Visual Brand Guidelines

A PROPOSAL TOWARD BRAND DIFFERENTIATION & REDEFINITION / MAY 13, 2018 /
The VCFA visual system
A contemporary system for compelling visual communications

IMAGERY:
- Highlight diversity, shown through groups & individuals
- Focus on human gesture & interaction
- People first

COMPOSITION:
- Keep elements discreet
- Be reductive & use negative space
- When using the VCFA logo, compose akin to a flag

COLOR:
- Use similar colors to your advantage
- No wild combinations
- Keep it tight

TYPOGRAPHY:
- Focus on the modern, but use normal capitalization
- Use color, italics, weights & underlines
- Tight, focused copy with eager typographic expression

MESSAGING ETHOS:
- Less is more
- Stay dynamic
- Bigger than Montpelier
Brand focus: Contemporary, attractive, forward-thinking

Tight, meaningful copywriting, a modern use of color, compelling imagery, and nuanced typography are the foundations.

No dotted lines, overlays, drop-shadows, tints, shades or unnecessary visual elements.
The VCFA logo: Our standard

LOGOTYPE

WORDMARK

Vermont College of Fine Arts

VCFA provides its students with a window into their self-actualized artistic futures. Our school is a place that invites exploration and critical evaluation in the context of a vibrant and supportive community.

MINIMUM SIZE
Always use our mark at a minimum height of .625" or 60px.

Need logo files? Email: market@vcfa.edu
The VCFA logo:
Alternate configurations

FLIP IT
The wordmark may anchor from the left-hand side of the logotype in situations where a right-hand visual weight is needed... but only when truly necessary.

FLATTEN IT
The wordmark may be rendered as a single line of text anchored from either side of our logotype for strongly horizontal and/or very small use cases.
The VCFA logo: 
Alternate & single-color configurations

**LEGIBILITY**
The logo may be reproduced in one or two colors, or reversed out of a background color or image. In all cases, legibility and edge definition must be maintained.

**COLOR**
When possible, reproduce the logo in two colors, using the green palette. In contexts with limited production flexibility, our identifier may be rendered in a single green value, black, or reversed out of a color field or image. Avoid reproducing our identifier in color(s) other than our green palette, black, or white.
The VCFA logo:
Clear space suggestions

Use half of the width of the counterform of the logotype to establish basic clear space around our identifier and/or its discreet components.

Do not overlap the logo onto edges of visual imagery—this destabilizes brand clarity.

Vermont College of Fine Arts
The VCFA logo:
Program-specific configurations

MAKING A MARK
The ‘flipped’ variation of the VCFA full logo comes in handy in order to brand each of our programs as standalone entities.
The VCFA logo:
Program-specific configurations

BEING REDUCTIVE
If necessary, the logo alone can be used in conjunction with the program-specific boxes.
The VCFA logo:
Program-specific configurations

**REVERSE**
Branded program boxes can also be used in the standard logo configuration.
The VCFA logo:
Examples in use
The green color palette plays the defining role in VCFA’s visual identity.

A series of bright, intentional supporting accent colors allows for flexibility and dynamism across program communications. Use them ‘straight’ – do not use shades or tints of these colors. Think of them as spot colors—use the first row as backgrounds and the second row for type, mixing with white.

When using colors, choose from the primary or the secondary palette, but try and use the primary palette first—string brand communications rely on communicating the institution as a whole first and individual programs and initiatives second.
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Web banner ad.

Sample holiday card.

Best wishes for the holiday season from Vermont College of Fine Arts

Color:
Examples

Points North
Book Launch & Celebration of the life of Howard Frank Mosher

THOMAS CHRISTOPHER GREENE

CHRIS BURKHARDT

DON BRUES

GARRET KEZER

JAKE MOSHER

ROBIN McCAVANAH

RICHARD RUSSO

Thursday, Feb. 8, 5PM VCFA Alumni Hall, Free and open to the public.
36 College Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Montpelier's Bear Pond Books will be on hand to sell Points North and will also be carrying a selection of books by all of the attending writers.

Web banner ad.
Color: Dangers

Avoid approaches to color that dilute our visual brand and hinder the clarity of our communications.

GRADIENTS AND EFFECTS
Color and image do the heavy lifting. Avoid gradients and vignette-like treatments.

VIBRATION AND LEGIBILITY
The use of color combinations that ‘vibrate’ or are very close in value should only be used with care and caution.

THE RAINBOW CONNECTION
Overly complex color combinations have the potential to undermine brand focus and can create visual cacophony.
Typography: Our typefaces

Primary Typographic Palette

Antenna

Thin \& Italic + Condensed Thin \& Italic
Light \& Italic + Condensed Light \& Italic
Regular \& Italic + Condensed Regular \& Italic
Medium \& Italic + Condensed Medium \& Italic
Bold \& Italic + Condensed Bold \& Italic
Black \& Italic + Condensed Black \& Italic

Head for the Antenna family of typefaces. When pairing weights of Antenna, skip one or two weights (light + bold) to assure that the intended visual contrast appears clear and intentional.
Typography: Hierarchy

MFA

Cabeza ipsum lorem estrum dolor cabeza.

→ Shifts in color or value create more subtle shifts in hierarchy within headlines or dense blocks of information.

MAURIS ANTE ALIQUET SEM
Lorem untio ium quidem incitur aut volorem postis si ut porae. Neque laut vel mod quo omniaes sequasseque eum quiscit eostent restis magnist od quis de plabo. Pitia dellant venimus cum dolo totatia am, conecti nvelluptat eum.

→ Type styles (small caps) or decorations (underline) provide additional flexibility when structuring text.

← Use weight for emphasis or to establish additional levels of hierarchy.

← Dramatic shifts in size or color signal dramatic shifts in hierarchy.
Avoid approaches to typography that could dilute our visual brand and hinder legibility and clarity.

- **Type that is too light or too small to read.**
  - Always keep the legibility of content—and the age of your readership—in mind when choosing type styles and sizes.

- **Setting type in a spectrum of colors.**
  - Using too many colors in a single block of text creates excess noise—an unpleasantly staccato reading experience.

- **Using force justification for body copy.**
  - In most cases, force justifying text will create inconsistent typographic color, awkward spaces, and will make reading more difficult.
Imagery:
Photography

Photography plays a critical role in our visual communications. Imagery establishes a sense of physical place and imbues our communications with the **warmth** and **dynamism** that characterize our community.

Photography also helps set expectations for the intensity of the on-campus residencies, as well as the productivity of the off-campus semesters.

Our photography should always be and feel truthful to the VCFA experience, giving viewers a sense of intimacy with and connection to the spaces and personalities that are the core of our institution. Our photography invites people in—it never keeps them at arm’s length. When choosing photography, emotion and honesty trump more traditional measures of good photography (such as sharpness or composition). Use cropping and layout to bring visual drama to a meaningful but ordinary image.
Documentation of the VCFA experience through photography falls into two broad categories: the individual creative process and its products, and the collaborative critical process.

The first category includes documentation of finished work as well as of works-in-process and the art-making process itself. The second category documents the interaction of students and faculty in the pursuit of a better critical understanding and refinement of individual students’ visions.

Collect images of the creative process happening beyond the residency periods—at home studios and offices. Gather documentation of shows and readings beyond our campus.

Communicate the dynamism and intensity of the residency experience—both formal critiques and informal debates—from an involved and inviting first-person perspective.

Imagery: Creation & Interpretation
Imagery:
Overlays

By layering and offsetting full-color images with duotone images made using the two VCFA PMS spot colors and highlighting the gesture, the vibrancy and dynamism of our institution is brought to the fore.

The full color/duotone layering effect emphasizes both the individual and our community.
Imagery:
Dangers

Avoid imagery that is alienating, or offensive—whether the effect is the result of composition or subject matter. Also, avoid using images that lack the appropriate qualities (sharpness, resolution, etc.) for the intended purpose.

REPETITION
A powerful design principle, repetition should be approached with caution in photographic contexts. Avoid combining series of images that use the same scale and/or perspective. When creating layouts using multiple images of people, pay attention to the direction of the subject’s gaze within each image—and design accordingly.

CONNECTING COLOR
When designing with color photography, both the subject matter and the color space (artistically speaking) must be taken into account. Choose photographs that intentionally contrast or compliment the colors in any given design, or adjust the colors used in a design to accentuate the colors in a featured photograph.

RESPECTING CONTENT
When cropping photographs for use in a design, be aware of cultural mores around obscuring or cropping eyes and mouths.

Similarly, exercise caution when cropping documentary images of two- and three-dimensional artworks.
Composition:
Visual balance

Bring fields of color into dynamic relationships with typography, imagery and page structure.

Color reinforces our visual brand in several ways grounding our visual communications in a sense of branded place. Using either squares of the Rule of Thirds, balance brand imagery and typography tastefully.

Sample web banner ad.

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Compostion:
Structure versus Intuition

There is a time and a place for everything. Where possible—as in this set of guidelines—organize layouts with a grid of modules, be they square or rectangular.

| When creating a grid, keep in mind how gutters and typographic baselines will be integrated into the overall layout approach. |
| These guidelines are based on the grid used on this document, offering hanglines and structure. |

Sometimes we are not afforded structure that is easily deconstructed by a grid, like in the sizes of Google Display ads, the dimensions of which are shown to the right. In these situations, turn to the compositional strategies offered in this document.
Believe in your writing

Faculty

Ralph Angel
Mark Cox
Trinie Dalton
Matthew Dickman
Harrison Candelaria
Fletcher
Connie May Fowler
Abby Frucht
Douglas Glover
Barbara Hurd
Richard Jackson
David Jauss
T. Geronimo Johnson
Ellen Lesser
Brian Leung
Bret Lott

Patrick Madden
Richard McCann
Clint McCown
Adam McOmber
Tomás Q. Morín
Natasha Sajé
Betsy Sholl
Sue William Silverman
Martha Southgate
Ira Sukrungruang
Anthony Swofford
Leslie Ullman
Robert Vivian
Nance Van Winkel
David Wojahn
Xu Xi

“\textit{I found my writing voice at VCFA}”
- Ann Cardinal, VCFA Ambassador

MFA in Writing

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- Get regular critical feedback and advice while studying off-campus
- Program tailored to your goals as a writer
- Access to the world’s largest library catalog

MFA in Writing
Vermont College of Fine Arts

Learn more
vcfa.edu/writing

Believe in your writing

By using a mix of the full-color/duotone image highlighting, focusing on individuals and gesture, audiences will empathetically relate to our programs.
Composition:
Posters & full-page ads

HARNESS YOUR IMAGINATION

“If it wasn’t for VCFA I never would have become the writer I am today”
- Ann Cardinal, VCFA Ambassador

APPLY BY AUGUST 15, 2019

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LEARN MORE
vcfa.edu/wcya

FACULTY
William Alexander
An Na
Margaret Bechand
Tom Birdseye
Martha Brockenbrough
Alan Cumyn
Sharon Darrow
David Macinnis Gill
Louise Hawes
A.M. Jenkins
Varian Johnson
A.S. King
Uma Krishnaswami
Jane Kurtz
Martine Leavitt
Kekla Magoon
Mary Quattlebaum
Liz Garton Scanlon
Cynthia Leitich Smith
Nova Ren Suma
Shelley Tanaka
Linda Urban
Tim Wynne-Jones

Vermont College of Fine Arts
Thank you!

For questions and assistance, or to request logo source files, typefaces, our media kit, or other visual assets, please email:

market@vcfa.edu