## Lucie Lacava

Lucie Lacava has a keen eye for typography unlike any other newspaper designer. Her favorite fonts are Bodoni, Futura, and Helvetica. "Bodoni is the most elegant font ever designed. It is no surprise that its endless variations are longtime favorites of fashion magazines. I love Futura for its bold weights, its hard edges, and even strokes. It has a great presence even in smaller point sizes. And then there is Helvetica, which has a ubiquitous quality. It never calls attention to itself: like tofu, it can be transformed into anything you want." Interestingly, Lacava never uses these fonts in her projects, often preferring to commission designers to create new ones.

Among her influences, she cites two people who shaped her attention to detail and methodology from a young age. Domenico, an amateur painter and friend of her father, gave Lacava her first set of watercolors and taught her how to add shading with pencil. She was just six years old and she practiced this technique over and over again on a bottle until perfecting it. The other is her father, a professional tailor. She would spend hours in his atelier, leafing through books filled with illustrations of elegant men dressed in suits and tuxedos. She would also take scraps of fabric and use them to design outfits for her dolls. "I think this early exposure to art and precision had a major influence on who I became," she reveals.

Lacava is fluent in four languages and had considered becoming a translator. But she soon realized that her passions lay elsewhere. In college she studied visual arts and graduated in design. Her first professional project was creating advertisements for a friend's store, something that called upon her drawing skills. These ads caught the eye of the commercial department of the Montreal Gazette, which hired her as an advertising creative in 1982. Later, she joined the paper's recently formed graphics department, designing front pages before becoming art editor in 1987: "A men's fashion front was my first SND-award-winning page, a nice homage to the years spent roaming around a tailor's shop," she remembers fondly.

In 1995 she founded her own studio, Lacava Design Inc., in Montreal, where she also teaches at the Université du Québec. The studio has produced over 100 projects in nine countries, all with her distinctive stamp. "My approach looks back while looking forward.



Like the city it serves, a newspaper also has a history that a designer has to respect. I think after USA Today, newspapers went too far. Everybody wanted that colorful look with graphs and charts all over the place. I tend to be very classic in my approach to typography and design." Like a true archaeologist, Lacava rummages through the history of each newspaper, imbibing its personality. Some clients may worry that her proposals will be too retro. But what she is really examining are previously used graphic details and other elements that made the newspaper original in the first place.

Lacava's designs prove that classic does not equal boring. "News doesn't necessarily break in print anymore. There is no longer a need for boldness and urgency," she explains. This type of thinking is characteristic of her methodology, which she also applies to newspapers that might lack a long history. For the design of the National, a 2008 Englishlanguage project in Abu Dhabi, she chose Plakat for the headlines. "for its similarity to Helvetica," and Arnhem for the body text. "I wanted the headlines to feel familiar to the expats working in the UAE." Here, the palette uses cool tones, considering the hot, desert environment within which the newspaper is published: "I wanted readers to feel like they were in an oasis as they read the paper."

In general, Lacava is restrained in her use of typography, subscribing to "less is more." This approach can be traced as far back as her successful redesign of Le Devoir in 1992, in which she used only two fonts, a choice that went entirely against the then dominant fashion that followed the arrival of the Mac. "Many newspapers had gone font crazy," she says. The Le Devoir project had a huge impact on her career and earned her worldwide attention. She was given only four months to complete the project after the failure of the original agency. Due to financial and time constraints, creating custom typography was not an option. Hence the design had to rely on the fonts already available at the paper. The result was a triumph: circulation boomed and the SND named Le Devoir one of the best-designed newspapers in the world. The paper hired Lacava as art editor, a post she stayed at for the next year and a half. Twenty-five years later, Le Devoir called on her again. In November 2017, the newspaper merged its various entertainment and travel sections into a new daily tabloid.  $\rightarrow$ 

> 1. A type-only front page for the Les Arts section of the Canadian newspaper Le Devoir which Lacava redesigned in 1992. It combines Torino and Century fonts.

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d'expression

MARIE LAURIER e Centre québécois PEN Club internatio



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fondée à Londres en fontréal cinq ans plus vocable Canadian Ce namiens. Nous n'avons aucu nouvelle d'eux mais nous sa-par le siège social du PEN à res que nos confrères dans ce sont privée sont privés de leur libert e. Même si c'est un travai ue haleine, nous allons tous pur intervenir auprès des s suréries

n 2000 écrivains et res de répression VOIR PAGE C 2 : PEN

LE DEVOIR, LES SAMEDI 30 ET DIMANCHE 31 OCTOBRE 1993 ◆ LE DEVOIR ◆

e cinema en crise lors Montréa pomt de salut

Malgré d'intéressantes <mark>initiatives</mark>, et même des «miracles» comme le Festival de Rouyn-Noranda qui débute ce week-end, le cinéma vit de graves problèmes structurels à l'extérieur des grands centres. Risque-t-il de disparaître carrément? LE T R E M B L A Y

Chaque année, à l'automne, on exhibe le miracle abitibien. Faisant mentir tous les discours pessimistes déclarant les régions zones sinistrées de la cinéphilie, depuis douze ans, à Rouvn Noranda, il y a un festival de cinéma qui marche. 10 000 personnes, le tiers de la population de la ville y participe: Des jeunes, des baby boomers, tout un public devenu cinéphile, exigeant, et qui veut du bon.

La rue principale est pavoisée, les cafés tapissés d'affiches du festival, et la fièvre monte. Ca commence ce soir. Jusqu'au 4 novembre, le public abitibien se fera servir 71 films de partout, et pas du pré-mâché, des oeuvres parfois difficiles, tel ce sulfureux Naked du Britannique Mike Leich. Jean-Claude Labrecque lancera son dernier documentaire: André Mathieu musicien. «À Rouyn, Labrecque reçoit l'accueil d'un Mick Jagger, m'explique Jacques Matte, un des patrons du festival. Combien de petites villes du Québec peuvent se vanter de connaître aussi bien son oeuvre?»

La capitale du cuivre est depuis toujours un terreau de cinéphiles. S'y bousculaient jusqu'à sept cinémas au cours des années 40. En movenne chaque habitant de Rouvn Noranda (bébés et malades inclus) serait allé 35 fois dans une salle obscure en 1949: record québécois de tous les temps. C'était avant la télé, la vidéo. Aujourd'hui, ne survit qu'un seul cinéma commercial à Rouvn. Mais tous les dimanches et lundis, le Théâtre du cuivre (dirigé aussi par Jacques Matte) présente des soirées ciné-qualité vouées aux films de répertoire. En région, si tu veux ton miel, tu te le fais.

Le cinéaste André Blanchard est de Rouyn. Il se rappelle les belles années pré référendaires quand lui et 🖝 🕫