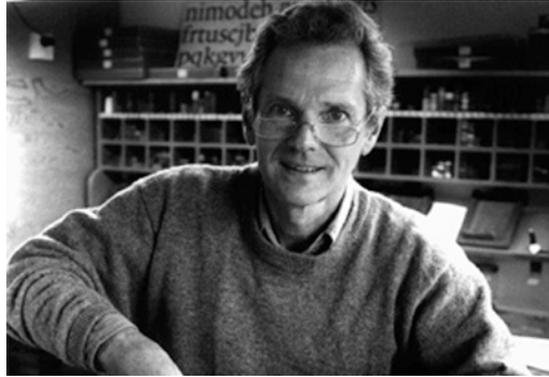


Bram de Does and Kaba Ornaments

Bram de Does was born 1934 in Amsterdam
He studied asymmetrical typography in the 1950's at the Amsterdam Graphic school.

Even though he was highly educated he decided to study a practical skill which was quite unusual at the time. He later became employed at Joh. Enschedé in Harlem as a typograph caretaker until 1988.



De Does released a type face, Trinité in 1982 for which he was awarded the H.N. Werkman prize in 1991. It was designed as an all-purpose typeface, elegant and delicate and gained significant popularity when it was released as postscript font. After releasing the type face he wrote a book about the typeface called Romanée en Trinité in 1991. Enschedé published another De Does typeface in 1995 called Lexicon. It was a highly adaptable design and qualities that could make it a possibly contender to become the new times new roman. Before the release of Lexicon it was used to the set the 1991 edition of van dales Groot woordenboek der Nederlandse taal

Bram de Does started working on the Kaba ornaments in the 1960's after completion of the two typefaces Trinity and Lexicon.

Bram was asked to design a series of ornaments to be used by the company Enschedé, as security printing on legal bank documents, but primarily as a book designer. He worked at the same company until 1988, and he had the job since he graduated in the 1950's, so you can imagine he had a good relationship to the company. But, because the production of quality books stopped being a top priority at Enschedé, Bram De Does decided to leave the Enschedé, but within a year he would come back. The kaba ornaments were never finished while under commission. The times were changing and the world was getting more modern, the computer and credit card were invented. It made the security printing unnecessary since the digital society came and took place in the late 1980's

Bram de Does chose to create the Kaba, ornaments in old traditional way of printing by hand, and in that way you can say he is making a protest to the digital world. Kaba is the Arabic word for cube, and it's also the name of the holy cube in Mecca. Bram de Does expressed that he found working with the ornaments meditative. Bram had great talents in math and the



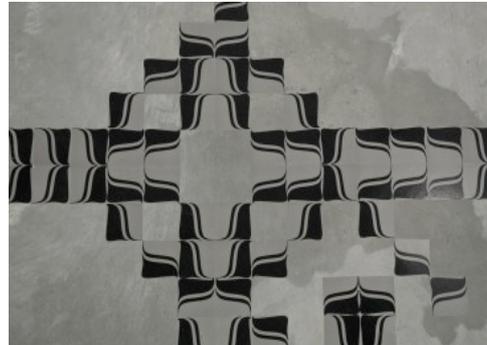
understanding of complex systems, which is maybe the reason for the structure of the Kaba ornaments, and why he felt free working with it, compared to working with typography.

The Kaba ornaments is based on two mirrored patterns, the patterns can be changed into 4 different positions and the mirrored patent as well, so in the end you have 8 different positions to play with.

This means you can place the ornaments order and in that way make a mathematic plan over the piece.

He made the ornaments so they could be programmed in to patterns, based on mathematic matrixes.

The way he made the Kaba ornaments as described can be understood as him making a subversive statement towards the digitalisation



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Throughout his productive life, he has gone through ups and downs. He has received awards and respect. He is a popular and respected type designer and typographer. His dedication and original, clever ways of thinking and combining old traditional methods with modern ways of thinking, has changed thoughts and opened doors and expanded the world of typography.

The Kaba ornaments are an excellent example of a brilliantly thought-out revolt, with great visual and elegant result.

Conclusion

In my opinion Kaba ornaments has been made, is relatable to the DIY culture. The DIY ethic is tied to anti-consumerism, as a rejection of the need to purchase items, or use existing systems or processes. It would foster dependence on established societal structures.

Kaba ornaments have a similar tendency to oppose to mass production and then celebrate the personal touch on serious works based on limited means.

