

Project Proposal – “->”

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Contents

PART ONE: TOPIC OUTLINE.....2

PART TWO: RELEVANT INFORMATION AND IMPORTANCE3

PART THREE: SOURCES OF INFORMATION5

PART FOUR: INSPIRATION FROM SIMILAR PROJECTS.....6

PART FIVE: PLAN AND SCHEDULE.....8

PART SIX: SPECIFIC MEDIA TO EXPLORE9

PART ONE: TOPIC OUTLINE

My project will be focused on public information design, with specificity around public transit signage in the metropolis of Montreal. As I began to research, and acquire datasets to help strengthen my project, I have learned that as of 2016 the mother tongue of over 35% of the population of Montreal is something other than French. Montreal is a massive multicultural, and ethnic gathering point whether for business, education, leisure, etc.

Therefore, I seek to create a set of pictorial wayfinding signs (language-less) to ensure that information is clear for all people as they transit through the city. My illustrated signs will take a skeuomorphic approach, which aims to imitate the design of natural elements found in daily life. This is so all people, of all backgrounds can equally understand the message of the sign without the need-to-know language, or local cultural meanings.

Given the nature of signage, I plan to illustrate, and produce a series of transit signs enclosed in a 16-page zine. In essence, the user will flip through 10 pages of different signs that transports, and guides them from one location to another.

The name of the project is “->”. I decided that the name would be the combination of “-” and “>”, as it highlights the symbolic aspect of the project, and the openness to access all peoples, regardless of language knowledge. In addition, the pictorial representation of “->” alludes to “go to the right”, which is a sign to open the zine, and start the exploration process.

PART TWO: RELEVANT INFORMATION AND IMPORTANCE

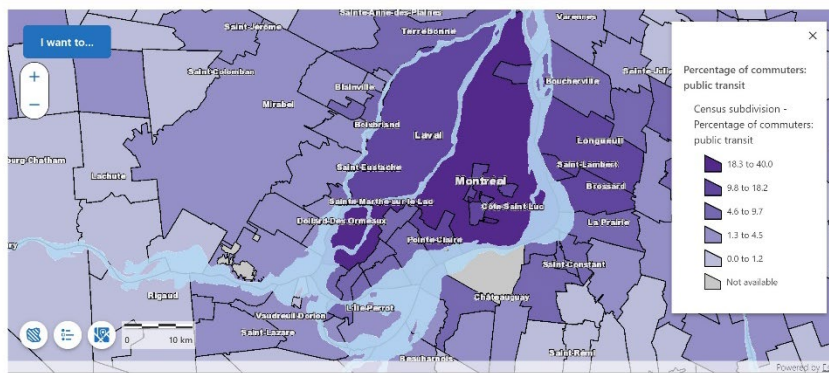
Research Information regarding mother tongue in Montreal

Mother tongue ⁴ , Montréal, 2011 and 2016				
Language	2016		2011	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	4,053,360	100	3,894,855	100
English	533,845	13.2	517,085	13.3
French	2,672,360	65.9	2,596,770	66.7
Other languages	1,009,300	24.9	912,250	23.4
Aboriginal languages	910	0.0	855	0.0
Immigrant languages	1,007,045	24.8	910,400	23.4

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/foqs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=462&TOPIC=5>

The above data allows me to understand that there is a need to create pictorial signage that communicates solely through imagery.

Research Information regarding the percentage of public transit commuters in 2021



<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/dv-vd/cpdv-vdpr/index-eng.cfm?locale=en-CA&statisticsProgramId=3902&activeIndicatorId=21180021&visualizationGeographyLevelId=5&focusGeographyId=2021A00032466&>

The above data map displays that up to 40% of the island of Montreal commutes via public transit. This equates to over 700,000 people on any given day. Therefore, it is necessary to create signage that is clear, concise, and inclusive for all peoples.

Topic Importance

This topic is important to me as I am an anglophone, and although I do speak French, I often feel frustrated with the language laws in the Province of Quebec. Therefore, I feel as though the easiest way around the politics is to simply not include language in signage. In addition, I am also intrigued by public design that includes only small amounts of data, but creates a large impact. In essence, I like clear illustrative data that produces a large impact at a glance.

PART THREE: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The maddening vagueness of European road signs

Countries in the European union tend to use image-based signage, as the proximity of neighboring countries creates a meeting point of so many cultures, and languages. The issue is that pictorial signs can cause confusion when they are not coherent, or when they comprise of uncommon elements.

<https://medium.com/@ronradu/the-maddening-vagueness-of-european-road-signs-70bc8b3197e1>

RATP

I have linked the website for the RATP or “Régie autonome des transports parisiens” below. At first glance the Paris Metro looks very complicated, but I find the illustrative design language clear and impactful.

<https://www.ratp.fr/en>

PATH

Public signage, whether in the perspective of automated transit, or foot transit reminds me of the underground “PATH” network in Toronto. This network uses recognizable symbols to indicate to walkers that they are in tunnels that belong to the network.

<https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/visitor-toronto/path-torontos-downtown-pedestrian-walkway/>

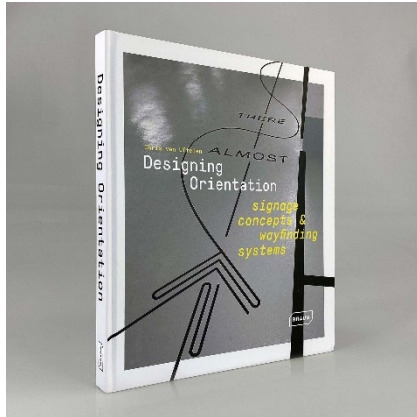
Massimo Vignelli

During the research aspect I came across Italian designer, Massimo Vignelli. Vignelli worked in several areas of design including information design. Vignelli designed plane tickets for American Airlines, however his most iconic work is the design of the New York City subway map, and it’s associated signage.

<https://99designs.com/blog/famous-design/remembering-massimo-vignelli-modernist-master/>

PART FOUR: INSPIRATION FROM SIMILAR PROJECTS

Designing orientation : signage, concepts & wayfinding systems



Uffelen, C. van. (2021). *Designing orientation: signage, concepts & wayfinding systems* (1st ed.). Braun Publishing.

Designing orientation: signage, concepts & wayfinding systems was published in 2021 and explains the primary function of wayfinding and signage design. The book encompasses several information design projects from all around the globe as informative case studies. A large emphasis of the book regards around the necessity of ensuring that all visual communication is understood by all peoples. I have borrowed this book from the Vanier library, and intend on referring to it as I produce my illustrations.

Guided by the Signs



Avon, OA. (2022). *Guided by the Signs* [Photograph]. Project proposal document.

Public signage guides us in our everyday maneuvers. My intention is to emphasize the unique signage by coupling them to a traveling narrative. Therefore, my project is laid out in a way that the signage directs the viewer from north to south. The photographs intentionally highlight the linguistic, and socio-political differences that occur as one travels from metropolis

Canada to rural United States. Playful graffitied vandalism on French city signs evolves into anxious privatized gun aroused English signs.

Guided by the Signs is a film photography project that I created in 2022 that shows how public signs are used for more than just wayfinding. The project's appearance was intended to virtually transport the viewer, and guide them from north to south. I investigated how the graffiti / vandalism affected the sign's original purpose, and how the unexpected traits may have skewed the data, and produced a different informational outcome. I have included this project as an inspiration, as the theme of signage and transportation is of interest, and I would like to develop further work on wayfinding.

PART FIVE: PLAN AND SCHEDULE

My plan to is create 10 transit sign assets that flow from one to another when put together in the zine. The viewer will essentially be transported and guided through the zine from one place to another. One will begin by entering the transit system, and finish by existing the transit system.

Proposal – September 26th

- The document that outlines my desires, provides references, data, and inspirations to help guide the project.

Mid Term Prototype – October 24th

- Five (5) of the ten (10) illustrative assets will be complete as high-fidelity drafts.
- A presentation will be created that outlines my project, my inspiration, and allocated research. In addition, the presentation will address the potential stakeholders, and allow time for class comments and questions.
- A discussion regarding three (3) different directions that my project could take. I will present the three (3) different directions in low-fidelity form via,
 1. Printed zine with cover, back and 3 Illustrations.
 - To be completed by October 6th.
 2. Information guide map (Microsoft Visio) with 3 illustrations.
 - To be completed by October 13th.
 3. Wood / metal burns of 3 Illustrations (Concordia Digital Fabrication Lab).
 - To be completed by October 20th.

Final (Prior to Critique) – Week of November 20th

- All of the illustrations and encompassing book material (zine) will be complete in high fidelity-form.

Final – November 28th

- The entire project will be complete for the Critique.
- Small modifications can be made on the evening of November 28th based on comments, and feedback from the critique.

PART SIX: SPECIFIC MEDIA TO EXPLORE

I plan to create all of my design elements (signs) as vector graphics with Adobe Illustrator. Once the assets are made, I will produce the page layout for the zine with Adobe InDesign. The polished product will be printed on a standard 8.5 x 11 paper which will be folded to create the zine format.

I will use the double sided 8-up zine format. The zine will comprise of one double sided page, a front cover, back cover, 10 sign illustrations, and 4 transitional pages. These transitional pages will likely be placed between every second illustration, and are important as they will help produce an attractive, and coherent design throughout the zine.



Holzenthal, CH. (2021). *How to Make a Zine: Fonts, Graphics & Templates to Get You Started* [Photograph]. Project proposal document.

I plan to experiment with the laser cutter, as I would like to print / burn three (3) of my illustrations onto 1/8 plywood, and or thin iron / metal alloy / aluminum. Public signs are typically made with physical materials, and thus I figured that this experiment would resemble the reality of sign making, and allow the exploration of physical dimensionality. I find it fascinating that the burn marks are engraved at different depths depending on several variables. Therefore, the variation of depths could assist people with vision impairments, as they could physically touch the sign, and be guided via the uneven texture.



Avon, OA. (2023). *Laser Wood Cut Example on 1/8 plywood* [Photograph]. Project proposal document.