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Graphic! Design History

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12. Corporate Identities and International Style 1950s–1970s

- The work of the graphic designer expanded from composing and stylizing messages to coordinating an “image” across products and communications. This coordination was facilitated by a logical approach and new production technologies.
- The aesthetics of corporate systematization drew on the “universal language” of visual communication developed at the Bauhaus, championed by the New Typography, and redefined by postwar proponents as an international style based on the values of clarity, rational organization, and functional efficiency.
- Phototypesetting and photographic manipulation in graphic design and print production supported the synthetic imagery of logotypes, house styles, and other integrated sign systems.
- Devising homogenous campaigns that communicated organizational coherence, graphic designers became insiders in a corporate culture characterized as **one-dimensional** because it integrated individuals into a single unified identity.
- With the arrival of television, graphic designers faced new challenges in the conception of corporate and brand identities that could function across a variety of media.
- The graphic design profession further advanced recognition of its own achievements; new organizations and publications set standards of excellence that established hierarchies among professionals.

12.1 Paul Rand, IBM logo, 1956.

Paul Rand's work embodied the aesthetic and **ethos** of an emerging international corporate culture. Rand distilled the principles of modernism into the very picture of formal efficiency and functionality. His designs for IBM exemplified an approach to identity programs that featured flawless logotypes that projected a unified image. The typeface he chose as a point of departure (City Medium) was designed by Georg Trump in the 1930s. Rand's use of outlines, striped fragmentation, and tonal manipulations transformed the dated modernity of Trump's face into letterforms that suggested information processing, automated office work, or the scan lines of a monitor. IBM, the logo suggests, is a smoothly functioning system in which all information and activity stream with seamless coordination. Rand's uncompromising attitude toward stylization was well suited to the demands of a company committed to uniformity across its many operations and offices. In the course of his career, Rand's own identity became a brand. His name became synonymous with a certain approach to graphic design.

The United States came out of the World War II a more prosperous and conservative nation. Europe faced reconstruction and reform. In both contexts, graphic design played a critical role in shaping societal norms and representing new political and economic orders. Adapting their professional practices and drawing on stylistic innovations from earlier in the century, graphic designers aligned themselves with an emerging corporate culture. Modern approaches to graphic design were distilled into a rationalist, **functionalist** method. What came to be known as the **International Typographic Style** developed in Switzerland out of the legacy of Constructivism, De Stijl, and other once-experimental movements. The last gasp of modern utopianism was channeled into the neutral-seeming surfaces of a **universal style** system that served private interests with seamless efficiency. Global capitalism was on the rise in the decades following WWII. National boundaries no longer contained productive and commercial development. Money and goods flowed through interconnected systems of production, distribution, and consumption. The older model of privately held companies that concentrated on a particular product or service gave way to board-run corporations with greatly diversified assets. These complex, multinational corporations spurred the development of visual **identity** programs that went far beyond branding products and

12.2 James K. Fogleman, CIBA packaging, 1956–1960. One of the first corporations to create a uniform style was CIBA (Company for Chemical Industry Basel). Graphic design director James K. Fogleman pioneered a model that defined identity through color, typeface, and a few basic visual elements, such as the solid rectangular background from which the company's initials are dropped out. CIBA's products clearly belong to a single line and stem from the same seriousness of purpose. Authority and reliability are expressed by the packaging's consistency. Graphic design disappears into functionalism here, as it is supposed to do. The packaging makes it seem as though these products simply existed, as though their contents were as straightforward as their graphic identity.



services. They became a means of making complex organizations seem like a single entity. Not incidentally, the **logotypes** and other identifying features of these campaigns did not rely on any particular language but drew on the **universal language** of graphic design meant to be legible throughout an international network of communications. Uniformity (conformity) and abstraction were the hallmarks of corporate style. Not all graphic designers were absorbed into this programmatic approach, but it defined the prevailing ethos and aesthetic of the postwar decades in both the private and the public sectors (Fig. 12.1).

Beyond branding products, identity systems became a means

Image and identity systems In the 1950s, the field of graphic design entered a new stage when it was called upon to respond to a change in the character, not just the scale, of businesses. As companies became corporations, graphic designers were hired to provide identifiable images for complex entities comprised of multiple divisions and activities. Vertical integration (the incorporation of all facets of an industrial process from raw materials to final product marketing, distribution, and service) meant that many corporations had employees and offices worldwide. Horizontal integration (ownership of several subsidiaries that sell similar products to different markets) required that corporations achieve brand recognition across wider ranges of products and contexts. International corporations struggled to coordinate their practices and customs throughout diverse cultures and locations. Defining and holding market share required careful construction and management of corporate identity (Fig. 12.2).

The unified image afforded by a distinctive logo and corporate identity system might well conceal a host of inequities or abuses, even as it functioned with clear, rational effectiveness in strategic communications. A consistent style conferred authority and reliability. But the apparent unity

12.3 Lester Beall, International Paper, 1960. Lester Beall's identity program for International Paper preserves the source image of a tree, abstracting its form to be read simultaneously as an *I* and a *P*. The surrounding circle encloses the letters in a stable overall design that is enlivened by the diagonal thrust of the tree shape. International Paper had become one of the largest paper companies in the world by 1960, and its logo had to be recognizable in a variety of media, including labels, cartons, trucks, and other internationally distributed materials. The robust simplicity of Beall's design made it adaptable for many scales, surfaces, and circumstances.



provided by a single logotype also hid the diversity of practices and people involved in the production of goods and services. A company like CIBA had a wide variety of geographically dispersed chemical plants, factories, and mining concerns. Chase Manhattan Bank had many branches and subdivisions with holdings in real estate, currency markets, and other financial enterprises. The image of a single entity concealed this complexity, as well as the risks to investors and workers, or costs in natural resources that might be involved. Meanwhile, the movement of large amounts of

of making complex organizations seem like a single entity.

capital into a global economy began to undermine some of the traditional powers of national governments. The impact of this shift on fiscal and environmental regulations, safety, quality standards, and a host of other social responsibilities is still being felt and evaluated today (Fig. 12.3).

A generation earlier, graphic designers' roles had been limited to layout, composition, and style choices for print design. Now their work involved large-scale, coordinated communication campaigns that not only maintained the identity of a corporation but also added value to its products through symbolic investments in this identity. Slogans, catchphrases, logotypes, and other compact messages made the corporation seem like an individual entity with a voice and personality. Highly professional firms such as Chermayeff & Geismar and Unimark established their own brand identities while purveying them to others. The visual landscape was transformed, as corporate identity systems for Alcoa, Ford, J.C. Penney, the National Park Service, Memorex, Westinghouse, UPS, Xerox, Steelcase, Panasonic, British Petroleum, Chase Manhattan, the International Paper Company, and other giants accustomed the public to a coded language of sovereign logos, signature typography, and proprietary color schemes. The

12.4 Chermayeff & Geismar, Chase Manhattan, 1960. The Chase Manhattan symbol, designed by the firm Chermayeff & Geismar, has no obvious meaning. It may have been based on the Chinese coins collected by the Rockefeller family, but this reference is lost in the logo's abstraction. The symbol is made up of shapes whose systematic repetition forges an association of solidity. The interlocked form is heavy, bold, and confident. But the symbol communicates "logo-ness" rather than any specific characteristics of the bank or its services. The vogue for logos was at its peak in the 1960s and early 1970s, and corporations were under pressure to have striking symbols on which to hang their public image. The use of such a symbol by a bank provided the same reassuring uniformity that stamped franchises in the rapidly growing fast-food industry. Brands and logos provided a quick visual cue to customers who responded to familiar and reliable products in an increasingly dense commercial landscape.



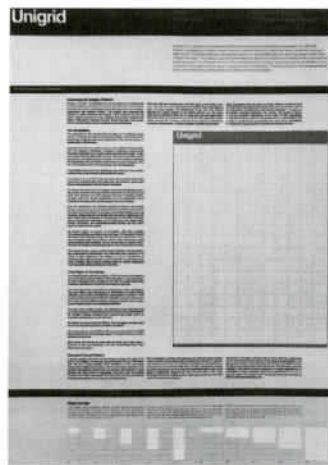
corporate report, an annual description of financial achievements sent to shareholders, became a major opportunity to showcase graphic design. Good visual communication could gloss over irregularities in business activity or accounting practices by constructing an image of smooth operations in a climate of uncertainty. The graphic designer's art sometimes raised ethical questions of accountability (Fig. 12.4).

Ultimately, "universal" signs succeed by becoming familiar.

12.5a Unimark, signage system, 1960s. In the 1960s, Bob Noorda of Unimark International designed public signage systems. The Unimark approach promoted recognizability and legibility and produced an overall image of order. Unimark developed programs for New York and other urban transit systems, airports, and public environments. Graphic uniformity carried over from station to station, providing passengers an identifiable visual code made up of numbers, arrows, consistent colors, and very few words. The system relied on recognition as much as reading. What was to be "read" in its distilled forms was functionality throughout the transit network.

In addition to private corporations, public entities such as railways and postal systems assumed visual identities. The role of the graphic designer was to convey the essence of an organization's identity. In-house personnel who handled communications both within and outside the company maintained style conformity. This conformity often governed the dress and decorum of individual employees, as well as the consistency of product and image design. Keeping all elements of a corporation's graphic identity unified was a challenge, especially when companies had multiple, scattered offices, each with its own design staff and production capabilities. Graphic designers developed stylistic guidelines for large corporations. These had to be specific enough to control consistency while allowing staff the necessary flexibility to work in various contexts. Requirements for layout, images, typefaces, text settings, and even punctuation were often specified down to the last detail. Printed manuals disseminated these specifications in an age before electronic communications (Figs. 12.5a and 12.5b).

Graphic identity extended from letterheads and logos to packaging, trucks and shipping containers, point-of-purchase displays, and architectural signage. Immediate recognition relied on clear and distinctive



12.5b Massimo Vignelli, National Park System, 1977. Emphasis on systematicity not only created new visual vocabularies but also shifted approaches to the designer's task. A systems approach established general principles, separate from specific uses. These principles could be applied across a range of needs within an organization. Massimo Vignelli's designs for the National Park Service proposed a "unigrid" that could be used in any number of graphic situations. As a set of instructions and specifications, it functioned as a "meta" design. Vignelli's method is directly related to that of the 1950s Swiss style *neue grafik*. His approach depends on standardized formats, overlapping grids, consistent alignments, and predetermined sizes of two specified typefaces.



12.6 Roger Cook and Don Shanosky, signage system, 1974. In the early 1970s, the AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts), in collaboration with the Department of Transportation, assembled a committee to make recommendations for a public signage system. The firm of Cook and Shanosky Associates was charged with the design of pictographic signs to locate amenities and services, such as food, drink, baggage and no smoking areas, first aid, telephones, taxis, bus service, and so on. The challenge of communicating to an international audience through a set of visual symbols was not new. Indeed, the committee's recommendations to Cook and Shanosky were based on an initial survey of existing systems. The resulting "symbol signs" had a built-in familiarity that made unknown environments less threatening. However, these signs often incorporated biases and assumptions. The sign for women shows a figure in a skirt ending at the knees, for instance, an image that is problematic for different reasons in different cultural contexts.

symbols rather than substantive texts or images. Symbol systems had already attracted considerable military attention. As international patterns of trade and shipping intensified, so did the search for visual signs that would read across cultures. Ultimately, these "universal" signs succeeded by becoming familiar conventions, rather than by any inherent, immediate legibility (Fig. 12.6).

International style The spread of the International Typographic Style paralleled the growth of corporate culture. The Swiss style sprang from its own aesthetic sources, but its clean, neutral forms were so well suited to the image needs of the new business patterns that the entire movement could have been invented to serve those interests. Visually, the International style was characterized by underlying grid structures, asymmetrical layouts, and sans serif type. It also favored straightforward, "objective" photography, geometric forms, and an almost total absence of decoration or illustration. Journals, corporate communications, and serial advertisements were designed as stylistic wholes that affirmed consistency as much as clarity. Clean, unfussy directness was the primary aim of this approach. But the

12.7 Josef Müller-Brockmann, *Schützt das Kind!* (Mind the Child!), Swiss Automobile Club, 1955. Dramatic use of photography and simple typographic treatment of a text reduced to its essentials make this a classic of Swiss graphic design. But claims that its design is entirely rational are contradicted by its emotional impact. The scale distortion between wheel and child, the lines of motion coming from the brakes, and even the elevation of the exclamation point to the status of a separate word by the introduction of a space after "Kind" are all expressive elements. The poster is emotionally manipulative, and no grid or logical structure organizes its composition. Instead, the design makes use of a reduced and carefully managed set of elements for maximum effect.



Swiss style claimed a neutral basis for rational communication.

pretense of a neutral, universal basis for rational communication also served to erase ethnic, cultural, economic, and political differences. By definition applicable to anything, the International style's systematic design dominated the field in the 1950s and 1960s. Critics found the approach formulaic: The insistence on sans serif type and geometric compositions marked these graphics with a predictable aesthetic. But the programmatic tenets of the International style defined an approach to graphic design that proved durable and functional in many contexts (Fig. 12.7).

In their teaching and their practice, key graphic designers such as Max Bill, Josef Müller-Brockmann, Emil Ruder, and Armin Hofmann stressed a highly logical, grid-based system of layout. Proportion and harmony had been elements of classical book design since the Renaissance. But the new method took its cue from concepts of efficiency and rational organization and approached all formats, including posters and promotional materials, as forms of information design. The prevailing practice often made use of the impassive presence of underlying structures to provide a reassuring visual effect of control and functionality. Every element seemed to have a place within a hierarchical and categorical system that gave it stability and



12.8 Josef Müller-Brockmann, *Konzerte Tonhalle-Gesellschaft* poster, 1969.

The abstract structure that organizes this poster alludes to the temporal patterns of a musical performance. Color separates the text from the background and establishes a hierarchy of information. The composition immediately locates separate events and their programs, musicians and their instruments, featured artists and works—all within an orderly stair-stepped arrangement. The dynamism of the descending vertical and the back-and-forth movement across the page is stabilized by the regularity of the text's spacing and leading. The poster could serve to advertise any festival, series, or set of coordinated events. The nonspecificity of its design is fundamental to its neutral tone.

12.9 Carlo Vivarelli, *Neue Grafik*, 1959. Carlo Vivarelli's 1959 cover for *Neue Grafik* embodies the principles of Swiss style through its ordered grid and tightly set sans serif type (here, as often elsewhere, Akzidenz Grotesk). The use of three languages in graphic design publications emphasized the internationalism of their audience and suggested that translation was a simple, almost mechanical matter. The austerity of Vivarelli's design relies on the shapes generated by lines of text while maximizing the interaction between negative space and the definition offered by baselines, margins, and aligned edges. The layout seems to celebrate logical principles. The implication that an **architectonic** form underlies the page provides absolute authority and balance—as if no individual preference or emotional affect could disturb its order. Müller-Brockmann, Richard Lohse, and Hans Neuburg were members of the Zurich-based *Neue Grafik* editorial team who approached the magazine as a means of demonstrating the tenets they espoused.

Neue Grafik New Graphic Design Graphisme actuel

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meaning. But the emotional impact that could be achieved by minimal-seeming means was an equally successful use of the International style (Fig. 12.8).

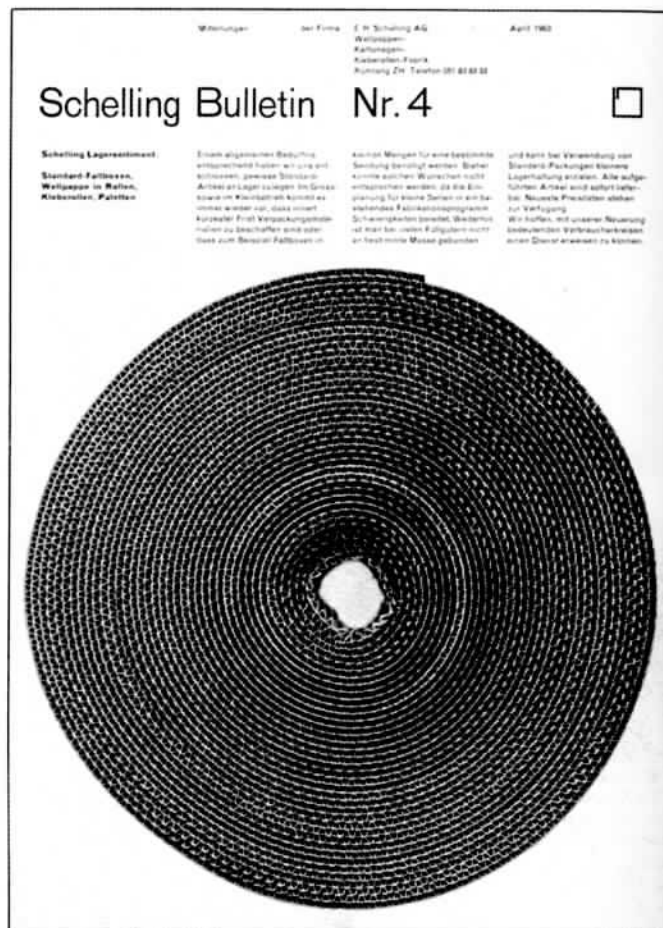
The International Typographic Style traced its roots to the Bauhaus and De Stijl and drew selectively on principles of the *neue typographie* advocated before the war by Jan Tschichold. One of the most powerful forces for dissemination of the approach came through its institutionalization in design schools. A foundation program in design, established by Ernst Keller in the 1910s at the School of Applied Arts (*Kunstgewerbeschule*) in Zurich, pioneered the spirit of professionalism that later characterized Swiss style. This approach found support among former Bauhaus students and faculty such as Max Bill, who developed an influential curriculum at the Institute of Design in Ulm, Germany, in the 1950s. Official links between the graduate program in design at Yale and that of the School of Applied Arts (*Kunstgewerbeschule*) in Basel facilitated faculty and student exchanges and contributed to the internationalization of the Swiss approach (Fig. 12.9).

Educational programs institutionalized graphic design doctrines to an unprecedented degree in the 1960s. But another major force for the dissemination of the International style in the 1950s and early 1960s came in the form of publications that embodied the aesthetic they promoted. The Zurich-based publication, *Neue Grafik*, was a primary organ for

12.10 Siegfried Odermatt, Schelling Bulletin, 1963. Odermatt's design for a packaging firm's catalogue is a quintessential embodiment of Swiss principles: gridded, rational, clean, and without any apparent excess. These principles were very teachable because they could be organized into a set of operations and procedures. The decision-making process by which titles, content lists, publication information, and other elements became distinguished echoed the automated tasks of data sorting and processing that were increasingly restructuring corporate life. Design of this kind both emulated and enabled such automated processes. The extent to which the grid was a generalizable and repurposable structure becomes evident when this design is compared with that of *Neue Grafik*. Publications played an enormous role in internationalizing graphic design styles in the 1950s.



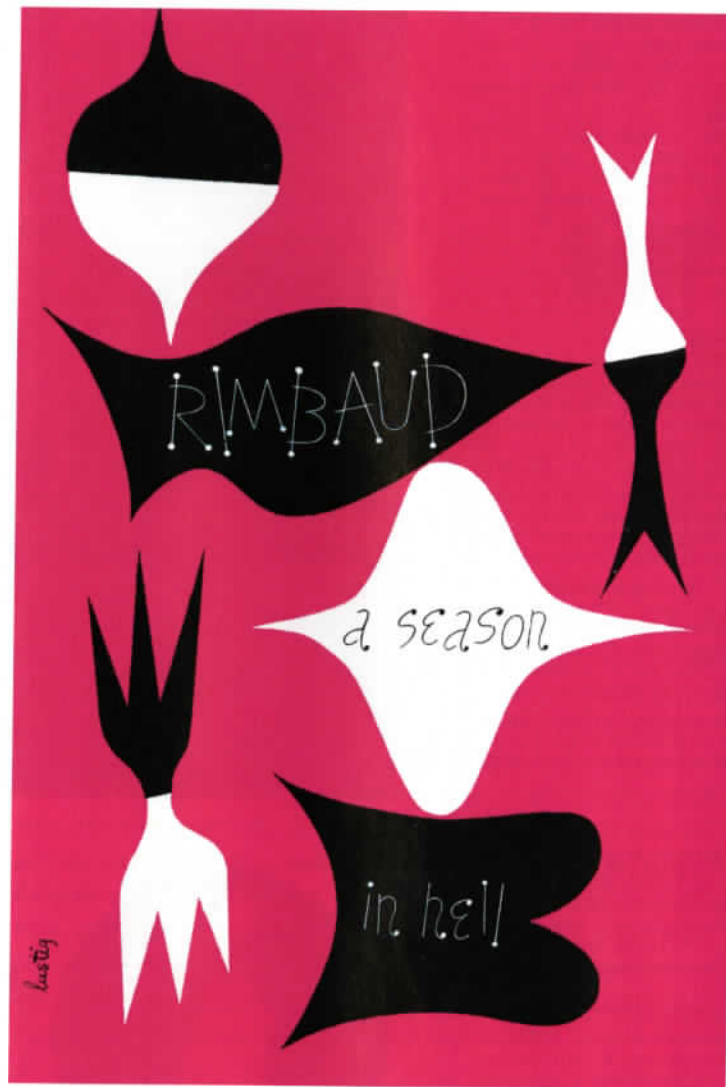
12.11 Masaru Katsumi, Symbol designs for the Tokyo Olympics, 1964. An enthusiast of European design, Masaru Katsumi laid the groundwork for a modern graphic design profession in Japan in the 1950s. He prompted the establishment of graphic design schools and founded the Society for the Science of Design. His translation of Herbert Read's *Art and Industry* in 1954 brought the concerns of modern graphics to a Japanese public, as did the journal *Graphic Design*, which he launched and edited. In 1964, he was named design director of the Tokyo Olympics and oversaw the creation of its symbol system. This system would, in turn, serve as the basis for Ott Aicher's pictographic program used at the 1972 Munich Games.



demonstrating and proselytizing. Books like Josef Müller-Brockmann's *Grid Systems in Graphic Design* and Emil Ruder's *Typography* were widely translated (Fig. 12.10).

Through this international network of creative and critical exchange, the principles of a grid-based, rational approach became common practice. European graphic designers worked for American companies and vice versa. The flow of graphic ideas followed patterns of trade. Advocates for Swiss design included the American, Rudolph de Harak, as well as those, like Siegfried Odermatt and Rosmarie Tissi, who never left Switzerland but whose work circulated influentially. Along with many others, they practiced and taught in the spirit of Swiss graphics or developed their own variants. In Japan, *Graphic Design*, a magazine established by Masaru Katsumi in 1959, promoted the International Typographic Style. In turn, Japanese graphic design caught the editorial eye of Western magazines like *Graphis*. Yet, although the term *international* suggested a global nexus, in fact, the major stylists of internationalism remained those working in European, American, and Japanese contexts. Other cultural approaches to graphic design did not enter the international spotlight. Internationalism meant a conformism that had little room for the social differences that stylistic diversity might express (Fig. 12.11).

12.12a Alvin Lustig, *A Season in Hell*, 1945. Alvin Lustig's cover design for the nineteenth-century French Symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell* makes a stylish, lively pattern of biomorphic and hand-lettered forms. Lustig's design communicates the relevance of Rimbaud's revolutionary and imaginative work to a new generation. Lustig's sense of style was light, nimble, and uniquely animated. His design interests—like those of the famous California husband-and-wife team, Charles and Ray Eames—crossed into many media and disciplines. Whether for exhibitions, advertisements, books, fabrics, or furniture, his designs were grounded in a profound understanding of abstract form. Perhaps more than any of his contemporaries, Lustig had an eye for the applicability of lessons learned from the cutting edge of visual arts. His compositions play on the work of modern painters such as Piet Mondrian, Bradley Walker Tomlin, Stuart Davis, and Hans Arp, all of whom were considered definitive artists in the 1950s. The levity and wit of Lustig's approach distinguished him from many of his peers.



Style, systems, and graphic design concepts Graphic designers of the 1950s and 1960s had an unprecedented variety of source materials and production methods to draw on, and, although the International style predominated, particularly in civic and corporate environments, it did not entirely foreclose other aesthetic possibilities. Some graphic designers did not fit the universal model and developed their own equally contemporary styles. A tremendous sensitivity to the visual character of old illustrations, wood type, script and decorative faces, and photographically manipulated letterforms is displayed by some of their work. Biomorphs distilled from surrealism and the bold, broad brushwork of abstract painting became chic motifs in the graphic repertoire. In the United States, Lester Beall, Bradbury Thompson, Alvin Lustig, and others developed individual styles that absorbed European approaches while preserving an American idiom and including vernacular imagery. Imaginative eclecticism and creative use of technology often went together in their projects (Figs. 12.12a and 12.12b).

12.12b Charles and Ray Eames in their studio, 1974. The well-organized but very full bulletin board in this photograph by Arnold Newman gives an idea of the creative energy and rational organization of Charles and Ray Eames' approach to design. The husband-and-wife team became known in the 1950s and 1960s for their innovative practice in many areas of industrial, exhibition, and graphic design. They drew on the richness of pattern and structure in the natural and cultural world for their inspiration. The message of their work is that design can be observed in a wide variety of forms that provide an inexhaustible source of inspiration. The Eameses' furnishing designs set style trends. They incorporated geometric motifs and abstract organic shapes into objects for daily use and brought ideas about modern design to a broad public. The notion that "design" was equivalent to a set of systematic principles relating form, function, materials, and production methods came out of earlier twentieth-century dialogues between art and industry. But through the prolific efforts of the Eames Office, this perspective became accessible and popular. The Eameses' legacy remains visible in graphics and objects of their design that are still produced and in designs inspired by their energetic example.



12.13 Bradbury Thompson, Westvaco, 1958. The multitalented designer Bradbury Thompson worked for Westvaco (West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company) for more than twenty years, from the late 1930s until the early 1960s. During that period, he produced designs that exploded the graphic vocabulary of his times. Because he worked under severe budget constraints, he made inventive use of existing elements in his designs. He used letterpress display type and other found materials with a keen sense of the specific aesthetic properties of different print technologies. In this instance, he exploited the nature of **offset printing**, exposing the magenta, yellow, cyan, and black plates used in the **four-color process**. His graphic designs transposed images from earlier eras, such as printers' cuts, decorative elements, and novelty type into contemporary compositions. His recycling of these vernacular elements kept them circulating in an era when abstraction, rather than figurative references, predominated. Thompson's humanism lay in a revelation that all visual forms carry history. His sensibility stood out in a period when many graphic designers seemed to embrace the ahistorical universalism claimed for abstract forms.



In the corporate environment, programmatic approaches to graphic design subsumed most individual voices. Indeed, conversion of the very notion of *identity* from a subjective experience to a floating form of signage that presented a nonhuman entity—the corporation—was the goal in this context. Nonetheless, a few corporate visionaries realized that they could gain prestige in the marketplace by commissioning artistic and humanistic graphic campaigns rather than promoting goods or services. The resulting elevation of a company's status in public perception, the investment in its sign value, was sometimes worth the separation of its identity from specific products (Fig. 12.13).

12.14 Herbert Matter, Knoll Associates, 1956. Herbert Matter's chic campaigns for Knoll Associates in the mid-1950s equated the furniture company's signature *K* with the ultimate in style awareness. The sense of play in these ads attributes a fashionable smartness to the furnishings themselves. Matter was working as something of a conceptual artist in these sequences. By creating a series of communication events, not just organizing texts and images on a page, Matter was playing with the temporality of the print environment and trusting to the sophistication of his readers. Eero Saarinen's space-age, streamlined designs for Knoll furnishings, produced by adventurous new industrial processes, also became icons of 1950s style. These ads and products anticipate the cleverness of 1960s campaigns.



12.15 Armin Hofmann, Herman Miller, 1962. Armin Hofmann's poster for Herman Miller furniture emphasizes the coordination of the furniture maker's designs and contrasts tellingly with Matter's approach to Knoll. An appearance of unity is created by fitting the profiles of various mold-made forms into a series. These abstract shapes combine geometry and **biomorphism**, while the use of red, white, and black recalls the Constructivist aesthetic that helped define modernism. The act of abstraction removes the furniture from any context. These are industrial products, made with repeated templates and modular processes. Formally echoing the logo above them, the pieces pictured function as expressions of a brand identity and a unified system, rather than as objects for human use. In 1965, Hofmann published a manual outlining the principles of his approach to graphic design.

Systematic branding went beyond graphics. Design as a mode of distinctive form-giving took hold in the style-driven world of consumer goods as well. Graphic designers played a key role in the public image of these products, creating campaigns that embodied an aesthetic of mass style production. Consumption had always been fueled by trends and fashions, but, in the 1950s, the term *design* came to signify a high-end, sophisticated sensibility in furniture, housewares, office equipment, and other product lines. The notion that style could be branded and that consistency was not just a matter of quality control but also of identity was not new, but the scale of stylized production and consumption increased dramatically. Mass-produced objects were promoted as much on the grounds that they embodied design concepts as for the quality of their materials or workmanship. Big ideas became as essential to industrial and graphic designers as any tool or skill (Figs. 12.14 and 12.15).

Technology Systematic approaches to graphic style were supported by changes in the technological means at a designer's disposal. Photographic production methods became the standard platform for static and animated graphics in the 1960s and 1970s. Although many designers were trained to hand-letter type and make thumbnails and sketches with pencil or ink, the sleek surfaces and functional look of International style formalism depended on mechanical means of production. Handwork became a sign of eccentricity, unwelcome in the corporate world of conformity and efficiency. Marks of individualism vanished in the photographic production of type, images, and layouts. The notion of professionalism in graphic design was associated with a capacity to command technological means of production, rather than with skills at the drawing board (Fig. 12.16).

American television boomed in the 1950s and 1960s. Attracting advertisers became a high-stakes enterprise, and networks vying for audience share needed a successfully branded identity as much as other corporate identities. Other new markets for graphic design opened in the film industry and in commercials involving animation. Graphics entered

12.16 John Massey, U.S. Department of Labor, 1974. John Massey's cover for the U.S. Department of Labor's graphic standards manual applies the very principles it proposes. Typography, margins, and grid variations for every textual occasion have been specified. Contrasting weights of sans serif type are used for textual meaning and formal effect. Information is defined by the system, but the system also overwhelms specific issues of work hours, wages, and health and safety conditions by turning the entire design into a formal exercise. Reason and systematic logic rule the graphic approach, suggesting that they also govern the policies described in the publication.



12.17 William Golden, CBS logo, 1950. William Golden's CBS logo remains a classic of the genre. Designed in 1950, it achieves an air of timelessness. Abstract, removed from the material conditions of television production, the logo suggests a unified, systematic integrity and authority so seamless it almost cannot be questioned. Confronted with this symbol of network identity, a viewer feels that the processes of production are inaccessible, sealed into the hermetic completeness of a large, powerful firm, beyond the reach of individual influence. Such an effect was precisely what was desired from a logo. Corporate identity and anonymity combine to reinforce the breachless representation of power.

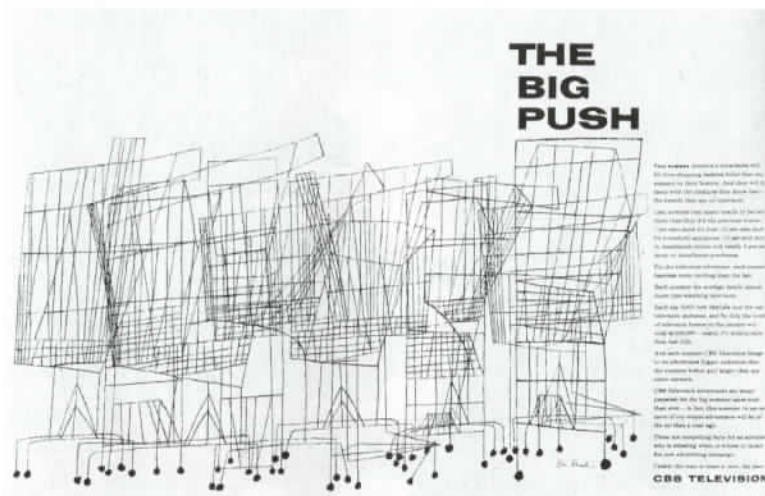
time-based media, and the well-composed static image no longer defined the limits of a graphic designer's field of activity. The complex of challenges posed to graphic designers would only intensify as time went on. In addition to the dimension of temporality, design in the digital environment would require consideration of navigation, live data, animation, and other features of intermedia display. The first inklings of such challenges arrived with television and with multimedia presentations for trade shows and exhibition environments. Transformation of the visual landscape was

Graphic design was no longer confined to the static image.

rapid and profound in these decades. Pioneers of motion graphics took on sequence, engaging movement and timing as compositional features of design. Photo-based production evolved quickly, offering changing tools for changing tasks. The finished results of many identity campaigns emphasized simplicity. But the processes by which designs were reduced to essentials took weeks of work, consultation, and refinement. The hard work of arriving at a final product through complicated negotiations and revisions was usually invisible in a design that was effortless to consume (Figs. 12.17, 12.18, and 12.19).

On the graphic designer's desk, industrially produced elements like **transfer type** and **screen patterns** appeared, as did new systems of lettering. Phototypesetting, using film strips and strobe lamps, offered lower costs and more flexibility than metal type, and graphic designers began to experiment with the possibilities of early electronic type production as well. Typographic programmers could type a paper tape with embedded commands that were read and executed by specialized output devices. But these processes were still cumbersome and were not widely adopted. Initially, hot (lead) type remained integral to many

12.18 William Golden and Ben Shahn, trade ad, CBS, 1957. Commercial and editorial uses of fine art and hand-drawn illustration were almost obsolete by the 1960s. Photography prevailed in the International style, and abstraction, rather than literal or figurative references, was the ruling preference. William Golden's use of Ben Shahn's delicate line drawings heightened their abstract effects as well. The filigree effect of so many overlapping grids has a distinctly modern quality. The pattern of the carts form a gray middle mass, framed by dark, punctuating wheels. The weight of the headline type is balanced by the white space in which it sits. The composition has a quality of effortlessness that has been achieved through careful consideration of each element. The ad is designed to sell advertising time to commercial customers and signals professional communication skills in an authoritative but contemporary style.



12.19 Saul Bass, *Anatomy of a Murder*, 1959. Saul Bass's film titles set a new standard of creativity in design for this medium and revealed the potential of animated typography. By coordinating a film's title sequence and publicity materials, Bass extended the province of graphic identity to entertainment products. The poster for *Anatomy of a Murder* is typical of his work in the 1950s. The flat, hand-cut forms and letters are inspired by the work of Matisse, whose collages of this period featured similarly striking contrasts and suggestive shapes. Although different in style, Bass's approach to film promotion and titling is alike in principle to identity graphics for business. Film studios, television networks, and production companies were all corporate entities with visual identity systems, but each film or show entailed a separate campaign and required its own distinct brand to build interest, recognition, and loyalty across media and venues.

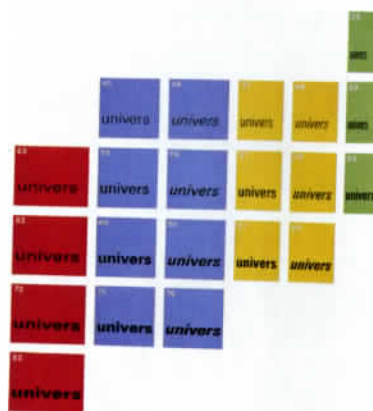


12.20 Otto Storch, *McCall's*, 1959. Otto Storch's designs for *McCall's*, shown here in a two-page spread from 1959, brought typographic verve to the high-toned color and striking poses of the models. The sheer density of color printing, along with its inexpensive availability, changed the graphic designer's art, as did the use of photographic means to arrange typographic elements, including those knocked out of solid fields. Storch's simple shapes and saturated hues echo the work of geometric abstract painters of the 1950s, such as Barnett Newman, although the stylistic innovations of advertising and editorial design may have nothing to do with the aesthetic concerns of the anarchist painter.



12.21 Adrian Frutiger, *Univers*, 1954.

The *Univers* type family exemplifies the predilection for systematic functionality that was central to graphic design in the 1950s. Designed by Adrian Frutiger, the face is derived from earlier twentieth-century Gothic faces. Twenty-one variations, commissioned by the Deberny and Peignot firm, were issued in 1954 in a novel type specimen format that only identified them by number. Familiar terms, such as bold, semi-bold, and condensed, had been replaced by a more logical-seeming system. Graphic designers made ample use of the face but the numeric naming system did not necessarily catch on. Frutiger's designs for Deberny and Peignot were among the earliest to engage with the transition to photocomposition. *Univers* was issued in hot metal and phototype simultaneously.



printing operations, both because the capital investment in equipment made it impractical to change and because, even when offset was the ultimate means of reproduction, a letterpress proof still provided the “original,” a photograph of which became the basis for an offset plate. The first generations of typesetting alternatives to letterpress involved more efficient means of generating this camera-ready original. Next came purely film and light-based processes that eliminated the need for a hard copy to be photographed. The technical differences between hot type and photocomposition were numerous. Metal type either had to be cast and set by Linotype or Monotype or cast as a reusable font by a foundry and set by hand. This was not a medium for trial and error because the expense of

With film, the old rigidity of text blocks began to break down.

12.22 Max Miedinger and Edouard Hoffman, *Helvetica*, 1950s. *Helvetica* (which means *Switzerland* in Latin) was originally called *Neue Haas Grotesk* and was derived from Akzidenz Grotesk, the 1896 Berthold foundry face favored by designers of the International Typographic Style. Designed by Max Miedinger and Edouard Hoffman for the Haas foundry in the early 1950s, *Helvetica* had a larger x-height than its inspiration, making it more legible. Differences among sans serif faces are sometimes subtle but often significant. The curved tails of the lower case *t* and *y*, for instance, give this face's letterforms more variety than those of more rigidly designed geometric faces that follow mathematical principles without regard to their effect on the eye.

resetting was considerable. The physical constraints of metal lines made it hard to be flexible—conceptually or technically. As phototype began to overlap with metal typesetting in this period, graphic designers experienced a newfound freedom. Type could be manipulated photographically or cut, pasted, and rephotographed. The boundaries between text and image blurred. The old rigidity of text blocks began to break down, as more graphic design work involved film and copy camera manipulations (Fig. 12.20).

Typefaces designed by Hermann Zapf (Palatino, Optima, and Melior), Adrian Frutiger (*Univers*), and Max Miedinger and Edouard Hoffman (*Helvetica*) defined the era—but then, so did Brush and other script faces, which were often seen in ads and fashion magazines. Less popular were Old Style faces. Although they remained standards in editorial and book design, they looked stodgy by contrast to script or sans serif faces. Almost all of the latter were designed in families, conceived with a full range of weights and sizes to ensure stylistic unity: The systematic sensibility that characterized the period also extended to typeface design. Although they still required considerable drawing skill in their design, photographically



12.23 Bradbury Thompson, Alphabet 26, 1950. Bradbury Thompson's Alphabet 26 was not a success. But it has a charm that is the result of conviction coupled with a careful eye and a practiced sensibility. Throughout the twentieth century, a desire to simplify the alphabet to a set of 26 rather than 52 letters prompted experiments of various kinds. Thompson's decision to base his single-character face on Baskerville distinguishes it from those of designers who sat down with a straight-edge and compass to compose their letterforms according to strict geometry. The curious character of his face combines humanist traditions with modern impulses. This integration was typical of Thompson and demonstrates that modernism and historical forms were not always antithetical.

12.24 Franco Grignani, Alfieri and Lacroix ad, 1950s. Franco Grignani experimented with the flexibility of film as a physical object to create a number of his designs in the 1950s and 1960s. In this ad for the Alfieri and Lacroix printing company, he literally twisted the strip of photographically produced type and then re-photographed the results. Grignani's work embodied its technological novelty. He made adventurous use of printing processes, layering the negatives used to burn plates, for example. The effect was dynamic, even if the press or process was only vaguely indicated.



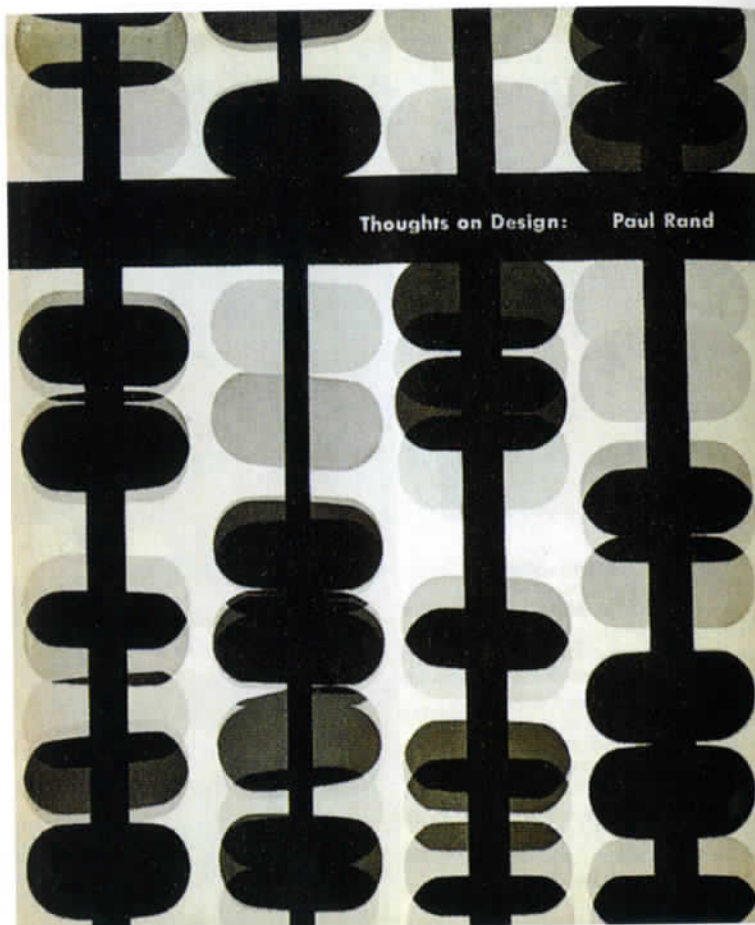
produced typefaces did not have to be cut or cast in metal. Thus, designers had a greater capacity to adjust their set (letter width) and fit (built-in space between letters). Overlapping, layering, bending, and rephotographing type offered new compositional possibilities (Figs. 12.21, 12.22, and 12.23).

Imagery prepared photographically for offset reproduction allowed for fine detail and tight registration. Process color printing became common, and the viewing public's expectations were heightened by the proliferation of high-quality, low-cost color printing. The facility of combining type and imagery photographically expanded designers' vocabulary. Photo-offset was becoming the norm. The graphic possibilities of its prepress processes seemed liberating compared with the earlier limitations of relief printing. The scale and availability of mass circulation magazines with glossy production values increased, and popular culture of every sort became saturated with vivid images (Fig. 12.24).

12.25 Paul Rand, *Thoughts on Design*, 1947. Paul Rand's *Thoughts on Design* remains a landmark and a touchstone for the sensibility that prevailed in the third quarter of the twentieth century. Unabashedly aligned with the interests of corporate power, completely absorbed into the culture of business and economic expansion, Rand was an optimistic advocate for graphic design. He was a spokesperson for professionalism and raised the designer's profile from commercial artist to communications strategist: a skilled participant in promoting the broader interests of business. A multiple-exposure photograph of an abacus covers the first edition. Its irregular motifs lend warmth and humanity to a coming age of automated calculation.



12.26 Cipe Pineles, *Seventeen*, 1949. Cipe Pineles was one of first women art directors to rise to prominence. Her work to establish the distinctive look of *Seventeen* and other publications demonstrated the increasing importance of branding and identity to mass-circulation magazines. The "image" of such a magazine went beyond literal representations of young women to offer a style sensibility with which readers could identify. Consistency and systematic design were maintained throughout the journal and across issues. Mastheads and other recurring graphic elements assumed a task similar to that of logotypes in other corporate communication campaigns.



Commercial artists became key communications strategists.

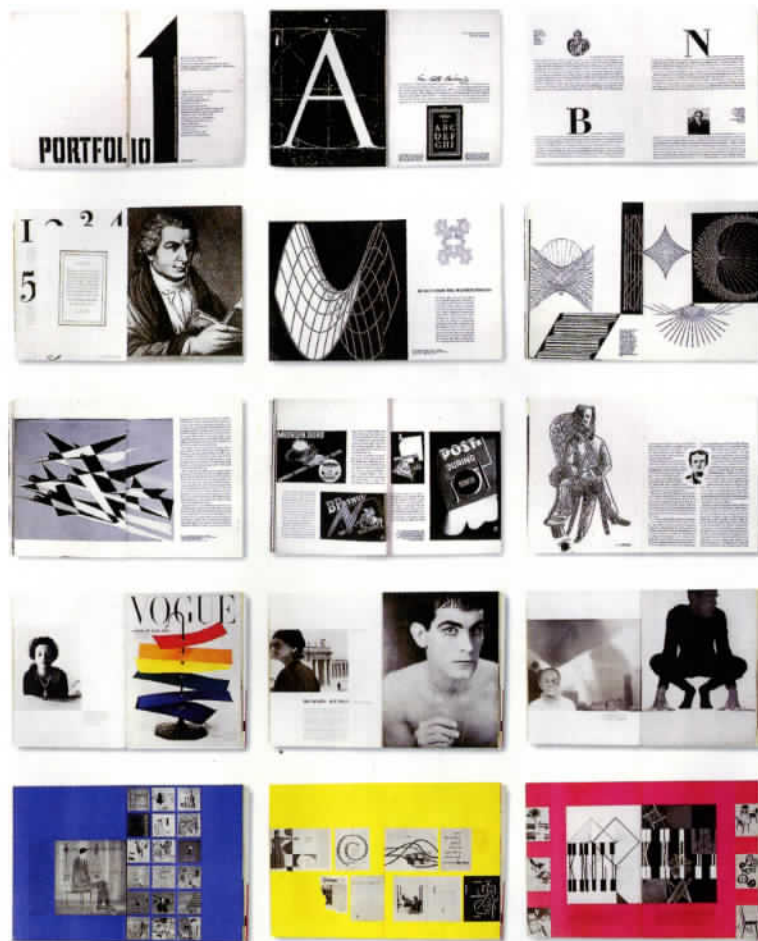
The profession As large corporate and civic organizations assembled in-house design teams, the role of the graphic designer broadened in scope. Responsible for coordinated campaigns, graphic designers often grappled with elusive, intangible, but essential concepts. Sociologist Kenneth Boulding's 1956 book, *The Image*, had an enormous impact on corporate managers. The idea of value added by a symbolic profile gave rise to the perception that graphic designers could have a dramatic influence on the success of a corporation (Fig. 12.25).

As the market in mass-circulation magazines became more crowded, formulaic publications relied on cover designs to attract attention in newsstand displays. Special typographic treatment of a single word became a standard graphic method of establishing brand identity in mastheads. Gender, interest, and activity defined the categories of ever more, often short-lived publications: men's lives, women's lives, home, entertainment, news, sports, people, art, photography, cooking, travel, business, and, of course, style. Art directors remained a significant force in these periodicals. Not only did they establish the style of their publications, but also they developed signature styles of their own (Figs. 12.26 and 12.27).



12.27 Gene Federico, *Woman's Day*, 1953. New York designer Gene Federico's campaign for *Woman's Day* was aimed at advertisers. The message was that since women had to go out to buy the magazine they would buy whatever products were advertised in it at the same time. But the ad communicates more than this superficial message. The woman, her child, the shopping basket, and the typography are all integrated by the bicycle tires. The woman, a relaxed and in-charge consumer, is part of a smoothly operating system. But she is clearly back in a domestic role and made to look as if she simply belongs there. The shift from wartime work to motherhood and domesticity coincided with a new stage of consumerism. By the 1950s, the baby boom was well under way, and images of families projected role models that did not always match reality. Nonetheless, researchers determined that women were the main decision makers when it came to directing the family budget, and marketing to them was big business. Corporate cultural sensibilities extended into the family environment through the vehicle of advertising. A friendly, common-sense tone made the nuclear family lifestyle seem like the natural order of things.

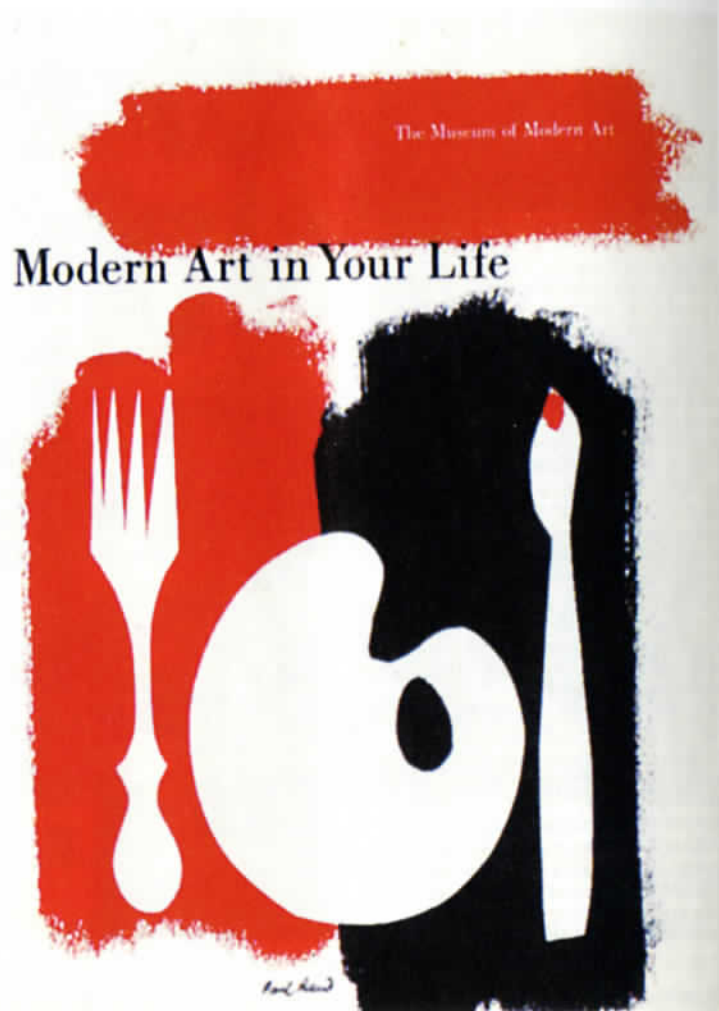
12.28 Alexey Brodovitch, *Portfolio*, 1950. Conceived by Alexey Brodovitch and launched in 1950, *Portfolio* was a bold graphic design experiment that failed commercially. The three issues that were produced display an incredible range of photographic and design sensibilities. The first issue looks like a compendium of styles. Its pages showcase Brodovitch's own refinements of pacing and flow but also an eclectic mix of historical and contemporary materials. Photography and drawing are juxtaposed, decorative motifs are cited, and color is used in flat, photographic, and illustrational ways. Just as Bradbury Thompson had pushed the limits of letterpress composition and other aspects of print production, Brodovitch learned to engage the photomechanical process as a form of artistic expression, working with fluency in the medium of photostats (film negatives) to produce unexpected formal results.



Journals dedicated to the graphic design profession continued to gain in visibility. *Print*, *AD*, and *Graphis* defined standards of excellence for the graphic community and showcased the work of outstanding firms and individuals. Occasionally, well-financed projects allowed graphic designers to experiment with their own ideas for editorial content. Alexey Brodovitch's *Portfolio*, for example, produced a few strikingly original issues in the course of its short run but was not commercially viable (Fig. 12.28).

Public recognition also came to graphic and industrial design through museum exhibitions, such as *Modern Art in Your Life* (1949), the *Good Design* series (1950–1955), and *Graphic Design* (1955) mounted by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The legitimacy conferred by attention from one of the world's premier museums of modern art promoted and reflected an increased public awareness of design as integral not only to industry and commercial communication but also to the culture at large. This awareness would intensify under the lens of Pop art and in the image-driven, media-savvy, consumer cultural mix of the 1960s (Fig. 12.29).

12.29 Paul Rand, *Modern Art in Your Life*, 1949. Paul Rand designed this clever catalogue cover for the Museum of Modern Art's 1949 exhibition, *Modern Art in Your Life*. The composition's play on color, shape, and figure/ground relationships combines the familiar and unfamiliar aspects of its imagery into a readily consumable message. The far-sighted curatorial approach of this exhibition juxtaposed the modern design of many utilitarian objects with the artistic sources of their forms. This institutional gesture was extremely important, not only because of the way it positioned design among the arts, but also for its subtler argument about the way modernism was spread in popular culture through the design of consumer goods for daily use. The exhibition implied that material culture was as much a vehicle for modern style and ideas as fine art.



Conclusion Rationalist approaches, grounded in an appearance of order and systematicity, defined the graphic style that came to prevail in advertising, editorial art direction, and corporate communications. Design gained recognition as a broader concept and validity as an integral feature of graphic, material, and industrial culture. Multitalented figures like Alvin Lustig and Charles and Ray Eames took the integrity of their protean practices into new areas of production, designing furniture and equipment, as well as packaging, signage, exhibitions, and public relations campaigns. Graphic designers on both sides of the Atlantic invented their own approaches and signature styles. Yet the “anonymous” International (Swiss) style held the most ground, and the massive communications firms and in-house graphic design units that served the ascendant corporate culture tended to efface traces of individual expression. Modernism had become mainstream, losing its political claims and innovative edge in the process.

12.30 Herbert Bayer, Container Corporation of America, 1960. Herbert Bayer worked as a consultant to Walter Paepcke at the Container Corporation of America to develop the corporation's image. The "Great Ideas of Western Man" series was one result of this association. It promoted the company without making any real connection to its products—a daring publicity gamble that paid off. The tone of the series opened a space for art, poetry, philosophy, and reflective quotations that invoked a humanist sensibility. But the "Western Man" series was, indeed, grounded in a white, male, Western canon that seemed beyond doubt or dispute at the time. This particular collage by Bayer was organized to contain a quotation of Theodore Roosevelt: "The things that will destroy America are... the love of soft living and the get-rich-quick theory of life." Bayer's arrangement seems to reinforce Roosevelt's cautionary tone, even as its images celebrate the good life. The work heralds the 1960s: Its collage approach disconnects each element from any narrative context. Each fragment becomes a signifying icon—of luxury, consumerism, affluence. These icons circulate as signs of value in a system of production that has moved far beyond meeting needs. While earlier consumer culture was promoted through fantasy lifestyle vignettes, the Pop era seemed saturated by an abundance of available goods. Objects floated freely, released from old-fashioned-seeming stories. In the Pop world of Bayer's design, signs are treated as if they live a life of their own.



The humanistic tradition continued to assert a formal influence in book design, as publishers sought to distinguish their products from those driven by advertising interests. But humanism was increasingly absent from the global conditions in which corporations flourished. These were the same conditions that gave rise to political, social, and even armed conflicts which could not be kept in check or away from view. The impetus to steer ideology went hand-in-hand with struggles to control and exploit natural resources and labor forces. The efficient surface forms of logotypes and identity systems might promote an image of stability, but the one-dimensionality of corporate America would come under siege in the 1960s, as counterculture sensibilities and political causes brought social issues to the fore. "The man" of the corporation would be confronted by a youth movement unwilling to submit to either the image or reality of a conformity that repressed diverse voices and attitudes (Fig. 12.30).

Corporate Identities and International Style 1950s–1970s

- 1947 Paul Rand's *Thoughts on Design* published
- 1949 Herbert Spencer launches *Typographica*
Doyle, Dane, and Bernbach founded
MoMA exhibit, *Modern Art in Your Life*, focuses on design
- 1950 MoMA's first *Good Design* exhibit
McCarran Act, anticommunist law, passes
CCA begins its *Great Ideas of Western Man* campaign
- 1951 J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* published
First hydrogen bomb tested in Marshall Islands
UNIVAC, first functional mainframe computer for commercial use
William Golden designs *CBS logo*
Videotape recorder invented by Charles Ginsberg
- 1952 Richard and Maurice McDonald franchise their family restaurant
Dwight Eisenhower elected president
Leo Lionni designs *Olivetti* exhibit at MoMA
First barcode patented by Joseph Woodland and Bernard Silver
Independent Group forms at Contemporary Institute of Arts in London
- 1953 Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Peter D. Martin found City Lights bookstore, a Beat venue
McDonald's adopts *golden arches* motif designed by Stanley Meston
Assault on Moncada military barracks launches Cuban revolution
- 1954 *Push Pin Studios* established
Oral contraceptives tested
U.S. Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision declares segregation unconstitutional
Polio vaccine developed by Jonas Salk
Fortran I computer language developed
Battle of Dien Bien Phu marks a major French defeat in Vietnam
- 1955 Sony's first transistor radios
The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit, exposing American conformity, a best seller
Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man* exhibit at MoMA
Tomorrowland attractions at Disneyland include Monsanto Hall of Chemistry
- 1956 Rand designs *IBM logo*
This Is Tomorrow exhibit at Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
Martin Luther King, Jr., organizes Montgomery Alabama bus boycott
William Whyte's *The Organization Man* published
Federal-Aid Highway Act provides for 41,000 miles of highway in U.S.
- 1957 Elvis Presley filmed from waist up on Ed Sullivan Show
Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* published
Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* published
Chermayeff & Geismar open their "design office"
Helvetica designed by Max Miedinger and Edouard Hoffman
Sputnik launched, provoking space race
Ford promotes the Edsel
- 1958 NASA established
First credit cards issued by Bank of America
Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* published
PERT, a project management technique, developed by U.S. Defense Department
Fortran II, first high-level computer language
Josef Müller-Brockmann and R. P. Lohse launch *Die Neue Grafik*
- 1959 Xerox introduces photocopiers
Cuban revolution: Castro ousts Batista
Microchip invented by Jack Kilby for Texas Instruments
Communication Arts launched

- Westinghouse identity designed by Rand, Noyes, Matter, and Eames
 Letraset begins marketing rub-down lettering
 Emil Ruder's *The Typography of Order* published
- 1960** John F. Kennedy elected
 Billy Wilder's *The Apartment* satirizes corporate mentality
 Chermayeff and Geismar design Chase Manhattan Bank identity
 Massimo and Lella Vignelli Design Office opened in Milan
- 1961** AIGA presents Sutnar's *Visual Design in Action* exhibition
 Freeman Craw designs Ad Lib typeface for ATF
 Berlin Wall erected
 Vietnam War begins
 Valium patented
 U.S.-backed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba fails
 Aaron Burns's *Typography* (about Herb Lubalin) published
- 1962** Arco light designed by Achilles Courreges
 Telstar 1 satellite achieves first transatlantic telecast
 Spacewar!, pioneering computer game, released
- 1963** Cassandre designs Yves Saint Laurent logo
 Walter Allner art director of *Fortune* magazine
 Audiotape cassettes first commercially produced
 Final Westvaco *Inspirations* published
 Computer mouse invented by Douglas Engelbart
- 1964** Chermayeff and Geismar design Mobil identity
 Permanent press fabrics introduced
 U.S. offensives in Vietnam
- 1965** Soft contact lenses introduced
 Massimo Vignelli cofounds Unimark International in Chicago
- 1966** Handheld calculator invented by Jack Kilby for Texas Instruments
 Dot Zero designed by Unimark
 Masaru Katsumi designs symbol system for Tokyo Olympics
- 1967** Raymond Loewy designs Shell identity
 IBM floppy disks developed
 Arab-Israeli Six-Day War
 Emil Ruder's *Typography*, a manual of design published
 Berthold develops its Diatronic phototypesetting machine
- 1968** RAM chips marketed by IBM
- 1969** ARPANET, first packet switching network, first used at UCLA
- 1970** Salvador Allende elected president of Chile
- 1972** Otl Aicher designs graphic system for Munich Olympics
 First barcode used in a Kroger grocery store
- 1973** FedEx founded
- 1974** Cook and Shanosky design "symbol signs"

Tools of the Trade

White-out
 Felt-tipped markers
 Pens with disposable cartridges
 Spray adhesive
 Tracing wheel
 Dry-coated paper
 Color-aid paper
 Foam core
 Rubylith
 Film stencils
 Pantone matching system
 Type spec sheets
 IBM Selectric with changeable type
 Solvent transfer
 Photostats
 Photocopying
 Phototypesetting
 Hot metal proofs for headlines (still)
 Rolodex