

RIAN HUGHES

PREPARE TO
DAZZLE

JUST ADD TEXT



Talking to Rian Hughes was an extraordinary experience. With a wealth of expertise, and known as a competent, and original 'British graphic designer, illustrator, type designer, comics artist and novelist', he certainly can deal with any poised project. 'Hughes has written and drawn comics for 2000 AD, Vertigo CMYK and Batman: Black and White, and designed for DC Comics and Marvel. His designs and illustrations are published widely across the UK and US'. As a young student, who takes great interests in font and type, it was an honor speaking to the signature typographer.

Hughes, started his career, with an interest in design spark through letraset, and then went to further his interest with a degree from the then, London College of Printing. LCP, which is now known as The London College of Communication. Learning was a 'pretty hands off experience, and his degree was project based', so there was 'very little direct instruction' he added candidly. As an Author and writer too within the industry, his experience was documented through early writing, 'I wrote about it too, for 'New Art School Rules', a poster exhibition organized by Malcolm Garrett'. In the art piece, he muses how he wanted to learn differently, and more technically, 'At art school, I thought I'd be taught composition, anatomy, perspective, layout, drawing, painting and type design'. Upon thoughts, and thinking? Rian Hughes, thought they would teach him how to think, I thought I'd learn, 'semiotics, perception, colour theory, storytelling, structure and language', how to think he mused through his artwork. 'I wanted to apply myself to technical challenges that would have honed the eye, the hand, and the mind'.

On teaching at LCC today?, the way degrees are conducted, and how they all compare, taking in mind their consideration, or regard to typography? 'I've little idea on how degrees are run today. I'd imagine it's more computer skills based. I graduated before the MAC was invented'. Hughes, has striking, bold and modern tastes in design, with an ingenuity and propensity within his work. I asked Rian Hughes, if he could pick out a few examples of his work, of particular interest, and why it is important to him? Self effacingly, Hughes answered, 'There are different milestones that represent different periods: Paraluculent was my first attempt at a large family. Blackcurrant was a surprise hit that captured the zeitgeist. Korolev is my largest family and has become a best-seller. There have been families that have not found an audience (for example, I hoped Argent would get more use) and those I almost didn't release because I don't think anyone would want to use them, but then when I did they became ubiquitous (eg Roadkill). It's like releasing a single - you never can tell if it'll chart or not'. Dazzle Unicaise is modern and extremely stylish at times, I then asked him, 'How do you feel about your newest addition to Adobe fonts?'. The stylish, and modern font, is a cult classic for many, Hughes gave me an honest, and sincere account, 'It was designed in 2017, so is actually from a batch of releases from a few years back. There's a bunch of new designs that recently went live at Adobe: Wilko, Guildhall, Chassis, etc. These are all available at my own site and *MyFonts* too. Dazzle Unicaise is a development of Dazzle, an "op art" multi line font I designed in 2005. The character shapes are the same, but for Dazzle Unicaise I added more "unicase" (sometimes called "common case", ie lower-case forms in the capitals) letters. It has similarities to Avant Garde and the other geometric sans of the early 70s in that it's constructed from (optically corrected) circles and perpendicular lines. There's a bit more background on it in the Device font catalogue, which also has other essays and background stuff you might find interesting.

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As an Author, he has created work looking at typography with dynamics and detail. One of his best books, *Typodiscography*, which is available on Amazon, has many areas of interest, for typography enthusiasts. 'The complete range of type designs available from Rian Hughes' digital foundry, featuring sample settings, background information and interviews. Also includes Hughes' Filmotype revivals and *FontFonts*'.

Dazzle Unicaise is certainly, one of his most successful fonts, with Korolev. I asked Hughes, if he could describe the font in a few words? Hughes, an expert typographer, started his answer to my question, with reference to his *myfonts* listing: An elegant, stylish unicaise font with alternative lower-case letter-forms designed to fit the capital's X-height. The lower-case forms are available in many of the lower-case keystrokes, with even more available as "stylistic alternates" or a "stylistic set", which can be activated in Adobe apps. Eye-catching, sophisticated and contemporary. Available in five weights. A more sober companion to the original op-art version of Dazzle. I asked, if he has any more variations for Dazzle Unicaise - anything else in the pipeline? Hughes, put the record straight immediately, despite the fonts brilliance, 'No more variants for Dazzle. Always new designs in the pipeline!'. Which, I think meant, no more new versions of Dazzle Unicaise. Let's look towards new fonts, and typology design.

I pressed further, and asked, 'How would you describe your fonts? Through your work do you want people to engage more with typography, or just want people to find your contribution to design to be eye-catching?'. The typographer, answered, 'To a great extent a font finds its own audience. Sometimes I'll create one for a specific need, sometimes it'll just be a geometric or aesthetic idea'. With so much expertise, and effort put into his work, and books, I asked if there was anything specific, from the genius, and if there was a specific, way he wanted people to use his signature fonts? He answered, that things would be perfect, if they were used in 'creative ways, and they should delve into the alternatives, the OpenType options, etc, to get the full picture'. The same was true for my next question, which was if, 'Through your work with fonts do you want people to engage more with typography, or prefer aesthetic appeal or some kind of reaction to your work?'. His answer was simple, after all the complication, and details of working with fonts, people's 'creative ways' were important to Hughes, and I am assuming expression and communication, were also of importance.



PROFILE

RIAN HUGHES

UK BASED – Rian Hughes was born in the United Kingdom, and now works across the world, in particular the USA. He works with Graphic Design,

Illustration, type design and typography, is a comic artist, and an Author and Writer. He graduated from the London

College of Printing, The University of the Arts, London. The college is now known as the

London College of Communication, and is based in Elephant and Castle. Rian

Hughes started his early career, working at ID Magazine, Smash Hits magazine and Conde Nast.

He has written some very contemporary and up to date books on design, and typography and even branding. Some of his career highlights as an Author include:

Logo-a-gogo: Branding Pop Culture, Korero Press, 2018

Cult-ure: Ideas can be Dangerous, Carlton Books, 2015
"XX: A Novel, Graphic," Picador, 2020

"The Black Locomotive," Picador, 2021

"Rayguns and Rocketships: Vintage Science Fiction Book Cover Art," Korero, 2018

