

fabien BRANNO

BY SARA NEHER

Fabien Baron was first noticed for his redesign work of Italian Vogue in the late 1980s. His career at Italian Vogue ended after a series of issues, however, this presented Baron with the opportunity to show his talents working at Alexey Brodovitch's magazine, Harper's Bazaar. More recently, his flair has shined through his work as editorial director of Interview magazine. Throughout his ongoing 20+ year career, Baron has successfully revamped five magazines, created several lucrative perfumes, and has even established his own line of eyewear and furniture. Fabien Baron has brought a defined sense of minimalism and order to the design world, sharpening everything in his path.

The first example of his refined technique shows a spread from Harper's Bazaar. The design demonstrates Baron's famous use of white space. The text is set in Didot and uses multiple styles; some italicized, some capitalized, and others written in contrasting sizes. The large, italic, lowercase letter "d" takes

up a majority of the right side of the spread but still leaves a ton of breathing room around the page. The rest of the introductory text, or deck, is uniquely placed inside the counterspace of the d, while the bottom serif of the d points to the names of the author of the article and the name of the photographer of the image that is situated on the facing page. The different weights and styles of the text create a movement that intrigues viewers, leaving them with an urge to know more.

The second piece of work is a page from another Harper's Bazaar spread. This design differs from the first in a few ways. While the top heading ("Bazaar") follows Baron's motif of contrasting sizes and strategic placing, the subhead and body text seems much more structured. The "Bazaar" heading is just that, bizarre. Yet somehow it seems to work. Fabien Baron used, what appears to be, Didot as his weapon of choice once again. However, this time the font seems to be stretched and distorted. Typically stretching a font to distortion



is unpleasant to look at, but Baron does a nice job of manipulating each letter, placing them on top of one another while still separating them using different colors. The difference between the heading and the subheading/body text is a great example of how Baron is able to be conservative and still let his talents run free, in the best way possible. The body text uses a similar serif's font, but it doesn't appear to be Didot.

Fabien Baron's unique quality of style is evident through the pieces he's created throughout his time as a designer. While some would think of a minimalistic approach as easy, the task can be much harder than imagined. Baron has a natural sense of simplicity and is able to keep his work simple without making it boring. The way that he takes advantage of white space and differing sizes, weights, and styles, allows his layouts to look clean cut but extremely captivating -- anything but boring.

