

'Fuck Art, Let's Dance': An interview with Chris Morton

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Abstract

Born in Singapore, Chris Morton moved with his family to England as a young child, settling in the northeast in the early 1960s. His passion and talent for drawing was reflected in his love of comics and animation, later with a combined interest in music drawing him to underground magazines and posters associated with the hippie counterculture. After having to leave art college early in 1975, he found himself in the right place at the right time and was commissioned to create a graphic identity for a new independent record label based in London, Stiff Records. Still running a design studio in Newcastle, he discusses punk, new wave, typography, print technologies, humour, parody and graphic design with Russ Bestley.

Keywords

Punk, new wave, Stiff Records, graphic design, print, humour, independent labels

Chris Morton aka c-more-tone was the original art director at Stiff Records, the pioneering independent record label founded by Dave Robinson and Jake Riviera in 1976. Morton created the original logo and custom lettering first used by Stiff, though he left to set up his own independent studio in 1983. He designed the first British punk record label and single bag for the Damned's 'New Rose', going on to work with a range of Stiff new wave artists including Ian Dury, Nick Lowe, Richard Hell, Lene Lovich, Wreckless Eric, the Plasmatics and Tenpole Tudor. Stiff eventually found commercial success in the early 1980s with a roster that included Madness and the Pogues, before Morton moved on to form c-more-tone studios in 1983 and created iconic graphics for Theatre of Hate, Spear of Destiny, Siouxsie and the Banshees, the Beat, Stray Cats, Dave Edmunds, John Otway, Feargal Sharkey, Ledernacken, Tom Verlaine, Scott Walker and Philip Glass. He also designed the iconic and much copied 'Fuck Art, Let's Dance' t-shirt and the 'Home Taping is Killing the Music Industry' logo.

Morton's adopted pseudonym reveals a lot about his approach to design and his love of hand-drawn lettering, Rotring Rapidograph pens, Letraset, Letratone and Mekanorma transfer sheets, the PMT

camera¹ and the printing process. He became known for his witty, dynamic and high-contrast graphic style, while his promotional and marketing campaigns for Stiff ranged from posters, record sleeves, tour programmes, stickers and badges to a 7" single-styled animated watch, cigarette lighters, ashtrays, aerosol cans and even a 'scratch and sniff' album cover.

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Russ Bestley: *Tell me about your early life. I know that you grew up in the northeast of England, but what influenced you to pursue an artistic path? Were you naturally drawn toward art and creative expression from an early age?*

Chris Morton: I was born in Singapore and my family moved to the UK when I was seven. It was the first time I had witnessed television (I had only ever seen two films before then; Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* and *Fantasia*). It was also my first introduction to fireplaces and changing seasons – I never knew you could feel cold! I was the eldest of four siblings, with a sister and two brothers. I had been to a kindergarten in Singapore with mainly Chinese and some Malay children, so it was a bit of a culture shock to arrive in the northeast of England, albeit very exciting...

I went to three different primary schools, including a rural village school with two rooms and three teachers where we had our dinner on our desks. I discovered that I was interested in and relatively good at art before failing the 11+ exam twice (my mum demanded a re-sit). Luckily, I managed to avoid going to the local secondary school and, via interview, got into to a grammar school-like county technical school that also taught horticulture and had a working farm! (Looking back, it was more a 'foundation course for farmers and apprentices' school).

I did reasonably well in most subjects but badly in exams. My favourite subjects were art, woodwork, technical drawing, geography and English, where I could design the style and look of my exercise book pages and homework. I particularly loved doing diagrams and maps, all unwittingly at the expense of content! I have always been fascinated by handwriting styles and lettering – I would be constantly adjusting and upgrading my handwriting by adding new ways of drawing certain letters based on seeing someone else's more attractive cursive or italic version. I briefly fancied being an architect before settling on signwriting – particularly on haulage trucks – but then subsequently discovered that you could go to an art school.

I muddled through GCE and CSE exams and blagged my way into sixth form to do Art and English Literature. Halfway through, I became a dad and my heavily pregnant girlfriend had to do her secretarial and shorthand finals at her teacher's house as the head wouldn't let her go to school. In 1972, I went on a local pre-art college Foundation course, which was just a marvel to me – quite an eye-opener and

¹ Photomechanical Transfer, or Process Camera. A large camera designed for process work: making negatives the size of the finished print for plate-making, creating halftone images from black and white photographs, rescaling and resizing high quality artwork prior to collating for print etc.

genuinely life changing, including my introduction to Pop Art. Then (with my small new family), I went to Norwich School of Art to do a DipAD in graphic design, initially doing film and television graphics – this was even more mind-blowing than the Foundation course and changed everything again.

At the same time, I got heavily into underground and psychedelic comix and music, then Dada. So much so, that I was politely persuaded to leave at Easter of the final year as they didn't think my style of work fitted the course and they insisted I wouldn't get a design studio job anyway.

RB: *And music – you've previously told me that you were a big music fan in the late 1960s/early 1970s? Were you attracted to the graphics and visual material associated with pop music at that time?*

CM: I have always been a big music fan. Early favourites were guitar instrumentals and girl groups, Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley. From the age of twelve to fifteen, it was the Animals, Yardbirds, Pretty Things, Kinks, Stones and Roy Orbison, then when I was in sixth form it was T Rex, ska and reggae. At nineteen, on the Foundation course, there were genuinely seismic changes for me; I discovered the Velvet Underground and Plastic Exploding Inevitable art/music/lightshow events. Between 1973 and 1975 at Art School I discovered the New York Dolls, Lou Reed and Iggy Pop, then West Coast psychedelia; Grateful Dead and Quicksilver Messenger Service, Steve Miller Band, then Captain Beefheart, Ry Cooder, Tom Waits, Roxy Music, David Bowie, plus lots of reggae and (wonderfully) Dub.

The first band I saw live was Mott the Hoople's Rock'n'Roll Circus – including Max Wall! – at Newcastle City Hall in April 1972. The best pre-Stiff era gig was the Grateful Dead and their 'wall of sound' set-up at Alexandra Palace in September 1974.

RB: *You have said that you liked to draw lettering/type... how did that come about?*

CM: Originally from school as mentioned above, and then greatly amplified during Foundation where I started designing logos and typefaces. I then further developed those skills with professional guidance at art school. Type and lettering were usually central to my design projects and illustrations.

RB: *Did you put it to use in professional design commissions, or was it reserved for the sketchbook and college work?*

CM: Yes, in both. When I left college early, I went freelance (in the summer of 1975), initially offering 'alternative culture' letterheads, shop signage and matching newspaper ads as well as band logos and comic strip-style 'hallucinogenic illustrations' – often featuring lots of Rapidograph dots and faux mercury/silver effects. I did some that got me noticed for Pete Frame at *ZigZag* and some freelance work for *Men Only* magazine.²

² *ZigZag* was a British music magazine that ran between 1969 and 1986. *Men Only* was a pin-up periodical that originated in 1935 and was rebranded as a softcore porn magazine by Paul Raymond Publications in 1971.

Fig.1 Son of Frisco (1976), poster advertising student disco at the University of East Anglia, 27 May 1976.
Courtesy of Chris Morton.

RB: *How did the connection with Stiff Records come about?*

CM: In early 1976 I had gotten a commission for a letterhead and logo for a music management company and met the influential and highly respected A&R man, Andrew Lauder, who invited me to show my folder of work at United Artists. He commissioned me to do a new look and logo for the George Hatcher Band which involved my first ever meet-the-band-backstage appointment (before seeing them play live...). Marvellously for me, this was at The Roundhouse in Chalk Farm, North London. While I was there watching from the wings, I saw someone I'd met briefly with Andrew who was the tour manager of the band George Hatcher were supporting, Doctor Feelgood. That was Jake Riviera. He said he remembered meeting me and seeing as I did record cover stuff – which I hadn't technically actually done yet – would I like to do some roughs and ideas for a new record label he was setting up?

He went on to explain that his intention was to emulate the 1940s and '50s American independent record label guys "who'd fill the trunk with newly pressed 45s and drive around delivering them to juke joints and local radio stations...". At that time there weren't any independent labels in the UK – there was only the seminal Skydog label in Paris, while Beserkley in California were only just getting started – both would soon become involved with the fledgling Stiff.

Fig.2 Sketchbook (1976). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.3 Sketchbook (1976). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.4 Sketchbook (1976). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

RB: *And you created the Stiff logo and lettering? Plus, early promotional posters and other material?*

CM: Yes, and yes and yes and yes! I've still got my notebook with those original ideas and roughs. I designed all the initial printed items, with all the lettering for the original logo and label, letterhead and first poster (featuring the 'MC Undertaker' character, which I came up with to reflect the 'undertakers to the industry' theme we'd started), all drawn by hand (Figure 5).

I drew them at the size they'd be printed; the 20x30 inch poster promoting Stiff's new roster of artistes was created at life-size with hand-drawn lettering. I didn't know about making camera-ready artwork and photographically reducing or resizing lettering and design elements from a larger size original. All the dots on the poster were individually hand-placed using 'needlepoint' Rapidograph pens varying in nib size from 0.1mm to 0.3mm for the 'misty cloud effect' and up to 1mm for the lettering and outlines. The title lettering at the bottom – as you can tell from the wonky spacing – was laid out in situ using small compasses and tiny stencil curves, painstakingly redone at different sizes from the first Stiff record label and 45 single house bag designs I'd just done in the same way.

Fig.5 Stiff Records promotional poster (1976). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

When I discovered the professional world of typesetting – which was quite a zap and another eye-opener – I hand-drew the artwork for the Stiff typeface I'd designed so we could specify sizes and get it photographically typeset and delivered back, which was a godsend compared to the amount of Letrasetting we were doing. I remember creating the original artwork for Richard Hell's *Another World* EP (featuring the brilliant track 'Blank Generation') in November 1976, which I'm particularly proud of (Figure 8). Jake Riviera's brief for the design – as he handed me a photo of the artist – was to play on the fact that Richard Hell was the first person to have a punk hair style when he cut his own hair with a razor blade, effectively inventing the punk look (he also was one of the first to use safety pins to hold together a ripped t-shirt). I hand-drew the razor blade lettering on the front cover in response. That record was released before we had any graphic design equipment at Stiff, never mind an 'art department' where you could design and make the artwork for printing using analogue photographic methods. All the cover's design elements were hand-drawn, and we gave those bits to the now legendary Pete Frame (aka Banger Grafix) who knew a printer who could professionally assemble photo-mechanical artwork so it could be printed.

Fig.6 Nick Lowe (1976), 'So It Goes', 7" single in Stiff company bag.

Fig.7 Tyla Gang (1976), 'Styrofoam', 7" single in hand-stamped bag.

Fig.8 Richard Hell (1976), *Another World*, vinyl EP.

Fig.9 The Damned (1976), 'New Rose', 7" single.

RB: *Barney Bubbles has been famously credited with most of the Stiff graphics, of the early period at least prior to Jake Riviera stepping aside to set up Radar Records (taking Nick Lowe and Elvis Costello with him). Barney stayed on as a commissioned freelancer for Ian Dury and the Blockheads, who remained at Stiff, but most of the roster was passed to you to create visual identities and promotional material. Who did you work with and which artists in particular stand out?*

CM: After the first stuff, Barney and I did most of the early design work. He was very helpful to me and a magical mentor, but then he went off with Jake to work for Radar full time. Everyone designing stuff for Stiff had been working freelance. I was asked by Dave Robinson to set up an art department and offered the full-time art director job when Jake left, so I was responsible for doing the design work for everyone on the roster – except for Ian Dury. I initially had an assistant, but that became three or four as the workload grew, including a young graduate fresh out of London College of Printing, Neville Brody.

The artistes who I most enjoyed doing design stuff for were Wreckless Eric, Lene Lovich, Madness, the Plasmatics, John Otway, Lew Lewis, Jona Lewie, Kirsty MacColl and Desmond Dekker – who insisted I be

commissioned to do his last cover after I'd finally left Stiff, which was a lovely compliment as his marvellous 'It Mek' was the first ska/reggae I'd ever bought. I also really enjoyed designing the graphics for the Be Stiff Tour and *The Akron Compilation* (my first two awards). We really pushed the boat out with that album. I was asked to come up with something unusual to highlight what made the US city of Akron, Ohio (in)famous, which was the fact that it was the home of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber company, nicknamed the 'rubber capital of the world'. This was the first album cover to feature 'scratch and sniff' as part of the printed package – my tyre illustration/lettering smelt pungently of burning rubber when it was rubbed, and my copy still does, if only mildly! We also produced a range of promotional material including ashtrays set into small rubber tires and my favourite, the 'Air from Akron' spray can, which was just my label stuck on an empty aerosol can. It did spray real air, although probably not the actual air 'as breathed by' all the bands from Akron, as it claims on the can.

It was also towards the end of my time at Stiff that I started doing all the covers for Theatre of Hate, including doing artwork for their preceding band incarnation, the Pack – those and Lene's stuff just before they fomented and jump-started the 'photo-mechanical illustration' style that I was to become quite well-known for.

Fig.10 Stiff lettering artwork ready for photographic processing (1977). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.11 Stiff badge sketchbook ideas (1977). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.12 Stiff t-shirt design (1977). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.13 Stiff t-shirt design (1977). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

RB: Which design and print technologies were essential to your craft?

CM: Undoubtedly my most important tool was/is a Repromaster Process Camera, which was the first thing I got when I left and went freelance. After that would come Letratone and the French rub-down equivalent, Mecanorma, which had a wider range of textures and arty graphic marks.

RB: You adopted the nickname c-more-tone... tell me about that?

CM: This stems from my long-time fascination with halftone dots and how they printed black and white 'photographs' in newspapers. The name came about via Dave Robinson's idiosyncratic pronunciation – instead of saying my name Morton as 'more tun' he'd say (or usually shout in an Irish lilt from his office) 'more tone'. As a lifelong lover of puns and Spoonerisms,³ it soon occurred to me that seeing as my first initial also sounds like 'see' here was a hilarious opportunity not to be missed. Well, amusing for a while...

³ A mistake made by a speaker in which the first sounds of two words are changed over, often with a humorous result.

RB: *Did Dave Robinson and the Stiff team give you a free hand in what you wanted to do visually?*

CM: Absolutely, that was one of the best aspects of the job – although as a photographer himself, Dave would often go through the contact sheets with me to help choose the main pictures for covers etc. I would then have carte blanche with the overall concept and the designs. There was no ‘Stiff team’ as such when it came to design and visuals, although when Paul Conroy and Alan Cowderoy came in as directors, they often had suggestions to add to Dave’s.

Fig.14 Stiff Route 78 tour programme (1978). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.15 Lene Lovich, ‘Say When’ artwork (1979). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.16 Lene Lovich, ‘New Toy’ artwork (1981). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

RB: *Were any of the artists involved themselves?*

CM: Some more than others. Lene and her partner Les would always explain what the songs were about or the album’s themes (after we’d talked about obscure and/or interesting new music we’d recently heard). Chrissy Boy from Madness used to take an interest and would often come into the art department while the rest of the band were in a meeting with Dave to do some drawing (often pencil sketches of eyes). Wreckless Eric had been to art school and would often come in to see how his stuff was progressing.

Fig.17 Lene Lovich, *Flex* artwork (1979). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.18 Lene Lovich, *Flex* artwork (1979). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.19 Lene Lovich, *Flex*, promotional poster (1979). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.20 Lene Lovich, *Flex* t-shirt (1979). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

RB: *Stiff was always associated with a playful, often ironic and humorous use of visuals and language for their promotional material. That must have been a joy to work with as a designer.*

CM: That was probably the best aspect, and definitely the most fun! That happened with the Stiff watch and a lot with badges and t-shirts. I’ve still got my ‘working list’ layout sheet of dodgy-puns-for-badges ideas. Also, if Dave liked one of my tenuous concept suggestions, we’d name an album with it and work a campaign backwards from there – *The Akron Compilation* and its scratch’n’sniff campaign is a good example, also Wreckless Eric’s *Big Smash* and Lene’s *Flex* campaigns...

RB: *You also worked with the Cramps when Stiff was considering signing them.*

CM: I was desperately trying to get Dave to sign them for their first album, but he said he thought they’d be a short-lived thing.

RB: *You've talked about your personal friendship with Lux and Ivy?*

CM: Yes, whilst try to convince Dave I was meeting them regularly in a greasy spoon café (which they loved the idea of) in Portobello, doing music paper adverts and a poster for them. Those ads were based on a mutual love of religious kitsch and hardcore southern baptists! For their debut album, *Songs the Lord Taught Us*, I created beatific tortoises with halos...

RB: *And Madness? Your 'Fuck Art, Let's Dance' t-shirt design was eventually assigned to them but had been developed earlier?*

CM: Yes, I originally did the 'Fuck Art...' slogan for the Cramps (Figure 21) – inspired by David Johansen's song 'Frenchette' ('let's just dance...'). When Dave saw it, he really liked it and 'politely insisted' we used it for Madness (Figure 22), especially as we weren't going to sign the Cramps. He also pointed out that although he didn't mind me moonlighting, I was still Stiff's art director, and he was still paying my wages!

Fig.21 'Fuck Art, Let's Dance' original t-shirt (1980). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.22 'Fuck Art, Let's Dance' Madness t-shirt (1980). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

RB: *Were there any benefits, or disadvantages, working for an independent label outside the mainstream music industry? I think there were some tensions between new and upcoming designers and the established printing industry, particularly the print unions and various closed-shop agreements they had in place – Mike Coles has mentioned this to me in the past (Bestley 2016). I guess the major labels had fixed ideas in relation to branding artists, marketing releases and promotion. The music graphics old guard were also quite territorial, I believe, so entering the profession through a new/alternative and independent route (rather than, say, an apprenticeship) may have led to some conflicts?*

CM: This question is an interesting angle. We didn't have any problems with unions or printers; on the contrary, the union smoothed the way to quickly make me 'Father of the Chapel' (I think that was the official nomenclature) so that our ads could be printed in the music press. The printers were very quickly elbowing each other out of the way to print our record covers – especially big LP cover runs.

Meanwhile, there was a perceived attitude problem with established graphic designers, particularly those in the major record company art/publicity departments, snobbishly looking down on our adjudged lack of artworking ability and professionalism. Although I always suspected our deliberate lack of obediently following their time-honoured design theory protocols was really the problem – perhaps in the same way that the older generation of musicians feared and insulted the 'new wave'...

Also, there was a problem with the cartel-like British Phonographic Institute's attitude to independent labels. It took ages for them to acknowledge independent record company directors and admit entry to Dave Robinson. This was at the time of major record companies' fears about 'home taping' which in turn

led to the BPI's knee-jerk announcement of a prize-winning competition for a promotional campaign logo to be held amongst the major record companies in-house design departments. Dave was very keen we should enter this, especially given the BPI and the music industry's attitude to us indie labels and all our 'alternative' new wave designers. It was then a wonderful surprise to learn that my design submission (Figure 23) had won the competition. However, the BPI quickly reneged on giving a prize; coincidentally, just after they discovered who'd done the anonymously entered design. Dave did at least become the first (of a very few) indie label directors to gain admittance to the 'club'.

Funnily enough, after all that and the money the BPI spent on the campaign, a year or so later, a much-respected music industry-related magazine (I think it was *Gramophone*) published a large-scale survey that proved that hardly any home taping was, as they had argued, a 'cottage industry' for profit and resale. Most people made their own cassette recordings for their playlists and mix tapes or, like me, to preserve their vinyl from wear and tear.

Fig.23 'Home Taping is Killing Music' logo (1980). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

RB: Tell me a little more about setting up c-more-tone as a design studio. Was it just you on your own? Did you lease a studio space somewhere? Did that mean scouting for commissions, or did some of the former Stiff and Stiff-related artists follow you?

CM: It was just me and I converted our spare room into a studio. The centrepiece (and most important tool) was my newly acquired, second-hand Agfa-Gevaert process camera in its own tiny darkroom. I bought it from one of the printers I knew via Stiff as they were getting a posh new digital one.

The Stiff roster artists I continued with after we both left were Theatre of Hate/Spear of Destiny and John Otway. Beyond that, I embarked on an ongoing round of ringing up record companies for appointments to show them my dauntingly unwieldy A0-sized folder of work. An ex-Stiff press officer did get me in at Phonogram where I did the award-winning stuff for Dire Straits.

Fig.24 Theatre of Hate (1980), 'Original Sin', 7" single.

Fig.25 Theatre of Hate, *Westworld*, promotional poster, 1982.

Fig.26 Theatre of Hate t-shirt (1980). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.27 Theatre of Hate t-shirt (1980). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

RB: That period seemed very fruitful for you, and led to a range of work with what might be called a strong signature style. Were clients drawn to you because they liked your style and wanted to buy into that? Did you feel you had more of a free hand in the creation of work at that stage than previously?

CM: They told me they were drawn to me initially because I'd been the original art director at Stiff and had seen the type and the impact of design and promotional stuff that I could do... Also, I discovered a lot of them liked that more idiosyncratic, 'arty' style design stuff I'd done, particularly for Lene Lovich, Theatre of Hate, John Otway and the Plasmatics. As regards the 'free hand' thing, luckily, I'd always had that at Stiff and was able to continue that freelance...

There were really two separate factors at work there. The first was the ironic/punning/cheeky attitude and approach to marketing and promotion that could be applied to anyone on the roster regardless of the visual design style required for the actual covers, posters, ads etc. and the second was my development of a distinctive, process-led style that, crucially, could be developed in a protean way, based on my line drawings of seemingly incongruous traced photos and text that were then photo-mechanically enhanced and/or distorted.

Rather than just using photographic images in my designs, I would trace the outlines by hand then fill them with dots and tones. This not only made the imagery look and feel idiosyncratic but, much more importantly, allowed them to become ambiguous – thematically and metaphorically – a technique which I still use and love. A big part of what I call the protean aspect of the work related to the febrile and highly competitive atmosphere of music graphics at that time. My designs deliberately incorporated distinctive elements and techniques that other designers couldn't replicate, to try and keep one step ahead. Even little things like using French Mecanorma rub-down lettering and textures instead of the usual UK/US Letraset and Letratone made a difference as well as the 'ideological' tracing methodology. The other effective way to do this was by experimenting with the Process Camera at the pre-press artwork stage, learning new tricks and techniques by creatively 'pushing' the technology – but that's a hopefully intriguing story for next time.

Fig.28 Tenpole Tudor, *Eddie Old Bob Dick and Gary* poster artwork (1980). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

Fig.29 Tenpole Tudor, *Eddie Old Bob Dick and Gary* poster (1980). Courtesy of Chris Morton.

RB: *Tell me about the early digital image-making and typographic work. How did that come about? You seem to have always been fascinated by print technology, particularly in what might be called the 'analogue' sense, so why step across to these new, digital technologies? Was it about seeking opportunities for new tools and techniques? And was it more about pre-press image treatments and print reproduction than about design/artwork origination at that point? Certainly, some of the tools you describe as being located in-house at printers, rather than part of the design studio.*

CM: I didn't really see any differences or that I was 'stepping across'. I was always curious about any new processes or methods and interested in the possibilities of new design tools. The in-house bit was only because the new nascent computer systems took up such a lot of space – a whole sealed, dust-free, double

glazed room the size of a small conservatory in the middle of the main print production room that cost a small fortune!

There's a good example and a detailed description of my transition from analogue to proto-digital in the chapter I contributed to Andrew Krivine's *Reversing into the Future: New Wave Graphics* book, involving my development of analogue and photographic processes for Siouxsie's 'Peek-a-Boo' single bag, followed by the *Peepshow* album cover (Figure 30) using Paintbrush – the digital prototype Photoshop program – which was then a new printer's technical tool, albeit a room within a room, rather than the workstation or screen-based application that we are so familiar with today. At that time, it was something to be used by pre-press artworkers for digitally preparing artwork and photographs for printing; part of the print manufacturing process, as opposed to a tool for creatives to design with.

Fig.30 Siouxsie and the Banshees (1988), *Peepshow*, vinyl album.

There are a lot of illustrated explanations of my analogue design methods and process camera pre-press artwork techniques and tricks for the likes of the Clash, Tenpole Tudor, Lene Lovich, Theatre of Hate/Spear of Destiny and Scott Walker – as well as the proto-digital stuff for Philip Rambow and Siouxsie and the Banshees – on my c-more-tone.com website as well as updates on [chrismorton_cmt](https://www.instagram.com/chrismorton_cmt) via Instagram. That content, and much more, is going to be in my hopefully-soon-to-be-published book *How to Make an Album Cover Before Photoshop...*

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Chris Morton's design work from the late 1970s and early 1980s remains iconic and influential more than forty years after it was created. His approach to design has always been playful, idiosyncratic and visually dynamic, combining a love of drawing and lettering with a highly adaptive, experimental approach to the creative potential of print technologies. His work spanned a wide range, from simple, analogue and hand-rendered processes to an irreverent, playful engagement with what was then the cutting-edge power of digital pre-press computer systems. His mastery of the Process Camera and ability to intervene creatively at the printing stage of production helped him establish a signature style that was protean and unique while at the same time hugely influential on the visual design aesthetic of the post-punk era.

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