





# Sign Language

## **typography on streets of Hong Kong**

The regular Hong Kong citizen is always hurrying off to somewhere, most of them know the place they grew up in too well and are able to live their life without the instructions and labels that are printed, carved, chiseled, painted, stuck (you name it) on every surface of the city, yet they are there.

The many businesses, traffic, public service installments are the by-products of a small land-mass with a dense population of 8000,000. Some of these type could date back to the British colonial 60s, 70s, there are those that contain the aged primary colors of the 80s and 90s, and then there are the government warnings and posts, quick advertisements of small scale businesses that did not involve a mere speck of aesthetic consideration, yet they all contribute to

My hunt for typography was carried out in East Hong Kong Island area, a chunk of residential area with a rich historical background, a relatively older district with many 30 years plus shops and restaurants, residential buildings ancient and brand new, government service buildings including wet markets, libraries and service buildings. When the rent is slightly cheaper, East HK Island is quite dynamic.

One can imagine, there are countless categories at different time lines mashed in to the complex of narrow streets. By paying closer attention and a camera, there is a lot to catalogue in only a couple hours' walk. I think that the vast diversity is what makes Hong Kong unique, yet as a graphic designer having spent most of my time growing up here, I feel that a system needs to be in place in improving the overly clustered sea of information.







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# Select 5

## **typography of Hong Kong (to me)**

It has always been complicated for Hong Kong designers to define the streets of Hong Kong, for that reason, in searching of a representable typography, I needed a way to shave down a good amount of items. I have decided to neglect a bunch of modern ads and posts that are not meant to last.

The remaining articles have been selected because they have stood the test of time, typography that haven't gone through many alteration since I can remember. I truly believe any Hong Kong resident would easily recognize these items.

The sources of there posts/ signs or print are as follow: the HKC Government, small scale businesses, post office (private with gov. funding), bus/ transport company (KMB, private). English is a common in HK due to it's colonial days, but another feathur is the use of Traditional Chinese characters. Most of Mainland China uses a more simplified version of Chinese namely Simplified Chinese, leaving Hong Kong and a few other cities in the word to be using Traditional Chinese characters in the public.

These items and the typography applied to them are selected as a reflection of Hong Kong city planning. It's mostly functional, making use of the dimension that is available with very direct hierarchy as for the purpose of the object itself. A prime example of that would be the street ad/ bills which originated from newspaper ads then later on adapted as stickers or print outs posted with glue. Exactly like the people of Hong Kong: economical, little time to consider much detail of use or better living, resulting in an industrial look that remains very close to one another, not much left for the imagination or creativity.