

**GRAPHIC DESIGN
AND ERRORS .**

* Abstract

Research project
Master degree in Graphic
Design 2018

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Graphic design and errors .

My project is about graphic design and errors, from spelling mistakes to creative freedom.

To understand the topic of my dissertation, it is necessary to explain the term ERROR.

An error is a sign of ignorance of the rules. However, careless mistakes can be corrected. It can be the unconscious character revealed when writing. In Latin, the word mistake comes from the verb fail that is to say to miss a duty or rules. The question is to know how errors were created socially and how they standardized; how can errors be source of creativity ?

My main subject deals with spelling mistakes at school from a personal experience. Is writing well synonymous with beautiful hand writing or writing without spelling mistakes? I never had a good spelling. I am dyslexic, I have difficulty in learning the spelling rules because the school system is not adapted to the way dyslexics think. Paradoxically, as a graphic designer, I am keen on typography.

My principal question is how can spelling mistakes that can be stigmatizing at school be source of freedom in art ?

1. Writing as social cohesion

Graphic Design and Errors

Writing requires a form of standardization so that we can understand one another. There have been different steps in the standardization of writing and spelling rules to abolish inequality. First, there was the edict of Villers Cotterêts which homogenized spelling. And from the 17th century onwards, printers became also guarantors of the conformity of the language. Geoffroy Tory was the first printer of the king François I. He wrote a treaty on typography and introduced specific characteristics such as punctuation. He was the guarantor of spelling rules because he printed texts for a wide public. Such a standardization required a learning process. At school we learn the writing rules but it is a hard process to learn, which implies a lot of mistakes. The learning process can be stigmatizing for some pupils like dyslexic pupils. Because they fail to understand the rules, they make mistakes. At school, they are judged on the mistakes they make and not on their abilities.

Our alphabetical system was created to simplify the written language, which is fairly difficult. It is a phonetic system. The first writing was ideographic, that is to say pictograms. Then came the alphabetical system. A sound equals a letter. The first alphabet was consonantal, all the written letters were pronounced. It became more complex with the creation of vowels. Dyslexics have difficulty in perceiving graphemes and phonemes. In China, the system is ideographic. Can a French dyslexic not be dyslexic in China ? Stanislas Dehaene shows that, thanks to neuroscience and when comparing the digital image of the brain, ideograms do not stimulate the same part of the brain. Ronald Davis is a dyslexic expert in dyslexia. In his book *Le don de dyslexie* he wrote that a dyslexic is a visual thinker. If our alphabet were ideographic, maybe dyslexics would make fewer mistakes.



Mesopotamian,
Egyptian and
Chinese writing
systems

2. The teaching of writing between trace and body

How was the norm imposed in our society through learning? Learning writing consists in learning the spelling rules and the writing gesture. It is a cultural and technical transmission. In graphic design, we talk about ductus. This word means the qualities and characteristics of writing instantiated in the flow of writing a text. This questions the tool. New technologies have modified the act of writing from a fountain pen to a computer keyboard. The tool also questions the limits of writing. The act is different whether on paper or digital. The action of the body helps to memorize the drawing and the spelling of a word.

It is very difficult for dyslexic pupils to learn how to write because the school system is not adapted to them. Each person reacts differently to learning rules. How can each person react to the learning of writing rules? Each individual is compared to a norm. Georges Canguilhem in the book *Le normal et pathologique* questions the limits of the norm. He compares normativity and pathology. Dyslexia is a pathology. The norm leads to judgment. He said that there is a difference between what is pathologic and normal. What is pathologic in a situation can be normal in another. Normativity is relative because it is based on flawlessness only.

Learning how to write is imperfect and limited. It depends on spelling rules and writing gesture but also the singularity of individual.

3. The transgression of rules by art, force of change

Graphic Design and Errors

Some writings are difficult to read either from graphic or spelling points of view. A sentence may be incomprehensible while mistakes can reveal different meanings. Sigmund Freud referred to Freudian slips that is to say words replaced by other words unconsciously thus leading to another meaning. Writing reflects the person. Denise Berthet, a graphologist, studied the unconscious of writing and studied different writings. She said there is bad writing, that «bad writing» represents a pain both physical and mental. A mistake can reveal human psychology. In the case of dyslexia, mistakes are part of clumsy writing because, as Ronald Davis said, dyslexic students hide their mistakes with bad letter drawings.

I questioned my writing because I draw beautiful letters. I hide my spelling mistakes behind well-drawn letters as if filling a lack with beautiful letters.

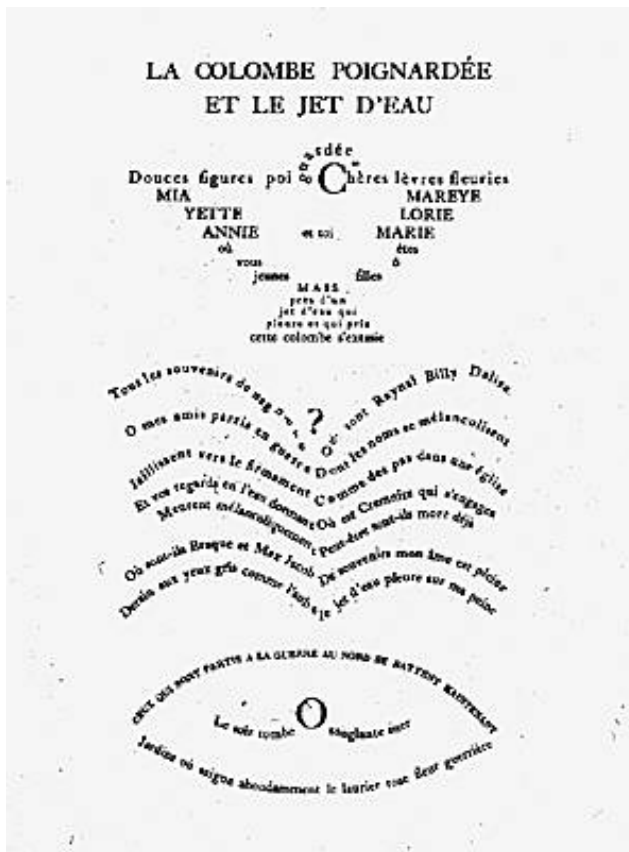
As Pascal Quignard explained writing has two sides - one visible and the other legible / understandable. The distinction is that the visible side represents what we see while the legible is an interpretation of the visible.

Micrographic writing began in the fourth century. It is a process of personal annotation of Biblical texts. The monks noted down their own interpretations to be added to the text, to facilitate the understanding of the text.

In graphic design there are macro and micro typographies to make reading more understandable. Macro typography is the link between paragraphs, images and colors whereas micro typography refers to the size of letters, fonts, etc. Writing comes from the unconscious. We cannot reduce writing to norm learning.

In the artistic field in the twentieth century, Guillaume Apollinaire was a poet and the first who broke the writing and spelling rules. He created calligrams.

Anne-Marie-Christin in her book *Histoire de l'écriture de l'idéogramme au multimédia*, says the technical constraints of printing foster creativity just like for poems.

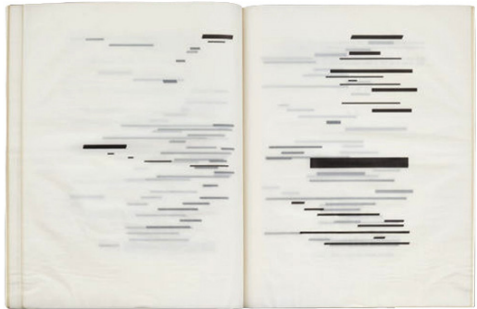
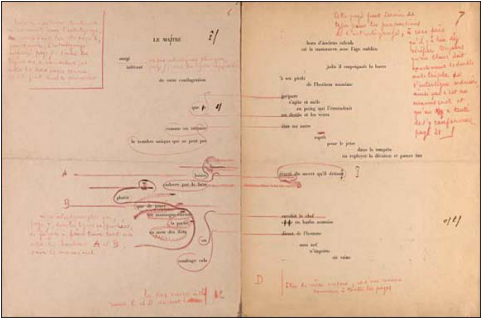
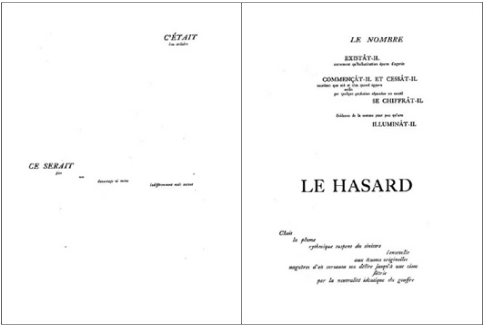


Calligram
by Guillaume
Apollinaire, a
French poet.

Graphic Design and Errors

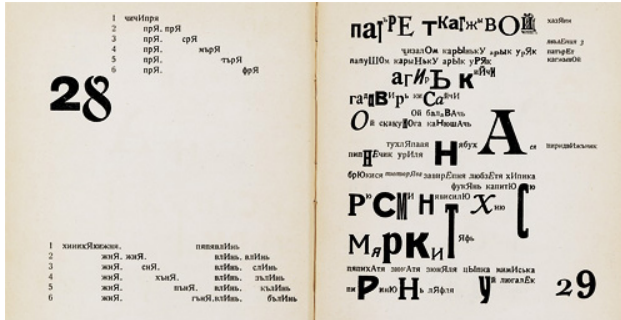
It was a new kind of poetry free from the constraints of verse and rhymes. The first typographic poem is entitled Un coup de dé jamais n’abolira le hasard, written by Stéphane Mallarmé. The layout of the page is like a game that associates content and form.

Stéphane
Mallarmé,
«Jamais un coup
de dés n’abolira
le hasard, proofs
corrected, pages 6
and 7» [poem], ©
BnF / Reserve rare
books.



The transgression of the rules by art, force of change

Like Mallarmé, for Les Futuristes movement form was inseparable from content. Art transgresses the norm. Typography was a field to experiment. In the book *Les mots en liberté* the letters are transformed into illustrations by combining spelling and typography. Art can be a source of freedom through the transgression of norms.



Fillipo Tomaso
Marinetti «Les
mots en liberté»
(without date)
[poem], National
Library of France.
<[http://classes.
bnf.fr/ecritures/
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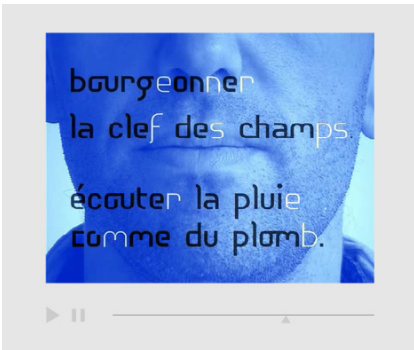
Graphic Design and Errors

Pierre Di Sciullo is a designer specialized in typography. According to him, there is “invisible language” in our language. Typographers can play with writing when there is a double meaning in a sentence. Pierre Di Sciullo created new rules with which we cannot make spelling mistakes. This system is named “Le facile”. He plays with our language.
Mistakes in art can be a source of freedom.

The double role of graphic designers is that they must respect both the spelling rules and typographic ones but they can also play with the rules.

avec Toi je suis
comme
le beurke
avec les radis

sans Toi je suis
comme
un pêcheur
sans filet



The transgression of the rules by art, force of change

pain	pin
pin	pin
peint	pin
sein	sin
saint	sin
thym	din
teint	din
tain	din
ver	ver
vert	ver
verre	ver
vain	ver
vers	ver
père	per
paire	per
pair	per
pers	per
perd	per

rat	ra
raz	ra
ras	ra
riz	ri
rit	ri
ris	ri
rôt	ro
peaux	po
pot	po
paire	poir
boire	poir
croit	kroi
croix	kroi
croît	kroi
quoi	koi
coit	koi
couac	koik
quoique	koik

Pierre di Sciullo,
«Quantange,Sintétik,
Kouij « [typography],
quiresiste.com.
<http://www.quiresiste.com/projet.php?id_projet=48&lang=en&id_gabarit=0>

4 . The project

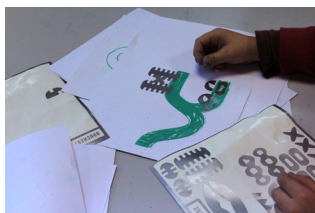
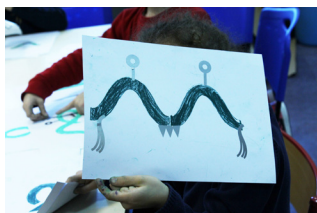
For my project I worked on several workshops whose aim was to play with letters alone or with other people in order to appropriate their forms and better understand them. These workshops gave the opportunity to learn differently. My idea is how can we experience form to facilitate the learning of letters? As Francoise Pollard, a pedagogical advisor, says “ to learn how to write and to understand how to write, it is necessary to draw.”

The first step of my project was my internship. Indeed, I performed my internship at “Jaune Sardine”, a collective of three graphic designers who organize participatory workshops to make people sensitive to graphic design. During my internship I organized a workshop for 6- year-old children. The topic was learning to read and write. I named the workshop “Monsters and letters”. I created four categories to classify the letters of the alphabet. There was a bridge, a wave, a stick and a loop. During the workshop each child created a monster using different materials like stickers and stencils. In combining monsters the children created letters.

The project



“Monsters
and letters” -
workshop first
and second
sessions

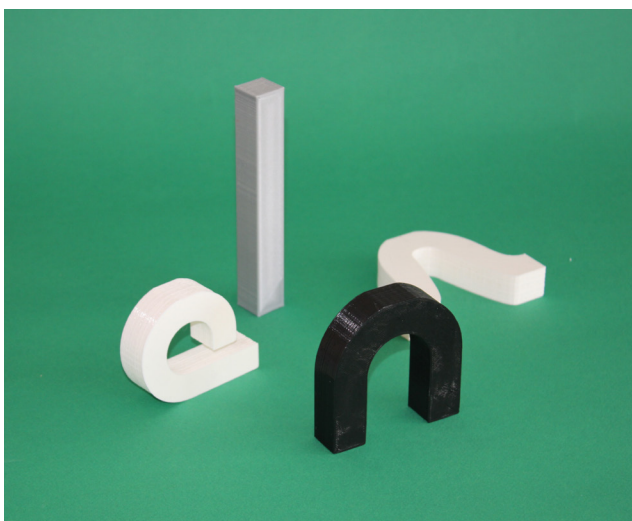


Graphic Design and Errors

For my project I proposed an educational design based on a writing experience. I was inspired by alternative methods like Freinet or Montessori. These alternative methods promote the manipulation and the implication of the five senses in the learning process. It is a child-centered way of learning.

As a graphic designer, I chose a device to handle shapes so that children could better appropriate letters. I wanted to offer a different experience of writing and learning. This device is composed of the four shapes - a bridge, a wave, a stick and a loop - from my first workshop.

a bridge, a wave,
a stick and a loop



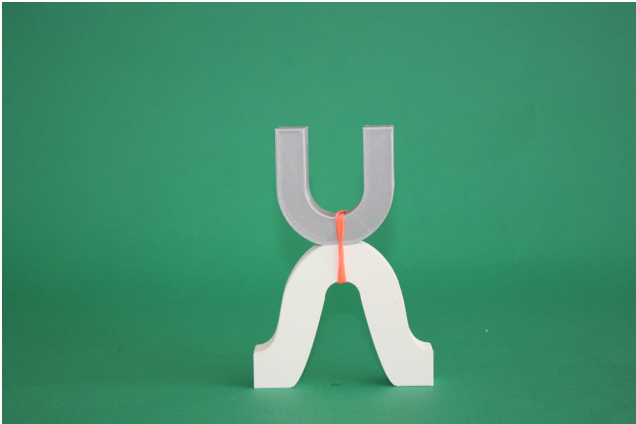
Writing is based on a graphic sign system, each sign must have a code.

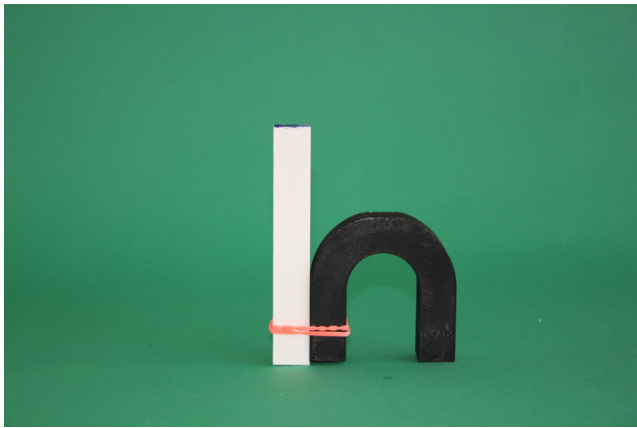
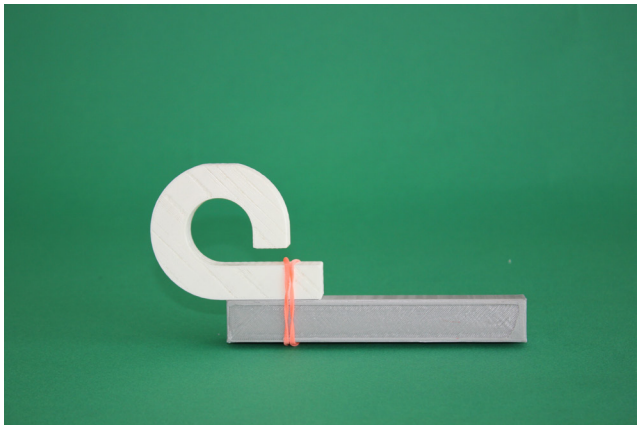
According to Françoise Pollard, a pedagogical adviser, writing is a graphic activity centered on language as well as the coded combination of signs. Its function is to leave a mark to communicate. The flow is horizontal, from left to right, and the letters are drawn in a standardized direction. To learn to write is to learn a gesture controlled visually on a controlled space. Writing corresponds to the coordination of different movements. Children work on the ductus of the letter. They first work on the form of the letter, its drawing, the place of the letters and then the links. They learn the drawing of letters through graphic similarities - loops up or down, sticks, waves and bridges.

The aim of my workshops was to call both gesture and the body in the writing process for pupils aged 6. I collaborated with Anne-Marie Brochier, a primary school teacher at Saint-Michel school in Marseille.

For my second workshop I created shapes printed in 3D. I made the pupils handle these four shapes on different scales to appropriate them. They had to compose letters tying the shapes with elastic bands. The compositions were endless. With the different shapes I was able to create an alphabet that has endless combinations. With these forms, words or even texts can be written to integrate spelling.

Letters made with
shapes

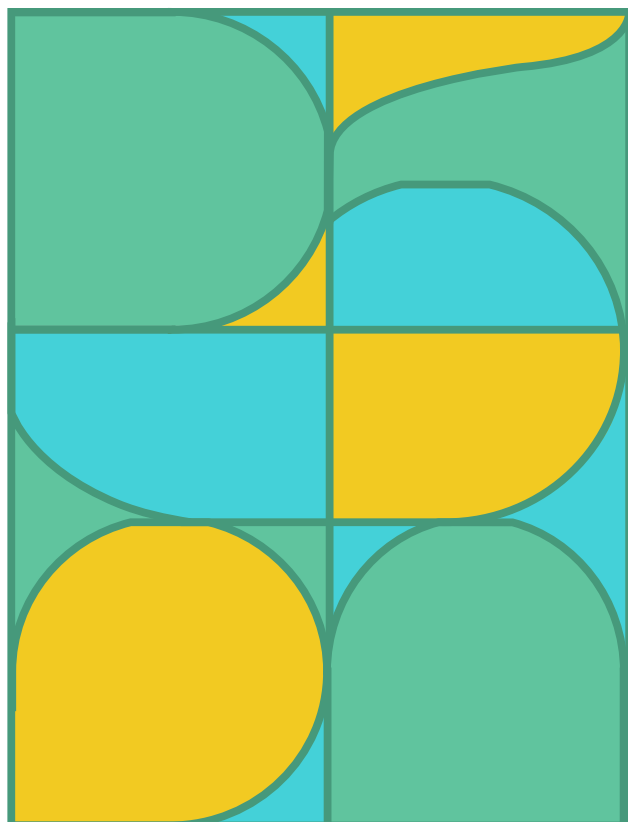




Graphic Design and Errors

The third workshop is a playing field for children. I changed the scale to draw huge letters on the ground. I created spaces to play on like a basketball court. The children played on the field to create their own experience while following the lines on the ground. It helped them memorize and integrate the marks as the whole body was involved actively. It was a workshop to pass from an individual experience to a collective experience.

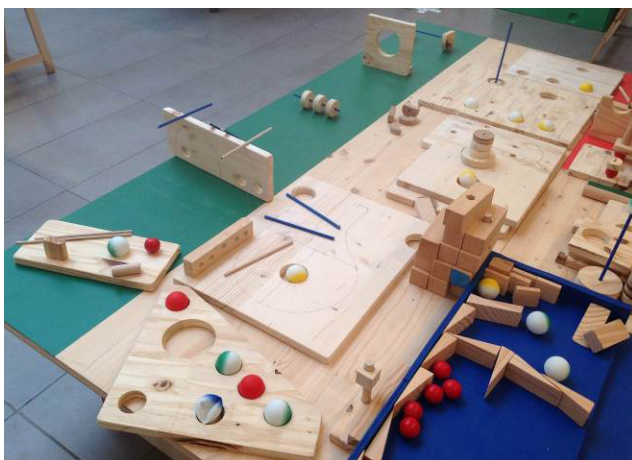
The project



Playing field for
children

Graphic Design and Errors

For the fourth workshop I was inspired by wooden games and the artist Laurence Lagier. She created a table tennis set full of traps. It was an opportunity for me to put in action the body and live another experience. I created a big stencil in which we could use a tiny ball. The children had to make the ball follow the different curves without dropping it. For that game the body was engaged too.



The project



Laurence Lagier's
work - table with
traps

The project

wooden games



Conclusion

I focused my research on different workshops for both an individual and collective experience. I made devices that represent the basis of writing in order to learn in a different way like memory palaces, a technique of memorization. The principle is to create «artificial memory» by referring to a known place in which the information is available. Words are put in places that we know to find them more easily. The goal is to live an experience that helps memorize technical means to remember the construction of a letter or a word.

Source

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