The digital graphic design revolution of the mid 1980's, past, present, and future – Phil Thomas

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Research in context

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Graphic design has changed many times over the course of the last 5 years, let alone over the last 40 years. Technology has advanced immensely with smart AI slowly making its way into everyday life, along with the artists themselves finding ways to navigate through the new era of graphics and finding and managing to utilize AI in their work. In this paper, you will see the evolution of graphics throughout the years, the artist that stood out with their incredible work during their era, and how we will come to either work together or against the new technical era in our present and future.

The 1980's was a time full of crazy colors, action movies, music, and interesting outfit choices when it came to style, the graphic style was no different. Something that is utterly amazing about graphics in general is you can usually tell when something is from a certain era because the layout, word formatting, and colors can give it away so easily. Each era had such a specific and trendy design in their respected time period and for the rest of the future to come. People don't always give graphics the recognition they deserve, even when it can define a whole decade of style.

The 1980's had the creation of the Mac computer in its future which changed the design game all together, but before that were the artists who made graphics by hand with visual art, photography, etc. An artist by the name of Paul Rand, who designers look highly upon, is known for his graphic design work back in the 1940's to the mid 1990's and still on. Paul was born on August 15, 1914, in New York City, he died on November 26, 1996, in Norwalk, Connecticut, USA. Paul was an American art designer and graphic designer best known for his famous logos around America including IBM, ABC, UPS, and many more. He was known for his ability to practice the graphic design style known as Swiss Style design. The Swiss Style Design was popular

from the 1950's to the 1960's and was a mix of the Russian constructivism and international typographic style. Paul was the first American graphic designer to use the technique in his designs successfully.

Paul worked as a professor for the most part of his adulthood, but as mentioned before, he was widely known for his contributions to the field of corporate identity logo design. It's said that he could convince any business that design was a much-needed tool in any industry for business to boom. Paul single handedly made graphic design a true profession and made it possible for us to work how we do today with big and small companies. His biggest company success was his work on IBM in 1956, he added stripes to the new logo to make it lighter and more dynamic than its old heavier look. There were two distinctive designs for the logo, one had a more professional eight stripe look for the main company's logo while the other had thirteen stripes for a more elegant look for special occasions.

A quote from Paul that I enjoy is "Design is the method of putting form and content together. Design, just as art, has multiple definitions; there is no single definition. Design can be art. Design can be aesthetics. Design is so simple, that's why it is so complicated." With Paul's revolutionary contribution to the working class of business and his simplicity in style, our way of jobs for graphics changed forever.

Herb Lubalin was an American graphic designer who was known as the father of conceptual typography and well known for leading the conceptual image style in graphic design. He was born March 17, 1918, and died on May 24, 1981. He attended cooper Union and became obsessed with typography at seventeen years old, he was diagnosed to be color blind later in life, discovered by his parents. His love for typography helped him create such unique styles of writing when it came to his own designs, he even created the typeface ITC Avent Garde, along with others

such as Availability, Era, Serifa, Ronda, and Lubalin Graph. His conceptual image style was his way of using visuals and unique styles of type to bring deeper meanings to his already emotional allusions of art he created. He worked on magazines with these styles, even collaborated with Ralph Ginzburg on some magazines from Ginzburg's. Herb also worked with logos and advertisement, at Sudler & Hennessey, for nineteen years creating well known logos such as the original NBC Peacock.

One of Herbs' ongoing ideals in his artwork was jazz. Jazz was extremely popular in New York in the 1950's and became his primary source of visual inspiration. Herb made a lot of visual album covers by trying to captivate the feelings and sounds the music would bring as he created drawings on paper as visual art, he did so by going to many jazz clubs while in his teens in the 1930's. The practices helped develop his typography style and his visually music inspired layouts you see in a lot of his work.

To shift into the era of technology really starting to come into play, my next American artist and graphic designer is Susan Kare. Susan Kare helped apple with the development of interface elements with the first apple computer, the Mac, from 1983 to 1986. When the Mac computer was created, graphic design changed forever as a whole. People feared what the future would look like for graphic designers and how a smart device that did current designer's jobs for them would affect the industry. Some people did lose jobs, like the ones who created typography by hand, the need for them became truly little, but in the end modern technology helped graphic designers immensely.

Susan Kare was born February 5, 1954, in Ithaca, New York, and is still alive today at the age of seventy. Susan always liked fine art and wanted to make that her life's career but the principle of making art a full-time job back then still wasn't ideal to the world. She ended up

getting a job working for Steve jobs after leaving apple as a creative director for the company called NeXT in 1985. 1983 to 1986 is when the mac computer was trying to get its footing in with the world, so it was constantly being evaluated and judged by new eyes every day. Susan was the pioneer for pixel art and being responsible for creating the mac interfaces used back then and even today. Her most famous interfaces are known as the Lasso, the Grabber, and the Paint Bucket. She also had the worlds first proportionally spaced digital font family, those fonts are called Chicago, Geveva, and Monaco typefaces. When Susan was coming up with her interface designs, she was told to go to the store and buy some stationary paper that had squares on it and to start drawing out her ideas for some interfaces, she came up with the boot, jump, debug, auto indent, and danger. Although Susan's work extends past just digital art, her work has changed the approach that graphic designers use to make interfaces even today. There are still pixels and small squares used to make graphic art but on a much larger scale, she absolutely walked so we could run with our future using technology.

Rob Janoff is the creator of the apple logo in 1977. The mac computer was making its popular debut in the 1980's, but before that was the creation of a simple logo that will remain the same for years to come. The apple logo is well known all over the world, the only changes made to it since the seventies have been color schemes and the occasional newer pride flag design. Although simple the apple logo has found ways to remain connected to our era through such relations in color change, but not total design change. The logo represents the fruit itself because that's what the company was calling it, apple, so Rob decided to keep the logo just as simple and draw an apple with a bite out of it. The bite in the apple represents computer terms used in everyday technology, tying the design meaning and connection to technology all together. Rob was just as

new to the technology scene as the rest of the graphic designers of that era, little did he know he would create one of the most famous technological logos in the world.

When the Mac hit the main industries of graphic design, April Greiman was one of the first to use it to its full potential. April was well practiced in graphic and visual art before she began finding ways to break them and morph them into never-before-seen designs. April was born on March 22, 1948, and is currently the age 76, if you were to look her up, she is labeled as "one of the first designers to embrace computer technology as a design tool." Her father was an early computer programmer, so she was no stranger to technology when it came into the graphic design world. She fought back against the belief that computers would destroy how graphic designers worked in everyday life and instead embraced it. Her work inspired past and present designers to use the computer as a tool in design with the manipulation of photography and the many mediums she experimented in. April finds the term graphic designer too limiting, especially with the walls she has brought down between old graphic design and new ones.

The next and last graphic designer is Jessica Walsh, Jessica is a good example of how graphic design has excelled today with technology at its current highest. Jessica is known as one of the most famous designers currently in the 20th century, she formed her own studio and still runs it today. She began coding and creating different websites at the age of eleven, she would gain up to 50,000 website visitors per day and even started making thousands of dollars per month just from adding ads to her websites. This is when she started to realize how much more she could do with a website and the sort of designs she could make to better them. With her skill in photography, painting, and digital design Jessica works on the branding, typography and art that goes into creating a thorough website page. All of her work can be found as out of the box colorful and interesting in design, this is the kind of work that has begun to inspire the generation of this era.

Jessica has collaborated with many popular clients known around the world such as Snapchat, Barneys New York, and Parle Argo, and even more major companies that can relate to the younger generation through art.

Something that is new for us, just like the computers were new back in the 1980's, is AI or better known as Artificial Intelligence. It's up for debate if AI is going to take the jobs of graphic designers or help enhance them. AI can do so many things that its almost frightening, there are cars that can drive themselves and work as taxis, robots that can run with guns or pick up heavy boxes, and photo generated art created from the AI searching the internet for the results you typed in. To quote from Daniel Susskinds book "A World Without Work" he indicates that people have worried about how the new technology will affect us and replace human labor altogether, and every time that's happened, we have been proven wrong and have found ways to use these new technologies to our ability and to along side it.

It's understandable how AI can be intimidating because its intelligence in technology is on a whole new level, so for people to be afraid of how it's going to mix with our everyday life is expected. For graphic designers AI can be used for good in our industry if used correctly. AI isn't perfect, it has many bugs to it and isn't completely taking over the industry yet. Theres always things wrong with AI pictures or videos that give away that its AI, things such as extra fingers in pictures or unnatural body movement in videos. The way its utilized with graphic designers is it can help when trying to come up with ideas for certain designs or logos, if you needed help coming up with a dino café you could type that in AI and it would come up a bunch of variations of a dino café that you could use as an example.

The only worry about graphic design and AI right now would be copyright issues if they came up, because again, AI is technically taking parts of multiple pictures all over the internet and

making one picture, so that could be an issue in the future. People are always going to want specifically made graphics for what they are looking for so no one should worry yet about AI taking jobs, for now, graphic designers should learn to work hand in hand with technology because it is our future, and we need to utilize it.

Graphic Design has changed drastically from the early 1980's to the now early 2020's, technology has made major leaps in the assistance of creating design, the art styles that come with graphics and typography have also changed majorly. Graphics have become more out of the box and even easier to create with the development of mac computers and technology, there will always be the need for visual art though. Even with technology being at the forefront for design today, visual art is always right beside it. Sometimes it takes throwing some paint down or drawing the perfect image by hand before you can truly put your work into the computer to enhance your visual art into classic graphic design digital art. The possibilities are endless with having so many typefaces in the palm of your hands with a computer and being able to create designs to go with it.

In conclusion, the digital design revolution was a big one in the eighties and has changed our way of creating graphics forever and will be an even bigger one now when people in the future are talking about the creation of AI and how it changed our knowledge of graphic design as we know it.

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