

# David carson: renowned for his inventive graphics

[Design](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

He was born September 8, 1952 in Corpus Christi, Texas. Carson and his family moved to New York City four years later. Since then he has traveled all around the world but has maintained New York as his base of operations. Carson now owns two studios; one in New York and another in Charleston, South Carolina. Because of his father, Carson traveled all over America, Puerto Rico, and the West Indies. These journeys affected him profoundly and the first signs of his talent were shown at a very young age; however, his first actual contact with graphic design was made in 1980 at the University of Arizona on a two week graphics course.

He attended San Diego St. University as well as Oregon College of Commercial Art. Later on in 1983, Carson was working towards a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology when he went to Switzerland, where he attended a three-week workshop in graphic design as part of his degree. This is where he met his first great influence, who also happened to be the teacher of this course, Hans-Rudolph Lutz. He became renowned for his inventive graphics in the 1990s. Having worked as a sociology teacher and professional surfer in the late 1970s, he art directed various music, skateboarding and surfing magazines through the 1980s.

As art director of surfing magazines and more famously style magazine Ray Gun (1992-5), Carson came to worldwide attention. His layouts featured distortions or mixes of 'vernacular' typefaces and fractured imagery, rendering them almost illegible. Indeed, his maxim of the 'end of print' questioned the role of type in the emergent age of digital design, following on from California New Wave and coinciding with experiments at the

Cranbrook Academy of Art. In the later 1990s he shifted from 'surf subculture' to corporate work for Nike, Levis, and Citibank.

During the period of 1982-1987, Carson worked as a teacher in Torrey Pines High School in San Diego, California. In 1983, Carson started to experiment with graphic design and found himself immersed in the artistic and bohemian culture of Southern California. By the late eighties he had developed his signature style, using "dirty" type and non-mainstream photography. He would later be dubbed the "father of grunge." Carson went on to become the art director of Transworld Skateboarding magazine.

Among other things, he was also a professional surfer and in 1989 Carson was qualified as the 9th best surfer in the world. [1] His career as a surfer helped him to direct a surfing magazine, called Beach Culture. This magazine lasted for three years but, through the pages of Beach Culture, Carson made his first significant impact on the world of graphic design and typography with ideas that were called innovative even by those that were not fond of his work. Not afraid to break convention in one issue he used Dingbat as the font for what he considered a rather dull interview with Bryan Ferry. 2] (However, the whole text was published in a legible font at the back of the same issue of RayGun, complete with a repeat of the asterisk motif). From 1991-1992, Carson worked for Surfer magazine. A stint at How magazine (a trade magazine aimed at designers) followed, and soon Carson launched Ray Gun, a magazine of international standards which had music and lifestyle as its subject. Ray Gun made Carson very well-known and attracted new admirers to his work. In this period, journals such as the New York Times

(May 1994) and Newsweek (1996) featured Carson and increased his publicity greatly.

In 1995, Carson founded his own studio, David Carson Design in New York City, and started to attract major clients from all over the United States. During the next three years (1995-1998), Carson was doing work for Pepsi Cola, Ray Ban (orbs project), Nike, Microsoft, Budweiser, Giorgio Armani, NBC, American Airlines and Levi Strauss Jeans, and later worked for a variety of new clients, including AT&T, British Airways, Kodak, Lycra, Packard Bell, Sony, Suzuki, Toyota, Warner Bros. CNN, Cuervo Gold, Johnson AIDS Foundation, MTV Global, Princo, Lotus Software, Fox TV, Nissan, quiksilver, Intel, Mercedes-Benz, MGM Studios and Nine Inch Nails. He acted as the original design consultant for the tourism magazine Blue in 1997. In 2000, Carson opened a new personal studio in Charleston, South Carolina. In 2004, Carson became the Creative Director of Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston and designed the special " Exploration" edition of Surfing Magazine and directed a television commercial for UMPQUA Bank in Seattle, Washington.

Carson became interested in a new school of typography and photography-based graphic design and is largely responsible for popularizing the style; he inspired many young designers of the 1990s. His work does not follow " traditional" graphic design standards. Carson is emotionally attached to his creations. Carson's work is considered explorative of thoughts and ideas that become " lost" in the subconscious. Every piece is saturated, but Carson still manages to communicate both the idea and the feeling behind his design.

His extensive use of combinations of typographic elements and photography led many designers to completely change their work methods and graphic designers from all around the world base their style on the new "standards" that have distinguished Carson's work. Carson's work is familiar among the generation that grew up with Raygun Magazine and its progeny such as huH and xceler8, and in general, the visually savvy MTV generation, but his work still receives criticism from a generation that refuses to engage with his connotative excesses.

Carson has been one of the greatest influences on modern graphic design in the last twenty five years. He took photography and type and manipulated and twisted them together and on some level confusing the message but in reality he was drawing the eyes of the viewer deeper within the composition itself. In November 1995, Carson published his first book the End of Print. It sold over 200, 000 copies in five different languages and soon became the best-selling graphic design book worldwide. His second book, 2nd Sight, followed in 1997.

It is said that this book simply changed the public face of graphic design (Newsweek). In 1998, Carson worked with Professor John Kao of theHarvardBusiness School on a documentary entitled "The Art and Discipline of Creativity." The third book that Carson published was Fotografiks (1999) which earned Carson the Award of Best Use of Photography in Graphic Design. Carson's fourth book, Trek, was released in 2000. Carson has also helped in the development of The History of Graphic Design by Philip Meggs and The Encyclopedia of Surfing by Matt Warsaw.