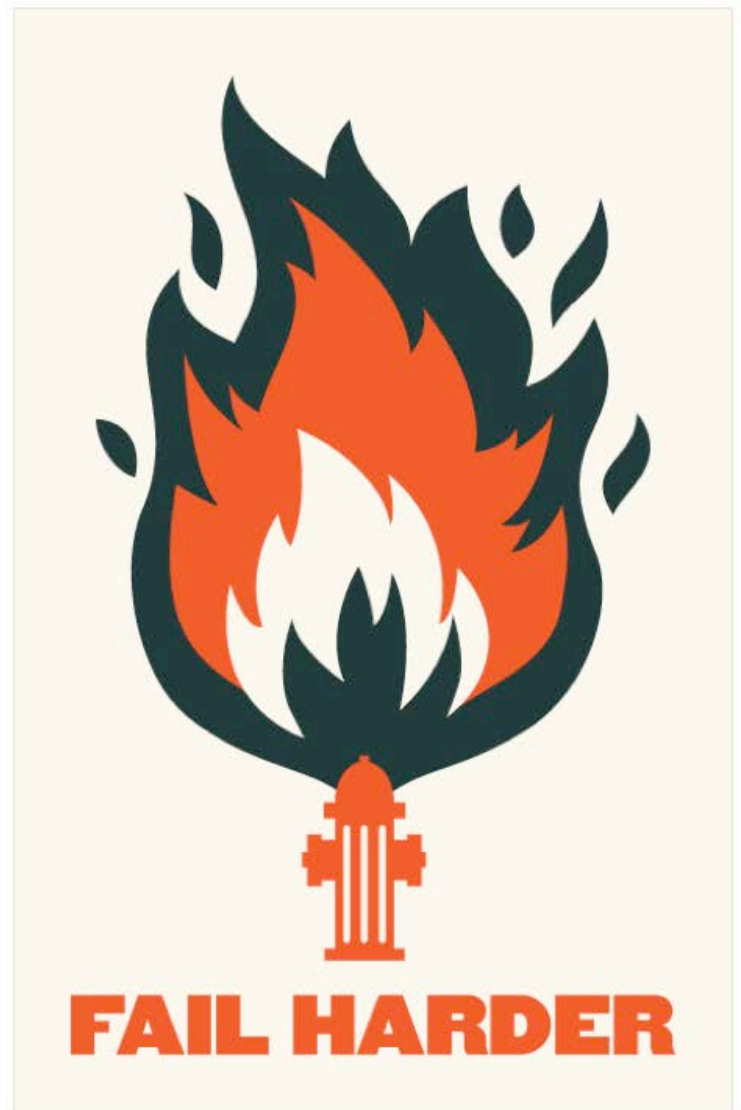# Design Thinking

Get ideas quickly and overcome creative block

Ben Barry designforfun.com

Design Thinking

Brainstorming
Brainstorming means attacking a problem from many directions at once, bombarding it with rapid-fire questions, in order to come up with viable solutions.

Brainstorm Rules
One Conversations at a time
Go for Quantity
Headline!
Build on the Ideas of Others
Encourage wild ideas
Be Visual
Stay on Topic
Defer Judgement- No Blocking

DOVE
DOVE is a guideline or protocol for brainstorming an idea in a group. It is intended to encourage creativity in an inclusive manner.

D – defer judgement on any one else's ideas or comments
O – opt for the unusual and creative
V – generate a vast number of ideas
E – expand on the ideas by piggy backing off others.

Visual Brain Dumping / Rapid Viz
This technique transforms brainstorming into a visual medium suited for working individually.

1. Start sketching. After defining the basic purpose and parameters of your project, get some paper and a pencil and start making quick, small drawing.

2. Set a time limit. In a twenty-minute period, shoot for at least twenty sketches. Put many small drawings on each page so that you can compare them.

3. Keep moving. Rather than erasing and refining one sketch, make alternative views of the same idea. Review your ideas and choose some to pursue further.

6 Thinking Hats

The premise of the six hats is that the human brain thinks in a number of distinct ways which can be deliberately challenged, and hence planned for use in a structured way allowing one to develop tactics for thinking about particular issues...

In each of these directions the brain will identify and bring into conscious thought certain aspects of issues being considered (e.g. gut instinct, pessimistic judgement, neutral facts).

White Hat Thinking- Facts
Information and data
Neutral and objective
What do I know?
What do I need to find out?
How will I get the information I need?

Red Hat Thinking - Feelings
Intuition, hunches, gut instinct
My feelings right now.
Feelings can change.
No reasons are given.

Black Hat Thinking - Cautions
Difficulties, weaknesses, dangers
Logical reasons are given.
Spotting the risks

Yellow Hat Thinking- Benefits
Positives, plus points
Logical reasons are given.
Why an idea is useful

Green Hat Thinking - Creativity
Ideas, alternative, possibilities
Provocation
Solutions to black hat problems

Blue Hat Thinking- Process
Thinking about thinking
What thinking is needed?
Organizing the thinking
Planning for action

Mind Mapping

1. Focus. Place one element at the centre of the page.

2. Branch out. Create a web of associations around the core phase or image. If you like, use simple pictures as well as words.

3. Organise. The main branches of your map can represent categories such as synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, clichés, and so on. Try using a different colour for each branch you develop.

4. Subdivide. Each main branch can feed smaller subcategories. Work quickly, using the process to free up your mind.
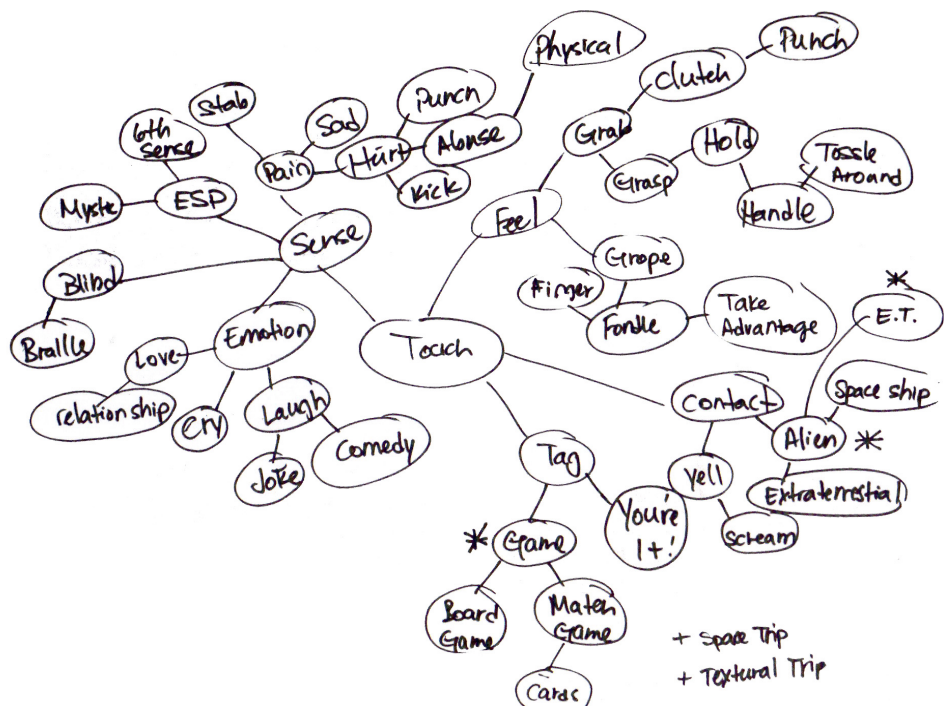
Visual Research

1. Collect. Begin an open-ended study of the brand space of a particular client, product, or service. Look at logos, naming strategies, promotional language, colour, and other aspects of the brand.

2. Visualise. Choose an area to analyse visually. Look for repetitive patterns and trends, such as recurring vocabulary, colours or features.

3. Analyse. Draw insights from your data visualisation. Does it suggest ways you could differentiate your work from those that already exist?

Sight Research

1. Write a list of places you could physically visit to gain insights into your brief

2. Go there, document the experience with words, sketches and photos

..... the object was in the **shape** of a letter?

What if...?

This design thinking strategy works by you asking questions of your problem. The questions you ask are up to you. They may be simple, such as to do with the appearance, or more complex, such as to do with function or purpose.

SCAMPER

Substitute
What if I swap this for that and see what happens? What happens if I substitute the shape, type, form or colour?
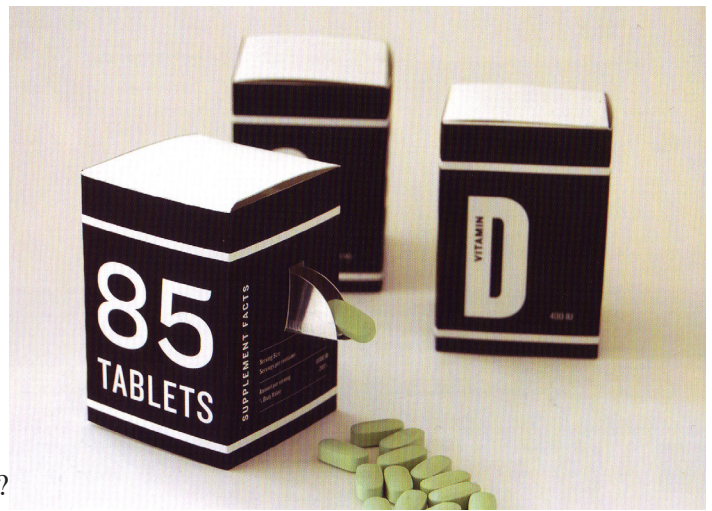
Combine
What would happen if you combine this concept, shape, form, etc. with another to create something new?

Adapt
How could you adapt or change this concept to serve another purpose or use?
What other context could you put your product into?
What other products or ideas could you use for inspiration?

Modify, Magnify, Minimise
What happens if part of the concept is exaggerated, minimised or changes?
What could you add to modify this product?

Put to another use
Who else could use this product?
How could this product behave differently in another setting?
What other area or use can my concept be applied to?

Eliminate
What can be removed from my concept? What happens to the idea if parts are taken away?
How could you streamline, tone down or simplify this concept or part of it?
How could you make it smaller, faster, lighter, or more fun?

Reverse
What is the opposite of what I am currently doing?

Action Verbs

Take an initial idea and apply different verbs to it, such as magnify, rearrange, alter, adapt, modify, substitute, reverse and combine. Each verb suggests a structural, visible change or transformation. This exercise will help to create fresh and surprising variations on the initial idea.
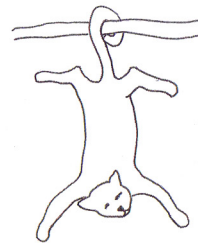
Hang in There
Sketches: Beth Taylor

Flatten
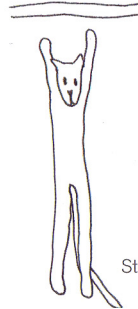
Stretch

Invert

Brand Matrix

1. Get smart and start a list. Study the subject are you are seeking to understand. This could be a group of products, a user culture, or a collection of objects. Create a list of elements to diagram, such as brands, people, personalities, logos, products, etc.

2. Finding opposites. Make a list of polarities that you could use to organise your material, such as east/west, high/low, good/evil, formal/informal, expensive/cheap, fancy/plain, etc.

3. Connect the dots. Plot the elements in your list on the matrix. Look for meaningful patterns in the result. Do items tend to cluster in one area? Is there an empty space that should be avoided, or is there a sweet spot you want to hit?
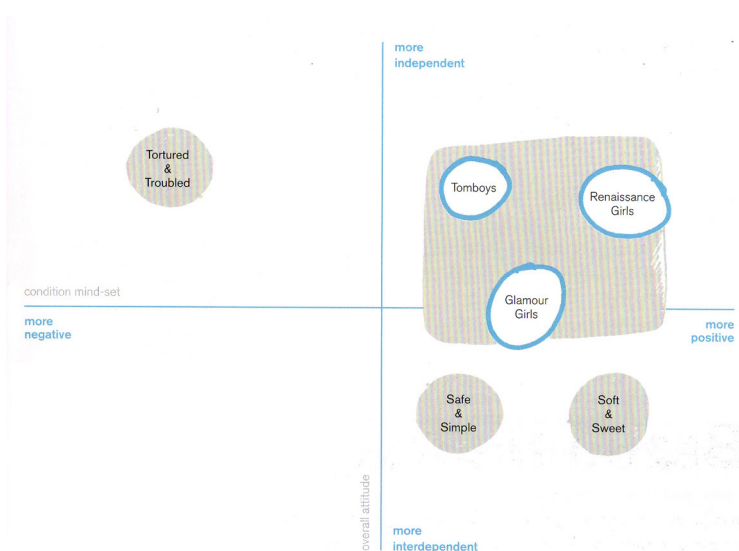
Add one take one

1. Draw one idea quickly on a blank page.

2. Make a copy of your first drawing, as you do, either add one new element or take one away.

3. Repeat step two many time over on the same page, spend no more than one minute on each drawing.
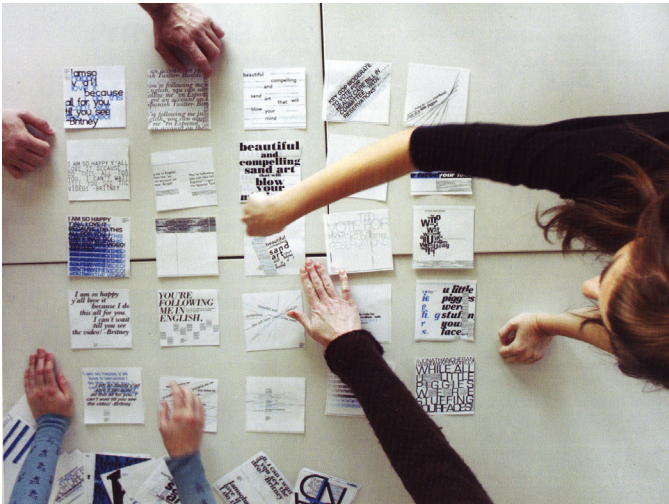
Sprinting

1. Set parameters. Define some ground rule, such as a limited range of typefaces and a fixed set of layout elements. You might also create a few set rules and rotate them among your sprints.

2. Warm up. Five minutes of speed reading (look at inspiring books) or loose sketching (no computer) will help you get in the mood. Don't count the warm-up in your thirty-minute sprint.

3. Plunge in. Try new ways of working. Ward off brain mush by pacing your sprints throughout the day. Work fast have fun.

4. Decision time. When you have generated a body of work, print out small versions of your sprints and lay them out like cards on a table. Sort them out, compare and discard. Repeat four times to get a range to choose from.

SWOT

This tool is used to analyse a situation so as to help make a decision. Through the later stages of the design process, knowing the best way forward can get harder. Conducting a SWOT analysis will provide you with more information to help way up strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

1. Draw up a grid or chart with four sections label them strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

2. Conduct you SWOT analysis using each of the four headings as question to ask about you concept.

3. Evaluate the the pros and cons, consider the whole picture don't narrow in on your immediate reactions and emotions.

POOCH

Like SWOT and PMI, POOCH is a tool used to analyse an idea or concept. Each letter prompts a different question.

Problem
What is the problem?
Who's problem is it?

Options
What can you do?

Outcomes
What is likely to happen?

Choices
What is your decision?

How
How did it turn out?

PMI

The PMI (plus, minus, interesting) model was developed by Edward De Bono. Using this method, any problem, issue or area of interest can be analysed quickly and effectively.

1. Preparation. Set up a table with three columns for PM&I.

2. In the column underneath **Plus**, enter all of the possible positive results of taking the action.

3. Beneath **Minus**, write all the possible negative effects.

4. In the **Interesting** column, enter the implications and possible outcomes of taking the action, whether positive, negative, or uncertain.

Overcoming creative block

Two main reasons

There are two main reasons why creative people get stuck on a piece of work. The first is you don't actually have an idea. The second is while they have they have the idea, executing the idea takes a lot of work …basically you don't want to do the work…

In either case, if you try to solve the one problem when you are having the other, you're going to waste a lot of time.

J.C. Herz page 91 Break through! 2012

Ask questions

If you're stuck in the middle of the design, it probably means that you're not asking enough questions... At the core of every successful design is a set of simply defined constraints that you measure your ideas against.

Robert Andersen page 86 Break through! 2012

Create a flow

Writing down everything creates a flow: once an idea is on paper, another is free to present itself to you.

Jasper Goodall page 97 Break through! 2012

http://www.jaspergoodall.com/

Ideas for overcoming creative block

Get away from technology
Go for a walk and get some fresh air
Draw something fun
Listen to music
Look through photography books
Talk to some-one
Look for inspiration from another art form
Architecture magazine
Movies
Blogs
Photography
Impose some restriction
Set yourself a time limit
Try different materials or methods
Keep at it until you push through the block
Tidy up your workspace
Do some jobs like cleaning or cooking
Don't be overly judgmental; explore everything and decide later if it is good or bad
Get some sleep
Clarify the problem
Start all over again
Try looking at things in a different way
Don't be afraid to fail
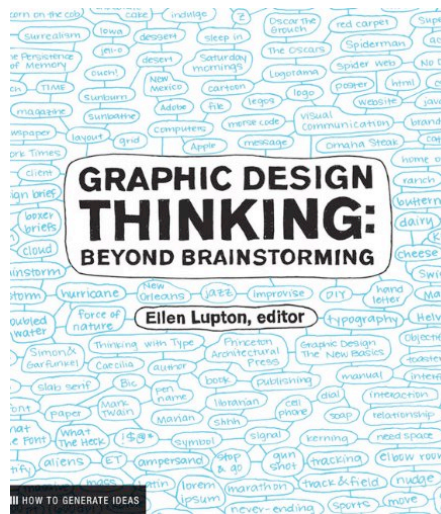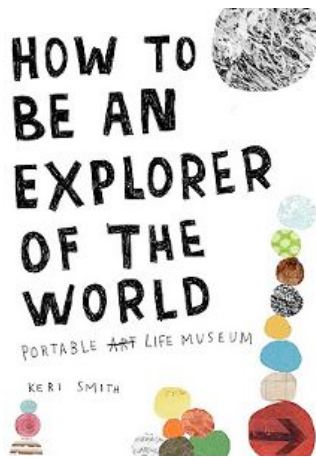
Graphic Design Thinking Beyond Brainstorming 2011
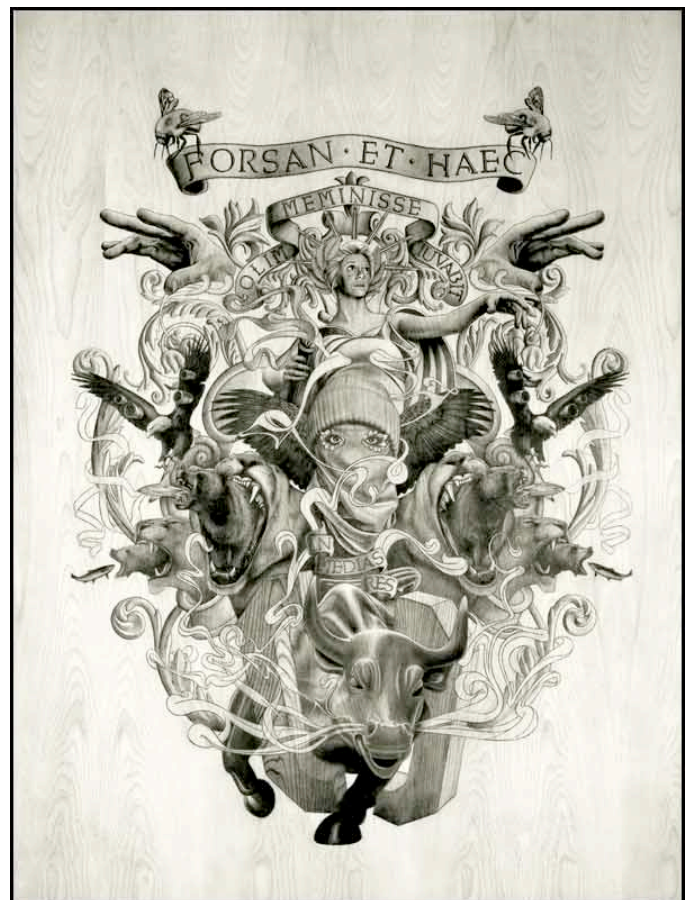
Camm Rowland
www.cranbrookart.edu

Design Thinking - a short list

Featured books
Graphic Design Thinking: beyond brainstorming - Ellen Lupton, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2011
How to be an explorer of the world - Kerri Smith, Perigee Penguin Group, New York, 2008
Break through! - Overcome creative block & spark your imagination - Alex Cornell, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2012

Other books
Wreck this Journal - Kerri Smith
This is not a book - Kerri Smith

Video Clips
The Dark Night Rises 2012, DVD Bonus Disc - Short Feature: The Batmobile

Music
I Love Art...Really! - David Holmes
Verse for Forgiveness (Instrumental) - Hammock

Apps
The Idea Factory
CreateOMat
Wreck this App - Kerri Smith
GarageBand

Website
http://blog.iso50.com/14312/overcoming-creative-block - Alex Cornell
http://minesf.com/resources/cca/ - Christopher Simmons
http://www.theage.com.au/news/technology/in-praise-of-silence/2008/05/20/1211182807058.html?page=fullpage - Carolyn Johnson