The influence of graffiti writing in contemporary typography

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April, 2017

Abstract

With the entry into the so-called postmodern era we see significant changes in the paradigm of visual communication in general and design in particular, promoted by new ideas and principles that emerge as, what some call, a reaction to Modernism.It is in this environment that graffiti writing arises, controversial, irreverent and creative, becoming a reference for many graphic designers who adopt its characteristics. The development of graphic editing software has facilitated not only the creation of these new works with a hybrid character, but also the practice of graphic design. Consequently, typography, sharing with graffiti its passionate dedication to letters, also explores new forms and variations by the hands of professional designers and enthusiasts. This research aimed to identify the influence of graffiti on contemporary typography. To this end, we analyzed the work of graphic designers where marks of this influence have been found. These provided us with clues to the understanding of the changes that have occurred in the type design practice and their relationship with graffiti.

Keywords: Visual Communication, Graphic Design, Typography, Calligraphy, Graffiti Writing

1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives

Our study, within the field of graphic design research, intends to answer the following questions:

- having proven the existence of characteristic marks of the influence of graffiti writing in graphic design (Craveiro, 2011), do we also find them in contemporary typography?

- given that a large number of currently active graphic designers were, or are still, graffiti writers (Craveiro, 2011), is it also possible to verify the existence of typographers whose work shows some influence of graffiti writing?

- if confirmed, will this influence be significant enough to have a place in the history of graphic design and typography, thus contributing to a better understanding of the practice of these two disciplines?

In view of these issues, the following objectives were defined: proving the existence of marks of the influence of graffiti writing on contemporary typography; verifying the existence of designers / typographers, whose typefaces or compositions, show signs of this activity's influence; contribute to the understanding of graphic design practice, as well as the contemporary typography practice; complement and deepen the scarce bibliography on graffiti writing and its relation with contemporary typography and graphic design.

1.2. Typography

Typography, etymologically of the Greek *typos* (form) and *gráphein* (writing), is the process of shaping writing. For the sake of readability, it is based on the arrangement of the mechanical alphabet, characters - letters, numbers, punctuation marks - in the composition or layout of the text, each representing the "type" (Figure 1) which is the origin of the word typography.

Fig. 1. Movable type - metal and wood.

> Typography is the discipline within Graphic Design that studies the different ways of optimizing the graphic emission of verbal messages. It has a technical and functional dimension based on the work of typographers and printers (...) has a humanistic dimension that is based on writing, abstract representation of objects and ideas, which made possible the perpetuation of culture, organization of thought and intellectual development of men. Understood as a discipline, Typography deepens and enriches, in various ways

the objectives of Graphic Design (Juárez, s.d.: 7).

1.3. Graphic design

Graphic design is born as a consequence of the industrial revolution and the resulting development of the graphic arts. Frascara (2006) defines graphic design as an activity that organizes visual communication in society. It adds that graphic design is both a rational and artistic activity. For Richard Hollis, graphic design is: "(...) a kind of language, imprecise grammar and continuously expanding vocabulary whose essential elements are the alphabet and the image. It attributes to graphic design three main functions: to identify; inform and / or instruct; present and / or promote" (2001: 4). Tyler (1992) further suggests that the audience should be taken into account as an active participant in the design process because it has cultural beliefs that influence its interpretation of visual language.

1.4. Modernism and Post-Modernism

In design, postmodernism is understood as a reaction to Bauhaus modernism, new typography and international style, to its elementary principles, the concepts of functionalist design, which have had a great impact on the design and typography of the twentieth century. However, some designers like Dan Friedman questioned whether postmodernism was a decisive break with modernism, or whether it was its natural continuation. He believed that it was possible to embrace the new postmodern tendencies without dismissing the modernist teachings (Poynor, 2003).

For modernism, the main purpose of both graphic design and typography was to communicate the message as efficiently and briefly as possible, disregarding the decoration and ornament in favor of a rational design, oriented to the communicative function. It sought to present the information based on clarity, readability and objectivity (Meggs, 2000; Cauduro, 2009). The famous phrases "less is more", adopted by the architect Mies Van der Rohe, and "form follows function" by Louis Sullivan, became symbols of the pedagogical program of the Bauhaus, as well as of the modernist movement itself, contributing to a new functionalist movement , the international style.

Designers such as Emil Ruder, Armin Hoffman (Figure 2) and Josef Müller-Brockman (Figure 3) advocated the standardization of the visual form through simple, concrete and rational information so that it could be universally understood. They proposed restrictive graphic solutions,

rigidly controlled by the typographic grid giving preference to clear and functional, simple and harmonious sans serif fonts such as the famous Futura (by Paul Renner) (Figure 4), Helvetica (by Max Miedinger) (Figure 5) and Univers (by Adrian Frutiger). These minimalist solutions eventually became a predictable formula, often boring and uninteresting, becoming almost invisible after some time (Pelta, 2004; Heller, 2007; Cauduro, 2000).

On the other hand, postmodern design values and cultivates difference, plurality, disorder, heterogeneity, hybrid, irony, paradox, ambiguity, mutability, and improvisation

Fig. 2. Armin Hofmann Giselle,
Basler Freilichtspiele 1959

Fig. 4. Futura (designed in 1927
by Paul Renner).

Fig. 3. Josef Muller-Brockman,
Juni-Festwochen, 1959

Fig. 5. Helvetica (designed in 1957 by
Max Miedinger)

(Harvey 1998). Designers seek to imprint their individuality, based on their experiences and preferences, denying dogmatic solutions. There is a tendency for the ludic and the reinterpretation of the alphanumeric signs of Western writing stimulated by the new digital technology. The new typefaces tend to mutability, due to the manipulations and experimental transformations improvised by the designers such as Neville Brody (image 06), where the transgression of the purist canons is encouraged, being common the customization according to the project (Cauduro, 2002, 2000; Felton, 2006).

The type itself becomes a form that carries meaning (s) and should be competent to hold our attention. Letters and words become images that may not be tied to their meaning. The form thus ceases to be subordinate to its function (Lupton, 1996). Type can, therefore, entertain, amuse, please, persuade, go beyond meaning.

In the digital age, type design can be eccentric / original, unique / personal and subjective, as the aim is to promote multiple readings / interpretations, rather than just one, fixed interpretation. It aspires to provoke the reader so that she becomes an active part in the construction of the message (Poynor, 1991). This new reader should be completely free to explore and interpret what she observes, free from constraints. Thus, a graphic design object, like other artistic objects, is incomplete until the reader interprets it.

This freedom implies the sense of pleasure, the visual aesthetics of the sign (Eco, 1962). However, this new way of approaching and practicing typography and design itself, has raised many questions, namely related to legibility and readability, which are vehemently debated by designers of different generations, with different ideologies and formations, hindering a consensus.

Although David Carson (2003) states "Just because something is readable does not mean it communicates. More importantly, it does not mean it communicates the right thing." Scher (in Byrne & Witt, 1990) considers that readability depends on the purpose of the work, whether it is supposed to be more, less or not readable at all. Many designers think like Herman Zapf: "Reading is the most important part of the whole design. If you limit this - if you slow down the speed of reading - I think it's wrong."

1.5. Legibility and readiness

Ovink (in Heitlinger, 2007: 19) defined readability as "the ease and precision with which the reader perceives printed texts". Ovink adds that this process involves two terms, legibility (visual perception), and readability (intellectual understanding of the text, and explains how to differentiate the two terms:

Fig. 6. FF Dirty Faces 1 (designed by Neville Brody, 1994)

To recognize. It is the most immediate level of recognition of the characters, shape and arrangement of glyphs in relation to the background to which they are inserted. To be recognized, the letter must be visible. To interpret. It is the intellectual acquisition of the text by those who read it. It's about content and the author's ability to communicate it to their readers. Authors should be aware of anything that may decrease the ability to decipher a text. In the field of typography, readability is a quality of a given text, typographic font, or document (book, newspaper, etc.). Many typographic fonts were created to meet the specific reading difficulties of a medium (Heitlinger, 2007: 19).

Today we know that legibility is just a matter of habit, as Zuzana Licko (s / d) says:

> Typefaces are not intrinsically readable. Rather, it is the reader's familiarity with typefaces that accounts for their readability. Studies have shown that readers read best what they read most. Legibility is also a dynamic process and the readers' habits are ever-changing. It seems curious that blackletter typestyles, which we find illegible today, were actually preferred over more humanistic designs during the eleventh and fiftieth centuries. Similarly, the typefaces we perceive as illegible today may be tomorrow's classic *choices.*
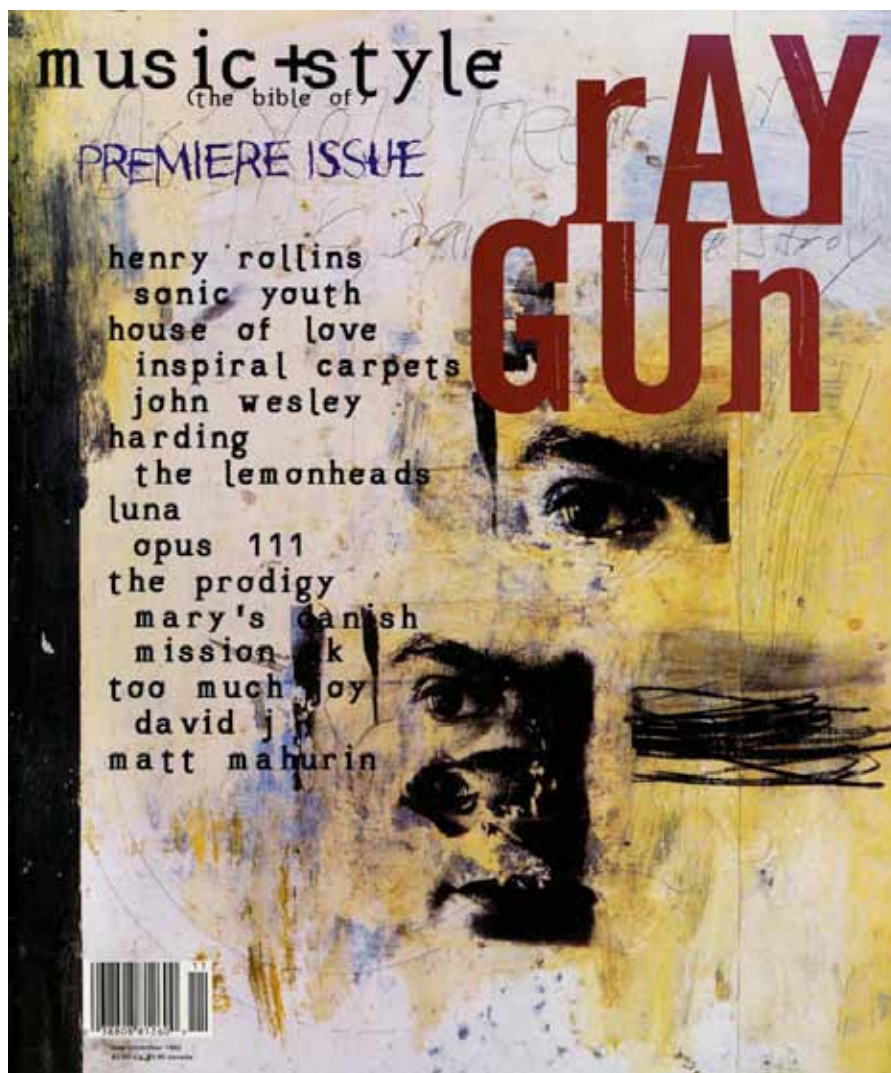
Fig. 7. Premier issue cover of Ray Gun Magazine
(designed by David Carson, 1992).

With the growth of multimedia applications, the way fonts were thought and designed has also changed to include readability issues for desktop and mobile screens (Ambrose and Harris, 2006).

According to Cheng (2006) there is not only one correct method of creating fonts since each designer will have his own. Typography is an "art" that continues to grow and evolve constantly. Each new generation of graphic designers establishes their own conventions and boundaries with respect to their activity. Some creations endure over time, while others reflect only fashions and fleeting tendencies, but all have a part in the history of typography (Dawber, 2010).

1.6. Graffiti writing

Graffiti was born in the United States during the 1950s as a result of the combination of social and cultural factors linked to the French student movement in May 1968 and the American hip-hop culture.

The term "graffiti" has Italian origins and is plural of "*graffito*". It derives etymologically from the Greek "*graphein*", the name given to the inscriptions made on walls since the Roman Empire, meaning "inscription". It generally refers to any form of unauthorized inscription on a public surface (Phillips 1999; Lewisohn 2008). It refers to the inscriptions made in urban space, in various supports, such as walls and urban furniture, through several instruments, these usually being the spray or aerosol can and the marker (Campos, 2007).
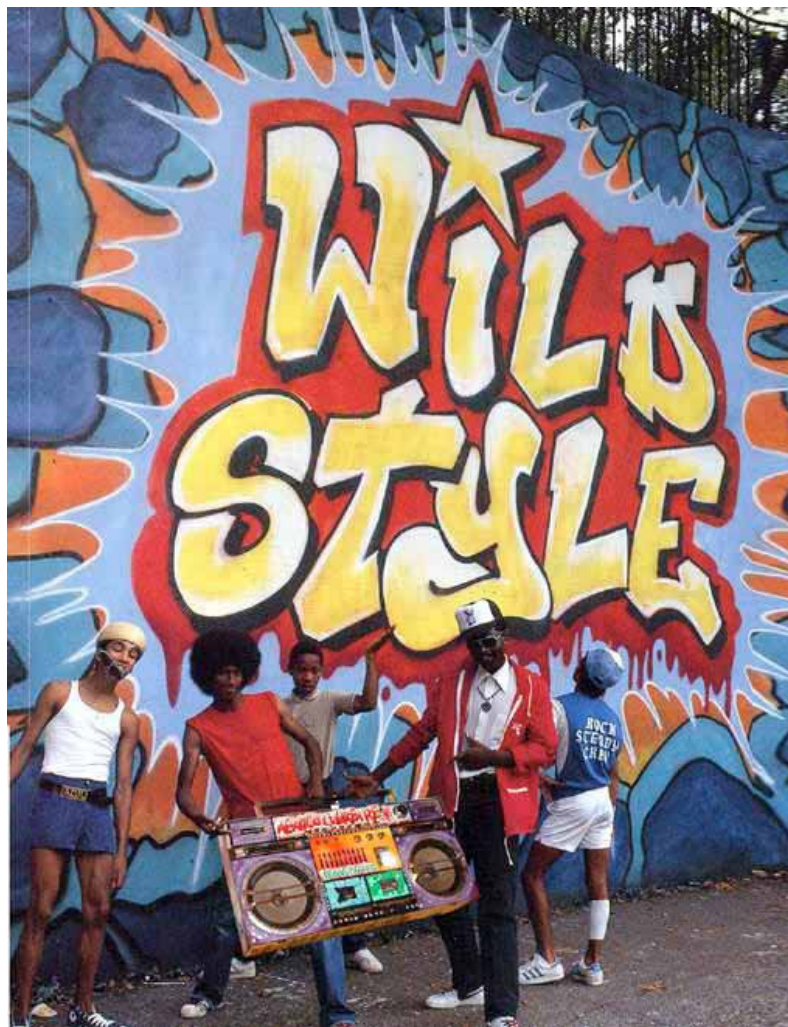
Fig.8. Rock Steady Crew and *writers* Zephyr e Revolt.
Wild Style first movie cover, New York City, 1982.

The present study focuses exclusively on graffiti writing, a term used to identify and differentiate this activity from others, whose definitions refer to completely different objectives. Thus, graffiti writing refers to the activity associated with hip-hop culture, originating in Philadelphia, which was established in New York City during the 1960s,

Fig.9. Spray graffiti tag by writer Amaze.

and whose central theme is the tag, or the author's signature

(Lewisohn 2008, Austin 2001). Graffiti can be considered a predecessor of other movements such as street art or post-graffiti, with which it shares certain graphic, formal, philosophical and social characteristics. Fig. 10. Marker graffiti tag by Sever.

Fig. 11. Wild Style by Molin One, 2016.

Fig. 12 - Bubble Style throw-up by Cope2.

Since its inception, graffiti writing has been specializing in drawing letters, usually of a specific name. Writers have developed numerous styles and variations of the ones that have been defined over time. The great majority of these styles are variations of those that are considered as the typical styles of graffiti writing, the stylistic foundations of graffiti, to which wildstyle (Fig. 11), bubble style (Fig. 12) or 3D (Fig. 13), are examples (Walde, 2011).

Graffiti is, therefore, a cultural practice that presupposes the production of a cultural object that communicates through

Fig. 13. 3D graffiti by Odeith (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2014

a series of verbal, iconic and pictorial codes, giving rise to a culture or, as writers prefer, an urban movement. A universe composed of interrelated norms, patterns, representations and imaginary that have established themselves over time (Campos, 2007).

1.7. Graffiti writing, graphic design & typography
Letter is a fundamental element of graffiti writing, communication, graphic design and typography. From advertising posters and TV ads, through urban clothing and footwear lines to album covers, there are innumerable types of graffiti-inspired typography, or with visual marks that refer to it (Kimvall, 2016).

There are testimonies of graphic designers claiming to have gained a taste for typography through graffiti, many of whom have been or are graffiti writers such as Pettis "Originally I got into letterforms in high school when I was into graffiti" (in Dawber, 2010: 118).

According to Ferreira (2008) we can consider that graffiti writing, with regard to typographic compositions, sometimes resembles the work of a professional designer. Both share a common ancestor, the written word (Lynam, 2008); the two work at both microtipography and macrotipography. Microtipography refers to the shape of the letter itself, to the issues of spacing, alignment, size, among others (Spitzmüller, 2007).

Since the letter is the basic element on which graffiti writing develops, as the collective Sicksystems says "Graffiti is all about letters" (in Dawber, 2010: 58) many writers have invented and continue to invent, a large repertoire of alphabets, created initially in their blackbooks and later passed on to walls or subway and train carriages. However, the letters created by graphic designers and typographers are different from the ones conceived by writers. Typefaces created by designers are usually designed for mechanical or digital reproduction, for a standardized and versatile use, so

Fig. 14. Poster for the "Air Force One" promo made for Nike Sportswear, by Sycksystems

Fig. 16. Zoo York t-shirt design.

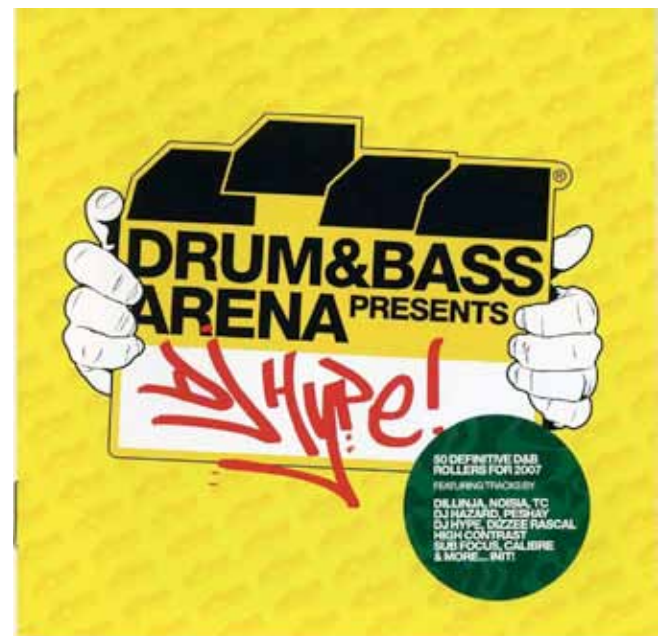Fig. 15. Graffiti piece by Dmitri Aske, Sycksystems

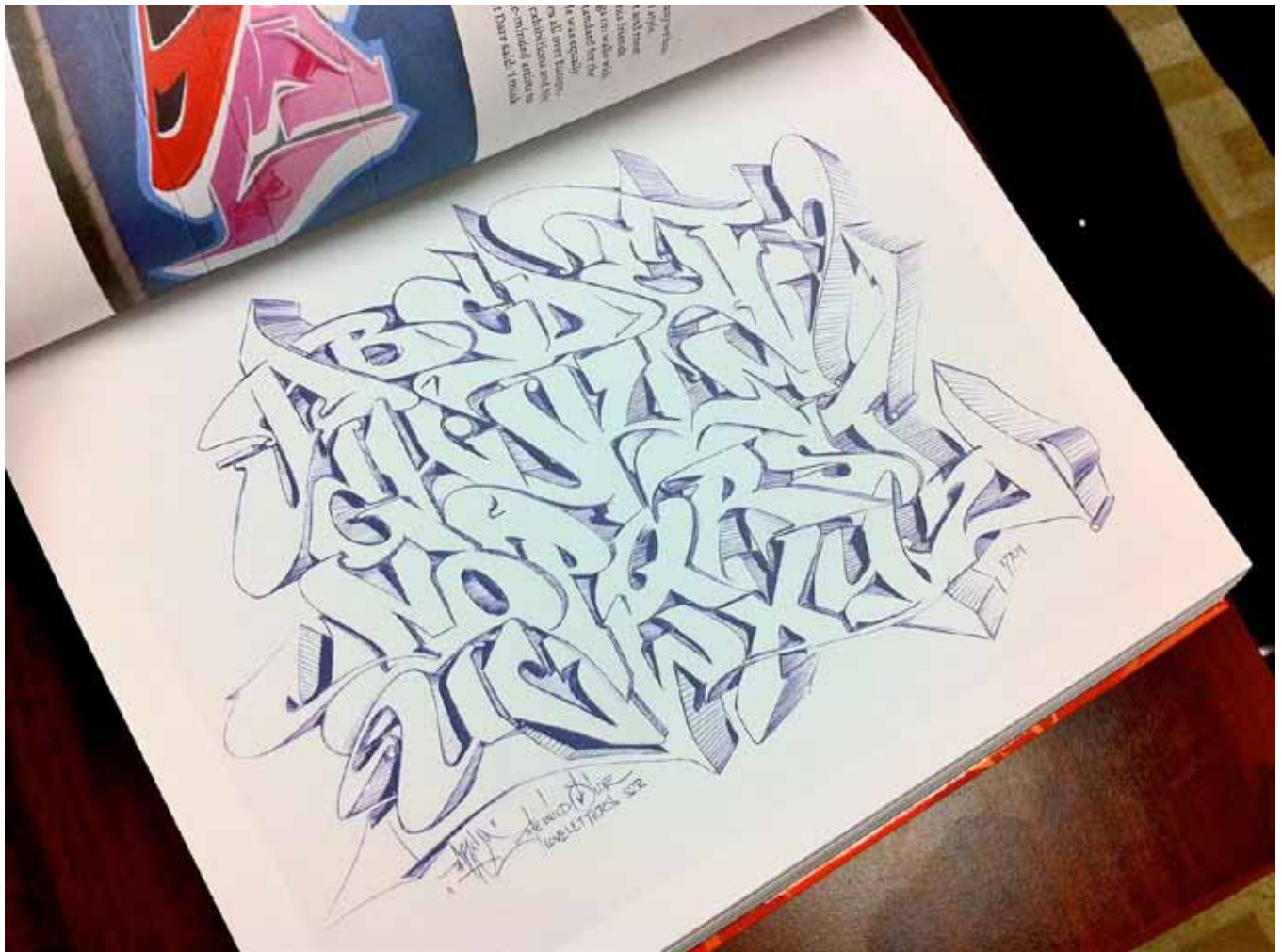Fig. 17. Drum And Bass Arena Presents DJ Hype, album cover.

Fig. 18. Graffiti alphabet by Dare

that they can be applied in different texts, without losing their characteristics. The alphabets created by writers are usually designed for specific inscriptions (Sartwell, 2004). However, there are writers who draw whole alphabets. They can be used to determine the consistency of a style, enhance the improvising ability of the writer or even allow him/her not to limit productions to a single tag.

Many writers adopt different tags throughout their career, often simultaneously. Names, nouns, verbs, phrases with ironic or satirical meanings, painted on walls and carriages, among other supports, constituting messages addressed to both a more specific audience and a wider audience, depending on the writer's intention, but each one resulting in a different letter design. Attempting to reproduce exactly the same shapes turns out to be almost impossible, given the limited control of the inscription tool, the dependence

on the movement of the arm and hand, and in the case of the aerosol can, up to the finger pressing the cap. Even the surface on which graffiti is applied can have consequences on the physiognomy of the painted letters. Thus, each work of graffiti presents a typographic variation.

Unlike traditional typeface design, graffiti does not aspire to an exact repetition of the typographic forms it generates, on the contrary it can even be considered as unoriginal or too repetitive. It's this idea that Giant conveys by stating:

> The whole thing with graffiti letters is that they should be unique every time you paint, but should have a recognizable style every time. A font set only gives you one way of doing each letter, within a certain style (Giant in Lynam, 2008: 139).

However, it must be borne in mind that being repetitive in graffiti is subjective. A writer who devotes himself more to bombing has the greater aim of spreading his name, the tag, the greater number of possible places, being less concerned with stylistic variations or formal characteristics of the letterings than a writer who is dedicated more to the painting of murals and halls-of-fame, from which greater differentiation from work to work is expected.

In graffiti, the drawing of the letters has a close relation with the movement of the body, being dependent and closely linked to the expressiveness and fluidity of the lines, which is an example, according to Lynam (2008), the tag, often drawn with a single stroke, with marker or aerosol spray, referring to the old calligraphic tradition, where the brush and pen were the tools.

Calligraphy refers to the art or technique of handwriting, forming letters and other elegant, harmonic graphic signs according to certain patterns and stylistic or beauty models and artistic excellence. Writer Mode 2 compares the writers' calligraphic work to that of Japanese calligraphers, saying that this differs primarily in the respect earned from the general public (Lewisohn, 2008).

> If we can tie together graffiti and calligraphy as spontaneous approaches to linguistic images, we can contrast them both with the highly specialized craft of drawing letters with a pencil and the demanding practice of designing words. These are anything but spontaneous processes. They are all about patience, trial and error, careful refinements and critical judgment.
> (Meulman and Eeuwens 2010: 11).
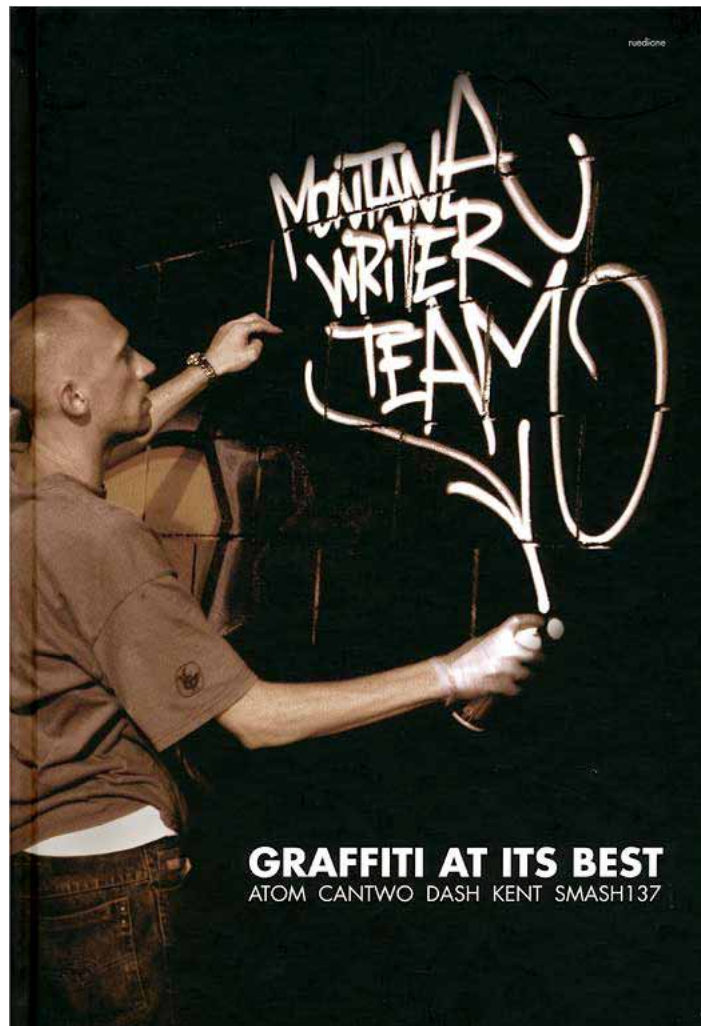
Fig. 19. Montana Writer Team book cover. Writer Kent tagging.

Macrotipography is concerned with the formats of the text areas, as well as the organization and hierarchy of all the graphic and typographic elements (Spitzmüller, 2007). Just as the graphic designer organizes and hierarchizes the elements in the layout, so that the message is clearly conveyed, the writer also does something similar on the surface in which she works. The graffiti work is typically composed by arranging the piece (the main element), tag, phrases and dedications, and the other pictographic elements. Thus, the main part, be it a bombing, a throw-up or a piece, acquires the most prominent role, following the tags, phrases and dedications, depending on the purpose of the writer. All of this is organized and framed in a format delineated by it or dictated by the characteristics of the surface.
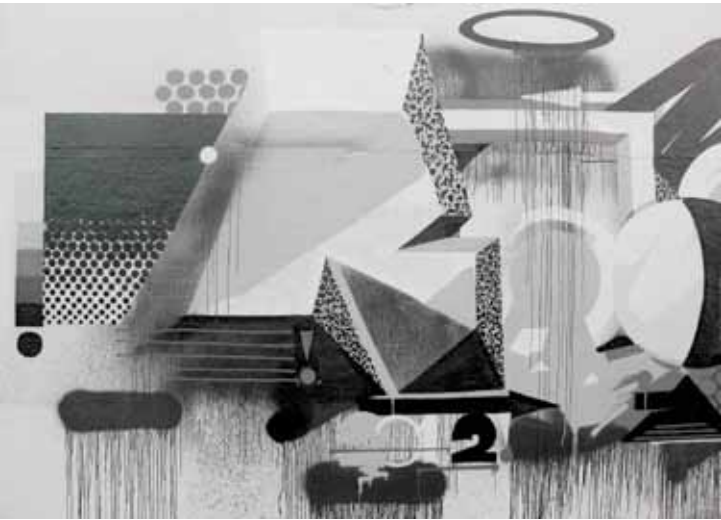
Fig. 20. Characteristic effects of the tools used in graffiti by Roid MSK - spray can

Fig. 21. Characteristic effects of the tools used in graffiti - markers

Fig. 22. Adidas Campaign by Vasava

Fig. 23. "A dripping marker" graffiti font

Fig. 24. Graffiti piece by Rogue-one and Ejek.

Fig. 25. "Degrassi" graffiti font

Fig. 26. Crookers party flyer by Glossy
TV and Kalimodjo

2. Methods

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, a set of typographic / graphic design objects was analyzed. The method used in this analysis was the direct observation that, characterized by its subjectivity (Fortin, 1999), takes into account the cultural background and experience of the observer, in this case as graphic designer and graffiti writer.

Fig. 27 - Graffiti piece by Cey Adams.

Fig. 28. Beastie Boys logo (1986) by Cey Adams

Based on the review of the literature presented, the academic formation and work as graphic designer and the experience of the author as a writer, we substantiate it theoretically. In order to carry out this analysis, we have established criteria that serve as indicators in the analysis of the elements that may be present in typographic / graphic / graphic design objects that suggest the influence of graffiti:

Fig. 30 - "B-Boy" graffiti font.

Materials - when the elements present characteristics of the tools used in graffiti;

- Formal - when formal characteristics are the same as graffiti;

- Typographic - when it comes to letters with characteristics similar to graffiti, that is, letters based on graffiti writing. We do not include in this criterion the letters based on graffiti's characteristic calligraphy.

Fig. 29. Graffiti piece by Bando, 1985

- Calligraphic - when it comes to elements that have similarities to the calligraphy characteristic of graffiti writing, namely tagging or, in other words, graffiti-based calligraphy;

Fig. 31 - Graffiti tag by Bates.
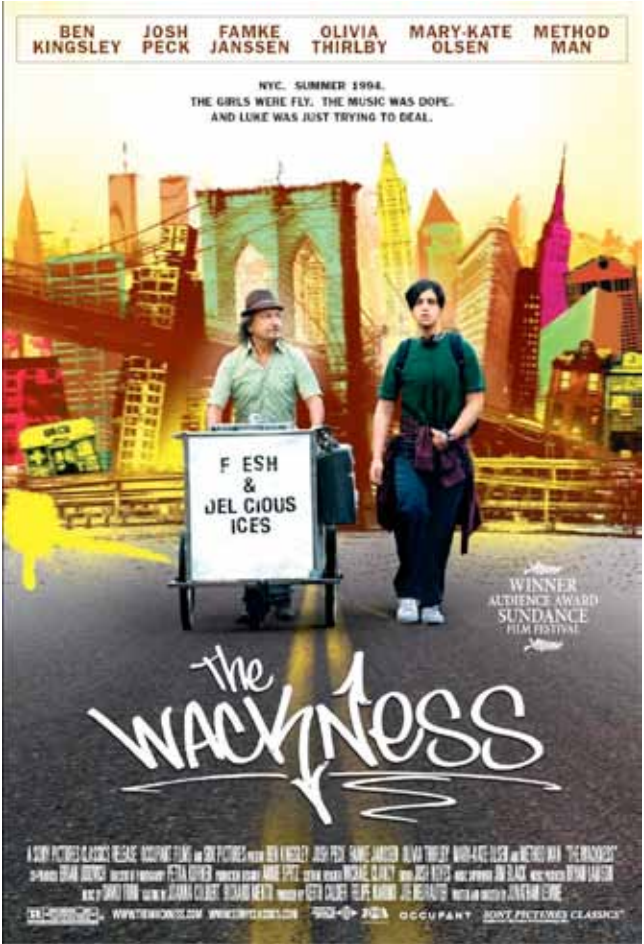
Fig. 32. Poster for the movie "The Wackness", 2008

Fig. 33. "Pilot Rase 1" graffiti font

We analyzed 50 graphic objects, whose typographic elements could possibly present some kind of graffiti writing influence. The objects were chosen because they integrate professional practice, regardless of their perceived quality. This sample includes graphic objects by graphic designers, who still are or were writers, and others whose authors we do not know. They are, above all, two-dimensional objects, intended for printing or viewing on digital media,

such as billboards, posters, flyers, logos, album and disc covers, packaging, a catalog, a website and contemporary typefaces.

3. Results

In this analysis of the 50 objects of graphic design we obtained the following results:

Taking into account the previously defined criteria, the most frequently identified mark was the calligraphic type (36%), which consists of graffiti writing calligraphy. Second, we identified elements that share common formal characteristics with the tools and / or techniques used in graffiti writing (characteristic spots of spray / aerosol paint, drippings, writing simulation with marker brush, among others). They are marks based on the characteristics of the tools used in graffiti writing (26%). Thirdly, graphic marks of formal nature (21%) were identified. They are marks as bold outline, second and third outline to create contrast between figure and background; Arrows as an integral part of the letters and links between letters that refer to wildstyle graffiti; shapes and ornaments typical of graffiti. Brands that are related mainly to the customization of letters, not concerning to the letter shape design itself.

The marks included in typographic criterion (17%) appear in the last position, among which there is a varied typography that shows similarities with typologies and styles characteristic of graffiti writing, such as the throw-up and bubble style. Some of these marks have been identified on the same object.

4. Conclusions

Through this study, it was concluded that it is possible to find graphic marks of the influence of graffiti writing on contemporary typography.

Since the calligraphic markings, which consist of tag-type calligraphy, have been identified in a greater number (36%), we can confirm that calligraphy done by writers are now frequently transformed into typography by designers. It's exactly this type of calligraphic graffiti that most graffiti-based typefaces, available on the internet, try to reproduce. They are made up of letters that can be classified, in some cases, as cursive, which simulate handwriting styles, done using pen or brush, replaced in this case by the spray can or marker that gives them their own expressiveness.

It is this characteristic expressiveness of the tools used, which led us to define the criteria for elements that share common formal characteristics with the tools and / or techniques used in graffiti writing (characteristic spots of spray / aerosol paint, drippings, writing simulation with marker brush, among others). They are marks based on the characteristics of the tools used in graffiti writing (26%).

The fact that this creative practice (i.e., graffiti writing) presents common traits throughout the world, regardless of its variations, contributes to a certain artistic / stylistic unity, based on certain expressive and technical values (Pais, 2000).

Graffiti writing is based on letter design, however, in addition to the design of the body of the letter itself, there are graphic marks of a formal nature (21%), mainly concerning the customization of letters. Typical graffiti shapes, elements and ornaments, consist of arrows or links between letters (ligatures), and often work to create a style of graffiti known as wildstyle. In this sense, Campos (2010: 291) states that:

> In the beginning, graffiti basically consisted of a set of letters. These letters later acquire visual properties and pictorial potential, serving as raw material to sculpt the imaginary in ways that are original and ideally inimitable.

In part, these are formal features that help define typical graffiti writing styles, such as wildstyle.

To the consolidation process of graffiti's characteristic styles, the shape of the letter it is equally important. Its structure, predefined by the shapes of the original characters that constitute the different alphabets, can be changed to a certain point, if it is intended that it remains more or less readable.

There are, however, stylistic conventions that allow us to identify and distinguish the different typologies and styles of graffiti writing, allowing us to find and identify typographic marks (17%), which consist of typography that simulates some of these typologies. This is a key point to answer our second question of investigation, fulfilling the objective of verifying the existence of designers / typographers, whose typefaces and/or typographic compositions created by them, show signs of the influence of this activity. Many of these typefaces are not designed by writers (Lynam, 2008), inevitably "sinning" for lack of style and genuineness. They

are, for the most part, fonts whose design presents an irregular spacing between letters, which means that when applied, certain elements of a letters anatomy invade the body or "limb" of another, which gives them, to a certain degree, the dynamic and spontaneity feel of graffiti writing. Some of them also show characteristic expressiveness of the tools and / or techniques used in graffiti writing, such as the ones mentioned above.

Christian Schwartz (in Acker, 2013) points out that, at first glance, graffiti and typography / typeface design seem to have little in common, except at its base, letter design. This is especially so given that spontaneity and illegibility (except in specific cases) are rarely objectives of traditional type design. He adds that a deeper analysis allows us to understand how much these two activities share and influence each other, which is evident in the influence of gothic types in some styles of graffiti writing, and some of these styles in typography / letterings used in graphic design objects.

Both typography and graffiti grow together, reinventing themselves and influencing each other. Acker (2013) argues that, just as calligraphy has been an inspiration to typographers and type designers, for many generations, urban characters serve as inspiration for contemporary typography. Although this kind of influence is not always easy to detect, there are situations in which it is obvious. "*There is an often hidden relationship between these two lettering practices, typeface design and graffiti, that is worth looking deeper into.*" (Lynam, 2008: 21).

The project Handselecta, directed by Christian Acker and Kyle Talbott, writers and graphic designers dedicated to typography, aims to preserve and document the various styles of graffiti through the publication of books on this subject. As an integral part of the project, the two designers work directly with various writers in the United States to create graffiti-inspired digital fonts in terms of their visual expressiveness but later adapted to the parameters of conventional typography. This project explores the connection between graffiti and calligraphy and simultaneously tries to establish a link between graffiti and typography. In the transposition of the fonts to the computer, that is, in the process of scanning / vectorization/ digitization, designers try to be faithful to the forms given by the writers, in order to preserve the original

Fig. 34. "JokerStraightLetterBold" graffiti font by Handselecta.
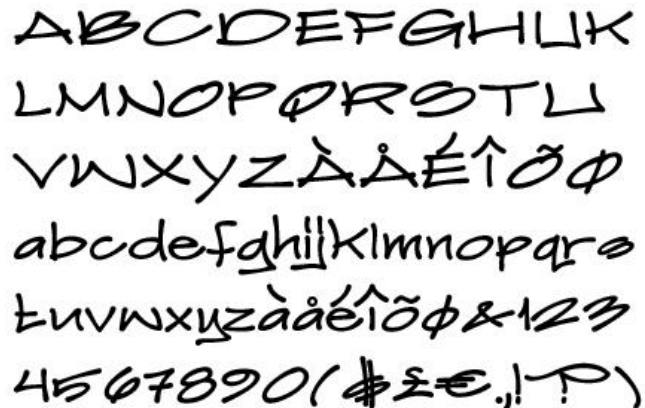
Fig. 35. "Nike_6 b" graffiti font by Handselecta

Fig. 36. "MeneOneNYThrowie" graffiti font by Handselecta
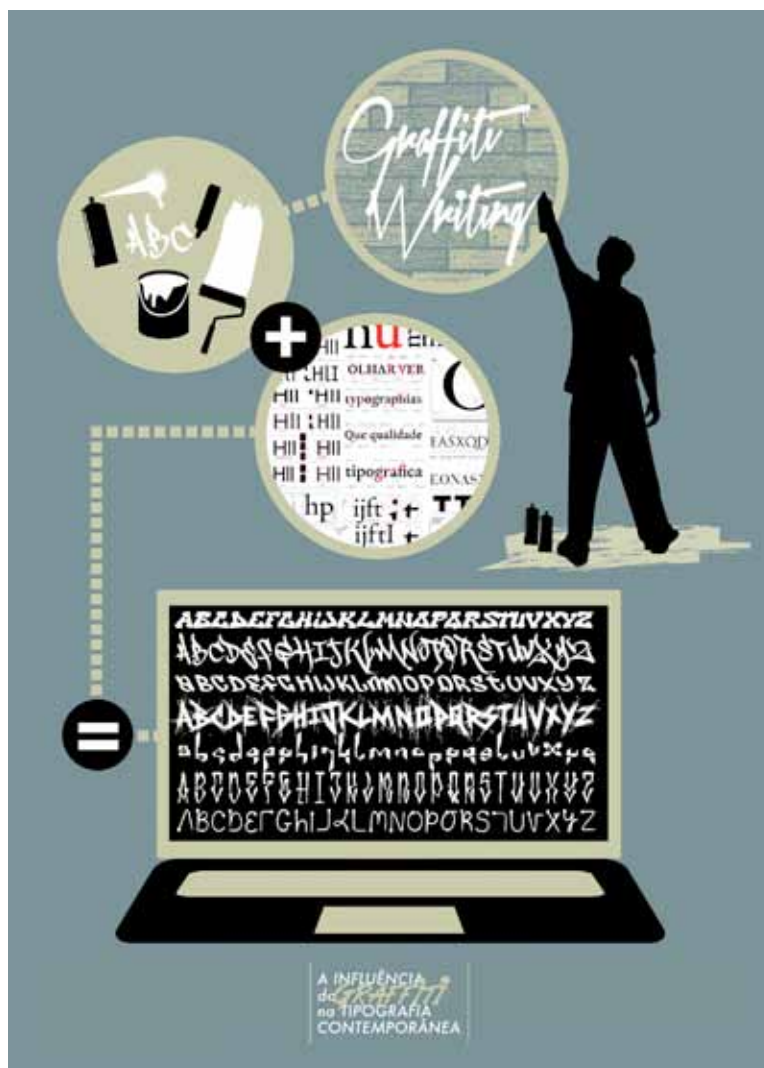
Fig. 37. "The Influence of Graffiti Writingin Contemporary Typography"
original poster by Rodrigo Craveiro, 2014

In short, there is a close relationship between graffiti writing, graphic / communication design, calligraphy, and typography. Although they are distinct practices, they are intimately linked by a common bond, the letter, each one working according to different methods and using different tools, yet serving different objectives in different contexts. It can be affirmed, to the extent that typefaces are created based on the expressive characteristics of the letter design of graffiti, that this influences graphic design, namely in the typography field. The fact that these fonts try to reproduce the writing through spray / aerosol and brush-type marker, also gives them their own expressiveness.

It is concluded that, since typography is an indispensable part of graphic design, it also allows itself to be influenced by these contemporary forms of visual expression that cohabit in the urban landscape, surrounding us daily, and to which we are not immune. When we talk about how graffiti writing influences typography and / or design, it can be considered that it influences us, graphic designers, communication professionals, individuals, spectators and observers attentive to what is happening around us, especially with regard to forms of visual expression and image. This assimilation, this hunger for novelty and freshness, imposes itself on an activity that, in a society constantly bombarded by images, seeks to communicate effectively with increasingly heterogeneous, specific and unique target audiences.

Although we feel that modernism has contributed unequivocally to design, with principles that still make sense today, it is also true that some of its ideas have become obsolete, old-fashioned, no longer attracting, persuading and communicating with much of the population that now seems to need new visual stimuli that somehow touch and interact with it.

With regard to typography, specifically, the postmodern era brought what may be characterized as a new enthusiasm, which translates into new communication strategies. It seems to leave out the idea that typography serves only and exclusively the purpose of decoding text content, accepting that connecting emotionally with the recipient of the message is essential.

Thus, readability seems to gain ground on legibility, as it becomes more important for the audience to understand and identify with the content that is being communicated. It is understood that the public is not universally equal, existing different "tribes" that respond to different stimuli. We understand that without this new way of thinking and practicing design / typography, this connection to graffiti and reciprocal influence might not have been possible.

The way our senses perceive the world and the information presented to us seems to be different. Technological advances force our perceptual capacities to evolve, so it seems logical that we can decode complex messages more easily. The amount of stimuli, signals and signs that we are able to process at the same time seems to be much larger, and consequently we need more challenging and stimulating messages, that is, the public's ability to grasp and digest information has changed, especially due to new media. Samara (2007: 121) states that:

> just look at documentaries and television news, where various types of presentation - oral, video, icons and still images, mobile typography - succeed or overlap in rapid editing, to understand that people are accustomed to having more complex experiences with design.

Designers in general and typographers in particular, find in their own experiences and environments that they inhabit references that influence them and, consequently, influence their work, namely, typeface design. Graffiti writing is just one such reference. Consequently, we consider that our conclusions allow us to complement and deepen the bibliography on graffiti writing, contemporary typography and graphic design and the way they relate to each other, therefore contributing to the understanding of these practices, thus giving a response to the last one of our study. Graffiti may be illegible for most people, but it will always be effective in communicating with its target audiences, who are more than accustomed to finding letters and words in ways other than the usual or variations of them.

We ask ourselves, therefore, if the canons of what should be the basic structure of the design of each letter or character, remain the same, or if it is moving towards new typographic principles, which redefine the design of types, conscious of this new way of practicing design.

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