

PRINT MATTERS

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MORE MORE MORE

ON LOCATION
IN THE
GALLERIA AREA

Photography by
Julie Soefer
Produced by
Kate Stukenberg
Model Charlotte Stevens
for Page Parkes
Hair & makeup by
Tonya Riner for Page Parkes
Styling assistance by
Molly Jodeii & Alyson Bowers
Special thanks to Janet Gust
for the use of her home

Here's your all-excess pass to the season's '70s-savvy and glamorously glittery gestalt. More colors, more patterns, more embellishment, more sheen. How do you like it?

PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANCE BY HARRY DEARING II



Embellished mini dress, \$4,385, by Balmain at The Galleria; select pieces at Sotheby's; David Webb yellow gold and diamond earrings; Harry Dearing yellow gold ring; and Cartier yellow gold diamond curb-link bracelet, all price upon request, at Tenerbaum Classic Jewellers.

HOUSTON CITYBOOK

5 super cool design trends

Less is definitely more this year in terms of graphic design trends. Once the minimalists have finished their happy dances, we can take a look at what the experts are saying is hot right now in terms of graphic design.

But first, let's talk about what good design is in general. "It's clean, there is a good use of negative space, and it isn't cluttered," said Claudia Herring, principal of Claudia Herring Design. "It gets the message across without calling attention to itself."



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Stacy Allen, who owns Stacy Dawn Design, concurs, and also brings up the fact that publishers are competing for readers' attention. "There is a ton of information out there, and you want to get their attention and keep their attention." Good design will do just that.

"I will pull things that will highlight a story and push it further so a reader will read it," Allen says. "There's a reason I choose a certain typeface and color, and a reason why a photo is cropped the way it is. You want a cohesiveness about everything that is on the page."

Now some smaller publishers might be intimidated by what the trend makers are saying. To that, we say "rubbish." Maybe you do not have a degree from a fancy design school, but you are absolutely capable of incorporating something from these trends that will work for your publication.

Without further ado, let's see what they are.

1. Minimalism

For many designers, good design and minimalism are one and the same. When asked to talk about the concept, Herring replied, "Apple, Apple and Apple. They really have been the standard bearers for design minimalism for years and years, and I really do love it. Less is more, absolutely."

White space is Allen's favorite term to use when discussing minimalism. "It allows a designer to highlight the information. To me, it is about being essential and simple in what you are providing," she said.

Herring likens it to the old adage about being well-dressed: Before leaving the house, review your outfit and accessories and remove one piece of jewelry. "If a design has too much going on, it looks unprofessional," she said. "If you remove a photo, make the margins wider, and use more white space, that could really make something shine a little more."

2. Bold typography

By bold, we don't mean boldfacing type — we mean bold in

terms of BIG. If a headline is in 72 point type, there is no way to avoid it. It's a great way to lure a reader into a story. "I really like using bold type," Herring said. "It's very effective at getting an idea across."

And if you don't have room to use giant type, maybe try a daring typeface you haven't used before. Or place one word in a headline sideways. Maybe use a giant drop cap at the beginning of a story. Allen says even simple boldface type can make a difference. "If you have lots of running copy, maybe highlight a person's name and where he is from, so when someone is looking at the page those names will pop out and draw his interest," she says.

3. Loud, bright colors

If you're thinking, "no way," just give us a minute. We are not asking you to create a neon orange page. "If used in a cohesive manner, bold colors can really enhance your design," Allen says. Maybe use a bold color in a headline or in a graphic icon, like an arrow indicating that a story continues on the next page. You could use bright colors as backgrounds for photos.

"Just like we want new colors in our clothing, it gives a fresh look to our designs when we use bright colors," Herring said. "We are all inspired by the newest 'thing,' and there is room for you to work it in somehow even if it's not part of your traditional design concept."

4. Hand-drawn illustrations

Again, hold the fort before you eschew this idea. Many people do, as they feel hand-drawn illustrations are not professional. That isn't true at all. They can be used in an upscale manner, and even better, they appeal to the child in all of us and therefore will garner good attention from your readers.

Allen used simple, square illustrations that were similar to emoticons for a client recently. "It really gets a reader's curiosity going, because he wants to see what the characters are doing," she said. "They're fun and they make the material delightful to read."

Herring suggests trying a hand-drawn headline. "It's very different and it's a nice change of pace for the reader," she said. "But be sure that it looks planned and not like the font dropped out."

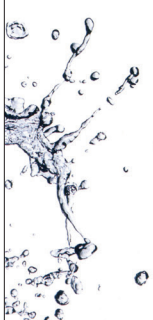
The artwork on these pages represents exceptional examples of the trends we discuss herein. We certainly hope you come away inspired. We would like to offer profuse thanks to *Houston CityBook* magazine for providing so many examples of stellar design. We are also grateful to Prism Design for providing the incredibly creative retirement poster it designed in collaboration with Kimberly-Clark.

THE CHEAT RIVER TAKES A TURN

Conservation groups and paddlers help give West Virginia's wildest river a second chance.

By Ted O'Callahan

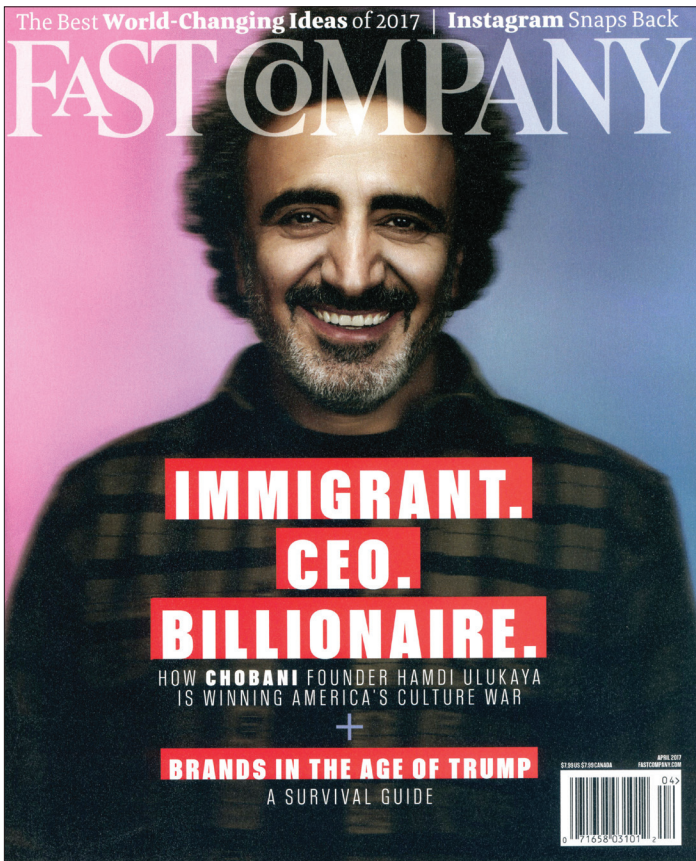
LONG RUN: Jim Snyder launches his "squirrt boat" into West Virginia's Cheat River, which he has been paddling for 45 years.




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WRITERS BY NATURE

The Nature Conservancy has protected ecologically precious lands and waters across the United States—including places that have inspired some of the nation's greatest writers. From the grand coastal panoramas of John Steinbeck to the mesmerizing minutiae of Rachel Carson's salt ponds in Maine, these scenic spots have served as both ecological and literary habitat.

By Amanda Fiegl // Illustrations by Stan Fellows

The Willa Cather Memorial Prairie in Nebraska (left).

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5. Authentic photography

Essentially, this means to use more realism in your photos. Many of us use stock photography, which is perfectly fine, but perhaps we should be more judicious in our selections. If you're illustrating a business concept, don't use the standard shot of the man and the woman in professional attire discussing something on a white board. Instead, find something that has more interesting subjects or is taken from an unusual angle.

In terms of photos that are specific to your publication, hiring a professional photographer is always the best course, but we know that isn't in everyone's budget. Very often, editorial staff and/or readers supply photos for small publications. Not to worry, Allen says. "Yes, you will have to learn what creates a good photo, but if you keep trying, anyone can achieve it."

Allen recommends brainstorming ideas before anyone shoots anything. "If a plan is in place before the photo is taken, you will have a much better chance of getting a good shot," she says. "If you keep making lists of ideas, eventually taking good photos will become second nature."

Instruct your amateurs to go for candid shots — they are infinitely more interesting than the grip and grin photos. And of course, teach them about high resolution too.

We sincerely hope you will try some of these techniques in your publication. In a world that is saturated with information, every advantage helps. As Allen astutely points out, "Getting people's attention is the whole reason for design."

FEDEX MUSIC

Electric Dreams

Defying easy categorization, fast-emerging electronic act MNYNMS has a new record, and a prized slot at Day for Night. By Daniel Ruffow. Photo by Todd Spoth



(pronounced "many names") has just started playing a set debuting tracks from their new EP *Rise of Phoenix*. With a new record, a new member, and an enviable berth as one of the few local acts to be featured at December's Day for Night festival, this group is on the rise, and the crowd here can feel it.

As the band works through its set with musical precision and a cool and casual onstage presence, it becomes increasingly apparent that MNYNMS isn't your run-of-the-mill electronic act. There's something special about the way this quartet from — equal parts Houston, Dallas and Austin — melds its lyrics and synths to create the hip, atmospheric soundscapes.

Big D starlet Wahlgren, who is in her early 20s, has been filling notebooks with lyrics since she was a kid, so she had a lot of material when the project got underway. Producer and ATX native Childs is a folkie, over a year ago to form MNYNMS. Their first, heavily experimental album, *Phoenix Series*, hit last fall, saw Youngblood, and features nine original tracks that resemble cryptic prayers or meditations.

The vocalizations — often indecipherable and eerie — have been stripped inside melodic words that move in and out of focus. He continues to defy attempts to be placed within a specific genre, but that hasn't stopped critics like the *Detroit Independent* — the online magazine sells the album on its website, and rather than usually promote

Musically, electronic synths start clanking from the speakers. Vocalist Jessica Wahlgren — bewitching in a black lace mini dress with sheer sleeves that she's wearing over black tights, and sporting pink eye makeup beneath her edgy, stark-white cool — starts singing in her ethereal voice and nodding her body to the dark soundscape her bandmates Lacey Youngblood and Josh Childs are creating behind her on the keys and drums respectively. It's a balmy Saturday night in August at Fitzgerald's, and Houston's favorite new electronic group, MNYNMS

people to add it to their shopping cart when they're browsing the "health-goods" apparel — from t-shirts. Shortly after releasing its first album, the duo had a chance encounter with Youngblood, 24, while she was playing a DJ set at Warehouse, a now-defunct monthly gay dance party in Montrose. Youngblood had recently returned to her native Houston after a six-year stint in New York when she generated a following as a DJ in underground parties and hip venues like Manhattan's Webster Hall. "The next week I went over and I did a practice with them, and I felt —

76 | www.houstonpress.com

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FEDEX BUSINESS

The New Lee Ellis

Restaurant innovator Lee Ellis, who sees Frito pie as fine dining and creamed corn as an ice cream flavor, is quickly rebuilding his company — after leaving behind his empire. By Edward Nawotka. Photos by Julie Soefer



Lee Ellis, one of the city's best known restaurateurs, who is now a few months into a massive reinvention of himself and his company, reveals that he didn't grow his long, Billy Gibbons-esque beard in homage to the ZZ Top frontman. "I've always had a weird hair thing," he says while sitting in Petric Sweets (2700 W. Ashland St., 713.525.7097), the desert bar run by his new restaurant group, Cherry Pie Hospitality. "It just got there I started losing my hair on top, I went for a weird beard instead — and it gave a lot of attention."

Known also for his colorful, dark-tinted eyewear — "I have a friend at Oliver Peoples who makes my glasses, and I have them in multiple shades of blue, rose, amber," he says — the 57-year-old has also amassed 75 or so years of Nikes. At

Jordan, Lefebvre and KD. "I've been into it long enough to know that the best deals aren't necessarily found at the specialist shoe boutiques," says Ellis. "I buy most of my shoes, even limited-editions, from the guys at the Foot Locker out at CrossTimbers and 41."

One wonders if Ellis, given all the attention to his trademark quirky look, is a bit vain. After all, he did come out last

one of his restaurants after Houston's Luc's Fried Chicken and Donuts (603 Heights Blvd., 713.480.1350) also became a monthly site. Deposition of the restaurant, in 2005, out front. But, then again, he's also clearly pragmatic and down-to-earth — characteristics that are reflected both in his confident, easy-going manner, and the way he runs his business. Ellis, who's been called the Godfather of Comfort Food —

86 | www.houstonpress.com

KIMBERLY-CLARK / PRISM DESIGN

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Publisher's Corner

It's fun to share



Karl, Scott and Flori Meeks

Journalism can be a tough profession, but it has its pretty cool moments too.

Flori Meeks, who has been writing professionally for 30 years, says some of her favorite moments have come when she has been able to share her work with loved ones. Here are three vignettes from her career.

Meeks was a features editor for her school newspaper at Oakland University. The publicist for Jon Cryer (at the time “Duckie” of “Pretty in Pink” fame) invited journalists to interview him. Cryer was rather dreamy to college-aged girls, and one of Meeks’ friends was particularly smitten. Meeks invited her friend to come along as her “photographer.” “I told her at the last minute, and she was pretty excited, but I told her she absolutely had to have her composure,” Meeks said.

Meeks was able to deliver a similar “wow” moment to her youngest son, Scott, when he was in high school. She was interviewing a group of ghost hunters, and Scott was able to come along and see some of the equipment they used. “Scott was very interested in photography, and the photographer working with me let Scott shadow him,” Meeks said. “Scott was able to observe and ask questions about the settings on his camera, which he very much enjoyed.”

Karl, Meeks’ eldest son, also was able to watch his mom at work — at the tender age of 11. Meeks was interviewing an Army veteran who had served as a sniper in Iraq. “Karl enjoyed asking a few questions, and the serviceman was very respectful,” Meeks said. “They even talked about video games.”

As most moms know, having your kids think you’re swell is a rare event. “For them to see that part of my work was very rewarding for me,” Meeks said.

Editor's note: If you have any fun publishing stories to share, please email Tracey Timpanaro at tat25@comcast.net.



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