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<p align="center">The Pepsi Generation</p>

Prior to starting my journey toward a BFA I couldn't name a single notable graphic designer, and

there were just as many who had influenced me. In our recent readings however, there has been a

theme that continues to pop up and has been making me think about the field in a new way.

Rebellion. The manifestos written by artists who are looking to shake up the status-quo, have left

an impression on me. Their desire to go against the grain, or to push society forward in some

way has caused me to think deeply about how I approach the practice of design. Starting this

endeavor I was really into Swiss typography, and the "clean, modern aesthetic". I think most of

us in this program probably are, and that likely has a lot to do with the limits of html, css and the

various coding frameworks. However, being a child of the 90s I can't help but yearn for a less

homogenous, more experimental environment. In doing research for this paper I "stumbled" onto

David Carson, and I was immediately struck by his work. He deliberately flies in the face of all

the grid evangelists, and process junkies, and makes designs that are obviously the work of

Xacto knives, paste, and tons of trial and error. Something about the covers to Ray Gun

magazine made my heart sing. The erratic nature of his work, and how he plays with legibility

has opened my eyes to new possibilities. While the Ray Gun work is beautiful his work at Pepsi

is a master class in semiology.

There is little available about the historical context of the Pepsi ads, but Carson, largely being active in the 90s is a paragon of the decade's style. Highly expressive, eye catching, and engaging, these Pepsi ads speak to the core audience which Pepsi is targeting. Carson, utilizes type and the Pepsi logos to create three simple, yet distinct advertisements. The most interesting thing about these ads is what they accomplish with little of the bombast that Carson is known for.

Arguably some of Carson's more tame work, the communication on display in the advertisements is genius. Using a collection of signs (text) as a signifier, Carson plants within our minds the signified, that being the various vessels in which Pepsi is sold in. The type comprising the image speaks to Pepsi's core demographic, that being young people, and calls out the actions that a spontaneous youthful person might take. The most important text of the image is highlighted in red with a yellow outer glow, and from the top to bottom of each design reads "I wanna be young, have fun, drink Pepsi". In each ad the typography matches the vessel which it illustrates. The classic glass bottle has a tall thin typeface, the two-liter has a wide round typeface and the can utilizes an all caps serif font.

The ethos of this image was explained best by Grygory Kepes in his book *Language of Vision* "When representational units within the same picture contain statements which seem counter to the accepted logic of events, the spectator's attention is forced to seek out the possible relationships until a central idea is found which weaves meaningful signs together in a meaningful whole."Juxtaposing our understanding of what a Pepsi can looks like, and replacing the actual can with typography, Carson eschews sentence structure, kerning and leading rules, and wraps the text in the Pepsi logo. These advertisements work from both far away and up close. If you're far enough away, all you can see is the shape of a Pepsi can, or bottle, and once

you get up close you're invited to read the actual contents of the ad. The advertisement contains several facets which if replaced with photography would completely lose its power. Carson having not been formally trained, (remarkably) still understands that our brains will fill in missing information, and make sense of things that shouldn't in the context they're placed in. Due to what the Pepsi logo symbolizes, the text within the advertisement could probably have been replaced with lorem ipsum text and our brains still would have made the connection that Pepsi comes in a can, glass bottle, and plastic two-liter, and that Pepsi co. is probably trying to sell you Cola.

Carson and his use of messy, grid-breaking layouts, and use of type as texture disregard legibility in favor of engagement. His methodology runs counter to what Beatrice Ward, author of the essay "The Crystal Goblet" believed. "There is nothing simple or dull in achieving the transparent page. Vulgar ostentation is twice as easy as discipline. When you realize that ugly typography never effaces itself, you will be able to capture beauty as the wise men capture happiness by aiming at something else. The 'stunt typographer' learns the fickleness of rich men who hate to read." While Carson's work largely catered to the punk rock ideology, his uniqueness has allowed him to work with bigger brands such as Pepsi, and arguably a brand known particularly for having "rich men" patrons in Macallan.
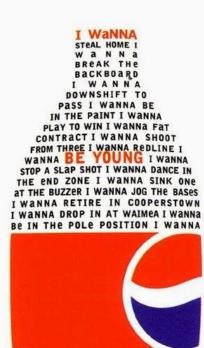
Mostly due to a lack of schooling and a rebellious spirit, Carson, abandons design conventions, and thumbs his nose at those who say his work is hard to read "And the whole legibility thing. Number one, I feel strongly that it got way overstated. I can think of one or two incidences in my entire career where I would say you couldn't read something, and at that point it was sending a different message. People read what they're interested in reading." While

Carson may not have been rebelling against a specific design convention or style at the moment, today he's firmly dug in. The Pepsi ad, like most of Carson's work, proves that what you say sometimes is less important than how you say it. The work almost gives you a sense that Carson may have been thinking "what else can be said about Pepsi that hasn't already been said?". In a lot of ways he's the perfect designer for this ad. Pepsi has been recognized as a number 2 cola brand, and as such cannot invoke its authority or first to market original status. It has to target a specific audience and authority doesn't speak to youth.

The 90s was a time of wild experimentation and growth. Designers like David Carson and Paula Scher have inspired generations through their expert use of typography and their willingness to explore new ideas. Something can be said about analog tools allowing the mind to create freely without thinking within the confines of keyboard shortcuts, and menus. Carson's use of type to create an illustration demonstrates the power of the human brain to make sense of nonsense, and his ability to provoke onlookers into participating in his work is top notch. As designers we should all strive to be as bold and allow our minds to run free.

I wanna TUNE IN I WANNA ZONE OUT I WANNA MASSIVE SUB-WOOFER I WANNA CURE I WANNA HIT MACH 5 I WANNA ENTER THE 4TH DIMENSION I WANNA **be young** I WANNA FULFILL ALL FOUR FOOD GROUPS I WANNA BLACK BELT I WANNA FAST-FORWARD I WANNA DRIP DRY I WANNA GO BACKSTAGE I WANNA HAVE 500 WATTS PER CHANNEL I WANNA SUPPLY I WANNA DEMAND I WANNA *have fun* I WANNA KNOCK ON WOOD I WANNA PIZZA TO GO I WANNA PUT ON SIDE B I WANNA ROLL THE DICE I WANNA ROCK THE BOAT I WANNA BRIDGE THE GAP I WANNA ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES I WANNA *drink pepsi*

I WaNNA STEAL HOME I WANNA BREAK THE BACKBOARD I WANNA DOWNSHIFT TO PASS I WANNA BE IN THE PAINT I WANNA PLAY TO WIN I WANNA FAT CONTRACT I WANNA SHOOT FROM THREE I WANNA REDLINE I WANNA **BE YOUNG** I WANNA STOP A SLAP SHOT I WANNA DANCE IN THE END ZONE I WANNA SINK ONE AT THE BUZZER I WANNA JOG THE BASES I WANNA RETIRE IN COOPERSTOWN I WANNA DROP IN AT WAIMEA I WANNA BE IN THE POLE POSITION I WANNA DIG IN MY CLEATS I WANNA BEND THE RIM I WANNA INTERCEPT THE BOMB I WANNA **HAVE FUN** I WANNA POP THE CLUTCH I WANNA GO THE DISTANCE I WANNA TRUCK FULL OF TROPHIES I WANNA WEAR THE RING I WANNA BE THE MVP I WANNA TKO I WANNA CRACK AN ALUMINUM BAT I WANNA BE A SHOWSTOPPER I WANNA BE A CROWD PLEASER I WANNA **DRINK PEPSI**

i wanna CLIMB EVEREST I WANNA TIE THE KNOT I WANNA SHARPEN MY SENSES I WANNA BE NOBODY'S FOOL I WANNA HIT THE SNOOZE BUTTON I WANNA MANSION AND A YACHT I WANNA GET TO THE BOTTOM OF IT ALL I WANNA HAVE MY CAKE I WANNA EAT IT TOO I WANNA GO TO A LASER LIGHT SHOW I WANNA **be young** I WANNA WEAR A WETSUIT TO WORK I WANNA SEVEN DAY WEEKEND I WANNA TICKER TAPE PARADE I WANNA BE CLEAR FOR TAKEOFF I WANNA PAIR OF BLUE SUEDE SHOES I WANNA *have fun* I WANNA ANSWER THE QUESTIONS I WANNA QUESTION THE ANSWERS I WANNA GO STRAIGHT TO THE TOP I WANNA KISS THE BRIDE I WANNA WATER MY PLANTS I WANNA ACT FOOLISH I WANNA HAVE NO RESERVATIONS I WANNA WEAR SHADES INDOORS I WANNA 6 DISC CHANGER I WANNA BUTLER, A MAID AND A COOK I WANNA *drink pepsi*

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