

O1 LETTER

Graphic designers have a keen eye for the physical form of letters. We know them intimately. We know their personalities and their style. We know where they fit in and where they don't. Words set in a typeface characterized by the contrasting thick and thin strokes of Didot would look too uptight when they should set in something more psychedelic, like **Arnold Böcklin**. Through letters, we are able to persuade passerby to enter stores and warn drivers of hazards on the road. ¶ You are about to form a close relationship with a single letter. You will develop intimate knowledge of its structure, discovering exactly what it takes to make your letter what it is and what it isn't. You will give it personality and a life of its own on paper and in the world. Through this process, you will develop a rich spirit of experimentation and appreciation of creative research.

Spend time making your letters. Each letterform you create should be an in-depth investigation into the form of your letter using different materials or processes. This project is about process as much as it is about creativity.

APPROACH

Think of your letter as a piece of clay waiting to take shape. Type, like clay, is malleable. A letter's shape can be pushed, pulled, stretched and cut. It can also be wrapped, disguised, stretched, compressed, mixed, distressed, decorated and inflated. Every week for the next four weeks you will create three original forms for your letter using whichever materials or methods you like. Your letters must be made of objects. You may only use the computer as a starting point to explore various letterforms by printing your letter to use as a guide to make your own with various materials.

READ

Graphic Design: The New Basics, pages 8–69.

SPECIFICATIONS

The letters you make can be made from any material by any process you can imagine subject to the restrictions listed in the schedule. Your letters must be recognizable.

- ▷ Photographs of three different and original designs of your letter
- ▷ 7.5" x 7.5" high-quality color prints flush mounted using PMA to illustration board
- ▷ Process and written reflection should be completed as outlined (see back)
- ▷ Place your three mounted prints, process documentation and written reflection in a 10 x 13 envelope. Write your name, "Intro. to GD" on the top-right of the envelope. Work not meeting this requirement will not be accepted.

REFLECTION

Write responses to the following:

- ▷ What went well with this assignment?
- ▷ What did not go well?
- ▷ What would you do differently if you could do this assignment again?
- ▷ Describe the process you took to create each letter. Where did your ideas come from? How did they evolve?

Type your reflection using a word processor. Be sure to carefully proofread it and add your name to the top of your paper.

PROCESS DOCUMENTATION

- ▷ Use Photoshop to make contact sheets of *all* of your images. Staple or clip the contact sheets together and write your name on the first page.
- ▷ Place your written reflections and contact sheets in a 10 x 13 envelope marked with your name. Turn this envelope in with your project.

SCHEDULE

MONDAY, 1.23

Review. Bring at least 50 digital photos of your letter on disc to class to use in a demo. We'll review your images and creative process in class.

WEDNESDAY, 1.25

Critique. Bring three printed, mounted and trimmed letters plus your process documentation and reflection.

EVALUATION

This assignment will be evaluated on a numerical scale using the following criteria:

25%	CREATIVITY
50%	Letterform Design. <i>How imaginative is the design of each letter? Do the materials used to make the letters reinforce/support their design?</i>
40%	Negative Space. <i>Is the design of the space surrounding the letters (including background) as carefully considered as the design of the letters themselves?</i>
10%	Framing/Composition. <i>Are the letters well placed within the frame of the page with an appropriate balance between the letter and the surrounding space?</i>
100%	Total Creativity

25%	CRAFT
20%	Brightness/Contrast. <i>Are the images printed with a pleasing and appropriate brightness and contrast?</i>
20%	Focus/Resolution/Proportion. <i>Are the images in focus? Are they printed at a high enough resolution to not show the image's pixels?</i>
20%	Print Quality. <i>Are the images printed using a high-quality color printer?</i>
20%	Trim. <i>Does each image extend to the edge of the board? Are the board edges cleanly cut in even straight lines?</i>
20%	Mounting/Cleanliness. <i>Are the images firmly mounted to boards with no bubbles or edges peeling up? Are the images free of marks?</i>
100%	Total Craft

50%	PROCESS
90%	Range of Letterform Designs. <i>How great is the range of different letterform designs? Are different materials used? Is there a range in style (uppercase, lowercase, italic, serif, san serif, etc.)?</i>
10%	Written Reflection.* <i>Is the writing a thoughtful and insightful response to the assignment? Is the writing clear and free of errors?</i>
100%	Total Process

100% PROJECT TOTAL

3 = EXCELLENT. Work meets/exceeds the requirements of the assignment. It has superb formal mediation and impeccable craft. Ideas are original, thoughtful and imaginative. Writing is free of spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

2 = SATISFACTORY. Work fulfills the requirements of the assignment, but does not demonstrate the additional effort needed to excel. It lacks thoughtful, original or imaginative resolution or attention to detail and craft.

1 = UNACCEPTABLE. Work shows no understanding of the assignment. It shows a lack of understanding of design principles and poor craft.

* If you do not write a reflection for every project, your final letter grade will drop by one letter grade.