

Research Week 2023

Research problem statement

During the Summer of 2022, I traveled with eleven other girls through LU Send to study in various art museums in the heart of London. As I began to wander around London, and ease my way into a new environment, I was also searching for my research topic. Spending the first week or so learning the city, one element of London that particularly stood out was the ease at which I could navigate a place I had never been. I am constantly on the lookout for good, or bad, design, and the tube map located at every station in London was something I stared at almost every day. Though it was daunting for the first few days, I quickly adapted to the ease of public transportation. The reason? Great design and typography. It was through this ease and experience that I finally landed on my topic: typography. Specifically, the Johnston Font, also known as the Typeface of the Underground. I wanted to take a very formal, business-minded typeface, and spin it in an artistic and creative way.

Typography is an aspect of design that deserves to be researched. Think about the visceral reaction when someone mentions Comic Sans. The laughter that erupts, the eye-rolls, and the scoffs of disgust, need I go on? Oftentimes people tend to overlook the importance of intentional font choice, and many designers end up spending less time on typography than anything else. My passion is typography, and while it may seem boring to the untrained eye, there is an entire world of learning out there, right between the letters you read.

Communication objective

My communication objective is simple. I want to bring appreciation to typography through a piece I design. My intention is to bring awareness to the art behind the type. I sought to create a type-heavy design, focusing on the transportation system that runs throughout London. I

knew I was not the only tube fanatic, as many of the girls on my trip enjoyed exploring the city through the means of public transportation, and many of us were saddened to see a lack of fun transportation merchandise at most of the street vendors. Therefore, my end goal was to create a postcard that one might see on the street in London.

Visual Solution

In order to turn a professional-based font into something beautiful, I needed to research the meaning behind and creation of the Johnston Font. This began in the form of spending a few days hard at work in the Library at the Transportation Museum. Reading through various texts on the life of the font's creator—Edward Johnston—the creation of the font, and the business transactions behind the creation, I was beginning to see the story come together. From then on I utilized the color palette from the different tube lines, as well as the Adobe Font equivalent of the Johnston font (P22 Underground), and created a piece that I felt would be perfect on a postcard.

How it was Produced

I began the creation process by going an entirely different route. I knew I wanted to incorporate the font through an artistic lens, so I began by using the word 'London' in the P22 Underground font (the adobe equivalent of the Johnston font) and turning those letters into different London landmarks and noted aspects. After bringing the design to life, it still felt off, so I scrapped that completely and started back at the beginning. Why did I choose this topic, why was I drawn to typography? The public transportation, "the tube." With this rediscovered inspiration, I typed out each of the different tube line names and utilized the colors from the actual underground. Bringing in the phrase "London's Handwriting," I began arranging the words in a way that was slightly chaotic, yet still beautiful, the same way I felt observing the tube map during my time in London. To execute this properly, I used Adobe Illustrator, and with

the assistance of many layers and articulate use of alignment, I was able to craft the finished design, which I hope to turn into a postcard in the future.