

A Typographic Legend: Jan Middendorp

Descrizione

Jan Middendorp (4/9/56-12/8/23) contributed an incredible wealth of knowledge to the field of typography and was an integral part of our typographic family. I met Jan at my first TypeCon conference in Milwaukee in 2012. He was one of my first type design mentors, who offered business advice, type critiques, and introduced me to invaluable new contacts in the field. Jan was at almost every one of the larger type conferences, and I can vividly see him sitting in the lobby with his backpack slouched next to him, giving critiques to students or discussing the latest type controversies with colleagues. He published a great number of typography books that were not only jam packed with knowledge, but also beautifully designed, and written with a fresh, approachable style. I used his textbook "Shaping Text" in my Intro to Typography courses over the years, not only because it was thorough, but also because he knew how to draw students in with inviting content, with subheads like "Seducing with Type".

The conference talks are often enlightening, but the great networking and real fun happens after the talks, with dinner, drinks, and dancing. I found out that Jan was not only the center of many professional talks at the conferences, but also the life of the party, in his own quiet way. One night in Milwaukee, several of us went to a bar called the SafeHouse, where we had to do the chicken dance to get inside. Jan didn't miss a beat! I so wish I had a photo of that moment. Over the years there were countless type conferences...with paella on the beach in Barcelona, a dance floor packed with type designers at a German bar in Amsterdam, and beautiful rooftop happy hours in many cities across the globe. The photo, above, is from the 2018 Kerning Conference in Faenza, Italy, when Jan and I went for a coffee and walk around the farmer's market, and he told me about his illness. Due to the pandemic, it ended up being our final goodbye.

Our international type community is small, and a bright light has been lost this last year. I am immeasurably grateful for the ways that Jan Middendorp changed not only our type community, but also for the countless ways in which he impacted both my career and personal life. May your memory live on, dear Jan!

Categoria

1. Uncategorized

Data di creazione

7 Gennaio 2024

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