

Research in Context

Title: Question 5: From the **FUTURE WORLD** research strand lectures, choose a theme, movement, or selection of artists or designers that relate to your practice or interests, and construct a 2,500-word essay. Critically assess primary themes, key writers, and relevant practitioners.

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From the **FUTURE WORLD** research strand lectures, choose a theme, movement, or selection of artists or designers that relate to your practice or interests, and construct a 2,500-word essay. Critically assess primary themes, key writers, and relevant practitioners.

The movement in which I have decided to explore is Timeless Design and how it is used within design principles, also how it is applied in a commercial space such as logos, posters, and design structure. Our society today relies on simple, visual communication that is legible and straightforward. Timeless Design is about deconstructing elements and only including the essentials and stylish typography or layout design. It is very similar to minimalism in some respects, however, there are a few slight differences. The difference between minimalism and timeless design is that minimalism concentrates on what we value most and eliminates everything that diverts us from it. Timeless Design is functional, less is more and has been specifically developed in order to convey clear messages through visual communication which expresses elements of directness, seriousness and clarity.

I will be covering a range of topics situated around timeless design, including the evolution of famous logos such as Apple and Burberry and the historic design process of the Swiss Design movement and a female graphic designer Paula Scher who is currently working in the New York Pentagram. These topics are ones that are mostly recognised as being timeless and are well known for their reputation. In terms of the Swiss Design style, I wanted to research in depth how this influenced designers today and what impact it has had on timeless design.

There are numerous designers who have and still are creating timeless designs whether it's product design, furniture design, fashion design or graphic design; these all share familiarities with one another. Timeless design isn't only incorporated within graphic design but can also be applied across a vast variety of subjects.

Famous and historic designers have work that is still regarded as timeless design that have impact our generation and may continue to the future such as Paula Scher, Josef Müller-Brockmann, Mike Joyce and the Bauhaus movement just to name a few. These designers and past designers have a lot in common regarding subject, style, composition and thought process. I also find timeless design an interesting topic and its relationship to the human race.

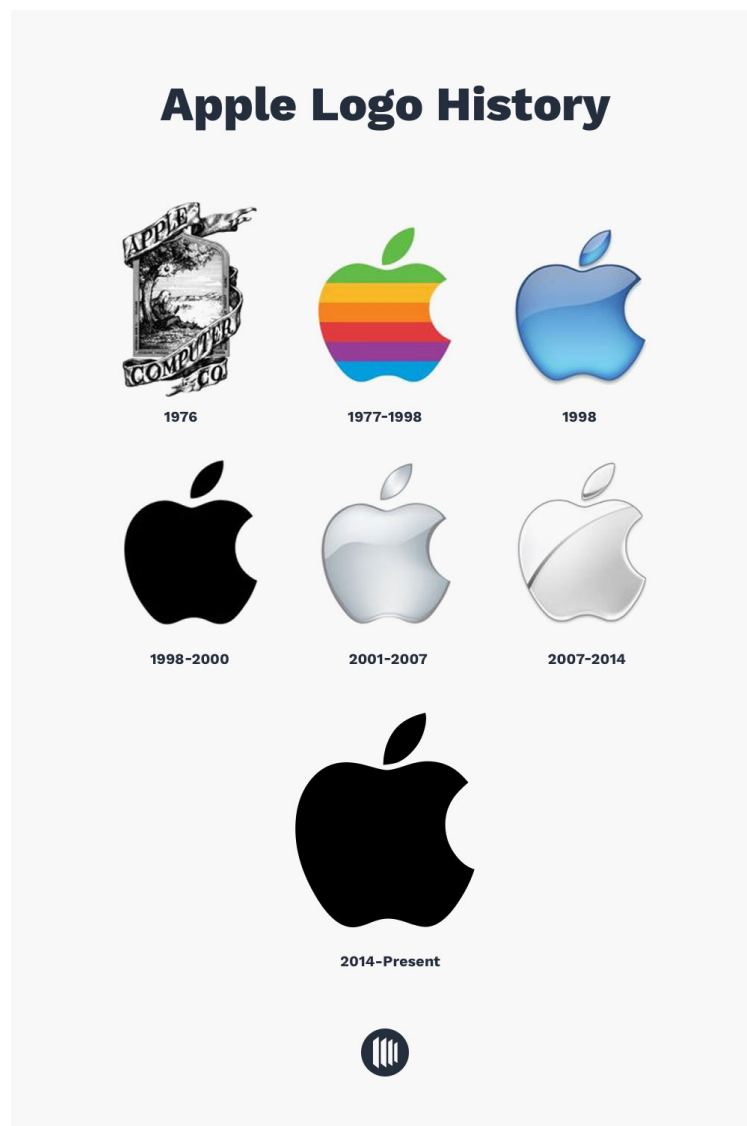


Fig.1: *Evolution of the Apple Logo.*

As shown in figure 1 a major difference can be seen from 1976 to 1977 considering there is only a year difference; the original logo looks as if it was designed in the 1800s and the rainbow Apple logo looks modern, simple and sophisticated. What is also interesting about the rainbow Apple logo is the use of various colours. In contemporary society, colourful stripes are associated with the pride movement and Apple used it within their logo in 1977. This demonstrates that even in 1977 Apple was modern and technologically advanced before their time. The logo in 2014 has subtle tweaks made but is not noticeable to the human eye; the black Apple logo which has been and will be the logo for Apple for centuries to come. The concept behind the logo is a historical event whereby Sir Isaac Newton had an apple fall onto his head. In terms of the bite from the Apple, this was done by Alan Turing who invented the algorithm. The main idea behind Apple is to bring simplicity to the public in terms of brand recognition. Not only do we see the logo as being timeless but we also see that Apple demonstrates this across a wide range of products from Macbooks, iPhones, Ipads to graphics. Apple as a company is a leading high end organisation who are constantly developing new ideas and products for the market need. The target audience which Apple has targeted is those looking for a functional, practical and stylishly finished product which again fits into the category of timeless design. Apple is all about knowledge and understanding, whilst still creating a sophisticated brand identity that works today and will for centuries to come.

Another brand that has achieved outstanding recognition without the use of words or color is Apple... At this point in consumer culture, it would be rare to find a consumer of any age and in any country who cannot identify the logos for Nike and Apple (Cantor, 2019).



Fig.2: *Burberry Logo Evolution.*

Since 1901, the Burberry logo has also developed its brand identity over a long period of time. The 1901 original logo shows a horse rider with a shield and pike developing into a black and white version in 1968, keeping the horse rider giving it an abstract twist (see figure 2). In 2018 Peter Saville was commissioned to redesign the Burberry logo; he used the Styrene B typeface as the new identity creating a bolder, more sophisticated and legible design whilst also incorporating a modern yet elegant look to the brand.

The present Burberry logo was designed in 2018 and reflects the new era of the brand. It portrays a youthful and modern approach to design, emphasizing the energetic and progressive character of the fashion house and its inclination to follow the latest trends and make them (logomyway, 2022).

The current logo in itself has a domineering look and holds itself without adding any elements to it including the iconic horse rider. Burberry today is known for its

expensive, clean, high-end and upper class products, but people are arguably drawn in by the logo. Few people in London may pass the Burberry shop and glance for a moment, but what catches their attention is the iconic 2018 logo designed by Peter Saville and this is what a good piece of timeless design is all about. Modernisation of the logo has resulted in the removal of the knight; “The “equestrian knight” has been done away with from the logo, but it’s still on the brand’s tags and packaging, not to mention the patterns of branded clothes and accessories” (logomyway, 2022). Despite removing their iconic image from the logo, Burberry has kept the timeless design on their clothing ensuring continuity and their brand identity. It isn’t just about a well-designed logo, it is also the fact that people return to the shop; it is all about the first impression and how the identity speaks to the client and its memorable.

Looking further into the Burberry logo, it is solid black, another indication that the brand will be high up in the retailing business. “some of the most successful global brands are supported by logos that transcend color. By doing this, they’re not only embracing simplicity, but they’re also offering a logo that looks good anywhere and in any place” (Cantor, 2019). It is appropriate for brands and brand identities to keep a consistent timeless logo and this will ensure Burberry’s reputation continues.

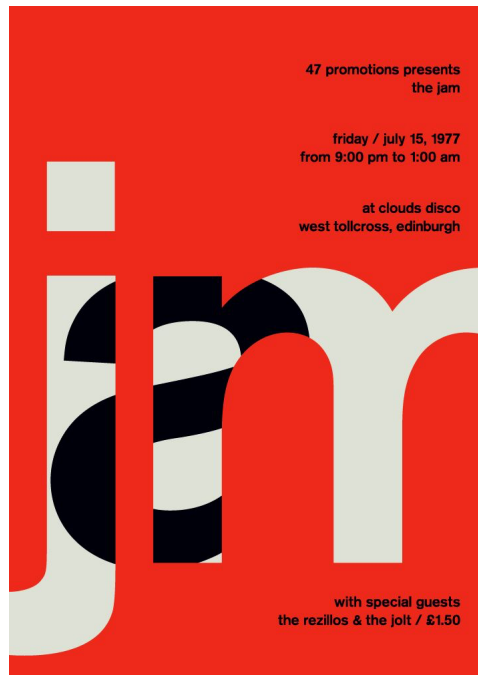


Fig.3: *The jam/ Edinburgh poster*

The Swiss Movement has influenced many designers from around the world, past and present, with the techniques used still continuing to play a role in design today and will continue to do so for a very long time. Joseff Müller-Brockmann was one of many revolutionary designers that changed how designers in the 21st century think and design. His work utilised geometric elements of organisation and grid like structures providing his graphics with strong form which appealed to the consumer. “he used visual graphics to translate music through rhythm, repetition and scale” (Keung, 2021). Brockmann wanted the viewer to easily understand what he was trying to communicate in an efficient and practical way. “His compositions very much adhered to the grid to organize elements and to make it easier for the audience to read the message” (Keung, 2021). Through organising his designs systematically Brockmann was able to reach out to the majority.

Joseff Müller-Brockmann was arguably a pioneer of Swiss design, and his work is still used today as a reference for visual communication graphics..



Fig.4: Massimo Vignelli Subway Signage Identity

Massimo Vignelli is an influential designer who has created a number of designs including posters and identities, which include, American Airlines, Knoll, US National Parks Service and NYC Subway System just to mention a few. One that is widely circulated is the New York Subway system (see figure 4) which is created for simple identifiable routes on the New York Subway; this is colour coded and easily understood. Vignelli taught us to appreciate the functionality and elegance of simple, rational shapes—an aesthetic that is the result of a deep cultural sensitivity, before being a matter of style or taste (Munari, 2013-2018). Not only has Massimo Vignelli created a subway system that works, but he has also made the lives of Americans easier by creating a visual system that is practical, functional and timeless. This

demonstrates that timeless design or any design of that nature does have a major impact on our society and arguably is the key to understanding complex subjects in a visual manner.

Mike Joyce is one of many designers who embraced the Swiss movement, creating simple yet timeless designs that are seen and purchased by many. His approach is to create large scale posters, band posters and designs based on events, famous bands and people past and present such as The Jam (see figure 3). Whilst some of his work is traditional Swiss graphics others lean more towards timeless, modern and contemporary design.

What is also evident within the Swiss design is the eye for detail and construction. Swiss design falls into many categories associated with timeless design such as the use of colour, style, layout, typeface and visual communication which is functional and practical for viewers. Functionality is timeless, so most objects designed within this style were able to stylistically survive for decades, and still counting (Grilo, 2018).

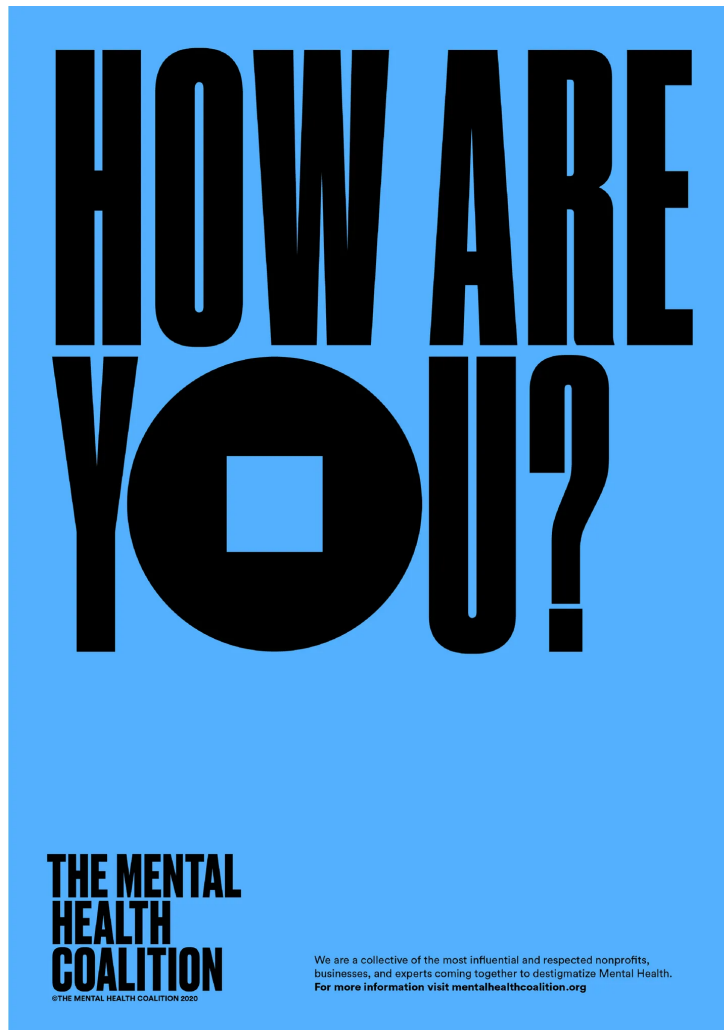


Fig.5: The Mental Health Coalition

Paula Scher is a world renowned graphic designer based in New York and works for a large design firm, Pentagram. Her work is still influencing designers today and has had a positive impact on young designers and the way they think. Scher is responsible for designing many brand identities over a lifetime, and these identities are still well known today such as the Atlantic Theatre, Public Theatre, Shakeshack, Citi banking and The Mental Health Coalition which is a more recent project during the pandemic, these are only to name a few. She also explains how brands such as Apple started off with a disappointing logo, gradually building their reputation from

1980 to the early 90s.

The first version was terrible. The second logo looked like a bad rip-off of Apple Records. And then it became associated with the product. If you look at the original packaging design, it was quite awful. It really didn't get any better until the end of the 1980s and early '90s (Cowan, 2019).

As Scher explains, brand recognition and identity have been key to Apple's success. Until the logo was associated with the product it was not successful. For timeless design to be efficient it must take into consideration the future world for people and also designers. Paula Scher is one of many designers that takes all aspects of design into thought and a powerful meaning behind the designs that she creates.

The Mental Health Coalition poster, evidenced in figure 5 concentrates on minimal yet essential information structured in a clean, timeless and beautifully designed piece of work. The simple statement "How are you?" is bold, clear and direct. This again is a great way for viewers to be pulled in and read the poster as well as understand the meaning behind it. Paula Scher has also cleverly used the stop button as an O to suggest it's time to put an end to mental health, and as seen everywhere the stop button icon does not change. We see it on TV remotes, iPads, iPhones and all technological devices. Simple icons can be timeless and incorporated within graphic design, creating simplistic but effective and impactful meaning.

Timeless design arguably will never end as it is constantly evolving on a daily basis. It is becoming more common in our generation and as a world, it helps individuals with better knowledge and understanding in a simplified way. The timeless design

also creates an image of cleanliness, futuristic appearances and legibility.

Contemporary society relies heavily on minimal and timeless messages as this is arguably an easier way to understand complex information whilst still communicating what is important. Through creating simplistic designs, information can become memorable whether it's a few words or even a brand. Timeless design is and will always be a recurring event. Perhaps in many centuries to come timeless design would be taken further; by incorporating smarter technology, and robotic machinery that creates identities suited to your needs, the power of timeless design can become endless. It isn't just within graphic design, timeless design covers a wide range of areas such as products, fashion, automotive and architecture. The reason behind the design is promotion and recognition.

Many designers are still designing based on this movement which is demonstrative of how popular it is and what design should be moving forward to in the future. Most designers I have discussed created designs in a timeless fashion even before timeless design became a popular trend, and these are the designers that have shaped and moulded the world of design today. As a student this has helped me to understand the relationship between design and timeless design, it has broadened my knowledge and understanding of this movement and the process in which is involved in creating such timeless designs, and it has expanded my creative skills for the future and has given me an opportunity to experiment more within this subject and how I can apply this method across a vast range of design applications, this also explains that researching is an essential key to successful design and also having a clearer understanding of how past and present designers has influenced many young designers today, I hope to continue my career by creating timeless designs that will be noticed and understood by many for centuries to come.

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List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Anisimova, M. (2022) *Evolution of the Apple logo*. Available at:

<https://thedesigonest.net/apple-logo-history/> (Accessed: 26 June 2022)

Figure 2: 1000logos (2022) *Burberry Logo Evolution*. Available at:

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Figure 3: Conwill, G. (2022) *The jam/ Edinburgh poster*. Available at:

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Figure 4:

Figure 4: Lalji, A. (2022) *Massimo Vignelli Subway Signage Identity*. Available at:

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Figure 5:

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