

# inspiration=ideas

A Creativity Sourcebook for Graphic Designers



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ROCKPORT

For me, inspiration is a process of input and output. When I have a design problem to solve, I start with research. I feed my head with input from books, magazines, photos, paintings, fashion, conversation, and travel.

Then I think about the problem. Early mornings, lying in bed before I get up, are the most productive times for thinking.

My brain is still drifting from sleep and not yet distracted

# chase >

by the demands of the day. If I direct it toward the problem, my brain, being well fed and happy, does the rest.

It makes connections and creates images that seem not to be driven by me at all. The output just happens. I just have to be quick enough to get up and write it down.



vision

## Margo Chase

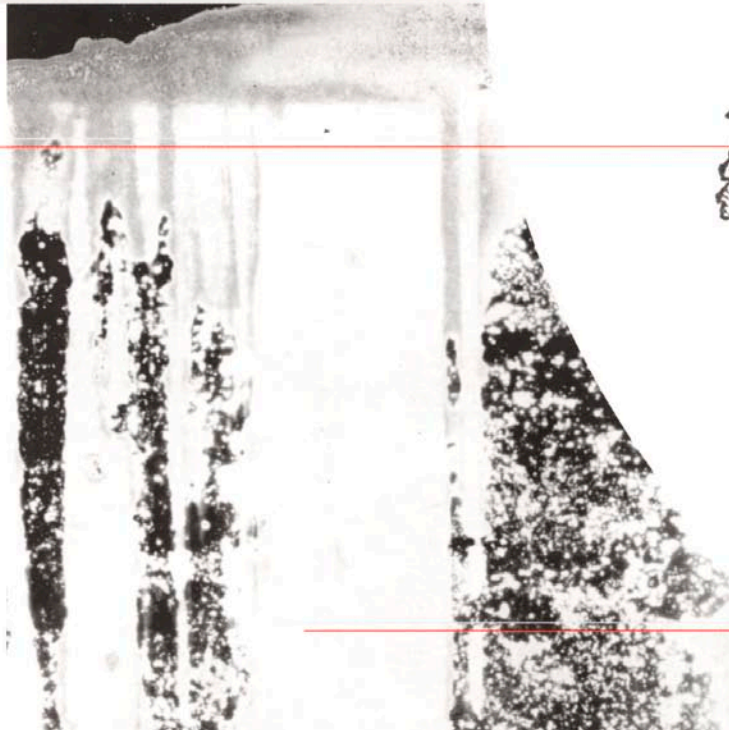
los angeles>designer

my hunger for inspiration is:

perpetual  
insatiable  
curiosity

ongoing sources of inspiration:

- 1 = Books:** My methods of inspiration are varied, but I most often rely on books, of which I have more than will comfortably fit in the wall-to-wall bookcases in my office. I collect books on everything, but I particularly love old type specimens. I have a huge collection of books on lettering, calligraphy, and manuscripts, which I continually refer to for inspiration about letterforms and design in general. I also love books as objects. I have several that are in languages I don't read just because they have beautiful bindings. Books are sacred companions and I will never have enough of them.
- 2 = Travel:** Travel has been a huge source of inspiration. My favorite part of the world is always the one I've just visited or am planning to visit. When I travel, I take a camera and a sketchbook. I have binders full of photos from my trips. Many of these are underexposed and blurry because I love to take pictures in museums where there's no light and you can't use flash. Even though the shots aren't perfect, they're often enough to remind me of what I saw and inspire an idea. Travel has opened my mind and provided a perspective on the world that growing up in southern California failed to do. Travel has provided context for all of the images I admired first in books.
- 3 = People:** My list of inspirational people includes eccentric geniuses and romantic iconoclasts who have followed their own paths and created work that continues to amaze us years and generations later: T. S. Eliot and Emily Dickinson (poets), Michael Ondaatje and Salman Rushdie (writers), Frank O. Geary and Antoni Gaudi (architects), Georg Bocsckay and Louis Barbadour (calligraphers), Jack Lenor Larson and Anni Albers (textile designers), and Eiko Ishioka (designer of everything).



535.—MUGWORT.

ARTEMISIA VULGARIS. M. 399.

Reddish or yellow. 4 ft. Aug.

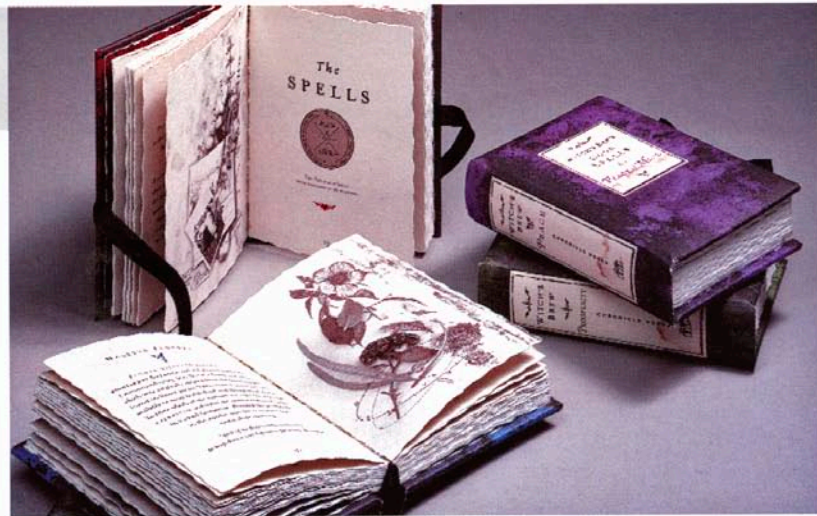
This set of four books of 'good spells' was written by a practicing white witch and explains how to cast spells, make potions, and provides a wealth of herbal and astrological lore to help with the problems of everyday life.

Photos of grave memorials that I shot at the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris helped define the distressed and slightly creepy feeling I wanted for the project. The line art used in the photo collages were taken from botanicals and books on alchemy (one of the best sources of arcane diagrammatic art). The challenge with these books was to make them feel authentically "witchy" but not too dark. The spells are all white magic (spells for positive outcomes rather than negative ones) so the books needed to feel a bit lighthearted and warm without getting too sweet.

I love worn leather bindings and tried to reproduce the same feeling for the bindings of *Witch's Brew*. I referenced a photo taken in a rare bookstore in Paris. Most of the collages were made by placing junk I collected on the scanner bed and then adding the textured paper and line art later in Photoshop.



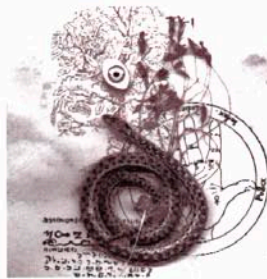
BOOKS  
*Witch's Brew* ▶



p = 67



Good spells for prosperity:  
Collage for wealth



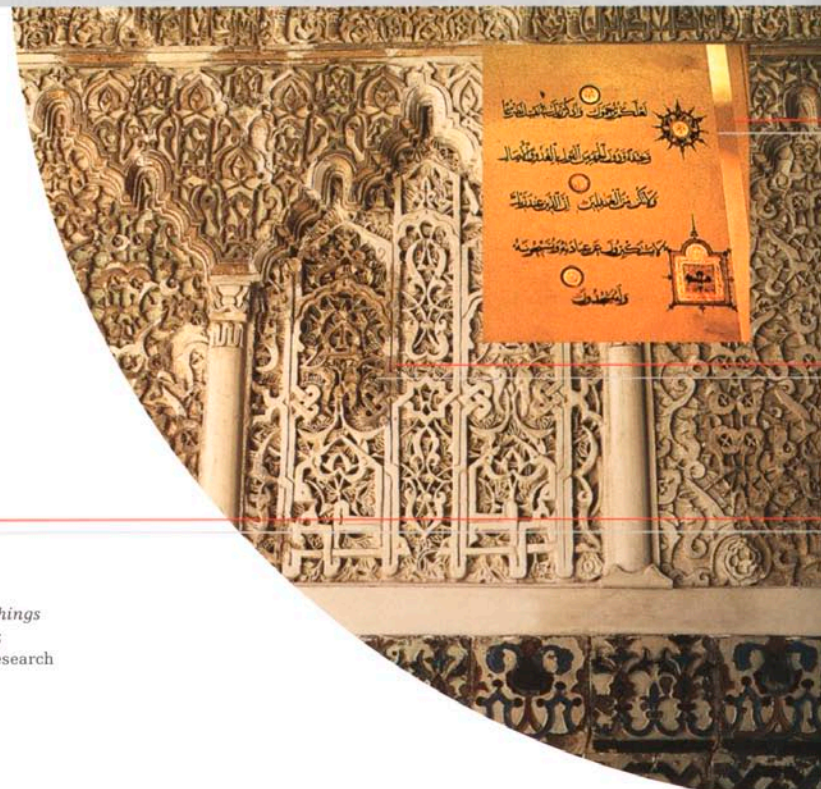
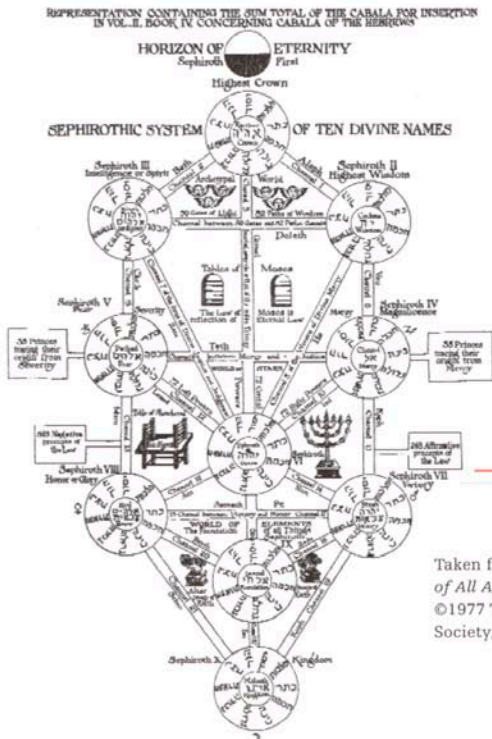
Good spells for peace of mind:  
Collage for dandelion tea



Good spells for love:  
Collage for breaking up  
with a bad match



Good spells for healing:  
Collage for healing



Taken from *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* by Manly P. Hall;  
©1977 The Philosophical Research Society, Inc., Los Angeles.

This logo was a proposal for an Asian restaurant in Pacific Palisades. It was never used because the restaurant's name was changed to Pearl Dragon. The plan was to create a club-style restaurant with a sake bar and takeout. I wanted to capture a contemporary Asian club feeling appropriate for a planned line of products and merchandise as well as for a restaurant catering to families. I had fallen in love with these three Buddha boys and was sad to see them go.

These signs from the Dotomburi area in Osaka, Japan are unintelligible to me so they became sources of form. I naturally try to read them as English so they often supply ideas for odd-shaped letterforms. Also in the mix is an extremely peaceful and well-fed Buddha image from the British Museum. He's an image that I've saved for years in the hope of finding an application for his smug expression.



Little Buddha Restaurant  
PROPOSED LOGO (NOT USED)

PROPOSED LOGO (NOT USED)  
Madonna | Drowned World Tour

Madonna's 2001 *Drowned World* tour is a multilayered musical and spiritual journey through diverse worlds. We designed a custom icon and logotype to convey the unique and ethereal qualities of Madonna's show and address some of her personal interests. Madonna is a student of the kabala and she requested that we include references to that body of knowledge.

The diagram we drew from represents the ten spheres of the world divided into three columns representing wisdom, strength, and beauty. According to kabalists it is the key to all knowledge, and understanding its meaning is the path to wisdom.

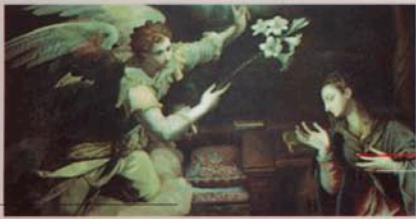
This is one of many logo designs we proposed, but not the one that Madonna chose. This one was my favorite because it referred to more specific aspects of her show and also because I had a chance to stretch to create the new letterforms.

زمن الفصوص

معار و لآله حجرة

و ير عجاج

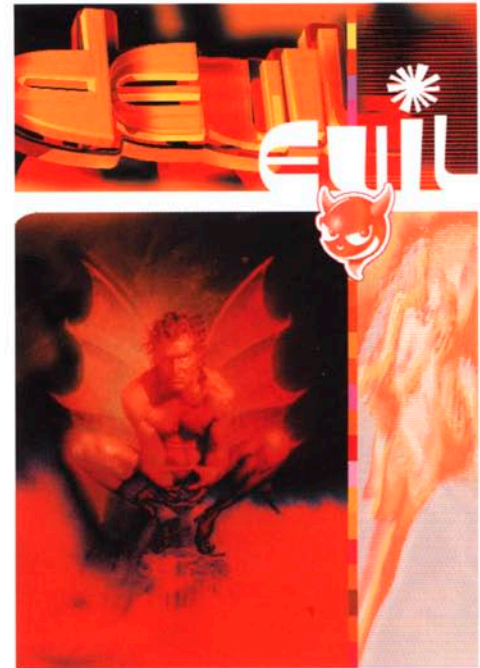




This pair of posters is a pop-art send-up of the moral and religious themes of good and evil. I've always been fascinated by the duality in spiritual and psychological symbolism that reflect the dual nature of man. The epic battle between good and evil has been a favorite theme of religious art through the centuries. Although we might find the idea of angels and devils a bit quaint today, our struggle for balance between irreconcilable opposites still finds expression in many aspects of our lives and art.

The "type pile" is a piece of lettering that I kept around for years until I finally had a chance to use it for the good and evil letters. Other sources of inspiration came from an Italian painting in the Pitti Palace in Florence, a gargoyle from somewhere in Italy, and the Las Vegas signage graveyard.

Good & Evil  
POSTERS



Photography: Merlyn Rosenberg