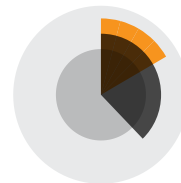


DYNAMIC IDENTITIES

How to create a living brand

by Irene van Nes



de watchstore
zeen



“IN ART WE TRUST”
NIKOLAJ KUNSTHAL



DYNAMIC IDENTITIES

*How to create
a living brand*

by Irene van Nes

DYNAMIC IDENTITIES

How to create a living brand

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INTRODUCTION

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FOR LIVING ORGANISMS 06**

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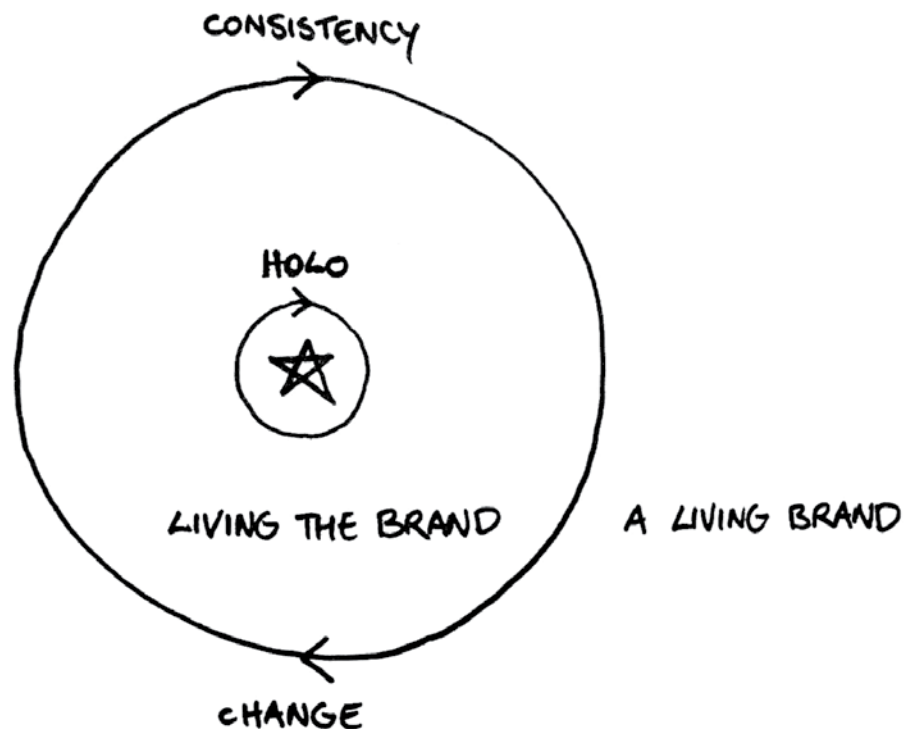
INTRODUCTION

Paul Hughes

Paul Hughes tells stories that create organisational change. Through his 'Ten Meters of Thinking' series, he unrolls timeless stories that are applied to timely contexts to create change. This change is an ongoing path where he uses design & branding to pave the way and offer signposts for the journey, a journey which he coaches participants to walk by taking practical steps.

In our interconnected world, we are facing global challenges, across every aspect of life, challenges we have never faced before, Paul believes that these challenges are in essence design challenges. It is this comprehensive scope of design that he feels we are called to address. We can feel empowered to do so once we realise that we can analyse the past because it exists. However, the future does not yet exist, so we need to design it.

paulhughes.nl
tenmetersofthinking.com



design is dead
design should be alive

everything in this world changes
so should design

we are living
in a living world
with living organisations
that cry out for living brands

brands change
learn and adapt
so the limitations of consistency
are liberated with a balance
of consistency and change

no longer will we be dictated by brand manuals
but rather we will be facilitated by brand magazines

with this comes a more mature understanding of brands
for we now understand that a brand is not a logo
no more than we are our signatures
instead a brand is understood to be a collection of relationships
internal relationships that stimulate us to live the brand
and external relationships that stimulate a living brand

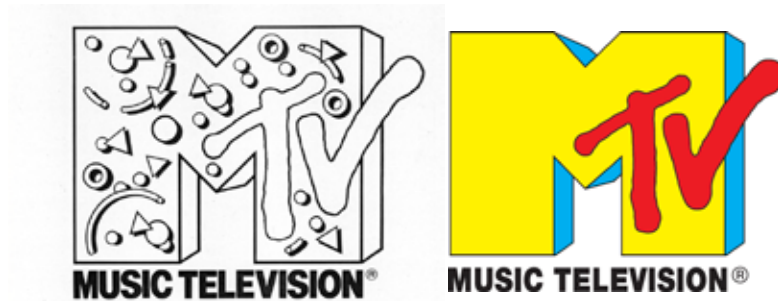
by focusing on relationships we form a more mature definition
for relationships give context and it is only context that gives meaning

logos were nothing more than static components of a brand
now they too are redefined in terms of relationships
singular meaning now becomes holistic meaning
logos now become holos

a holo acts as a beating heart at the center of a brand
that stimulate the brand to change
learn and adapt to living organisations
in a living world

design should be alive

DESIGNING IDENTITIES FOR LIVING ORGANISMS



MTV, Container
Logo design by Manhattan Design, 1981

Fifty years ago, a brand was just a single mark used for brand recognition, which set it apart from the rest. Now a brand has become a platform where like-minded people come together, and an experience that creates emotional attachment. Brands need to constantly adapt to their fast-changing environment in order to survive. Internet, social media and technical revolutions have given brands the opportunity to behave like living organisms.

A logo, a set of colours and a font, that's all it takes to create a visual identity. At least, that's how designers have set to work for a long time. There has been a shift in recent years towards creating more organic identities, using more and variable elements. New technologies have made this possible, combined with a shift from print to screen.

Although we still exchange business cards, most interaction today takes place online. This gives brands the opportunity to create a much more vivid and variable identity, using a different logo each day if they wish. Internet, social media and technical revolutions have given brands the opportunity to behave like living organisms. It has also created the possibility for companies to come closer to their clients and vice versa. These new forms of interaction feed a company and should be expressed within its identity.

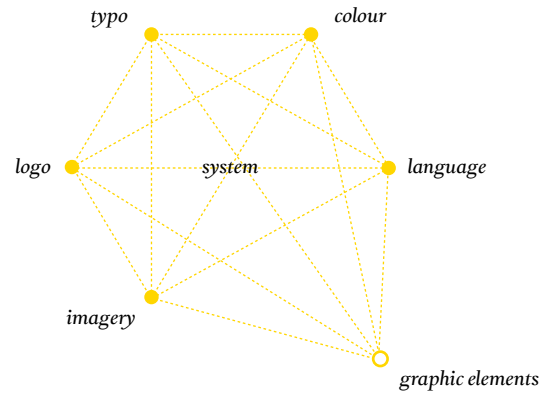
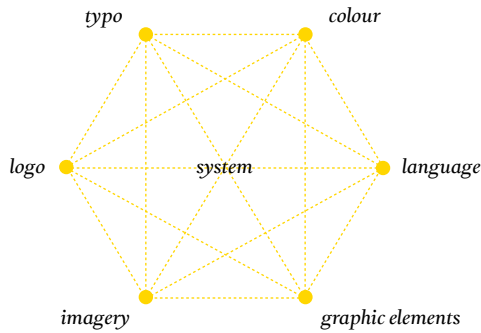
An identity should reflect the values and aims of a company as a whole. What drives it, what it believes in, why it exists. This is not something static, frozen in time. It is always evolving,

growing, adapting to new circumstances. A person has a vision, a wardrobe and a circle of friends evolving and changing as they grow up, meet other people, travel, live. In the same way, a company is also an organic entity: influenced by, adapting to, and changing through economic and social circumstances, the vision of a new CEO, or a major technological breakthrough.

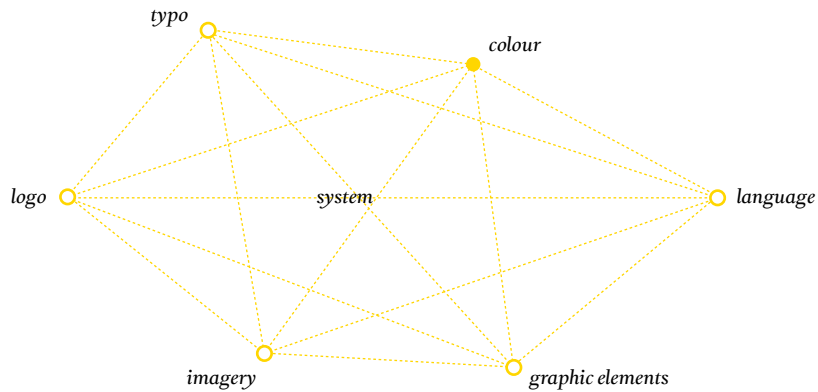
Learning companies are dynamic and should therefore have a dynamic identity that is flexible enough to meet all these changes, to incorporate and reflect them. An identity should be as organic as the company it is designed for; it should speak its language, grow with it, and adapt to its environment.

Dynamic components

The way I see it, there are six components to an identity. A logo is one of them, colour and typography makes three, and then there are graphic elements, imagery and language. Together they form a system that builds the identity of the brand.



The 6 components of an identity and its connections create the system. Variables create the dynamics, keeping a certain constant to maintain recognition.



Apple, for instance, fixes the logo (the apple), the colour (black and white), a font, and developed a unique language with the i-products (iPod, iPhone, iPad, ...), creating a strong branding system. Levi's and T-Mobile both claim a colour. You can recognise the red label on the side of the back pocket of a pair of Levi's jeans without having to read the label.

Each component helps sharpen the identity of the brand it represents. The more components are defined, the more specified the identity becomes. But within these limitations, there is definitely room for more freedom.

Moving logos have been a trend lately. The restyles of UPC and Swisscom, for example, have resulted in an animated logo. However dynamic their new logos may seem, I see them as nothing more than a moving version of a static logo. Creating a dynamic identity requires much more freedom than just movement. For example, one or more of the components could consist of different variables, adding flexibility to the identity. Fixed components help the user recognise

their brand; it is the variability that gives it room to live and evolve.

Dynamic systems

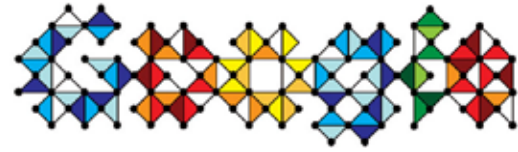
Fixating at least one recognisable component can leave room to play with the others, creating a dynamic identity. This is nothing new. One of the first to take the leap was Manhattan Design, who created an identity for MTV in 1981. They created a system where 'M' and 'TV' have a fixed shape and position, but can be built with thousands of variations of colours, patterns, textures, animations and illustrations. All of its iterations have only served to strengthen the youthful vibe that is synonymous with MTV. In 1994, Bruce Mau Design projected a fixed wordmark of the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi) onto a range of surfaces and materials, maintaining consistency while communicating the diverse activities and ambitions of the NAi. Today, this system of a **container** 'holding' content is still a common way to create a variable identity. A similar system is placing a **wallpaper** behind a fixed item. Wolff Olins created this

This book collects international examples of identities that are alive, meaning that they are not static but dynamic. That they can change and generate new versions over time, and behave like a living organism.

I have categorised them into 6 different types of design systems, which I would like to call: Container, Wallpaper, DNA, Formula, Customised and Generative. These names are based on their behaviour as described in the essay. This categorisation is of course not set in stone, as some could fall under more than one category, but should give the reader an overview of different ways to create a dynamic identity.



Aol. wallpaper (pg 40)
by Wolff Olins, 2009



DNA of the IDTV identity (pg 54)
by Lava, 2007



The Google Doodle formula
by mwmgraphics, 1998

type of dynamic identity for Aol. Behind the wordmark 'Aol.', a space is created that forms a platform for artists. Each time, different artwork is selected from a monitored data bank of images created by artists around the world. Visitors of the website can even select their favourite to use.

It does not necessarily have to be the ingredients, such as the four black and white pixels that form the **DNA** of IDTV, that form the identity. It could also be a set of rules, a formula. Back in 1998, the Google Doodles were created when Google founders Larry and Sergey played with the corporate logo to indicate their attendance at the Burning Man Festival. The identity **formula** – a set of colours in a particular order and a vague shape of the wordmark – still stands, daily commemorating interesting events and anniversaries. In a similar fashion, New York's New Museum could communicate their different exhibitions and events each day due to its system of leaving a space between 'New' and 'Museum' that can be filled in endlessly. The formula could also be a fixed language in combination with

set typography and colour. Take the Nikolaj Kunsthal, for example, a Danish art centre which Scandinavian Designlab personified and gave it a language/tone to speak in. Because it is located in a former church, they let it preach its passion for art through biblical quotes: "Let there be art" and "May art be with you".

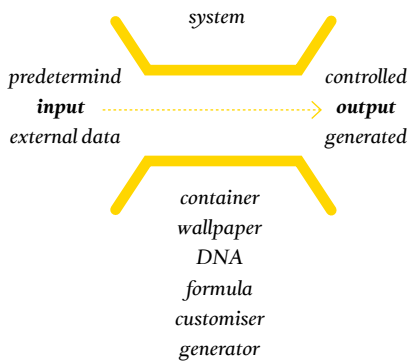
Predetermined input leads to controlled output. Opening up one of the components and letting it be influenced by external input can lead to more living results. Take for example the OCAD University, where the identity holds actual student art and design. The logo literally becomes the display window for the students, **customised** to the graduating student medal winners each year.

A much less controlled and much more recent technique is the **generative** approach. The identity of the Scandinavian peninsula Nordkyn designed by Neue, for example, uses real-time data coming from a weather station to build their identity. For the identity of the Japanese television station TV Asahi, Tomato had let the identity be reactive to

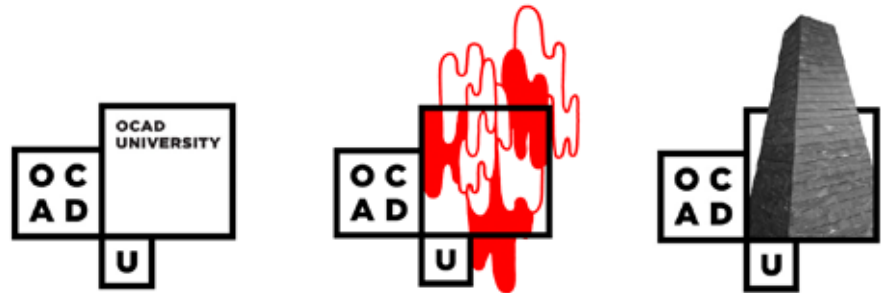
sounds recorded at a certain location. Both these 'generative' identities are created with scripted tools, a gift of modern technology. When using real-time data to feed a number of parameters, artwork is generated that forms the identity. It is basically a technical tool: once programmed, the computer does the work. This may feel like a trick, but it is one that can be performed in many different ways. When the input is generated by live information, the identity reflects the world it is living in and adapts according to its real-time input. It becomes alive.

Possibilities for this input are numerous: time, the activity on a site or in a building, live tweets, stock information, the news, the number of visitors to a museum, anything really. The less controlled the input, the more alive the identity, keeping in mind that there should always be a constant that makes the identity recognisable. Losing touch is a danger inherent to dynamic identities, so avoiding that pitfall should be a priority for the designer. The trick is to create as much room for dynamism as possible, while maintaining recognition.

Predetermined input leads to controlled output. Opening up one of the components and letting it be influenced by external input can lead to more living results



Generative identity of Nordkyn (pg 190) by Neue, 2010



Customised logos for OCAD University (pg 128) by Bruce Mau Design, 2011

So is this generative approach enough to create a living brand? I feel that we're only at stage one; despite the huge potential offered by current technology, there is still vast room for improvement. Perhaps the next step in creating a living identity goes beyond the external live input that flows through the tool, letting the tool itself be influenced by external input. Making it a learning tool that is able to evolve over time, shifting from a 'live' identity to a truly living identity.

Dynamic future

Knowing that brands need to constantly adapt to their fast-changing environment in order to survive, why do so few companies have a dynamic identity? Yes, institutions and organisations in the cultural sector and the creative industry have embraced the concept of dynamic identities. The Casa da Musica concert hall in Portugal, the New Museum and the Brooklyn Museum in New York, big players in the media and entertainment industry such as MTV and Google, and forward-thinking research and educational institutes such as

the MIT Media Lab and the Design Academy Eindhoven. These are only a few of the numerous examples presented in this book. However, other sectors are still trailing behind. one, and insurance companies are another example: industries where reliability seems to be an important value. Perhaps dynamic identities seem too whimsical to these more traditional organisations.

But there might be another issue at hand. A dynamic identity is hard if not impossible to patent. Companies might be afraid to take a leap with a corporate identity they cannot protect under current intellectual property legislation. In this fast-changing world, IP laws are not adapting fast enough. Should progressive companies and designers wait until lawmakers have caught up? Of course not. There is no time to waste. We live in a dynamic world. Maybe not every company is ready for a dynamic identity, but more and more will cross that line; the future will be more dynamic than ever!

If you love the topic of dynamic identities and would like to stay posted on new work, be sure to like the Dynamic Identities page on Facebook. Feel free to look around and be inspired. Please do respond to posts, and most importantly: share new inspiring dynamic identities, links to articles on the topic, or anything relevant. Inspire us all! If Facebook is not your cup of tea, feel free to share through e-mail. You can reach me at ireneontwerp@gmail.com.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dynamic-Identities/343110245712721>



Category

CONTAINER

The most obvious choice to create a dynamic identity is to approach the logo as a box that can constantly change its content. Playing with just one variable, such as colour or imagery, can already create great variety while remaining recognisable.





The Pantone Hotel in Brussels is the first design hotel based on the world colour standard, Pantone. BASE wanted to create a colourful and delightful identity, instead of a corporate hotel. They wanted to capitalise on the sensory experience of colour and created a hotel with a white background and colours popping out. Based on the concept: 'Live in colours, dream of colours', they realised ten concept rooms, one colour per floor. BASE wanted to

play with colours for the global concept of the hotel, and then implement Pantone through design. The design is the link between the hotel and Pantone, keeping the graphic code and spirit of Pantone. The identity extends through signage, hotel environments, website, and printed materials. The hotel concept as well as its identity can easily be applied to other future spaces.

—
**PANTONE
HOTEL**
BASE
—



CITY OF MELBOURNE

**CITY OF
MELBOURNE**
Landor Associates



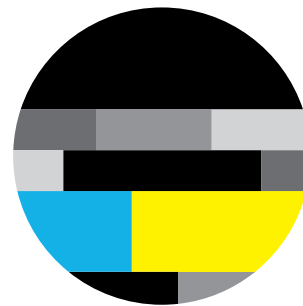
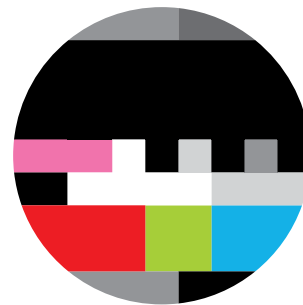
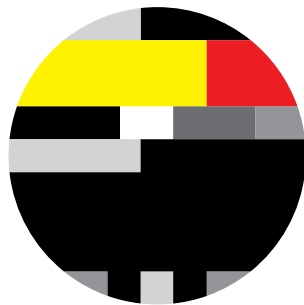
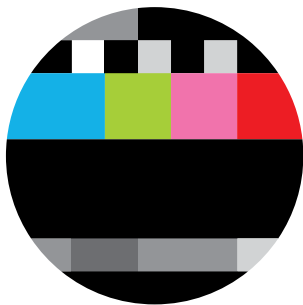
Melbourne is a dynamic, progressive city, internationally recognised for its diversity, innovation, sustainability, and livability. With its ever-growing portfolio of different initiatives, programmes, services, events, and activities, the City of Melbourne Council needed to unite the various aspects of Melbourne's identity.



At the heart of the new design, the bold 'M' presents a full expression of the identity system – immediately recognisable and as multifaceted as the city itself: creative, cultural and sustainable. A celebration of diversity and personal interpretation that is both future-proof and iconic.







imagine8

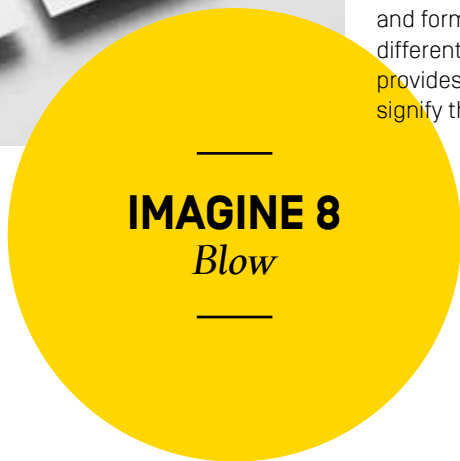
imagine8

imagine8



Imagine 8 is a production studio for video production, DJ and event management. Hong Kong-based design studio Blow was asked to create a new identity to enhance the overall image and create a strong association with the video production industry.

To do so, Blow used the international TV test signal as a graphic element to design the identity. By putting two circles on top of each other, it subtly represents the number 8, and forms a bold and recognisable icon. With different colour combinations, the identity provides strong visual impact and variety to signify the diversity of Imagine 8's services.



IMAGINE 8
Blow

Category

WALLPAPER

Another common example of dynamic identities is placing variables behind a constant logo. The total shape may vary, but the impression is still a single identity.

—
AOL
Wolff Olins
—



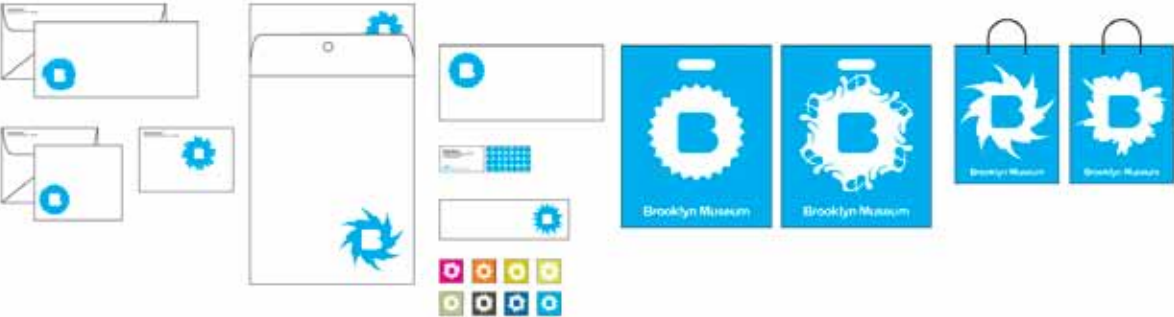
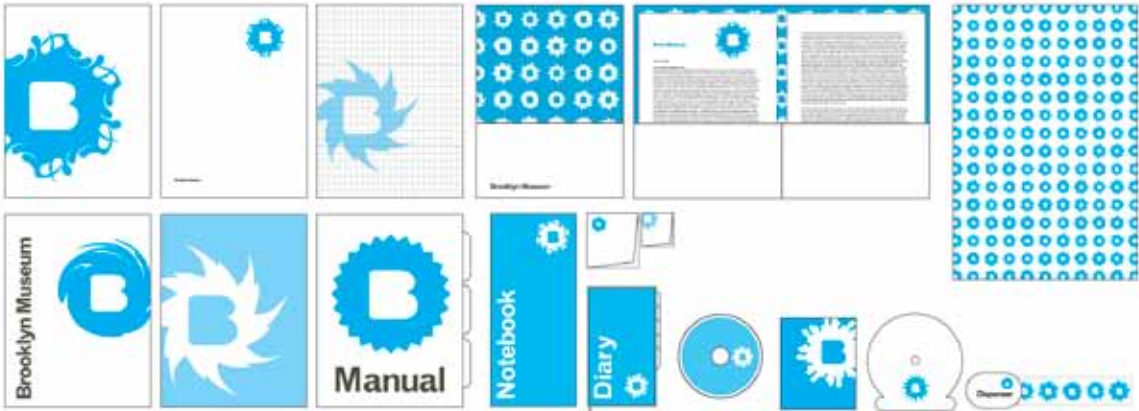
In December 2009, global web service provider AOL divested from its parent company, Time Warner. The AOL brand had become synonymous with internet access, so AOL looked to Wolff Olins to help reshape perceptions around its actual business. Incoming CEO Tim Armstrong's new mission reflected this strategy: to inform, entertain and connect the world – not with more of the same, but with extraordinary content experiences. AOL works with the best journalists, artists and musicians to create 80% original content.

The briefing given to Wolff Olins was to help make AOL a media company for the 21st century. At the IPO, Wolff Olins' first task was to create a forward-thinking brand identity that reflected the importance of creativity and originality.

As AOL is content, it made sense to invent an identity that acted as a platform for content, the content being art from around the world. At AOLartists.com, artwork is commissioned to showcase globally. The artwork behind the brand is selected from the resulting database. The site allows visitors to discover and explore the works of participating illustrators, videographers, filmmakers, painters, photographers and sculptors. If you like a specific piece, you can select it to be the artwork behind the AOL brand.







Visitor parking 8am to 6pm

Vehicle	Rate	Notes
Motor	\$2	
Flat bed	\$5	
Additional hour	\$2	
Over six hours	\$5	200 maximum

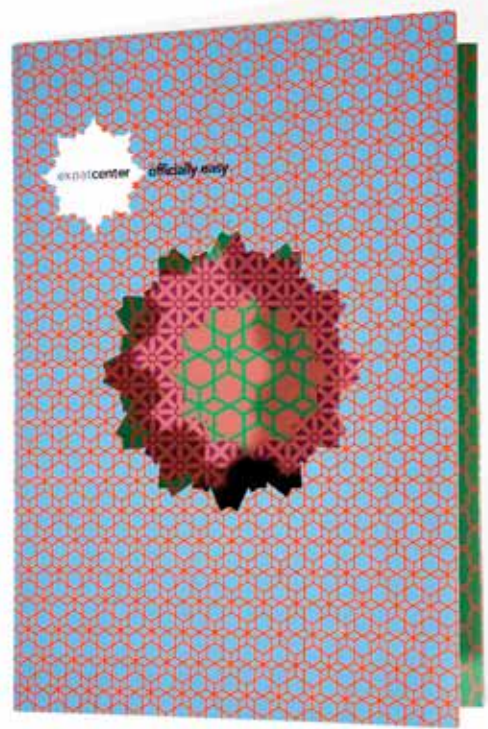


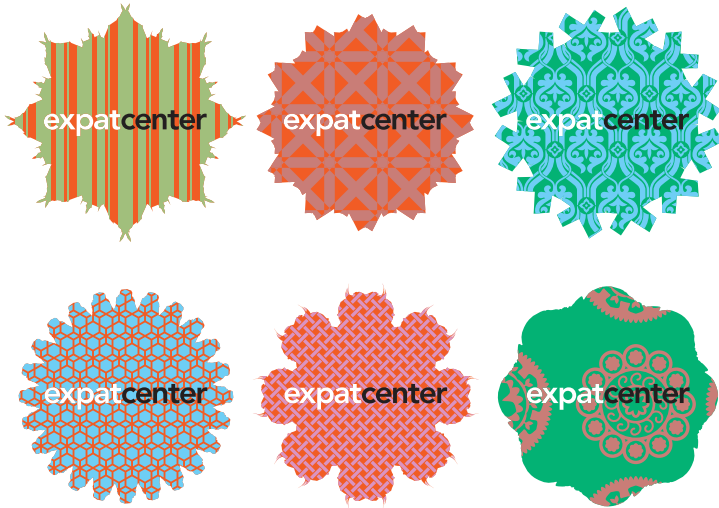
The Brooklyn Museum houses the nation's oldest and largest art collection. Perhaps in comparison to its Manhattan neighbors, the museum is particularly community and family-centered, dedicated to the widely diverse cultural consumers of the five boroughs. Well known for presenting contemporary exhibitions in diverse and experimental formats, the institution actively encourages visitors to participate and form their own interpretations of great art.

The design agency 2x4 imagined the Brooklyn Museum as the alternative museum: alternative in the sense that "mainstream" is imaginary, that everyone, and all important things, run in diverse and unpredictable ways, in real-time, and that increasingly museums are less an archive than a mechanism to experience these acts and utterances as they happen.

The logo is a contemporary take on the classic museum seal. It starts as a modern seal, but the seal continuously morphs. Each new iteration draws from a different trope, both high and low: a stamp, a flower, a violator, a thought bubble, a drop of water, etc. The morphing system plays out over the range of graphic materials from business cards and shopping bags to uniforms and site signage. The concept: Solidity, destabilized.







—
EXPATCENTER
*Fabrique
 & Silo*
 —

The complicated procedures governing the ability to work in the Netherlands are a source of irritation for many international companies and their employees in the Amsterdam region. With a single desk for expats, the ExpatCenter removes these barriers and puts Amsterdam back on the map as a hospitable city for employees and their families. From now on, 'knowledge migrants' can collect their residence permits, register with the municipality and obtain advice on schools and housing at a single location.

Hospitality and diversity are the starting points of the identity that Fabrique developed in cooperation with Silo Design. It shows that the ExpatCenter targets at a highly diverse range of people, cultures and backgrounds. Using colour and various patterns and forms, a flexible and multi-coloured language is created which changes constantly, in the same way as the ExpatCenter is formed by the people who come, stay and then move on.

The new style was also used in the interior (designed by OTH architects) of the ExpatCenter in the World Trade Center in Amsterdam. The ExpatCenter patterns and colours on window foils and authentic ExpatCenter wallpaper give the space a friendly, unique and service-oriented image.

Category

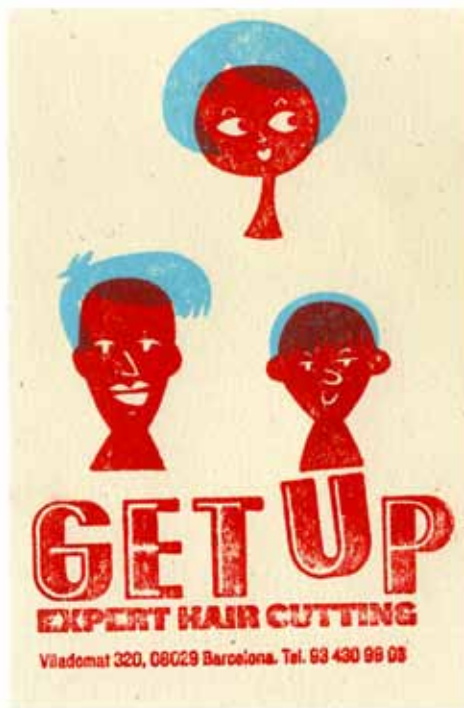
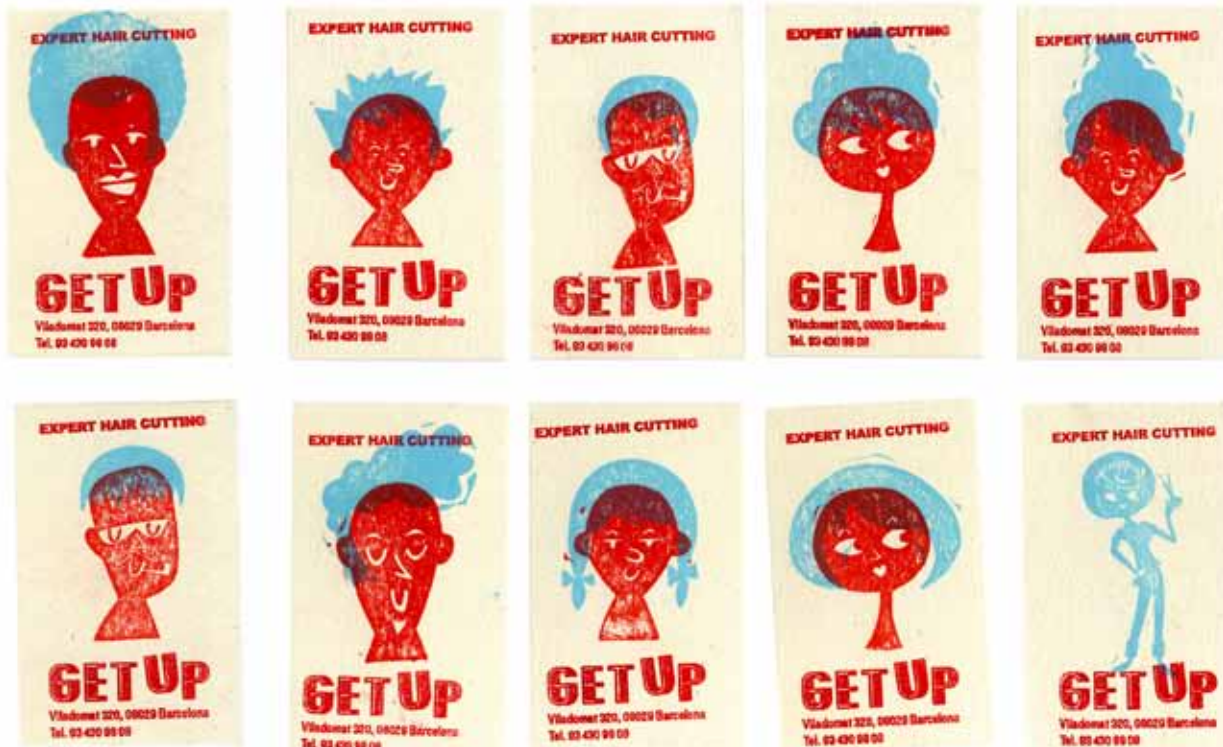
DNA

Dynamic identities can also be created by supplying a toolbox containing several core ingredients. Various recipes can be created using these ingredients, resulting in a different outcome each time.



—
GET UP
Alexis Rom Estudio
Atelier Vostok
—





When designers Claude and Alexis started creating a new brand image for Get Up, a small hair salon in Barcelona, they considered the creative attitude of the young hair stylists that work there and enjoy dressing and decorating the shop window. Their aim was to provide the users with a tool that would let them play with business cards and other printed material to develop a personalised image that went beyond the designer's suggestion.

As a solution, they created a simple and flexible logo made of a range of faces and hairstyles that can be freely matched, and turned it into a kit of modular stamps. This DIY printing kit/toy allowed stylists to customise their identity materials in playful ways, with many possible outcomes. The kit displayed on the shop counter is in itself a key element in the shop's image, as well as the most convenient way to personalise it.

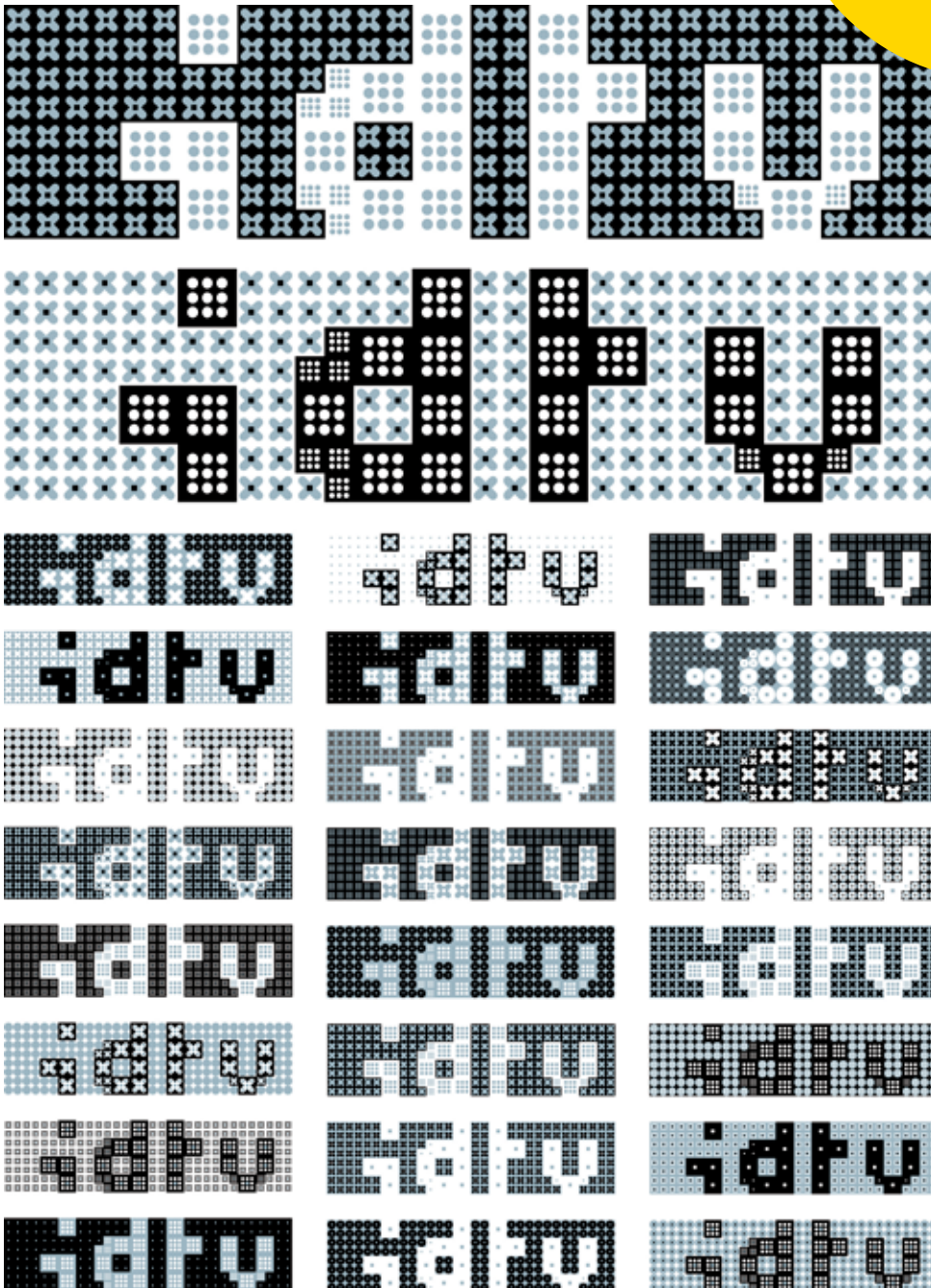
The kit itself is self-made by the designers using a vintage photopolymer machine and mounted on balsa wood.

IDTV

Lava

IDTV is the **second-largest independent** production agency in the Netherlands. It is at the forefront in the development and production of television programmes, films, documentaries and events. An innovative company should have an innovative identity. The pixel, the building block used to display all images on screen, is used as visual DNA. The creation of four unique pixels in different combinations and on a different scale enables an endless range of designs.

This helps not only to represent IDTV's current activities, but also offers room to incorporate new initiatives. Whatever you design with the pixels, it's always IDTV.



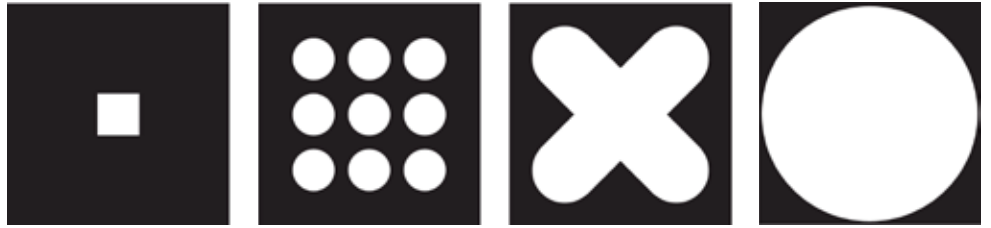




图 4-1-1 各式纹样



图 4-1-2 上林图



图 4-1-3 五井



图 4-1-4 各式纹样

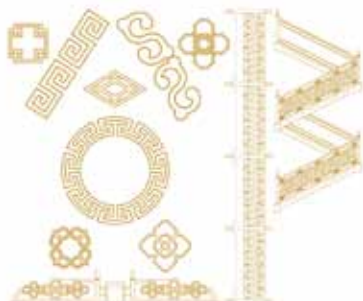


图 4-1-5 各式纹样



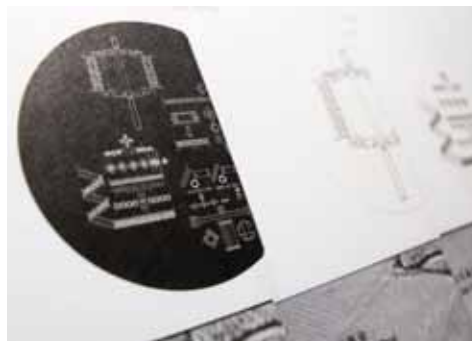
图 4-1-6 各式纹样



—
**TRADITIONAL
 CHINESE
 ARCHITECTURE
 EXHIBITION**
TGIF
 —



The Conservancy Association Centre for Heritage is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation promoting conservation of Hong Kong culture, heritage and history. It promotes public awareness on cultural and heritage conservation through various activities for schools, educational institutes and the public of Hong Kong.



TGIF was asked to design an exhibition identity and promotion items for the exhibition of traditional Chinese architecture. Among historical buildings in Hong Kong, these are special not only because of their historical value, but also due to their artistic architectural style. Using details from traditional Chinese architecture, the designers created a visual graphic Chinese typeface. The name of each of the seven buildings shown in this exhibition was written in this visual typeface, forming a logo for each building. These seven variable yet recognisable identities were used to communicate the exhibition.

Category

FORMULA

Instead of letting the ingredients being the core of the identity, one could also let the system be the constant. Whether it is a grid or a set of rules, it forms a language, a formula, that brings everything together.

—
NEW MUSEUM
Wolff Olins
—

In a city over-saturated with cultural institutions, the challenge of New York's only museum dedicated exclusively to showcasing contemporary arts was to create a brand that would drive the museum's vision and ambition to become a world player in contemporary art and a first-choice, 21st-century cultural destination.

Based on the idea of 'New Art and New Ideas', the first step Wolff Olins undertook was to simplify the name to loosen up the museum's institutional feel. This meant using only the words 'New Museum' in all the displays, thus creating a brand name. This helped the museum escape from the narrow definitions of an art museum to become recognised as a cultural hub. In collaboration with the museum, Wolff Olins created visuals that feature a broad spectrum of colour and language, and a logo that literally moves and bends to welcome new artists and audiences and to announce new art at the New Museum: open, fearless and alive.





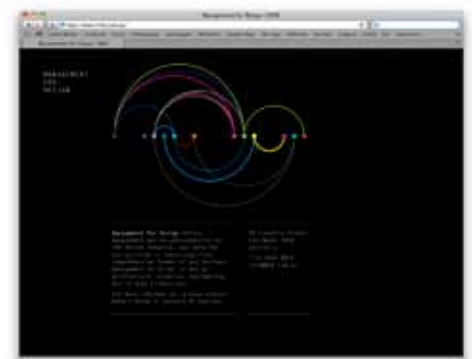
MANAGEMENT
FOR
DESIGN



—
**MANAGEMENT
FOR DESIGN**
Pidgeon
—

Management for Design offers management advice and expertise to the design industry. The name itself is rather straight-forward and boring, so the challenge for Pidgeon was to show designers that Management for Design has an understanding of creative businesses, and that they, in turn, are creative within their own business.

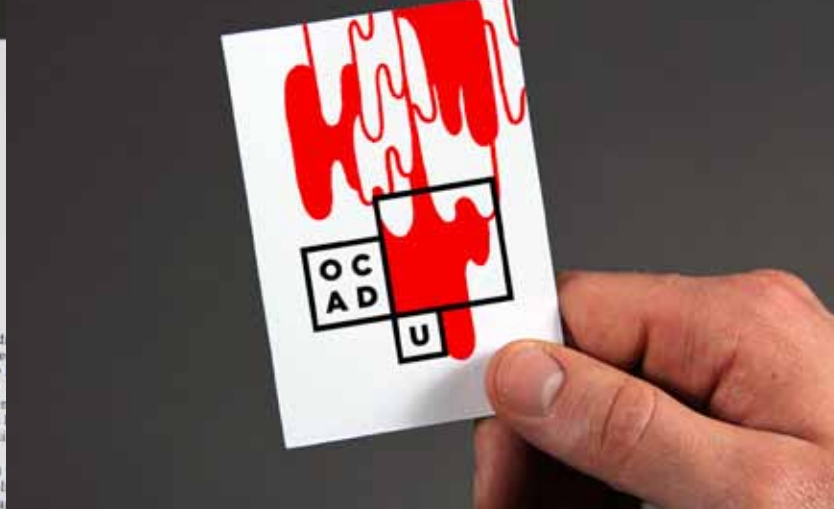
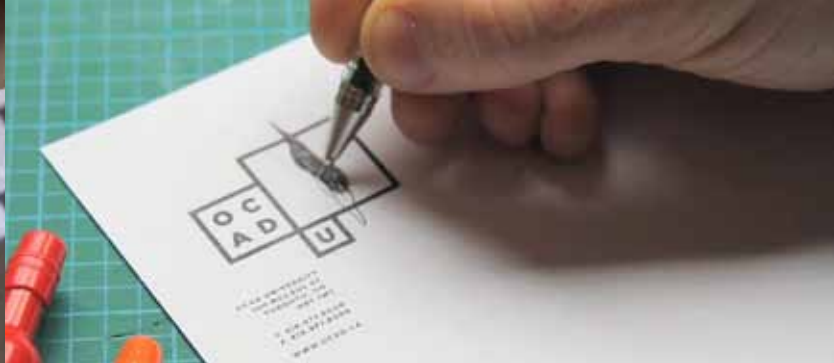
By assigning each letter in the name a colour and/or value relative to its position within the alphabet, Pidgeon established a set of parameters that allowed it to create a series of information graphics that form the identity. The identity is evolutionary in that there are endless ways in which the data inherent in the name can be interpreted.

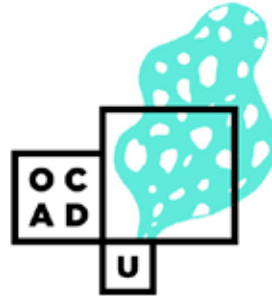
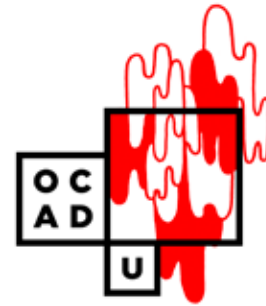
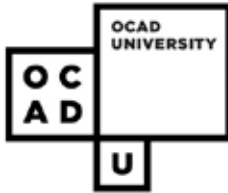


Category

CUSTOMISED

Nike, Jones Soda and many others can confirm: customisation is hot! It lets the client interact and be part of the brand. It makes the client the owner of the brand. Customisation is the first step towards letting the identity reflect a certain sense of community, creating an emotional bond.





—
**OCAD
 UNIVERSITY**
*Bruce Mau
 Design*
 —

OCAD University, Canada's pre-eminent art and design school, is now accredited to confer degrees. It is an inclusive, vibrant and vital institution built on creativity, risk and innovation. It needs a new identity reflecting that status.

Bruce Mau Design questioned whether the visual identity could reveal the extraordinary creative energy that lives at OCAD U. Inspired by the iconic Alsop-designed building, they created a base of black-and-white pixel 'windows' - modular frames to hold actual student art and design. The logo literally becomes the display window for the students.

Every year, graduating student medal winners will be invited to design a logo within the basic window framework providing a set of logos for that year. As OCAD U grows and matures, a living library of identities will emerge over time, recording the ideas and aesthetics that have shaped its culture over time.

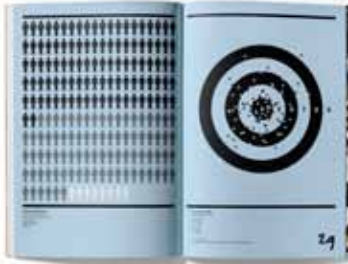


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DESIGN ACADEMY EINDHOVEN

The Stone Twins

—



Design Academy Eindhoven (DAE) is one of the world's foremost design schools. Central to the rebrand by The Stone Twins is an abstracted letter 'E', for Eindhoven. The logo provides a framework for infinite iterations of the school's name, mostly created by the students and faculty itself. Handwriting the words 'Design Academy Eindhoven' within the three bars creates options for unlimited permutations of the logo. In addition, users are invited to own and personalise the mark by employing different messages or slogans (e.g. Dream Academy Eindhoven, Kiss the Future, Everything Must Go). As a hybrid of static and dynamic approaches to identity, real brand expression will happen in engaging and inventive implementation.



This creative implementation is reinforced by a series of quirky introduction videos where passers-by are interviewed on the logo's meaning. The Dutch answers are straightforward, while the English captions cheekily describe the new system in bombastic design jargon. As one woman says, "I think it looks like a window", the subtitle reads: "The centrepiece of a unique brand architecture". The spirit of the videos and the customisation of the DAE logo loosens the academy's institutional feel and reflects its inclusive, progressive and dynamic nature.

MUSEUM VOOR COMMUNICATIE **Hallo**

MUSEUM VOOR COMMUNICATIE **VET**

MUSEUM VOOR COMMUNICATIE **kom langs**

MUSEUM VOOR COMMUNICATIE **zeestraat 82 den haag**

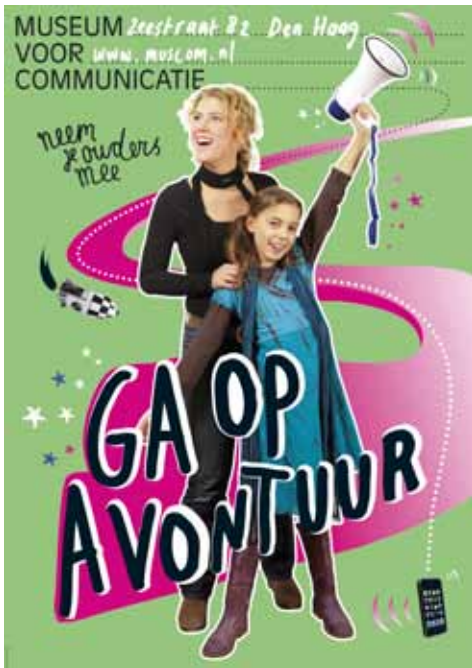
MUSEUM VOOR COMMUNICATIE **MAANDAG gesloten**

MUSEUM VOOR COMMUNICATIE **tell me more**



MUSEUM VOOR COMMUNICATIE *alles kan veranderen*

MUSEUM VOOR COMMUNICATIE **Den Haag**



The communications sector is in a continuous state of change as the Museum for Communication can testify. Located in The Hague, the museum is a dynamic platform for curators, artists, designers and visitors to communicate and to learn about communication.

The identity that Lava designed offers room for change, while still maintaining a firm and recognisable base. The identity offers space for external input, enlivening the identity by using it to its full advantage.

For instance, the logo is combined with handwritten messages: the exhibition title, the name of an employee, the website, a personal message or a signage system. The many aspects of the museum are thus showcased in a spontaneous and personal way.



THANK YOU

*To all participating studios
for their collaboration.
To friends, family and colleagues
for their enthusiasm,
advice and insights.
To Luc and Bram
for their patience.*

Fifty years ago, a brand was just a single mark that made the brand recognisable and set it apart from the competition. Now a brand has become a platform, a place of exchange, an experience that arouses an emotional attachment. Brands need to constantly adapt to their fast-changing environment in order to survive. They become living organisms.

This visual book looks at the different possibilities for creating living brand identities. A wealth of international dynamic identities are categorised into six different dynamic systems. These examples range from identities using simple controlled changes such as colour or shape, to identities that rely on code and external data input.

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