

● Website: www.williamhall.co.uk

◎ Interviewee 受訪者: William Hall ◎ Studio 工作室: William Hall ◎ City 城市: London 倫敦

William Hall

書籍設計包裝 讀者觀點出發

There is no high drama or exuberant talent in what we do, it's an informed, incremental, thoughtful approach, with a long editing and refinement process at the end. With books I want to make something people will notice, be seduced by, and finally covet. I think these are distinct aims, and require distinct techniques.

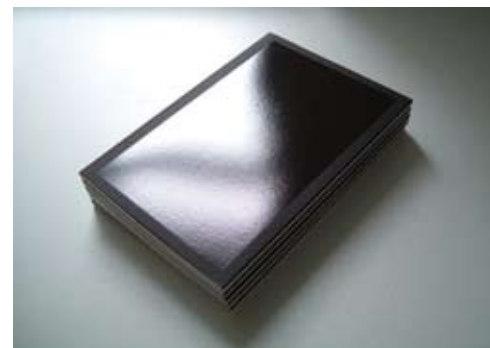
我們的設計中沒有高潮迭起的劇情，也沒有熱情洋溢的才華，設計是一種被傳送的、漸進的、思考的過程，加上長時間的編輯和最後的修飾過程。在書籍設計方面，我希望能做出讓大眾注意、被吸引，最後渴望閱讀的書本。這是我的終極目標，需要終極的技巧來輔助。

✕: Please introduce "William Hall" to the readers of XFUNS.

William Hall is a London based graphic designer with a small team, and clients across Europe. Our projects are varied, but books and identity schemes figure most frequently.

✕: Please share with us your earliest influences that inspired you to become a designer.

My father is an Interior Designer, so there were always



architectural drawings and plans around when I was growing up, and I learnt to understand them when I was very young. I would draw plans of my perfect home, with swimming pools, and go-kart tracks. My interest in maps and information design probably originates in the same place.

✕: Can you tell us a little about your studies, and how they shaped your work?

I studied graphics at Saint Martins, graduating in 1997. Our college building was in the middle of Covent Garden, in central London. Our neighbours were Gap and Paul Smith, so we were totally submerged in commercial graphic design, but we were also only five minutes from the National Gallery, The Photographers Gallery, and about ten cinemas. It was a brilliant environment to study graphics.

When I was at college the Mac meant that for the first time anything at all was possible. David Carson's exuberant work for Ray Gun was extraordinary, but didn't appeal to me. As a student you have to respond to the status quo and I felt turned off by all the noise. It seemed so self-conscious, and belligerent. I wanted to make things that were perfect, even if that meant they were robbed of

invisible spine, but the printer said it was "impossible". We asked him about using different glues, about removing the mesh tape they usually use. We made our own dummy with PVA glue. The printer made some samples. Eventually we found something that worked. With the "We Not I" project it was the same problem. Maybe ten or fifteen printers told us we couldn't puncture paper in the quantities that we wanted, in the way that we wanted. But we persevered, and eventually found a solution that required combining the skills of three separate companies. It has been important for us to find production people who care about their work, and are willing to spend more time than is usual – or financially sensible. The smallest detail can make the difference between something ordinary, and something special.

✕: How difficult is it to present the concept of a brand by using a very minimal design, for instance your Calvin Klein catalogue?

We tend to work with clients who have an educated visual and theoretical viewpoint. But it's not always straightforward. They don't tell you at college that doing good design work is 10% about being a good designer,

William Hall

energy. In the first and second year I didn't use colour at all. I still use it tentatively.

✕: What stimulates your creativity?

The content of the project, and considered reasoning. There is no high drama or exuberant talent in what we do, it's an informed, incremental, thoughtful approach, with a long editing and refinement process at the end. With books I want to make something people will notice, be seduced by, and finally covet. I think these are distinct aims, and require distinct techniques.

✕: What is the main concept and key element in your work?

That you can only elucidate communications by paring them down. That graphic design should be tactile, beautiful, and serious. That perfection necessarily includes some element of imperfection. The Japanese concept of wabi sabi most accurately describes this.

✕: What or who is your biggest influence, in terms of style?

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a rational, deliberative modernist whose angular buildings are soulful, handsome, and ennobling. Also I should mention my colleague, Nicholas Barba, who has worked on all the projects you see here. Sometimes I think he has an even bigger influence than Mies.

✕: Have you ever confronted any difficulties when creating different works? What are the solutions?

My work is an endless list of difficulties. Finding a way to persuade a client, or a printer that something is right, and achievable is what I do every day. The solution is to gently ignore the printer when he says "no". With the *Ettore Spalletti* catalogue I wanted an

and 90% about planning, diplomacy, and business. We hope to communicate with confidence that a particular concept is the best possible solution. The design work we do is very pragmatic, which perhaps makes it easier to explain to a client how we arrived at our resolution. However, an important element of our work is knowing when and how to compromise. For the Robert Ryman catalogue for example we argued for a long time with the client about whether there should be text on the spine. In the end we agreed to blind emboss it.

✕: Please tell us about Robert Ryman catalogue, and how did you originate the design on this book?

As with all the books, our starting point is the content. Robert Ryman is one of the founders of the Minimalist movement in art, and his paintings are exercises in control and reduction. Invariably using a square format and white paint he sensitively explores brushwork, surfaces and materials. In short, it's painting about painting. There is no clearer agenda for a designer than to let the work speak for itself in an uncluttered and unselfconscious space. Of course you have a sense of the book being beautiful, and well proportioned, but if you're interested in Ryman, you're consumed by the images, without distraction. When you look through the book you think "there's no design here at all!" and sometimes I wonder why it is so difficult – but then you look at ten other Robert Ryman catalogues, and you can't believe how self indulgent the



Left and Right Page
Calvin Klein catalogue

graphic designer has been, or how completely they have failed to comprehend the artists work.

✕: What special techniques are involved during the process of creating these two pieces?

None. Although it is quite unusual to reverse text out of a large field of foil block, as we did inside the *Calvin Klein* book.

In the *Robert Ryman* book we cut out all of the backgrounds in Photoshop, and neutralised the colour and tone, so that when you look through the book you aren't distracted by slight changes in wall colour.

✕: Which designers or artists do you admire most? Why?

I think this is an impossible question, so I'll list the five that come to mind first:

Donald Judd, Decimus Burton, Konstantin Grcic, Dieter Rams, and Ben Nicholson.

I think perhaps, despite the eclectic selection, that these are linked in some ways. Everyone in the list works with purity and refinement, and the forms they create are central to the experience – it's not just visual. You will

notice that none of them are graphic designers.

✕: Can you tell us a little about the current project / future plan of William Hall?

We're working on a catalogue for a young artist called Jamie Shovlin, and another one for an older artist called Thomas Schütte. We've just finished designing a book called *Patio and Pavilion*, which concerns the relationship between architecture and sculpture, and we're designing a book to celebrate the London College of Fashion centenary.

We're also working on the identity of a new website called Cornwall100.com which will support artists in the south west of England, and aims to introduce artists to art buyers.

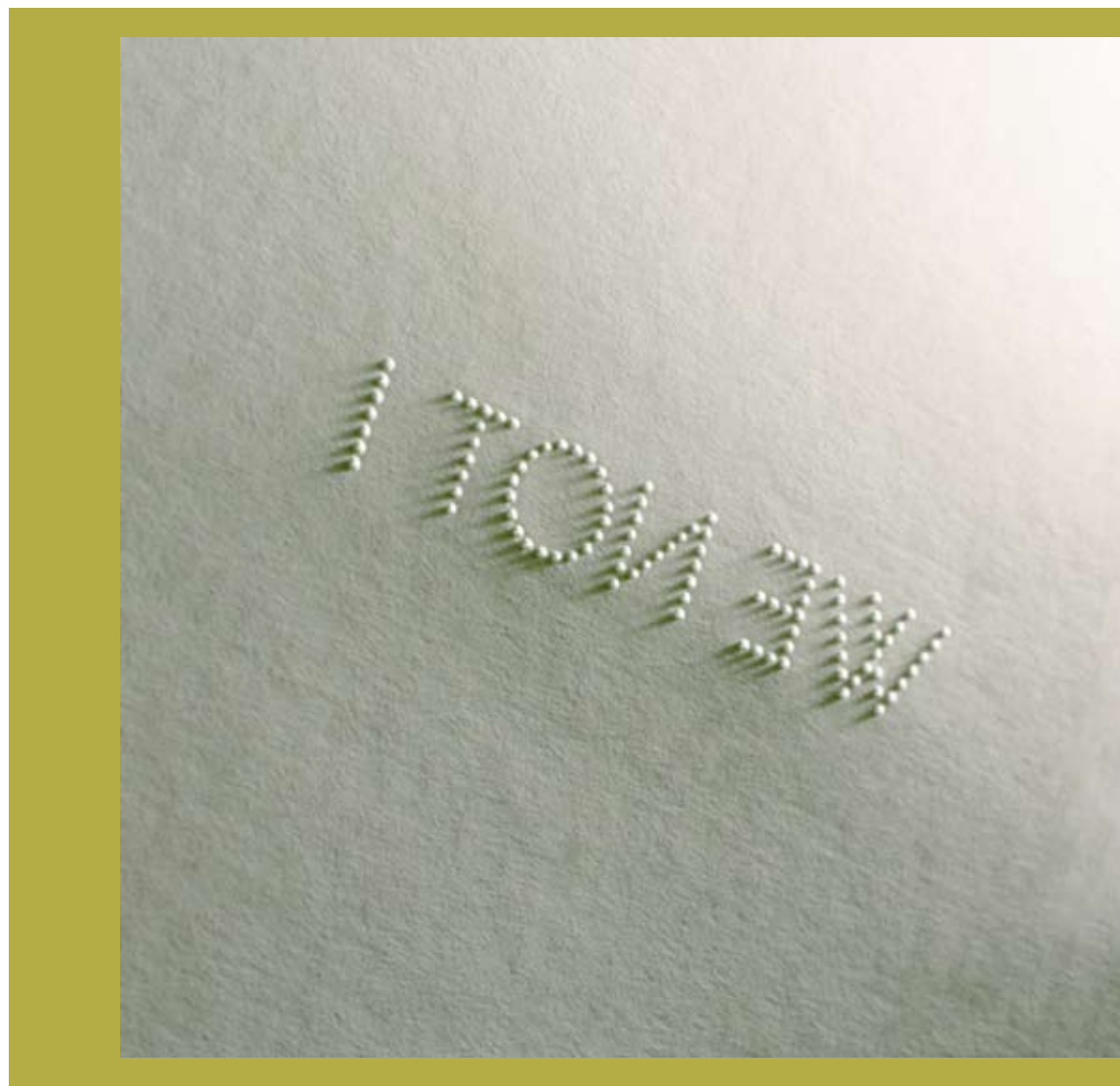
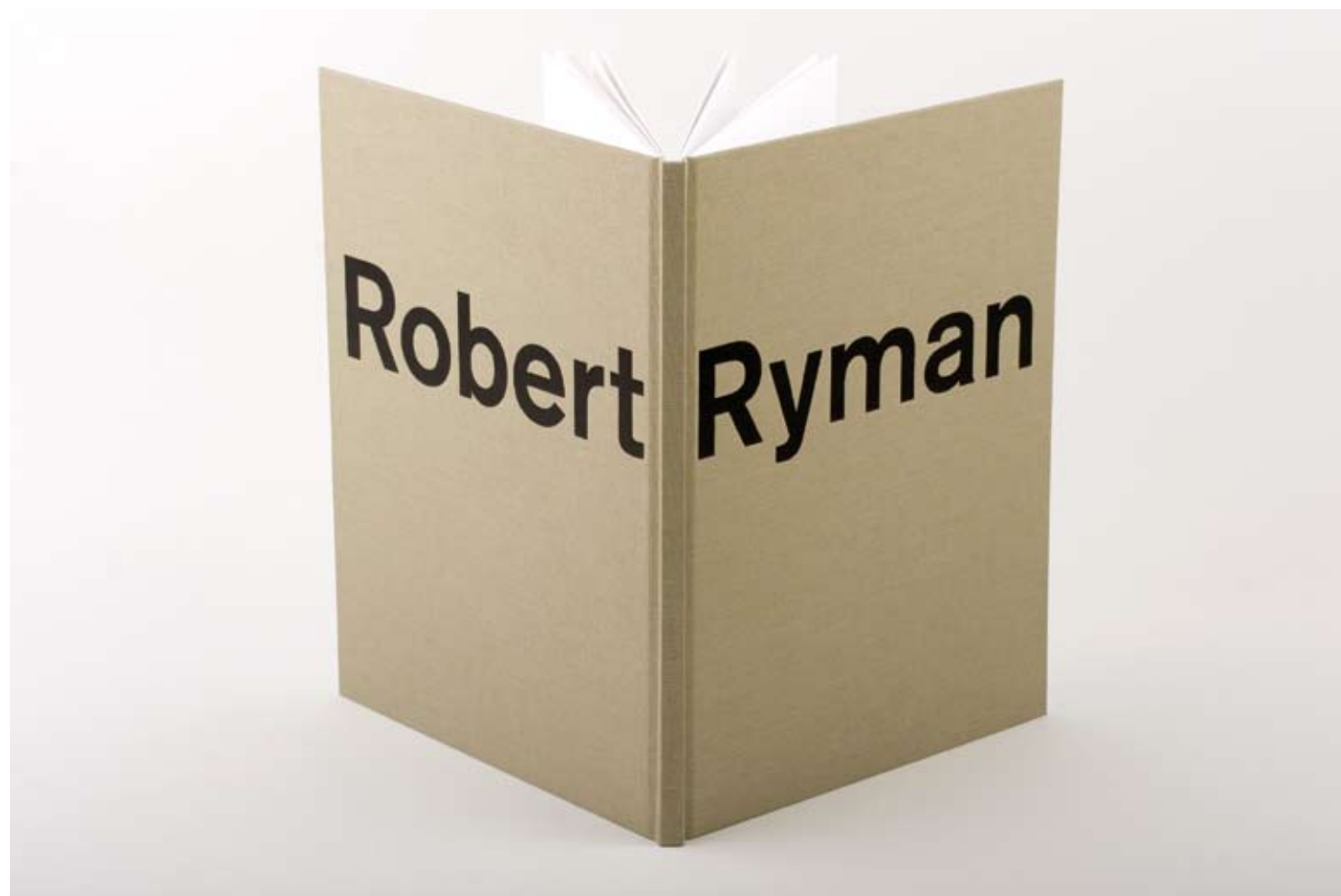
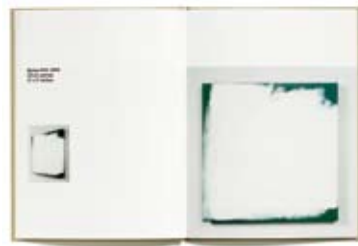
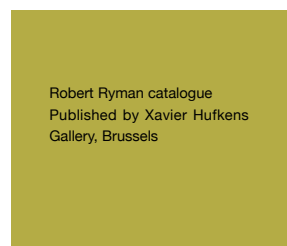
We're interested in working on identity projects with small and medium sized companies with a creative edge to their work.

✕: Please drop some suggestions to people who want to take part in graphic and brochure design?

Do it, it's a great job. We work intensively with artists, authors, chefs, or designers for six months, and at the end

of it you get a book as a neat encapsulation of that period in your life. It's a very satisfying process. In some ways it's better than architecture because one person can have total influence and control.

Remember that book design isn't just about the way the cover or pages look. Consider how it will be used, and by whom, consider its weight and tactile qualities. It's important to control the book in a gesamtkunstwerk way. It doesn't really matter what sort of design you want to do, what's important is to be able to think laterally, and not worry too much about making a mistake. Then begin to have a considered sense of whether one solution is better than another. Don't fall in love with your work, because this makes it difficult to change. You can fall in love with it when it has been published. ✕



William Hall

Stationery for an architectural office called "We Not I"



William Hall

✕: 請向 XFUNS 的讀者介紹「William Hall」。
我是住在倫敦的平面設計師，我的設計團隊很小，客戶遍及歐洲各國。我們做的案子非常多樣，最常接到的是書籍和商標識別等設計案。

都沒有感覺，是非常自覺又好勝的。我想做出完美無瑕的作品，即使必須耗盡我的心力也在所不惜。大學的頭兩年我一點顏色也不用，到了現在，顏色也是我偶爾實驗時才會使用的。

和高尚的質感。另外還有我的同事 Nicholas Barba，這裡看到的都是他參與的作品。有時我覺得他給我的影響比 Mies 還大。

✕: 你早期受到什麼影響，使你成為一個設計師？
我的父親是一位室內設計師，所以在我成長過程中，隨處可見建築繪圖和平面圖。我很小的時候就能夠看懂那些圖。我會畫出理想房屋的平面圖，裡面有游泳池和小型賽車跑道。我對地圖和資訊設計的興趣，也許就是從這裡開始的。

✕: 你的創意靈感從何而來？
案子的內容，還有和經過深思熟慮的推斷。我們的設計中沒有高潮迭起的劇情，也沒有熱情洋溢的才華，設計是一種被傳送的、漸進的、思考的過程，加上長時間的編輯和最後的修飾過程。
在書籍設計方面，我希望能做出讓大眾注意、被吸引、最後渴望閱讀的書本。這是我的終極目標，需要終極的技巧來輔助。

✕: 在創作不同作品時，是否遭遇過任何困難？解決方案為何？
我的工作中有無盡的困難，例如，說服客戶或印刷商我的某個想法是正確的、是被執行的，都是我每天必須經歷的事。
我的解決辦法是當印刷商跟我說「不」時，我會假裝沒有聽到。就 *Ettore Spalletti* 作品集而言，我希望能做出一個隱藏的書脊，但印刷商卻告訴我那是「不可能」的。於是我請他們多換幾款膠水，再把他們常用的網眼膠布撕掉。最後我們自己用 PVA 膠做出想要的效果，而印刷商也多做了一些樣本，我們終於找到了可行的辦法。
在「*We Not I*」案子中，我們也遇到類似的問題。大概有十到十五個印刷商告訴我們，無法在那疊具備一定厚度的紙張上，按照我們的設計模式，打上我們想要的洞。但在我們的堅持之下，總算研究出這必須要結合三家廠商的技術，才完成了這個案子。

✕: 請和我們分享你的求學經歷，以及這些經歷如何形塑你的作品？
我在聖馬丁學院讀平面設計，1997 年畢業。我的學校位在倫敦市中心科芬園的中央，附近有 Gap 和 Paul Smith 服裝店，所以我們完全被商業平面設計給包圍。此外，從我的學校到國家美術館和攝影師美術館只有五分鐘的距離，附近也有將近十家電影院。這是一個學習平面設計的絕佳環境。

✕: 你作品中的主要理念與關鍵元素為何？
只有觀眾將元素組合在一起，才能解釋作品要傳達的訊息。平面設計應該是策略性的、美麗的且嚴肅的。另外，在絕對的完美中，也會帶有不完美的元素，日文中的「侘寂」一詞最能解釋這樣的意境。

我在學校讀書時，Mac 的意思是任何事在第一次發生時都是有無限可能的。David Carson 為 Ray Gun 做的傑出作品雖然朝氣蓬勃，但我一點也不喜歡。作為一個學生，我必須要反映現狀，而我對所有的噪音

✕: 就風格而言，哪些特定的人或物帶給你影響最深？
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe，他是一位理性、慎重的現代主義者。他所設計的稜角建築具備著靈魂、美感



Giorgio Locatelli

Made In Italy Food & Stories



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找到對工作用心，也願意花更多時間投入，或對預算敏感的廠商是非常重要的。最小的細節往往能拉出普通和特別的作品之間的差距。

✕：用簡潔設計去呈現一個品牌概念的困難度如何 – 如你們所設計的 *Calvin Klein* 作品集？
我們喜歡和有受過視覺訓練和有自己理論觀點的客戶合作。但事情也並非永遠如此的簡單。學校老師並不會告訴我們，好的設計是 10% 的設計天分加上 90% 的規劃、運籌帷幄和生意頭腦。我們希望能有自信地和客戶溝通，讓他們知道某個觀點是最好的解決方案。我們的設計是非常實用的，也許這也讓我們更容易讓客戶瞭解，我們的想法是如何形成的。
我們作品中最重要的就是要知道什麼時候要妥協，又如何妥協。以 *Robert Ryman* 作品集為例，就書脊上是否有文字這件事，我們就和客戶爭論了很久。最後我們同意用壓印的方式處理。

✕：請談談 *Robert Ryman* 作品集的設計，以及這本書的設計緣起。
和其他書一樣，我們從書的內容開始。*Robert Ryman* 是極簡主義運動在藝術界的發起人之一，而他的畫作正是抑制和簡約的實踐，總是一成不變地用白色的方塊深究筆觸、平面和媒材。簡言之，他的作品是和繪畫有關的繪畫。

✕：可否與我們分享 *William Hall* 工作室目前在做什麼作品？接下來有什麼計畫？
目前正在進行兩本作品集的設計，一本是年輕設計師 *Jamie Shovlin* 的作品，另一本是較年長的 *Thomas Schütte* 的作品。我們剛完成 *Patio and Pavilion* 一書的設計，這本書講的是建築和雕塑之間的關係。另外，我們還在設計另一本慶祝倫敦時尚學院一百週年校慶的紀念書。
我們也正在幫 *Corwall100.com* 這個新網站做識別設計，這個網站是為西北英格蘭的藝術家開闢的園地，建立藝術家與買家之間的連結關係。
我們很喜歡為從事創意事業的中小型公司做企業識別的設計案。

✕：對想從平面設計和書頁設計的人有哪些建議？
喜歡就去做，這是很棒的工作。我們通常得和藝術家、作家、廚師或設計師展開六個月的合作關係，最後能夠看到一本書的出爐，紀錄了那段時間生活的點點滴滴。這個過程讓人很有成就感。它比建築好的地方在於你可以對作品有完全的影響和掌控力。請記得書籍設計不只是設計好看的封面和內頁，你還必須考慮到這本書讀者是誰，他會怎樣利用這本書，還有書的重量和觸感。要把整本書看成是一個藝術的整體。
至於你想要採用怎樣的設計不是那麼重要，重要的是你要能做側向的思考，不要擔心會犯錯，然後開始思考還會不會有更好的設計方案。另外請注意不要愛上自己的作品，這樣一來你就很難去修改它。你只能在作品已經出版後才可以愛上它。✕



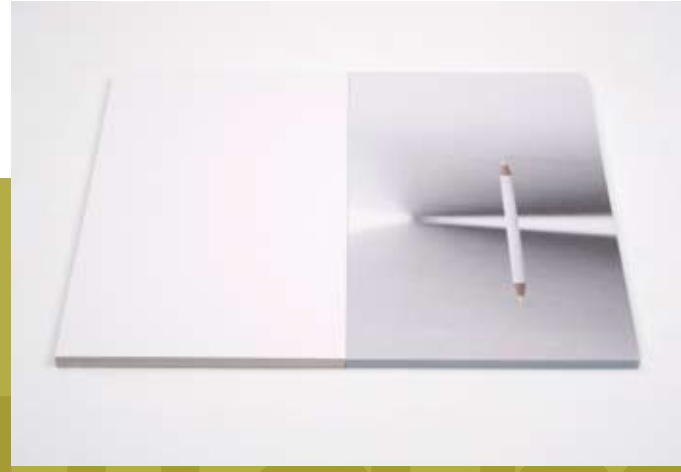
對設計師而言，讓書中的作品在整齊自然的空間中展現自我，是最讓人明瞭的方式了。當然大家都認為一本書看起來應該是漂亮、成比例的，但如果你喜歡 *Ryman* 的作品，你必定會被他的圖所深深地吸引。
當你翻閱這本書時，你會想「這裡面哪有什麼設計啊！」，有時候我也會懷疑這本簡單的書為何設計起來那麼難？但如果你看過 *Robert Ryman* 的其他十本作品集，你會對那些設計過他其他作品集的平面設計師，只著重在展現個人設計風格，卻未徹底瞭解 *Ryman* 作品的真正意義的做法，感到難以置信。

✕：這兩件作品的設計過程中有使用那些特殊技巧嗎？
沒有。不過，我們一樣在 *Calvin Klein* 書中使用大塊鉛箔效果反轉文字，倒是個挺特別的技巧。
Robert Ryman 的作品集中，我們用 Photoshop 剪下所有的作品背景，再中和背景的色調，因此當讀者翻閱書本時，不會受到牆面顏色些微差異的干擾。

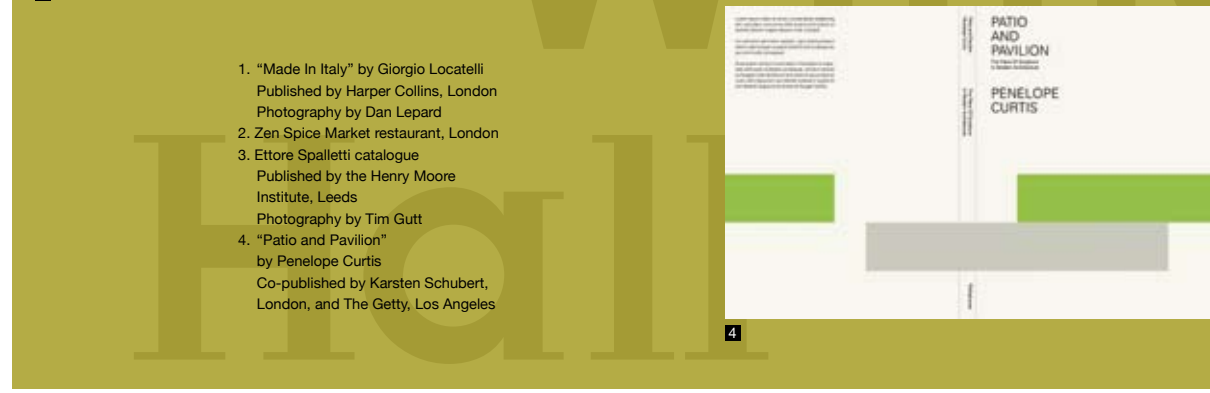
✕：你最推崇哪位設計師或藝術家？為什麼？
這個問題很難回答，但我還是列出首先想到的五個：*Donald Judd*、*Decimus Burton*、*Konstantin Grcic*、*Dieter Rams* 和 *Ben Nicholson*。我想這五個人中間是有某些相似點的，他們的作品都有純粹和細緻的風格，以經驗為中心創作，而非只是視覺效果。這五個人都不是平面設計師。



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