. As a consequence, hand-made procedures and techniques are now being used to enliven digital graphic design. Outdated methods and typography from past eras are being revived and combined with hand-made techniques to provide alternative visual styles.

As stated earlier in this study Ellen Lupton (2006) believes that a hand-made visual style has emerged during events that have encouraged the reduction of consumption. Typographic trends often give definition to particular moments in social, political and cultural history, and even the most technically and academically acclaimed lettering evokes these associations. Arguably, concerns about the rapid pace of technological change and environmental deterioration associated with the current digital age are reflected in design and typography.

The incremental impact of 19th, 20th and 21st century industrialism on global social and environmental sustainability witnessed an increasing critical response on the part of scientists and citizens toward the late 1960s and 1970s. The ecology movement, as defined by David Sills (1975, p. 4), is based upon environmental protection against damage caused by industrialisation, global warming and over-consumption. The movement emerged at the end of the late 1960s as a values driven social movement and increased in motivation as

damage to our planet increased. Roderick Bamford (2011, p. 1) states that the hand-made 'style' has "emerged as an antidotal signifier to the combined impacts of hyper efficient production and rampant 'throw away' consumerism". Presently our planet can't sustain itself, and Tony Fry (2009, p. 3) in *Design Futuring* stresses "design's continually growing importance as a decisive factor in our future having a future". He suggests that design is concerned with the development of products, tools, machines, and activities that all have a direct impact on ecology and states that we are currently designing in a way that reduces the lifespan of our planet (Fry 2009, p. 2). It has been said that designers themselves "express this concern through a nostalgic longing for the past, in an attempt to return to a seemingly simpler yet primitive way of life" (Papenek 1995, p. 25). This information is useful to the creative element of this study by stressing the importance of designing in less impacting ways: hand-made graphic design may not in all cases have the most environmentally friendly production method but could be a way to engage with such complex issues.

The aim of this study has been to establish whether these hand-made techniques, often isolated from newer technologies, can support the communication of environmental concern and play a role in the reduction of damage to our planet. As an example, a hand-made typographic style with an interest in sustainability can be seen in 'Project Winterfood', a community event created by students of the Virginia Commonwealth University (USA) and posters for 'Youth Food Nights' by Sydney based Youth Food Movement. The design students of Virginia Commonwealth University strived to promote positive change through community service learning. Project Winterfood was a local food resource, art exhibition, and community initiative held during December 2009 (Shea 2012, p. 44). The aim of the project was to highlight the merits of buying and eating locally sourced and in-season food in the community. To aid this effort, students created accompanying posters, flyers, a blog

and logo using custom designed lettering (Figure 17). Visitors to the event were educated in the ways they could enjoy and share food produced by local organic growers and restaurants that use locally sourced ingredients. The aim of the project was to share and preserve local food culture, as well as to educate the community in how easy, beneficial, inexpensive and fun it is to utilise local food options. The overall purpose of Project Winterfood was to capture new attention, but particularly of “those who already enjoyed farm-fresh foods and those who had heard the phrase ‘eating locally’ but had not had the chance to really discover what it was all about.” (Shea 2012, p. 44).

Current directions in ecological awareness, social and cultural changes have fuelled a natural and inevitable return to more primitive ways of life and production methods in design, with distinct historic references and raw, earthy and organic lettering. An example of this can be witnessed in the communication material for the ‘Real Food Nights’ event organised by the Youth Food Movement (Figure 18). Here the Youth Food Movement attempted to engage the community culturally and politically. Enabled by technology these designers have combined valuable form and content with the aim of simulating change, awareness and education. The environmental movement of the 1960s developed responses to sustainability issues that are still relevant in the 21st century. The current use of hand-made visual styles has its roots in hand-craft practice of the 1960s and 1970s. This alternative approach “acts as an antithesis of the prescribed design of the mass market place” (Lupton 2006, p. 1). There are values and knowledge associated with non-digital practice and as Alfoldy (2008, p. 107) states, they stand as forces against “capitalism and mass production, they are deeply satisfying to makers; they forge intimate connections with users and consumers”.



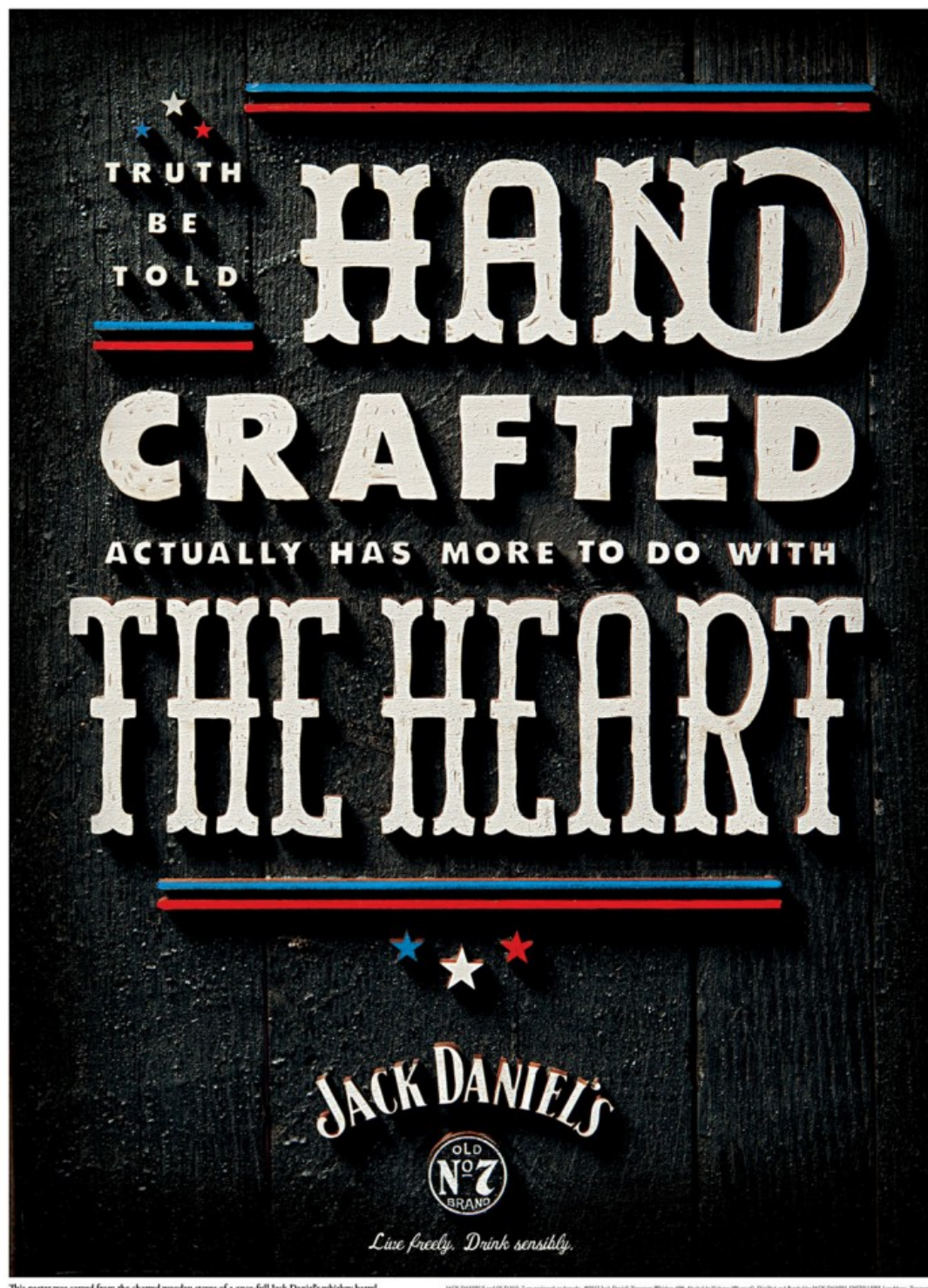
Figure 17: 'Project Winterfood', Virginia Commonwealth University USA (2009)



Figure 18: 'Real Food Nights' poster by the Youth Food Movement (2013)

Today's hand-made revolution is partly a direct result of technological change, and the result can often have an alternative, warming appeal (Figure 19). Mike Press suggests the hand-made is able to "humanise this dangerous new century that we have recently entered", providing a sense of humanity and a personal touch during a time when we have very little human interaction with anything (Press 2007, p. 252). The punk subculture as described earlier in the case study of *Sniffin' Glue* magazine is echoed today as the hand-made aims to combat the monotony of mainstream production. The hand-made movement has arguably become a socialist movement that aims to combat commercialism and in many cases today, consumers buy hand-made items to undermine the domination of large corporations and to show their social consciences.

In an era of mass production and a digital sameness, there seems to be a growing awareness, among both designers and consumers, of links between mass production, corporatisation and issues of sustainability. Aided by new self-sustaining and low carbon footprint technology, government initiatives and the press, many people around the world are engaging in DIY activities in an effort to save money and to generate unique products from quality materials, echoing in part the ethos of the Arts and Crafts movement, thus making way for a new trend in hand-made sensibilities (Lupton 2006, p. 18). Hand-made design allows consumers to actively engage with the design process at a number of levels. Ellen Lupton states that hand-crafted objects and products enable consumers to "feel less dependent on the corporations that manufacture and distribute most of the products and media we consume" and this has a direct relationship with environmental concern (2006, p. 18). The increased volume and saturation of designed and printed material has led to a trend of simple design that suggests honesty, integrity, dedication to quality materials and packaging to encourage confidence in



This poster was carved from the charred wooden staves of a once-full Jack Daniel's whiskey barrel.

JACK DANIEL'S and OLD NO. 7 are registered trademarks. ©2012 Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey 40% Alc/Vol (80 proof). Distilled and Bottled by JACK DANIEL'S DISTILLERS, Lynchburg, Tennessee.

Figure 19: Jack Daniel's 3D Wood Type Poster (2012)

a product through hand-made sensibilities (Terashima 2010, p. 7). There is also a danger that some organisations may take advantage of consumer demand for environmentally friendly goods and services by using a hand-made style when designing and packaging their product.

Set alongside digital formats, this alternative approach to design can engage audiences and capture attention; it implies a sense of nostalgia and supplies a stark contrast to the principles of digital design. According to Levine (2008, p. xi), many people who engage in craft activities believe that they are “reshaping how people consume and interpret the hand-made” with their hand-made work aiming to make political statements. Essayist Andrew Wagner (in Levine 2008, p. 2) suggests that craft is a “particular outlook on the world”, often holding a set of anti-industrial and oppositional values to those of conventional design for the mass marketplace. Small-scale and alternative design allows consumers “to feel less dependent on the corporations that manufacture and distribute most of the products and media we consume” (Lupton 2006, p. 18). In today’s struggling economy products packaged with hand-made sensibilities make us believe the item and the company that produce it are kinder and gentler than others and also seem to be used as a device to appeal to a growing environmental subculture.

Typography is an important element of graphic design and communication, able to portray mood and emotion, as designer Paula Scher states in an *Eye* magazine interview: “Words have meaning and typography has feeling” (Walters 2010, p. xx). The increased use of hand-made typography is in many cases, such as the masthead for *Green Lifestyle* magazine, a reflection of heightened green awareness and a natural alternative to the mass of conventional digital design. This response is also evident in the marketing material and brand mark of ‘The Cake Crew’ and the packaging of ‘Twinings Tea Infusions Range’

(Figures 20 and 21). Here the reference to the hand-made makes these products appear both good for us and for the environment whether they really are or not, therefore risking an accusation of green washing.

The unadulterated and primitive techniques of hand-made lettering lend themselves well to graphic design for food products, as the more natural visual style leads us to believe that the product is good for our health. Enabled by the typographic history available on the internet, many designers look to lettering styles from the past “to find alternatives outside computer imposed perfection” (Heller & Anderson 2007, p. 9). Visual references to the past, outdated lettering and production methods (Figure 22) achieve a charisma today that “highlights a contemporary rough-hewn character” (Heller & Anderson 2007, p. 9). Karen Wilks (1990, p. 12) writes about the charm of analogue techniques in the 1990 issue of *Baseline* magazine:

Part of this appeal may be purely nostalgic (...) perhaps it is its polished appearance on screen (...) or the fact that it is, at this level, design by program, lifeless step by step, no-risk easy stages without any intuitive element.

The launch of new technology and impressive design software can enable fast production and replication of pen strokes and print textures, yet it can also result in amateur imitation if created by an unskilled designer. It is technology that has enabled the recent surge of hand-made typefaces and lettering with reference to past eras, and has also led to the creation of work that looks as if it were custom designed. When writing about the Arts and Crafts movement, Francis Watts Lee (1892, p. 53) suggests that we as humans will always be interested in design that “testifies that it has been a source of joy to the maker”. Exposing the



Figure 20: 'The Cake Crew' branding and logo design by Tobias Hall (2013)



Figure 21: Twinings Tea Infusions Range designed by BrandOpus (2013)

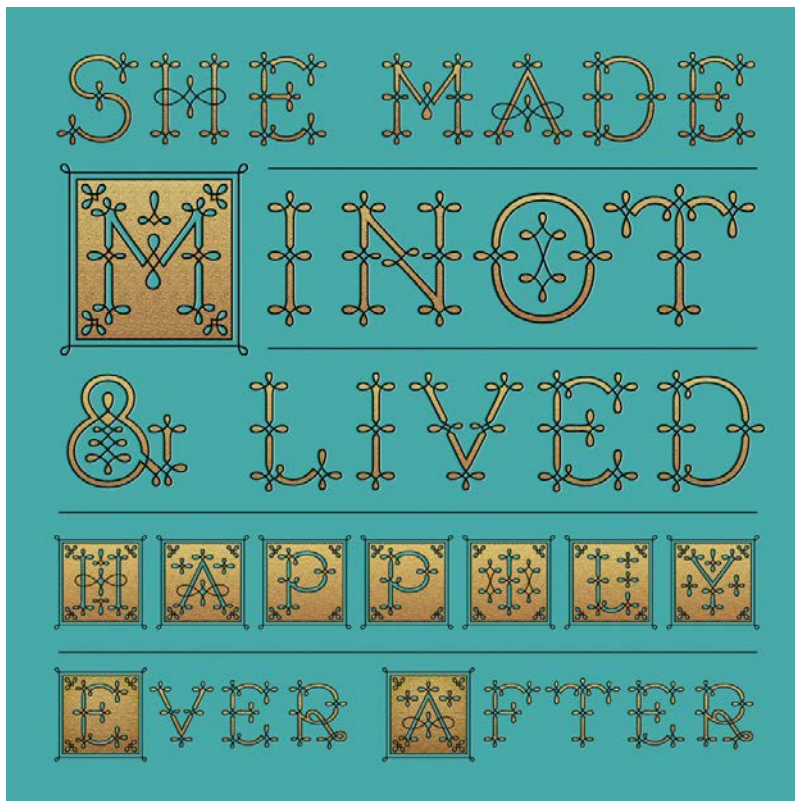


Figure 22: 'Buttermilk' (top) & 'Minot' by Jessica Hisch (2013)

production techniques and the touch of the maker through hand-made graphics creates a narrative and depth that is directly evident to the viewer.

This chapter establishes that the hand-made movement has thrived because of recent times of economic and environmental concern. The raw quality of genuine hand-made lettering has enabled the consumer to connect to the human stories we are missing in our technologically overloaded world. Hand-crafted and beautifully created lettering design express genuine reference to what seems to us now as simpler times where we consumed less. It is important to be aware of our changing relationship with technology with the trend in hand-made lettering now resulting in an increase of simulated design. This has begun to cause a rhetoric that devalues digitally created hand-made lettering and in contrast increases the value of traditionally hand-made lettering design.

As the qualities of hand-made design become fashionable, manufacturers of mass-produced items exploit this appeal. Capitalism and consumption are quickly becoming ecological disasters and we are becoming increasingly wary of the consequence, therefore hand-made design and a rejection of the digital aesthetic lends itself well to the design for sustainability projects. Yet it can also be argued that the appeal of the hand-made is largely due to a desire for diversity in visual experiences.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study began with discussion of values associated with the outdated Arts and Craft printing technology in the mid to late 19th century, at a time when more efficient and modern alternatives were available. It was also argued that outdated lettering styles and techniques are often used in response to social change, increased consumption and therefore environmental concern. Creating novelty out of the past, which in some cases provides a return to quality craftsmanship and in postmodernist design a rebellion against conformity including functional standardisation, is often linked to claims for reassessing and preserving social values. The study has also addressed the characteristics of modernist design and its eventual decline in the wake of postmodernism that saw a return to outdated lettering styles, individualism and contradiction in cultural practice.

This study has suggested that as both consumers and designers we are drawn to design and products that display a sense of tactility and crafted fabrication during times of political, technological and environmental change. It appears that as humans we strive to feel and experience the tangible and natural, and this has been heightened as a result of significant advances in digital technology. To some extent all of us welcome the ‘real’ and unadulterated and, as professionals, graphic designers usually enjoy working in a hands-on manner. Perhaps digital technology has meant, as Foster puts it “They lost their touch with their work – literally” (1999, p. 7).

Designers have begun to design beyond the limitations of technology, recognising that hand-made design is able to appeal in an era where we are swamped by default-formatted information. The automation of printing and design with limited human interaction often results in predictable and cheap outcomes. Today it is the playful and tactile quality of the

hand-made that communicates directly and has established itself into a popular style, although now currently under threat of becoming style rhetoric. Hand-made lettering, when used as an image device, can function as both a carrier of information and as visual concept, and by designing for audiences to both look at and read it asks for further consideration of the messages intended for communication.

Hand-made design and new technology exist effectively now only with the help of one another, yet most of us are well aware of the damage caused to the environment through irresponsible industrial development on a global scale. Paradoxically, we are also capable of using new technology to re-deploy those original hand-made forms that were otherwise unable to survive commercially. In short, digital software, the internet and new printing technology aid in the reproduction and distribution of hand-made graphics. Furthermore, when communicating environmental issues, the hand-made is an appropriate means. After all, it is heavy industry and unsustainable technology and practices such as over packaging that are predominantly responsible for the current state of our planet. In contrast, the hand-made, if sustainably used, creates a very coherent set of alternatives that are able to engage audiences that might not otherwise take action. The implications of hand-made design do not always directly impact sustainability, yet hand-made design does symbolise alternative values as a way of being in the world. Hand-made design is an effective agent in community sustainability; its visual nature is seen as being a more ‘natural’ alternative to new technology and can be exploited to facilitate positive change.

Appendix 1: Email correspondence with iSUBSCRIBE (2013)

Danielle Hooker <danielle@isubscribe.com>
To: daniellelucy@icloud.com
Green lifestyle magazine

25 November 2013 2:18 PM

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: Green lifestyle mag
Date: Wed, 25 Sep 2013 12:00:46 +1000
From: Michelle Morrison <michelle@isubscribe.com>
To: Danielle Hooker <danielle@isubscribe.com>

Hey Danielle,

Wow that's great thanks for finding me those results!

I have done a report on a few things, let me know if you would like me to run any others!

Year on year sales between August & September

Sales from August 24th 2012 - 24th September 2013 = 345 subscriptions sold
Sales from August 24th 2011 - 24th September 2012 = 271 subscriptions sold

In early 2011 the price of a 12 month subscription was \$35.00 however after the name change the magazine increased to \$49.00 for a 12 month subscription however sales have increased.

Overall the Home & Garden Category has increased, which could have affected the slight increase however I would suggest the name change has also captured a larger audience.

Percentage of subs by age within **Sales from August 24th 2012 - 24th September 2013:**

Age Range	This Year	%
-	2	0.58%
18-24	12	3.48%
25-34	55	15.94%
35-44	58	16.81%
45-54	40	11.59%
55-64	22	6.38%
65+	10	2.90%
N/A	146	42.32%

Percentage of subs by age within **Sales from August 24th 2011 - 24th September 2012:**

Age Range	This Year	%
18-24	2	0.74%
25-34	33	12.18%
35-44	48	17.71%
45-54	30	11.07%
55-64	20	7.38%
65+	4	1.48%
N/A	134	49.45%

Hope this helps, again let me know if you need any other information.

Thanks,
Michelle

Michells Morrison | Customer Service Representative | iSUBSCRIBE
p +61 2 9251 3500 | f +61 2 9251 3600
Suite 17, 13 Hickson Road, Dawes Point NSW 2000 Australia

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