

Annotated Bibliography

REFERENCES FROM THE READING LIST

Tenen, D. (2017) Plain text : the poetics of computation. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

In Plain Text, Dennis Tenen investigates the intricate relationships between medium, modality, and message. Tenen delves into how different mediums influence the perception and interaction with content, emphasizing the designer's role as a mediator. He explores the interdependency between the medium, the content, and the reader, examining how each component shapes the overall experience. Through various iterations, Tenen highlights the sensory aspects of perception and the complex dynamics at play in digital and print formats. This work is pivotal for understanding the nuanced interplay of medium and perception, offering designers a profound insight into how their choices affect user interaction and comprehension. Tenen's analysis encourages a deeper reflection on the design process, stressing the importance of considering both functionality and aesthetic in creating effective communication.

Wim Crouwel et al. (2015) The debate : the legendary contest of two giants of graphic design. New York: The Monacelli Press.

In 1972, Dutch graphic designers Wim Crouwel and Jan van Toorn engaged in a pivotal debate that continues to resonate within the graphic design community. This debate centered on the dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity in design philosophy. While exploring interactions within reading through studio experiments, I frequently encountered similar crossroads, balancing personal preferences for functionality and minimalist design against the need for broader experimentation. Crouwel's stance emphasized the role of the designer as a neutral conduit for delivering messages, prioritizing clarity and objectivity. Conversely, van Toorn advocated for the designer's active participation in the creation of meaning, challenging the notion of design as merely a translation of content. This debate highlights the ongoing tension between functionalism and expressive design, encouraging designers to reconsider the balance between personal expression and conventional correctness. The discussion underscores the importance of flexibility and openness in design practice, urging designers to break free from restrictive norms and fully explore the potential of their work.

REFERENCES FROM MY RESEARCH

Lupton, E. (2014) Type on screen : a critical guide for designers, developers, writers, and students. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Type on Screen addresses the evolving landscape of digital publishing and its implications for the future of books. It explores how new platforms and the changing preferences of readers are transforming the traditional form of publishing. The book examines how different mediums can either enhance linear reading experiences or promote non-linear interaction with content. Despite these variations, it emphasizes the importance of maintaining a consistent flow and adaptability of content across different digital interfaces. The insights provoke considerations about the design approaches necessary to ensure both functionality and accessibility in digital formats. This work is essential for understanding the intersection of page and medium, offering valuable perspectives for designers grappling with the demands of digital typography and screen-based reading.

Noble, I. and Bestley, R. (2002) Experimental layout. Crans-Près-Céligny ; Hove: Rotovision.

In Experimental Layout, Ian Noble and Russell Bestley delve into the evolving dynamics of design prompted by new technologies and mediums. The book explores how traditional rules of layout, such as alignment and hierarchy, are challenged and often redefined in the face of interactive and three-dimensional design spaces. Noble and Bestley discuss the emergence of new visual languages and methodologies that designers must adopt to effectively communicate in these innovative formats. This work is particularly relevant for understanding how proximity and scale in 3D space influence the reader's interaction with text, emphasizing the necessity to direct the eye differently than in traditional two-dimensional layouts.

PRACTICES / PROJECTS

hannahpohlmann (2023) Typographic Encounters — augmented reality typography, Hannah Pohlmann. Available at:
<https://hannahpohlmann.com/typographic-encounters-augmented-reality-typography/>.

Typographic Encounters explores the dynamic relationship between form and communication, particularly through the lens of augmented reality (AR). This project underscores a significant shift in the approach to reading, transforming it from a passive visual interaction to an active physical engagement with typography. By closely

integrating words and animations, the text emphasizes how the interplay between these elements can enhance the conveyed messages. AR interactions provide readers with a new layer of interpretative freedom, allowing for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the message. This capability is especially valuable for creating richer experiences that convey the full context of the text.

Spatial classification of typography in AR/VR – Fonts Knowledge (no date) Google Fonts.

Available at:

https://fonts.google.com/knowledge/using_type_in_ar_and_vr/spatial_classification_of_typography_in_ar_vr.

The advent of AI and AR/VR technologies has introduced new opportunities and challenges for designers, particularly in creating three-dimensional environments. Spatial Typography in AR/VR by Google Fonts explores the emerging concept of spatial typography, focusing on how typography functions and maintains legibility in physical space. This text addresses the technological challenges faced during the exploration and implementation of AR/VR typography. It emphasizes the need for designers to consider how typography interacts with readers in immersive environments, where traditional notions of layout and readability are redefined. These insights into the classification of spatial typography and the ways of reading in augmented and virtual reality helped me situate my position within the context of graphic communication design.

Extended Critical Analyses

Wolfgang Weingart- Typography

The process of exploring type in 3D raised many questions. Most of them made me conscious about my decisions while designing in the context of 3D space and the consequences of these choices. Slowly it revealed the interdependency between the aspects of design and communication. To contextualize my position, I engaged in recreating one of the compositions by Wolfgang Weingart in Blender. Weingart, known for his experimental Swiss typography, exemplifies the fusion of form and content, pushing the boundaries of conventional design principles. By bringing his 2D work into a 3D space, I wanted to see how 3D type could change the way we design and interact with text.

Wolfgang Weingart is renowned for his revolutionary approach that broke away from the rigid constraints of the International Typographic Style, or Swiss Style, which dominated mid-20th-century design. His work is characterized by its playful experimentation with type, unconventional layouts, and a willingness to embrace disorder and complexity. Weingart's practice emphasized the physicality of type, making him an ideal figure to explore when transitioning from 2D to 3D typography.

In earlier projects, I was curious about my shift in perspective of looking at and engaging with type. If we look at a page as a carrier of content, then type in 3D space could be considered as a physical object with which we can interact with physically as opposed to the visual engagement that we engage in with type traditionally. Weingart's designs often challenge the viewer's perception and engagement with type. His compositions are dynamic and multilayered, frequently incorporating varied type sizes, weights, and orientations. This complexity forces viewers to interact with the text in a non-linear way, breaking away from the straightforward reading paths typically promoted by traditional 2D design principles. His approach to typography as a tactile, almost sculptural medium, where type elements interact within a space, rather than merely on a flat plane, parallels the shift to 3D typography. Recreating Weingart's work in Blender allowed me to appreciate how his principles could be extended into a 3D realm. For instance, his use of overlapping type elements and varied spatial relationships translates naturally into a 3D context, where type can occupy different depths and planes.

Moving type into 3D opens up new ways of reading and engaging with text. In a 3D environment, type isn't stuck on a flat surface. It exists in a space we can move through, changing how we interact with it. This physical interaction brings new challenges, like directing the viewer's eye in this new space and rethinking traditional layout rules. Weingart's experimental layouts often disregard traditional alignment and grid structures, which aligns well with the possibilities presented by 3D typography. In 3D space, alignment becomes less about strict vertical and horizontal lines and more about spatial relationships and viewer perspective. For example, alignment is crucial in 2D design for order and readability. In 3D, alignment depends on the viewer's perspective and movement.

Exploring 3D type through the lens of Weingart's practice revealed how his approach to typography can inform and enhance modern design with the daily innovation of technology. Wolfgang Weingart's experimental and tactile approach to typography provides a rich foundation for exploring 3D type.

"Literature Down to a Pixel" by Dennis Tenen

My line of inquiry began with the question, "How does the medium impact typographic expression?" This inquiry expanded into exploring ways of reading in 3D space, focusing on the effects of the medium on the design process and reader interpretation through this exploration.

In "Plain Text," Dennis Tenen delves into the intersection of literature, technology, and textuality, exploring the dynamic interplay between media and message and challenging the traditional distinctions between digital and analog representation. Tenen argues that the medium through which text is presented significantly shapes its modality, influencing how readers perceive and engage with it. As text becomes digitized, it gains a new dimension of physical presence. This concept is especially crucial when considering 3D typography, where text is not only seen but also experienced as a physical entity. The exploration of 3D typography through augmented reality (AR) underscores the evolving relationship between text and technology, offering profound insights into how AR reshapes human perception and interaction with text.

Tenen's argument that screens refresh multiple times per second, making signs and texts appear dynamic rather than static, is pivotal in understanding digital text. This raises questions about how we perceive seemingly static words through a dynamic medium and what happens to literature when it appears on screens. The pixel, as the fundamental unit of digital text, becomes crucial in this context. When we transition to 3D space, the basic unit of type shifts from the pixel to a volumetric element. This shift necessitates a rethinking of how text is constructed and perceived.

In 3D typography, text becomes a physical entity that users can interact with in a tangible way. This spatial navigation adds layers of complexity to reading and interpretation, echoing Tenen's exploration of digital text. Just as digital text challenges traditional notions of literary form and structure, 3D type challenges traditional typographic principles and reader interactions. In AR, text can float, move, and change based on user interaction, creating an immersive experience that transforms the act of reading into an active exploration.

Tenen's insights intersect with Marshall McLuhan's contemplation on extended senses, emphasizing how new media environments reshape our sensory perception and interaction with the world. AR, by extending our sensory experience beyond the confines of the physical world, reshapes our understanding of space, time, and communication. McLuhan argued that the media extend our senses and alter our perception. AR exemplifies this by creating environments where text and space interact dynamically, making the experience of reading more immersive and engaging.

The reader's interaction with text in 3D space brings about new modes of interpretation and engagement. Readers are no longer passive recipients of information; instead, they become active participants in the reading experience. The ability to manipulate and navigate through text in a 3D environment allows for a more personalized and immersive experience, potentially leading to deeper levels of engagement and comprehension. This shift towards interactivity also poses new challenges for designers and writers, who must consider how to create content that is both engaging and accessible in this new medium.

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