



WORKEQUALSPLAY

A GRAPHIC DESIGN PORTFOLIO
BY METAGRAMME



How nice of you to drop by.

WORK = PLAY

WORK EQUALS PLAY

A Graphic Design Portfolio

Written, designed, illustrated, and second-guessed
by Matt Steel, Owner & Design Director at Metagramme

For Graham



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*This is how sections in the book are arranged.

“The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play.”

—ARNOLD TOYNBEE

HELLO AND WELCOME to Metagramme in print. After almost six years of freelancing and working in agencies, studios, and one in-house marketing department, I started this company with my wife Leslie in March 2009. Located in a tidy, historic neighborhood of Saint Louis, Missouri, we produce smart design driven by clear strategy for print, web, and graphics for built environments. In other words, we make ourselves useful by paying close attention to who our clients are, who they want to be, and by thinking critically about how best to solve their visual problems. The consistent result is beautifully appropriate design.

I am Mr. Design & Art Direction and Leslie is Mrs. Finance & Organization. So far our little enterprise has been successful. Between my creativity and her efficiency, we make a passably well-rounded brain. We are a small studio and want to keep it that way. We like having personal relationships with clients and vendors. When you call our office, I am the one who answers the phone. There are no layers of hierarchy to get to

the person producing the work. Our overhead is minimal, which allows us to offer very reasonable fees and work comfortably with all kinds of budgets. I am thoroughly involved in every single project, large or small, from initial meetings through completion. This ensures continuity and attention to detail at every stage.

Over the years we have gathered a nationwide network of fine collaborators—from writers, photographers, and illustrators to printers, fabricators, videographers, and web developers. This means that we're able to pull off everything from invitations to multi-faceted branding campaigns. We can't hold a candle to the output of large agencies; but after flipping through or perhaps even reading this book, I hope you will agree that the quality of our work is on par with the best graphic designers in the field.

I am happiest when a good idea takes hold, and the line between work and play becomes blurred. At such times the hours fly past. This is when

I produce my most effective work. The projects you're about to see are tangible results of what happens when work becomes play.

Much of the work shown here was designed before we launched Metagramme as a full time practice. After all, this is only our first year in business. Unless otherwise stated, I was the lead designer on all projects. I am forever grateful to those who have mentored me over the years—in particular, Siri Nadler, Ron Thompson, and Deanna Kuhlmann-Leavitt. Metagramme is largely where it is today due to the wisdom and skill of these accomplished designers.

If any part of this portfolio seems incomplete or shallow, it's because we are young, a little too enthusiastic, and nowhere near our peak of creative output. From here it only gets better.

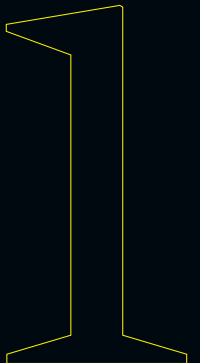
I hope you enjoy our book.

—MATT STEEL
Saint Louis, Missouri
28 August 2009

“In June 2009 my company needed a corporate brochure that would efficiently communicate who and what we are. Our product is visual (tailored safety signs and labels), and the locations in which they are placed can be visually interesting. Metagramme created a brochure that elegantly conveyed our company’s distinctive competence. Everything about the brochure’s design, from choice of pictures and words to its typography, layout and paper choice were absolutely right. For the first time in our 20-year history I feel like we have a corporate brochure that we can be proud of.”

—GEOFFREY PECKHAM
CEO
Clarion Safety Systems

Print Collateral —Books, Brochures, & Posters



**Formica
Group**

—
SurfaceMix

SurfaceMix refers to the range of products—from laminates to solid surfacing and real wood veneers—that Formica makes to cover all manner of surfaces.

The brief was to design a modestly sized yet lavish book to serve as inspiration for architects and interior designers: the people who specify Formica products.



The process of combining color and texture was mirrored with five different paper stocks and three different printing techniques. Images show all the ways Formica products can be paired and juxtaposed. Scattered throughout the book are intricate illustrations which draw from and enhance the content in each section.

Design Firm:

Kuhlmann
Leavitt, Inc.

—
Design Director:

Deanna Kuhlmann-
Leavitt

—
Art Directors:

Deanna Kuhlmann-
Leavitt, Matt Steel,
Tom Twellman,
Krista Hoppe

—
Writer:

Penny Benda

—
Primary

Photography:

Scott Dorrance

—
Printing:

The Hennegan
Company







LONGUEURS D'ONDES ÉMOTIONNELLES
(COULEURS CLASSÉES EN FONCTION DE LEUR IMPACT ÉMOTIONNEL MOYEN, PAR ORDRE DÉCRÉISSANT)

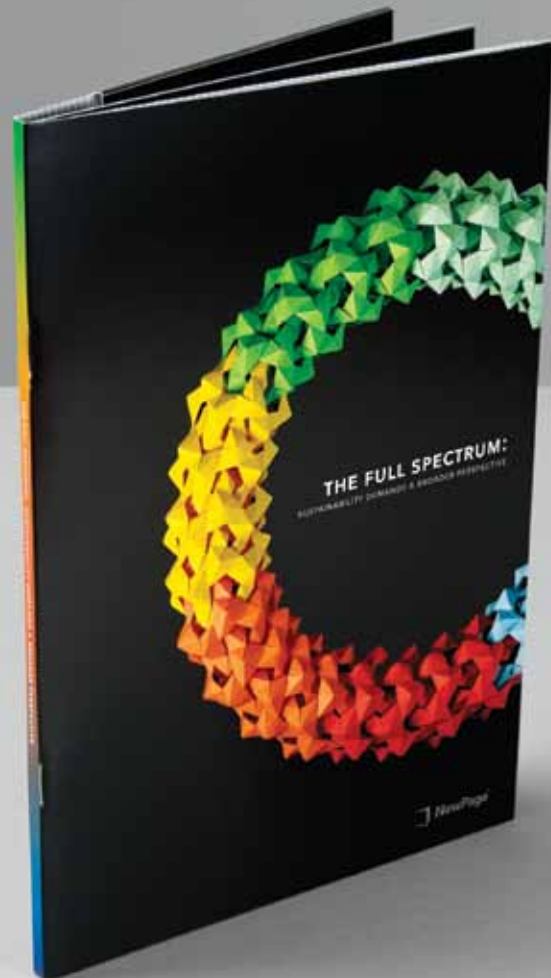
LONGITUD DE ONDA EMOCIONAL
(DISPOSICIÓN DE COLORES DE ATRÁS HACIA ABAJO SEGÚN LA MEDIA DE IMPACTO EMOCIONAL)



**NewPage
Corporation**

—
*The Full
Spectrum*

NewPage, a commercial paper company, needed a vehicle to tell their sustainability story. Their approach to sustainability encompasses not only green efforts, but a whole host of well-balanced business management and consumption practices.



The Full Spectrum uses origami—multifaceted and colorful—to illustrate the story. Photographer Terry Heffernan brought these beautiful shapes to life.

The campaign was printed on paper that holds three environmental certifications, using non-toxic, water-based coatings. Designed with Tom Twellman at Kuhlmann Leavitt, Inc.

Design Firm:
Kuhlmann
Leavitt, Inc.

—
Design Director:
Deanna Kuhlmann-
Leavitt

—
Art Director:
Tom Twellman

—
Writer:
Penny Benda

—
Photographer:
Terry Heffernan

—
Stylist:
Linda Mihara

—
Illustrators:
Dusty Deyo,
Tom Twellman,
Matt Steel

—
Printing:
The Hennegan
Company







THE FULL SPECTRUM: SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS FOR EVERY PROJECT

 NewPage®

NEWPAGE CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

NewPage is the largest coated paper manufacturer in North America and is committed to providing a wide range of sustainable paper products.

NewPage offers a wide range of products, including: **premium** (Gloss, Matte, Carbon Black, Recycled), **#1** (Advanced Print, Professional Print, Professional Print, Professional Print, Professional Print, Professional Print), **#2** (Advanced Print, Professional Print, Professional Print, Professional Print, Professional Print, Professional Print), and **#3** (Advanced Print, Professional Print, Professional Print, Professional Print, Professional Print, Professional Print).

**DIRECT MAIL
COMMERCIAL PRINTING
BOOKS
UPSCALE CATALOGS AND MAGAZINES
BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS
ANNUAL REPORTS**

All NewPage mills in North America have implemented chain-of-custody systems that are third-party certified. These systems ensure that all fiber secured for NewPage paper production comes from responsible sources.

NewPage provides assurance of responsible and sustainable fiber sourcing and usage. For customers that need chain-of-custody certification, we have solutions from premium through SC-A4. Most of these products are available with recycled content from 10-30% as well. When you need to communicate responsible sourcing, NewPage has the full spectrum of high quality product solutions.

#2
Continued: Subject

LWU
Expansion

SC-A4
Voyager Artist
Voyager etc.

**MAGAZINES
CATALOGS
INSERTS AND FLYERS
WORKBOOKS AND MANUALS
HIGH-END RETAIL INSERTS**

* FSC certified by FSC, PEFC and others
 ** Dual-certified by FSC and PEFC
 *** PEFC certified only

The Ligature

—
*The Ligature on
 Brand Identity*

Known worldwide for their beautiful print work from engraving to embossing, letterpress, and foil stamping for stationery projects, The Ligature wanted to announce their other strengths in lithography, online ordering, and inventory management.

The theme of Brand Identity arose as a distillation of how The Ligature helps build and elevate brands through

fine printing. Line drawings referring to DNA reinforce this concept, and show off The Ligature's skill in producing crisp detail and smooth color.

After the brochure's release in 2006, The Ligature enjoyed an increase in new business and rave reviews from existing clients.

Design Firm:

Kuhlmann
 Leavitt, Inc.

Design Director:

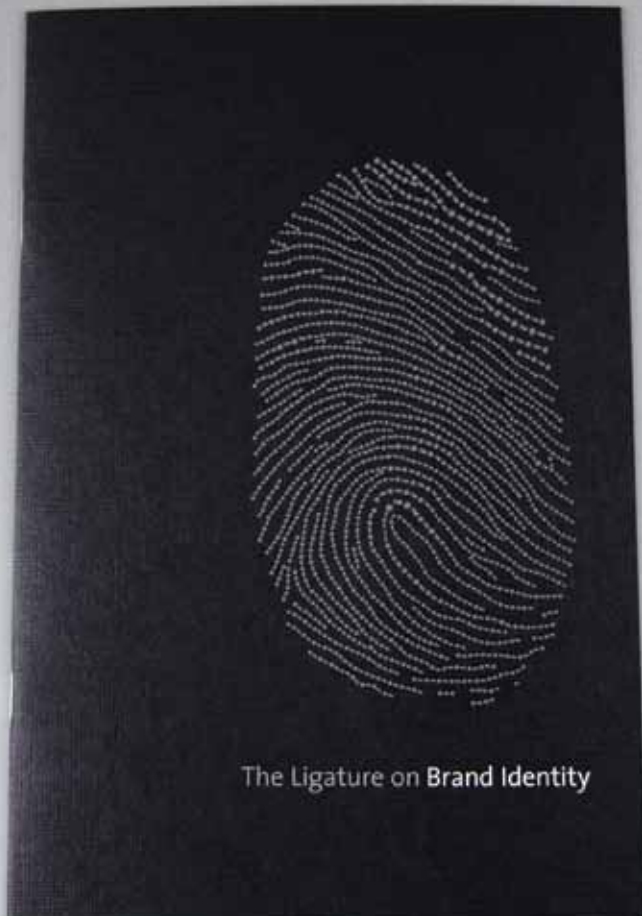
Deanna Kuhlmann-
 Leavitt

Writer:

Penny Benda

Photographer:

Eric Schmidt







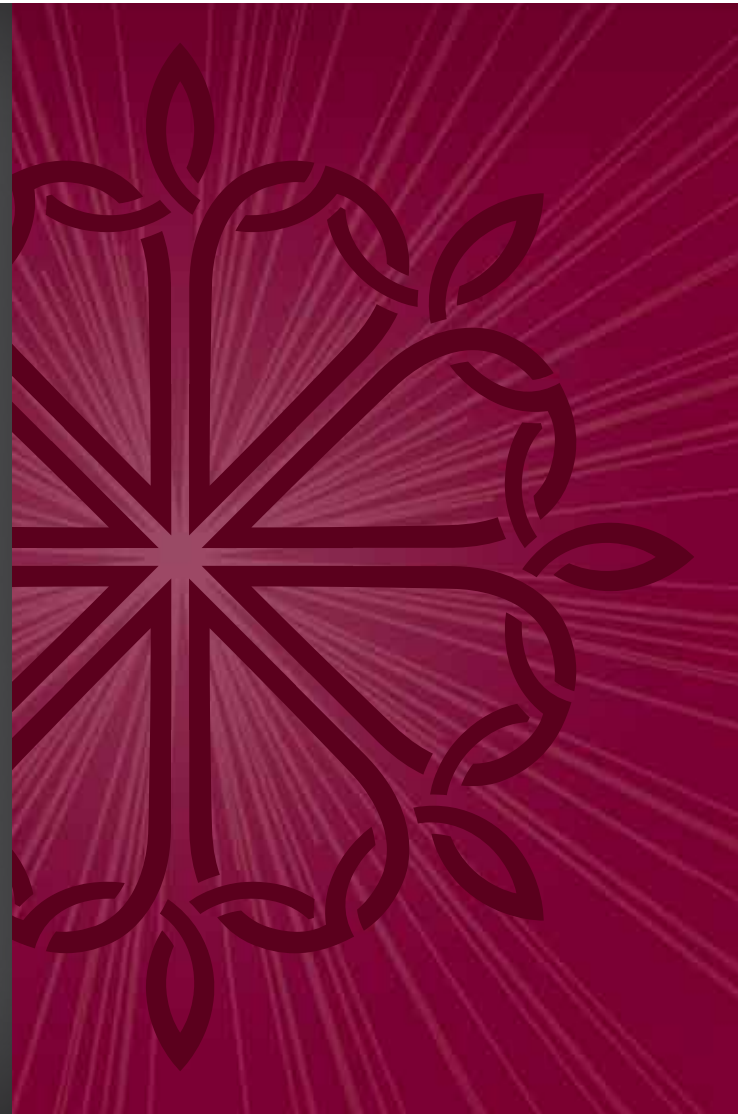
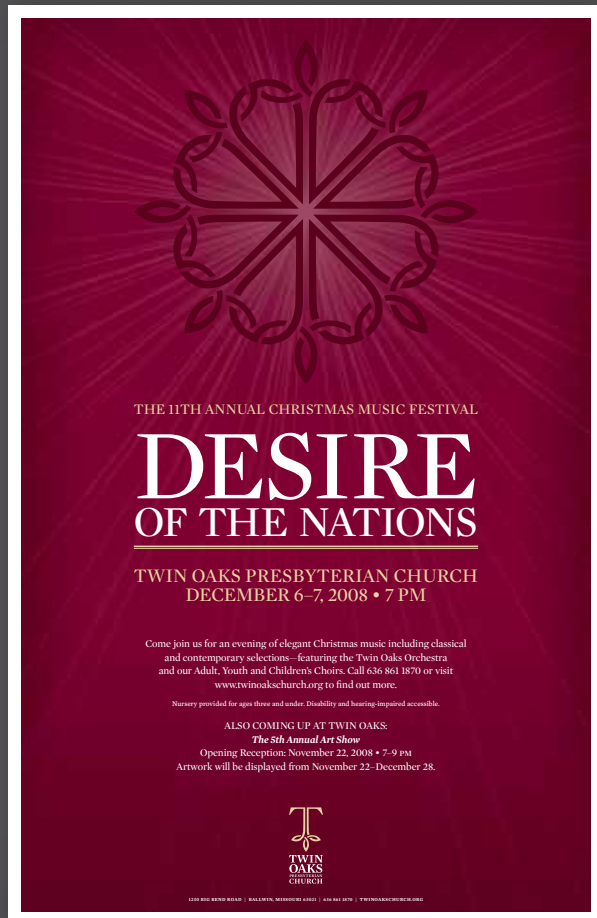
**Twin Oaks
Presbyterian
Church**

—
Advent Poster

On the heels of creating a new visual identity for Twin Oaks, a wide array of projects arose including the weekly bulletin, the monthly newsletter, and various other items (see pages 36–39 for more on the identity design).

For the Advent season, I designed a suite of materials to promote their Christmas music festival. The warm, symmetrical look of the poster mirrors the fully orchestrated selections of new and old classical music.

Design Firm:
Metagramme



“Working with Metagramme has been an enlightening process in understanding more of our own identity. And that’s exactly what a good designer should do: communicate a concept that can even help change the client’s thinking of what their company is truly about.”

—KEVIN KELLY
Creative Agent & CEO
Anti-Agency

Visual Identities —Logos & Systems



**Twin Oaks
Presbyterian
Church**

—
*Logo and
Style Guide*

I created a graphic identity for Twin Oaks Presbyterian Church which describes their doctrinal roots, and their desire to build strong relationships both in and outside of the church. The logo combines subtle references to Twin Oaks's name, their philosophy of growth, the cross, the Holy Trinity, and the church's historical connection to Scottish Presbyterianism—all in one timeless mark.



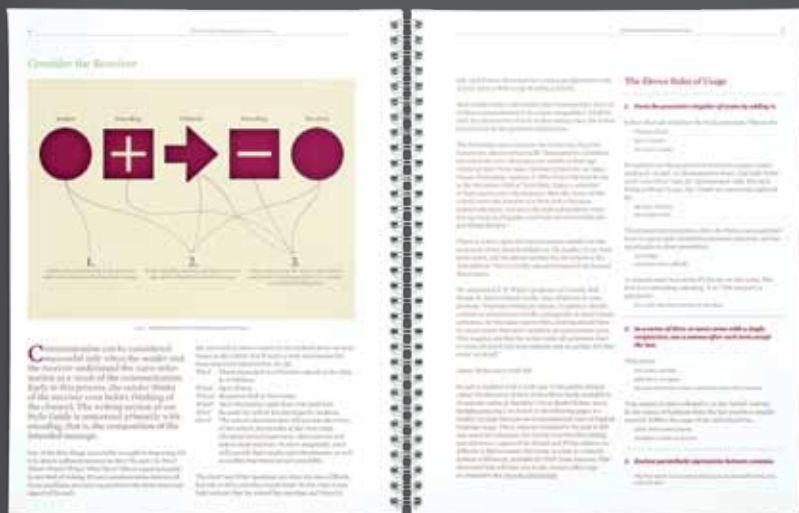
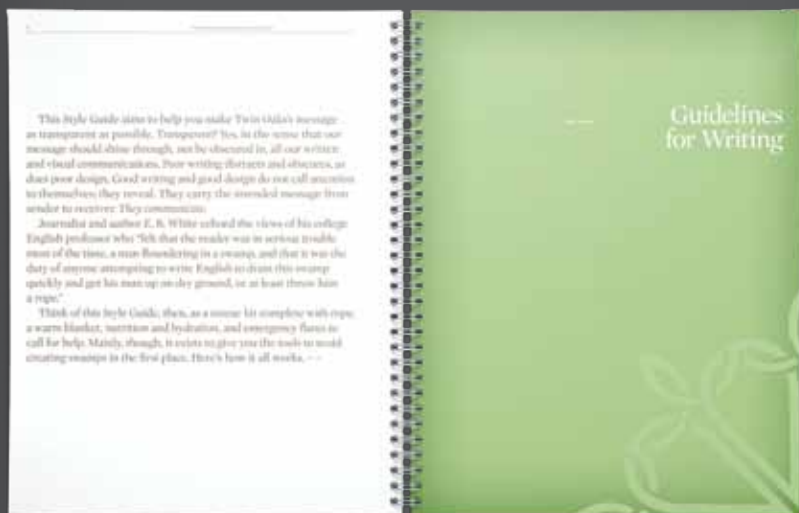
Since then, Metagramme has co-written and designed a comprehensive Style Guide for the church staff, covering all communication tools from writing to typography.

Design Firms:
Kuhlmann
Leavitt, Inc.,
Metagramme

—
Design Directors:
Deanna Kuhlmann-
Leavitt, Matt Steel

—
Writers:
Nickolas Eicher,
Matt Steel





Herbie's

—

*Full Identity
Program*

Herbie's is a French-American restaurant and bar in the West End of Saint Louis. Located in the same building as Balaban's, a Saint Louis landmark from 1972–2008, Herbie's maintained much of the ambience, almost all of the original French artwork and several classic menu items for a new, yet familiar dining experience.

I was the design lead on a comprehensive identity program which included logotype, menus, stationery, ads, and website. My colleagues designed the signage and consulted on the interior decor. The new identity ties Herbie's to the old Balaban's with the "Vintage 72" strapline.

Design Firm:

Kuhlmann
Leavitt, Inc.

—

Design Director:

Deanna Kuhlmann-
Leavitt

HERBIE'S
— *Vintage 72* —





Formica Group

Stationery

This simple but classy stationery suite for Formica Group employs engraved printing and colorful patterns made from the logo, reinforcing what Formica products are all about: texture, pattern and color.



The new stationery was part of a global branding effort, driven by a style guide which I helped develop that included guidelines on every aspect of their brand, from working with the iconic Formica logo to print collateral, websites, presentations, and typography.

Design Firm:
Kuhlmann
Leavitt, Inc.

Design Director:
Deanna Kuhlmann-
Leavitt

Printing:
The Ligature





Logos:
Various
Clients

Shown on this spread and the next is a small collection of logos I've designed throughout my career.

When designing logos—whether for a small start-up or a well-established corporation—I spend many hours sketching concepts and drawing type. I find that I do my best thinking with a pencil, to paraphrase renowned designer and educator Milton Glaser.



Every one of the logos shown in this book use type that was either drawn from scratch, or modified from an existing font. After all, a successful logo must be unique; and besides having a good, original concept, custom lettering is the best way to achieve this.

All logos below are shown without color for the sake of highlighting concept and form.

Design Firms:
Metagramme
(Anti-Agency,
Electric Egg, Flock,
Scott Stinehagen),
and Kuhlmann
Leavitt, Inc. (B&T,
The Miami Sessions,
SurfaceMix, Unifund)

Design Directors:
Matt Steel, Deanna
Kuhlmann-Leavitt

Note:
*Logos for B&T, The
Miami Sessions,
and Unifund were
proposed logos and
differ from the final
designs chosen.*





surface**mix**TM

J^{os}. SCOTT
STINEHAGEN^{LLC}

unifund

“Finally, I found someone who could read my mind.
What I mean by that is Matt routinely takes my
rambling, incoherent thoughts and turns them into
excellent concepts, then executes perfectly.”

—NICKOLAS EICHER
Publisher
WORLD Magazine

Advertising —Art Direction & Design



**WORLD
Magazine**

—
Print Ad
Campaign

WORLD Magazine is a non-profit news organization that operates from a Christian perspective. They approached Metagramme to create an ad campaign to encourage happy subscribers to give gift subscriptions to friends, family, and colleagues. The deal was that new subscribers could get eight issues of WORLD for eight dollars.

I conceived, illustrated and designed two ads with the same basic message, but that played on the numbers game in different ways—one that harkens back to the classroom, and another with illustrative filigree akin to money. Both ads featured the timely headline: “It’s Nice when the Numbers Work in Your Favor.”

Design Firm:
Metagramme

Writing:
Matt Steel,
Nick Eicher

Photography:
Thomas Collins
for Getty

WORLD MAGONOMICS

$$\frac{8 \text{ ISSUES}}{8 \text{ DOLLARS}} = 1^* \text{ Happy New Subscriber}$$

*MULTIPLY AS NEEDED!

It's Nice when the Numbers Work in Your Favor.

Is there someone you know who ought to be receiving WORLD Magazine? **Introducing our 8/8 program: For just \$8, we'll send 8 issues (4 months!) of WORLD to anyone who isn't a subscriber.** You might have a friend, family member, pastor, or coworker who might subscribe but has never heard of WORLD. This is a great way to spread the word.

We understand that people everywhere are making short-term budget adjustments these days. That's why we're offering the 8/8 program—so you can give the gift of WORLD without breaking the bank.

WORLD Magazine's uniquely hard-hitting, truth-telling, Christian worldview journalism stands in stark contrast to other news organizations in confusing, chaotic days like these. Share WORLD with a friend—or lots of friends!

Our 8 issues for \$8 subscription is a trial offer and may not be renewed at this price. **Call 800.951.6397 or visit www.worldmag.com/8for8 to find out more today.**

WORLD
MAGAZINE

★ IT'S NICE WHEN THE NUMBERS WORK IN YOUR FAVOR. ★

Is there someone you know who ought to be receiving WORLD Magazine? **Introducing our 8/8 program: For just \$8, we'll send 8 issues (4 months!) of WORLD to anyone who isn't a subscriber.** You might have a friend, family member, pastor, or coworker who might subscribe but has never heard of WORLD. This is a great way to spread the word.

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Our 8 issues for \$8 subscription is a trial offer and may not be renewed at this price. **Call 800.951.6397 or visit www.worldmag.com/8for8 to find out more today.**

WORLD
MAGAZINE

“Working with Metagramme is one of the highlights of my work day. Their amazing talent shines through in every creative piece. Whether the campaign calls for print, web design, or both, I have absolute trust in their ability to produce a top notch piece each and every time.”

—DAWN STEPHENSON
Marketing Manager
WORLD Magazine

Interactive —Website Design & Direction



**Gregg
Goldman
Photography**

Flash Website

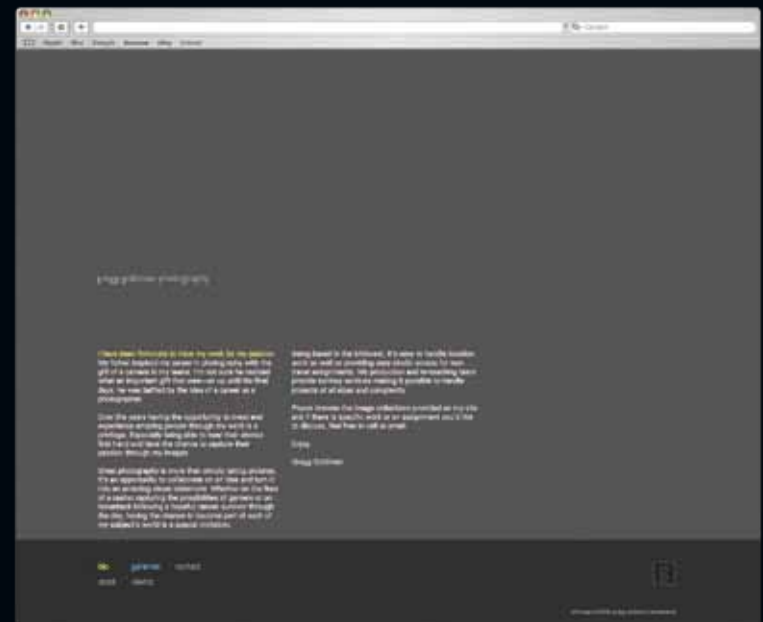
Gregg Goldman is an internationally recognized photographer based in Saint Louis. He required a new website to show his growing portfolio. I designed a Flash interface that scales itself to the viewer's browser, so the images always appear at an optimum size and resolution. The navigation is simple, intuitive and quiet—letting Gregg's work speak for itself.

Diptychs and triptych arrangements of images throughout the site—whether part of a series or placed together for contrast—create unique associations and showcase the breadth and depth of Gregg's skill.

Design Firm:
Kuhlmann
Leavitt, Inc.

Design Director:
Deanna Kuhlmann-
Leavitt

Site Build:
Propaganda3





Unifund

Hybrid Website

Unifund is a B2B company that buys and sells debt. Their business model allows banks and other creditors to maintain client relationships, all while putting bad debt to work.

I was the design lead in rebranding all of Unifund's corporate communications, from advertising, stationery and sales collateral to trade show graphics and website.

The site is deceptively simple, with various entry points for different audiences. An HTML framework with a navigational system and animated ads built in Flash allows the site to load quickly with excellent usability across all platforms.

Design Firm:

Kuhlmann
Leavitt, Inc.

Design Director:

Deanna Kuhlmann-
Leavitt

Photographer:

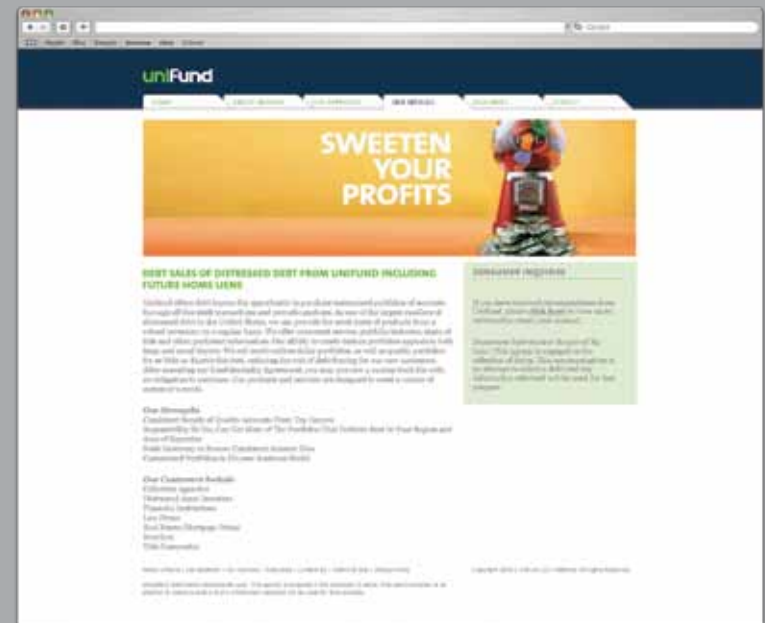
Pete McArthur

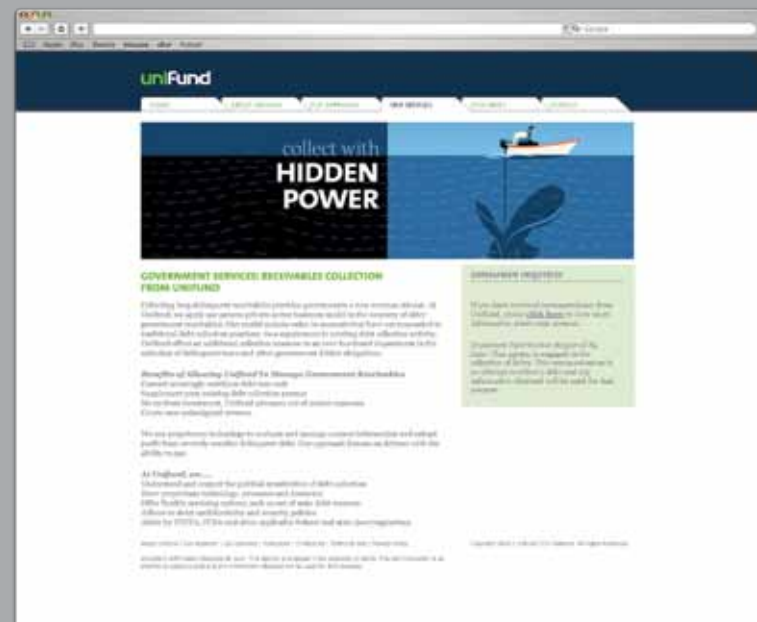
Illustrator:

Craig Frazier

Site Build:

Propaganda3

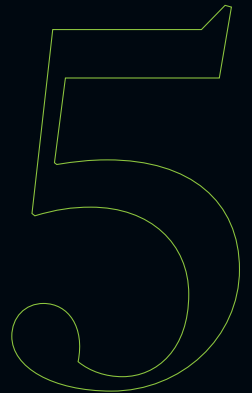




“We have had the pleasure of working with Matt Steel for several years. While working at his previous studio, Matt showcased the rare gift of being both a talented designer and a good listener. Now as he heads up Metagramme, Matt brings his prior knowledge and the desire to learn and improve to each job. From collaboration to concept to completion, Matt’s attention to detail and ability to incorporate fresh ideas throughout the process ultimately results in attractive and effective design.”

—CHRIS PENNELL
President
The Ligature

Illustration —Image & Information



The Ligature

—
Concept
Illustrations

When The Ligature approached us to design their capabilities brochure, we explored multiple concepts. Some of my favorite directions didn't make the final cut, such as "The Ligature on Imagination." This particular concept involved illustrations scattered throughout the book—simple silhouettes of surreal, whimsical objects and wild juxtapositions.



The idea behind this direction was that when smart, creative concepts and excellent printing come together, a unique and powerful result takes place which cannot be otherwise duplicated.

Design Firm:

Kuhlmann
 Leavitt, Inc.

Design Director:

Deanna Kuhlmann-
 Leavitt

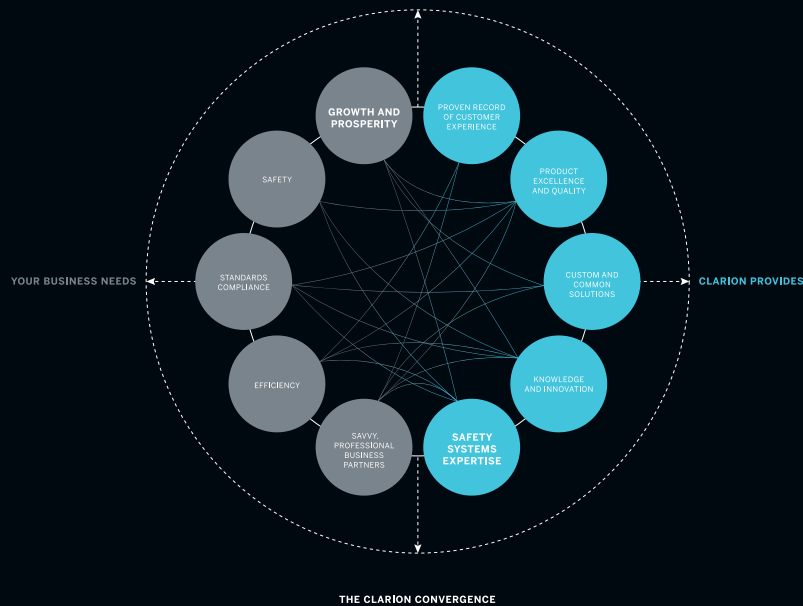




Clarion Safety Systems

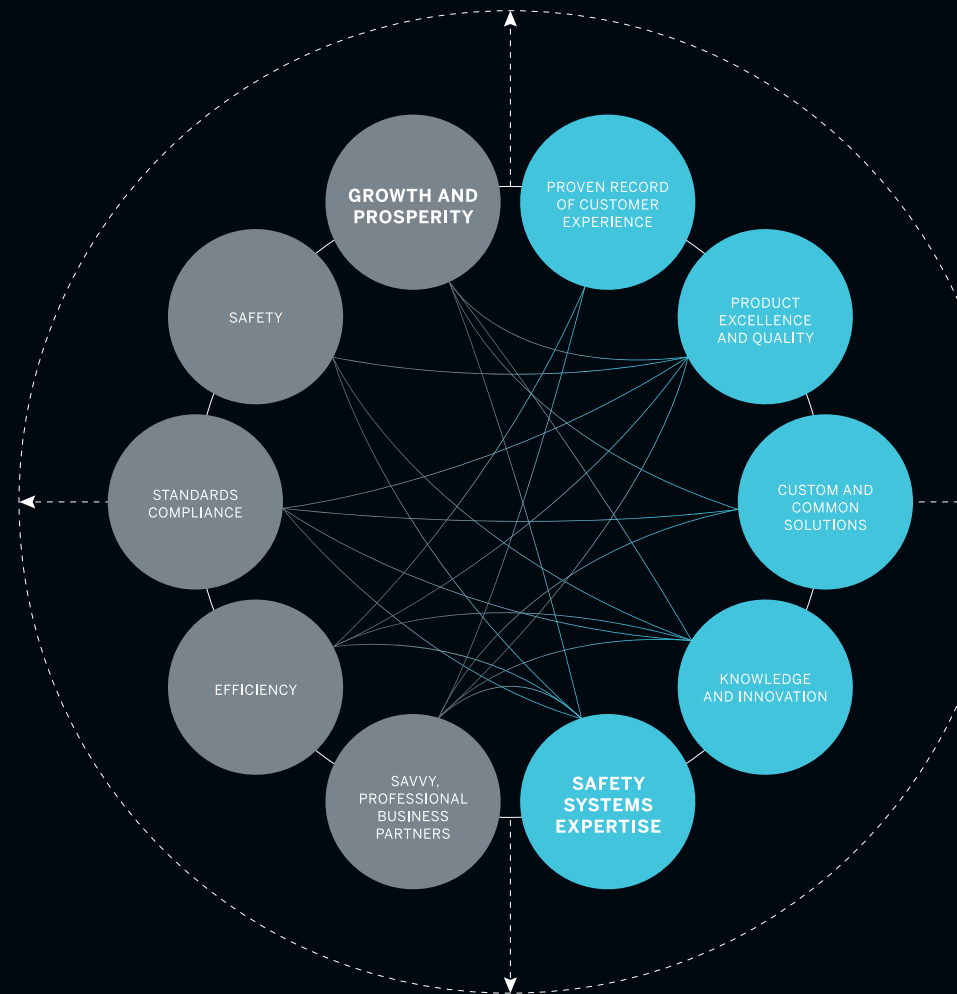
—
Information
Graphics

Clarion Safety Systems designs and produces safety and hazard signage for a wide range of companies across the world. They commissioned Metagramme to create a new corporate sales piece. Central to the original brief was a conceptual drawing which would clearly describe their products and services.



As the direction of brochure changed, we moved away from this early graphic but still felt it effectively described the convergence of need and expertise that Clarion was uniquely positioned to fulfill for their clients.

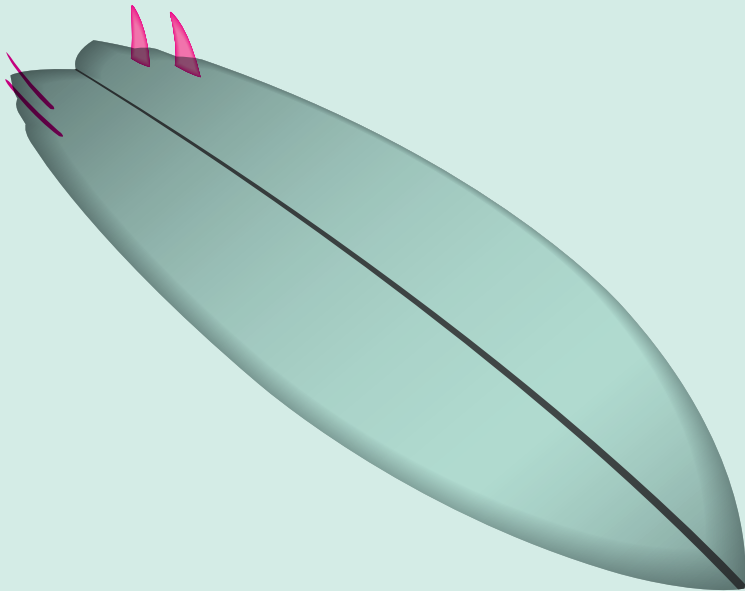
Design Firm:
Metagramme



Self-Initiated

—
*The Madison
 Letters*

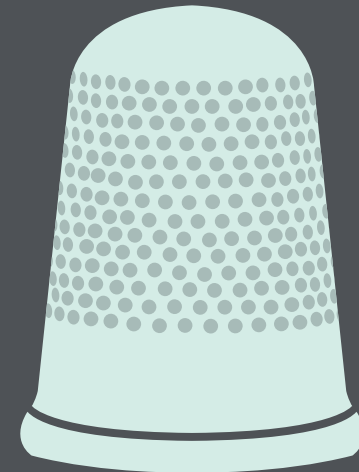
At the beginning of my relationship with my wife, Leslie, we lived in different parts of the country. Due to the long distance, there had been many emails flying back and forth, especially in the first few months. When the time came to propose, I decided to create a visual record of our relationship—something she could have as a keepsake for the rest of our lives.



Our emails took the form of a small book entitled *The Madison Letters* (after the town where Leslie lived before we were married), with simple illustrations scattered throughout. Each drawing represented important events and artifacts in our lives to date.

Needless to say, this is by far the most successful design project I've undertaken.

Design Firm:
 Personal project





IF YOU'VE GOTTEN THIS FAR, chances are you've probably seen something that interests you, or you're the sort of person who reads the end of a story before the beginning. At any rate, this little book has made its way into your hands because you are a person we'd very much like to work with. Some of you have already worked with Metagramme, and with this book we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

By now you have some sense of our capabilities and have perhaps even drawn conclusions about our personalities. We believe life is too short to take ourselves too seriously, and we pride ourselves on the fact that our success has just as much (if not more) to do with being nice, hard-working people than any sparkling design chops we may or may not possess.

If you care to see even more work, visit us online at metagramme.com for a less tactile, yet much more environmentally friendly experience. We look forward to producing something remarkable with you.

COLOPHON

TYPOGRAPHY

The type in this book is set in Mercury Display, designed by Hoefler & Frere-Jones in 1996, and National, designed by Kris Sowersby/Klim Type Foundry in 2007.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Portfolio photography by Kevin Kelly (gentletrouble.com).

PAPER

Mohawk Superfine, 100lb. cover and 100lb. text.

PRINTING

Digitally printed on a six-color HP Indigo press by Top Graphics in Saint Louis, Missouri.

HELP IS ON THE WAY

If any of the arcane information on this page is remotely interesting to you, please call Metagramme immediately at 636 328 5868 before your condition gets any worse.



All good, mediocre, and bad things
must come to an end.



Meta**gramme**