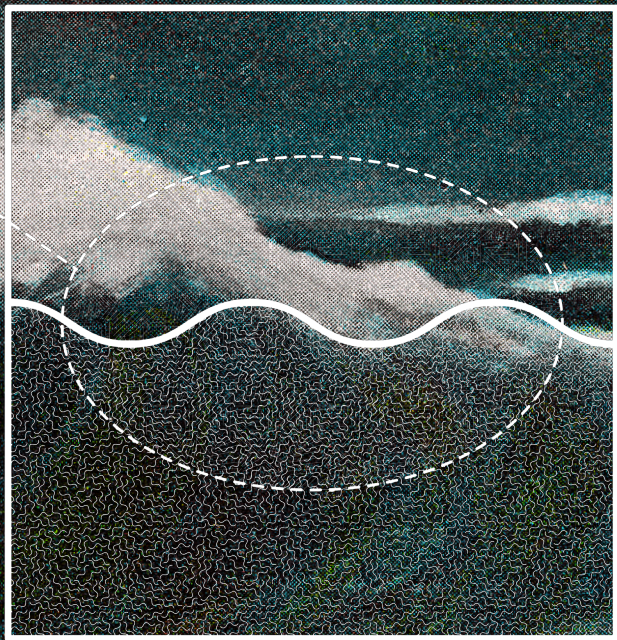



explanatory

GRAPHIC DESIGN



evocative

© 1971

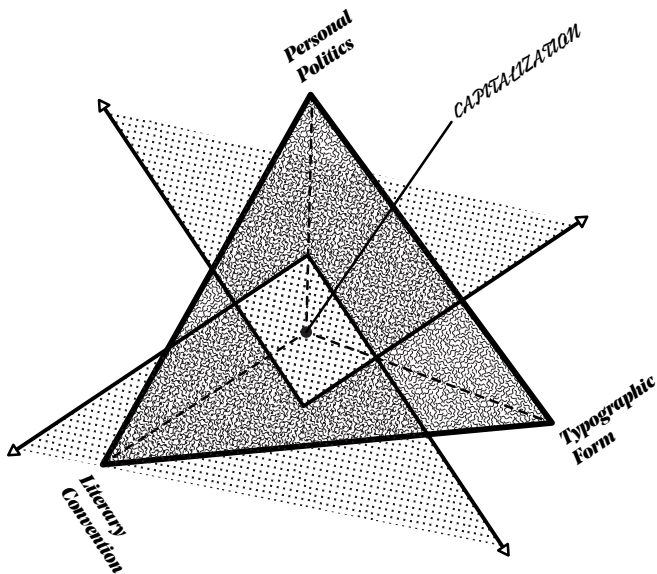


Graphic design is uniquely situated at the intersection of two energies: the explanatory & the evocative.

Explanatory energy lives in the immediate, literal message.

Evocative energy vibrates in the figurative levels of meaning adjacent to the literal.

Graphic designers use the tenets of art to solve practical problems.



**The designer is
a point of contact
and transmission.**

**the farther
you carry
me, the larg-
er we be-
come**

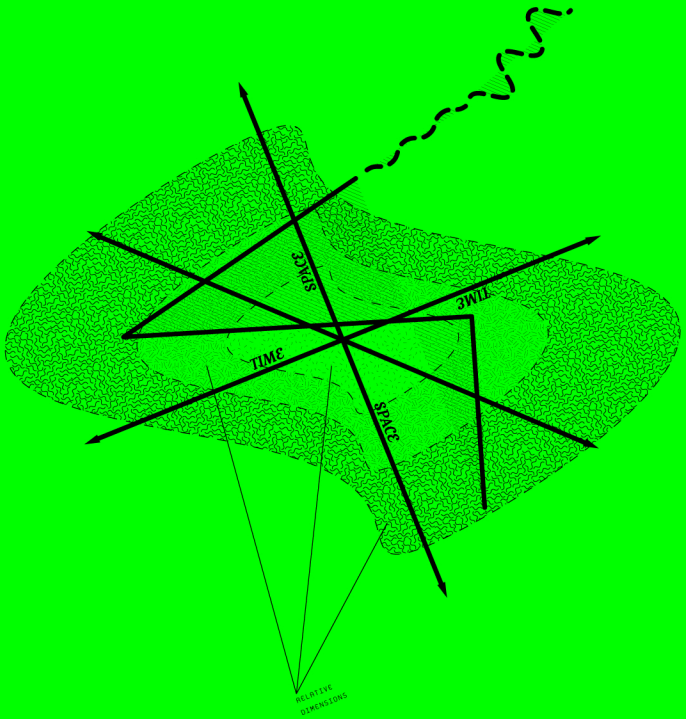
**(the further
you carry
me, the larg-
er we be-
come).**

OTHER
PROBABLE YOU

SPACE

TIME

© 1996 BY JERRY SEINFELD



ABOVE: a routine trip through space and time. notice how relative dimensions remain propped (at points/moments) upon the linear remnants of the journey.

3

L

A

N

Q

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A

G

E

"any given language was, for Bakhtin, always being pulled in different directions, spoken in multiple voices; it was both official and idiomatic, received pronunciation and slang."¹

[heteroglossia]

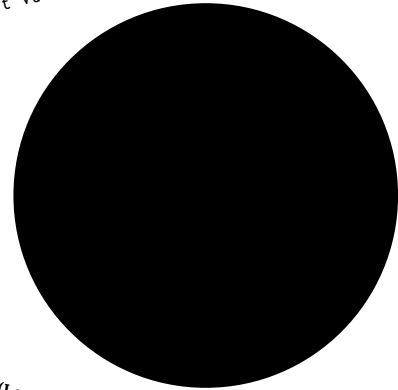
3

Slang subverts grammar. It necessarily complicates & corrupts existing semantic structures.

A graphic designer who wants to engage with content like a

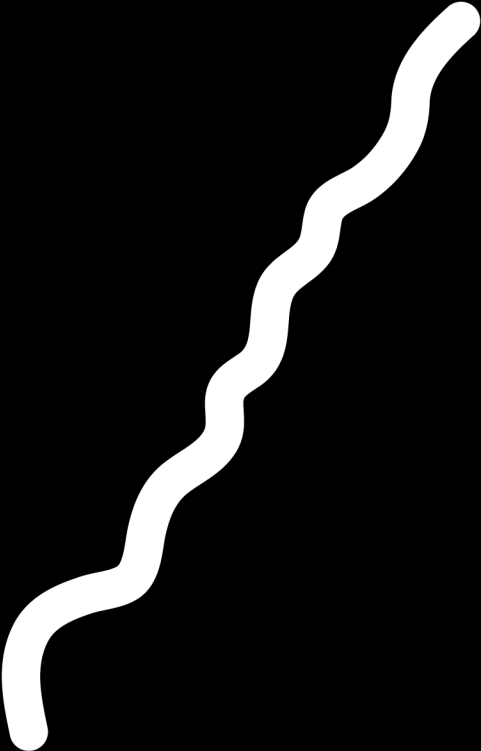
poet should tend towards a formal sense that, like language itself, stretches to incorporate aberrant gestures and syntaxes.

the coexistence of distinct varieties within a single linguistic code)



1. David Batchelor *Chromophobia* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000) 103.





4

So, I was sharpening my knives one day, and started thinking about the words “sharp” and “blunt.”

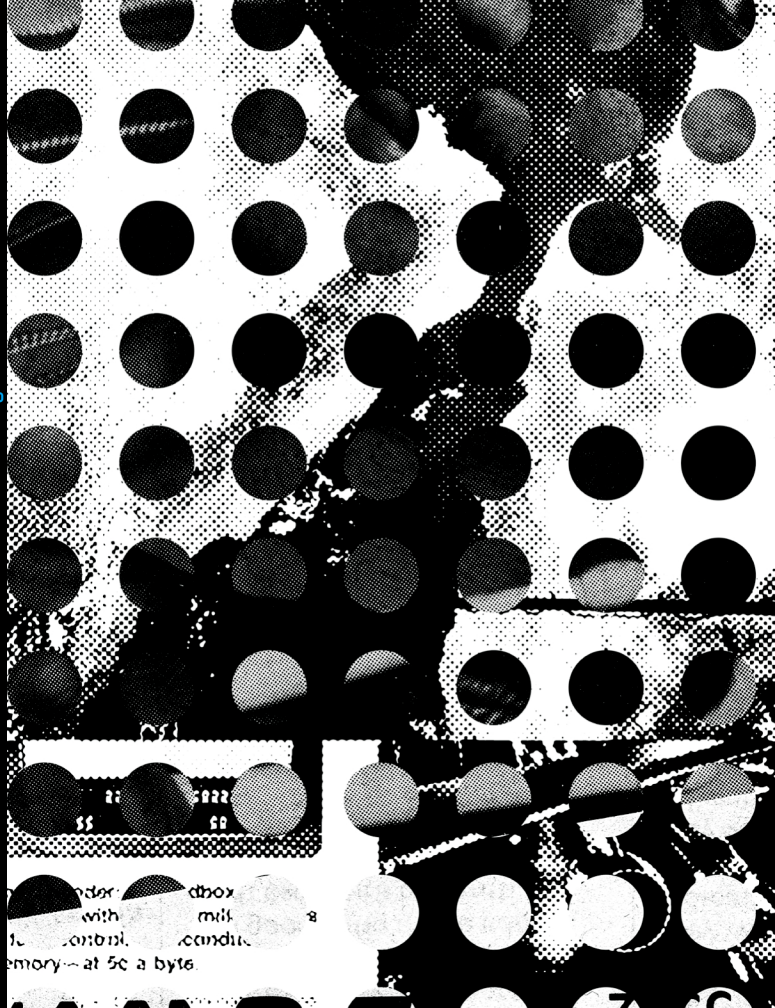
In the context of cutlery, they’re opposites: two mutually-exclusive states of being.



**But what about:
Sharp as in shrewd.
Blunt as in direct.
Sharp as in abrupt.
Blunt as in abrupt.**

a sudden, steep drop
in address or manner

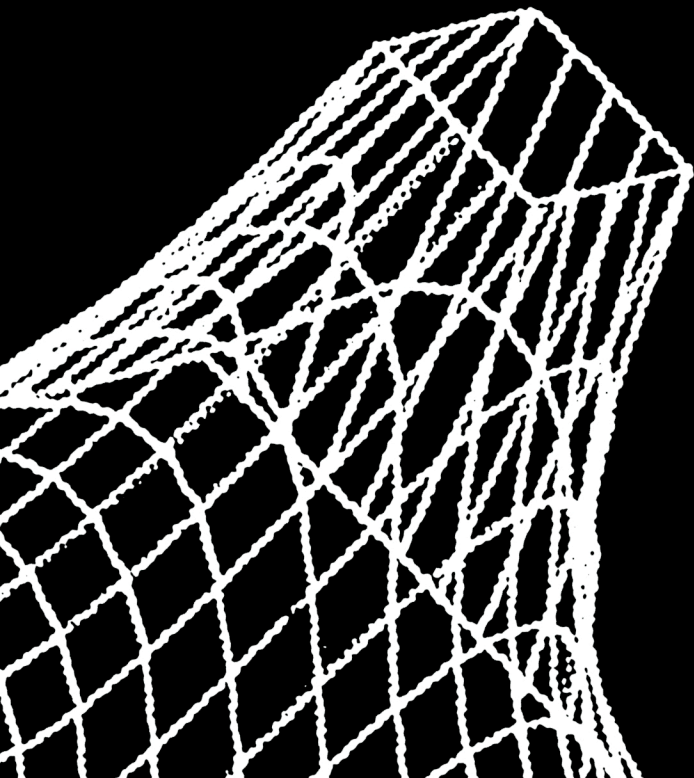
**The more the words
come to mean, the
less exclusive they
ultimately become.**



...nder dbox
with milk
...ontrol ...ondit
...emory -- at 5c a byte.

A maul is 1/2 sledgehammer, 1/2 axe, and all business.

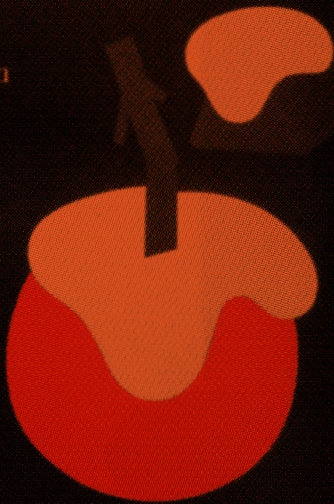
each side is equally powerful, yet differently
so — connecting them is one continuous,
transitional plane.



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5

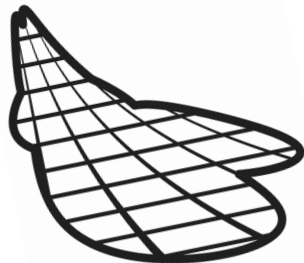
to act in accordance with preset instructions



**A moment ago,
someone chose to
do something.**

**They did not decide
to do that thing.**

In computer power and human reason, Joseph Weizenbaum makes a distinction between deciding and choosing. Krystal South explains:



"It is the capacity to choose that ultimately makes us human. Human judgment encompasses complex non-mathematical factors, such as emotions and the value they play in our emotional society."¹

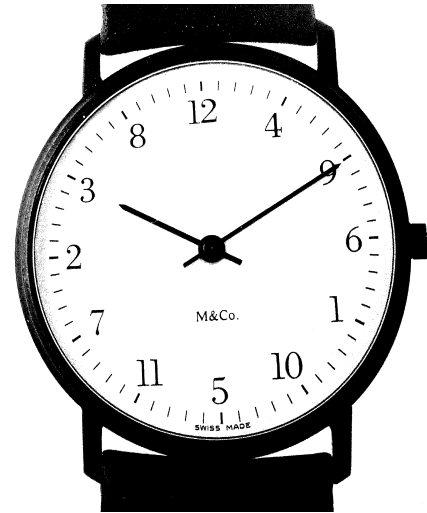
**Deciding is purely
computational; a
machine can easily
be taught to decide.**

**Choice is the prod-
uct of judgment,
not calculation.**

Against a backdrop of decisions, design choices can uniquely heighten a designed object's communicative potential.

Containing apparent traces of the designer's will, or spirit, the designed object frames graphic design as more

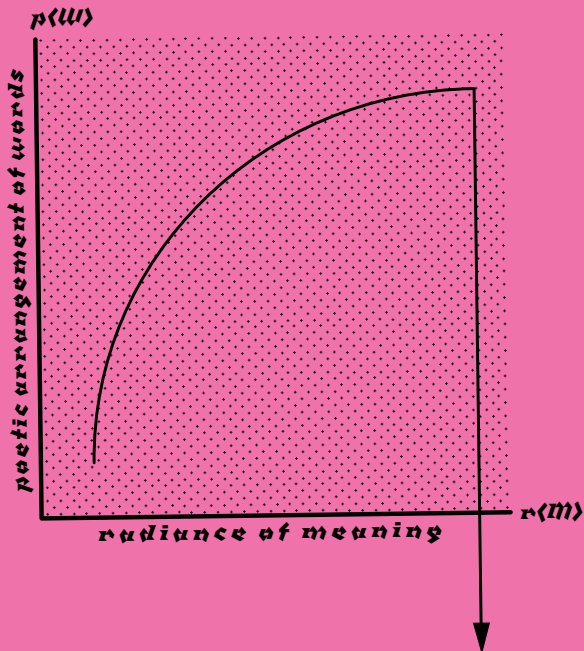
than a one-way visual transmission between object & observer.



**Designed objects
exhibiting choice
become artifacts of
human willfulness.**

**Formal aberrations
are evidence of a
fellow human mind
making a uniquely
human judgment.ⁱ**

*i. e.g. to zig, when all available logic
suggests to zag*



**When a poet writes a poem, she
looses language's evocative energy.**

**Meaning radiates from her words in
soft concentric waves.**

6

the work of
the future

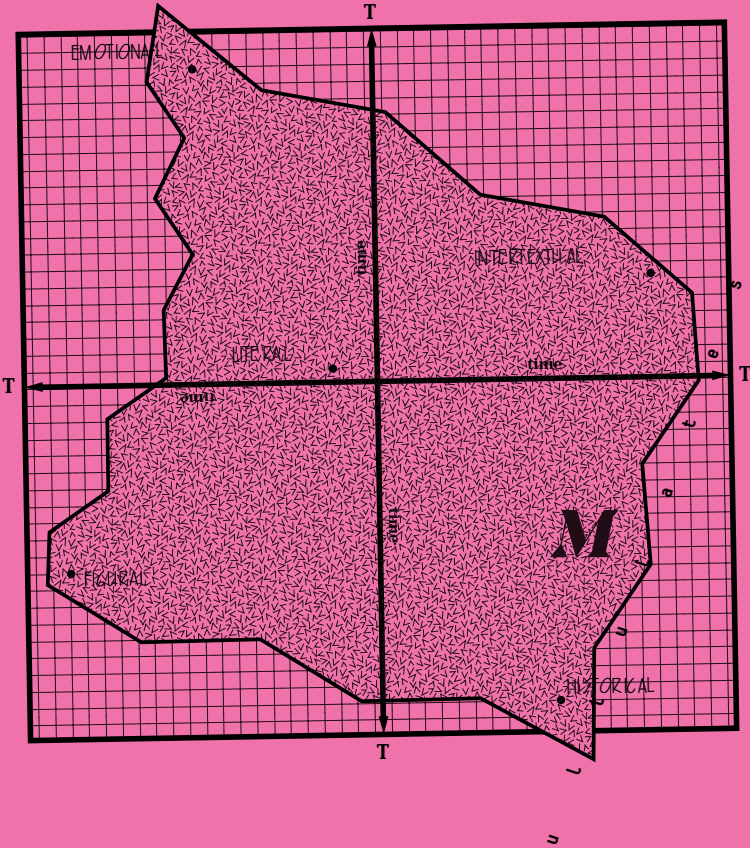
I aim at graphic design like a poet might.

Some poets urge language towards a posture that reflects some facet of its meaning. They sculpt the written word into a visual counterpart to its immaterial spirit. This impulse (to manipulate language's physical appearance to affect its communicative potential) is certainly familiar to graphic design.

Q: What is the inverse of a poet with a graphic approach to language?

I aim at graphic design like a poet might





ABOVE: over time, a robust colony of meaning spreads to new levels of significance and association.

A large, bold, black lowercase letter 'g' is centered on a bright yellow background. The letter has a thick, rounded body with a circular hole in the middle. The top of the letter curves to the right and ends in a small, pointed tail. The bottom of the letter curves to the left and then back to the right, ending in a small, pointed tail. The overall style is clean and modern.

GIVING AS GOOD AS U GET

7

Subjectivity in graphic design practice is complex.

subjectivism: a focus on those subjected to design (oneself included)

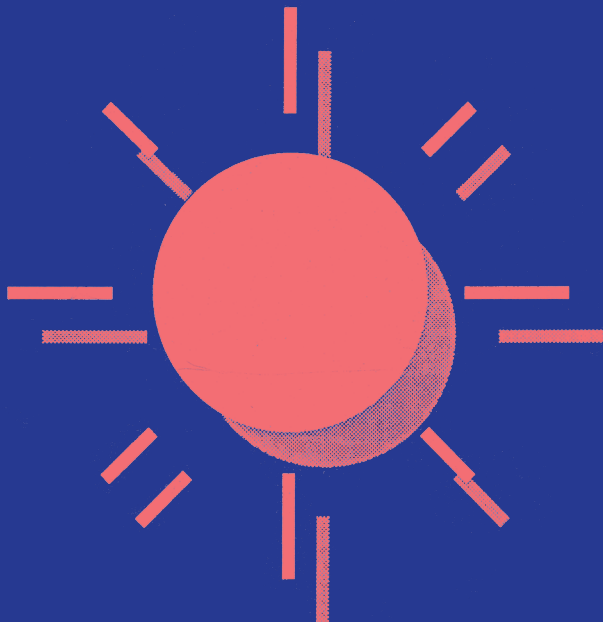
Subjectivity privileges the interaction between individual and object.

objectivism: a focus on the object or objective (the product or goal) of the design process

A true subjectivist designer is therefore responsible for producing work with which her au-

**dience can interact
meaningfully.**

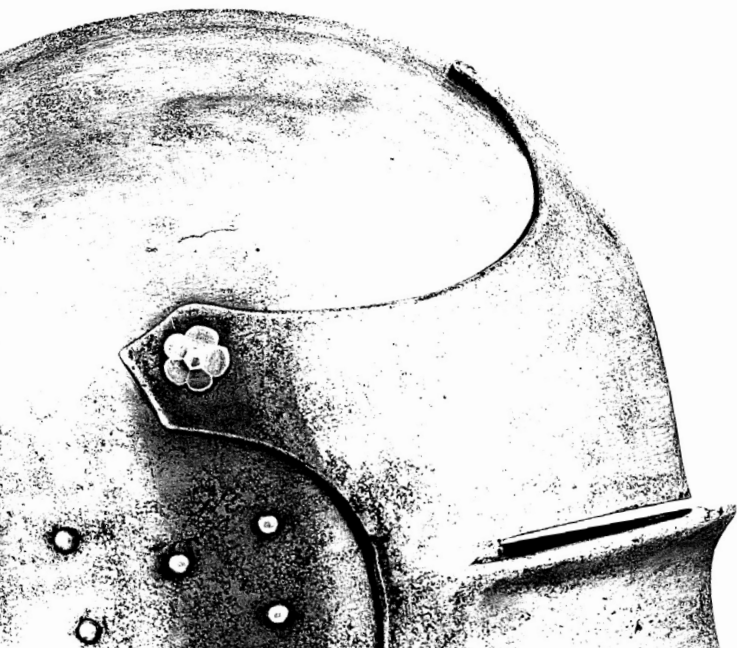




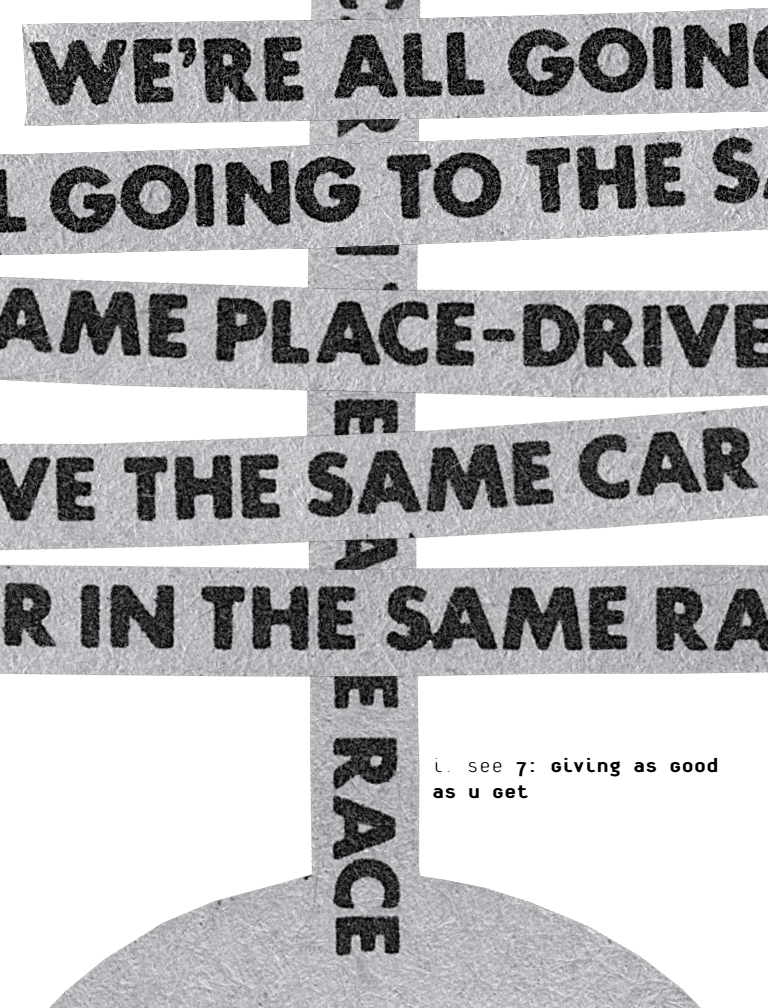
REACHING HIGHER GROUND

8

"the artist must raise everything to a higher level: he is like a pump; he has inside him a great pipe that reaches down into the entrails of things, the deepest layers. He sucks up what was laying there below, dim and unnoticed, and brings it out in great jets to the sunlight."



1. Gustave Flaubert, letter to Louise Colet, June 25, 1853. *Letters, 1857–1880*, 189.



i. see 7: giving as good
as u get

My practice is a subjectivist¹ one: it recognizes our human right to willful interpretation; it encourages the projection-through-form of a personal interaction with a given idea.

I believe designers navigate space, cul-

**ture, and history
like poets through
language. We are
subjective explorato-
ry engines! We draw
formal inspiration
from figurative,
emotional, and ana-
logical associations.**

