

THE TOP 25 20TH CENTURY TYPOGRAPHERS

by Steven Heller

“Letters of the alphabet that are cast or founded for the purpose of impressing upon paper are known as type. ... The precise form of the ‘types’ and the exact position they need to occupy the selected paper involve skill in the art that is called typography.”

—Stanley Morrison, British type adviser to Monotype and designer of such typefaces as Times New Roman

Those reading this magazine should know the difference between *type design* and *typography*. Right?

“Learning to draw letters is hard enough,” wrote type designer Jonathan Hoefler, “but learning to create typefaces is something else entirely.” *Type design* is the creation of a typeface family, from drawing the letters to developing all of its various components. *Typography* is the application of typefaces, some that already exist, and others that are drawn for specific projects. Each demands fluency in the craft, design and grammar of type, but the type designer is not always a great typographer,

and the typographer is not always an excellent type designer, even though computer programs have made it possible to more easily create faces.

A typographer is, in my opinion, one who makes type and letters come alive on a page (or screen) through aesthetic manipulation and organization—otherwise known as composition. For the average person, the distinction between a typographer and graphic designer may be fairly arcane. A typographer and graphic designer do almost the same exact thing to an extent. Yet specifying or setting a line of Helvetica is not typography, just as drawing an alphabet is not type design. Compare a violinist to a fiddle player. Both can play their parts, but one is a virtuoso.

For this issue, *Print* asked me to name 25 of the most significant typographers of the past 100-plus years. In their minds the focus would be on designers like Robert Hunter Middleton and Matthew Carter, both great exponents—but not typographers.

I further wanted to narrow down the list: American or international? Living or dead? Latin or non-Latin typography? I decided on American, living and dead, Latin letters. Now, I recognize that my selection is probably different than yours. While there are some names we can all agree upon, there will be the inevitable *where’s so and so?* Or *why is this person included?* If you have a complaint, letters, tweets and text messages will be read.

So, here—from my perspective, and arranged chronologically by birth—are the top 25 *typographers* active during the 20th century who have made powerful and lasting contributions to the American typographic language today.



2. BRUCE ROGERS (1870-1957), the father of 20th-century book design, was inspired by William Morris. Rogers designed the Centaur typeface in 1914 for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and was known as a classical typographer with literary flair in his output. In 1916 Rogers moved to England to work with Arts and Crafts advocate Emery Walker, hoping to establish a press for fine editions. However, because of the outbreak of World War I, they only produced one book. Shortly after, Rogers began working with Cambridge University Press. He then returned to the U.S., where he met the original publisher of *Print*, William Edwin Rudge. Rudge put Rogers to work, enlisting his talents as a book designer for Mount Vernon Press. When Rogers wasn't designing for Mount Vernon, he kept busy as typographic adviser for Lanston Monotype and designer at Harvard University Press. Starting in 1928 he took six years to oversee the typography and printing of *The Oxford Lectern Bible*, which Joseph Blumenthal called "the most important and notable typographic achievement of the 20th century."



1. WILL H. BRADLEY (1868-1962) was America's first graphic designer and an American Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts pioneer. Under his Wayside Press he served as illustrator, designer and editor of *Bradley: His Book*—making him one of graphic design's earliest self-branded entrepreneurs. His privately printed chapbooks and keepsakes were precursors to the self-promotion journals that led to, among others, *The Push Pin Graphic* and *Pentagram Papers*. He was also a consultant for the American Type Founders, where he designed various faces, including Wayside Roman, Missal Initials, Bewick Roman and Vanity Initials, as well as type specimen books. As art editor for *Collier's Weekly*, he made certain that its typography was up to a high standard. For Victor Bicycles and other advertisements he integrated his sinuous lettering throughout the floriated iconography that was a hallmark of his early output.

Bradley: Advertisements featured in *Bradley, His Book*, Vol. 1, May 1896. Rogers (top to bottom): *Fra Luca de Pacioli*, Grolier Club, New York, 1933. *Essays of Michael Lord of Montaigne*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1902; images courtesy of Letterform Archive, San Francisco.

3. **OSWALD BRUCE COOPER** (1879–1940), a progenitor of the Chicago Style during the 1920s and '30s, combined calligraphic skill with typographic expertise to create mass periodical advertisements that were modern in character and classic in form. But as a prodigious typographer he may be overshadowed by his emblematic type design, Cooper Black, the most imposing of the so-called fat faces and leader of the so-called fat face market (or “black blitz”) of the mid-1920s. Cooper’s layouts were unfettered by decoration; he was skilled at the art of arranging type for maximum effect without the flowers, dingbats and borders that junked up many press advertisements.

He often complained that he was beholden to public tastes: “We lose hundreds of years of taking seriously every inane suggestion from anybody anywhere,” he once said.

CA BOOK YOU SHOULD OWN

THE FURNISHING of a home is a problem that confronts every man and every woman. To help solve this problem there is no book so simple, so direct, so suggestive, or so convincing as “The Furnishing of a Modest Home” by Fred H. Daniels, Director of Drawing, Newton, Mass. ¶ Every page carries conviction that the author knows what he is talking about, that his judgment is sound, and that his tastes are correct. He goes to none of the extremes of the Arts and Crafts movement. He advocates sincerity, solidity, and restfulness. He lays down principles that are sound and always have been. ¶ The book is beautifully printed, consists of 114 pages, and is profusely illustrated. ¶ The price is \$1.00 per copy, postpaid.

ATKINSON, MENTZER & COMPANY

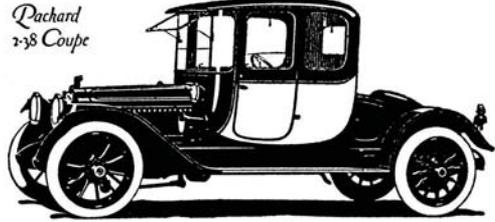
Boston, 120 Boylston St. ☪
New York, 30 W. 36th St. ☪



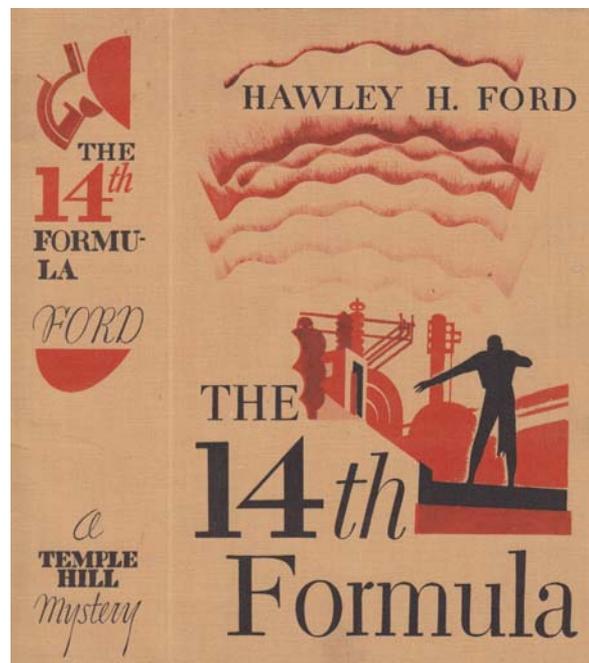
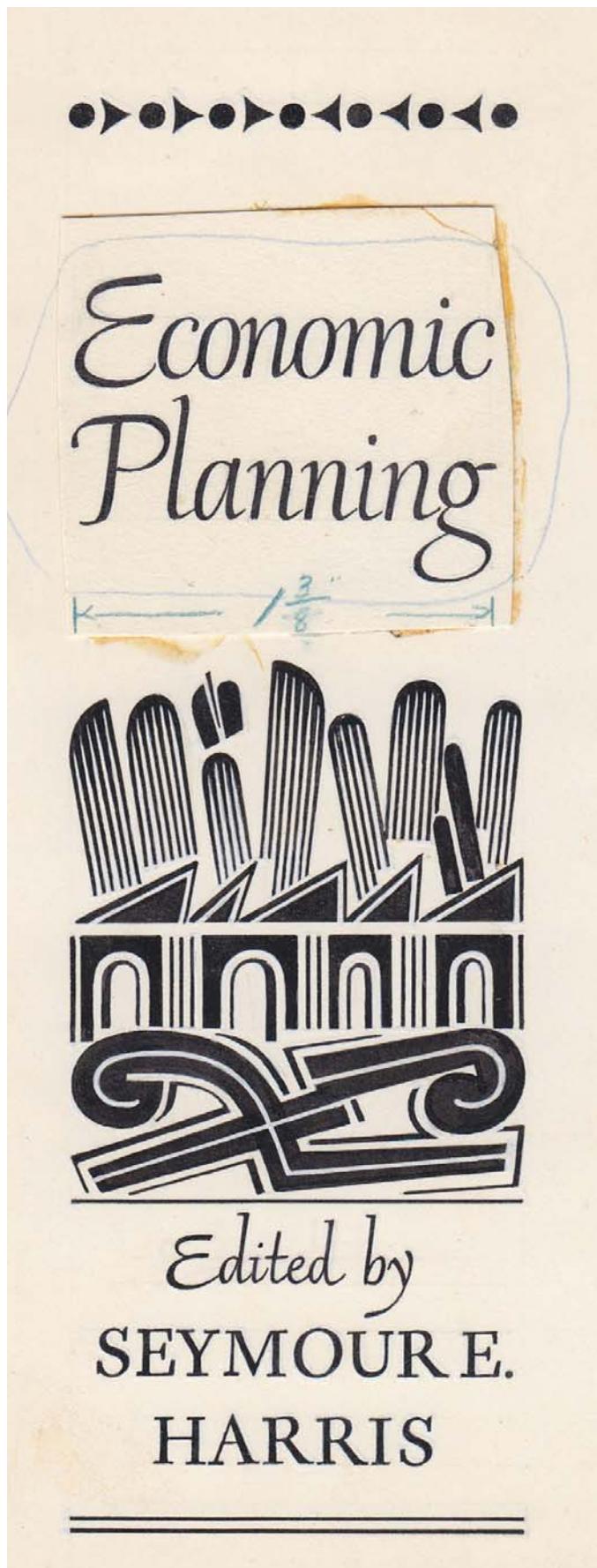
318 W. Washington St., Chicago ☪
☪ 315 S. Preston St., Dallas

ALL works of taste must bear a price in proportion to the skill, time, expense and risk attending their invention and manufacture. Those things called dear are, when justly estimated, the cheapest. They are attended with much less profit to the artist than those which everybody calls cheap. A disposition for cheapness and not for excellence of workmanship is the most frequent and certain cause of the decay and destruction of arts and manufactures. —RUSKIN

Packard
2-38 Coupe



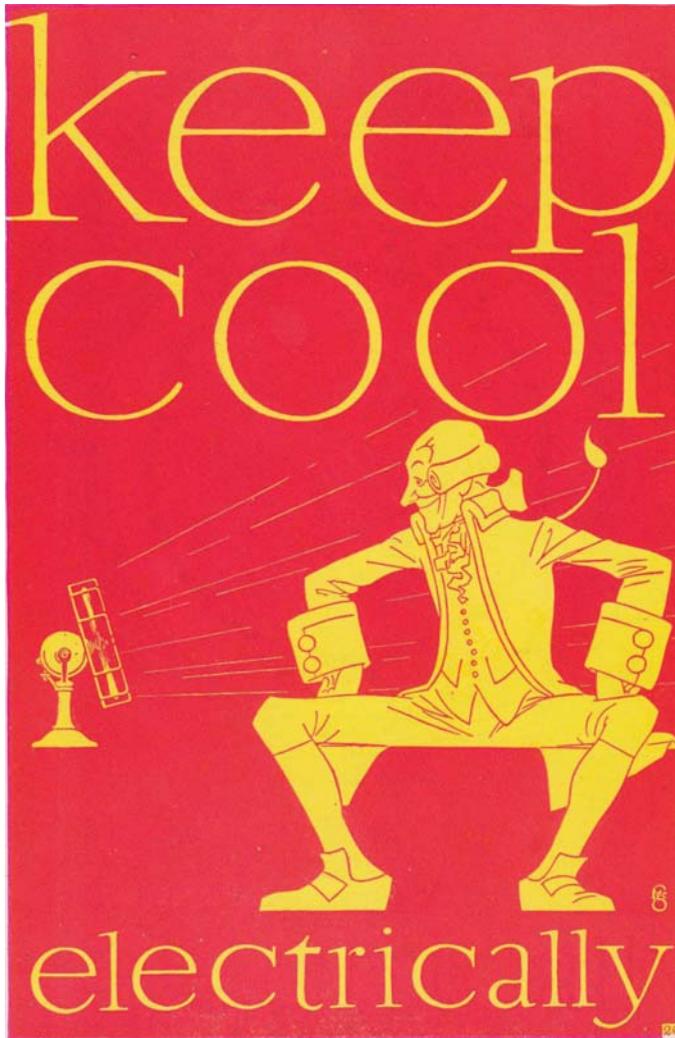
Ask the man who owns one
PACKARD MOTOR CAR COMPANY DETROIT



4. **WILLIAM ADDISON DWIGGINS** (1880–1956)—credited with coining the term *graphic design*—was a type designer, calligrapher, book designer, letterer and typographer, among his other arts. Dwigginns began his practice as a letterer in Chicago with prolific type designer Frederic Goudy; together they moved to Hingham, MA. He spent the rest of his life there, designing, printing, writing, editing and performing with his homemade marionettes (really). The typefaces he designed, Electra, Caledonia, Metro, Eldorado, Winchester and more, as well as his book on typography, may outlast his more commercial lettering work. Still, it can be argued that his book, advertisement and magazine typography loom large in the stylistic pantheon of his era. Whether it was the handlettering for the spines and jackets of Alfred A. Knopf books—such as the exquisitely decorated *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* by William H. Davies—or the smartly fragmented (schizophrenic) cover type and art for *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Dwigginns worked on letterforms with thematic, harmonic and tonal precision.

Left: Handlettered book spine design for *Economic Planning*, 1949.
Above: Book cover of *The 14th Formula*, date unknown.

5. FREDERICK G. COOPER (1883–1961), better known as F. G. Cooper, helped develop the commercial American poster. He was known particularly for his lettering, and noted for his interest in using lowercase rather than capital roman letters. Also a cartoonist, his lettering set a tone for the semi-comic/serious work of his day; neither modern nor classical, it had a witty quality. According to Leslie Cabarga in *The Lettering and Graphic Design of F. G. Cooper*, by 1905 Cooper (not to be confused with No. 3 on our list, Oswald Cooper) was entrenched in work for the New York Edison Company, including their corporate character icon. As time passed, his lettering became more typographic than cartoony, and he became best-known for his illustrated magazine covers for *Life* and others. “Being printed from wooden blocks, these very modern creations had the air of primitivity,” noted *The Poster* #13. And although it may not have always looked like it, his strength was “his complete and utter simplicity.”

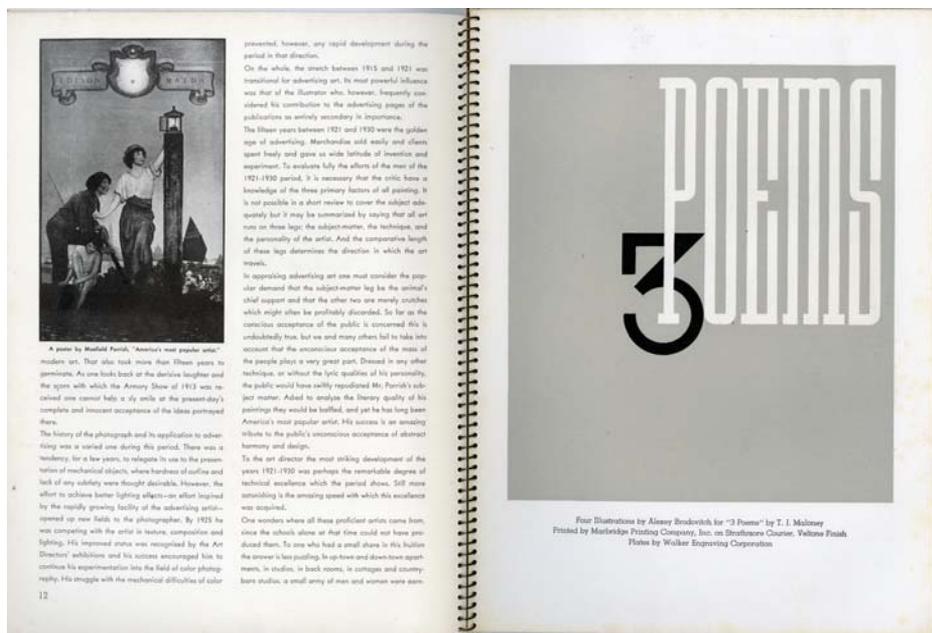
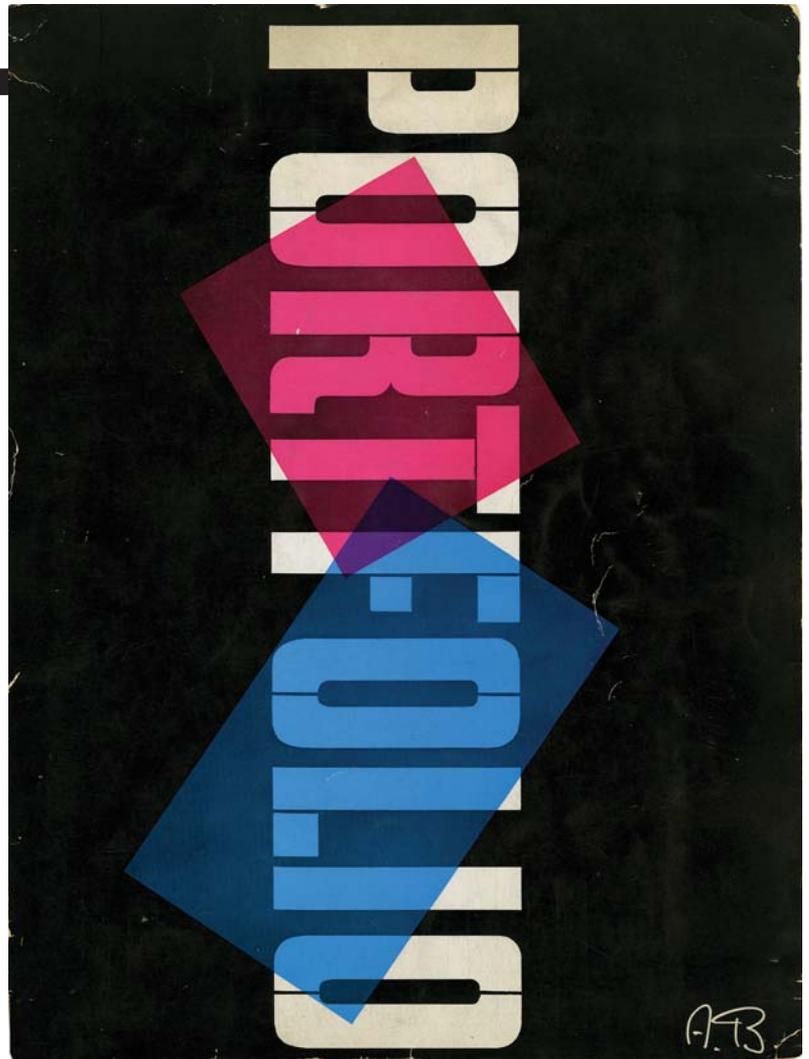


6. MERLE ARMITAGE (1893–1975), an art director, book designer and theater set and costume designer in New York City, had a fixation on modern artists like Picasso, Klee and Kandinsky, which inspired his total immersion into typography for books—often books he wrote, edited or published about progressive artists of his time. Armitage’s notable books epitomized the Art Moderne sensibility. Paul Rand once grumbled that Armitage “overdid it,” referring to his signature mammoth type treatments, usually on two-page title spreads (a form he claimed to have invented). He was also extremely fond of generous margins and widely leaded serif body texts. His unorthodox treatments were the result of a mission to demolish antiquated tenets and reflect his time. He angrily described the books of his era as “anonymous among their fellows ... becoming comparatively impotent as a means of communication.” Critiquing the publishing field at large, he noted, “the grand escalator that has brought us all up from darkness and slavery into light and freedom has, in our time, lost its leadership, and is uncertain of its function and its direction.” He deplored ersatz William Morris and other classical graphic forms, and replaced antiquarian aesthetics with modern sans serif typefaces, custom-made letters and bold pictorial images. Armitage imbued in each book a certain monumentality that underscored the words and enhanced the pictures.

Cooper: Poster for New York Edison Company, “Keep Cool Electrically,” 1919. Armitage: Book title spread of *Martha Graham*, 1937.

7. ALEXEY BRODOVITCH (1898-1971) was best-known as a magazine designer who exquisitely mastered pacing photography and type in a cinematic manner. He was a typographic narrator, so to speak, echoing the contours and moods of photographs with the fluidity of type. His favorite face in the late 1930s was Didot, which he used while working in Paris on *Cahiers d'Art* in the 1920s. During his time at *Harper's Bazaar*, Didot with its lights and darks, poise and balance, became Brodovitch's veritable signature that defined the essential qualities of fashion of the period. In the 1950s Bodoni shared the stage.

Typographically speaking, Brodovitch did incredibly modern things with classical aesthetics. *Portfolio*, published between 1949 and 1951, was a case in point, a 20th-century graphic and industrial arts magazine that elevated design and set the standard of magazine layout that few publications then or now can equal. The key to success was dynamic juxtapositions: big and small, bold and quiet, type and pictorial. Brodovitch splayed comps out on the floor, mixing and matching, moving pages and entire stories around as needed. He used a photostat machine like a notepad; he would get stats of every photo, and as he put them down all of a sudden a spread would materialize beautifully proportioned, everything in scale, with just the right amount of white space, type and picture mass.



Above: Cover for *Portfolio* magazine, Winter 1950.
At left: Cover for *3 Poems*, 1935.



A poem by Maxfield Parrish, "America's new popular art" modern art. That who took more than three years to generate. As one looks back on the dawning laughter and the spirit with which the *Arts and Crafts* show of 1913 was received one cannot help a shy smile at the present-day's complete and innocent acceptance of the ideas portrayed there.

The history of the photograph and its application to advertising was a varied one during this period. There was a tendency, for a few years, to relegate its use to the presentation of mechanical objects, whose hardness of outline and lack of any softness were thought desirable. However, the effort to achieve better lighting effects was often inspired by the rapidly growing facility of the advertising artist—opened up new fields to the photographer. By 1925 he was competing with the artist in texture, composition and lighting. His improved status was recognized by the Art Directors' exhibition and his success encouraged him to continue his experimentation into the field of color photography. His struggle with the mechanical difficulties of color

presented, however, any rapid development during the period in that direction.

On the whole, the stretch between 1915 and 1921 was uneventful for advertising art; the most general influence was that of the illustrator who, however, frequently considered his contribution to the advertising pages of the publications as entirely secondary in importance.

The three years between 1921 and 1930 were the golden age of advertising. Merchants sold easily and clients spent freely and gave us wide latitude of invention and experiment. To evaluate fully the efforts of the men of the 1921-1930 period, it is necessary that the critic have a knowledge of the three primary factors of all painting: it is not possible in a short review to cover the subject adequately but it may be summarized by saying that all art rests on three legs: the subject-matter, the technique, and the personality of the artist. And the comparative length of these legs determines the direction in which the art moves.

In appraising advertising art one must consider the popular demand that the subject-matter lag to the artist's chief support and that the other two are merely crutches which might often be profitably discarded. So far as the creative acceptance of the public is concerned this is undeniably true, but on so many other points to take into account that the spectacular acceptance of the mass of the people plays a very great part. Dressed in any other technique, or without the lyric quality of his personality, the public would have easily repudiated Mr. Parrish's subject matter. Added to analyze the literary quality of his paintings they would be baffled, and yet he has long been America's most popular artist. His success is an amazing tribute to the public's unostentatious acceptance of abstract harmony and design.

In the art director the most striking development of the years 1921-1930 was perhaps the remarkable degree of technical excellence which the period shows. Still more remarkable is the amazing speed with which this excellence was acquired.

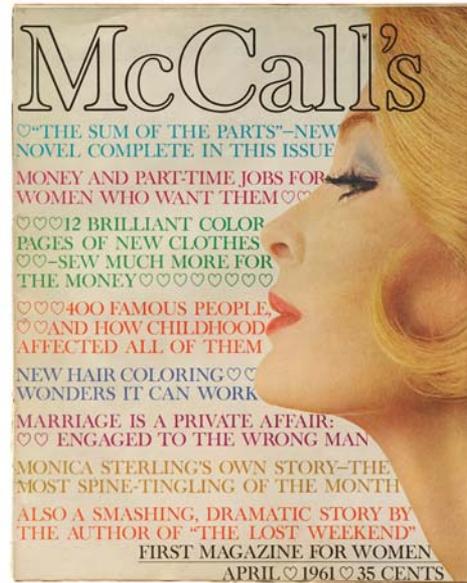
One wonders where all these prolific artists came from, since the schools alone at that time could not have produced them. To one who had a small store in his location the answer is less puzzling, for in ten and eleven-room apartment houses, in studios, in back rooms, in cottages and country-barn studios, a small army of men and women were seen.

Four Illustrations by Alexey Brodovitch for "3 Poems" by T. J. Maloney
Printed by Marples Printing Company, Inc., on Strathmore Coarse, Yellow Paper
Folio by Walker Engraving Corporation

8. **BRADBURY THOMPSON** (1911–1995) was a maestro of the grand typographic symphony, especially the turning of pages. He so mastered the rhythmic tenor of his typography that one couldn't help but hear music while seeing the letterforms. His opus was the orchestration of the company magazine *Westvaco Inspirations*, which he edited and designed for more than 60 issues (1939–1962). Among these issues were some design and typographic history milestones, but my favorites were two issues produced on photography in 1954 and 1956, which showed Thompson's genius for integrating photos, typography and painting together as essential elements of design. This was not his only typographic feat, however: He designed Alphabet 26, a simplified English alphabet system to help readers learn letters faster.

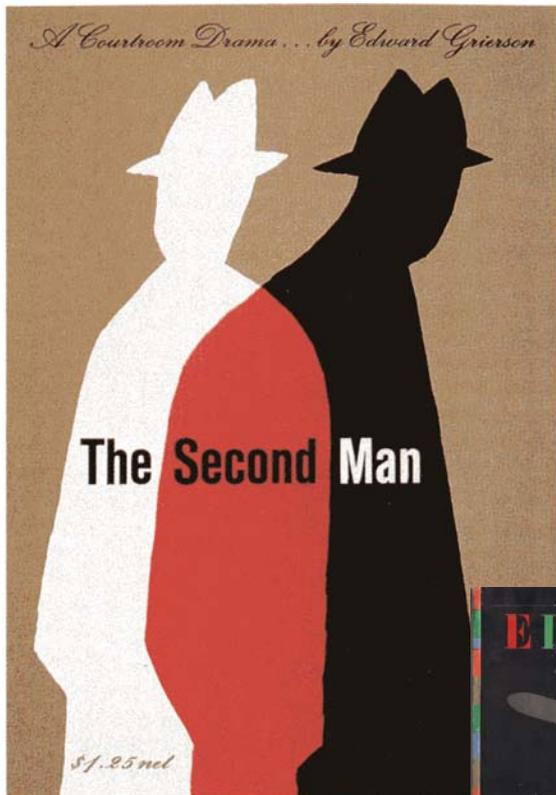


Thompson, top: Interior spread of *Mademoiselle*, 1952; bottom: Interior spread of *Westvaco Inspirations*, 1961. Storch, top: *McCall's* cover, 1961; bottom: *McCall's* interior spread, 1961. *McCall's* images courtesy of Letterform Archive, San Francisco.



9. **OTTO STORCH** (1913–1999) was one of a handful of graphic designers in the 1950s who helped modernize the visual content of staid old American magazines—in part, by returning to the past. He belonged to what the graphic design historian Philip B. Meggs called “the New York School,” a group of editorial and advertising designers who based layouts on unified visual ideas rather than merely embellishing the page with ornamentation. As art director of the women’s lifestyle magazine *McCall's* for 14 years starting in 1955, Storch wed stylish typefaces and studio photography into word-pictures, so that a headline or text type was an integrated component of the illustration rather than separated from it, as was the common practice.

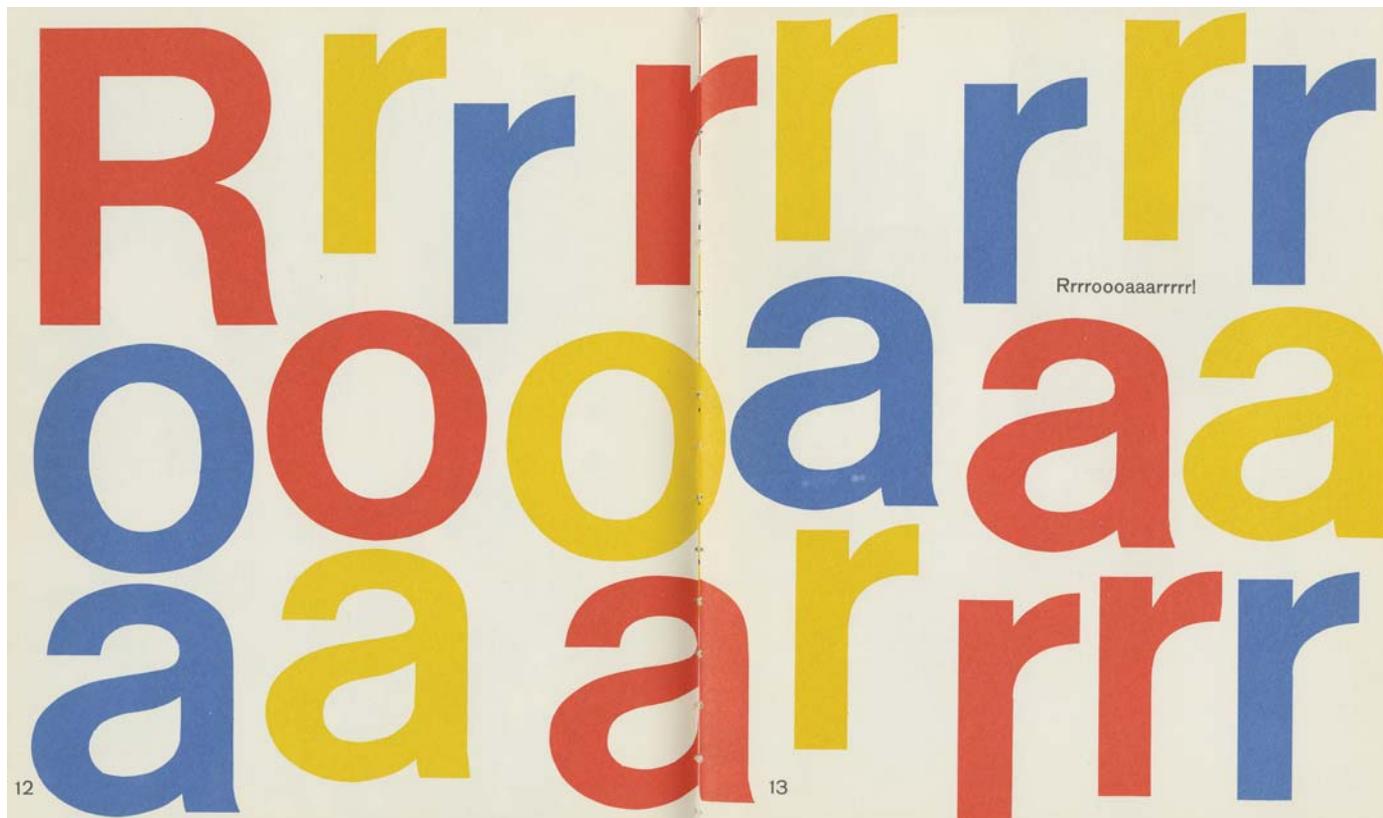
Typical of this approach was a 1961 *McCall's* layout for “The Forty-Winks Reducing Plan,” in which a picture of a sleeping woman lying on top of the text distorts it to simulate a sagging mattress. Storch used a variety of photographic processes to make type twist, turn and vibrate in the days before computers made such special effects commonplace in magazine layouts. He also helped revive late 19th-century Victorian wood typefaces, which had been passé for decades, to add graphic impact and contrast to the printed page—a style embraced to this day.



Clockwise: Book cover of *The Second Man*, 1963. Package design, El Producto, 1952. Spread from children's book *Listen! Listen!*, 1970.



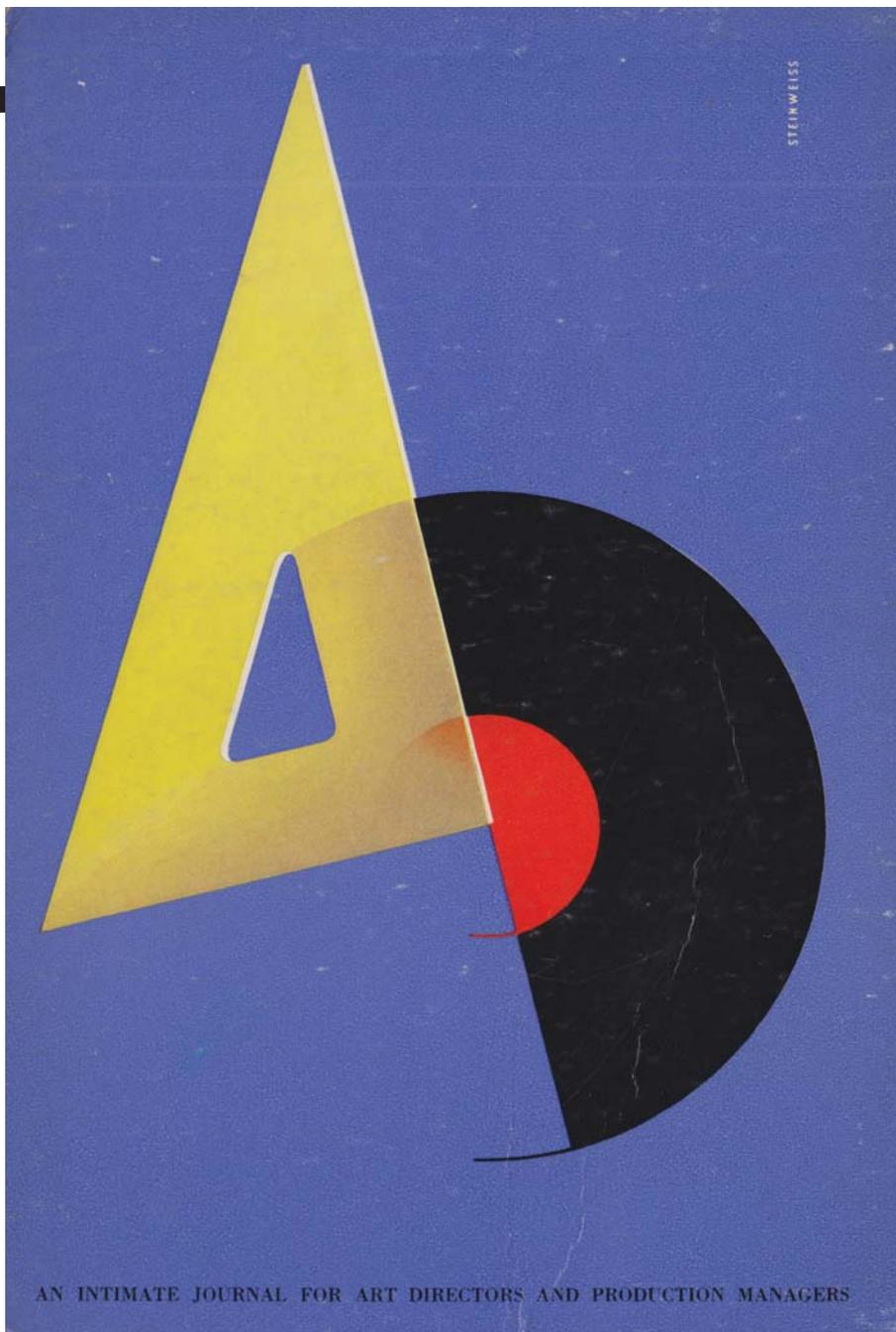
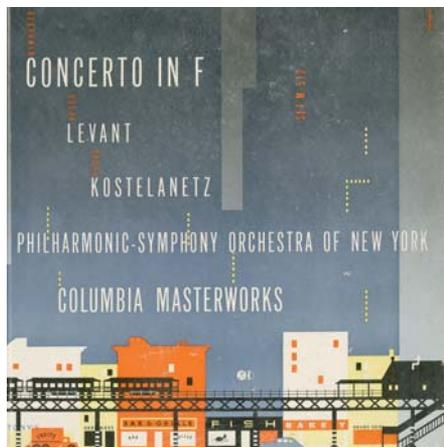
10. **PAUL RAND** (1914-1996) would not single himself out as a typographer; he was a “commercial artist” or “graphic designer,” and typography was part of the mandatory job skillset. But there would be no Rand design if typography was simply included as part of a larger patchwork. He had a lot to say about typography: “I know people who have religiously used only sans serif, who suddenly switched to Times Roman. Now, the reason they switched to Times Roman is for the same reasons they used sans serif. They considered sans serif very functional, devoid of doodads and ringlets and hair curlers. ... There is no typeface that is more reasonable than Times Roman. But let’s face it, Times Roman is ugly, especially in big sizes.” Like many of his Modern contemporaries, Rand used only certain faces but not for their looks alone. The real difference is, he said, “the way ‘space’ is interpreted: that is, the way an image is placed on a sheet of paper.”



11.

ALEX STEINWEISS

(1917–2011) often goes down in history as the first graphic designer to put art on 78 rpm album covers—however, this claim must be modified to say he was the first to make typographically illustrated posters for records. The distinction is essential; art was used on some RCA albums before he introduced his original designs in 1938, but these instances were usually existing paintings by great masters. As an illustrator and typographer, Steinweiss was profoundly influenced by the French, German, English and Italian poster artists of the 1920s and '30s—most importantly A.M. Cassandre, who hand-drew letterforms and made typefaces for a range of advertising clients. Steinweiss' eclectic typographic palette, which included 19th-century wood and electrotype cuts that he wed to more modern scripts and sans serifs, helped define the modern record cover aesthetic. These albums were sometimes raucous like theater bills and other times subdued like book pages, but in total changed the way records were displayed and sold as individual typographical entities.



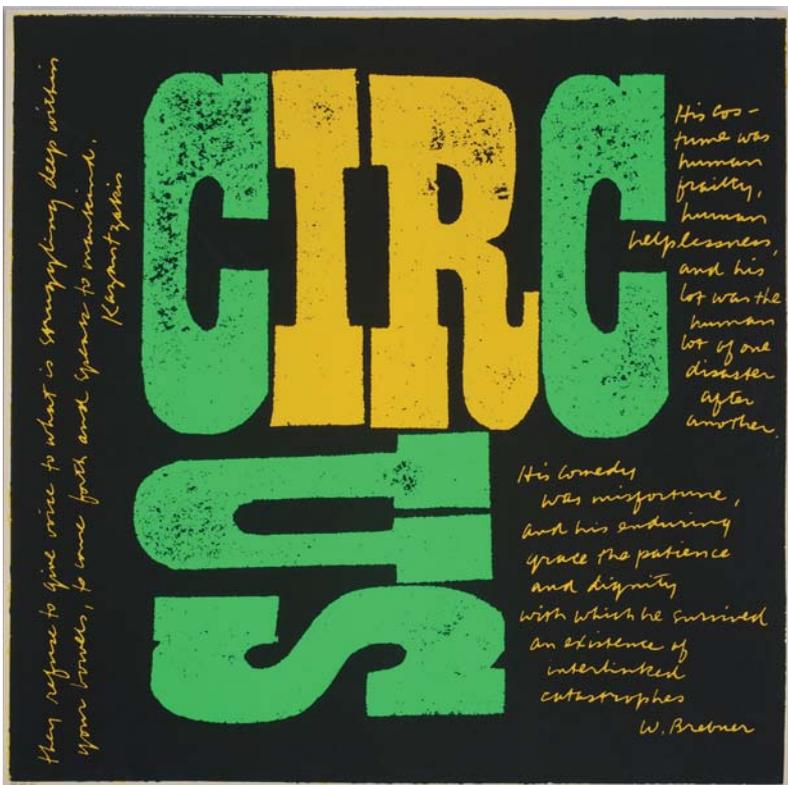
Clockwise: Magazine cover of *AD*, 1941. Record cover, *Andre's Segovia Plays*, 1954. Record cover, *Concerto in F*, 1942.

Top: Detail of *Gastrotypographicalassemblage*, 1966. Bottom: Ad, "Let's Talk Type," 1958. Courtesy of The Herb Lubalin Study Center at The Cooper Union.

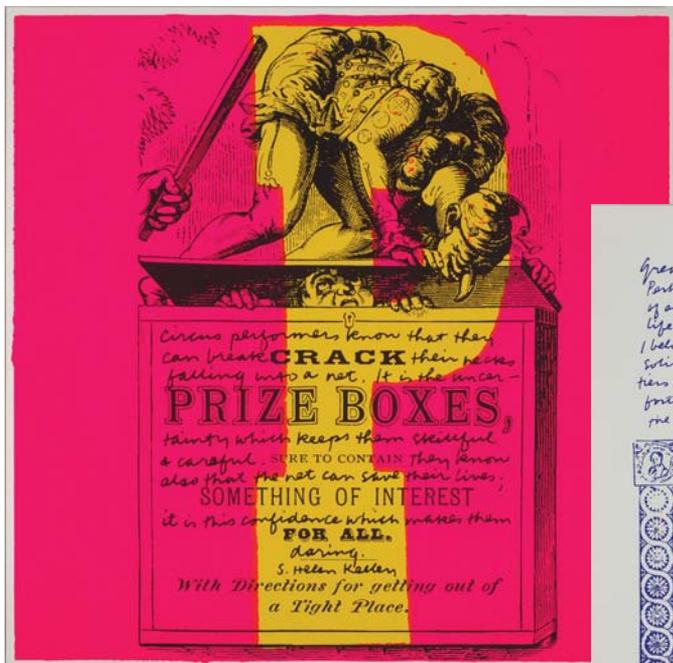


12. **HERB LUBALIN** (1918–1981) amplified the voice of typography. Although his expressive work began prior to the advent of phototype, he anticipated its wonders, as well as other technological advances—and not just in how to set type, but in how to extract emotion from it. Lubalin’s typography was sometimes like a building block in which paragraphs, words and punctuation fit seamlessly together in a pattern that both symbolized and stated the idea it was communicating. Curiously, however, he was offended at being called a typographer. “What I do is not really typography, which I think of as an essentially mechanical means of putting characters down on a page. It’s designing with letters.” His friend and business partner, the type impresario Aaron Burns, called his work *typographics*, which implies a kind of acrobatic skill that was clear from the moment Lubalin left New York’s Cooper Union and became an advertising art director. Lubalin also designed alphabets, his most famous being *Avant Garde*, a tip of the hat to the future of type. But most characteristic of his body of work was his playful approach to design; he was amazed at how the shape and the weight of each symbol could change the meaning of words.

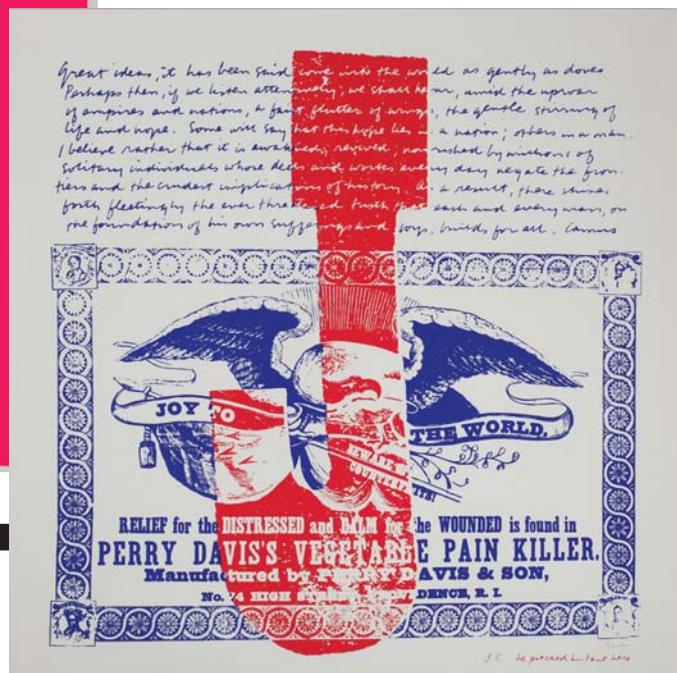


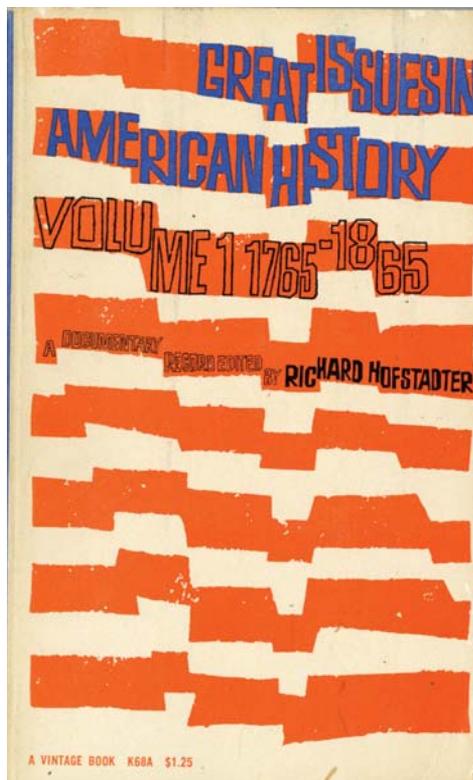


13. CORITA KENT (1918–1986), aka Sister Mary Corita Kent (born Frances Elizabeth Kent), used typography as a means to an end. She was not a commercial graphic designer, but type was a component of her art, and art was a tool of her social activism. She joined a Catholic convent in 1936—right after she completed high school—and served in the Immaculate Heart of Mary order in Los Angeles for three decades as a “rebel nun” and head of the art department. (She ultimately left the order to pursue art in Boston, feeling stifled by an archdiocese that did not always stand by her politicized service.) Kent was mostly a silkscreen printer, although she also published offset books because she wanted her art to be affordable and widely distributed. Her designs combined handlettering and vintage display letterforms printed in bright fluorescent colors. She practiced during the heyday of Pop Art, and many of her posters borrowed from this language. *Damn Everything But the Circus* was one of her most gaily ornamented typographic assemblages, illustrating the 26 letters of the alphabet. On the whole, her circus-themed prints drew on materials she saw at the Ringling Museum of the American Circus, as well as in 19th-century American advertisements.

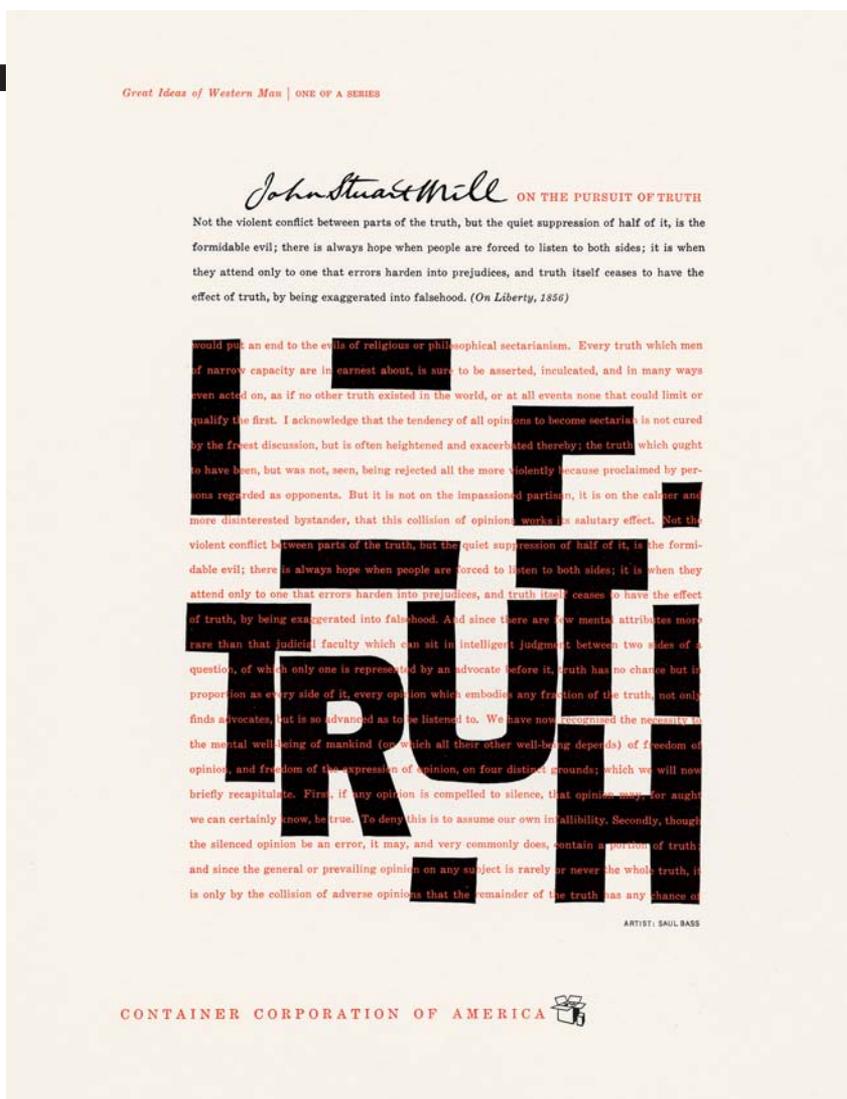


Interior pages from *Damn Everything But the Circus*, 1970.



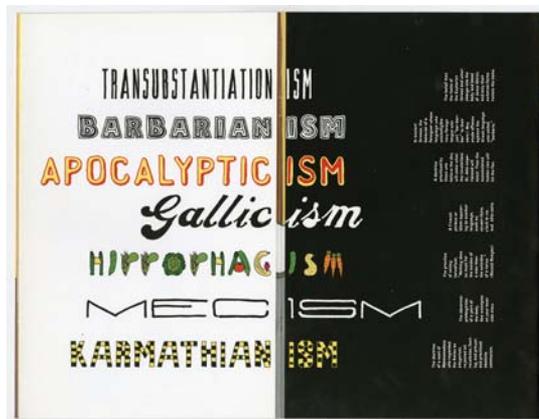
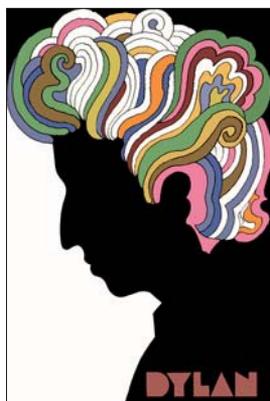


14. **SAUL BASS** (1920–1996) was the pioneer of motion typography. While he was not the first graphic designer to make type dance on screen, he was the most demonstrative, indeed ingenious, to do so. Part of his strategy was to brand or identify a film from the get-go, the advertisements, then follow through with consistent title sequences. Using pictorial devices wed to expressive lettering and type, as he did for *The Man With the Golden Arm* and *Bonjour Tristesse*, among his many campaigns, he developed a system emphasizing that “creativity is indivisible.” In the May/June 1958 issue of *Print*, the editors acclaimed that since trade requirements demanded extensive credits on movie titles, “It seems that this usually rather dull interlude should be converted into a positive introduction to the film. Saul Bass’ objective is to make the titles sufficiently provocative and entertaining to force movie-goers to remain in their seats.” While Bass did not completely achieve this with type, it was his typography that revolutionized the movie industry.



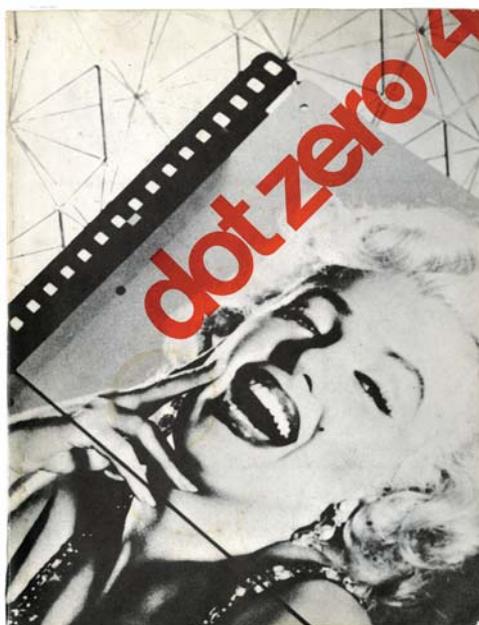
Clockwise from above: Ad for Container Corporation of America, 1957. Poster for *The Magnificent Seven*, 1960. Book cover of *Great Issues in American History*, 1969.

15. **PUSH PIN STUDIOS**—**MILTON GLASER**, born 1929, and **SEYMOUR CHWAST**, born 1931—created a typographic and language revival of past for present. In 1953 when the first *Push Pin Almanack* was published, it launched a graphic style challenging the prevailing ethic of functionalism, the International Style, imported from the Swiss and adopted by leading American corporate and advertising designers. A bimonthly promotional piece, the *Almanack* led the way of emerging historicist design trends. A taste for all things old fashioned was returning, perhaps as a reaction to what was perceived as cold, humorless Modernism. “It was called the *Push Pin Almanack*,” Chwast explained in a 1990 interview, “because it was a quaint name—and quaintness was popular in those days.” Chwast and co. published six issues of the *Almanack* before Push Pin Studios officially opened, and two after. The *Almanack* evolved into the *Push Pin Graphic*, which began as a monthly broadside printed in black and white on one sheet (usually newsprint). The elegant and emblematic logo was designed by Glaser in a variant of German Fraktur. In all, 86 issues were published from 1957 to 1980, and they ran the gamut from the silly to the profound. The *Graphic* had an incalculable influence on the conceptualization of graphic design, and its evolution eclecticized American design but also changed the style and content of American typography and illustration.

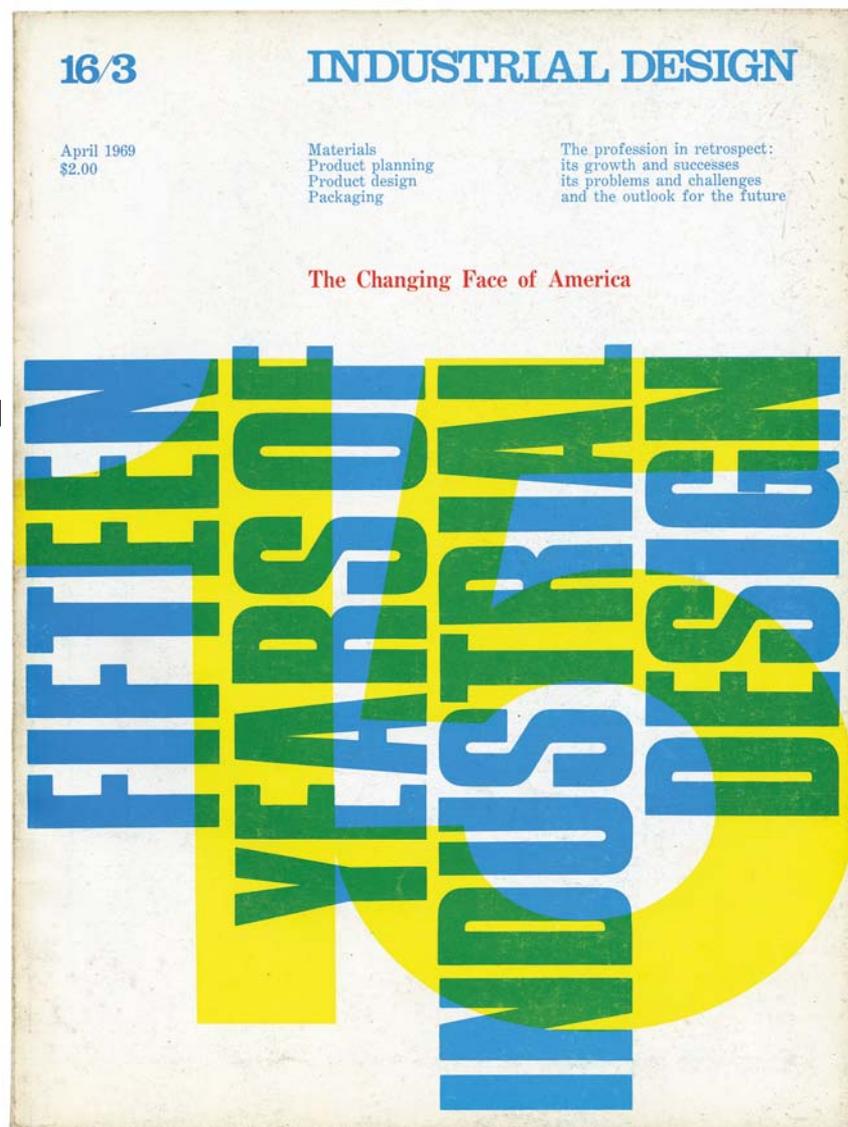


Glaser, left column, clockwise: Poster, “I Heart NY More Than Ever,” 2001. Poster for Bob Dylan’s *Greatest Hits*, 1967. Poster for Cooperstown Summer Music Festival, 2016.

Chwast, right column: Package for Artone Ink, 1964. Interior spread of *The Nose* #14, 2006.

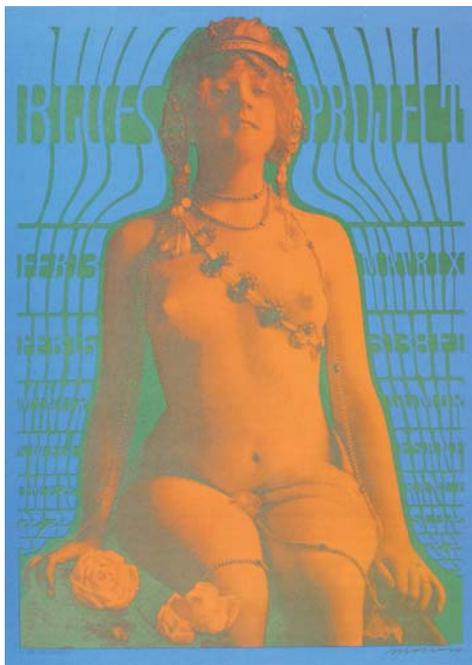


Above: Magazine cover for *Dot Zero 4*, 1967. At right: Magazine cover for *Industrial Design*, 1969.

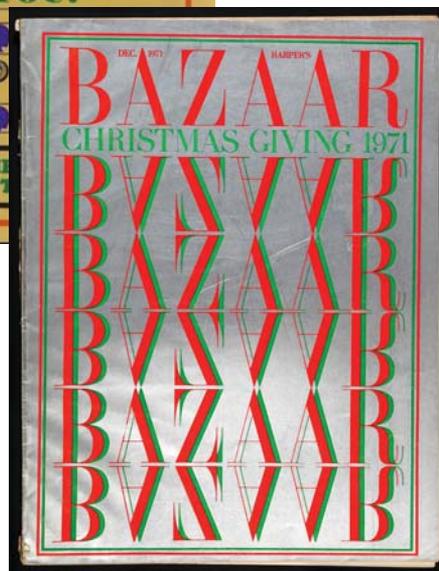


16. **MASSIMO VIGNELLI** (1931–2014) believed everything could be designed better through the correct use of typefaces. In *The Vignelli Canon*, he wrote, “Most typefaces are designed for commercial reasons, just to make money or for identity purposes. In reality the number of good typefaces is rather limited and most of the new ones are elaborations on pre-existing faces.” His essentials: Bodoni, Helvetica, Times Roman, Century, Futura, Optima, Univers, Caslon and Baskerville. “As you can see, my list is pretty basic but the great advantage is that it can assure better results. It is also true that in recent years the work of some talented type designers has produced some remarkable results to offset the lack of purpose and quality of most of the other typefaces.” Vignelli was a typographic minimalist; he favored clear hierarchy and dramatic contrasts, which allowed him to achieve the maximum impact using economical means. He knew how to make a few typefaces or images dramatic and expressive. While he admired “classic” typefaces, he avoided typesetting traditions that created fussy complexity, such as paragraph indents and hyphenation. His control made clarity look simple, when in reality it was difficult to copy his work unless one shared his ideology. Merely using a few typefaces or cropping full-bleed images tightly wasn’t enough; his process involved finding the perfect balance of joy, surprise and consistency.

17. **VICTOR MOSCOSO** (born 1936) was a fallen Modernist in the San Francisco psychedelic counterculture. The Brooklyn-raised, Spanish-born artist/designer stumbled into this milieu and became a defining force in the distinctly American typography introduced through psychedelic rock posters. The style was noteworthy for its illegible typefaces, electric colors and antique illustrations—a conjoining of 19th-century slab serif wood types and Vienna Secession/Art Nouveau naturalistic letterforms. Moscoso created some of the most emblematic posters of the 1960s; the Blues Project poster is one classic for which he used a vintage photograph of a nude Salome. Following her contour, he arranged the concert information in a typeface that he called Psychedelic Playbill (an adaptation of a Victorian woodtype). But he did not just set the type, he drew the letters out of negative space (whiting out all the areas between the bodies of the letterforms, rather than drawing them directly). The figure was printed in bright orange against an acid-green background; the lettering was printed in process blue. The slightly off-register trapping gave the letters a three-dimensional look in addition to the vibrating sensation produced by the juxtaposition of similar chromatic values.



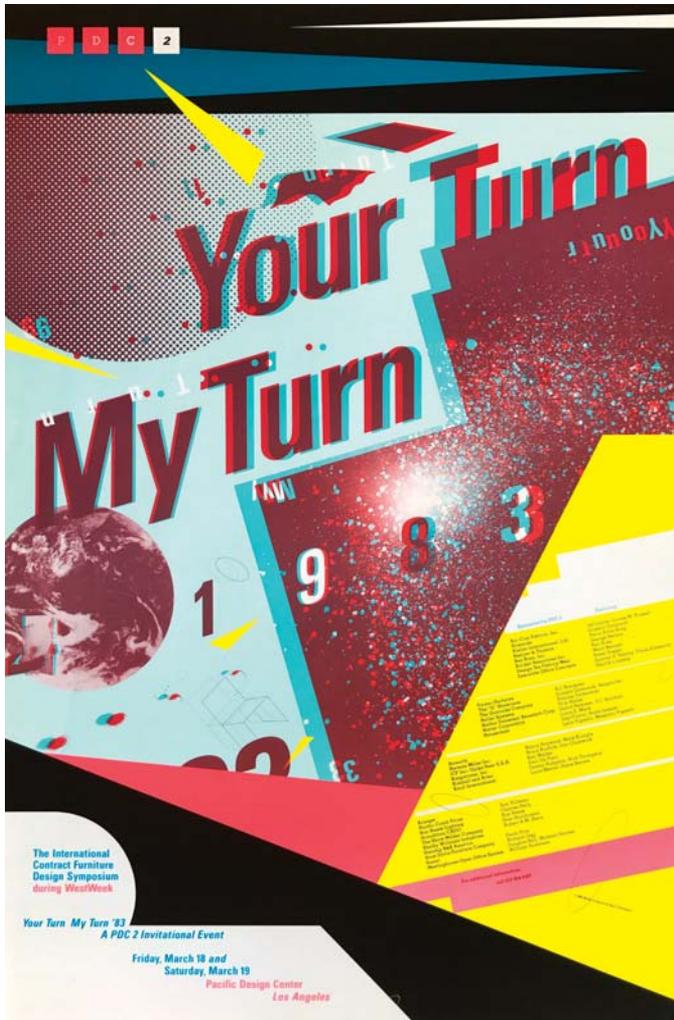
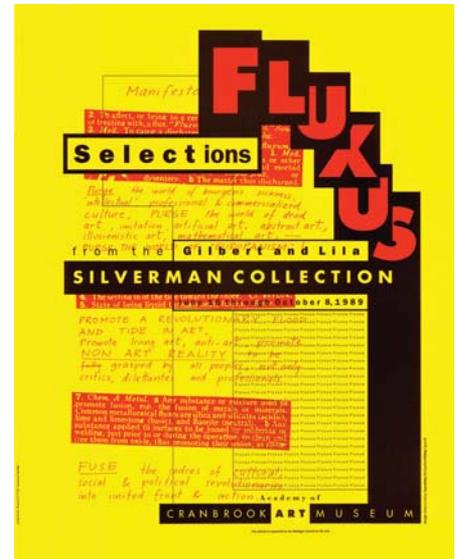
Moscoso image: Poster for Blues Project, et al., 1967. Above: Bea Feitler, cover for *Ms. Magazine*, 1973. At right: Ruth Ansel, cover for *Harper's Bazaar*, 1971.



18. **BEA FEITLER** (1938–1982) learned magazine design, fashion photography and typography from Marvin Israel, one of her teachers at Parsons who, in 1961, became art director of *Harper's Bazaar*. That same year, Feitler and **RUTH ANSEL** (born 1938) joined the magazine as art assistants. When Israel left *Bazaar* in 1963 to devote himself to painting, Feitler and Ansel, then in their mid-20s, were named co-art-directors and at once channeled the energy emerging from pop culture: street fashion, rock music, pop and op art. Each had their respective typographic preferences, which was a touch of the modern, a bit of the classical and a dose of the spectacular. They followed Alexey Brodovitch's tradition of designing magazines as a harmonious and cinematic whole. "They were open to accidents, material around the studio and events surrounding them," Philip B. Meggs noted in an AIGA profile. They maintained an inspirational wall—something like a mood board—that would offer them (and anyone who laid eyes on it) a resource for invention. Making type carry the weight of expression was one such outcome. Feitler summed up her editorial design philosophy as thus: "A magazine should flow. It should have rhythm. You can't look at one page alone; you have to visualize what comes before and after. Good editorial design is all about creating a harmonic flow."

19. **KATHERINE MCCOY** (born 1945) was as much a catalytic force in late 20th-century American typography as she was a practitioner. Originally an adherent of clean Swiss Modernism and a “problem solver” through modern objectivity, she was exposed to an alternative method of experimental expression—notably by Edward Fella, who launched his own rejection of Swiss-ness.

In the early 1970s McCoy co-founded a multidisciplinary partnership with her husband, Michael, and eventually both accepted roles as co-chairs of Cranbrook Academy’s graduate design departments. The school’s Avant Garde legacy inspired her to look differently at design and typography through a linguistic lens. She encouraged students to play more fluidly and expressively with typography, teaching by example with the Cranbrook materials she and Michael produced as McCoy & McCoy. Her critiques at Cranbrook frequently addressed disrupting the norms of everyday practice. She required students to read about both historical and contemporary design and theory to really understand the context in which they were communicating. What she founded became a Postmodern style but began as an intellectual conversation on the pre- and post-digital age.

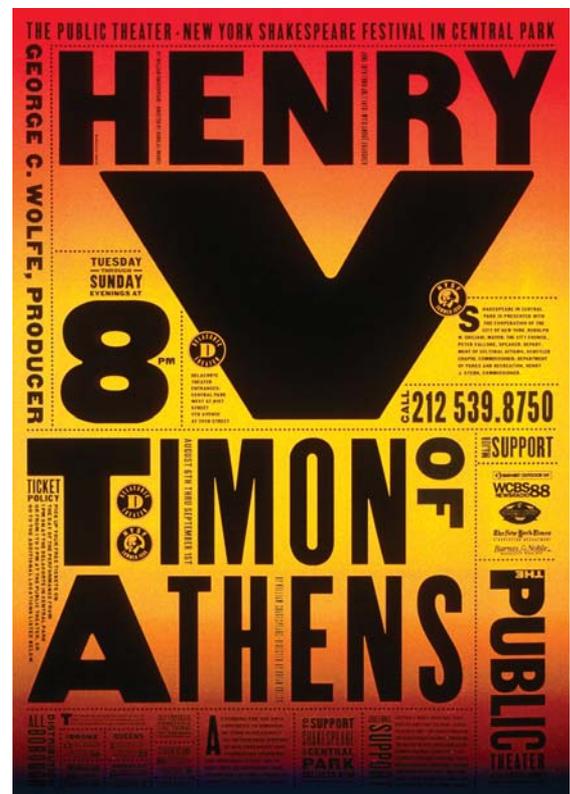


20. **APRIL GREIMAN** (born 1948) was for a while the American incarnation of Wolfgang Weingart. But then she was reborn in 1984 when the Macintosh inched its way into the design field. She recognized the huge potential of this new medium and quickly threw herself into it. “The digital landscape fascinates me in the same way as the desert,” she said in an AIGA essay. Greiman’s formal journey as a designer began at the Kansas City Art Institute. She studied under Basel School of Design alumni Inge Druckrey, Hans Allemann and Chris Zelinsky. After experiencing their talents and being introduced to Modernism, Greiman was inspired to pursue her graduate studies at Basel as well, where she was a student to Armin Hoffman and Weingart. At the time, Weingart was exploring what is now called New Wave. He introduced a form of design that broke away from the strict grid organization of the International Style and encouraged designers to explore wide letterspacing, new angles and changing weights and styles to expand their typographic communication. New Wave would later become a staple in design history and in Greiman’s arsenal. After moving to Los Angeles, Greiman collaborated with photographer Jayme Odgers, which led to two experiences that would greatly influence the direction her life would take—he introduced her to the desert and, shortly after, they formed a creative partnership that was to last for four years and produce some highly visible typographic/photographic work that would define the digital ’80s.

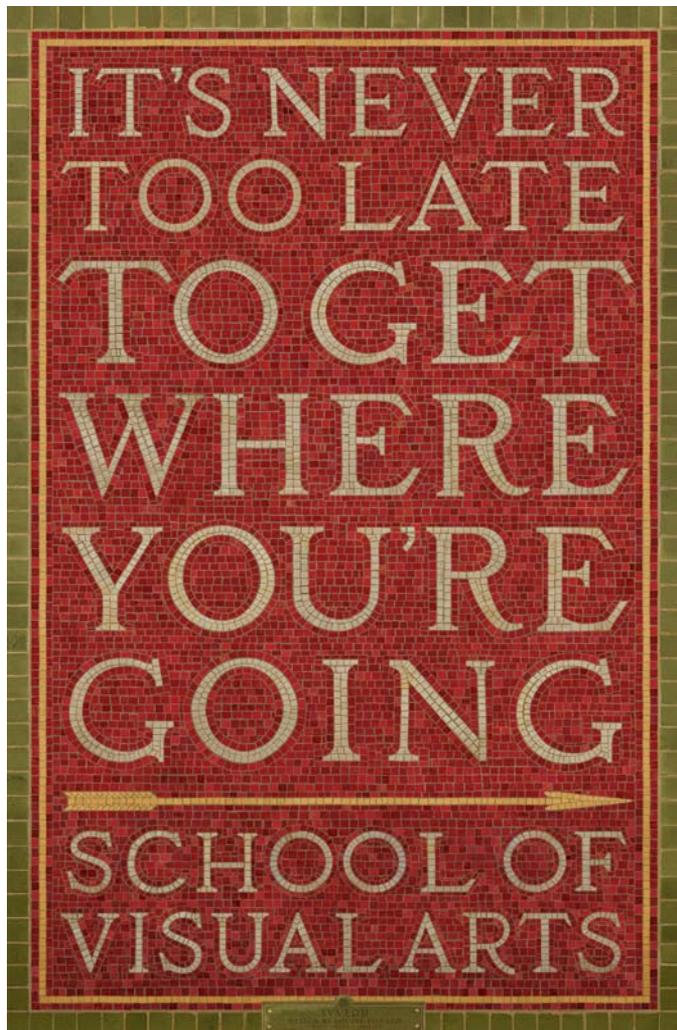
McCoy: Poster for “Fluxus Selections,” 1988.
Greiman: Poster for “Your Turn, My Turn” symposium, 1983.



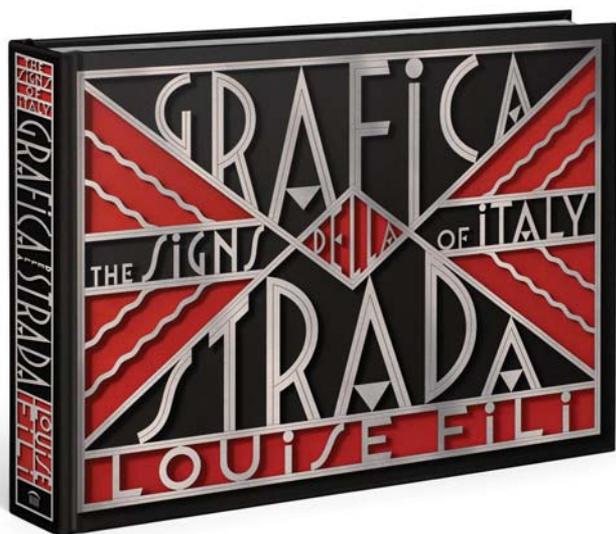
21. **PAULA SCHER** (born 1948) began her typographic journey as an archeological anthropologist. One of her most well-known “digs” included the *Best of Jazz* poster that was the result of uncovering the much-forgotten Russian Avant Gardists’ visual vocabulary, but she ended up with a distinctive tapestry woven of personal affinities, problem-solving pragmatism and New York derring-do. The letterforms are not Russian Cyrillic, but 19th-century American sans serif woodtypes savored from old Victorian type catalogs. Yet Scher also borrowed the constructivists’ strong geometric composition, thrusting diagonals and signature colors: red and black. High contrast is apparent between the bold, black capitals that spell out *Best* and the smaller, busier typography. Overlapping colors, surprints and knockouts make the most of the limited color palette. There is an unmistakable resemblance to Victoriana in the tightly packed, nearly cluttered arrangement of type, the woodtype typography itself, and the slant toward ornamentation. Although it was a hybrid of two historical forms, the result was fresh-faced, decidedly contemporary yet eerily familiar, much like a child whose genetic code spawns from—but ultimately transcends—that of its parents. Scher’s work is never entirely based on typography but it does play a central role in communicating her ideas. While the selection of typefaces may originate in the history of design as inspiration, influence, homage, quotation and parody, the results are clear interpretations held together by the glue of knowledge and imagination.



Clockwise from top left: Poster for The Public Theater’s 1995–1996 season. Poster for Shakespeare in the Park, 2016. Poster for *Henry V*, 1996.

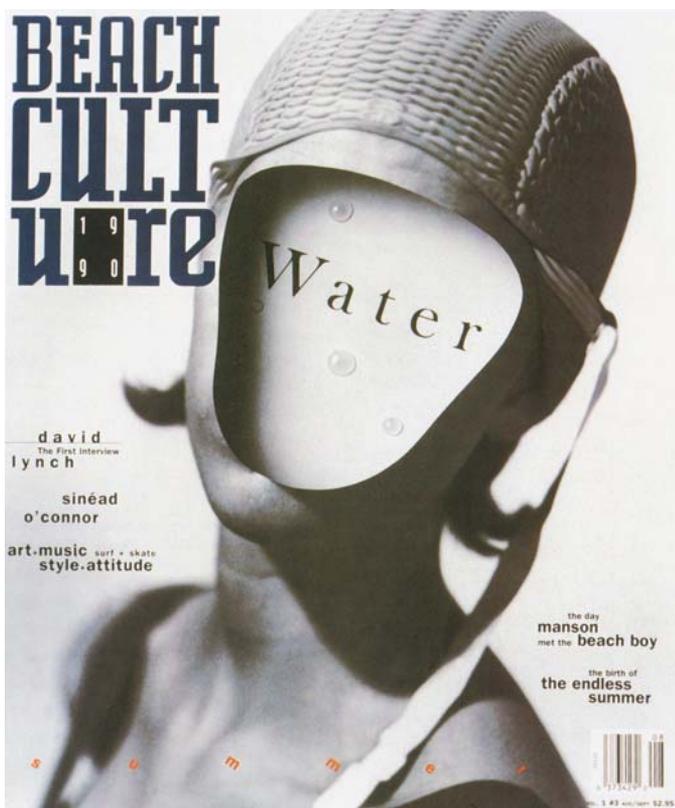


22. **LOUISE FILI** (born 1951) is the paradigm of typographic elegance. Hired by the legendary type maestro Herb Lubalin, a formative experience to be sure, she was already working on expressive ways of retooling vintage and historical typefaces from all over the world. As art director of Pantheon Books, she had an extraordinary opportunity to experiment daily with many different periods of design history, and produced close to 2,000 jackets and covers, including the now-classic *The Lover*, in which she introduced a form of nuanced shadow lettering that influenced many other typographers (Ed. Note: See page 84). Design historian Philip B. Meggs wrote in *Print* that Fili was one of “The Women Who Saved New York,” a reference to the revival of revivalist graphic design emanating from the city. Yet Fili’s work never slavishly references the past but rather incorporates its virtues. She later left Pantheon to diversify and pursue another passion through her work: food. Fili invariably began making typographic logos that were elegant, witty and memorable. From there, she produced distinct package designs with an intense focus on type and typography. Typefaces that exist yet are redrawn are her driving design force, but type that expresses ideas, if not moods, is what distinguishes her typography.



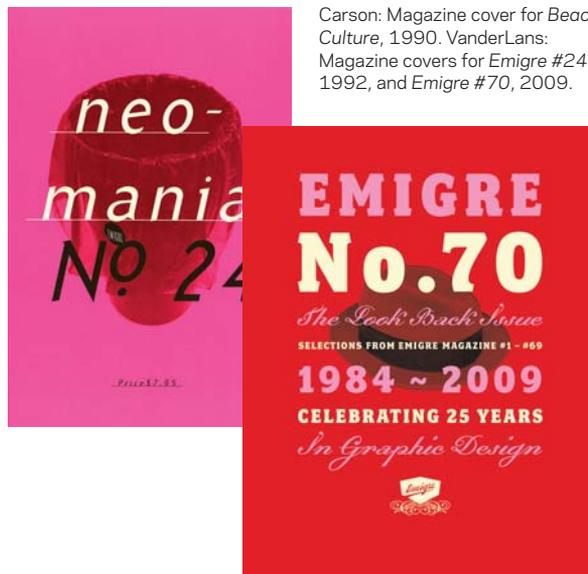
Clockwise from top left: Poster for School of Visual Arts, 2011. Wine labels, Il Conte, 2007–2008. Book cover, *Grafica della Strada*, 2014.

23. **DAVID CARSON** (born 1954) defined the zeitgeist of his epoch. In 1990, the magazine *Beach Culture*, devoted to West Coast water sports, was a perplexing yet enviable radical design object when it landed in competitions and annuals nationwide. Surfers were its target audience, yet it was also followed by design practitioners and scholars. It was a turning point in publication design. Carson, its art director, created a vehicle rooted in raucous typography and design tomfoolery that broke the same rules that Futurists and Dadaists had attacked in the teens and '20s. With its deliberate design indulgences and computer-driven trickery, *Beach Culture* made a statement that graphic design should not be simply a neutral frame for content—design tropes should be integrated into the content or even *be* the content. Carson catered to an audience that was presumed literate enough to navigate through the chaotic visuals and text. Although there were no rules about how a surfing magazine should look, one would still not have expected this to be a wellspring of typographic revolution, or that its distinct style would wash up on the shores of mainstream culture. Carson seized the opportunity; following in the footsteps of contemporary design experimenters, including Wolfgang Weingart, Rudy VanderLans and Neville Brody, he began an expedition into new realms of visual presentation. But Carson's spin on typographic anarchy was different: He not only infused his pages with wit and irony, he accepted that a magazine page is destined to be pulped, and should not be taken so seriously. Comically, it was taken seriously by designers and design historians.

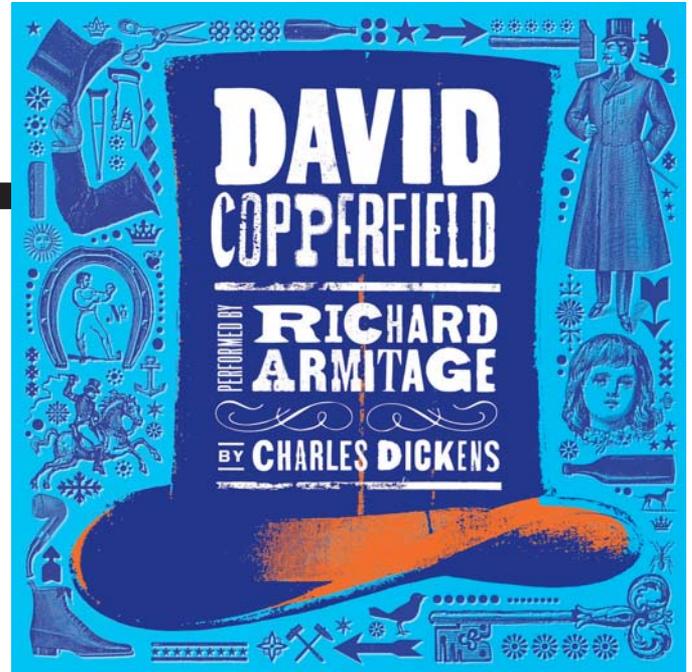
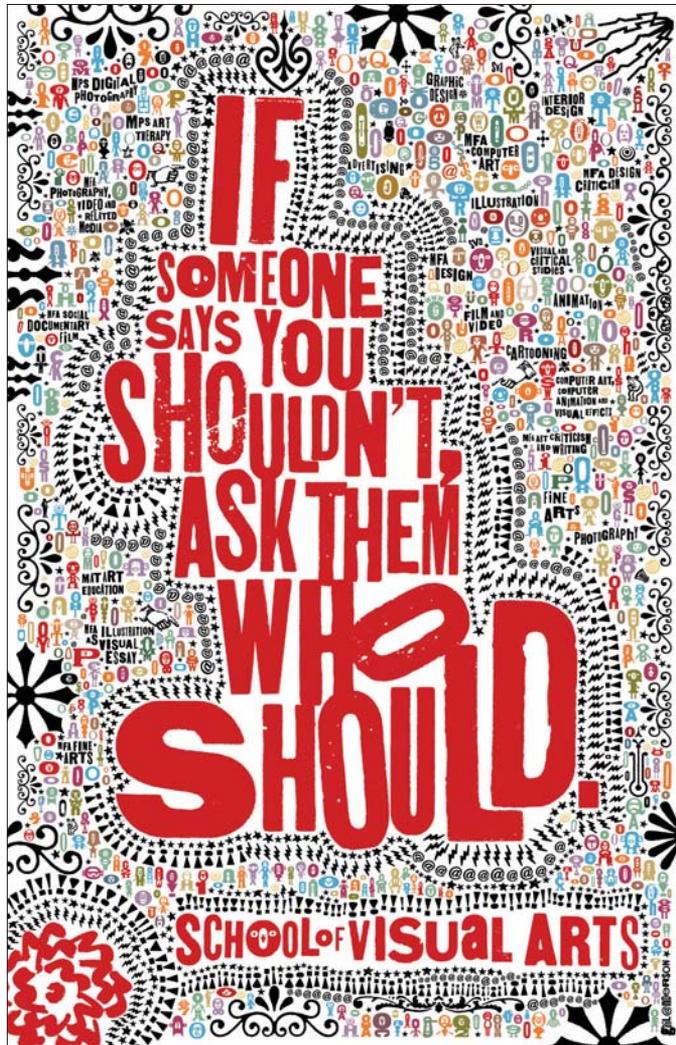


24. **RUDY VANDERLANS** (born 1955) co-founded *Emigre*, the clarion of the new graphic design, with his wife, type designer Zuzana Licko. The magazine knocked the typographic establishment for a loop and helped forever change visual communication and graphic design. *Emigre* was a laboratory for the new-new digital typography that VanderLans' type foundry was putting into the world, and a trailblazer in those uncertain early days when *fonts* became part of the ambient vocabulary. "Most designers were telling us the Macintosh was a fad without any use for serious graphic design," VanderLans has recalled. "So at the time we felt very isolated within the design community. We weren't taken seriously at all. We enjoyed the challenge and opportunities this tool offered, but we had no idea how big it would become, and that it would solidify our place within it." *Emigre* issues were often designed in radically different styles from one another, some by guest designers, showing alternative ways of making typography using the Mac. Older Modern designers went nuts because the tenets of balance, hierarchy and elegance were turned on their ear. In 2005 the magazine ceased publication, in large part because of its tremendous production expense, financed by type sales that declined when the economy dipped. But there were other reasons to discontinue *Emigre*, VanderLans says. "The world of graphic design was changing, the focus became the internet and blogs, and I felt disconnected from much of it. It was too geeky for me." The legacy of *Emigre's* typography was the so-called design-culture wars of the '90s, in which he and Licko fought with traditionalists over legibility and illegibility, classical versus experimental. VanderLans concludes, "Our type designs often responded to the larger conversations that were circulating around design in general. Now our work is far more inward-looking."

Carson: Magazine cover for *Beach Culture*, 1990. VanderLans: Magazine covers for *Emigre* #24, 1992, and *Emigre* #70, 2009.

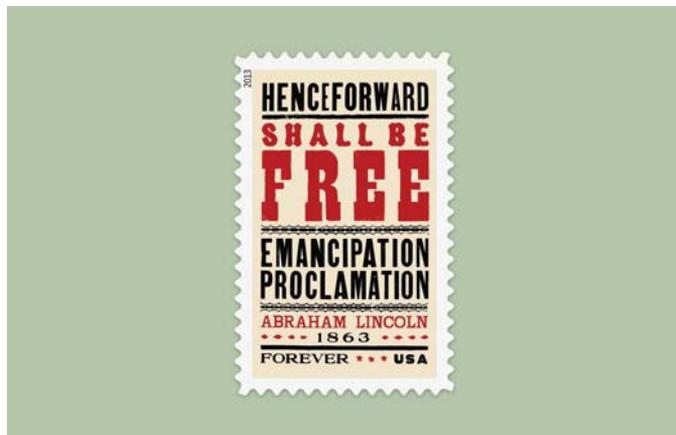


Clockwise from top right: Poster for *David Copperfield*, 2012. Postage stamp, Emancipation Proclamation, 2013. Poster for SVA, 2007.



25. GAIL ANDERSON (born 1962) is the quintessential pot type masher. Her typography is either pitch-perfect pastiche or a hybridized version of Victorian, Deco and Futurist approaches. She fine-tuned her approach working with art director Fred Woodward at *Rolling Stone*. Like actors on a stage, Anderson directs letterforms to perform dramatic and comic feats. In just two dimensions they emote, express and exude energy that projects them off the page. In 2002, after a move to SpotCo, her typography switched from the intimacy of a magazine page to work that competes for the attention of theatergoers. She is “always looking for that little visual wink or tiny gesture of extra care,” Anderson says. “I’m all about the wood-type bits and pieces. I love making those crunchy little objects into other things, like faces.” A fancy border and detailed extras are always part of her repertoire. “I’d ask the designers I work with to put them on everything,” Anderson says, “but I like being employed.”

For its human dimension, the art for *The Good Body*, the Eve Ensler show about women and body image, struck just the right chord with its curvy Isabelle Dervaux line drawing and two ice-cream scoops for breasts. But Anderson may be best known for the *Avenue Q* subway-inspired, puppet-fur logo, a delightful image that became an indelible brand for the play. “I’m definitely wittier on paper than in real life,” she laments. “I think I approach the work looking for a little wink where I can, because deep down, I hope people associate clever with smart.” ■



Steven Heller is the co-chair of the MFA Design/Designer as Author + Entrepreneur program at School of Visual Arts, and the author of more than 170 books. He is an AIGA medalist and received the 2011 Smithsonian Institution National Design Award for “Design Mind.”