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Letter Splice

INTRODUCTION To understand type, begin studying the basic components that structure it. Consider the ascender, descender, crossbar, bowl, etc. A typeface holds together as a single system because these same components are repeated. The same crossbar, for example, appears in both the “e” and the “t.” The bowl of the “d” is repeated in the bowl of the “b.” In this sense, all typefaces are modular. Each one is built from a the same rigid elements. In this project you will break a typeface up into these parts and then repurpose them as modular units for building a family of icons.

THE BRIEF Pick a classic serif typeface from the typeface. Examine the different parts of the characters. Notice that each typeface is broken into the same 21 parts (these include ascender, descender, crossbar, bowl, counter, and terminal . Refer to typeisart.com for a visual reference and description of each of these parts. Once you have selected a specific typeface, dissect the letterforms to create these 21 parts. Then, using these same parts, create a family of 3 icons. All three icons should have a common theme (for example: faces, animals, lamps, seasons) and a similar look and feel.

Research: Consult Typeisart.com, a website that demonstrates each of the icon parts. Feel free to play around in this program, although I want you to create our project in Illustrator using the font of your choice. Do your own research for examples of type converted into images/icons.

Roughs/Sketches: First select the serif typeface that you would like to use. Then bring the typeface into Illustrator and change it to outlines. Once the font has been changed to outlines, you can dissect it into the necessary 21 pieces and begin to play with all the components. You can do this either by printing and cutting out the pieces to manipulate by hand or by working with them in Illustrator. After you get a feel for the components, begin to sketch possibilities for icon families. Each icon family should have a theme that makes it cohesive (for example: faces, animals, lamps, seasons) and a similar look and feel. *Throughout this project, do not stretch or otherwise distort any of the letter components. Make sure to slice them up just as the letters on typeisart.com are sliced.*

For this first stage, bring to class sketches of more than one idea for an icon family (at least 4 different themes). Also have your typeface sliced into pieces and ready for assembly in Illustrator. At this stage, I want to see that you have spent time sketching various approaches. We will discuss your ideas during the deskcrit and I will help you focus your approach for Phase One icon development.

Phase One: Develop your sketches into icons to bring to class for small group critique. Experiment with various ideas, but focus on one set of 3 icons to present in class. Print out each icon in a 8 x 8" square. Mount the square on black mat board and trim flush. Icons should be black and white. Do not use any color.

Final Phase: Revise your Phase One icons and take them to final. Bring the final icons into class for a large group discussion. After the discussion you will turn them in to be graded. Print out each icon on a 8 x 8" square, mount them on blackboard and trim flush.