

the alphabet

26 thesis of the world and typography

A is for the alphabet. The alphabet gave us the culture. Before culture came the abstract thought, and that abstract thought enabled man to ascent from a hunter gatherer to a cultivator of fields and a breeder of animals. From the abstract thought came pictures. The pictures evolved into signs. The signs evolved into letters. The letters evolved into the alphabet. And the alphabet made us able to pass our knowledge to our descendents. That ability gave us the world that we have today. Respect the alphabet.

B is for banal. We have the alphabet, and look what we have done with it. We have used this brilliant ability to kill each other, to ignore each other, to make money with it. The alphabet was not made for that.

C is for cultivation. We need to appreciate this precious talent we have. Our capitalistic society too easily turns this beautiful thing into mockery. Please, do take good care of your abilities.

D is for deconstructivism. Since we no longer have nothing to unmask, we concentrate on text itself. Nietzsche and Freud were right during their time, but the anthropological changes during the last century made their ideas obsolete. Today the world is textual. Language is everything. Language defines the world around us, and so, to understand the reality, one must understand the language, and free one self from logocentric thinking. Content and meaning are indeterminate.

E is for emotion. You have a head and a heart. Use them both. Too many decisions are made by the calculator instead of compassion. Our world could be a better place if it was another way around. Trust your heart.

F is for form. Our thoughts and feelings are given form by the alphabet. By writing and speech can we see the form of our ideas. Like God that turned His idea into being, so we also do the same in our world. We are all Gods.

G is for genius. Each and everyone of us has that. Do not be afraid to show that. It comes in different forms to different people, and too often it is shied away from, instead of embracing it. Today's educational system tends to shunt children instead of bringing them to their talent. Be a genius.

H is for humour. With humour we can deal with issues that would otherwise be too strange or painful to issue. In fact; without laughter there would be very little we could react to in this world. Humour is fuel for your thoughts.

I is for idea. Idea always comes first, and everything else is secondary. Idea is also the end; something that leads us, something to follow. Ideology is not dead.

J is for jester. If you cannot be a jester; if you need to be the authority, you have nothing. To be able to be a jester is to be able to have perspective. Jester was the most valuable person to a king, for he was the only one brave enough to point out the flaws of the king. Dare to be stupid.

K is for knowledge. The alphabet gave us the ability to learn from our ancestors. Use your alphabet to increase your knowledge. Use your knowledge to build yourself, and to build your surroundings. It is the lack of knowledge that gives room to fear and hate. The lack of knowledge makes tyrants and keeps the poor in poverty. The lack of knowledge keeps the white away from black, the Christians away from Jewish and the Jewish away from Muslims, the heterosexual away from homosexuals, the rich away from the poor. Be curious.

L is for lust. If you lust for nothing, you are dead. To lust is to have passion; to feel. To lust is to be alive. Lust is dangerous, but it is also beautiful. It can do terrible damage, but it can also do terrific things. Lust is precious.

M is for machine. Today machines are tools. Computer is a brush. Screen is a canvas. Mobile phone is a diary. Machines are gods. Television is a priest. Stock ticker tells you how the gods react to the wars in Middle East. Windows allows you to live your life. Do not respect the machines.

N is for noise. World is filled with noise. Most of the noise is incoherent and without information, even when it comes from intelligent sources. Today it's hard to make yourself heard over the background noise. You literally have to take a sledge hammer and hit people in the head with it to get their attention. Make a point instead of noise.

O is for offence. Dare to offend. Dare to be offensive. Do not try to please others. Compromise does not help anybody. To be proactive instead of reactive is always better. Defence can keep you afloat, but if you want to be successful, you have to be capable to take offence. If others are offended, that is more often than not a sign that you have hit into something valuable. If others are offended, you should be proud of yourself. Do not apologize.

P is for print. Alphabet is at its most beautiful in print. Crafted lovingly into carefully selected paper the Alphabet fulfils its function; it tells a message. At its best the print is a medium between the sender and receiver. When done right, no one notices the print itself, and the message gets through effortlessly. Print is forever.

Q is for quintessence. Do not tarry from your target. If you set yourself a goal, go for it. Forget everything irrelevant, and start ranting. Quintessence is a worthy goal.

R is for random. Sometimes things happen without reason. Random acts and occurrences are part of everyday life. These random things can be a brilliant source of inspiration and ideas. Do not feel shy about taking advantage from random happenings. They are nature's way to be creative. Embrace chance.

S is for structure. We live in a structured chaos. We try to mould our environment into neat and orderly constructions, and the nature resists us every step of the way. And if we leave something unattended, the nature promptly comes

and tears it down. Only lately have we begun to learn to understand that the way the nature builds itself is not chaotic, but just that the structures of nature are so much more intricate than what our feeble human brain can comprehend. Believe in nature.

T is for typography. Typography is the base of all graphic design. Everything else is just decoration and picture manipulation. After photo composition, which made enough damage to typography, PostScript and desktop publishing made graphic design commonplace. If you do not understand typography, you do not understand graphic design. To understand typography, study the history of the alphabet. It gives you all the knowledge you need in the field of graphic design. In Type we trust.

U is for upbringing. To make sure that the knowledge the alphabet has given us, be careful to pass that knowledge to your children. Do not hide your talent. It is the upbringing of us, and of those before us, that has got us this far, so it is your obligation to raise the next generation. Spread your knowledge.

V is for vectors. Since the PostScript printing language came to market in 1985, all typefaces have been made in vector format. To make vector graphics one should have certain skills. There should always be a point in horizontal and vertical extremes, so the printer program won't have to guess where the extreme point of the rasterized object actually is. And, to maximize the printing efficiency, in type design, one should always use the minimum amount of points to streamline the calculating time. Control the point.

W is for wonder. Have dreams and wonder. Dare to be a child and be amazed. Take things for what they are, and do not be scared to be surprised. Revel in it. Make wonders. Make others wonder. Abhor common solutions. Have fun, and let others do the mundane. Question the reality.

X is for x-rated. Accept no censorship. Let your own instinct to be your only guide. If others look at it as pornographic material, so be it. Do not let that stop you. There is censorship everywhere. Society is a censor, but so is religion and the market forces. Be a porn star.

Y is for you. Nobody else but you can make you do what you do. Be yourself, and be your best friend. Trust yourself and examine yourself; you just might be amazed about what you'll find. Believe in yourself.

Z is for zeal. Go on crusade. Be sincere about what you do. Do not leave it half way. If you lack passion, you might as well be a civil servant. Be a crusader.

