



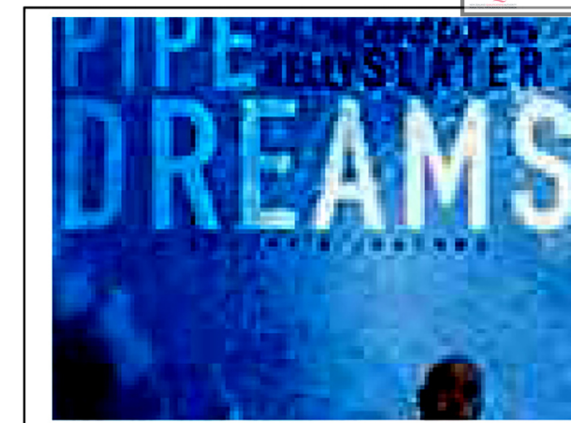
Title: HELP

Date:



Title: RAY GUN Cover

Date:



Title: Pipe Dreams – Kelly Slater

Date:

### Techniques

How does **colour** contribute to the messages the works communicate?

Carson usually uses very muted colours – often a limited colour range to create unity of the design – he often uses blues or yellows like the ocean sand and sky because he is a surfer and loves the beach culture – But also because a lot of his subjects are surf magazines and stuff so the colours fit that theme.

How does the **juxtaposition of subject matter** (including focal points created, complexity and position) contribute to the messages the works communicate?

The word help is isolated like it needs help to be saved

The P drops off the end and needs help or is coming to help, or going to get help

The p dropping reflects the curve of the wave creating a visual repetition.

How does the **text** (including size, weight, and placement) contribute to the messages the works communicate?

Size weight and placement is everything – Carson mixes it all up to create visual interest. With the most important words being bigger or bolder.

How does **image manipulation** (including layering of images and cut and paste) contribute to the messages the works communicate?

Words are cropped to create tension and draw the eye in. Sometimes you can't quite read the words but the overall message is still very clear – the feeling, style, emotion of the work

*Carson is famous for saying the "Legibility is not the same as communication"*

*So in the help design we don't have to read all the words to get a sense of isolation*

*Some images are very bad quality because Carson left the camera in the sun on the dash of his car (A Porsche 911 was he cashed his retirement in to buy) But he liked the effect so used the images in his NINE INCH NAILS CD cover design.*

### Concepts and common themes informing David Carson's work

Who or what influences have informed David Carson's work?

David Carson is self taught but was influenced by a course in did in Europe where they started to question the established rules of design. He is very influenced by street culture and things like peeling posters and faded ripped magazines which looked cool.

What ideas or themes does David Carson often work with?

Carson works with youth culture

A lot of grunge style comes into his work with ripped things, faded colours, dirty bits, hand made stuff, that reflects the kind of things kids would make for themselves.

Most regular themes are with surfing and music – but not always the big established names – often the really cool alternative stuff.

What subject matter or settings does David Carson often use? What is the significance of this?

Music people surfing waves urban street scenes because of the subject matter

Very California style – cool hip people not posh rich banker like in New York

### Links to other artists:

What similar techniques does Neville Brody use?

They both use text as important way to create visual interest. They both break text up to make visual elements that cannot always be easily read. They both use limited colours and have small amounts of different colours to draw the eye.

What other artists use similar techniques?

Carson was unique when he started but now lots of people imitate him.

Maybe he is like DADA artists that stuff everyone thinks is low art and ugly – and turns it into admired designs. Japan has WABI SABI where people admire the beauty in things that have aged and weathered.



**MESSAGE**

This is an article about David Carson's gallery exhibitions.

His main clients for these images were the RayGun magazine and surfing magazines which means the target audience were mainly young people interested in cool action events like music concerns and extreme sports.

The design style was directed at these clients and the exact opposite to the corporate official style seen in other news and fashion magazines like vogue and Time.

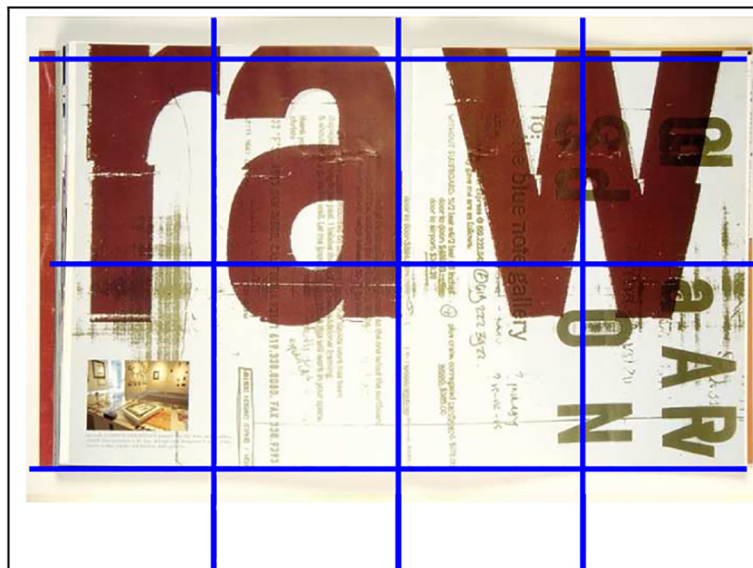
Vogue - Time = clean text, careful layouts, easy to read, clear photographs of attractive people with airbrushing etc

Carson = disrupted, stressed typography, overlapped and clutter hard to read text, bleached and blurred photos, rough cuts, stains, broken bits

I think the RAW is very effective at summarising this different approach. The style of Carson's design is very RAW compared to that of other magazines at this time. RAW has connotations of being real, honest, in touch with grass roots ideas, not polluted/corrupted/civilised like the official style of grown ups.

He wanted to start a revolution against the fake design that had no soul

2



**Designer:** David Carson

**Title:** RAW

**Design studio:**

**Date:**

**COLOUR**

The colour is very muted

The off white paper and earthy red look like unprocessed sugar and organic dyes - kind of hippy natural so its very RAW

3

The red stands out from the background very strongly with the greenish letters providing 'simultaneous contrast' where the warm/cold colors contrast and intensify each other.

Everything makes the red RAW stand out - colour, size, tone, placement etc

The red ink is quite transparent so some of the green letter can be seen through it. This creates a layer effect that Carson uses a lot so it looks more real (not polished) and like layers of posters on the walls of streets and kids drawing things on top of posters - deliberately trying not to be too finished

**COMPOSITION CONSTRUCTED ELEMENTS**

The two main constructed elements in this composition are the grid and use of negative space.

**GRID** - see the blue lines onto of the design

The design does look very geometric because its all rough and grungy. But actually if you look carefully you can see that things line up mostly with the horizontal and vertical. The RA are on one side of the centre line which is where the page folds and the W is on the other. The little square photograph on the left balances out the green letters on the right - The vertical lines of text act like a scaffold that links and connects all the big structural elements.

**NEGATIVE SPACE**

There is a lot of negative space in parts but I think there are two types of negative space.

The first is the pure white areas the provide a rest from the busy text areas

The second - is more overall. If you blur your eyes a bit then there is a balance between the heavy dark areas RAW and bigger green letters and the light yellowish areas

**IMAGERY**

The only photograph is of the interior of the gallery for the exhibition. But the image is so small you can hardly see it with all the attention going to the huge RAW work.

Carson likes to suggest a 'feeling' rather than show the 'answer'. This is kind of mysterious that make the audience want to find out more

The images and words are a bit transparent so you can see what is underneath. This means you can see how the design has been made which is very honest.

This is in complete contrast to the photos in glossy magazines where the girls don't even look like themselves because they have been so airbrushed. Carson is rebelling against this commercial establishment lies in the design industry. He wanted to start a revolution against boring fake design that had no soul.

**TEXT**

Some words can't be read - but they still communicate an atmosphere and strong feeling - David Carson said "Legibility is not the same as communication" which means just because you can read the words does mean its good desing - Design needs to enage the viewer and make them think about the topic

4