

WRITTEN COMPONENT 3

Catarina Neves

How are positions most effectively developed and demonstrated? Discuss this in relation to a creative practice or text. Then explain how this has helped you think about developing your own emerging position.

Communication design represents the world around us, serving as a window of what goes on in society. For its capacity to visually explain the world and all its complexities, designers and artists take advantage to voice their concerns and bring attention to what they feel needs to be known. Therefore, behind each piece, there is a perspective that frames the way its producer faces a subject.

For instance, “The Other Side: An Emotional Map of Great Britain”, a book published by the London-based design publisher GraphicDesign&, came as a personal response to the result of the 2016 United Kingdoms’ referendum on staying or leaving the European Union. The intention of the partnership consisting of Lucienne Roberts and Rebecca Wright was to use graphic design as a language to examine and question the situation they were experiencing. As the former frames it on an interview for the Aiga Eye on Design “it started from a sense of real grief” (Roberts, 2020). They intended to have a neutral position, representing fairly both sides and allow each individual to expose their points. As Rebecca Wright suggests, that is the “one thing that was missing in the media: people weren’t given the opportunity to just pause and reflect” (Wright, 2020). So in this book, they use graphic design to create a space that gives an equal opportunity for the two sides to present their reasons. For example, the layout builds a double-ended book that comes together at the centre, while the various typefaces implemented identify each speaker’s region, serving as an individualiser of the different voices.

On the other hand, the way designers demonstrate their perspective is also crucial for its development. In this case, the implementation of graphic design is, in itself, a form of demonstrating a position to the reader. Starting from the layout, the physical interaction provoked by the flip of the book allows the reader to get an insight into the opposing ideas represented. Yet, by coming together at the centre, Roberts and Wright show that their intentions were not to accentuate the divide but to use “graphic design’s potential for reconciliation” (Morley, 2020). Additionally, The thought process behind the typographic implementation could also help contextualise the author’s stance on this topic. They chose typefaces that evoked neutrality, while at the same time questioning if that is even attainable. As Roberts says, “they have a semblance of neutrality about them, clearly, some of them are... a bit more friendly than others” (2020).

This case illustrates that positions can grow from the process of production. While considering what would be the format, layout and typefaces for the book, they were strengthening their perspective while iterating with ways of representing opposing views. In my practice, I also tried to use experimentation as a form of position development. During the past weeks, I have been debating how to present doublespeak, using the visual language of communication design to understand how it works and its consequences. Similar to Roberts and Wright, I wanted to use design as means of gaining understanding on the topic of doublespeak, and take advantage of its methods to explore how it translates into typography. Furthermore, akin to the experience of the flipping of the book described previously, I want the reader to play with the medium, so it serves as another

form of explanation. I believe that interaction adds another layer of understanding of the information presented and could help the audience assimilate what is the position of the author.

REFERENCES

- Graphic Design &, GraphicDesign& The Other Side: An Emotional Map of Brexit Britain. GraphicDesign&. Available at: <https://www.graphicdesignand.com/product/the-other-side> [Accessed May 13, 2020].
- Roberts, L. (2020) Interviewed by Madeleine Morley for Aiga Eye on Design, 12 March. Available at: <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/can-graphic-design-help-mend-a-political-divide/> (Accessed: 13 May 2020).