How To Choose Typography For A Brand: Gather Inspiration, Find Common Concepts... *author unknown*

Having branded 70+ small photography businesses, I'm pretty comfortable building a brand from conceptual imagery, even if I don't have any typography materials to match. At first I believed that you couldn't create a logo without at least an inkling of your client's typographic sensibilities, but now I can lead a client to typography choices that suit their business very well, regardless of whether or not they were able to bring their typographic tastes to the table.

Not every entrepreneur or business owner is drawn to typography, and sometimes people hire you almost exclusively to make recommendations for these difficult branding choices. Through a lot of trial and error, I've come up with a few tricks to help designers (and their clients) through this essential stage in the branding process.

Gathering Inspiration
The images included with this article are inspiration for past clients that were stumped when it came to selecting their typography. Since the niche was wedding photographers, the majority of the inspiration resources that came my way were shots of weddings, dresses, cakes, shoes, bouquets, you name it. Look very closely at the chosen images and search for common connotations; these can later lead to firm decisions on typography.

Finding Common Concepts
When dealing with inspiration resources that are mostly imagery with little else, determine the mood of the client's chosen materials. Try and understand why the client selected these specific images. If determining the exact motives behind these choices feels like squeezing dust out of a stone, try and lead the conversation. Start sentences with, "What I notice when I look at these images are _____, _____, and _____." See if they agree or disagree. Regardless, you have gotten the conversation started.

When a client offers little or no typographic inspiration, I will offer the widest possible variety of typographic options for their new brand. Even if some of these extreme options are 100% wrong, it will at least help to create boundaries, narrow the choices through the process of elimination, and create some momentum towards a final decision.

The images that I pulled range from warm, vintage tones that range in light to dark, a strong use of contrast, and a healthy use of warm light to bold and bright and edgy. These will certainly help me with the imagery, textures/patterns and icons for the brand as well as choose typographic style.

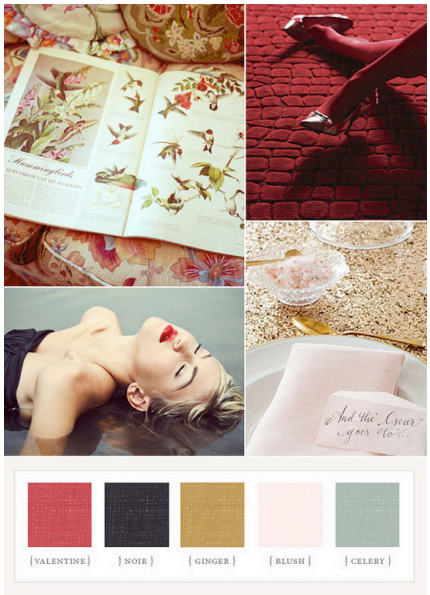
Offering Variations
In order to derive typographic choices from my observations of the client's chosen imagery, I might focus on the "rustic" and "romantic" nature of the images. As we go from images, to general concepts, to specific typography choices, I keep things pretty plain until very late in the process. No mixing messages with various fonts; I like to keep things completely cut and dry until we've narrowed down the options. Keeping things simple at the outset will allow the process to naturally build on itself, instead of intimidating an already-overwhelmed client with too many ideas and options at once.

It's also perfectly acceptable to repeat a few ideas that are executed in slightly different ways. Letting the client see how many variations there can be on a single concept will help broaden their understanding of what's possible. Often, clients are simply unaware of all of their options (this is perhaps the exact opposite of an overwhelmed client suffering from too many options), and they may need someone to lay it all out there, illuminating the possibilities.

{ CREAM }
{ TERRACOTA }
{ ROSE }
{ INK }
{ SEAFOAM }

CARTE D'EUROPE
La Folie
{ HOT PINK }
{ FEATHER }
{ JADITE }
{ SUNFLOWER }
{ COAL }

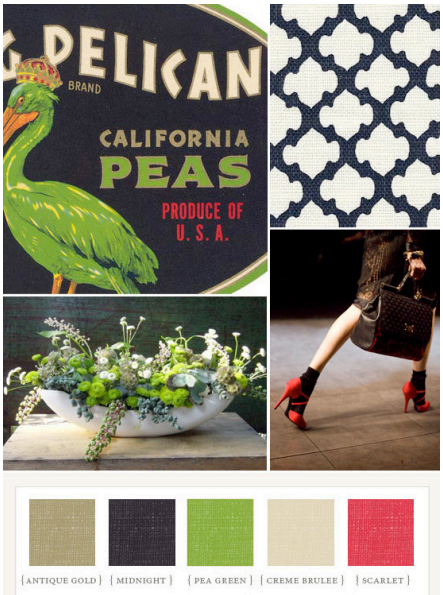
LINEA 25
10 CTS.
4
39106
LINEA 25
10 CTS.
5
17111
{ PUTTY }
{ SIENNA }
{ SOFT PINK }
{ LAVENDER }
{ GOLD }


And the Gear goes to...
{ VALENTINE }
{ NOIR }
{ GINGER }
{ BLUSH }
{ CELERY }

FINEST
VOTIVE CANDLES
GINGER FLOWER
PRICE'S
{ MINT }
{ CORAL }
{ SOFT PINK }
{ CANTALOUPE }
{ MOCHA }

LOVE
{ BLACK }
{ GOLD }
{ PEONY }
{ GRASS }
{ DUST }

I ♡ FLEA MARKETS
{ CHERRY }
{ LEMONADE }
{ AQUA }
{ FUSCHIA }
{ CHALKBOARD }


PELICAN
BRAND
CALIFORNIA
PEAS
PRODUCE OF
U. S. A.
{ ANTIQUE GOLD }
{ MIDNIGHT }
{ PEA GREEN }
{ CREME BRULEE }
{ SCARLET }

Nº 1453
Gas.A.T
0,30
1,10
Gail Pays
{ GOLD }
{ TIN PAIL }
{ WOOL }
{ SOFT PEACH }
{ MIDNIGHT }