Title: *101 Reykjavik*
Designer: John Fulbrook
Client: Scribner
Photographer: Misha Gravenor **Year:** 2003

Design

Section One

Specialties

Most art schools wisely teach graphic design as a general practice, the theory being that the orchestration of type and image, whether on paper or screen, is always based on the same fundamental formal principles. Different media, however, have different requirements. Editorial design is not the same as advertising; advertising is not the same as book design. Each has a unique focus and target. In most cases, the tools are similar but the methodologies are not.

Many graphic designers perform a broad range of tasks, switching media as clients and jobs demand. A designer cannot always afford to specialize because the volume of work in a specialty may not warrant it or competition may be too

intense. Therefore, it is prudent at the outset of a career to learn about and practice all the disciplines that strike your interest and fancy as well as those that are growth areas for employment. Although it is not necessary to be expert in everything, it is useful to be fluent in as many forms as possible, at least while you are looking for a career niche.

How is this accomplished? For those bound for art school, there may be no choice. The average design program provides instruction in the basics while spotlighting specialties such as magazine layout, book and record covers, posters, advertising, and Web design in order to provide students with a well-rounded professional portfolio. Once out of school, however, specialization usually calls. If you are hired by a general design firm, exposure to a variety of disciplines is very likely. But if you are hired by an in-house art/design department, specialization is inevitable.

A junior designer at a design firm usually assists on different aspects of various projects, from annual reports to brochures to Web pages. Even if you do not feel entirely confident with a particularly new medium, never refuse an opportunity – in fact, volunteer for as much extra duty as possible within the limits of monetary remuneration (learn as much as you can, but do not allow yourself to become financially exploited in the process).

A junior designer at an in-house corporate or business art/design department is often given a single task. While it is important to build expertise in whatever field this may be, it is also consequential to expand your potential knowledge base. If possible, volunteer for additional jobs that depart from your basic assignment. If the company art department has several divisions, such as print, Web, and exhibition, attempt to assist outside your own area; there is a very good chance you will be given the opportunity to do so.

This advice is not aimed exclusively at neophytes. Experienced designers must also continually broaden their range of expertise, if only to thwart impending obsolescence. For example, when digital technology entered the realm of graphic design,

many dedicated print designers turned their attention toward CD-ROM and Internet opportunities. A few enrolled in graduate schools to get more intensive training; others gave up senior print jobs to apprentice or assist others already working in the digital arena. Moving from print to electronic media is not the only possible career change. Many designers who fall into a specialty without previous exposure elsewhere want new challenges and so switch from, say, advertising to editorial, perhaps accepting a lower position to get on-the-job training until achieving proficiency in the new discipline.

Ultimately, the majority of designers pick a specialty (or specialties) and stick with it (them) until the learning curve flattens out or the projects become routine. Of course, depending on their comfort level, some designers spend their entire lives in one job either moving up the corporate hierarchy or, if content with the status quo, remaining at the same basic level. Everyone's ambition is individual and depends on personal needs, wants, drive, and ability. If one hungers for creative challenges, then general practice is preferred; if one longs for consistency, then specialization is a good option.

Your decision to practice in a specific discipline should be considered thoughtfully. While it is true that many designers stumble into a specialty simply because a particular job is available to them, others carefully reconnoiter the job market for the position that most appeals to their passion or interest. Then there is the hip factor: Some job seekers simply want to be hired by the hippest firms – MTV and Nickelodeon Networks rate high among that demographic. There is nothing wrong with this goal – except, of course, that you must be aware that these sought-after companies receive hundreds of applications for comparatively few openings.

It is axiomatic that more is much better than less knowledge, which means that it is important to know what disciplines are available, what they require of a prospective candidate, and how to apply for the job. This section examines genres that hire the greatest number of graphic designers and offers basic information concerning

the nature of each at the entry and senior levels. Becoming a graphic designer in any of these showcased disciplines is based on skill and accomplishment – graphic design is nothing if not a meritocracy. When your portfolio is professional (no loose or disorganized scraps of paper), well edited (the number of pieces is limited to the few that show how proficient you are), and smartly paced (showing that you know how to make ideas appear dynamic), then you have a greater likelihood of influencing a prospective employer, if not for the job being considered, then for other possibilities and referrals. Even if you don't get the job, it is important to make a positive impression so that you are remembered for future positions.

Knowing the field is one important way to maximize your chances of entering it. Each specialty has unique needs and wants. Job candidates who desire to make a good impression should design a portfolio that indicates interest, and at least a modicum of expertise, in the selected area.

I. Editorial

FACTS AND FIGURES issued by the United States Department of Labor are sketchy about exactly which medium is the largest employer of graphic designers. Nonetheless, it is a sound assumption that magazines and newspapers give opportunities to a large percentage of junior and senior designers and art directors.

Within a magazine or newspaper infrastructure, design duties are often divided into two fundamental groups: editorial and promotion. The latter, which administers advertising and publicity, including the conception and design of ads, billboards, and collateral materials such as advertising rate cards, subscription campaigns, and promotional booklets and brochures, may be large or small, depending on

the priorities of the specific company. The former, however, is the creative heart of an institution. Editorial designers are the people who give the publication its aura, image, and format. And yet the editorial art department is configured differently from publication to publication, so it is not always possible for a job candidate to know the makeup of specific departments before interviewing for a job (which may or may not help anyway). The following are typical scenarios that illustrate the variety of editorial opportunities.

MAGAZINES

MAGAZINES COME in various shapes, sizes, and frequencies. In any given year, thousands are published on such a wide range of subjects that it is difficult to list them all here. The quality of their design also ranges widely from high to low, with a great deal in between. While this book is not a critical guide to design quality, one important part of any professional equation is indeed the publication's design standard. Does the publisher expect the highest and most rigorous quality or merely competent work? The evidence is usually clear from the look of the magazine itself. The job seeker should decide whether working for a particular publication is going to enhance or detract from future prospects — and from compiling good portfolio samples. Of course, this is ultimately a personal decision. Sometimes acquiring experience is more important than any other concern; sometimes working on the best not only encourages the best but results in greater opportunities later.

Design positions at magazines are frequently available for all experience levels. The intense and constant workflow that goes into periodical design and production demands many participants. A typical hierarchy begins at the top with a *design director* or *art director*, who manages the overall design department and design of the magazine, including the format (which either he or an outside design consultant originally designed); this may include overseeing the work of senior and junior page designers and designing pages and covers himself. It may also involve assigning illustration, photography, and typography. (When the budget allows, custom typefaces are also commissioned.) In addition, the art director is involved

in meetings with editors (and sometimes authors) concerning article presentation. Some of these duties are invariably delegated to a deputy or *associate art director*, who does many of the same design tasks as the art director and also may manage, depending on the workload. The deputy or associate may be on a track to move into the art director's position, should it open, or, after acquiring the requisite experience, move on to an art director position at another magazine.

On the next-lower level, *senior* and *junior designers* are responsible for designing components of a magazine (features, columns, inserts, etc.). Some design entire spreads or pages and commission the artwork and photography; others design elements of a feature and use the illustrations supplied to them by the art director or the deputy. Some are better typographers than users of art. The difference between senior and junior is usually the degree of experience and talent. The former may have been a junior first or may have been hired directly as a senior from another job; the latter is often right out of school or was an intern while a student. Based on achievement, a senior or junior designer can be promoted to a deputy or associate position. There are no codified rules of acceleration other than merit and need. Therefore, it is not impossible for a junior to be so professionally adept that promotion to the next level is fairly swift. Conversely, merely competent progress in a job is

The Case of the Default Art Director

In the art department of small publications, such as a neighborhood newspaper, it is possible to rise from production artist to art director in a short time. A veteran art director relates his phenomenal accession: "I was hired right out of high school for what I thought would be a summer job as a mechanical artist for a small New York newspaper. Within a month, after the art director taught me the job — at that time, doing pasteups — he was hired to be the art director of a larger, more prestigious magazine. With barely two weeks' notice, I was plunged into the role of art director while the publisher looked for a replacement. I don't know why, but fortuitously, no good applicants emerged and by default I was given the job. It was an incredible experience — a frightening one, too, as I knew absolutely nothing about art direction. But I was forced to learn very quickly. I remained art director for a year, until the newspaper folded, by which time I was hooked on publication design. I decided not to continue with my liberal arts studies at college, briefly enrolled in art school, and continued to get increasingly better art directorial jobs at magazines and newspapers."

rarely rewarded.

The junior designer position is often at the entry level. Some magazines have additional entry-level jobs, such as unpaid *interns* or paid *assistants* who do less critical, yet nevertheless necessary, support work. The most common task is production, such as scanning images into the computer or maintaining electronic files; occasionally, a minimal amount of layout or design work on tightly formatted pages may be assigned. In addition, the intern or assistant is invariably required to act as a gofer, attending to all the odd jobs that need to be done. This is actually a critical juncture for the wannabe because an employer can measure the relative competence or excellence of a worker. Even the lowliest job can result in significant advancement.

The art department is only one nerve junction of a magazine. In some environments, it is on a par with the editorial department (editors and writers), while in others it is the handmaiden. The relative importance of art and design is often linked to the comparative strength and power of the design or art director. Whatever the hierarchy, it is important that editorial designers (at any level) be aware of the editorial process – not merely the schedule but the editorial philosophy of the magazine. Too many bad relationships between design and editorial departments exist because their missions are not in sync. The two departments must complement each other; achieving this is one of the jobs of the design or art director. But even the lowest-level designer must have a precise understanding of what is being editorially communicated in order for the design to not only carry but enhance the content of the publication.

NEWSPAPERS

ALTHOUGH FINANCIAL analysts report that, due to fierce competition with television and online services, newspapers are currently a faltering industry, nonetheless there is an increased demand for art directors, designers, graphics editors, and production personnel at newspapers today. The reasons are fairly simple. Once many newspapers (afternoon, morning, and evening editions) competed in the same locales for the same readership and advertisers. That number has been radically reduced (for example, from their peak in the 1950s, New York City's dailies have been reduced from twelve to three). In most cases, this means that the remaining few papers are larger in size and offer more extensive coverage. In addition, over the past two decades, newspapers have augmented hard news with soft news features, such as lifestyle and home sections. At the same time, printing technology has significantly advanced to allow more innovative visual display (including full-color reproduction). In the past, newspaper composition was carried out by editorial makeup persons who were not trained as artists or designers; today, art directors and designers are responsible for the basic look and feel of the average newspaper.

Another paradox that makes newspapers a welcoming job market is the precipitous decline in the number of art directors and designers specifically trained for this medium. Despite the newspaper's ubiquity, few art schools and colleges offer courses dedicated to its design. If they exist at all, they are folded into a general publication design curriculum. Many who work in newspaper design departments never formally studied

the discipline in school classes – they came through school newspapers, internships/apprenticeships, or junior or senior design positions at magazines – hence the current demand for designers exclusively trained in the newspaper environment. Various journalism schools have started news design courses, but getting a newspaper job and learning from hands-on experience is still a viable option at the entry-level stage.

Over the past decade, newspapers have introduced new job categories unique to this industry. One notable entry is the graphics editor, a hybrid of editor and designer, who is responsible for the information graphics (charts, graphs, and maps) that appear regularly in most newspapers. This new sub-genre has become essential to contemporary newspaper content.

The newspaper industry has distinct hierarchies, but each newspaper has different jobs and job descriptions; the following are typical. Beginning at the entry level, the best way to start is as an *intern*. All newspapers employ seasonal (usually paid) interns as junior copypersons, who act as assistants-in-training to the various news desks. Likewise, the art department (which is often under the wing of the news department) employs a design intern to work directly with designers or art directors. The *New York Times*, for example, hires one intern a year for a ten-week stint. Often, art department interns are selected from art schools or universities with publication design programs (the candidates need not have had newspaper experience, although some newspaper work is a definite advantage). The tasks given the intern vary depending on the publication; one newspaper may offer intensive training in design, production, and information graphics, while another may have the intern do gofer work (scanning, making copies, or whatever clerk-like tasks are necessary). Internships sometimes lead to permanent employment; sometimes they do not. An internship is a kind of test for an employer to ascertain how well an individual fits, professionally and personally, into a specific art department.

The next level is usually more permanent. If a newspaper has *junior designer* or *design assistant* positions, these are often full-time jobs with various responsibilities. The experience necessary may be an internship at a newspaper or magazine or a junior position, preferably at a newspaper. Regardless of experience, juniors may be hired on the formal and conceptual strength of the portfolio.

Every newspaper art department is organized differently, so the assistant in one may work closely with the senior designer or art director actually designing some of the pages of a hard or soft news section, or the junior may assist many designers in the daily process, which might include doing routine production chores (such as electronic mechanical, color preparation, and photo processing). The degree of responsibility is based on the volume of work *and* the art director's desire to delegate.

In many newspapers, the junior or assistant is a union job, which means that salary, benefits, etc., are governed and job security is ensured by the union contract. Membership in a guild or union is mandatory at this level, and the security offered is both good and bad – good for the obvious reasons and bad because it encourages people to stay in their jobs for a long time, which is not always good for creativity. In fact, in many union shops there is so little movement that the junior may be stuck with the same title for an excessively long time – and this is an important consideration in joining a newspaper art department.

Continuing Education

A certain amount of design know-how can be obtained by osmosis on the job. The ambitious neophyte who lands a production job at a periodical is in an excellent position to learn practical skills as well as the procedures involved in that specific publication. But the likelihood of promotion to a design job is minimal without additional design experience. One way to convince an employer that your ambition should be rewarded is to enroll in continuing education classes specializing in publication design. Most art schools and some colleges offer intermediate and advanced courses. Some are under the desktop publishing umbrella; others are components of broader graphic design programs. Most classes of this kind are at night, but some of the larger art schools offer intensive editorial design workshops during the summer months. Supplementing on-the-job experience with classroom instruction pays off in the long run.

The next job designation is *senior designer* or *art director*. (In some newspapers the title *graphics editor* is also given to those who design hard and soft news sections.) Experience required is almost always a periodical design job, whether as a junior or a senior at a magazine or newspaper. Designers without this experience or training are rarely qualified. Nonetheless, opportunities exist in locales where few newspaper or magazine design specialists are found. The responsibilities vary depending on the size of the newspaper. An art director may design a specific section of a newspaper, assign the illustration and photography, and design the so-called dress or feature pages. (An *assistant designer* or, at many newspapers, a makeup editor, may design the more routine pages.) The senior designer or art director works with text editors, picture editors, and graphics editors (when that designation applies only to information graphics). Usually, a production person or production editor works in concert with the senior designer to translate the design layouts into a final electronic or mechanical form. The senior designer may work on one or more sections of a newspaper; at a small paper, the job may involve many subject areas.

Parallel to the senior designer or art director is the *graphics editor* responsible for information graphics. The experience required is a combination of reporting and graphic expertise. In many instances, the prospective candidate must pass a test that determines news judgment and editing skills as well as the ability to consolidate raw data into accessible visual form. The requirements are no less rigorous than for designers and, in fact, are more complex because of the intersection of news and art disciplines. In some newspapers, this job involves page design; in others it is limited to information design alone. The graphics editor works with the news and feature editors, who decide on the daily news report, to conceive and shape a particular graphic presentation. The

graphics editor coordinates work with the senior designer in order to achieve a seamless overall page design. For those who are interested in typography, graphics, and research and reporting, this is a wide-open area in which to seek employment.

The top level at a newspaper is called the *design director*, *senior art director*, *senior graphics editor*, or, in some places, the *managing editor for design*, who is supported by a *deputy*, *assistant*, or *managing design director*. Extensive experience is required for this job, including the administration and management skills needed to oversee a staff of designers and production personnel. The design director is usually responsible for maintaining the overall design quality and is often the original designer of the formats within which senior designer and art directors work. Sometimes the design director has a hands-on role in the design of special features, but often the demands of a newsroom require that such work be delegated to others under watchful supervision.

Newspaper design is essentially different from magazine design. First, it is expressed on a larger scale – more editorial components must be balanced on the broadsheet pages. Second, it occurs at a different frequency – the luxury of a weekly or monthly magazine deadline allows for more detail work, whereas at a daily newspaper, little time is available for the nuances of design. Third, the production values are not as high – working with newsprint on web-offset presses does not allow for the fine printing common to most glossy magazines. And yet the newspaper is every bit as challenging and offers equal creative possibilities for the designer who is interested, indeed passionate, about editorial work. While one can use a newspaper job as a stepping stone to other job opportunities, a majority of newspaper designers find that this medium provides a good place to build a career.

Freelancers Always Wanted

Most magazines and newspapers hire freelance designers and support personnel to meet excess creative and production needs. Over the past fifteen years, freelance employees have become prevalent throughout the publishing industries, especially because seasonal shifts in editorial emphasis (special issues and sections) add to the workload. Freelancers are hired to do secondary design and production tasks, and skilled freelance designers are often assigned to work on primary components of a publication. For the junior, this kind of work is experientially important; for the senior, it can be creatively (and financially) beneficial. Freelance assignments can be either long- or short-term and are perfect for designers who are not yet, or have no desire to be, committed to any specific discipline. Most freelancers work in the art department of the publication on their equipment.

The Optimum Portfolio

Entry level

Most entry-level portfolios include a large percentage of school assignments, often one or two redesigns of existing magazines or fantasy magazines. This work exhibits original thinking unfettered by the constraints of a real job, and yet the solutions are realistic. The editorial portfolio should include mostly editorial work, but general samples (posters, brochures, letterheads) are useful to gauge typography and layout skills.

Contents

Ten to twenty samples:

a. Feature pages and spread designs (showing range of stylistic and conceptual thinking)
b. Cover designs (showing two or three logo and illustration approaches)
c. Department pages (to show how routine editorial material is designed)
d. Two to four noneditorial examples

Junior/Senior Designer

By this stage, portfolios should include a large percentage of published work. The junior may continue to include school projects, but the senior should jettison them. The samples should be of high quality. Not everything in print rates showing in a portfolio. Through these samples, the important thing is to show your taste, talent, and expertise.

Contents

Fifteen to twenty-five samples:

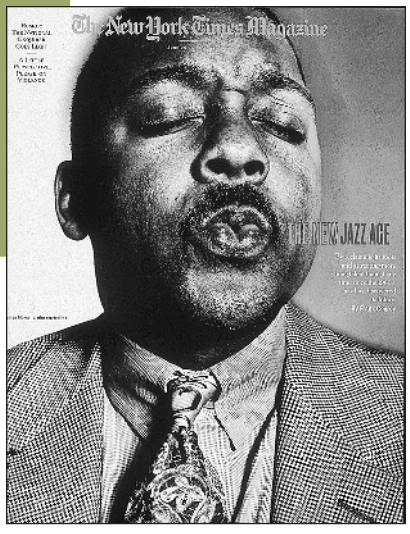
a. Feature pages and spreads from published periodicals
b. Cover designs (if available)
c. Examples of illustration and photograph assignments (if available)
d. Department pages (if available)
e. Two noneditorial examples

Format

35mm slides (in tray) are still applicable, but increasingly this method is being phased out in favor of CD and DVD in the following formats: Flash, Power Point, and iPhoto. Online portfolios are also encouraged. Avoid digital tricks. Keep the presentation as straightforward as possible. Anything that crashes the viewer's computer will hamper appreciation of your work.

Title: AIGA
Designer: John Fulbrook
Art Director: Michael Ian Kaye
Client: AIGA
Year: 1998

Designing the News



Title: The New Jazz Age **Designer:** Lisa Naftolin **Creative Director:** Janet Froelich **Publication:** *The New York Times Magazine* **Photographer:** Richard Burbridge **Typefaces:** Champion, Cheltenham Roman **Year:** 1995

Title: The Eye of the Photojournalist **Designer/Creative Director:** Janet Froelich **Publication:** *The New York Times Magazine* **Photographer:** Sebastiao Salgado **Typeface:** John Hancock **Year:** 1991

JANET FROELICH

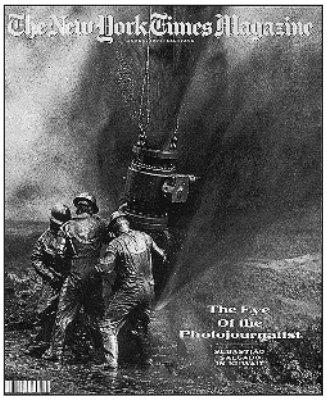
Design Director, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Times Style Magazines*, New York City

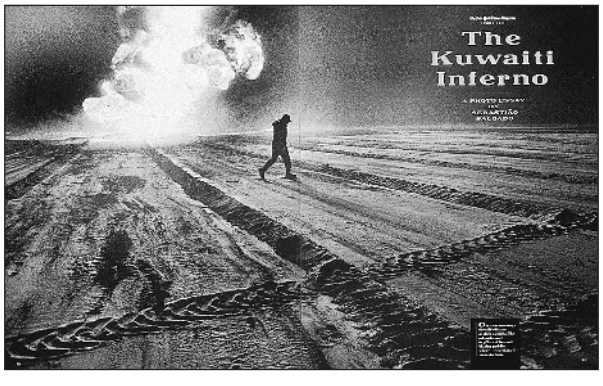
Did you go straight into editorial design, or did you dabble first?

I did a lot of freelance work. I tried to get as many jobs as I could. I did lots of brochures. I did a lot of what now might be called pro bono work. And then I worked for *Look* magazine for a very short while as a freelance gig until I answered an ad in the *New York Times* for a magazine art director. It turned out to be for the *Daily News*. I went up there with my portfolio, and the man who ultimately hired me told me that I did not have enough experience – but he needed a young designer and he took a chance. I started out doing newspaper pages at the *Daily News*. The thing that I remember most was that I took every bit of it really seriously and I would sit there for hours struggling with pages trying to make them look as good as I could.

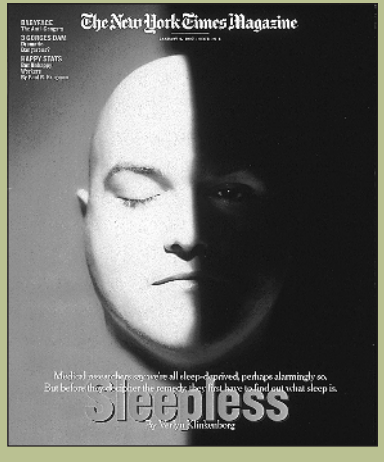
Was it a conscious decision to go into editorial design, or did the newspaper job lead you there?

Well, I fit well with journalism. I just love the news. I love designing magazine pages because there's an immediacy to them and it happens very quickly and it turns around constantly; it repeats. Every week you have another challenge. You don't sit there for a month or two designing one thing.





Title: Some Enchanted Evening Clothes **Designer:** Janet Froelich **Creative Director:** Janet Froelich **Publication:** *The New York Times Magazine* **Photographer:** Lillian Bassman **Typeface:** Champion **Year:** 1995



Title: The Next Hundred Years **Designers:** Joel Cuyler, Lisa Naftolin **Creative Director:** Janet Froelich **Publication:** *The New York Times Magazine* **Typefaces:** Stymie, Champion **Year:** 1996

Title: Sleepless **Designer:** Joel Cuyler **Creative Director:** Janet Froelich **Publication:** *The New York Times Magazine* **Photographer:** Lisa Spindler **Typefaces:** Champion, Cheltenham **Year:** 1997

Have you ever had any interest in doing another form of design?

I can't say that I never had an interest. I've toyed with it from time to time. Everybody would sit around and sort of assess their career or their life and think about moving in another direction. But there was never a natural opportunity or reason to move out of the path that I was in.

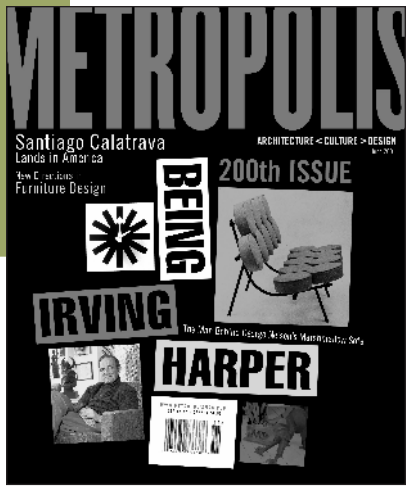
As the design director of *The New York Times Magazine*, what is the most fulfilling aspect of your job?

The personal relationships. I know that may be funny to say for a designer, but I just love working with the people I work with. They challenge me, they question things. We develop ideas together. I love to listen to them talk about writing and what makes good writing, and to talk about events and how you turn events into a story. The other part of my job is that I really think of myself as a sort of impresario or team builder. What is really crucial when you're managing a department, when you're art-directing or being a creative director, is your ability to choose good people, to nurture them, to make the atmosphere satisfying for them to do good work in, to create an atmosphere in which they get along well with each other and feel like they contribute.

What is the single most important skill a designer needs to be successful?

The ability to be self-critical. In order to get anywhere, you need to be able to look at your own work and see how it solves a problem, what works well and what doesn't. To be able to judge your own work and to be able to know how to push it to another place is the most important skill of all.

Content Dictates Style



Title: June Cover **Art Director:** Chriswell Lappin **Publication:** *Metropolis* **Photographer:** James Westman **Year:** 2001

Title: After the Wall
Art Director: Chriswell Lappin
Publication: *Metropolis*
Photographer: Thomas Mayer
Year: 2001

Title: November Cover
Art Director: Chriswell Lappin
Publication: *Metropolis*
Year: 2001

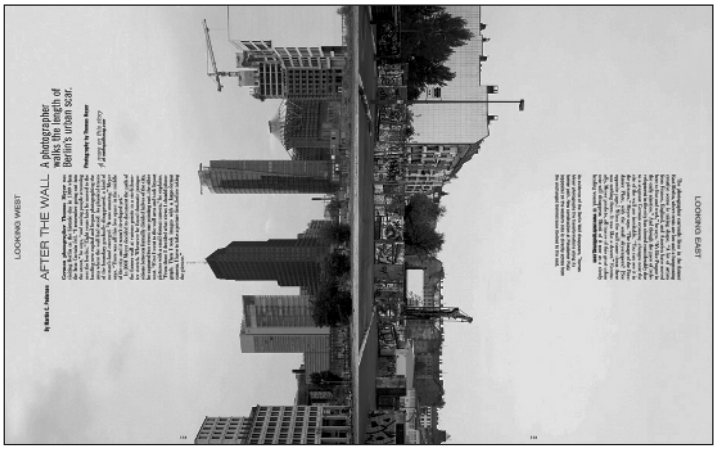
CHRISWELL LAPPIN

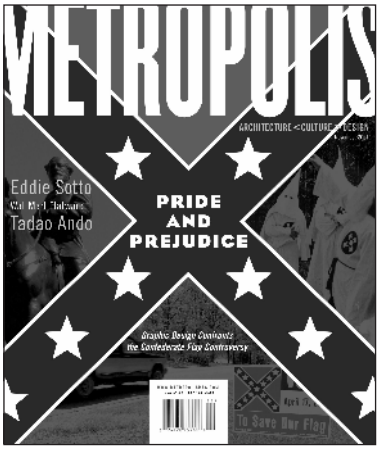
Art Director, *Metropolis* Magazine, New York City

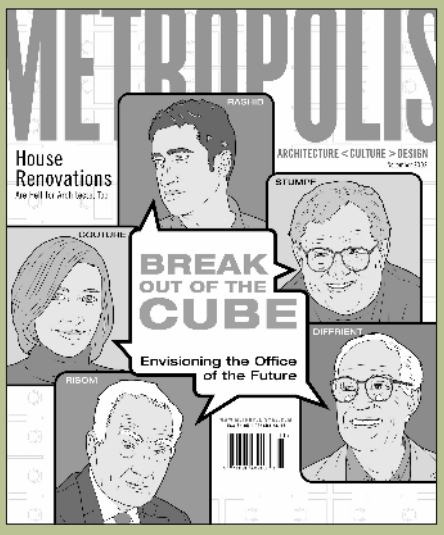
How did you become a magazine designer/art director?
After a stint as an exhibition designer at the Cooper-Hewitt, two former colleagues told me about an opening at *Metropolis*. I met with Susan Szenasy, the editor in chief, and we talked for almost two hours before she asked to see my work. I was not looking for a magazine job – I could count the number of publications that interested me on one hand – but two things made my decision easy: the content of the magazine and the value it places on art direction. It's like still being in graduate school – with tighter deadlines.

Designing a design magazine gets considerable scrutiny from designers. How do you design for this audience?
We design a magazine for our peers. Producing a design magazine provides a greater opportunity for visual exploration because our audience understands the subtleties of design. But we are probably more scrutinized for visual decisions that are unclear or confusing.

How do you collaborate with your associate designers?
We have a small, remarkable staff. If we do not collaborate, we die. Any time you have an opportunity to work with smart people,







it makes your work better. I work with smart people. We make each other look good.

Do you design according to a grid, or are your decisions more ad hoc?
The grid in the feature well is flexible. The content of the story often dictates the approach. So the visual look of this section often varies from story to story. The rest of the magazine is more standardized. There is an organized grid system that is meant to accommodate shorter stories on a single page and help segregate editorial content from advertising. But the entire magazine evolves from month to month. We make design adjustments – adding new pages, trying new fonts, reworking systems – on a regular basis.

***Metropolis* has an identity. Does it have a style too?**
Style should not dictate content; content dictates style. Helping the reader understand the story is the first priority. A designer's "voice" comes out naturally if you focus on problem solving.

What is the makeup of your staff, and what do you look for in staff members?
I work with one other designer. Together with our photo editor we form a mighty design version of Voltron. (Google it.)

I look for designers who:

-think conceptually
-recognize the importance of typography
-can generate their own imagery
-can communicate verbally
-have a sense of humor

Title: Sound **Art Director:** Chriswell Lappin **Publication:** *Metropolis* **Photographer:** John Edward Linden **Year:** 2001

Title: November Cover **Art Director:** Chriswell Lappin **Publication:** *Metropolis* **Illustrator:** Tim Kucynda **Year:** 2002

Title: December Cover **Art Director:** Chriswell Lappin **Publication:** *Metropolis* **Year:** 2001

The Art of Curiosity

Title: *Eye* 43, Reputations **Designers:** Silke Klinnert, Nick Bell **Photographers:** Hope Harris, Anthony Oliver **Typographer:** Nick Bell **Client:** Quantum Business Media **Year:** 2002

Title: *Eye* 42, Overview **Designer/Art Director/Typographer:** Nick Bell **Photographer:** Anthony Oliver **Illustrators:** Alan Smith, Adam Foulkes at Vehicle **Client:** Quantum Business Media **Year:** 2001

Title: *Eye* 42, Portfolio **Designer/Art Director/Typographer:** Nick Bell **Photographer:** Anthony Oliver **Illustrator:** Stephen Byram **Client:** Quantum Business Media **Year:** 2001

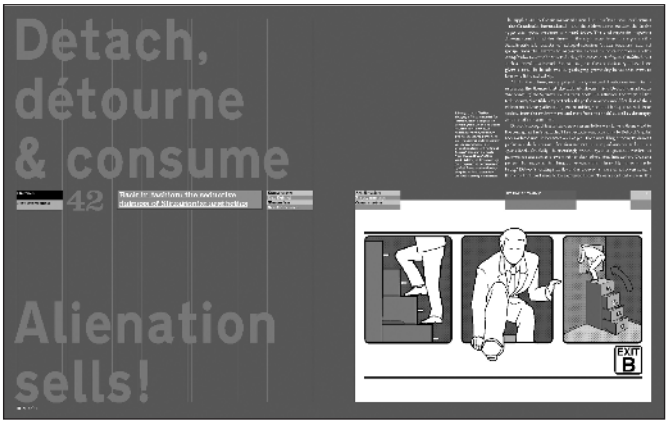
NICK BELL

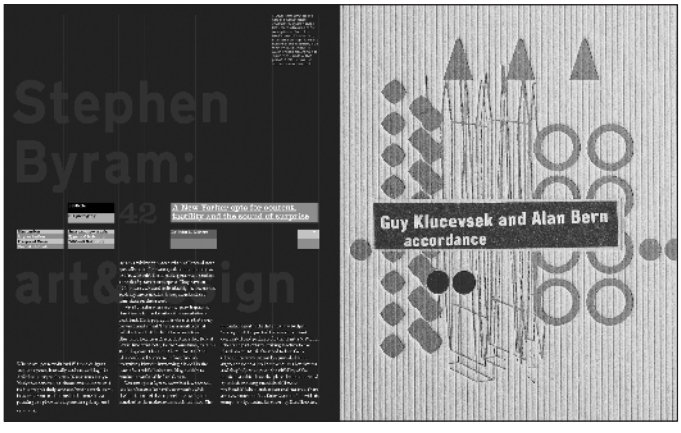
Creative Director, *Eye* Magazine, London

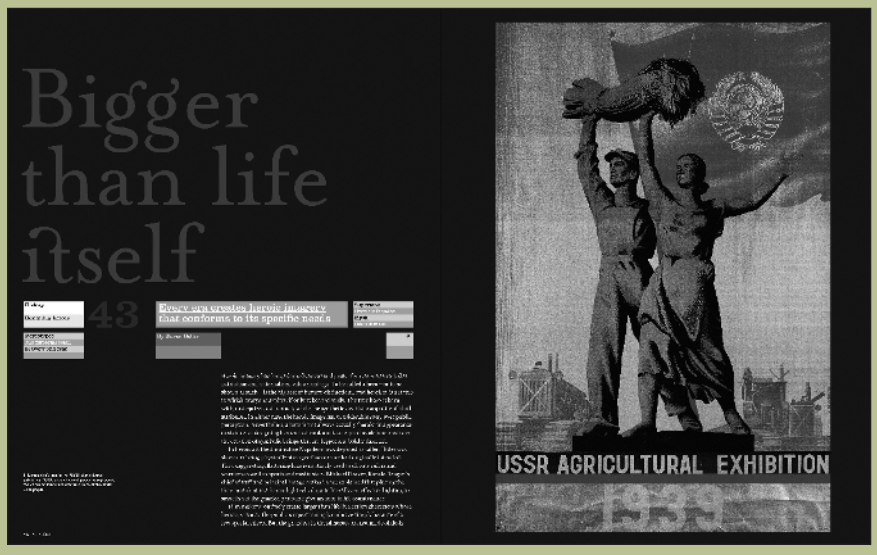
What is the difference between art directing and designing a magazine and the other work you do?
There is not much difference since all our work, be it book design or exhibition design, is concerned with the management and presentation of content (piles of text and images).

What is the most important aspect of designing *Eye* – pacing, typography, color, or all?
Color is the least important. Pacing and typography are both important, even though typography takes up the most time. A sense of completeness and coherence comes from careful pacing; that's visual and thematic pacing.

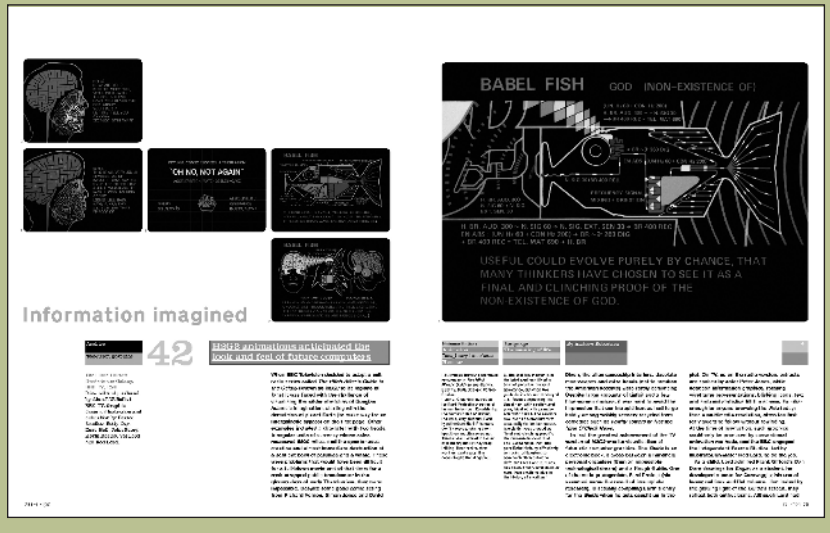
How with *Eye*, which is a magazine about design, do the designer and editor collaborate?
John Walters (*Eye* editor) proposes future themes. We discuss these. Most article commission ideas come from John and only occasionally from me. John talks to the writers about what he requires. I only get involved with the contributors once their text is written and I am chasing them for images.







Title: *Eye* 43, History **Designers:** Silke Klinnert, Nick Bell **Art Director/Typographer:** Nick Bell **Photographer:** Anthony Oliver **Illustrator:** Klimaschin **Client:** Quantum Business Media **Year:** 2002



Title: *Eye* 42, Archive **Designer, Art Director/Typographer:** Nick Bell **Illustrators:** Betty Day, Dave Hall, John Percy, Kevin Davies, Val Lord, Rod Lord at Pearce Studios **Client:** Quantum Business Media **Year:** 2001

I have the responsibility for editing down images delivered by contributors. John gets a chance to comment on the results of this in the first layouts. We discuss how implicit themes start to become explicit as layouts progress. Sometimes new themes emerge, and we discuss ways to tease these out further.

Once all the layouts are done, John sends his editorial to me for comments. My comments are always minor, as much has been agreed on by this stage.

What constitutes good magazine design versus bad magazine design?
A magazine is badly designed if the content it contains has to compete with the design of the magazine. A magazine is, by definition, a collection of different things, so if there is no sense of variety when you flick through it, the design has failed.

When you hire young designers, what is their most important attribute?
Curiosity.

Raised on Print

Title: *Speak* Cover
Designer: Martin Venezky
Client: *Speak* Magazine
Photographer: Unknown
Year: 1996

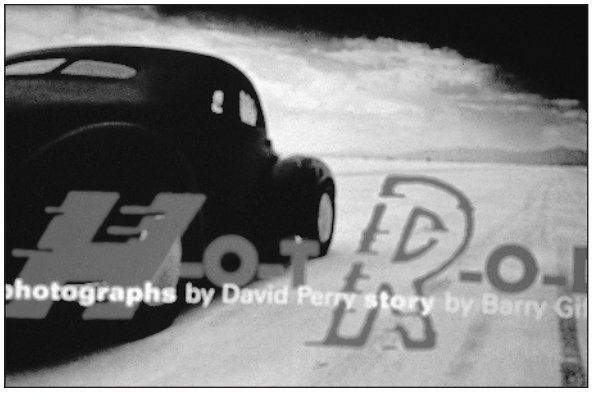
MARTIN VENEZKY

Principal, Appetite Engineers, San Francisco

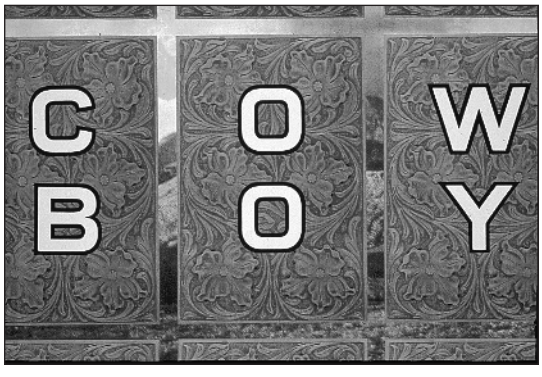
How would you describe the kind of work you're doing now?
I feel that my work has a lot in common with fine art. I take more from fine art than from advertising or product marketing. I work with photographers and artists in collaboration, which is actually what I most love to do. I'm finding new ways of visually combining the image with the text. Instead of creating a clear illustration of the text, I make creative connections in the gap that occurs between the image and the text. It's halfway between being a designer and an illustrator and an artist. It sort of floats in that area.

Why did you turn to editorial design?
I really love print. To me, there's something about print that Web design or multimedia design doesn't have. It could be just because that's how I was raised – everything was print. Most of what I'm known for is editorial design at *Speak* magazine. *Editorial* is a general term to describe my work because I just completed a book on which I worked with a photographer and a writer. I guess that was editorial, too, but I was given the opportunity to interpret the material, not just present it, which is unusual.

Title: *Hot Rod* Book Cover
Designer: Martin Venezky
Creative Director: Michael Carabetta **Client:** Chronicle Books **Photographer:** David Perry **Year:** 1996

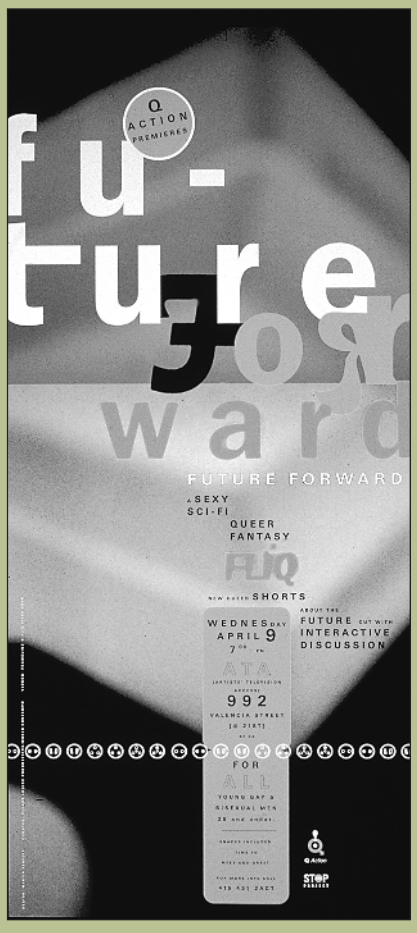


Title: "Cowboy" from *Notes on the West* **Designer:** Martin Venezky
Client: Self-published at Cranbrook Academy of Art **Year:** 1993



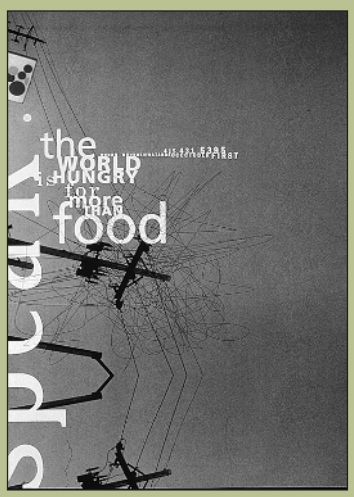
Title: Future Forward **Designer:** Martin Venezky **Client:** Q-Action **Photographer:** Martin Venezky **Year:** 1997

Title: *Speak* Promo Card **Designer:** Martin Venezky **Client:** *Speak* Magazine **Photographer:** Martin Venezky **Typeface:** Sign System **Year:** 1996



How do you use the computer to express your fine-art sensibility?
I guess everything ends up having to be translated into a digital format or output – although it's funny, because with this brand-new issue of *Speak*, I am actually using a waxer, believe it or not. So I actually got to do some pages completely by hand that aren't even going to be put into the computer. They're going to be scanned with a digital camera.

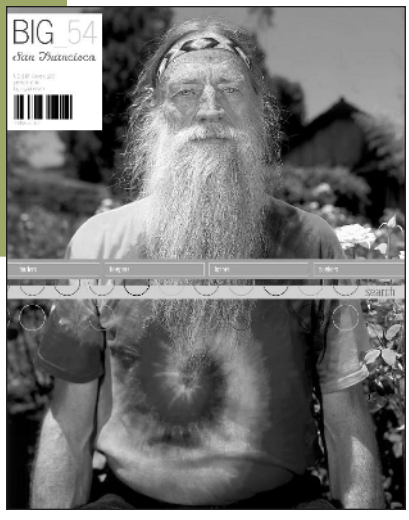
Hand work is pretty novel at this stage in design?
When I was at Cranbrook, I did a lot of work with my hands. They had a stat camera there that no one had used for a long time, so I got it running and was actually going into the darkroom and making prints, all these things being hand skills. I really love doing that kind of thing, but the computer keeps luring me away. When I go to the art supply store, I often buy pens, ink, and paper just to remind myself of those materials. I try to allow time to play by hand. I cut up type with scissors and cut paper and tape them together with Scotch tape, which is how a lot of my form generation happens. Then I scan that into the computer and work it into a page or something. But I don't design all that much directly on the computer. It's always a way of juggling things that started out being done by hand.



What is the most satisfying aspect of your job?
Creating something where there's a certain magic, where the elements almost feel like they sprang to life themselves, became something didn't exist before I was there. I created this thing, whether it's a page in a magazine or a postcard with this wonderful image on it. The thing that I like the least is probably the thing that I'm weakest at, which is selling myself. Being a shrewd business manager is not the kind of thing that I am, but in a month from now I may be. It's just because I never had to do it, so I've been hesitant about the whole financial side. It's hard to manage all of those budgets.

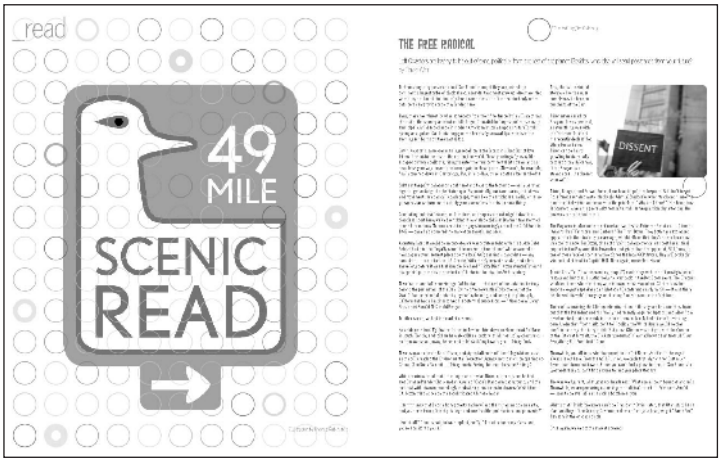
What did you look for in your intern?
I teach at California College of Arts and Crafts, so I get interns from there. It's helpful to have them as students because not only do I see their work but also their work habits, their attendance, how alert they are, how conscientious they are, if they take instruction, if they take suggestions easily, or if they're belligerent, and all those other factors.

The Next Little Thing



Title: *BIG* San Francisco Cover **Creative Director/Designer:** Rhonda Rubinstein **Publication:** *BIG* Magazine **Photographer:** Olivier Laude **Year:** 2004

Title: _read **Designer:** David Peters **Publication:** *BIG* Magazine **Illustrator:** Rhonda Rubinstein **Year:** 2004



RHONDA RUBINSTEIN

Principal and Creative Director, Exbrook, San Francisco

Is magazine art direction still a viable profession for a veteran like yourself?

I have always loved magazines. To me they are a medium that allows a creative team to shape the culture and thinking of hundreds of thousands of people on a regular basis. However, after working for many years as art director for magazines, I wanted to use that powerful combination of editorial process and visual design to contribute more directly to positive social change. Thus, partner David Peters and I founded a design studio called Exbrook, which both allows me to work with progressive organizations, and also create magazines.

How do you make a magazine fresh?

Magazines are products of their particular time. Their very ephemerality is what makes them so enduring. I think that a magazine is made fresh through new content, new interpretations, new collaborations, new structures and new contexts. Design helps people see and experience this freshness. It's what they notice first.

You and David Peters have guest designed an issue of *BIG*. How do you make an existing magazine your own?

In guest art directing an existing magazine we knew we had to respect the essence of the magazine (or its brand, which is basically its reputation in the world). It had to be recognizable as *BIG*, but we would be infusing it with our approach-our ideas and style while interpreting the theme of San Francisco. As a

brand, *BIG* is known around the world for its creativity, excellence, and visual innovation. There were no pre-determined templates, sections, typefaces, or even logo. Thus we were able to create our own complete 24-part story about San Francisco at this particular moment (the economic vacuum before the next boom).

How much of the content do you originate?
As much as I am allowed. For *BIG* it was 100%. *BIG* offered us complete creative freedom, an anomaly in the publishing world. We developed the concept of "SEARCH" to represent the dual appeal of high-tech and high-touch that attracts people to San Francisco. We put together the team, developed the visual and editorial ideas with the photographers and writers, and packaged it all – every detail, from cover to cover. The success of *BIG* reminds us that people are eager for experiences that are intense, complex, and rich in contrast (sort of like San Francisco), provided they are well-structured and thoughtfully designed.

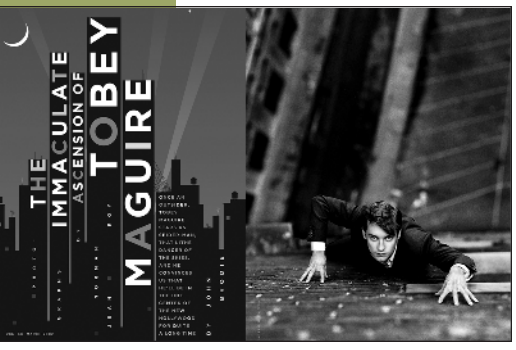
What is the "next big thing" in magazine art direction and design?
The next big thing is little. The smaller-sized magazine is a growing trend in Europe, and is just starting to gain attention in America. Like record designers who had to downsize for the CD format, magazine designers will have to develop new thinking in digest-sized designs.

With the Internet a key content provider, is there a way to marry the virtues of magazine and Web together?
I can imagine a completely customizable, downloadable magazine. You pre-select the type of content, the style of design, and the frequency. Then your bots troll the Web collecting the information, run it through a smart graphics program, and publish it to your desktop printer. Or Kinkos.

How should neophytes prepare themselves as periodical designers?
Travel the world, find out what really matters to you, and study journalism. The first will give you some background, the second will give you a point of view, and the third will help you shape the stories you want to tell.

TOP: Title: _eat **Creative Director/Designer:** Rhonda Rubinstein **Publication:** *BIG* Magazine **Photographer:** Bill Owens **Year:** 2004 **MIDDLE: Title:** *BIG* Table of Contents **Creative Director/Designer:** Rhonda Rubinstein **Publication:** *BIG* Magazine **Photographer:** Robert Schlatter **Year:** 2004 **BOTTOM: Title:** _go **Creative Director/Designer:** Rhonda Rubinstein **Publication:** *BIG* Magazine **Photographer:** Noah Webb **Year:** 2004

Strip It Down



Title: Tobey Maguire
Design Director: Fred Woodward
Designer: Paul Martinez
Publication: *GQ*
Photographer: Norma Jean Roy
Photo Editor: Jennifer Crandall
Year: 2004

Title: Jamie Foxx
Design Director: Fred Woodward
Designer: Ken DeLago
Publication: *GQ*
Photographer: Mark Seliger
Photo Editor: Bradley Young
Year: 2004


twĕn´ty-fîrst
cĕn´tu-ry föx(x).

1. By now you've heard a lot about what a talented actor JAMIE FOXX is—with career-making performances in *Collateral* and *Ray*. **2.** But where the 36-year-old actor *really* makes it happen is right here at home, where the barbecue is fired up, everyone is bringing a bottle, and the man of the house is working the phones, rounding up the ladies. **3.** CHRIS HEATH invites himself in for some time with October's biggest surprise. (*Photographs by* MARK SELIGER)

FRED WOODWARD,

Design Director, *GQ*, New York City

You have been art director for various magazines – *Texas Monthly*, *Rolling Stone*, and *GQ*. What determines how you design each one?

It's primarily a response to the material, but all kinds of things play into it: What's s my editor like? How much autonomy do I have? What's s my staff like? How's the magazine doing? The most important job is to create a look for your book that is singular, its own. The worst thing possible would be to look like somebody else. This goal tends to set you off on a contrary path from the start. When I arrived at *GQ*, although long regarded as an industry leader, it was generally perceived to be "your father's magazine" and was losing readers and advertising. Nobody told me to make the magazine look younger; I just thought that's what was needed. I didn't go in thinking I was going to redesign, but as I tried to put the first issue together and make personal sense of what I was doing, understanding the content and structure of the book . . . well, I ended up changing that first issue completely. Michael Hainey, the executive editor, said it was like changing the tires on a moving vehicle.

With *GQ*, you've created a very distinctive design environment. What would you say is its most important trait?

Simplicity. The exercise I set for myself was to see how far I could strip it down – how simple could the page be and still be interesting. After fourteen-plus years at *Rolling Stone,* I was eager for a fresh start. I didn't want to repeat myself. It wouldn't have been fair to either magazine. I was looking for something like reinvention and said at the time I was hoping to shed a skin. It was a little like being that newly divorced guy who finds himself moving from a comfortable, rambling Victorian (with lots of additions over the years) into a small, spartan, white box of an

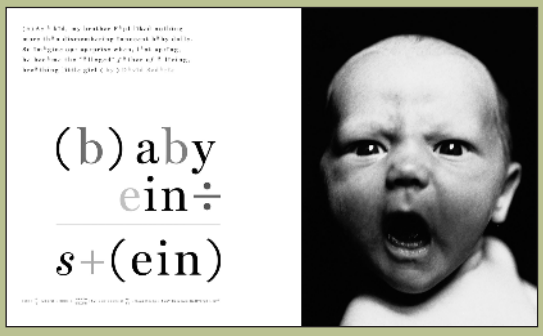
apartment. I was happy to throw everything away, even the stuff I loved most, in the hope of feeling lighter and for the chance to build something fresh and new.

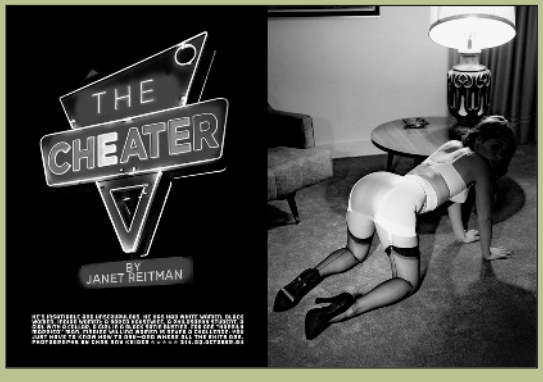
Illustration and photography serve very different functions in your magazine. How would you describe the difference?
I have always considered myself a Champion for illustration, but I must admit here that *GQ* is a photo-driven magazine. In this company (Condé Nast), photography is king. Generally, if we can shoot somebody, we do. In addition to the commissioned portrait and fashion work, the product shots are sweated over, and great effort is put into photo research. Illustration is used to solve specific problems, and the choice of illustrator must mesh stylistically with the overall vibe of the magazine – masculine, modern, graphic, smart, sexy, and sometimes funny. Illustrators like Christoph Neiman, Zohar Lazar, and Tavis Coburn are the prototypes for *GQ* at the moment.

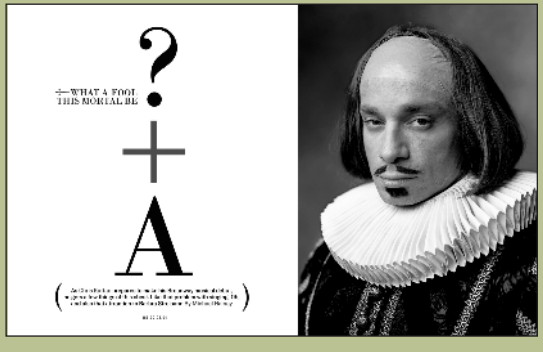
You cannot design every page, so what are the most important components in *GQ* that you must design yourself?
Every page matters, but I have always been most interested in the design of the feature stories and the cover. I always work with the other designers. We are an ensemble cast, a design team. More than anything else about my job, I enjoy this collaboration. When the chemistry in a group like this is right, we are all better than anyone would be individually.

Given your strong design personality, what must an associate or assistant designer have that will make you want to hire them?
Well, it helps if they like my work. I'm most interested in chemistry – for myself and for the team as a whole. It's all about the exchange – someone who adds spark, personality, humor, intelligence. Generosity of spirit. A quick mind and a good heart; people I'd like to spend time with; a good work ethic. Hunger.

How do you find these people?
I rarely advertise an open position on my staff. It's usually word-of-mouth, a referral, or someone's portfolio I had seen when there was no opening. A couple of the best hires were the result of receiving a heartfelt letter. I like to promote from within, so I'm usually looking for the most junior position. I prize loyalty above everything else.





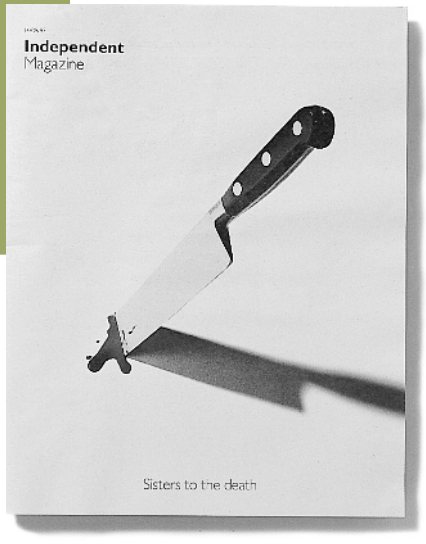


Title: Baby Einstein **Design Director:** Fred Woodward **Designer:** Ken DeLago **Publication:** *GQ* **Photographer:** Amy Arbus **Photo Editor:** Jennifer Crandall **Year:** 2004

Title: The Cheater **Design Director:** Fred Woodward **Designer:** Sarah Viñas **Publication:** *GQ* **Photographer:** Chas Ray Krider **Photo Editor:** Bradley Young **Year:** 2004

Title: Chris Kattan **Design Director:** Fred Woodward **Designer:** Ken DeLago **Publication:** *GQ* **Photographer:** Mark Seliger **Photo Editor:** Jennifer Crandall **Year:** 2004

Something Out of Nothing



Title: *The Independent Magazine* **Designer/Creative Director:** Vince Frost **Studio:** Frost Design **Photographer:** Matthew Donaldson **Client:** The Independent **Year:** 1995

Title: *Zembla* Magazine, Issue 1 and Issue 2 **Designers:** Vince Frost, Matt Willey (London), Anthony Donovan (Sydney), Tim Murphy (Melbourne) **Creative Director:** Vince Frost **Studio:** Frost Design **Client:** Simon Finch Rare Books **Year:** 2004

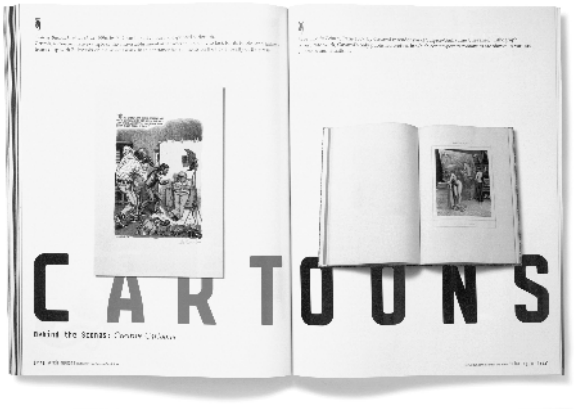
VINCE FROST

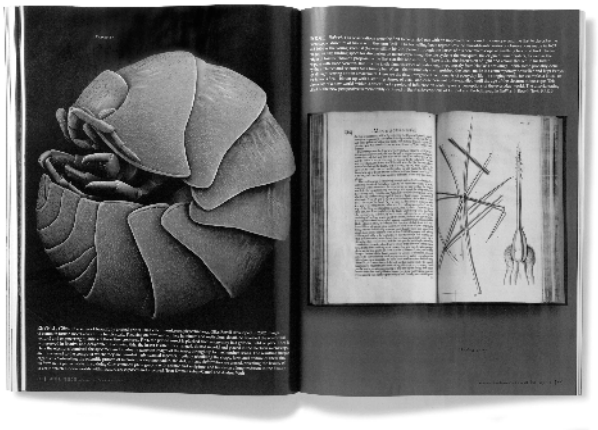
Design Director, *Zembla*, London

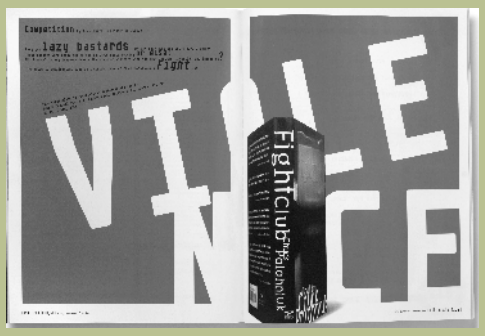
As a magazine designer, what do you think is the most important part of the design process?
The most important thing for me is doing the right magazine. They take up a lot of your time, life, and energy, so it is important that you have infinity with the subject matter and the editorial team, especially the editor. I like to listen to the content, and I get the editor to tell me what each article is about, as often the article I need to start thinking of illustrating has not been commissioned or written.

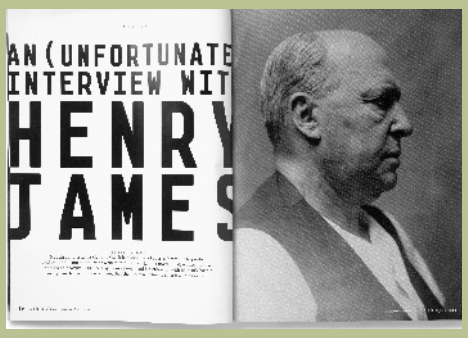
What are the influences for your typographic styles?
I have always liked fairly bold typography. As I am constantly trying to make something out of nothing, I use typography to do most of the expression of the content. I try to create the magazine's aura, its look and feel. Fonts each have their own personality, and choosing them is an enjoyable process.

What determines what typefaces you use? Is it a personal aesthetic or a more rational decision?
I suppose for me it is an intuitive organic process. Once I know what the brief is and the kind of person it is aimed at, I start to play with the blank page. I start by playing with combinations of fonts, paper, formats, rules, grids, hierarchy, images, pace, etc.









Title: *Zembla* Magazine, Issue 3 and 2 **Designers:** Vince Frost, Matt Willey (London), Anthony Donovan (Sydney), Tim Murphy (Melbourne) **Creative Director:** Vince Frost **Studio:** Frost Design **Client:** Simon Finch Rare Books **Year:** 2004

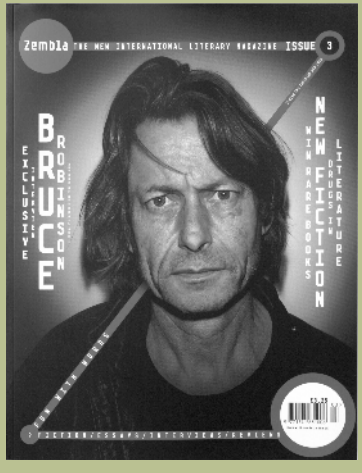
Can you learn how to be a magazine designer, or is it an instinctual process?
I learned how to do it mainly by being chucked in the deep end. I never have and still don't find it easy. Like all my other work outside of publishing, I go through the same process, and the way I work is definitely using my intuition. I am always aware that each and every dot of ink will be seen by hundreds of thousands of people. So I try to make the right decisions, as any mistake is seen all over the world.

What is the relationship between a magazine art director and an editor?
This relationship is the most important one for me. Magazines are stressful enough without having poor communications between the art director and the editor. You need to share the same vision and have mutual respect for each other's skills. My point of view is that it's my role to support and visualize the editor's vision.

What is the best way to become a magazine art director?
Make sure that is really what you want to do!

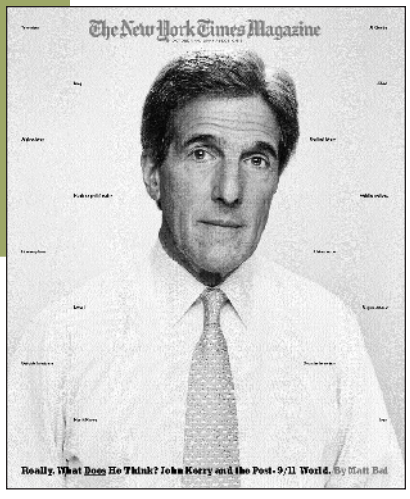
I think the best thing is to try to get work experience in different publication companies that create magazines that interest you. There is no point getting stuck on a publication that you don't enjoy. Magazines are relentless and bloody hard. You work long stressful hours and your social life reduces to zip. The way that I work is outside that world, and we design the magazines that we work on in the studio. I believe that you can be more versatile when you work from or in a design studio. The variety of work keeps you fresh, and you don't get consumed in the world of publishing politics.

Perhaps I sound negative about my experience working on magazines. That is not the image I want to create. They are incredibly rewarding. I thrive on the pace, and the opportunity to play on the page is wonderful. I still get a buzz out of the whole process, and I can't wait each time to be the first person to hold the complete printed magazine, even knowing that I now have to go through the whole process again.



Title: *Zembla* Magazine, Issue 3 **Designers:** Vince Frost, Matt Willey (London), Anthony Donovan (Sydney), Tim Murphy (Melbourne) **Creative Director:** Vince Frost **Studio:** Frost Design **Client:** Simon Finch Rare Books **Year:** 2004

Working for the Reader



Title: John Kerry Cover
Designer: Arem Duplessis
Photographer: Taryn Simon
Publication: *The New York Times Magazine*

Title: Fear and Laptops on the Campaign **Designer:** Arem Duplessis **Photographer:** Chris Buck **Publication:** *The New York Times Magazine*

Title: Almodovar's Women
Designer: Arem Duplessis
Photographer: Sofia Sanchez & Mauro Mongiello **Publication:** *The New York Times Magazine*

AREM DUPLESSIS

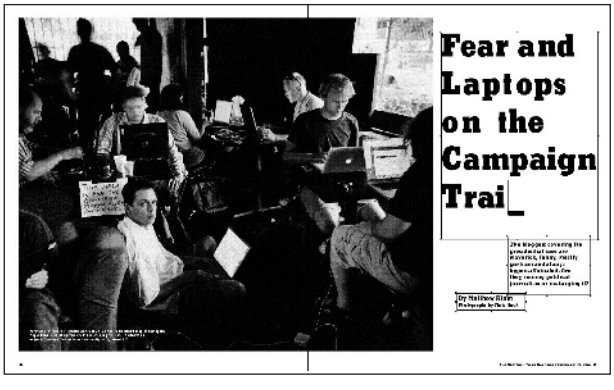
Art Director, *The New York Times Magazine*, New York City

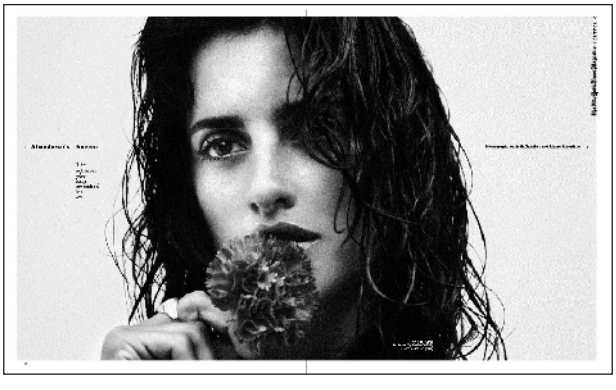
You've designed monthlies (*Spin* and *GQ*) and now a weekly magazine. Creatively speaking, what is the biggest difference between the two, other than time frame?

Starting on a weekly was incredibly intimidating at first, until I learned that it was a hell of a lot more organized then a monthly. With monthlies, editors have more time to make decisions, which inevitably means that the art department has about a week to design the issue. Therefore there is no difference, but creatively speaking you do not have as much time for experimentation. You have to make a decision and adhere to it. This can often work in your favor, considering that gut reactions are usually the best and most honest.

Obviously, designing *Spin* has different priorities than a news/feature magazine. What are they?

The type play is a little different. At a music magazine, your type solutions can be consistently flippant if you choose. You do not always feel the pressure to define your design; sometimes it's just about having a good time and doing something cool or weird. At a news magazine, especially *The New York Times Magazine*, I feel like every story is so incredibly important to the entire world that the pressure almost dictates my decisions. I tend to work a little harder for the reader and not just for other designers. I still get results that I feel good about; I just take a different path to get to that point.





Title: How to Reinvent the G.O.P. **Designer:** Kristins DiMatteo **Publication:** *The New York Times Magazine* **Title:** *Spin* Cover: Red Hot Chili Peppers **Designer:** Arem Duplessis **Photographer:** Norman Jean Roy **Publication:** *Spin*

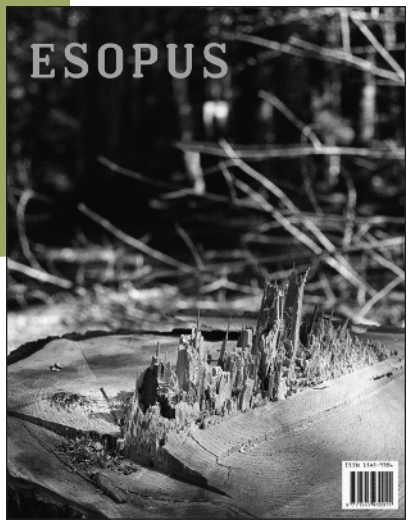
What is the key element in the design of a periodical? Is it organization, aesthetics, or conceptualization?
I would have to say aesthetics. Organization is good, but disorganization can be quite enjoyable when done right. Concepts are great but not always necessary. Sometimes it's just about creating a beautifully designed page. No concept, no real grid, just great intuition.

How important is the cover to a magazine?
Extremely. It dictates so much. It tells the reader whether or not it's worth picking the magazine up. It defines what you should expect on the inside. However, there is nothing in the world more disappointing then to pick up a magazine that has an absolutely beautiful cover and the inside does not hold up. The photograph grabs you, the type is done in some sick and interesting way, the colors are just right, not all bright and color wheel-like but just right. And then you open the magazine expecting the second coming and it immediately crumbles, taking your expectations with it. That's just plain wrong, man . . .

What do you look for in a designer who wants to work with you as an associate, junior, or senior designer?
There is nothing like a brilliant designer who is humble. Good design, to me, is based on good intuition and an acute understanding of small detail. I also like people who experiment. I hate holding hands. I would rather see a study of seven layouts with seven different directions, with only one having potential, than a single layout that needs a full critique. Having to give detailed instructions on how to make a layout work should not be my job. I prefer to mold rather than rebuild.

Title: Icons – two spreads
Designer: Arem Duplessis
Photographer: Norman Jean Roy
Publication: *The New York Times Magazine*

Design Is Essential



Title: Cover, *Esopus* 1
Designer/Art Director: Tod Lippy **Publication:** *Esopus*
Photographer: Anonymous
Year: 2003

Title: Cover, *Esopus* 2
Designer/Art Director: Tod Lippy **Publication:** *Esopus*
Photographer: Anonymous
Year: 2004

TOD LIPPY

Editor, Art Director, Designer, *Esopus*, New York City

You are an editor, not a trained designer, but you have become an publication auteur, which means you write, edit, and design. What is the advantage of wearing all three hats?
The greatest advantage is, of course, having control over all aspects of publication, which can – when it's working – lend a consistency of focus to the material. Because *Esopus*'s stated goal as a nonprofit is to provide a space for artists and public to interact with the minimal interference, it just made sense for there to be only one person for contributors to deal with, and rely on, in getting their work to an audience. Also, if you've spend weeks editing a piece, engaging in a back-and-forth with the author, you know much more about it and him or her and can reach beyond the final text (say, to a specific reference in a first draft that was later cut) for appropriate, if not obvious, visual solutions. Another great reason to take on everything is the fact that you can save yourself an enormous amount of money.

As a non-designer designer, what are your typographic strengths and limitations?
I studied graphic design for a year or so in college, so luckily I haven't been working completely from scratch. That limited knowledge has been bolstered by the proliferation of font sites on the Web that are so well-organized according to styles, families, etc., that you can really learn as you go. As far as strengths and limitations are concerned, I think it's like any situation in which one lacks formal training – in some ways, you're handicapped because the knowledge most people take for granted you have to acquire during the creative process, which can be time-consuming and distracting, but in others, you may be better able to think out of the box because you're not starting with any limitations or givens about how things should, or must, be done.

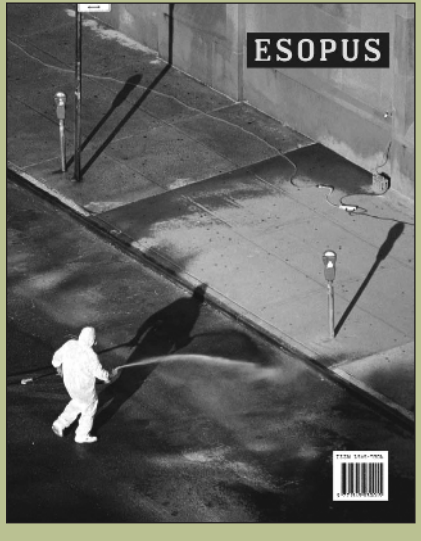
Presumably, starting a magazine is like starting any business; you need capital and customers (or audience). What have you done to ensure that this business succeeds?
The only way *Esopus* can and will succeed is by placing it squarely within the nonprofit world, where one can depend on a combination of

Title: 100 Frames: Majid Majidi's "Baran" **Designer/Art Director:** Tod Lippy **Cinematographer:** Mohammad Davudi **Publication:** *Esopus* **Year:** 2003 **Title:** Alex Shear's Object Lesson #2 **Designer/Art Director/Photographer:** Tod Lippy **Objects:** From the collection of Alex Shear **Publication:** *Esopus* **Year:** 2004

public and private grants to sustain the enterprise. The magazine is deliberately sold for less than it costs to produce in order to reach a wider, more diverse audience, and we are dependent on donations from organizations and individuals to make up that difference. As far as reaching an audience, we depend on several distributors, each specializing in a particular market (museum stores, or newsstands, or large chains like Barnes and Noble, or smaller independent bookstores) to get the magazine into the hands of as many readers as possible. And, of course, the Internet is an enormous help.

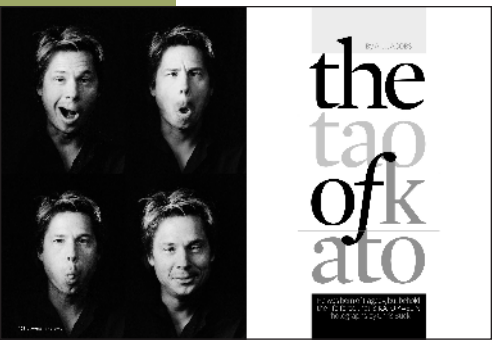
How important is design to the success of your magazine?
Design is essential to the success of *Esopus* because the magazine is meant to attract visually those people who might normally shy away from much of its material – contemporary art (often conceptually based), critical writing on culture and the media, etc. The idea was to make the design appealing enough to attract readers, who would then, hopefully, take it home and actually read its contents. That said, the design is never meant to overwhelm or obscure the material it frames.

What does it take to be an auteur? Do you advise this path to everyone?
It takes: **(1)** a clear vision you are compelled to share with others; **(2)** enough drive, resilience, and commitment to realize it; **(3)** an ethical consistency that is clear to both contributors and supporters/investors; **(4)** a willingness to compromise up to a point (without mitigating that vision). I advise the path to anyone who feels capable of all of the above.



Title: Cover, *Esopus* 2 **Designer/Art Director:** Tod Lippy **Publication:** *Esopus* **Photographer:** Anonymous **Year:** 2004

Making the Reader Stop



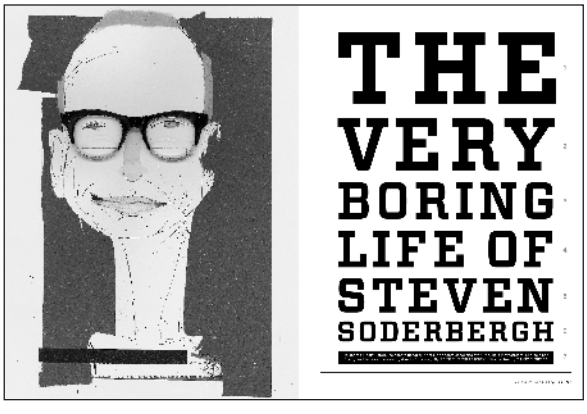
Title: The Tao of Kato **Design Director:** John Korpics **Publication:** *Esquire* **Photographer:** Chris Buck **Photo Editor:** Nancy Iacoi **Year:** 2002

JOHN KORPICS

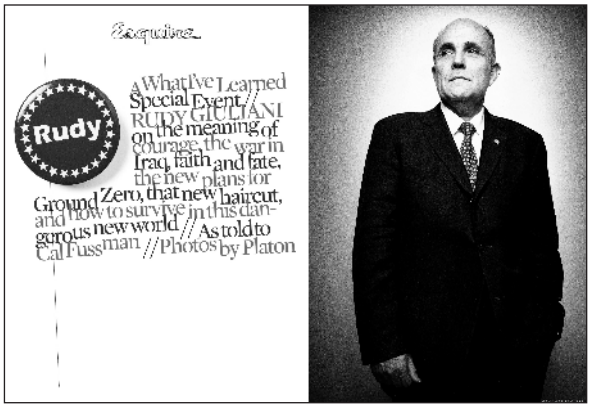
Design Director, *Esquire* Magazine, New York City

When designing mass-market magazines, how do you deal with the impermanence of design trends that reflect popular culture? Design trends are, for the most part, visual trends. Certain types of fonts may be popular for a while – certain design elements like rules, arrows, boxes, no rules, bullets, all that kind of thing. I use all of these things and many more on a regular basis, but at their core, they only make up the surface of what I do. They are not the most important thing. They are the wrapping on the package. The thing that affects my work the most and makes it specific to me is how I approach my job. What I say yes to and what I say no to. How I approach assigning art. Are there opportunities to be creative there? How I utilize editors. What I see when I read a story as opposed to what another person sees. I personally have never felt defined by the surface elements of the design, so sometimes I'll use a font that I know has been used somewhere else, or I'll use rules in a way that I may have seen them used recently. I'll follow certain trends or adapt them, simply because I don't feel defined by them. When I can be clever, or funny, or intelligent with a layout, I'm usually much more successful than when I have to design a beautiful surface. At a magazine like *Esquire*, I can take advantage of my personality and bring it to bear on the way the magazine is art directed, which means I don't have to worry so much about trends. Which is good, because its exhausting.

Title: Soderbergh **Design Director:** John Korpics **Publication:** *Esquire* **Illustrator:** David Hughes **Year:** 2002



Title: Rudy **Design Director:** John Korpics **Publication:** *Esquire* **Photographer:** Platon **Photo Editor:** Nancy Iacoi **Year:** 2003

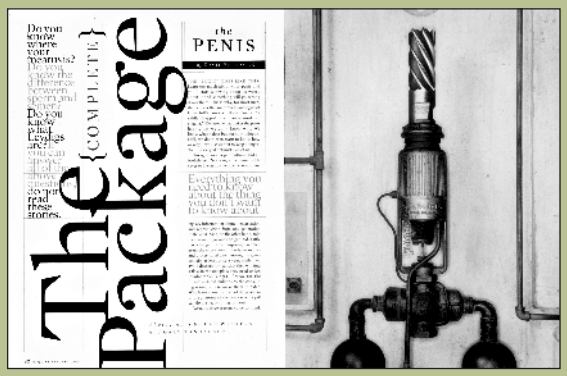


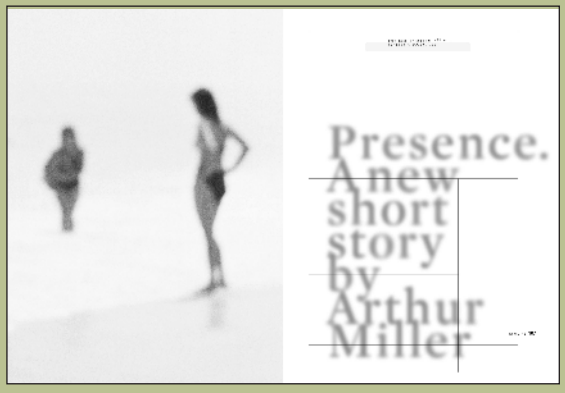
How do you balance the literary tradition of *Esquire* with the pressure to compete with the success of "laddie" magazines?
I take a lot of that from my editor. If he tells me we need to compete, then I compete. So far, he doesn't feel the need to compete. I think we just want to do our magazine. The temptation is to copy a successful model. When *Lucky* is a hit, you get *Shop Etc*. When *Oprah* is a hit, you get *Rosie*. Those are business decisions. When *Maxim* is a hit, you get *FHM*, but you don't turn *Esquire* into *Maxim*. *Esquire* is driven by what my editor believes *Esquire* should be: quality writing, quality service, quality art, good jokes, sexy women, insightful stories. We always want to create the magazine that we want to read, and then we just hope enough people will agree. We want to be inspired by our product. *Esquire's* literary tradition has nothing to do with any of this. If we we're still doing Norman Mailer and Tom Wolff and Gay Talese [the last generation of *Esquire*'s stable], or if I was trying to recreate George Lois, we'd all be dead. And we're not necessarily looking for the next version of any of those guys either.

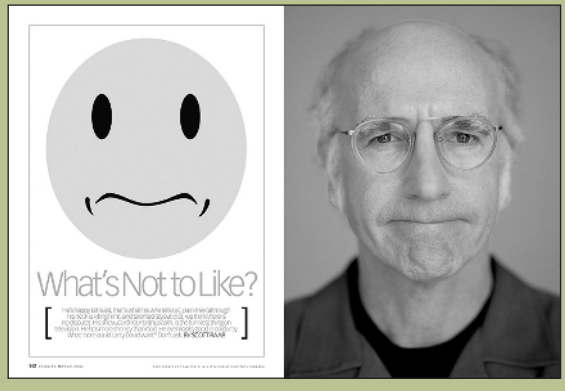
Do you have a personal style in your design?
I don't know. I have certain tricks that I fall back on when I'm struggling. I tend to design with bigger type than I used to because my eyesight is bad. I like smashing type together, I like upper and lower case, I like making things hard to read sometimes, but not impossible, like a puzzle for the reader to figure out. I think it makes the reader stop for a second, which is good. I have very little patience for details any more, so my sidebars and boxes and drop caps and stuff aren't as nice as they used to be.

What role does typography play in your approach to design?
Typography is the foundation. I was trained pretty heavily in typography. In school, we used to do type-as-image problems all the time, like that was normal. As soon as I got a real job, I didn't understand why everybody was spending so much money on photos when we could design with type so well. Not everybody wants to see a big type solution on the opener of a story. It is very important to me. Type is my paint, I guess. Sounds corny, but it's as close a description as I have. I can express the mood and feel and identity of a story or a whole magazine by how I use type.

What do you look for when hiring designers?
Personality first. I'm a people driven-person. If I can't talk to you and get along with you, and if you can't get along with all of my staff and the staff of the magazine, then you are useless to me, no matter how talented you are. Then, they have to be smart, able to think on the fly, solve problems, and create intelligent solutions. Finally, they have to be a talented designer (with a strong typography skills), because I'm going to let them design half the magazine, and I don't want to look stupid. An assistant has to be very upbeat, because I'm going to dump stuff on them every day and I still want them to be able to smile when it's over and ask if there's anything else I need.







Title: The Complete Package **Design Director:** John Korpics **Publication:** *Esquire* **Photo-Illustrators:** Dan Winters, Gary Tanhauser **Year:** 2000

Title: Presence **Design Director:** John Korpics **Publication:** *Esquire* **Photographer:** Bill Jacobson **Photo Editor:** Nancy Iacoi **Year:** 2003

Title: What's Not to Like? **Design Director:** John Korpics **Publication:** *Esquire* **Illustrator:** Christoph Niemann **Photographer:** Sam Jones **Photo Editor:** Nancy Iacoi **Year:** 2002