

Question 3: *Investigate the digital graphic design revolution of the mid 1980s.
Discuss the work of 3 designers who embraced this new technology to
challenge the past and define the future.*

STUDENT NAME : CHING YI WONG

STUDENT NUMBER : 2010182

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LECTURER: DONNA WILLIAMS

It was well known that art was dominated by realism, heavily influenced by the social-political atmosphere in the past. Art then was for the main purpose of creating artwork, which was truthful, accurate, politically motivated, therefore, conservative. In this essay, the following passage will describe the influence of different eras in art and design through the 1860s, on Swiss design in the 1950s, to becoming what's known as the International Typographic Style in the late 1900s. The essay will be exploring how Swiss design became what it is today and how it came to be. To do this the essay will be following the lives of 3 artists: David Carson, April Greiman, and Joseph Müller Brockman. Focusing on the purpose of why Swiss design emerged after the industrial revolution, World War 1, It would be impossible to explain all the events of the past that influenced Swiss design. The largest political events like the November Revolution, World War 1, Industrial revolution, etc. will always be the main topic of the conversation. So, an investigation of how these events motivated the different artistic movements which brought about the international style in graphics and typography will be in the discussion. To answer the question of how it challenged the past and influenced the future; an exploration of the importance of swiss design, particularly typography (predominately sans serif), will be carried out in appreciation to the extent of which swiss design revolutionized graphic design commercially, aesthetically and for its functionality.

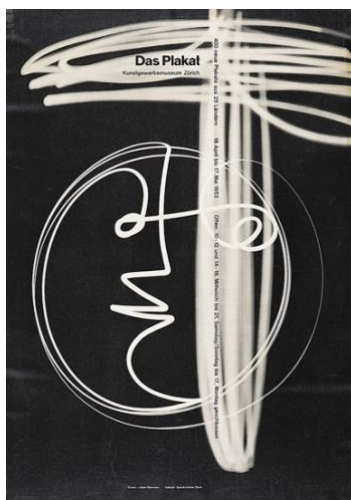
One powerful reason why Swiss design became widely known, is from its influence from the art movements that came before it, depending on the result of the political/social climate at the time. Such as the Art Nouveau set around 1890-1914, Arts and Crafts in 1880 to 1920, and the Jugendstil 1896- 1914 are known to be key starters of Swiss design. The Arts and Craft movement represented the beginning of a new appreciation for decorative arts throughout Europe. Originating from Britain, the Arts and Craft movement was a reaction against the industrial revolution in the mid 19th century, and the societal upheaval along with it. It was a criticism of industrial labor. The movement grew popular as a reaction against the decline of decorative standards in production during the Industrial Revolution. It emerged from the increasing understanding that society needed to prioritize in terms of the manufacturing of products. It was an attempt to reform design to create products that had more integrity, in a less dehumanizing way after mass production and machine-based productivity made artists less creative in their production. The key characteristic of the Arts and Crafts movement is in the craftsmanship which stresses the inherent beauty of the material and focuses on nature.

Then came the Jugendstil movement meaning "Youth Style" in 1890 until the first world war. Jugendstil combined florals, sinuous curves, and geometric lines. It is the German counterpart to Art Nouveau. Both were influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement. Artists in this era took plant forms they saw in nature and made elegant designs by flattening and abstracting them, turning them into organic motifs. The Arts Nouveau movement is known for its romantic craftsmanship. Originating from France, the art community has defined it for its creation of artistic designs for everyday objects, for it to be accessible to the general community. "No object is too utilitarian to be beautified." It was a reaction to the desire to abandon the historical styles.

Thanks to the new technology during the industrial revolution, color lithography, and color printing gave graphic designers a completely new platform to create revolutionary designs in this century. All 3 of these are movements have very intricate styles and are done by hand, therefore very illustrative when the advancement of technology allowed for artists to create at a larger scale with greater visual impact. Typographic styles and the nature of visual communication profoundly changed from the 19th century to the 20th century day. Experiments with serifs and sans serif typefaces created the most significant font families that are widely used in today's age. Before the 19th century, books and broadsheets were the dominant forms of dissemination of information. The industrial revolution brought photography, letterpress, lithographic printers.

What these 3 movements have in common is that they are all decorative and they aimed to reform the quality of design in the art community after design/art/packaging in the 1900's intricate designs. They brought about a completely different style of typefaces which was a significant advancement in design history and influential in poster/book design then.

Swiss design was born of the credo "form follows function". Completely opposing the principles of Art and Craft, Art Nouveau, and Jugendstil, which in the future was played a major part in this particular style. Swiss designs' fundamental elements focus on 1. Typography (predominantly sans serif), 2. Photography, 3. Color 4. Graphic elements. While the 3 eras that came before had no particular focus on the Elements of Art and Design. A significant figure in the Arts and Craft movement was William Morris. He believed that the mechanization in the industrial period degraded the authenticity of craftsmanship. During the Art Nouveau period, they were against the segregation between fine arts, sculpture, and lesser popularised art in the arts and craft movement. In Jugendstil, they called this Gesamtkunstwerk, "total work of art". Gesamtkunstwerk was driven by the vision that the total work of art would reflect and create a utopian society. Unlike philosophies like the Arts and Craft movement and Art Nouveau, many graphic designers during the modernist era believed design should reject personal expression, eccentric solutions and wanted to move away from real-life issues like the Great Depression and the rise of Fascism in the past. The Swiss-style aimed to achieve communication through principles like clarity, simplicity, objectivity.



Josef Müller-Brockmann was one of the most influential artists in Swiss design during the 50s. "sought an absolute and universal form of graphic expression through objective and impersonal presentation, communicating to the audience without the interference of the designer's subjective feelings or propagandist techniques of persuasion." (Meggs, and Purvis, 2015, p.364). He's had an authentic way of approaching visual communication shown in projects he did as one of the city's chief designers. (Brockmann. J., 1953, DAS PLAKAT,). He created this poster using light and captured it through the use of time exposure. Very different from the other letters (P, L, A, K, A) the other artists designed. It was half illustrational and half constructive and clearly innovative.



He was a pioneer of his style and didn't follow specific styles during the modernism movement. He is however consistent in his minimal yet thoughtful designs and his frequent use of grid systems in his poster designs. Another example of a successful piece is "Der Film" 1960s. This was one of his later, most prolific works. It was created after World War 2 when the design industry had to meet the standards of the international market when it opened for international trade. Design styles had to be legible and suit a wide range of audiences. Therefore, Helvetica was frequently used. He also popularised the use of Grid Systems in graphic design. Which allowed for clarity and orderliness in the design. None of the subjects from objects, characters, use of font or color, is redundant. His work is

minimal but everything down to the choice of color has a usage or message for the sole purpose of the function to communicate. He believes that anything that doesn't indicate the message that needs to be conveyed, is useless. At the time "hot type" was still used. Brockmann made plenty of use from the invention of photography, using phototypesetting. This new technology revolutionized print in the 60s. Swiss design was less significant and evolved into the international style around the '70s only to come back in the 2000s. His work can involve a range of mediums. Such as light, typography, abstract imagery, illustration, geometric shapes, as well as free-hand drawing, etc. He doesn't limit himself by the medium he chooses to use, yet his style is perfectly consistent throughout his work. Brockmann is influenced by Bauhaus and constructivism although he doesn't limit himself to a specific movement. He taught in the school Kunstgewerbeschule, teaching his theory of Grid Structure and design principles.

When the Macintosh was first available on the market for the general public to use, many artists in the design community were wary of the new technology. Many criticized pixilation and "errors" using this advanced technology as the entire model of the design process, whereas the norm designers in print were used to cutting, pasting before digitizing and printing. April Greiman is an American graphic designer who embraced new technology despite the "errors" in pixelization. She made it hers and used it as an integral part of her work. She has then been rewarded the Grand Prize in Mac World's First Macintosh Masters in Art Competition. She was one of the first designers to advocate in spreading the idea to involve advanced technology in the art and design process. She changed the way people saw pixelated type and paved the way for those who were weary to incorporate this aesthetic moving from modernism to the

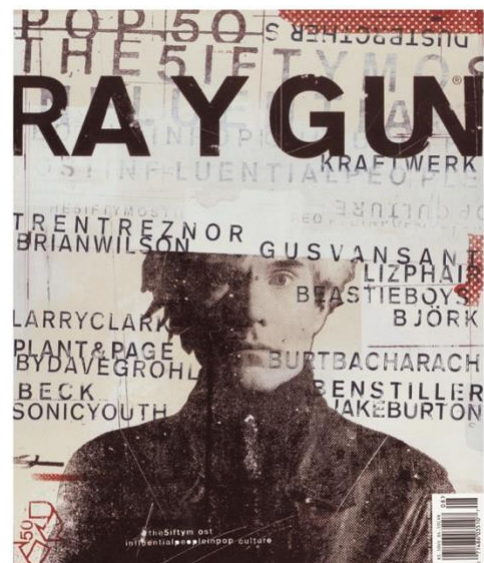




“New Wave” in post-modernism. One of her most notable works was the poster she designed and collaborated with Jayme Odgers (1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles). Contrary to many other designers Greiman chose to use a new medium in poster design. In this poster, she used experimental collage photography and designed it digitally. It's a good representation of elements in what started the New Wave during the 70s–80s. Completely contrary to Swiss Designs' minimalism and objectivity, April Greiman's work was loud and proud like many of designs based in New York. Her work investigates the use of collage, bright colors, drop shadow, diagonal typography, realistic, as well as geometrical elements. She involves no hierarchy in her poster designs, however, there is a complex order to them.

Surprisingly, she uses grid systems in her design process to create order in her busy designs, which was most prominent to the Swiss style. She was appointed director of the graphic design program in 1982, but because of her gender, her work was discriminated against by her predominantly male faculty. Openly disparaging her work, and discrediting her abilities in front of students, preventing Greiman to be taken seriously. She left in 1984 to design to open her own multidisciplinary design studio as her full-time work. She was fearless, proud, and confident, which shows in her designs. Because of her reach, she communicates innovatively in her work and is an inspiration through her success and struggles.

David Carson was another pioneer in his era in design. Nicknamed the “Godfather of Grunge Typography” David Carson focused on grunge-type designs. Drastically different from the international style's timeless and mainstream consumerist style, modernism and post modernisms' philosophy, grunge type is ever-changing doesn't conform to the Grid System mentioned previously. Grunge was a revolt against the consuming hyper-cleanliness of the movements before. Carson introduced a new typeface on Macintosh. A classic grunge typeface “Morire” which was none like the others. By Harriet Goren, this typeface was rigid and hollow in some parts creating a shadow effect. It almost used the negative space to communicate more than the actual type itself. He challenged the traditional principles of graphic design and typography. His work was controversial as many pioneers' works are. He celebrated white space with distressed type. Similar to methods used in the early 19th century he went back in with his Exacto knife to create his artwork to cut out and paste typography. Some photo manipulation, craftwork, collage, to create a humanistic “grunge” piece of work. It is debatable that the work he produces could either be design/art. It is a blurry line. Although, it is understandable why this topic comes up in his interviews. Many have said David Carson “paints with type” which is extremely high praise that he can make it look that way and have his work have impactful meaning and



purpose to the subject he's trying to communicate. Carson revolutionised graphic design, especially in America during the 1990s reminding designers the layout of type doesn't have to follow a grid or rules. The layout of type is too impactful and has too many ways of communicating a message to be confined to a set of rules. One of his most notable pieces was a cover he was asked to design for the experimental "Ray Gun" magazine. It is obvious the texts weren't necessarily meant to be read or understood. Unlike the International style, legibility and purpose wasn't the main principle. Instead, type was used as an image or to make art itself. It was used for texture, creating background or decoration. Depending on the font, size and placement within the design, David Carson creates an emotional impact by staging the deconstructed elements along with photography and craft and digital elements. This was an artists who had no formal training, in the peak of his career. Yet he was still sought after by many.

In conclusion, these 3 designers have very bold ideas of how design should be used. Each is vastly different from the other. All of them have their unique style and are authentic in their way. All of them have a significant influence on the way they approach to design with the technologies and environment available to them. All 3 of them are well known in the design community for their experimental approaches, which most likely played a major role in starting a new movement.

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