FO\nT D\nES\nIGNER – H\nERB L\nUBALIN

I have chosen to have a conversation from my timeline period of 1971-1981. His name is Herb Lubalin (Herbert Frederick) – born 17. 3. 1918 in New York, USA, died 24. 5. 1981 in New York, USA – graphic designer, typographer, type designer, teacher.


* TYPOGRAPHY – An Encyclopedic Survey of Type Design and Techniques Throughout History by Friedrich Friedl, Nicolaus Ott (Editor), Bernard Stein, published by Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft mbH.
I am Kristina Babianskaite. I am studying at the University of Greenwich in London, United Kingdom. I am a mature student here and obtaining graphic and digital design skills. I was doing research about famous graphic designers and your work had a big influence on my inspiration. I personally adore your work and would like to know more about you and about your early career. I know you are a prominent American graphic designer! I have heard that you have collaborated with Ralph Ginzburg on three of Ginzburg's magazines: Eros, Fact, and Avant Garde, and you are responsible for the creative visual beauty of these publications. I love your designed typefaces, ITC Avant Garde. This distinctive font could be described as a post-modern interpretation of art deco, and I saw you have brought a huge influence for other designers, they have used your typeface in the logos created in the 1990s and 2000s and I am trying "to copy" your beautiful style in my recent projects. That's all for the first time... I respectfully asking You to send me at least a short answer and if possible, please include your photograph.

I wish you were here,
Sincerely Yours,
Kristina
Dear Kristina,

I am very pleased to receive such a lovely postcard! First I want you to congratulate on your studies! I wish you luck and hope you will be famous designer in the future, just like me!

This weekend I am travelling to Japan to produce some new projects, but I will come back to United States after a month, so I promise to send you a letter then!!!

Yours, Herb.
3. I patiently was checking my post every morning, and finally a letter from Mr. Herb 21.11.2011

Hello Dear Kristina,

I hope you have enjoying the life in London! I am writing for you a letter as I promised!! I will tell you a little bit about my old times... I have entered a Cooper Union (If you don't know what it is: The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, is a privately funded college in the New York City, United States, located at Cooper Square) at the age of seventeen, and quickly became entranced by the possibilities presented by typography as a communicative implement. During this period I was particularly struck by the differences in interpretation one could impose by changing from one typeface to another, always interested by the look and sound of words and I was trying to express it with typographic
impact. After graduating in 1939, I had a very difficult time finding work, I was fired from my job at a display firm because I have requested a two dollar raise on my weekly salary. So as you see, it was easy but anyway later I landed at Reiss Advertising, also worked for Sudler & Hennessey (advertising company), where I have practiced my skills and attracted an array of design, typographic and photographic talent that included George Lois, Art Kane and John Pistilli. I have served with Sudler for twenty years but finally started my own company “Herb Lubalin, Inc.”, in 1964!!... If you want to know more, just drop me an email lubalinherb@gmail.com, it will be much quicker then send a postcard or letter.

I wish you good luck at the University!
Regards, H.Lubalin
P.S. I have included my photograph.
Dear Herb,
I want to thank you for your reply! I very much appreciate it! I am very happy to hear from you. Thank you for giving your email address, its a big pleasure to communicate with you. I have so many questions to ask!!!
Where and when were you born? What was your father's business? How many brothers and sisters do you have? Can you tell me some of your boyhood episodes? What did you get out of your college Cooper Union?

Once again thanks for your answers!!!
Yours faithfully,
Kristina
5. An email received from Mr. Herb  
29.11.2011

Hello my darling Kristina,

I was born in New York City. My father was a very fine musician who played with New York Philharmonic Orchestra. I have a twin brother and a sister.

I can remember is when I went to college at Cooper Union. I had no talent at all and they almost threw me out of school because I was so bad the first couple of years. I happened to be ambidextrous; I can work with both hands. We were given a problem at school of hand writing that must be done with the right hand because of the angle of the pen. Everybody in school thought that I was left handed because I drew with my left hand and I always used my left hand. So when they gave us the assignment, the teachers
said to me, "I know this puts you under a tremendous handicap because you are left-handed and you must do this with your right hand. You'll have to learn to use your right hand."

I did not bother to tell him that I do all my writing with my right hand. Since calligraphy is really hand writing, I found the job very easy. When I completed it I got the highest mark in the class, not because I was the best but because the teacher felt that I had overcome this great handicap and I'd done this job with my right hand. I guess this gave me some confidence because from that time on I did very well.

It wasn't until about four years ago when I received a medal for professional achievement from Cooper Union and I had to give a speech that I told them that I had cheated my way into the art profession. That's the only one I can remember of any significance.

At Cooper Union I met a number of people who I'm still involved with today, one of them is my wife who was in my class. Another one was Louis Dorfsman of CBS who married his wife who was in his class and after 25 years we are still very good friends and still have very close association. First two years I was about the worst in the school. In the second two years I was about the best in the school. Maybe my wife had something to do with it. Maybe she provided the inspiration. What I learned there was to become a designer more than anything else.

Cooper Union did not particularly stress technique. They were more interested in thinking and creating ideas and design. So when I got out, I had an advantage over other designers because although I was technically very bad, I was able to think out problems and find creative solutions faster than most others. What about yourself, dear Kristina? Where are your roots? Which courses and projects you developing now at your University?

Keep in touch,

MR. H.Lubalin
Dear Herb,

I am so happy to keep in touch, and very pleased with your stories. Sorry, that i was demanding for answers and I didn’t introduce myself which I should have done in the begging. I am originally from Lithuania, I have been born on 15 of May, 1979. I have finished the College of Arts there and was studying Art critic’s at the Vytautas Magnus University. I have moved to London in 2005, to search for new challenges. Now i have family here and growing up my little two “designers” (my kids) and decided to get back my skills and try to do what i have always dreamt for. Currently I have Typography course, Art and Design in Context course. Also i have done live drawings and lots of other things related to graphic design. I have attached some pictures of my work. Also you are welcome to visit my student blog http://kristinababianskaite.wordpress.com. I am currently uploading university projects there.

Will be waiting you answer impatiently!!! If you can, please attach some examples of your created typefaces!

Yours faithfully,
Kristina

P.S. Do you use a chatting program like Skype or Yahoo?
Hi again, Miss Babianskaite,

I am very proud of you that you don't give up and i think to be successful designer you have not to only work hard but you have to love it and live with it! I have looked at your blog: at your drawings and Mapping project. I think you have a natural gif and good future. Was very nice to have an opportunity to you!!! If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask. By the way, i do use Yahoo and Skype. My Skype nick name is: lubalingraph, add me to your friends! I have attached an image of my typefaces, thanks for interest!

Talk to you soon!!!

Yours, Herb L.
Two days later i found him on Skype...

4.12.2011

Kibiriuks says: Hello its Kristina!

Lubalingraph says: Hello, darling, i am very fine! How are you?

Kibiriuks says: Can i ask you something, i was feeling recently so lonely, with no friends around... Herb, do you have friends?

Lubalingraph says: Yes of course, my best friend is Mr.Louis Dorfsman!

Kibiriuks says: Is he a designer too?

Lubalingraph says: Yes indeed!

Kibiriuks says: Hello its Kristina!

Lubalingraph says: Hello, darling, i am very fine! How are you?

Kibiriuks says: Can i ask you something, i was feeling recently so lonely, with no friends around... Herb, do you have friends?

Lubalingraph says: Yes of course, my best friend is Mr.Louis Dorfsman!

Kibiriuks says: Is he a designer too?

Lubalingraph says: Yes indeed!
Kibiriuks says: How did you come to know Mr. Louis Dorfsman?
Lubalingraph says: We were very good friends in school
Kibiriuks says: How have you two been cooperating each other as friends and designers?
Lubalingraph says: We have been cooperating with each other as friends and designers for 25 years. We work for each other; I do work for CBS, he does work for my company. Right now we are both involved in a few very exciting big projects which I can't talk about at the moment but sooner or later people in Japan will hear all about them.

Kibiriuks says: Are there any other designers and artists who have influenced you or who are going friend who are good friends of yours?
Lubalingraph says: People like Gene Federico, George Lois, Allen Hurlburt, Bob Cage and others. Saul Bass is a very good friend of ours whom we communicate with a lot. That's just a few. There are hundreds of friends. And now i have one more friend – is You!!!!

Kibiriuks says: Thanks Mr. Herb! It is very kind of you.
Lubalingraph says: Yu should come over to our studio to practice and see how project is developing from zero to amazing piece of art! Wish you were here and experienced it all yourself!
Kibiriuks says: Oh thanks, Mr. Herb, I would love to come!!!!
Lubalingraph says: Glad you want! Anyway, my darling, I have meeting at 5, but i will be tomorrow same time! Good luck!
Kibiriuks says: Thank you, Mr. Herb, good luck to you too!! Speak to you soon.