

DesignVerso

Una collana dedicata ai migliori designer della comunicazione del ventesimo secolo immaginata come allegato alla rivista Multiverso, Università degli Studi di Udine.

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Curatori della rivista

A kid with the best job in New York City
Martina Melillo

Identity is the beginning of everything
Viola Moliterni

A love affair with The Public Theater
Daniele Dell'Orto

Great causes need great design
Eleonora Nava

Stampa

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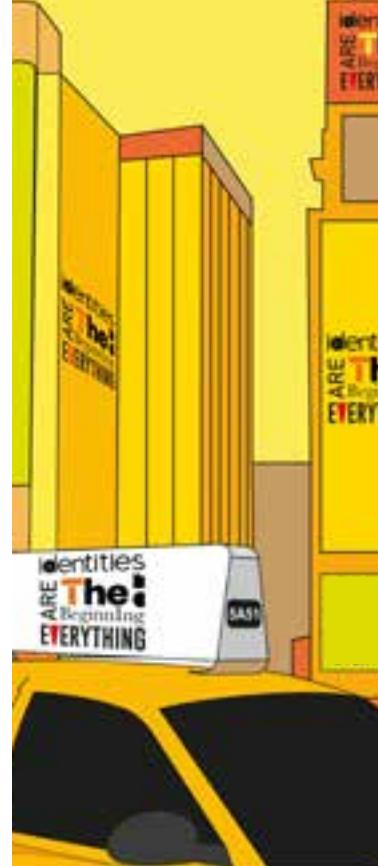


A KID WITH THE BEST JOB IN NEW YORK CITY

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Martina Melillo



IDENTITY IS THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING

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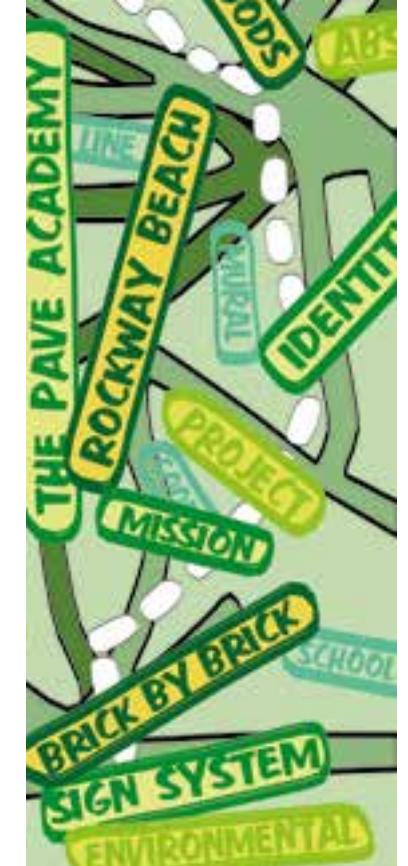


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Daniele Dell'Orto



GREAT CAUSES NEED GREAT DESIGN

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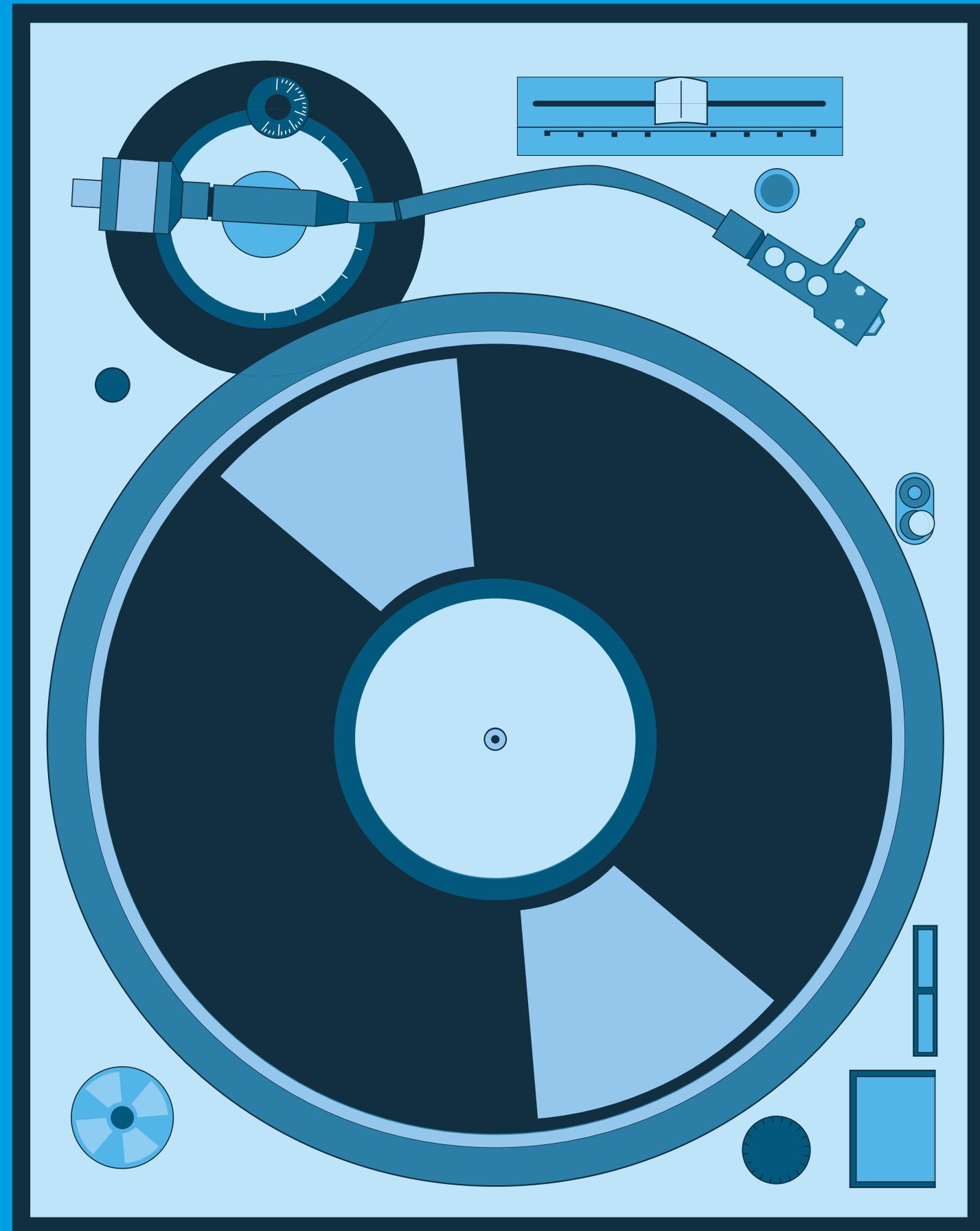
Eleonora Nava

EDITORIALE

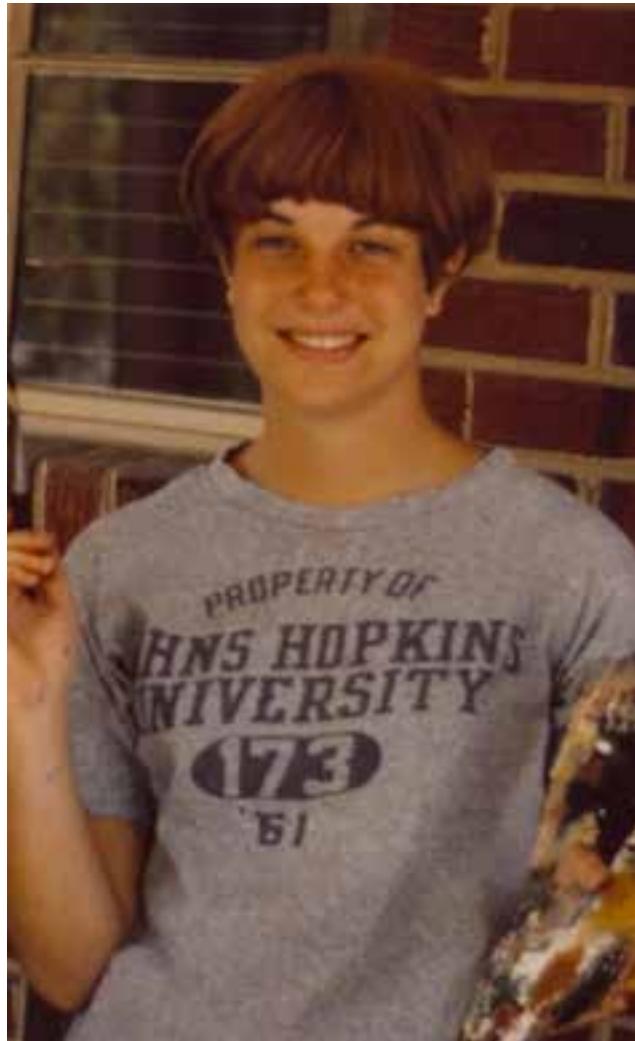
Paula Scher loves New York City. She's been living and working there for more than 45 years. Her work reflects the spirit of the City but at the same time contributes to the evolution of its appearance. She collaborated with record companies, museums, theaters, cinemas, schools, parks and every other kind of institution in New York. She also served on the Public Design Commission of the City of New York from 2006 to 2015. We could say that Paula Scher's design is affected by New York as much as New York finds its identity in Paula Scher's design.

This number investigates the relation between the designer and her city analyzing the works she made. The four rubrics treat the different kind of creations she made during her career in the Big Apple: the record covers in the '70s and '80s, the collaboration with the cultural centres, the 24-year-long relation with The Public Theater, the design for public good. Somehow, these are four ways Paula dealt with New York City.

The key element in the magazine is the map: its whole structure is based on the traceability of every single institution she collaborated with. This choice has two reasons: it allows to remark continuously the link between Paula's works and the city, but at the same time it is a tribute to her painted typographic maps. In fact, the magazine itself is a map.



RECORD COVERS



Paula Scher during her high school years

“As a child, I failed at everything but art. First, I was too scrawny; then I was too fat; my hair was never right; and I was never popular. But as the school artist, I was okay: that was the first place where I felt like I actually belonged.”

Those were the things that I really wanted to do. They spoke to me. I got a job designing record covers at CBS records in the '70s. I'd combine the illustration with typography that related to the illustration or contrasted it. I was a kid with the best job in New York City. I had recording artists and their managers, all these people coming in and out of my office. And always trying to keep these balls in the air to get them to agree to some design and get it to come to fruition. And I just became very good at it. Big recording artists were the things the company cared about the most. So I would do pretty much what the recording artists wanted me to do. Like for example, Bruce Springsteen's cover for *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. It was shot by a friend of his who was a butcher, and I put this typewriter typography on it. Cheap Trick was a little bit different. They weren't as big as Bruce Springsteen so I had a bit more control. With jazz

artists, they got to be a little artier. Like, this is a series of covers I did for Bob James's label, Tappan Zee Records, and they were all single objects that were blown up out of scale.

My favorite was always the matchbook. However, if nobody cared about the album, that's where I did typography. And that was what I liked doing most because I was the artist, I was the one that controlled what these things looked like. So, Charles Mingus, *One and Two*, and he didn't care what was on the cover. This was a reissue of a whole pile of Yardbird songs, and these things I really, really loved making. Over a period of four or five years, the typography came forward and the images moved to the background. I had made this radical shift and develop the way I would work for the next 30 years. I'd learned so much about typography, and became known for it.

Paula Scher painting the United States map



Netflix Serie: Abstract the Art of Design

After moving to New York City to take her first job as a layout artist for Random House, Paula Scher was hired in 1972 by CBS Records as an ad designer. However, she had her heart set on the more performative and exploratory art of record sleeve design, a format that she's become renowned for, having designed hundreds of covers over the course of her prolific career.

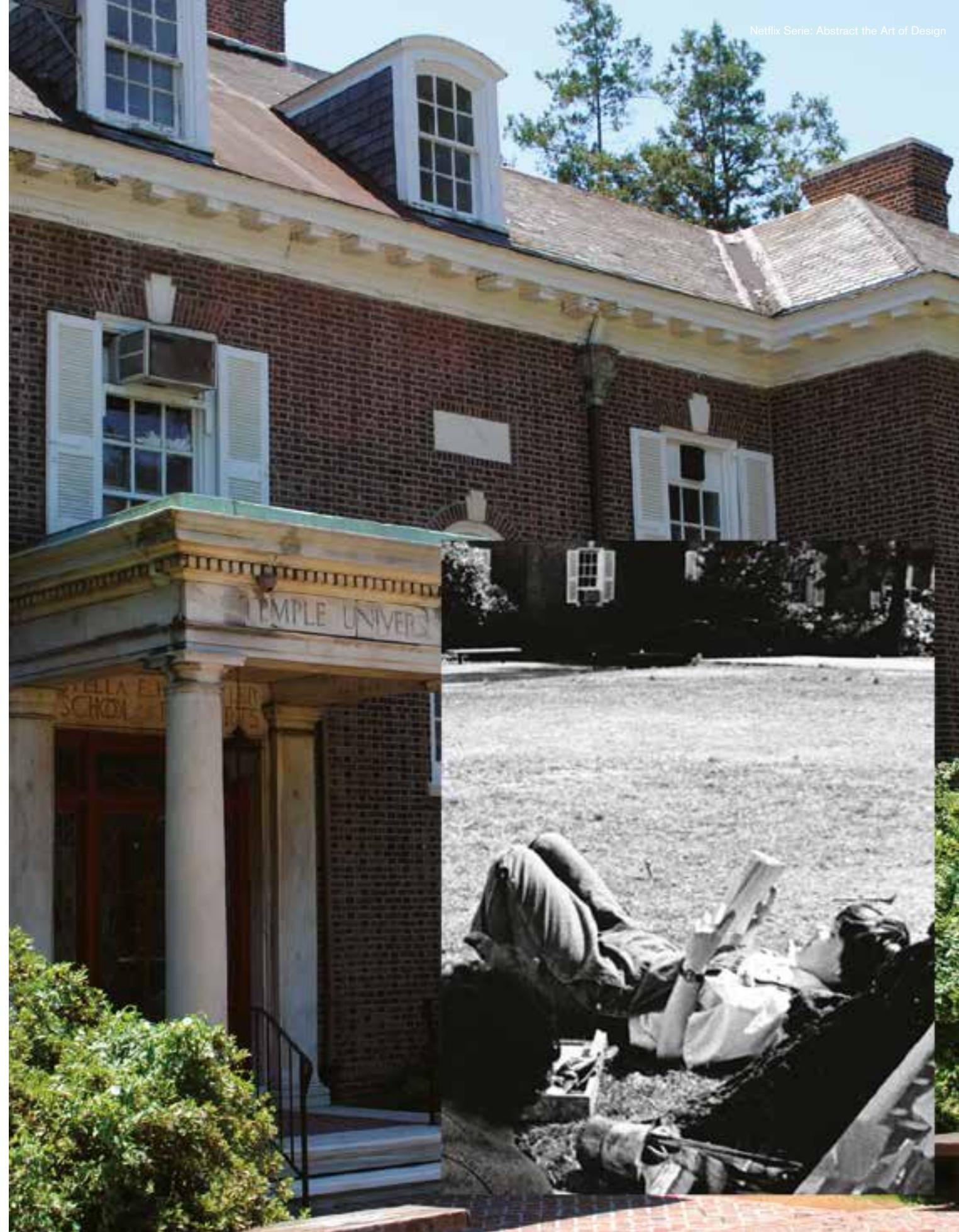
Paula Scher at Tyler School of Art, Tyler School of Art's campus

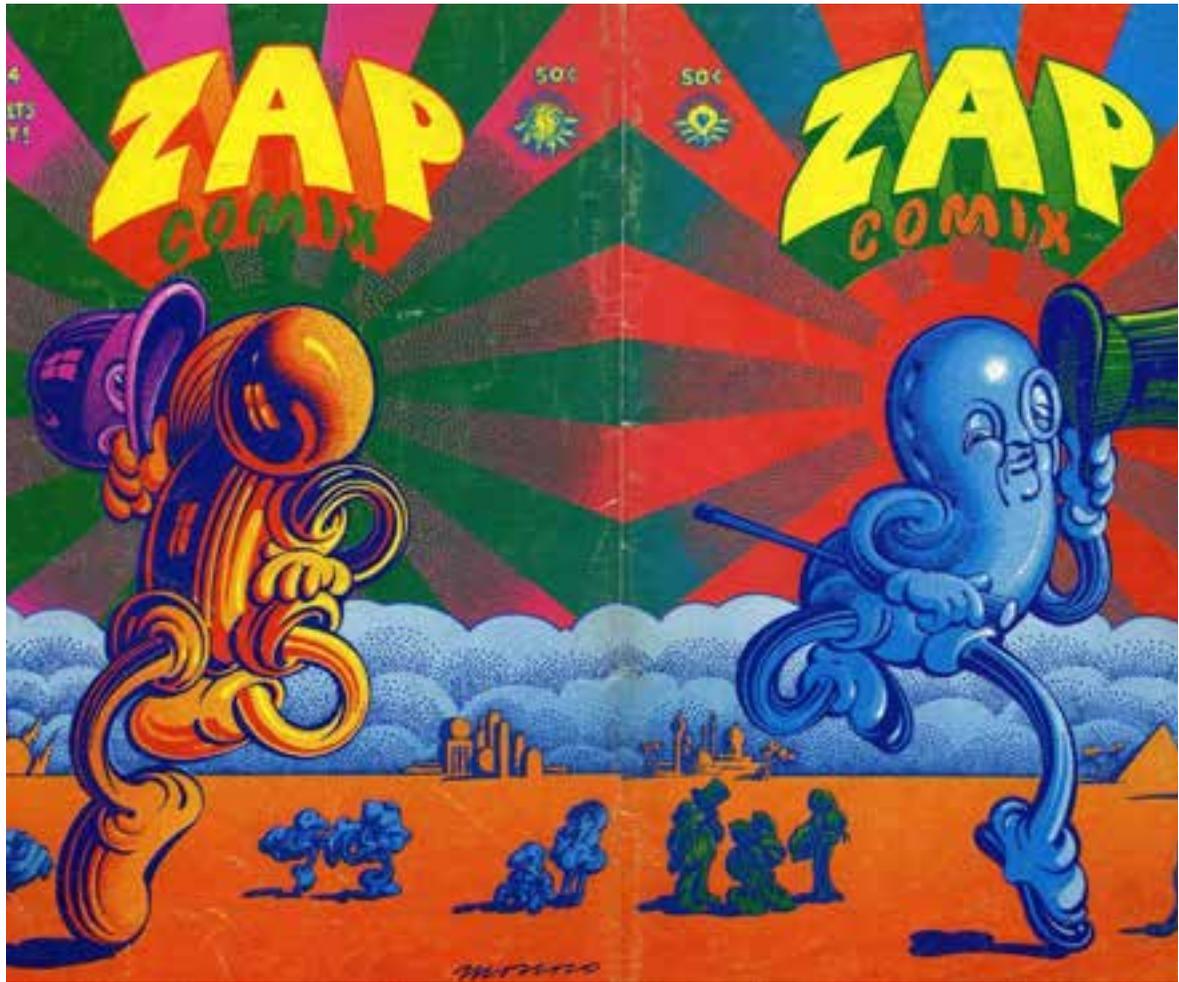
8 My first staff design job out of art school was in the advertising and promotion department of CBS Records. I held the lowest possible position: I reported to the assistant art director, who reported to the art director, who reported to the creative director, who reported to the vice president of merchandising, who reported to the vice president of sales, who reported to the president of CBS Records. I was teamed with a copywriter, and we created ads that promoted albums in trade publications like Cashbox and Billboard.

We would be given a work order, which contained a job number and stated the name of the album and the band to be promoted, the publication in which the ad would appear, the size of the ad, and some other basic content requirements. This information came from the product manager of the band, who was typically the author of the marketing plan for a given album. The copywriter and I would collaborate on a concept and headline. Then the copywriter would craft the body copy while I designed the ad. The finished layout would be attached to a routing slip, and a "traffic manager" would carry the ad from office to office to obtain the necessary approvals from various people within the corporation. The necessary signatures were as follows: the assistant art director of the advertising department, the art director of the advertising department, the creative director of the advertising department, the product manager of the band, the

director of product management, the vice president of A&R (artist and repertoire), the vice president of the record label (Columbia or Epic), and in the case of important recording artists, the president of CBS Records, who at that time was Clive Davis. The average amount of time allowed for a given ad to be conceived, written, designed, approved, typeset, and mechanicalized (this was before the computer) was about three days. Trade ads (Cashbox, Billboard, et al.) were printed on Wednesdays, which often meant that ads for those magazines had to be completed and approved in less than a day to make the publications' closings. The first ad I laid out was a trade ad. It was routed to the assistant art director and promptly came back to me for all kinds of revisions. I responded to the comments, and the ad was rerouted to the assistant art director. Again it returned. In both instances, I was instructed to make the headline and the name of the album bigger. On the third submission, the headline and album title were huge. The ad was returned with a memo to make "on Columbia Records and Tapes" larger. The fourth submission came back with the notation that there was not sufficient room for the body copy.

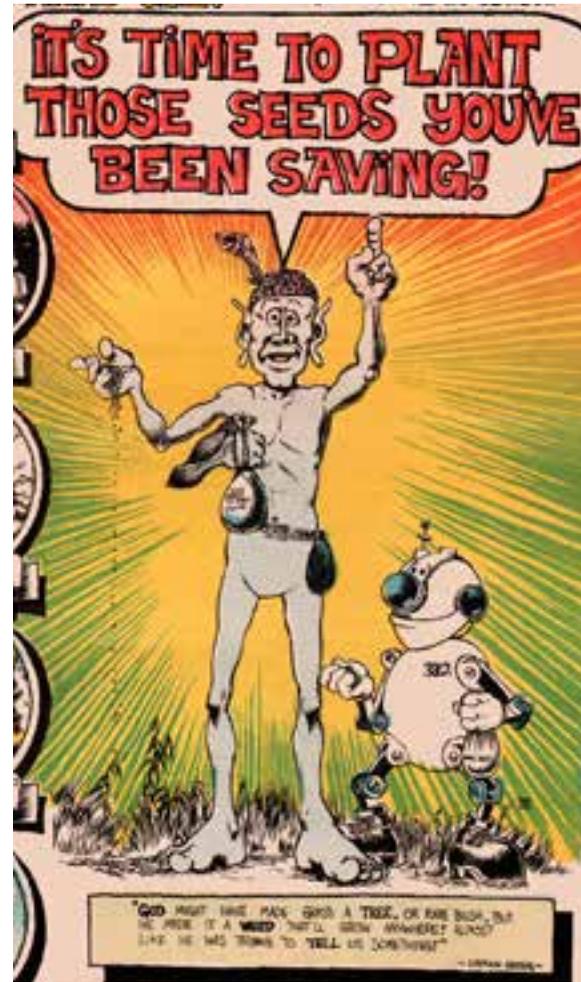
I decided to talk to the assistant art director because I had only half a day left to produce the ad. I waited outside his office for twenty minutes while he finished a phone call. He held one finger in the air to signal me to wait. When he finished the





“I was influenced by contemporary culture. Zig-Zag rolling papers, Zap comics, underground newspapers and magazines and record covers.”

phone call, he rifled through a pile of papers on his desk. After a few more minutes, he waved to me to come in. I was standing in front of his desk with the ad when he picked up another pile of papers. He flipped through them for another minute, then looked up at me and said, “What’s the problem?” I told him that I wasn’t getting anywhere with the ad layout and asked him for advice. He picked up a tracing pad and said, “You need to do it like this,” and created a thumbnail that in scale and proportion was nearly identical to my first layout. I thanked him and redesigned the ad. He signed off on it, and so did everyone else because it was late Wednesday night and there were no other options. As far as I can remember, the assistant art director



“I didn’t really fit in very well in high school. I mean, I was a person who went to art classes instead of going to the football games. There’s something wrong with you if you do that. Then I was studying illustration, and I fell in love with typography in a way I didn’t expect to.”

never approved an ad I designed on the first try. A month later I learned how to avoid obtaining his approval, and about six months after that he was fired in a corporate-wide layoff. I found out afterward that he had never been consulted about hiring me. The art director who hired me (his boss) hadn’t invited him to my interviews, never showed him my portfolio, and informed him that I was hired just one day before I started working there.

This experience has repeated itself in a variety of scenarios throughout my professional life. Someone who was entitled to approve my designs but who hadn’t been properly consulted about hiring me or hadn’t been consulted by me with respect to

a design would resort to any means possible to block, alter, or destroy my work. I quickly learned that the judgments made about graphic design in corporations, institutions, and organizations composed of more than one decision maker often have little to do with the effectiveness of a given design in the marketplace and more to do with how human beings naturally behave in complicated hierarchical social situations. ■



Lake's Lake back and front cover

What were your first significant projects?

A series of album covers for the best of jazz where I experimented with russian constructivism. the in-store posters were the best part of the series. I also still like my poster for elvis costello. another would be a series of jazz albums that relied of large scale objects for bob james (tappan zee records) and a number of intricate typographic albums.

At CBS Records (former name of the global record company Sony Music) product managers were the closest thing we had to clients. The product manager's acceptance and support of a concept and design were crucial.

A strong product manager participated in the creative process by providing the information that was essential to the design and encouraged an innovative result. When a strong product manager was pleased with a design, he or she would walk it through the approval process personally and act as a guardian of the work. Weaker product managers supplied the relevant information, and responded positively to innovative design, but would not ultimately defend anything. A superior was then far

more likely to criticize and compromise the work, largely because he or she sensed the product manager's weakness. It was an unbreakable cycle in which the weak product manager became even weaker, often became paranoid, and was eventually transferred out of the department or fired.

The weakest product managers were frequently quite shrewd. They avoided the aforementioned trap by never responding or committing to anything so that they couldn't be criticized by a superior. They kept their jobs longer than even the strongest product managers, and working with them was usually fruitless. These three types of product manager are the archetypes that describe every corporate or institutional client I've ever had.



MI-SEX
COMPUTER GAMES
GRAFFITI CRIMES



Details of Mi-Sex's Computer Games album

“I don’t think of design as a job. I think of it as—and I hate to use this term for it—more of a calling. If you’re just doing it because it’s a nice job and you want to go home and do something else, then don’t do it, because nobody needs what you’re going to make.”

I've become adept at identifying them and try to limit client relationships to the strong managers. It might seem like an arrogant statement, but the fact is that a designer cannot accomplish anything of import by working for a weak client. The relationship is pointless, even if it exists purely to obtain the design fee. The fee will probably be cut, or the amount of time expended on the job will wipe out the fee. The relationship is pointless because the weak client is eternally fearful. If a design succeeds through a weak client, it is only because someone stronger and more powerful has interceded on behalf of the design.

At CBS Records in the seventies, the record-cover department was much more powerful and respected than the advertising department. Covers weren't routed through the company by a traffic manager.

Product managers and label heads actually came to the designers' offices to meet, discuss, and approve art. It is true that the packaging of music has always been perceived as more important to its sale than advertising, yet the two divisions' different art-approval processes were created by the heads of the respective departments. The two creative directors had absolutely opposing philosophies about the goals of design within the corporation. The creative director of advertising saw himself as the leader of an organization in service to corporate management. He wanted to build personal relationships with label heads, sought them out socially, and didn't want to provoke, challenge, or offend them. He protected the status quo. The creative director of the cover division saw himself as an art director and designer. He wanted to be

well respected in the design community, win design awards, and make his service to the company a by-product of the excellence of the department. The cover department's creative director gained more immediate respect from the organization. In the late seventies and early eighties, however, when the record industry went into a financial slump, both creative directors were expendable. Most of the ads I produced for my first design job at CBS were formulaic. They consisted of a headline, some body copy, a picture of the recording artist that was an out-take of the album-cover photo session, and a picture of the cover. The only way to produce an interesting ad was to break the formula completely, which was an impossible task. Even if a strong product manager supported it, it would generally be rejected by Clive Davis; and if the ad was for a

smaller recording artist, the creative director would reject it.

After two years in the advertising department at CBS Records, I realized that it would be impossible to produce any notable work for the following reasons:

To produce notable work I would have to break record advertising conventions.

The president of the company was conventional.

The creative director was conventional and afraid of the president.

Sony Square
25 Madison Ave

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY East 23rd St



BUS Madison Av/E 25 St



She had her heart set on the more performative and exploratory art of record sleeve design, a format that she's become renowned for, having designed hundreds of covers over the course of her prolific career.

Did you move to New York right after college?

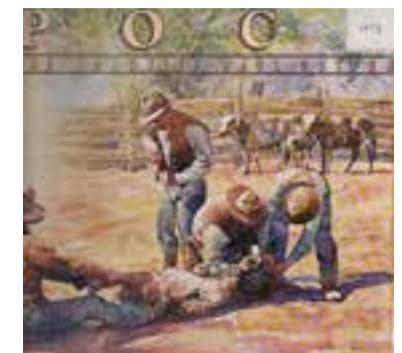
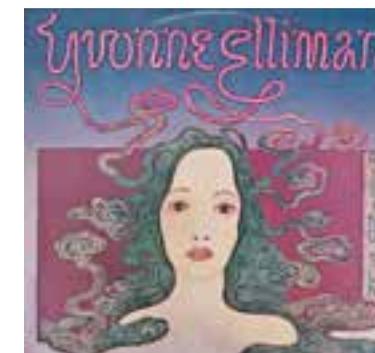
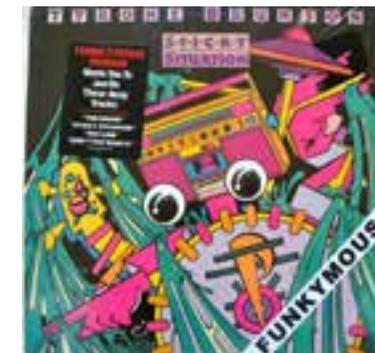
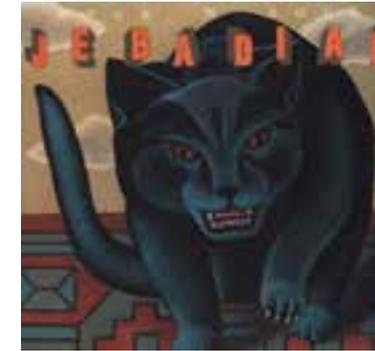
Yes. I moved to New York with my portfolio and \$50.

Wow. Tell us about that. What did your parents think?

You have to realize that I worked my way through college, so I was already fairly independent. I did not have a good relationship with my parents because nobody in my family was like me. I had felt like a complete misfit for a lot of years, until I got to Tyler, where I started to see people like me. I knew I couldn't go back to live a suburban lifestyle in Washington, DC.

So, what did your parents think about you moving to New York?

When I told my mother that I was going to move to New York, she said, "Oh Paula, don't do anything like that. That sounds like it takes talent."



- Eddie Harris's Bad Luck is All I Have
- Jackson Hawke's Hawke
- Jan Hammer's The First Seven Days
- Steve Khan's Arrows

- Jebadiah's Rock 'n' Soul
- Rolling Stones's Still Life
- Tyrone Brunson's Sticky Situation
- Yvonne Elliman's Rising Sun

- Blue Oyster Cult's Fire of Unknown Origins
- Dan Hartman's Instant Replay
- Lewis Ramsey's Funky Serenity
- The Songs of Paul Cotton



Cheap Tricks' Cheap Tricks front cover

“Money was irrelevant. It was more important to make uncompromised work. I have never made a pivotal career decision based on money.”



Bob James and Earl Klugh's One on One LP



Charles Mingus's Changes One and Changes Two front covers

I was working in the promotion department for CBS Records designing trade ads when I was offered the job at Atlantic. The art director there, Bob Defrin, liked my ads. But in the Atlantic art department you got to design the record covers as well as ads, and I wanted to design record covers. Taking the job was an easy decision. This was 1974. Charles Mingus had just come out with two related albums called Changes One and Changes Two. He didn't especially want a photograph of himself on the record cover. I had to eventually show the design to Nesuhi Ertegun (Ahmet's brother) who managed Charles Mingus inside the company, and I decided to make an all-type cover. I listened to the album once. At the time I hated that kind of jazz and no idea I was designing a cover for something that was going to become a classic.

Typography worked well with jazz albums because it was more abstract. I selected a wood typeface that I drew and added drop shadows to it. It was a good solution because it didn't cost much to execute and Atlantic always had a more limited budget than CBS. The whole thing took a week to design and it probably took another week to make

the mechanical. I made a comp by drawing the type with a rapidograph pen and rubbing down Cello-tack to create the color systems for the two albums. They were essentially the same design, but with the color changed. Nesuhi was happy with them. I hired a mechanical artist to draw the type from my hand lettering. Then I set the type for the back cover, added an existing picture of Charles Mingus, and marked up the mechanical for the printer.

The most complicated part of the project was the color breaks. I matched my Cello-tack colors by picking percentages of magenta, cyan, black, and process yellow out of a color chart that was produced by a color separation company called Color Service. They had the best color break book in the business, and I memorized the percentages. The best gray, for example, was 5% blue, 5% yellow, and 5% red. If you selected a straight black percentage for the gray it looked cheap and wimpy, especially on the cardboard that record covers were printed on. There was an area of design production called pre-press that has totally disappeared now because color separations are accomplished on the computer.

“If you get good at something and become known for it, then it’s time to change it. If you don’t, you’ll be stuck and people will get tired of it. You’ve got to grow. Sometimes that means putting yourself in a position where you might fail or do bad work for a while because you’re still finding yourself”

Illustration curated by Martina Meililo



At Atlantic Records my clients were the director of marketing, recording artists or their management, or Nesuhi Ertegun, one of Atlantic Records’ founders. If Ertegun was interested in an album-cover design, then no other opinion mattered. Ertegun had good taste and was easy to talk to.

Selling up only works when the designer has a strong client who is well respected within the organization, who can set the stage for a positive presentation, and who can provide the necessary backup before criticism. In the process of selling up, most objections to a design are expressed as “marketing concerns.” Marketing concerns are usually design-punishing reactions such as not liking a particular color or type choice, or thinking an image is “too” something (you fill in the blank). Designs that are “too” something are usually strong—maybe even edgy—and tend to be scary to people on first viewing. What most scares people in a corporation is a design that looks too far afield from other things like it in the marketplace (which is ironic, because the point of design in

the marketplace is to identify and differentiate). If, however, the most powerful person in the organization has blessed a design that seems different from other things like it in the marketplace, then marketing concerns usually vanish

At Atlantic Records I had a galley-like office with a long countertop that stretched the length of the space. My boss, the art director, had a big square office with a large table way back in the space, behind which he sat. It was an imposing position; my office was completely unimposing. There were books, color pencils, comps, and all sorts of arty things around. I found out that this worked to my advantage or disadvantage depending on the visitor. Recording artists who had cover approval, particularly the less powerful ones, enjoyed my office because it didn’t seem corporate. They thought of me as an artist and enjoyed meeting with me.

Powerful managers of important recording artists didn’t like my office because they thought they were talking to the art department’s peon.

Paramount Plaza

1633 Broadway

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY 50th Street



50 St



49 St Subway Station



BUS 8 Av/w 49 St



The music industry of all places offered Scher a chance to use her skills to showcase her ideas to a mass market yet allowing her to retain creative control. Unlike today, the album cover then was seen a direct link to the youth culture and desirable as a piece of art in its own right. This gave Paula the perfect creative vehicle.



Johnny & Edgar Winter's Together front cover

I never held a successful meeting with an important artist's manager in that office. After some very frustrating experiences, I started borrowing my boss's office for power meetings. Even then, the meetings were not particularly fruitful if the manager thought that I wasn't the most important person in the art department. I realized then that if I wanted to be able to persuade people to a particular design, I would have to be perceived as first, an absolute authority and second, the most powerful person to approach about design. This perception was nearly impossible to achieve at age twenty-five. The only way to have power at twenty-five, particularly in the music business, was to appear to be hip and groovy; then it would be assumed that you were a young visionary leading the way to the future. I

could not achieve that persona. Being neither powerful nor particularly hip, I relied on my personal strengths. I was articulate, and I had a good sense of humor. I therefore styled myself as what can best be described as a young smart-ass. It served me reasonably well for a number of years. I worked for Atlantic Records for a year when I was offered a position as an art director in the CBS Records cover department. In that year at Atlantic I produced twenty-five album covers. As an art director at CBS Records I would oversee or produce 150 albums a year. I took the job because there was more to design. I always look for more to design: the more you design the more you learn. You learn the most from your mistakes. You don't learn anything from success. In the CBS Records cover department

more people were involved in everything because it was a much bigger company. It took longer to make things than it had at Atlantic. I later came to appreciate working for smaller companies, simply because the politics are easier to manage. A middle-size corporation, if it has an active and intelligent president, turns out to be the best client. It is small enough to enable the designer to build a relationship with the appropriate power figure and big enough to realize design on a relatively large scale. That were typographic were comparatively easy to sell to product managers, producers, and musicians. Most of the typographic covers that I designed in the seventies were for classical and jazz albums or for reissues for pop recording artists who were either dead or dropped from the label.

The corporation found these typographic covers particularly appealing because they were cheap to produce. The covers were often formalistic compositions of information, the objections voiced were usually about color. My classical album covers generally employed historical typefaces that reflected the period in which the music was written. Because I had the opportunity to design so many covers, I became familiar with virtually every period of typographic design.

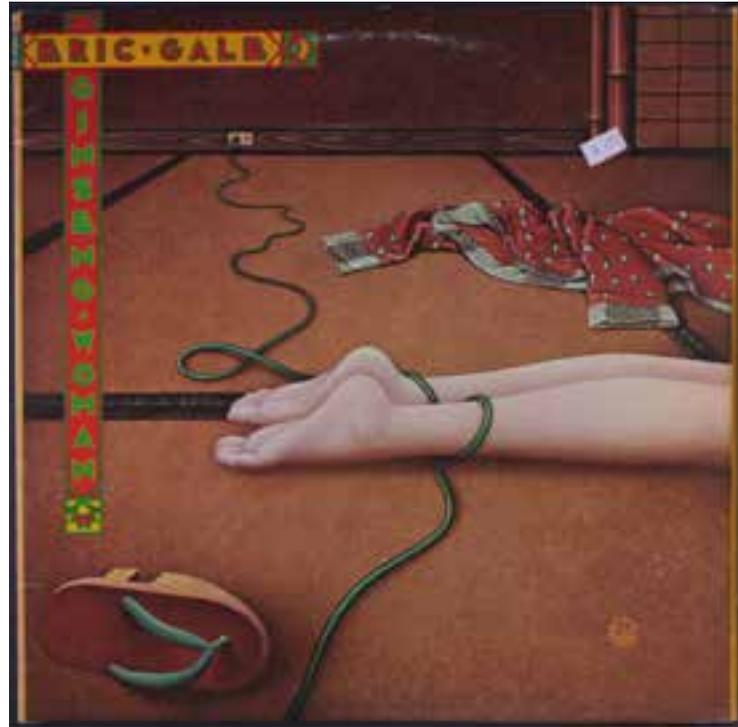
These early typographic covers at Atlantic and CBS Records became the basis for the design vocabulary on which I would continue to build for another twenty years. I noticed that in the eighties clients were far more sensitive to typographic styles than they were in the seventies. In the seventies product managers, bands, editors, and other non-designers were far more interested in imagery. They viewed typography as lettering only. Only rarely would they differentiate between the type that “had the little feet” (serifs) and the type that didn’t. In the seventies rock bands wanted logos, and a logo meant highly styled typography that integrated letterforms in a complicated way, like the Chicago album covers designed by John Berg and Nick Fasciano. My best work at CBS Records (and elsewhere) often came out of rush projects. The corporation would want to hurry something into the marketplace so quickly that it didn’t care what it looked like. I’ve always found the rush a tremendous opportunity to employ some energetic design experimentation. The speed at which you are forced to work inspires a madcap kind of spontaneity, and that’s good for design. Even the mistakes work for you. The best thing about rush projects is the absence of the approval process and therefore the absence of fear and indecision, which are the impetus of most corporate design. In fact, one tends to receive far more gratitude for merely accomplishing a project on time for clients who are on an accelerated timeline than for satisfying the requirements in a scenario of careful group deliberation. ■



Johnny Winter's White, Hot & Blue front cover

She collaborated with illustrators and photographers to interpret music in suggestive, poetic ways—she preferred to invoke a mood or stage a mysterious scenario than provide literal depictions of bands and performers.

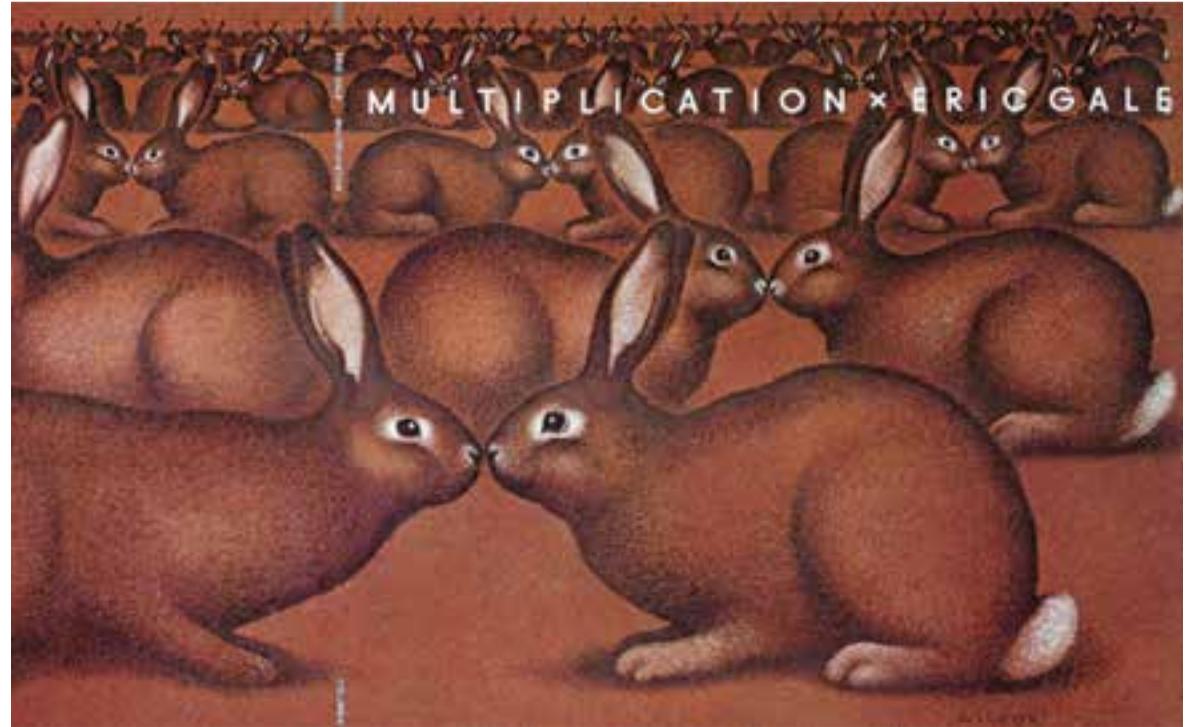
“I’m glad I learned to design before the computer; I learned a lot about color that way.”



Eric Gale's Ginseng Woman front cover

My favorite album-cover illustrator in the seventies was David Wilcox, the best of the magical realists. His work would be nearly impossible to produce within a large corporate structure today. The approval process involves too many people, all of whom are too nervous to allow an illustration to be commissioned without seeing something similar already in existence. Instead the art director has to find the similar thing that exists, scan it into the computer, show it to the committee, persuade the committee of its appropriateness, make recommended changes, represent it to the committee, assign the project to an illustrator, present the commissioned sketch to the committee, respond to the fact that the sketch doesn't look like the original presentation piece, have the illustrator rework the sketch perhaps three more times, and await the finished painting, which at this point is devoid of any spontaneity, emotion, surprise, or edge.

Ginseng Woman is the best of the Wilcox covers. Eric Gale, a jazz guitarist, was married to an Asian woman, and the album was dedicated to



Eric Gale's Multiplication LP

her. Gale wanted an image that would symbolize their connection. I persuaded Gale to accept a mysterious cover image: a Japanese room, tatami mats, a kimono, a sandal, and a woman's outstretched legs entwined with an electric cord from Gale's guitar. Wilcox's color choices and particular use of scale gave the room an eerie glow. The cover was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1978. Shortly thereafter, CBS Records received a letter from the National Organization for Women protesting violence to women in album-cover art and citing *Ginseng Woman* as an example. Corporate management (all male and very sexist) was absolutely delighted that a woman had designed the album cover and gleefully dumped the protest letter on me for a response. I wrote a relatively serious treatise about the difference between illustration and photography, about how one interprets images, and about the difference between the real and the surreal. In the *Ginseng Woman* image, violence could be construed, but it would be in the mind of the beholder. At the end of the treatise, I told *NOW* that I was earning significantly less money than male art directors with

the same responsibilities and asked for their help. I received no reply. *Ginseng Woman* was my first experience with politically correct interpretations of graphic design. In the eighties and nineties the fear of offending anyone became so great that it was nearly impossible to commission specific imagery at all.

Multiplication was the album that followed *Ginseng Woman*. Gale said he wanted "bunnies" on the album cover. I supplied the title to the album, and Wilcox supplied the rows of bunnies. In the top row of bunnies, in the background, there is actually a fornicating bunny couple. I can't imagine any corporation allowing this to be produced today.

At CBS Records at that time, though, Eric Gale's approval was all that mattered. I don't think anyone else looked at it that closely. As a jazz musician, Gale didn't sell enough records to warrant the kind of scrutiny given to best-selling recording artists. On the other hand, his albums were sold all over the world. Album covers, particularly jazz albums, were my first global work, and I still see them in music stores when I travel abroad.



- Yardbirds Favorites's front cover
- Heat Wave's Too Hot to Handle cover and LP
- The Wurlitzer's Sidewalks of New York front cover



Boston's Boston front cover and its initial sketch

The Yardbirds Favorites, Shine the Light of Love and Universal Rhythm are good examples of the spirit of my collaboration with Wilcox. I supplied a ridiculous premise, and he supplied an obsessive response. The Yardbirds album was a repackage, which meant that the company had extra tapes lying around and the contractual right to release them, but the recording artist wasn't in any way involved in the process. Repackages were generally nonpolitical album covers. Jim Charney, the project manager for Boston, Ted Nugent, and Cheap Trick, used to reward me with repackages as an antidote to the arduous political machinations that accompanied the production of cover designs for most best-selling albums.

Sidewalks of New York and **Too Hot to Handle**, both illustrated by Robert Grossman, couldn't have been more different albums. Sidewalks of New York

was a release by the classical division and featured popular tunes from the turn of the twentieth century played by the world's largest calliope. It was released by the Masterworks division, and a small audience was anticipated.

There was no particular corporate interference in the art direction. Heat Wave was an R&B band that Epic Records (a CBS subsidiary) had picked up. The album had an accidental hit single called "Boogie Nights," and the company wanted to rush the album into the marketplace to take advantage of the extra sales. Grossman produced the illustration in a week; I found the crazy wavy typography in the old Morgan Foundry collection. Epic Records was happy just that the album came out on time. It sold two million records. If it had not been a rush, the illustration would never have been accepted by management because it doesn't "look like" the artwork for any other R&B album.

And then, of course, the monster illustration, **Boston**. Six million copies, I think, in the first month of sales. It was quite something. They wanted it to be something futuristic, so we came up with this half-baked idea that the earth was blowing up and all these spaceships were escaping. Guitar-shaped spaceships. And they left the planet Earth and went up in the heavens. The Boston cover is dumb. I am still mystified by how something like that really resonates in culture. I mean, it predated Star Wars. So we must have hit a zeitgeist that was about to happen. But when I die, it will say, "Designed the Boston cover", and I've lived with this horror ever since, and I think it may wind up being true.

Band founder, guitarist Tom Scholz suggested a cover with a guitar shaped spaceship, it didn't make sense but they tried to tie it to a story: the Earth had blown up and space ships were escaping into

orbit. There were supposed to be many guitar-city-spaceships leaving the planet labeled, London, Paris, Rome, and Boston was supposed to be the largest escaping front and center. Eventually they took out the other city names to avoid confusion and just kept one city, Boston. The album exceeded expectations. It's the second best-selling debut album of all time. 20 million copies sold. And the album cover, simply iconic.

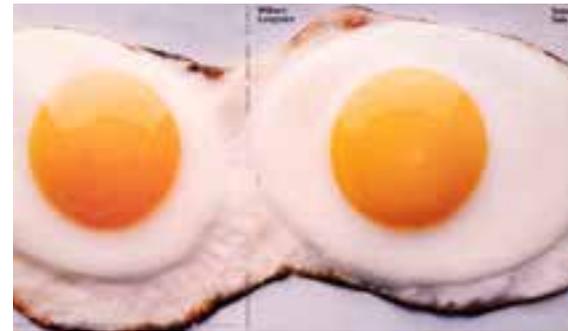
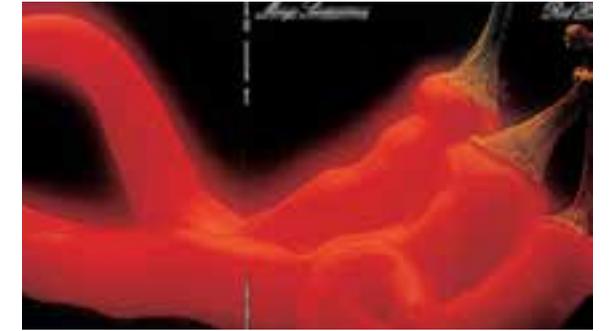
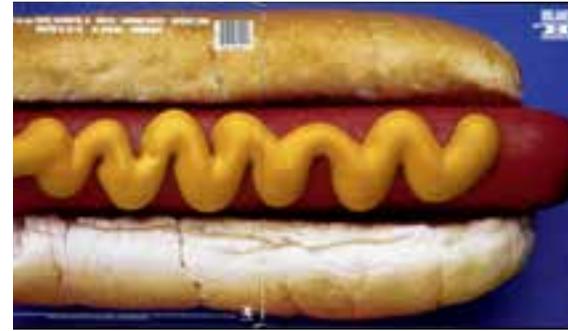
Blue Sky Records was a custom label distributed by CBS and was the invention of Steve Paul, who managed Johnny and Edgar Winter, Muddy Waters, Rick Derringer, and David Johansen, who later became Buster Poindexter. Paul was more a patron than a client. He was less concerned about what things looked like or what the subject matter was than about who did them and whether or not they were considered quality. Paul liked to work



Johnny & Edgar Winter's Together back cover

with the stars of the profession. He wanted to be convinced that every person handling any aspect of his project was simply the best in the business. He usually requested that Richard Avedon photograph his recording artists. If not Avedon, then how about Bert Stern? I didn't mind this at all: It's actually a good way of ensuring that the end product will be of the highest quality. When Avedon photographed the Winter brothers, I persuaded Paul to run the image without any typography. The Winter brothers were popular at the time and the only albinos in the record business. They would be instantly recognizable. The album title was Johnny and Edgar Winter Together, and the cover certainly made that clear. The company demanded that a sticker be placed on the shrinkwrap, but Paul

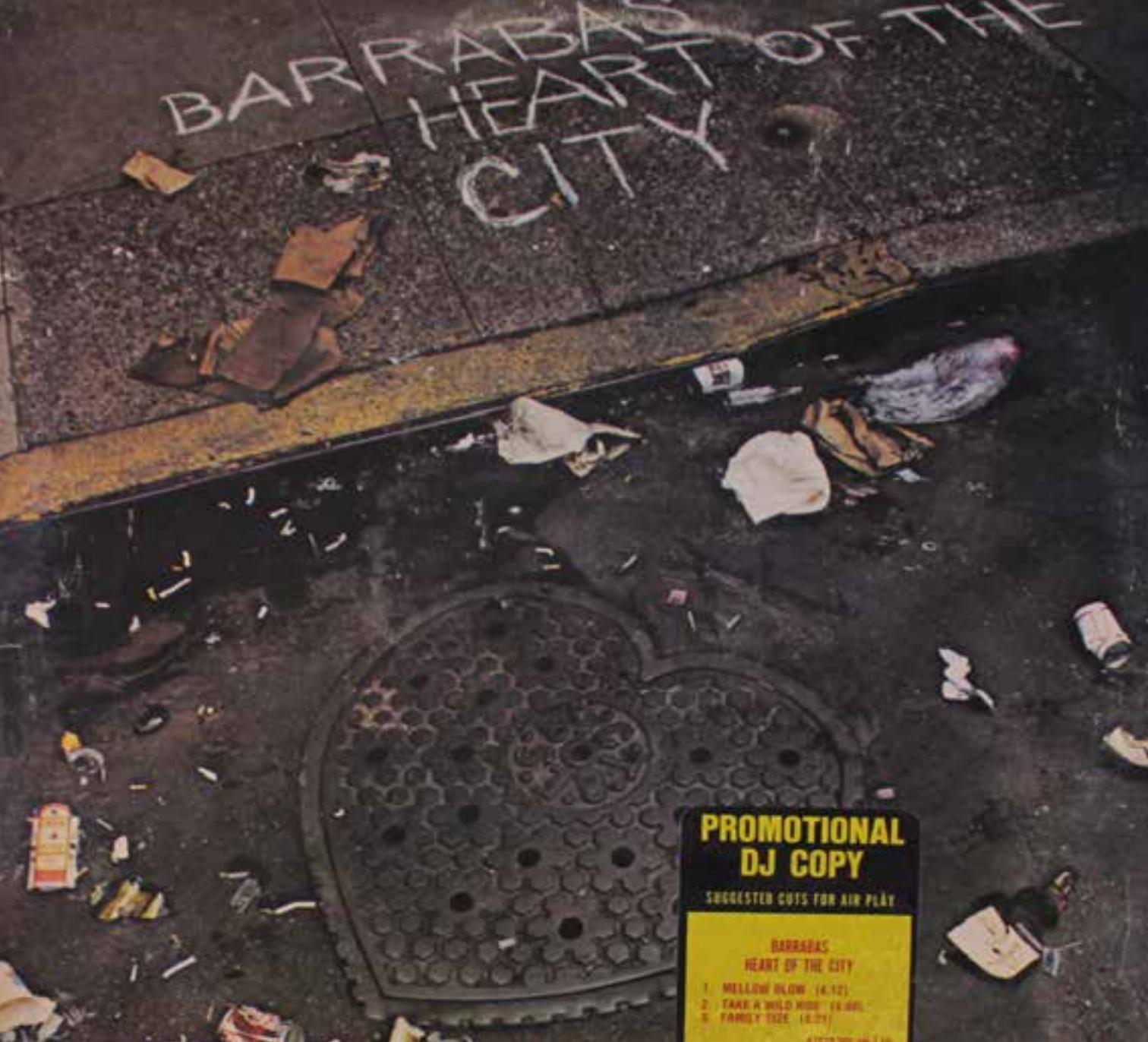
defended the position of no typography on the outside package. Once he was persuaded that it was an elegant thing to do, there was no stopping him. When Avedon shot Muddy Waters for *Hard Again* (1977), Waters had just walked in the door and hadn't yet taken off his hat and coat. Avedon moved him to a white wall, took four pictures, and said it was a wrap. It was. Paul had the confidence to accept two pictures from the four for the cover images. It was harder to persuade Paul to purchase illustration because he didn't know enough about the genre to identify famous illustrators by name. When I wanted to hire Phil Hays to paint a portrait of Waters, Paul wanted to be assured that Hays was simply the best portraitist there was. He couldn't make a judgment by looking at Hays's work, but



Paula Scher's serie of front covers for Tappan Zee Records portraying objects out of scale

he was impressed by the fact that other illustrators thought Hays was the best illustrator. Paul wanted what was acknowledged as best and got it. Bob James was my first ideal client. He had his own small label called Tappan Zee Records, which CBS distributed. He planned to release records of his own music plus those of other jazz musicians. He wanted his album covers to have a series look but not a specific format. James was entrepreneurial. He knew how to construct interesting deals with record labels that allowed him to have independence and control. His was the only approval necessary in the creation of these album covers. The **Tappan Zee** covers were all composed of smallish objects—simple American icons blown up so they were out of scale. The approach was successful on the

12-by-12-inch format, particularly because the albums opened up and the whole 25-inch surface could be used. James's covers were all numbered. He had had a previous label deal with CTI Records, and photographer Pete Turner had produced his first four albums. *Heads* (a nickel) was his fifth album, *Touchdown* (six points) his sixth. The objects and names were selected with respect to the number or, in the case of the other jazz musicians, the title of the album. Most of the covers were photographed by John Paul Endress. The most successful Tappan Zee cover was *One on One* (1979), for which the matchbook became the entire package. ■



Barrabas's Heart of the City front cover

“There’s always a moment when I think a project is going to be really amazing. That’s the moment I love, and it’s what I live for.”

Paula Scher's Typographic Charles Mingus Album Cover
[— eyeondesign.aiga.org](http://eyeondesign.aiga.org)

Paula Scher on The Great Discontent (TGD)
[— thegreatdiscontent.com](http://thegreatdiscontent.com)

Paula Scher on Abstract: Art of the Design
[— netflix.com](http://netflix.com)

Paula Scher, Make it Bigger
[— Princeton Architectural Press](http://Princeton Architectural Press)

paula scher interview
[— designboom.com](http://designboom.com)

ADC Hall of fame, Paula Scher
[— adcglobal.org](http://adcglobal.org)

About that Boston album cover
[— joebond.com](http://joebond.com)

More Than an Album Cover
[— theatlantic.com](http://theatlantic.com)

Paula Scher, Rockstar Designer
[— paulmcglade.github](http://paulmcglade.github)

Paula Scher's punchy identity for Poster

Album Art 60's 70's
[— discogs.com](http://discogs.com)

Paula Scher Biography
[— artnet.com](http://artnet.com)

1974/1983 CBS/Atlantic Records, Paula Scher
<http://paulatribute.weebly.com>

The best of series posters, Paula Scher
[— stevekhan.com](http://stevekhan.com)

Paula Scher: Biography, Albums, Streaming Links
[— allmusic.com](http://allmusic.com)

Reputations: Paula Scher
[— eyemagazine.com](http://eyemagazine.com)

Paula Scher
[— paulascher101.blogspot.com](http://paulascher101.blogspot.com)

For the love of vinyl
[— lennart-music.com](http://lennart-music.com)

Netflix: Abstract the Art of Design [—](#)

visualartsdepartment.com [—](#)

MoMA.org [—](#)

Paula Scher, Make it Bigger [—](#)

pinsdaddy.com [—](#)

cdandlp.com [—](#)

discogs.com [—](#)

phillyliving.com [—](#)

PHOTO CREDITS



BRAND IDENTITIES



Doorway to the New York City Ballet in Lincoln Center Plaza.

As well as designing countless posters and album covers, Paula Scher has designed some of the most iconic and memorable brand identities. One of them was for the new identity and promotional campaign for the New York City Ballet, one of the largest and most prominent dance companies in the world. The New York City Ballet's approximately 100 dancers perform a repertoire of over 150 works. The company is credited with bringing modern dance to the American public and as a result, has played a significant role in the history of twentieth century performing arts, a precedent that informs the company's mission today as it continues to be an influential cultural force. Paula Scher in particular has created an

“If you know how to design identity then you know how to design everything”

NEW
YORK
CITY
BALLET

NEW YORK
CITY BALLET

NEWYORKCITYBALLET

Logo set in the font DIN, 2008.

New York City Ballet

20 Lincoln Center Plaza

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY 66 St - Lincoln Center

1 2

BUS Broadway/w 64 St

M20 M5

Broadway/w 66 St

M104



On the left: New York City Ballet Theatre. On the right: promotional materials.

identity that links the company's legacy and location to a contemporary and dramatic new aesthetic. Set in the font DIN, the logotype appears stacked and layered, like buildings staggered in the skyline, with a degree of transparency that echoes the visual texture of the cityscape. As a matter of fact with its roots as the German industrial standard for technology, traffic, administration and business, DIN has more recently seen widespread usage in corporate identities and collateral material. The palette is composed of black, white and silvery grays, in the way that the buildings of New York can sometimes appear. The starkness of the identity is softened by its transparency and a subtle gradation of color that will include shades of blue

blacks, green blacks and red blacks. The graphics program is balanced by Nick Heavican's arresting black and white photography. Promotionally, most dance companies typically present their performers centered in the frame, with the entire figure pictured. For the New York City Ballet, the designers cropped the images of City Ballet dancers to create more tension and drama. Cutting in and out of the frame, the dancers capture the shifting focus one experiences while watching a performance. At the same time, the dramatic layering of figures reflects the logotype and the city itself as viewers are immersed in the intense energy of the dancers, as well as the style of the city. The new identity and graphics appear on bus shelter

and subway posters all over the city, in magazines and newspapers ads, in the company's programs and website, and in environmental graphics at the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center where the company performs.

“The job of the designer is to make things understandable, usable, accessible, enjoyable... important to a public, that involves the public”

The Metropolitan Opera

44

Logo designed in 2006 set in Baskerville and Avenir.

An important challenge for Paula Scher was designing the new identity for The Metropolitan Opera, the venerable New York institution. The Metropolitan general manager Peter Gelb proposed to rebrand the institution and reach a wide audiences like the younger generation that never set foot inside the opera hall. The logo for the Metropolitan Opera was designed really because the Met had lost its name to the Metropolitan Museum of Art because it had a better shopping bag. The shopping bag said “THE MET” in very large type, and it was everywhere. New Yorkers began to think the Met meant the art museum, not the opera. When Peter Gelb became head of the opera, he wanted to take a stab at getting back some of that nickname.

“I knew they couldn’t get back The Met, but they could get back ‘Met Opera’. So the design of the logo was based on that name as much as anything else. What we did is the break of the typography: “Met” and “Opera” are highlighted—the word “metropolitan” breaks so the “met” stands by itself, with “ropolitan” on the second line. It also served to make the logo more contemporary as it helped enforce the name”.

The Metropolitan Opera

20 Lincoln Center Plaza

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY 66 St - Lincoln Center

1 2

BUS Broadway/w 64 St

M7 M5 M20

Broadway/w 66 St

M104



Lincoln Center Plaza. In the front: The Metropolitan Opera. On the left: New York City Ballet Theater. On the right: David Geffen Hall.

Queens Theatre
 Queens Theatre
 Queens Theatre
 Queens Theatre

Logo set in the font Founders Grotesk, 2014.

Queens Theatre is the premier performing arts venue in Queens, New York, presenting world-class theater, dance, music and comedy. The innovative productions are matched by a one-of-a-kind location: QT is located in the historic Theaterama, one of the three structures that originally comprised the New York State Pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Pentagram's Paula Scher has designed a new identity for Queens Theatre that conveys its vibrant programming and unique setting. The logo employs simple shapes inspired by the geometric forms of the pavilion. The Theatre was looking for a visual language that would appeal to an incredibly varied audience and provide a cohesive system for promoting a wide range of activities. At the same time, QT needed an identity that would reflect its position as an im-

portant arts institution and help it stand out in New York City's crowded cultural landscape. Established in 1989 and officially opened in 1993, Queens Theatre repurposed the Theaterama, one of the few structures spared demolition after the World's Fair. Scher created a simple graphic system that marries the forms of the architecture with the dynamic spirit of Queens Theatre. The logo uses a circle and rectangle to make the letter "Q," with the shapes used as a containers for imagery. Institutional collateral like stationery and press kits utilize images of the architectural landmarks of the World's Fair, while materials promoting artistic programming use photographs of performers and productions. Color corresponds to different types of performance: blue for dance, red for theater, yellow for comedy, and green for family productions. For



“Identities are the beginning of everything. They are how something is recognized and understood”

consistency, photography always appears in black and white. “The theater needed a contemporary design that would not be complicated to execute” says Scher. “By making the logo the housing for photography, it simplified choices. Most of the design decisions enabled them to get a big impact out of a limited budget”. The logotype appears with a vertical orientation and is set in Founders Grotesk, with the letterforms of the “Q” and “T” customized to echo the architecture. The typeface is bold so that it can be legible and instantly recognisable. Theinhardt is the secondary typeface, subtly modified to better complement the Founders Grotesk. Text in brochures and programs is always set in a single column and set off by black bars. ■

Queens Theatre

14 United Nations
Ave South

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY Metro Mets - Willets Point



BUS Roosevelt Av/ Willets

Q48

PROMOTIONS & CAMPAIGNS



The humble poster has long been seen as a simple yet powerful form of visual communication. Whether it is Tomi Ungerer's Black Power, White Power poster from 1967 during the height of the US civil rights movement, designers have created posters in order to send a message. Now, the poster is set to become the subject of a new museum and gallery due to open in the fall of 2018 in New York. This museum will present rotating exhibitions and a permanent collection of international posters from all time periods and from around the world, examining how this ephemeral medium bridges art and design. Scher is responsible for the visual identity of the museum, which sees its name used as a typographic, "moveable frame device" with a flat base that immediately announces the content

POSTER



HOUSE

Poster House
119 W 23rd St

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY 23 St

1 2

23rd Street

JSQ-33 HOB-33

BUS W 23 St/Av of the Americas

M23

Av of the Americas/w 23 St

M7 M55 X7

at hand. The logo type is made from geometric shapes and is designed in order to contain the negative space which can be horizontal, vertical and square, sometimes long and thin or short and wide. As a matter of fact the two words of the name are placed along the edges of collateral and promotional materials, where they set off images and information and signal they are part of the Poster House programming, exhibitions or collection. The flat edge of the logotype also nods to the practice of full-bleed printing and the layered effect of posters being plastered on top of each other on advertising billboards. The idea behind the framing device is to reflect the fact that the museum will be displaying diverse exhibits such

as flyers, record covers and billboards, in order to “redefine what is considered to be a poster”.

In 2013, Paula Scher and Pentagram designers revisited the classic identity for Jazz at Lincoln Center, the country’s premier institution for jazz performance, updating it to riff on the current logo while expanding it into custom typography for the institution. The refreshed identity simplifies the original wordmark to make it more contemporary. The 2003 identity was designed to help put Jazz on the map at its new location and didn’t look like anything else at the time. The organization and identity are now well established with audiences.



Doorway to Jazz at Lincoln Center in Columbus Circle. Logo designed in 2003.



Flexible application of Poster House logo.

“When I designed this logo Wynton Marsalis, art director of the Lincoln Center, told me that jazz was about syncopation: it’s when you have a bunch of things in a row that are alike and one of them is off. So in a sort of way he handed me the identity”

Advertising for the broadcasting concerts from Jazz at Lincoln Center.



jazz at lincoln center presents

live webcast

*Broadcasting concerts in HD from
Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City*

“I wanted to make things that the public could relate to and understand, while raising expectations about what the ‘mainstream’ can be. My goal is not to be so above my audience that they can’t reach it”

The 2003 logo featured a circular disk that resembled a record for the “a” in Jazz, but with a square dot in the middle of the letter. The unique circular form became iconic over the years, and the refreshed identity has preserved and extended it by redrawing the existing logo using Neutraface font, rounding the square dot in the “a,” and making the letterforms slightly heavier. They then created a full alphabet with the circular forms of the round letters all filled in. In applications of the identity, the distinctive circular forms of the typography playfully punctuate the graphics like musical notes, creating a kind of visual rhythm that is unmistakably Jazz. The circles can be used in many different ways to become the basis of a flexible graphic system for the institution. “Everything in the identity system is made out of circles and squares, even the murals. Also the typography is made out of circles and squares”. The unique typography appears in Jazz promotions and on the website, and will eventually be applied to environmental graphics at the theater. So the update encompassed changes to the name—removing “at lincoln center”—logo, print materials and signage, and included the addition of a custom typeface.

Jazz at Lincoln Center

10 Columbus Circle

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY 59 St - Columbus Circle

A B C D 1

BUS Columbus Cir/8 Av

M5 M7 M10

M20 M104

W 58 St/
Broadway

M12



Advertisements for the 2013/2014 season. Taglines set in Jelly Roll.

Jelly Filled Character set

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Jelly Regular Character set

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

“The job of the designer is to make things understandable, usable, accessible, enjoyable... important to a public, that involves the public”



Museum of Modern Art

11 W 53rd St

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY 59 St - Columbus Circle

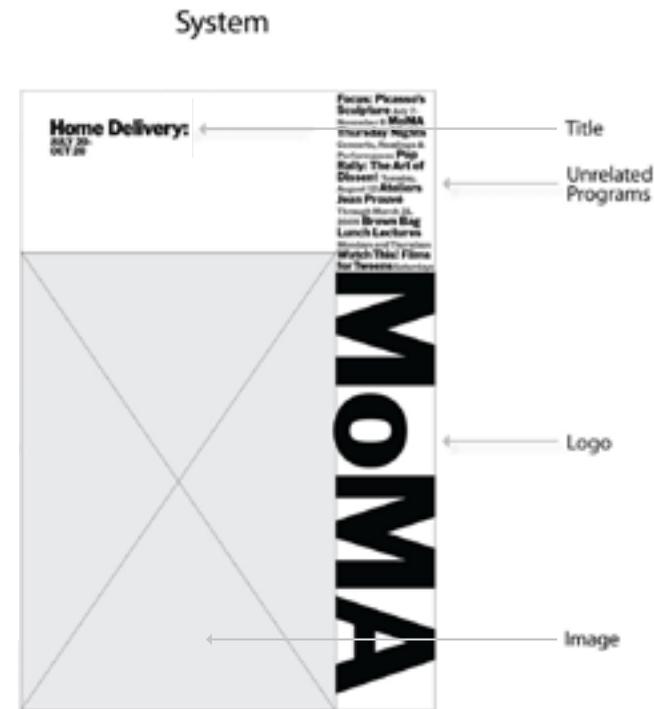


BUS 5 Av/w 54 St

X10 X10B X12

X14 X17 X17J

X30 X42



New grid for the MoMa promotional system for the consistent treatment of images and type.

Along with the many signature artworks in its collection, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) possesses one of the most recognizable logotypes of any cultural institution in the world. In recent years, however, the application of this identity across the museum's broader graphics program has been indistinct. Now MoMA has recast its identity, building on its familiar logotype to create a powerful and cohesive institutional voice. The new graphic identity has been designed by Paula Scher from Pentagram who has also some works exposed in the permanent collection of the museum. While the MoMA logo is iconic, it alone is not enough to continually carry the spirit of the institution. An organized and flexible system was required that would support program material across print, web and environmental applications. The new

The new identity's vertical logo placement echoes signage on the museum's façade.



system employs prominent use of the MoMA logo as a graphic device, dramatic cropping and juxtapositions of artwork, and a brighter color palette to create a bold, contemporary image. The identity also underscores the museum's leadership role in the field of design. The new identity system expands on this logotype, making MoMA Gothic the principal font for all typography. More importantly, the system creates a complete methodology for the identity's application and handling across all platforms. An appropriate scale and careful cropping were developed to make the identity more recognizable and powerful, and to create an attitude that modernizes the institution's image. A strong grid has been established for the uniform placement of elements (each quadrant of a page or a banner has specific function). The

images are paired with the logotype, which has a consistent vertical placement similar to the signage on the museum's façade. In most applications, one large image is selected as the focus, representing a current exhibition or signature work from the collection. A list of upcoming events unrelated to the featured image is organized into a text block. When seen in multiple, as in a series of posters or banners installed on the street, the design creates patterns—of type and image, and of color and black and white—that are visually powerful and dynamic. The program has a built-in flexibility that will allow for future expansion and a variety of forms. The identity will be applied to all of MoMA's institutional and public communications, including brochures, posters, banners, website and other materials. ■



Quad Cinema ticket office.

New York's renowned Quad Cinema reopened following a major renovation that revitalizes the theater with a sleek modern design and state-of-the-art technology thanks to the New York real estate developer and film producer Charles S. Cohen who purchased the theater in 2014 and initiated a complete interior gut renovation with a concept design led by Paula Scher of Pentagram. She developed the brand identity for the new Quad, as well as the look and feel of the theater, including signage, environmental graphics and digital installations for the interiors. The branding introduces a logo and custom typography that play off the unique name and evoke the visual language of cinema.

The Quad originally opened in 1972 and holds an important place in Manhattan moviegoing history: it was the first theater in the city to have multiple screens under one roof—four to be exact, hence the name. The new renovation and technical upgrade allows it to continue its mission of bringing a diverse slate of independent, classic and first-run films to New Yorkers, in a one-of-a-kind setting. The Quad logotype is inspired by the cinema's distinctive name. "QUAD is four letters, and quads are squares. So the logo type is made of four rounded squares" - as Paula Scher said. As a matter of fact the designers created a custom typeface that echoes the name in square letterforms with rounded corners, suggesting the

"Design is the art of planning, and it is the art of making things possible"



“I think we’ve moved from a verbal society to a visual one”

4 theaters of Quad Cinema, each one with a large-scale letter as Led lighting in the ceiling.



shape of screens and film sprockets. The identity and environmental graphics have been seamlessly integrated with the architecture. The new marquee is a dimensional version of the logo that projects from the building’s facade to create a striking presence on West 13 Street. The sculptural form instantly makes the Quad a landmark that looks unlike any other movie theater. Screening times appear on the sides of the marquee, and the word “Cinema” runs along the underside of the “U,” guiding visitors inside. Fabricated of aluminum, the monumental form of the marquee also extends back into the theater, through the ceiling of the foyer and into the lobby, where the name repeats on the reverse. The designers helped guide the

look and feel of the cinema interiors. The lobby greets moviegoers with a dynamic digital display wall, where sequences from classics in the Cohen Film Collection are intercut with information on showtimes and theater amenities. The 12- by 6-foot video wall is comprised of 32 flat screens, with clips simultaneously playing across different sections of the installation. The lobby also features a 50-foot concession stand and the new Quad Bar, adjacent to the cinema. The viewing experience is enhanced in jewel-like screening rooms that are intimate and luxurious. Each letter in the name “Quad” has been assigned to an individual theater in the four-screen cinema, where it appears as large-scale LED lighting in the ceiling. Each auditorium also

has its own color scheme from the brand palette of red, blue, black and grey, which appears on walls and seating. The Quad logo was extended into a modular signage system based on squares and illuminated typography. The team developed custom icons constructed of simple shapes for applications like restroom signage, and the identity is inlaid in tile on the Quad Bar floor.

QUAD Cinema

34 W 13th St

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY 14 Street / 6 Av

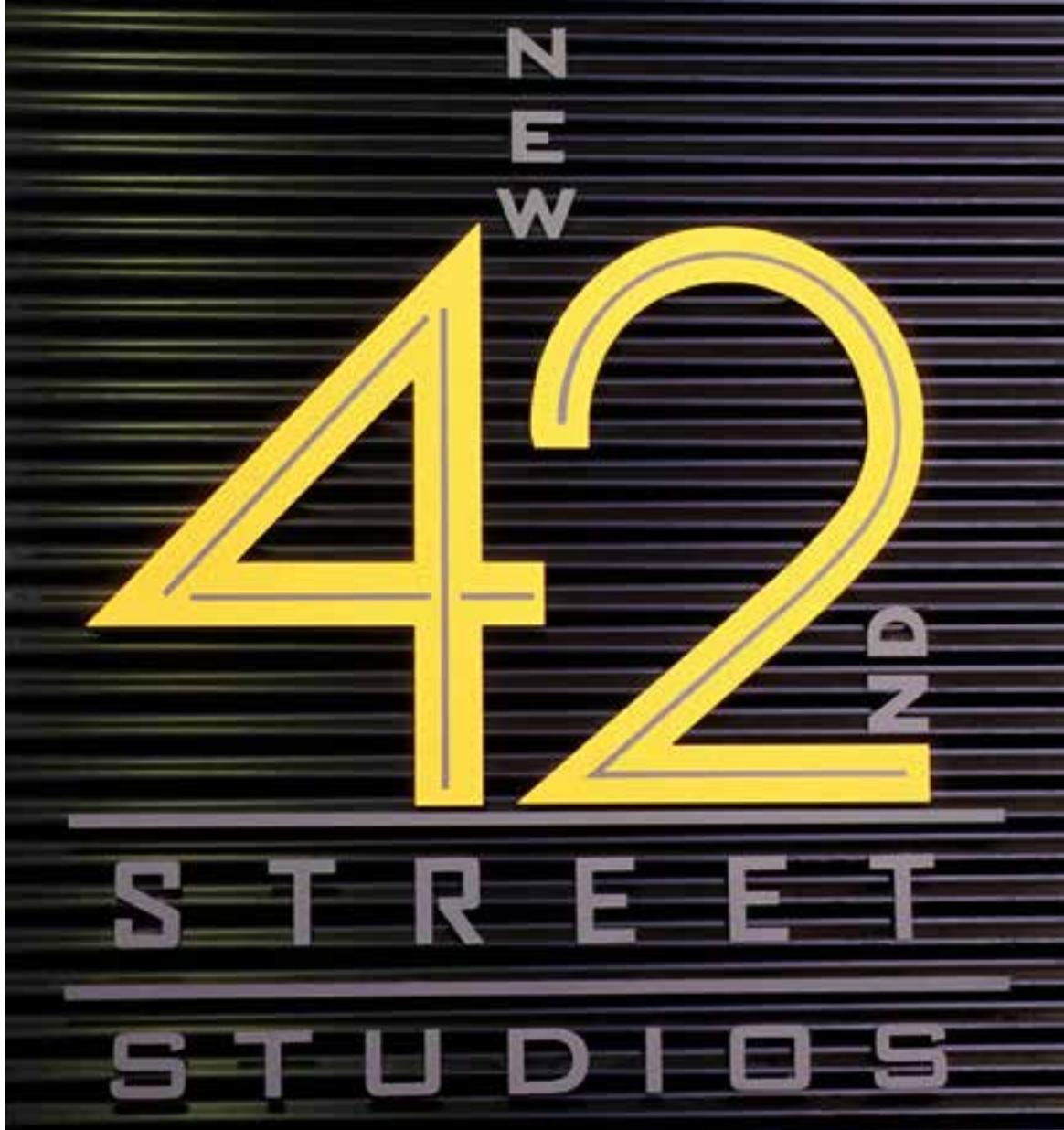


14 Street Station

JSQ-33 **HOB-33**

BUS Av of the Americas/w 12 St

M55



Logo for the New 42nd Street Studios.

One of the most experimenting project Paula Scher worked on was for the non-profit group dedicated to the restoration and reuse of seven historic theaters and playhouses on West 42nd Street in lower Times Square designing the identity. The New 42nd Street Studios is an unusual project reinterpreting the purpose of the Times Square Entertainment District. The large public project was intended to get new economic benefits from New York's famously glitzy Times Square – giving it meaning beyond re-created kitsch. In place of the conventional Times Square neon, the entire façade is an abstract collage of color and light that signals its use as a creative “factory” for the performing arts. Perforated metal blades and dichroic glass

create pattern and color by day. At night, theatrical lights play over the facade in an infinitely variable sequence of colors.

The experiment regarded not only using different materials from paper like plastics, glass and digital medium but dealing with environmental graphics for the first time. “The best way to accomplish serious design is to be totally and completely unqualified for the job. This doesn’t happen very often but happened to me in the year 2000 with the Duke theatre. So it was a rough go but I fell in love with this process of integrating graphics into architecture because I didn’t know what I was doing. I didn’t even know how to read a plant of a building. I said why can’t the signal be on the floor,



Duke theatre interior sign system.

new yorkers look at their feet when they walk so I found actually that the sign system on the floor functions better than other systems. About that she also said “it all was the same vocabulary really. It was taking typography and using it in crazy scales situations and space”.

The result is a super-graphic signage that wraps doors, floors, walls and ceilings “like a package”.

New 42nd Street Studios

229 W 42nd St

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY Times Sq - 42 St

- 1
- 2
- 3

BUS W 42 St/7 Av

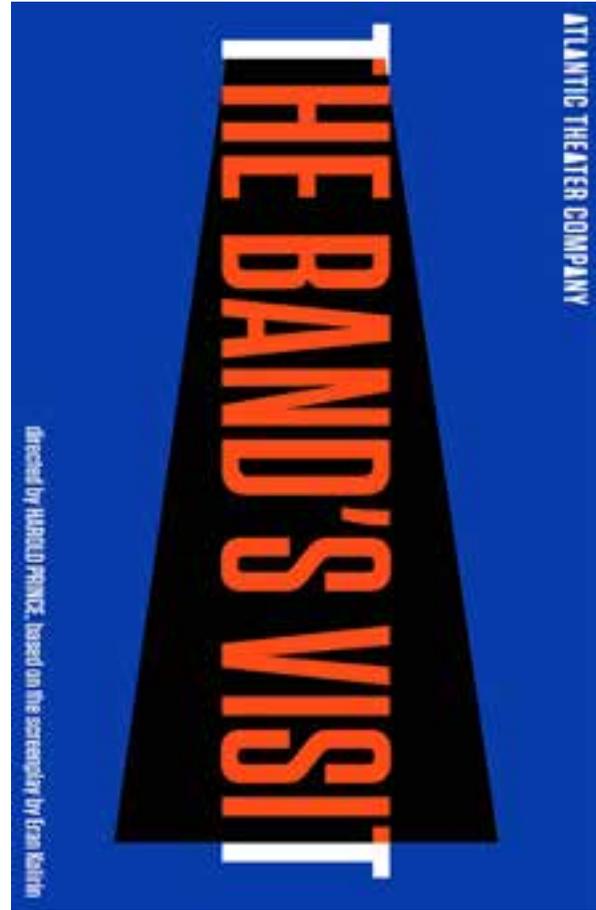
- M42
- X21

42nd St & 7th Ave

- 200
- 250
- 300
- 400
- 500

ATLANTIC THEATRE

66



Advertisement posters for Atlantic theatre 2015/2016 season.

Another example of Schers design history influences that deserves a separate article can be seen in a more recent project.

Atlantic Theater Company is one of the most influential Off Broadway groups in theater. For three decades, the group has produced groundbreaking works by new and established playwrights. Pentagram' Paula Scher has designed a new identity for the Atlantic that reflects its bold, original voice. The program combines a graphic emblem inspired by a capital "A" and strong typography to create an iconic visual personality for the company. The company wanted a graphic identity that would help it raise its institutional profile and stand out in the city's crowded arts landscape, with the goal of attracting new audiences, sponsors and



67

partnerships. It needed a flexible system that would support all initiatives (Atlantic Acting School, Tisch School of the Arts, Atlantic for Kids) while promoting a cohesive institutional image.

At the heart of the brief were two branding challenges that most performing arts institutions will recognize. First, any arts organization with programming faces the dilemma of promoting its individual productions versus the institution as a whole. Naturally, both need to be successful, but budgets are typically limited and the institutions must find a balance. Often, they want to create an individual image for every production, in the tradition of theatrical promotion like the widely recognized campaigns for Broadway shows like "Chicago". The problem with this is it promotes

the plays but not the parent institution. When the production crosses over and becomes a success it establishes an image for the hit, but with little reward for the organization that first fostered the work.

Secondly, institutions often don't have any images to use in their campaigns for programming, especially with new productions that have not yet been staged and photographed. So they must invent imagery, and it can be difficult to come up with something suitably iconic and memorable that will carry the spirit of the play. Organizations need a methodology for this as part of their branding initiatives. The solution is to create a framework where the individual can shine within the institution. For the Atlantic, Pentagram developed a system

Atlantic Theatre
336 W 20th St

HOW TO REACH

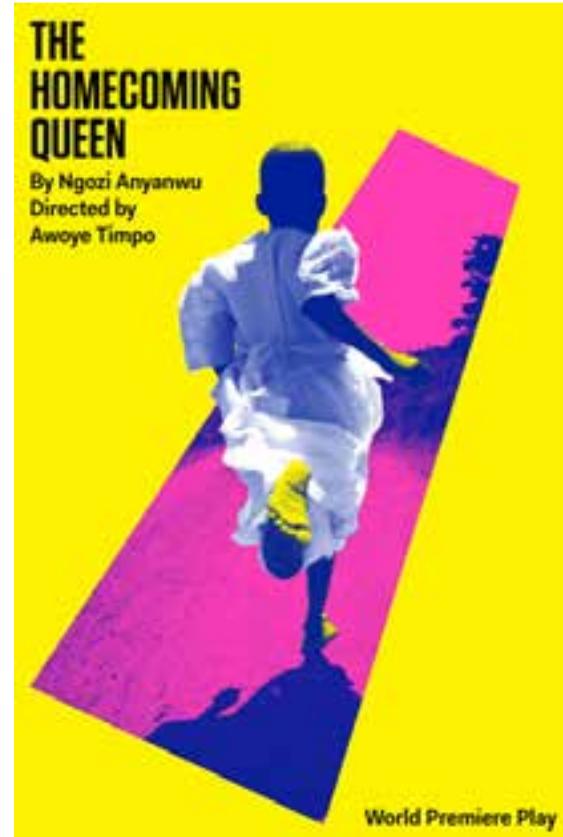
SUBWAY 23 St



BUS 9 Av/w 20 St



8 Av/w 20 St



Promotions and brochures for 2017/2018 season.

that can accommodate a wide range of uses but still unmistakably read as “the Atlantic”. The new logo takes the form of an abstract graphic emblem that is inspired by the shape of an “A” and also suggests a megaphone or spotlight. The shape can be used as a device to house—or “stage”—imagery related to a featured play or program, or by itself to represent the company as a whole. The emblem is accompanied by strong typography set in the compact sans serif Tungsten.

Below is an image of the brand identity Scher created for The Atlantic Theatre Company.

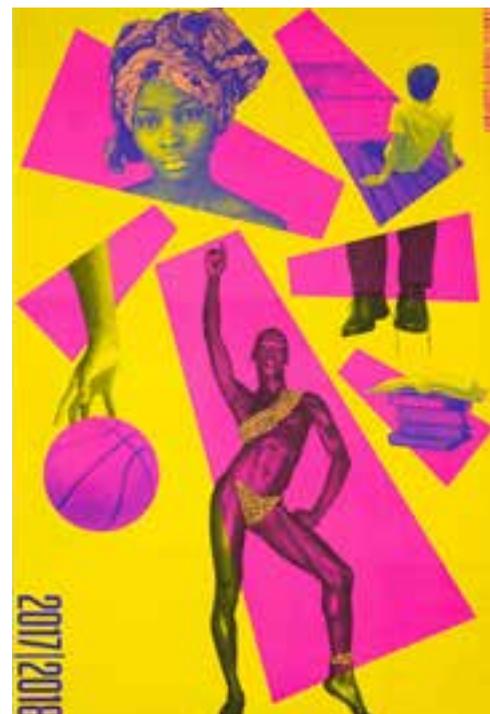
Previously, the Atlantic’s promotional campaigns featured commissioned illustrations to represent each production. In the new system, the promotion of the 2015-2016 season plays utilizes found imagery, montages and photo illustrations in combination with the “A” shape to create an iconic image for each production. The approach will serve as a bridge to a more typographic look that layers type directly on the shape. The identity’s colors are red, blue and white, in a variety of hues. For the 2017-2018 season Pentagram recast its brand identity for the influential performing arts group by introducing a blast of bright color. The red, blue and





Promotion for the Atlantic Acting School.

white of the institutional identity is updated in eye-catching pink, purple and yellow, used with a mix of found imagery, montages and photo illustrations. "When I did the Atlantic Theater, they were giving their plays out to some Broadway design house that made individual plays like they were Broadway plays where none of them were related. There was no look to the theatre, there was a logo that nobody understood because you didn't see it in repetition. The goal with them was to make them look completely connected all the time. So we found this A where the A in Atlantic, if you fold it in, could be either a megaphone or a spotlight, but it was a wonderful way to hold photographic information, so we began using it as a background for imagery, and very often when they would announce the plays they didn't have any pictures of anybody from it, which is a usual problem, so we could use found images that represented the play and then change them to the actors and actresses later. It really worked well for them, and they're in their third season now". ■



New York City Ballet/story
— Pentagram.com

The Woman Behind the Images: Paula Scher on Creating Brand Identities for New York's Cultural Institutions
— theintervalny.com

Dancing With The Stars, Season 9: DIN Stacked / Brand New
— underconsideration.com

The Metropolitan Opera/story
— Pentagram.com

INTERVIEW: Paula Scher on designing the brands of New York's most beloved institutions
— 6sqft.com

QueensTheatre/story
— Pentagram.com

Pentagram's slick, colourful Queens Theatre identity
— itsnicethat.com

New York's most beloved institutions
— 6sqft.com

QueensTheatre/story
— Pentagram.com

Paula Scher's punchy identity for Poster House museum in New York
— designweek.co.uk

Paula Scher on her logo for Poster House
— posterhouse.org

New York new Poster House
— typemag.org

Jazz at Lincoln Center/story
— Pentagram.com

Type over time-Paula Scher
— youtube.com

MoMa/story
— Pentagram.com

Paula Scher
— historygraphicdesign.com

Quad
— contractdesign.com

QuadCinema/story
— Pentagram.com

A Peek Into the Theater District
— nytimes.com

Paula Scher- Rockstar Designer
— paulmcglade.github.io

Atlanticactingschool.org —

behance.net —

bpando.org —

postehouse.org —

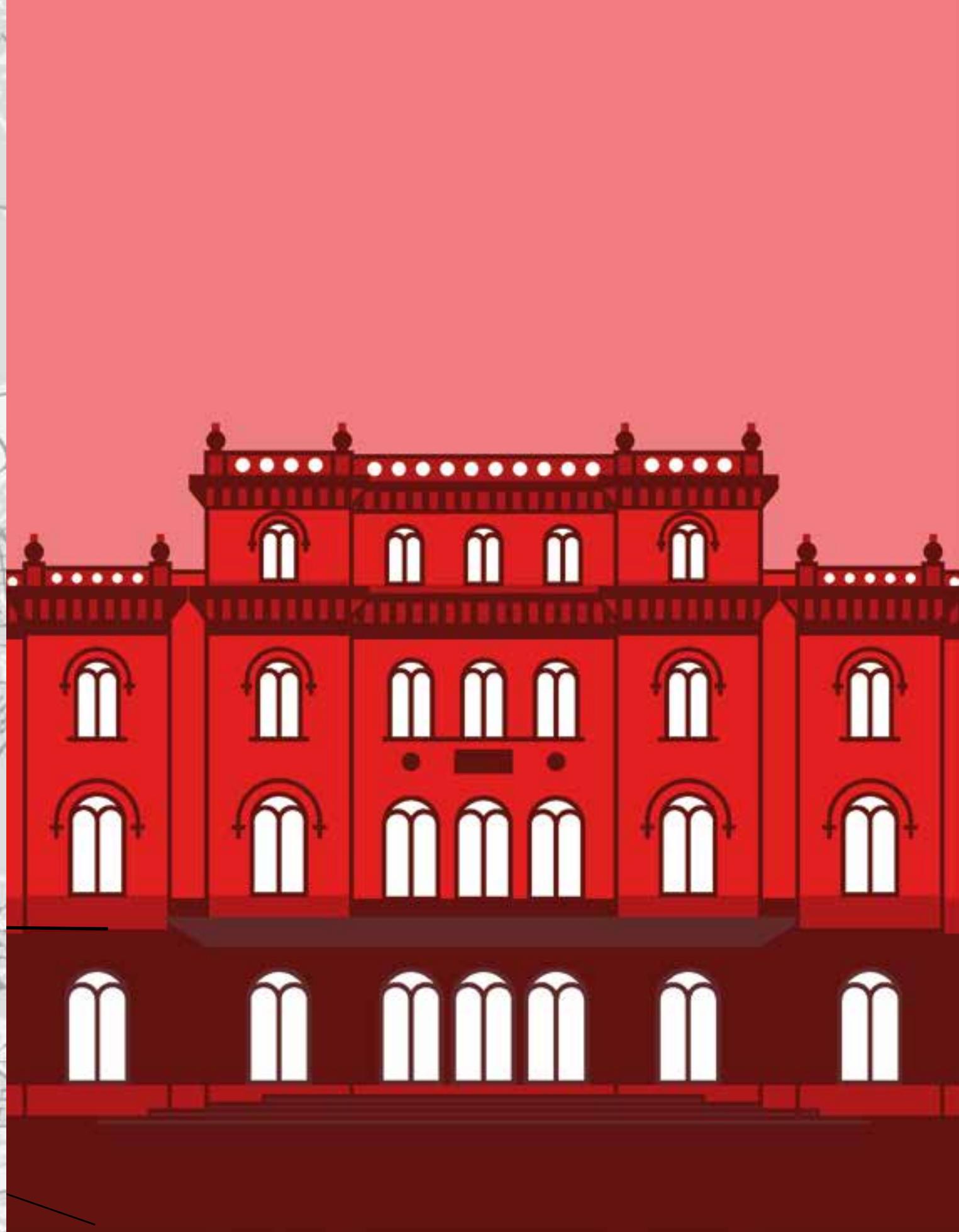
kuvo.org —

designweek.co.uk —

Pentagram.com —

Atlantictheatre.com —

PHOTO CREDITS



CLIENT PENTAGRAM PERFECT AND THE



Front view of the Public Theater in Manhattan

Scher left Atlantic Records to begin her own design firm in 1982, and in 1991 she joined her current firm, Pentagram, as the company's first female principal. Although Pentagram is an international design company, its New York office is behind the identities of some of the city's most beloved establishments. It was at Pentagram Scher established her reputation as a New York designer who created unique, lasting identities.

When I go to work every day, I feel like I'm navigating myself through a maze. I sit nose to nose with my partners. My team is on the fourth floor. I have to run up and down steps to see them. It's very quick paced. I'm solving things on scraps of paper. Starting something, getting interrupted... The interruption is great. Pentagram is a design cooperative. There's the benefit of a large firm, but everybody gets to act like they're an individual. There's no boss. Just friends.

Paula Scher

Pentagram's a supergroup of the most famous designers in the world doing the best work in the world. It's like an all-star team, and Paula is the indispensable player on that team. We all have our own individual style, individual way of working.

Michael Bierut,
Pentagram partner



Entrance of Pentagram offices in New York.



Interior of the offices

Pentagram

250 Park Ave S

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY 23 St



BUS Park Av S/
E 21 St



Interior of the offices

There is a particular mystique surrounding Pentagram as an agency, the scale of the output from that building is mystifying. Why is that?

Because we don't have any business partners. Pentagram was started in the 60s, when it was Fletcher/Forbes/Gill. Now partners change, but it's founded on an idea, and the idea is what is sustainable. The idea here was that a group of like-minded, talented people, who were all practitioners, could come together and run and manage a business where they accepted a notion that they were equals. That meant that they would have an equal vote, would share money equally, and is cooperative – that's very hard to do.

Do you grapple with the weight of Pentagram's reputation as a leader in design?

No! (laughs). Why would I do that to myself? Do I have to worry about your feelings when I'm designing? My God, it's bad enough to get the client involved.

And why did you decide to join that particular firm?

I was a lone woman in a design firm, and I had a certain reputation designing for the entertainment industry and youth-oriented products. But I was getting older and realized I was likely to get the same work I was always getting if I was by myself. I needed help with a bigger firm. They invited me to join as a partner, so I joined. When I joined Pentagram, I began all these cultural and corporate accounts.



Posters for the Public Theater 1994-1995 campaign

From 1993 to 2005, Scher worked closely with George C. Wolfe, The Public's producer and Oskar Eustis, who joined as artistic director during the fiftieth anniversary in 2005, on the development of posters, ads, and distinct identities. In 1994, Scher has created the first poster campaign for the New York Shakespeare Festival in Central Park production of The Merry Wives of Windsor and

Two Gentlemen of Verona, and was borrowed from the tradition of old-fashioned English theater style. This laid the foundation for the new overall identity and visual language that came to define the Public Theater for the rest of the decade and beyond. The designs for the Shakespeare in the Park campaign went all across New York, like the buses, subways, kiosks, and billboards.

So is there a way you can recognise the perfect client, who will enable you to do good work?

I've only had a couple. They're really rare. First of all somebody with immense power. So if it's a big organisation they have to be an autocrat or a crazy entrepreneur who doesn't have to answer to anybody. There also has to be chemistry. And then anything can happen. And I think money is irrelevant. My favourite client of all time was George C. Wolfe at the Public Theater. When he became director he had immense power.

THE PUBLIC THEATER

1994 logo for the Public Theater

I've been designing for the Public Theater since 1994. My first project was creating an identity for the Theater. When they hired me, they had a name issue.

Paula scher

One of the things that was very challenging about the Public Theater, it had multiple identities: it was the Public Theater, and then some people called it the Joseph Papp Public Theater, and then there was Shakespeare in Central Park. I wanted everything to feel like it was of one. That it was breathing fully as an institution."

George C. Wolfe,
artistic director and producer of the Public Theater from 1993 to 2004

It had to be populous. I knew it had to be New Yorkish, meaning it had to be loud and proud. I was flipping through one of my favorite books on American wood type. I like American wood type because it's powerful, and it has many forms. On this particular page were these Rs, and they go back to the skinniest form or the widest form, and I realized I could make the word "Public" in the same kind of weights, and it would symbolize all of new York. Every type of weight was included. You can create an identity for a whole place based on a recognizability of type. [Wolfe] Paula's work pulled people in. You instantly knew, "The Public". It's a language that could be dissected, taken apart, put back together. That's one of the things I think is really thrilling about it.

Paula Scher

When you first started working on the Shakespeare in the Park posters, how did you conceive what you wanted the posters to look like?

Well, everything was a little bit accidental. In fact, George Wolfe did not commit to hire me to do an identity right away. He gave me Shakespeare in the Park first, which was in the summer of '93 or the summer of '94. There were two plays that were going to be shown. It was Kiss Me, Kate and then there was Merry Wives of Windsor. The problem with the two plays in the summer is it's difficult to do one image with the two plays.

When they brought me on, the issue was that the posters had been done by Paul Davis every year, and they were usually a painting of the star of the play. They wanted to neutralize that, because what had happened was over time it had gotten very hackneyed because the stars of the play always assumed he was going to get his picture painted by Paul Davis and they got very involved and started looking at their noses and so on, and then all that made the work a little more boring.

The other problem was that at the same time, Paul was working for Masterpiece Theater on public television and there were Paul Davis posters around for that. New Yorkers were confused about it and they had some data to show for it. So, when I started this, it was specifically to not do images like Paul Davis. Do something else. The other point was they wanted to emphasize that it was free Shakespeare. They thought that was very important. The free part still is.

So, I wrote a line for it that said, "Wives and Kate in Central Park. Free. Live. No waiting," and so it sounded like we were selling whores, but it was actually just this very funny way of doing it. I did

Joe Papp in 1961 during the construction of the Delacorte Theater in Central Park



Delacorte Theatre

81 Central Park West

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY 81 St
Museum of
Natural History Station



BUS E 79 St
Traverse Rd/
E 79 St Traverse Rd

M79-SBS

Central PK w/w 79 St

M10

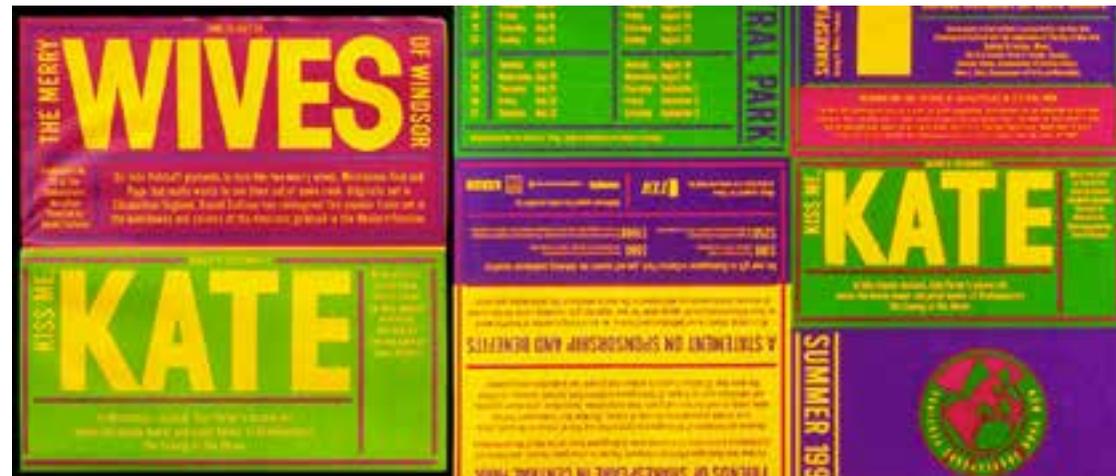
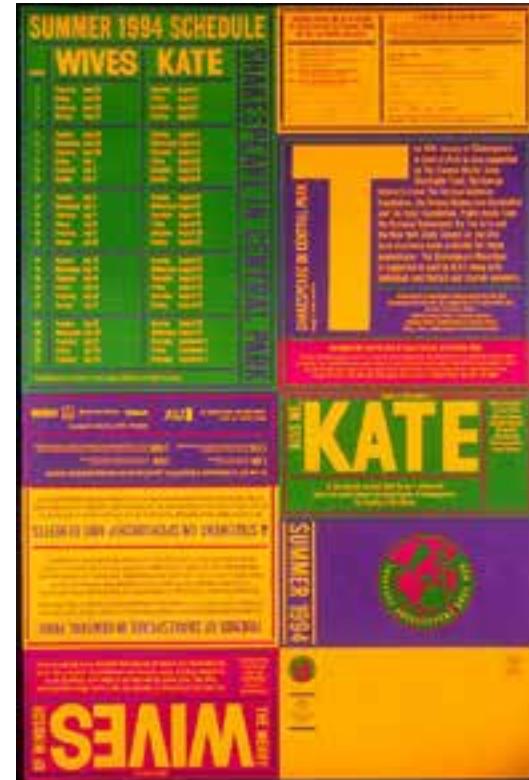
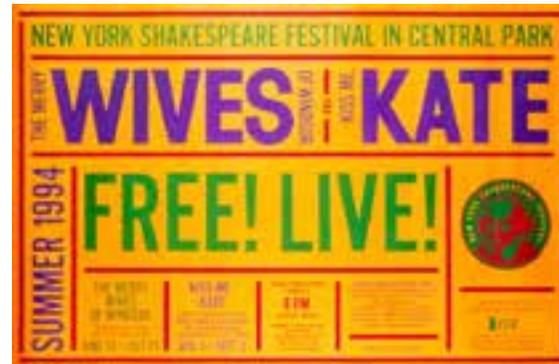
Central PK w/w 81 St

BxM2

it in great big wood type, and I did it in a font that was similar to the fonts we ended up using for The Public Theater, and these were configured as horizontal and vertical images and you could tell it was one campaign. They went up all over the city. Then they couldn't get the rights to use this new rewritten Kiss Me, Kate musical because the family protested, so the play was changed after all the stuff was up. They changed the play to Two Gentlemen of Verona, so we wrote, "Wives and Gents in Central Park," and went around and covered all these posters with the word 'gents,' and that's when I knew that The Public Theater was going to be all typographic because if they're going to change the play every five minutes, what if we had actually drawn somebody's face? It wouldn't necessarily have been able to be changed like that, so that really happened.

I was reading in another interview you did they described your Shakespeare in the Park posters as the first American Shakespeare posters, and I was wondering what that means visually to you?

It was really ironic, because I don't think about it that way. When I first started doing the Shakespeare posters in summer, and then ultimately the Public's whole season, I really was inspired by the way the West End has these painted buildings that still exist with all the



Posters for 1994 Shakespeare in the Park

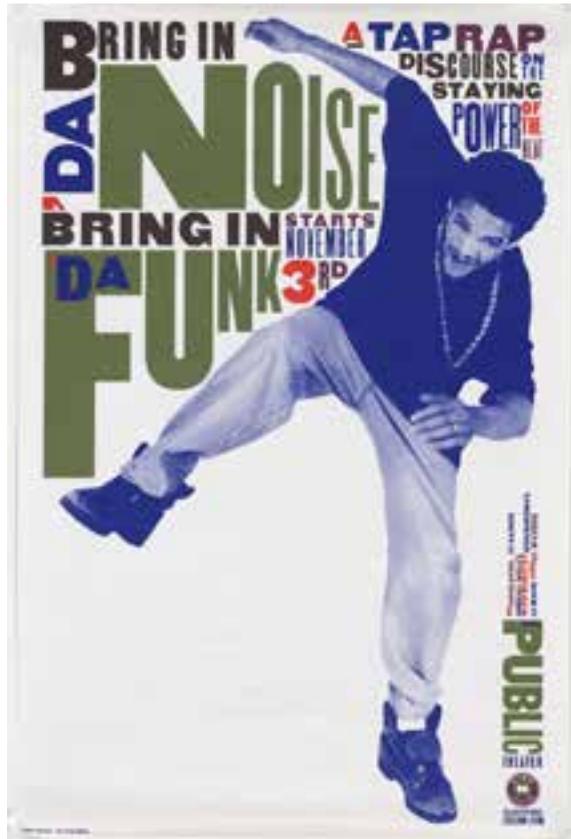
plays and what's going on in the theatre, and it would be the name of the play and the date and then time. It seemed to make so much sense. When they started doing theatre advertising, there used to be things like, "The Wiz is a wow!" and there'd be some goofy logo and a little tagline like that. I thought that was really vile, and I thought that they had it right in 1870. Let's just go back to that. It would be the name of the play, the type of theatre, etc. Then it became something that looked American because people were still doing the other form of theatre advertisement, so doing a Shakespeare play that way seemed like, "Just the facts, ma'am," and people thought it was a very American way to do it, but the reality was I stole it from London.

There was also something about the boldness of the posters that people thought was very American?

It was also the color system. They were very loud and they yelled and they were in New York City: "Two Gentlemen of Verona! 8:00!" That was the method of it, and it's still like that. They're designed to live in New York City. You can't put a little thing with little curlicues up in New York City—it's going to disappear. The other thing was that if you think about European posters, particularly Polish ones, when it comes to things like Hamlet, it's always like some illustration of a guy holding the skull. Enough. ■

How else did the posters evolve?

There were some highs and lows. In the beginning, when we first invented the look of it, it was really amazing because you saw it right away. It was back in the days when there were phone kiosks as well as subway posters, and you really saw it right away. It looked like something that happened. It was successful almost immediately. It was really shocking.



poster for *Bring in 'da noise bring in 'da funk* (1995-1996)

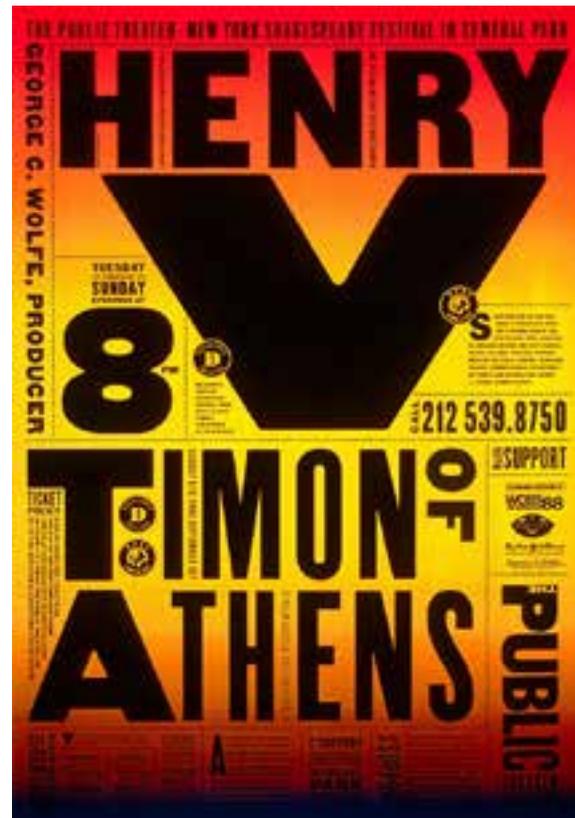
The 1995 posters Pentagram designed for The Public Theater's production of Savion Glover's *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* featured the wood typefaces used throughout The Public's identity. The play's title and theater logos surrounded the tap artist in a typographical be-bop, like urban noise. And for the first time, advertising for The Public appeared all over the New York City landscape, from Chelsea to Harlem, in Times Square, at the Lincoln Tunnel, on city buses, and most fittingly, beneath one's feet on the sidewalk.

“When we did *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*, which really coded in New York City, it became this style. In other words, people looked at it and other designers began copying it. For a period of time New York Magazine was designed like that or various other small things were designed like that, but then Chicago was designed like that and that was bad for The Public because Chicago had a lot more money, so to a degree, that style ate The Public Theater's identity. Because if everybody uses it, The Public Theater has no identity.

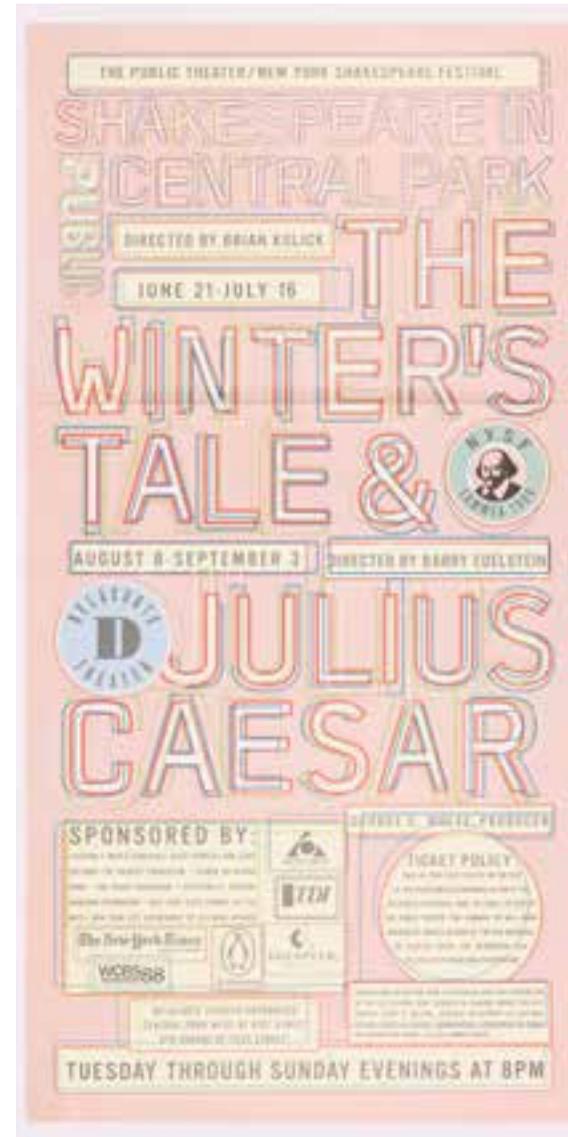
At which point I thought, “Well, what I'll do is I'll change it every season.” So I started changing the typography, leaving the Public logo, and I did that for a period of time. Some of the posters are good and some of the posters aren't good, but the end result was bad for The Public because if the poster was a hit like *Topdog/Underdog*, you remembered the play but you didn't necessarily remember the play was at The Public, and when it went to Broadway you got doubly confused, so they didn't get the credit for their good works because they began looking too dissimilar.”



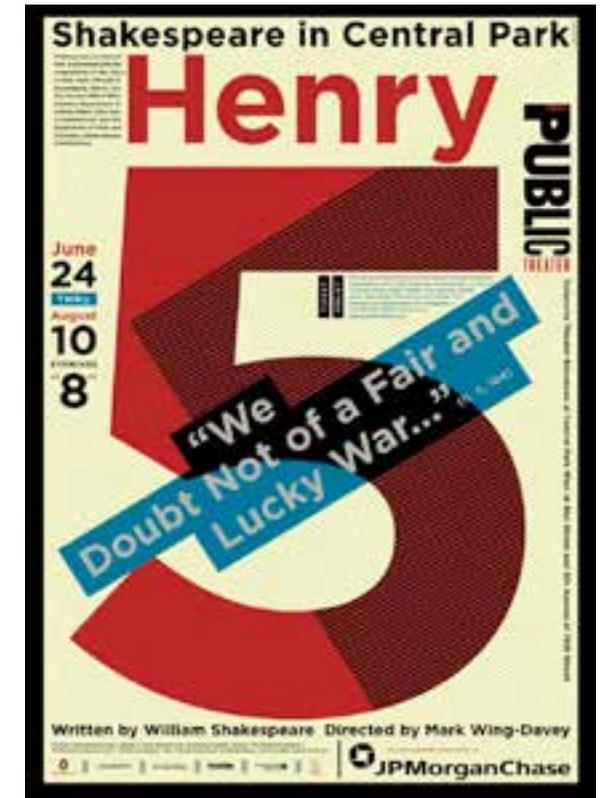
1995



1996



2000



2003

Individually the posters tend to reflect what is going on culturally at the time, for example posters for the 1995 performances of *The Tempest* and *Troilus and Cressida* carried the political and promotional message “Free Will” that was not only an advertisement for the free performances, but also as rallying cry to arts supporters to exercise their public influence as that year a conservative Republican Congress was threatening federal funding of the arts.

The 1996 poster for the productions of *Henry V* and *Timon of Athens* afforded Pentagram some of the most playful typography of the series. The designers combined her handwriting with wood type in the 1997 poster for *On the Town* and *Henry VIII*. The season represented the culmination of Papp’s ambition to produce all of Shakespeare’s plays at the Delacorte. The marathon took ten years and its success is noted on the left side of the poster.

The typography of the 1998 poster emphasized the melodrama of the two plays featured, Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* and Thornton Wilder’s *Skin of Our Teeth*. While winking at news headlines during the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, the posters for *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Tartuffe* singled out the words “lust,” “shrew” and “tart” in a degraded fluorescent red. For the 2000 design of the poster for *Winter’s Tale* and *Julius Caesar*, Scher reversed form and did a deliberately pastel

poster. The design also subtly related the state of print in the millennium—on the Web. The 2001 poster for *Measure for Measure* and *The Seagull* doubled as a map of Central Park. In 2003, after the invasion of Iraq, a poster for *Henry V* featured a quote from the play (“We doubt not of a fair and lucky war...”). The 2004 poster for *Much Ado About Nothing* was the only photography based poster; the lush image of the park at night perfectly captured the romanticism of the play. ■

“I’ve redesigned the Public Theater logo three times, and nobody even knows it. I’ve tightened it up, moved it apart, changed the font. I’ve had, like, a love affair with the Public Theater.”

Scher's Shakespeare in the Park campaign had become a seasonal tradition in the city. The identity has progressed over the years which redesigned The Public Theater logo in 2005 and 2008. The Public celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2005. That same year George Wolfe left and Oskar Eustis joined as artistic director. As part of the organization's anniversary campaign, the identity was redrawn using the font Akzidenz Grotesk. The word theater at the bottom of the logo was dropped, placing even more emphasis on the word public and the organization as a whole, as opposed to a specific location (the theater building). Posters for the 2005 plays *As You Like It* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* ushered in Akzidenz Grotesk as the identity's new principal font. In 2006 the Akzidenz Grotesk was extended and "War" was declared for productions of *Macbeth* and *Mother Courage and Her Children*. A corrective slate of the romantic comedies *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2007 led to "Free Love" in the park and an Akzidenz Grotesk that was ardently italicized and provocatively rounded.

2005 logo for The Public Theater



2008 logo for The Public Theater





2007 Shakespeare in the Park poster

In 2008, Pentagram updated the identity, produced in conjunction with a major renovation of The Public's multi-theater complex on Lafayette Street. The letterforms have been redrawn using the Hoefler & Frere-Jones font Knockout, which provided affordable and accessible productions. The new system is more refined as it retains the active nature of the original but provides more structure, while the change from a vertical to horizontal organization has the effect of making the logo more architectural.

To a certain degree, all three version of the logo share a common structure that in the dense spacing of the letterforms, as well as their variant widths and slightly exaggerated verticality, references the architecture of the city. It is this system that has made the logo particularly adaptable for renewal. "You can basically take any version of sans serif font, organize it in the same way and with the same proportions and it would be recognizable as The Public's logo," says Scher. "The system was designed to be flexible, because we knew it would

2008 Shakespeare in the Park posters



Photos of Manhattan's streetscape

need to be handled by individual designers over the years." This new graphic system was first seen in the 2008 Shakespeare in the Park posters that utilize the strict 90° angles of a De Stijl-inspired grid, a pattern in Manhattan's streetscape. The identity is like New York itself, constantly evolving. Retained is the bold Victorian wood block type but now, the space is organized by angled printers rules, a distinctive throwback that adds structure while it references wood block type.

In 2010, Scher designed the New York Shakespeare Festival in Central Park poster has presented powerful productions of The Winter's Tale and The Merchant of Venice, starring Al Pacino as Shylock. Scher's festival promotional campaign focuses on the reminiscent language in both plays by pulling lines from each production to meet in a dimensional expressive of words and typography. This campaign was award for Print Regional Design Annual 2011.

The Public Theater

425 Lafayette St

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY Astor Pl



BUS Lafayette St/
Astor Pl

M1

E 8 St/
Lafayette St

M1

M2

M3

M8

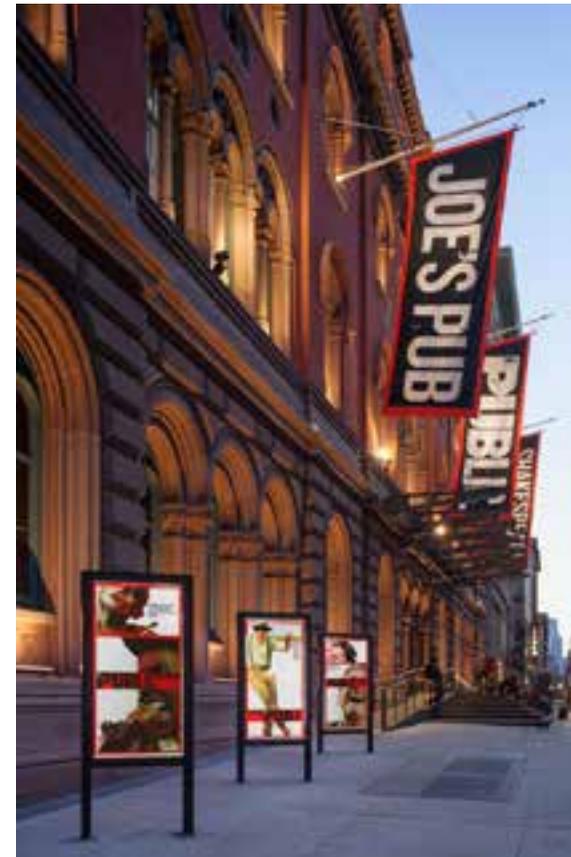
3 Av/Astor Pl

M101

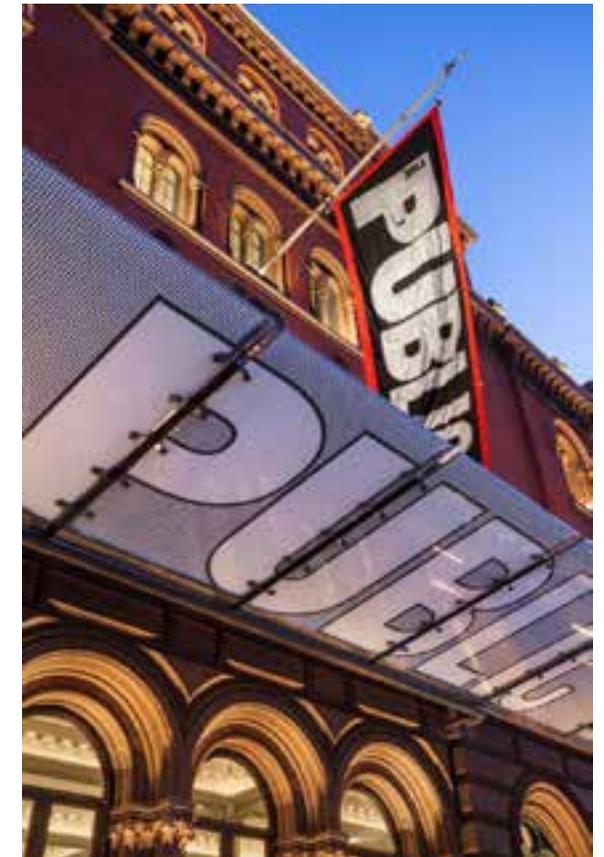
M102

M103

At that point in time, they weren't printing the posters anymore. The posters were digital, and I began to realize that it's the collectivization of this stuff, and I began to design something simpler that could be moved around, that other people could use more easily, it didn't have to just be me, that there could be a staff down there because Oskar seemed much more ambitious to accomplish a much more. We designed this very black-and-white identity that we used between 2008 and 2012. During that period, we redesigned the lobby, and when the lobby was finished and we took all the posters and put them behind glass behind the box office, it looked to me like that was where posters belonged, and that I had to think of things as a much broader pallet in terms of electronic media versus big image.



Exterior of The Public with the new poster boxes



The canopy with the logo above the entrance

In 2013, the lobby of the Public Theater was transformed into one of New York's most vibrant and welcoming spaces for theatergoers. As part of a major renovation by Ennead Architects, Pentagram has created a program of environmental graphics for the space that integrates the iconic identity for the Public into the architecture of the theater itself. In the two decades since Pentagram first designed the identity for the Public, the exuberant graphics (including two subsequent redesigns) have become a familiar presence on New York's cultural landscape. Pentagram worked closely with Ennead to translate the identity into signage and wayfinding that helps make the lobby dynamic and accessible and celebrates the Public's status as a theater for the "public."

The theater is housed in the former Astor Library,

a historic 1853 building on Lafayette Street in the East Village that was originally constructed as the city's first public library. The Public's founder Joseph Papp (who also established Shakespeare in the Park) moved the theater into the space in 1967, helping to save the building and win it landmark status. The interior was converted into six individual theaters of various sizes (originally designed by Giorgio Cavaglieri), as well as Joe's Pub, the popular nightclub that opened in 1998. Ennead has been working over the past decade on various upgrades to the building, but the current revitalization is the first significant intervention since the Public opened in the space. The design features a redesigned entry, expanded lobby, and restoration of the façade that adds a canopy and moves the building's steps back onto the sidewalk.



The circular desk of the lobby surmounted by Ben Rubin's sculpture



Left: dimensional typography identifies the different theaters and facilities in the building
Right: installation for donor recognition; the bigger the gift, the bigger the brick



The box office features a collage of posters from the past two decades

Under the guidance of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis, the Public's mission is theater for everyone, and the renovation makes this explicit by opening up the space while also preserving the landmark building.

For the exterior, Pentagram designed a new marquee canopy that dramatically renders the Public logo in glass over the steps of the entrance. To win approval by the city's Landmarks Commission, the awning is only connected to the building at two points. The letters of the logo are clear and transparent, reversed out of the custom frit pattern of the glass. Remarkably light and airy, the canopy provides a monumental entrance feature but does not significantly alter the appearance of the historic façade. The awning is accompanied by illuminated

poster boxes that run along the street in front of the theater.

Inside, the environmental graphics inventively marry type and architecture to make the Public identity feel like an integral part of the building. Pentagram's graphics for the Public are recognized for their expressive use of typography (set in Knockout, the font of the identity), and here the type performs in the space, guiding theatergoers and setting a friendly tone that invites audiences to linger.

The reconfigured lobby centers on a circular front desk that features a dimensional, large-scale version of the Public logo. The designers helped commission a chandelier-like multimedia sculpture designed by the artist Ben Rubin that hangs over the desk. Called the Shakespeare Machine, the piece

randomly generates phrases from Shakespeare's works (also set in Knockout, a specific dictate of the project) and is flanked by projections that provide information of current productions. The box office at the back of the lobby features a colorful collage of sniped Public posters from the past two decades.

The various theaters in the building are identified with dimensional typography that has been etched into the lobby's distinctive arches. Plaster archways feature routed typography painted with textured paint; steel archways use laser-cut steel sheets. The color echoes the red and black typography of the first identity Pentagram designed for the institution, back in 1994. A red railing also runs around the balcony lounge on the lobby's

second level; this line was referenced in the "Open the Public", Institutional campaign for The Public Theater in New York that celebrates its status as a theater for the "public", that accompanied the official reopening of the space last fall.

For donor recognition signage, the designers created a dimensional installation that presents donor plaques as bricks that extend from an arrangement in the wall. The bigger the gift, the bigger the brick. Other donor signage appears as supergraphics on the doors to the various theaters, acknowledging specific gifts for the various performance spaces.

The environmental graphics were honored with a Bronze Cube in the Art Directors Club 92nd Annual Awards. ■

A woman from my class [at School of Visual Arts] named Kristen Hoover went down to work at The Public Theater and she was assisting me on the work, and then as we were working on Joe's Pub, I didn't like the way Joe's Pub looked in relationship to The Public. So I started to figure out this notion of this annual system where the summer poster would become the look of the season, and then everything would be designed against that premise for a year, and then at the end of the year we'd stop and we'd go into next season, which is what we've been doing since and it really works. I think it's the right thing for them.

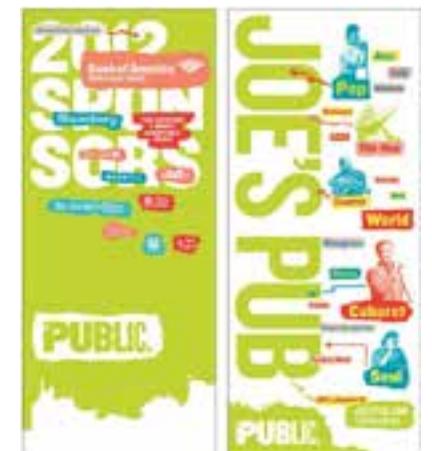
2012 Shakespeare in the Park posters and wayfinding



Campaign for the 2012 season of Shakespeare in the Park.

Joseph Papp, the founder of the Public Theater and New York Shakespeare Festival, took his free performances of Shakespeare "into the woods" of Central Park to the Delacorte, the Public's amphitheater in the park. The Delacorte first opened on June 18, 1962, and over the past five decades over 5 million people have enjoyed more than 100 productions presented at the theater.

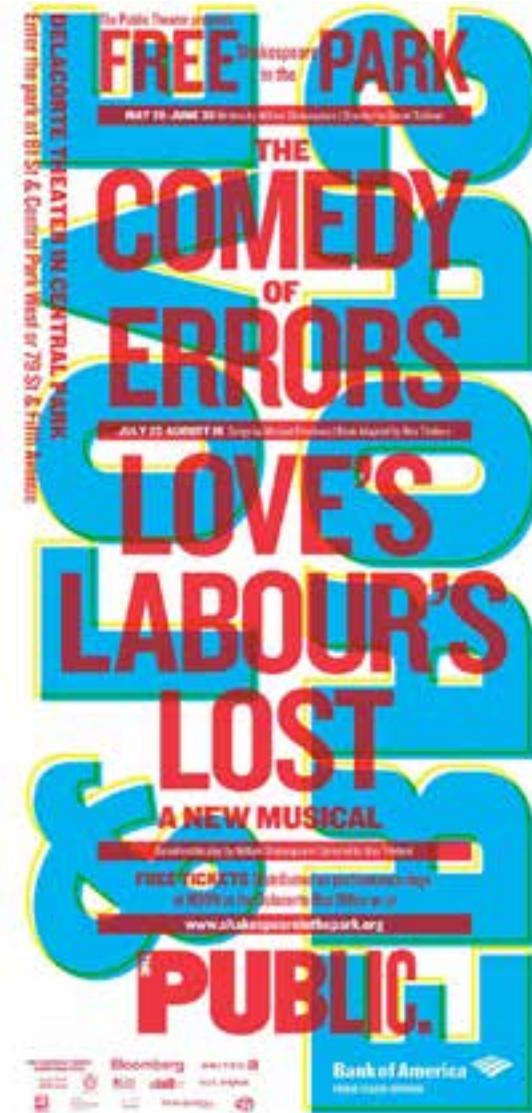
To celebrate the fifty year anniversary, the Public is mounting two forest-oriented productions for the 2012 edition Shakespeare in the Park: "As You Like It," Shakespeare's romantic comedy that takes place in enchanted Forest of Arden, and "Into the Woods," a new staging of Stephen Sondheim's classic 1986 musical starring Amy Adams, Denis O'Hare and Donna Murphy. Pentagram has



designed the festival campaign, which launched with a full-page ad in The New York Times and will be seen in posters going up in the streets, subways and buses of New York, along with a program of signage at the Delacorte.

Pentagram started designing the posters for Shakespeare in the Park in 1994, and our 18th campaign represents a departure from the graphic language of past seasons. The 2012 campaign, designed with Kirstin Huber, the Public's in-house graphic designer, has a looser feel than past posters—it's fun, celebratory, and purely about the park. The tagline of "Shakespeare and Sondheim in the Park" appears in a large swath of verdant green with a rough edge that evokes trees and greenery. Smaller typographic elements diagram a kind of journey through the woods, with bits of information pointing out a path through the green.

2013 Shakespeare in the Park posters and wayfinding



“Introducing The Comedy of srorrE Errors and evol Love’s Labour Lost.”

2014 Shakespeare in the Park posters and wayfinding



“The contrasting points of view are paired in dramatically skewed typography, a first for the annual campaign.”

Posters for The Public Theater 2014-2015 campaign

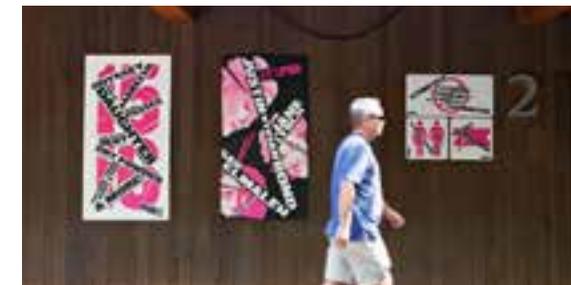


“The campaign updates the classic pop look of the Public Theater graphics, which incorporate photographic images against flat color backgrounds, this time in an arresting palette of black, white and yellow.“



“Playing off the word ‘free,’ this year’s design is handmade and exists as lines of sliced typography that are cut through photography or large-scale words.“

2015 Shakespeare in the Park posters, wayfinding and t-shirts



2016 Shakespeare in the Park posters and wayfinding



“The striking typography appears against a black background and is set off with comic-book style outlines.”



2017 Shakespeare in the Park posters



“The typography modifies Knockout, the font of the iconic Public Theater identity, by squaring off the inside of the letterforms for a hard, rigid look.”

“The Julius Caesar campaign mixes images of hands and weaponry and lines from Shakespeare’s text that relate to what’s going on politically.”



What's the vibe like in NYC right now?

(ed. note: this interview was conducted shortly after the announcement of Trump's international visitor ban).

Everybody's miserable. I don't know anybody who voted for Trump. I'm sure a lot of people did, but I don't know them. Sometimes, like right after the election, if you saw someone you hadn't seen for a while you had to vent about it, now we just sort of walk around and pay attention to what we pay attention to and go out and protest when we want to. That's more or less the climate, but that's New York. I'm sure the West Coast is the same. I went out to LA recently and everybody seemed to be behaving that way too. But there is this big middle of the country, and they're different.

Has it changed the way you've been working recently?

It depends on what I'm designing. I'm working on the Summer Season for the Public Theatre right now, the director of the theatre made it Julius Caesar, which is very political.

Very subtle.

It's going to be a heavy Subway system. ■

Interview: Paula Scher on designing the brands of New York's most beloved institutions

— 6sqft.com

Paula Scher on Abstract: art of the design

— Netflix.com

An interview with Paula Scherrand New

— semipermanent.com

Paula Scher

— historygraphicdesign.com

Reputations: Paula Scher

— eyemagazine.com

The Woman Behind the Images: Paula Scher on Creating Brand Identities for New York's Cultural Institutions

— theintervalny.com

The Public Theater

— Pentagram.com

The Public Theater logo evolution

— fontsinuse.com

The Public Theater Lobby

— Pentagram.com

Shakespeare in the Park 2012

— Pentagram.com

Shakespeare in the Park 2013

— Pentagram.com

Shakespeare in the Park 2014

— Pentagram.com

The Public Theater 2014-2015 Campaign

— Pentagram.com

Shakespeare in the Park 2015

— Pentagram.com

Shakespeare in the Park 2016

— Pentagram.com

Shakespeare in the Park 2017

— Pentagram.com

publictheater.org —

virtualofficefaq.wordpress.com —

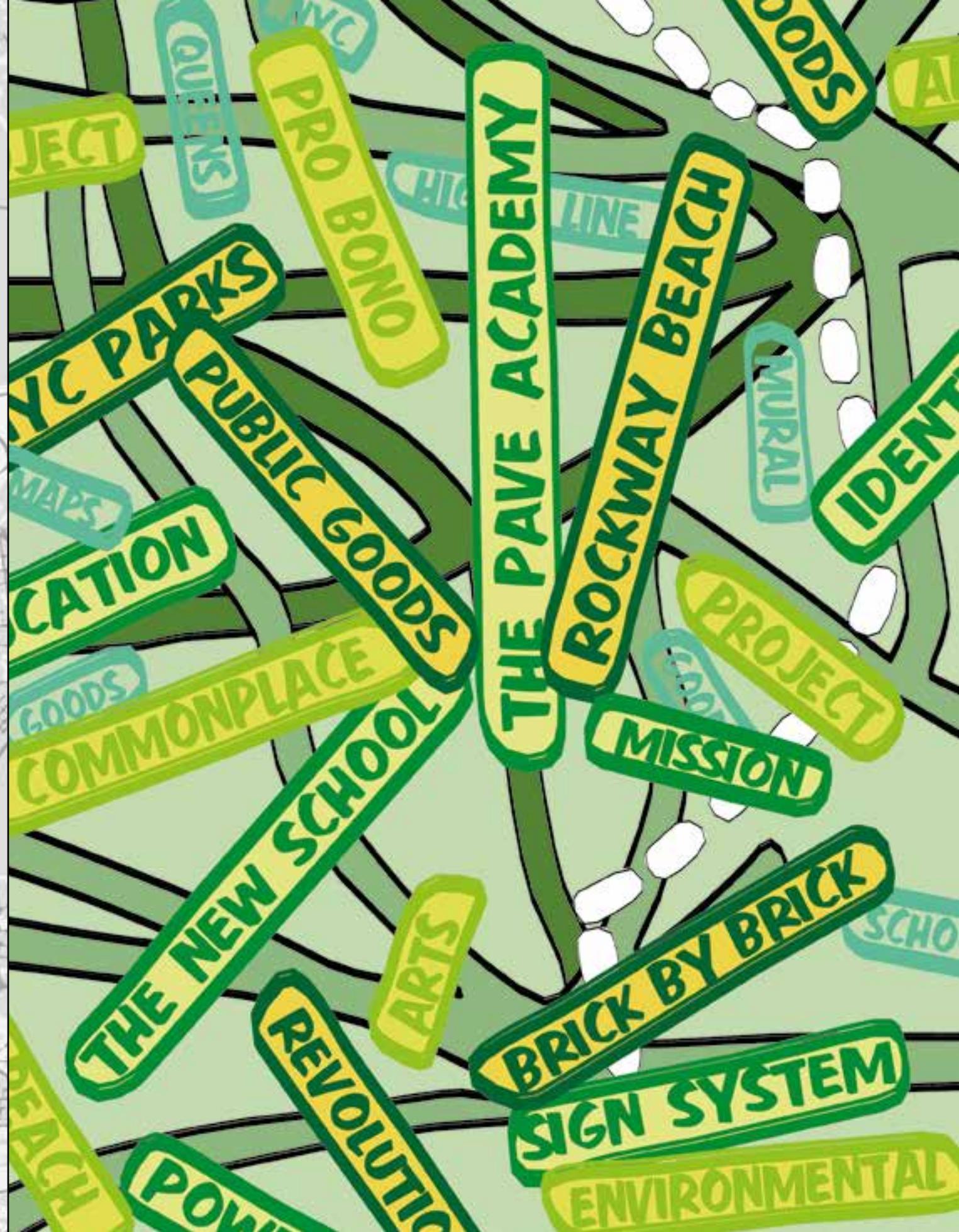
eyeondesign.aiga.org —

Pentagram.com —

harriettatham.com —

SOURCES

PHOTO CREDITS



DESIGN AS A SIGNAL OF HOPE

108

“That’s why pro bono work is great. You choose to do it, and if you’re choosing to do it to grow your own work, your deal is essentially that you’re not going to collaborate. You’re going to do the job the way you think the job is gonna be done.”

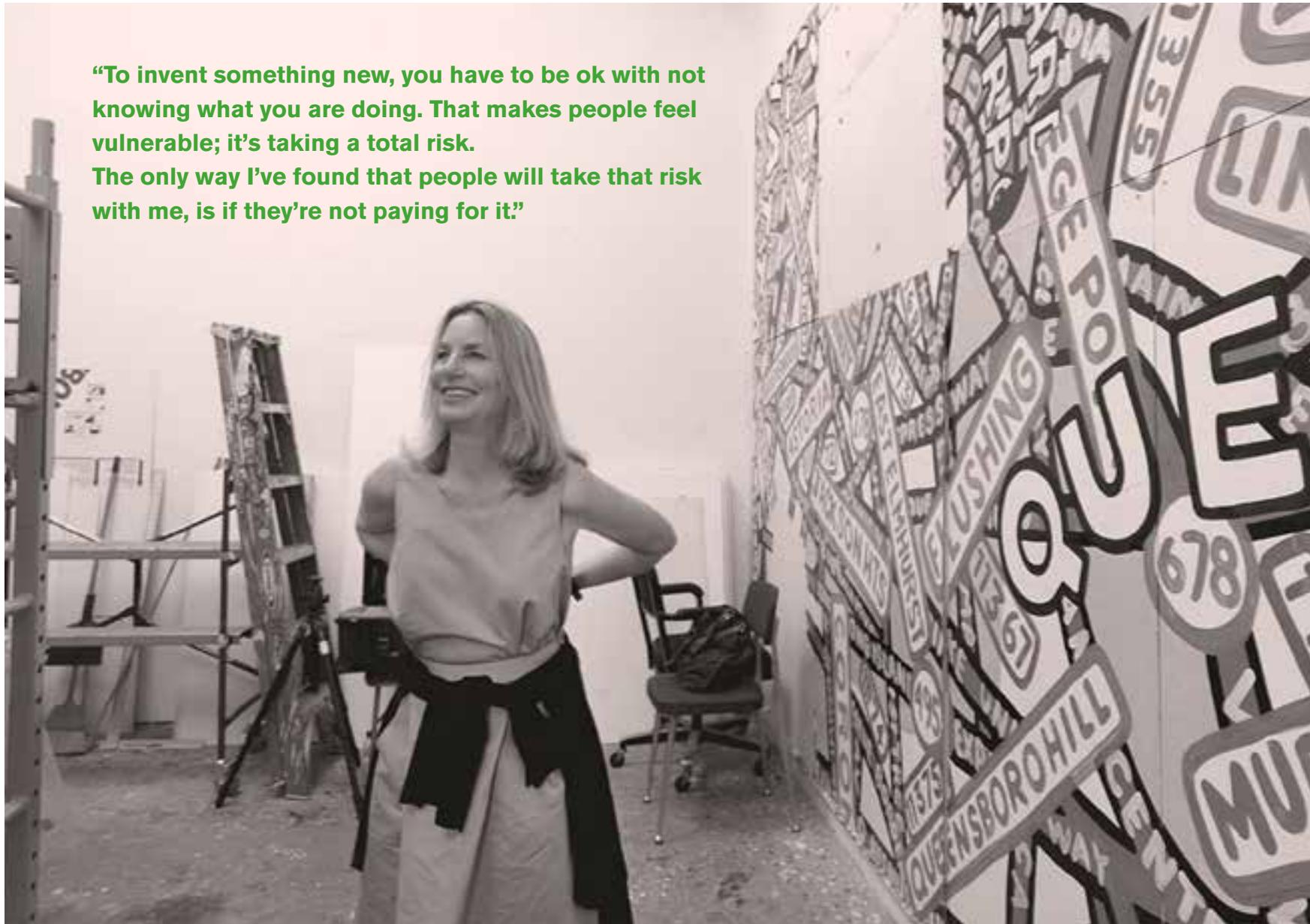


109

PAULA SCHER: PRO BONO HALL OF FAME

Paula Scher has been inducted into the Pro Bono Hall of Fame for her contributions in the field of design. Paula is one of the world’s top 10 designers, and provides at least 25% of her work each year pro bono. Taproot founder, Aaron Hurst, recently contacted Paula to discuss how she uses pro bono as her lab and how her pro bono projects impact her commercial work.

“To invent something new, you have to be ok with not knowing what you are doing. That makes people feel vulnerable; it’s taking a total risk. The only way I’ve found that people will take that risk with me, is if they’re not paying for it.”



When you first started your career, you did a lot of work with civic organizations. What inspired you to do that?

I didn't purposefully think about working for "civic organizations." Some of it was very selfish. I started out in the music industry, and I was a salaried employee. But I wanted to do terrific work that I was proud of. So I'd volunteer for things, projects that didn't have high visibility or weren't for famous recording artists, because I could do better work for them.

Then you continued that strategy when you transitioned into the design field?

I translated it to design organizations. I built some of my design reputation by doing pro bono pieces for graphic organizations, whether it was the AIGA, or the Art Directors Club. Then later, I began doing it with not-for-profits, when they couldn't afford something. It was something I cared about, and it was something that afforded me an opportunity to do good design.

How has your pro bono work impacted your commercial work?

I look at work in totality: some work pays the bills, some work is important to us as a society, and some work builds reputation. What's the best is when it does all three, which sometimes it does.

Do you have an example?

I donated a complete sign system for the NYC Parks Department. It was probably the biggest donation I've ever made. Then, because of that relationship, after Hurricane Sandy, they hired me to do a paid project designing signage for all the beaches. The two things went together really well. If I hadn't done that massive donation, we wouldn't have developed a relationship and they might not have thought of me to do the paid work. So the pro bono and commercial work actually fed each other. I created two very visible pieces of work, one donated, and the other an assignment.

“So, I use pro bono as my lab. There were projects where you have the opportunity to figure out what something can be without somebody else’s opinion.”



Identity and signage for New York City Beaches

NYC BEACHES: AN EMOTIONAL SIGN SYSTEM

When Hurricane Sandy hit New York in October of 2012, the city's 14 miles of beaches took the brunt of the storm, with boardwalk structures destroyed and millions of tons of sand displaced. In the Rockaways, where homes and the beloved boardwalk were washed and thousands of people were displaced, the beaches represented the heart and soul of a community and a place where the community met, relaxed, and played.

Rockway Beach

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY Beach 90 St



BUS Rockaway Beach Bl/
Beach 88 St

Q22

QM17

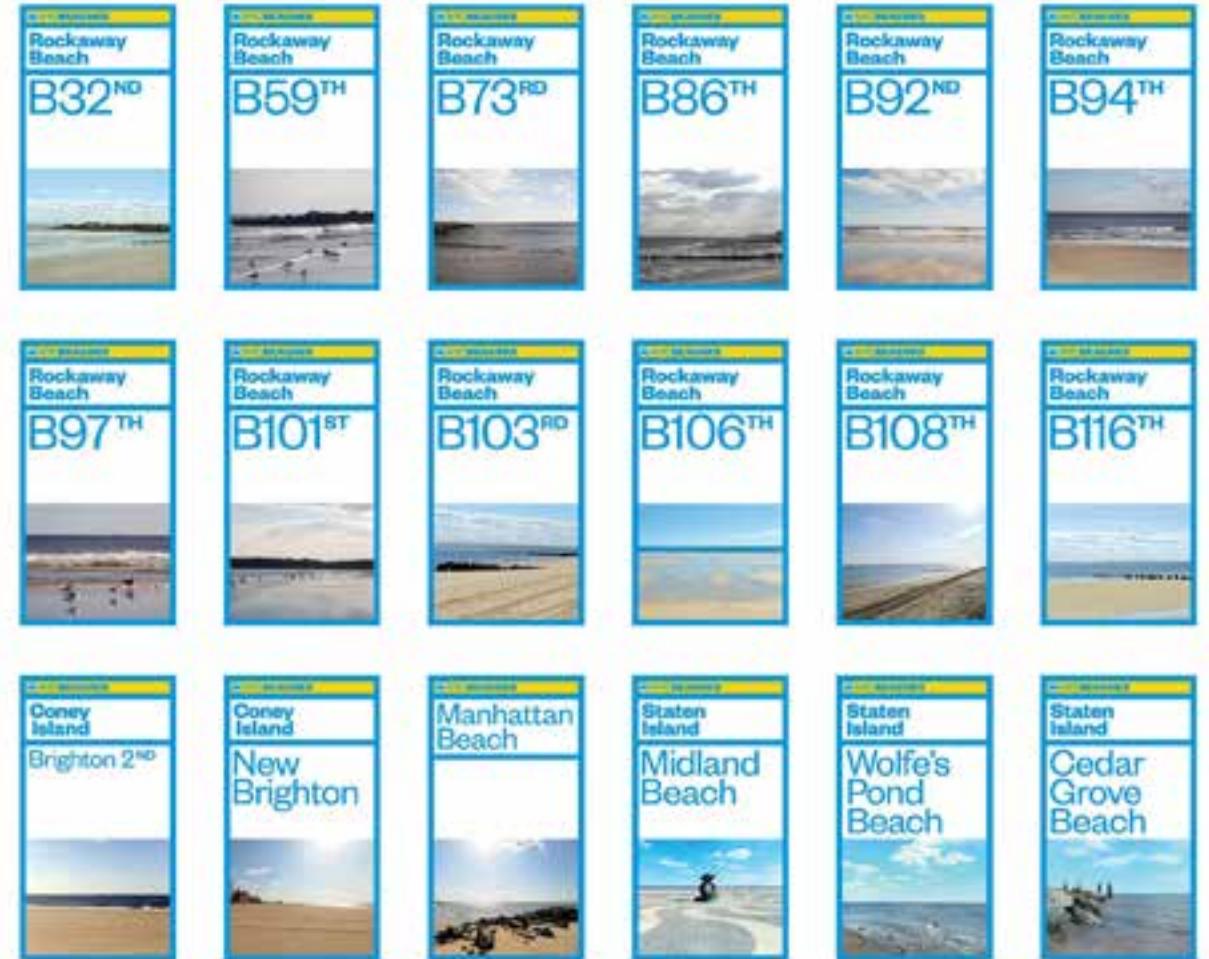
Following an extraordinary effort by the Mayor's Office, the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, and the NYC Department of Design and Construction, the city's eight public swimming beaches were reopened on Memorial Day 2013, only seven months after being devastated by the storm. As part of the restoration, Pentagram has created a program of signage and environmental graphics that welcome New Yorkers back to their beaches.



The new NYC Beaches identity

For the designers, a major challenge of the project was to get people to the beach, with or without the familiar structure of the boardwalk to guide them. They wanted the signage to help create a sense of place and capture the charm and the romance of the beach. Pentagram designer Paula Scher has created a modern design identity for New York City's 14 miles of beaches that presents an optimistic, clean, and attractive vision of what urban beaches should be.

She knew her design had to appeal to that community and the city at large, and they had to be memorable. In shorefront neighborhoods like the Rockaways, beaches are the front yards and a point of pride for the community.



Each sign features a photograph of the beach, taken from the exact location of the sign

The new beach identification signs each feature a photograph of the beach taken at the exact spot where the sign is located.

The images face the street, and remind residents and visitors that whatever Sandy took away, the beauty of the beach remains.

The identification signs are accompanied by highly visible marker signs that run along the shoreline. At Rockaway Beach the existing boardwalk was located at street level (with stairs down to the sand) and visitors used street signs to see where they were.

Much of this boardwalk was destroyed, and the ruined sections left massive stanchions that have

been repurposed as supports for a seawall made of sand that will help protect the shore. The new markers are affixed to the stanchions, so visitors can easily locate where they are in relation to the streets on the other side of the dunes.

The stanchions have been painted bright yellow at access points through the wall, so visitors can find the entry and exit points up and down the beach.

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The designers created a full range of signage types

Pentagram previously developed the identity and signage standards for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, which manages and maintains the city's beaches.

The beaches are their own unique experience, and Pentagram has branded NYC Beaches as its own identifiable entity, endorsed with the NYC Parks logo. The identity uses different fonts, Founders Grotesk and Maple, and a color system that uses bright blue and yellow in place of the green of Parks. Regulatory signage follows the system designed for the parks, replacing the existing jumble of signs with a cohesive set of panels, here in blue.

The beach signs feature elegant railing designed by Sage and Coombe.

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The signs capture the charm and romance of the beach while also being highly functional

The designers also created environmental graphics for the “pods,” a series of distinctive modular steel structures designed by Garrison Architects that punctuate the beaches and contain comfort stations, lifeguard stations, and offices for Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) and maintenance and operations staff. The structures are elevated to avoid future flooding and marked with supersized

graphics of the NYC Parks logo and restroom icons. At Rockaway Beach, four temporary concrete “islands” with seating areas and lights have been constructed at the boardwalk junctures of Beach 86th, 97th, 106th and 116th Streets. The exteriors of the buildings have been painted with supergraphics of the street numbers and bright, colorful maps of the surrounding area. ■

The program is implemented at Rockaway Beach in Queens; Orchard Beach in the Bronx; Coney Island Beach, Brighton Beach and Manhattan Beaches in Brooklyn; and Midland, Wolfe’s Pond, Cedar Grove and South Beaches in Staten Island.



The pods contain comfort stations, lifeguard stations and other beach facilities



Redesigned regulation sign at a lifeguard station



Rendering of one of the distinctive modular 'pods' designed by Garrison Architects

“After Hurricane Sandy, the whole economy of Rockaway beach was devastated. The boardwalk was destroyed and the beach was fenced off. So I was hired to create what I’d call an emotional sign system. Beaches like the Rockaway’s invoke a memory of a bygone era of wooden boardwalks and rollercoasters. It had to be brought into the 21st century. While the boardwalks were destroyed, what the neighborhood still had were the beaches. And that the beach looked unique from every place that you entered it. We created these large standing posters with photographs that would help orient people once they reached the beach. They helped emotionally connect the community, while functioning as directional signage. There was so much pride from the signs that the city government made this series of postcards so every town could have their own picture of their own beach. You’re getting your own icon, your own logo, and it would give them identity. There’s an emotional aspect to it. Design needs to take human behavior into account.”



**NYC PARKS:
A MODERN AND ICONIC IMAGE SYSTEM**

Pentagram has collaborated with the Parks Department on the design of a new identity that creates a unified, accessible and modern image for the agency. The program includes the design of a cohesive program of signage, wayfinding and environmental graphics for the more than 1,700 parks, playgrounds and recreation facilities in the Parks system.

The graphic program for NYC Parks is designed to meet several objectives. The Parks Department was initially looking for standards for the consistent application of its identity across agency materials. Despite having one of the most familiar logos in the city, many of the department's communications for the public were not immediately recognizable as "Parks."

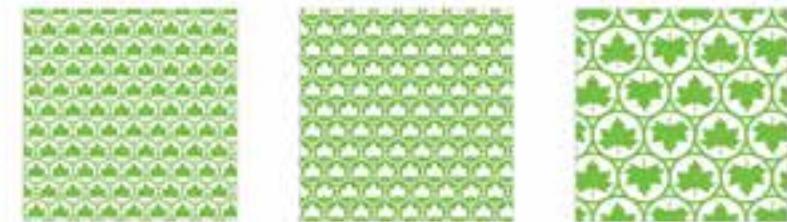
At the same time, Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe was looking for a system to visually link Parks and its partnerships with high-profile community initiatives such as the High Line and Madison Square Park, which have their own distinct identities.

And Parks needed a cohesive system of signage and environmental graphics in the parks themselves.

The Parks leaf logo is one of the most iconic symbols in New York. The logo's exact date of origin and designer are uncertain; it was first introduced to the department's letterhead and official documents in 1934, when the five independent borough Parks Departments were unified into one agency, and Robert Moses was put in charge of the agency. The type of leaf has never been officially identified; it most closely resembles the leaf of a sycamore, London plane, maple or sycamore maple. It is known to the agency as "The Parks Leaf" and has been periodically updated over the years, most recently in the early 1980s. The leaf and circle motif was developed in 1978, when it was introduced on Parks trucks, and widely disseminated on Parks signage in the 1980s under former Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern.



The new identity for the New York City and Recreation



The leaf logo can be applied in graphic patterns

In the new identity, the designers have tweaked the leaf logo to give it a more modern appearance. The shape of the leaf has been streamlined slightly to smooth out the edges, and the line of the surrounding circle has been made thinner. The color has been changed to a more contemporary shade of bright green that can be

uniquely associated with NYC Parks – as opposed to the more generic fern or forest green associated with parks services in general – and may be updated according to fashion. The logo can also be used in black and white, where its distinctive silhouette makes a powerful mark and the colour



Sub-brands for the various categories of NYC Parks programming

The signature has also been changed, shortening the name from New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to the more colloquial NYC Parks. The type is set in Akkurat, the primary font of the identity; the secondary typeface is Chronicle. The new program asserts the symbol as an icon, and the leaf can be adapted to fun and stylish patterns that can be used in brand merchandising for Parks. The most visible application of the new program will be signage in the parks themselves. Currently, the signage in most parks appears as a confusing patchwork of information.

Entrances to Parks properties are announced by the familiar green identification signs that feature the Parks leaf logo; these are accompanied by rules and regulations on separate signs, many of them containing only one message each, resulting in a crowd of directives and distracting visual clutter in the natural environment.

This evolved out of necessity: signs were added as new regulations were introduced, or in response to the communities the parks serve; for instance, most signage appears in multiple languages. The sizes and colors of the signs vary, and they are produced using three different methods—routing, vinyl and silkscreen—creating a cacophony of signage types.



The new signage functions as a modular system



Detail of the new system of modular panels, which clip into fences from both sides.

The new system consolidates all of this into modular signage that can be expanded with additional panels to accommodate further information. The signs can be arranged in horizontal or vertical orientations for various locations—at park entrances, dog runs, pavilions, etc.—and to accommodate the different heights of fences and other fixtures. On fences, the signage is double-sided, with panels clipping together at the same spot to be seen from both sides.



Signage can appear in horizontal and vertical orientations depending on park fixtures

The new identity establishes a system for promotional and communications materials for the Parks Department programming in various categories: Arts, Culture, Sports, Outdoor Adventure, Kids and Nature. In the past these materials were designed by different freelancers and studios, with little standardization between them and no consistent treatment of the Parks identity.

The new system simplifies the graphics and makes them look more contemporary, establishing a unique look for each category and at the same time branding it as Parks. This is achieved through different logo treatments, types of imagery and distinctive color palettes. For instance, Arts & Culture brochures announce their titles on nameplates placed over images of Parks landmarks; Sports and Fitness materials feature icons of various activities, set in patterns of circles and a bright palette of blue, green and orange. Nature division posters combine flat graphics and photography of the natural environment; for Kids, the Parks logo is used in colorful patterns that form animals and objects.



Postcards promoting Kids events



Posters for Nature events combine the leaf logo and photography



An important part of the new program is the creation of graphic standards to link NYC Parks with its partnership parks the community initiatives, alliances, trusts and conservancies such as the High Line, Times Square Alliance, Bronx River Alliance, NYC Greenway and Madison Square Park that have established their own high-profile identities. The new system pairs the Parks leaf with the logos of these groups, producing a cohesive and iconic system that works in both horizontal or vertical orientations and in various applications like signage and promotional materials.

THE HIGH LINE: REVITALIZE A COMMONPLACE

Originally built for freight trains in the 1930s, the High Line is an elevated rail structure on Manhattan's West Side that has been turned into the city's most popular new park.

The structure was saved from demolition by Friends of the High Line, a community-based non-profit organization that advocated for the preservation and reuse of the structure as a pedestrian promenade. In 2011, Phase 2, from West 20th Street to West 30th Street, was opened to the public.

In 2000, Pentagram Partner Paula Scher was asked to create the identity for Friends of the High Line. The logo eventually became a symbol of the park itself. As graphic consultants to the group over the past decade, Scher and her team at Pentagram created various fundraising and promotional pieces to help gain support for the initiative.



The new identity for The High Line

Once the city approved the plan to revitalize and reuse the High Line as a pedestrian park and promenade, Scher's team was invited to work with the selected architects, Diller Scofidio and Renfro and James Corner Field Operations, to develop the signage and environmental graphics for the park. The program includes identification signage, maps, and wayfinding, which can be found at the entranceways to the elevated park and in the railings of the park. The team also completed donor recognition.

The signage has been sensitively integrated into the High Line using materials that complement the industrial structure and the park environment.

The street-level signs at the park's access points are installed on the supports of the structure itself. In the elevated park, the signage and wayfinding have been engraved into the railings of the structure.

High Line

HOW TO REACH

BUS W 23 St/10 Av

M11 M23 M12



The new signage functions as a modular system



At night the railing signage glows with a photo-luminescent infill applied to letters





ACHIEVEMENT FIRST ENDEAVOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

Achievement First is a network of public charter schools in Brooklyn and Connecticut. With the support of the Robin Hood Foundation, Achievement First seeks to provide students in urban areas with an education that will put them on the path to college. The students at Endeavor have a reputation for taking pride in their school, and the new graphics capture this confident spirit.



“With a little paint and some bold typography, a school designed to change the life of its students has endured a transformation of its own.”



For the Achievement First Endeavor Middle School Pentagram has created a program of environmental graphics that help the school interiors become a vibrant space for learning. The project was completed in collaboration with Rogers Marvel Architects, who designed the school as a refurbishment and expansion of an existing building. Character building is the foundation of Endeavor's teaching philosophy, and the environmental graphics at the school have been inspired by a series of motivational slogans used by its teachers.

BETTER
DO
MOTIVATE
TO
GRAPHICS
ENVIRONMENTAL

The team also completed donor signage and a special Founders Wall that was unveiled for the opening of the park's Section 2 in 2011.



The designers created a simple, unique and highly recognizable identity for the group that subsequently became the logo for the park itself.



Achievement First originally produced these slogans – “All of us will learn,” “Whatever it takes,” etc. – as colorful stickers that students were encouraged to affix to their books and lockers.

The designers enlarged these into supergraphics that help define the interior spaces.

The graphics appear as a series of equations (“Education = Choice,” “Education = Freedom”) in the halls, quotations running around the perimeter of the gymnasium, and most noticeably, climbing the main staircase at a front of the school, where they are visible through windows to the street.

As every homeowner knows, paint can be a simple and economical solution for transforming a space. At Endeavor the process required thorough planning. Using the existing color palette, the designers applied the colors to a scale model of the school to conceive of the patterns and placement for specific installations.

In rooms like the cafeteria, the bands of color are used to define and enhance the architecture, creating an illusion of depth that expands the space. In other areas, the painting of typography, set in Rockwell, is intricate and detailed.

The Endeavor graphics become part of the architecture and help the building become a participant in the learning process: celebrating language, “talking” to students, encouraging them to do better, creating a unique environment they can call their own. All of this was accomplished with little expense.

Achievement First Endeavor Middle School

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY Clinton -
Washington Ave

A

BUS Park Av S/E
21 St

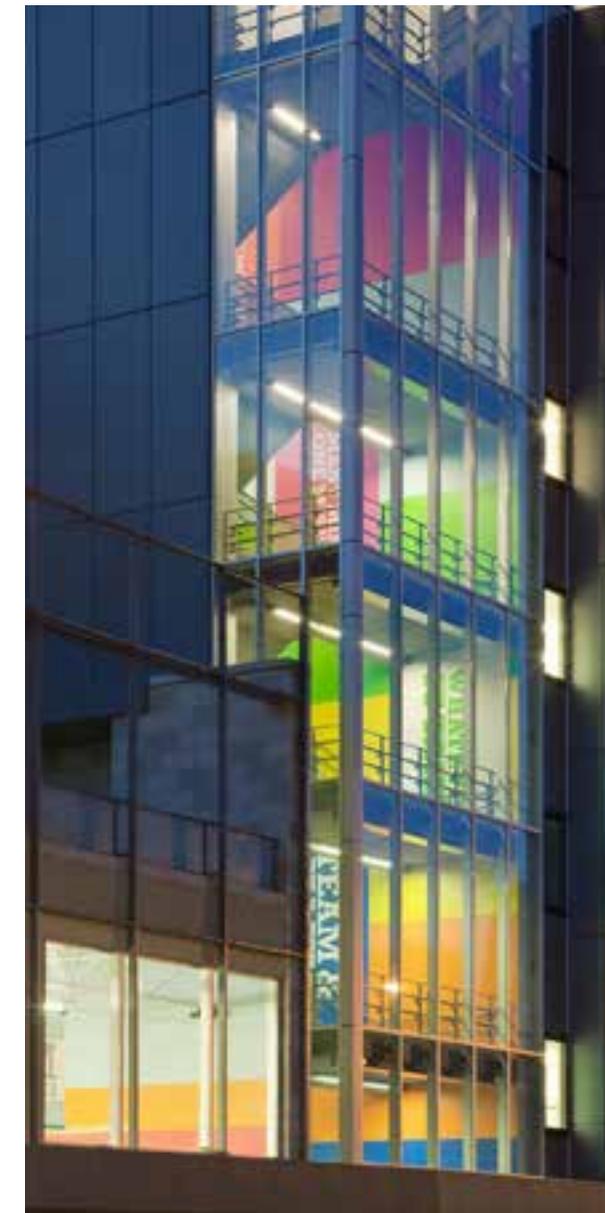
B45

B25

B26



Graphics in one of the school hallways



The graphics can be seen through windows in the school facade

The Pave Academy

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY Smith
9th Street



BUS Mill St/Clinton
St



THE PAVE ACADEMY

The PAVE Academy, a charter school in Red Hook, Brooklyn, is one of the rare buildings in the neighborhood that wasn't affected by Hurricane Sandy. The school's sparing seems a bit like fate: the building is the first new elementary school in more than half a century for the isolated neighborhood, where "elementary and middle schools have struggled for decades to adequately prepare the neighborhood students," according to PAVE's administrators.



Typographic tile mosaic in the school cafeteria

The New York City public school system is full of bad architecture, most of it inherited from the 1970s and '80s, when rising crime and a fiscal crisis produced dozens of gloomy schools that look more like prisons than schools.

Pave is one of 13 schools built in the past 10 years by Civic Builders, a nonprofit development group that leverages its well-connected board of developers to open new schools in underserved areas (tagline: "real estate will never be a barrier to an excellent education").

The PAVE Academy Charter School serves a high-needs population of low-income kids with a rigorous academic program built on the core values of Perseverance, Achievement, Vibrance, and Excellent Character, or PAVE.

Pentagram has designed a program of environmental graphics for the school that capture its mission and spirit in large-scale typography that is part of the building itself. The school was developed by Civic Builders, non-profit developers who partner with the New York City Department of Education to build charter schools.

PAVE relies on positive messaging to help motivate its students, and Scher and her team have turned these educational phrases into bold supergraphics that are integrated with the architecture, designed by Mitchell/Giurgola Architects.



The awning signage appears to emerge from the building's surface

"There's a growing philosophy of explaining, and to a certain sense indoctrinating, the kids about what success can be," she says. "The graphics are sort of like a Jewish mother, telling the kids that they're gonna grow up and go to Harvard."



Inside, they're greeted by tiled slogans like "Do the right thing" and "Show me what you know." Scher calls this kind of typographic cheerleading "sloganeering," and explains that it's increasingly common in schools these days.

"The best work is the work that's in collaboration with the architects, and where you really begin to build sculptures with typography"

The teachers and administrators come up with the wording, and Scher works with her design team to integrate the slogans into the architectural design.

At PAVE, this is achieved by merging of typographic and architectural space with details like the entrance sign, which is made from extruded aluminum letters that reach back to the building envelop.



PAVE's motto appears in a painted mural in the school gymnasium

“Thinking back to my days in elementary school, I’m not sure how I would have taken to being yelled at by walls in addition to teachers, coaches, and parents.”

Scher explains that the slogans are as much about color and visual interest as motivation. *“I was surprised by it, at first”* she says. *“I didn’t know how the students would feel about going to a school that talked to them that way.”* In fact, the kids at PAVE responded to Scher by saying they’d like to become artists, too. *“They’ve been tremendously successful”* she adds. *“I think most kids are accustomed to going to a school that’s totally beige.”*

PAVE’s motto is **“Building citizens and scholars brick by brick”** and inside the school various educational slogans have been combined with the architecture to create a dynamic environment for learning. Inexpensive materials like tile and paint are used to maximum effect. The “brick by brick” motto appears as an 7 ft high painted mural that wraps around the walls of the school gymnasium. The typography is set in Benton Sans, to complement the school’s existing identity.



Typographic frieze in a school hallway

Queens Metropolitan Campus

HOW TO REACH

BUS Union Tpke

Q23 QM12 QM42

QUEENS METROPOLITAN CAMPUS

Over the past decades, Paula Scher has explored using superscale typography in environmental graphics for interiors and urban environments, corporate headquarters, museums, performing arts centers and schools.

At the same time, Scher has created a series of large-scale typographic maps paintings and prints that examine ideas of location and ways of seeing the world.

Now Scher has merged her environmental graphics and painting to create a remarkable new work: a pair of murals at the new Queens Metropolitan Campus in Forest Hills.

The murals were completed as a commission for the Department of Cultural Affairs Percent for Art program, in partnership with the NYC School Construction Authority Public Art for Public Schools program.

The two murals are located in an atrium and commons at the Metropolitan Campus and each cover approximately 2,430 square feet.

In both murals, New York City sprawls across the walls in vibrant color, wrapping around walls, corners and ceiling, creating a world in a room. As in her map paintings, locations in the murals are misspelled or misidentified; Scher seems to be figuring out the geography along with the students, creating a joyous sense of recognition that mirrors the learning process.



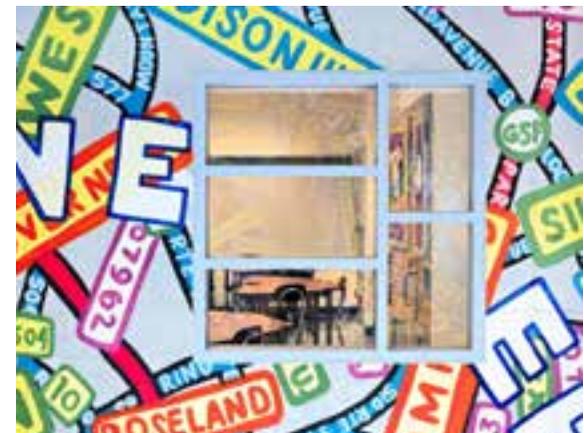


The Metropolitan Campus in Queens is made up of two schools: the Queens Metropolitan High School and the Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School. The schools are separate but share spaces like the auditorium and atrium where the murals are located.

The campus was designed by Urbahn Architects. The murals were completed in collaboration with Percent for Art, the public art program of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) and Paula Scher was invited to create the murals. The architectural plans for the school originally designated a single wall in the atrium for the painting; Scher proposed that the mural be expanded to the

surrounding walls and ceiling.

To begin the commission, Scher painted the New York City metropolitan area with Queens as the focus. The painting is approximately 8 feet by 6 feet, and was completed in 3 pieces. The finished mural consists of over 100 of these panel, most 4 feet by 8 feet, but others in odd sizes to fit into the atrium's corners and around its windows and other fixtures. The panels are made of 3mm and are covered in applied canvas. Painted in acrylic, the panels recreate the dense layering and texture of Scher's original painting, albeit on a larger scale. Affixed to walls of the atrium, the finished mural is like walking into a dimensional painting. ■



Murals located in atrium and commons

THE NEW SCHOOL

The New School has been at the vanguard of innovation in higher education for almost a century. Founded in 1919, the progressive university in New York's Greenwich Village now combines design thinking with varied areas of study: from liberal arts to performing arts, from global policy to social research. Pentagram has designed a new identity for The New School and its constituent institutions that reflects the university's unique interdisciplinary approach.



The new identity for The New School

Using custom typography, the identity establishes an iconic brand for The New School as a whole, while also setting apart the university's different schools, institutes and programs.

The identity introduces a groundbreaking bespoke typeface called Neue that is composed of extended letterforms.

The typeface is revolutionary in its combination of regular, extended and very extended widths of the same font programmed together and used all at once. The typography embodies the progressive mission of The New School and represents a technological advance in the art of type design.



Design for environmental graphics at The New School

FUTURE
INTO
THE
UNIVERSITY
LAUNCHING

The New School

HOW TO REACH

SUBWAY Union Square Station



BUS W 14 St/5 Av



The designers had the idea to create a typographic solution that could be used to differentiate the various schools.

The school names are not individual logos, but did need to have their own unique character while remaining connected to each other.

To develop the new font, they experimented with extending different letterforms for different words. Each letter has been drawn in three widths that are used together seemingly at random.

An algorithm has been created to facilitate the use of the three widths in headlines and text.



LYNX TUFT FROGS, DOLPHINS ABDUCT
 BY PROXY THE EVER AVKWARD KLUTZ
 DUD DUMMKOPF, JINX SNUBNOSE?
 FILMGOER, ORPHAN SGT. RENFRUW
 GRUDGEK REYFUS, MD. SIKH PSYCH IF
 HALT TYMPANY JEWELRY SRI HEH!
 TWYER VS. JOJO PNEU FYLFOT ALCAABA
 SON OF NONPLUSSED HALFBREED
 BUBBLY PLAYBOY GUGGENHEIM DADDY
 COCCYX SGRAFFITO EFFECT, VACUUM
 DIRNDLE IMPOSSIBLE ATTEMPT TO
 DISVALUE, MUZZLE THE AFGHAN CZECH
 CZAR AND EXNINJA, BOB BIXBY DVORAK
 WOOD DHURRIE SAVVY DIZZY EYE AEON
 UVULA SCRUNGY PICNIC LUXURIOUS
 SPECIAL TYPE CARBOHYDRATE OVOID
 ADZUKI KUMQUAT BOMB? AFTERGLOWS
 GOLD GIRL PYGMY GNOME LB. ANKHS

Neue Display Black (normal),
 Neue Display Wide (wide), Neue Display Ultra (widest).



In the new system each school has its own logo

The identity incorporates a pair of parallel lines that echo the horizontal striations in the architecture of the buildings. These graphic bars anchor The New School wordmark and provide an organizing device to display the names of the various schools and programs at different scales in relationship to the logo. The system enables The New School to stand alone at large scale, or act as an endorser when connected to schools such as Parsons.

The flexible structure allows the university to continue to evolve and change, and supports the different names to work alongside The New School brand. The New School wordmark and bars appear in black, while the names of the individual schools and programs are set off in red. The university commissioned a Pantone color, called Parsons Red, to honor the design history of its Parsons School of Design.

The aesthetics of the identity system is inspired by the architecture and typography of the New School's landmark Joseph Urban building, as well as the new University Center, which opened in 2013. Neue is a customized version of the font Irma, which is utilized in the environmental graphics of the University Center and was designed by Peter Bil'ak. Pentagram commissioned Bil'ak to draw and program Neue, which means "new" in German. The proprietary font has been named in honor of The New School, with a nod to The New School's historic luminaries.



The new identity applied



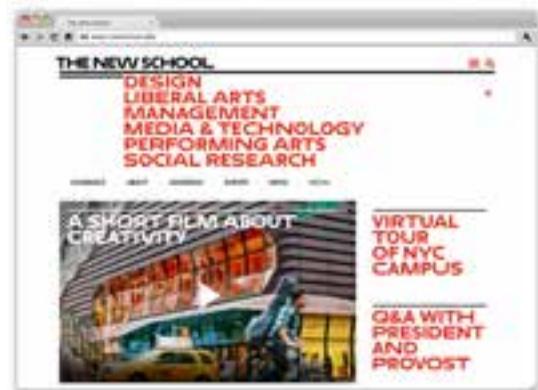
Student identification card

The designers collaborated closely with The New School to create the system. The university needed an identity that would clearly express the nature of its curriculum, which is integrated, flexible and personalized.

The system also had to distinguish the relationship between The New School as a university and its constituent schools. In addition, the identity had to be able to evolve over time, as the university is continuously redefining its programs.



The graphic bars are used to organize information



The redesigned New School website

“Using custom typography, the identity establishes an iconic brand for The New School as a whole, while also setting apart the university’s different schools, institutes and programs.”

The in-house team has redesigned The New School website working with Pentagram’s initial guidelines and utilizing Neue.

The identity has the potential for future growth and expansion in various applications. To introduce the new identity, Pentagram worked with students at Parsons to create a special environmental installation at the Sheila C. Johnson Design Center, as well as on the campus water towers. ■



The campus water tower design by Parsons students

Paula Scher: Pro Bono Hall Of Fame
— taprootfoundation.org

Paula Scher on pro bono design
— davidairey.com

The Power of Pro Bono
— Pentagram.com

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Pentagram’s Paula Scher Designs the Beige Out of Middle School, Conquers Fear of Color
— fastcompany.com

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Paula Scher mural
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Pentagram Rebrands The New School
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Paula Scher uses “revolutionary” typeface in rebrand of The New School
— designweek.co.uk

Paula Scher’s Irreverent Identity for The New School
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