

EXHIBITION TEXT (ENG)

The Unlikely Combination of Typeface and Sculpture An Introduction by Isabel Pacheco

On the axis of visual communication, the placement of typography and the practice of sculpture might be naturally considered quite separate if not at complete ends – one deals mostly with language and the latter material and construction. And although you might consider the similarities between both fields tenuous at best, there is a relationship built on legibility, mood, the use of space, and their respective relational combability with us the viewers, that unify typography and sculpture under the same pursuit of conveying a message. Contemporary Hyloshapes by Pau Geis is a project that seeks to blend examples of 21st century contemporary sculpture with typography to design an original typeface that appropriates the textural, tactile, and materiality of sculpture into a two-dimensional plane where “object” is transmuted into the verbal to encompass a different format of visual stimulus.

Fundamental to this project, accordingly, is the situating of sculpture (both as a practice and a final product) and typography at the apex of human innovation due to the fact both elevate the “object” into a more nuanced form.

Sculpture within the realm of the 21st century has taken the mantle from its avant-garde predecessors, and continues to explore materiality, technological advancements, and the human narrative now within the framework of globalisation where factors like wealth, environmentalism, and social discourse have certainly changed.

Typography has similar evolved to adapt to a growing consensus that the visual components of written word, what makes up a typeset, has the capacity to reflect whatever global trends and societal demands are of a particular time. What the Bauhaus school postulated was that the design of a typeface did not exist removed from the epoch it belonged to, nor did it stand alone from its content – typography was an object devised to be epitome of both.

The ability to render a concept into a visual signifier, to give form, presence, and emotional weight to a body of work is a trait particular to humanity. In creating do we share ourselves, our experiences, and remove the singular from individualism into a mutual connection where the other can relate. The transmission of message and meaning is fundamental in any creative endeavour and is the initial link between typography and sculpture, for both are channels and we the ready receivers. From an idea, an object is made, and objects generally speaking are the material culture of our society. Sculpture takes the conception of thought and gives it physical form with space and physical matter. Typography takes the conception of thought and gives it visual form with language as its platform.

Therefore the weight of sculpture comes from within not from material alone as it embodies a greater plan: the emotionality of the artist who builds is embedded in the fabric of the creation in the same way that each letter has its own nuance whether in the context of

its placement alongside other letters to give sound and utterance or as a stand-alone object in itself. In this sentiment, the creation of a typeface always carries a mood, a designated aura, that encapsulates the significance of a written word outside its literal definition, in the very same way sculpture alone isn't an isolated object but one with kaleidoscopic significance.

We interpret both sculpture and type because they both carry a message whether literally or implicitly. In the deciphering of both we're active agents, responding accordingly, and ascribing meaning to this engagement. This process is relational – with sculpture our bodily movements, our proximity, our ability to distinguish the tactility of the object through observation, creates an exchange between us as the viewer and the artwork. Sculpture has the ability to take up space, to fill an emptiness, to obstruct movement, and because of its very real presence, we are drawn into a connection with the object, where our body conducts our ability to cognitively and physically process. Typography, although flat mostly, holds that same gravitas as any three-dimensional object, where the placement of each character on a blank visual field dismantles the vacuity of a workspace and its existence emanates a tangible bearing. Our eyes move along axes and situate us as participants in a text. In this instance, for both mediums, it isn't just the literal comprehensibility that is essential but their movement, their positioning in an environment, and their form, as it's all representative of a message.

We produce to communicate, we produce to share, we produce to exclaim and monumentalise events, emotions, concepts – that is what we as a species unfailingly have done since our emergence. To create objects is a primordial force, thus there is no better way to understand our behavioural necessity, that innate force that propels us to shape and assemble, that through the analysis of our material culture. Our objects are a visual, material representations of the psyche that speak. As we have always created, so too have we been motivated to engage with language as expression, hence typography is like sculpture, in that both are objects that give form to expression. As sculpture has a body, a beginning and an end, so does any typeset. They have specific features and components and hold an element of personhood. Contemporary Hyloshapes takes all that contemporary sculpture has so far achieved in going beyond Duchamp's ready-mades, subverting the recognisable into a new visual language, and implants this very innovation within the field of typography. The typeface that Pau Geis has designed decontextualizes sculpture by shaping it to fit the format of written word, making the link between the sculptural and design tangible. What is created therefore, holds the same textured, geomorphic, sometimes minimal, and other times garish form echoed in the sculpture of the artists like Bruno Cançado, Eva Fàbregas, and Hisae Ikenaga to name a few, transcending the boundaries of traditional typography into a new arena that pulsates with radicality.