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### **Rick Griffith biography (2016)**

Rick Griffith (born 1969) is a largely self-taught graphic designer, strategist, letterpress printer, and nerd (amateur computer scientist) living in Denver, Colorado. He faithfully attends to the business of design at his studio and typographic laboratory, MATTER.

Griffith was born to British West Indian parents and raised in southeast London. In 1984, his family immigrated to Washington D.C.'s Virginia suburbs, where he attended high school. Griffith's first jobs were in record stores where he was exposed to both the DC punk scene and album art, the primary influence of his early work.

In 1989, Griffith relocated to New York City and by the next year had begun his design career in the Madison Avenue advertising world as a mercenary for various agencies and their clients. He started his own practice in 1991 with only a handful of contemporary classical musicians, presenting organizations, and venues as his early allies and clients. Griffith permanently relocated his studio to Colorado in 1996.

In 1999, Rick Griffith co-founded MATTER to re-frame his design practice and began his adventure into design as a maker and thinker; the studio still focuses on tools and the advantages of self-sufficiency in the field of design.

Rick and the MATTER staff have designed and curated three exhibits on visible language which included works by Harrison Tu, Ed Fella, and the community of letterpress printers around the United States. MATTER's works have been on exhibit at the Denver Art Museum and the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art and have been celebrated by the Type Directors Club, Print Magazine, Dwell, and the AIGA 50 Books/50 Covers. Works are also present in the permanent collections of the Tweed Museum, the Denver Art Museum, and the Butler Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts at Columbia University. Rick was published in *Art for Obama: Designing Manifest Hope and the Campaign for Change* in 2008. He has been awarded numerous additional titles and accolades both nationally and internationally.

In 2013, Rick was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the Art Institute of Colorado.

In addition to his current work as design director of MATTER, Rick is active in the design community through his teaching in the region and lecturing around the United States at various colleges and universities. Griffith is past president of AIGA Colorado and he has served as a Commissioner of Cultural Affairs in the City and County of Denver since 2011, where he chairs the Public Art Policy Committee.

He plays table tennis and has been a DJ for thirty-one years.