2020 Summer Undergraduate Research Experience Information Sheet

Faculty Mentor:
Name: Amy Papaelias
Department: Art

Student:
Name: Caitlin McGetrick
Major (minor): English and Graphic Design
Expected graduation date: Spring 2023

1. Does this work involve human subject? No
If yes, has the IRB been notified?
2. Does this work involve recombinant DNA? No
If yes, has the IBC been notified?
3. Does this work involve non-human vertebrates? No
4. List the faculty mentor's other funding sources (approved and pending):

5. Preliminary supply budget summary: (cannot exceed $1,000 including delivery fees)
Please provide a general, preliminary list of items and associated costs:
Type: The Secret History of Letters by Simon Loxley ($10.99 amazon.com + $7 shipping)
Just My Type: A Book About Fonts by Simon Garfield ($12.00 amazon.com + $4.82 shipping)
Culture+Typography: How Culture Affects Typography by Nikki Villagomez ($14.58 amazon + $3.98 shipping)
Tax: $3.10

Total amount requested: $56.16
Does the requested budget cover all expenses related to the proposed work? Yes
If not, explain the sources of funding that will be used.

Project Description

__x___ I accept responsibility for the conduct of this project and assure that the information in this application is correct. Indicate your agreement with this statement with an 'X'.

1. Project Title: *Girl Culture: The Typography of Teen Magazines*

2. Background: Typography, the arrangement of text on a page, serves as a visual voice for the written word. Gendered language, like gender roles, are learned behaviors that permeate cultural norms at a very early age. The visual language of advertising, branding, and packaging design clearly marks gender roles through coded messages using color, images, and type. Certain typefaces are associated with being feminine or masculine, largely based on past context and uses.

Throughout the history of printing and graphic design, attempts have been made to articulate the formal qualities of typefaces. Gendered descriptions of type appear in specimen books, typography essays and printing manuals throughout the 20th century, and earlier. In Benjamin Sherbow's 1916 "Making Type Work," a demonstration of visual emphasis uses the word "feminine" set lowercase in an italic font with generous letter spacing, while the word "Strength" is set in a bold font at a larger size with tighter spacing. Author and fine printer Theodore Low DeVinne described "masculine printing" as that of quality: "good paper, bold, readable types and simple composition, strongly printed with good black ink" (De Vinne, 1892).

Typography is a reflection of culture. In the case of teen and girl culture, the printed word has reflected some of the cultural norms still present in publications for several centuries. Gift books were annual volumes of Victorian poems and elaborate illustrations marketed to women and girls. According to *Poetry, Pictures and Popular Publishing* by Lorraine Janzen Koolstra, "the gift book was doubly feminized, first as an object to be presented to women, and second in terms of the ornamental makeup that constituted its physical desirability." In the 20th century, teen magazines such as *Seventeen* (1944) and *Tiger Beat* (1965) used the emerging visual language of teen girl culture to entice and attract its audiences. Into the 21st century, publications such as *Teen Vogue* (2003) brought some of these visual tropes into the digital reading experience, while also challenging and recontextualizing this established visual language.

In my own research and scholarship, I explore relationships between gender and typography. In 2015, I co-founded Alphabettes.org, a network and website supporting and promoting women designers in the fields of type design, typography and the lettering arts. Over the past five years, we have helped elevate the voices of women in our disciplines and published hundreds of original essays and articles on current and historical practices. Within the history of publication design, there exists an opportunity to further explore how the typography of teen magazines has influenced the visual stereotypes of "feminine" typography over the past 100 years. Caitlin's research project will provide a qualitative analysis of the typographic design of these magazine covers, making clear how the visual language developed and evolved over time.

3. Research Aims and Questions: The goal of this project is to study the evolution of the typography of teen magazines (specifically *Tiger Beat, Teen Vogue,* and *Seventeen*), analyze how the typography used on the covers has changed over the years, and better understand its influence on the visual language of girl culture and visual stereotypes associated with "feminine" typography. The major questions this project will investigate are: How

has the cover design and typography of teen magazines evolved over time? What are the differences and similarities in the design and typography of different teen magazines during the same time period? In what ways do the cover design and typography of teen magazines reflect or influence the development of visual "feminine" stereotypes over time? How can this historical study be used to inform the creation of a masthead for a contemporary online design publication?

4. Methodology: Caitlin will focus her study on the three most successful publications geared towards female teens – *Seventeen, Tiger Beat, and Teen Vogue*. She will look at every cover of each magazine's issues and gather data on the following elements: font(s) used/ type foundry / type designer, colors used, number of words on the cover in relation to number of pictures, amount of phrases in bold/italic/serif/sans serif/script/decorative fonts, placement, hierarchy, and alignment of typographic elements, any designers associated with the cover designs of each issue. Caitlin will chart the independent evolution of each periodical's cover design, and will also look for more overarching trends occurring at the same time period to determine the potential influences that these publications had on one another as they compete for the demographic interest. Caitlin plans to consider the impact of contemporary social movements in the U.S., such as the women's liberation movement in the 1970s and the third wave feminist movement in the 1990s, on the design and typography of the covers.

5. Budget: Minimal funding is required for this project. Caitlin is requesting several books to use as reference for the project if ebooks are not available to purchase or access through the library.

6. Outcomes: The goal of this research is to analyze the evolution of the typography on the cover of three popular teen magazines during the 20th-21st century. After studying and analyzing the covers from these magazines, Caitlin will write an article blog post for Alphabettes.org. Caitlin will also design a masthead for Alphabettes.org (the masthead changes every two weeks, featuring the type or lettering of a woman designer) based on the typographic styles found in these magazines over time.

7. Learning Experience: The SURE program will give Caitlin the time needed to thoroughly complete the necessary research to analyze these covers and collect the data. Although Caitlin is only finishing up her first year at New Paltz, her enthusiasm and curiosity around the subject matter makes it evident that she is prepared to thoroughly and successfully complete the work. While students in the BFA graphic design program do complete a year-long senior thesis project, this kind of intensive summer research makes it possible for Caitlin to apply what she learns from this experience to her research and practice as she moves forward in the program.

8. Faculty mentor plans: As Caitlin's faculty mentor, I will provide feedback about her research process and data analysis. We will meet via video conversations several times a week during the eight week period. All data analysis / research information will be stored in a shared location, including images of all covers that will be analyzed. Additionally, Caitlin will maintain a blog documenting her research process and will post several times a week for the duration of the 8 weeks. I will also provide Caitlin with additional readings, articles, and research that will help provide context for her project.

9. Past SURE Projects: The past SURE students I worked with were from 2011 (Timothy LaSalle), 2013 (Joshua Angehr), and 2015 (Megan Doty). All are successfully working as web and branding designers.

Student Statement

__X__ I accept responsibility for the conduct of this project and assure that the information in this application is correct. Indicate your agreement with this statement with an 'X'.
__X__ I will present my SURE project work in the Fall as required. Indicate your agreement with this statement with an 'X'.

1. State your role in achieving the goal(s) of proposed project.
My role in this project will be collecting and analyzing data. I will be investigating the evolution of typography on the covers of these publications, and I will eventually write an article about my findings, as well as present them at the SRS in the fall.
2. State the specific methodology you will employ in carrying out the proposed project.
For the first half of the eight weeks, I will focus on gathering data. The specific data I intend to look for is spelled out in the "Methodology" section. After I have all the data I need, I will be spending the latter half of the eight weeks analyzing this data and putting together a blog post for alphabettes.org that will present my findings.
3. Provide a description of your qualifications to participate in the proposed project.
I am just finishing up my first year at New Paltz, so I will have a lot of time after this project to continue my research into the topic of typography. I am majoring in Graphic Design and planning on minoring in English, and I am interested in typography because I see it as a combination of both of those disciplines. With the SURE program, I will be able to analyze this topic through the lens of media and popular culture, parts of our lives that are only becoming more relevant as time goes on. This project will accompany my own personal study of hand lettering, and could act as a stepping stone for my honors thesis project that I will have to do senior year.
4. Describe your plans to meet with your mentor in person for guidance.
I will commit myself to work full time on research and collaborating with Professor Papaelias. This project can easily be conducted remotely. I will have online access to the front covers of all the magazines I plan on using; *Teen Vogue* has a gallery of all of their past covers, and I will have access to databases such as The Women's Magazine Archive. I will be in contact with Madeline Veitch, library liaison to the art department, who can assist me in finding more resources. I will be able to contact Prof. Papaelias through a video-chatting program where we can collaborate and talk about my progress.
5. Describe the expected outcome/ product of your work.
The purpose of this project is to investigate how the design elements evolved over the course of time in teen magazines, and to analyze the way they differ across various publications. I am hoping the outcome of my research will show overall trends that come from the covers of these magazines and the way typography relates to teen girl culture.
6. Describe your plans after graduation and how your involvement in the proposed work relates to these goals.
After graduation, I hope to continue working with typography in the Graphic Design field; whether it be as a freelance lettering artist or as an employee at a design firm. I know this project will teach me a lot about the field of typography and the way it relates to our cultural understanding of things. All of the information I glean from my research can be utilized in the future as I continue my education and eventually join the workforce.
7. Describe your plans for presenting the results of your research, in addition to the Fall presentations that are required.
In addition to presenting my findings in the fall, I will be making a blog post for Alphabettes.org and will create a header for the website that will visually reference what I have written about in the article.