Interface Aesthetics Week 8 Signs, pictograms, and icons

OUTLINE

Semiotics
Building symbols
Pictograms
Icons
Logos

INTERFACE AESTHETICS

Assignment 5 Design a new pictogram/ logo/icon for:

- I School, or
- Your school or program (non-I School), or
- Your own project

Semiotics: The study of signs

Signified

The physical thing or idea that the sign stands for.

Signifier

The representation of the object, which could be a word, a picture, or a sound.

Sense

The understanding that an observer gets from seeing or experiencing either the signified or its signifier.





Warm, hot, burn, bright, dangerous, etc.

Signs - Symbolic - Iconic - Indexical

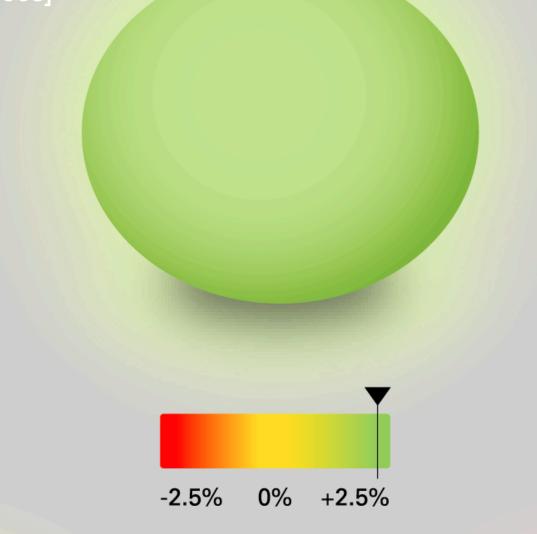
[Charles Sanders Peirce, 1839-1914]

Symbolic signs Code or rule-following conventions required

Symbolic signs Language characters, numbers

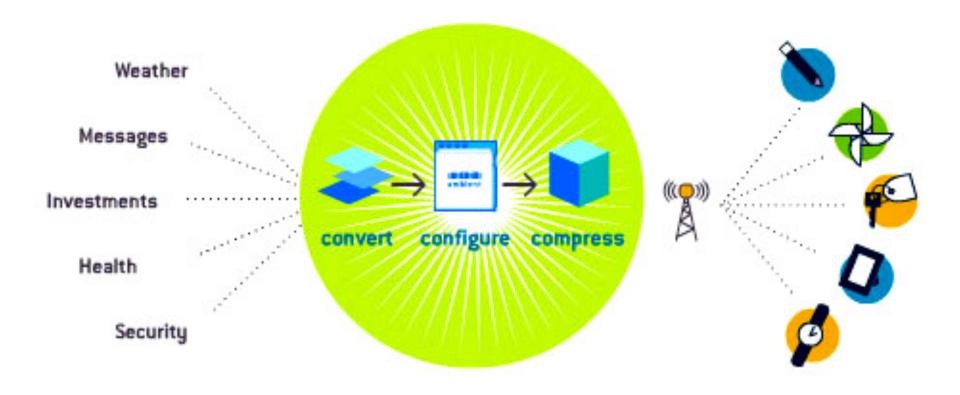
AMBIENT MEDIA

Orb [Ambient Devices]

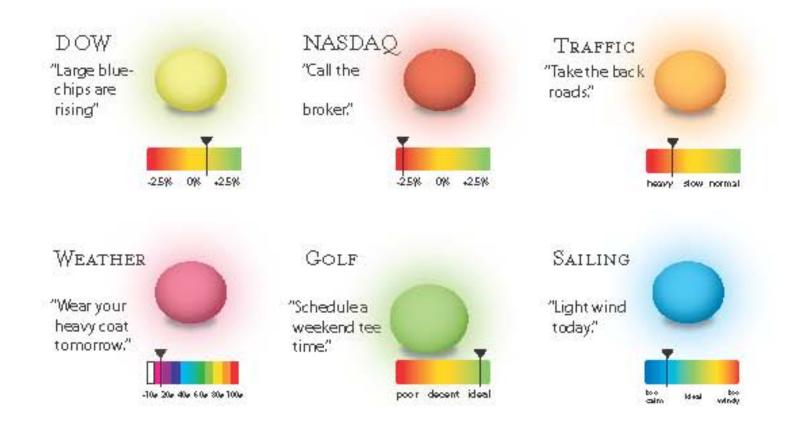


AMBIENT MEDIA

Orb [Ambient Devices]



Symbolic signs Abstract visual representations



Iconic signs An intermediate degree of transparency to the signified object

Iconic signs Drawings and caricatures

Iconic signs Metaphors

[Jeremijenko, 1995]



Indexical signs Directly connected to the signified.

Indexical signs Natural signs

Indexical signs Measuring instruments (scale, thermometer, clock)



Indexical signs Countdowns



Symbolic Language characters, numbers, abstract mapping (e.g. colors of "orb")

Iconic

Drawings, caricatures, metaphors

Indexical

Measuring instruments

Signs in context of use



to represent "snow flake" == **Iconic**

to represent "cold weather" == **Indexical**

to represent "Ski Club" == **Symbolic**



from *Pictograms, Icons & Signs* (Abdullah & Hübner, 2006)



Iconogram

Illustrative representation with common points between the signifier and the signified.

Pictogram

Cartogram

Pictorial representation. Represent complex facts through visual carriers of meaning.

A topological representation

with complex functions (e.g.

statistics) and iconic facts.



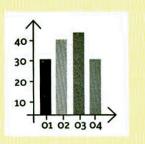
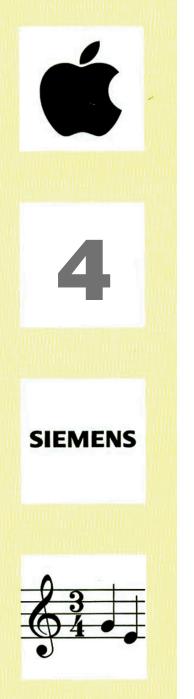


Diagram Functional representation. A more functional carrier.



Ideogram

Representation of a concept. Independent of any formal identification.

Logogram

A visual, referential linguistic sign that does not take the phonetic dimension into consideration.

Typogram

Typographical representation. A sign derived from a written repertoire.

Phonogram

Phonic representation. A sign signifies sounds.



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Illustrative representation with common points between the signifier and the signified.

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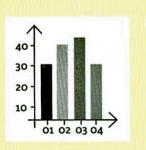


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SIEMENS

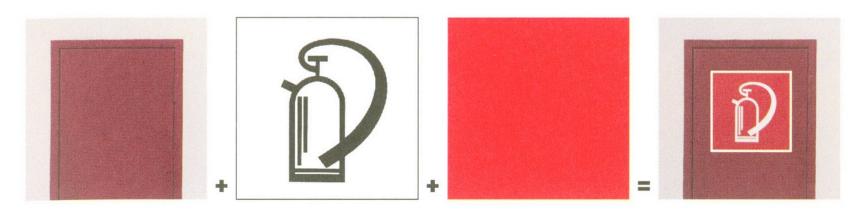


Signs and the surroundings

Interface Aesthetics 03/16/09



Icon A fire extinguisher

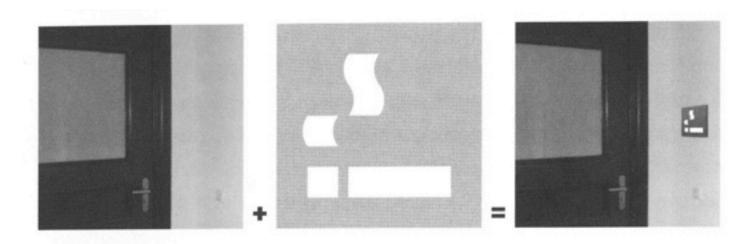


Surroundings A door

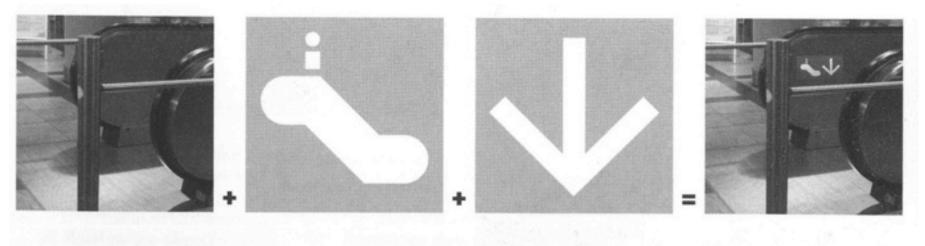
Icon A fire extinguisher

Symbol Square and red

Indication: Behind this door is a fire extinguisher in case of fire

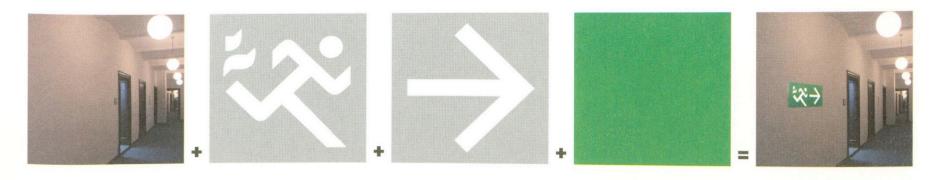


Surroundings The door of a room Icon Burning cigarette Smoking room



Surroundings An escalator

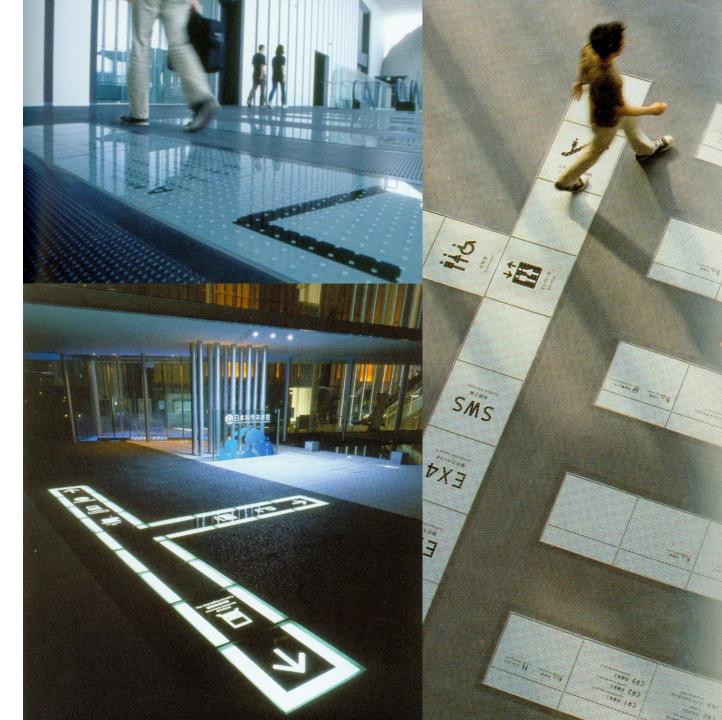
lcon An escalator Symbol An arrow This escalator is going down



Surroundings A corridor **Icon** Person running away from fire Symbol An arrow Symbol Square and green

Indication: In an emergency, this is the direction to take





National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation Tokyo Japan

Pragmatics The manner in which the receiver interprets the sign.

The Intention



Indicative

A person may smoke here, but he does not have to smoke. Up to the receiver what he does with information.



Imperative

The intention is to influence the receiver's behavior. Smoking is prohibited even if the receiver feels like smoking.



Suggestive

Represents an appeal to stop smoking for reasons of health, regardless of time and place. Building signs

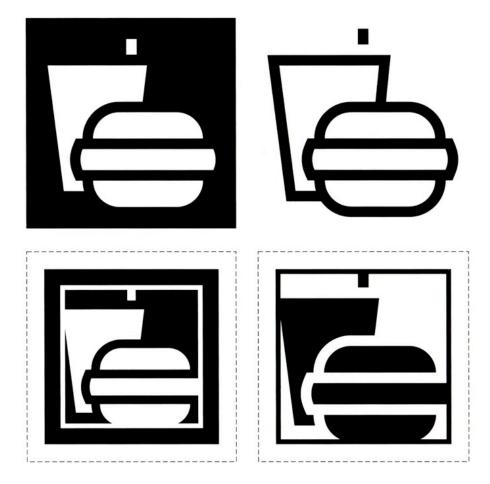




The Bearer

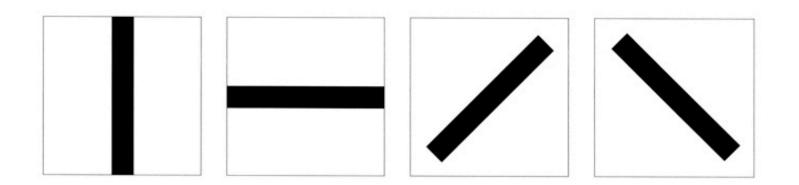
The bearer is whatever holds the pictogram.

The landscape format reinforces the direction in which the symbol is going. The circular lamp reinforces the indicative message.



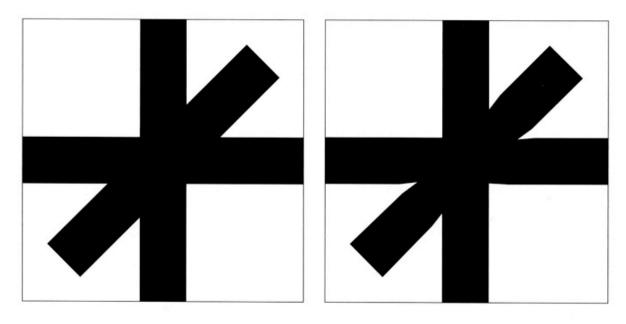
The Format

A free standing pictogram only needs a protective area to separate it from surrounding elements. A pictogram with a background also needs an inner protective area.

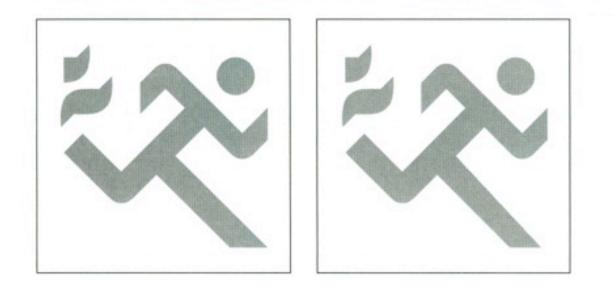


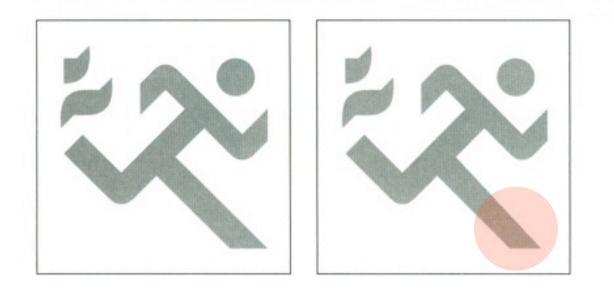
The Visual Balance

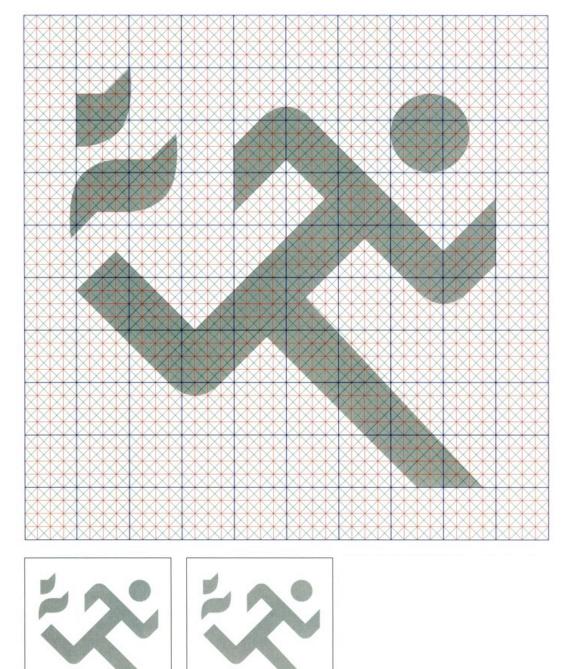
A vertical bar looks longer than a horizontal bar. A diagonal bar should appear shorter than a vertical or horizontal bars.

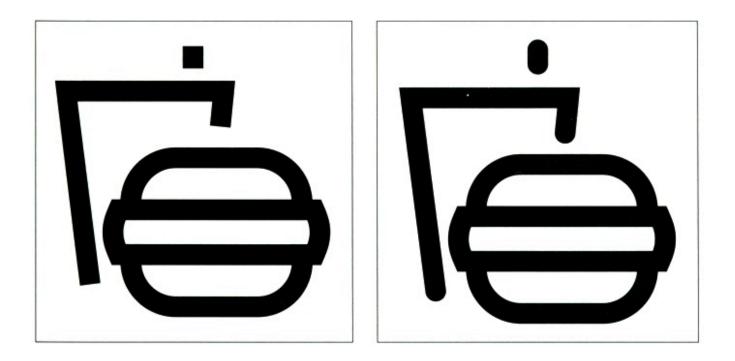


If several bars intersect, the crossing point puts excessive weight on the positive form. It seems too thick or too black. The negative space between the intersecting bars needs to be enlarged in order to re-establish the balance between positive and negative.



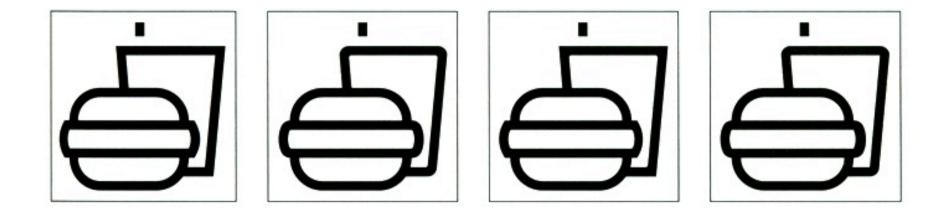






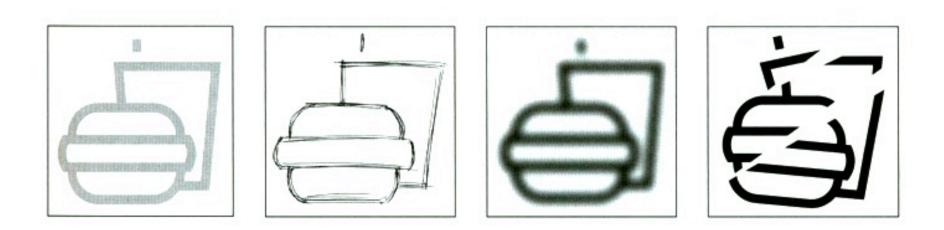
Line Endings

Using open forms means that there are more line endings. The endings could be rounded or squared off.



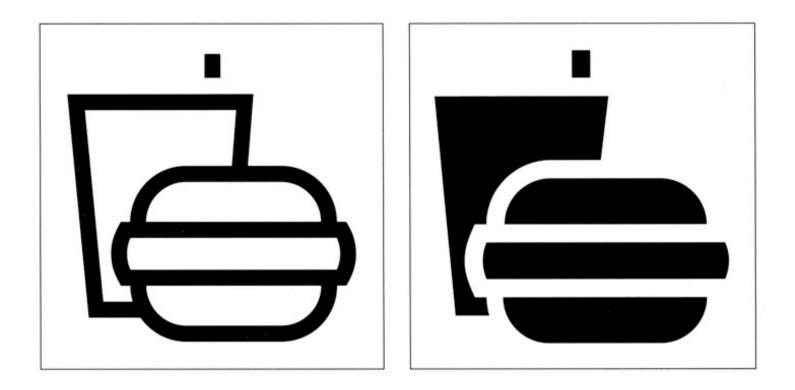
Corners

Both inner and outer corners may be either rounded or squared off.



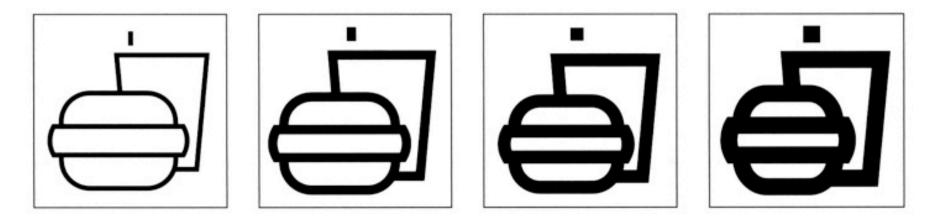
Styles

The designs could be faded, sketched, blurred or fragmented. Creates a big visual impact.



Structure

Shapes could be empty, fully or partially filled.



Line thickness

Thinner lines may not have enough visibility. Thick lines could overwhelm the negative space and affects recognizability.







Visualizing prohibition

Traffic signs have made us associate round and red with prohibition, even without crossing through the motif of the pictogram.



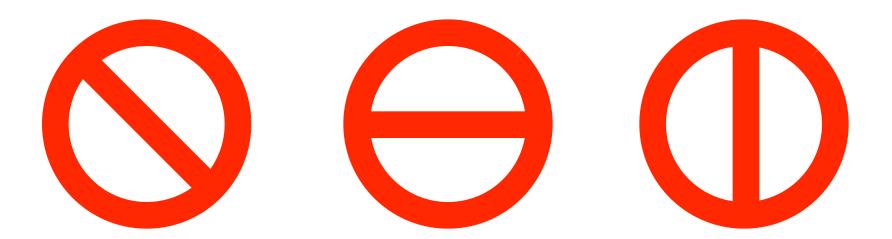
Crossing out

Method of visualizing a ban.



Red, round, and crossed out

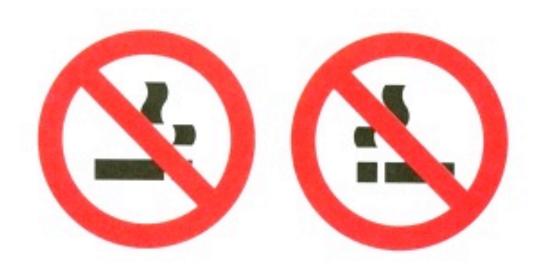
A prohibitive sign with an additional line has a heavier and more urgent impact.



Prohibition

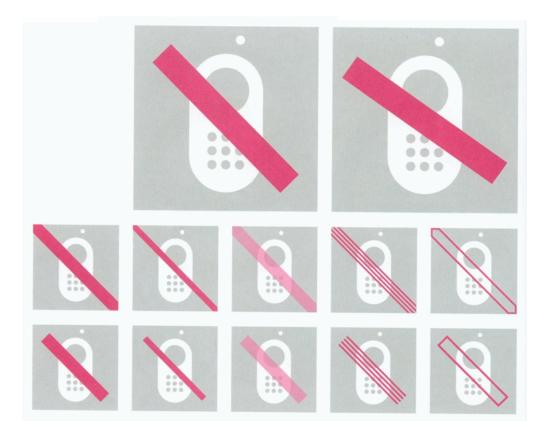
Diagonal lines are best suited to indicate prohibition. Horizontal and vertical lines could suggest a division.





Mirror image of the motif

Crossing out a pictorial motif can reduce the ability for people to recognize the sign. Recognition could be restored through mirroring image.



Visualization of the diagonal

Provided that the prohibition is clear, a thinner diagonal can enhance the motif. A transparent diagonal can help to make the motif stand out.



Complex or multiple messages

Each message should be visualized through its own pictogram. Otherwise there is a risk that individual messages could get lost or be misunderstood. SIGNS

Examples



This old motif for the 'footpath' sign had to be changed – not for the sake of modernization, but because the man in the hat holding hands with the little girl suggests a possible abduction rather than a father taking his daughter for a walk.



German traffic signs

- 1 Pedestrian path
- 2 Entry to pedestrian zone
- 3 End of pedestrian zone
- 4 Pedestrian and cycle route
- 5 Segregated cycle and pedestrian route
- 6 Segregated pedestrian and cycle route
- 7 Cycle path
- 8 Pedestrian crossing
- 9 Underpass or footbridge
- 10 Horse-riding path



24

- 1 Travel centre. information desk 2 Ticket-cancelling machine 3 Ticket sales with EC card 4 Ticket sales with credit card **Ticket sales** 5 Service Team 6 7 Customs 8 Reservations 9 Arrow: upwards or straight on 10 Meeting point 11 Service point 12 First Class 13 Station/Train 14 Children to be held by the hand 15 Luggage trolley 16 Luggage trolley can be taken up escalator 17 Luggage trolley can be taken down escalator 18 Waiting-room 19 Locker 20 Luggage conveyor belt 21 No luggage trolleys
- 22 Left luggage
- 23 Do not overload luggage trolley going up
- 24 Do not overload luggage trolley going down

Deutsche Bahn AG

A system for German railway company. The thin white line around the outside help the sign to stand out against the surrounding.



Pictures giving general directions have a yellow background.

Red indicates measures to counter dangers.



The blue background symbolizes facilities for the disabled.

Pictograms denoting protection from danger have a green background.



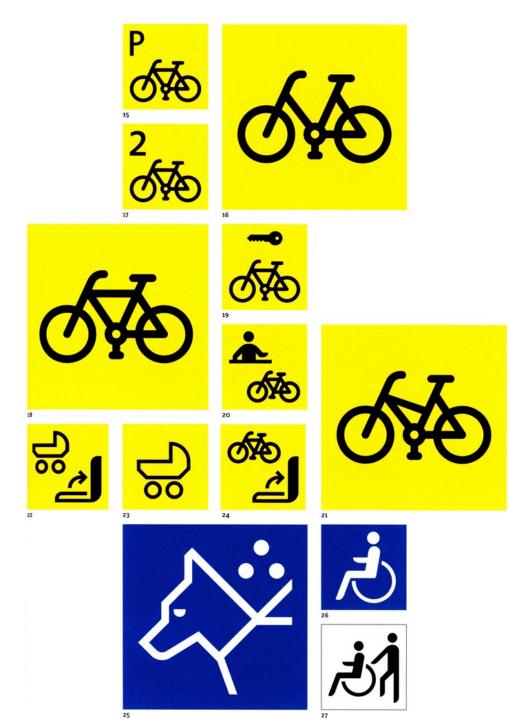
Company signs have a grey background.



Berlin Transport Services

A pictogram system created by Meta Design Berlin in 1993. Introduced a five-color system and consistent directional representations.







Helicopter pad 5 6 Arrivals 7 Spectators 8 Airport 9 Airport 10 Customs 11 Passports 12 Waiting area with flight announcements 13 Waiting area 14 Lecture hall 15 Conference room 16 Sauna 17 Lounge 18 Motorway 19 Car park 20 Park & Ride 21 Petrol station

1

3

Departures Customs 2

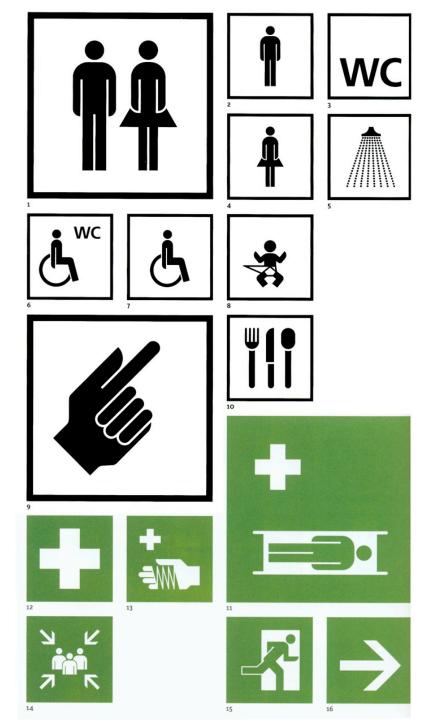
EU citizens

4 Non-EU citizens

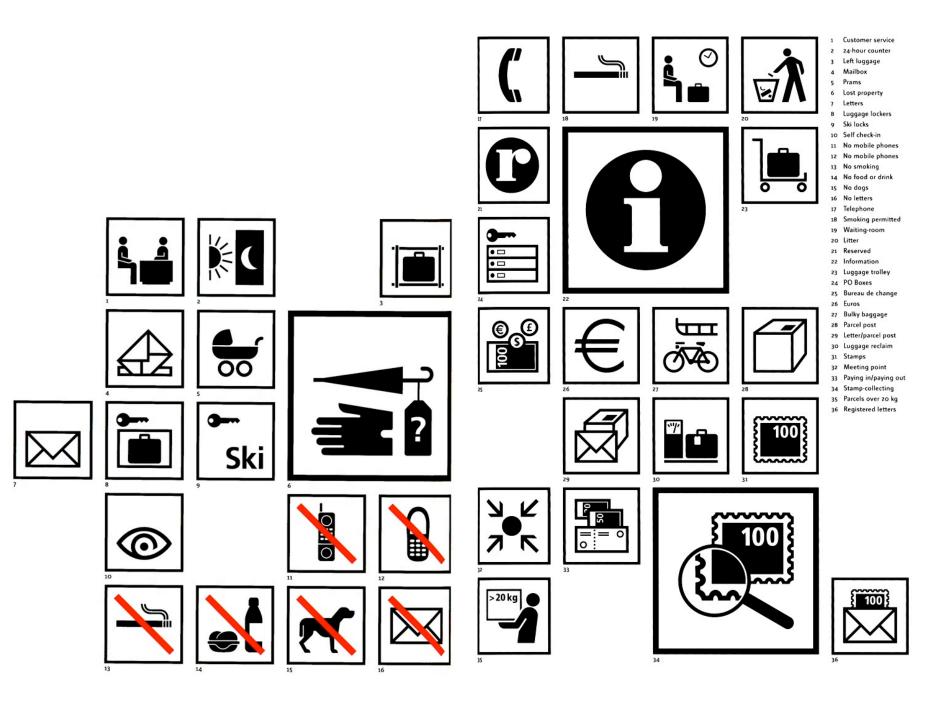
- 22 Car rental
- 23 Car rental 24 Supervised car park
- 25 Taxis

Düsseldorf Airport

An extended pictogram system created by Meta Design Berlin.



Swiss Post A system designed by Designalltag Zurich.

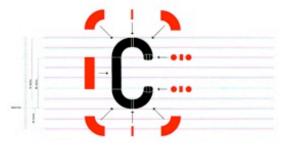


Cologne/Bonn Airport

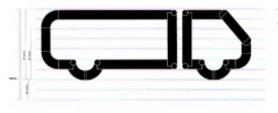
Designed by Integral, Paris. Both signs and type incorporated the same structures and basic forms.



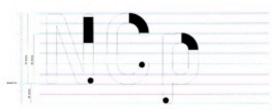
The typeface gave rise to thirteen basic elements, the majority of which are arcs of different unit sizes, along with two different types of line.



We can see from the letter C that letters are composed of three basic elements combined: arc, line and dot.



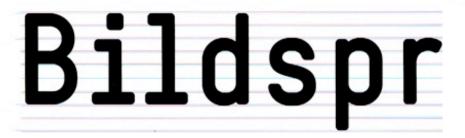
The pictograms are all composed of the same basic elements, and thus harmonize with the script.

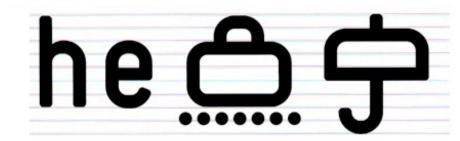


These basic elements are used in all the letters. The only difference lies in the radius of the arcs.



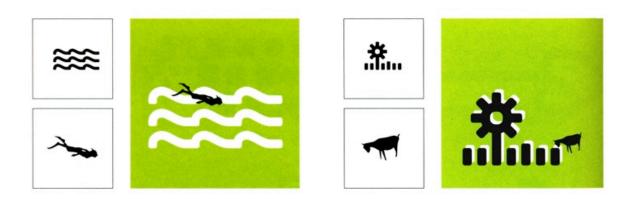
By combining the different elements, all kinds of pictograms can be devised.





















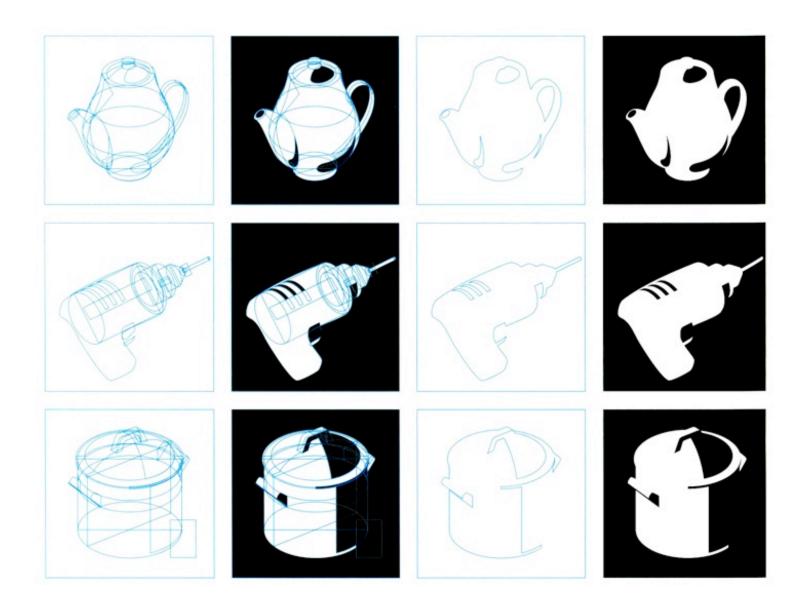






Pacific Bell - Yellow Pages

Visual guidelines by Michael Renner and Joachim Müller-Lancé, to illustrate the different themes of Yellow Pages.



Brown glass Wine bottles **Zurich Waste Disposal** 2 Broken glass Window glass 4 Designed by Designalltag Zurich Household rubbish 5 Aluminium Tinplate Paper 8 Papier Karton Cardboard 9 Papier Carta Carton Cartone 10 Data-processing paper 9 Poison 11 Garden compost 12 Wood 13 14 Water pollutants 15 Compost 16 Cooking oil Gift 17 Motor oil 18 PVC Poison 19 Polystyrene Veleno **EDV-Papier** 20 Polythene Papier continu Carta continua 11 7dl Ø ØØ Wasser-Glas braun Weinflaschen Bruchglas Gartenabraum Schadstoffe Holz Verre brun Vetro marrone Bouteilles à vin Bottiglie di vino Verre brisé Vetro frantumato Déchets de jardin Rifiuti di giardino Bois Legno Polluants aquatiques Tossici idrici 3 13 14 Kompost Speiseöl Fensterglas Motorenöl Verre à vitres Vetro di finestre Déchets compostables Rifiuti compostabili Huiles de cuisine Olio commestibile Huiles de moteurs Olio per motori 16 17 Alu (R) ß (R) PVC EPS PE Kehricht Déchets Polyethylen-Rifiuti Polyvinylchlorid Aluminium Weissblech Styropor Folien Aluminium Alluminio Polychlorure de vinyle Cloruro di polivinile Polystyrène Polistirolo Films polyéthyléne Fogli di polietilene Fer-blanc Latta

7

18

19

20

Sto AG

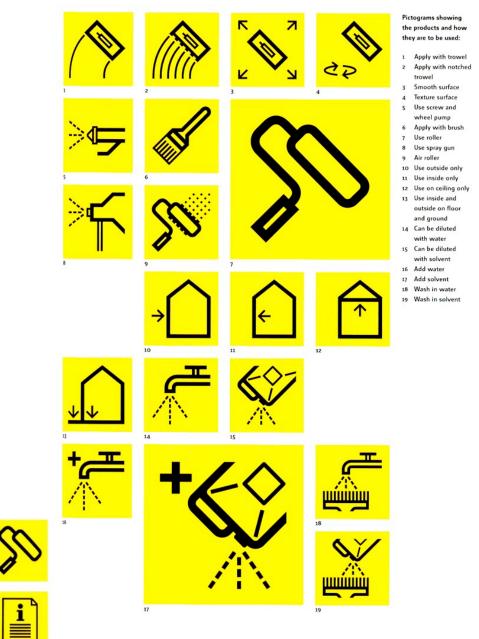
Sto

D-79780 Stale

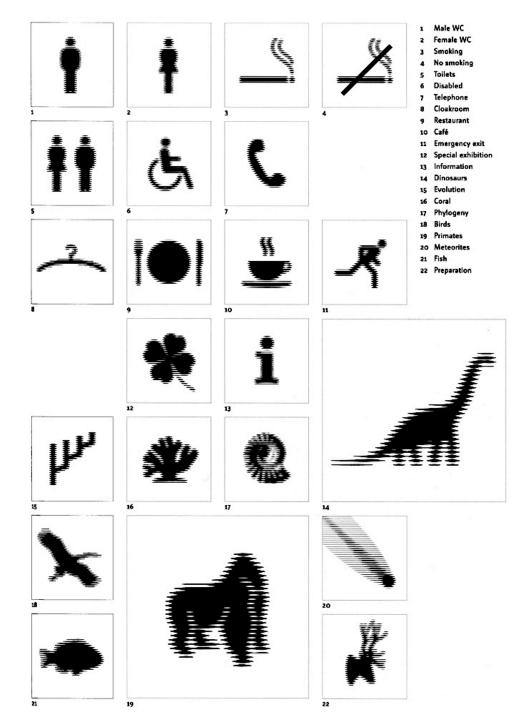
A product label system designed by Meta Design for Sto AG, a major manufacturer of building materials and paint. Reduced multilingual instructions.

> 10% max.



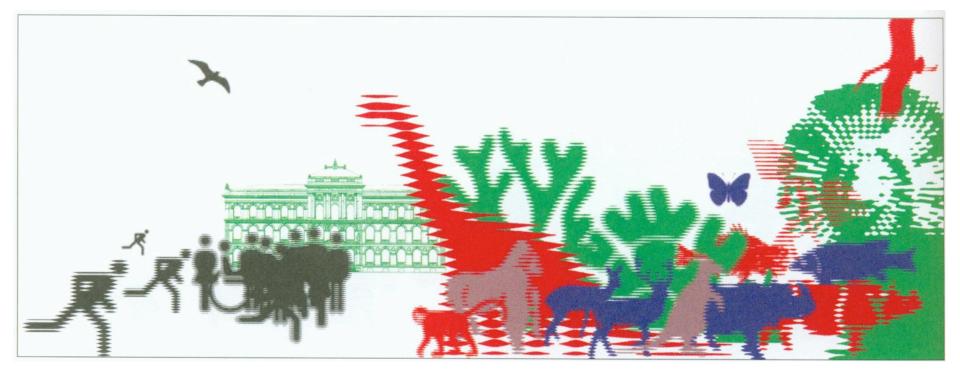






Natural History Museum Berlin

Designed by Mohn Design, Berlin. A dynamic movement that varies according to the distance at which one is standing.









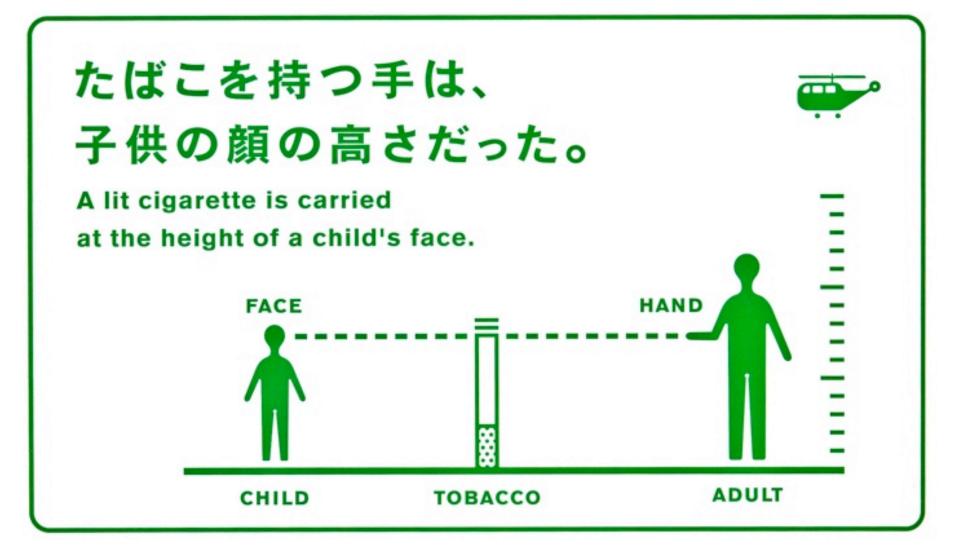






SIGNS APPLIED

Illustrative diagrams













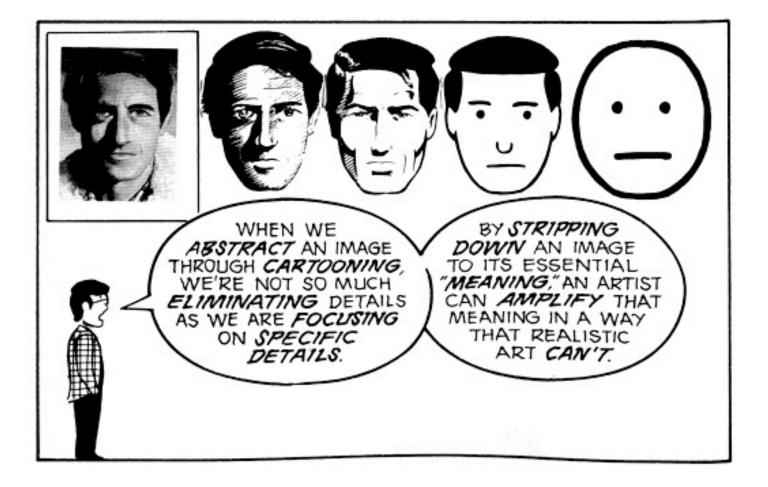


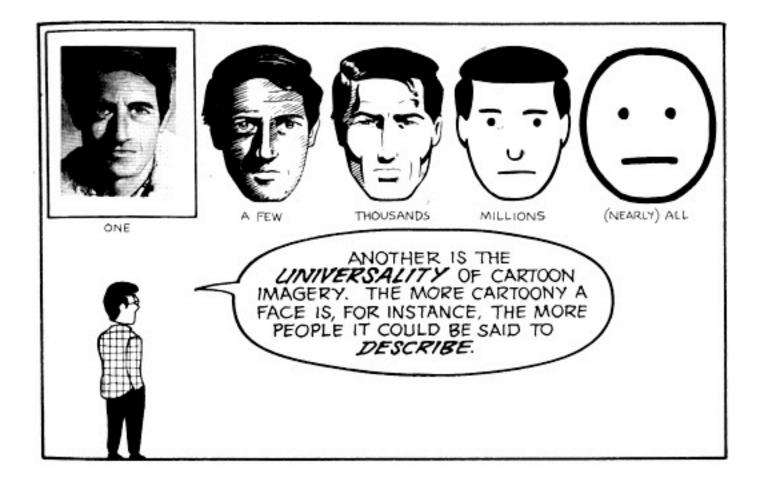




Amplification through simplification

[McCloud, 1994]

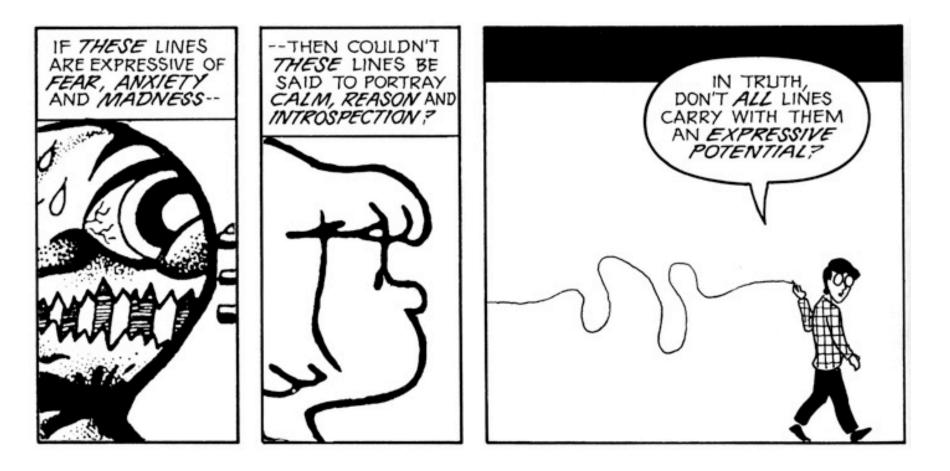


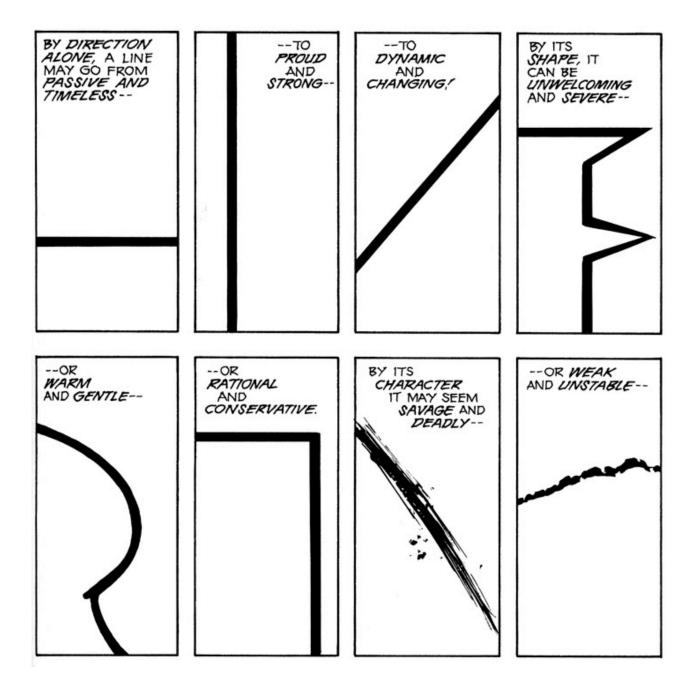












SYNAESTHESIA — PERCEPTION, THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE 19

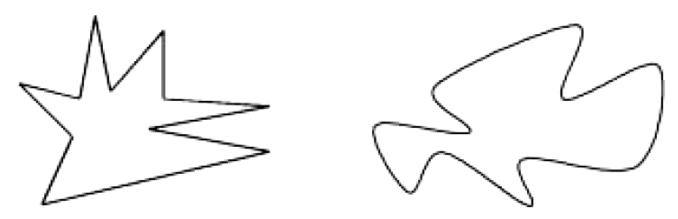
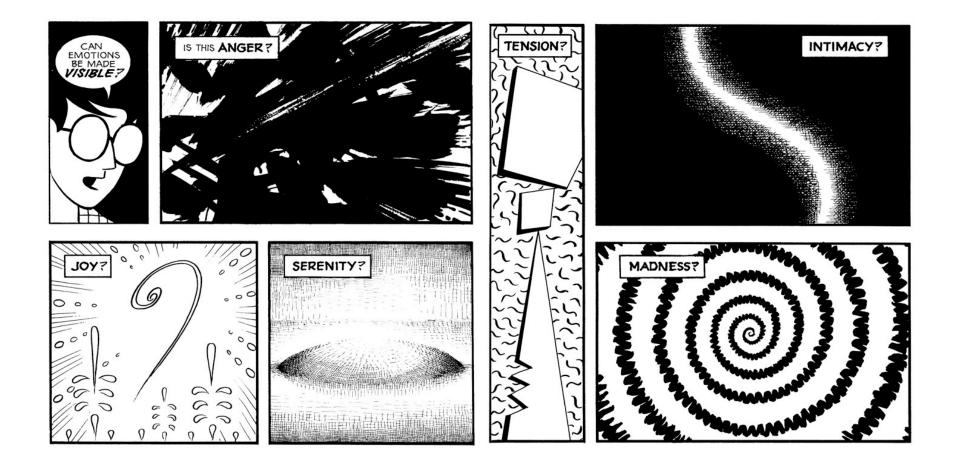
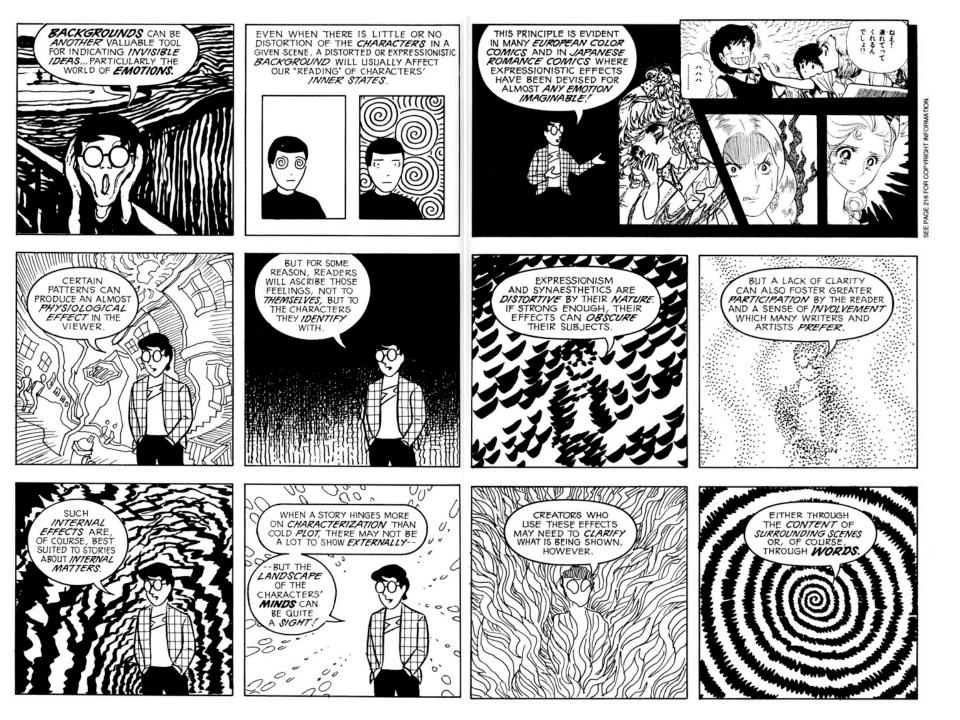


Figure 7. Demonstration of kiki and bouba. Because of the sharp inflection of the visual shape, subjects tend to map the name kiki onto the figure on the left, while the rounded contours of the figure on the right make it more like the rounded auditory inflection of bouba.

Wolfgang Köhler (1929) figure from Ramachandran, V.S. & Hubbard, E.M. (2001)







- Symbolic - Iconic - Indexical

Pictograms

Pictorial representations. Represent complex facts through visual carriers of meaning.



lcons

Iconographic representations. Represent any kind of object or action, most often in computer context (folder, tools, moods).





Logos

A graphical element (a set of symbols and typeface) for forming a trademark or brand. 



Icons The free spirits of the sign world. Greater freedom of design.



Pictogram



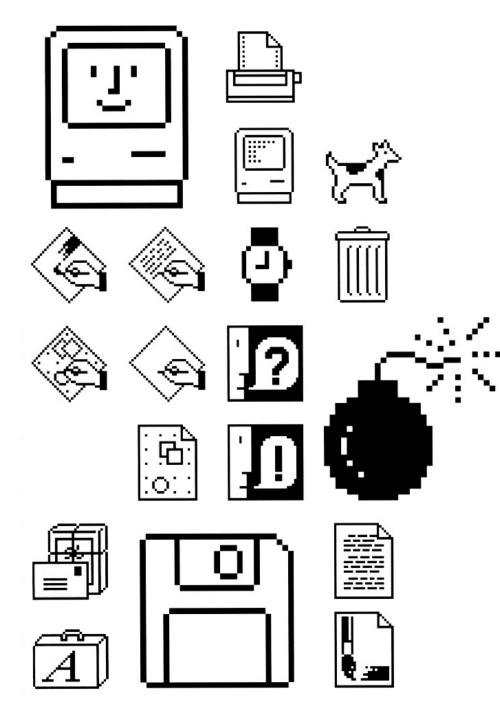
lcon



Pictogram



lcon



by Susan Kare (1980's) from *Pictograms, Icons & Signs* (Abdullah & Hübner, 2006)





acurity

9



by Meta Design, San Francisco from *Pictograms, Icons & Signs* (Abdullah & Hübner, 2006)



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Pictographic and ideographic logos Typograms

Logos Pictographic Ideographic

Pictographic logos

Signs as pictograms which pinpoint an idea or message, in a graphically reduced form.



034.01 phunk



034.02 Tsuyoshi Kusano



034.03 phunk



P.

034.05 Tsuyoshi Kusano



034.09 tronics



034.10 Tsuyoshi Kusano

034.06 jum









034.11 MASA Colectivo Gráfico

034.04 Power Graphixx



034.08 MASA Colectivo Gráfico



034.12 Sweden

Ideographic logos

Abstract signs that convey a feeling, a form, a movement, an idea. Their content and meaning is not revealed at a glance, but requires a certain "willingness to read."



045.01 MK12



045.02 onlab



045.03 FORMGEBER

045.04 FORMGEBER

Type as type Pictorial type Type as pictures

Type as type

Lettering developed from existing typefaces, consistently avoiding additional graphic elements and other interventions.



080.13 DSOS1

080.14 Power Graphixx

080.15 Method

080.16 Power Graphixx

Type as type

<u>eye</u>fi

088.01 OCKTAK

OYSTER

088.02 Luca Ionescu Design

MKK

088.03 CODE

JJN SUUS

088.05 SAKAMOTO

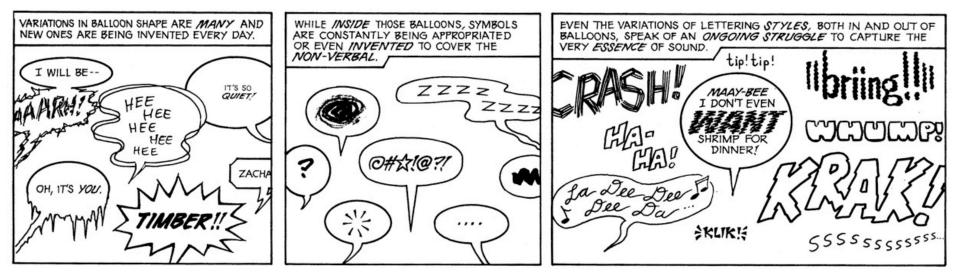


088.04 CODE





088.06 CODE



Pictorial type

Typograms in which additional graphic elements communicate content.





149.01 316tn

149.02 344 Design



149.03 WG Berlin

cherise

149.05 Forme



149.04 Hendrik Hellige



149.06 augenbluten

Pictorial type

S







142.01 DSOS1

142.02 MASA Colectivo Gráfico

142.03 DSOS1

142.04 DED Associates



142.05 Machine

142.06 Sweden

142.07 John J. Candy Design

NISION

142.08 büro destruct







raute

142.09 Machine

142.10 büro destruct

142.11 Niels Meulman

142.12 Rinzen

Type as pictures

Typograms that gain their significance from the free approach to characters, the typography broken down to the point of illegibility.



165.01 Rinzen



165.02 Luco Ionescu Design







165.04 Power Graphixx



165.05 Matthias Hübner

165.06 Luca Ionescu Design

165.07 Bionic System

HEKTIK JICTILIJ

165.08 Power Graphixx





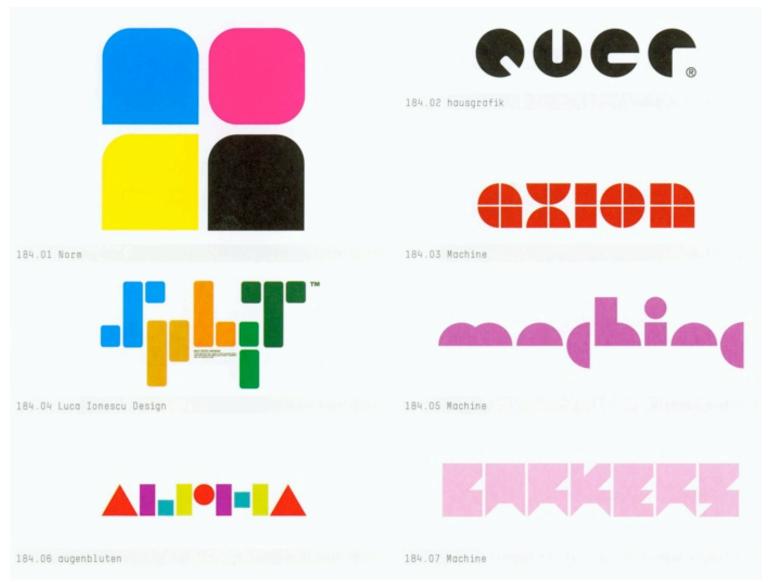
165.09 Luca Ionescu Design 165.10 Luca Ionescu Design

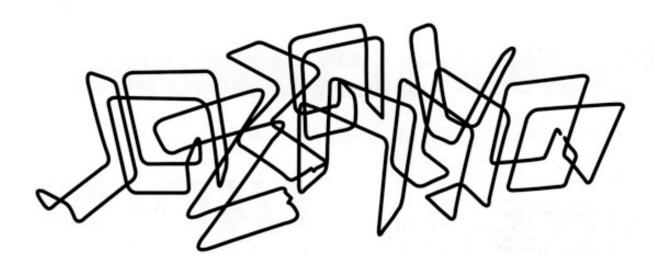
165.11 LEVEL1



165.12 onlab

Type as pictures







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Logos

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Pictographic and ideographic logos

Typograms



SURF

Assignment 5 Design a new pictogram/logo/icon for:

- I School
- Your school or program (non-I School)
- Your own project

Be clear what type of sign you are designing (e.g., pictogram, ideographic logo, type as picture, etc.) and describe how your sign stands for the signified.

Post your design and description of your design on the web by Saturday 28th. You will present your design at the workshops on March 30th.