

Design Rationale:  
L'iris Cosmetics

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Design Rationale: L'iris Cosmetics

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## Introduction of L'iris Cosmetics

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"Graphic design is the art of visual communication; its primary function is to communicate a message or promote a product or service." This definition is given by James Craig, author of the book, Graphic Design Career Guide.<sup>1</sup> The difference between graphic and fine art lies in the intent of the artist. A fine artist creates for himself; interpretation of his work is varied and the meaning not always obvious. A graphic artist, on the other hand, creates his work for others-- specifically, consumers. A designer must be able to clearly communicate an idea as dictated by his client. Communication is, in fact, the emphasis of graphic design. A designer must be able to communicate visually and verbally in order to be successful.

The visual message may be presented through several media, including magazines, newspapers and television. Verbal communication is vital in selling one's design, both literally and figuratively, to a client.

In order to experience several possibilities of communicating through graphic design. I created a product: L'iris Cosmetics. I developed this product in theory and design. Contained within are the rationales for my design solutions, including preliminary sketches, storyboard illustrations and slides of the finished pieces. These include logo design, package design, introductory ad series, fractional ads, newspaper ad and two commercials.

L'iris Cosmetics are targeted to the woman on "the go." She may be a business executive with a demanding schedule, someone who travels a great deal, for business or pleasure... she's any woman whose time is valuable and whose image is of utmost concern. The thrust of the theory behind L'iris Cosmetics is one of conserving time and space, while providing a product of highest quality. One unique feature of L'iris lies in the construction of the compact; it is stackable and fits easily into any purse, briefcase or suitcase.

Four products, and shade variations of each, are available: eyeshadow, blusher, lipcolor and powder. All of the compacts contain a mirror, applicator and a generous supply of the cosmetic.

Another unique feature of L'iris is in the color-coding system used for easy identification. When stacked, or unstacked, a colored ruled line is visible from the front, top and back of the compact. The typography, logo and contents sticker are also in a color matching the ruled line. The coding remains consistent, as follows: green; eyeshadow; gold, <sup>P</sup>lipcolor; magenta, blusher; coral, powder.

The color black was selected to communicate an expensive European look, much the same way the name does. Translated from French, the word l'iris means "iris." The coded colors were selected because they seem more pronounced on the black package.

The carton in which the compact is contained at the time of

purchase follows a reverse coding. The carton is printed in the coded color, while the typography and logo are in black. This allows for instant recognition of each of the four varieties in a store display case, when many are shown together. The carton also has on it a sticker matching the shade of the particular cosmetic it contains. With the use of this sticker, the cartons can be mass-produced, the sticker added on after printing, and cost is therefore greatly reduced.

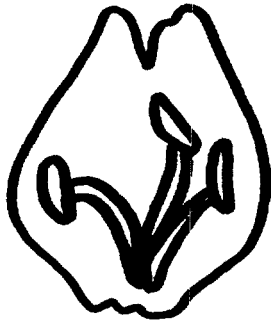
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#### The Logo

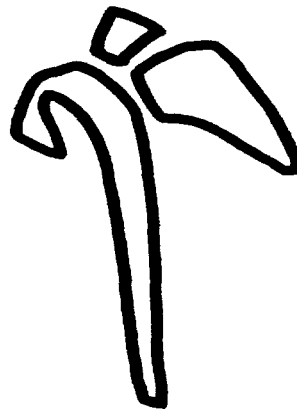
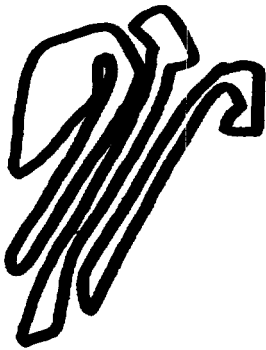
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In order to be successful, a company or product logo needs to be simple in design. Simplicity aids in instant recognition. With few exceptions, consumers merely glance at a logo and with that comes the association to a particular product. In his book, A Designer's Art, Paul Rand relates a similar philosophy: "Ideally they (logos) do not illustrate, they indicate...not represent, but suggest...and are stated with brevity and wit."<sup>2</sup> Rand also stated that "the symbol can express many different ideas by juxtaposition, association and analogy."<sup>3</sup> The L'iris logo follows this concept in that it suggests two forms, an abstracted flower and a female figure. Many, many sketches were made before a final logo was decided upon. A definite evolution of thought is seen. The logo began as complex and through reworking, became a very simple and quite subtle trademark.





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A partial showing of the  
L'iris logo evolution  
(from sketchbook drawings)







Final Logo Design

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Introduction Into Print Media

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A three-ad series was developed to introduce the new product to the target market audience, female professionals. There are qualities in developing a series which must be considered. The ads must be consistent in style, layout, amount of copy and presentation of the product. Those consistencies help in presenting a new product to the consumer by aiding in recognizing the product. Theoretically these ads would be placed in separate publications, or scattered throughout the same one, but are not intended to be viewed consecutively. The publications might include women's magazines, such as Ms. and Working Woman. They would be located on the right-hand page, the page most often read or locked-upon.

There are subtleties contained in these ads which may not be obvious initially, but which contribute greatly to the overall "feel" of the design. All of the body copy is stacked, much like the compacts. Color bands break through a black border, as on the compacts themselves. These intricate details serve to suggest elements of the product.

A minimal amount of copy was used, following the advertising adage, "Less is more." A sophisticated vocabulary was used to appeal to a particular consumer, the "L'iris woman." By not requiring the reader to spend a great deal of time sifting through long copy, the image of the product can be the focal point and the mood communicated visually. In other words, the product basically speaks for itself.

A different product is viewed in an open compact in each ad, communicating variety and revealing the quality of the product; the cosmetic is smooth and rich in color. Other series consistencies include Avant Garde Light type style, two or more stacked compacts and having the product reflected in the mirror. The consumer learns from the ads that the compacts fit together, contain a mirror and applicator and therefore must be perfect for travel.

Newspaper advertising would seem to pose a problem for a product which relies so heavily on color as a selling point, especially the color-coding. This problem is solved by retaining elements from the magazine series, the black border and horizontal lines, as well as the limited copy in Avant Garde Light. The viewer is able to associate the ad with the product, even though it is in black and white.

Several techniques were used with the newspaper ad that would not be feasible in a magazine. The edges of the newspaper ad are rounded, further conveying the image of the compact shape. A marker rendering is used, rather than a photograph; photos often do not reproduce well in newspapers. A horizontal format was chosen because from observation, most newspaper ads run vertically. A horizontal format helps the L'iris ad stand out from the rest, as does the bold, black border. This ad is simple, but strong. It can be noticed even by the reader who is skimming the newspaper.

A fractional-ad series is theoretically introduced after L'iris has been on the market for six months. Because of the initial expense of three full-color, full-size ads, the budget has been cut. The ads are designed in such a manner that each uses only two colors: black and the coding color.

Several notable differences are seen. The image of the stacked compact is no longer necessary. By now that is a well-known quality. A close-up of the compact reveals only the name and logo; these elements are what is being sold here. Three characteristics from the original ads are maintained for transition and recognition purposes. They are: minimal copy, Avant Garde Light type style, and four graduated color bars.

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#### Television Commercials

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To enhance the convenience and quality of the L'iris cosmetics, two television commercials have been written and designed through the use of storyboards. Storyboards illustrate a commercial frame by frame, concentrating on the main ideas. The thirty-second spot personalizes L'iris cosmetics by introducing a member of the target market audience. The woman featured is young and business-like. Her clothes are conservative and she is found in an office environment. Her services are requested...she is to represent her company at an important function out-of-town. She has very little time to prepare, but is able to fulfill her duties with the con-

venience and reliability of her L'iris cosmetics. All she needs for her trip comes in four small compacts which stack and fit neatly into her briefcase. For the "L'iris woman," being put on the spot is "no problem."

The second television spot is a ten-second filler. The method of communication is comparison (with other cosmetics). There are many other brands featured, but their names are not visible. The shape and color of the compacts serves to indicate particular brands. A pan left to right begins with a variety of compacts stacked and turned every which way, making them look awkward and inconvenient to carry or pack. The pan ends with a close-up of four L'iris compacts. The lighting serves to highlight the sleek, expensive look of the compact. The choice is obvious: L'iris cosmetics are the most convenient high-quality product for any woman on the go.

Script for thirty-second spot:

"Five O'Clock and All Is Well"

It's 5:00 p.m. Mr. Davis buzzes his secretary.

Mr. Davis: "please send Ms. Alexander to my office."

(shot of secretary, who is getting ready to leave. A clock is seen in the background.)

(Shot of Ms. Alexander, also on her way out.) Her briefcase is open on her desk. She is putting on L'iris lipcolor. She gets the message by phone and quickly snaps together her four compacts, placing them in her briefcase.)

Mr. Davis: (standing as she enters) "You'll be representing the firm in New York tonight. Here is your ticket; your plane leaves in one hour."

Ms. Alexander: (patting her briefcase) "No problem."

(a close-up of her face is seen. She is smiling; her make-up looks smooth and pretty.)

"What If..."

(Ten second filler)

Pan left to right across a jumbled assortment of various cosmetic compacts, ending at four neatly stack, elegantly lit L'iris compacts.

Voice over: "You may not need to take all of your cosmetics with you...but wouldn't it be nice if you could?"

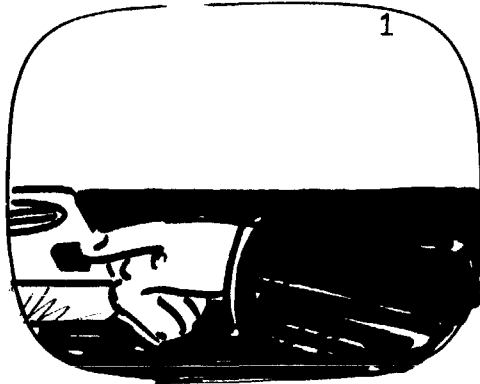
The experience of creating a product and designing several advertising pieces for this product has been very valuable. As a design student, it is important for me to be able to conceptualize and coordinate a variety of designs. As a graduating senior entering the professional world, this series of projects has enhance<sup>d</sup> my portfolio and improved my skills as a designer and effective communicator.



L'iris Cosmetics

"5:00 And All Is Well"

30 seconds



It's 5:00. Mr. Davis buzzes his secretary. "Please send in Ms. Alexander."



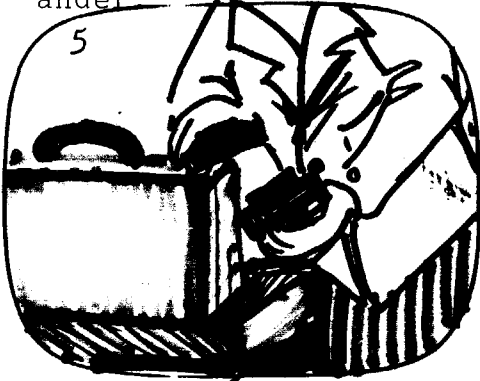
(secretary is on her way out. A clock is seen in the background.)



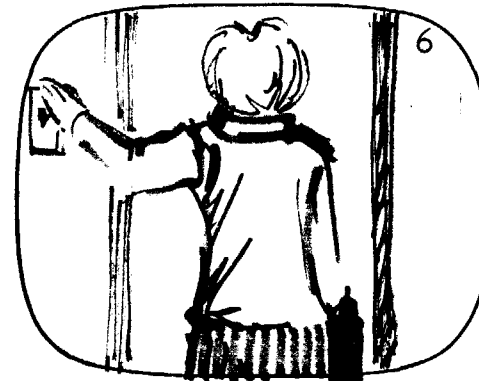
(Ms. Alexander, also on her way out, is applying L'iris lipcolor.)



She gets the message to go to Mr. Davis' office.



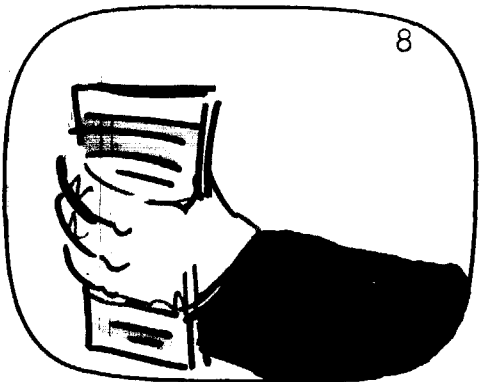
She snaps together her L'iris compacts and places them in her briefcase.



...and leaves her office.



Mr. Davis: You'll be representing us in New York tonight."



"Here is your ticket. Your plane leaves in one hour."



(patting her briefcase)



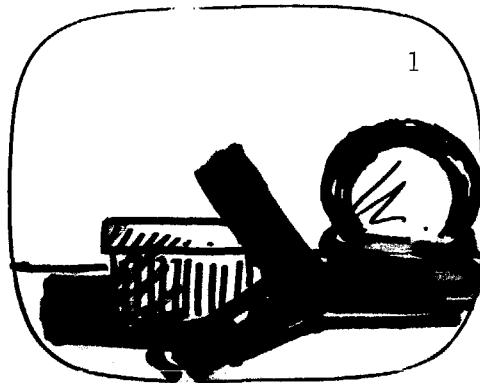
"No problem." (Closeup of her face; her make-up is smooth and pretty.)



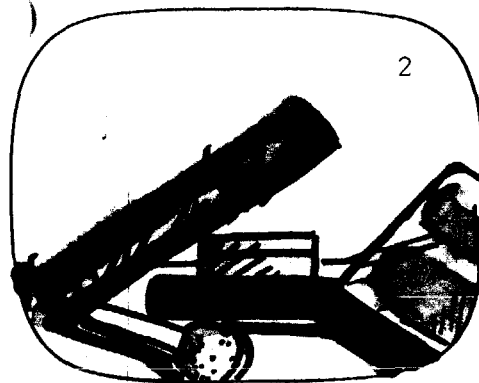
L'iris Cosmetics

"What If..."

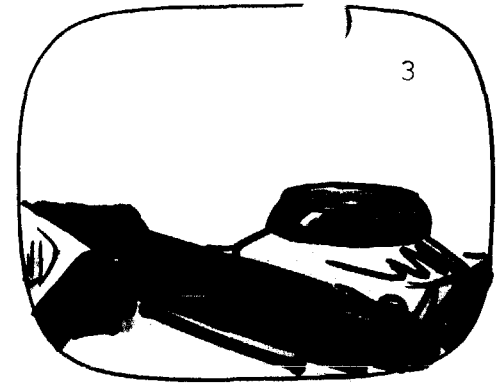
10 seconds



1



2



3

(Camera pans left to right)

(Dimly lit competitors)

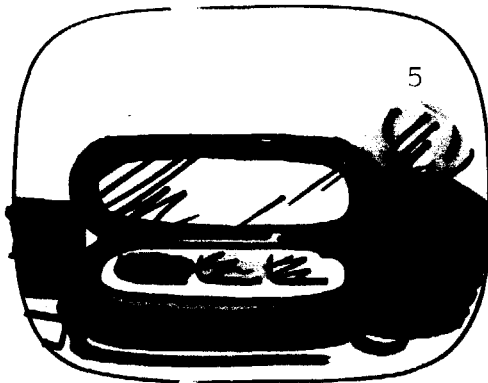
Voice over: "You may not need

to take all of

your cosmetics



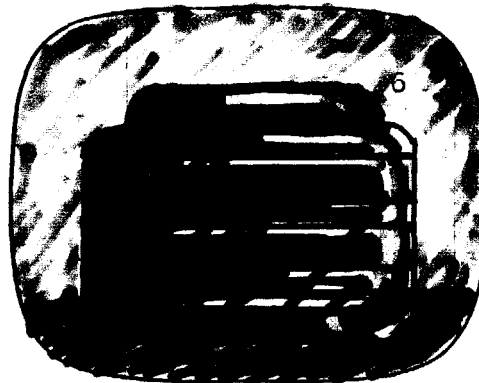
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with you, but

wouldn't it be nice



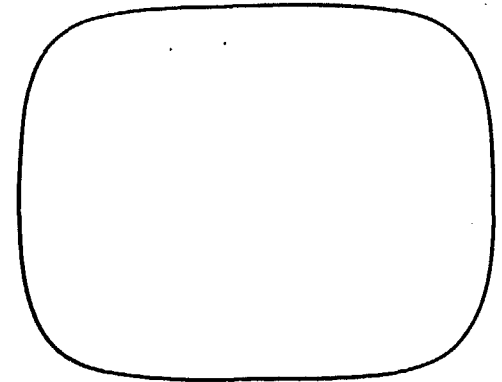
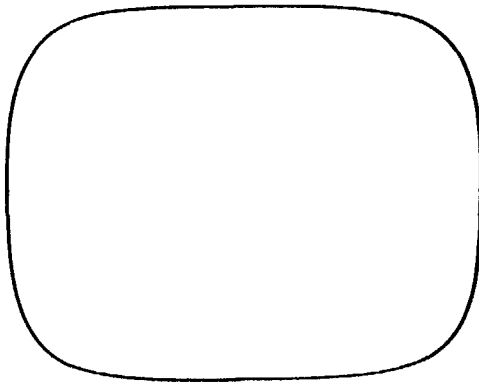
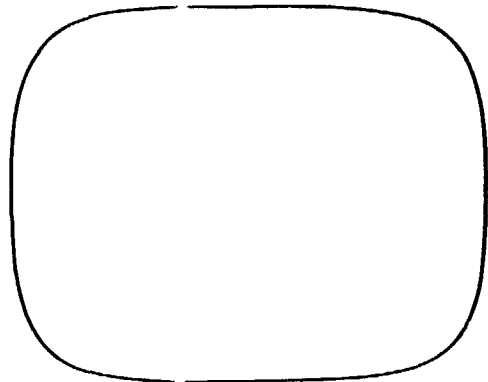
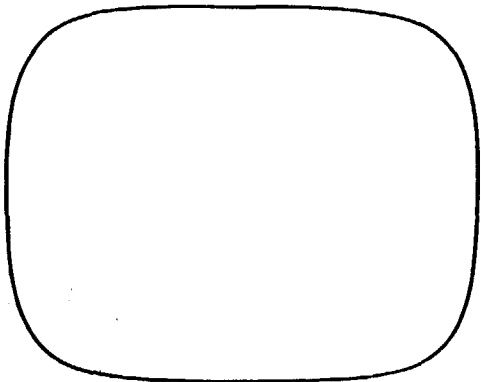
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if you could?"



(fade out)

\*\*L'iris compacts and logo featured in glowing color



### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> James Craig, Graphic Design Career Guide (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1983), p. 9.
- <sup>2</sup> Paul Rand, A Designer's Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p.24.
- <sup>3</sup> Rand, p. 14.

### Bibliography

- Craig, James. Graphic Design Career Guide. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1983.
- Rand, Paul. A Designer's Art. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

A bulk of the information contained in my rationale was drawn from class lectures given by Robert Cunningham, my advisor and graphic design instructor. These classes include Graphic Design 3, 4 and 5, as well as an Independent Study course.