

ELLEN LUPTON



Think  
More,  
Design  
Less.

## CAREER

**1985**

Graduated from Cooper Union

**1985**

Founded Design Writing Research with husband Abbott Miller, a forum where they could merge theory, practice, writing and design

**1989**

Design Writing Research became self sustaining with full-time staff and office space in NY

**1992**

Curator of contemporary design at Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in NY. She has since organized numerous exhibitions accompanied by major publications

**1997**

Director of MFA program in graphic design at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)

**2003**

Design Writing Research website launched

**2005**

Launched the Design Your Life with her identical twin Julia

## PUBLICATIONS

**1995**

The Annual of the American Institute of Graphics Arts (365: Aiga Year in Design), with David R. Brown, Moira Cullen, Steven Heller and Rick Poynor.

**1996**

Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office

**1996**

Letters from the Avant-Garde: Modern Graphic Design, with Elaine Lustig Cohen

**1996**

Mixing Messages

**1996**

Bathroom, the Kitchen, and the Aesthetics of Waste, with J. Abbott Miller

**1998**

Graphic Design in the Mechanical Age: Selections from the Merrill C. Berman Collection, with Deborah Rothschild and Derra Goldstein

**1999**

Design Writing Research

**2000**

The ABC of Bauhaus, the Bauhaus and Design Theory

**2000**

Design Culture Now: The National Design Triennial, with Donald Albrecht and Steven Skov Holt

**2002**

Link 8: Codex, with Johanna Drucker, Rachel Schreiber and Bill Sebring

**2002**

Skin: Surface, Substance, and Design

**2003**

Inside Design Now: The National Design Triennial, with Donald Albrecht, Susan Yelavich and Mitchell Owens

**2004**

Thinking With Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors and Students

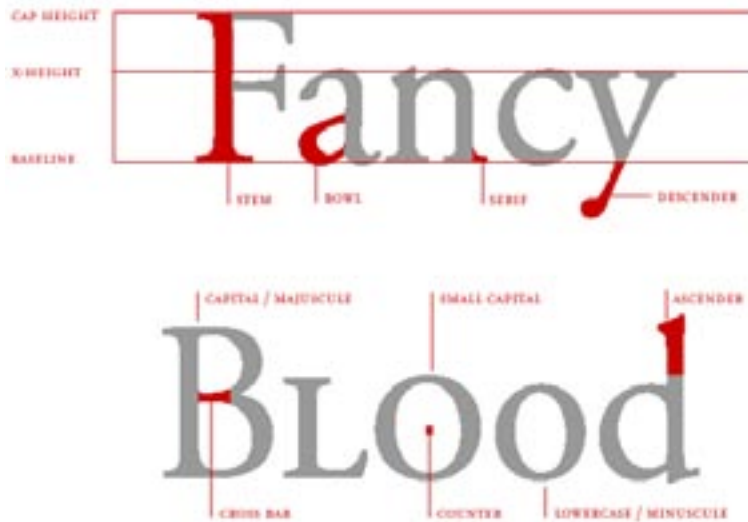
**2006**

D.I.Y.: Design it Yourself

# SELECTED WORK



## The Anatomy of a Letter



## Letter Size



*A typeface is measured from the top of the capital letter to the bottom of the lowest descender, plus a small extra space.*

*In metal type, the point size is the height of the type block.*

### Make it bigger, Paula Scher

*Amateur typographers tend to make their type too big. In contrast, experienced typographers tend to make it too small. Clients will often ask you to "Make it bigger."*

## WIDE LOAD

*The set width in the body of the letter plus the space inside it.*

## TIGHT WAD

*The letters in the condensed version of this typeface (alternates) have a narrower set width.*

## WIDE LOAD

## TIGHT WAD

### TYPE CRIME: HORIZONTAL OR VERTICAL SCALING

*The proportions of the letters have been digitally distorted in order to create wider or narrower letters. This analysis toolset alters the line weights of the font as well as its proportions.*

## Kerning

Takes two

SCALE, WITH KERNING SUPPRESSED  
*Spacing appears uneven, with gaps around the T and w.*

Takes two

SCALE, WITH KERNING  
*Spacing seems more even.*

*nearly touch*

SCALE ITALIC, WITH KERNING SUPPRESSED  
*A gap appears between the l and y.*

*nearly touch*

SCALE ITALIC, WITH KERNING  
*The intimacy of italic requires kerning.*

LOVE LETTERS

The VE and TT combinations make the whole word look mismatched.

LOVE LETTERS

Kerning has been manually adjusted for a more even appearance.

rub my back

TYPE CRIME!  
TOO MUCH SPACE  
Mind the gaps,  
especially at larger  
sizes

## Alignment

### *Alignment:*

how a line of text relates to the edges of a column

Justified text makes a clean, figural shape on the page. Its efficient use of space makes it the norm for newspapers and books of continuous text. Designers choose to set text flush left when they want to respect the organic flow of language and avoid the uneven spacing that plagues narrow columns of justified type. Flush right text can be a welcome departure from the familiar. It makes effective captions, sidebars, and marginal notes, suggesting affinities among elements on the page. Centered text, which is formal and classical, invites the designer to break a text for sense and create an organic shape responding to the flow of content.

*Flush right text makes effective captions and marginal notes.*

*Flush left text respects the organic flow of language.*

## THE PERSONALS

*a typographic dating game*

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ROUND, FIRM AND  
**POINTY**

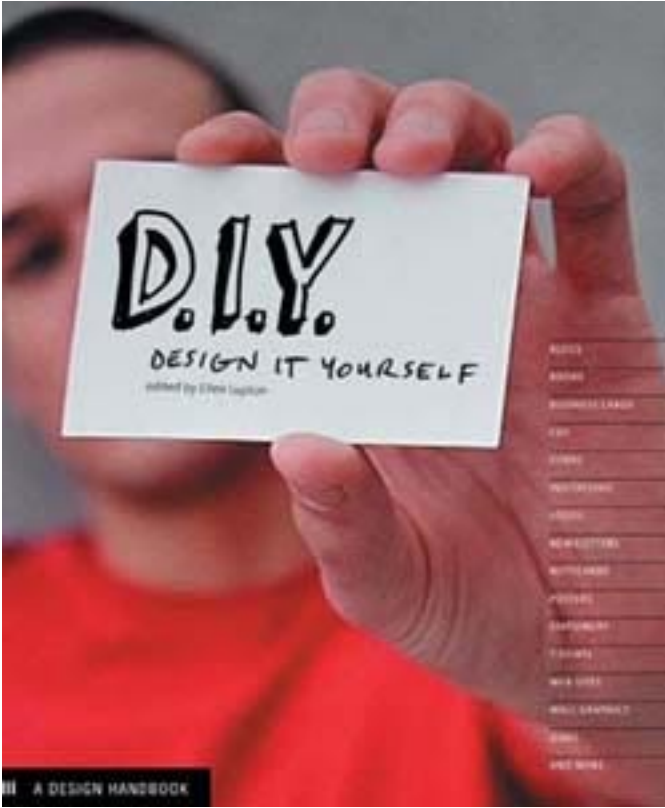
**fast fit Brit**  
**GIRL**

**HaRD**  
but knows how to cry

six-pack  
**SLABS**

**BALD**  
IS BEAUTIFUL

*of ample age and able*  
**BODY**



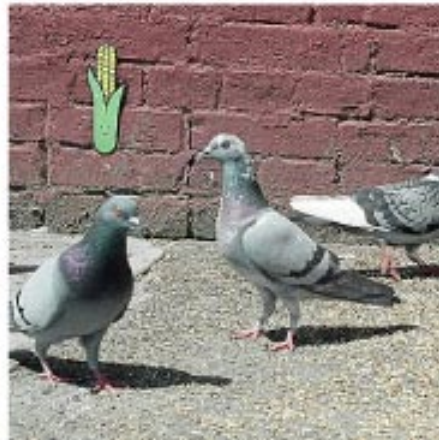
## T-Shirts



## Totes



## Stickers



## Logos



## Zines

## Free Downloads



**AS IS**

**DISCONTINUED**

**NOT FOR SALE**

POST CONSUMER

POST CONSUMER

POST CONSUMER

## **Conclusion**

Ellen Lupton is a prolific designer, writer and design theorist who spares her readers design jargon as she discuss typography and print design in her books. Her humor and straight forward manner makes her books useful tools both for the established designer and the beginner since her books are easy to navigate. Her work as a curator, teacher and writer seems to be aimed at making design and its principles readily available to the general public, to create a greater understanding for design.

## Sources

Heller, Stephen. *Interview with Ellen Lupton*. 1998, <<http://www.designwritingresearch.org/essays/luptonInterview.html>> (28 May 2006).

Lupton, Ellen. *Design it Yourself*. 2006, <<http://www.papress.com/designityourself/index.html>> (11 May 2006).

Lupton, Ellen. *Design Writing Research*. 2006, <<http://www.designwritingresearch.org/>>(11 May 2006).

Lupton, Ellen. *Thinking With Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors and Students*. New York: Princeton Press, 2004.