# COMD Theory Mid-Term Paper – David Carson

2015 Dubai Festival of Creativity Poster

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David Carson is one of the most influential graphic designers of this era, due to his expressive style and it pushes the design norms off of the ledge, his work is grid-free and unconventional. This unconventional style is what made him very influential of this era, designers started to realize in the 90s that they didn't need to follow the conventional way editorial layout were designed; image placement, consistent typography, Visual Hierarchy and etc. Most designers don't follow that way of thinking so the design can "look clean and precise" but for Carson and others their approach was 'Why not?", an approach I follow, and I believe most designer/artist should follow because it pushes creativity and avoids repetition. In this poster David Carson designed for the 2015 Dubai Festival of Creativity, is a great example of how he designed most of his compositions, wild type, collage style, photography, typography, bright/expressive colors, and sometimes he implies geometric and organic shapes within his works. Carson designed most of his posters like magazine pages, full of information that you can discover the longer you look at the poster, for this poster it all information about the festival. His unorthodox style of type works (I believe) even though its structure is certainly different, if you read it from top to bottom just like we read everything. You can see who designed this poster, what the event is, where is the event, when is the event and so on. Its art, and just like art it should make look at it longer to discover everything about it, study it. Carson style consist of the use of hand lettering in his work, he is still a designer that stays to his roots, he knows the importance of using pencil to paper and other utilities. But for this poster he didn't use hand letter but just like most of his designs he wanted the typography to remain busy especially since he was a main speaker at this event. Carson also uses photography in his work, heavily actually. With the Use of typography, he uses photography to make a collage style and swiss style. In the poster you can see a photo of his son in there just because he "liked the photo and love him" and a photo of him making the "End of print" posters (two of them below).

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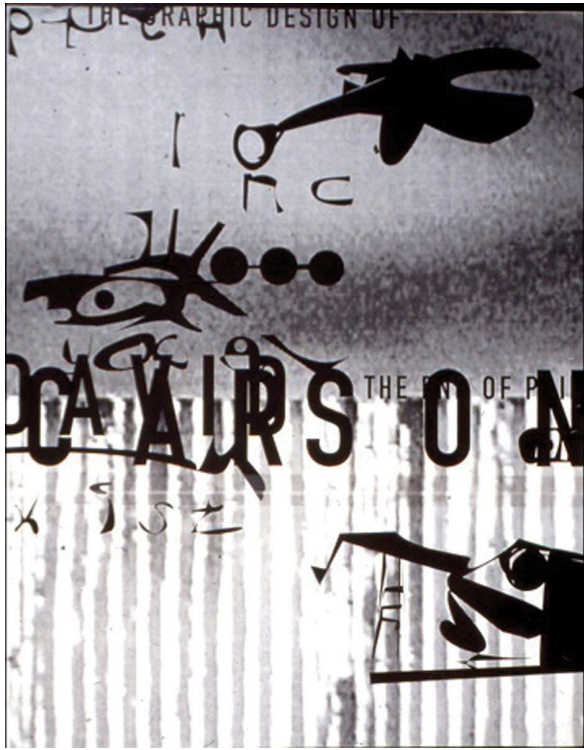
The first thing you notice in Dubai Festival poster is the use of typography in an unorthodox way. In the poster there some element Herbert Bayer had. Beyer believed "typographers sees possibilities of deeper visual experiences from a new exploitation of the typographic material itself", although his use of typography is unlike the way Herbert Beyers, Moholy-Nagy and other designers of the pasted (especially people involved with the Bauhaus) imagined it being. Carson uses his ability of hand-lettering to see the endless possibilities of type, having the ability to position type differently and having fonts scaled in different sizes but still be understood by others. This shows type doesn't need to be used in one way. It still brings for a deeper visual experience and also excitement to the graphic design world. They consider typography to strictly be clarity, conciseness and precise, although that doesn't mean its good design or the typography work, especially since the aspects of design is always changing. But Besides the obvious use and importance of typography in Carson designs, you can also say he was inspired by the ideas of the swiss style aka International typographic style. Swiss style is an asymmetric layout, use of Sans serif, the use of photography instead of illustrations (which Carson uses both but more photography then illustrations) and the main thing which is the mathematically grids to consider placements of design elements. Although Carson have said in an interview, he has never used grids when it comes to his designs, other than that Carson implements ideas from the swiss design in his designs. It communicates to you at all fronts of the designs from the style, to the type and photography, which is all honestly an example of typophoto.

Typophoto is basically the combination of communication composed in type and the visual presentation of what can be optically apprehended. Carson takes his hectic typography and overlapping disarray of photos to communicate what he is feeling about the composition/the project or design. He uses these elements (photography and typography) to create emotion and express his ideas, just like painters uses their brush strokes to create emotion but Carson uses type

to precisely and carefully to convey his message. In the eyes of some people the design can just look chaotic type on a photo, but it all has a purpose, its "unambiguous rending in an optically valid form". Language varies from person to person and just like language you have to be to communicate what the design is saying to you and why is it design in this fashion. Everything doesn't have be directly visible to understand it, sometimes you have to look deeper. The methods of Moholy-Nagy can be seen in that. He believed photography is highly effective when used as typographical material, Moholy-Nagy expressed how important communication can be in a composition when it has both elements of type and photo is present. Davis Carson work takes after that. Carson design can be used as an example of how Moholy-Nagy pictured the future of type and photo would be. He knew the future typography would be structured differently than in his times. He saw then the number of things that you can do when both type and photo is present, designer were going to have to adapted.

Carson surely adapted and taken plenty of element of the past to create his unique styles. Because of this Carson I believe was certainly a part of the Avent-Garde movement, Carson might be a Designer that is technically listed under one type of movement but just the fact he simply pushed and broken boundaries of the traditional way design should be expressed (more subjectivity then objectivity). He's taken after so many movements it impossible to just list him under one. If I had to pick, I think he would be an odd ball of the swiss design with no particular grid system.

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