

**“THE AMERICAN IMAGINATION DEMANDS THE REAL THING AND, TO ATTAIN IT, MUST FABRICATE THE ABSOLUTE FAKE.” —UMBERTO ECO**

**WHAT? THEMERICA** is an in-depth study of **thematic design** as a visual vocabulary that will explore **thematic environments** from around the world. This includes the architecture of theme parks, resorts and hotels, retail spaces and restaurants. **THEMERICA** traces the history of theming from Coney Island to Disneyland, Las Vegas to Dubai—from an innovation in entertainment to a global design phenomenon.

**WHY?** Thematic environments are a bold new format: they affect how we think about culture and history. Sociologists, historians and architects have commented on their impact, yet there is currently no comprehensive study of theming as a unique design language. As a book, **THEMERICA** will be pitched to publishers, and will appeal to professionals, students of design and the general public.

**HOW? THEMERICA** includes archival research, interviews, and field observation of theming meccas such as Las Vegas, Dubai City and Disney parks around the world. The book will consist of both original and supplemental writing, culled from interview transcripts and commissioned essays. Design professionals will be pestered. Forgotten visionaries will be vindicated. Academics will be accosted. Vacations will ensue.

**WHO? Dave Gottwald** was born and raised a short drive from Anaheim’s Disneyland. His undergraduate work was in history at California State. Dave has worked in graphic design for over nine years, including as principal of his own multimedia firm. Currently he is a graduate student attending the Academy of Art University.

#### **CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROJECT.**

Agree to commission an essay. Grant an interview. Share your expertise. De-mystify. Clarify. Debate and digress. Participate on my blog. Get on board. **THEMERICA** needs your perspectives, unique insights, and experience.

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