

paula scher make it bigger

paula scher make it bigger captures the essence of one of the most influential graphic designers in contemporary visual communication. Paula Scher is renowned for her ability to transform typography and design into bold, dynamic statements that demand attention. This article explores the significance of Scher's philosophy encapsulated in the phrase "make it bigger," which reflects her approach to design involving scale, impact, and clarity. From her groundbreaking work in branding and identity to her innovative use of typography, we delve into how Paula Scher revolutionized design by emphasizing size and scale as powerful tools. Additionally, this piece covers her career highlights, signature projects, and the broader influence of her style on modern graphic design. Readers will gain insight into how "make it bigger" is more than a catchphrase—it's a strategy that reshaped visual storytelling. The following sections outline this exploration in detail.

- The Philosophy Behind "Make It Bigger"
- Paula Scher's Career and Influence
- Key Projects Demonstrating "Make It Bigger"
- Typography and Scale in Scher's Work
- Impact on Modern Graphic Design

The Philosophy Behind "Make It Bigger"

The phrase "make it bigger," often associated with Paula Scher, summarizes her design ethos focused on scale as a central element of communication. Scher believes that enlarging text or graphic elements amplifies their presence, making the message unavoidable and memorable. This approach counters the traditional caution in typography that warns against overwhelming viewers with large text. Instead, Scher uses size to create an emotional and visual impact, challenging viewers to engage more actively with the design.

Emphasis on Scale and Visibility

Paula Scher's emphasis on scale involves transforming ordinary design elements into bold statements. By magnifying letters or shapes, she enhances readability and emotional resonance. This strategy ensures that key messages are not lost in subtlety but rather broadcasted with confidence and clarity. The philosophy encourages designers to reconsider spatial relationships and hierarchy within layouts, prioritizing what should stand out most to the audience.

Psychological Effect of Enlarged Typography

Enlarged typography in Scher's work creates a psychological effect that commands attention and evokes a strong response. Bigger text can convey authority, urgency, or excitement, depending on context. It breaks typical reading patterns, prompting viewers to pause and absorb the information more deeply. This method aligns with Scher's goal to make graphic design an active, visceral experience rather than passive observation.

Paula Scher's Career and Influence

Paula Scher's career spans decades marked by innovation in graphic design, branding, and environmental graphics. As a principal at the prestigious design firm Pentagram, she has shaped visual identities for major corporations, cultural institutions, and public projects. Her influence extends beyond client work into education and public discourse on design principles. Scher's commitment to pushing boundaries through scale and typography has earned her international acclaim and numerous awards.

Early Career and Education

Paula Scher studied at the Tyler School of Art, where she developed foundational skills in graphic design. Early in her career, she worked with record labels and advertising agencies, honing her ability to create dynamic visual identities. These experiences laid the groundwork for her later exploration of typography and spatial relationships that define her signature style.

Role at Pentagram

Joining Pentagram as a partner, Scher gained a platform to influence a wide range of design projects globally. Her leadership at the firm allowed her to implement her "make it bigger" philosophy across branding campaigns, environmental design, and promotional materials. Her tenure at Pentagram solidified her position as a thought leader and innovator in the field.

Recognition and Awards

Throughout her career, Paula Scher has received numerous honors, including the AIGA Medal and the National Design Award. These awards recognize her contributions to graphic design and her role in advancing the profession through innovative use of scale and typography. Her work is often cited in design education as exemplary of impactful visual communication.

Key Projects Demonstrating "Make It Bigger"

Several of Paula Scher's most iconic projects exemplify her "make it bigger" approach, illustrating how scale transforms design from functional to memorable. Her work for cultural institutions, corporate branding, and public spaces highlights the versatility of enlarged typography and graphic elements.

Public Theater Identity

One of Scher's landmark projects is the identity design for New York's Public Theater. The bold, oversized typography used in the logo and promotional materials broke the mold of refined, subtle theater branding. Instead, it conveyed energy, inclusivity, and immediacy, reflecting the theater's mission to be accessible and dynamic.

Microsoft Windows 8 Logo

For Microsoft Windows 8, Scher designed a logo that used large, geometric forms and flat colors to communicate clarity and modernity. The design's simplicity combined with scale created a memorable brand mark that was instantly recognizable worldwide. This project demonstrated her

ability to adapt the “make it bigger” principle to corporate branding.

Environmental Graphics for Museums

In environmental graphic design, Scher applied oversized typography and bold graphics to guide and engage visitors. Projects such as museum wayfinding systems use large-scale text and symbols to enhance navigation and create immersive experiences. These designs show how scale can function practically and artistically.

Summary of Projects Using "Make It Bigger"

- New York Public Theater branding with oversized type
- Microsoft Windows 8 logo design emphasizing geometric scale
- Museum environmental graphics for visitor engagement
- Album covers featuring bold, enlarged typography
- Corporate identity systems leveraging impactful scale

Typography and Scale in Scher's Work

Typography is central to Paula Scher's design methodology, where scale is utilized not merely for decoration but as a communication tool. Her innovative manipulation of letterforms and layout demonstrates how typography can dominate a design to enhance meaning and emotional impact.

Use of Sans-Serif and Serif Fonts

Scher often combines sans-serif and serif typefaces to create contrast and hierarchy. She enlarges key words or phrases, allowing them to become visual anchors within a composition. This interplay of font styles at various scales enriches the texture and readability of her work.

Hand-Painted Typography

Unique to Scher is her use of hand-painted typography, which she scales to monumental proportions. This approach adds a human, tactile quality to her designs, distinguishing them from purely digital typography. The physicality of oversized, hand-crafted letters invites a closer look and adds depth to the visual narrative.

Integration with Other Design Elements

Typography in Scher's projects does not exist in isolation but interacts dynamically with color, shape, and imagery. The deliberate enlargement of type creates a balance or tension with other components, guiding the viewer's eye and reinforcing the intended message. This holistic approach exemplifies her mastery of compositional scale.

Impact on Modern Graphic Design

Paula Scher's advocacy for "make it bigger" has influenced generations of designers by encouraging experimentation with scale and typography. Her work challenged conventions and expanded the possibilities of visual communication in branding, advertising, and environmental design. The ripple effects of her philosophy continue to shape contemporary design practices.

Influence on Branding Strategies

Many modern brands have adopted larger-than-life typography and bold visual elements inspired by Scher's work. The approach improves brand recall and market differentiation by ensuring logos and messages stand out prominently in crowded media landscapes.

Educational Contributions

Beyond her commercial achievements, Paula Scher has contributed to design education through lectures, workshops, and teaching positions. Her emphasis on scale and bold typography has become a staple in graphic design curricula, inspiring students to explore size as an expressive tool.

Legacy in Visual Culture

The legacy of Scher's "make it bigger" philosophy extends into broader visual culture, impacting poster design, editorial layouts, and digital interfaces. Her influence encourages designers to prioritize clarity, impact, and emotional engagement through the thoughtful use of scale.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Paula Scher and what is she known for?

Paula Scher is a renowned graphic designer and educator, known for her innovative work in branding, typography, and environmental graphics. She is a partner at the design firm Pentagram.

What is the concept behind Paula Scher's 'Make It Bigger' project?

'Make It Bigger' is a design philosophy by Paula Scher that emphasizes bold, large-scale typography and graphics to create impactful, attention-grabbing visuals.

How does Paula Scher use typography in 'Make It Bigger'?

In 'Make It Bigger,' Paula Scher uses oversized, expressive typography to dominate the design space, making the message clear and visually striking.

Why is 'Make It Bigger' considered influential in graphic

design?

'Make It Bigger' challenged traditional design norms by proving that bigger, bolder typography could be both aesthetically pleasing and highly effective for communication.

Where can one see examples of Paula Scher's 'Make It Bigger' work?

Examples of 'Make It Bigger' can be seen in Paula Scher's branding projects, public installations, and her work for clients like the Public Theater and CitiBank.

How has 'Make It Bigger' impacted modern branding strategies?

'Make It Bigger' has influenced modern branding by encouraging designers to embrace scale and boldness, making brands more memorable and visually dominant in competitive markets.

What advice does Paula Scher give about using size in design?

Paula Scher advises designers to not be afraid of scale, encouraging them to 'make it bigger' to create more dynamic and engaging designs that capture audience attention.

Additional Resources

1. *Paula Scher: Works*

This comprehensive monograph showcases the groundbreaking work of Paula Scher, one of the most influential graphic designers of our time. It features a wide range of her projects, from branding and identity to environmental graphics and posters. The book offers insights into her creative process, illustrating how she combines typography and imagery to create powerful visual statements. Readers gain a deeper understanding of her impact on contemporary design.

2. *Make It Bigger: The Graphic Design of Paula Scher*

A definitive collection highlighting Paula Scher's bold and innovative design style, this book explores her use of scale, color, and typography. It delves into her philosophy of making graphic design accessible and engaging to a broad audience. Interviews and essays accompany the visuals, providing context and background to her most iconic works. This volume is essential for anyone interested in modern graphic design.

3. *Paula Scher: Maps*

This book focuses on Paula Scher's unique approach to cartography, where she transforms maps into vibrant, expressive works of art. It examines how she blends graphic design with geographic information to create visually stunning and informative maps. The collection includes commissioned projects and personal explorations that highlight her innovative use of typography and color. It offers a fresh perspective on how maps can be both functional and artistic.

4. *Typographic Statements: Paula Scher's Impact on Design*

An in-depth analysis of Paula Scher's use of typography, this book explores how her bold type choices have influenced contemporary graphic design. It discusses her ability to convey meaning and emotion

through letterforms and layout. Case studies illustrate her work on branding, posters, and editorial design, demonstrating her mastery of typographic hierarchy and rhythm. The book is a valuable resource for designers and typographers alike.

5. Paula Scher: Identity and Branding

This volume highlights Paula Scher's contributions to corporate and cultural identity design. It features case studies of her work with major clients, showcasing how she develops memorable and effective brand identities. The book discusses the strategic thinking behind her designs and how she balances creativity with client objectives. It provides a detailed look at the role of design in shaping public perception.

6. Paula Scher: The Art of Environmental Graphics

Exploring Paula Scher's work in environmental and wayfinding graphics, this book illustrates how she integrates graphic design with physical spaces. It presents projects that enhance public environments, such as museums, transit systems, and urban installations. The book emphasizes her ability to create immersive experiences that guide and inform people visually. It's an inspiring resource for designers interested in spatial graphics.

7. Paula Scher: Posters and Print Design

This collection focuses on Paula Scher's prolific output in poster and print media, showcasing her dynamic compositions and use of vibrant colors. It includes a variety of cultural and commercial posters that reflect her energetic and expressive style. The book also features commentary on her influence on modern poster design and her experimentation with form and content. It's an essential reference for print and poster enthusiasts.

8. Paula Scher: Creative Process and Inspiration

This book offers a rare glimpse into Paula Scher's creative process, from initial concept to final execution. Through interviews, sketches, and behind-the-scenes images, readers learn about her methods of brainstorming, problem-solving, and visual storytelling. It highlights the importance of experimentation and risk-taking in her work. The book serves as both inspiration and practical guidance for aspiring designers.

9. Paula Scher: A Life in Design

A biographical account of Paula Scher's career, this book traces her journey from early beginnings to becoming a design icon. It explores her personal and professional milestones, challenges, and achievements. The narrative is enriched with anecdotes, photographs, and examples of her evolving style. This book provides a holistic view of her life, emphasizing the passion and dedication behind her success.

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