

2

字体玩家

TYPE
PLAYER

王绍强 编著

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innovation shines through the gauze of the historical veil, no matter how heroic a position one has been ascribed.

Who knows what role the history books will assign designers active today in expanding the boundaries of visual language, particularly those most stalwart in exploring the realms of intercultural communication. Satya Rajpurohit, Peter Bil'ak, and Rajesh Kejriwal of the Indian Type Foundry are contemporary type designers in pursuit of communicative efficacy — their foundry is currently developing unified digital versions of all the major scripts in India: Bengali, Devanagari, Gujarati, Gurmukhi, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Tamil, and Telugu. These designers are pursuing a means of allowing unified communication within India and related areas utilizing a formalized body of work. These efforts offer up a concentrated foray into truly increasing communicability between cultures. Will they be remembered for these efforts? Elsewhere, we find ourselves at a specific moment in history — one fraught with an overabundance of humanist sans serif types designed to pursue a utopian sense of form in typeface design. We do not need another riff on the mechanized humanist Klavika theme nor the smooth humanist Frutiger/Myriad theme. We need to see an increase in exploring type design in cultural areas where we as a race are deficient.* Perhaps where we are most deficient is in the constant search for the ultimate neutral type, one that embodies pure communication without disclosing an era or hint to context. My response is this: Timelessness is a myth. Inflection is unavoidable and should be embraced. The market is already flooded with recurring variations on said theme. The past decade in graphic design has largely been a myopic look backward in time with aesthetics to match. My hope is that the bulk of graphic design from this decade will be seen as merely a blip of constipation, not an end point.

The mode of contemporary *style* for most citizens of the world is to be boring and reflexive. If contemporary design is a matter of styling/cultural hairdressing, then most stylists have relegated themselves to the corners of the design sphere where haircuts are offered with a maximum of

efficiency and affordability. Stylists demoted to the position of service providers — and such style has a place — make average things average for an average world. But there are those who strive to overstep boundaries, to lead, and to fail harder and faster than their contemporaries in pushing style forward. There are those like myself who look to history in order to help inform the present, who look to the screw-ups from the annals and are continually fascinated with the awkward and the off. Therein lies the future — in doing it all wrong.

We need the weird and the truly experimental in order to push contemporary aesthetics. We need the playful. Without it, we are merely treading water, and while that may make us fit, it won't get us very far.

**And we are deficient. Try designing a book in Vietnamese and see how many fonts are on offer.*

Bio: Ian Lynam is a graphic designer and writer living in Tokyo. He runs a multidisciplinary design studio that focuses on pan-cultural identity design, motion graphics, and editorial design. He is a graduate of Portland State University (B.S. Graphic Design) and California Institute of the Arts (M.F.A. Graphic Design). His most recent book is *Parallel Strokes*, an inquiry into the crossroads of graffiti and type design. He writes regularly for "Idea Magazine," "Néojaponisme," and a host of design books.

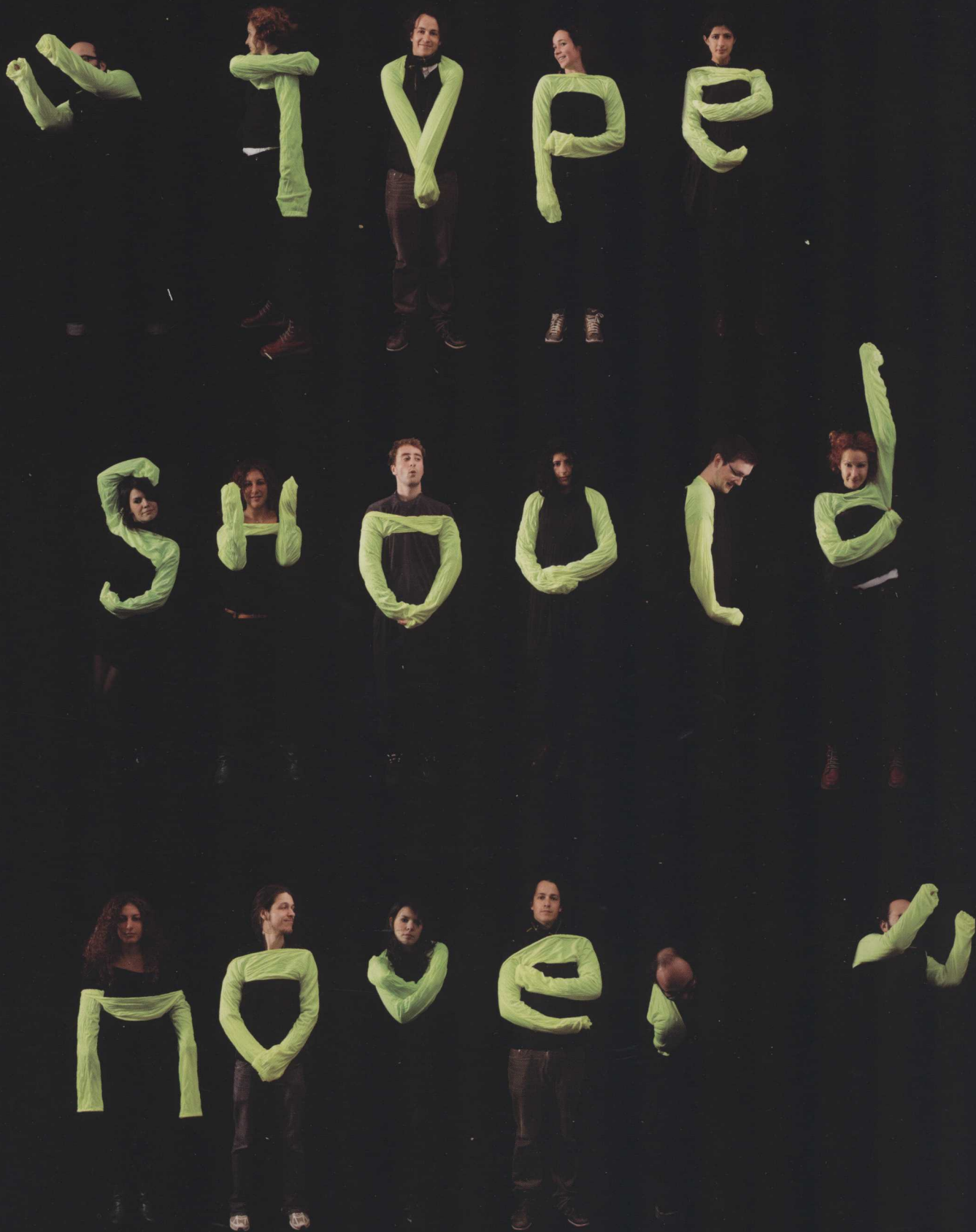


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“The idea is to create a ‘readable experience rather than a scripted space.’ Building up three-dimensional typographic installations allows confrontation between words and real life, using context as a playground rather than a simple background.”

01



Interview with AMANDINE ALESSANDRA

How did you get started designing type?

Typographic installations allowed me to integrate my two loves, photography and installation, and to focus on semiotics, and how to influence the meaning and impact of a message. I also see it as a chance to use mediums that are usually not related to graphic design.

More generally, I'm passionate about finding alternatives to print and computer-based communication; I love working out other solutions to publicly display physical messages in highly visible ways, taking their environment into account.

The idea is to create a "readable experience rather than a scripted space," (an idea borrowed from Michael Worthington). Building up three-dimensional typographic installations allows confrontation between words and real life, using context as a playground rather than a simple background.

What inspires you the most? Are there any type designers or movements that you find particularly inspiring?

Puns, Freudian slips, English and foreign idioms are an untarnishable source of inspiration. Playing with words and idea association in general. Georges Perec and OULIPO's work. I'm fascinated by little ways to both enhance and disrupt the everyday.

Andy Goldsworthy's ephemeral and natural print work (Rain Shadows), any in situ work by Helmut Smits and the Russian art group Voina are amongst my influences, and I've recently become fascinated by Chinese artist Chu Yun's work.

Your design work is described as focusing on the "temporary" and "transient nature of things." Take the example of "Letterform for the Ephemeral." How do you apply this concept to typography? Can you share your favorite moment during the design process?

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau creates a relationship between the metropolis and its inhabitants on one side, and the practice of writing and speaking on the other side, and discusses how pedestrians are "writing an urban text as they move through it."

A given message evolves in perpetual flux and its context is constantly shifting, regardless of whether its is an advertisement or public signage. Who is its audience? Where is it read? What is the weather like? What is everyone talking about on that day? Are they in a hurry? Does it smell of hot dogs as people are reading it? A static printed message cannot adapt to a changing

situation; it therefore belongs to the platonic ideal world rather than the hic et nunc (here and now) of the real world.

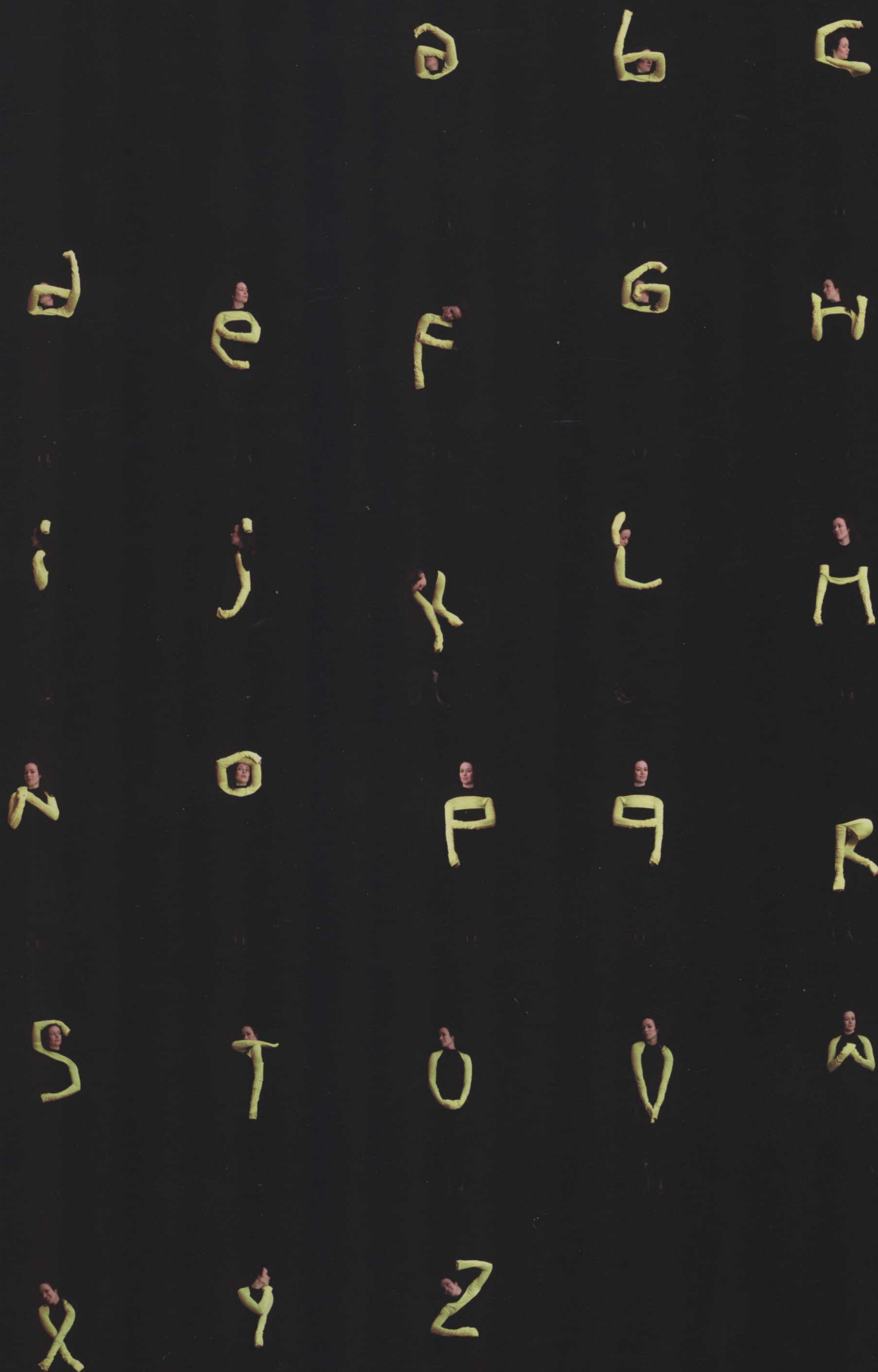
Because of the instability of the circumstances of message delivery, a context is bound to change and never be the same twice, just like Heraclites' river.

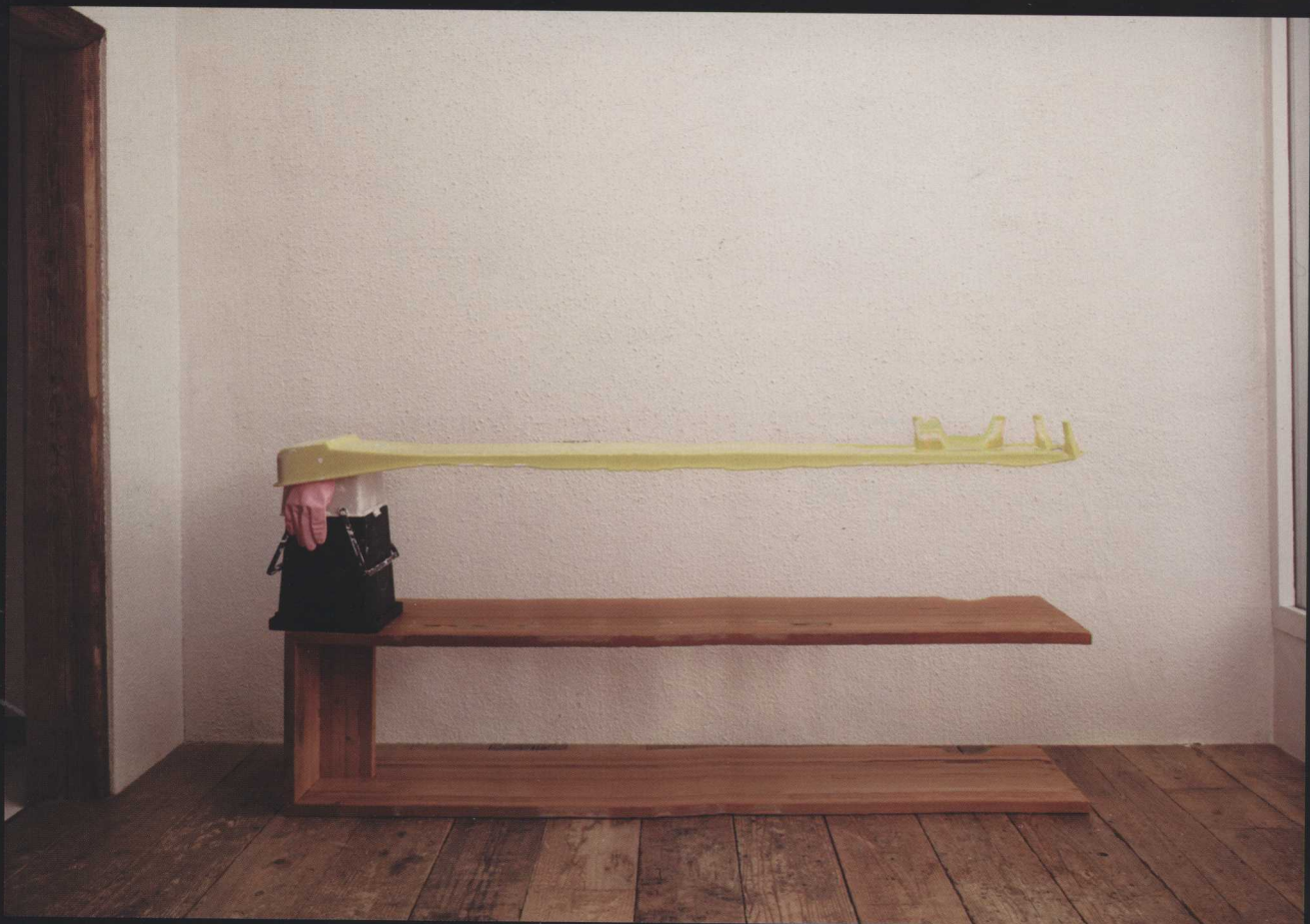
This thought leads me to concentrate my research on referencing the passing of time.

The wearable letterform allows comment on situations as they happen: a group of people standing in a public place can spell out a comment by becoming different letters, one word at a time, a bit like an analogical tweet (from Twitter) that would involve a group of people rather than an expression of individuality.

What is left of that kind of performance is a trace of it, as the message displayed (at the time the photograph was taken) will not be accurate anymore when looking at the photograph. What was achieved with this experiment of Wearable Type is a hic et nunc letterform, a letterform for the here and now, finding its raison d'être when used in real time.

I think that my favorite moment during the design process is when I get to the hands-on stage of the work, literally making things exist. There is something magical about making readable a pile of books, a few objects, or a group of people.





“I thought, ‘I can present typography in my own way, as I believe it is one of the territories that can accomplish a visual expression that functions as a communication tool as well as expressing the beauty of the form itself.’ ”

02

Interview with NAM

How did you get started designing type?

I had been so interested in typography for a long time and wanted to take on the challenge of designing it. I started to design my own typeface because I thought that it is one of the territories that can accomplish a visual expression that functions as a communication tool as well as expressing the beauty of the form itself.

What inspires you the most? Are there any type designers or movements that you find particularly inspiring?

In this work in particular, I think the flag signals which I learned during my time as a Boy Scout gave me a first glance into type design.

I cannot acknowledge all of the designers I like because there are so many, but I think the philosophical typography by Mr. Stefan Sagmeister is magnificent.

“Kids Alphabet” is an interesting project that composes the alphabet out of real objects and surreal images. How did you integrate alphabet design with the physical world of children? Please share any challenges you encountered during the photo shoot.

I wanted this project to work as a visual piece as well as a typeface. I intended to imbue the photos with a mischievous feeling, so we planned the photo shoot as a play date for the children. The photo shoot was a little challenging as the models were kids and they didn't move in the ways we wanted them to. However, the flip side of their unpredictable movement was that they created wonderful forms we hadn't imagined — which made the photo shoot fun.