## Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of The College of Fine and Applied Arts in Candidacy for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

# Educational/Informational Posters On Graphic Design

Ву

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"Design is directed toward human beings. To design is to solve human problems by identifying them, examining the alternative solutions."

Ivan Chermayeff

## Introduction

This section will contain thesis proposal, function, audience, and innovative aspects of the thesis posters.

### Proposal

This thesis stemmed from my interest in graphic design education, concern for graphic design advocacy, and a desire to personalize the vocabulary of graphic design.

My own undergraduate experience with graphic design courses plus input from other students and instructors, led me to believe there was a need for better understanding of the field of graphic design, i.e., what is involved in graphic design, who are the professionals in the field, what is the history and what areas relate to graphic design.

I thought about approaching this task in two ways. My first idea was to design a study guide/reference tool for students of graphic design, listing and explaining key theories in graphic design. In this guide I would cover the following:

color semiotics warmth syntax semantics whiteness luminosity pragmatics organization methods visual translations relativity grids modular visual form unit kenetics constructional value Gestalt principles space figure-ground consociation common contour mutuality proximity intermittance similarity successiveness continuity typography closure weight fixation style zeigarnic effect letterspacing information graphics wordspacing

posture

My second idea was to design a series of educational/informational posters to aid in the study of graphic design. Some of the topics to be dealt with in the posters would include the following:

```
typography

definition

parts of the letterform

classification

typographic measurements

type family

history of graphic design

highlight several key designers or movements in

the history of graphic design

perceptual principles

Gestalt principles

identification

symbols

logos

marks
```

After studying the feasibility of each topic and on the recommendation of my chief adviser, I decided to pursue educational/informational posters. This project was realistic in terms of time and scale.

## Thesis Proposal

I intended to design a series of orientation posters to be used as educational/informational aids in the study of graphic design.

These posters might deal with the following topics:

- -introduction to graphic design
- -tools of graphic design
- -history of graphic design
- -organizational and perceptual principles
- -typography
- -image formulation
- -applications of graphic design

#### Audience and Function

Having decided upon a topic, I needed to determine the audience and function of the posters. I decided the posters would be targeted at undergraduate art students, specifically women in a small liberal arts college. Ideally, the posters would result in students' increased awareness and understanding of graphic design.

These posters would deal with the following topics:

- -introduction to graphic design
- -tools of graphic design
- -history of graphic design
- -organizational and perceptual principles
- -typography
- -image formulation
- -applications of graphic design

The posters were designed to be hung and viewed in the sequence listed above; however, each poster will be capable of existing independently of the other six. They are to be hung in a design studio or classroom.

Proposed size of the posters is 18" x 24".

## **Innovative Function of the Posters**

The innovative function of the posters is integral to the target audience - undergraduate art students, specifically women in a small liberal arts college. The posters will highlight women designers who could serve as role models for young women interested in graphic design as a career.

## Research into Graphic Design Advocacy

Realizing my posters would be a form of graphic design advocacy, I decided to research what others have done to promote understanding of the profession of graphic design.

During my research I found three areas of graphic design advocacy which directly related to graphic design education and my project. They are, the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) paper on graphic design education titled, "What Should A Basic Graphic Design Education Encompass?"; Professor Robert Swinehart's "Discover Design" program; Sharon Heyenck's thesis called "The Graphic Design Career Kit."

### "What Should a Basic Graphic Design Education Encompass?"

The American Institute of Graphic Arts is the national non-profit organization of graphic design and graphic arts professionals. AIGA sponsors competitions, exhibitions, publications, educational activities and projects in the public interest to promote excellence in, as well as advancement of, the graphic design profession. The AIGA Education Committee has put forth a draft on what a basic graphic design education should encompass. The following ten points are taken from this draft:

### 1. Aesthetics, Perception, and Visual Configuration

Graphic designers should be sensitive to visual forms and their aesthetic functions. These forms include point, line, plane, volume, perspective, area, texture, color, figure-ground, sequence, rhythm, module, proportion, symmetry, Gestalt, program and hierarchy. Since they are elemental they are studied throughout the curriculum.

### 2. Process and Techniques of Visualizing, Form

Development, and Craftsmanship

Graphic designers should be familiar with the basic tools, techniques, and processes to generate or produce images, sketches, models, and finished artwork. They should use tools with skill and sensitivity for craftsmanship.

### 3. Materials, Tools, and Technology

In the process of design, in the production of objects, and in the methods for the visual transmittal of information, technology plays a constant role. Graphic designers are responsible for the visual translation of ideas into two and three dimensions, environments, and computerized and projected systems. The graphic designer must be aware of the potentials and uses of relevant materials, media, and technologies - for production and communication.

#### 4. Visual Communications

Graphic designers address communication problems. They interpret human communications, and contribute to systems for communication and their advancement.

### 5. Design Methods, Planning, and Management

Graphic designers serve to objectively determine design priorities and alternatives; they help clients determine needs. They research, define, and evaluate criteria and requirements. They develop and refine concepts, and present these through sketches and models. They coordinate diverse aspects (including production requirements, design management, and sometimes marketing strategies) to unify results.

While problem solving is essential to any design situation, it can vary in scope, method, and application. To manage complexity effectively the graphic designer should understand these processes on many levels, from form production to professional practice.

### 6. Communicating Concepts and Requirements

Graphic designers communicate both concepts and requirements to the client, to production specialists, to other professionals who contribute to the design process, and to members of the broader society. This communication involves expression and transmittal as well as reception and evaluation of information. They are expected to have the skills to communicate at all stages of the design process.

### 7. History

Graphic designers should have a sense of their work in relation to history, particularly knowledge of facts, trends and sequences of the historical developments in visual communication design and technology. Exposure to significant contributors and movements provide both a framework within which graphic design can be examined and the work of role models studied.

### 8. Business and Professional Practices

The graphic design profession works with other design professionals, artisite disciplines, technical/production specialists, social scientists, and other professionals such as those of business and law. As partners of the world of business and society they accept a professional responsibility and ethical stewardship that relates to the cultural, social, legal, economic, technological and environmental well-being. They have skills to work effectively and to negotiate with others. They understand the role of the graphic designer in the process of which design production occurs. They are able to comprehend the contribution of relevant disciplines.

## 9. Some Graphic Design Topics

letterform identity system design systems typography type and image design standards visual translation diagrams & graphics publication design symbol design architectural signing folders/brochures/catalogues environmental graphics poster design color communication visible language graphic arts technology photographic design evaluation information design video graphics film/animated graphics computer graphics multi-media/audiovisual computer interface design design criticism design internship design research package graphics book design design methods exhibition & display graphics advertising design design management/business

## 10. The Learning Environment: Studio Practice, Design Theory, Humanities and Sciences

The concrete environment is important to graphic design education (i.e.,

studio set-up, relations among students and faculty.) Design theory (i.e., principles, universals, and abstractions) builds a framework that presents principles that demonstrate interrelation and organization of specifics, enhancing generative operations. Designers need a broad cultural understanding in order to successfully collaborate with humanists, scientists business people and other design professionals.

Graphic design, as interpreters of human communications should have a thorough understanding of the intricacies of human relations. <sup>1</sup>

I found the AIGA paper very helpful in drawing up the topic outline for my thesis posters.

<sup>1</sup> AIGA Education Committee, "What Should A Basic Graphic Design Education Encompass?", (forthcoming).

### Discover Design

Discover Design was a program undertaken by Professor Robert
Swinehart of Carnegie-Mellon University. Discover Design was created to
provide high school students with a better appreciation and knowledge of
design. In this he was trying to full the educational void that existed concerning
the design profession.

Professor Swinehart chose the poster as the medium to accomplish his task for a number of reasons. Posters have great appeal (especially to young people); they are an effective medium when used to reach a large number of people when displayed on the art room wall. Posters are cost effective. At the time Discover Design posters were produced (late 1970's and early 1980's) the concept of using the poster as a revival of Chinese wall posters/newspapers was new in this country. Now the use of posters in this manner is widely accepted.

I wrote to Professor Swinehart concerning his program and he sent me copies of Discover Design posters #1 and #3. I was most interested in poster #1. It was intended to introduce the purpose of the project and present a potpourri of design related subjects with visuals that might enlighten the student and encourage discussion and a desire for more information.

Poster #2, currently out of print, was produced as a centerfold for the October '80 issue of School Arts magazine. The topic was visual notation and visual ideation. The established format was modified for this special issue (18  $1/2 \times 22 \ 3/8$ ").

Poster #3 was supported by the Society of Typographic Arts (STA) in Chicago and specifically addressed creativity, the theme of their fall 1980 conference. Each speaker was asked to contribute a short written statement and provide some visuals. The posters were handed out to all who attended the conference.

I liked the idea of informational posters in the tradition of the Chinese poster/newspaper. Informational posters which are hung in strategic locations are an excellent way to provide a large amount of information to a great number of people. I also took special notice of the organizational method (grid) used in poster #1 to group the information in the poster.

### The Graphic Design Career Kit

Out of a desire to synthesize graphic design with art education and the graphic design advocacy of Professor Roger Remington, Susan Heyenck developed her thesis. She felt there was a need for graphic design career materials to be used as a teaching tool for high school teachers.

While designed primarily as a career information kit for high school students, Sharon Heyenck saw other educational uses for the Graphic Design Career Kit. Among them was its use in 2 and 4 year educational institutions as an orientation program for potential graphic design students. It could also be shown and discussed at conferences and workshops by a professional art association such as the New York State Art Teachers Association.

Sharon Heyenck's program has four parts; the poster, the slide presentation, the brochure and the information page.

The materials give very basic information about graphic design job opportunities, salary scale, and guide a student toward more in-depth information.  $^{2}$ 

My posters differ significantly from Sharon Heyenck's work in the following ways:

-my posters discuss in-depth areas of graphic design theory, and history -my target audience is smaller. The intended audience for my posters is undergraduate art students, especially women.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Sharon Heyenck, "The Graphic Design Career Kit" (M.F.A. thesis, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1981).

## Other Materials

In my search for graphic design advocacy materials, I found two publications by Rochester Institute of Technology to be interesting and helpful in forming my posters. They are, "A Career Guide to Graphic Design" and "A Guide to Graphic Design." Both publications are brochures which fold out to form a poster and offer specific information on some of the history of graphic design as well as an overview of some of the theory of graphic design.

## Women in Graphic Design

The profession of graphic design is relatively young and therefore does not have a long history. Its past is spread through the histories of art, typography, architecture, printing, photography and advertising. In researching the history of graphic design it is rare to find women designers mentioned, let alone women who have made outstanding contributions to the field until recent years. Today there are several outstanding women designers recognized for the quality of their work.

As a woman designer interested in graphic design education, I feel it is important to acquaint young women with role models because they will find very few in graphic design history.

It is also to that end that I wrote to the following women working in the field and making significant contributions to it:

Sheila Levrant de Bretteville

April Greiman

Katherine McCoy

Paula Scher

Sharon Poggenphol

Barbara Stauffacher Solomon

I asked each of the designers for biographical information, articles and samples of their work for inclusion in my thesis posters. I received information from all women except for the last two mentioned. From the articles and biographical information sent to me, I was able to abstract quotes about or from each of the women. I also used examples of their work from the reproductions sent to me.

## **Poster Topics**

For presentation to my thesis committee members in early December 1986, I prepared a topic outline for each poster as shown below.

JAAFT

```
Proposed tonic outline for each poster:
Poster 1. Introduction to graphic design
              -introduction and definition of graphic design
Poster 2. Tools of graphic design
              -nhotography
                     -black and wnite/color, continuous tone,
                      high contrast, montage, collage
              -computer
              -hand skills
Poster 3. History of graphic design
              -highlight several key designers/movements in
               the history of graphic design
Foster 4. Organization and perceptual principles in graphic design
              -gestalt principles
                      -figure/ground, common contour, proximity,
                      similarity, closure, isomorphic correspondence
              -grids
                      -textural, patternistic, skeletal, compositional, constructional, typographic unit grid
Poster 5. Typography
              -definition
              -parts of letterforms
-classification/measurement
              -type family
              -letterspacing, wordspacing, line spacing, column width
Poster 5. Image formulation
              -visualizing techniques
              -marks
              -symbols
              -logos
              -pictographs
              -translations
Poster 7. Applications of graphic design
              -corporate lientity
              -ilagrams & graphs
              -publication design
              -folders/brochures/cataloges
              -cook design
              -advertising design
              -enviornmental graphics
              -poster design
```

Many changes in the topic outline resulted from discussion during the first meeting. Among those changes were elimination of two posters by combining topics. The poster on applications would be included in the first poster (introduction) and would highlight women in the profession. The poster on typography would be included in the poster on tools of graphic design. The poster on image formulation would also include process with special concern for the whole.

The revised topic outline would appear as follows:

Poster #1 Introduction to Graphic Design

- -definition
- -women in graphic design
- -applications of graphic design
- Poster #2 History of Graphic Design
  - -highlight several key designers/movements in the history of graphic design
- Poster #3 Organization and Perceptual Principles in Graphic Design

Gestalt principles

- -figure-ground
- -common contour
- -proximity
- -similarity
- -closure
- -isomorphic correspondence

Grids

- -textural
- -patternistic
- -skeletal
- -compositional
- -typographic unit grid

Poster #4 Tools/Typography

- -photography
- -computer
- -handskills

- -definition of typography
- -parts of letterforms
- -classification/measurement
- -type family
- -letterspacing/wordspacing
- -linespacing/column width

## Poster #5 Image Formulation/Process

- -visualizing techniques
- -marks
- -symbols
- -logos
- -pictographs
- -translations

At a later date the wording of the heading for the posters changed again. Poster #1 was originally called "Introduction to Graphic Design". This heading is rather obvious and did not really describe the contents of the poster. The poster answers the question, what is graphic design and gives examples of designers and their work. The title, "The Profession of Graphic Design" proved to be a better heading for poster #1.

Poster #2 deals with the subject of where graphic design came from. The history of graphic design is discussed in a chronological way. The heading chosen for this copy is "Tracing the History of Graphic Design."

Poster #3 and #4 are related in that both depict/discuss the principles or rules of graphic design; in other words, the grammar of graphic design. Poster #3 will have the heading, "The Grammar of Graphic Design: Organizational and Perceptual Principles." Poster #4 will be titled "The Grammar of Graphic Design: Tools and Typography."

Poster #5 deals with image formulation and process in graphic design. The heading "The Process of Graphic Design" aptly describes the contents.

## Poster Design Process

All posters were designed together because they are to be viewed as a whole.

The first design consideration for the posters was to devise a grid that would easily accommodate the copy, heading, photographs, titles and images in each poster. In addition to organizing specific content, the grid would help in building a sequential relationship between posters. In constructing the grid, I chose to use the typographic unit grid. The type size (10 point plus 2 points of spacing) determined the size of the units (12 points). The unit grid was then divided into a series of larger rectangles of recurring size (modules). After some experimentation, I found a five column horizontal format would work best. The columns were broken down into eleven modules. (see pg. 55)

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#### Framework and Treatment Plan

Once the grid was established, I then set up a framework for each poster. In this framework I listed the objectives of each poster which allowed me to predetermine all formal aspects of the design process. I set up a variable list for each poster predetermining texture, amount of imagery, tonality, functional or experimental qualities and line systems. This variable list enabled me to establish locations for smaller or larger amounts of copy, which posters would appear individually and as a group.

ABA form\* was also considered and used in the overall conception of the series and in each individual poster to achieve repetition and contrast. (see pg. 58)

"Visual relationships exist within an observable framework of repetition and contrast. In typographic communication, this famework provides a method for interpreting visual form. It is through the principles of repetition and contrast that the typographic designer creates visual order . . . The viewer seeks a varity that stimulates both eye and mind, while structuring the communication experience. This is the dual basis of ABA form.

\*"ABA form is comprised of both simple and complex patterns that give both order and emphasis to the visual linking of typographic elements. These are not fixed systems but are a way of understanding the interrelationships of typographic form. While ABA form is characterized by the repetition and contrast of typographic elements, in the typographic grid there is a purposeful regularity in the division of space. ABA structures govern the relationship of parts one to another; the grid determines their ordered locations on the printed page . . ."

I decided to have the most complex poster in the center of the series of five. The amount of copy and visuals would also make this the logical location for the poster darkest in tonality. I did a series of tonality studies. (see pg. 56-57) I perceived the posters in tone as going from lighter on either end to darker in the middle. In relation to tonality, the posters also will go from having a simple texture to complex texture and back to simple texture.

<sup>3</sup> Rob Carter, Ben Day and Philip Meggs, Typographic Design: Form and Communication (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., Inc., 1985), pp 62-67.

## Type

I chose Helvetica type for the body copy in my posters primarily because of its readibility. Designed by Max Miedinger, Helvetica is a contemporary sans serif typeface widely used for its clean design and legibility.

The heading type is Rockwell. This type can be characterized as an Egyptian type design. The letterforms have heavy slab serifs and show very little contrast between thick and thin strokes.

Many type styles were considered and tried for use in the headings.

Univers italic with an initial oversized capital letter was first tried and rejected because it gave the posters a "corporate" look which was not fitting for their use within the classroom.

Next, Goudy and Bodoni styles were tried in an attempt to soften the overall appearance while Bodoni was too "classical". Rockwell, with its heavy serifs provided a good visual compromise between the corporate and the classical look.

## Color

A warm, rich red (Pantone Warm Red) was chosen as the color for the headings and black for the body copy. The red was used to draw attention to the headings.

The color for the final posters is done by Chromatec.

## Visuals Used

I chose images that would clearly illuminate verbal ideas in the copy.

They often depict actual work of the designers mentioned in the copy.

## Conclusion

This thesis project involved many different aspects of graphic design - education, theory of graphic design, application, history of graphic design, and current trends in graphic design.

I found this project immediately helpful to me by personalizing the vocabulary of graphic design. The posters will also be helpful as a teaching tool in graphic design education.

It is my hope that young art students, especially women interested in graphic design as a career, will find the posters informative and inspire them to consider the place of design in their lives.

# Copy for Poster #1

The Profession of Graphic Design

At its core graphic design is visual communication. It is highly personal communication. The graphic designer is concerned with a one-to -one process of communication. As radically different as an album cover and a corporate design manual might be, both are to communicate to a group made up of individuals. Graphic designers communicate visually through type, symbols, illustration, photographs and computer graphics. The graphic designer is called upon to integrate human factors, technology and aesthetics.

Graphic designers apply their talents to the world. The graphic designers field is related to many others such as audio visual, architecture, computer graphics and copywriter to name a few. The study of graphic design can lead to work in many allied occupations.

Graphic designers are visual problem solvers interested in the highest level of informational and aesthetical quality. In graphic design, the problems usually originate in the clients mind. Design must grow out of an understanding of those problems, goals and aspirations. Designers must maintain an unrelenting interest in the problem at hand because once a problem is truly described, the solution comes along with the description.

Good graphic design depends on the ablility of the designer to act according to the structure determined by the nature of the problem and not run counter to it. Good design can be judged by the following standards:

There are sound, proven criteria for judging design effectiveness.

Design is an urgent requirement, not a cosmetic addition.

Design can save money.

Design can save time by presenting information more clearly.

Design enhances communication by helping people understand a given meaning.

Design simplifies use, manufacture and maintenance.

Design is needed in all areas of life, not to design is to suffer design by default.

The goal of design is performance.

Graphic design at its best provides visual solutions to problems that are functional, aesthetically pleasing, appropriate, simple and economical.

A good way to understand graphic design is to look at people in the field; to look at their visual solutions to client problems.

"Design is directed toward human beings. To design is to solve human problems by identifying them, examining the alternative solutions." Ivan Chermayeff

"Graphic design is a fusion of information and inspiration, of the conscious and the unconscious, of yesterday and today, work and play, craft and art." Paul Rand

#### Sheila Levrant de Bretteville

Trained as a graphic designer at Yale University, Sheila de Bretteville designed books at Yale, Stanford and Chantileer Presses. She worked for Olivetti in Milan, Italy.

Ms. de Bretteville has received awards of excellence from the American Institute of Graphic Arts, New York Type Directors Club, the Society of Publication Designers and has been chosen as outstanding educator of the year.

She co-founded the Woman's Building in Los Angeles in 1973 which houses the Women's Graphic Center and the Feminist Studio Workshop.

Sheila de Bretteville runs an architectural and design practice with her husband in Los Angeles.

## April Greiman

April Greiman established a studio in Los Angeles after studying in Basel, Switzerland. She has taken ideas developed in Basel in a new direction particularly in her use of color and photographs. She evolved a new attitude toward space. Typography, traditionally two dimensional, gains a sense of depth in her work. Overlapping forms, diagional lines of perspective, moving gestural strokes and floating forms that cast shadows move across the surface of her work. Often tactile sense is highlighted in her designs.

April Greiman has worked for clients such as Esprit, Xerox

Corporation, Los Angeles Times and Sasson. She has designed for television, record companies and magazines. Her work has been included in many books such as A History of Graphic Design and Seven Graphic

Designers.

April was director of the program in Visual Communication at California Institute of the Arts.

### Katherine McCoy

Kathy McCoy is actively involved in design communication, writing, editing activities and design education.

Her work has been exhibited internationally. It has appeared in many

"For me, it has been this integral relationship between individual creativity and social responsibility that has drawn me to the design arts. It is possible and profitable to reinforce existing values through design. In my work, however, I try to project alternative values of my own choosing."

Sheila Levrant de Bretteville

"April Greiman's work
is literally explosive. In her
hands graphic design is
communication art, and as in
art it appears to transcend
mundane needs, while
performing its task."

Massimo Vignelli

books and publications and has won more than 150 awards from Industrial Design, Progressive Architecture, Interiors Magazine and others.

Ms. McCoy was a designer with Unimark International, Detroit;
Omnigraphics, Boston; Chrysler Corporation, Detroit; and Designers and
Partners, Detroit; prior to her position as cochair of the department of design at
Cranbrook Academy of Art. She is also partners in McCoy and McCoy,
consultants in graphic, industrial, furniture and interior design.

### Paula Scher

Paula Scher spent much of her career prior to starting the design firm of Koppel and Scher as an art director for CBS records where her designs won four Grammy nominations and awards in every major graphic design annual. She has authored and designed books, written a number of articles on design which have appeared in Adweek, Print, AIGA Journal and currently teaches a portfolio class at The School of the Visual Arts.

Ms. Scher has received other medals and awards from such groups as the Art Directors Club of New York, Communication Arts, and Graphis.

Her designs have been collected by the Museum of Modern Art, Library of Congress and Beaubony Museum, Paris.

"Now I'm interested in obscuring the message just until the point where it becomes incomprehensible. It involves some thinking on the readers part, but can be more engaging than big, clear type."

Kathy McCoy

'There's a core, a

literate reason why we did

something the way we did.

When you look at it, you
may think it's great, or you
may not like it, or whatever,
but there is a pun, a piece of
wit, a reason for it. Take
Mahattan Records. It's
really a visual pun because
it's Mondrian. The painting
was Broadway
Boogie-Woogie and
Manhattan is Broadway."

Paula Scher

# Copy for Poster #2

Tracing the History of Graphic Design

The history of modern visual communication, what we have called graphic design, can be spanned by living memory. Modern graphic design derives many of its principles from the great revolutionary thinking of painters, architects and philosophers in the early 1900's.

## Avant Garde in Europe

Five movements in western Europe had strong impact in shaping modern graphic design. They are Futurism, Dada, de Stijl, Constructivism and Bauhaus.

#### Futurism

Futurist thought was proclaimed in 1909 with the Futurist Manifesto written by Filippo Marinetti. Futurists praised technology, violence, danger, movement and speed. This sense of dynamic action took two dimensional form in the successive overlapping of images they used.

Marinetti transformed these into some of the most revolutionary typography of the 20th century. Marinetti and all the Futurists destained what typography had become; a decorative art removed from the realities of the time. They sought to intensify meaning and form in typography and to make it not only read but seen, heard, felt and totally experienced.

### Dada

The Dada movement shattered traditional assumptions and broke all rules concerned with book design and typography. Kurt Schwitters' and Wieland Herzfelde's work exemplified Dada's interest in freeing typography from its rectilinear restrictions. Dada taught that humor, shock and surprise could help to overcome viewer apathy.

### de Stijl

At the same time Dada was taking hold, de Stijl ideas were being championed by Theo Van Doesburg. De Stijl involved the complete elimination of any reference to objects in nature. De Stijl artists sought harmony through composition unhampered by association with objects in the world. They wanted to create a new harmony between life and art. Their complete abstraction took the form of straight lines, right angles and the use of three primary colors (red, yellow, and blue.) The de Stijl movement had strong

influence on the International Style, Swiss graphics and the Bauhaus.

#### Constructivists

The Constructivists profoundly influenced the course of graphic design. They sought to create a richer environment through a unity between art and technology. They combined words and images into a simultaneous experience on the printed page. The work of a designer named El Lissitsky best realized the Constructivists ideas. He blended Constructivists design experiments with the developing ideas of the western European Avant Garde. El Lissitsky pushed the potential of montage and photomontage to create complex communication messages.

#### Bauhaus

Also at this time, design education began with the opening of the Bauhaus, a school dedicated to new training of the arts. The Bauhaus dealt with the creative relationships between art and technology. The Bauhaus became a gathering place that brought together the accumulated ideas of the first and second decades of the twentieth century. They extended the constructivists and de Stijl ideas into all aspects of visual communication. One of the well known teachers at the Bauhaus, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, had great interest in photography which lead to the marriage of photography and type.

#### Jan Tschichold

This brief history of Western European influences on contemporary graphic design could not be complete without a mention of one of the most ardent and uncompromising advocates of modern typography, Jan Tschichold. He worked independently of art movements and the Bauhaus making significant achievements in developing "the new typography". He applied the innovations taking place in form and visual theory and applied them to graphic design. Through articles and books he explained and demonstrated asymmetrical typography and design. Tschichold sought to express the spirit and life of his day through lucid, clear design, devoid of decoration made only for rational communication.

### Swiss Style

During the 1950's a design style emerged in Switzerland known as the International Typographic Style or Swiss Style. This style remained as a major force for more than twenty years and was characterized by objective clarity. The style is based on asymmetrical organization of elements which is built from a mathematically drawn grid. Other recognizable elements in the style are the use of sans serif type (Helvetica mostly), type set flush left and ragged right and the use of objective photography. The underlying principle of the International Typographic Style is that design is a socially useful and important activity when it expresses clarity and order.

A leading figure in the International Typographic Style was Josef Muller-Brockmann. He sought and achieved an absolute and universal graphic expression in his work without the interference of the designers subjective feelings. His graphic designs are fresh and powerful and communicate with intensity and clarity.

## Graphic Design in America

The excellence of modern design in America was a direct result of the immigration of talented designers from Europe escaping the political climate before and during World War II.

In the 1940's, New York became the center of design and the first steps toward and original American design were made. These designers had seen the work done by the European Avant Garde in America. They borrowed the form they used while at the same time inventing new forms. While the European designers emphasized theory and structure, American designers used intuitive and informal approach to organization. The American idea of using design to increase sales was born.

Among these American designers are Paul Rand, Saul Bass, George Lois, Herbert Lubalin and Lou Dorfsman.

Paul Rand's work was instrumental in developing the American graphic design approach. His work is characterized by playfulness and is visually dynamic. Rand has the extraordinary ability to use the ordinary, universally understood signs and symbols as powerful tools for communication.

Saul Bass frequently reduced his graphic design to a single dominant image positioned in the center of the page. He strips a graphic design problem to the essence by reducing communication to a single image. Unlike other

"Paul Rand is an idealist and a realist, one who uses the language of the poet and the businessman. He thinks in terms of need and function but his fantasy is boundless."

Laszlo Moholy-Nagy

minimalist statements, his work is marked by energy and a casual quality. He is well known for his mastery of film titles and posters.

An important figure in concept and advertising, George Lois, fully integrated visual/verbal concepts in communication. His designs are simple, direct, memorable. Lois designed numerous covers for Esquire magazine which invited the audience to directly participate in photographs depicting timely issues and people.

Herb Lubalin mastered the use of expressive typography by using letterforms as images. He looked at the alphabet characters as both visual form and message communication. His designs are practical examples of using visual form as a concept or message.

By the 1940's design was seen as a way to develop corporate image and identity among the public. William Golden, at this time, created one of the most successful trademarks of the twentieth century, the CBS eye. Lou Dorfsman continued the tradition of design quality at CBS by applying these standards to film, print material and computer animation.

## Copy for Poster #3

The Grammar of Graphic Design: Organizational Principles

Gestalt perceptual principles and grids answer the question of how to group and organize our work as graphic designers. It is the task of the graphic designer to visually organize existing elements of a design so as to create a comprehensible whole. The simpler the visual form, the clearer and easier will be its perception.

## Gestalt

Gestalt is a holistic style of psychology which orginated in Germany prior to World War I. Gestalt is a German word meaning structure and arrangement in the process of seeing. All of us have a desire for unity and harmony. In the Gestalt understanding of seeing, images are first perceived as unified wholes before they are perceived as parts. (The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.)

The eye has the capacity to absorb only a limited number of unrelated units. If confronted with too many unrelated units, the eye/brain attempts to simplify the information by organizing the units into a manageable whole. When this is not possible, the image will appear unorganized or chaotic.

An image is organized by control and application of the following primary principles of Gestalt:

## Figure-Ground

The principle of figure-ground states any visual field must have two features: a figure (usually, but not always the small area of the field) and ground (usually the larger area of the field.) The figure will appear closer than the ground. Figure and ground cannot be seen simultaneously.

## Proximity

Proximity means that objects near to one another seem to belong together. The closer two or more visual elements are, the greater is the probability that they will be seen as a group or a pattern.

## Similarity

Visual elements that are similar tend to be seen as related. When we see things that are related we naturally group them and therefore see them as patterns. Elements can be related in a number of ways such as size, shape, volume, direction, color or value. Similarity is sometimes called similarity

'There is no thing, no event, save in relation to other things and events.." Alan W. Watts

"The principle: the material contains usefulness, the immaterial imparts essence."

Lao-Tse

grouping or perceptual grouping.

## Continuity

Visual elements that require the fewest number of interruptions will be grouped to form continuous straight or curved lines.

### Closure

The human eye will tend to close gaps. A common method of visual grouping is based on the human ability to complete partial images. The artist creates clues and gaps. The mind finishes what is not complete, to see as continuous units things which have been broken or which are in part concealed.

## Isomorphic Correspondence

Graphic form is capable of communicating a message that is strongly emotional or psychological, for example, the Christian cross or the Nazi swastika.

"These principles suggest that if we want to produce compelling art, we should never spell things out, that lasting art is always perturbing or puzzling."

Ray R. Behrens

## Visual Organization and Grids

Gestalt data indicates that viewers like organized visual and verbal material. When two or more elements are alligned in a gestalt, they combine to create another organizational tool for the graphic designer. Grids are based on this principle. A grid is a network of uniformly spaced horizontal and perpendicular lines for locating points by means of coordinates. Other benefits of the grid besides suggestion of a rational approach for visual problems, is unity. Grids can unify complex visual material and make the information presented more understandable. Grids are valuable for building a family resemblance into a series of visual pieces.

### Visual Texture

A visual texture is created by any number of a single type of elements that are repeated. Visual texture may be arranged in a random organization or in a more predictable sequence.

### Pattern

Pattern occurs when there is equal legibility between individual modules and a group concept. Pattern deals with modules that are equal. Equal modules give a compositional grid. This is the unifying principle that uses the modules in terms of organizing the space.

"Although disciplinary in nature, the modular grid is not as restrictive as it may at first seem. Rather, it is a guide which frees the designer from the need to make tiresome and often arbitrary decisions so that the designer may work logically and methodically, while he explores the possibilities of choices and chances."

Paul Rand

## Compositional Grid

Compositional grids are used to fit elements to an existing format.

## Typographic Unit Grid

This grid is composed of a network of small squares which cover the entire working surface. The size of the squares is determined by the type size and line spacing of the typeface selected for the job. The unit grid is then divided into a series of larger rectangles of recurring size or modules.

The form the grid finally assumes will depend largely on an analysis of both the content and the function of the piece in question.

## Constructional Grid

This grid involves identifying the elements by studying their inherent proportional relationships and building a composition from their interlocking parts.

"Order makes it

possible to focus on what is

alike and what is different,

what belongs together and

what is segregated.

Rudolf Arnheim

"Design is a means of ordering visual and emotional experience to give unity and consistency to a work of art."

R.L. Wickiser

## Copy for Poster #4

The Grammar of Graphic Design: Tools & Typography

## The Language of Typography

Type, a basic tool of graphic design, must communicate understanding. It is verbal, visual and vocal. While type is meant to be read, it is interpreted verbally as well as visually and audibly. It is a dynamic means of communication. Type must communicate the message clearly so the viewer has an accurate understanding. Effective typographic messages result from the combination of logic and intuitive judgement. In the alphabet each letter represents only one thing: its elementary sound or name. Twenty six characteristics are combined into thousands of words creating a visual record of the spoken language.

"Typography is an expression of technology, precision and good order." Emil Ruder

## Letterforms Analyzed

Type can be classified into serif, sans serif, script and text letters.

Serif type has horizontal strokes at the termination of the letterform and is characterized by a thick to thin ratio.

Sans serif type has simple, uniform stroke width.

Script type is designed to simulate handwriting. It has very little contrast between thick and thin strokes. Letters connect and are usually inclined.

Text letters resemble hand drawn letters of scribes with letterforms similiar to those of calligraphy.

## Type Measurement

There are two basic measurements: the point and the pica. These are universally used in printing in all English-speaking countries. There are approximately 72 points in an inch and 12 points in a pica (6 picas to the inch). Point size is the vertical dimension of type. The larger the point number, the taller the type. Pica is the horizontal dimension that measures and specifies the spatial intervals between typographic elements. The more picas, the longer the line of type.

Other spatial intervals are wordspacing, intervals between words, interline spacing (traditionally called leading) or the amount of space between individual letters. Letters must flow rhythmically and gracefully into words, words into lines. Too much or too little letterspacing destroys the normal texture intended by the type designer.

## **Type Family**

The type family consists of a group of related typefaces unified by similar design characteristics. Type families consist of three fonts; the regular roman face, a bolder version and an italic. There may be different weight changes within a type family. Four weights - light, regular or book, medium and bold - are sufficient for most uses.

## Legibility

Legibility in type is the quality and attribute that make type readable. The most legible typefaces have three qualities: contrast, simplicity and proportion. Effective type also depends upon the contrast, subtle adjustments of letterforms and spatial relationships. Letters set in all capitals are harder to read than upper and lower case letters because upper and lower case irregular shapes makes it more recognizable. Type that is excessively light of heavy will diminish legiblility, however typographers sometimes alter traditional criteria of legibility for expressive purposes.

## Tools of the Graphic Designer

## **Photography**

Photography is of great importance to the graphic designer. Designing with photographs requires a knowledge of the photographic process as well as being able to judge a photograph's content in relation to the communication objectives at hand. The graphic designer must be able to evaluate the design value and contrast within a photograph. When more than one photograph is used, the graphic designer must be able to use photographs in combination. Understanding how photographs work together, how they relate in value and how their forms will relate when they are positioned next to each other will help create successful designs.

Photographs used in graphic design are either taken for a specific assignment and shot to comply with a predetermined layout or they are used from existing sources. The designer uses the photograph to bring out the positive aesthetic values already present in the photograph. The graphic designer must learn to work with photographers, remembering they are also trained visual communicators.

Selection of photographs is based on relevance to the communication problem, relation to the overall design, and intuitive response to the photograph. The photograph that holds one's vision on a contact sheet will probably attract the readers attention on the printed page.

## **Photographic Effects**

There are many special effects that can be created with unusual camera lenses and darkroom techniques. The following are a few techniques available.

Superimposition is two or more overlapping images created by double exposure or by a combined printing of more than one negative to create a single print.

Montage is combining two or more images by printing them separately and mounting them into a single composition.

Photograms are made by placing objects on a sheet of photographic sensitized paper and manipulating and exposing it to the light.

Solorization is a method of changing the texture of the printed surface by a momentary second exposure to light. Adaptations of this process are used to turn halftone images into values with the tones reduced to a texture in pure black and white.

### Illustration

From the 1930's and the rapid advance of photography, the use of illustration has changed in design. By the 1970's illustration was moving in many different directions. Among them, Art Nouveau and the Surrealist approach to illustration were strong. Designers/illustrators understand the need for simplicity and unified concept that is essential to modern design. Today they tie illustration to the overall design considerations of the page.

## Graphic Illustration

Graphic illustration responds to the need for design solutions to informational, technological and scientific problems. It requires understanding of the intricacies of statistical, tabular and analytical content and communication of the material in a clear, graphic form. Graphic illustration requires an unusual degree of general knowledge, sense of logic in problem solving and strong sense of visual organization.

## Computer Graphic Design

Science and technology present new problems in graphic design and allow us to broaden our field of pictorial language. Computers can be used in design projects in many different ways. Artists working with computers need not be systems programmers or experts in mathematics.

Computer graphics techniques can be divided into two-dimensional and three-dimensional and each has its advantages and limitations.

The computer is a tool. Once the designer has mastered a practical knowledge of graphic computer capabilities, the computer can serve the designer with its speed and expanding capabilities.

## Copy for Poster #5

The Process of Graphic Design

The moment of illumination when an idea surfaces is a rewarding but difficult part of the design process to understand or explain. This is often described as creative talent or the capacity to use imagination and discover fresh or original concepts. Both intellect and feeling are involved in finding solutions to client problems in graphic design.

### An Outline of the Creative Process

There are four generally accepted steps in the creative process: analysis, incubation, inspiration and verification.

Analysis is easy to understand because this activity is centered in the deductive or rational part of the mind. It involves, for example, doing research on a problem.

The term incubation is used to describe a period of dormancy in which an idea is being formed without the aid of deductive thinking. The inspiration phase is a direct result of the incubation period. This is where intuition and rational analysis blend to arrive at a design concept.

Verification is the final test to see if the creative solution is appropriate to the problem.

Play can also be an important part of the creative process. As seen in the play of children, the objective and verbal is set aside for the intuitive and visual.

### Production Steps: A Practical Approach

The graphic design process can be simple or complex. It can involve one choice or multiple choices.

Each problem in design has its unique differences yet certain commonalities help to structure an attack on a problem. Any problem has an infinite number of solutions. The greater number of alternatives, the broader the scope of visual choices will be for the designer.

## A Way to Begin

The first step toward a working solution to the problem is to define the needs inherent in the problem and gather pertinent data. Once the problem has

"The creative process is not performed by the skilled hand alone, or by the intellect alone, but must be a unified process in which head, heart and hand play a simultaneous role."

Herbert Bayer

"Graphic design which fulfills aesthetic needs, complies with the laws of form and the exigencies of two-dimensional space; which speaks in semiotics, sans serif, and geometrics; which abstracts, transforms, translates, rotates, dilates, repeats, mirrors, groups and regroups is not good design if it is irrelevant."

Paul Rand

been identified and understood then preliminary ideas are the first translation of research into visual form. Thumbnails are visual ideas on paper; they are quick ideas. As many thumbnails as possible should be made to get all ideas on paper. They allow the designer to explore alternative concepts and compare them quickly with a minimum amount of work.

The next step is to refine a smaller number of thumbnails that show potential. These are called "roughs". At this point the graphic designer reevaluates, enlarges and reexamines the thumbnails by testing color, type and illustration alternatives.

Comprehensives are final sketches and are the first visual ideas presented to the client. Once the client has accepted one of the comprehensives, the process can continue. Otherwise, the designer must go back and repeat the preceding steps. The comprehensive is a highly finished mock-up of a printed piece. The comprehensive might include color indication, transfer type, PMT stats, etc. The comprehensives should clearly reflect the designer's two or three best ideas. Simulate the "in use" situation wherever possible. For example, show an ad in a newspaper page.

Once the comprehensive has been approved it must be converted into black and white art for reproduction. This is called camera ready art or layout or mechanical art. It is extremely precise and carries instructions for printing.

Printing is the final step. This phase must be carefully controlled to insure fidelity of concept.

Being open to chance is important to the creative process. There are two levels of chance that can influence concept formulation. The first is pure chance or accident. The second is controlled accident where design sets the stage for chance. Both can bring about good results in a designers work.

"Before the type can be determined, the designer must know how much text and illustrative matter must be accomodated in the printed work he has to design and of what nature it is. He should have an idea of what his answer to the problem should look like overall and in detail. The designer is well advised to make his small scale sketches as accurate as possible."

Josef Muller-Brockmann

"Ideas come from anywhere, anything, anytime, anyplace. Without a harvest of visual experiences he (the designer) would be unable to cope with the plethora of problems, mundane or otherwise, that confronts him in his daily work. Ideas may also grow out of the problem itself, which in turn becomes part of the solution."

Paul Rand

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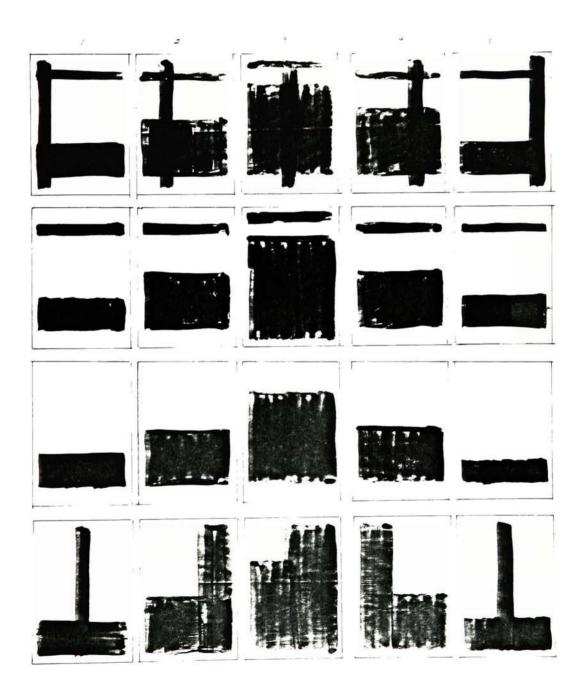
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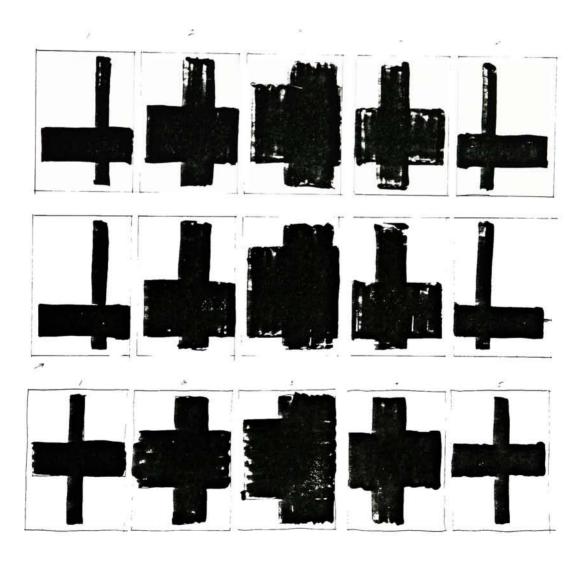
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## Appendices

## Grid

## **Tonal Studies**

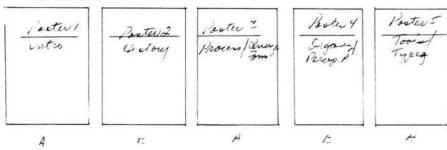




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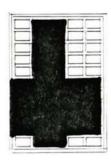


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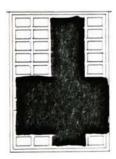
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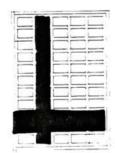
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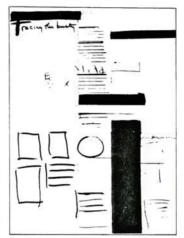


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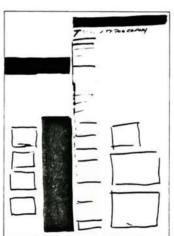
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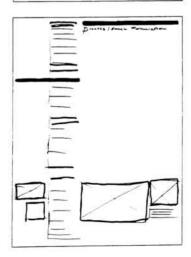
## **Preliminary Sketches**











# Women in Graphic Design

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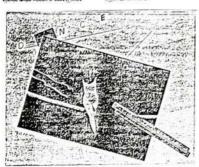
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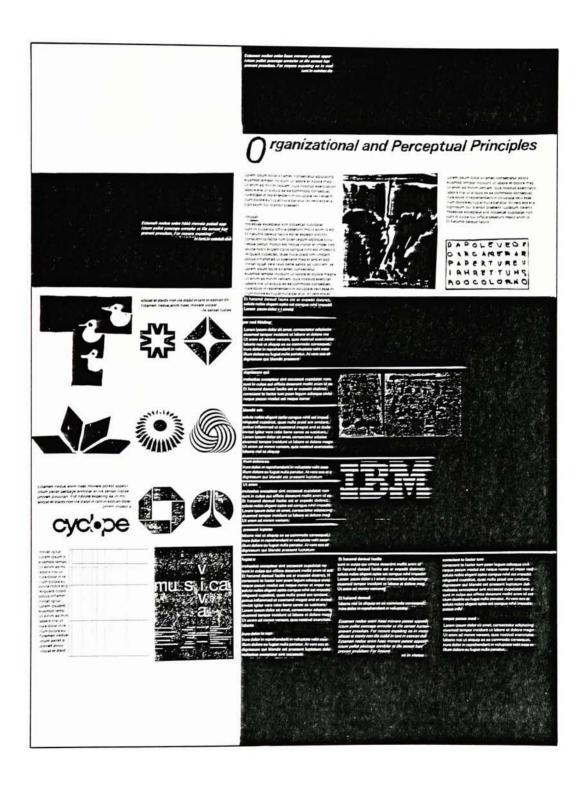












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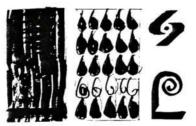








## The Creative Process





# The Process of Graphic Design











# The Process of Graphic Design

















## **Final Posters**

# The Profession of Graphic Design

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# Tracing the History of Graphic Design









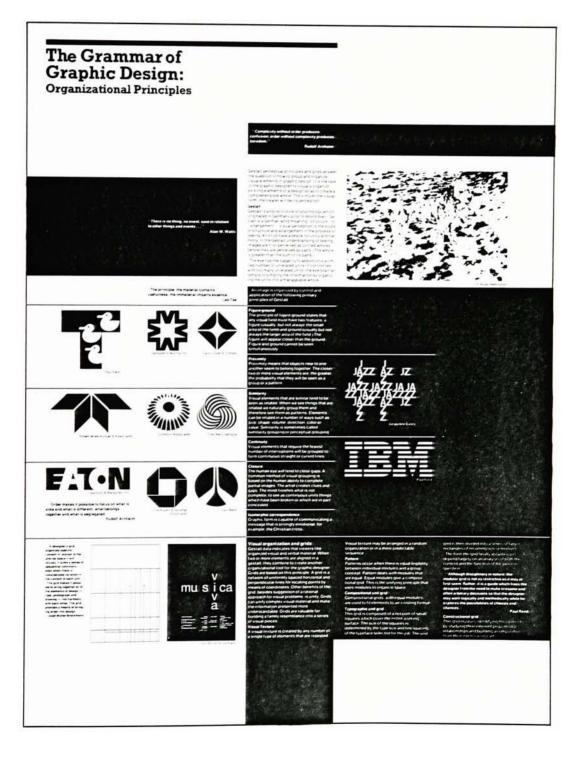












# The Grammar of Graphic Design:

Tools & Typography

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# The Process of Graphic Design

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