

Emerging Talent No. 15: David Rager

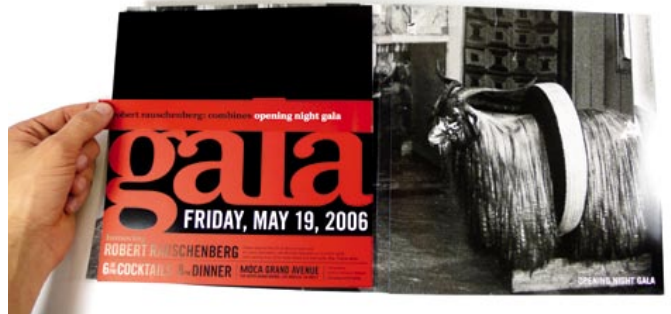


David Rager believes in concision. “Reduction creates a higher level of abstraction, resulting in a more engaging and memorable experience,” he says. “I have a tendency to go too far, then pull back from there. The more work a designer does on his or her end, the less work a user should have to do.” He also possesses an obsession with usability. Describing himself as “a very function-based designer,” Rager says he likes things to “to work well for the purpose intended.” This desire for functionality has shown up throughout his career—from the attention to paper grain details that affect folding in museum collateral, to a suggestion of adding an RSS feed (years before it was a common feature) to enhance a television network’s online magazine. The little things matter.

Born in New York, but raised between Southern California and London, Rager played in bands while attending San Francisco State University, where access to a single-color A.B. Dick and a letterpress studio only meant one thing: “My band could have awesome flyers!” Rager’s flyers caught the eye of other bands, who asked him to do their handbills, and later, album cover art. When Rager started at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the transition from the music world was smooth. “The artist/curator/museum correlation was familiar with me, as it was similar to the band/manager/record label relationship.” Relocating to New York recently, Rager has helped the New Museum roll out its new brand and open new quarters—designed by Sejima + Nishizawa/SANAA—while continuing work on personal projects.

“David is one of the most talented and self-motivated designers I’ve ever met. His work is bold and effective, with just the right level of unexpected and brilliant details,” offers Monica Schaug, art director at AdamsMorioka. “He approaches each project with enthusiasm, seeing the opportunity it has to offer. I’m sure that I’ll continue to be impressed by him as his career proceeds, and I’m very excited to see what else he has in store!”

www.davidrager.org



2006 | ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG: COMBINES OPENING NIGHT GALA INVITATION | CLIENT: THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES

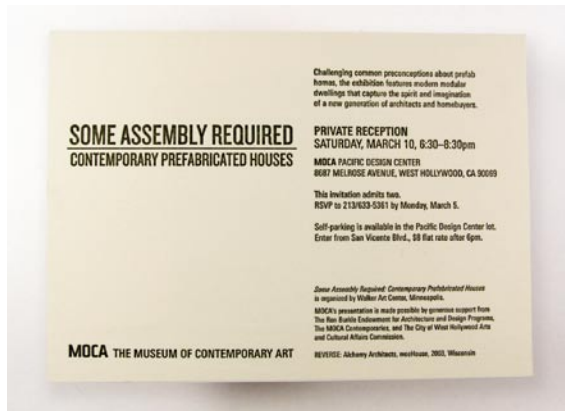
As to defining a distinctive through-line in Rager’s work, he says he’s still trying to figure his style out. “I’ve had friends who know me spot a piece and ask me if I designed it, and chances are I did,” he offers. “But I can’t exactly explain how they knew.” It could be the rich, high-contrast color palette Rager favors. He finds this heightened color saturation, as well as the attention to detail, in the movies of director Jean-Pierre Jeunet, such as *Delicatessen* and *City of Lost Children*, to be personally inspiring. “I live in that color space,” says Rager. Or perhaps it’s Rager’s less-is-more aesthetic that defines his pieces? “My work has definitely become more pared down over the years. It’s all about reduction. Taking things down to the essential idea.” **S**



2005 | CALUVFORNIA | SELF-PROMOTION: THE COMMITTEE FOR ADVANCEMENT OF CALIFORNIA LOVE



2005 | LAZY HALO ILLUSTRATION | SELF-PROMOTION



2007 | SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED: CONTEMPORARY PREFABRICATED HOUSES INVITATION | CLIENT: THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, L.A.



2007 | NEW MUSEUM FALL MEMBERSHIP CALENDAR | CLIENT: NEW MUSEUM