

WOW

2

Richard Emery



THE CREATIVE

Stoke
2

江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章

THE CREATIVE



*Communicating with Brush and Pen
in Graphic Design*

Richard Emery



ROCKPORT PUBLISHERS • ROCKPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

Copyright © 1994 by Rockport Publishers, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission of the copyright owners. All images in this book have been reproduced with the knowledge and prior consent of the artists concerned and no responsibility is accepted by producer, publisher or printer for any infringement of copyright or otherwise, arising from the contents of this publication. Every effort has been made to ensure that credits accurately comply with information supplied.

First published in the United States of America by:

Rockport Publishers, Inc.
146 Granite Street
Rockport, Massachusetts 01966
Telephone: (508) 546-9590
Fax: (508) 546-7141
Telex: 5106019284 ROCKORT PUB

First Published in Germany by Rockport Publishers, Inc. for:

Nippan
Nippon Shuppan Hanbai Deutschland GmbH
Krefelder Str. 85
D-40549 Dusseldorf
Telephone: (0211) 504 8089
Fax: (0211) 504 9326

Distributed to the book trade and art trade in the U.S. and Canada by:

North Light, an imprint of
F & W Publications
1507 Dana Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45207
Telephone: (513) 531-2222

Other Distribution by:

Rockport Publishers, Inc.
Rockport, Massachusetts 01966

ISBN 1-56496-078-1

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Designer: Richard Emery
Production Manager: Barbara States
Production Assistant: Pat O'Maley

Printed in Singapore

Contents



Foreword	7
----------	---

Freehand:

Viability in the Graphics Business	8
------------------------------------	---

The Art Speaks For Itself 19

Paul Shaw	20
Colleen	26
Sherry Bringham	32
John Sayles	38
Edward Vartanian	44
Julian Waters	48
Jane Dill	54
Terry Louie	60
Mike Quon	64
Daniel Riley	68
Jean Evans	74
Claude Dieterich A.	78
Larry Brady	82
Ivan Angelic	88
John Stevens	94
Richard Lipton	100
James Fedor	104
Georgia Deaver	110
Frank Riccio	114
Susan Skarsgard	118
Joey Hannaford	122
Anthony Bloch	126
Nancy Culmone	132
Raphael Boguslav	138
Bonnie Spiegel	142
Sheila Waters	146
Brenda Walton	150
Iskra Johnson	154
Miscellany	159

Gallery	179
---------	-----

Index	190
-------	-----

Foreword



In the first volume of *The Creative Stroke*, the primary effort was to demonstrate just how inclusive the application of freehand graphics is in the communications industry. It can often intuitively touch the creative center of a problem more directly than any other method. It has a real connection to the inner reactive nature of the viewer. All this is shown again here in volume two.

One of the most interesting results of the first go-around was that each of the artists has such a wide range of expression. They show such diversity of style from situation to situation, and seem less interested in promoting a specific style than discovering appropriate and meaningful communication. Thus emerged a natural format for the content of a new volume, *The Creative Stroke 2*.

Two considerations immediately come to mind. First, many of the artists integrate their work through a wide range of media and must therefore make accommodations to the demands of production materials and specifications. The need to keep artwork within differing restrictions guarantees variety, and, since the hand is almost limitless in its possibilities, this need certainly does not seem to be a constraint.

Secondly, they are exposed to products and situations that are very different from each other both in imagery and in content. Though products and services can be placed in generalized categories, they still possess their separate identities and must be understood in that light.

As *The Creative Stroke 2* began to take shape, it became apparent that there was a need to invite the contributors to talk about not only the diversity of their expression but also the very process they use to produce their work. If, in fact, the results of their efforts have an intuitive nature, then it must also be true that the process of creating them follows along the same subjective path. Since each artist has a distinctive approach to creativity, a questionnaire was drawn up and presented to them. It discussed the basic format for an article concerning the design process from beginning to end.

The results from this invitation were both remarkable and illuminating. No two artists revealed exactly the same philosophy or approach to the creative process, and yet what they reported seemed to genuinely support the editorial scheme of the article. Many of them decried the efforts of those in the communications industry who attempt to reign in or dictate the end results of their efforts. They talked of sometimes feeling constrained to the point of losing the personal touch that their talent offers. Yet these experiences did not diminish their commitment to the real challenge of their art.

Sometimes the constraints on creativity come from shared production, where an artist has only a piece of the puzzle and has little or no influence on the remaining parts. Though a certain sterility can creep into the art, many of the respondents stated that shared creativity was not necessarily a problem. If they were included in the overall problem-solving strategy, their work could be successfully integrated and their talents fully utilized.

As you proceed on through this book you will be amazed and delighted at the successful integration of the freehand artists' work into the overall design strategies. They have been selected for just this reason, and their work truly affirms the premise of this volume: flexibility, adaptability, and the viable nature of freehand expression.

We hope that you will be inspired to a greater appreciation of the world of graphic design, or to a new and expanded approach to your own artistry. Much has been said and much has been written, but nothing can compare with seeing the results.

Richard S. Emery
President and Creative Director
Richard Emery Design, Inc.



Viability in the Graphics Business

The following article was compiled from conversations with and questions presented to some of today's best known freehand artists and calligraphers. Much gratitude goes out to them for their contributions.

Who knows? The basic impulse to write/draw comes from places inside us that no one can really explain." This was the response of John Stevens to the question of motivation in his work. His statement

reaches to the core of what is unique about immersing oneself in the art of freehand expression, and why it is so important to the communications industry. Subjectivity, intuitive responses, felt rather than rationalized impulses: these all seem to be common grounds for meaningful freehand expression and therefore provide an answer to where artists get their creative ideas.

But this is just the beginning. If we are to understand the significance of freehand graphics as a communications tool, we must examine the whole process. The full reach of successful graphic communications extends well beyond the first subjective touch. There is more to an idea than just impulse. "The 'product' is a visual one," says Nancy Culmone. "So many decisions can only be made visually." This then presupposes a need for a flexible yet working structure to realize the completion of an idea. The following generalized structural conditions are suggested for approaching freehand graphics:

- 1. Motivation**
- 2. Exploration**
- 3. Comprehension**
- 4. Experimentation**
- 5. Actualization**

Motivation refers to what excites and motivates the designer to use the freehand approach to solve graphic design problems. *Exploration* is the activity used to discover the true nature of a problem and to search for its definition. *Comprehension* means fully understanding the results of this exploration and developing a workable articulation to apply to the continuing process. *Experimentation* refers to the actual hands-on application of this knowledge through various approaches to freehand expression. *Actualization* is the time needed for final decision-making, isolation of the appropriate application, and the finished rendering of the results.

Many artists and designers will find that they fit comfortably within these conditions. Others would wish to change the sequence or combine two or more of them. Nevertheless, this set of conditions provides a springboard for understanding just how they work and how they produce their wonderfully creative and original ideas.

Again responding to **Motivation**, John Stevens says, "Apparently drawing/mark-making is a language we artists feel compelled to become fluid in. Without such expression, something feels 'wrong'. It is as if we are moving toward becoming fluent in a yet undiscovered but ancient language inside us which requires constant practice, awareness, etc." It is as though we are discussing an innate part of the artist and not a part of some conscious reality. This is perhaps what ultimately separates out the freehand

artist and defines the difference from other design approaches.

"There is a nuance of voice," says Jean Evans, "that's not available otherwise." Her use of the word "voice" seems to validate what this discussion presumes, that whatever processes the different freehand artists follow to complete their work, it all begins somewhere in a common search for "voice," some personal intuitive expression that will communicate throughout the development of the art.

"Freehand graphics brings a living and animated character to language capable of expressing the concept or value through the immediate interpretation of the artist." Thus Anthony Bloch describes his feelings about graphics and language. Communication must come first from some immediate subjective response before the translation to

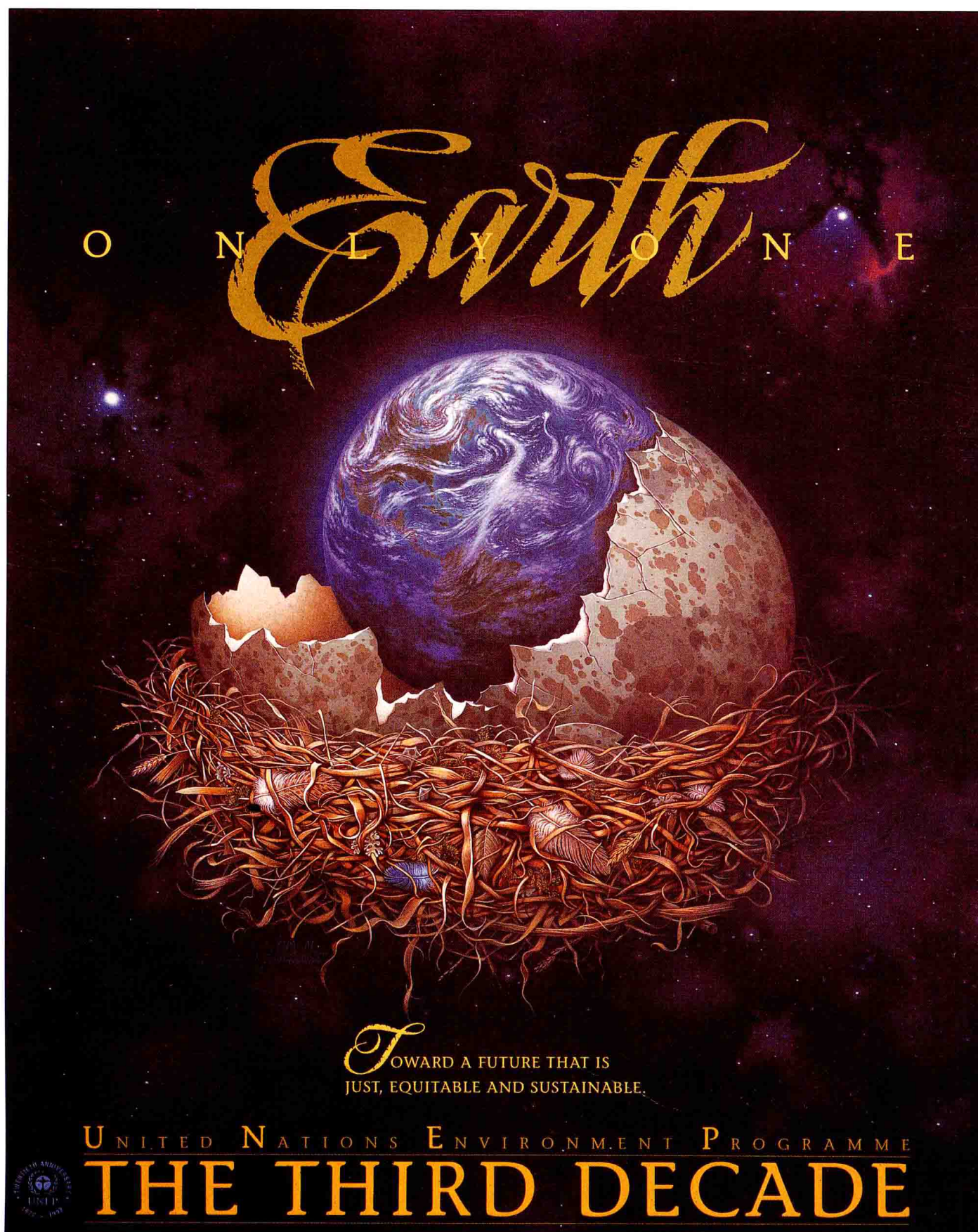


This design was created for an Argentine graphic design magazine, *tipoGráfica*, by Claude Dieterich A. Through design he has given these bits of calligraphy a great sense of freedom.

graphics takes place. The very nature of this response is well defined when the artist Colleen says, "...the sentiment I hear most frequently at the juncture of the artist/client relationship is 'I'm looking for a human touch.' What better, more unique solution; uniqueness wedded to strength and beauty will certainly capture and hold a

greater audience." Certainly the "human touch" is what arrives at the very beginning and is what motivates the artist's creativity. Terry Louie adds, "The human heart responds instantly to human touch."

Basic human responses are triggered by this touch. An example is response to *movement*. Joey Hannaford says, "It



Iskra Johnson produced the freeband title for this poster for UNEP. It has a direct relationship with the illustration by Braldt Bralds

is one of our most intrinsic characteristics as humans, whose sight is our sense of primary importance, to be attracted to anything that moves. As a college student I often attended parties where a television was left on, the sound turned all the way down, music on the stereo blasting. My friends and I would sit in a room, having entire conversations unrelated to anything happening on the television screen, but still with all eyes glued to the motion on the screen. We couldn't help but follow the motion with our eyes. I feel that handcrafted elements within graphic design serve the same purpose. The movement implied by a fluid or rough line, obviously handcrafted, creates a visceral communication, many times subliminal in its impact, but always drawing the eye to follow its movement. . . . I usually turn to hand lettering as a way of introducing movement and energy into a design that has become slightly static due to a very conservative use of type within a grid."

Though this reaches into the next suggested step in the process, it seems that the human response mechanism is also touched subjectively by the experience of contemporary living. In discussing the artist/client relationship, Paul Shaw states,

"These clients often need only a single word, a phrase or set of headlines. These words are inevitably described in either vague or ambiguous terms: they must be fresh, contemporary, youthful, unique, new, spontaneous, etc." This is where the intuitive hand can come to full flower, creating real but subjective communication with a few appropriate strokes of the brush or pen.

Another motivational pull seems to be the need for growth and change. Marsha Brady, in discussing her calligraphic work, says, "Many times the freehand, expressive solution may stem from attempting to break from the cliché, or just playing with the tools." One's personal artistic growth may well be a major motivation and a catalyst for direction and artistic identity. Very much related to this idea is a comment made by Susan Skarsgard. "In my own personal work (not commercial) my motivation is usually quite different. I may choose to undertake a project based on the inspiration of a meaningful text, or a technique that I would like to explore, or using materials and tools that I have never tried



This design produced for the Type Directors Club displays the wonderful freehand talent of Mike Quon. The strokes create the negative space allowing the letter form to appear.

before, or a reproduction method that is unfamiliar to me. . . . That is why I value and always strive to devote time each year to making art that is for me and my own goals alone. I believe it enhances and effects the quality of my commercial work as well. I see it as creative research."

It follows that once motivated the artist will then seek out the true nature of the problem to be solved. This could be called the area of **Exploration**, a time to search for some meaningful definition of content. "To me," says John Stevens, "exploration is working with a problem until it gets lodged into our subconscious where real inspiration takes place. Then a unique point of view transcending simple logic or linear approach is possible." When working commercially it involves client discussion and questioning.



Daniel Riley, of Riley Design Associates, shows how a simple use of the freehand stroke successfully frames a piece of art and adds focus to this delightful T-shirt design.

"In trying to elicit more information to clear up any vagueness and ambiguity," John continues, "this process sometimes yields 'the answer' within minutes or, at other times, it takes many hours."

Exploration can mean different things to different people. To reach the same kinds of objectives, artists may employ thinking and questioning, as Jean Evans says, "with in-depth conversation to get to the heart of the project," or, as Larry Brady suggests, "Intellectualizing visual problems can often lead to predictable results. One does what one knows, or what is expected. It is the exploration of ideas with materials in hand, being shaped by hand that can lead to exciting discoveries and thereby to better ways of defining the problem, which usually provides the most interesting and original solution." It is obvious that any approach to exploration that inspires and stimulates the artist is valid and in fact demonstrates the special nature of the very process we are discussing. Nancy Culmone says,

"Exploration revolves around the 'purpose' and uses of the final product. Is it a logo or a letterhead? Intimate or public — *why* is this needed." She is addressing the concern of all artists and designers at this stage of the process, and it must certainly be a part of discovering the true nature of the problem to be solved.

Also, there is the commitment of the artist to the task. "By constantly thinking of a design problem," says Terry Louie, "even while riding a bus or sifting through related material, an idea emerges." Colleen says, "Sometimes I forget that simply sitting and closing my eyes — awake, dreaming — can assist greatly in this compilation and sifting stage. I do find this not-hands-on time is when it's O.K. to stop, think about the job at hand and let possible solutions arise." Joey Hannaford makes an interesting observation on the commitment and integrity of her designing when she says, "The active energy of hand lettering is not always appropriate. I have to evaluate this seriously within my own

thought processes, as I want to be sure that I am not turning to a hand lettering solution merely as a crutch or as something that I prefer to do for my own enjoyment, rather than for the integrity of the piece." This does not downplay the importance of freehand expression, but merely demonstrates the commitment to honest appraisal and concern for the integrity of the final solution.

Sherry Bringham remarks, "With exploration comes discovery and definition, not only for the designer but also

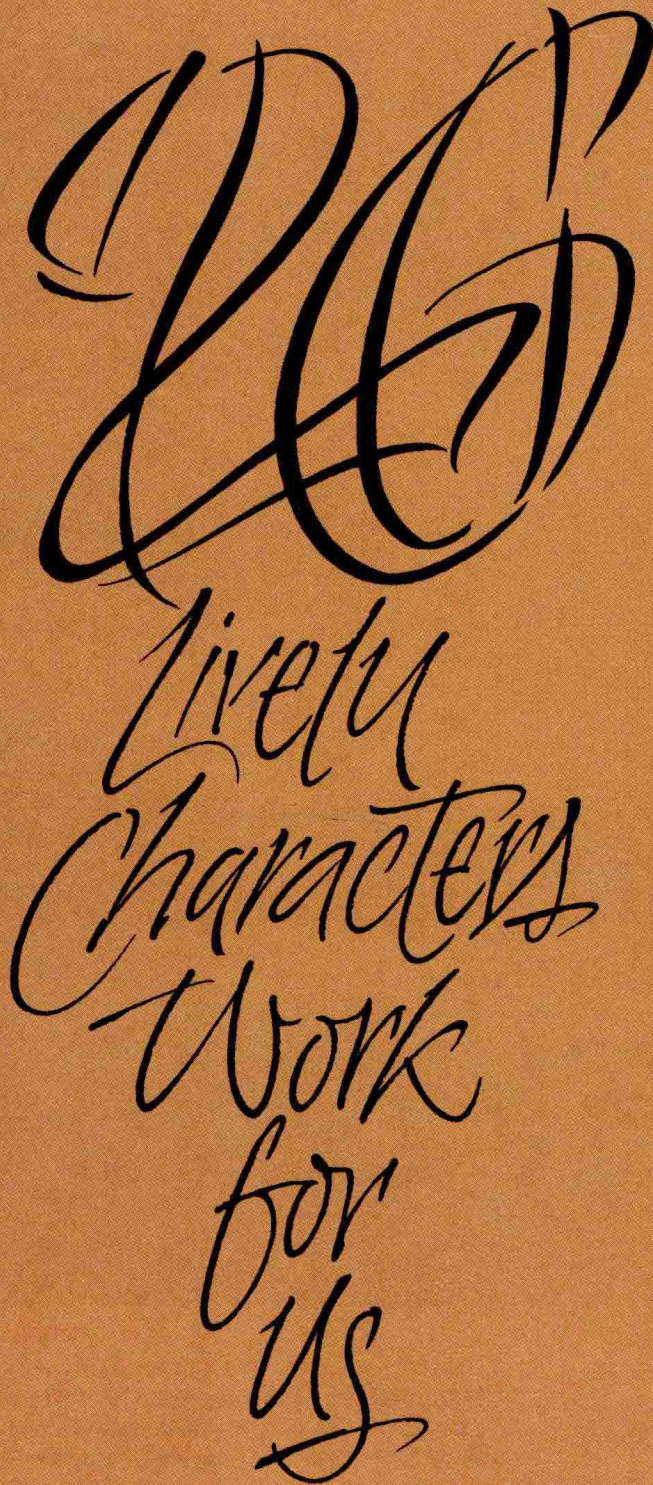
for the calligrapher. We often think we've taken something as far as it can go until we are pushed into a new catharsis, and then we find that this process is the source for new ideas."

"Comprehension is a never-ending learning experience," says Jane Dill. Sherry Bringham adds, "The big picture (comprehension) presumes that the designer understands the process." What they seem to be saying is that this is a critical spot in the evolution of an idea. When the artist

presumes to have a real grasp on the content, then she or he is accepting the risk to begin implementation. Concerning the risk factor, Colleen says, "I have a favorite quote on my drawing board. The words are Jay Maisel's (photographer) and must trust that something will come: 'Work hard, be a perfectionist and always be prepared to fail before you succeed.' The first two are easy for me. It's the last I need to be reminded of on an hourly basis."

This stage is not so much an involvement of time as it is representative of the moment an artist feels secure with the subjective content of the project. When comprehension is secure, articulation through trial and experimentation begins.

Experimentation is when the real fun and work begin. This means trying different expressions along with further variations on them. Joey Hannaford addresses this when she says, "At this state I will create a very rough version of the hand lettering, or hand-produced design element, scan it in, play



Lively
Characters
Work
for
us

In this spot for Hoffmann & Angelic Design, Ivan Angelic successfully produces the feel of "lively characters" with his bouncing script.

with position and scale and have a more specific idea of where I want the hand lettering to 'go'." Larry Brady also acknowledges this by saying, "The chance of arriving at a good solution to a problem is enhanced by the 'hands-on' exploration of many ideas and the process of evaluation as work progresses. Cross-fertilization reduces the chance of soporific designs and worn-out decisions."

"Experimentation to me," says John Stevens, "refers to the ongoing dialog we should keep of our work without thought to tangible results. It feeds the imagination as well as feeding on the imagination. Basically, it keeps your work from being derivative or *dry*. Experimentation is wet! Juicy!"

Since this was the area that received the most liberal response, the following is a list of some responses without comment. They provide an interesting comparison of differing ideas and styles while underscoring the common experience – having fun:

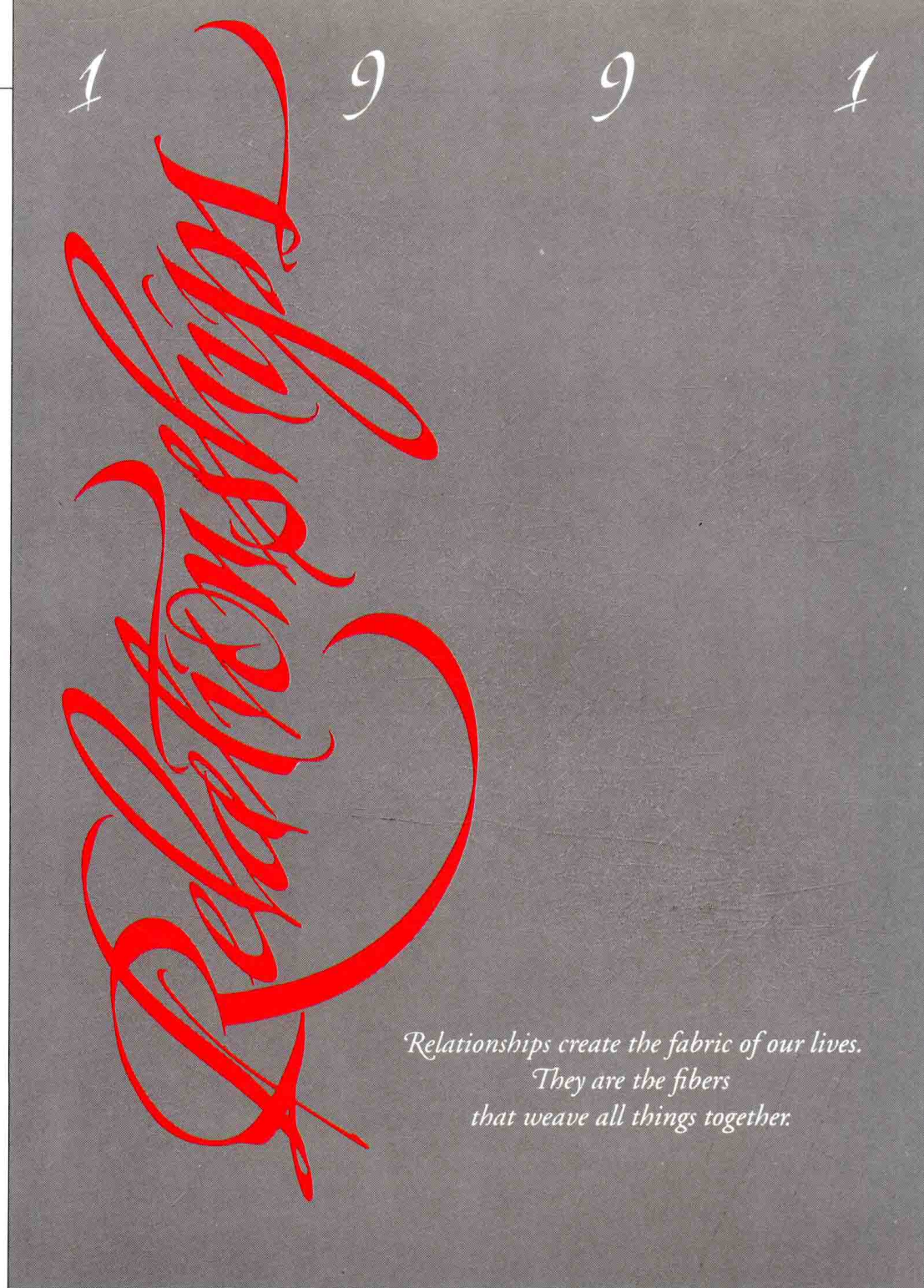
"The fun part! Using different tools and styles and papers (brush marker on paper towel for 'Melónge') and just playing at the rough stage – sometimes that energy can be captured at this stage and with very few refinements can become final art (see Julian's 'Relationships')."

– Jane Dill

"The externalization of concepts through the means of hand processes provides a vital element in the creative process. It puts distance between object and creator and allows for a more detached, unbiased view of the work in progress. Without the external form of our ideas to respond to, the feedback loop is severed and interrelationships cannot be discovered. Most importantly, the wonderful accidents that happen in this type of activity, which often result in exciting new solutions to design problems, would never happen."

– Larry Brady

"Experimentation leads to developing the overall idea. If the project is done for a client, usually a series of layouts are prepared for presentation. The calligraphy may be the key element or a small part of the project. It may be a wildly expressive piece for an art poster or an exact, totally legible part of a packaging design. Art projects allow the calligrapher certain freedoms, and often the piece works itself around the lettering; packaging projects and their size definitions bring their own rules. For instance, rough calligraphy is often put into several designs which go into



(top)

Julian Waters created the lettering design for this highly expressive cover for a calendar for S&S Graphics, Inc. The art director was Tony Fitch.

(bottom)

This rough spongy style was created by Jane Dill for a raspberry watermelon wine spritzer for Boku. (Design Firm: Source Inc., Art Director: Michael Livolf)



Alice B. Theatre presents

Camille

by Charles Ludlam

October 9 - November 7, 1993

Pay-What-You-Will Performance October 20

at the Ethnic Cultural Theatre
3940 Brooklyn Ave. N.E.

For tickets call 322-5423



Poster by Modern Dog
Printing by Two Dimensions

the computer, and letters may be pushed, pulled, extended, compressed, etc., to fit a certain space. The layout often returns barely recognizable, but the space and design are determined, and the calligrapher now works to perfect the rough computer image of his own work."

— Sherry Bringham

"If I've done my homework, I've generally got a nice set of self-articulated 'specs' for a job. They're like a sturdy, mental safety net, or a pair of crutches on which I can lean as I step up to this new task. Like most people, beginnings can stymie me; this safety net of givens (scale, style, use, attitude, color, etc.) can keep my visual space wide open allowing for tremendous freedom. Tools, too, play an integral part in fostering spontaneity, and right now — in the experimentation stage — I do not want my brain hampering the process.

"Now to begin. This is the exciting, lonely, and gratifying time. Once the process of working up concept roughs has begun, time must stop it. If I can stay at the board through the typical, stiff, initial sketches (yawn, don't I need to go downstairs for something — anything?! I'm completely exhausted and I've just had a night's sleep), if I can stay the anxiety and keep working, pretty soon the solutions are each demanding their own sheet of paper, one rising up before the last is quite done. A number of years ago Raphael Boguslav talked about beginning a project with an entire ream of large good quality paper at his side. That image was a wonderfully permissive one I continue to hold dear, as much energy goes into keeping the stern, nay-saying parents at bay during this stage."

— Colleen

"The product is a visual one — so many decisions can only be made visually, through visual thought — doing and looking depending on stage 3. This can be very subtle variations and experiments, or a great variety of extremes can be explored in the search for the right visual expression (how does one express peace or wetness or wild?). There are an infinite variety of solutions — sometimes it is just time to stop and choose."

— Nancy Culmone

Below is an excellent example of a "tortured" script to accompany the art on this theatre poster for the Alice B. Theatre. Michael Strassburger designed and illustrated this piece for the design firm Modern Dog.

“When the client looks at my samples, I like to get more than a simple yes or no. I like to know if any individual characters are problematical, how the lettering will fit the designer’s layout, if they want the letter distressed or rough-edged and so forth.

“Then, if the lettering is to be drawn or done with the broad-edged pen, I fine tune it with several tracing sketches prior to doing a finish. However, if it is a spontaneous script, I write out the word(s) over and over again before choosing the best one or creating the best one from several. (Spontaneity takes a lot of work!)”

— Paul Shaw

“The process of playing with an idea is important in either clarifying the intent of the piece or in creating happy accidents. The subtle nuances of line and what they convey sometimes entails making many, many versions of a word, for example, and then stepping back to evaluate which version contains all the meaning and the technical aspects that I am looking for. Sometimes when I am using this process, I almost want to shut off my conscious mind and let my hand create its own expression. The less analytical interference, the better. I usually try several different types of paper and if using a brush, I may try



John Stevens displays great freedom in this experimental script. The combination of the sweeping bold white strokes with the textured background creates a vibrant, arresting image that could only be achieved through the employment of the free hand.