Flex It

INTRODUCTION The words *corporate branding* bring to mind solid unwavering marks, accompanied by fat imperious style guides. Participatory culture disassembles such elite singular logos, giving them over to a new breed of designers who revel in the fluctuating, unpredictable form of the flexible mark. Using modules and templates, they build identity systems that empower users, overturning top-down hierarchies long reinforced by modernist design principles.

Let's turn a static mark upside down.

THE BRIEF For this assignment, pick a static identity and redesign it as a flexible mark. Make sure to pick a business for which a flexible identity is appropriate.

Flexible marks fall into one of two categories: a modular system or a template. A modular system supplies the user/designer with a set number of components that can be reconfigured to form different variations of an identity (think the Brooklyn Museum mark by Eddie Opara: www.2x4.org/ or the Dignity mark by Jonathan Barnbrook: www.barnbrook.net/). A template system leaves some part of the mark open to outside content (think Wolff-Olins NYC mark: www.wolffolins.com/ or Post Typography's Splice Today: http://www.posttypography.com)

RESEARCH First research identities. Begin with businesses or institutions that seem appropriate for a flexible mark. For instance, a museum is a natural fit since the exhibitions within it constantly change. Or a service-oriented business like a salon, since hairstyles vary greatly depending on current trends. Or, a new more constellation style business like Amazon (see the flexibility reading from *Participate*). Then look for a mark that calls out to be redesigned. Don't attempt to redesign a successful, effective mark.

SKETCHES For the sketch phase bring to class a printout of the mark that you wish to redesign, as well as sketches of both template and modular flexible identity solutions.

PHASE ONE Bring in the first proof of your flexible identity concepts to class. More specifically, bring in two options for a template approach and two for a modular approach. For the template approach restrict the static part of the mark to one to two colors. For the modular approach, use no more than 2 colors in any single iteration of the mark. Print each design out on an 8.5 x 11 sheet. Clearly show how each approach would change in multiple iterations.

PHASE TWO Bring in a revised proof of one of your concepts. Print it out an 8.5 x 11 sheet. Apply the concept to a series of business cards (3) so that we can see how the mark changes. Bring in one additional application that is appropriate to your business/institution. For example, for a clothing line, a tag. For a museum, signage or exhibition banners. For a salon, a simple 4x9 card that outlines services available or the logo applied to a robe or towel. This is similar to the promotion item in the first logo project, but in this instance, it doesn't necessarily have to work as a give away.

FINAL Post finals to the blog. Turn in final of mark, series of 3 business cards, and additional application. The initial mark and series of bcards should be mounted on 16"x 20" blackboard. The additional application can be mounted on the board as a rendering or turned in as a comped piece depending on what it is. The mark should be 6" (longest dimension), the business cards should be standard size (show both sides if it is a two sided card), the additional piece will vary in size.

PROJECT GOALS: 1) understand the difference between a static and flexible mark; 2) be able to design a flexible mark when appropriate; 3) put into play the design adage: unity with variation; 4) be familiar with contemporary trends in branding