April Greiman, Los Angeles, 10.28.88

Emigre: Do you design differently now that you work on a computer? **April:** This would be very hard to articulate. I think that I design completely differently since I've become Mac-fluent. Everything at one point or another goes through the **CONE** of my Mac. We're able to bring in 35 mm slides, scan them into the Quantel graphic paintbox, bring in a Mac image or a digitized image, bring in live video, then put all these things together. This provides a whole **new texture.** And for sure, the most profound part of this is the Macintosh influence. **Emigre:** You used to combine imagery from various sources before... **April:** Yes, but the "textures" are different now. **Emigre:** What "textures?" **April:** I'm talking about real texture. On the one hand, you can go for a very **seamless image** with high-end equipment [like the graphic paintbox.] What's a shame about that is that when you see the final results, you don't realize that it's created on a computer—it looks like straight airbrushed photography! What's great about the paintbox is that it's totally in communication with the printing process, and you have complete control over color separations, etc., On the graphic paintbox, you can select

EMIGRE: What type of computers do you work with and what do you use them for?
MALCOLM: For some years we used the Robocom system, which is Apple IIe-based. We also have a couple of Macintosh Plus computers. For a short while we borrowed the Macintosh II, but we had to return it because we couldn't really afford it.
EMIGRE: They are quite expensive in Europe, I hear.
MALCOLM: Yes, it's a lot of money. But for what you get, it's worth the expense. These are the computers we have at the studio. In addition, I have worked with the Crossfields Synnervision system, which is an image manipulation system, comparable to the Quantel Paintbox. It's PC-based, so it's as easy to use as the Macintosh and much more economical than Paintbox. I've also done a fair amount of work on the Scitex response page planning system.
EMIGRE: When did you get involved with computers?
MALCOLM: About five or six years ago, when we bought the Robocom system.
EMIGRE: Why did you buy it?
MALCOLM: Because I am obsessed with technology. The first computer I came across was the Sinclair computer, which was the very first home computer. It cost about a hundred pounds. My colleague at the time immediately bought one because... because it was something you just had to have!
EMIGRE: What do you achieve by working on a computer that you cannot achieve by working with traditional methods?
MALCOLM: That depends on what computer you are talking about. Different computers can do different things. But the main thing you can achieve is that once you have material stored in the computer's memory, you can output it in quickly and easily modifiable form. So it allows you, very quickly, to run through potential design options at a fairly finished level.

April Greiman
Poster for Caremark, U.C. Irvine, 1987.

You don't have to commit yourself to a final design at an early stage.
EMIGRE: What has been the most significant influence that the computer has had on your work?
MALCOLM: Do you mean stylistically?
EMIGRE: No, not just stylistically, but you can start with that.
MALCOLM: That's not an easy question to answer. I guess the computer has affected my work in many ways. Different aspects of my creative output have been altered by using computers. But overall I don't think they've had any effect on my work other than make it more like it would have

been anyway. The computer just allowed for quicker development of certain aspects of the kind of work that I am doing.
EMIGRE: Since we are entering a new era, with people using computers more and more, do we as graphic designers have a responsibility to explore a new design aesthetic that is appropriate to this new technology?
MALCOLM: Yes, although the aesthetic will come about by default.
EMIGRE: Are there any specific qualities that you have seen in digital design, both high and low resolution, that point towards a new design aesthetic, or do you think

that the computer will make a name for itself mostly as a new production tool that makes things go faster and more cheaply?
MALCOLM: Both. The computer does allow you to do things faster and more cheaply, that's inherent with the computer. It also allows you to do more complex tasks. But what intrigues me about the various advances in technology is the ever-increasing ability that we have to draw on visual references from many different cultural sources and combine them in a hitherto unseen manner. I call this "Retrievalism." The real design aesthetic that is emerging out of today's tech-

nology is that of new combinations. That is where I see design change, aesthetically, more so than out of the inherent stylistic qualities of the technology, which I think will disappear as the equipment becomes more and more sophisticated, allowing the style or personality of the designer or client to come through more dominantly. I think all of the technical development that we are seeing at the moment is accelerating the potential of the stage we're already at. The next true creative development we will see will be in artificial intelligence. At the moment computers are becoming more and more able to assist the human brain. The development of true artificial intelligence will have a significant effect on mankind as a whole, and its effect on the visual arts will be on par with the introduction of the photo camera, which changed the visual arts completely. The camera completely changed the role of painting from being documentary to being more philosophical.
EMIGRE: In the article about you in *Graphis* (NO. 248, NOV./DEC. 1988), you say that "you firmly believe that the book is now an invalid form of communication. It's a valuable reference work and a decorative object to enrich one's life, but as a form of

communication it is finished." First, I would like to know more specifically about what type of books you are talking about? And secondly, what exactly do you think will be the alternative?
MALCOLM: I'm talking about the printed word in general. As access technology develops, we won't need to use books for communication or for reference. I am kind of overstating it when I say that the book is finished. What I mean is that conceptually it's on the way out. The only reason for retaining books will be for pleasure reasons. Just as the camera replaced the role of the painter, what I call the "world information library" will replace the book. Even though painting still exists, its role has changed significantly. *The New York Times* doesn't send out a painter any more to document a five-alarm fire. They send out a photographer. So the documentary aspect of painting is finished. In the same way, the information communication aspect of the book is finished.
EMIGRE: And what do you see as the alternative?
MALCOLM: It will all be electronic.
EMIGRE: I understand that, but can you paint me a more precise picture of how you see information being dispersed in the future?

an area by making a stencil, and indicate this area to be 100% white and remove all other colors. When you get back your digital piece of film, you'll see that where it is white, the film is completely clear. That's great if you want really tight control. But the problem with the graphic paintbox is that **it makes things too seamless.** So I, in a way, like to use the video paintbox from Quantel, because that still has that **fabric** or **texture** of video. But the nice thing about the graphic paintbox is that you can import all these different kinds of images and you can retain that high quality seamlessness [like eight by ten photographs that have been laser-scanned], while at the same time you can beef up some of the more textural things that you might import from other tools. **Emigre:** Are there still things that you

Malcolm Garrett (Assorted Images)
Boy George, 12" record sleeve, 1988.

MALCOLM: Whatever the Japanese will come up with will replace the book. The book will be replaced by electronic communication. The laserdisk library, higher resolution TV screens, parallel processing, transputers that can speed up processing and analysis. I have no idea what's going to exist and how it will exist, but I just know that with every passing minute, there are more and more electronic developments. I mean, who uses a Telex machine these days now that we have Fax machines? The Fax machine is practically replacing the airplane. You don't need to travel anymore. A telephone and a Fax machine, and you're in visual communication with a client on the other side of the globe instantaneously.

EMIGRE: If that is the future, and if you look at how graphic design is taught in schools today, do you think that today's design students are properly educated?

MALCOLM: No. But they never were. Students educate themselves. Design education can only teach you what to look for or how to look, and hopefully in the visual arts, they encourage you to develop your drawing skills.

EMIGRE: But there are still a great number of design schools that teach their students how to set type by hand. Do you feel this is still valuable for future designers who will have to deal with Fax machines and sophisticated pre-press computers and who will produce a great many designs for the electronic media?

MALCOLM: Yes and no. Research into the methods and tools which led to the peculiarities of particular type designs will always be useful to designers. But of course to ignore or miss the electronic advances currently going on is nothing less than Luddite. A designer must acknowledge and be familiar with the workings of every tool at his or her disposal.

EMIGRE: Apple Computer is selling the Macintosh by making everybody believe that they can produce professional-looking graphic designs quickly and cheaply. Do you feel this endangers your profession in any way?

MALCOLM: It's definitely deceptive. People who see these advertisements believe that if you buy a computer, you will become a designer. And this is absolutely not so. However, what the Macintosh is doing

find are impossible to do on a computer, but that you would like to do? April: I have one problem with the graphic paintbox, and it's not the fault of the equipment. The problem is that **I can't afford,** for a client or even for myself, **to experiment enough** in order to get loose on it. A lot of the work on the paintbox is done with an operator. Now, I have one operator who just sets up the machine for me and lets me play on it, but mostly I have to give instructions like, "Oh, please a little more red," "Eh...could you just move that slightly..." So the graphic paintbox lets me do things that are wonderful and that I need, and the Macintosh does some things that are wonderful and that I need. I'd like to find an economical way to make the paintbox be more **painterly** and maybe be more **ambiguous** in the final result. Sometimes, **accidentally,** this happens because I am new at it, but I don't feel like I'm really controlling that yet. I'm kind of missing **that painterly feeling that you can get on a Mac.** If you airbrush on the Mac, it's so rough that you always get these wonderful **gestures** out of things, because it is making decisions and approximations at every corner! With the graphic paintbox, the resolution is so high that it's all very accurate, there are no visible approxima-

is demonstrating in very real and tangible manner to these people who buy the Macintosh that they are not designers, and in the process, hopefully they will realize and understand more the role of the designer and the importance of his or her function in organizing information. So the advertising is very deceptive but hopefully it won't have a bad effect ultimately. And the more people that are familiar with the technology the better. So many designers are scared of it or distrust it or dislike it because they think it will dehumanize their work, or they simply think they'll never understand how to use it because computers are too complicated to work with. I still run into designers who even refuse to let me show them how the computer works, because they think they won't understand it, and they just dismiss it. The wonderful thing about the Macintosh is that it completely bypasses the need to understand it or how it works.

EMIGRE: Do you think that the Macintosh as a popular and powerful graphic design tool contributes in any way to a degradation of graphic design standards?

MALCOLM: No, I don't think so—did rub-off type? I do know that the Macintosh has helped some of our clients to understand what the hell it is we do for them. Before, they didn't even understand the word "typesetting," or that there were different typefaces. Because people do not notice that, they read words. They don't look at type. With Macintosh computers in more and more offices, there is a growing understanding of what it is that designers do and subsequently companies make more allowances for the role of design in their businesses. They now build graphic design into their scheduling at a much earlier stage, and they make more allowances for the amount

tions. **Emigre:** Will the Macintosh contribute to a change in graphic design mostly in the area of production, or will it influence design aesthetics as well? **April:** Both! In principal, I would agree that the Mac saves us time and all that. But what I experience is rather than just doing something quickly, **we're looking at more possibilities.** Instead of doing more work **we are seeing more options.** Now **we spend more time visualizing and seeing things,** and before the Mac, we spent more time doing things. You wouldn't look at twelve different sizes of a headline type, because it would involve setting the type and then statting it and you would just say, "Oh come on, I don't have to try this subtler difference." But with the Mac, once the information is stored, you can just look at seventy-two thousand variations. And then the accidents happen and you say, "Oh that's so much better, why don't I go that way?" And then

RICK VALICENTI (THIRST), Chicago, 1/8/89

EMIGRE: Why and when did you decide to get involved with the Macintosh?

RICK: It was peer pressure and curiosity. I got seriously involved after a talk I had given at Notre Dame. I was invited down there by a friend, John Sherman, who runs their design program. John had developed a program that was focused around a room where they had nine Macintosh computers. He had every piece of peripheral imaginable. And his students, all undergraduates, were doing all kinds of great things, from developing their own fonts to PageMaker layouts, and he was teaching them how to design on these computers. I was down there for two days, and at the end I said, "John, I know I have to make the investment. I want you to tell me what I should get. Write it down and I'll buy it." So he did. He gave me a shopping list, and I turned it over to a computer consultant and said, "I want everything on this list."

EMIGRE: During your lecture at CCAC in Oakland last December, you showed the T-Shirt poster you did for the Museum of Contemporary Art and you mentioned you had used the Macintosh, which had lead to great frustration. What went wrong?

RICK: That's right. That was the first day. I had input all the copy and wanted to see it. During the course of that day, it seemed that everybody I knew decided to come into the office. I tried to be friendly and say, "Please leave," and they didn't leave. Finally it got to the end of the day and I was really pissed because I couldn't get it to work, I couldn't see what I wanted to do. So I said to my sister, Barbara, "Just print out this Geneva type, 36 point and I'll cut and paste it together by hand." So next day I brought in the boards with the type arranged just the way I wanted, statted it down, and it was done. But it was the aesthetic of those Geneva characters that I was pretty fascinated with. Later, and I must admit this, I was reprimanded by Michael and Bob, because I had found myself cutting character spacing, kerning characters, and changing word spacing.

EMIGRE: Considering the poor spacing you get on a Mac, you'll be doing that...

Rick Valicenti (Thirst)
Poster for Lyric Opera of Chicago 1988.

of time things need to be properly designed. So in that respect, the Macintosh is having a very positive effect on the design profession. I think it is also worth noting that as desktop publishing produces more and more "designed" material from more and more domestic sources, the importance of good design and the need for clear communication of information will become ever more apparent. In this way I like to think that desktop publishing will liberate more and better designers, as the distinction between the merely ordinary designer and the would-be designer becomes blurred.

EMIGRE: Is this an exciting time for you?

MALCOLM: Yes. I must say that I'm extremely enthusiastic about all the computer technology that is now a part of the field of graphic design. But I am also realistic about it. I don't think that the technology will replace the way we do things. The role of a designer as I see it is to be a master of information control. And whatever tool is required to manage that information should be employed. I don't advocate the use of the computer only. Maybe I will in the future, but right now I feel there are still a lot of limitations and there is no job that we have ever done that has been produced exclusively on a computer.

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you are off trying a whole new idea. This pioneering, **where you don't have an aesthetic yet and you don't have tradition,** is both time-consuming and wonderful. **To feel lost is so great.** There are only a few areas in this very controlled industry that you can feel like that. **Emigre:** Where will these experimentations lead to? **April:** There are two ways that we are pushing this technology. One is by **imitating and speeding up normal processes** of different disciplines, such as production and typesetting. In those cases the **technology is a slave** and is simulating what we already know. But I think that, if we all keep going the way we are going and other people jump in, all desperate for **new textures/new languages,** then the other area in which it's going to advance is a **new design language.** Rather than get the language that's built-in to speak to you in English, you say, well, I know it can speak English, it does that very well, but there's also a new language. What do digital words really mean and say? There is **a natural language in that machine** and I am interested in finding out what that is, and where the boundaries are. **Emigre:** How come you haven't done any type design on the Macintosh? **April:** There just isn't enough time to do everything. I am such a fanatic about type, and I am so critical and such a perfectionist about it, and there are so many great typefaces that exist. It would take me a year to come up with anything decent and I just don't have the time. **Emigre:** Do you think that there will be an increase in gimmicks and copying due the Macintosh?

April: Sure, but that happens with any new technology. I don't worry too

RICK: Yes, but you don't have to do that, because it doesn't belong to that aesthetic.

EMIGRE: What aesthetic? You mean the bad spacing that you get when you use the screen fonts? You like acknowledging the weakness of the machine and using its defaults?

RICK: Exactly, it's all part of its character. But at that time I thought I wasn't ready for that.

EMIGRE: I want to ask you about your expectations of the Mac. At this point you have just started working on it and I would like to know what you would like it to do.

RICK: I would like to be able to sit down and manipulate my type, whether it's text type or headline type, and structure it in such a way that I can see it before it's played out, and I haven't gotten to that point yet. I recently saw this book—I forgot the title—and typography looked like it was done on the Mac. The fonts were all slightly distorted and stretched and condensed. The texture of that type was not only readable but was quite beautiful! It looked like they were able to monitor their rags and it just looked like the designers were extending their hands-on to the point where it was at the typographer's level. So what I think this machine will allow me to do is become a better typographer.

EMIGRE: How about the added responsibilities? Now you have to make decisions about how to break sentences, correct typos, all very time-consuming work.

RICK: No, I'm not afraid of that. I personally wouldn't do that anyway. I would have somebody else do the keyboarding, but it would happen in the office, which means I still would have more control, which would make it all much more economical.

EMIGRE: When I first saw some of your typographic work, I thought it was produced on the Macintosh. It was so intricate, with so many type variations and type sizes within a single text block. This is fairly easy to do on a Macintosh and quite complex and expensive on a conventional typesetting system. Now that you do have a Macintosh, do you expect your designs to change?

RICK: Not really, because most of my designs are previsualized in my head.

EMIGRE: But now it's easy to look at options quickly. There are more choices possible. This won't influence your decisions, and subsequently, the design?

RICK: The way I do it now, without the computer, I have every face and size available to me. Before I start the process of producing a piece, I decide which faces to use and xerox samples of them and put them in front of me. Then, I take it a step further, because I want some parameters to work within. Most people who see my work think that it's done without much control. But actually, it's all very controlled. I know in advance what sizes I will use. So I set up the recipe and I just pick from it in different sequences. I know in my head what an "M" or "N" space looks like. And I know when I add one or two points how that will make it look. I previsualize leading. I have a good ability to imagine or visualize what the thing will look like. And then it's just a matter of writing it out for the typesetter, and I produce pretty tight sketches. When I need to write in twelve point, my hand writes close to twelve point. And with the Mac, instead of writing it all out for the typesetter, I'll be typing it out.

EMIGRE: So your method of working won't change by using a Mac?

RICK: No, I don't think so, except for the ability to make revisions, and to move type around more freely. I would like to eliminate the cutting part. I did actually make corrections sometimes by cutting the type, even though it was minimal. Most of the time, it comes back from the typesetter exactly as imagined. It is always staggering to me to see people work with scissors pushing type around. For me it's just the opposite. The design is already drawn and the typesetter just renders it.

EMIGRE: How do you justify your typesetting bills to the client?

RICK: No client has ever questioned them. The typesetting bill for the *Holly Fabric* book was $1,500. Now that's staggering!

EMIGRE: Yes, that's quite high.

RICK: Yes, considering that it's only eight pages of roughly five lines per page.

EMIGRE: Isn't that a little out of proportion, a little unrealistic maybe?

RICK: Well, there were fifty-two font changes, and every time I made a different font assignment, it cost $50.

EMIGRE: How did the client feel about this?

RICK: They didn't flinch in this case. I haven't had anybody scream yet—knock on wood. I think somebody will before too long, because I'm becoming a little more flamboyant. Expressive is a better word. Hopefully, the Macintosh will help cut cost.

EMIGRE: What are you going to do now that you will be cutting your typesetting bills to one twentieth of your earlier typesetting bills? With the Macintosh, you will spend $5 on LaserWriter printouts and maybe another $30 on Linotronic output. How do you explain that your typesetting bill is $35 instead of $1,500 dollars?

RICK: Well, the actual cost on type itself will be reduced, but the time of sitting in front of the screen, inputting it, manipulating it, etc., will take longer. So there is a trade-off. They'll get it as an additional design fee.

EMIGRE: But isn't it easier to account for production cost and typesetting than it is for design? Most clients seldom question the cost of material things, such as type and paste-up boards, but design is too subjective.

RICK: Well, I haven't really encountered that, that's new to me. And that's maybe because we are really cheap. There's nobody driving a big black BMW in our office...Yet! The nature of our clients keeps things lean and mean. And when they

spend $1,500, it's our responsibility to give them something that is unique and of equivalent value.

EMIGRE: During your lecture at CCAC, you talked about the subject of originality and uniqueness. I don't hear too many designers discuss this topic, and I'm very much intrigued by this because there's a real lack of originality in graphic design. And not just designers being original in comparison to other designers but also within their own work.

RICK: Exactly. And that was the point I was trying to make during my lecture. As I see it, it's on two levels. First of all, the solution to the project that you are working on should be honest to its intent; i.e., the client's message and/or objective, and should therefore be original. Unless the parameters are exactly the same, it can't look just like a Michael Vanderbyl piece. And secondly, within yourself, if you treat your daily activity as a designer in the same way that artists treat their work, you will discover that the design process is an art and you do find yourself working through your own problems and concerns; the ones that you adopt and establish for yourself. Whether it is the relationship between the letter forms and the message, or whether it is your exploration of a personal vocabulary of color and form, or all of the above simultaneously. You do find yourself and your work evolving while working through these things. And the people in your office, if they're plugged into the same thing, find themselves exploring similar problems. What usually happens is that the result of those explorations is original. It's the artist process versus the "borrower's" or "product-oriented" process of which we see too much, unfortunately.

EMIGRE: In your designs you use a very distinct way of treating text. You emphasize punctuation, use a lot of underlining, change typefaces often; it's a very visual interpretation of text. It's very recognizable and actually already copied by other designers. Do you fear that you might get caught repeating yourself and start designing with a formula?

RICK: I'm afraid of a couple of things. First of all, I'm afraid that clients will come here expecting a certain type of design, and be disappointed when I've moved beyond it into something else. This seems to have happened with Neville Brody, who has admitted to be "laying low." What I don't want to happen is that this work, this attitude towards my personal experiment, is perceived as the product. And I hope that as people take the experiment into other directions they don't look at me and say, "Oh, he's just stuck in doing it the same old way." I am going to pursue the experiment personally, wherever it takes me. I may move at a different pace than everybody else, and I hope I won't get forced into doing it differently than I've been doing it so far. Secondly, I would like to see that if others adopt the typographic devices, they also adopt the intense concern for the devices' relationship to the content. Otherwise, it is just decoration.

EMIGRE: Will the Mac play a role in this experimentation?

RICK: Sure it will. Just as my wife will play a role in it. You know, all the influences will. I just hope that we don't all get into this leap-frog mode, looking for the new and next, while failing to first come to terms with what it was. We have to seek the Mac out slowly and see what it has to offer. We are all so fad-conscious. It happens in fashion, you see it on TV, where series get canned after three episodes. That attitude is in our culture, unfortunately.

Tonight I'm going to a lecture, where Michael Bierut from Massimo Vignelli's office is speaking. And I know he is not going to look quite as hip as everybody expects Vignelli to look. And I hope people are not going to say, "Fuck him, he's not doing anything hip!", when in fact Vignelli is committed to his own vocabulary. Massimo's office really explores an evolving international vision. So, I hope that people won't say to me or anybody who is making some really sincere explorations that they're eh...nothing.

EMIGRE: Let's get back to the Macintosh. There are designers that fear that the Macintosh will contribute to a homogenization of design. They fear that the Macintosh has too strong a character and will therefore overshadow and restrict personal expression. You mentioned yourself that you enjoyed some of the Macintosh characteristics, such as funky spacing and low resolution.

RICK: That's just a coding attached to the most basic function of the system. That's like typewriter type. It tells you where it came from. Letter press type has this too; you know it by how it feels. It's the difference between engraving and offset. I don't think you should dismiss it because of that. I think the Mac aesthetic should be employed when it's necessary, because when it's employed it brings a meaning, like a "power" tie brings to a meeting a certain meaning and a definition. Just as manipulated photography brings meaning to a design. You don't dismiss a photographic image because you can see that it was manipulated. The aesthetic of the Macintosh will become as vernacular or as accepted as the typewriter has.

But to answer your question about homogenization, it will perhaps be no more dramatic than the International Style was and its use of Helvetica and three-or four-column grids.

EMIGRE: The reason why you see similar results now is probably due to the newness of the computer. Designers are in an experimental phase.

RICK: That's right, we have not used the computer as a natural extension of the individual. But when that happens...and it is happening in Wolfgang Weingart's work for instance, it has his mark all over it. And in April Greiman's work; it's very rich. The computer is just another hand on her body...(Sorry April, I couldn't resist that rather provocative image.)

Time is the issue now. Currently, the most significant contributors to the Mac catalog of design are young designers. These designers, while exploring the Mac, were in the early stages of their careers. The traditions of design that they bring to their work are less experienced. As soon as the more experienced designers find time to work and experiment with the Mac, the results will appear very different from what we see now, because they will bring much more past experience to this new process. We have seen this happen before, in situations where the letter press typographers set type photomechanically. Their expectations of the process were different. Their typographic concerns surfaced. It's all a matter of time. I look forward to seeing what designers such as Ivan Chermayeff, Woody Pirtle, or Michael Manwaring will bring to the ever-growing Mac catalog.

EMIGRE: A lot of the early work that was produced on the Macintosh was low resolution, and with this we saw the emergence of quite a few low resolution typefaces that were mostly designed for screen display. Now we see these typefaces in print as well. How do you feel about this?

RICK: Actually, I already see some of this low resolution, Mac-inspired, digitized type on public access stations. And nobody seems to want to turn it off because it wasn't set in Garamond. However, the applause for it remains silent.

EMIGRE: Why do you think most people have no problems reading low resolution type on a screen but are bothered by its appearance in print?

RICK: It may be that it becomes this little "design" device, like typewriter type is a "design" device, and people will only use it as a novelty, which will be sad. It's with the high resolution capabilities of the Mac, such as with the Adobe Postscript fonts, or even the Emigre type that you are reading right now, where it has its own character. There, it's not about bad resolution type on a TV screen. It's about new letter forms. And with Adobe, it's about the reproduction of existing letter forms in an economical way.

EMIGRE: How do you feel about Adobe and their effort to reproduce existing type for use in Postscript? Most of those typefaces were originally designed for lead, and were later redesigned for photographic reproduction and now, again, they have been redesigned for digital reproduction.

RICK: It doesn't matter where it came from. We will always have an appreciation and a need for the letter forms that were rendered in the sixteenth century. And just as those letter forms represent a certain attitude, whether those attitudes are about stability or refinement, we'll use them for those messages. Today, when we see such fonts as Zuzana Licko has designed, where the character of the letter forms speaks about a spirit of technology as well as about the machine that they were generated on, we will use those for their inherent meanings.

EMIGRE: Where will we use it? When is it appropriate to use low resolution type or imagery, or high resolution computer-generated type, such as Zuzana's? Only in print work that is computer-related?

RICK: That's a great question. It requires a crystal ball to answer. The creative vision of our design community will provide visual answers. Let me give you an example. If we assume that any typography that reflects Mac technology carries with it the assumption of lower costs, then a non-profit corporation or a health care facility will employ it for their annual report or business graphics. The unspoken message to their public will be that they do not waste money needlessly.

EMIGRE: Can you see the two typographic heritages living alongside each other?

RICK: Absolutely! Just as you could hear in one song a live string quartet combined with a fuzz-tone guitar. So the marriage is fine, and they're fine independently. I'm just a little bit benevolent. I say it should all mesh. And we should all be free to eat from the buffet. And it's the fusion, those hybrids that we create, that makes the statements of the designer much more appealing and richer. And hopefully, because each of those type opportunities carries with it a secondary typographic meaning, it will make the designer's messages that more provocative.

EMIGRE: Are the readers going to pick up on all these hidden messages?

RICK: They might not know it in the front of their brain, but in the back of their brain they will be able to feel it. Just like when you get a wedding invitation, you know that it applies to a wedding when it has script type on it. But when you take that script type and put it on an annual report for a bank, you also feel comfortable and you say, "Ooo.. this means money." When you take the same script type and put it on a fashion ad you say, "Ooo... this means expensive, this means refined and formal." Now the audience, the readers, they don't know exactly when or by whom that script type was designed, but they do comprehend on some level the meanings or the codes attached to those letter forms.

EMIGRE: These people who are now experiencing these messages on the subconscious level are at the same time able to buy a Macintosh and design their own letterheads and newsletters without any real knowledge about the things you just talked about. How do you feel about this?

RICK: The typewriter was never assigned to one class of people either. Everybody was able to put their words down on a sheet of paper. And the typewriter expanded possibilities by allowing you to bold face, which then allowed people to make a typographic emphasis. And the typewriter had different colored ribbons, so you could work with color. You could underscore and use quotations. All these devices were designed to allow the person to add punctuation where they wanted it and to help increase the emphasis within and meanings of their message.

EMIGRE: We often see it in your work, and in general, there seems to be a resurgence of experimental typography. Designers are a little more expressive with their typographic solutions and don't just use type as stylistic matter.

RICK: That's true. And not only have these devices resurfaced, but now we have the Mac, which provides us with any number of fonts. So there's been this explosion of potential for the typewritten word. And we find people at the word processing level, such as copywriters, who don't really function as graphic designers, exploring the words and messages that they are generating. They are beginning to liberate the meaning of their words. And that's a neat thing. I'm excited about the fact that everybody can explore these things on a Mac. When graphic designers complain and say things like: "Now everybody can be a graphic designer," I get pissed. Because it's not true. Not everybody can conceive a project, or get it printed, or even fit their solutions into some marketing scheme. Those are the jobs of the graphic designer. If somebody is just putting words on paper, that in itself does not make him or her a graphic designer—that makes them an extra special clerical person. Imagination becomes the variable, like time; imagination along with a commitment to a personal vision separates the practitioner from the artist. Technicians will be exposed as only technicians. This happened in photography within the last two decades.

EMIGRE: Another area where the Macintosh will allow the designer to have more control, is color separation and pre-press. Printing and graphic design have been separated from each other. As a graphic designer, you produce your mechanicals and together with a list of instructions, it goes off to the printer. The printer then has to figure out what it is you want. He hires out separations and next time you see your design is when the stripper has finished the blue line. How do you feel about the possibility of controlling color separation and other pre-press facets, or even being creative in this area?

RICK: It has always been too expensive to be involved in this creatively. You need to be quite knowledgeable in order to work in this area. Most designers are getting very knowledgeable real fast. If they don't, they'll be lost in the shuffle. For myself, if the Macintosh can do color separations as clearly as we can do them conventionally, we're in great shape, and then I would love to get involved.

EMIGRE: I think that if graphic designers will allow themselves to get involved with computers more and more, you will see all these disciplines, that are now so strictly separated, come back together again.

RICK: Yes, actually, because I didn't get the design experience that most students got in school, I would invite myself to printers and learn to strip on the weekends. This experience changed my way of designing. You're a better specifier when you know what's going on beyond your drawing board. Most designers, who have no idea what happens after their mechanicals leave the office, make the worst specifications and unnecessarily expensive design decisions.

EMIGRE: One last question. Do you think that graphic design, or communication in general, will move towards the computer screen? Will people start reading their information from computer screens more and more?

RICK: Well, I think it's like this: who would have ever imagined that we would be listening to synthetic or electronic music and be dancing to it? So naturally now we ask the question, "Who would ever be reading a book from a TV screen?" But the same people who listen to electronic music will also enjoy a little classical acoustic guitar while on vacation in Mexico. It will all exist together. We all like the experience of holding a book in our hands, reading it, putting it down etc. That's just a different kind of relaxation or experience. And all this will be available to us. I don't think it will make our culture psychotic. It's going to make us more exciting. We're going to be able to choose from this rich buffet and there will be something for everybody.

much about that. The Mac's so easy to use. It's going to be very scary. It'll be interesting to see what will happen in another three years or so. Kids know how to use this now and everybody will be **modeming** and using **electronic bulletin boards** and what not. So yes, there'll be a lot of mimicry and copying, but it will make the people with traditional design backgrounds and the people with the high-end equipment who know what they are doing push themselves further. For a while, communications may be really ugly and bad. There are going to be large corporations who will start to design their own reports, or a little corner shop where the wife does the accounting and she's got a Mac and she starts fooling around on it and before you know it she's a designer, and she's designing business cards and all that. **Emigre:** How do you feel about that? When everybody can try to be a graphic designer or at least try to help themselves? The tool is there and it's affordable. Will this lead towards a deterioration of graphic design? **April:** No, I think that it's going to be terribly wonderful. I think that we as designers are going to learn a lot. **We're going to see people empowered with our visual language imitate us,** [a language that we have spent a lot of time learning and developing]. We'll see them do everything from really terrible to very wonderful things and it will be a good learning experience for us. **Everybody is visual, it's in the collective soul,** and the Mac will empower and help a lot of these people to express themselves. I like the idea that so many people will have a common language using modems and electronic bulletin boards. And this tool has its own language! Its own viruses! And it's already spreading like crazy!

"What I really miss now are the great accidents that happened when I first started working on the Macintosh four years ago. At that time, the Macintosh threw me into an area where I wasn't so much in control anymore. I could do things that I wasn't able to do by hand. Accidents, messy things, kept happening. I'd use the wrong keyboard command or the mouse would get stuck, and these things would start happening, opening up whole new roads of possibilities that hadn't been heavily trod upon by other designers. This too is such a profound thing about the Macintosh."