# A visual truth-teller

GLENN GOLUSKA HAD the great luck of working during a chaotic and unsettled century, typographically speaking. In no period since the incunabula has typography undergone such rapid, repeated technological change, a century in which the trade dumped great tonnages of metal type and casting equipment into the back alleys in favour of problematic, clumsy photo-mechanical typesetting devices that generally produced lousy type (but did so quickly and cheaply).

In the late 1980s, digital "desktop publishing" equipment revolutionized typographic practice once again. Gradually these new tools have improved, shaking off some of the crudities of their immediate predecessors and opening the possibility that some small portion of the craftsmanship and knowledge dumped with all that metal type decades earlier might be reinterpreted for the digital age.

Glenn worked with all these typographic materials. He learned paste-up during summer jobs at a jukebox factory in Chicago and at the student newspaper at St. Michael's College. He composed on photo typesetting gear at a translation company run by the Honorary Council of Uruguay and at Coach House Press. He got impromptu Linotype lessons from Stan Bevington and outfitted his private press with a model 31 and an impressive range of Linotype faces and metal and wooden type. And he certainly became proficient with the digital tools, something his later work for McGill-Queen's University Press and the Canadian Centre for Architecture clearly demonstrate.

The result of working through all these technological transitions was that Glenn evolved the typographic reflexes of a cat and a clarity of design sense unfettered by the limitations of any tool, or the demands of any client. In his best moments—and he had many—his work balanced pure form against the blunt demands of communication, creating a sort of visual truth one recognizes perhaps even without realizing. The other skill he developed was the ability to balance classical formality with the mirth of innovation. These are the qualities I admired most in Glenn's work and which have profoundly influenced my own.

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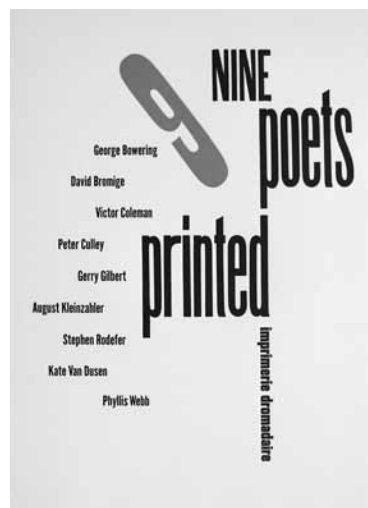
☙ Andrew Steeves is a typographer and letterpress printer and the co-founder of Gaspereau Press, Kentville, NS.

# Typographical sophistication at the CCA

I MET GLENN GOLUSKA in May 1990 when I was interviewing for the position of production manager at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA). Glenn was completing his second book for the centre and he was among my interviewers. He spoke to me only once, to ask me what my favourite font was. This question destabilized me and I named instead several fonts that I dislike. My answer amused him, and after the interview he apologized for catching me off guard. Such kindness characterized him. After I was hired, we soon became friends and he told me that he had been asked this trick question by Stan Bevington of Coach House Press.

Glenn was working freelance and reported to Publications Services. His desk was in the same room that a researcher and I occupied. Our team also had a head, two editors and a secretary. All got along wonderfully. Glenn was a cultured man who never tried to impose

himself. He shared our schedule and always stayed on duty when projects consumed our evenings and weekends. Chained to his Mac, he freed himself only to go warm up his coffee and chat a bit with other employees. Otherwise, he would be found at the CCA Bookstore pursuing his passion for architecture and design.

The CCA was an exciting place. Its rich collections, higher-quality standards and attractive new building were uplifting. Unfortunately, its director regularly lost her temper. Publication meetings

Robert Kroetsch

Letters to Salonika

Grand Union Press Toronto
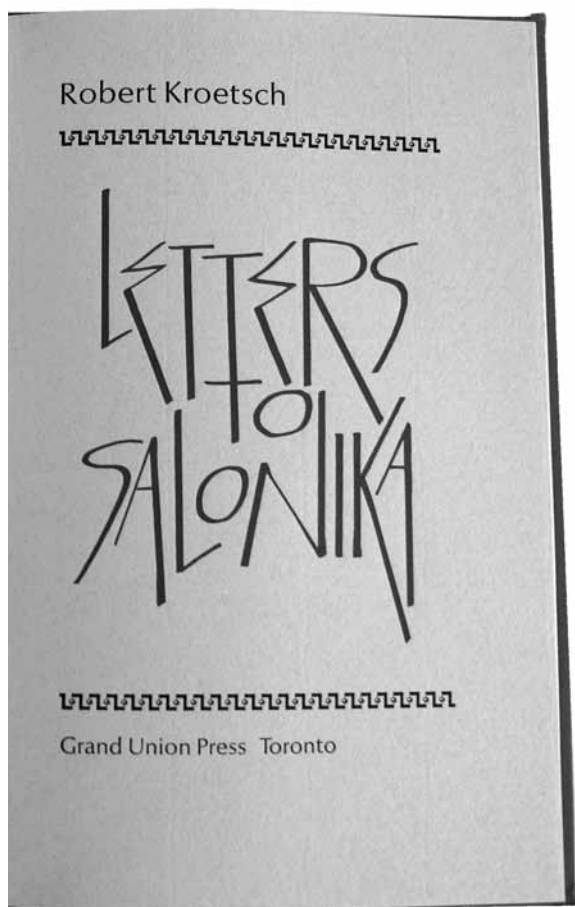
with her, with participants standing around a light table, often proved difficult. When graphic design was the topic, only Glenn had enough credibility to express himself. He kept his cool, even when we could sense that he was boiling. Only once did he become irritated to the point of leaving a meeting. He returned after a walk in the park.

Many consider the period from 1989 to 1999, during which Glenn served as its graphic designer, as the golden age of CCA publications. Each title represented a collective effort, but it was Glenn's role to achieve the perfect balance between form and content.

During an average year, Glenn designed one important monograph, a half-dozen exhibition booklets and posters, as well as brochures, invitations, ads, etc. This load was in fact heavier because all CCA publications, except posters, were either bilingual or published simultaneously in French and English.

For some time the development of the publishing program required the help of an assistant designer. After she placed copy and images in QuarkXPress grids designed by Glenn, he did the rest. His scrutiny allowed him to improve the most minute details. He fixed justification at the last moment, in case reflowing would displace end-of-line hyphens.

Sometimes Glenn's typographical sophistication went so far as to modify fonts with Fontographer. Thus, finding that figures in Futura—the CCA font—were too big for his taste, he reduced them. He further hybridized Futura by adding old-style numerals. He imported them from Architype Renner, a digital version of the alternate characters designed by Paul Renner in the 1920s. But Glenn was not stuck to classics. He relished the audacity of foundries like Fuse and Emigre. He also managed to use unexpected fonts like Dear John, Filosofia, Stencil, Variex . . .

Like any designer, Glenn had to deal with constraints. For instance, at the CCA, only the director could select cover and poster images. These images were significant from an architectural or historical standpoint but seemed on occasion austere. Still, Glenn was able to highlight them. He always offered typographical options to his client, and he kept the nicest rejects in a drawer labelled "Salon des Refusés."

Glenn, by his own admission, was better with typography than with colour. Of course, this did not prevent him from creating beautiful pieces. However, he was relieved to have me in charge of colour proofing and press OKs.

LES JOUETS ET LA TRADITION MODERNISTE

TOYS AND THE MODERNIST TRADITION

Centre Canadien d'Architecture / Canadian Centre for Architecture

Glenn's star began to fade in 1998 as the CCA was preparing to celebrate the 10th anniversary of its new building. The last book Glenn designed under the director's control was *Carlo Scarpa, Architect: Intervening with History*, in 1999. The atmosphere was very tense. But right after the book was published, Glenn received a complimentary e-mail from the director. The very last book designed by Glenn for the CCA was *Anxious Modernisms*, co-published by M I T Press in 2000.

∽ Denis Hunter was production manager at the CCA for 13 years, then jointly in charge of the museum market for a commercial printer. After self-publishing an art book, he is now steering his career toward the Internet.

Character revealed in colophons

COLOPHON: THE PAGE that you hope to find in a book (usually at the back) where you might find the answer to your question whether the typeface used is Gill Sans or Bembo, or whether the paper is from Barcham Green or La Papeterie Saint-Armand, along with answers to other questions about the book in your hands.

But sometimes there is something more and something different to be found in a colophon. Recently, I have been taking a close look at some of the works printed by Glenn Goluska. Below is a quotation from the colophon for his *Nine Poets Printed* (Toronto: Imprimerie Dromadaire, 1986–88).

These broadsides were all printed as part of the Letters / Salon reading series put together way back in 1986 by Nicky Drumbolis, assisted by Victor Coleman and Kate Van Dusen. Most were printed the day of the reading and rushed to the salon, where sales usually kept the printer in beer for the evening. Others were printed months or even a year later. Today Letters is gone from Queen Street, squeezed out by the greed rampant in world-class Toronto, and the Salon no longer exists at all.

Sixty copies were held back and were collected and published in this portfolio. The colophon gives a picture of the harried life of the designer/printer, his leisure time and his view of the world.