



Characters

Cultural Stories Revealed through Typography

by Stephen Banham

WITH A FOREWORD BY RICK POYNOR (UK)

We're surrounded by them everyday and everywhere we look – signage and typography.

You'll never view your city in the same way after reading this book!

Tales of Type

Here for the first time is the secret history and amazing stories that accompany them. Did you know that the Skipping Girl Vinegar sign is in fact only one of 'neon girl trio'; that architects have used subversive word plays right under our noses or that there is a myriad of mysterious objects found inside or behind signage (even a plane!) and many more.

Characters presents a selection of stories about the signs seen around a city – in this case Melbourne – that have helped to shape its character and its intriguing history.

The places, experiences and stories are unique to Melbourne and Australia, but the 'way of seeing' signs is as universal as the human appeal of storytelling. Rather than presenting the new, *Characters* offers a new way of looking at the familiar.

Tantalising Topics include...

The Herald Sun building – a victim of typographic crime / The Shell sign that inspired illegal gambling and had to be removed / The hidden typographic messages in the laneways of Melbourne / The neon signage that was saved from destruction – twice! / The traces of the 1956 Olympic Games hidden on our streets / The darker side of the Qantas logo

Characters will appeal to anybody with a curiosity about their own city, architecture, and social history as well as anyone with an interest in design, graphics and typography.

These stories are meticulously researched and brought to life by Stephen Banham. Currently co-curating the Paper City exhibition at the city Gallery in Melbourne as part of the 2011 State of Design Festival, Banham will be featured at the Melbourne Writers Festival in August 2011, part of which will be walking tours of hidden signage and typography in the city.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Called a 'typographic evangelist' by UK Design journal *Eye*, Stephen Banham's design work has been covered in almost every type annual and design magazine. He is also the founder of Letterbox, a typographic studio based in Melbourne and has lectured in typography at RMIT since 1991. One of his most high profile campaigns in bringing typography into the public eye was the *Death to Helvetica* debate in the early 2000s. Since then he has run a series of forums on the social and cultural importance of letterforms as well as typographic film festivals. This book is a result of some two-and-a-half years of research into typographic storytelling.

Stephen Banham is available for interview

TITLE

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