

**Locotypes.**

**An Exploration of an  
Alternative Signage System  
that Challenges the Current  
Approach of Prioritising  
Conformity in Designing  
and Reading of Wayfinding  
Signage Systems**

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This exegesis is submitted to the Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Arts (Art and Design) in the year 2006.

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## Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or any other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements."

Lam, Letitia November 24th 2006

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## Abstract

Locotypes is a practice-based research project that is intended to suggest an alternative approach to traditional ways of designing and reading wayfinding signage systems. This is an alternative approach that will not follow the traditional universal\* approach of design for effective signage application. The aim of the project is to suggest a rethinking of visual conformity as the main objective in designing a wayfinding signage system.

The research question is: what are the opportunities and impediments to designing a wayfinding signage system that acknowledges and is equally influenced by the local as well as global characteristics of a particular system?

This practical research project takes on a hypothesis that the approach of prioritising GLOBAL\* visual conformity typical of the standard signage systems fails to reflect the mix of culturally specific and multi-cultural profiles that are peculiar to the "actual specific local"\* contexts. I am intending to explore an alternative way of designing a coherent wayfinding signage system which can be read from both a LOCAL\* and GLOBAL point of view. This system could potentially change the traditional notions of developing a wayfinding signage system and triggers further explorations in design industry.

**Footnote\*:** Refer to glossary on p.143 for the specific meanings of this term.

## Introduction

Locotypes is a practice-based project that is intended to suggest an alternative approach to traditional ways of designing and reading wayfinding signage systems. The practical work represents 80 percent of the research project and the exegesis comprises the remaining 20 percent of the submission.

In this research my key design objective is to identify and adapt the cultural uniqueness of a specific local context to establish an iconic representation that acknowledges the visual variations between local sites. The research question brings up the possibilities and impediments of designing a wayfinding signage system in a multi-cultural environment that aims to highlight the diversity of different cultures rather than ignoring it.

This is an experimental research project in that it does not aim to suggest a wayfinding signage system for a purely pragmatic outcome. Rather, it suggests a different approach of designing and a different understanding of a system that challenges the rigid boundaries of the standardised signage system. The project could potentially change the traditional notions of developing a wayfinding signage system, thus triggering further explorations from the design industry.

I have selected the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) in Hong Kong as a local context as the 'vehicle' for this research. The culturally diversified environment of Hong Kong and its international city status offer a pertinent site for exploration. I intend to design a series of signage icons/pictograms for each local station for the MTR and to develop a series of unique profiles to represent each of these local stations that coherent together create a system. The stations chosen range from the most culturally Western to the most Eastern areas of the city.

In this exegesis the visual content is meant to be the primary focus to "explain" my project. The written text should be seen as a support of the visual. It is a visual documentation that catalogues the project contents from:

1. Establishing a critical position for the project – considering the background of systems and in particular "the wayfinding signage system" as a graphic design context
2. Explaining the specific physical context (site) chosen
3. My Final outcomes
4. My working methodology
5. The evaluation and conclusion of Locotypes

# One / The Theoretical Background of Different Systems

1. The United States Department of Transportation Symbol Signs
2. The British Airways Identity
3. The Watson's Bottle Identity
4. The Bits Font
5. The Hanover Exposition Mascot



## 1. The United States Department Of Transportation

### Symbol Signs

The United States Department of Transportation system is an example of a signage system that is standardised in both design approach and visual outcome. I am commenting on this as one example of a signage system that is still in use, but also represents an historical benchmark for signage systems. I acknowledge that there are some other examples that employ a similar approach - such as the Tokyo International Airport signage system.

This standard transportation signage system is commonly called "Department of Transportation Symbol Signs" (D.O.T. Symbol Signs) and was produced by the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) in 1974 for the universal need of public communication.

The D.O.T. Symbol Signs were produced by making references to real objects/people from twenty-four countries. It was believed to be effective and legible and to communicate a wide range of complex messages to individuals of different ages in a diverse range of cultural groups universally. The first thirty-four pictograms were produced in 1974 while another sixteen pictograms were added in 1979 and together they formed a series of fifty pictograms of the D.O.T. Symbol Signs. I have compiled ( Fig. 1) together with a world map to illustrate the universal\* approach of the signage system.

The D.O.T. system borrowed sources from both the Tokyo International Airport pictograms and also the signage system of 1972 Olympic games in Munich that was designed by the German graphic designer Otl Aicher who was named as the father of the "look" of the Olympic games.

This signage system is also very much influenced by the Vienna sociologist and philosopher Otto Neurath (1882-1945). He coined the acronym Isotype (International System of Typographic Picture Education) in 1936. It was intended to establish a global standard for an ordered system as a universally readable visual language.

**Footnote\*:** Refer to glossary on p.143 for the specific meanings of this term.

### Critical Analysis

It has been established that there are many attempts to create a universal pictorial language that could visually communicate messages across a diverse range of cultures without having to use written languages to translate.

However, in some of the specific contexts, the universal sign might not fit comfortably in certain circumstances. For example, there may be a problem when a men's bathroom sign is used in Fiji where men wear skirts. Although the message is effective, it does not reflect the cultural ritual/realities of the local site. I consider this to be a compromised outcome that is always flawed because minority groups of the population have been left out.

The simplified outcome in D.O.T. Symbol Signs is visually bound to a narrowly similar look which could not reflect the differences within a multi-cultural environment as we are all different individuals. Besides, it also simplifies the complexity of visual research data and denies the cultural uniqueness in a specific cultural context.

The universal approach of the D.O.T. tends to deny both differences and complexity of visual research data within a multi-cultural environment. An example of a contrast to this is *Colors* magazine which celebrates the diversity and differences of cultures. The subtitle of the magazine is "a magazine about the rest of the world."

The following are a number of extracts from the *Colors* book that emphasise the diversity and differences in a multi-cultural environment.

*Colors* is an internationally renowned magazine since 1991 formed in Italy by Fabrice Benetton which is the Benetton's research centre. It is a multilingual magazine which covers a range of themes such as race relations, religion, war, ecology, health and travel.

It is intended to celebrate the differences between us

And at the same time to show how, despite the differences in how we do it, we all eat and smell and laugh and cry and fuck and look ridiculous (in or out of our clothes).

We're all different and we're all the same.

Diversity is good.

That's what Colors is about

there are only ways to deal with diversity.

>kill it with violence--all the people that are different:

proud history but now too--rwanda, bosnia

>kill it with money--strangle it slowly--with coke, macdonalds, benetton, hollywood

>celebrate it--find the way to regale and learn from multiculturalism

The world would be a very boring place if all you could do every night is have spaghetti alla Bolognese

Or caviar. Night after night after night, caviar. You could die. You would die.

*PRAT  
T NED  
BANKS*

The world would be a very boring place, if everyone wore Armani suits, or jeans or dashikis. Or even nothing.

If everyone did the same thing, it would be a drag.

Because if you liked other people's desserts or shoes or music, you might not want to kill them

So it is just a practical idea that we should not kill other people's cultures. We should investigate them and learn from them and maybe even enjoy them.

And that's not a left or right idea, its just practical. Self-serving even.

Besides, it is a well known fact that if you want to change the world, you should start by changing the minds of the young.

It's easier.

--they haven't made up their minds

--just ask any cigarette marketer

And it's more worthwhile--they live longer

And they're much more fun than old people anyway

*SABER*

Especially to young people for whom a variety of experiences and flavors is the lifeblood of education and development

So we made Colors

-a magazine that would change peoples minds

-about the ideo that diversity is good

-for young people

and if it was going to do any good we needed it to be global

why global--any mag, any medium designed for the future

has to be global

hollywood movies are tested for gloval appeal before

funding

everybody crosses borders--travelk is the worlds largest

and fastest grwing industry

*SOUND  
TRUCK*

*POCK VENDOR  
S MANS  
CARR*

The magazine begins in New York City on a typically harassed and muggy day. MK

Fig. 2. Kalman, M., & Peltason, R. (Ed). (2002). Colors. London: Thames and Hudson, p. 114.

Fig. 3. Kalman, M., & Peltason, R. (Ed). (2002). Colors. London: Thames and Hudson, p. 34-35.

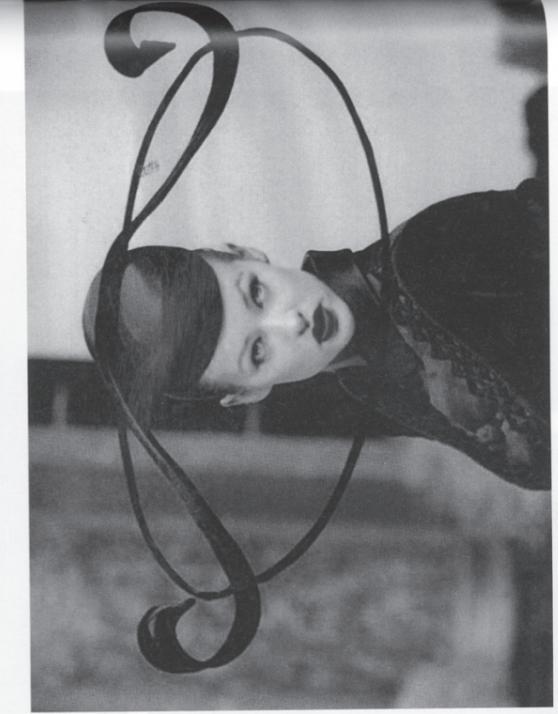
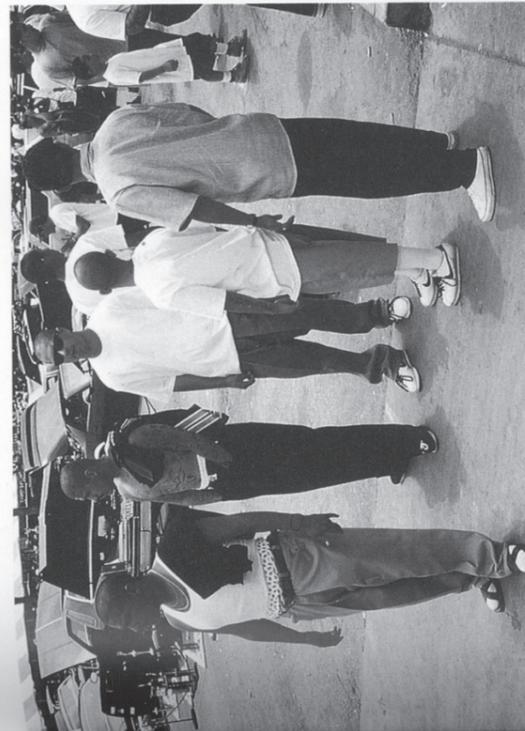
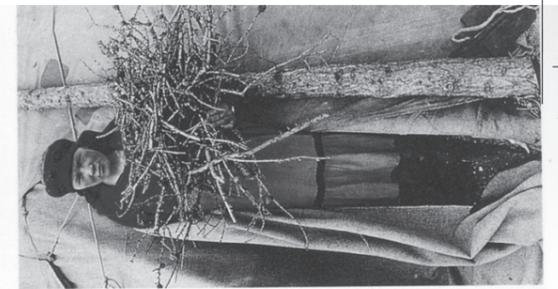
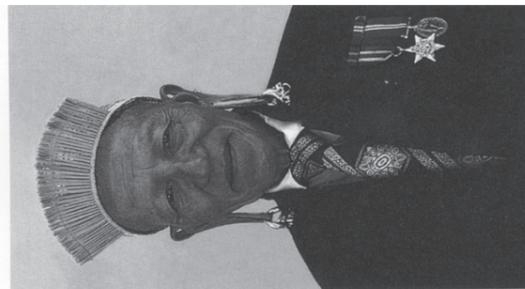




Fig. 4. Kalman, M., & Peltason, R. (Ed). (2002). *Colors*. London: Thames and Hudson, p. 40-41.



Fig. 5. Mustienes, C. & Hilland, T. (Ed). (2004). *1000 Signs*. Koln: Taschen, p. 337-399.

This is a collection from my research data of a range of bathroom signs in response to actual specific localised\* sites - that preserves the cultural uniqueness of each specific context. However, these localised signs do not intend to challenge the current visual conformity of a universal signage system.

Footnote\*: Refer to glossary on p.143 for the specific meanings of this term.



### 3. The Watson's Bottle Identity

The Hong Kong designer Freeman Lau applied wrapping design in his 3-D form of the Watson's bottle for distilled water to celebrate the 100 years anniversary of Watsons Water Company in 2003. Lau invited another eleven local artists and designers to design a series of designs for the wrapping of the bottle for a monthly launch throughout the year.

#### Critical Analysis

I have compiled each design (local) and redesign in this format (Fig. 7) to illustrate the parallel design approach to the British Airways. The changeable identity as the artists and designers were given the restriction of using the confined structure (the bottle) to design their individual wrapping.

The changeable identity is most compelling when the different styles and forms of each design are placed one next to another simultaneously. Each design targets a subgroup (local)\* in each month. And all twelve designs together form a coherent unity (global). This implies that to understand the design of each unit within a system we need to understand the design of the whole structure as a system.

**Footnote\*:** Refer to glossary on p.143 for the specific meanings of this term.



Fig. 7. Lau, F. (2003). 董小明. 03深圳设计展。深圳：海天出版社, p.226-227.

### 4. The Bits Font

Paul Elliman is a British designer who designed the Bits Font. He developed his ideas from an on-going process of observing and collecting everyday junk objects.

He then compiled these different objects and unified them to become one coherent system. Consequently he removed the material quality and colour of the original object by scanning and digitising them to develop a visual unity for the font system.

The font has been simplified to a fixed medium by scanning as silhouettes, so that the visual form of each letter varies and yet is seen as part of a coherent whole.

#### Critical Analysis

It is a novel visual language system that Elliman puts together because most typefaces are visually coherent and conform narrowly to a primarily readable form.

Elliman's project questions the assumption that practicality (immediate legibility) is the key function of a font; instead, through combining different objects he actually has developed a readable and interpretable system for font design. The function of a typeface is shifted and it becomes an unusual font to look at as opposed to considering only the legibility for reading. For this unified font system (although it has different forms, sizes, weights etc), each letter is to be read in relation to others as a whole rather than as individual units by themselves.

This font is visually compelling not because of each of the individual letters but as a whole system (global) and yet each letter (local) is unique, though not necessarily legible. Elliman has offered an alternative notion to the design and reading of font system.

I have noted that his font was constructed by combining ideas of error and inconsistency.

What fascinates me is Elliman's approach of gathering all sorts of objects that are different in scale, form, size, material, texture and colour and combining them to become a coherent font. Through the work he was able to challenge the visual conformity of font design.

Mascota Expo de Hannover 2000 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15  
thematic versions

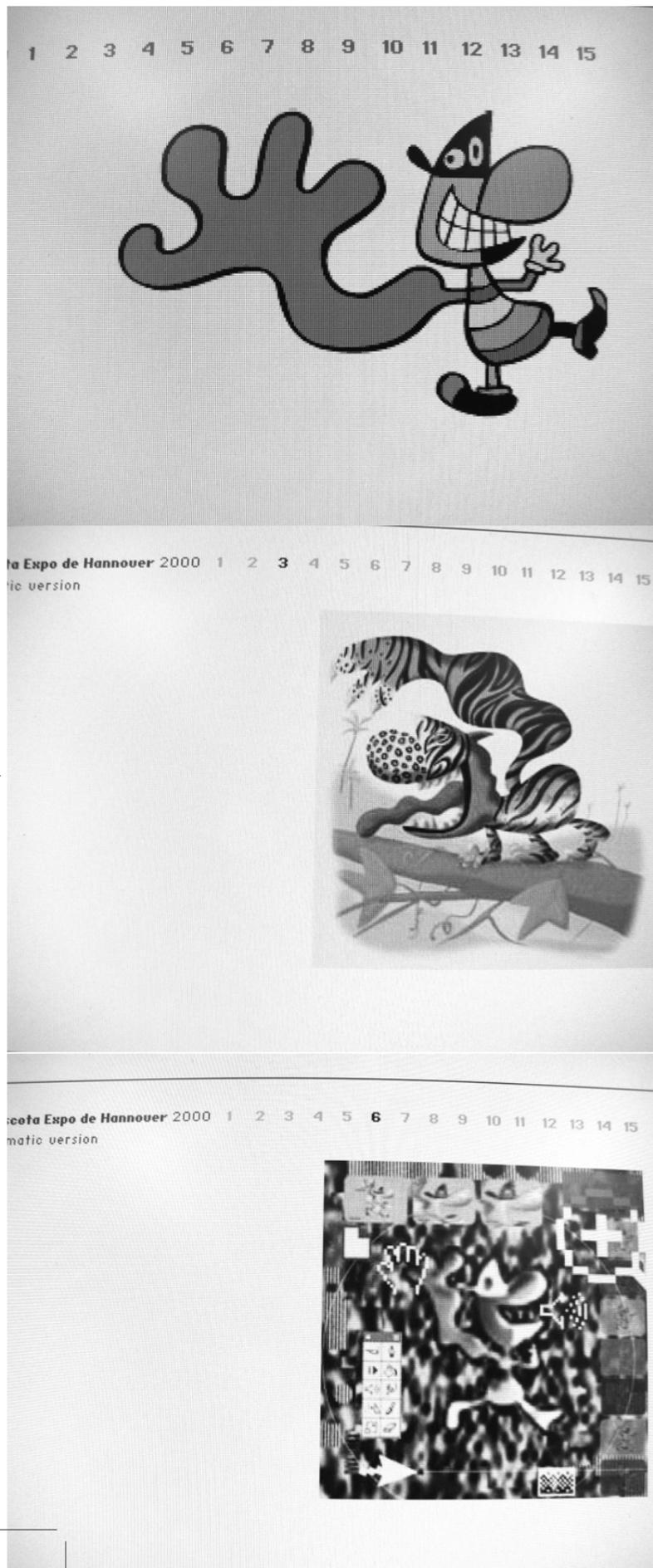
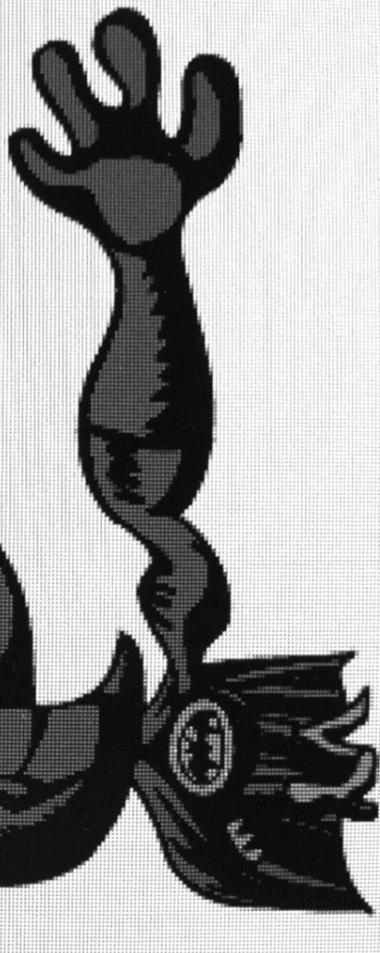
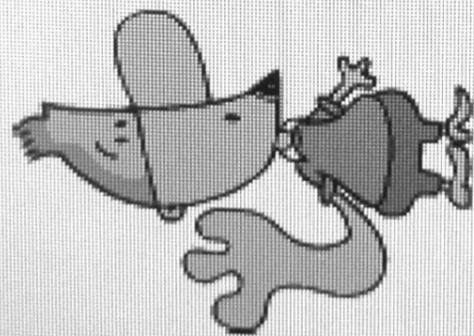


Fig. 9. Mascota Expo de Hannover Twipsy. (2006). Retrieved July 18, 2006, from <http://www.mariscal.com/>

## 5. The Hanover Exposition Mascot

Twipsy is a mascot that was designed by the Spanish graphic designer Xavier Mariscal. His work won the competition to be for the Hanover Exposition in 2000. The mascot was aimed to represent the theme of culture, nature and science for the Hanover Exposition.

Twipsy is part of a changeable identity that is recognisable mainly through its distinct elongated arm. The black outline form is a design feature used to sustain the structure of the identity.

Mariscal has morphed Twipsy with a series of other familiar characters such as Mickey Mouse, Snoopy and Popeye by combining the other characters' unique structural forms with the structure of Twipsy.

### Critical Analysis

The structure of Twipsy stays the same while he morphs with the structure of different characters to construct a new character. It is a way of creating a recognisable entity but also reflects the differences of each character. This is another example of preserving the cultural aspects (character) of a local unit but also capable of fitting that unit into a coherent system (global).

**The D.O.T. Symbol Signs are visually bound to a very similar look. The universal approach does not reflect the complexity of today's world. While the others are changeable sign systems, the British Airways identity and Watson's Bottle identity are changeable only within a confined structure. The Bits font and the Hanover Mascot have parallel design processes and objectives. Both Elliman and Mariscal have deconstructed and reconstructed their visual research data to create a changeable and yet coherent output. The changeable sign systems are also most compelling when they are read as a whole system.**

# Two / The Background and Reading of Locotypes

1. The Story of the Name Locotypes
2. The Design Structure
3. Semiotics
4. The Reading of Locotypes

In this chapter I will explain the name Locotypes, the design structure (background) of the signage system, semiotics theory in relation to the signage system and the reading of Locotypes.

## 1. The Story of the Name Locotypes

Locotypes was inspired by the pictographic language system Isotype (International System of Typographic Picture Education) which was designed by Otto Neurath in 1936.

An early idea of mine was to use the name Letitiatype. It does seem too personal now, but the logical opposite to the international/universal Isotype system is an individual/personal system.

Then I was thinking about an alternative name by using the word Localtypes to emphasise how the wayfinding signage system is made up by different local sites.

Finally I decided to use the word "Loco" to suggest a combination between "Local" – an individual/personal system and "Iso" – the international/universal system to become "Locotypes".

## Isotype

## Letitiatype

## Localtypes

## Locotypes

### 2. The Design Structure

**Negotiating the Global Components**

**Fixed Design Elements**  
Colour / Structure  
e.g.

**Changeable Design Elements**  
Scale  
Form  
Line  
Weight  
Medium  
Composition

**Negotiating the Local Components**

**Fixed Design Influences**  
The cultural uniqueness within each specific station  
e.g.

**Changeable Design Influences**  
Chinese language / Visual language  
e.g.

**Local**

I have separated the design structure into the two main parts that I had to negotiate in developing the system: both the local and global (as a whole system). Within the local components, the fixed design influences\* I refer to are the cultural uniqueness and the changeable design influences - such as the Chinese and visual languages of each site. I have used the Chinese language as the main local language used in Hong Kong while the icon/pictogram is to be read as an international language.

The cultural uniqueness that I have chosen is a changeable element. For example, in the Causeway Bay station I have used cute toys in the shop window display - that may change over time.

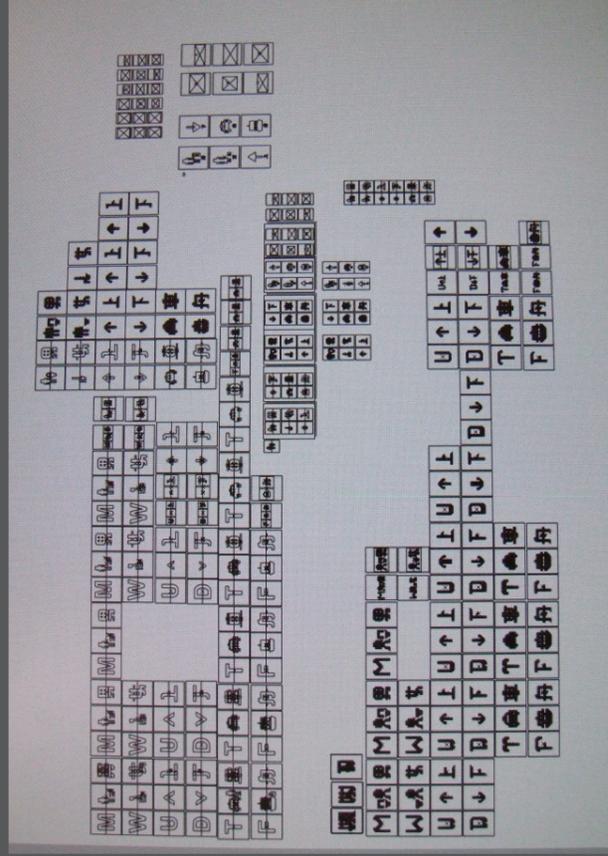


**Global**

Within the global components, the fixed design elements are the monochromatic colour and the rectangle frame (structure) and the changeable design elements are the use of scale, form, line, weight, medium and composition. The fixed design elements are intended to cohere the system while the changeable design elements function to reflect the cultural uniqueness within each station.

The negotiation between the global in the system is parallel to the Twipsy mascot design and the Bits font. However, the visual outcome tends to look more like the British Airways identity as I have the same structure of using a consistent form (rectangle frame) and within it the visual form and the design elements vary.

**Footnote\*:** Refer to glossary on p.143 for the specific meanings of this term.



**3. Semiotics**

**The Interpretation is Determined by the Receivers**

The philosopher Jacques Derrida\* stressed that the meaning of a sign is determined by the receiver or reader, rather than the transmitter. Therefore signs themselves have no absolute or fixed meaning.

Different receivers interpret signs differently depending on their own personal values, experiences and background. The meaning of the sign is likely to be distorted and “lost in translation” when there is no agreement between the receivers.

This suggests the need for reflecting the multi-cultural elements of a sign and that a standard system for universal application is less effective since individual reader (receiver) will interpret differently. Because simply everyone will not read the same thing.

In the article “Stereotypes on the street or in search of Mr. Ligac” Peter Bilak questions the visual consistency and stereotyping in European signage systems and sums up by writing that “This text emphasises that all languages are local, and suggests the use of working laterally of reading a culture through its own symbols, it also serves as a simple reminder that nothing is neutral. Increasing the legibility of the world through uniformity denies the richness of experience.”

The following photocopied pages are a number of extracts from texts that have influenced my thinking in the research process.

**Footnote\*:** My reference here is from *Type and Typography* by Baines, P. & Haslam, A., London: Lawrence King Publishing in 2005.

From “Stereotypes on the Street or in Search of Mr. Ligac” by Peter Bilak, *Dot Dot Dot*, 3, 56-62



36 Type &amp; typography

In contrast to the modernists' rational approach Ed Fella offers an expressive irreverence to both the form of letters and the delightful disorganization of structure. The envelope top, while not typography, reveals the origins of the typographic doodles which are extended into his commercial work. The results seem unplanned, amateurish scribbles developed from a starting point without sense of what the end might be. The reader has to interpret the information, enjoying or enduring the idiosyncrasies of the form.

on modernism, with its belief in the designer's role as author. From the 1960s onwards, post-structural thinkers began to re-examine the way in which language is received and interpreted. Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard began to attack Saussure's assertion that the signs in language – the words – are neutral. By analyzing and questioning the structuralist principal that meaning is built through a system, Barthes began to dismantle the structure. All three developed ideas that challenged the assumed precepts in a range of fields, including literature, language, advertising, architecture and politics.

The basis for their analysis lay in the questioning of absolutes. For these post-structuralist thinkers, most ideas contained a dualism: certainty contains within it uncertainty, while fixed meaning embraces interpretation. In many respects this philosophic questioning of structuralist ideas revisited a far earlier debate. The early Greeks had contemplated the relationship between mind and body. They questioned how external things related to their internal meaning; how the outward appearance of an object related to its essential nature. Is the essence of a vase defined by its external clay form, they asked, or by its containment of the inner space or void?

In his influential book *Of grammatology* (1967), the philosopher Jacques Derrida devised the term 'grammatology' to describe the study of writing. He saw writing as a copy of the spoken word and typography as something that mechanically formalizes the copy. For Derrida, the material forms of language – writing and speech – together represent meaning. The 'reading' of the representation, the interpretation by the viewer or listener, is not determined by the transmitter but by the receiver. The reader brings his or her own ideas and experiences to a message; language is defined by interpretation. In this way, structuralism was itself dismantled or 'deconstructed'. Roland Barthes extended the deconstructivist belief in interpretation still further, suggesting that the interior essence of self is actually defined by external readings. He proposed that the author's role of constructing meaning through form had been usurped by the reader's ownership of meaning through interpretation. The result: 'the death of the author'. Deconstructivist ideas were given physical forms in architecture, design and typography. Such physical artefacts made visible the radical nature of the ideas, but have often been belittled as a superficial style rather than the manifestations of a critical approach.

A bitter and somewhat childish debate, which is often reduced to 'my *ism* is bigger than your *ism*', has raged between those who maintain that modernism lives on as an unfinished project and those who claim to have witnessed its last rites. Accusations fly from both sides about the misrepresentation of each party's argument. It is clear that not all modernist typography is authoritarian, structured imperialism, delivering a specific fixed and indisputable message to the eye of its readers. It is equally clear that not all deconstructivist work is illegible style-based nonsense paying no attention to content, or is a mass of mixed messages based entirely on individual interpretations. Such crude polarization is perhaps a product of the protagonists spending too long in the rarefied air of academic debate.

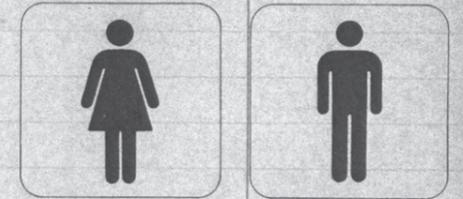
Fig. 10. Baines, P., & Haslam, A. (2005). *Type and Typography*. London: Lawrence King Publishing, p. 36.

## agreement



Three versions of signs for man and woman. Left – runes. Below – symbols used by the American department of transport. Right – signs from the font Creation 6 based on the runes. Designed by the author for the Religion issue of 'Fuse' magazine issue no.8.

All that is necessary for any language to exist is an agreement amongst a group of people that one thing will stand for another.



There are two exceptions to this rule but the fact that we can readily identify them as exceptions only reinforces the overriding rule that ordinary signs are constructed from arbitrary relationships. There are of course onomatopoeic words which in some way imitate the things they represent through the sounds they make. A dog for example could be described as a 'bow-wow'. A gun as a 'bang-bang'.

The second exception is where the sequence of sounds which make up the word or the signifier, is constructed from two separate signs which might describe an action or the construction of the object it represents. A 'keyboard' for example describes the object used for typing words. It is quite literally a board which holds the keys. However, this type of second order signifier is only of use in English and does not transfer to other languages. A 'keyboard' in English is 'teclado' in Spanish. So we can see that the relationship between the sound and the thing it represents is learned. It is its use in social practice that helps us to understand its meaning. Saussure also pointed out that

language is not just a set of names that is chosen at random and attached to objects or ideas. We cannot simply replace the arbitrary name for one object in one language for the name in another language. Whereas the English language uses the word 'key' to represent something which we press to type or open a door or play on a piano or a significant idea or moment all from the same signifier, the translation into French would throw up a range of different words. Similarly there are signifiers in one language which have no direct translation into other forms of language. Each language has a series of arbitrary signifiers which exist independently of any other language or dialect. Languages do not just find names for objects and ideas which are already categorised; languages define their own categories.

All that is necessary for any language to exist is an agreement amongst a group of people that one thing will stand for another. Furthermore, these agreements can be made quite independently of agreements in other communities. Saussure proposed that this was true of any language, or dialect.

Fig. 11. Crow, D. (2003). *Visible Signs: An introduction to semiotics*. Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, p. 20.

There are three main areas which form what we understand as semiotics; the signs themselves, the way they are organised into systems and the context in which they appear.

language. In its early stages linguistics was an attempt to explain signs by imagining them as descriptions of a series of gestures, actions and sensations. This developed into a comparative study of the forms of words in different languages and their evolution. At this stage linguists were concerned with the structure of language in its own right with no distinct relation to the mind. Prior to his post at Geneva, Saussure himself was concerned with the study of historical languages and had a particular interest in the comparative grammar of Indo European languages particularly Sanskrit. Saussure was unhappy with the way linguists were approaching language as he felt they had not determined the nature of what they were studying. As a result Saussure proposed an entirely different way of looking at language by returning to the essentials and looking at language as a system of signs. If we could understand how the system of language worked then this may lead us to how meaning is formed. One crucial difference in this approach was that Saussure and the structuralists were concerned with the underlying principles of language which all speakers or bearers of a language have in common. These underlying principles are fixed and do not evolve over time with social or technological change. We will return to this later when we look at language and speech. Saussure was a linguist. As a result his theory focused on language and his model is centred on words as signs.



A variety of different crosses. The meaning of each cross is dependent on its context for its meaning.

1. The cross of St Julian
2. The cross of St George
3. The Red Cross
4. No stopping sign (UK)
5. Positive terminal
6. Hazardous chemical
7. Do not wring
8. No smoking

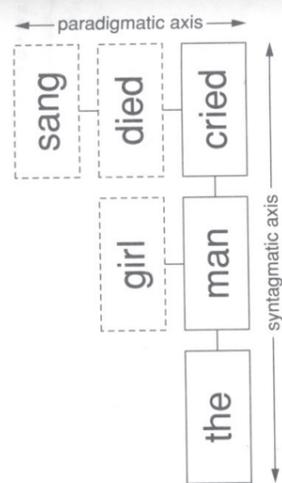


FIGURE 3.1 Syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes

called the latter associative relations (Saussure 1983, 121), but Roman Jakobson's term is now used. The distinction is a key one in structuralist semiotic analysis. These two dimensions are often presented as 'axes', where the horizontal axis is the syntagmatic and the vertical axis is the paradigmatic (see Figure 3.1). The plane of the syntagm is that of the combination of 'this-and-this-and-this' (as in the sentence, 'the man cried') while the plane of the paradigm is that of the selection of 'this-or-this-or-this' (e.g. the replacement of the last word in the same sentence with 'died' or 'sang'). While syntagmatic relations are possibilities of combination, paradigmatic relations are functional contrasts – they involve differentiation. Temporally, syntagmatic relations refer intratextually to other signifiers co-present within the text, while paradigmatic relations refer intertextually to signifiers which are absent from the text (ibid., 122). The 'value' of a sign is determined by both its paradigmatic and its syntagmatic relations. Syntagms and paradigms provide a structural context within which signs make sense; they are the structural forms through which signs are organized into codes.

Paradigmatic relationships can operate on the level of the signifier and on the level of the signified (ibid., 121–4; Silverman 1983, 10; Harris 1987, 124). A paradigm is a set of associated signifiers or signifieds which are all members of some defining category, but in which each is significantly different. In natural language there

are grammatical paradigms such as verbs or nouns. In a given context, one member of the paradigm set is structurally replaceable with another. The choice of one excludes the choice of another. The use of one signifier (e.g. a particular word) rather than another from the same paradigm set (e.g. adjectives) shapes the preferred meaning of a text. Paradigmatic relations can thus be seen as 'contrastive'. Saussure's notion of 'associative' relations was broader and less formal than what is normally meant by 'paradigmatic' relations. He referred to 'mental association' and included perceived similarities in form (e.g. homophones) or meaning (e.g. synonyms). Such similarities were diverse and ranged from strong to slight, and might refer to only part of a word (such as a shared prefix or suffix). He noted that there was no end (or commonly agreed order) to such associations (Saussure 1983, 121–4).

Paradigms are not confined to the verbal mode. In film and television, paradigms include ways of changing shot (such as cut, fade, dissolve and wipe). The medium or genre are also paradigms, and particular media texts derive meaning from the ways in which the medium and genre used differ from the alternatives. The aphorism of the Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan (1911–80) that 'the medium is the message' can thus be seen as reflecting a semiotic concern: to a semiotician the medium is not 'neutral'.

A syntagm is an orderly combination of interacting signifiers which forms a meaningful whole within a text – sometimes, following Saussure, called a 'chain'. Such combinations are made within a framework of syntactic rules and conventions (both explicit and implicit). In language, a sentence, for instance, is a syntagm of words; so too are paragraphs and chapters. 'there are always larger units, composed of smaller units, with a relation of interdependence holding between both' (ibid., 127): syntagms can contain other syntagms. A printed advertisement is a syntagm of visual signifiers. Syntagmatic relations are the various ways in which elements within the same text may be related to each other. Syntagms are created by the linking of signifiers from paradigm sets which are chosen on the basis of whether they are conventionally regarded as appropriate or may be required by some rule system (e.g. grammar). Syntagmatic relations highlight the importance of part-whole

Fig. 12. Crow, D. (2003). Visible Signs: An introduction to semiotics. Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA, p. 61.

relationships: Saussure stressed that 'the whole depends on the parts, and the parts depend on the whole' (ibid., 126).

Syntagms are often defined as 'sequential' (and thus *temporal* – as in speech and music), but they can represent *spatial relationships*. Saussure himself (who emphasized 'auditory signifiers' which 'are presented one after another' and 'form a chain') noted that visual signifiers (he instanced nautical flags) 'can exploit more than one dimension simultaneously' (ibid., 70). *Spatial syntagmatic* relations are found in drawing, painting and photography. Many semiotic systems – such as drama, cinema, television and the World Wide Web – include both spatial and temporal syntagms.

The structure of any text or cultural practice has both syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes. Roland Barthes (1967) outlined the paradigmatic and syntagmatic elements of the 'garment system'. The paradigmatic elements are the items which cannot be worn at the same time on the same part of the body (such as hats, trousers, shoes). The syntagmatic dimension is the juxtaposition of different elements at the same time in a complete ensemble from hat to shoes. Within a genre, while the syntagmatic dimension is the textual structure, the paradigmatic dimension can be as broad as the *choice of subject-matter* (Thwaites *et al.* 1994, 95). In this framing, *form* is a syntagmatic dimension while *content* is a paradigmatic dimension. However, form is also subject to paradigmatic choices and content to syntagmatic arrangement. In the case of film, our interpretation of an individual shot depends on both paradigmatic analysis (comparing it, not necessarily consciously, with the use of alternative kinds of shot) and syntagmatic analysis (comparing it with preceding and following shots). The same shot used within another sequence of shots could have quite a different preferred reading. Actually, filmic syntagms are not confined to such temporal syntagms (which are manifested in *montage*: the sequencing of shots) but include the spatial syntagms found also in still photography (in *mise-en-scène*: the composition of individual frames).

Both syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis treat signs as part of a system – exploring their functions within codes and sub-codes – a topic to which we will return. Although we will discuss syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations separately, **it should be emphasized**

that the semiotic analysis of a text or corpus has to tackle the system as a whole, and that the two dimensions cannot be considered in isolation.

The description of any semiotic system involves specifying both the membership of all of the relevant paradigmatic sets and also the possible combinations of one set with another in well-formed syntagms. For the analyst, according to Saussure (who was, of course, focusing on the language system as a whole), 'the system as a united whole is the starting point, from which it becomes possible, by a process of analysis, to identify its constituent elements'; one cannot try to construct the system by working upwards from the constituent elements (Saussure 1983, 112). However, Roland Barthes argued that 'an important part of the semiological undertaking' was to divide texts 'into minimal significant units . . . then to group these units into paradigmatic classes, and finally to classify the syntagmatic relations which link these units' (Barthes 1967, 48; cf. Leymore 1975, 21 and Lévi-Strauss 1972, 211). In practice, the analyst is likely to need to move back and forth between these two approaches as the analysis proceeds.

### The syntagmatic dimension

Saussure, of course, emphasized the theoretical importance of the relationship of signs to each other. He also noted that 'normally we do not express ourselves by using single linguistic signs, but groups of signs, organized in complexes which themselves are signs' (Saussure 1983, 127). However, in practice he treated the individual word as the primary example of the sign. Thinking and communication depend on *discourse* rather than isolated signs. Saussure's focus on the language *system* rather than on its *use* meant that discourse was neglected within his framework. The linking together of signs was conceived solely in terms of the grammatical possibilities which the system offered. This is a key feature of the Saussurean framework which led some theorists to abandon semiotics altogether in favour of a focus on 'discourse' while leading others to seek to reformulate a more socially oriented semiotics (e.g. Hodge and Kress 1988). However, this is not to suggest that structural analysis is worthless. Analysts still engage in formal studies of narrative, film

### Syntagm and Paradigm

In the following I will explain the structural relations of the semiotic terms "syntagm" and "paradigm" and how both terms have some similarities that relate to my wayfinding signage system. Ferdinand de Saussure\* has established that to understand each sign within a structure, the receiver has to understand the relationships within the structure in order to understand each sign.

Saussure has established that a syntagm is a collection of signs which are organised in a linear sequence such as a sentence, while a paradigm is a collection of signs which have something in common but also have different qualities as a set. Saussure stressed however that there was no end to the definitions of both terms.\*

My wayfinding signage system can be read on two axes. I refer to the horizontal/global view as the paradigmatic sequence, and the vertical/local view as the linear syntagmatic sequence. For example, looking at the system horizontally, it suggests a paradigmatic reading. Where each sign is synonymous – i.e., each sign has different visual interpretations while having the same meaning.

**Footnote\*:** My reference here is from *Semiotics: The basics* by Chandler, D., New York: Routledge in 2002.

**Footnote\*:** This paragraph is paraphrased from *Visible Signs* by Crow, D. on p. 41-42, and from *Semiotics: The basics* by Chandler, D. on p. 80.

Looking at the system vertically, the different pictograms are positioned in a linear/conventional sequence. This suggests the meaning of a sign is dependent on the way that signs are organised or arranged in a syntagmatic sequence considering what goes before or after it. The relationships between the signs affect the meaning of each sign. For example, the men's bathroom signs can be understood by comparison with the women's bathroom sign. Therefore, to understand all signs of individual locals must be read as a whole system. (global)

Fig. 13. Chandler, D. (2002). *Semiotics: The basics*. London; New York: Routledge, p. 80-83.

#### 4. The Reading of Locotypes

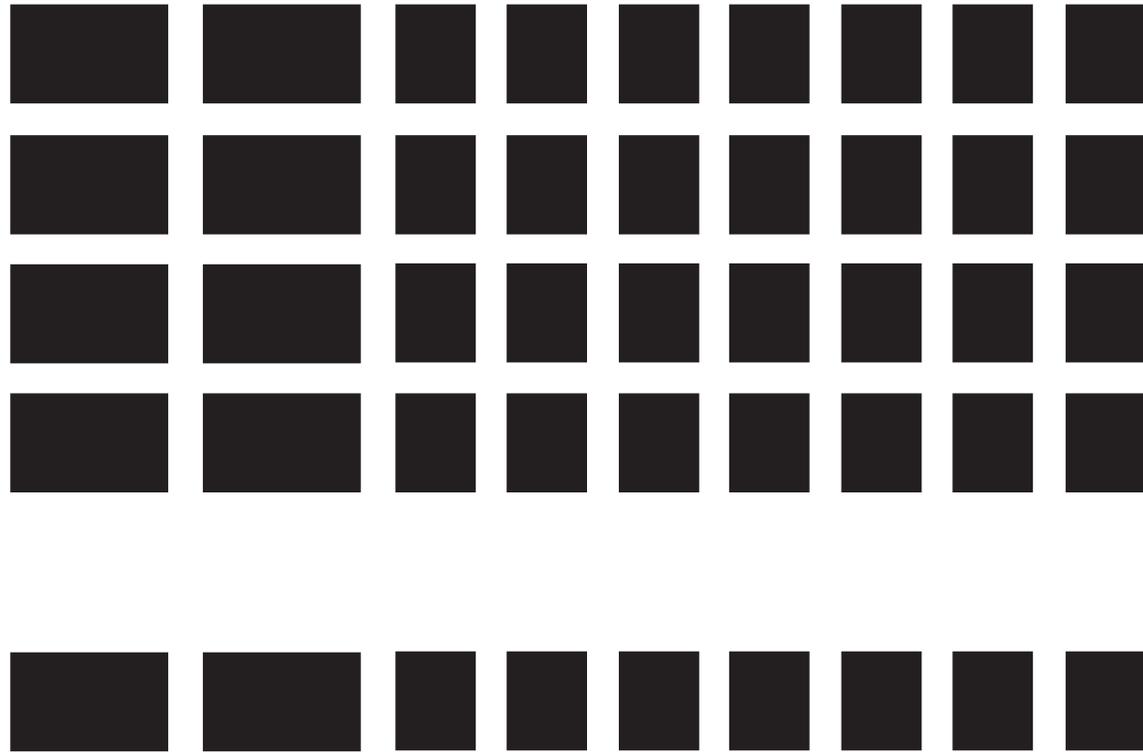
To make sense of Locotypes it helps to review this wayfinding signage system by considering the two dimensions – of the horizontal and the vertical.

The system has been chosen to represent the range of cultures in Hong Kong and has been placed in an order (left to right) from the most international – Airport to the most Chinese – Wong Tai Sin stations.

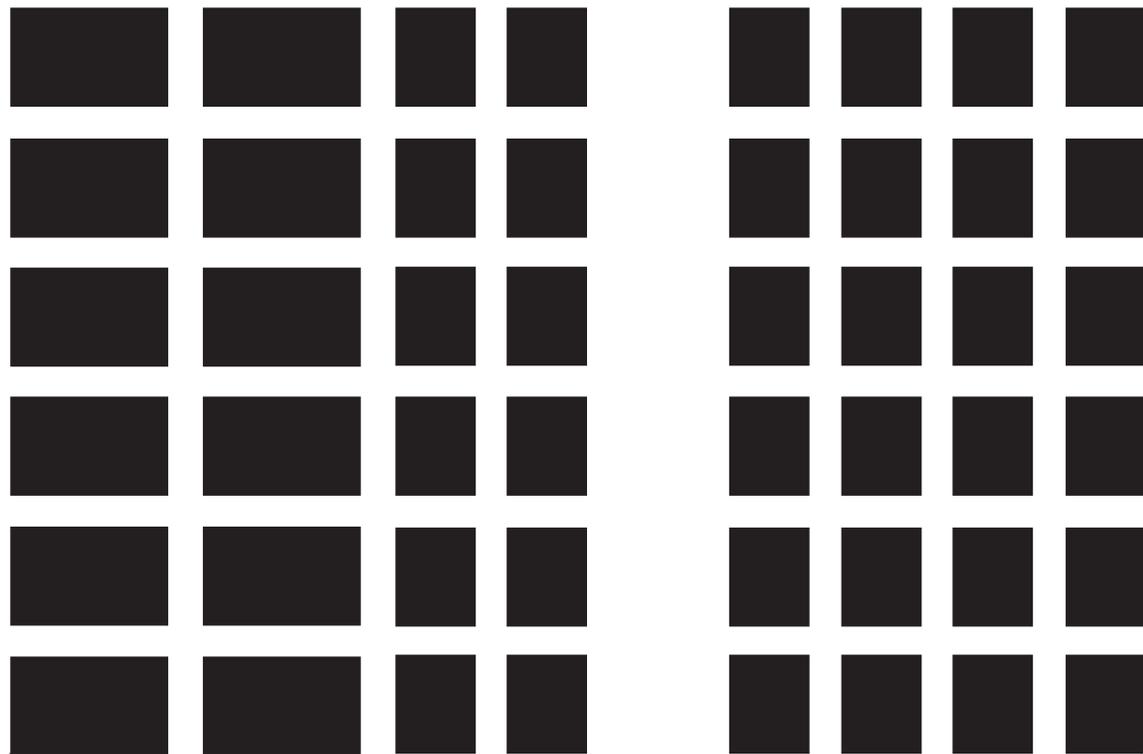
Looking at the system horizontally or as a coherent whole, viewers can distinguish the transition and translation within each sign from one station to another.

Looking at the system vertically, viewers can perceive the specific cultural uniqueness of the signs, and how they are also coherent within the station.

### The Horizontal View of Locotypes



### The Vertical View of Locotypes

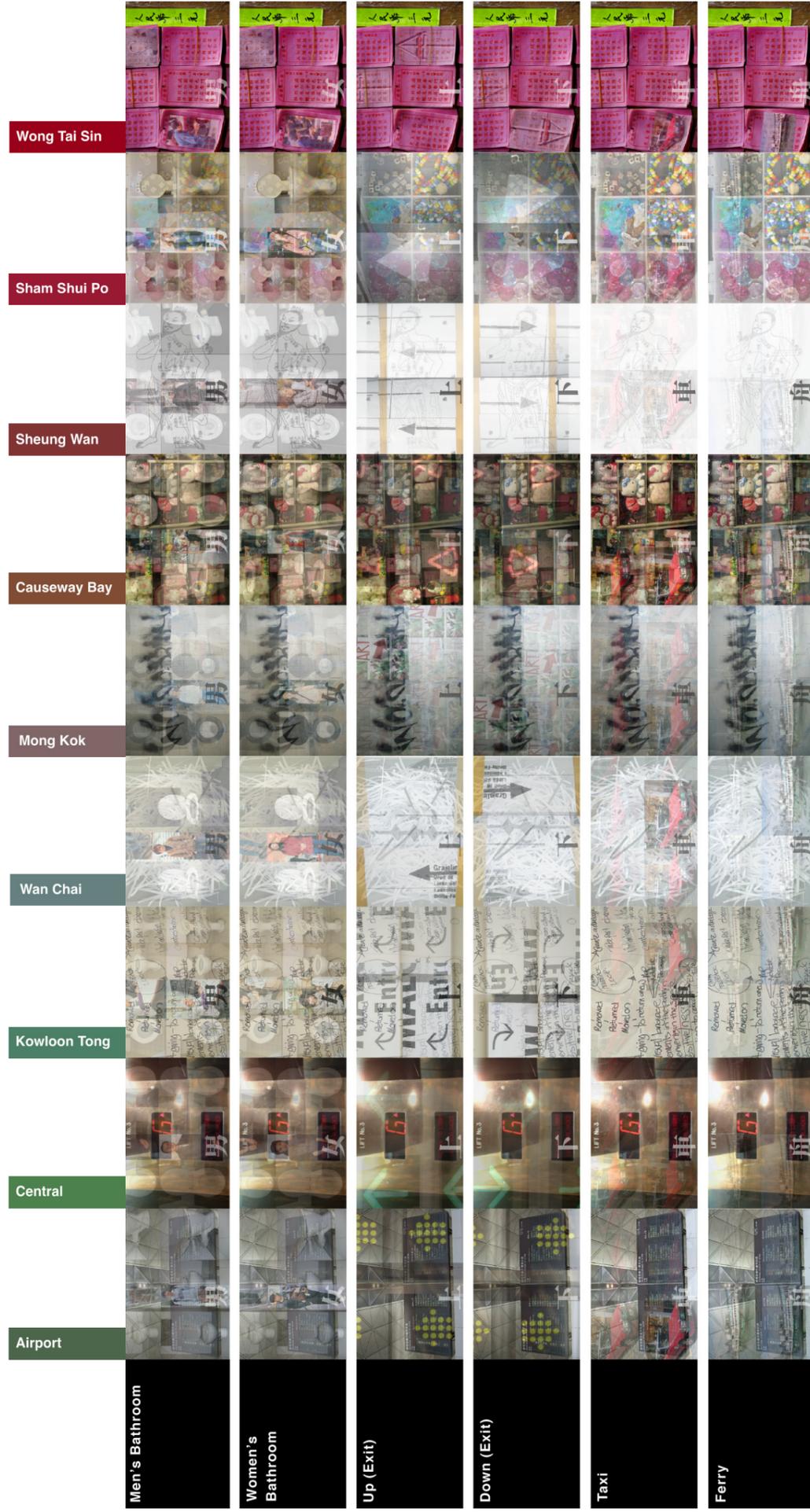




The Colour Codes of Each Sign



# The Cultural Uniqueness in Each Station



I have explained the name Locotypes as a combination of morphing both words “Local” and “Iso”, the negotiation between global and local design components. I have discussed how semiotics theory relates to my project, in a way it highlights how interpretation is determined by receivers. I have also drawn a comparison in between my system’s horizontal and vertical axes “syntagm” and “paradigm” in relation to my system and the multiple dimensions of readings.

# Three / Methodology

1. Gathering - Magpie
2. Making - Deconstruction and Reconstruction
3. Documenting and Analysing - Diary



In this chapter I will explain the three methods which I have used in the research process. They are Magpie, Deconstruction and Reconstruction and Diary. I will also discuss some examples from other artists/designers in relation to my methods.

## 1. Gathering - Magpie

Metaphorically I have positioned my working process as a Magpie\*. This method shows how I have gathered my primary and secondary research data. The method is parallel to Paul Elliman's approach as he also developed his ideas from observing and collecting everyday junk objects. The value of this methodology is that it foregrounds the role of a design researcher and practitioner as an observer and a participant in the "real world".

Here are the visual design influences of one of the women's bathroom signs within each specific station.

**Footnote\*:** Refer to glossary on p.143 for the specific meanings of this term.



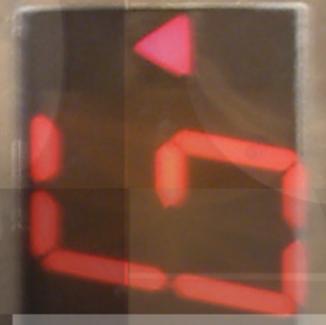
辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

行段 Aisle	Name of airline
G	NZ
J	CA
G	AI
BCD	AA
J	BA
DE	N8
BCD	CX
G	5J
D	CI
H	MU
J	CZ
F	KA
F	BR
	AIR NEW ZEALAND
	Air China
	Air India
	American Airlines
	British Airways
	CR Airways
	Cathay Pacific
	Cebu Pacific Air
	China Airlines
	China Eastern
	China Southern
	Dragonair
	EVA AIR

辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

現在時間  
Time now 17:03

行段 Aisle	Name of airline
H	UO
G	3K
LH	LH
AE	AE
PR	PR
OR	OR
OF	OF
50	50
TG	TG
US	US
UA	UA
VS	VS
MF	MF
	Hongkong Express
	JETSTAR ASIA
	Lufthansa
	Mandarin Airlines
	PAL
	DATAR AIRWAYS
	Qantas Airways
	Singapore Airlines
	Thai Airways
	US Airways
	United Airlines
	Virgin Atlantic
	Xiamen
	港聯航空
	捷星亞洲航空
	德國漢莎航空
	華信航空
	菲航
	卡塔爾航空
	澳洲航空
	新加坡航空
	泰國國際航空
	美國聯合航空
	維珍航空
	廈門航空



Returned  
Moved on

4 giving - to return arend

Visual language  
elements in the poster  
elements in the poster  
Positive/Neutral  
to connect

MAP  
Aesthetic  
Document  
Black  
White



What am saying  
What am saying  
you see  
Creates tension  
"Cross Culture"  
"Cross Cultural Co"  
"Cross Cultural Co"  
"Crossed Culti"









## 2. Making - Deconstruction and Reconstruction

Trial and error experimentation enables me to deconstruct and reconstruct the concepts/ ideas in the wayfinding signage system. The value of this methodology is that it enables the role of a researcher to create a different reading/interpretation such as morphing the fixed and changeable design influences.

Parallel to my design method, Qing Lo, a Professor in Taipei Univeristy of Education, has discussed his painting method of Mountain Huang stating that “黄山是由无数分裂的花岗岩所组成, 也可以‘解构’的观点来诠释” “我以移植、误读、霸占、拼贴的手法, 使数个不同时代的记号体系相互重叠。” (1993: p.42) In English it reads that the Mountain Huang was being constructed by large pieces of fragments, but it can also be viewed from a “deconstructive” point of view. He uses the methods of “transforming”, “mis-interpretating” and “collage” by combining and overlapping symbols and markings from different centuries.

He expresses his vision of the mountain in his paintings by employing a deconstructing and reconstructing methodology. He has created this different way of interpreting the Mountain Huang which has become his own made up visual language.

These are some of the workbook pages in the design process when I morph the following:

1. Visual language and pictograms
2. English language and pictograms
3. Chinese language and pictograms
4. Chinese and English languages
5. Chinese/English languages and pictograms

These methods were originated from my experience of playing with Lego bricks in my childhood.

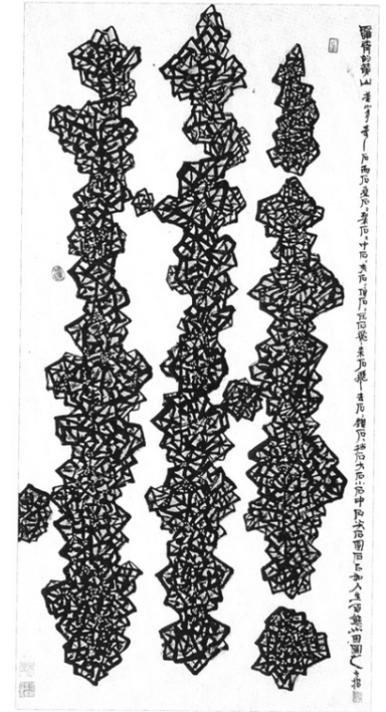
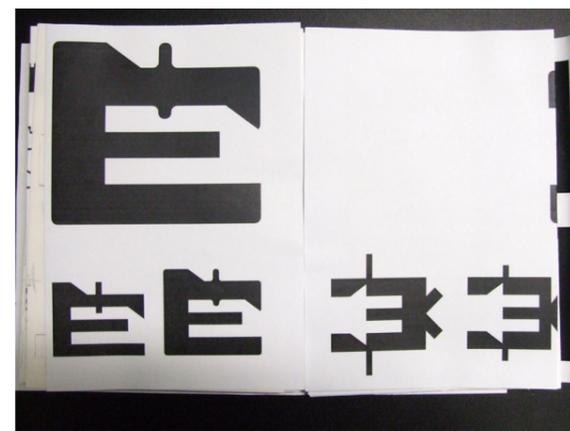
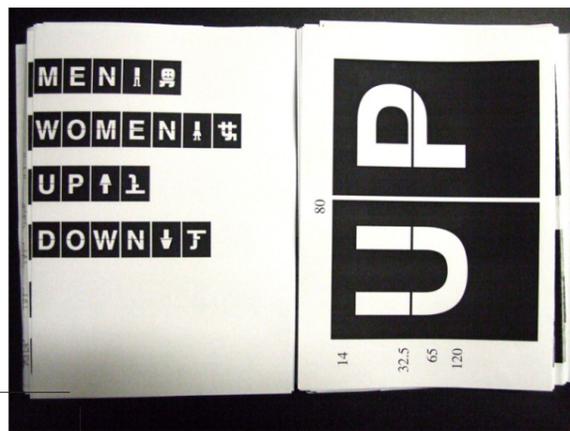
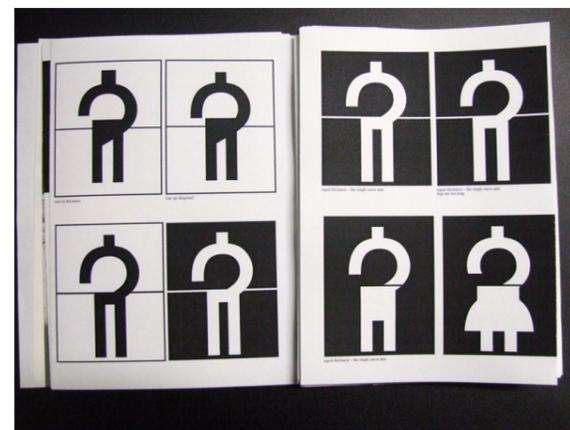
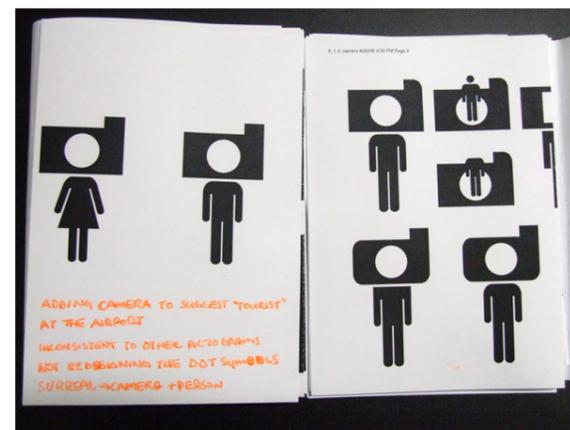
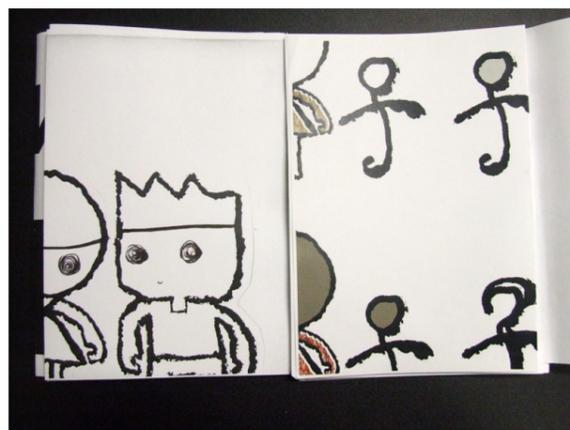
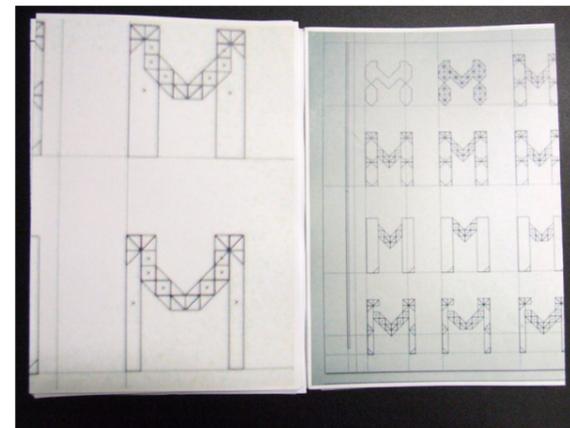
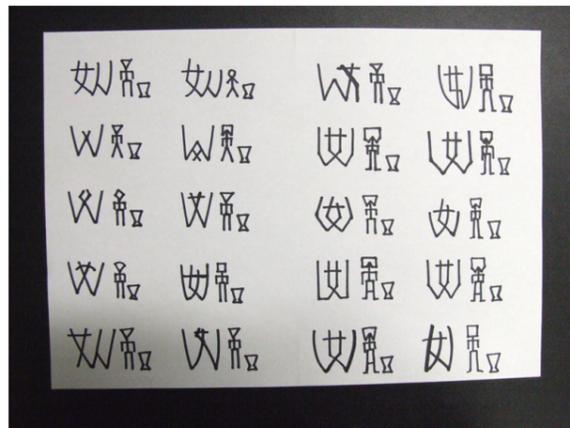
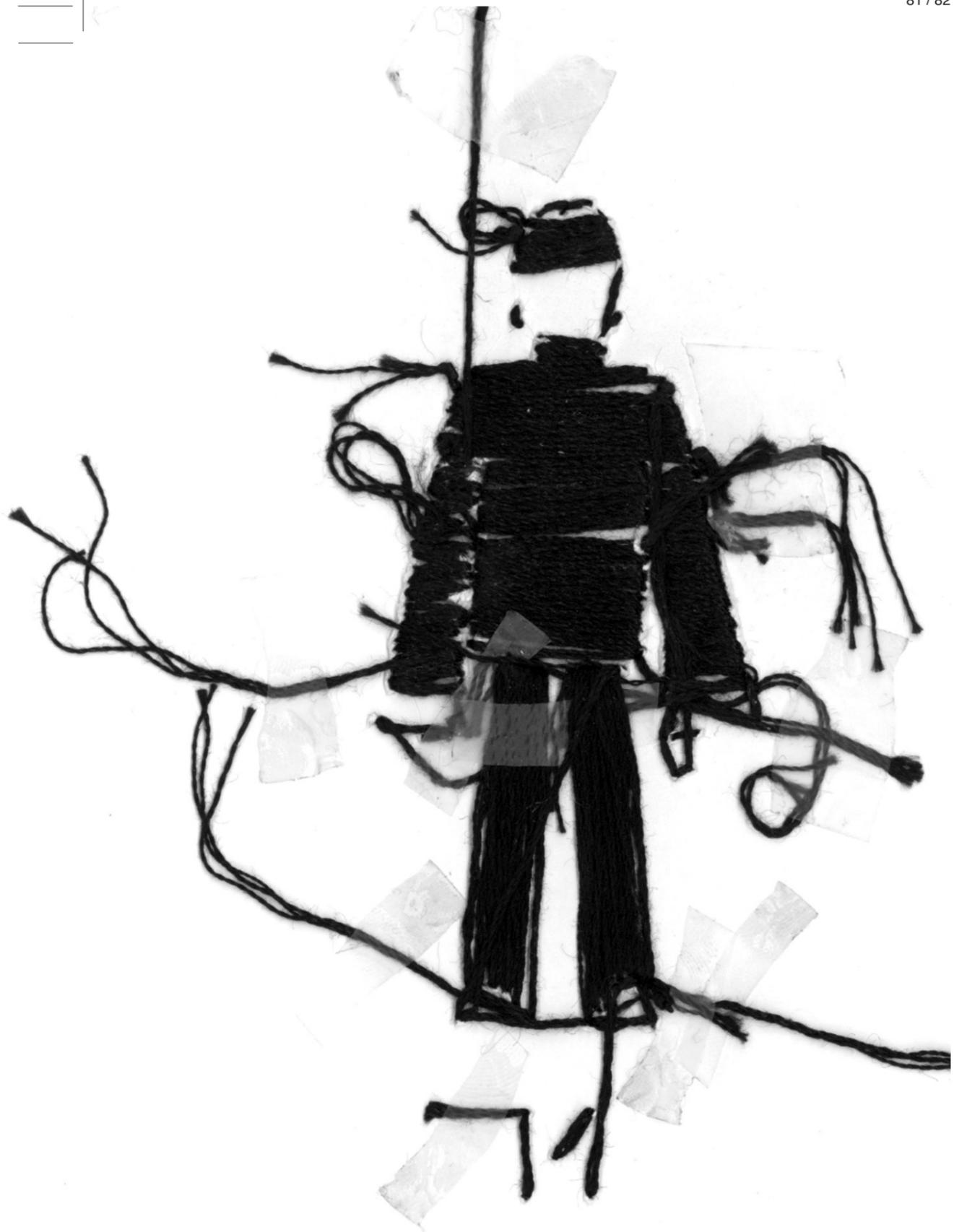
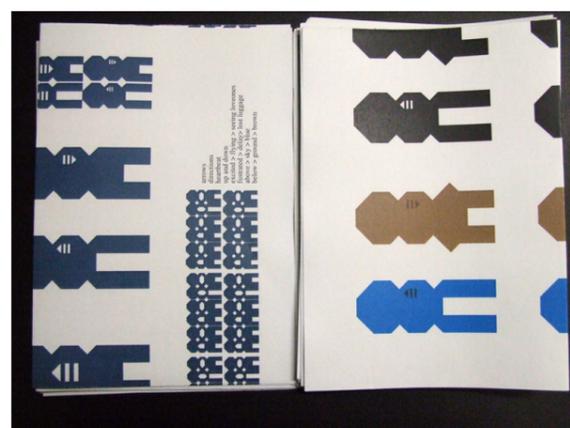
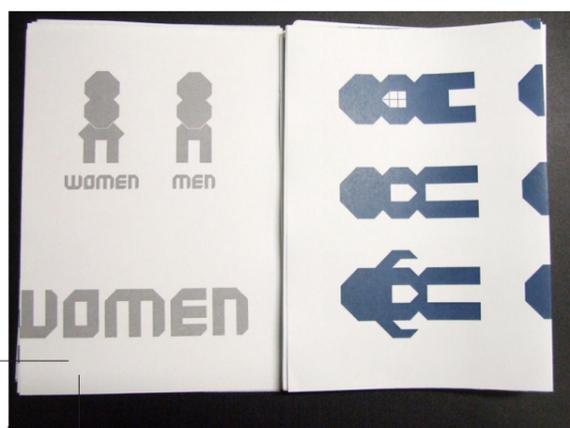
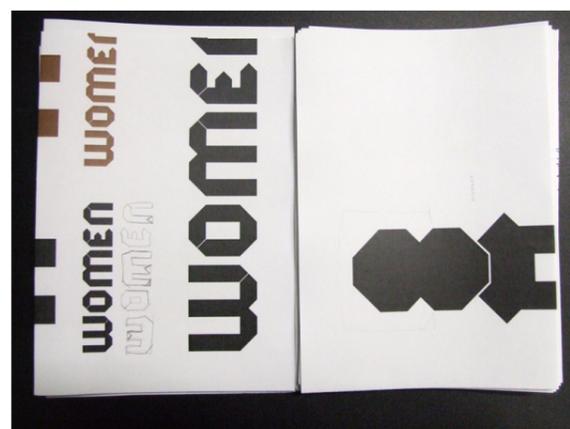
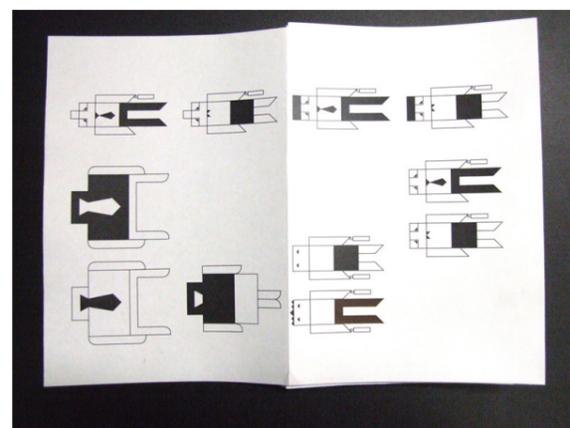
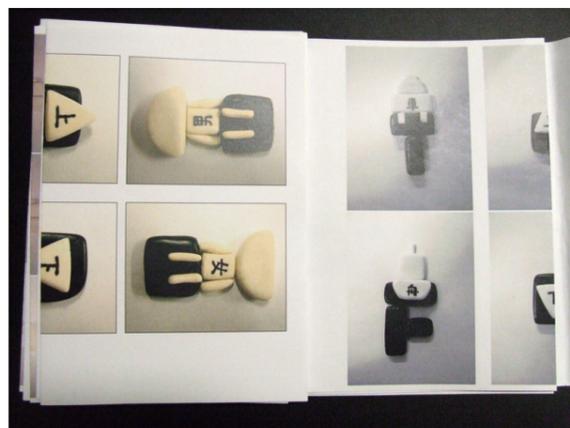
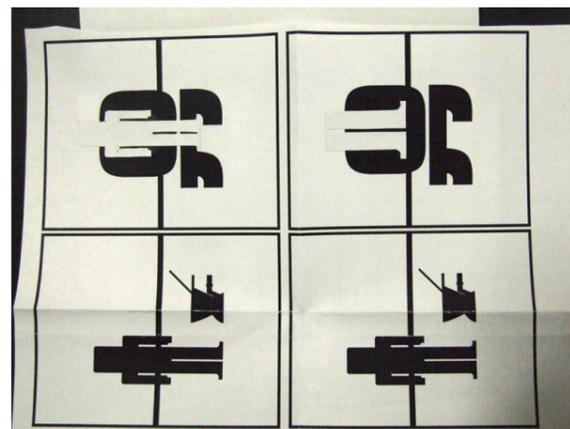
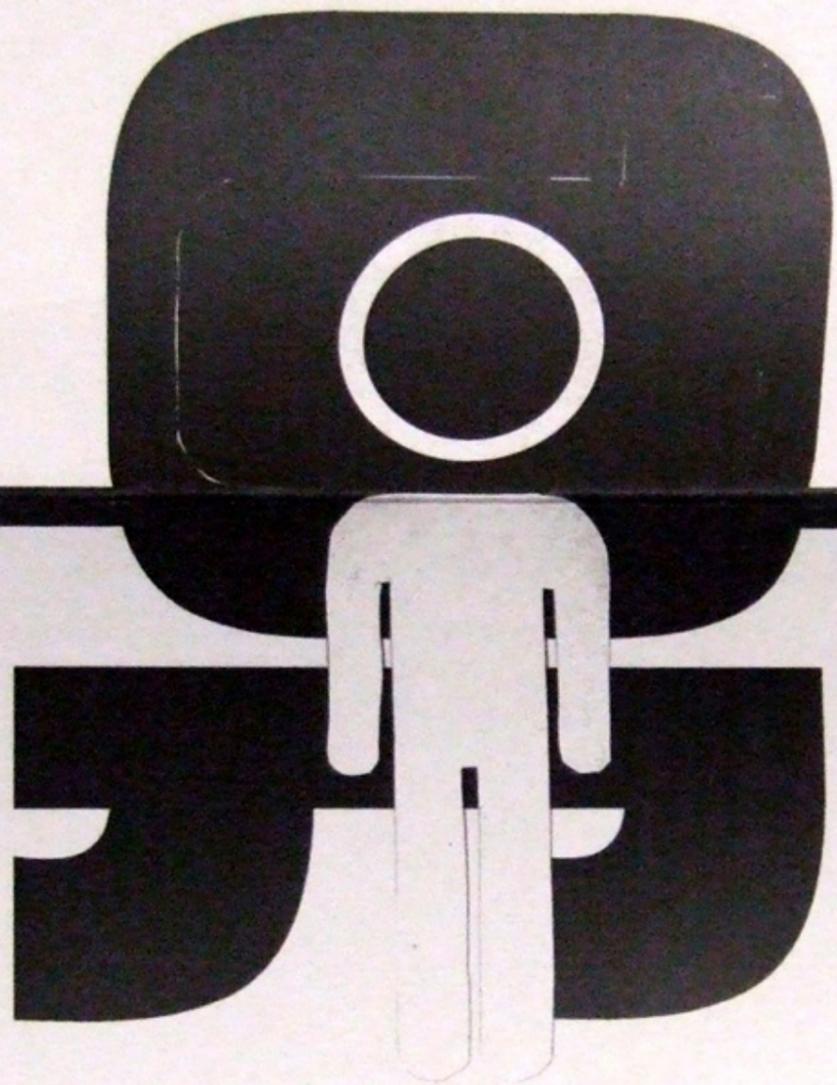


Fig. 14. Lo, Q. (1993). *Deconstructing Mountain Huang*. Ink on paper.



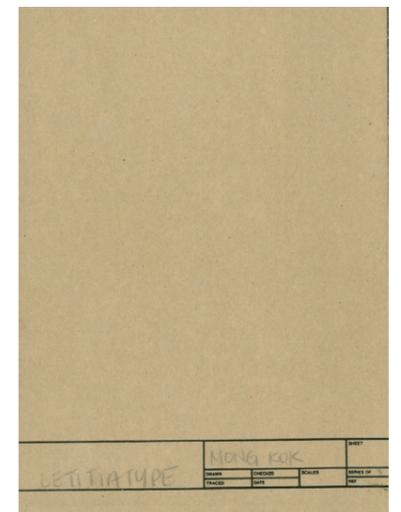
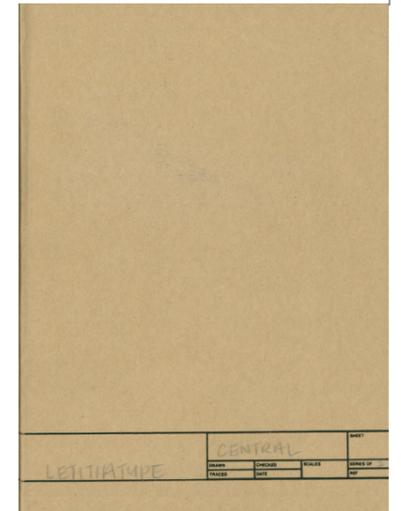


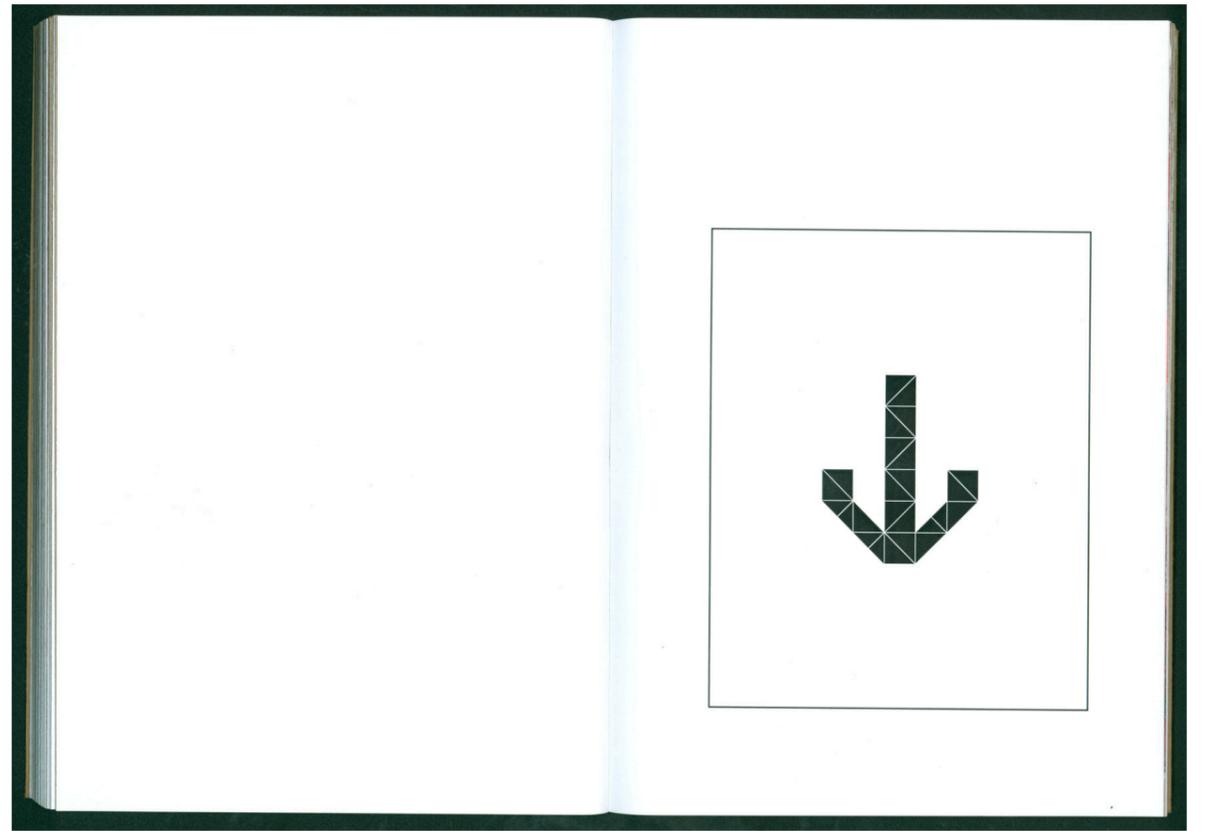
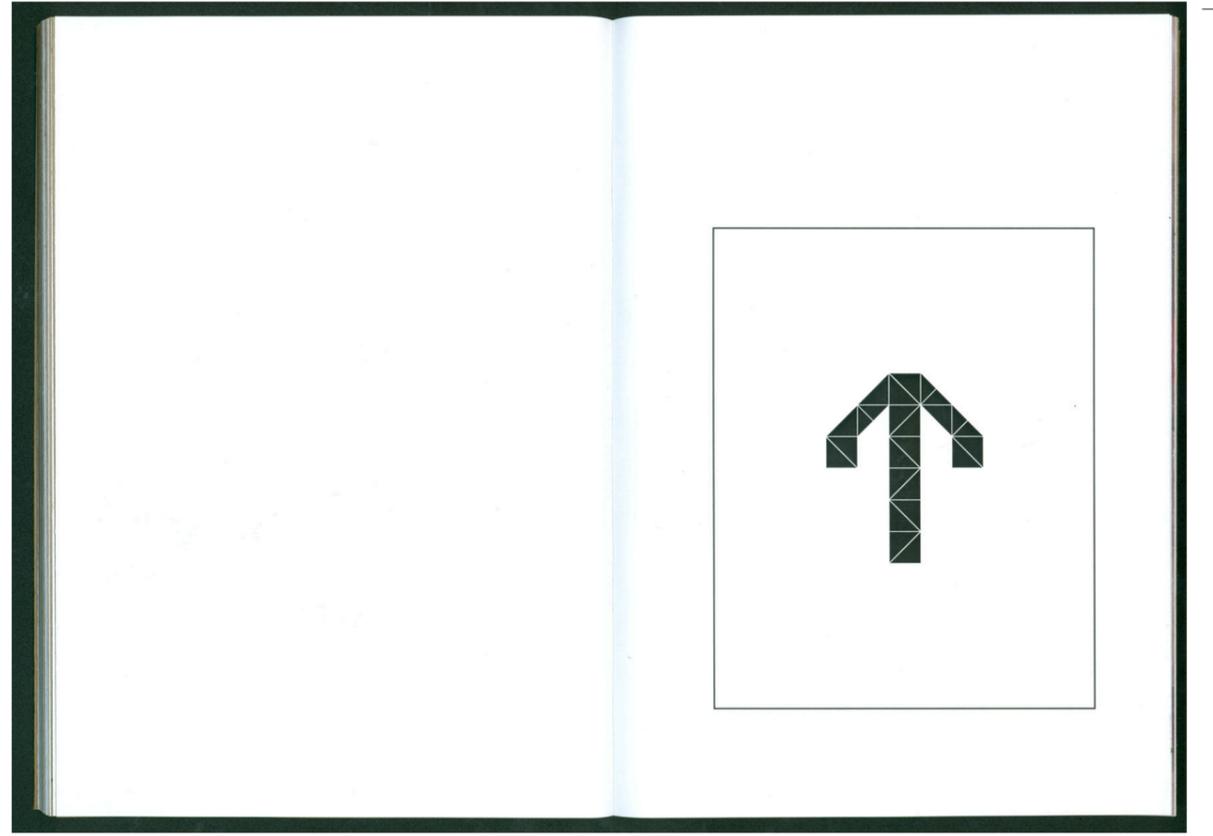
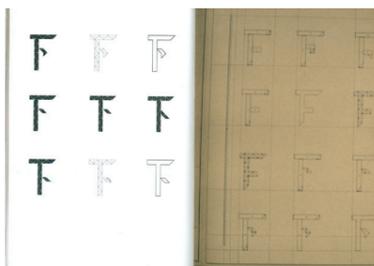
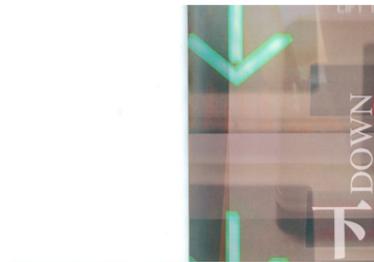
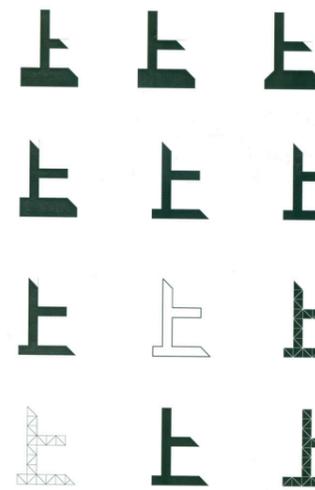
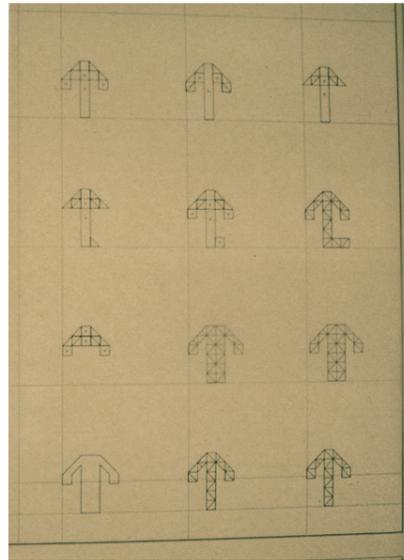
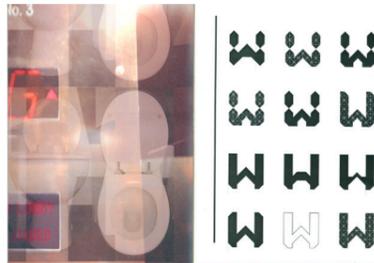
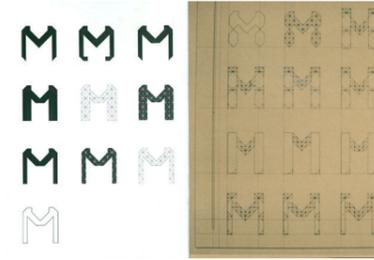
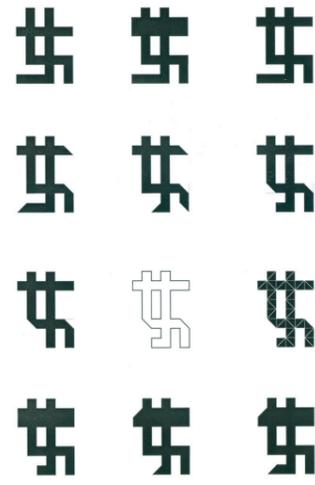
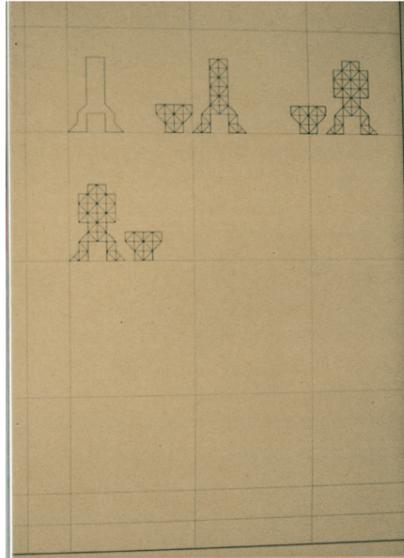
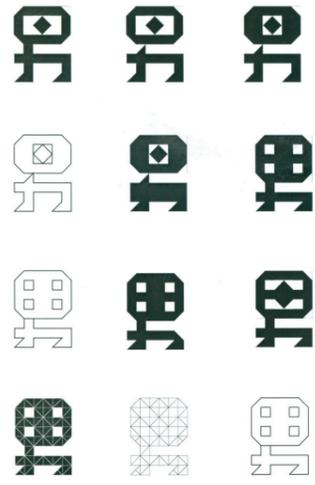
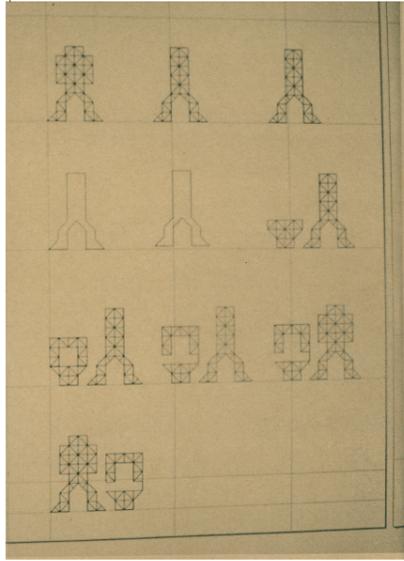


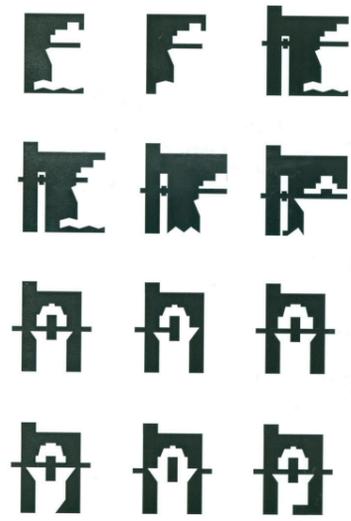
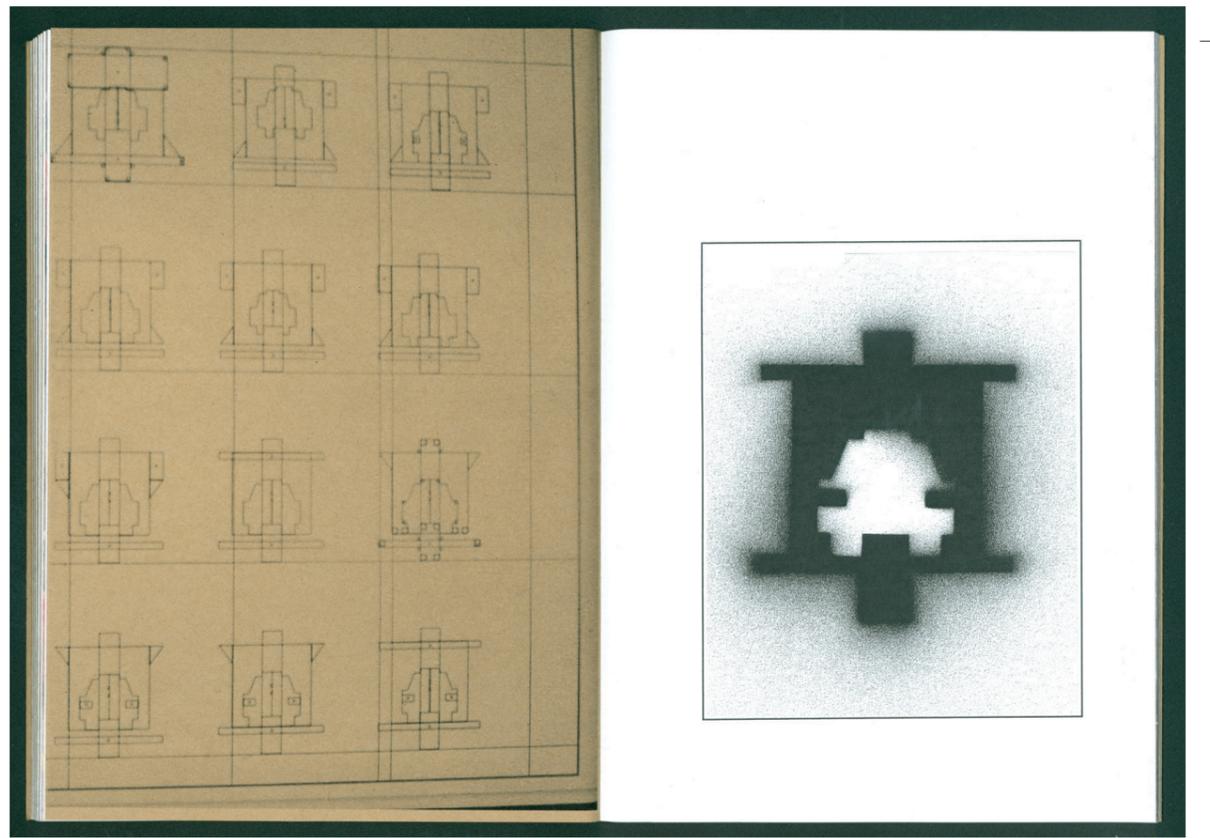
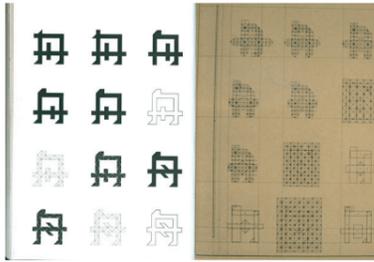
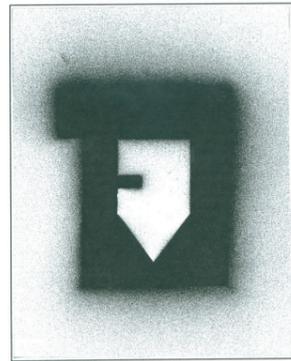
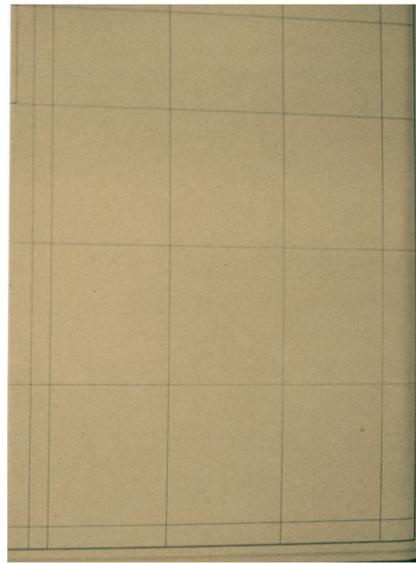
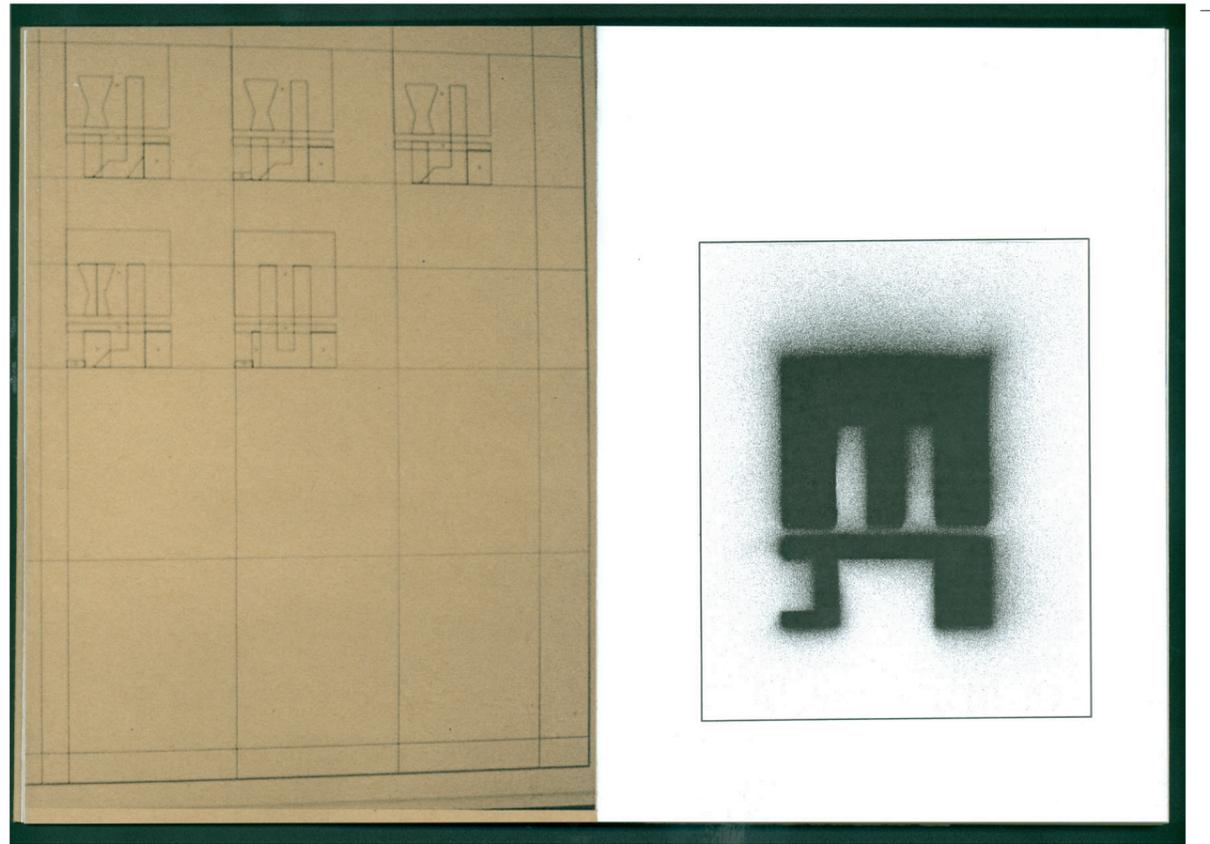
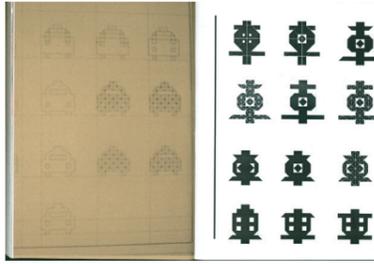
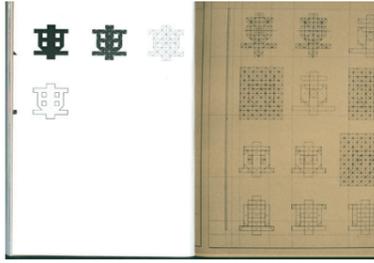
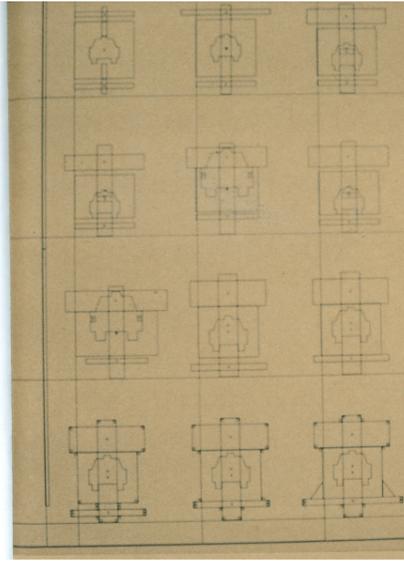
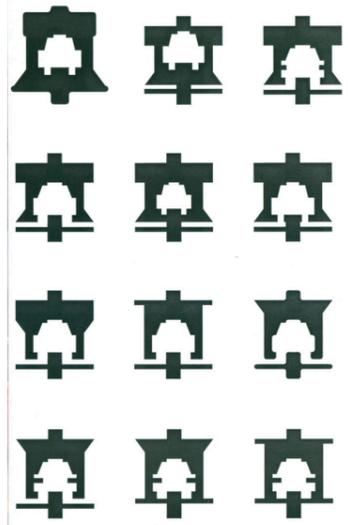
### 3. Documenting and Analysing - Diary

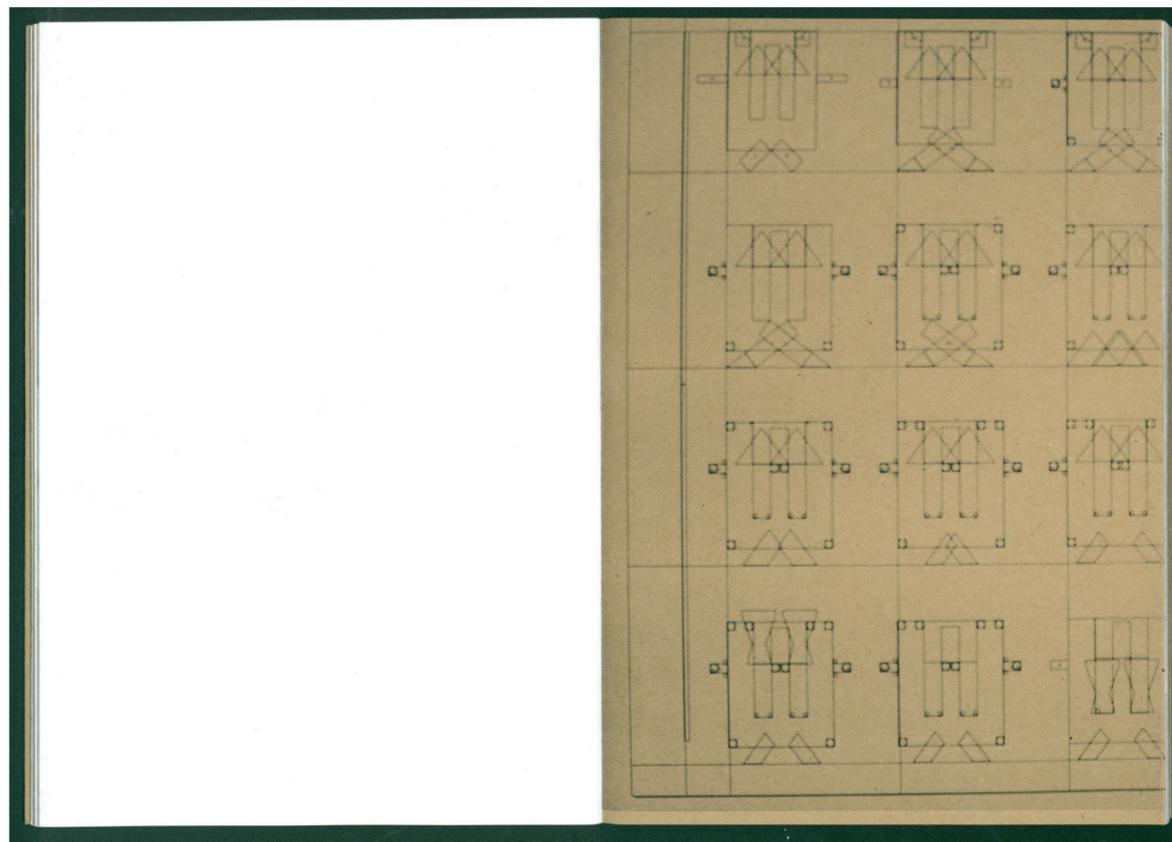
Diary is the third method which I have chosen to describe my documentation, process and progress.

This method has a personal and poetic quality through my documentation. It is a subjective approach to my objective visual research data collecting. I document my process and exploration through extracting and selecting the main ideas for further developments.







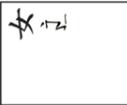
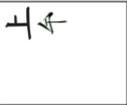
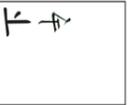
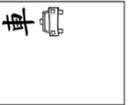
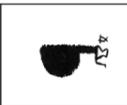
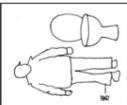
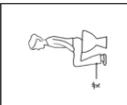
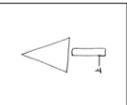
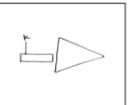
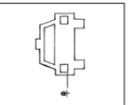
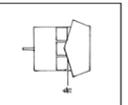
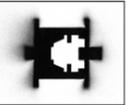
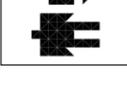
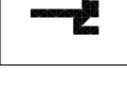
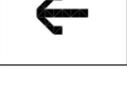
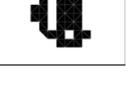


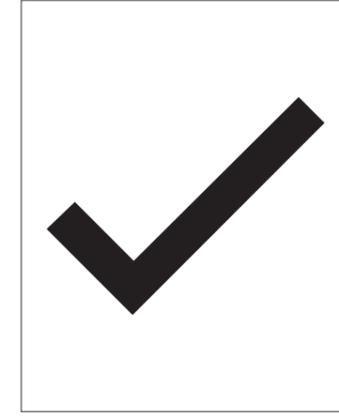
These methods enabled me to firstly gather visual research data by observing from everyday objects. Then I started making by a process of deconstruction and reconstruction. I then documented the research exploration as a cyclical process where I shift back and forth from developments to refinements.

# Four / The Evaluation of Locotypes

1. The Advantages
2. The Disadvantages

In this chapter I will discuss both the advantages and disadvantages of the Locotypes. The advantages are to suggest some possibilities for the system, whilst the disadvantages are to acknowledge the inevitable compromised outcome within the wayfinding signage system.

Wong Tai Sin						
Sham Shui Po						
Sheung Wan						
Causeway Bay						
Mong Kok						
Wan Chai						
Kowloon Tong						
Central						
Airport						
Men's Bathroom						
Women's Bathroom						
Up (Exit)						
Down (Exit)						
Taxi						
Ferry						



### 1.The Advantages

The changeable design elements (Footnote 1) are able to reflect the cultural uniqueness of each station. For example I used shredded paper strips, sewing and modelling clay. The fixed design elements have given a coherent unity to the system. For example I used monochromatic colour and the rectangular frames.

While the universal approach tends to disregard the cultural differences in a multi-cultural environment, my wayfinding signage system intends to encourage an appreciation of the diversity of cultural differences.

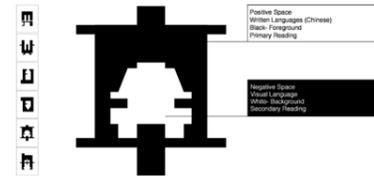
The legibility of the Mong Kok station signs is one of the most unusual examples for both universal and local viewers. For this pictogram I have overlaid the Chinese language and visual language on top of each other. The use of positive and negative spaces helps to shift the hierarchy of reading and creates multiple readings in one visual form.

**Footnote 1:** See details description on page 28.

Paper Strips      Sewing



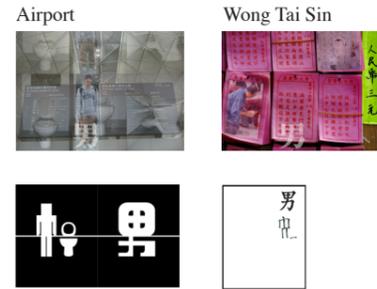
Modelling Clay



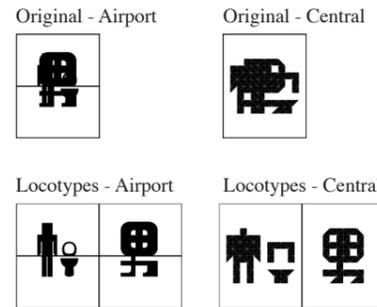
Comparing my system to the British Airways and the Watson's bottle identity, neither design processes are parallel to my system. For instance the cultural references used for the British Airways design must be adapted to fit within a very confined tailfin structure whereas my design systems are not bound to a structure which makes them much less compromised.

## 2. The Disadvantages

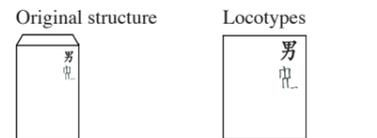
The use of monochromatic colour and the rectangle frame help to hold the different signs together from each station as a system, however the simplification of the colour and structure is a compromised outcome. For example, the text of Airport station needed to be reversed to a white background although it was black originally. Also the Wong Tai Sin's paper has a distinctive pink colour which I have removed.



The Airport and Central stations have two rectangle frames while the rest of the stations have one. This is because the text in the flipping type and the lift numbers structures originally overlap within a rectangle frame which deforms the outcome. It leads to a compromised outcome in that the signs are not as visually consistent with the other stations.



Originally this station was based on an envelope shape that had to be simplified to fit into the system – distorting the reference to the iconic Wong Tai Sin “chim papers” from the temple.



The interesting dilemma\* I found is that while foreigners should be familiar with the most international station – the Airport, they will be confused by the most Chinese station – Wong Tai Sin. This is because the sign is the most localised and is now unfamiliar to the universal viewers. The local viewers could probably understand the signs of the Airport station through the Chinese language. However, the Chinese character is distorted through deconstruction and reconstruction and has become less familiar to the local viewers when comparing with the traditional Chinese calligraphy of Wong Tai Sin station.

**Footnote\*:** Over the page I have overlaid multiple layers of semi-transparent tracing paper to visually imply the dilemma of the legibility in my system.

Because of these disadvantages, it became clear that to be familiar with the system **it must be learned** – which takes time.



In summary, Locotypes is a wayfinding signage system that answers to some of the aspects of the current system's approaches – as discussed in the previous chapter. However, there are also a lot of compromises that occur in the design outcome and the negotiations of reading between universal and local viewers. This suggests that Locotypes is also a compromised outcome which requires a learning process to understand it.

# Five / Conclusion

Locotypes did not follow the universal approach which visually bound signs to a narrowly similar look that was unable to reflect the complexity of today's context. Rather, this wayfinding signage system questions the possibilities and impediments of visual conformity and emphasises the diversity of cultural elements in the system. I also have foregrounded the potential of applying cultural elements to highlight cultural diversity in this wayfinding signage system.

It might be possible that multi-culturalism could be represented by this wayfinding signage system. However, I realised that the design process is always a compromise when negotiating between the global and local design components as a coherent system. Through the research process, I realised that the universal approach, localised approach and Locotypes inevitably are lost through transitions and translations.

The value of my research project, I believe, is in the way that I have thoroughly and visually explored the questions and problems that are relevant to contemporary graphic design. Although I haven't found a final conclusive answer to the "problems" in the research question, rather, I have raised further questions from those problems\* and looked for alternatives and possibilities. However, I think the process of visual exploration is the most useful and revealing issues/aspects of research for graphic design in the "real world" as a Magpie through observations and collecting from everyday lives. I believe the loose-ends and the open-ended outcome created by raising questions is more useful than aiming for a flawless/purely pragmatic\* outcome.

**Footnote\*:** Refer to the appendix chapter for further explanations.

**Footnote\*:** I also believe that (as with my project) Paul Elliman's aim was more about researching through the design process than designing for a purely pragmatic outcome. The fact that his Font has been picked up and used for "real" applications is probably amusing to Elliman.

# Six / Appendix

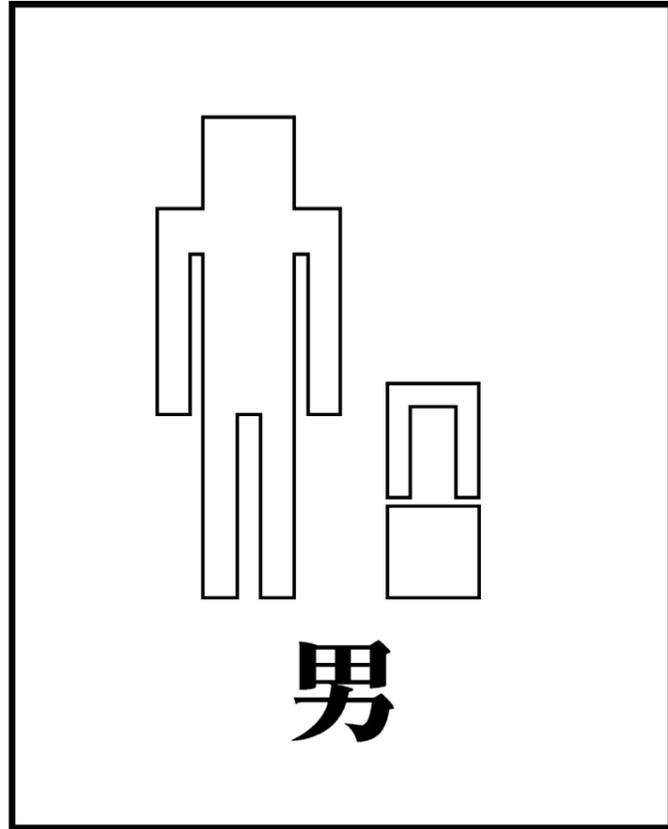
### **What if?**

**Diversity of visual research data = a simplified sign**

A key question in my research was, what happens when I simplify the diversity of visual research data to become a simplified sign?

So to answer to this, I have created the "middle ground" of this system named as the "X" station which simply has no unique personalities to represent it. The "X" station can also be seen as a combination of all of the other stations.

I have overlayed/morphed all of the visual research data from each station and printed inside the French-fold pages to illustrate that the simplified outcome has hidden/ignored the diversity of cultural differences.



LIFT No. 3

辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

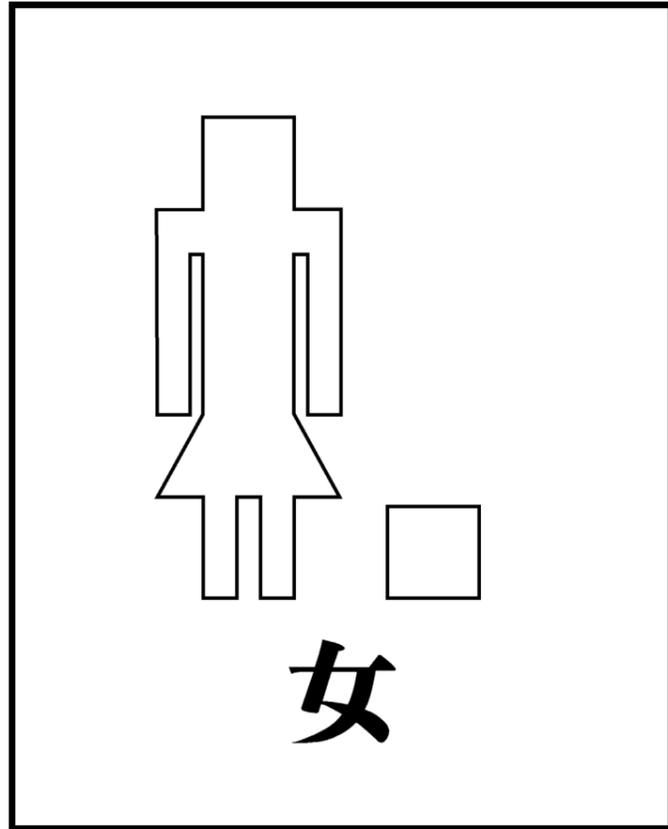
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15	AIR NEW ZEALAND	紐西蘭航空
20	Air China	中國國際航空
30	Air India	印度航空
30B	American Airlines	美國航空公司
40	British Airways	英國航空公司
50	CR Airways	國泰航空
60	Cathay Pacific	國泰航空公司
70	Cebu Pacific Air	宿務太平洋航空
80	China Airlines	中華航空
90	China Eastern	中國東方航空
95	China Southern	中國南方航空
100	Dragonair	龍運航空

辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

現在時間  
Time now: 17:03

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
H	OO	HongKong Express 港聯航空
G	3K	JETSTAR ASIA 捷星亞洲航空
E	LF	Lufthansa 德國漢莎航空
D	AE	Mandarin A'Lines 華信航空公司
H	PR	P A L 菲航
D	QR	QATAR AIRWAYS 卡塔爾航空
J	QF	Qantas Airways 澳洲航空公司
D	SU	Singapore A'Line 新加坡航空
E	TG	Thai Airways 泰國國際航空
G	US	US Airways
G	UA	United Airlines 美國聯合航空
F	VS	Virgin Atlantic 維珍航空
J	XMF	Xiamen 廈門航空





女

辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
G	AIR NEW ZEALAND	新西蘭航空
J	Air China	中國國際航空
G	Air India	印度航空
BCD	American Airlines	美國航空公司
J	British Airways	英國航空公司
DE	CR Airways	中國航空
BCD	Cathay Pacific	國泰航空公司
G	Cebu Pacific Air	宿務太平洋
D	China Airlines	中華航空
H	China Eastern	中國東方航空
J	China Southern	中國南方航空
	Dragonair	香港航空
	EVA Air	長榮航空

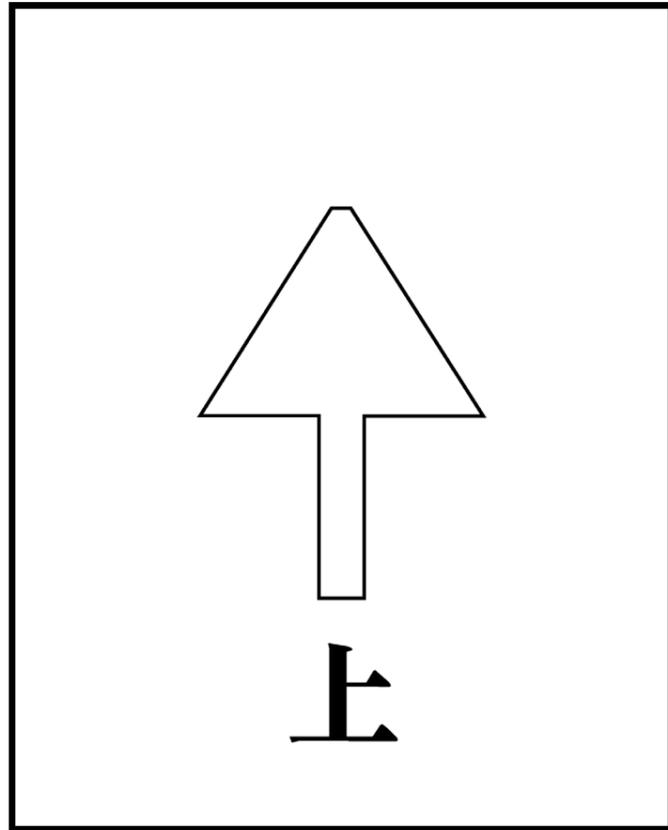
辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

現在時間  
Time now 17:03

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
H	HongKong Express	港聯航空
G	JETSTAR ASIA	捷星亞洲航空
E	Lufthansa	德國漢莎航空
D	Mandarin A'Lines	華信航空公司
H	P A L	菲航
D	QATAR AIRWAYS	卡塔爾航空
J	Qantas Airways	澳洲航空公司
D	Singapore A'Line	新加坡航空
E	Thai Airways	泰國國際航空
G	US Airways	
G	United Airlines	美國聯合航空
F	Virgin Atlantic	維珍航空
J	Xiamen	廈門航空



SALE  
2017.2.23



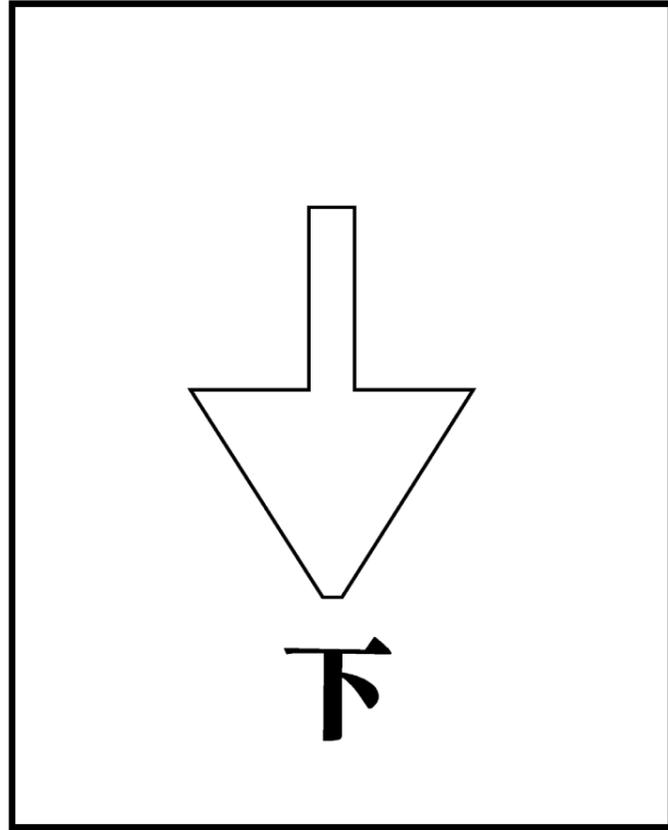
辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
G	NZ AIR NEW ZEALAND	新西蘭航空
J	CA Air China	中國國際航空
G	AI Air India	印度航空
BCD	AA American Airlines	美國航空公司
J	BA British Airways	英國航空公司
DE	N8 CR Airways	中富航空
BCD	CX Cathay Pacific	國泰航空公司
G	5J Cebu Pacific Air	宿霧太平洋
D	CI China Airlines	中華航空
H	MU China Eastern	中國東方航空
J	CZ China Southern	中國南方航空
F	KA Dragonair	港龍航空公司
F	BR EVA Air	長榮航空公司

辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

現在時間  
Time now 17:03

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
H	UO HongKong Express	港聯航空
G	3K JETSTAR ASIA	捷星亞洲航空
E	LH Lufthansa	德國漢莎航空
D	AE Mandarin A'Lines	華信航空公司
H	PR P A L	菲航
D	QR QATAR AIRWAYS	卡塔爾航空
J	DF Qantas Airways	澳洲航空公司
D	SO Singapore A'Line	新加坡航空
E	TG Thai Airways	泰國國際航空
G	US US Airways	
G	UA United Airlines	美國聯合航空
F	VS Virgin Atlantic	維珍航空
J	MF Xiamen	廈門航空



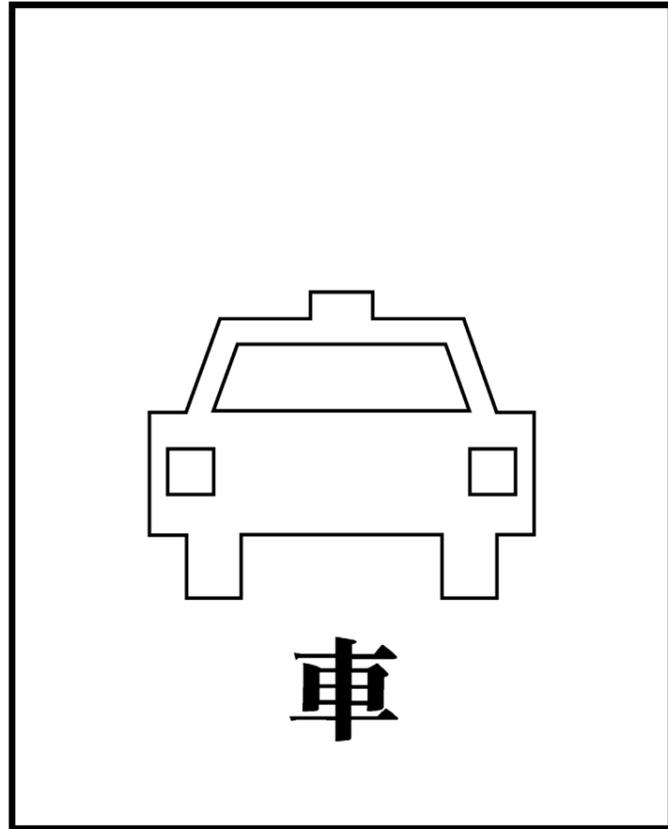
辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
G	NZ AIR NEW ZEALAND	新西蘭航空
J	CA Air China	中國國際航空
G	AI Air India	印度航空
BCD	AA American Airlines	美國航空公司
J	BA British Airways	英國航空公司
DE	N3 CR Airways	中富航空
BCD	CX Cathay Pacific	國泰航空公司
G	5J Cebu Pacific Air	宿霧太平洋
D	CI China Airlines	中華航空
H	MU China Eastern	中國東方航空
J	CZ China Southern	中國南方航空
F	KA Dragonair	港龍航空公司
F	BR EVA Air	長榮航空公司

辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

現在時間  
Time now 17 03

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
H	UO HongKong Express	港聯航空
G	3K JETSTAR ASIA	捷星亞洲航空
E	LH Lufthansa	德國漢莎航空
D	AE Mandarin A'Lines	華信航空公司
H	PR P A L	菲航
D	QR QATAR AIRWAYS	卡塔爾航空
J	QF Qantas Airways	澳洲航空公司
D	SQ Singapore A'Line	新加坡航空
E	TG Thai Airways	泰國國際航空
G	US US Airways	
G	UA United Airlines	美國聯合航空
F	VS Virgin Atlantic	維珍航空
J	MF Xiamen	廈門航空



車

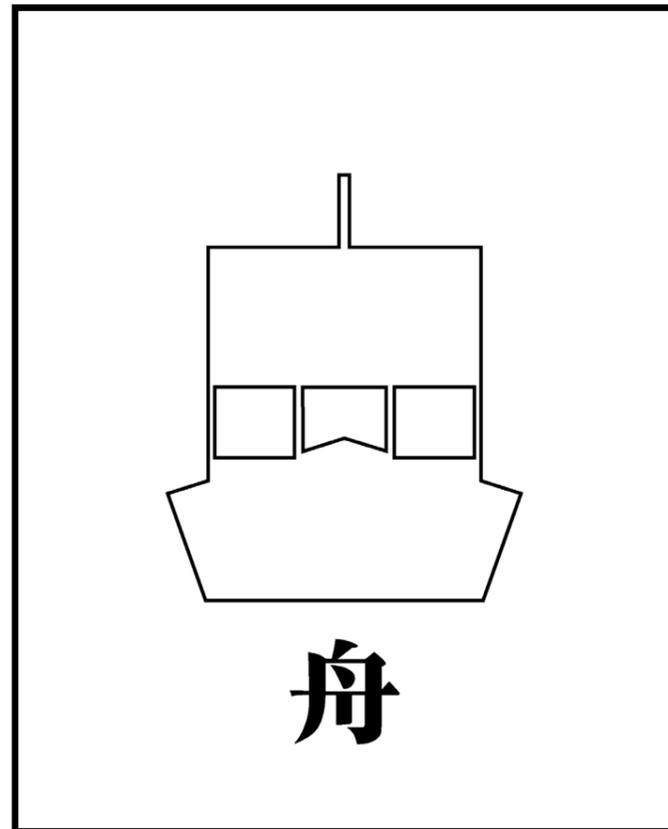
辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
B	AZ	新西蘭航空
J	CA	中國國際航空
G	AI	印度航空
B5D	AA	美國航空公司
J	BA	英國航空公司
DE	N8	中富航空
B5D	EX	國泰航空公司
B	5J	宿霧太平洋
J	CI	中華航空
H	MU	中國東方航空
J	CZ	中國南方航空
F	KA	港龍航空公司
F	BR	復興航空公司

辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

現在時間  
Time now 17:03

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
H	UO	港聯航空
G	3K	捷星亞洲航空
E	LH	德國漢莎航空
D	AE	華信航空公司
H	PR	菲航
D	QR	卡塔爾航空
J	QF	澳洲航空公司
D	SQ	新加坡航空
E	TG	泰國國際航空
G	US	美國聯合航空
G	UA	維珍航空
F	VS	廈門航空
J	MF	



**What if?**

Diversity of visual research data = a complex sign

Another question in my research arose about the logic of representing the diversity of visual research data by integrating everything on top of each other to imply the diversity of visual research data within a multi-cultural environment.

For example why didn't I just combine all of the men's bathroom signs to create a mega-sign? This is what it might have looked like. (Opposite page)

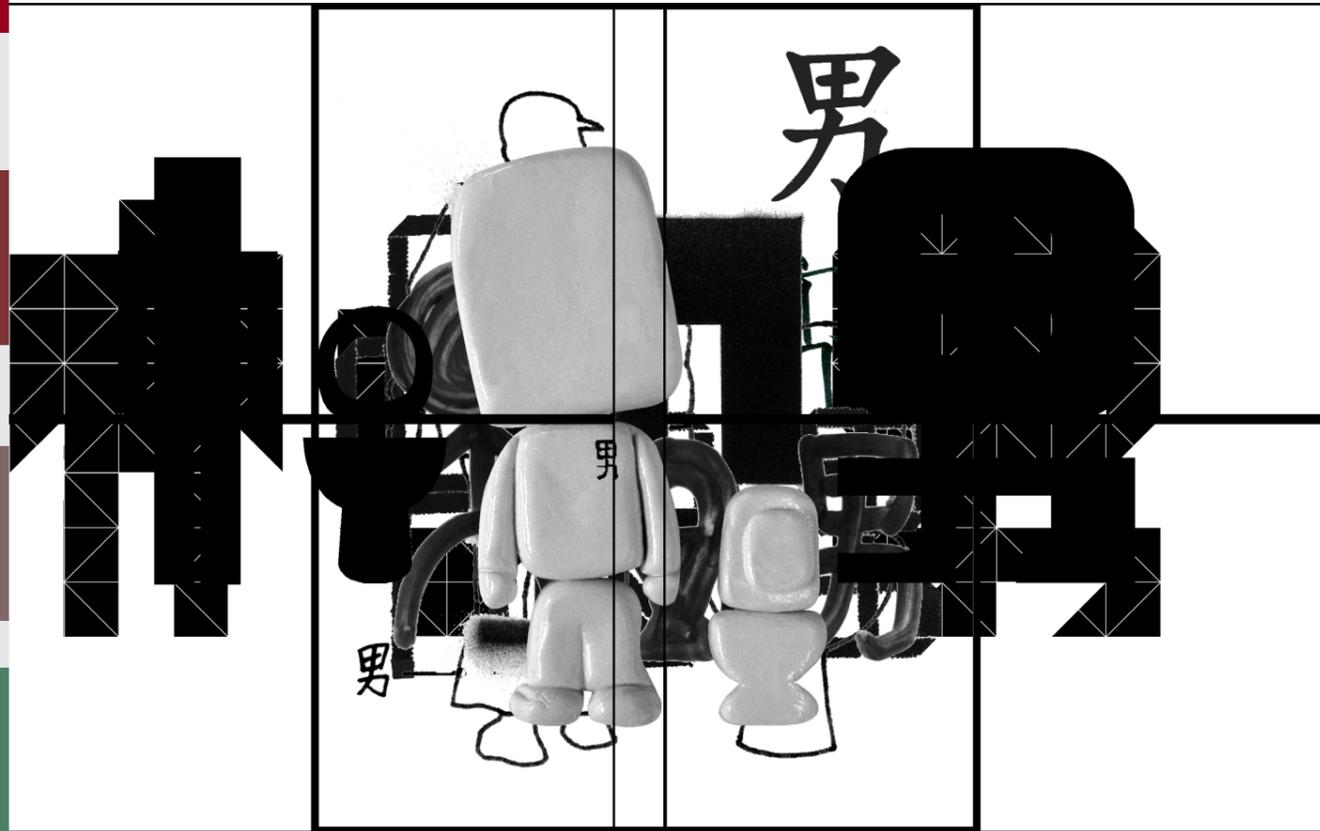
辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
G	NZ AIR NEW ZEALAND	新西蘭航空
J	CA Air China	中國國際航空
G	AI Air India	印度航空
BCD	AA American Airlines	美國航空公司
J	BA British Airways	英國航空公司
DE	N8 CR Airways	中富航空
BCD	CX Cathay Pacific	國泰航空公司
G	5J Cebu Pacific Air	宿霧太平洋
D	SI China Airlines	中華航空
H	MU China Eastern	中國東方航空
J	CZ China Southern	中國南方航空
F	KA Dragonair	港龍航空公司
F	BR EVA Air	長榮航空公司

辦理登機手續登記處  
Airlines check-in area

現在時間  
Time now 17 03

行段 Aisle	Name of airline	航空公司
H	UO HongKong Express	港聯航空
G	3K JETSTAR ASIA	捷星亞洲航空
E	LH Lufthansa	德國漢莎航空
D	AE Mandarin A'Lines	華信航空公司
H	PR P A L	菲航
D	QR QATAR AIRWAYS	卡塔爾航空
J	QF Qantas Airways	澳洲航空公司
D	SQ Singapore A'Line	新加坡航空
E	TG Thai Airways	泰國國際航空
G	US US Airways	
G	UA United Airlines	美國聯合航空
F	VS Virgin Atlantic	維珍航空
J	MF Xiamen	廈門航空



# Seven / My Exhibition Documentation





► **Locotypes.**  
An Exploration of an Alternative  
Signage System that Challenges  
the Current Approach of  
Prioritising Conformity in  
Designing and Reading of  
Wayfinding Signage Systems



## Glossary

**Universal** = Here I refer to “universal” as for a wide range of audience. (E.g. All of the possible visitors to Hong Kong)

**Local** = Here I refer to “local” as each individual station within the system. (E.g. The “Causeway Bay” station)

**Actual Specific Local** = Here I refer to “actual specific local” as the “real” and existing visual elements within a specific local context. (E.g. The visual elements in Switzerland)

**Global** = Here I refer to “global” as a coherent whole of the system. (E.g. The MTR system)

**Changeable** = Here I refer to “changeable” as having different design elements within a coherent structure.

**Design influences** = Here I refer to “design influences” as each cultural uniqueness that influences the form of the icon/pictogram in each station.

**Media** (media is the plural for medium) = Here I refer to “media” as the materials which represent the cultural uniqueness of each specific location within the system.

**Magpie** = A kind of bird that loves to collect bright/shiny and unusual objects and keep them in their nests. Such behaviour makes them unique and different from other species.

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