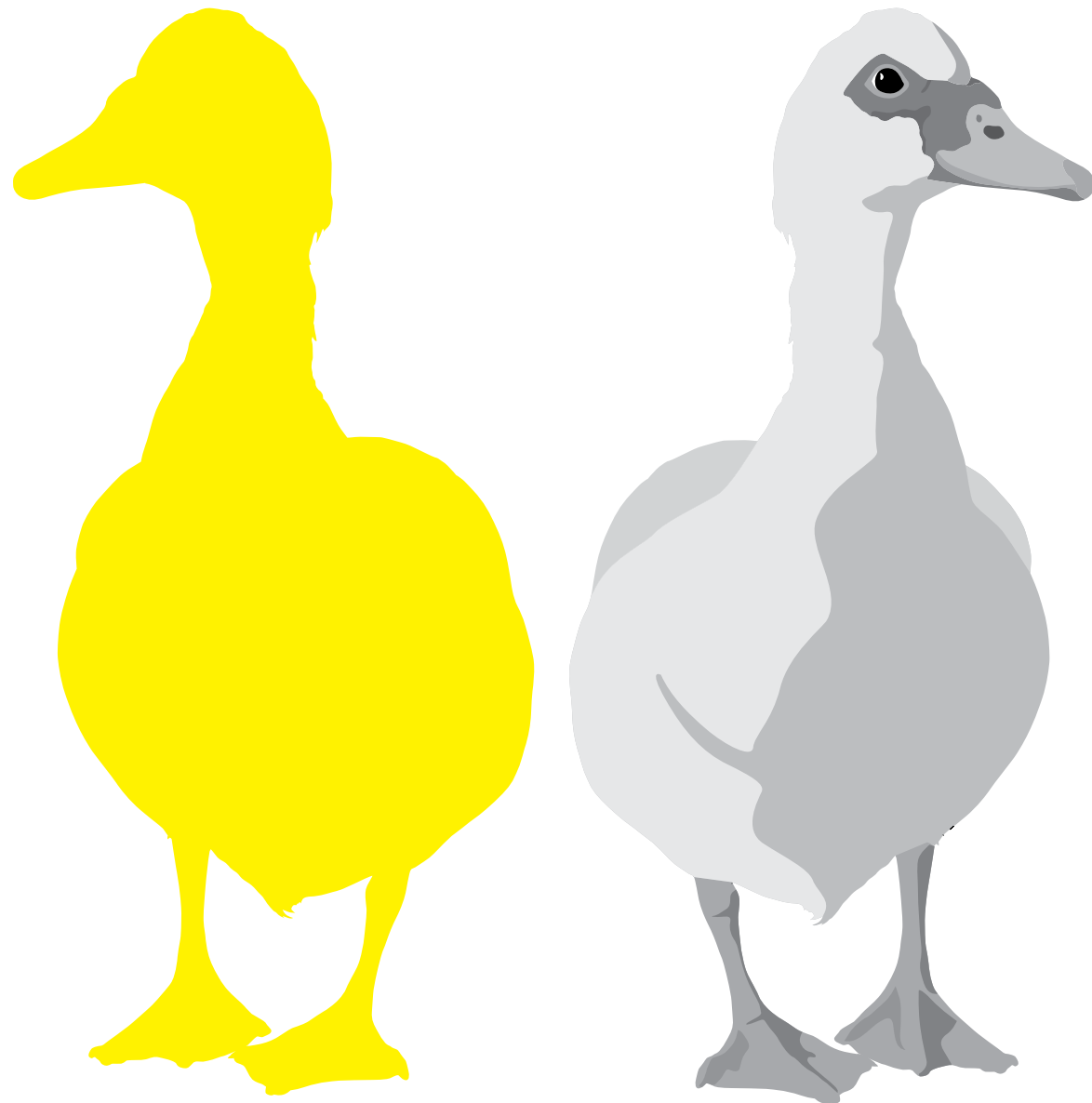


# DECORATING THE DUCK



[WWW.DECORATINGTHEDUCK.COM](http://WWW.DECORATINGTHEDUCK.COM)

101 THINGS  
ARCHITECTURE  
CAN LEARN FROM  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
GRAPHIC DESIGN

BYERA HADLEY TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP 2010  
FINAL REPORT FOR THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTS NSW

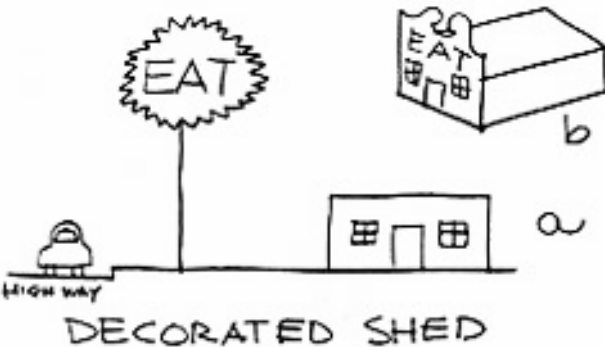
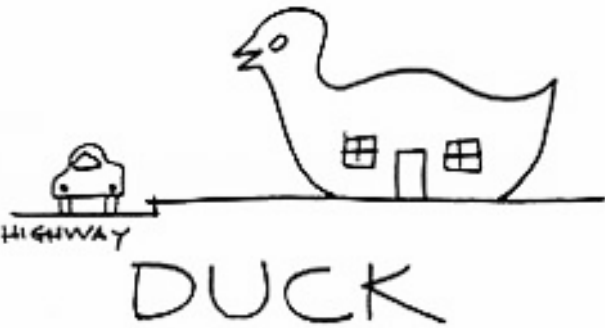
CHRISTIAN WILLIAMS with MARSHMALLOW PRODUCTIONS



WITH THANKS TO BYERA HADLEY AND THE NSW BOARD OF ARCHITECTS

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# INTRODUCTION



Architecture as Sign and Symbol. Robert Venturi.



Modified Diagram. Decorating the Duck.

When the world is proliferated by sign and communication, is a billboard architecture or is architecture a billboard?

## CONCEPT >>

In their book, ‘Learning From Las Vegas,’ Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown made the distinction between “...the Duck and the Decorated Shed as architectural prototypes for our time: that is, the building as itself a symbol, exemplified by the Long Island Duck... and the building as generic loft whose aesthetic derives from its decorative or iconographic surfaces and/or applied design.” They advocated the latter as the way forward for architecture.

Signs and sign systems have had a greater impact on the composition of our built and social environments than we could ever have imagined – both on a visual and cultural level. While Venturi Scott Brown speculated on the landscape of signs in Las Vegas in the 70’s, they probably did not imagine to what extent these communicative structures would begin to rule, not just Vegas as a “vernacular”, but the world, developed and undeveloped.

While modernist and deconstructivist architecture valiantly attempts to maintain a pure architecture (pure duckness) – it is difficult to ignore the notion that sign and architecture are becoming one. Whether it be a cultural institution, a commercial building or an urban landscape, architecture is no longer just an expression of structure and less a machine for living than a machine for communication.

Through a series of building case studies from Seoul to Rotterdam to Los Angeles, interviews with acclaimed practitioners and attendance at the Society for Environmental Graphic Design Conference, this investigation aims to explore whether SPACE and SIGN can coexist more harmoniously, and what the architect’s role should be.

Metaphorically speaking, helping architecture to retain the importance of its unique spatiality and form (the importance of its duckness), whilst enveloping signage and wayfinding in its midst. Decorating the Duck.

INVESTIGATIVE METHOD >>

The investigation was organised as an intensive study matrix, based on 3 distinct tiers of study: User Experience, Professional Experience and Educational/ Academic Experience.

1. USER EXPERIENCE

A series of field studies were undertaken focusing on one typology, the theatre. We looked at this typology in its various iterations, from small local theatre to large Performing Arts Centres, as a way of comparison. Signage, wayfinding and environmental graphic interfaces were studied, photographed and catalogued. In the majority of cases I was taken on tours of the case study buildings by staff members.

2. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

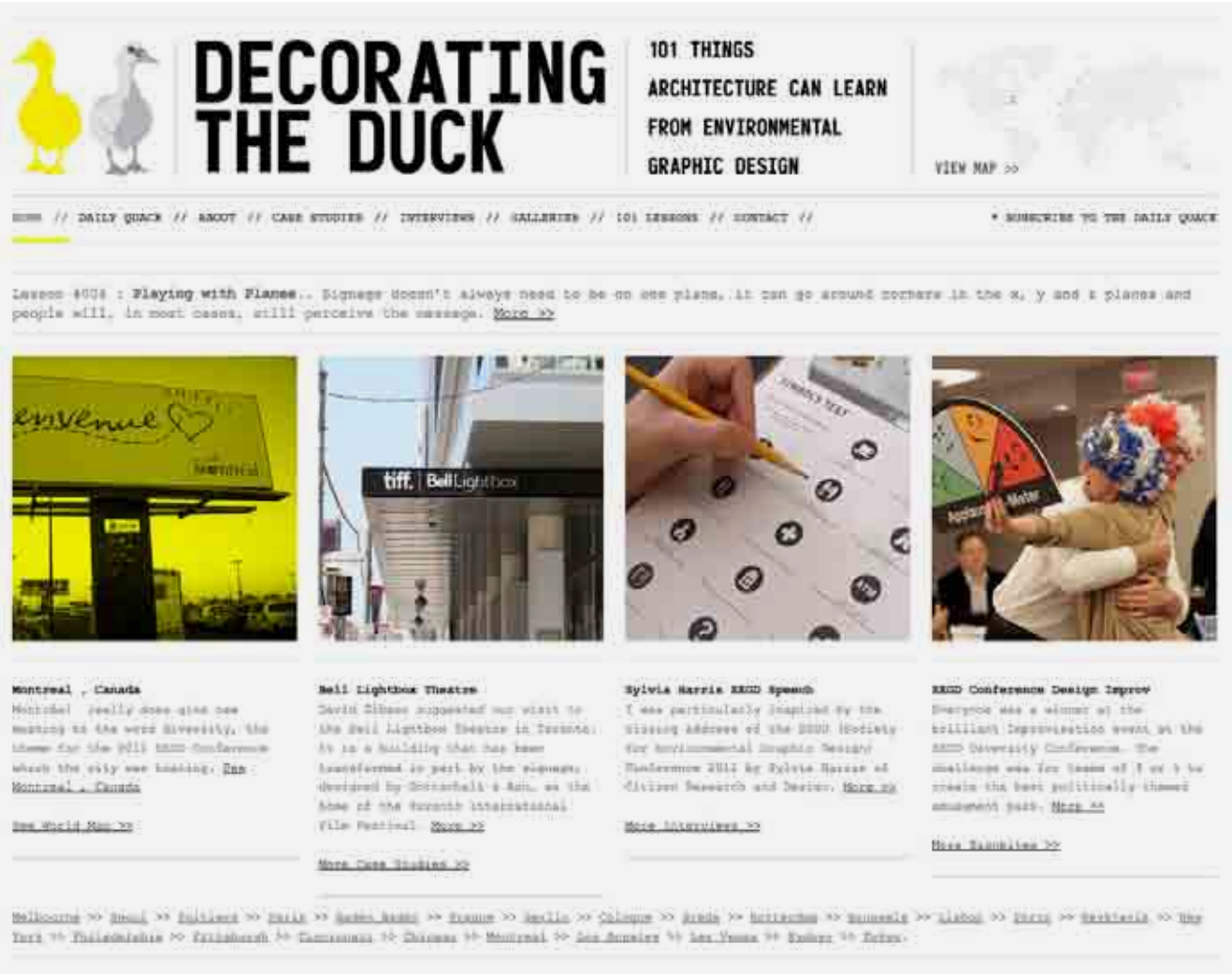
A series of interviews were conducted with world renowned Enviornmental Graphic Design Firms. The same set of questions were asked to each practitioner.

3. EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

To gain a broad overview of current issues on the Environmental Graphic Design horizen, to broaden my knowledge of both practical and theoretical aspects of EGD and to make connections within the EGD Community, I attended the *SEGD (Society for Environmental Graphic Design) Conference 2011: Designing the Difference* in Montreal, Canada.

DOCUMENTATION >>

The result of the investigations is reported in full with images and text on the website [www.decoratingtheduck.com](http://www.decoratingtheduck.com) that was designed specifically for the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship trip. This is the major output of the study.



This physical report is produced for the Board of Architect's records.

The body of the report forms the 'conclusion,' which is to to offer practical examples and suggestions for the integration of signage and building through offering '101 Lessons that Architecture can learn from Environmental Graphic Design'.

These lessons incorporate all the investigated material gained from the trip.

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# LESSON #001 | MAKE MEANINGFUL ACCESSIBLE SIGNAGE

There is little point in having braille and tactile signage if a visually impaired person can't find it, if it is not in a logical place and part of a logical system. There are some hard and fast rules as part of AS1428.1 Design for Access and Mobility (for Australia) but this doesn't extend to explaining how an effective Accessible system works. Since having a child I have become more aware of the reality of these systems, and it would not do any signage designer harm to take a pram or a wheelchair out for a spin in their buidling or project to see how the Accessible system would work in reality. Below are some clever systems noted on the BH trip.



PLATFORM ACCESSIBILITY TACTILE INDICATORS.  
METRO, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



TACTILE AND BRAILLE SIGNAGE.  
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL, LOS ANGELES, USA



BRAILLE INDICATORS NEXT TO DOOR HANDLES.  
GAITE LYRIQUE DIGITAL CULTURE CENTRE, PARIS, FRANCE.



It does feel in general like that accessible area is becoming more and more strict to the point where buying it off the shelf will be the only option...

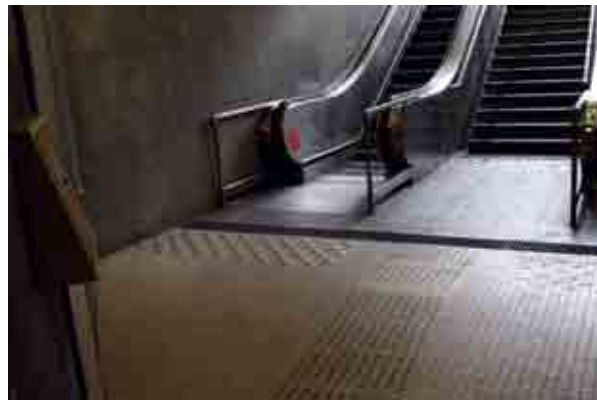
I guess we don't really have a formal position on this but I would say that our feeling would be that an accessible journey shouldn't be a compromised journey. There are a lot of other ways that you can make those journeys equally well delineated without having to put signs up everywhere.

BRIDGET ATKINSON, DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENTS.  
INTERVIEW FROST DESIGN, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



BRAILLE AND TACTILE DIRECTORY BOARD DETAIL.  
SOUTHBANK, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA





TACTILE PATH SYSTEM FROM STATION ENTRY TO PLATFORM.  
IJZER METRO STATION, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM.

Q: What is your view on the extent to which signage should be accessible in terms of “universal design” and braille and tactile signage?

A: It depends on the context and the specific space and type of building. In an office building, for example, the journeys are what would be called route-and-event. They are linear, predictable journeys. You have predictable corridors and predictable lift lobbies, you have a series of doors down a corridor and then you can have a handrail, you can do all that stuff and it will work.

But where you have an airport concourse or a railway station or a metro system it is absolutely pointless, it is actually a waste of money. You are better off putting that money into operational responses that actually meet the needs of those users. One of the other things we have found is by slavishly adhering to having braille and tactile on every sign you erode the value of the system for the vast majority of people who can use it. It is for the possible benefit of the smallest percentage of the population, who have equal rights undoubtedly, but the numbers don't make sense. The sign costs 6 times as much, it is half as effective for 99.9% of the people using it. The reality is most people who read braille, can only read basic words such as toilet or lift. To read in terms of fluency - there is tiny percentage of people without sight, making up a small percentage of people in the population.

FINN BUTLER, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT BURO NORTH, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

# LESSON #002 | EMBRACE LASER CUT VINYL

When i first started designing signs, I shunned laser-cut vinyl as a material as it seemed a cheap, nasty solution. From observation and experience, I realise it is a cheap, effective and streamlined approach. There is the risk of it being scratched or ripped, so in a place such as a school hallway it may not be appropriate. But many other methods risk being scratched and meddled with and are not so easy or cheap to replace. So, don't dismiss vinyl straight away. These show that, if designed well, laser cut vinyl can look super and well . . . not like vinyl.



LASER CUT VINYL ON METAL DOORS AND WALLS.  
PLATOON KUNSTHAL, SEOUL, KOREA



LASER CUT VINYL ON SMOOTH CONCRETE.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE



LASER CUT VINYL ON METAL.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL





LESSON #003 | ...BUT AVOID VINYL IN VULNERABLE, HIGH TRAFFIC AREAS

Vinyl is not a good option for external, high traffic or child centred areas. Things in patterns, people or other drawings may be particularly appealing to pickers as will be things at hand height.



LASER CUT VINYL ON EXTERNAL ELEVATOR SIGNAGE.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE



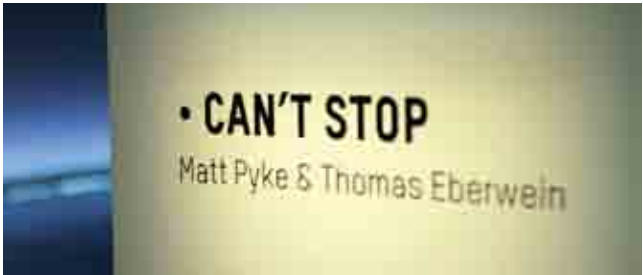
BLOCK LASER CUT VINYL SIGNAGE AT HAND HEIGHT.  
GRAPHIC DESIGN MUSEUM, BREDA, THE NETHERLANDS.

# LESSON #004 | UTILISE LIGHT TO EMPHASISE OR REVEAL SIGNAGE

Simple signage may be highlighted by beams of light, light from behind or within. This is particularly effective in areas that are dark or have low light, or where signage should only be seen as a whisper.



EXHIBITION IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
GAITE LYRIQUE DIGITAL CULTURE CENTRE, PARIS, FRANCE.



EXHIBITION IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, NEW YORK, USA



SIGNAGE ILLUMINATED FROM WITHIN. BY BURO NORTH.  
WESTFIELD MARKET STREET, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



ROOM IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
BELL LIGHTBOX THEATRE, TORONTO, CANADA



LIT SIGNAGE CREATES FOCUS. DESIGN BY P-06 ATELIER.  
MUSEO DO ORIENTE, LISBON PORTUGAL

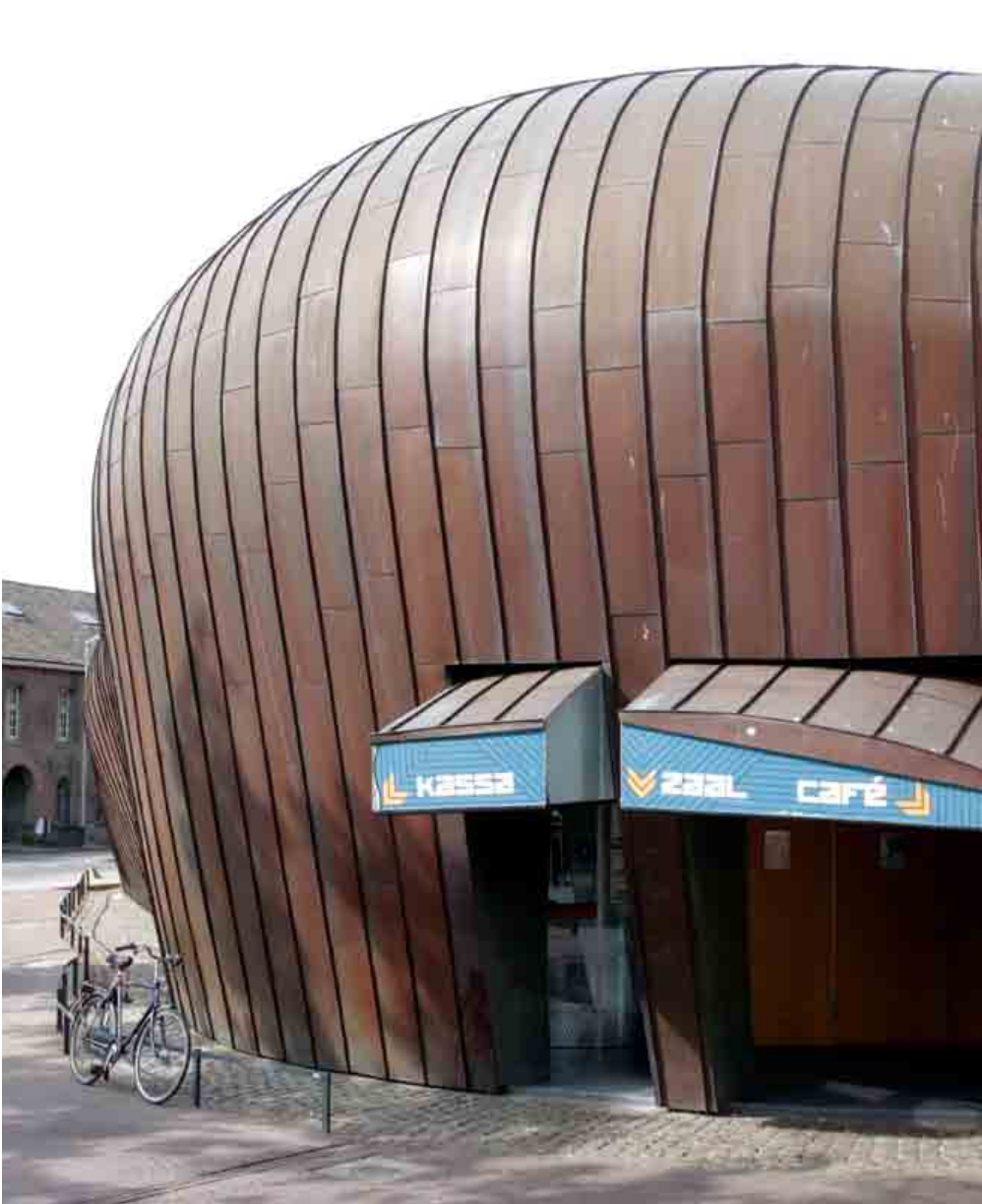


# LESSON #005 | BEWARE OF FASHIONABLE AND YE OLDE WORLDE FONTS

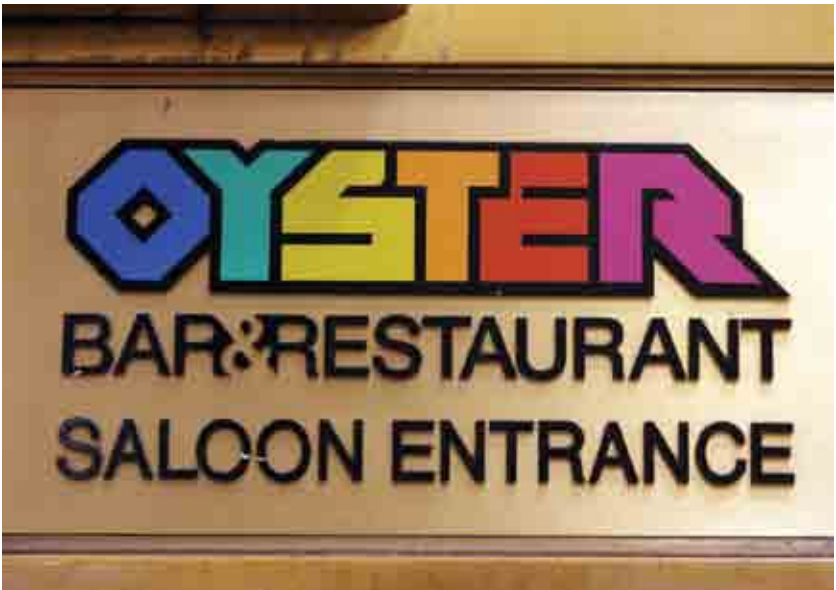
While keeping up to date is necessary, choose fonts carefully, particularly for institutions. Fashionable fonts date as quickly as neon jeans and can drag a the image of a business or institution down with it in a few short years. Consider the possibility that it will need to be replaced. What impact will this have?



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGN  
BLACK LIGHT THEATRE, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGN ONCE SO FUNKY.  
POP MEZZ THEATRE, BRED, NETHERLANDS



WHAT WHERE THEY THINKING? OYSTER BAR FAILS THE TEST OF TIME.  
OYSTER BAR, GRAND CENTRAL STATION, NEW YORK, USA

# LESSON #006 | NOTHING BEATS A NICE CLEAR ARROW TO MAKE A DIRECTIONAL POINT

An arrow is a truly universal symbol. It cannot fail to make the point that ‘THIS IS THE WAY TO GO’ and can even extend to ‘THIS IS THE WAY YOU SHOULD GO’. They can be glitzy, geometric or even minimal. It can be sculptural, hanging, painted, inverted. If in doubt or if you really want to make a point - embrace the arrow.



GOING THE FULL SPARKLE. ENTRANCE INDICATOR.  
R (LOVE) HOTEL, SEOUL, KOREA



ORDER DRINKS HERE.  
FREMONT STREET, LAS VEGAS, USA



ANIMATED NEON ARROW ENTRANCE INDICATOR.  
KUNSTHAL, ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS



HOW TO STAND OUT IN A NEON CROWD.  
BINION'S CASINO, LAS VEGAS, USA



NEEDING TO STAND OUT IN A COMPLEX COMPLEX.  
LINCOLN CENTRE, NEW YORK, USA



PARKING SIGN.  
DOWNTOWN CHICAGO, USA



VACANCY HERE.  
DOWNTOWN, RENO, USA





METRO IS HERE.  
LAURENT METRO STATION, MONTREAL, CANADA



A REPLICA OF THE FAMOUS HOLIDAY INN SIGN.  
AMERICAN SIGN MUSEUM, CINCINNATI, USA



MY FAVOURITE ARROW OF ALL TIME.  
UNKNOWN JAPANESE SOURCE



TRUCKSTOP ADVERTISEMENT SIGN.  
ON THE ROAD. MONTREAL TO NEW YORK



FANTASTIC MOTEL DIRECTIONS SIGN IN THE LANDSCAPE.  
BETWEEN REYKJAVIK & THE AIRPORT, ICELAND

LESSON #007 | ...HOWEVER MORE ARROWS ARE NOT NECESSARILY BETTER

While arrows are a great tool. They can be over utilised and create confusion. The aim is not to have your users going around in circles. Below are some examples:



HEADACHE INDUCING CINEMA DIRECTIONAL SIGN.  
VILLAGE EAST CINEMA, NEW YORK, USA



MORE ARROWS NOT ADDING TO THE MESSAGE.  
MIDTOWN PARKING STATION, NEW YORK, USA



EXIT ANYWHERE! DON'T PANIC!  
TOUR DE MONTREAL OBSERVATOIRE, MONTREAL, CANADA



HIGHWAY SIGNAGE.  
RENO, USA



# LESSON #008 | EXIT SIGNS DON'T HAVE TO BE GREEN AND WHITE

Convention would have it (and no doubt your subconsultants) that there is only one type of EXIT sign, (typically green and white in Australia). I have been enlightened to a whole new world. Not a necessity by any means but a nice touch.



BLACK AND GREEN EXIT SIGN.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



GREEN ON PERSPEX EXIT SIGN.  
TOWN HALL, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND



PINK AND METAL SORTIE SIGN.  
TOUR DE MONTREAL OBSERVATOIRE, MONTREAL, CANADA



PINK ON PERSPEX EXIT SIGN  
MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN, NEW YORK, USA



HAND PAINTED - DEFINATELY NOT TO CODE!  
STUK ARTS CENTRE, LEUVEN, BRUSSELS

# LESSON #009 | BE INSPIRED BY YOUR CLIENTS

I find a lot of our clients inspiring. Most people think of clients as being assholes or hardwork or mean whereas I think if we didn't have the clients we wouldn't be in business. So it is very important for us that we collaborate with our clients and that we actually involve them in the process. It is not something that is done in isolation or secretly. As often as we can we try and involve them in that process and you get a far stronger result as an outcome because they've been along on the journey and you get a real understanding of immediate feedback from them. Most of the time it is pretty fluid and pretty open.

I think what is really important is that we really have to listen to brief and the opportunities and make sure that we don't go in straight away with an opinion about how something should be. I think the listening, the observing, the research, the delving into the project really helps us to discover the solution that is relevant for that project. Some companies will just inflict, I like to use the word 'inflict', but they will just do their style on everything they do. And that is fine some clients just want that and it is sometimes easier to just go "I want that flavour and that flavour.." but through what we do we discover the idea first and then work out how to express that idea.



INFORMATION KIOSK. EGD BY FROST DESIGN.  
CHINATOWN, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

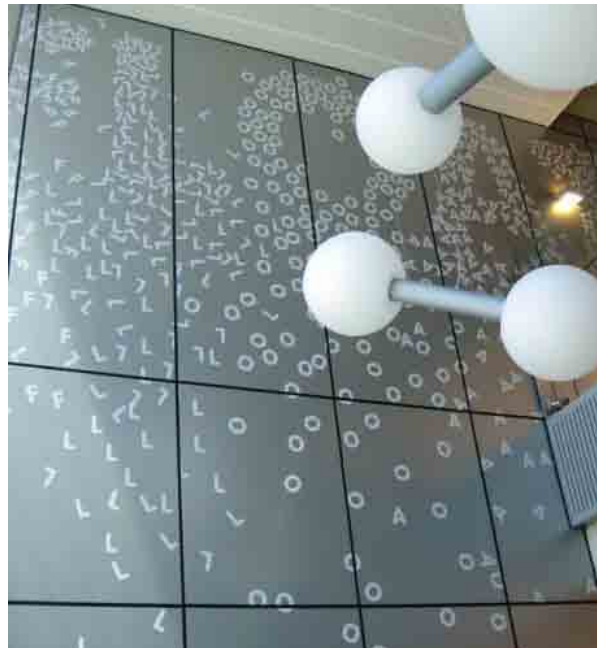
....we are always looking for clues and often the client will only say it once...Regardless of how long or short, it is critical in that first stage that we speak to all the right people, get all the right information.



VINCE FROST, DIRECTOR (LEFT) AND ANNABELLE STEVENS, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTS (RIGHT).  
INTERVIEW WITH FROST DESIGN, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

REDFERN WATERLOO IDENTITY. EGD BY FROST DESIGN.  
REDFERN OVAL, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA





ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS AND SIGNAGE BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF WATER. EGD BY FROST DESIGN.  
SA WATER HQ, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

POPCORN INSPIRATION, FRAMED.  
SUSSMAN PREJZA OFFICE, LOS ANGELES, USA

POPCORN INSPIRED SIGNAGE. EGD BY SUSSMAN PREJZA.  
UNIVERSAL CITY CINEMAS, LOS ANGELES, USA



# LESSON #010 | CONSIDER UTILISING SCREENS FOR SIGNS

This is an area that requires a whole study to itself and a tool often misused. What will happen to signage as the era of screens, mobile and smartphone technology progresses? One can only hazard a guess at something like a video parlour of screen signs in the future or a times square like atmosphere in every building and on every street. In the mean time, on a small scale, screens can work very well in spaces where signage will change regularly. Greater success will be achieved with the right sort of framing and joinery so that it isn't just a big LCD TV monitor stuck to a wall. The best example I have seen is the below in the foyer of the Museum of Art and Design in New York.



DIGITAL SCREEN SIGNAGE WITH INFORMATION ON WHAT IS ON EACH LEVEL INCLUDING CHANGING EXHIBITIONS.  
MUSEUM OF ART & DESIGN, NEW YORK, USA



WHAT'S ON SIGNAGE AS PART OF MAJOR ID SIGNAGE  
ACMI, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA





In the Times Square district, our main identification sign is required to have a MINIMUM amount of lux or light emission.

IS THIS THE FUTURE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF BUILDING, TECHNOLOGY AND SIGNAGE? COMPETING SCREENS ON EVERY SURFACE.  
(THE VERY OVERWHELMING) TIMES SQUARE, NEW YORK, USA

TOUR WITH ALMA MALABANAN-MCGRATH.  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET THEATRE, NEW YORK, USA



# LESSON #011 | BUILD MODELS OR MAKE LIFE SIZED MOCK UPS

Similarly to architecture, environmental graphic design benefits from a true understanding of scale. I have asked every practitioner I have interviewd and either they are keeping secrets or there are no ‘norms’ for things like text sizes. Their advice: do your research, print things out 1:1, check how it works for yourself and how it is viewed by the client.



SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING MODELS AND MOCK-UPS.  
INTERVIEW AT SUSSMAN PREJZA, LOS ANGELES, USA

# LESSON #012 | CONSIDER DESIGNING VISUAL DIRECTION INTO THE SHAPE OF SIGNAGE

A variation to the use of the arrow (Lesson #006) is the idea of using visual ‘movement’ or direction with directional signs. This gives users the subconscious notion of moving in a particular direction without really needing to think about it. This can be particularly helpful in buildings with many signs and paths or a lot of other competing information.



**DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE.**  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA.



**DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE.**  
TOUR DE MONTREAL OBSERVATOIRE, MONTREAL, CANADA



**DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE.**  
YOYOGI PARK, TOKYO, JAPAN



**DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE IN CURVED ARCHITECTURE.**  
BMW PLANT, LEIPZIG, GERMANY



# LESSON #013 | BE INSPIRED BY PORTUGUESE DESIGN

Revisiting Portugal was a great reminder of the fact that environmental graphic design is not a new concept. There is decoration and messages on the old buildings, in the pavements, everywhere. Portugal was also home to the most inspiring interview of the trip, with P-06 Atelier, and the most inspiring architecture of the trip, the Casa Da Musica. Contemporary Portuguese environmental design seems to be taking inspiration from their vibrant past while embueing it with new levels of slick playfulness.



CLASSIC STREET SIGN.  
RUA DA HERA, LISBON, PORTUGAL



METRO ENTRANCE SIGNAGE.  
PORTO, PORTUGAL



TRADITIONAL BLUE & WHITE TILED FACADE.  
LISBON, PORTUGAL



TRADITIONAL GEOMETRIC TILED FACADE.  
ARCOS, LISBON, PORTUGAL



TILED GRAPHIC FACADE OF A FADO RESTAURANT  
LISBON, PORTUGAL



TRAIN STATION SIGNAGE.  
WEST LISBON, PORTUGAL



USE OF THE ABOVE TRADITIONAL TILING IN A CONTEMPORARY SETTING.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL







SHOP FRONT SIGNAGE.  
DOWNTOWN PORTO, PORTUGAL



RESTAURANT SIGNAGE.  
CLUB FLUVIAL, RIVERSIDE, PORTO, PORTUGAL



REUSE OF A WATER TOWER AS SIGNPOST.  
WEST LISBON, PORTUGAL



MUSEO DO ORIENTE. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
WEST LISBON, PORTUGAL



RIVERFRONT RESTAURANT SIGNAGE.  
RIVERSIDE, PORTO, PORTUGAL



NEW SIGNAGE, OLD BUILDING. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
TRÓIA, PORTUGAL



VAI COM DEUS. TYPOGRAPHIC INSTALLATION BY R2 DESIGN.  
ERMIDA NOSSA SENHORA DA CONCEIÇÃO, LISBON, PORTUGAL

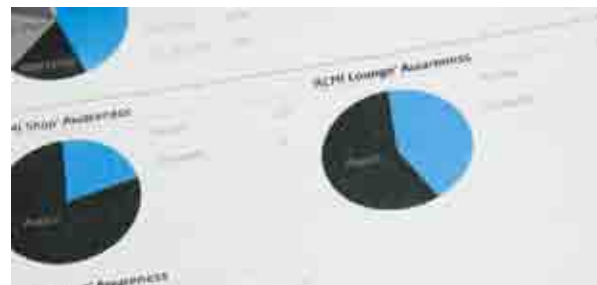
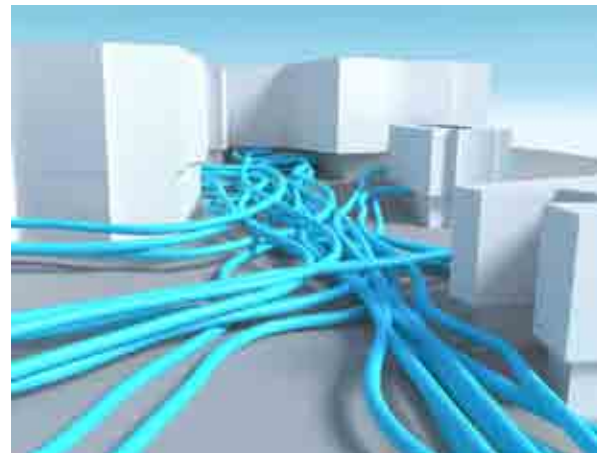
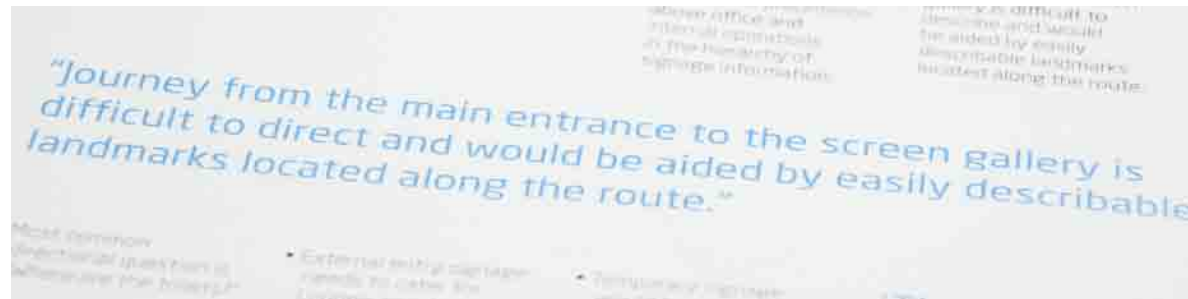
# LESSON #014 | BE INSPIRED BY WAYFINDING

Wayfinding is not only a pragmatic requirement - it can become the beginning of the aesthetic ‘idea’ for a project. Firms such as Buro North in Melbourne place huge importance on wayfinding modelling of projects - a relatively new technology - that helps to understand user flows. This can then be translated into clever informatic and directional systems. Or something as simple as this lo-fi signage system we stumbled on in Porto.



WAYFINDING SYSTEM BASED ON A MAGICAL PATH OF COLOUR.  
CENTRO COMERCIAL BOMBARDA, PORTO, PORTUGAL





We start with the wayfinding strategy. We are both involved in the Wayfinding strategy and the design. But he leads wayfinding and I lead the design. Once the wayfinding strategy is done we have a performance specification that is a basic diagrammatic solution. For example, he will say "cars are driving at 60km down this road - they need to read the sign from a distance of 30m - therefore it needs to have a type size of 400mm at 3.8m to the underside of the text and it needs to be illuminated".

We get all the performance criteria and THEN we design and I think that is key to our design process because it takes away as many variables as possible. We like to lock down the givens. And that is all evidence based stuff so we can sit down with the client and say, "it has to be like this and this for these reasons", and now we'll talk design language and it just puts to bed so many irrelevant discussions.

We use computer models to anticipate navigational behaviour on new sites - but this is very new. We've been trialing a number of modelling solutions for quite a long time. What impact is that going to have on the circulation? I think it is impossible to make assumptions. There has got to be a way of quantifying those decisions. We have one project example where we actually observed, stood in federation square and watched the behavior, which is the best way. I don't think anything beats that. Watching 1000 people moving through a space is better than asking questions, better than questionnaires, because the behavior IS the behavior. There is no interpretation.

# LESSON #015 | THE SUCCESS OF CHANGEABLE SIGNAGE DEPENDS ON CONTENT NOT JUST FRAME

Finding a changeable signage system to please everyone is a difficult task. Off-the-shelf systems can be ugly but have tested ‘changeability’. Custom systems look good by often fail functionally. Keep in mind that what is more important is the message in the frame and the consistency of that graphically. It can make a world of difference and only requires a good template system and the education of staff to that system.



CHANGEABLE SIGNAGE.  
BELL LIGHTBOX THEATRE, TORONTO, CANADA



CHANGEABLE SIGNAGE.  
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL, LOS ANGELES, USA



CHANGEABLE SIGNAGE.  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, NEW YORK, USA



TEMPORARY SIGNAGE - TEXTA ON PRINTED BASE.  
HALO OPEN DAY, FRASERS BROADWAY, SYDNEY



A CONSISTENT APPROACH TO THE CONTENT OF THESE WELL WORN CHANGEABLE SIGNS MAKES A DIFFERENCE.  
SCHAUBÜHNE AM LEHNINER PLATZ, BERLIN, GERMANY





LESSON #016 | ...SO LEAVE A SIMPLE USERS MANUAL & TEMPLATES FOR CHANGING/TEMPORARY SIGNS



DESIGNED POSTERS IN OFF-THE-SHELF FRAMES.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, AUSTRALIA

DESIGNED POSTERS IN OFF-THE-SHELF FRAMES, CHANGEABLE SYSTEMS READY TO ROLL OUT, POSTER WALLPAPERING AND OFF-THE-SHELF SYSTEMS.  
MELBOURNE RECITAL HALL, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

# LESSON #017 | THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX WITH STAIRS

Stairs are an under utilised canvas for signage. There are issues to counter including the scuffing of shoes and the perception of legibility, however none of this impossible to overcome if you are tight on signage space or want to make a statement.



DESIGN SQUARE LEVEL SIGNAGE.  
HONGDAE, SEOUL, KOREA



INTRODUCTION TEXT  
COOPER UNION BUILDING, NEW YORK, USA



ELECTRONICS STORE  
AKHIBAHARA, TOKYO, JAPAN



STAIRWELL GRAPHICS.  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET THEATRE, NEW YORK, USA



INFORMATION GRAPHICS (AND SICK ME) ON ENTRANCE TO THE COMPLEX.  
LINCOLN CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, NEW YORK, USA.

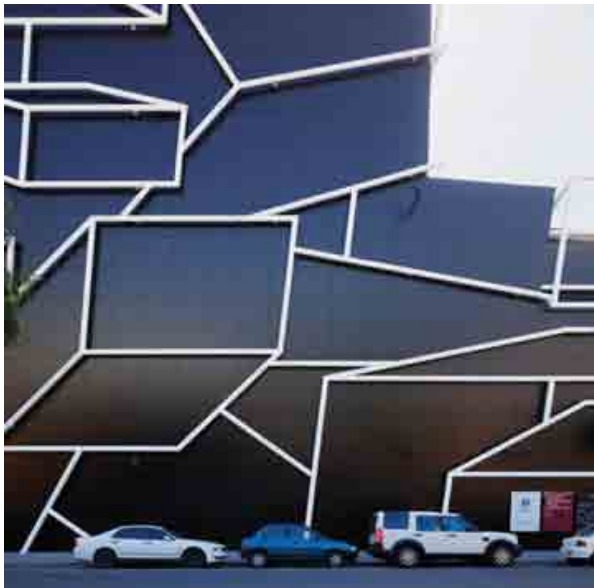


ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES NOT QUITE MY INTENDED POINT - BUT POSSIBLE.  
AMERICAN FILM MARKET CONFERENCES, LOS ANGELES, USA



# LESSON #018 | A LANDMARK 'DUCK' BUILDING STILL NEEDS WRITTEN IDENTIFICATION

The Mezz Theatre and Melbourne Theatre Company are both buildings I was interested in for their 'duckness', or architecture as sign. In both cases the manager's of the venues said that they often had people lost because they couldn't identify the venue. At the Mezz the signage is too ambiguous and disconnected from the building and nowhere does it say the word 'theatre', which confuses people. At MTC there is no ID signage at all until you get to the electronic doors and find some small decals with the name of the building.



AT THE MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY NO ID SIGNS ARE VISIBLE UNTIL SMALL DECALS ON THE ENTRY DOORS.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



MANY USERS SEE THE SIGN AS A DISCONNECTED SCULPTURAL PIECE OR DO NOT UNDERSTAND IT IS A THEATRE.  
MEZZ THEATRE, BREDA, NETHERLANDS

# LESSON #019 | INCORPORATE SIGNAGE WITH JOINERY OR FURNITURE

People are pretty complex. There are a lot of different people with different abilities and you have to communicate to those people. You are going to have problems no matter how great your building is and how legible the environment is - it can't be legible for everyone with no signage.

When architects get us involved early, signage is able to be integrated, for example, with joinery they are already doing. The joinery has a cost associated with it so when you integrate the signage, there is little extra cost. The joinery looks great and the signage looks great. The building functions better and looks better.



BUILT IN CHANGEABLE SIGNAGE.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, AUSTRALIA



LIFT LEVEL IDENTIFICATION IN WALL PANELS.  
FAIRFAX HQ BY BURO NORTH, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



JOINERY AND SIGN BECOME ONE.  
REVOLUTION LOUNGE, MIRAGE, LAS VEGAS, USA

SOREN LUCKINS, DIRECTOR, BURO NORTH.  
INTERVIEW AT BURO NORTH, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

INFORMATION BOLLARD & EXIT SIGN.  
BELL LIGHTBOX THEATRE, TORONTO, CANADA.



# LESSON #020 | EVACUATION SIGNS ARE LAW - CONSIDER HOW THEY WILL APPEAR

Evacuation signs are generally part of the builder’s package and left out of the environmental graphics narrative. The result is that little thought is given to their appearance. At worst they are printed on paper and blu tacked to the wall. Depending on the level of aesthetic consistency required in a building this is something to address as part of the signage package. Here are examples of the good, the bad and the downright ugly.



EVACUATION PLAN ENGRAVED IN ELEVATOR PANELLING.  
MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN, NEW YORK, USA



PART OF WAYFINDING. EGD BY HIROMURA DESIGN OFFICE.  
TOKYO POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, TOKYO, JAPAN



EVACUATION PLAN PRINTED A3 PAPER.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



EVACUATION PLAN PRINTED ON LIFT PANELLING.  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, NEW YORK, USA



PRINT ONTO REVERSE OF ACRYLIC.  
ASAKUSA VISITOR'S CENTRE, JAPAN



ALUMINIUM PANELS FIT TO MATERIAL SIZES.  
ZA KOENJI PUBLIC THEATRE, TOKYO, JAPAN



EVACUATION PLAN STILL NOT PUT IN ITS PROPER HOLDER.  
CARRIAGEWORKS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

LESSON #021 | SIGNAGE PINNED OFF THE WALL IS A SEXY SOLUTION

Whenever I see signage neatly pinned off a wall, I purr. What more can I say. Worth considering on a number of surfaces, particularly on heritage surfaces where it may have minimal impact.



INFORMATION BOOTH.  
KRING CREATIVE CULTURE SPACE, SEOUL, KOREA



ARCHITECT  
KREUZBERG, BERLIN, GERMANY



SHOPFRONT SIGNAGE.  
PORTO, PORTUGAL



ROOM IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
STUK ARTS CENTRE, LEUVEN, BELGIUM



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
CULLMAN CENTER, LINCOLN CENTRE, NEW YORK, USA



# LESSON #022 | ASK WHAT THE CITY IS DOING TO HELP LOCATE YOUR PROJECT

You may be in charge of the signage and wayfinding once a patron arrives at the venue - but they must find the venue first. A notable omission from city signage was the Melbourne Theatre Company and Recital Hall that were not included in the city's directory boards for the area. You needed a google map or to know what the building looked like to find it. Management said this was a problem. If you are working on a significant building - work out who to talk to to get your building noted in civic signage.



NO MENTION ON CIVIC DIRECTORY (LEFT), A SMALL GLIMPSE FROM THE MAIN THOROUGHFARE. MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY AND RECITAL HALL, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



CITY HOARDING. KUNSTHAL, ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS



CITY TRAFFIC DIRECTION SIGN. WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL, LOS ANGELES, USA

CITY DIRECTIONAL SIGNS A BIT GENERIC. TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POTIERS, FRANCE.



# LESSON #023 | COLOURED/PATTERNED WALLS IN DARK OR DREARY PLACES MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY

They may not always stay on trend and some contemporary environmental graphic designers like to discredit ‘supergraphics’ as a simplistic approach. As far as I can observe well meant, durable coloured walls in dark places such as Subway and Metro Systems, tunnels, carparks and underpasses will generally make people happier.



COLOURFUL BRICK WALL.  
METRO SYSTEM, SEOUL, KOREA



COLOUR WALL BRIGHTENS RUN-DOWN PART OF DETROIT.  
DETROIT, USA



SC JOHNSON CAMPUS - COLOURFUL WALLS BRIGHTEN UP UNDERGROUND PASSAGEWAYS. EGD BY SUSSMAN PREJZA.  
RACINE, WISCONSIN, USA

We took the tunnels - they have all the pipes, sewerage and heat, etc. People walk through them because it is very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. We started spiffing them up a bit with big graphics. There is a chalkboard that people can write on.

PAUL PREJZA, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT SUSSMAN PREJZA, LOS ANGELES, USA



BOH COLOURED DOOR SYSTEM.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA







GRAFFITI STYLE MURAL ENLIVENS PARKING STATION.  
SHIBUYA, TOKYO, JAPAN



COLOURED WALLS ENLIVEN A MULTI RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT. EGD BY HIROMURA DESIGN OFFICE.  
SHINONOME CANAL COURT CODAN, TOKYO, JAPAN



# LESSON #024 | CONSIDER WRAPPING SIGNS

Signs don't need to be on one plane only. It can be structurally and graphically interesting to wrap, bend or warp signs around corners. It can also help integrating with joinery, giving directional emphasis and dynamism.



DIRECTIONAL SIGN.  
BELL LIGHTBOX THEATRE, TORONTO, CANADA



DIRECTIONAL BOARD SIGN. EGD BY BURO NORTH.  
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE MOVING IMAGE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



UTILISING COLUMNS. EGD BY SUSSMAN PREJZA.  
VAN NUYS FLYAWAY, LOS ANGELES, USA



IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
RIVERSIDE QUAY COMPLEX, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



# LESSON #025 | DON'T FORGET THE BACK OF THE BUILDING

It is easy to forget the back of a building or complex - both in terms of architecture and signage - inevitably it will be seen and ultimately it can effect the aesthetic of the overall project. It doesn't take much effort or cost much more to include these signs as a part of a signage package and add those prescious finishing touches.



SERVICE AND PARKING ENTRY SIGNAGE.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE



SERVICE ENTRY SIGN.  
KUNSTHAL, ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS



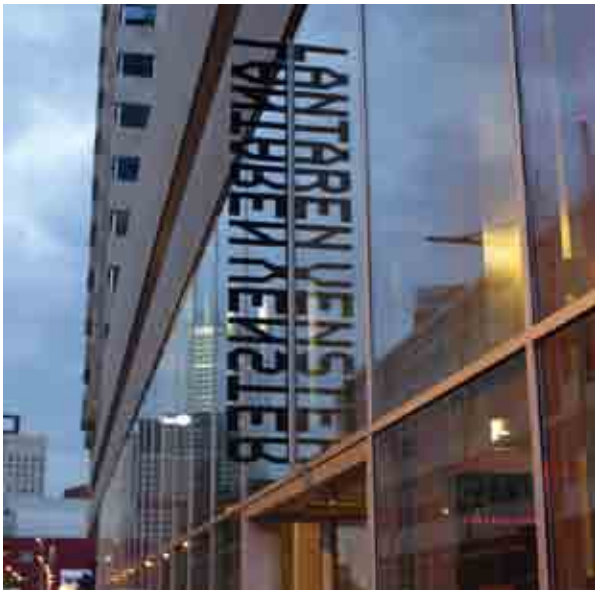
ARTIST'S ENTRANCE SIGN.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL

# LESSON #026 | REFLECTION IS A GREAT WAY OF ACTIVATING SIGNAGE

One of the my favourite discoveries on the trip was signage utilising reflection. This meant that the sign became something more than a static element but something responsive to it's environment.



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGN REFLECTING THE MODD OF MOTHER NATURE.  
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, MELBOURNE, ASUTRALIA



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
LANTAREN VENSTER CINEMA, ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS



IDENTIFICATION SIGNS REFLECTING THE NATURAL STONE AND WATER.  
HARPA CONCERT HALL, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND



DECALS REFLECTING ONTO CONCRETE SURFACES.  
GINZA GRAPHIC GALLERY, GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN





NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL DESIGN, THIS GLASS WALL AND SIGN HAS BEEN WELL RECEIVED.  
CARRIAGEWORKS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



REFLECTIVE DETAIL ON DIRECTORY SIGNS.  
MYER MARKET STREET, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



NEON REFLECTING LIGHT ONTO METAL.  
AMERICAN SIGN MUSEUM, CINCINNATI, USA



A CONTEMPORARY INSERT TO AN OLD BUILDING, THESE ENTRANCE GRAPHICS ARE ESSENTIALLY REFLECTIVE DECALS.  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, NEW YORK, USA

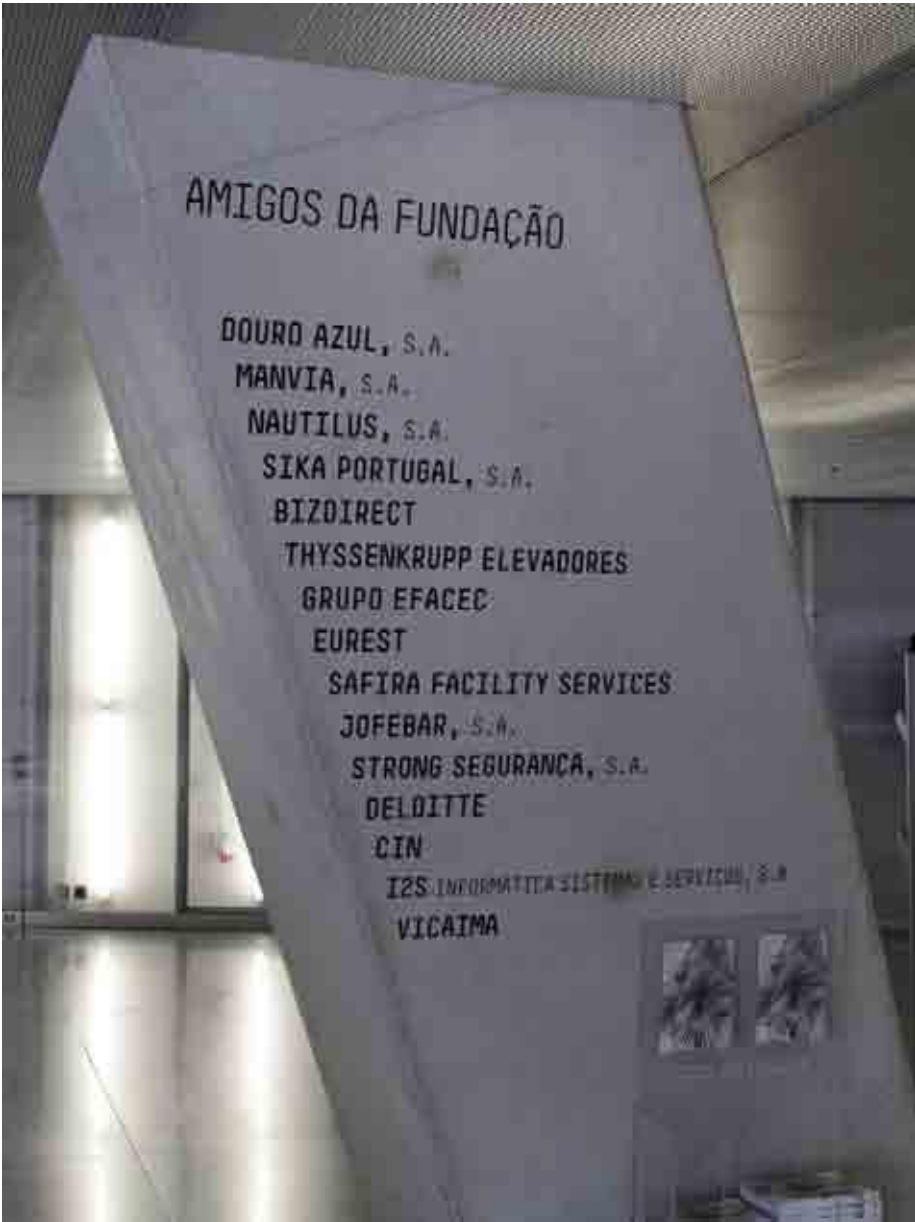


# LESSON #027 | DONOR BOARDS DO NOT NEED TO BE ON A PLAQUE - UTILISE OTHER SURFACES

When you think of a donor board, you mostly think of a roll call on a wall plaque - but as we saw in many of the theatres we visited this need not be the case - particularly when space is limited and the donors keep on growing. Think outside the wall plaque - doors, floors, retaining walls, staircases, etc. can be used.



DONOR REGOGNITION SIGNAGE UTILISING COLUMNS.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL

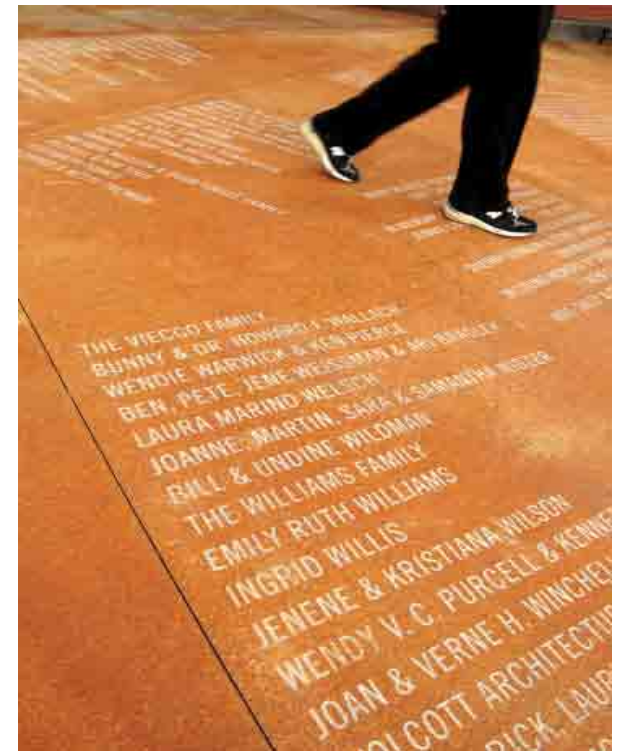
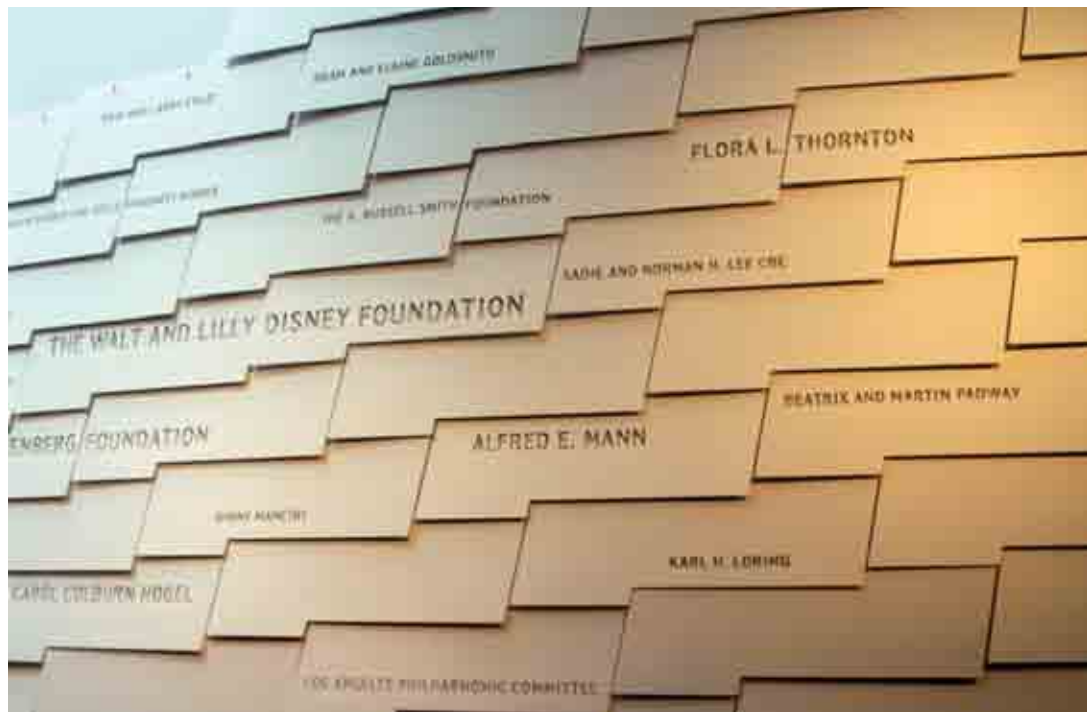


DONOR REGOGNITION SIGNAGE WITH CHANGEABLE PANELS.  
MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN, NEW YORK, USA





**DONOR RECOGNITION CREATES LIGHT WALL DISPLAY.**  
BELL LIGHTBOX THEATRE, TORONTO, CANADA



**PAVEMENT RECOGNITION. EGD BY SUSSMAN PREJZA.**  
KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE, CULVER CITY, USA

**JUST A FEW OF THE MANY DONOR RECOGNITION POSSIBILITIES...**  
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL, LOS ANGELES, USA

LESSON #028 | SHEETS OF VINYL STUCK ONTO 'SAME COLOURED' WALLS RARELY WORK

They will be a different finish to the surface they are stuck on and therefore unattractively visible. They also have a tendency to collect dust in a very obvious way.



PROHIBITED THINGS SIGN.  
ARCHA THEATRE, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE.  
BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN, ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS



DUST COLLECTOR EXHIBITION SIGNAGE.  
MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN, NEW YORK, USA



INFORMATION BOOTH IDENTIFICATION.  
JIMBOCHO THEATRE, TOKYO, JAPAN



SNOWFLAKE DECALS FRAME VIEW TO \$14M CHANDELIER.  
METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE, NEW YORK, USA



SO CLOSE. COLOUR MATCHING SIGNAGE.  
ZA KOENJI PUBLIC THEATRE, TOKYO, JAPAN



# LESSON #029 | THINK REALLY HARD BEFORE YOU SET IT IN CONCRETE, SO TO SPEAK

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I thought I had found the holy grail of signage at the Casa Da Musica in Porto - Signage set into the concrete!! How wonderful. Unfortunately, the majority of the signs no longer function as they indicate rooms that are no longer there or have different rooms. The main 'CASA DA MUSICA' one at the entrance still functions. Clearly one to think loooooong and hard about. But beautiful nevertheless.

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**CAST CONCRETE SIGNAGE. THE CAFE WAS NEVER BUILT, THE SALAS NOW HAVE DIFFERENT NAMES....BUT IT IS STILL THE CASA DA MUSICA!**  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL

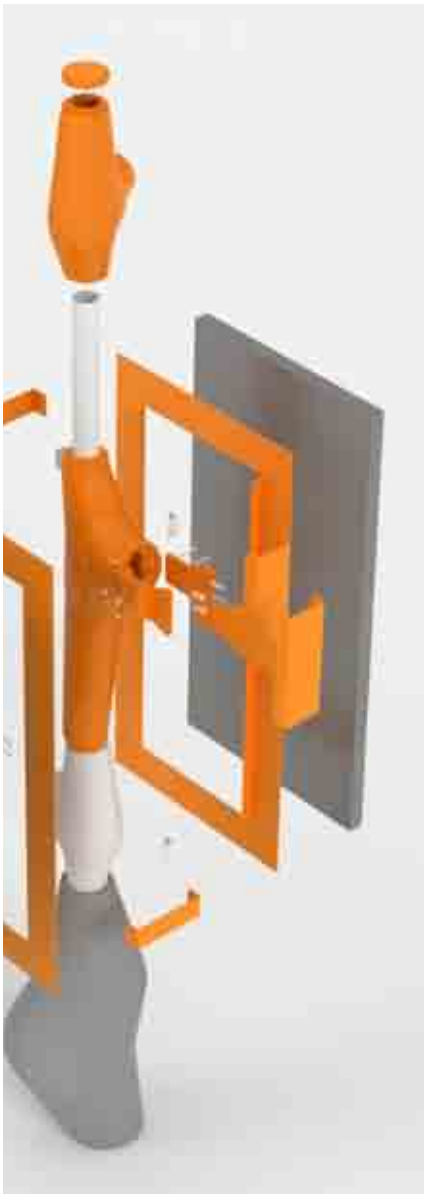
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# LESSON #030 | CONSIDER AN INNOVATIVE STRUCTURAL STATEMENT - WITH CARE

There are a lot of great off-the-shelf signage products but there are also great opportunities for designing new and innovative systems that suite the designer and the building’s aesthetic preferences. The caution being a situation such as those in Lesson #029 where signage has been beautiful and innovative but not practical or aligned with the client’s changing aspirations or those at right where the structural intent of reusing heritage beams from the building as a signage structure was commendable, but has come more of a sculpture. Make friends with manufacturers.



A CHEEKY LITTLE BEND IN THE DIRECTORY BOARDS AND MAPS.  
JARDIN DES TULLERIES, PARIS, FRANCE



WAYFINDING SYSTEM THAT PROMOTES VISIBILITY AND CHANGEABLE INFORMATION.  
FALLS CREEK ALPINE RESORT SIGNAGE BY BURO NORTH, FALLS CREEK, AUSTRALIA



We don’t have a standard book of details. It is good because we’ve painted ourselves into a corner, but we’ve got to deliver it, we think, “who can we talk to?” For example the signage for Falls Creek, we talked to someone who makes wheelie bins because that was a material we could use. And they don’t even know what a sign is but you can take people that have never done stuff before and use that information.

FINN BUTLER, DIRECTOR, BURO NORTH.  
INTERVIEW, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA





THIS SIGNAGE STRUCTURE WAS DESIGNED TO BE CHANGEABLE, BUT HAS TURNED OUT TO BE TOO EXPENSIVE FOR THE ORGANISATION TO UPDATE.  
CARRIAGEWORKS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



The sign on Wilson Street (large entrance structure) was a great idea but it is impractical for an arts organisation of our scale because we can't afford to rotate that scale of signage. We had to pull the existing signage down because it was out of date and didn't fit our new brand. The problem is that we now can't afford to put up new signage. When architects are designing buildings it needs to be taken into account that signage needs to change all the time. Sometimes people think that signage should stay forever. I think it is better to have systems for being able to change it instead of setting things in concrete. This helps buildings move through time more easily.

INTERVIEW WITH LISA HAVILAH.  
CARRIAGEWORKS DIRECTOR, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

# LESSON #031 | CONSIDER FLEXIBLE FACADE SIGNAGE

Institutions often change (as per Lisa Havilah’s comment in Lesson #030), so signage that has built-in-adaptability (that is also relatively inexpensive) is a good way to provide both a clear identity and also options for the future. This type of system needs excellent documentation behind how it works, otherwise the intention can get lost within staff changes.



EXTERIOR DECALS AS PART OF ART GALLERY.  
PLATOON KUNSTHALLE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



EXTERIOR GRAPHICS.  
QUAI BRANLY MUSEUM, PARIS, FRANCE



GIANT DIGITAL PRINT BEHIND MODULAR GLASS FACADE.  
NY PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, NEW YORK, USA



MAJOR IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
MUSEU DE CIÊNCIA E HISTÓRIA NATURAL, LISBON, PORTUGAL



# LESSON #032 | BE INSPIRED BY AIRPORT SIGNAGE

If you are looking for a place where time and money has been invested in sign systems and wayfinding, look no further than your closest airport. Airports are where it is of the utmost importance to get people from A to B with minimum time, fuss and confusion. Directional signs generally have excellent hierarchical solutions and colours, pictograms and fonts are absolutely clear and readable.



STAIR / ARROW SYMBOL.  
CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT, PARIS, FRANCE



AIRPORT SIGNAGE BY SUSSMAN PREJZA.  
VAN NUYS FLYAWAY, LOS ANGELES, USA



AIRPORT SIGNAGE. EGD BY BURO NORTH.  
TERMINAL T5 HEATHROW AIRPORT, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM



AIRPORT SIGNAGE. EGD BY INTEGRAL RUEDI BAUER.  
COLOGNE BONN AIRPORT, COLOGNE, GERMANY.



# LESSON #033 | DESIGN DEDICATED SPACE FOR A CLIENT'S ARCHIVES / COMPANY INFO

Institutions, theatres in particular, often need space to display historical information about the organisation. Build this in to the signage or strategy, if possible.



POSTERS OF PAST EVENTS IN SIMPLE ALUMINIUM FRAMES.  
PLATOON KUNSTHALLE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



ARTISTS CHANGEABLE SIGNAGE ON UNATTRACTIVE OFF-THE-SHELF RACKS.  
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL, LOS ANGELES, USA



OLD PROGRAMMES IN PINBOARD CASES, BACK OF HOUSE.  
SCHAUBÜHNE AM LEHNINER PLATZ, BERLIN, GERMANY

# LESSON #034 | BE PREPARED TO HAVE TO REPAINT AROUND SIGNS PAINTED DIRECTLY ONTO WALLS

Consider maintenance when designing signs. The manager at the Duke on 42nd street was dreading her repainting budget to get this signage by pentagram retouched properly.

(LEFT) A BUILDING MAINTENANCE ISSUE.  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET, NEW YORK, USA

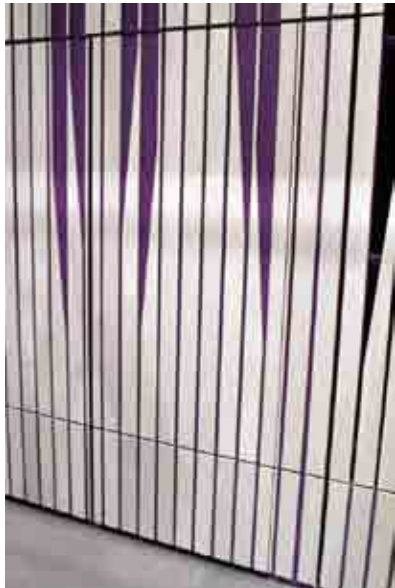
(RIGHT) REPAINTED SIGNS WITH OLDER VERSIONS VISIBLE.  
NAKA MEGURO, TOKYO, JAPAN





# LESSON #035 | THEATRE INTERIORS ARE NOT THE PLACE TO TRY AND HIDE EXIT SIGNS

In the dark, in the middle of a performance, in need of a toilet?! People can get very anxious about trying to find an exit inside a theatre auditorium. So as ugly as they may be, don't try and make exits too discrete. Patrons should be able to see where they are and find the door handle / push. The doors at Harpa have been particularly problematic for patrons who can't find the doors in the dark.



THESE EXIT SIGNS ARE NOT ENOUGH FOR NERVOUS PATRONS.  
HARPA CONCERT HALL AND CONFERENCE CENTRE, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

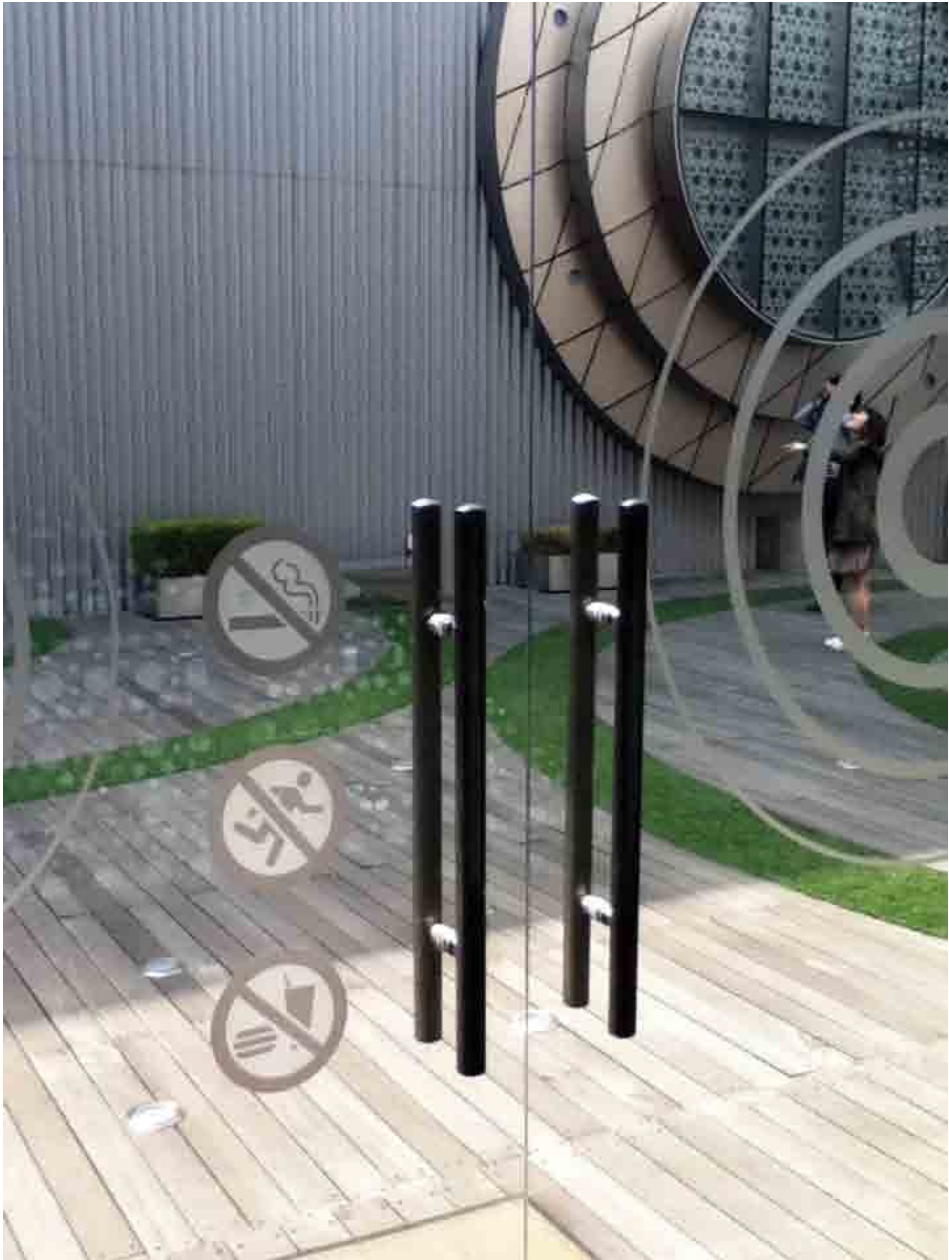
THESE 'PUSH' HANDLES AT THE DOORS HELP BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE THE UNLIT PICTOGRAMS IN THE DARK.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE

# LESSON #036 | UTILISE DECALS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

In the inevitability that you will have to have glass safety decals on glass doors and facades, take the opportunity to use this space for notifying of information such as opening hours, and as a space for some simple or abstracted branding.



IDENTIFICATION AND INFORMATIONAL DECALS.  
PLATOON KUNSTHALLE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



PROHIBITION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DECALS.  
KRING CREATIVE CULTURE SPACE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



FACADE GRAPHICS.DOUBLE AS SAFETY DECALS.  
LA CINEMATEQUE FRANCOIS, PARIS, FRANCE



CARRIAGEWORKS DECALS MIMIC OLD TICKET PUNCH MARKS.  
CARRIAGEWORKS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.





INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION.  
MELBOURNE RECITAL HALL, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



IDENTIFICATION FACADE GRAPHICS.  
MUSEO DO ORIENTE, LISBON, PORTUGAL



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGANGE MEGA 'DECAL'  
SEYMOUR CENTRE, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

IDENTIFICATION DECALS.  
BADEN BADEN, GERMANY



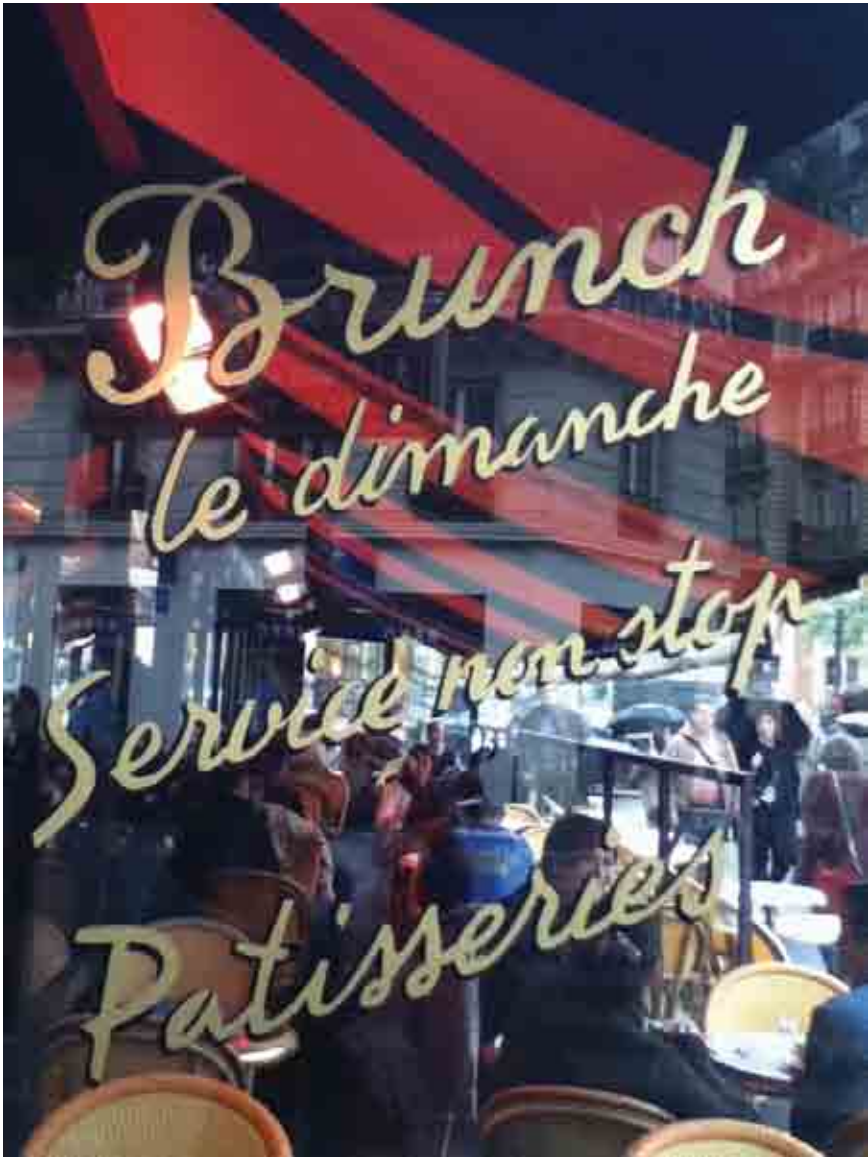
FROSTED VINYL FRAMING VIEWS  
RÁÐHÚS REYKJAVÍKUR CITY HALL, REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND

A PLAY ON WORDS AND INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION IN THE DECALS. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE



LESSON #037 | BE INSPIRED BY THE HISTORY OF SIGNWRITING AS A PROFESSION

“There was a time - as recently as the 1980’s - when sign painters worked without the aid of computers or other mechanized means, and storefronts, murals, banners, barn signs, billboards, and even street signs were all hand-lettered with brush and paint. But, like many skilled trades, the sign industry has been overrun by the technology fueled promise of quicker and cheaper. The proliferation of computer-designed, die-cut vinyl lettering and inkjet printers has ushered a creeping sameness into our landscape.” Foreward to ‘Sign Painters’, Faith Levine & Sam Macon, 2013, Princeton Architectural Press.



CAFE WINDOW SIGNAGE.  
BASTILLE, PARIS, FRANCE



On the Candy Sign it looks like the letters are bevelled into the glass. Really it is all just flat. It has burnished gold leaf and matte gold leaf together to creates that effect fooling the eye to make you think it is bevelled glass.

TOUR WITH TOD SWORMSTEDT, FOUNDER.  
AMERICAN SIGN MUSEUM, CINCINNATI, USA. MAY 2011.



TACOMBI RESTAURANT REFURBISHMENT.  
LOWER EAST SIDE, NEW YORK, USA

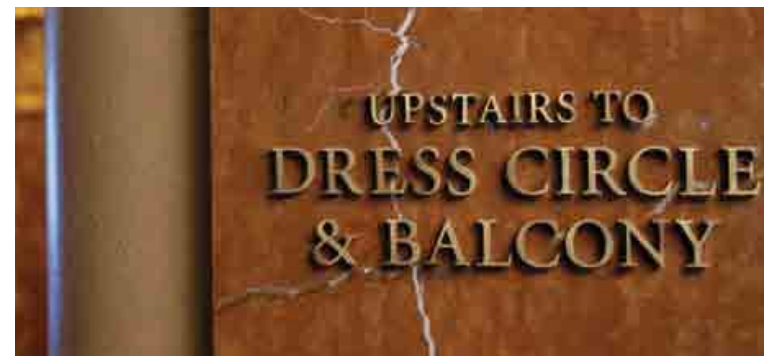




IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE REFERENCING THE ERA OF THE BUILDING. EGD BY BURO NORTH, MELBOURNE.  
REGENT 187, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



Look at the 'B'. It has a black shadow. We call that a drop shade. Then there is a shadow of the shadow in a dark shale grey called a split drop shade. It makes it look like the letters are floating.



The lobby is beautiful art deco. So there were a few signs like this that were historic landmarks - these we restored and cleaned up. And based on this Jonathon Hoefler, who is a great type designer, created that (pointing to page). It was actually created using this and the word aisle on another sign. There were about 7 or 8 letters. He was able to extrapolate and then we were able to create the new signs using the typeface - we built the signage around the old framework.

TOUR WITH TOD SWORMSTEDT, FOUNDER.  
AMERICAN SIGN MUSEUM, CINCINNATI, USA

REFERENCING ORIGINAL SIGNAGE. EGD BY TWO TWELVE.  
CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA & RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL, NEW YORK, USA

DAVID GIBSON, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT TWO TWELVE, NEW YORK, USA

LESSON #038 | CONSIDER INNOVATIVE STATUTORY SIGNAGE (WITHIN CODE REQUIREMENTS)

I am not sure what it is about the Icelandic, but they don't seem content with off-the-shelf statutory signage - rather they want it to be pretty and to be part of the overall package. And as long as it complies with the building codes, it can't hurt to let your perfectionistic tendencies run a little wild.



FIRE HOSE & HYDRANT IDENTIFICATION SIGN REVEALS ITSELF.  
HARPA CONCERT HALL, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND



ELECTRICAL CUPBOARD.  
TOWN HALL, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND



# LESSON #039 | CONSIDER SEATING & NUMBERING AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THEATRE SIGNAGE

Theatre seating numbers and aisle numbers can contribute to the overall custom aesthetic of a building.



THEATRE SEATING NUMBERING.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE

THEATRE SEATING AND AISLE NUMBERING.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL

THEATRE AISLE NUMBERING INLAID INTO TIMBER.  
MELBOURNE RECITAL HALL, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

THEATRE AISLE NUMBERING INLAID INTO CARPET.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

LESSON #040 | CONSIDER GIVING DEPTH TO SIMPLE TEXT

The simpler a font, the easier it will be to read and recognise. In many cases, building and room identification, branding etc. does not need to be complex to stand out. Giving simple letters a depth can give a title..well..a whole new dimension!



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGN.  
MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN, NEW YORK, USA

MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE. LETTERS ON GLASS FACADE.  
TOUR DE MONTREAL OBSERVATOIRE, MONTREAL, CANADA





TRADITIONAL PORTUGUESE SHOPFRONT SIGNAGE.  
PORTO, PORTUGAL



MAIN ENTRANCE SIGNAGE AND GALLERIES IDENTIFICATION.  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, NEW YORK, USA



LEVEL IDENTIFICATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNAGE. EGD BY HIROMURA DESIGN OFFICE.  
LOFT STORE, SHIBUYA, TOKYO, JAPAN

LESSON #041 | BE INSPIRED BY 'TRADE' SIGNS

The ultimate three-dimensional sign is the Trade Sign. These go back to the times when most people couldn't read - they would use a symbol or an icon to represent the product sold by the business.

TOUR WITH TOD SWORMSTEDT, FOUNDER.  
AMERICAN SIGN MUSEUM, CINCINNATI, USA



TRADE SIGNS AS SEEN ON TOUR WITH TOD SWORMSTEDT, FOUNDER.  
AMERICAN SIGN MUSEUM, CINCINNATI, USA



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGN.  
MUCHADO FADOS, LISBON, PORTUGAL



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGN.  
LIGHTING CENTRE, RENO, USA



LAUNDROMAT.  
LOWER EAST SIDE, NEW YORK, USA



I'll leave you with the most Venturi Scott Brown thing I can say which is we didn't try and come up with these ideas to stamp them all over the goddamned American landscape. We said 'What is the American landscape doing anyway?' People were doing this long before ARCHITECTS were doing it. People setting up shop, putting up signage. McDonalds was McDonalds long before pop art got a hold of it. They wanted large beautiful signs so that people would turn in and buy a hamburger. So, you'll probably learn as much from the inbetweens as you will from Venturi Scott Brown making big architecture with lots of signs. The everyday folk who are trying to get people to notice their businesses are doing the right thing and that is what we try to learn from.

**INTERVIEW WITH JEREMY TENENBAUM, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER.  
VENTURI SCOTT BROWN & ASSOCIATES, PHILADELPHIA, USA**



**TRADE SIGN FOR ITALIAN RESTAURANT.  
BUON GUSTO, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**



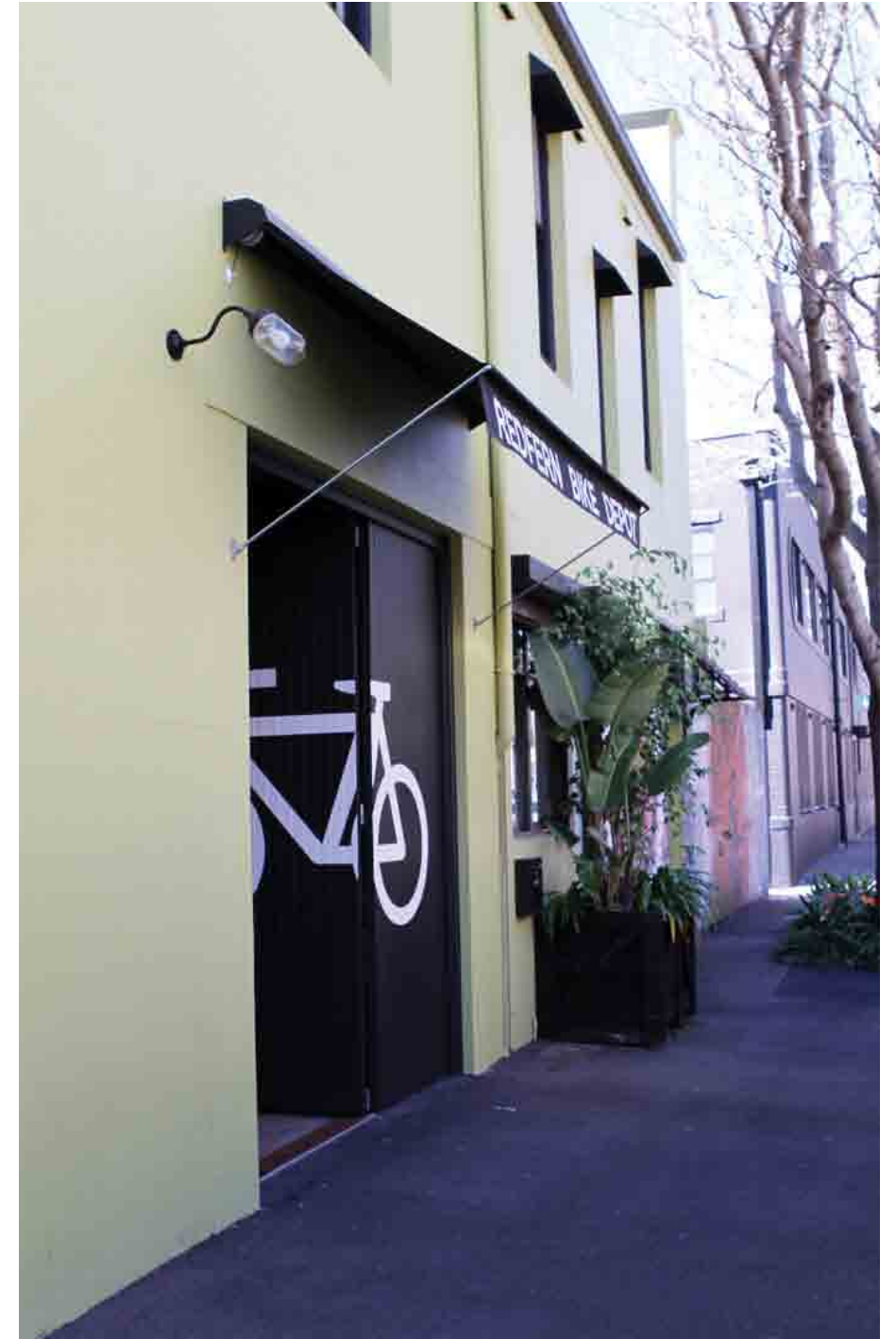
**REUSE OF AN OLD TRADE SIGN.  
NAKA MEGURO, TOKYO, JAPAN**



**ICECREAM.  
SHIMOKITIZAWA, TOKYO, JAPAN**



**OPTOMETRIST.  
CHINATOWN, MONTREAL, CANADA**



**A SIMPLE SUPERGRAPHIC ADVERTISES THIS BIKE FIX-IT SHOP.  
TOWN BIKE PITSTOP, REDFERN, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

# LESSON #042 | CONSIDER USING COLOUR AS A WAYFINDING TOOL

Colour can be a useful wayfinding tool to explain complicated projects - colour forms a kind of a 2-dimensional landmark. Wayfinding is easier if it is subliminal rather than something people have to think too much about.



COLOUR CODED CHANGING ARTISTS CHANGEROOMS  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, AUSTRALIA



DIRECTION IS GUIDED BY A SIMPLE COLOUR SYSTEM, FROM ENTRANCE TO DESTINATION IN THIS COMPLEX CONFERENCE CENTRE.  
TOKYO FORUM BUILDING, TOKYO, JAPAN

METRO WAYFINDING IS AN OBVIOUS EXAMPLE.  
TOKYO, JAPAN





We worked with a Portuguese architect called Gonalo Byrne Arquitectos for the laboratory of a Portuguese Water Company. It is a huge water company. The traditional colour for water is blue. We know the architect of the building very well and he is a bit of a grey guy, he does things white, black, grey. The Portuguese water company was really sad they didn't have their traditional colour in the building. We were proposed by the architect and of course the client said, "How much for the wayfinding?" but when they saw our portfolio they could see maybe they were going to get some colour.

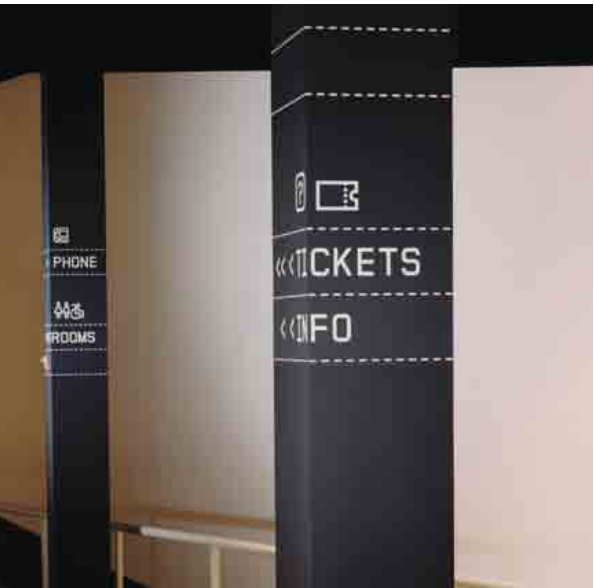
The building is really strange because it is a cube inside a cube with corridors around it. So we painted the corridors in a logical way so you always have blue on your right side and you can orient a little bit. More than all in white. The intention was to use the blue walls as the supports for most parts of the information. It's like in chemistry where have the whiteboards with the formulae. So we made the information like chemistry formulae. It was inspired by that. And we proposed the name to the building Lab C. It used to be Laboratori Central. Then we made a contraction so it would look like a chemical formula.

ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS AND WAYFINDING DIRECTIONAL TOOL. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
LABORATÓRIO CENTRAL DA EPAL, LISBON, PORTUGAL

NUNO GUSMÃO, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT P-06 ATELIER, LISBON, PORTUGAL

# LESSON #043 | UTILISE FORM AS A SURFACE

Another way of integrating environmental graphics, signage and wayfinding is to work WITH to forms of a building to harmonise and even highlight aspects of the architecture.



WORKING WITH THE FORMIC ASPECTS OF THE BUILDING'S INTERIOR FITOUT.  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, NEW YORK, USA

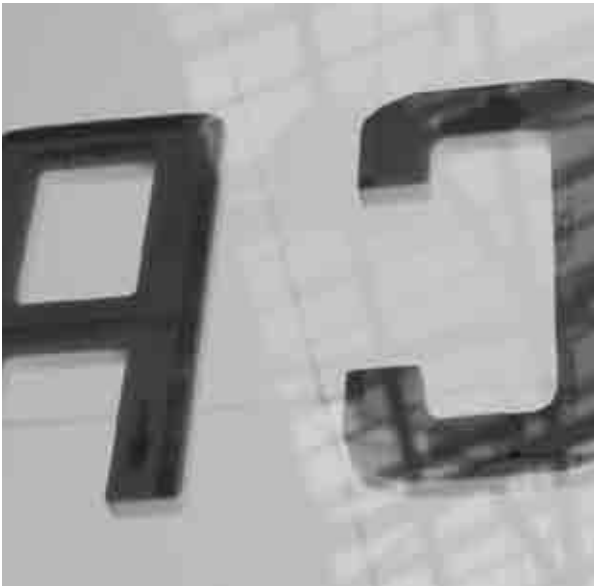
DYNAMIC SIGNAGE COPING WITH AN ARCHITECTURE OF EXTREME EXTRUSION.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

SIGNAGE REFURBISHING FORM BY TWO TWELVE.  
MoMA QUEENS, NEW YORK, USA



# LESSON #044 | CONSIDER ALL SIDES OF A SIGN

Don't kill the illusion by exposing ugly construction or fixing details. You could even take it to the other extreme by making the rear part of the design.



DON'T LOOK TO CLOSE. FIXING DETAIL EXPOSED.  
CARRIAGEWORKS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



CITY SIGNAGE. EGD BY SUSSMAN PREJZA.  
PHILADELPHIA, USA

# LESSON #045 | REMOVE OLD, GRUBBY SIGNAGE

Try to convince clients to remove old, grubby signage no longer in keeping. It really does kill the vibe. This could be considered as part of signage defects reporting to the client.



GATE IDENTIFICATION SIGN.  
LINCOLN CENTRE, NEW YORK, USA



EXHIBIT SIGNAGE DECAYING IN THE NEVADA SUN.  
FLAMINGO CASINO, LAS VEGAS, USA



METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE DECAL  
LINCOLN CENTRE, NEW YORK, USA



# LESSON #046 | USE MATERIAL AND MODULES AS A CANVAS FOR SIGNAGE

Material is an important consideration when designing signage, wayfinding and environmental graphics. Just another method to achieve an outcome where architecture and signage are in harmony.



SIGNAGE IS TRULY INTEGRATED WITH THE SURFACES AND ALIGN WITH MATERIAL MODULES UTILISING SEVERAL HIGHLY RESEARCHED PRINTING TECHNIQUES.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL





**PUBLIC TOILETS TILED SIGNAGE.**  
SHIMOKITIZAWA, TOKYO, JAPAN

**EXTERIOR SIGNAGE RESPONDS TO GLASS MODULES**  
MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN, NEW YORK, USA



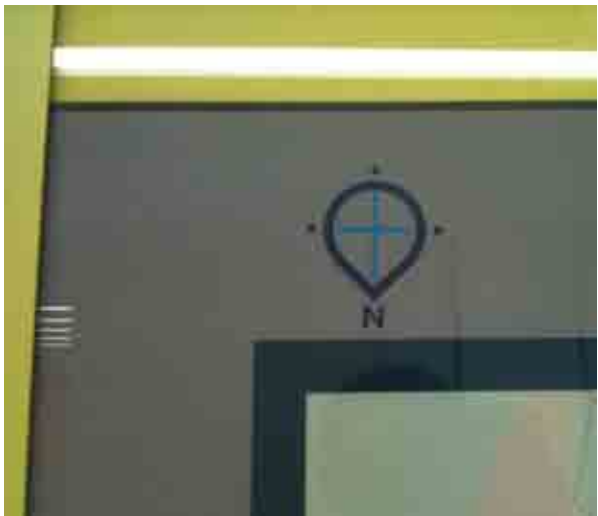
**WEATHERBOARD INSPIRED IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.**  
GENERAL STORE, NAKA MEGURO, TOKYO, JAPAN

**SIGN DESIGNED TO CONCRETE MODULE.**  
ZA KOENJI PUBLIC THEATRE, TOKYO, JAPAN

**SIGNAGE RESPONDING TO ARCHITECTURAL MATERIAL CUES.**  
DAVID H KOCH THEATRE, LINCOLN CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS, NEW YORK, USA

LESSON #047 | POINT NORTH UPWARDS

Unless you have years to work on an amazing rotational map system, always have north pointing upwards. Turning a map in the direction you are pointing will disorient people. My husband, who I usually say has a built in GPS, got utterly lost in Japan a couple of times after looking at their metro maps.



METRO MAP.  
TOKYO, JAPAN

So I am going to tell you about a project that failed and I was a little embarrassed by it and I am hoping to have another chance. This is New York University - it is a big school in the middle of New York City.

We worked with Pentagram to redesign the exterior map system...we found a lot of confusion about the map system that they currently had...and we decided, from our observations to try to create a map that rotated. So north was facing north, if you were facing north and south was up if you were facing south. And we put them on the street and people had problems with them because they were expecting north to be up.

The people who are good navigators expect north to be up. The people who were terrible navigators didn't understand it anyway. It was just a mess!

SYLVIA HARRIS, DIRECTOR, CITIZEN RESEARCH & DESIGN.  
CLOSING ADDRESS, 2011 SEGDC CONFERENCE

LESSON #048 | SIGN TO COMFORT

If you have a complex entry process or a site that is difficult to find, consider signs to comfort visitors. People will enjoy your building more if they haven't been on a wild goose chase getting there.



THIS MUSEUM WAS AMIDST A HILLY AND COMPLICATED LABRYNTH OF STREETS.  
LEEUM SAMSUNG MUSEUM OF ART, SEOUL, KOREA



# LESSON #049 | DEVIL IN THE DETAIL

Look for clever, unobtrusive methods of subliminal identification.



BICYCLE PARKING.  
TAP THEATRE, POITIERS, FRANCE



ROTATING DOOR SIGNAGE.  
MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN, NEW YORK, USA



TEMPORARY BUILDING EXTENSION.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL



DOOR HANDLE, FREE FACTORY CAFE.  
SHIMOKITIZAWA, TOKYO, JAPAN

# LESSON #050 | PRESENTATION, PRESENTATION

What we try to do, and it is really difficult and this is why sometimes we get really happy. Normally here you don't have the type of clients that want to take risks. What you have to create is the ability for him to get that idea.

I want to present things in a way that they cannot see another thing.

I am really a big motherf\*#!%^ when it comes to presentation issues. I say 'no this image can't be here, this image must be bigger, no this colour it should not appear, we can only show this on another face'. For me the presentation is the most important. And normally I do the reading of the client before. And I see what kind of client I am facing.

Because when we talk about clients we are talking about a different kind of understanding so it is much easier to speak to an architect. You know that they understand some things, you don't need to explain an image. You show the image and you know it is going to have some effect on the architect.

On regular clients you have to have a good speech, a good presentation and show things the way you want them to see them. You have to orient them. Make them think they participated in the idea. Its good because sometimes you really do get people to do what you want. Normally people are very formal, very institutional they don't want to take risks.

NUNO GUSMÃO, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT P-06 ATELIER, LISBON, PORTUGAL

LESSON #051 | ANOTHER SIGN IS NOT ALWAYS THE ANSWER - CONSIDER OPERATIONAL RESPONSES



INFORMATION BOOTH WITH INFORMATION CLERK.  
TOKYO FORUM BUILDING, TOKYO, JAPAN



INFORMATION BOOTH WITH INFORMATION CLERK.  
KRING CREATIVE CULTURE SPACE, SEOUL, KOREA



HUMAN MCDONALDS SIGN.  
MIDTOWN, NEW YORK, USA



INFORMATION BOOTH WITH INFORMATION CLERK.  
CARRIAGEWORKS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Q: What other difficulties have you had with the signage on a practical level?

A: Our biggest problem was we never had a point of information in the building and that is why we put a new visitor services desk in. Nobody could see the box office when they walked in. They would walk in and say “where do I go?.” Now when you walk in there is a person that can talk to you and give you directions. For the first 5 years it operated without any customer service at all. I think people, as much as signage, are important as information points.

Q: That is one view that has been consistent in most of the theatres I have visited. That there is a certain amount to do with signage but there is a certain amount to do with people and systems of face-to-face contact.

A: That’s right. And as part of us shifting from being a theatre to being a multi-arts centre we now have standardised opening hours everyday from 10am til 6pm. Between those hours somebody will be there to give you information about the Carriageworks. That has negated a lot of the issues of turning up at the Cariageworks, going to doors and not being able to open them, not understanding what is happening anywhere because there is someone to give you that information.

Q: Is it costly?

A: Absolutely, but a very important investment.

INTERVIEW WITH LISA HAVILAH, DIRECTOR.  
CARRIAGEWORKS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

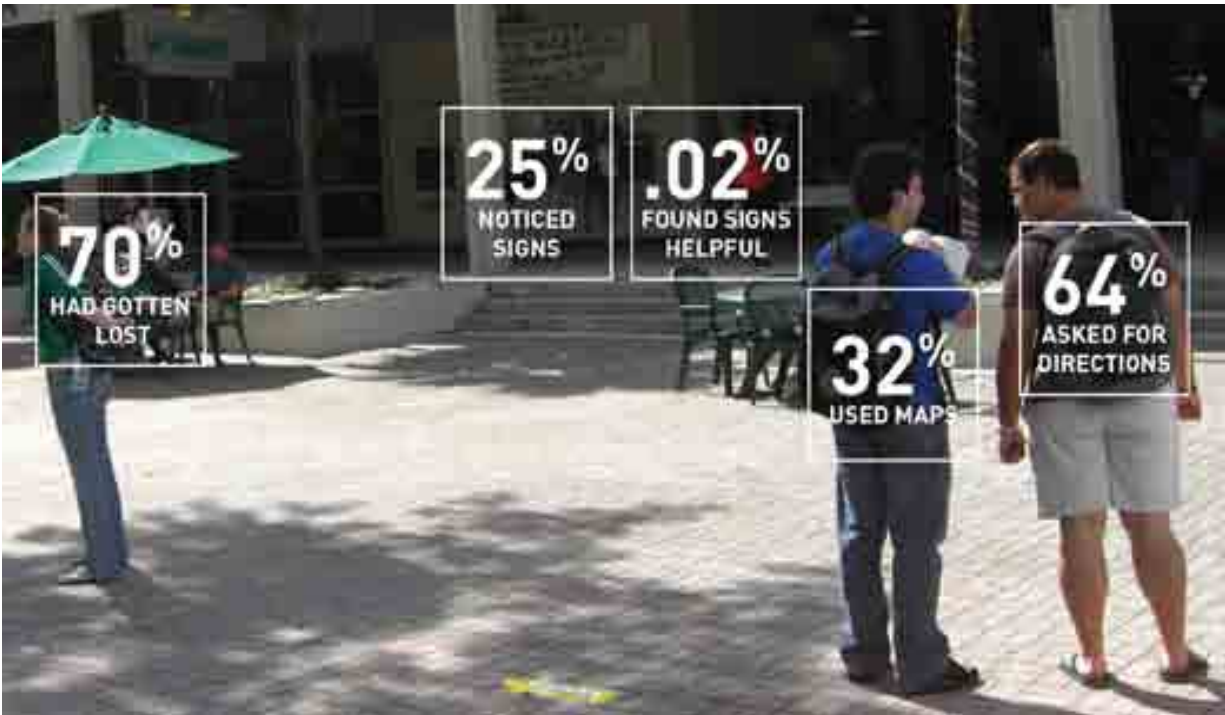


The first example I will share is about finding people at the University of Miami. It is one of the most beautiful college campuses in the country and is still being planned. Cooper Robertson and Partners did the Masterplan and they asked us to come and help fix the signs. They wanted more signs. We started, however, with the people factor and we tried to find a way to look at what the people wanted first.

So we started by interviewing the folks on campus to find out who was getting lost, who wasn't, what their experience was rather than presupposing what we thought was needed which was maybe more signs. We asked them to give us their thoughts on what their daily experience was and what we learned was just fascinating. As you can see this is true - that more people told us that they were so confused on that campus that they didn't go around alone. People would travel together, particularly at night, because they had so much trouble finding their way. Underneath that we also learned that people rely on people more. What we discovered, however, is that asking the way to go was wonderful in terms of building community but what it did was it created inaccuracies. One person would tell you to go one way, another would tell you to go another way.

So what was missing was a formal system of explaining how to get around. So what we recommended actually was creating a visitor information centre, which they never had - a central place where you could go and talk to a human. It was human contact that the people we were interviewing were asking for. I think they are just getting ready to fund it. So it turned out not to be about signs - they are just going to upgrade the signs a little bit but really put their money into the people.

**SYLVIA HARRIS, DIRECTOR, CITIZEN RESEARCH & DESIGN.**  
CLOSING ADDRESS, 2011 SEG'D CONFERENCE



**SURVEY RESULTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI.**  
CITIZEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN, NEW YORK, USA



**SELF SERVICE STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS. EGD BY HIROMURA DESIGN OFFICE.**  
9 HOUR CAPSULE HOTEL, OSAKA, JAPAN.

# LESSON #052 | CONSIDER UTILISING LIGHT AND COLOUR AS WAYFINDING CUES

Directory boards and extensive wayfinding systems aren't the only means of getting people from one A to B. In places where there is less need for immediate destination discovery (such as airports, hospitals, etc.) and more emphasis on wandering and discovering, try subliminal methods of direction.



NEON STAIRS CREATE DIRECTION.  
KRING CREATIVE CULTURE SPACE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



SUBTLE LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE INVITE YOU TO EXPLORE DOWNSTAIRS.  
GINZA GRAPHIC GALLERY, TOKYO, JAPAN

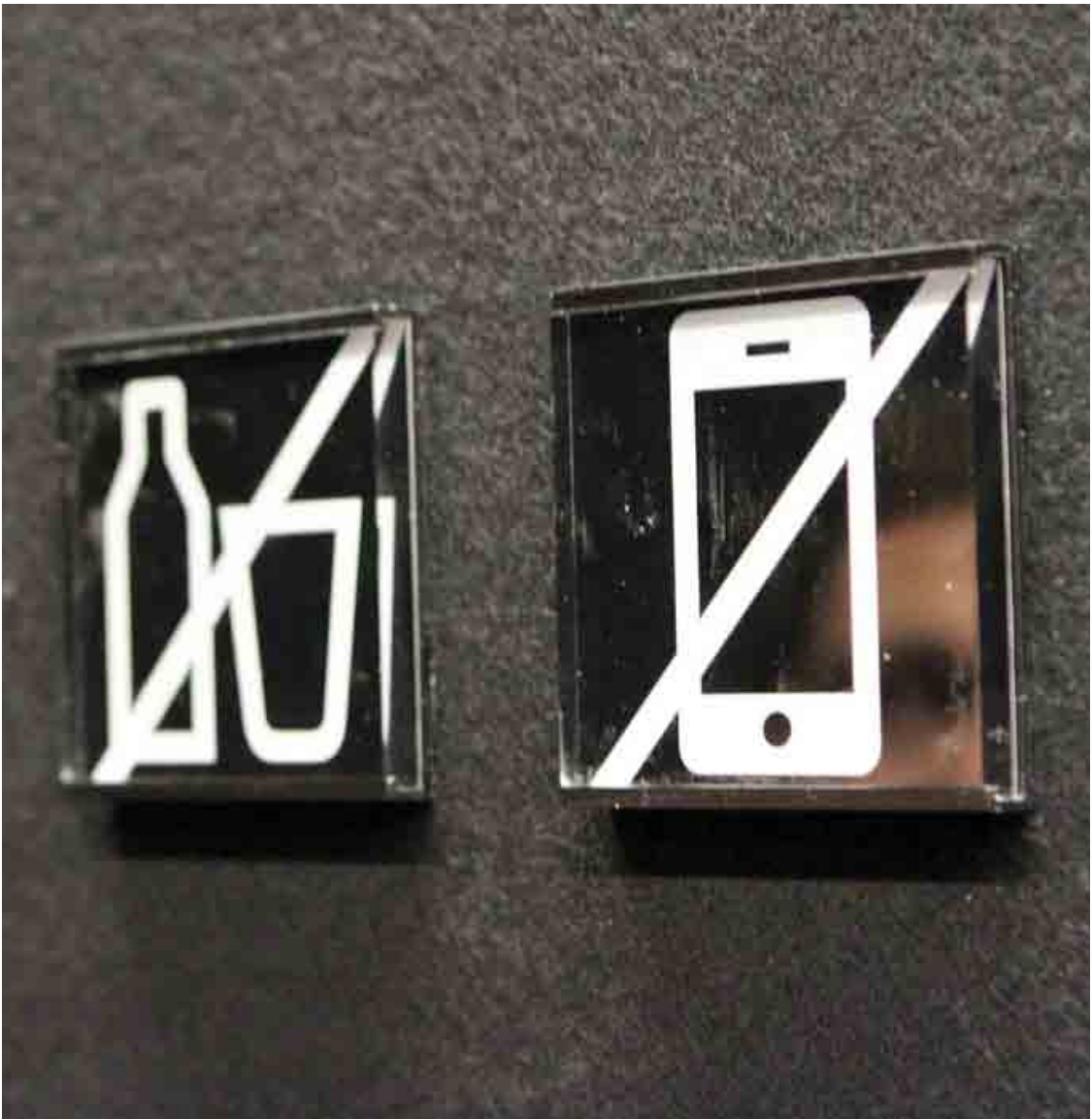


COLOUR CREATES INTEREST IN ENTRANCES.  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, NEW YORK, USA



# LESSON #053 | INSTALL SIGNAGE LAST

Attempt to install all superficial signage (ie. not integrated in joinery, electricals etc.) until after the builders have left and site cleaned. Many materials, particularly acrylics can get irreversibly infiltrated with dust and damaged when they are moving out equipment etc.



DUST INFILTRATED SIGNS.  
HARPA CONCERT HALL, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

# LESSON #054 | FACE SYMBOLS FORWARD

There is no legislation regulating this anymore however it makes intuitive and aesthetic sense to face a person or object pictogram in the direction in which the arrow is going - in other words - in the direction in which it should be travelling. This sounds like it should be entirely obvious...you would be suprised...



ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE THIS WAY.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE



THESE SIGNS WITH THE PLANES FACING AGAINST THEIR ARROW DIRECTION FEEL ANTI INTUITIVE.  
COLOGNE BONN AIRPORT SIGNAGE BY INTEGRAL RUEDI BAUER, COLOGNE, GERMANY

# LESSON #055 | ACTIONS CAN SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

How many times have you seen the word PUSH, but pulled anyway? And do you know the word for PUSH in Icelandic? I rest my case.



QUITE CLEAR WHO SHOULD PARK HERE.  
ZA KOENJI PUBLIC THEATRE, TOKYO, JAPAN

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY ARE WARNING ME AGAINST!!!!!!  
YOYOGI PARK, TOKYO, JAPAN



PUSH PICTOGRAM..  
PERLAN BUILDING, ICELAND, REYKJAVIK

CROSS ROAD WITH CAUTION, MANGA STYLE WARNING.  
YOYOGI, TOKYO, JAPAN

INTERNATIONALLY FRIENDLY DIRECTORY.  
ASAKUSA VISITOR CENTRE, TOKYO, JAPAN

BEWARE OF BICYCLES PAVEMENT WARNING BY P-06 ATELIER.  
BELEM BIKEWAY, LISBON, PORTUGAL

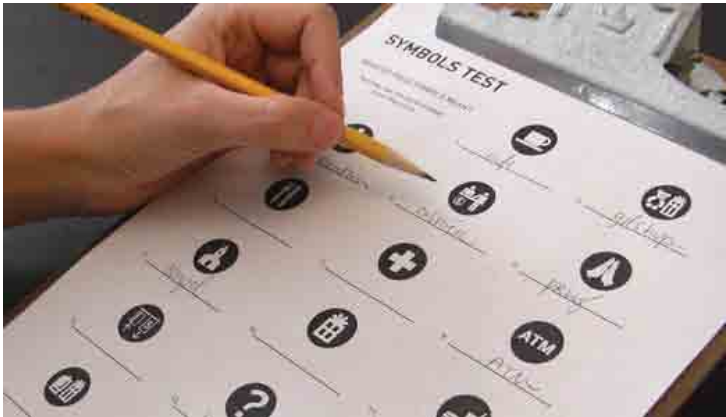


# LESSON #056 | ...BUT EVEN STANDARD PICTOGRAMS CAN BE CONFUSING

During the Byera Hadley Trip we passed through atleast 10 different countries in quick succession and were constantly faced with new systems of signage, new pictograms. There were even some internationally accepted signage pictograms that it took me many sitings and much thought to understand.

This is for the New York Presbyterian Hospital. When you design a wayfinding system for a big campus a lot of it is based on symbols. They asked us to let them know - how do you know that the public understands these symbols? We know they have been published, we know they have been tested but do they really work in this hospital? And we weren't sure so we suggested that the team built full sized prototypes of signs in front of the existing ones and we left them up for a day and we did a series of cognitive tests to see how people - real people, real patients - on a real day understand what was happening. We did interviews and were talking to them while they were doing it. Then we conducted tests of the symbolswe were planning to use. And we asked people to tell us what they thought each symbol meant. And what we learned was just amazing. 77% of the people we talked to thought that the symbol on the far right was hand washing. The least amount of people thought that that meant prayer. A few people thought it was a drinking fountain. It just goes to show you never know. What we learnt from this is that when it comes to symbols there is no hard science that actually culture and context really matters. And I learned a tremendous amount because coming at it I said "You don't need to test this. The one with the two hands is the right one for a multinational audience" and I was dead wrong.

SYLVIA HARRIS, DIRECTOR, CITIZEN RESEARCH & DESIGN.  
CLOSING ADDRESS, 2011 SEGÐ CONFERENCE



CITIZEN RESEARCH & DESIGN.SYMBOL ANALYSIS.  
NEW YORK PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL WAYFINDING, NEW YORK, USA



THIS APPARENTLY MEANS EMERGENCY GATHERING SPOT.  
STUK ARTS CENTRE, LEUVEN, BELGIUM



NO DANCING?  
LISBON, PORTUGAL



CONFUSING GERMAN ROAD SIGNS.  
BADEN BADEN, GERMANY



NO HOLDING HANDS?  
PARIS, FRANCE



CROSS OVER THE GRASS?  
YOYOGI, TOKYO, JAPAN



## LESSON #057 | BE INSPIRED BY SHOWA PERIOD JAPANESE SIGNAGE

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After the American's invaded Japan their way of life started to infiltrate the Japanese culture, including their signage. I fell in love with the Showa period signage (1926-1989) in particular that from the middle of the century. There was an amazing museum in a small town in the mountains dedicated to this period with mock-ups of common streets and shops. I was sad to only have one night in Osaka's Dotonbori district with the infamous Glico man. This era of signage has a naive feel that mostly makes you smile at it's eagerness.

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TRADITIONAL STREET AND BUSINESS SET UPS FOCUSING ON THE MID TWENTIETH CENTURY.  
SHOWA KAN MUSEUM, TAKAYAMA, JAPAN

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THE ANIMATED NEON GLICO MAN, ORIGINALLY INSTALLED IN 1935. BIG FOOD SIGNS ALONG THE DOTONBORI - FLYING COWS, SUSHI AND FISH - NOT ALL SHOWA BUT INSPIRED BY.  
DOTONBORI NEON DISTRICT, OSAKA, JAPAN



# LESSON #058 | REVISIT AND COMPLETE A POST OCCUPANCY REVIEW

Sometimes well intentioned temporary signage reveal problems with intended usage in buildings. Often clients do not know what they need before a building begins it's occupancy. Think about adding a contingency amount to your fee to revisit the site and suggest simple solutions for all the paper that has been stuck up since the signage was installed. You may learn something too.



PROHIBITED THINGS PAPER SIGN.  
ARCHA THEATRE, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



LAMINATED PAPER SIGNAGE.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, AUSTRALIA



ADDED AND ALTERED SIGNAGE.  
SCHAUBÜHNE AM LEHNINER PLATZ, BERLIN, GERMANY

Really, I think that is a problem with the industry at the moment. If you look at other disciplines - such as industrial design or packaging design they have that rigour as part of the design process. They'll have preference testing, they'll have trials to see if people can actually open up the carton, if they can read it - that is actually part of their design process. And considering the amount of money spent on a signage system for a hospital - it could easily be multiples of millions - there is actually very little rigour that goes into developing that design response. If you can't do the same for a hospital as you would do for a carton of milk or a box of chocolates - it seems wrong.

FINN BUTLER, DIRECTOR.  
INTERVIEW AT BURO NORTH, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



USER ALTERED 'UNISEX' TOILET SIGNS.  
HARPA CONCERT HALL, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND



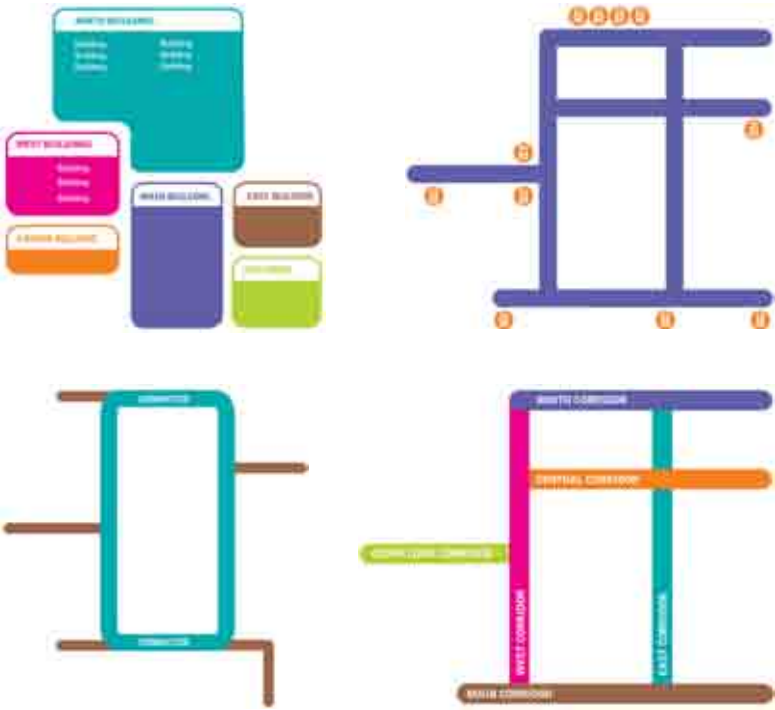
# LESSON #059 | DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING OF ACTUAL USER PATTERNS

Architects design buildings for people, but sometimes they forget that there is a human dimension to a building and people have to get from here to there and they have to know certain things. I think we can often cover that. [ David gets a copy of his book 'The Wayfinding Handbook: Information Design for Public Places' ].

I think one of the particularly interesting parts of the book is Section 2.2 on planning and strategy. I have this idea of plan, approach and refine and return. It explains the whole human approach of going through a space and what kinds of information you need along the way leading to the idea of wayfinding strategies. If you think of a hospital complex - that is Sir John Hoskins Hospital in Baltimore (diagram top right) - that is the tangle that a person like us faces when you are trying to figure out a wayfinding problem. How the hell do I make sense of a whole complex with a million destinations, all these corridors and buildings? Architects tend to see the buildings in blue and I think people perceive the yellow, which are pathways because often you don't know in a hospital when you are going from Building A to Building B.

So I have developed an idea that there are potentially four different models you could use to build the strategy of wayfinding. Is there a connector that connects everything? or do we actually divide it into districts Do we focus on landmarks (which could be elevators)? or do we use my streets model which focuses on corridors? Each of these is a mental mapping paradigm that we could develop. For big complex, urban and institutional wayfinding projects these models can be useful as a way to build the foundation for a wayfinding system.

That is the part that happens at the beginning - where you are walking the walls if it is built or the plans if it is unbuilt. You are talking to people, you are talking to the architects, to the clients, to the users, to the guy at the security desk who answers all the crazy questions that people have about getting to the so and so. That is where you set the stage for the design process and build a foundation so that then, particularly in a complex situation with many constituents and stakeholders, you get people to agree on what it is you are trying to do - not just arguing because I like red and you like green. Working on the bigger issues.



# LESSON #060 | BIG PERSPEX/ACRYLIC SIGNS CAN BE PROBLEMATIC

Big sheets of acrylic stuck on walls is an unattractive and expensive option that rarely achieves the desired effect of ‘transparency’, is difficult to fix and scratches easily. It is often problematically difficult to read if there is any layering of visual texture or other textual interference, overlapping or issues with the text being read backwards..



PERSPEX DIRECTIONAL SIGN OVERLAP.  
KRING CREATIVE CULTURE SPACE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



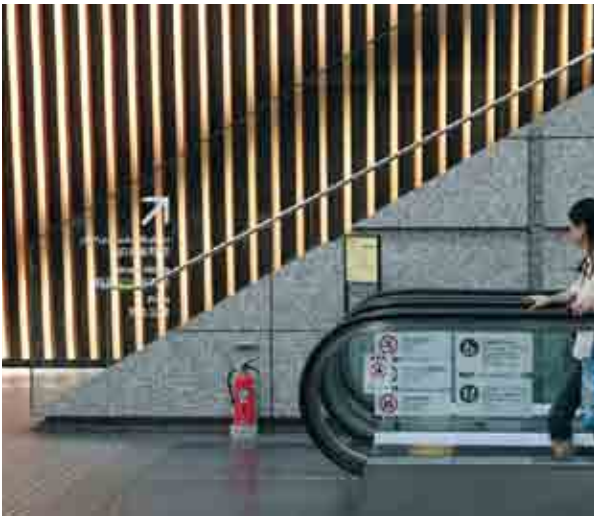
DIRECTION BOARD ON PERSPEX.  
LOTTE WORLD, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



PARKING ENTRY SIGN.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE



BACKWARDS AMENITIES SIGNAGE.  
MELBOURNE RECITAL HALL, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



OBSCURED DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE.  
TOKYO FORUM BUILDING, TOKYO, JAPAN



# LESSON #061 | ANALOG DIGITAL SIGNAGE CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE FORM OF SIGNAGE

As we have ushered in a new technological age, the prevalence of screens and digital text is increasing. It can be horrible. But it can also be integrated into signage systems to identify the place, advertise changing events or as part of the environmental graphic design in clever and relatively unobtrusive ways.



DIGITAL SIGNAGE WELCOMES VISITORS & GIVES INFO ON VENUES & EVENTS. INFOGRAPHICS BY DILLER & SCOFIDIO. LINCOLN CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, NEW YORK, USA.

ENTRANCE SIGNAGE STRUCTURE. DUKE ENERGY CENTRE, CINCINNATI



EXTERNAL INFORMATION & IDENTIFICATION SIGN. PLATOON KUNSTHAL SEUL, SOUTH KOREA

DIGITAL SIGNAGE GIVES INFORMATION ON VENUES AND EVENTS. THE AUDITORIUM'S INFOGRAPHICS WALL CAN BE UTILISED AS PART OF PERFORMANCES. MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

# LESSON #062 | PLAY WITH PLANES

Signage doesn't always need to be on one plane, it can go around corners in the x, y and z planes and people will, in most cases, still perceive the message. This can be a great way to introduce dynamism into a space.



ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNAGE.WEAVES AROUND CORNERS AND CEILINGS IN THE SPACE. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE

MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE WRAPS NEGATIVES IN THE BUILDING FABRIC.  
COOPER UNION BUILDING, NEW YORK, USA





ROOM IDENTIFICATION DOUBLES WITH WAYFINDING IN BOLD WRAPPED TEXT.  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET THEATRE, NEW YORK, USA

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE ON FLOOR AND WALLS. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
PAVILHÃO DO CONHECIMENTO (KNOWLEDGE PAVILION), LISBON, PORTUGAL



DIRECTIONAL AND EMERGENCY EXIT SIGNAGE INTEGRATED INTO THE PAVING.  
TOKYO FORUM BUILDING, TOKYO, JAPAN

# LESSON #063 | BE BOLD WITH CARPARK SIGNAGE

Carparks require BIG signage so it is a great place to go for extreme environmental graphic design. Often it is the first place people will see, so it helps the branding of an institution or building if the user has already begun identity recognition and wayfinding before they have left the comfort of their own car.



CARPARK SIGNAGE. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE

CARPARK SIGNAGE DESIGNED FOR CAR VIEW LINES. EGD BY EMERYSTUDIO.  
EUREKA CARPARK, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA





CARPARK SIGNAGE UTILISING AN ABSTRACTED SYMBOL OF THE BUILDING FOR WAYFINDING.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL



CARPARK SIGNAGE. EGD BY SUSSMAN PREJZA.  
KODAK THEATRE, HOLLYWOOD, USA

CARPARK SIGNAGE.  
WORLD SQUARE, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

# LESSON #064 | BE INSPIRED BY AUSTRALIAN SIGNAGE

I began this study thinking that Australia was behind the world in environmental graphic design. However, in interviews with renowned international designers we were constantly asked why we were coming to talk to them when we had designers of the calibre of Vincent Frost and Garry Emery etc. at our doorstep. Here are some examples of the aforementioned’s inspiring work alongside new young firms like Buro North and Deuce Design.

[...the secretary interrupts to give Paul a message from Deborah Sussman who is at home sick...]

Evidently she says “The young woman doesn’t know who Garry Emery is?” He is one of our favourite designers.

I think somebody like Garry Emery - I am always so envious of him. We met years ago in Halapa in Mexico, we were at a conference together and immediately I liked him. He came over to get that medal and it was a long trip for what it was - its not like you are getting the AIA gold medal. Anyway he seems to be able to work with Architects in a way that to a certain extent we do but to even greater effect. I wish we could turn out the consistent quality he seems to turn out. Or maybe we just don’t see the other parts that don’t come out so well. He’s done some very nice stuff.



We have a book on Frost\* that we call our bible. It is funny because new people come here and talk about the bible.

SYDNEY PARK SIGNAGE AND PLAYFUL ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS.  
FROST DESIGN, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

NUNO GUSMÃO, DIRECTOR  
P-06 ATELIER, LISBON



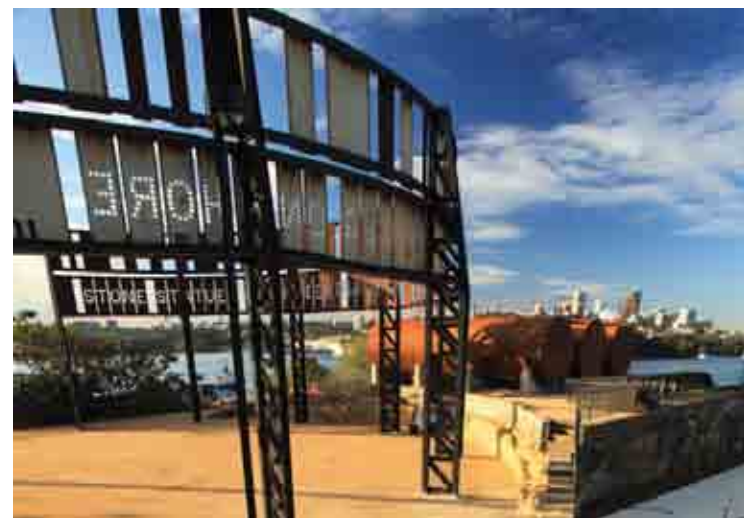
PRAISE FOR EMERY DESIGN STUDIO BY PAUL PREJZA, DIRECTOR.  
INTERVIEW AT SUSSMAN PREJZA, LOS ANGELES, USA

EUREKA SKYDECK GRAPHICS, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.  
EMERYSTUDIO, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA





(LEFT) RMIT SWANSON CAMPUS, MELBOURNE. (MIDDLE) RCD DANDENONG. (RIGHT) ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, MELBOURNE.  
BURO NORTH, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



(LEFT 2 IMAGES) BALLAST POINT PARK ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS. (RIGHT 2 IMAGES) WAVERLEY SERVICE CENTRE, SYDNEY.  
DEUCE DESIGN, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



# LESSON #065 | BE INSPIRED BY VERTICAL ( MARQUEE ) SIGNS

When I look at older theatres I can't help be dazzled by traditional vertical marquee signs. On our trip I noticed other fascinating vertical signs. In contemporary commercial signage it seems the vertical has gone out of fashion in favour of the more space hungry horizontal sign. I say it is time for a renaissance.



GROVE THEATRES SIGN.  
FARMER'S MARKET, LOS ANGELES, USA.



SIMPLE NEON AT THE CINEMA L'EPEE DE BOIS.  
RUE MOUFFETARD, PARIS, FRANCE.



MAIN IDENTIFICATION SIGN.  
THUNDERBIRD MOTEL, RENO, USA



DE STIJL STYLE ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS.  
DE UNIE CAFE, ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

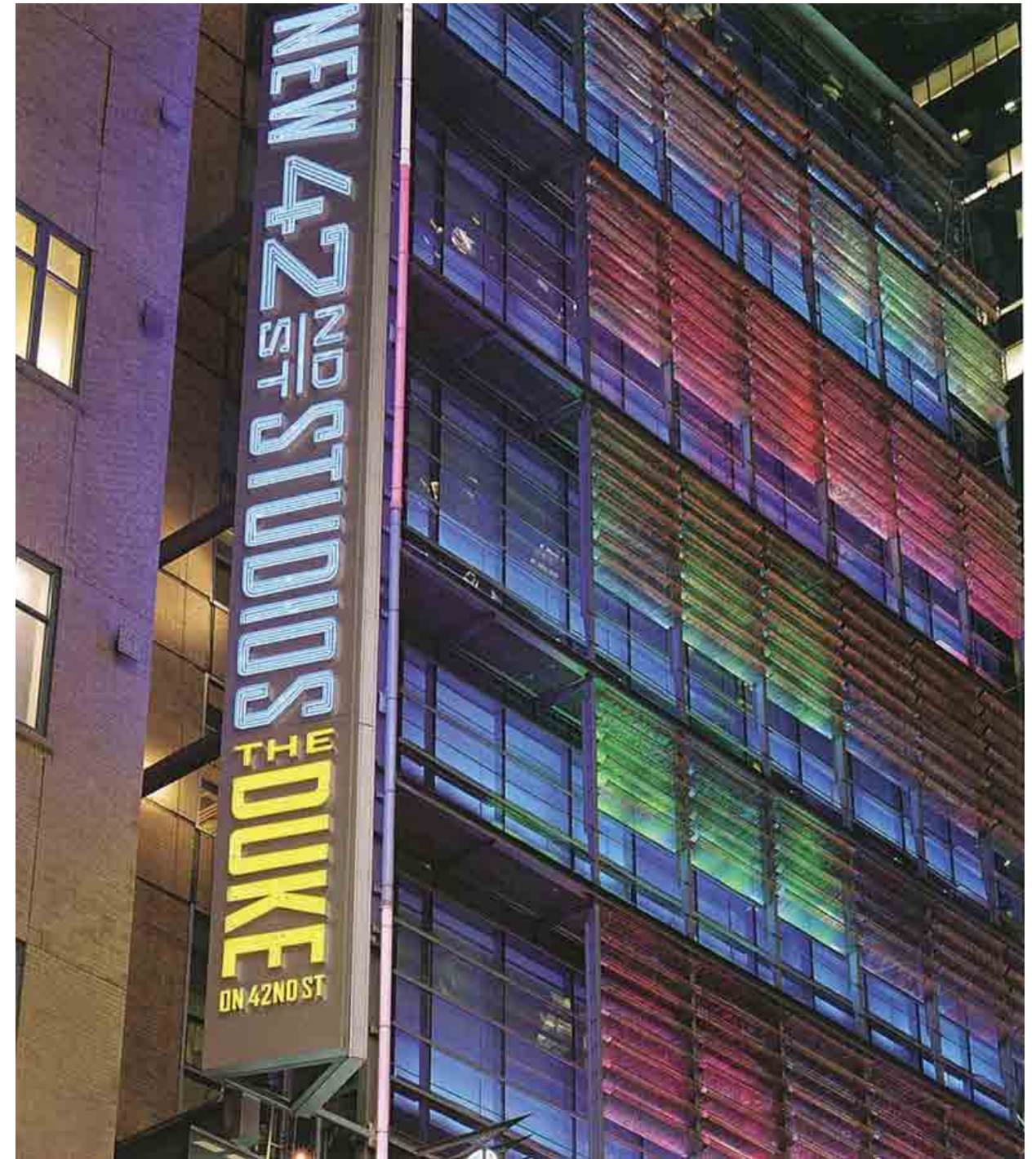




MCDONALDS ECHOES IT'S SURROUNDINGS.  
CHICAGO THEATRE DISTRICT, CHICAGO, USA



FRISSEUR. VERTICAL IN MODERN TYPE AND BOXES.  
BADEN BADEN, GERMANY



PENTAGRAM DESIGNED NEON SIGN IN THE MIDST OF THE NEON HEAVY TIMES SQUARE.  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET THEATRE, NEW YORK, USA



A COMBINATION OF NEONS AND MODERN INTERPRETATIONS.  
LITTLE RUSSIA, CHICAGO, USA



TRADITIONAL MARQUEE SIGNAGE.  
CHICAGO THEATRE, USA



# LESSON #066 | THE DECORATED SHED IS PERFECT FOR LOW BUDGETS

Many of the older practitioners we interviewed still hold the word ‘decorating’ in high regard, whereas nowadays it is usually associated with what you do to a christmas tree or as a derogatory term for people who like choosing cushions....However increasingly big firms are using Environmental Graphic Designers along with Interior Designers and Architects to refurbish bland corporate environments.



We feel that signing can play a role in helping create an image for a place....We try to enhance the architecture rather than disappear into the architecture. And more and more as the budgets don't allow for any decoration in a building, you can't do what they used to do - say even only looking back to an art deco building how much decoration they could put into it. So in a way the signs for us, a lot of times, become that.

A BASIC SHED WITH APPLIED GRAPHICS - A PROVERBIAL DECORATED SHED THAT USERS LOVE.  
WALT DISNEY EMERGENCY HEADQUARTERS BY VENTURI SCOTT BROWN AND ASSOCIATES, FLORIDA, USA

PAUL PREJZA, DIRECTOR.  
INTERVIEW AT SUSSMAN PREJZA, LOS ANGELES, USA





REFURBISHMENT UTILISING ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS. EGD BY FROST DESIGN.  
COMMONWEALTH BANK HEADQUARTERS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

LESSON #067 | CONSIDER SIGNAGE, IDENTITY AND EGD INSPIRED BY THE ARCHITECTURE.



PERHAPS TOO LITERAL.  
NAKA MEGURO, TOKYO, JAPAN

MATERIAL INSPIRATION.  
ZA KOENJI PUBLIC THEATRE, TOKYO, JAPAN.

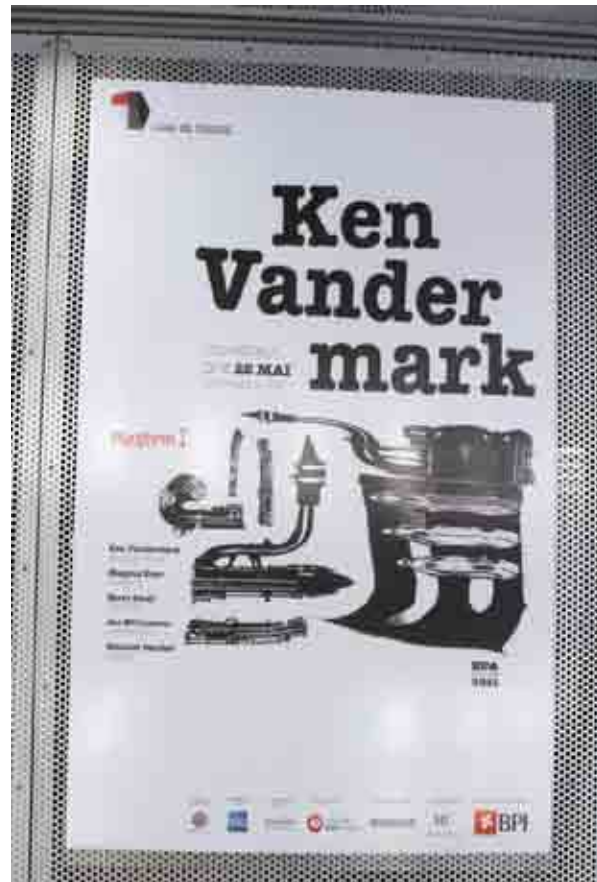
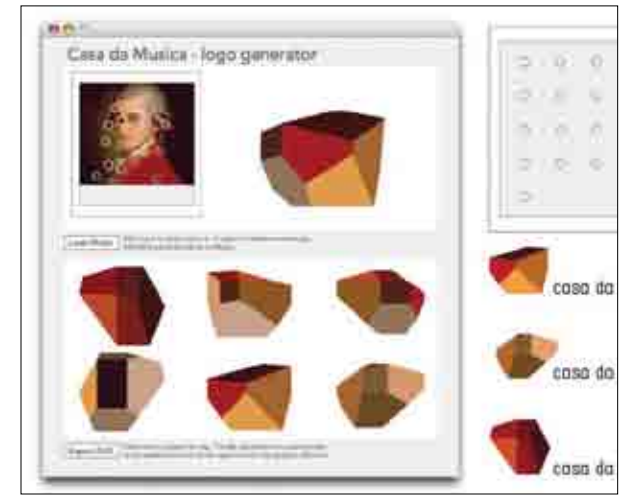
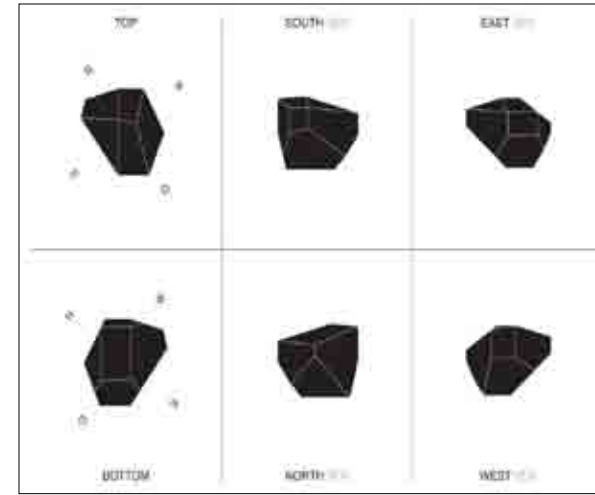
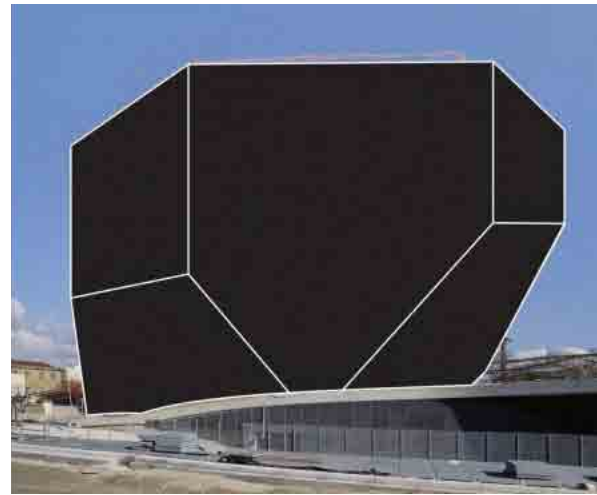


UTILISING THE DISTINCTIVE LEVEL DYNAMIC OF THE ARCHITECTURE FOR DIRECTORIES AND DIRECTIONS.  
ASAKUSA VISITOR'S CENTRE, TOKYO, JAPAN

INSPIRED BY THE DISTINCTIVE TRIANGULAR FORM.  
BETH SHALOM VISITOR'S CENTRE, PHILADELPHIA, USA

VERTICALLY INSPIRED TYPE.  
LILAC HOUSE, NAKA MEGURO, TOKYO, JAPAN





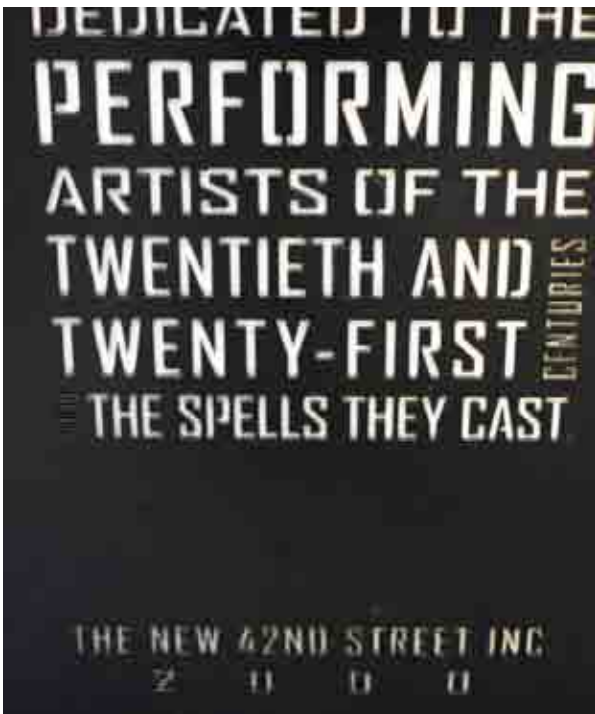
FLEXIBLE BUILDING IDENTITY DESIGNED BY STEPHEN SAGMEISTER (NY) BASED ON THE GEOMETRIC 3D FORM OF THE BUILDING AS USED FOR BRANDING, IDENTIFICATION AND SIGNAGE DIRECTIONAL APPLICATIONS.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL

LESSON #068 | MANUFACTURERS HATE STENCILS

My experience of signage manufacturer's thus far is that stencil type cuts are difficult and finicky so they prefer not to do it. But it is possible and lead to some very pleasing bespoke looking signage graphics.



GATE SIGNS.  
ROLAND GARROS, PARIS, FRANCE



STENCILS CUT INTO WALL PANELS.  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET THEATRE, NEW YORK, USA

LESSON #069 | EXPLAIN ARCHITECTURE FOR EGD

Remember that noone knows the building as well as the architect. Building plans and sections may be disorienting to a graphic designer, even to an environmental graphic designer. They will also not have time to become at one with the building so make sure you are clear about how the building works programmatically. Draw diagrams.

Q: What do you do if you find something in the architecture that you don't think works on a wayfinding level? A: Sometimes you say "that is going to be confusing" or "that doesn't make sense"..I mean, often it is too late, the dye has been cast. That is why we like to get involved early so that we can potentially have an impact on the way things unfold. On a simpler level, how many times have I worked with an architect that designed a canopy over an entrance where you can't even put the address! At some micro level you can say, "let me help you think about how you design this canopy so that maybe we can put the name of the building or the address". And I think sometimes we can provide useful perspective to architects on just how people are going to experience their building. It might not entirely occur to them to really think about the experiential quality: what am I thinking when I plan my visit? When I am approaching the site? When I am trying to figure out where to enter it? I just want to find the destination and then get out. What are the human considerations along this journey? That can be a useful dialogue.

DAVID GIBSON, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT TWO TWELVE, NEW YORK, USA

It is a bit like architecture - I need plans, sections and elevations. It is difficult because people who come straight from Graphic Design do not have that kind of pre-occupation. Normally we accept people who just came from college because we don't want people who already know. So we are trying to make them learn our way of working.

NUNO GUSMÃO, DIRECTOR  
P-06 ATELIER, LISBON.



## LESSON #070 | CONSIDER MANUAL METHODS OF CHANGING LETTERS, WORDS AND NUMBERS

Manual methods have worked for years and years. And you know whaty they say, if it ain't broke...People who worked in these institutions, said they actually took pleasure in changing the letters as part of their job - certainly it doesn't take a rocket scientist and therein results something humanistic and appealing.



**CHANGEABLE CINEMA SIGNAGE.**  
THEATRE DE LA HUCHETTE, PARIS, FRANCE



**DIRECTORY BOARD BASED ON A FLEXIBLE PINBOARD.**  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET THEATRE, NEW YORK, USA



**MENU BASED ON A FLEXIBLE PINBOARD.**  
**PLATOON KUNSTHALLE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA.**



**RETRO SIGNAGE BASED ON A FLEXIBLE PINBOARD.**  
**PLAZA, LAS VEGAS, USA**

# LESSON #071 | LIGHTING IS IMPORTANT TO THE APPEARANCE OF SIGNAGE



SÓPESO RESTAURANTS. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
BRANCHES THROUGHOUT PORTUGAL



THAT YELLOW. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE

We won the competition for SóPeso restaurants because our budget was really low. We didn't change the space but we really CHANGED the space but only with painting, video and changing some little things because the budget for implementing this was really low. They had a meeting with me and said 'Is it really possible?' So we painted some walls black and some walls in green. The use of colour is really important because the lighting with colour you can make to be something really fantastic. If you don't have the right lighting the colour can be a huge mess or something not interesting. We are always really worried about the way they are going to do the lighting. You cannot design without knowing how the lighting is going to be. When we made the first images of selling this project, photoshop simulations, they are really helpful and sellful. I asked the people working on the the simulations to choose the colour and show me and they chose a light colour. It is funny because when they think the colour should be this one...but I say, 'No it has to be darker because the light will open the colour'. You have to make make tests in buildings - I go there for several hours to see the changes and what we are going to do to change the colour. You need to work on othe colour for the most important part of the day because sometimes they use the colour at night, sometimes in the day. You have to put all that into the equation to create something really nice.

Normally we ask the painting companies to make samples. Sometimes I want them to reflect sometimes I don't want them to reflect. I made some tests with some coating over the colour for instance in the search for the perfect yellow for TAP. Millions of samples of yellow.

Do you work with lighting designers?  
Yes. Last week I was with a lighting engineer and I was talking about concepts - I want this and that and he told me, 'I am not a light designer but I think we need more in here'. And I said, 'I'm not also a light designer but I am parts of it because I am a designer'. I know what I want but I don't always know the equipment that does it. I know a bit more because I made many experiments. It is like when you go to coffee and you see cakes - the lights are chosen to make the cakes look really nice. Even though they could look a bit insipid. It is the same when you work in a museum you have to have the right lighting for people to see what you want. Then one wall with colour could really be a work of art.

NUNO GUSMÃO, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT P-06 ATELIER, LISBON, PORTUGAL



# LESSON #072 | IMPORTANT ROOMS ALONG A HALLWAY SHOULD BE INDICATED FROM ABOVE

People don't like to venture into the unknown. Partially this is due to laziness - that taking a wrong turn will take unnecessary time, and partially it is due to fear. This is one architectural problem where signage is the only answer to an unfortunate conundrum. Make signs visible from the beginning of the corridor or continue to give people cues to encourage them to keep going.



CEILING HUNG CUBES FOR AMENITIES SIGNAGE.  
KINGSFORD-SMITH AIRPORT, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



SIMPLE FLAG SIGNS FOR AMENITIES SIGNAGE.  
BELL LIGHTBOX THEATRE, TORONTO, CANADA

Q: What do you do if you find something in the architecture that you don't think works on a wayfinding level? A: It does happen to us and we can only advise our client that the architectural design is going to cause a problem on site once the building goes live. We'll do our best to fix it, but we can't guarantee that signage is going to fix it because it often can't. We have that problem on a large retail mall project at the moment because the retail drives so much of the floor plate design, the toilets are tucked away in obscure locations - dog-leg corridors that are narrow and very very long. People get to the entrance of the corridor with the toilet sign, look down the 40m long narrow corridor and it doesn't feel safe because there is no escape route. So they don't go down there but walk to the information desk and ask where the toilets are and when they are finally directed back, they walk back and head down the dog-leg. It just makes it a difficult experience. So no matter how good the toilet signs are - it's not going to fix that.

SOREN LUCKINS, DIRECTOR.  
INTERVIEW AT BURO NORTH, MELBOURNE, AUSTALIA



RESIDENT COMPANY SIGNS IN KEEPING WITH THE INDUSTRIAL AESTHETIC.  
CARRIAGEWORKS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



INNOVATIVE FLAG SIGNS. EGD BY HIROMURA DESIGN OFFICE.  
TOKYO POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, TOKYO, JAPAN

# LESSON #073 | THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT SIGNING TRANSLATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES

At the newly designed Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre the signage designers had to carefully study the translation of Icelandic words. In this case the translations into English are descriptions of the Icelandic words as the direct translation would not make sense in English. Multilingual signs need a careful hierarchy usually involving tone, colour and attention visual spacing between lines. Pictograms usually help.



SIGNAGE DESIGNER HÖRÐUR LÁRUSSON FROM VINNUSTOFA ATLA HILMARSSONAR EXPLAINS SOME OF THE PITFALLS OF THIS HIGH PROFILE PROJECT.  
HARPA CONCERT HALL AND CONFERENCE CENTRE, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND



# LESSON #074 | EGD CAN BE A METHOD OF REGENERATION

One of the aspects that impressed me on the BH trip was projects where EGD was used as a means of regenerating buildings or precincts. It could be seen to be a superficial answer...but examples such as the Belem Bikeway by P-06 Atelier show how EGD can change and rejuvenate the outlook of an large area of a city.



UGLY CARPARK STRUCTURE REHABILITATED BY NEON LININGS.  
RENO, USA



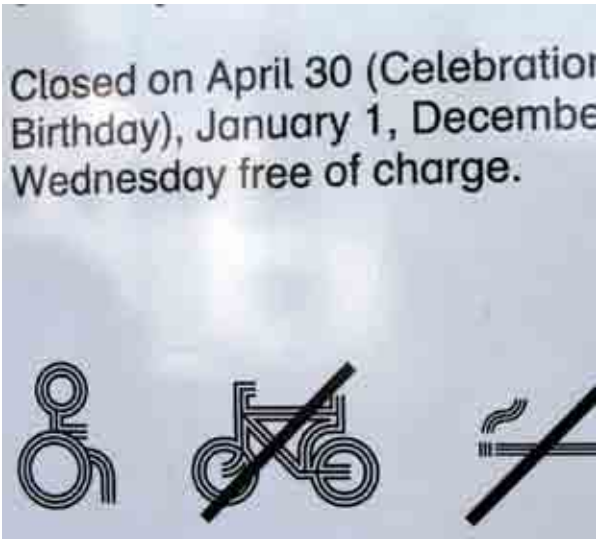
BELEM BIKEWAY.  
BETWEEN BELEM AND CENTRAL LISBON, PORTUGAL

COLUMNS IN THIS INDUSTRIAL BUILDING WERE COVERED AND UTILISED FOR EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYS.  
MUSEO DO ORIENTE BY P-06 ATELIER, LISBON, PORTUGAL



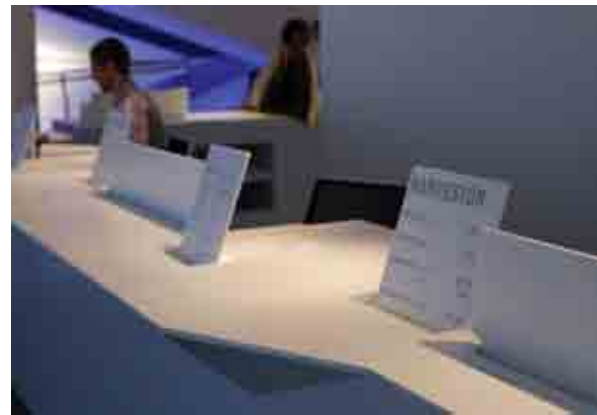
# LESSON #075 | CONSISTENCY IS TANTAMOUNT. LET IT INFILTRATE AS PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE

A simple level of consistency will help consolidate signage so that it feels as if it is telling the project's narrative. This requires standard fonts, font sizes, materials etc. A consistent body of signage within a building assists simplification and the elimination of visual noise for users.



BASED ON A FLEXIBLE IDENTITY SYSTEM, THE SIGNAGE HERE FOLLOWS AESTHETIC GUIDELINES FROM WO TO GO, FROM ARROWS TO PICTOGRAMS TO SUGAR.  
MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN, ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS





BASED ON A FLEXIBLE IDENTITY SYSTEM, THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST EXAMPLES I HAVE SEEN OF CONSISTENT, SIMPLE AND FUNCTIONAL INSTITUTIONAL SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING.  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, NEW YORK, USA

# LESSON #076 | CONSIDER DIAGRAMMATIC INDICATIONS

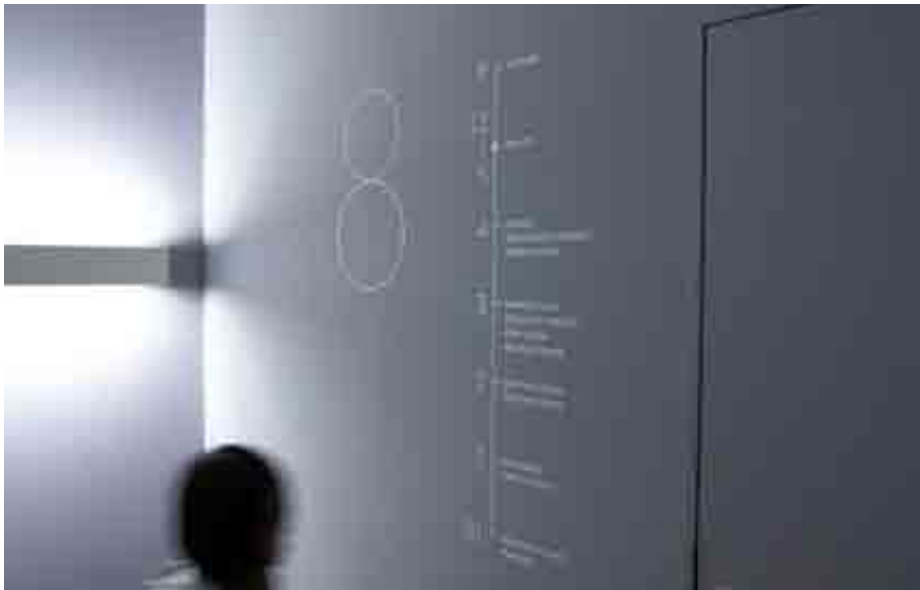
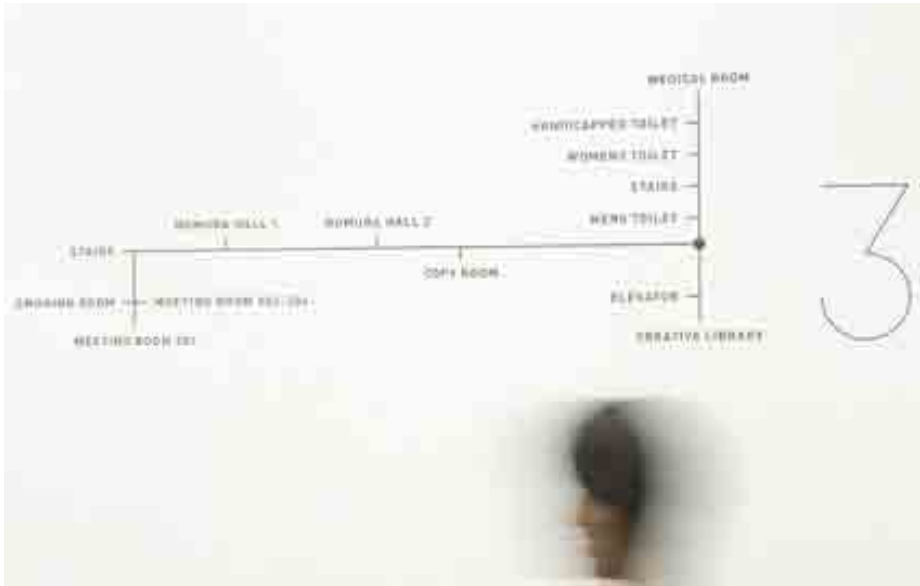
As well as basic pictograms, other clever diagrammic responses to wayfinding and direction can help users get from A to B with ease. It is useful to put yourself into the user's shoes and think laterally and practically. Is there a better way of explaining a particular problem? It could involve anything from the design of a whole system to a simple line diagram.



INFORMATION POINT WITH BIRDSEYE VIEW PERSPECTIVE MAPS.  
ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



DIRECTORY SHOWING BUILDING ORGANISATION IN SECTION.  
METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OFFICES, TOKYO, JAPAN



DIAGRAMMATIC WAYFINDING DIRECTORIES. EGD BY HIROMURA DESIGN OFFICE.  
KOGEI HEAD OFFICES, TOKYO, JAPAN



# LESSON #077 | CONSIDER SIGHTLINES

When preparing location maps don't just locate something on a plan in the middle of the wall because it makes sense in plan. Consider the way a user will approach something, what vertical elements the sign may be contending with, points of confusion, whether you need further indicators. Some signs are better to be located exactly on site once the building work is finished, particularly those located around complicated stairwells.



LEVEL IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
PLATOON KUNSTHALLE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



LEVEL BOARDS VISIBLE FROM ELEVATORS.  
WESTFIELD MARKET STREET, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



FOLLOW THIS LINE  
ASAKUSA VISITOR'S CENTRE, TOKYO, JAPAN



AMENITIES IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
STUK ARTS CENTRE, LEUVEN, BELGIUM



MAKING A BUILDING OF CORRIDORS LESS DIFFICULT TO NAVIGATE. EGD BY HIROMURA DESIGN OFFICE.  
MORISAWA CORPORATE BUILDING, TOKYO, JAPAN



# LESSON #078 | BE INSPIRED BY RETRO LAS VEGAS SIGNS

In the face of ubiquitous LED screen signage, neons are making a comeback and the best can be seen in the Fremont Street area of Las Vegas. Designed to lure gamblers towards the ‘glamorous’ world of gambling - they are not shy of a lightbulb or two.



THE CALIFORNIA HOTEL CASINO.  
LAS VEGAS, USA



THE PIONEER CLUB.  
LAS VEGAS, USA



THE FOUR QUEENS CASINO.  
LAS VEGAS, USA



THE GOLDEN GOOSE.  
LAS VEGAS, USA



BINIONS HOTEL & CASINO.  
LAS VEGAS, USA

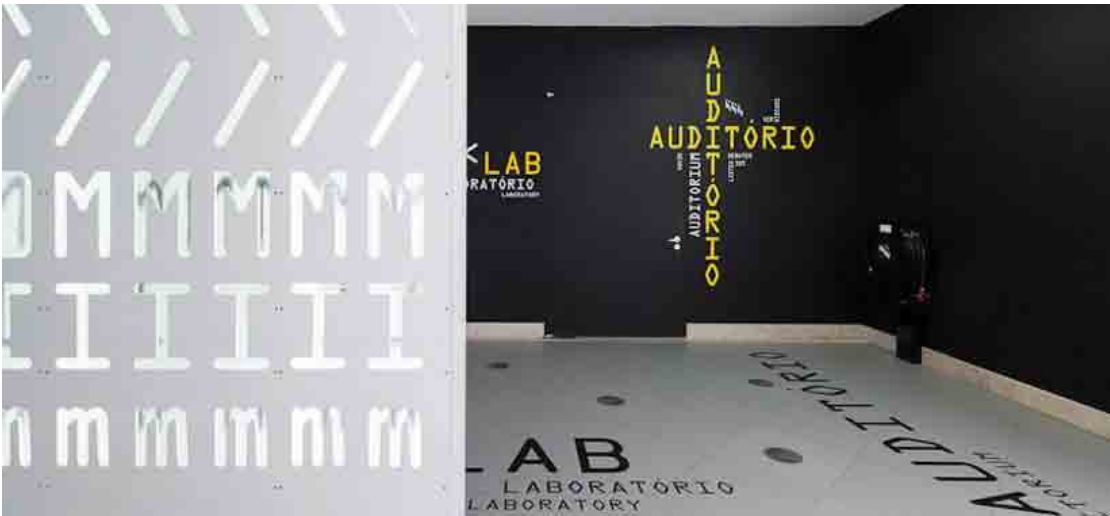


# LESSON #079 | BE INSPIRED BY 'WORDS IN MOVEMENT'

This started when the architect was explaining the project to me. These are mainly 2 containers that are theatres. He said these are 2 boxes of sounds there is not much more to say about the project. So I took those words - the sounds coming out and coming in and the lettering and wayfinding to make it look musical you have to have letters coming in and coming out and I call it 'words in freedom'. So they are in freedom with the sound. It has a lot to do with the Dada movement. I am really passionate about it. And this decal with the taps it started because it is really boring only to see stripes. We have done it with little stripes also in the Portuguese school of Music. All the pictograms are designed by us, inspired by the typography. They have all the same gestures.



(LEFT) THE SOUNDS OF THE ORCHESTRA IN THE ARTISTS ROOM. (RIGHT) TAP TAP TAP...GO THE DECALS ON THE DOOR. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE



NUNO GUSMÃO, DIRECTOR.  
INTERVIEW AT P-06, LISBON, PORTUGAL

THE THEME, ASCII (AMERICAN STANDARD CODE FOR INFORMATION INTERCHANGE) IS AN ANALOGY TO MUSEUM INTENT OF SHARING INFORMATION. EGD BY P-06 ATELIER.  
KNOWLEDGE PAVILION, LISBON, PORTUGAL

# LESSON #080 | CONSIDER MULTIPLE SIDES

For complex wayfinding systems and big spaces, signs that can be seen from multiple sides can lessen the actual quantity of signs needed.



GATE IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
ROGER'S CENTRE, TORONTO, USA



BOOTH NOTIFIERS.  
TOUR DE MONTREAL OBSERVATOIRE, MONTREAL, CANADA



HANGING SIGNS MAY HAVE LESSENED THE MAZE HERE.  
HARPA CONCERT HALL, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

# LESSON #081 | BE INSPIRED, IN GENERAL

I think what is really important is that we really have to listen to brief and the opportunities and make sure that we don't go in straight away with an opinion about how something should be. I think the listening, the observing, the research, the delving into the project really helps us to discover the solution that is relevant for that project. Some companies will just inflict, I like to use the word 'inflict', but they will just do their style on everything they do. And that is fine some clients just want that and it is sometimes easier to just go "I want that flavour and that flavour.." but through what we do we discover the idea first and then work out how to express that idea.

We created a graphic image with triangles because the most fantastic pieces they have the closed triangle in the inscriptions. Very normal in a lot of places - it is a very representative image atleast for the archaeologists and the museologists. For them it was really strong. We made a lot of studies about triangles. Normally we make a search in all the world to try to understand what is a triangle. Mostly because of Giuseppe, who is Italian, when he entered the office - he calls it "Inspiro". Inspiration. Now for our projects we have the folders and one of them is called Inspiro. This part is really important for us. First you want to learn a bit about what is going on. Second you don't want to do it the same way someone else has done it before. You try and reinvent. And it is really important to see the mistakes that others have made. Normally our Inspiros are from art, architecture and design. Mainly art.

VINCE FROST, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT FROST DESIGN, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

NUNO GUSMÃO, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT P-06 ATELIER, LISBON, PORTUGAL



# LESSON #082 | BUILD SIGNAGE INTO LANDSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

Some of the most inspiring signage around is for parks and gardens. There is a liberty to being free of an enclosing structure one must adhere to (pardon the pun). Buildings and complexes also have landscape elements that can be utilised to integrate signage elements - think fences, gates, seats, lightposts, columns, etc.



MAIN AND MINOR ID IN CAST IRON FENCES.  
PADDINGTON RESERVOIR GARDENS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



A SIGN ATOP THE ENTRY GATES WELCOMES VISITOR'S TO THE COMPLEX.  
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS EXCELLENCE, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



PRISON FENCE ON ROAD OVERPASS.  
ON THE ROAD BETWEEN CINCINNATI AND INDIANAPOLIS



MAJOR IDENTIFICATION SIGN ON GRASS.  
KRING CREATIVE CULTURE SPACE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

# LESSON #083 | AVOID MULTIPLE SIGNS BY MAKING AMENITIES SIGNAGE TO CODE

One thing that really annoys me is seeing beautifully designed toilet signage with customised materials and pictograms only to see the builder's standard stuck up next to the door because it didn't comply. If you are going to custom design amenities signage - make sure it complies with your local disability codes. Codes also change, so keep up to date.



AMENITIES SIGNAGE.  
McDONALDS, RENO, USA



AMENITIES SIGNAGE.  
MELBOURNE RECITAL HALL, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



BIG PICTOGRAMS AREN'T ENOUGH TO SATISFY THE CODE.  
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS EXCELLENCE, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



TACKED ON TACTILE SIGNAGE.  
CARRIAGEWORKS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA





COMPLIANT AND ATTRACTIVE AMENITIES SIGNAGE BY BURO NORTH.  
AUSTRALIA CENTRE OF THE MOVING IMAGE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



COMPLIANT AND ATTRACTIVE AMENITIES SIGNAGE.  
TIFF BELL LIGHTBOX THEATRE, TORONTO, CANADA.

# LESSON #084 | WORK OUT A SYSTEM OF DIRECTIONAL HIERARCHY APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROGRAM

“Directional signs constitute the circulatory system of a wayfinding program because they provide the necessary cues that users need to keep on the move once they have entered a space. This sign type routes pedestrian or vehicular traffic between main entrances, key decision points, destinations, and exit points by displaying graphic prompts, such as typography, symbols and arrows. While their design should harmonize with the the surrounding architecture, directional signs also need to be obvious and recognisable. Message content should be simple, coordinated for easy navigation through an entire facility, and based on a specific wayfinding strategy.” David Gibson, The Wayfinding Handbook, Princeton Architectural Press, 2009, pp.50.



UTILISATION OF DIFFERENCE IN TEXT SIZES AND OFFSETTING LAYOUT.  
MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN, ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE UTILISING COLOUR HIGHLIGHTS.  
TIFF BELL LIGHTBOX THEATRE, TORONTO, CANADA



DIRECTORY BOARD.  
ASAKUSA VISITOR'S CENTRE, TOKYO, JAPAN





TOO MANY DIRECTIONS FOR ONE BOARD.  
STUK ARTS CENTRE, LEUVEN, BELGIUM



THE DESIGNERS HERE DECIDED FOR ONLY ONE DIRECTION TO BE ON EACH SIGN.  
HARPA CONCERT HALL, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND



THE CLIENT WANTED THIS DIRECTORY BOARD TO BE PURPOSEFULLY AMBIGUOUS.  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET THEATRE, NEW YORK, USA



THE DADA APPROACH BY P-06 ATELIER.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE

LESSON #085 | FOR BETTER OR WORSE, LETTERS CAN BE 'BUILT INTO' ALMOST ANY MATERIAL

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(TOP) LETTERS IN CARPET. (BOTTOM) LETTERS IN PLASTER.  
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL, LOS ANGELES, USA

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LETTERS IN CONCRETE.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL

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LETTERS IN LINOLEUM.  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET THEATRE, NEW YORK, USA

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LESSON #086 | 'TOILETS?' PRIORITISE DIRECTIONS FOR HUMAN NEEDS

This is a point that continued to come up during the trip. One theatre manager recounted irate mothers during a children's festival unable to find the amenities or their location on directional boards. Don't ruin people's experience of a building by hiding the toilet.



WAYFINDING REPORT AND RESULTING SIGNAGE HIGHLIGHTING THE TOILETS. MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



TOILET SIGNS PULLED OUT TO EMPHASIS. DESIGN BY HIROMURA DESIGN OFFICE. NASU GARDEN OUTLET, TOCHIGI, JAPAN.

L#087 | DON'T SCRAMBLE

The period of deconstructing text has really come and gone. Make sure people can read your signage.



EH? BOULEVARD ST LAURENT, MONTREAL, CANADA

# LESSON #088 | BE INSPIRED BY DUTCH DESIGN

There is a whole book dedicated to why dutch design is better - and I can see where this comes from. There is a clarity and rigour, whilst maintaining a playful graphic presence. We went from the frazzling German Road system and found ourselves greatly relieved and able to work out where we were going once we crossed the border into the Netherlands.



EVEN THE CIVIC SIGNS AND PAVING ARE GRAPHICALLY BOLD.  
ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



ROAD SIGNAGE.  
ON THE ROAD, ROTTERDAM - BRUSSELS, THE NETHERLANDS.



HISTORIC HOUSE NOTIFICATION.  
ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



NOT TAKING ITSELF TOO SERIOUSLY.  
KUNSTHAL, ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



HOME OF DE STIJL.  
ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



HOTEL NEW YORK  
ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



# LESSON #089 | SPECIFY THAT STATUTORY IS IN KEEPING WITH OTHER SIGNAGE

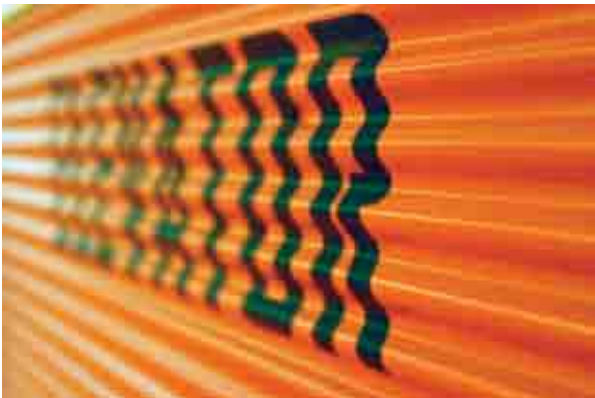
While much statutory signage is part of the builder’s package, you can specify the fonts, colours and materials so that it is in keeping with the main body of signage. Put it in the specification when you go to Tender so that builder’s are aware from the get go and can allow for this in their price. Builder’s should supply you with a schedule of signs during construction and then you will supply fonts etc.



FONT & COLOUR COORDINATED STATUTORY SIGNAGE.  
MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



STATUTORY SIGNAGE RESPONDING TO THE BUILDING’S SUPERGRAPHIC AESTHETIC WHILST STICKING TO CODE.  
DUKE ON 42ND STREET THEATRE, NEW YORK, USA



# LESSON #090 | DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS FOR CHANGEABLE SIGNAGE

Information in institutional and public buildings changes constantly. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of a changeable system for changing and temporary information. There is nothing worse than blutacked paper or laminated paper stuck up on walls and on joinery. This can be avoided by providing a framework that can be rolled out when required. The solution needs to be simple enough for the institution to change otherwise they won't be utilised. There are plenty of great off-the-shelf options, there are simple surfaces that can be created for schmick posters, there are new systems to be invented. It's not going to be perfect but it is better than the paper. Just do it!



A SIMPLE STAPLE POSTERS ONTO BOARDS TECHNIQUE.  
KUNSTHAL, ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS



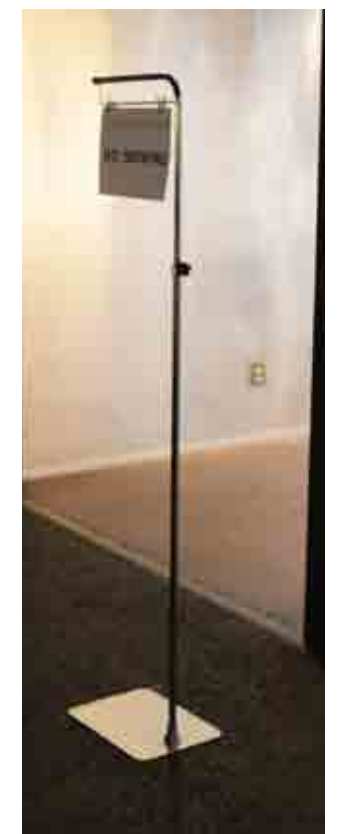
(LEFT) CUSTOMISED FLYER & INFORMATION STAND. (RIGHT) OFF-THE-SHELF POSTER STAND WITH ADDED LOGO.  
TAP THEATRE ET AUDITORIUM, POITIERS, FRANCE

ACRYLIC POSTER HOLDERS WITH CLOSSY TEMPORARY POSTERS.  
CASA DA MUSICA, PORTO, PORTUGAL





A CLEVER BANNER HANGING SYSTEM DESIGNED AROUND BULLDOG CLIPS, COLUMNS PAINTED WITH BLACKBOARD PAINT.  
ARCHA THEATRE, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



CUSTOM DESIGNED TEMPORARY DISPLAY STANDS.  
ASAKUSA VISITOR'S CENTRE, TOKYO, JAPAN

CHANGEABLE, HANGING SIGNAGE SYSTEM. EGD BY HIROMURA DESIGN OFFICE.  
SHINWA MEDICAL RESORT, JAPAN

TEMP SIGNAGE IS MATERIAL MATCHED TO BUILDING.  
ZA KOENJI PUBLIC THEATRE, TOKYO, JAPAN

NO SMOKING SIGN CLIP.  
PLATOON KUNSTHALLE, SEOUL

# LESSON #091 | BE INSPIRED BY BIG LETTERS

Make it big, keep it simple.



SEOUL SQUARE SIGN.  
SEOUL SQUARE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



PORT DISTILLERY MAJOR IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.  
RIVERSIDE, PORTO, PORTUGAL



SOME SERIOUS BEAM WORK.  
STUK ARTS CENTRE, LEUVEN, BELGIUM





ZOOM INTO SKYSCRAPER SIGN NEW YORKER BUILDING  
NEW YORK, USA



BASCO WAREHOUSE SIGN BY VENTURI SCOTT BROWN AND ASSOCIATES.  
PHILADELPHIA, USA



ZOOM INTO SKYSCRAPER SIGNAGE CHICAGO TRIBUNE BUILDING  
CHICAGO, USA



MAIN ID SIGNAGE AGAINST A COMPLEX GEOMETRIC BACKDROP. EGD BY BURO NORTH.  
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR THE MOVING IMAGE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



MAIN ID SIGNAGE IN TRADITIONAL SHIPPING CONTAINER STYLE.  
PLATOON KUNSTHALLE, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA.



INDUSTRIAL SIGN ON THE ROAD  
ON THE ROAD BETWEEN PRAGUE AND BERLIN

# LESSON #092 | UNLEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas is a different world to the one that Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown captured in their infamous book Learning from Las Vegas. *“Learning from Las Vegas was one of the first books to advocate that architects pay attention to the vernacular world around them rather than trying to impose their own vision upon it. Where the modernists stuck to an orthodox vocabulary for how buildings should look and what they should mean, Venturi and Scott Brown were willing to accommodate ambiguity, even a sense of humor.”* Ariel Ben Amos. Las Vegas is now in the very serious art of humour, Las Vegas is the mother of all imitation. And for the past few decades that has meant imitations of cities or ‘images of cities’ - Paris, New York, Monte Carlo etc. That has involved facades on very basic shed like architecture (the same large cross plan with casino sheds in front. This was Venturi Scott Browns prototypical ‘decorated shed’. The interesting addition to the landscape now are ‘images of architecture’- Daniel Liebeskind building a ‘Liebeskind’ on the Las Vegas Strip. Are these architecture or are they just a facade of great architecture where the architect himself becomes the sign. Or the architecture is just a sign that says ‘This is great architecture’.



We think we should embrace an ideal of the past, where iconography and signage and symbolism were important. Go back to hieroglyphics, to writing incised upon the temple. Go back to Classical pediments that had sculpture in them. You say, “oh that’s art” but it wasn’t really art so much; it was explaining the religion at the time. Early Christian architecture and Byzantine architecture are filled with mosaics we now consider to be art, but art was only their secondary function. The mosaics were really signs to teach you, a member of an illiterate populace, about theology; or to convince you to convert to Christianity. Take the stained glass windows of gothic architecture: they were beautiful art, but more important, they offered specific instruction. Now we have billboards. We have light emitting diodes. We have Times Square, the great urban complex of our time, the equivalent of the Piazza San Marco of Venice of the past. The architectural effect of our age should not come from dramatic, expressive, articulated architecture. It should come from the generic loft, the simple building. What is beautiful, then, is not the sculptural effects of the architecture, but the signage on the form. We call that the Decorated Shed. Let’s build for the Electronic Age, and for the Information Age.





A DUCK GUARDING A SHED, THE PARIS SIGN ALMOST MORE FAMOUS THAN THE REAL CITY, A RETAKE ON THE NOUVEAU METRO SIGN.  
PARIS CASINO, LAS VEGAS, USA



THE BRIGHTEST MANMADE THING VISIBLE FROM OUTER SPACE AND A HUGE ENERGY WASTER  
THE LAS VEGAS STRIP ON A SATURDAY NIGHT, LAS VEGAS, USA



THERE ARE SO MANY SIGNS AND LANDMARKS IN LAS VEGAS THAT SOME UNSIGNED SPACE WOULD BE A NOVELTY.  
NEW YORK NEW YORK CASINO, LAS VEGAS, USA



LESSON #092 (CONTINUED) | UNRELEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS



THE REAR GENERIC CASINO AT CRYSTALS IS NO DIFFERENT TO ANY OTHER FACADE TO THE CROSS SHAPED PLAN SHED ON THE LAS VEGAS STRIP SUCH AS BALLYS (ABOVE RIGHT).



IS IT A SPACESHIP? IS IT A GEHRY? NO! IT'S A LIEBESKIND. IT HAS THE APPEARANCE OF A DUCK BUT IS INFACOT ONLY A DECORATED SHED RENEGADING AS ARCHITECTURE. CRYSTALS CASINO DESIGNED BY DANIEL LIEBESKIND, LAS VEGAS, USA

AND IMITATIONS OF IMITATIONS - THE ORIGINAL VENETIAN (LEFT) AND THE VENUS FORT SHOPPING COMPLEX, TOKYO, JAPAN.



# LESSON #093 | EARLY SIGNAGE INTEGRATION IS PREFERABLE

Signage can not be avoided in public buildings so the earlier it is integrated the more likely it can integrate and work WITH the architecture rather than against it. This was one thing consistent with ALL the people we interviewed.

Q: Is it easy when you put signs in the buildings to collaborate with the architects to make good projects?

A: It depends on the beginning, I mean, the way you start. If the architect is welcoming use and ready to work with us, it's ok. If not, it's hard. Their attitude has considerable weight in projects.

MASAAKI HIROMURA, DIRECTOR.  
HIROMURA OFFICE, TOKYO, JAPAN

Q: Is there anything you think architects could do better in terms of making the integration of signage and architecture happen more smoothly?

AS: I think what is good is when architects really know what it is to integrate the signage. We've had projects where they have said - we are doing a desk, for example, and our concept is to integrate a sign into a desk and so they have worked with us to make that happen by changing and adding to their documentation. That works really well.

VF: Especially when we get pulled into a project right at the very beginning so that we are part of the big picture of the project. It is really great at the beginning otherwise you just get pulled in at the end you just stick something on something that is already there. Some of the stuff we have been doing lately, say with CBA, is not just graphic design any more - it is a combination of interior design, industrial design, typography, graphic design. It's not just the old thinking of signage or whatever it was.

ANNABELLE STEVENS, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTS AND VINCE FROST, DIRECTOR  
INTERVIEW AT FROST DESIGN, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Q: If you find that you have a project where the architect's have designed it and you realise that the architecture doesn't work very well how do you deal with that in terms of working with the architect?

A: I mean we are the tail and not the dog. We try to point those things out if we get involved early enough but we realise they are not going to redesign the building if it is already in a certain phase. But if we can get in early enough then you can say - look you've got this many people coming through and this isn't going to be the greatest thing. We speak up when we think it can make meaningful change but if it is just complaining about the fact that they overlooked something then we keep our mouths closed because it can't go anywhere anyway. We don't want to make the architect look dumb in front of the client.

PAUL PREJZA, DIRECTOR.  
INTERVIEW AT SUSSMAN PREJZA, LOS ANGELES, USA

People are pretty complex. There are a lot of different people with different abilities and you have to communicate to those people. You are going to have problems no matter how great your building is and how legible the environment is - it can't be legible for everyone with no signage. When architects get us involved early, signage is able to be integrated, for example, with joinery they are already doing. The joinery has a cost associated with it so when you integrate the signage, there is little extra cost. The joinery looks great and the signage looks great. The building functions better and looks better.

SOREN LUCKINS, DIRECTOR.  
INTERVIEW AT BURO NORTH, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

# LESSON #094 | BE INSPIRED BY METRO SIGNAGE

The ‘M’ for Metro is one of the Europe’s most recognised identities. Yet it is adapted to the aesthetics and organisational requirements of each different country and often to each city. This is a great example of an adaptable signage identity.



METRO SIGNAGE.  
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



METRO SIGNAGE TAKING ON A MODERNIST AESTHETIC.  
ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



VARIATIONS OF METRO SIGNAGE.  
PARIS, FRANCE



METRO SIGNAGE.  
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



PORTUGUESE METRO SIGNAGE (LEFT) PORTO. (RIGHT) LISBON.





# LESSON #095 | BE INSPIRED BY MCDONALDS SIGNAGE. REALLY?! YES!

The ‘M’ for McDonalds is probably the world’s most recognised identity. Yet in cataloguing the signage in each country (just an experiment I thought would be interesting), I discovered that there is actually a lot of attention to context for each different McDonalds restaurant. Again the adaptable identity is integrated within a variety of architectural contexts.



MCDONALDS TRANSLATED INTO KOREAN.  
SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



MCDONALDS PORTO WITH SOME SENSITIVITY TO HERITAGE.  
PORTO, PORTUGAL



MCDONALDS BREDA TAKES INSPIRATION FROM DUTCH CIVIC SIGNAGE.  
BREDA, THE NETHERLANDS



MCDONALDS PRAGUE GETS INTO THE SPIRIT OF THE BEER GARDEN.  
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



MCDONALDS TAKES ON NEW YORK. FROM LEFT BROADWAY, TIMES SQUARE, LOWER EAST SIDE AND SELF EXPLANATORY MOVEABLE SIGN.  
NEW YORK, USA.





# LESSON #096 | FRAMEWORK & MATERIALS FOR INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE DULL

Interpretation should be something that people are interested enough to look at. It should invite them to read it, peak their curiosity. Generally restricted to some sort of panel system, interpretation can also be integrated into structural elements or even form new ones. Information should read as a narrative and remember that most people are generally not interested in the finite architectural history but rather a user's perspective.



ULURU INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE.  
ULURU, AUSTRALIA



INTERPRETIVE TIMELINE. EGD BY BURO NORTH.  
WESTFIELD MARKET STREET, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



WATER MAIN INTERPRETATION. EGD BY DEUCE DESIGN.  
WAVERLEY, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



LOCATION OF OLD PETROL BOWSER REINTERPRETED AS PUBLIC SEATING (LEFT) AND TIMELINE ATTACHED TO HISTORIC WALL (RIGHT).  
PADDINGTON RESERVOIR GARDENS, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA





# LESSON #097 | ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHIC DESIGN IS NOT A CONTEMPORARY CONCEPT

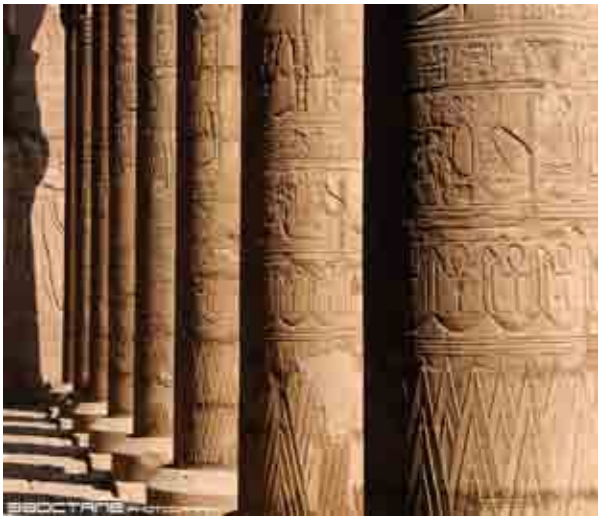
The message and the means have changed but at the end of the day what we call environmental graphic design is not really a new concept. What we consider art now was once just about selling a message of Christianity or civic pride. Now we sell hamburgers or a commercial or institutional entity. And there has always been a delicate balance between the architecture and the signs/message. But the message and the ‘image’ or surface is becoming so important that architecture may start to play second fiddle to environmental graphics. That was part of what Modernism was fighting for - but took way too far. Still we see this in a microcosm where architecture fights the sign designer with passive aggressive stubbornness to it’s own detriment.



CHINESE TEMPLE (LEFT) AND IT’S MODERN COUNTERPART IN MULTIFULTURAL MONTREAL (RIGHT).  
KUDAT, CHINA AND MONTREAL, CANADA



SAINTS GIVING MESSAGES AT BASILICA SANT APPOLINARE (TOP) AND DIRECTIONS AT RMIT (BELOW).  
RAVENNA, ITALY (TOP) AND MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA (BELOW)



TEMPLE OF HORUS (LEFT) AND DECALS GRACING THE FACADE OF THE ARCHA THEATRE.  
EDFU, EGYPT (LEFT) AND PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC (RIGHT)



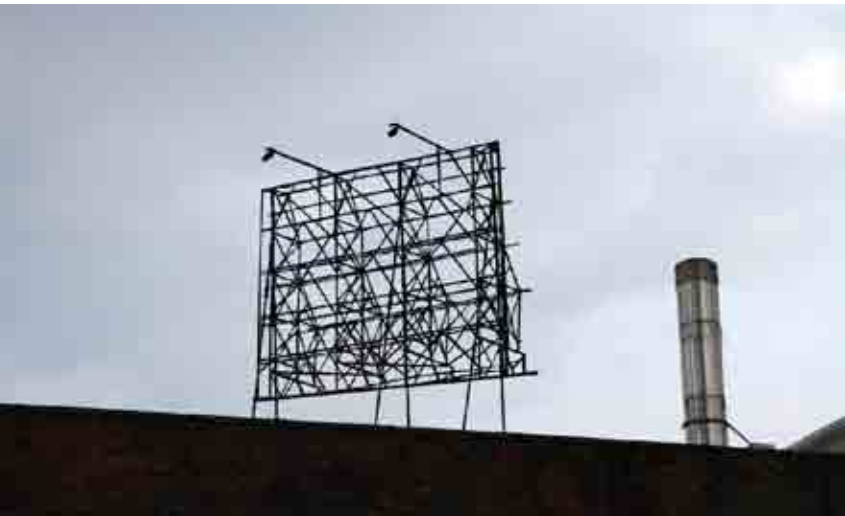
LESSON #098 | BE INSPIRED BY SIGNS AS ART



LAURENT GRASSO ARTWORK AS PART OF A GROUP EXHIBITION.  
LEEUM SAMSUNG MUSEUM OF ART, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



NATHAN COLEY ARTWORK.  
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.



THESE ARTWORKS APPEAR 3D FRAMES OF EMPTY SIGN STRUCTURES ARE INFACCT 2D CUTOUTS.  
'SPACE AVAILABLE' BY KIM BECK, THE HIGHLINE, NEW YORK, USA.



STATUTORILY INSPIRED DEMANDING DOORS.  
MARTIJN ENGELBREGT, MCA TOKYO.



A WORLD WITH ONLY THE SPACE LEFT BY SIGNS.  
'YOUNG ST, WILLOWDALE' BY ROBYN COLLYER.



# LESSON #099 | BE RESPONSIVE WITH SIGNS IN PICTURESQUE SETTINGS

It's not rocket science to say that you don't necessarily want a neon pink sign in a tranquil traditional garden setting. Try and remember why people go to places and respond accordingly. You want to accentuate that experience, not clash with it. This can be a reponse to material, form, colour or even message.



TIMBER SIGNAGE RESTS DELICATELY AGAINST THE TRADITIONAL JAPANESE PARK.  
HAMA-RIKYU GARDENS, TOKYO, JAPAN



PORT BOTANY BIRD SANCTUARY SIGNAGE BY DEUCE DESIGN LETS THE VIEWS THROUGH.  
PORT BOTANY, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.



ONLY MINIMAL SIGNAGE GRACES THE CONCRETE WALLS (PERHAPS A MINIMILISM NOT ALLOWED IN AUSTRALIA).  
CHICHU ART MUSEUM, NAOSHIMA, JAPAN





# LESSON #100 | CONSIDER THE POTENTIAL OF THE BUILDING AS A CANVAS FOR THE FUTURE (EEK!)

An interesting example of the complexities of the tradition of building as sign is the Schaubuhne theatre in Berlin where the architect played with the novel idea (in 1932) to combine commercialism and architecture - perhaps one of the earliest examples of architecture as billboard. Ironically it is no longer used and the structure houses no function. Moving forward, where signs in the very obvious sense (not murals or other environmental messages of the past) are required to a greater and greater extent...it is possible that your building may in the future be used as a canvas for some sort of signage. It is not an architect's intent, sure. But perhaps this is where the present lies. The decorated duck.



THE PRESENT (TOP) AND PAST (BELOW)  
SCHAUBÜHNE AM LEHNINER PLATZ, BERLIN, GERMANY



CANADIAN CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE  
MONTREAL, CANADA



DIFFICULT TO KNOW IF THIS WAS THE INTENTION OR NOT.  
ZA KOENJI PUBLIC THEATRE, TOKYO, JAPAN



THIS BEAUTIFUL BUILDING HASN'T GONE UNTOUCHED BY THE TENTICLES OF ADVERTISING.  
METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE, NEW YORK, USA.





ILL PLACED GENERIC ZAHA SCREAMING FOR SOME SIGNS.  
CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTRE, CINCINNATI, USA



HIGH POWERED PROJECTION TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS THESE BLAND FACADES  
FLAMINGO AND TROPICANA CASINOS, LAS VEGAS, USA.

A LOCAL RESTAURANT OWNER'S TAKE ON COMMERCIALISM  
RESTAURANT, NAKA MEGURO, TOKYO



IS THERE A BUILDING IN THERE?  
YEOUNG DONG MARKETS, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA



# LESSON #101 | THE FUTURE OF SIGNS IS NO SIGNS....

So to the future. The present sees much of the world turning into a Times Square like LCD landscape where we can't see the architecture for the signs or the way to move forward for all the statutory limitations. It is almost too scary to think about. One thought is that physical signage will disappear in place of a kind of extra-sensory signage input into the brain.

Q: What do you think is the future of sign design.

A: I think sign design might not exist. It's something unnecessary maybe. Sign design is something disliked in the design field. Many architects don't like adopting signs in their buildings. Putting those signs which say, 'here is the toilet' or, 'there is something if you go there', is considered as dirtying their buildings by some architects. Like I said before, if it is are well planned building, it doesn't need any signs.

More specifically speaking, there is digital signage now but it can be something that inputs certain information into people's brains directly in the future. For example, if you go into a certain area, some sort of signals are sent to our brains and give us some direction . . . So, the world without any signs will be the future of signage.





# CONCLUSION

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While there is certainly a possibility that physical signs will be eliminated altogether in place of a kind of telepathic system - that is sometime down the track. For now, we need to move on from an era where “signage comes last.”

Although the majority of practitioners I interviewed talked highly of their field, and passionately about their work, they inevitably slipped into the negative assumption that their field was well down the pecking order.

Indeed, the field is still uncertain of it's own name. Variations included 'Wayfinding', 'Signing', 'Environments' and even 'Space Graphysm'.

I use the terms 'Environmental Graphic Design' and 'signage' interchangeably in this document as I have come to the conclusion that it doesn't make much difference to anyone at this point, (although it may become a sticking point in the near future). I have chosen the former because the 'Society for Environmental Graphic Design' seems to be leading exploration into this area in the most holistic way.

Regardless of the field's hesitance to proclaim it's own importance, it is now chewing its way out from the intersection of architecture and graphic design and forming a very clear role in the function of a building or space. The design of signs and 'informational decoration' in a building is becoming a part of a broader scope of work for the 'Environmental Designer'.

The 'graphic look' and inclusion of branding and messages in a project has become a widely accepted standard.

Two dimensional 'decoration' including signs, has become a cheap and effective way of creating mood. It often embraces or even articulates the identity of the occupant, as opposed to what would have once been done by the interior designer on the inside, or the work of the landscape designer on the outside.

The systematic approach to 'wayfinding' as part of the Environmental Design also fundamentally informs a project from a humanistic point of view. It identifies key locations, provides direction from A to B and gives instruction about how to use a building or space.

There are two ways left for any aesthetically concerned architect to respond: One is to take the high road and say 'my building doesn't need signage - the architecture will tell the story of how to move around and use the building'.

The other is to take the middle road and accept that, working with an environmental designer has become as important as, say, working with a structural engineer, in terms of creating a fully functional building or complex.

In most countries legislation and regulation require even the high road designed building to have basic signage (statutory fire and safety warnings, Braille and tactile amenity identification) to obtain an Occupation Certificate.

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If these requirements are not addressed within the design envelope, the building will get the standard, off the shelf, versions of these signs installed by the builder. And so the high road becomes the low road.

The only buildings seen on my travels that were allowed an absolute minimum of signage were projects where architecture is art, such as the Chichu Art Museum in Naoshima, Japan.

At the very least an architect should consider carefully at the front end of a project whether or not signage will be used only as a wayfinding and statutory tool, or whether it will be utilised as an integral part of the environment:



Will the building and main identification sign be as one or will it be a building with a sign? Will the building be the sign or will the building be a billboard for a sign? There are several different approaches but many projects fail in articulating this at an early stage so what happens is an ugly mish-mash of both.

The original concept for the study was to focus on theatres as a common typology. I did learn some things from this methodology but it is potentially true to say that comparing theatre-to-theatre is as different to comparing theatre to any other institutional style building.



There are so many different types of theatres with different agendas: small theatre's like the Archa in Prague with an almost handmade approach to signage versus huge complexes like the Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts in New York needing complex infographic systems.

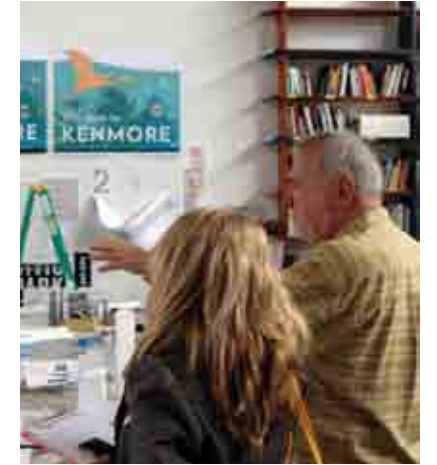
Ultimately, signage is everywhere and I tried to look at signs everywhere - as we passed through towns, transport terminals, restaurants. It was overwhelming to say the least - some places you can hardly see architecture anymore and in many places the 'environmental design' is more noticeable and has more influence on the user than the architecture.



While there are those few buildings that are an exception to the rule, in general, I take the view that Architecture must take an 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em' approach: it must embrace the positives that Environmental Graphic Design can provide and integrate it as an essential part of the project, enhancing and adding to the architecture rather than viewing it as an 'add-on'.

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This report, my 101 lessons that Architecture can learn from Environmental Graphic Design, has followed this theme. My conclusion is to provide practical examples of how architects can deal with the era where communication rules.

The lessons are designed to inspire architects attempting to add signage to their repertoire or wanting to understand more about how they can integrate signage into their projects. It was always intended to be a kind of 'dummies' guide, so to speak. I don't wish to pretend I understand Graphic Design or Environmental Graphic Design as well as people truly trained and experienced in the field.

Some of the points I suggest contradict others or could both be true in different circumstances: some points will reference others. If I have learnt anything from this trip it is that the whole area has many, many shades of grey and there are very few givens. The 101 lessons aims to point out potential problem areas, to suggest possibilities and to give examples of clever, innovative and exquisitely simple project solutions.

Not everyone will agree with the ideas that I postulate or will like the examples that I use to illustrate them - but it is a starting point for discussion. To this end, I have also made a point of looking not only at schmick published projects - but real world examples.

In terms of a logistic conclusion, I could venture to say that I tried to cram too much into my Byera Hadley Trip, because it was such a unique opportunity, not allowing enough time to process the information as we were going (note to future recipients). There is no doubt that the data that I did collect is extensive.

Full interviews and case studies can be found on the website that accompanies this report:  
[www.decoratingtheduck.com](http://www.decoratingtheduck.com)

My intention is to continue with the decoratingtheduck.com website, exploring projects nationally and internationally and publishing them for the viewing public. Others will be invited to contribute to the website with projects they have seen either directly or through social media interfaces.

I have taken opportunities to speak publicly about this study: Pecha Kucha at the Byera Hadley 60th anniversary celebration in 2012, the opening night Short Clips (pecha kucha style) event at the Society for Environmental Graphic Design Conference 2011, several lectures for the University of Sydney Architectural Design students and talks at several architecture firms.

The scholarship has opened up a whole new world of study and possibilities to work in a niche field bridging the gap between my profession and my passion. I hope that it has and will continue to contribute to the architectural community and create an ongoing point of discussion.

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