

Grunge Typography Book Design from David Carson's Work for Young Graphic Designers

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This study aims to design a grunge typography book based on David Carson's work aimed at young graphic designers as a guide to understanding and implementing innovative and experimental grunge typography styles. The research method uses a qualitative type with a Research and Development (R&D) approach, which includes pre-production, production, and post-production stages. This book is designed by utilizing a distinctive color scheme, unique typography choices, and a small landscape format to optimize the visual appearance. The creative process involves the use of applications such as Procreate and professional design software such as Adobe Photoshop and InDesign. Promotion is carried out through digital media, such as Instagram and Tokopedia, as well as print media, including posters and stickers. The results of this study produce a book that not only reflects the aesthetics of the grunge style but also serves as a reference for young graphic designers to develop creative, bold, and unique works.

Keywords: Design, Books, Typography, Graphic Design.

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1. Introduction

Typography is a method that translates words into shapes or images and has been used for a long time. [1]. Typography can also be understood as more than just the arrangement of text explaining images in an illustrative or photographic manner [2], so that typography becomes one of the most important elements in graphic art which plays a role as a visual element (font) that can be seen and a literal element (text) that can be read [3]. Typographic design plays a crucial role as a visual element that not only conveys a message but also influences the audience's experience and emotions. One typographic style that has successfully broken tradition and created a new paradigm in the design world is grunge typography. This style is known for its experimental, messy nature, and its lack of conventional typographic rules.

The challenge in applying grunge typography to visual design lies in the balance between visual expression and readability. While grunge typography offers freedom and creative exploration, overly cluttered or distorted designs can diminish communication effectiveness, especially in media that require clear and quickly understood messages. Furthermore, novice designers may struggle to find ways to effectively implement grunge elements without sacrificing function and aesthetics. Grunge typography is a visual statement that defies convention and challenges the boundaries of traditional typography with the goal of expressing individuality and design freedom.

Grunge characteristics are recognized through various visuals that are digitally collaborated to produce new images, including in typography, this brings visual design to a more exploratory level than before [4]. Grunge itself means "arbitrary", "anti-regularity", even "garbage" so that this design style approach looks messy with dirty stain textures, irregular lines, and tears in the design [5]. The grunge style movement is demonstrated by David Carson who developed his unique style through experimentation. David Carson approached editorial design differently, by discarding design conventions such as grids and consistent

layouts beyond the ordinary. Through his work in a magazine, Grunge-style typography often manipulated letterforms to the point of being unrecognizable because David Carson did not study design formally, only doing what felt right to him. Carson expressed that in design, creativity is needed; where creativity, according to him, is something that cannot be learned [6].

Although grunge typography is very appealing, many young graphic designers struggle to grasp the concept and apply it to their designs. This is due to the limited literature that comprehensively discusses the techniques, principles, and philosophy behind grunge, especially those drawn directly from the works of pioneers like David Carson. Therefore, designing a book focused on grunge typography, based on David Carson's work, is an important effort to provide guidance and inspiration for young graphic designers. This book will provide designers with a deeper understanding of Carson's visual approach, how he interprets messages through typography, and provide practical insights into how to implement grunge style in the context of modern graphic design.

Based on the above description, the title "Designing a Grunge Typography Book from David Carson's Work for Young Graphic Designers" was chosen to address a critical need in the design world, particularly for young graphic designers seeking inspiration and a different visual approach. David Carson, as a pioneer of grunge typography, has transformed perceptions of typography and design, demonstrating that typography is not only about readability but also about the expression of emotion and the message it conveys.

2. Literature Review

Visual communication design is a discipline that aims to study communication concepts and creative expression through various media to convey messages and ideas visually by managing graphic elements in the form of shapes and images, letter arrangement, color composition, and layout. This way, ideas can be accepted by the people or groups who are the target recipients of the message [7]. The concept of communication and creative expression which is then applied in various visual communication media by processing graphic design elements consisting of shapes, letters, images, colors, layout and composition, then these elements are combined to convey messages visually [8].

Furthermore, book design or planning refers to the design of the content, style, format, layout, and sequence of various types of books. Components refer to sections or pages of a book, such as edition notes, introductions, indexes, or front and back covers. In book design, elements are things that can occur repeatedly, such as illustrations, lists, headers, footers, tables, and so on [9]. Book design is an integrative process that combines the art and science of arranging text, images, and other visual elements to create an informative and engaging work. Book design emphasizes the importance of typography, layout, and visuals as the primary communication tools in book design.

Typography is the science, art, or technique of arranging letter elements or text so that they are legible, convey their meaning clearly, and have aesthetic value. In general, typography can also be considered the science that discusses the techniques of selecting and arranging letters and arranging the distribution of letters or text within the available space or media to convey the meaning of the text and also to create a certain impression that helps the reader read the text comfortably [10]. Typography in a design has an important role in relation to the visual appearance in conveying information in textual form which includes letter shape, letter size, method and technique of arranging letters [11]. This demonstrates the crucial role typography has played in the evolution of graphic design throughout history, reflecting the spirit of the times and designers' responses to the needs of visual communication. Typographic works not only reflect aesthetics but also constitute a discipline that continues to evolve to meet the needs of visual

communication [12].

David Carson is an artist and graphic designer known for his innovative typographic and design experiments, finding expressive possibilities within his visual subjects. In addition to his innovative commercial projects, David Carson also has an experimental approach to typography. His typography often appears irregular, misleading, and chaotic, but this is part of his designs, conveying impressions, emotions, and feelings as the message he wants to convey [13].

Design Concept

The design concept for the Grunge Typography Book Design from David Carson's Work for Young Graphic Designers is presented below.



Fig. 1. Design Concept

3. Research Method

The research method used is qualitative research with a Research and Development approach, a research method used to produce a specific product and test its effectiveness. This research employs a pre-production, production, and post-production research model. The goal was to design a grunge typography book based on David Carson's work for young graphic designers. Data collection techniques included observation, documents, theoretical literature, and research journals.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of David Carson's grunge typography book design for young graphic designers are explained below.

Pre-Production

Pre-production describes the color scheme, font selection, and book size, as described below.

a. Color scheme

David Carson's dominant colors are gray, cream, black, red, and yellow. His choice of pale and dull colors reflects the difficult times of the 80s and 90s.



Fig. 2. David Carson's work

Source: Google Images, keyword David Carson Grunge Style

The colors chosen for the design of this book are red (#e54a52), black (#000000), cream (#f9ece4), and gray (#898b8e).



Fig. 3. Colors Used

b. Font Selection

David Carson uses a wide variety of fonts, but the ones commonly used for titles or headers are sans serif fonts that are cut up or stacked.



Fig. 4. Examples of David Carson's Work

Pulse, This sans serif font is used for the title or header in this Typography book design. It has a bold weight and clear limitations. It's suitable for titles but not for content.



Fig. 5. Example of Pulse Typography

Dymo, This decorative font is typically used for sub headers, but is also sometimes used in content for emphasis or as an element to create balance in the design. This font is quite unique because of its blocky letterforms.

The image shows the text "RAYGUN ISSUE 57" in a bold, red, distressed font. The letters are slightly irregular and have a grainy texture, characteristic of a grunge typeface.

Fig. 6. Example of Dymo Typeface

DCC-Ash, This font is a distorted typeface, evident by its blotchy, dirty appearance. Grunge typefaces often use this typeface due to its uniqueness. This font is used for chapter headings and quotations.

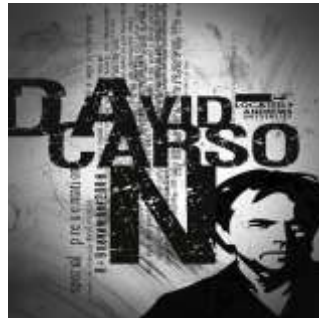


Fig. 7. Example of DCC-Ash Broken Type 15

Like the DCC-Ash font, this is also a distorted font. It's used only in brief descriptions for aesthetic appeal in book design.

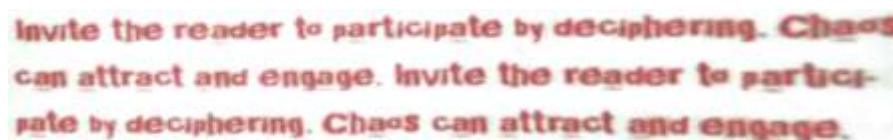
The image shows a block of text in a red, distressed font. The text is "Invite the reader to participate by deciphering. Chaos can attract and engage. Invite the reader to participate by deciphering. Chaos can attract and engage." The font is highly irregular and difficult to read, with many gaps and distorted characters.

Fig. 8. Example of a Broken Typography

Montserrat Alternate, The Montserrat font is used for body text and captions due to its clear readability and familiarity with readers.

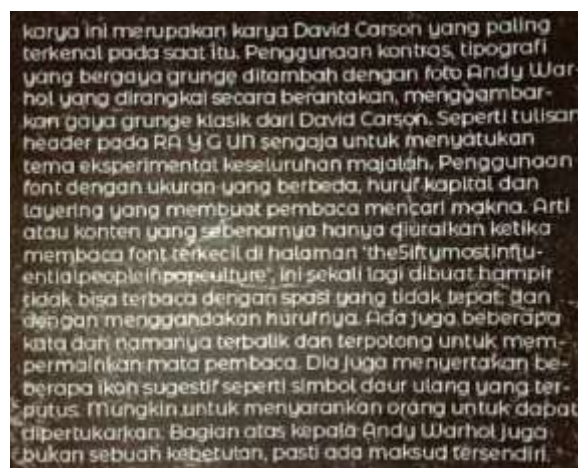
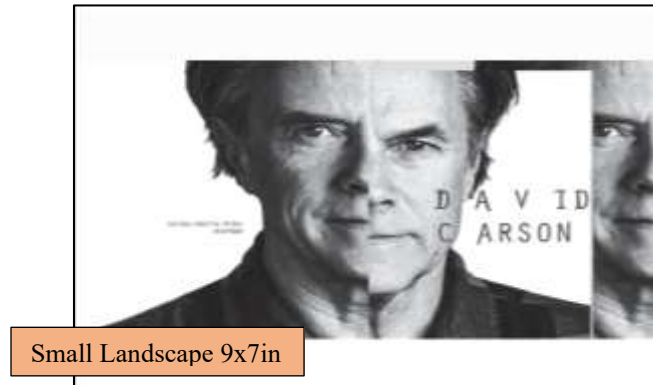
The image shows a block of text in a black, serif font. The text is "karya ini merupakan karya David Carson yang paling terkenal pada saat itu. Penggunaan kontras, tipografi yang bergaya grunge ditambah dengan foto Andy Warhol yang dirangkai secara berantakan, menggambarkan gaya grunge klasik dari David Carson. Seperti tulisan header pada RAYGUN sengaja untuk menyatukan tema eksperimental keseluruhan majalah. Penggunaan font dengan ukuran yang berbeda, huruf kapital dan layering yang membuat pembaca mencari makna. Arti atau konten yang sebenarnya hanya diuraikan ketika membaca font terkecil di halaman 'the 51st most influential people in pop culture'. Ini sekali lagi dibuat hampir tidak bisa terbaca dengan spasi yang tidak tepat dan dengan menggandakan hurufnya. Ada juga beberapa kata dan namanya terbalik dan terpotong untuk memperlmainkan mata pembaca. Dia juga menuertakan beberapa ikon sugestif seperti simbol daur ulang yang terpotus. Mungkin untuk menyarankan orang untuk dapat dipertukarkan. Bagian atas kepala Andy Warhol juga bukan sebuah kebetulan, pasti ada maksud tersendiri." The font is a clean, serif typeface, likely Montserrat Alternate.

Fig. 9. Example of Montserrat Alternate Typeface

c. Book Size

The book size used is based on the standard small landscape book size of 7 inches x 9 inches or 17.78 cm x 22.86 cm, then rounded to 17.8 cm x 23 cm. The researchers reasoned this because photo books or comics contain many images and are suitable for typography books, as they require space to accommodate many images and letters.



Source: adapted and edited from David Carson's book Small landscapes are ideal for photo books and product guides meant to highlight images and photos.

Figure 10. Small Landscape Book Image

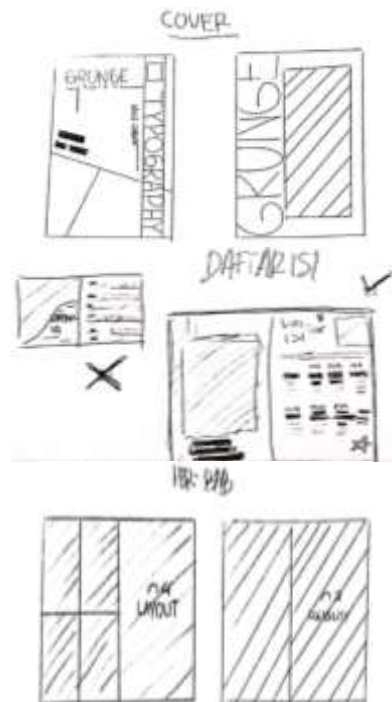
Design Process

This stage involves creative thinking to create a communicative design that resonates with the target audience. The author will follow two stages in the design process:

a. Sketch

A sketch is a rough drawing intended to convey an idea. The sketches for this book were created using an iPad with the Procreate app because they are easy to organize and save.

Main Media



Front Cover Sketch

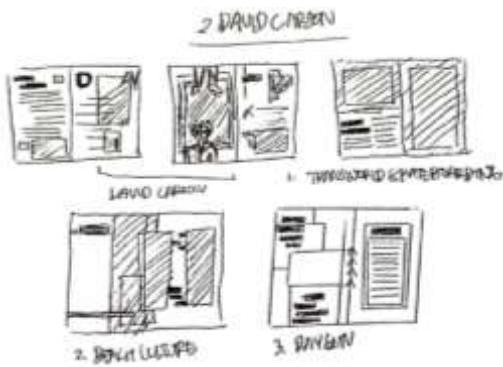
The chosen cover design is the one on the left, while the one on the right is an alternative cover design. The design on the right was not chosen because it looked too simple and didn't reflect David Carson's unique style.

Table of Contents Sketch

The chosen table of contents page design is on the right side of the image. The right side design was chosen because the unique half-number cut is suitable for the book's chapter numbers.

Book Chapter Page Sketches

Book chapter page sketches focus on full images, showcasing the work discussed in each chapter. The typeface used on the chapter pages is the same as that used in the table of contents, but the font size is intentionally larger for better readability.



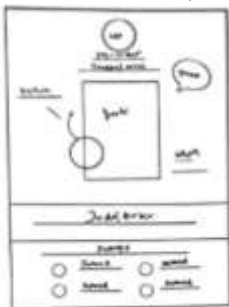
Book Contents Page Sketch

The book's contents page design is kept as free-form as possible, but still adheres to a grid system, including inside and outside margins. However, some designs intentionally break the grid for bold expression, such as David Carson's work. This is because the goal of this book is to design a grunge typography book.

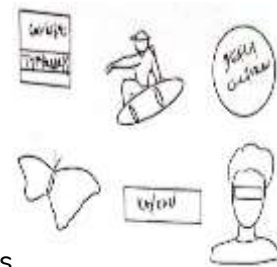
Fig. 11. Main Media

Posters and Flyers

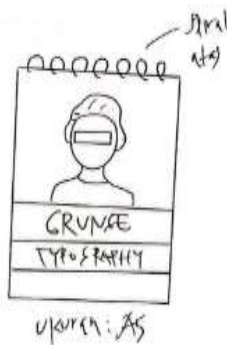
Posters and Flyers



XBanners



Sketches Stickers



Notepad

Pins & Keychains

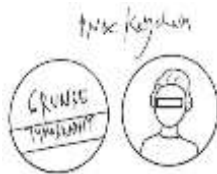


Fig. 12. Supporting Media

b. Design Software

After creating several sketches, the next step is to process the sketches in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe InDesign.

Adobe Photoshop

Adobe InDesign



Fig. 13. Sketching Process in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe InDesign

Post/Final Design

The post/final design stages for David Carson's Grunge Typography Book for Young Graphic Designers. The finished design is still in digital form.

a. Post/Final Design

Post/final design stages for David Carson's Grunge Typography Book for Young Graphic Designers. The finished design is still in digital form.

Front Cover



Adobe InDesign



Book Contents Page



Book Chapter Pages



Book Mock Up



Fig. 14. Post Design

b. Promotional Media

The pre-launch promotional event will be a simulation, not a real one. The event will take place from November 20-30, 2022, at the ICE BSD Hall on the 7th floor, as the book will be exhibited by Big Bad Wolf Books. The promotional media chosen are tailored to the target audience: young graphic designers.

The book will be offered at a 10% discount from the original price of Rp 170,000 to Rp 153,000. The author will sign the book with each purchase, along with a free keychain. Promotional activities for the design of "Grunge Typography of David Carson" are divided into two categories: digital (social media and blog promotion) and print.

Digital

Instagram



Tokopedia



Fig. 15. Digital (Promotion from Social Media and Blogs)

Media Print

Poster



Xbanner



Flyer



Pin



Sticker



Notepad



Key chain



Fig.16. Print Media

Discussion

The grunge typography book, based on David Carson's work for young graphic designers, aims to provide a visual guide and inspiration for young designers who want to explore this unique, experimental design style, known for its messy, disorganized aesthetic, yet highly expressive visual message and emotion. The

book is designed with a conceptual approach that integrates grunge aesthetics with modern design principles, featuring a color scheme inspired by shades of the 80s and 90s, such as gray, cream, black, red, and yellow. It not only reflects the mood of the era but also creates a strong and dynamic visual impact.

The typography is a key element in the book, using fonts such as Pulse, Dymo, and DCC-Ash, which represent grunge characteristics through their distorted and unique letterforms, creating a combination of freedom of expression and legibility that fits the theme. The book's size, which uses a small landscape format of 17.8 cm x 23 cm, is designed to provide optimal space for visual elements such as images and text, making the book not only aesthetically appealing but also practical to read and enjoy. The book's design process consisted of three main stages: pre-production, which included exploring design elements such as color, fonts, and layout; the creative process, which involved creating initial sketches using digital applications like Procreate, which were then refined using professional design software like Adobe Photoshop and InDesign; and final production, which resulted in a digital book with an integrated design, ready to be promoted to the target audience. To support the book's distribution, a promotional strategy was designed through a combination of digital and print media, including the use of Instagram, Tokopedia, blogs, and print media such as posters, X-banners, and stickers, all designed with a visual approach that appealed to young designers.

Furthermore, a simulated pre-launch event at the ICE BSD Hall during the Big Bad Wolf Books exhibition was designed to attract potential buyers through discounts, author signings, and exclusive merchandise, aiming to create an interactive experience for visitors. This book is expected to serve as an important reference for young graphic designers in understanding the grunge style in depth, while also encouraging them to experiment with bolder and more expressive designs, pushing the boundaries of conventional modern graphic design. Through this design, David Carson's works are not only positioned as aesthetic inspiration, but also as educational tools that equip young designers with practical knowledge to apply a design approach that is freer, more innovative, and more relevant to the needs of contemporary visual communication.

5. Conclusion

David Carson is no stranger to graphic design; his work continues to inspire graphic designers worldwide. Unfortunately, his designs are rarely discussed in Indonesia, yet his work demonstrates the importance of defying design conventions for creative expression. This book aims to provide a compelling visualization of grunge typography. It is also hoped that this book will serve as a reference for young graphic designers to be bolder in their designs, leading to more unique layouts.

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