



ALAN KITCHING - MARY QUANT TRIBUTE MURAL / CADOGAN ESTATE AND CHELSEA ART WEEK.

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ALAN KITCHING - TAXI POSTER / LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL

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ALAN KITCHING - PACKAGING / ENGLISH HERITAGE

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ALAN KITCHING - POSTER / THE GREAT NORTH RUN

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ALAN KITCHING - POSTER / SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE THEATRE

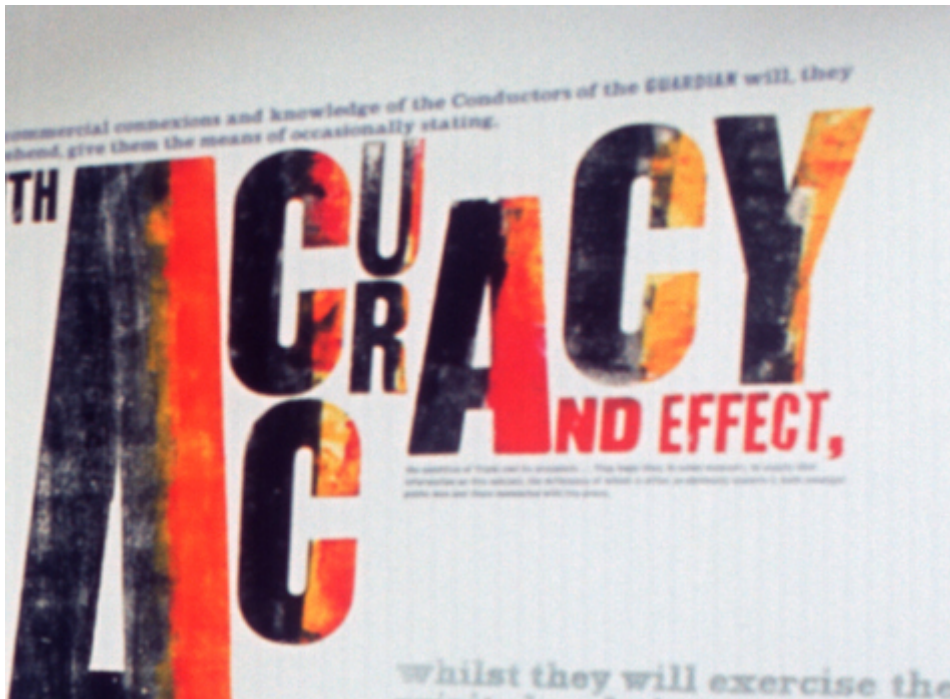
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ALAN KITCHING - FOYER MURAL / THE GUARDIAN

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anachronism, folly or otherwise.

But as we'll probably concede come autumn – hopefully the following spring, too – 10:10's common denominator may as well remain 'humans', plain and simple. Because humanity has always depended on horology to mete-out the seasons themselves (calendars came before clocks), as well as navigate to new climes (no chronometer, no longitude), and generally sing from the same global hymn sheet (1884's 24-time-zone carve-up in other words, the establishment of GMT, intercontinental trains not crashing, transatlantic phone calls... the future!).

Every modern human endeavour has demanded machinery of ever-more-excruciating precision. If you thought the Y2K bug fix was a worry, imagine how GPS operators feel every time astrophysicists sporadically add a 'leap second' to the world's atomic clock whenever there's a wobble in the Earth's magma core, nudging our sight on humanity's ultimate clock, the heavens.

So, it comes as a surprise that the old adage, "you can put a man on the moon, but [insert quotidian drawback here]" now relates to actually putting man on the moon. Again.

Billionaire space entrepreneurs, the ESA, NASA, they're all shooting for the moon over 50 years since Armstrong made his giant leap. And, just like America's 19th-century railroads, they need to agree on a common 'Lunar standard time' before their respective navigational satellites come a little too close for comfort.

The moon doesn't spin – a lunar 'day' is an Earthbound lunar 'month', or 29.5 days – so a cycle that chimes with human circadian rhythms will help. Only, NASA engineers are now having to address a stickier issue they've known about since 1972's technical note published in the wake of relativistic time corrections aboard the Apollo 12 and 13 missions: time moves differently on the Moon.

Thanks to gravity or lack thereof, a clock on the Moon gains around 56 millionths of a second per day compared to a terrestrial equivalent, and that rate changes based on whether the clock is in orbit or on the Moon's surface. It's not much, but with humanity hell-bent on a new 'lunar gateway', those millionths of a second will add up.

Time will tell, and humans will always need to tell the time, regardless of the endeavour.

Alex Doak



ALAN KITCHING - TIME / PORT MAGAZINE

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ALAN KITCHING - ANTIAROMATICITY / CHEMISTRY WORLD

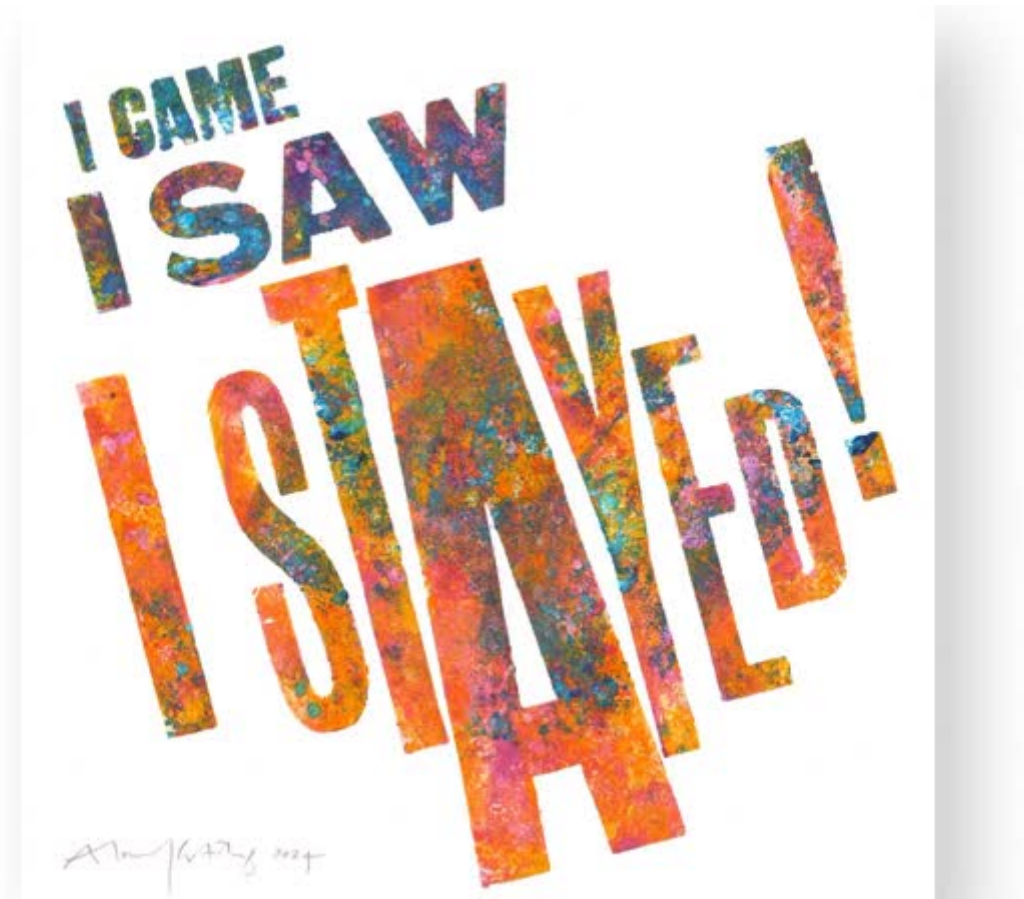
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ALAN KITCHING - I CAME, I SAW, I STAYED / PERSONAL WORK

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