

Typographies beyond the Classroom. New school Typographies through Contemporary Art

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Abstract The different types of typographies that we find today in the labels of our society lead us to rethink whether the typography that we are taught in school now and observe in school alphabets are functional for students in Elementary Education and Child Education, who later will have to read and to write with a typography that has nothing to do with what they have learned in school. In this paper, we describe a work experience in initial teacher training in which from the disciplines of Educational Process II and Language Teaching II we asked our university students what kind of typefaces they see in society and whether these are also those working in schools with students who are learning to read and write.

Keywords: *typography, Elementary Education, Child Education, Educational Process, Language Teaching*

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1. Introduction

Sharpe & Green (1975) say that models applied in teaching are more influenced by those we had as students throughout our schooling than by what we can learn during the initial and continuing education. This may occur unless we make these models explicit, de-construct and reconstruct them to help future teachers to think and realize different ways of teaching and learning. In Teaching education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lleida we ask: *'Why are teaching models so entrenched in the education world? Why is it so hard to change them? Why do we talk about the need for change so much, yet implementing it is so hard?'* (Betrián and Jové, 2013).

The work experience that we present here took place on Initial Teacher Education and began in a pedagogical subject called Processes and Contexts of Education II. The purpose of this subject is that future teachers become teachers of the 21st century. We want them to be teachers capable of giving educational solutions to the new needs of our society. For many years, in initial teacher education concepts such as difference, heterogeneity, otherness, labels, beliefs, expectations, strategies, methodology have been taught through texts and contexts about education, psychology, sociology and history (Jové, 2011). In the text *How do I improve what I am doing as a teacher, teacher educator and action-researcher through reflection? Reflection for action. A Learning walk from Lleida to Winchester and back again* Jové (2011) shows the fact that this method was often not enough to help our students

de-construct and rebuild their teaching models, so we looked for new ways to teach and learn.

In 2003 we ran into the Contemporary Art Centre La Panera. This encounter was the first step that generated the Educ-art project - Educa (r) t: hybrid space. This project was set up by a networking between the Faculty of Education, some schools and the Art Center (Jove, Ayuso, Sanjuan, Cano, Zapater, 2009) (Jove, Ayuso, Betrian, 2012) (Jove, Betrian, 2012). Educ-art - Educa (r) t: hybrid space is being developed by the concept of a hybrid space in which academic, practical and existing knowledge converge into new ways of learning (Zeichner, 2010). Therefore the aim of this project is to create situations in which all participants can learn through art, especially contemporary art. Based on Dewey (1934) we think on art as strategy, art as experience (Dewey, 1934, 2008).

Within the networking project Educ-art project - Educa (r) t: hybrid space, an exhibition space, called Zona Baixa, was created in 2008. It hosts several artistic interventions of contemporary art in relation to the exhibitions held at the Panera Art Center. Zona Baixa works as an exhibition space where the Faculty and the Art Center meet. From both institutions we understand art as a scaffolding for learning in teacher education, specifically contemporary art as a tool for training and knowledge construction. Each project in Zona Baixa begins with an opening session. We hold a seminar with the artist and / or the curator of the exhibition at La Panera and Zona Baixa in order to contribute to the education of the future teachers.

Our aim with the Educ-art project - Educa (r) t: hybrid space project is to construct pedagogical knowledge by interacting with different contemporary artworks that are displayed during the academic year in various community

resources in the city of Lleida. Thus we can learn and work through the 'lending of consciousness' (Bruner, 1997) and life forms of "other". The interactions generated through contemporary art practices are used by future teachers as lendings of consciousness to understand, discover and build new ways of teaching and learning. We understand by lending of consciousness *all the diasporas, that is, intertextuality or intervisuality, enablers of multiple visuals or intellectuals associations* (Guasch, 2004).

Teaching, learning and communicating through contemporary art allow us to generate art encounters, that is, situations that produces a rupture or crack in habitual modes of being and subjectivities, and it is through this rupture that a new world is affirmed, encouraging us to think differently (O'Sullivan, 2006).

As O'Sullivan (2006) also argued, we consider teaching, learning and communicating through contemporary art both as a catalyst of possibilities and a strategy that permits rhizomatic thinking (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). These authors use the rhizome as a model of thought that contrasts hierarchy and an arborescent tree-like structure, which draws on a few principles from which all else follows, in favor of a chaotic, multiply connected structure. They use the metaphor of the rhizome to explore this multiplicity, with its many possibilities for eruption of growth, for interconnecting the parts. In this sense Allan (2012) brings us closer to what she called rhizomatic wanderings. The rhizomatic wanderings let our students think in unanticipated directions, requiring them to undergo the '*disorienting jolt of something new, different, truly other*' (Bogue, 2004). Thus, the rhizomatic thinking is seen as nomad in search of new possibilities (Jove, 2013). According to Farrero (2012) contemporary art helps us establish rhizomatic possibilities from any discipline, not for staying in it but as a searching process of an interdisciplinary hybrid space. The art encounters that come in the context of the subject of Processes and Contexts II, lead us to search multiple and various rhizomatic wanderings favoring interdisciplinary encounters. This allows us to address the curriculum of future teachers in an interdisciplinary way, building links with other subjects (Springgay, 2008; Jove and Betrian, 2012).

During these years we bank on incorporating in our university teaching to teach, learn and communicate through contemporary art generating learning not only by texts and contexts used by our own disciplinary field, but through contemporary art. The first day of the course we situate our students in the art center La Panera, where we begin the classes visiting the exhibition of contemporary art. On this first visit we ask future teachers to observe and reflect on what they see in the exhibition room and write it down on a notebook. Then, we share it with other colleagues to reflect and build learning. Throughout the course, the contents of the subject are emerging in continuous interaction with contemporary art. We start from an initial visit that generates new art encounters in other community resources.

In this article we will show how the art encounters become interdisciplinary encounters. We are going to focus on an experience that took place during the 2012-2013 academic year in which the encounter with the typographic art work of Alex Trochut and Unos Tipos Duros took us into an interdisciplinary encounter with the subject of Languages II. Through the loans of

consciousness of these contemporary artists we ask future teachers to leave the university classroom and take photos of the surrounding typographies; typographies of signs found in the streets, in the cemeteries and in their practice schools. Then they have to reflect and write about it in their work.

Our database consists of the narratives built by the future teachers about their teaching and learning processes. As a teaching team we point out to the relationship between all the experiences and the knowledge of our students, so that they can correlate processes, build bridges and relationships, and integrate all of it into their being. We also believe in the importance of writing on the learning processes (Ryan, Amorim, and Kusch 2010; Amorim and Ryan 2005) to improve what we do (Jove, 2011). For this reason, we suggest our students the development of a written work where all those experiences and knowledge are knitted into their "becoming teacher". To analyze and to write about the work of our students helps us to improve our teaching and make decisions about new ways to improve (Jove, 2011).

2. Art Encounters and Rhizomatic Wanderings

During the academic course 2012/2013 the Art Centre La Panera presented an exhibition related to typography. This exhibition was developed by the Documentation Service of the Art Center. The Documentation Service of La Panera is responsible for conducting exhibitions related to art publications. This exhibition was committed to reflect the importance of the base of any publication, typography. Typography used to be a distinctive element that has no meaning by itself. For this reason, the Documentation Service of La Panera wanted to highlight the importance of typography in generating messages. During the exhibition, typographers such as Alex Trochut and Unos Tipos Duros, among others, created different fonts for the titles of various artworks exhibited in the art center. They wanted the font of the card to be as important as the artwork. Likewise, typography is a way to include content in the artworks.

During the exhibition in Panera, Zona Baixa hosted the work of the typographer Alex Trochut who hung six posters in this exhibition space. The artist conducted a seminar opened to the community about his creative process.



Exhibition by Alex Trochut (2013) at Zona Baixa

Alex Trochut is the grandson of the typographer Joan Trochut, inventor of the Super Veloz typography. Super

Veloz is an integral design of a font that wanted to be a type system that would have helped the small printers in their daily work. With the development of advertising in the thirties the printers needed new strategies for answering new advertising demands. *It was then when Joan Trochut developed the idea of a creative typographic system that could be used not only for typesetting but also for building different types of letter, alphabets, and also it was a resource to illustrate* (Balius, 2013).



Super Veloz modules typography



Typographic example of Super Veloz

Alex Trochut has as a reference his grandfather in order to meet the needs of the advertising industry and the decorative photography. Trochut makes contemporary the idea of Super Veloz and takes us beyond the written message showing us that typography is a message itself. The content becomes form while form also gives us content.

During the period of the exhibition by Alex Trochut in Baixa Zona, the Art Centre La Panera held a conference with the artistic group Unos Tipos Duros who showed us their art work in the art centre.



So Far, So Close. (2013) Unos Tipos Duros

Unos Tipos Duros want to debate, share, discover, propose and disclose the typography as the main actor in a speech. Typography is more than five centuries old. If we look around we will realize that typography is a dynamic part of our society. As we see with Alex Trochut and Unos Tipos Duros, typography has accompanied the development of society since its inception in the mid-fifteenth century. Its forms reflect the social, artistic and cultural variables of each time. The aesthetics of typography have developed based on past forms. Design is done as a series of cumulative designs which we can see reflected in the different type. Throughout history designers give meaning to a cultural artifact such as letters.

Alex Trochut and Unos Tipos Duros, are an art encounter with typography that take us through different rhizomatic wanderings into the typographies of the school context. Through the evolution of typographic a work is specify with our students about typefaces. The assignment proposal asked students to observe their surroundings and look for fonts and messages. The aim was to take photos of the typographical landscapes that surround us in everyday life. In that way, we realized about the diversity of typefaces we can see every day. As Unos Tipos Duros told us, history typography has been conditioned by the environment. The political conditions of our country have destroyed the typographical traces of earlier times. This fact let us to ask: where can we find the oldest lived typefaces in our environment? At the cemetery. We also decided to take photos of some of the typographical traces that remain in our country. We decided to go to the cemetery to observe the oldest typographies and see how they have been transformed. During the course, the future teachers attend school practices once a week in various schools in the city of Lleida. As a teacher team we think its of great importance the relationship between all the experiences and knowledge so that the students can connect processes, building bridges and relationships to integrate them into your being. For this reason, we also propose to take photos of typographies in their environment, in their school context and bring them into the class.

After that we will see what typographies were selected from the environment due to the art encounter with the work of Alex Trochut and Unos Tipos Duros. The interaction with these artworks allow students to establish new rhizomatic wanderings that alert and lead us through their talks and writings, to a disciplinary encounters with the subject of Languages II.

What are the voices, pictures and writings saying?

On the street...

Jordi shows these two commercial signs and says:



Kindergarten "L'infant"



Rodi Garage

About the signs we have found, we see that typography is related with the offered product. We found that the sign of a Kindergarten "L'infant" was written with a typography very similar to the one that children do when they start writing. Another example is the sign of a garage called Rodi, where the wheels of the cars are changed. In its sign, speed feeling typography is used. Ultimately, we have verified that the signs look for a suitable typography

to call clients attention. It is a way to "show" what they offer.

Jordi Macia

Furthermore, Adrià also pay attention on the identity of the typographies and on how we recognize it. Adrià makes graffities and tells us why he has chosen this typography through his experience:



It is cancer

One question we might ask is: if all signs were represented in the same way, we will get the same information? Obviously, no. The logos of advertisements are based on the idea of "identity". Typographies have to characterize you. When typographies are showed to the others they will identify them. That's my goal when I make graffiti. A clear example is Coca Cola. Looking at its typography we already know which product it is.

Adrià Rivera

At the University...

Montserrat observes her close environment, the university, and tells us how the work on typographies allows her to realize about a subliminal message and propose a transformation.



Work Viladot (Concret Poem)
(Child, boy, man, world)

Thank to the work on typographies, I've noticed that every morning when I enter into Faculty, I see the typographic work of Guillem Viladot (Concrete Poem). This work consists of four parts, where there is a masculine word in each. It is a work that generates my controversy because only represents the male world. My reaction to this work was a plot to promote equality.

Playing with the letters of the author, I changed the words getting a more positive feminine meaning.

Montserrat

At the cemetery ...

Maria Alba visited the cemetery of her city looking for typographical heterogeneity and tells us about her experience. She shows the typographical diversity in the cemetery through the word family:



The word Family in the headstones

Focusing on the activity of the cemetery, in the tombstones, I have observed that there are different types of typographies. Most of the letters are capitalized and some are linked. However, there are some attached to the headstone and others are cut into it. In some gravestone there are dedications that people write to their families. The tombstones with letters engraved or painted in the stone are older than the other with glued letters.

Typographies responds to the historical and social context of each person.

Maria Alba

At school ...

Future teachers took photos of the school's landscapes which allowed us to analyze which kind of typographies are used in schools. Next we could see different images of school fonts that students brought. Many of them took photos to the typographies used in the school alphabets.



School Alphabets

One out of 200 students that do school practice found different typographical alphabets. As we can see in the following pictures these typographic alphabets show

typographies made of food brands, aerial views of landscapes, buildings, etc.



Different School Alphabets

During the analysis of the typographical landscape from the current classrooms emerged questions such as: What kind of typographies can we see in schools today? Why do in schools only use linked and capitalized letters? Why aren't there variety of typographies in school? Alex Trochut and Unos Tipos Duros open our mind into new typographic landscapes and allow us to become aware of the typographical mortality that exists in many of classrooms today. What is it about the immobility of

typographic in the classroom? Why in a place of death, such as the cemetery, is there so much typographical life? Why in a place of life, such as schools, is there so typographical mortality? Are we condemned to live in repeating patterns? (Perec, 1979) Why don't we build an alphabet like Alex Trochut? What benchmarks and models do we give to our students? Marc says:

Through contemporary artists you break up with the three classic typefaces in schools: print, joined up and

capital. That is fine as it is a step towards learning to read and write going to the street and increasing functionality. Other activities could be reading brochures of carnival, catalogs of Carrefour, Media Markt,... After doing the work of typographies and view the wide variety that exist in our environment I have realized that it is essential to break this reductionism and impoverishment of the mind that involves working only three kind of fonts.

Marc Ticó

The art encounter with the works of Alex Trochut and Unos Tipos Duros shows us new possibilities to interact with typography. During the sessions at the University and in different learning contexts we realize that everyday environment is full of diverse typographies. However, the walls of the schools are full of print, joined up and capitalized alphabets letters. Contemporary art helps us to discover the heterogeneity of typographies found in our everyday environment showing us new meanings of typos in the XXI century. This allows future teachers to be more critical about the use of fonts in the school contexts.

Student voices "shout" us the need to go in to depth in the school typography. Contemporary art shows us different ways of relate to typography, but what does the discipline that works with typography tell? How does typography work in schools? At this time, art encounters lead us to interdisciplinary encounters with Language II subject. The teacher's team of both subjects decided to share teaching and learning processes about typography. The aim was to decide together new common proposals to help future teachers to reflect on the school typographic context.

Going deep with the work about typographies done in the subject of Process and Contexts II and within Languages II future teachers discussed in more depth about how typography is in schools today. We propose to future teachers to learn about and analyze the current teaching materials from different publishers. The goal was to see what kinds of typographies are used in the school context. Below we could see some images that our students took to analyze the typography textbooks.



Textbooks: 1st, 3th and 5th course

To analyze the different fonts that appear in various manuals from different publishers of textbooks of the three cycles of primary school let us to observe a great break between the typography that appears in the manuals of the first cycle and the Middle and Upper cycles.

Once our students have analyzed the fonts used in the school context we wonder: Where does the use of these fonts in the classrooms of the XXI century come from? Knowing this objective we did a literature search on the different trends that have influenced the use of the school typography. In the late nineteenth century in Europe first steps were taken to change the traditional calligraphic and typographic models, although it was not until the early twentieth century when the foundations of what was modern typography were sat. In this regard, between 1910 and 1930, appeared in Germany a series of reformers about typographies that tried to replace the Gothic typographies by new contemporary forms (McLean, 1999: 28).

Meanwhile, in other European countries such as Italy, Switzerland, Holland and Russia, avant-garde movements that emerged explore the possibilities of typography as an

expressive material and / or vehicle of communication in a pedagogical school level: Futurism, Dadaism, Constructivism and Neoplasticism. They found in typography a place for experimentation of traditional artistic media. Although most of their findings were highly controversial at that time and its application was limited to a small circle, later it expanded and incorporated daily through advertising as in the case of Joan Trochut. Trochout became a reference for both the artists and the most innovative teachers of the time and for those that come after them (McLean, 1999: 29). However, not all vanguard typographies joined the school. Most schools used the Montessori Method that advocates a type of writing based on learning cursive from well-established patterns. The reasons this pedagogues argued for the introduction of this typography in school is because it favors maturational aspects of personality. It allows childrens to write faster because they don't need to lift the pen with each letter. It also facilitates each word perceive as a whole for their links and requires the creation of spaces between words (Montessori, 2006: 269).



Two examples of typography Montessori

Some teachers use the same ideas that Montessori for teaching joined up letter. First, they say that it should be taught to follow and respect tradition. Second, learning cursive seems to favor the neurological and psychomotor development of children. Nevertheless, increasingly, it has been found that many children of five and six years begin to write their first words through the computer keyboard and do not use the stylus to develop their motor skills. We live in a world of globalization in which computers play a very important place, however, it is important to observe how parents and teachers encourage children in handling proper cursive writing, making identity and acquire good traits. This reflection raises new questions in the classroom as: what is the pedagogical point to still having cursive typographies in the XXI century? In a context dominated by printing letter and used in all media texts (books, computers, mobile phones and other electronic devices), How does teaching cursive contribute teaching?

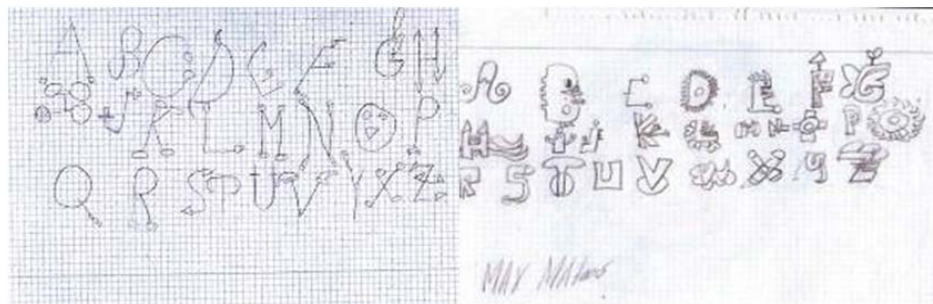
Critics argue that cursive writing environments (paper or virtual) are ruled and governed by the press. They state that it does not have much grip with the reality of education to continue teaching something that will not be used in adult life, and that if in a student activity formal and aesthetic issues graphology are added, that distracts

from the main purpose: alphabetize and learn to write correctly.

3. The Student as Producer. Constructing New Typographic Landscapes for Teaching and Learning

The art encounters generated in the subject of Processes and Contexts II led us through various rhizomatic wanderings to interdisciplinary encounters, in this case with the subject of Language II. This fact has allowed future teachers to materialize different interventions in the environment related to typography, generating new rhizomatic possibilities.

By opening our mind to typographical environments through contemporary art and to analyze the typographies of school from a specific curriculum subject allowed us to be conscious about the typographical homogeneity of our school contexts going deeper on some of the reasons why. Adrià set up a dynamic practice in his school. Adrià asked his students to make a new alphabet that must have been developed from their own production of new typefaces.



Children Alphabets

Children have the ability to create different fonts from those we found in the classroom. Despite this, teachers are often those who do not allow them to create and use them. As teachers we must let them build creative and construction processes.

Adrià Magallanes

Montserrat, after being aware of the male view of Viladot's work, decided to propose a virtual intervention. She changes the negative and the male view to an equal and feminist view.



Montserrat Aldomà propose and redesign by Mireia Farrero.
(We are Equal, Persons, alive)

Adrià Rivera and Veronica Parisi proposed an interdisciplinary typographic intervention at University campus. Adrià and Veronica decided to draw graffiti with yarn. The need to go deeper with typographies takes Adrià and Veronica to make an interdisciplinary work between graffiti and the knitting. The graffiti was the signature that Adrià uses in his works. At that point, the interdisciplinary work leads them to create a new typography influenced by the materials used. Their production appropriates a fence that has recently been placed on the campus of the University. This typography is a form of protest to get the Campus again to be a public space. Adrià and Veronica told their classmates the creative process of this typographical intervention on the fence.

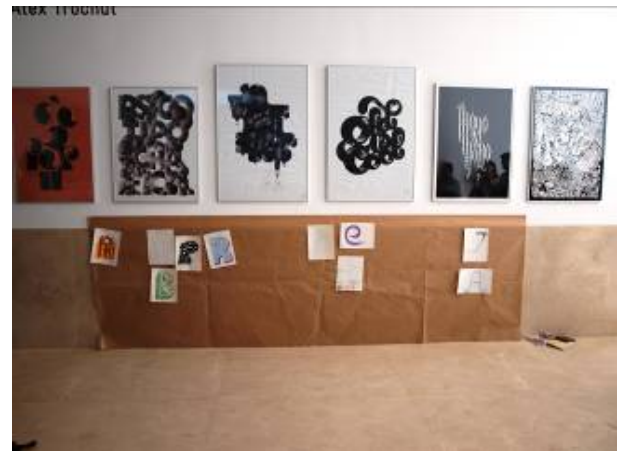
We do not like the fence of the campus so we decided to intervene it. We did that with Veronica in a interdisciplinary way. If you are doing patchwork with wool, why do not make graffiti with the same material? So we are breaking with the traditional idea that typography graffiti can only be done with paint sprays.

Adrià Rivera



Typographic fence

All these interventions transformed the school and university typographic landscape but they also expand to other educational contexts like the secondary school of Gil i Gaya in Lleida. Future teachers set up a new rhizomatic wandering welcoming the visiting the students of second course of ESO from Gaya i Gil high school. In the frame of the subject of Visual Arts, the high school students have design five types of typographies from which they had to choose one for their final project cover. At the University the students have proposed to visit the work of Alex Trochut in Baixa area, so that students could see other fonts and realize new proposals. During their visit to Zona Baixa high school students showed their typefaces and shared their creative processes. As they narrated their processes, university teachers, future teachers and practitioners of the art center La Panera mediated learning through the artwork and the creative process of Trochut.



Gil i Gaya students visit

High School students visited Zona Baixa with an initial proposal cover that they transformed by their visit.



Student's covers

Once the meeting with the students of the institute ended future teachers wonder: why does typography only is worked in Visual Arts? Why do we only consider typography when we need to do a cover or write a title for a work?

4. Conclusions

In this paper we have shown an experience in which art encounters, in our case with the typography of Alex Trochut and Unos Tipos Duros, lead us to other interdisciplinary encounters. Through the various rhizomatic wanderings we showed by the writing of the future teachers we can see how intersidicplinary encounters emerged from art encounters.

Future teachers show us how the encounter with contemporary art has been used as a catalyst for understanding and analyzing the typefaces of our environment and the school context. Alex Trochut and Unos Tipos Duros, open our mind to the typographical reality outside the school's walls. In that way we see typography nowadays so this is a loan of consciousness to make us aware, from a critical view, the school and educational environment. Interaction with contemporary art opens multiple and diverse possibilities to be relate to typography (rhizomatic wanderings). Moreover, future teachers are placed on interdisciplinary encounters. Art encounters "shout" the need to work together and make joint proposals from different materials. So that, we asked: Would we have been able to generate these processes of teaching and learning without the art encounters? Would have happened the same if from the discipline of Language II would have used typography without interacting with subject of Contexts and Processes II and art encounters? Or vice versa: Would have happened the same if the art encounters from Contexts and Processes II

had worked typography without a discipline encounter with Languages II?

The interdisciplinary encounters between a pedagogical subject and another discipline subject about languages through contemporary art allowed us to see that the school today opts for teaching cursive letters following a school centenary tradition. The interdisciplinary encounters generated through art encounters have made us aware of the few typographical stimuli in the classrooms of the XXI century. We should note that in our country there is no specific curricular legislation that requires schools to teach cursive. In fact, in the primary curriculum there is no explicit reference to letter type. Despite this, the large presence of textbooks in schools affects the kind of typography used in schools. If we as teachers are not open to the heterogeneity of possibilities about fonts in our area, we will only collect alphabets hanging three types of typography: print, joined up and capital letter.

In this article we have shown a experience from the University of Lleida we committed to build art encounters that allow us to create new discipline encounters through rhizomatic wanderings.

We want to end this article with the voice of Jordi Escarp, teacher's student who has a prior training in computer field:

Are there lines of flight in all electronic devices so you can intervene nature? The answer is yes. All times we can open our mind and look for possible connections that an object can have with nature, like typography. Fonts are transformed by technology, as we can see with fonts that are appearing every day in our computers. There are always something different. The typography is no longer freezes in the keyboard, but expands and becomes a relationship to nature, to what surrounds us.

Jordi Escarp



keyboard being alive

Jordi Escarp transforms his tool giving "life" to the fixed fonts of the keyboard. Jordi took out all keyboard's keys and gave them life by planting herb to symbolize the need to look at the natural.

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