



Designing the Cover of *the general brock university Undergraduate journal of history*

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April 6, 2016 I proposed a design for the cover of the first issue of the undergraduate journal of history, shortly before it was scheduled to go off to print. The idea of what the cover should look like and its function within the framework of the history and function of the university, the history department, and students struck me like lightning.

The cover design builds on Raymond Moriyama's vision as an architect, highlighting the persistence of his vision throughout his long distinguished career.¹ Moriyama's ties with Brock University are long and meaningful. He was formerly the sixth Chancellor of Brock University (2001-2007). He designed the Mackenzie Chown Complex in 1969. He also designed the Science Complex, Taro Hall and the Alumni Students Centre, and the Alan Earp Residence, Student Centre, and the Walker Health & Fitness Complex.

I heard the story of Raymond Moriyama's vision as it manifests itself in MCC's building layout from University [Art] Collections Coordinator and VISA Image Resources Curator, Ms. Leslie Bell. Ms. Bell graciously and sensibly holds important institutional memory. In her tours of the MCC she reminisces about the architect's vision. Moriyama has a long and distinguished career.² He founded Moriyama & Teshima Architects in 1970. He is Companion of the Order of Ontario, the Order of Canada and the Order of the Rising Sun (Japan), and has received many accolades.³

I recalled Ms. Bell's description of the building's layout, its modular structure with intersecting paths the purpose of which is to help people reach out to others to find their way, encouraging them to connect. Her description spoke to the many times I had asked passersby for help on my way to an office or a classroom, and how far people had gone to assist me to ensure I got to my destination. I remembered smiles, expressions of concern and sympathy. On many occasions that allowed for time for poking a joke about my love for getting lost – because it allows me to discover new things on the way– and to laugh at my playful (irresponsible?) approach to my management of time schedules, too.

Mr. Moriyama's vision continues to speak to what the ethos or spirit of the university as an institution, and the human relations that underlie it as it continues to evolve in context could be. This vision is more than ever relevant to Brock University today. How this is so, is what the design for the cover aspires to convey.

¹ Mr. Moriyama has a long and distinguished career. He is Companion of the Order of Ontario, the Order of Canada and the Order of the Rising Sun (Japan) and has received many accolades.

² Ms. Bell lucidly preserves the freshness of Mr. Moriyama's vision and relevance to this day, generously and genuinely honoring it. She confirmed on the phone my memory of her words. I thus proceeded to summon Mr. Moriyama's vision and give full reign to my imagination in connecting form and function in the cover of the journal.

³ Susan Ford and Geoffrey Simmins. "Raymond Moriyama." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Online. Entry revised by Branca Baic. Originally published 06/13/12. Last edited 03/04/16. Consulted April 10, 2016.

The design features a black and white photograph of Moriyama's architectural model of the Mackenzie Chown Complex and Schmon Tower dated 1970 (author unknown).⁴ The top third portion of the photograph where the Schmon Tower has been digitally modified using InDesign software by adding a black gradient with adjusted opacity to give it a contrasting, washed off, darker effect. The title of the journal sits at the bottom of this area and runs from left to right across the cover. There are two parts to the title, "The General" and "Brock University Undergraduate Journal of History." With the exception of the word "Undergraduate," all letters in the title are in lower case. The typeset used is Futura PT Book 16 pt., Kerning 100. On the bottom right corner of the cover, additional descriptors such as volume and number also are in lower case.

So, how does the design speak to Moriyama's vision? Readers/viewers might wonder about some, if not the most explicit, of the choices I made.

Why did I want the top third part of the photograph digitally modified? Why did I want the separation between the top and the bottom to be stark as opposed to getting a washed off or fading effect from the second third up to transition from one section of the photo to the other gently? Why did I want the font to be a geometric sans-serif typeface? Why did I want letters in lower case with the exception of an "U"? If "The General" refers to General Isaac Brock, why is this "G" not in upper case as this is the one a viewer ought to expect to be so, if only to demonstrate deference and respect for the memory of the namesake of the university?

Moriyama's vision underlies this design. Meaning in design is imbued with context.

Undergraduate students are leading the way, the spirit of Sir Isaac Brock knows of no differences in sex, gender, ethnicity, race, class, age. The Brock University Historical Society Executive is the expression of how this manifests in History's student body. The History Department's Chair, faculty at large, sessional instructors, and department coordinator mentor and support the student body in various capacities. In particular, they are helping steward knowledge and skills of the undergraduate journal's Editors-in-Chief and Editorial Board. University librarians and staff contribute with additional valuable knowledge and resources. From the Office of the Dean up, university administration and staff are there to support faculty and students to achieve their highest aspirations.

With regards to choice of lower vs upper case, it is there to help us put an emphasis on the role and function of undergraduates in relation to the legacy of university life. During

⁴ The photograph is in the University Photograph Collection, Brock University Archives. Whereabouts of the model unknown.

university years, students are here to be a beacon in the journey of curiosity, exploration and discovery, of searching and making connections. Faculty, Administration, Staff are here to provide them with means so that they live up to their full potential. Their search is a journey deep within and without for help, advice, inspiration, orientation. They are here to partake in meaningful ways in the creation of new things of value, overcoming all forms of obstacles and limitations.

The font speaks to the quality of relations, interactions, and work Mr. Moriyama's vision communicates. The MCC model is easily readable, unadorned. It presents us with simple lines, planes, and volumes. They stand on their own and they also are interdependent. Flow stands still at points of contact, then shifts direction. This interdependence communicates simplicity and sobriety in playfulness. Playfulness in the interaction between lines, planes, and volumes is what allows the structure to breathe. Even in containment there is a feeling of lines, planes, and volumes overflowing. The font is clear, clean, and aims to speak the language the lines of the model speak. Clarity in form speaks to the value of unadorned truth in History.

Finally, there is the upper-third section of the photograph. I can't help but think about something President Jack Lightstone recently said about space and types of spaces that were lacking or needed.⁵ I believe what President Lightstone is talking about is infrastructure and technology, not so much space.

I also think about sentiments colleagues in History convey about the negative impact moving from MCC to the new building across the street had on the department, the department's visibility among the student body, and their ability to partake in the day-to-day flow of people and ideas on campus.

I was not here when the department moved to its current location. I can understand the move might have been disorienting.

The launching of this journal is evidence that the department is at last finding its bearings. We need to remember that space is a social category.⁶ As such, it is infinite and we participate in its production on an everyday basis in social relations, via our interaction with each other and sharing.

⁵ "A Day in the Life of President Jack Lightstone," *The Brock Press* Vol. 51 No. 27 (April 5, 2016). Online version. <http://www.brockpress.com/2016/04/a-day-in-the-life-jack-lightstone/>. Consulted April 5, 2016.

⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, D. Nicholson-Smith trans. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991 [1974]).

The rest, the opaqueness of the top, it is as if the tower is cloaked in mystery. It is not that, by design, I wanted to get rid of the Schmon Tower. The photograph was modified so as to make it appear as if it is visible, yet also invisible, there and not really there. This speaks to the moment that the University has reached at the present time, this is a time to pause, step back, reflect, take stock of achievements, and most important of all, mistakes. There is a sentiment among many that the Administration has lost its moral compass, a moral horizon. There is no mystery in this perception of a state of affairs. Mr. Moriyama's vision is a beacon of light the University needs to walk towards lest it gets lost in the dark.

April 6 I phoned Moriyama & Teshima Architects in Toronto. Ms. Pat Vieira, MTArch's Administrative Assistant explained he was passing through town and that if I wrote an email she would be happy to pass it on to him. That is precisely what I did. In my email I expressed it would be an honour for students in history to be led by Mr. Moriyama's vision in the journey they are about to begin with the publication of the first issue of the journal, in his own words. Simply put, I said I would be most grateful if he could drop me a word, share with me his vision in a nutshell so that I could quote him in the photo caption. I waited with anticipation for his reply to come in.

In the meantime, I got a hold of Moriyama by Moriyama in a piece he wrote for the *UofT Magazine* and used the following quote in the photo caption: "If it is to be truly "golden," architecture has to be humane and its intent the pursuit of true ideals, of true democracy, of equality and of inclusion of all people."⁷

Two days later, the day before the journal launch, Mr. Moriyama's reply came in. "Having returned from out of town and just opened your message to Pat, this may be too late. You are absolutely correct in your quote [It is my understanding that the building is meant to help people reach out to others to find their way, encouraging them to connect]. It was for students to make unexpected, fresh interfaculty connections and also to give Brock flexibility in its development of future faculties and programmes."

I am very fortunate that the design for the cover of the issue of *the general brock university Undergraduate journal of history* I proposed resonated with students.

Mr. Moriyama apologized for his lateness in replying to my message. All I wished to do besides thanking him, from the bottom of my heart, for his continued dedication to

⁷ Raymond Moriyama, "The Architecture of a Life," *UofT Magazine*, Autumn 2010. Online version. Consulted April 6, 2016.

upholding clarity of purpose⁸ in his life and work, was to reply that it is never too late. I spoke about the above (without this script) and read my email exchange with Mr. Moriyama out loud at the launch of the journal this morning. His message made a strong impression on the public in attendance, which included two 10-11 year old girls who are in grade 6 at École Notre Dame de la Jeunesse in Niagara Falls, undergraduate and graduate students in History, the History Chair and faculty at large, and the Interim Dean of Humanities. Undergraduate students, the audience for which my design was intended, were sincerely grateful.

Then, I sat down to write this document least we forget the indelible mark he has made on those who have not personally met him, like myself.

My deep gratitude goes to Mr. Moriyama.

⁸ Lisa Rochon, "Honouring a Revered Canadian Architect," *The Globe and Mail*. Published Saturday, April 17, 2010. Online version. Last updated Thursday, September 6, 2012. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/honouring-a-revered-canadian-architect/article4315806/>. Consulted April 11, 2016.

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