

THE SEVEN TYPOGRAPHIC CONTRASTS

AN EXPLORATION OF CARL DAIR'S CLASSIC TYPOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY FOR LAYOUT HIERARCHY

Kevin King 2020

Carl Dair **(1912–1967)**

Was a Canadian typographer and graphic designer who taught widely on the subject of typography, culminating in his seminal book *Design with Type*, published in 1967.

Dair developed the seven typographic contrasts as a methodology for students and practitioners alike to have a basis for making decisions on using typefaces to produce more dynamic and functional layouts. This also allowed for designers to create more navigable document texts that reduced ambiguity and increased clarity for the reader.



**A quick word on the key values
of working with typography:**

The goal of good typography

Is to reduce ambiguity and increase clarity for readers in order for them to comfortably interpret and consume a given text. This criteria is applicable for display typography and text typography.

ambiguity is anything that impairs someone's ability to process a text.

This could be layering type over top of images, or reducing the contrast ratio of type with it's background.

This could also be utilizing typefaces with forms that produce an atmosphere that does not match that of the content's nature.

clarity, therefore, is anything that allows barriers of ambiguity to be reduced and transparency towards the message in the text to be processed and comprehended.

This would include an appropriate choice of typeface for the nature of a document and it's content, and it's atmosphere.

intrinsic vs. extrinsic values

The British typography and printing historian Michael Twyman notes that all pieces of typography consist of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* components which the typographer can control and manipulate:

intrinsic

☞ size (of type)

☞ shape (font appearance / style)

☞ character set (writing system)

Ream Ream Ream

g φ đ 永 사랑

extrinsic

Arrangement of the intrinsic factors in:

☞ lines

☞ paragraphs

☞ pages

Haarlem has a rich history dating back to pre-medieval times, as it lies on a thin strip of land above sea level known as the *strandwal* (beach ridge), which connects Leiden to Alkmaar. The people on this narrow strip of land struggled against the waters of the North Sea from the west, and the waters of the IJ and the Haarlem Lake from the east. Haarlem became wealthy with toll revenues that it collected from ships and travellers moving on this busy North-South route. However, as shipping became increasingly important economically, the city of Amsterdam became the main Dutch city of North Holland during the Dutch Golden Age. The town of Halfweg became a suburb, and Haarlem became a quiet bedroom community, and for this reason Haarlem still has many of its central medieval buildings intact. Nowadays many of them are on the Dutch Heritage register known as *Rijksmonuments*. The list of Rijksmonuments in Haarlem gives an overview of these per neighbourhood, with the majority in the old city centre. The oldest mentioning of Haarlem dates from the 10th century.⁶ The name probably comes from “Haarlo-heim”.⁷ This name is composed of three elements: haar, lo and heim. There

Also:

*Be careful with your line lengths
when setting paragraphs.*

Extensive research on readability has shown that line lengths that are too long or short impair the comfortability and readability of the text for all readers in the, in the Latin script at least.

A comfortable line length for a paragraph of text is between **10–12 words per line**, with 7 being a minimum allowance, and 14 being an upward limit for the word count to flex.

👉 this is the good one 😊

Intaglio printmaking emerged in Europe well after the woodcut print, with the earliest known surviving examples being undated designs for playing cards made in Germany, using drypoint technique, probably in the late 1430s.⁸ Engraving had been used by goldsmiths to decorate metalwork, including armor, musical instruments and religious objects since ancient times, and the niello technique, which involved rubbing an alloy into the lines to give a contrasting color, also goes back to late antiquity. Scholars and practitioners of printmaking have suggested that the idea of making prints from engraved plates may well have originated with goldsmiths' practices of taking an impression on paper of a design engraved on an object, in order to keep a record of their work, or to check the quality.⁹

Martin Schongauer was one of the earliest known artists to exploit the copper-engraving technique, and Albrecht Dürer is one of the most famous intaglio artists. Italian and Dutch engraving began slightly after the Germans, but were well developed by 1500. Drypoint and etching were also German inventions of the fifteenth century, probably by the Housebook Master and Daniel Hopfer respectively.

In the nineteenth century, Viennese printer Karel Klíč introduced a combined intaglio and photographic process. Photogravure retained the smooth continuous tones of photography but was printed using a chemically-etched copper plate. This permitted a photographic image to be printed on regular paper, for inclusion in books or albums.¹¹

In the 1940s and 1950s the Italian security printer Gualtiero Giori brought intaglio printing into the era of high-technology by developing the first ever six-colour intaglio printing press, designed to print banknotes which combined more artistic possibilities with greater security.¹²

In intaglio printing, the lines to be printed are cut into a metal (e.g. copper) plate by means either of a cutting tool called a burin, held in the hand – in which case the process is called engraving; or through the corrosive action of acid – in which case the process is known as etching. In etching, for example, the plate is pre-covered in a thin, acid-resistant resin or wax ground. Using etching needles or burins, the artist or writer (etcher) engraves their image (therefore to be only where the plate beneath is exposed). The plate's ground side is then dipped into acid, or the acid poured onto it. The acid bites into the surface of the plate where it was exposed. Biting is a printmaking term to describe the acid's etching, or incising, of the image; its duration depends on the acid strength, metal's reactivity, temperature, air pressure and the depth desired. After the plate is sufficiently bitten it is removed from the acid bath, the ground is removed gently and the plate is usually dried or cleaned.

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To print an intaglio plate, ink or inks are painted, wiped and/or dabbed into the recessed lines (such as with brushes/rubber gloves/rollers). The plate is then rubbed with tarlatan cloth to remove most of its waste (surface ink) and a final smooth wipe is often done with newspaper or old public phone book pages, leaving it in the incisions. Dampened imprint (product) paper will usually be fed against the plate, covered by a blanket, so when pressed by rolling press it is squeezed into the plate's ink-filled grooves with uniform very high pressure. The blanket is then lifted, revealing the paper and printed image. The final stages repeat for each copy needed.

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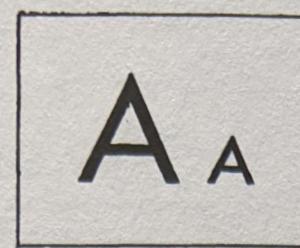
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The seven typographic contrasts:

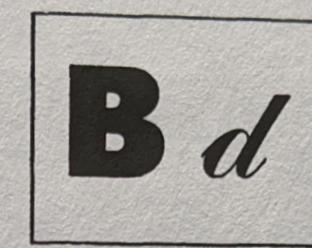
- 1) Contrast of size
- 2) Contrast of weight
- 3) Contrast of structure
- 4) Contrast of form
- 5) Contrast of colour
- 6) Contrast of direction
- 7) Contrast of texture

Contrast of size



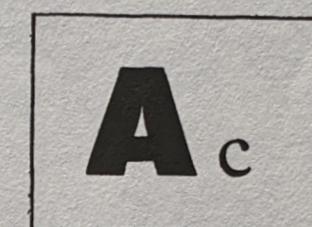
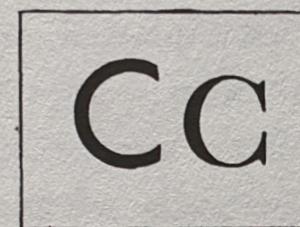
Contrast of weight and structure

Contrast of weight



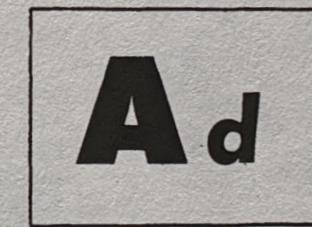
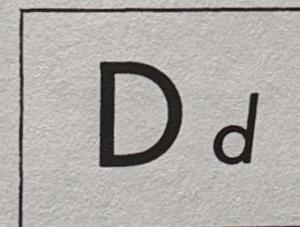
Contrast of weight, structure, and form

Contrast of structure



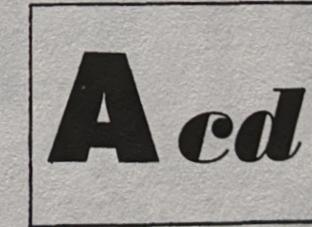
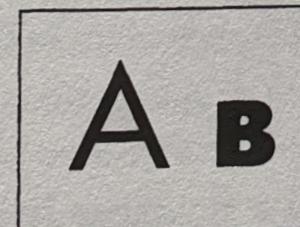
Contrast of size, weight, and structure

Contrast of form



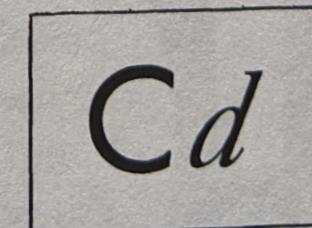
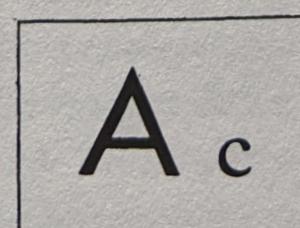
Contrast of size and form

Contrast of size and weight



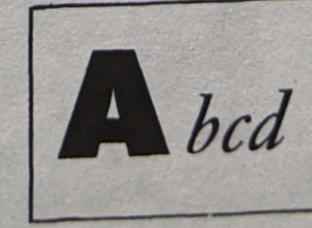
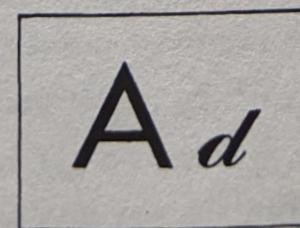
Contrast of size, structure, and form

Contrast of size and structure



Contrast of structure and form

Contrast of size, structure, and form



Contrast of size, weight, structure, and form

Contrast of size

Intaglio Printing



Figure 26

A banknote portrait pattern made with intaglio printing. Denomination: 1000 Hungarian forint. Depicted area: 18.1 by 13.5 millimetres (0.71 in × 0.53 in).

In intaglio printing, the lines to be printed are cut into a metal (e.g. copper) plate by means either of a cutting tool called a burin, held in the hand – in which case the process is called engraving; or through the corrosive action of acid – in which case the process is known as etching. In etching, for example, the plate is pre-covered in a thin, acid-resistant resin or wax ground. Using etching needles or burins, the artist or writer (etcher) engravess their image (therefore to be only where the plate beneath is exposed). The plate's ground side is then dipped into acid, or the acid poured onto it.

Process

To print an intaglio plate, ink or inks are painted, wiped and/or dabbed into the recessed lines (such as with brushes/rubber gloves/rollers). The plate is then rubbed with tarlatan cloth to remove most of its waste (surface ink) and a final smooth wipe is often done with newspaper or old public phone book pages, leaving it in the incisions. Dampened imprint (product) paper will usually be fed against the plate, covered by a blanket, so when pressed by rolling press it is squeezed into the plate's ink-filled grooves with uniform very high

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Figure 26 A banknote portrait pattern made with the intaglio printing process. Denomination: 1000 Hungarian forint. Depicted area: 18.1 by 13.5 millimetres (0.71 in × 0.53 in).

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Contrast of colour

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Im Saal des
Restaurant Bären
Grellingen
Schmutziger Donnerstag
20 Uhr

Bar und Weinstube
Eintritt 3.50
Maskierte 2.-
Es lädt ein:
das Orchester
Les diables rouges
der Wirt und
Jahrgang 45

GROSSER MAS



Contrast of texture

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 Thank you!