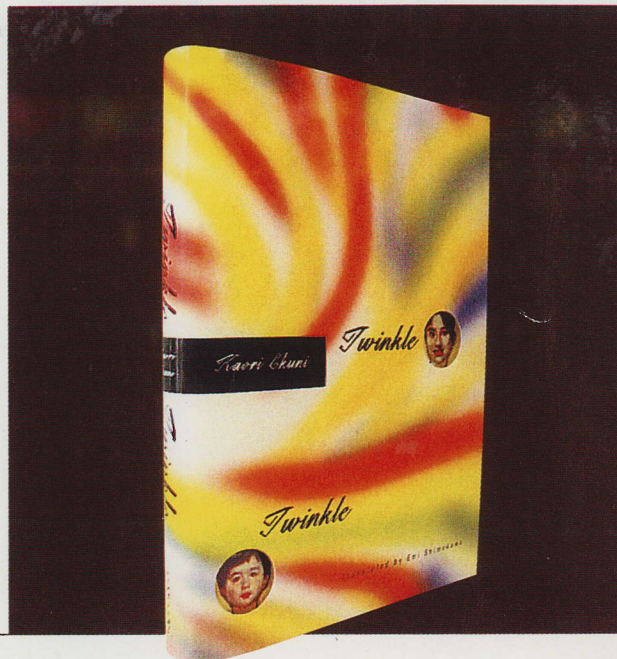


Near the end of *Twinkle Twinkle*, a Japanese novel from new indie publisher Vertical, Inc., Kaori Ekuni writes: "To be perfectly honest with you, I think it's reckless to love and trust another person. It's . . . foolhardy." Fortunately, Chip Kidd, who designed her book's cover, is a reckless lover. To him, Vertical represents "what every designer wants. They're fearless, they're smart, they want to be challenged, they want to challenge the marketplace." Vertical hopes to publish 10 new English translations of bestselling Japanese novels each year, and Kidd's charge is to build Vertical's visual identity singlehandedly, in addition to designing its lavish covers: *Twinkle Twinkle* has a die-cut jacket over expensive printed binding, *Ring's* jacket is clear acetate, and *Ashes* has a double-graduated jacket—essentially, one jacket on top of another. Kidd, who has designed 800 titles for Knopf, is already looking forward to October, when Vertical publishes the first of Osamu Tezuka's eight-volume graphic-novel series *Buddha*; under his direction, the books will be designed with *obis* (Japanese belly-bands) and spines that, once lined up, will form the title character's face.

—Maggie Kinser Hohle



SEPARATED AT BIRTH *Vowel Language*

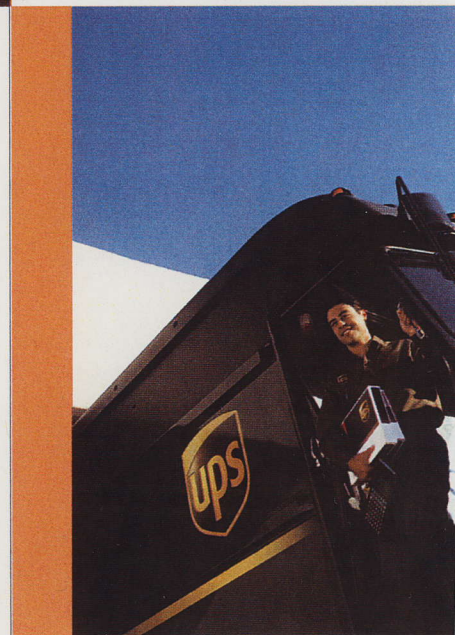
When it comes to design knockoffs, the entertainment industry is outdone only by the fashion world. But in recent months, six film, TV, and theatrical logos all resorted to the same graphic chestnut—a human form in place of a letter: more likely a glut of uninspired solutions than outright theft. The kickoff was in early December with the relatively striking logo for "Taken," Steven Spielberg's SciFi Channel miniseries, which replaced the *A* in its title with a man's glowing silhouette (below). Shortly after, a silhouetted drug lord served as the *I* in the title of NBC's

miniseries "Kingpin." Next came *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*, Miramax's film about TV host Chuck Barris's psychotic rise and fall, which endured a near-weekly logo change before finally settling on a silhouetted, gun-wielding woman for the *I* in *Mind*. Then, the logo for *Our Lady of 121st Street*, an Off-Broadway play, sported a nun as the *A* in *Lady*. *View From the Top*, Miramax's spring screwball comedy about stewardesses, opened with a logo that replaced the *I* in *View* with the international symbol for woman, as found on the doors of restrooms. Finally, the logo for USA Network's *Rudy: The Rudy Giuliani Story* stood apart, somewhat, with a photo of James Woods (as Giuliani) inside the first *D*. Who knows? Maybe this graphic spin-off will get legs.—Steven Heller



LETTER BOMB

Designers are going postal over UPS's \$20 million corporate-identity relaunch, announced in April, that replaces Paul Rand's 1961 icon. Branding watchers slammed the new logo's gleaming, "photorealistic" crest, zippy swoosh, militaristic burnished shield, and monogram ("Unite Parcel Service" is history) rendered in mutant Gill Sans. With its retro styling and *trompe-l'oeil* modeling, the revamped logo—developed not by a graphic design firm but by Future-Brand, "a global authority on branding and marketing"—signals a departure from decades of high-concept, abstracted identities. "The next thing they'll have is an animated Sir Lancelot as a mascot," groused one Metafilter blogger. Still, the new logo has its defenders. "Three-dimensional icons simply perform better across media than two dimensional logos," says Marty Neumeier, designer and author of *The Brand Gap*. "Our brains are hardwired to notice 3D objects more quickly than



flat symbols, and for the first time in history, our technology—TV, Web, cheap color printing—makes 3D feasible." Could the new logo get lost among other brands' spheres, cubes and shields? Maybe not: UPS's brown and-yellow color scheme should scaffold any copycats.—Ken Coupland