# The casting session

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Advertising spot for a brand campaign.



Silvia Muñoz de Morales, a "Cacharel-girl".

The scene, on a set. Intense light directed towards a white background. The rest, in half-light. On the right, a group of young girls, standing, waiting. All very similar. In the foreground, the casting director. His back is turned and he is in the dark. He makes a signal and one of the

girls steps into the center of the scene and, looking at the camera, says: "cacharel". The director watches her carefully for a few seconds and moves on to the next one. And so on, one after the other. He is looking for "the Cacharel girl". Brilliant creative solution of the advertising agency: the brand telling how it builds itself.

The monochrome image forces to focus the attention on the shapes. The colors would produce an interference in the registration of the details of physiognomy and gestures. At one point, the director says to one of the girls: "Please repeat". The girl smiles and, with the same pout as before, says "cacharel" again. The camera zooms in quickly on her face, the image is fixed, and the Cacharel logo appears below her. The Cacharel girl has been found.

What has happened there? Someone made a pre-selection of girls who "looked the part", based on a brief that included the Cacharel paradigm. That's why they all looked so much alike: same age, same height, same weight… In other words, "type". And, moreover, with similar dresses and the same color. With this cast of potential Cacharel girls, he, the casting director, was trying to detect the most Cacharel-like of them all. In the very few seconds he dedicated to each one, his mind, at high speed, decoded the signs they emitted spontaneously: smile, look, pose… Interpretation made from the socially valid codes of naivety, naughtiness, cheekiness, poise, fragility… And, simultaneously, the director contrasted that reading with the Cacharel brand personality, until he detected a biunivocal equivalence between both discourses. Just in case, he asked him to repeat, to confirm.

Why was he able to do so? Well, "very simply". First, because he had a perfect command of those codes, that is, he knew how to make a precise, socially valid, non-personal interpretation of those traits of the girls. And, secondly, because he knew the distinctive features of Cacharel. The photo of the Cacharel-girl alone would act as a discourse: the brand's identity discourse, a synecdoche of it: its core. The brand's profile selected its ideal client by showing a mutual identification.

When the casting of a film is right, all the characters are real, not acted: those who play them disappear from sight, they become transparent. When, on the other hand, the casting is wrong, one cannot concentrate on the character because what stands out most is the actor or actress. In our example, the chosen girl was chosen because "Cacharel" came from her soul, that is to say, all she said was "cacharel".

Exactly the same happens in the relationship between the logo and the brand. The writing of the name must seem to come from the soul of the company. It must not be seen: it must make you think of the company. It must become transparent as soon as it becomes known, that is to say, it must appear as the only possible way, the most natural way, to say its name. If instead of referring to its owner, the logo refers to itself, it has failed in its mission.

When a graphic designer chooses a typeface to build his client's logo, exactly the same process takes place in his mind. He decodes, in the pre-selected fonts, their connotations of nuance: tradition, coldness, elegance, colloquiality, amenity, severity… and contrasts this reading with the strategic profile of his client, his self-expressive mood.

What do you need to know in order not to get the wrong source? "Very simple": to perfectly master the cultural codes related to the letters (never your personal predilections), and to

know perfectly the brand personality of your client; and thus find that biunivocal equivalence. To do so, your brain must store as many paradigms as possible, that is, socially active associative chains; and, thus, be able to register nuances of meaning in each graphic feature and not choose "grosso modo". And his sensitivity will make them come into action in the precise order and combination. He will act as a "typographic casting director". Without this interpretative capacity, design is a mere practice of drifting formal invention.

To design at a high professional level, one must become a culturally representative interpreter of the society for which one works, and be an acute interpreter of the client's profile. A good graphic designer is basically a good designer because he or she has a very high command of connotation and knows how to generate messages that connote what they should connote. And this is so regardless of whether the designer knows it or ignores it.

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