



Jello © John Maeda

## SHAPING THE MESSAGE

**EN** | The "Shapeshifters" series of talks on graphic design, organised by Sint-Lukas, are incredibly popular and frequently sell out. For those unfortunates who have had to settle for a drink in the bar, however, consolation is at hand: the book has just come out.

BOOK | **SHAPING VOICES** ●●●●●

**STEVEN DEVLEMINCK, INGE GOBERT, JOHAN VAN LOOVEREN** | OOGAHTEND, LEUVEN, 2010, 144 P., €29,50 (IN ENGLISH)



*Shaping Voices, A Shapeshifters Anthology* is a compilation of

conversations with 15 designers. Thanks to the success of the Shapeshifters lectures, the book is almost certain to be an instant classic. Does it live up to expectations? In our opinion, the answer is an unequivocal yes. Over five chapters, the book guides readers through the broad spectrum of graphic design: we hear from the advertiser, the graphic designer searching for his/her own voice, the typographer, the computer programmer, and the designer entering into a dialogue with a client. The strength of the lecture series was the choice of speakers: this was no look from the outside at the graphic design business, but people active in the field, sharing their

knowledge with their colleagues and other interested people. "Visual communication is a hugely powerful tool of change, but obviously there is a danger involved in knowing how to use that power," says Joshua Blackburn. The founder and creative director of Provokateur shows how there is more to design than the production of pretty images. His bureau is involved in what he calls "ethical communication". Their provocative posters with the slogan, "Screw global warming, Let's fly", hit the target: they make people think about climate change. John Maeda's work is quite different: using bits & bytes and a load of algorithms, he creates beautiful works of art. It is hard to believe that the splendid colours of his *Jello* are the result of painstaking calculations on a computer. There are no brushes or watercolours involved; instead, a printer converts zeros and ones into pictures.

Graphic design is about much more than just pouring texts into columns, with the odd photo thrown in. In our digital society, the days of cutting and pasting are over for ever. New tools are giving graphic design new tasks. Graphic design now determines how we see the world. It shapes messages, packages them, and makes them digestible for the reader. So the graphic designer has a great responsibility. The title of the book, accordingly, could hardly have been better chosen. **HELEEN RODIERS**



"Screw Global Warming, Let's Fly": anti-aviation campagne © Provokateur Ltd.