

Technical education is today the concern of the technical schools. They should teach and explain the rules of typographic design. The extensive literature on the subject is not very stimulating to jobbing compositors. The examples are usually cooked or beautified and snags are avoided by alterations of text. This applies particularly to type foundries' specimen sheets. With few exceptions the majority give no guidance for normal jobs. For this reason it is no loss if type specimens rarely reach the hands of compositors. It is a pity when the few really good ones are filed away in cabinets where they cannot be used by anyone.

Typefounders today, recognizing that it would be better and in the long run more profitable if their specimens did reach the compositors, are generally willing to send them on request. The compositors who ask for them are usually the brightest, will go to the top and then be able to influence the choice of types to be ordered.

The study of good type specimens is a useful part of typographical education and should be pursued by all interested, especially jobbing compositors. We hope that type foundries will in future reproduce more normal work and fewer multi-coloured fancy pieces in their type specimens. Then they would be really useful to the men in composing rooms who have tougher and duller nuts to crack. To get around difficulties by altering copy is not skill, but deception.

### *The use of space*

All typography is an arrangement of elements in two dimensions. The right placing of words and lines is as important as the creation of significant and effective contrasts, and is an integral part of it. As type today stands by itself, without the addition of ornament, we have become more sensitive to it not only as words and lines, but as part of the design of a page. The sizes and weights of type used depend first and foremost on the contents, but almost always we have scope to choose a larger or smaller size or to alter the graphic appearance of some of the

lines. A line need not be full out to the left but may be moved a little or a lot to the right. Here begins true design, the shaping of the graphic form.

Every shape exists only in relation to the space around it. The same line has a totally different effect in a large or small area of white space. In either case the line can be so placed to achieve the best effect; but the placing and its over-all effect will probably be quite different in each case. It follows that there is a 'right' position for every shape on every occasion. If we succeed in finding that position we have done our job.

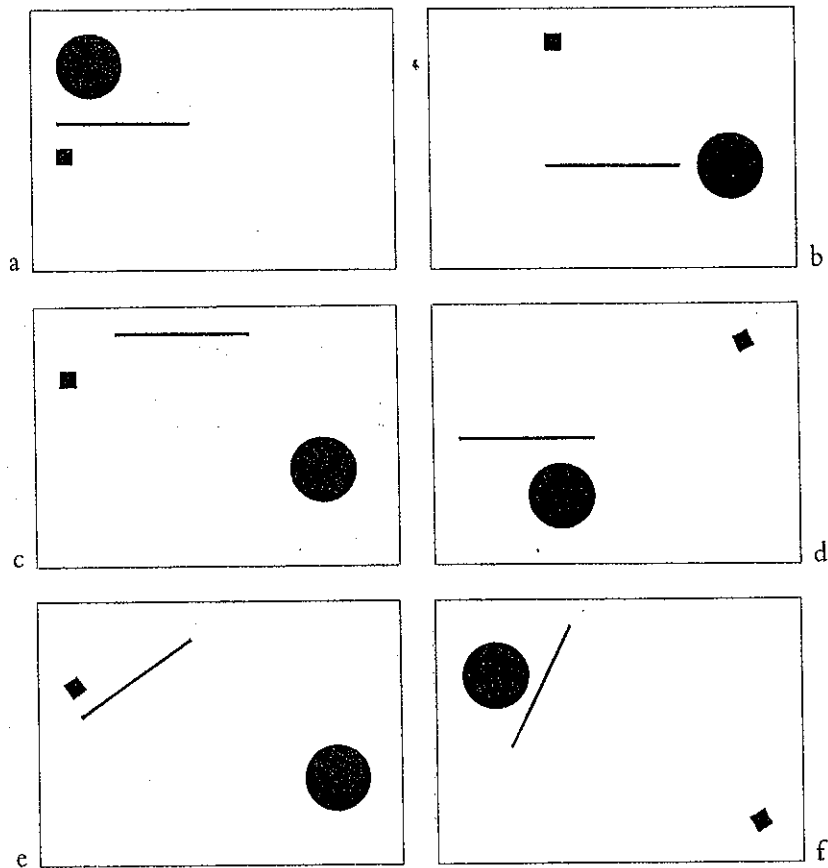
The six abstract arrangements on page 60 show that there are always several possibilities when there are several elements to arrange. The first (a) is a boring, visually meaningless arrangement, with all three elements lined up beneath one another. In the other examples there is some tension between the elements. The second (b) shows a geometric horizontal-vertical arrangement. In the third (c) the line and the square follow the directions of the page outline but their relationships to each other are not so geometrically fixed as in the second example. The line and circle in the fourth example (d) are more closely connected, the square is placed in opposition to the outline. In the fifth (e) square and line stand together in opposition to the outline, and in the last (f) they both strike out on a different line from each other and from the outline. The circle remains indifferent and peaceful. In none of the examples except the first is the placing accidental; each one shows a possible and significant arrangement. In every case, the placing of the elements, their relationship to one another and their distances apart are intentional and not fortuitous.

In the same way the right placing of the elements of a piece of typography must be discovered. There may not be only three elements, but as a rule they must be planned first by grouping disconnected lines in this way, to allow an orderly arrangement in the space available.

We have already said that three groups should be the rule. In placing them we must not forget how we read. Their sequence below and beside one another must follow common sense. The spaces between them could be equal but then they lose tension. In *asymmetric typography*, the intervals between the groups are as important for the over-all effect as the groups themselves. The intervals must be unequal, that is to say

distinguishable. At the same time they must be in accord with the coherence or non-coherence of the parts of the text. Finally, the leading of the lines in a group must have a certain relationship with the intervals between the groups – that too plays its part in the symphony of the whole.

The asymmetry of the typography suggested here also forbids the centring of a layout that is itself asymmetrical on its paper or within the area of an advertisement. Sometimes in very narrow columns this is unavoidable, but centring is, in principle, uncharacteristic here. Margins to left and right can and should be distinctly different. No more can be laid down – the exact amount must be decided by trained typographical taste.



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Jan Tschichold: Cinema poster. Typography. 1928.