

2110 Logo Odyssey

by

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For my senior project I have created a book of futuristic logos. There are 21 logos of companies and organizations ranging from the possible to the impossible. Some of the inventions these logos represent do not exist but might possibly in the distant future.

When I first proposed my idea, I wanted to do logos by only utilizing what I could find within the available cuts and typefaces available in the letterpress shop. This idea stemmed from a similar project that I had done the semester before in my letterpress class. For that project I had come up with roughly 12 make-believe logos and bound them into a book. I really liked the outcome of it and I wanted to see if I could develop the idea into something more substantial. I also believed that it was possible to do around 100 logos. I soon found out, something like this can't be rushed and it was ridiculous to think that I could create 100 amazing logos.

For the first couple of weeks into my senior project, I was in the letterpress shop non-stop. What I created in there was nothing substantial and I felt I was wasting time and needed to change directions. Even though Purchase has an amazing library of woodcuts, engravings, and metal type, it was still very limiting to me. Using found cuts and engravings made me feel like I was brain dead and incapable of creating my own images/iconography myself. It made me feel like a fake artist. I decided to shift my direction towards the computer where I could actually develop and illustrate new ideas from scratch. I figured if I could design them on the computer and have the logos sent out to have plates made, I would still be utilizing letterpress. This idea also fell through because of money issues, time restrictions and poor planning. The final book ended up being printed with a laser and ink jet printer.

Once I decided to design using the computer software, I went back to the drawing board, making numerous web diagrams and lists of ideas about potential companies I could imagine and design logos for. The common themes were robots, languages, outer space, space travel, time travel, parallel universes, technology, archeology, and food. I decided to incorporate it all. The first few logos I designed were strictly from my imagination. As the weeks progressed I started losing steam and decided to do more research (beyond my own imagination). I researched online and looked through my own collection of books, articles and essays about future inventions, technologies, space travel, the automotive industry, robotics, and different theories in physics such as the String and M theories. These readings inspired new ideas, helped me have more

specific concepts for my logos, and made me feel like there truly was no limitations to what I could do. Every week, the logos became more bizarre and more futuristic, and so did the inventions these logos represented.

I had kept my sketches for this project in a graph paper notebook. I started sketching ideas first and once I got a rough feeling of what I wanted I would scan them in and with the pen tool in Adobe Illustrator I'd trace the rough outline. When that was complete I would go back and build on top of it making it thicker and smoother, or whatever else needed to be done to create a good, clean, well-rendered logo. In some ways designing for make believe companies was easier because I was in charge of what I wanted them to look like and determining what the company was about. Even though these companies do not exist I treated these as if they did. The hardest part was choosing and staying with a certain direction.

I created about two logos a week which gave me some time to think of each company and why, where, when, and for who it existed. I thought about each logo a lot because I wanted to make them each meaningful and eye catching. I wanted to carefully represent what the company was about through the logo. I had to make sure the logos I was creating were appropriate to the idea of the company. I also wanted to create a specific mood, whether it was eerie or playful. The typeface also helps create the mood by either making something look more elegant, classical, contemporary or sleek (the list goes on). Color also has a large impact in creating a mood. For example the color blue is a soothing tranquil color and makes people feel calmer. Another characteristic of an effective logo is it needs to be versatile. It needs to hold up well in color, in black and white, and in reverse. It needs to be readable at any size and the elements in a logo cannot be competing with each other. This was the problem I had when I was creating my first logos in the letterpress shop. They never made it into this book, because they didn't work. I knew they didn't work subconsciously but I never knew how to explain it before, which now I can. It was because they were nothing more than a juxtaposition of type and image. They also had no real relevance to the company, and their size and scale relationships were also limited. Some of my logos in the book are logotypes while others I wanted to make more illustrative. I want to impact a viewer but at the same time keeping it simple. On many occasions I noticed I over designed and created logos that were too detailed making it impossible to understand what the company was about. I was constantly getting rid of things. This project helped me understand brand-

ing and my sponsor, Warren Lehrer helped me understand the difference between a good logo versus a bad one.

I think my favorite logo is Trans Atlantic. Trans Atlantic is a Chunnel based system connecting North America and Europe across the Atlantic Ocean. I feel it gets the point



across. I created it by using the typeface Neutra Face as a reference and mixing it in with my own drawn letterforms and connecting almost each one with a letter “U” like shape. It reminds me of pipes or tunnels. I also enjoy the idea of being able to drive across the ocean. The idea actually isn’t my own but my mother’s. We have family in Poland and she

always said that if there were a bridge to drive over to Poland, it would make her life so much easier. My father calls her crazy, but I just call her brilliant. This logo was made for her.

Even as a young girl I thought about technology and how fast it was moving. I remember getting angry at every new invention, or archeological find I heard about because I



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wanted to invent it and I thought that by the time I got to be their age there would be nothing left for me to do; nothing left for me to discover. I think that each logo that I have made is connected in some way to a part of my past and my memories. Another logo that was inspired by my past was Neptunia. When I was in second grade I had missed a month of school in February to go to a wedding in Poland. For the trip my teacher gave me a science magazine to read. Till this day I remember the magazine spread for an article about a group of scientists building an earth like environment in a pod like structure. The scientists would be locked up and monitored for 10 years to see if it was possible to survive. Those pod-like environments inspired the underwater pod city of Neptunia.

Another logo I enjoy is Polarsphere —a company focusing on preserving the polar region by means of ice cap refrigeration, development prevention, protecting animals



polar**sphere**

native to the region and advocacy. I chose to represent this logo with a bear because I associate the polar region with polar bears and right now a large amount of them are dying due to the ice caps melting. Originally when I had made this logo the bear was black, which didn't make sense because black bears don't live in the polar region. I decided to reverse the colors and knock out the bear making him white and the background black.

With the final layout of the book I decided to let each logo have a spread for itself. This way I was able to show case some logos with a close up detail. I also added an introduction pretending that these logos are in fact from the future and that I had found them after following a strange light in the sky. The beginning of the introduction is in fact true and it did happen to me. I had witnessed lights in the sky in the same manor as explained in more detail in the book. The only difference was as it passed over my house instead of running to the back door to find out what it was or where it was heading I jumped into bed too scared to do anything else. In the introduction the reader finds out that the book is a message from the future and not some alien encounter. Part of me now wishes that I went after the lights that night and maybe I would have found answers. If I ever witness something like this again I wont hide. I'll follow it.

I enjoyed creating these logos and each one is meaningful to me. This project helped me find my voice in the areas of design I'm most passionate about, which are identity design and book design. Most of all it has also helped me become a more thoughtful meaningful designer, a part of me that I think I lost last year.

