

Anatomy of a rebrand: we dissect Loewe's new identity, designed by M/M (Paris)

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Under the new creative direction of JW Anderson, Spanish luxury brand Loewe has enlisted designers Michael Amzalag and Mathias Augustyniak of M/M (Paris) to create a new graphic identity for the house, reworking its typeface and logo

For the past few years, Loewe has been on a reinvention race. From a new design direction for its stores led by Peter Marino to the September 2013 appointment of London-based designer Jonathan Anderson as creative director, the Spanish leather goods brand has been undergoing a steady transformation. The next step on its journey is a fresh new identity, unveiled today.

'Past, Present and Future' is the mantra that is guiding the fashion house's reinvention, and as part of this creative renaissance, graphic duo M/M (Paris) have been tasked with interpreting the brand's essence with a new face that will be officially introduced at the menswear presentation later this month.

The original logotype, set in a version of the Bembo font, has been re-designed by the Parisian pair in a typeface inspired by German-born typographer and calligrapher Berthold Wolpe. Looking at the history of the brand, the designers found that the trajectory of Wolpe (who was born near Frankfurt and emigrated to Britain in 1935) echoed that of Enrique Loewe Roessberg, the German-born craftsman whose name came to identify a cooperative of Spanish leather artisans in the mid-19th century.

The new typography is a testament to Wolpe's legacy and the modernity of his work. Famous for his 1932 Albertus font (still used for signage across the City of London and widely present in popular culture - its fans including British band Coldplay and director David Lynch) and his book cover work for Faber and Faber, Wolpe has been having a moment in the past few years. The new logotype nods to his 1937 Pegasus font, a forgotten typeface that the designers discovered in the archives of the Victoria and Albert Museum, who paid homage to Wolpe with a retrospective in 1980. 'We then adapted his font structure, enhancing details through our digital tools and reinforcing it to give the house the authority it deserves,' explain the designers.

M/M (Paris), who have worked closely with Anderson since he took up the reins at Loewe, also remodeled the brand's *Anagram* (informally known as 'el cangrejo', or 'the crab'), a quadruple-L insignia designed in 1970 by Spanish artist Vicente Vela. The two designers' take was, as usual, meticulously researched, and their logo design was delivered after an attentive study of the cattle branding practices.

'We tried to understand why the original 1970-design *Anagram* from Vicente Vela had this specific structure and discovered it was based on branding irons used to mark the cattle and the leather skins,' the duo explain. 'We studied the branding irons from all around the world to comprehend how metal is folded to make these structures.'

Redrawn with characteristic M/M (Paris) finesse, the new streamlined *Anagram* is a faithful adaptation of Vela's artwork, imbued with a new lightness that gives it a more contemporary feel.

The logos appear in black on boxes, bags and envelopes delivered in a discreet grey shade called Humo (Spanish for smoke) designed especially for the rebranding, a strong contrast with the more nostalgic shades of beige and brown that defined Loewe until now.

This new identity merges the brand's quintessential Spanish tradition with its contemporary vision. Designed to be at the same time current and long lasting, it's a fitting new face to project Loewe into the future.