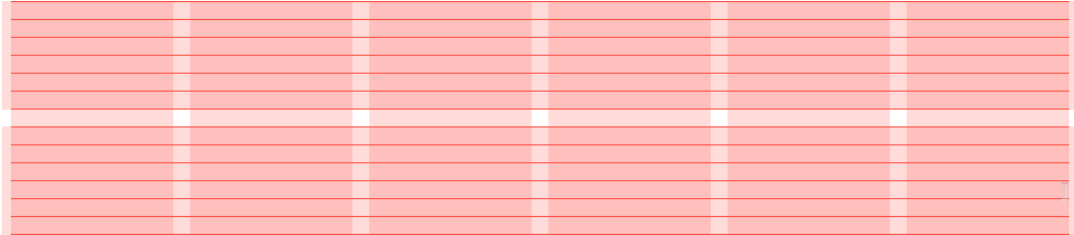


The Grid System

Antonio Carusone is a New York-based Designer with an obsession for grids. He's the author of the The Grid System, an ever-growing resource on grid systems. We talked to him about grids and order.



It seems like you have an obsession with grids, would you agree?

Ha, I guess you can say that. When I first discovered the use of a grid in graphic design, it immediately made sense to me. I knew that this was an important aspect that my designs lacked, and a skill that I personally lacked.

What was your intention when creating the website www.thegridsystem.org?

I wanted to create a sort of hub for grid education, that offered articles, books and templates that have been vetted to guarantee quality. I noticed that a lot of designers, especially students, don't fully understand the purpose of a grid or how to design and use one, so hopefully The Grid System can help them.

Why do you think grids are an essential part of Graphic Design? Or in other words: is graphic design only good if based on a grid?

I wouldn't say that only grid based designs are good, but I do believe that designs not created on a grid are fundamentally flawed. Imagine a song written without a tempo or a tall building constructed without a foundation. They're both vital parts of the process and without them the end product will exhibit problems. Same goes for a design not created on a grid.

What should be the elements of a good grid?

Any solid grid design should be based on a pleasing proportion, for example the Golden Ratio or the Rule of Thirds. The grid should take typography into consideration and also satisfy the project. Every design requires a unique grid.

Is there such thing as a perfect grid?

Sure, any grid designed by Müller-Brockmann, Crouwel or Aicher. The Unigrid by Massimo Vignelli is pretty damn perfect. It was designed in 1977 and is still in use today.

In which part of lay outing and designing you think it is possible to start breaking a grid?

I'm not a big proponent of breaking the grid. A grid has its purpose, one of which is to create order, so it doesn't make sense to me to break that order.

People say, Germans tend to be very organized and steady. What do you know about German (graphic) design? And: would you agree on that?

I'm not an expert on the habits of the German community, but I personally find that the classic German, Swiss and Dutch designers follow a certain aesthetic and principles that I can relate to. I do respond to designs that are more organized and simple in nature, and I'm Italian, so who knows.

Do you think designers need to be organized?

Designers no. Designs yes. An organized design improves the communication of the message.

Are there some examples of books, magazines, websites etc. that are based on a very good grid you like?

It's hard to single anything out. As long as the grid exhibits the points I listed above, and is created by a designer who fully understands grids, then it's going to be good.

How does your workplace look like? Are you an organized person? Can you give us a picture of your desk?

I hate clutter so my desk is pretty simple: iMac, wireless keyboard and mouse, some books on grids and some miscellaneous items. Sometimes, though, my desk gets messy. I get lazy.

Which projects are you currently working on?

I'm currently working on a menu and identity for my brother's restaurant. I'm in the early phases of a new Buddy Carr skateboard. I'm also writing a book on grid systems with Duane King that should be out next year. Antonio was interviewed by Nadine Roßa and Patrick Marc Sommer.