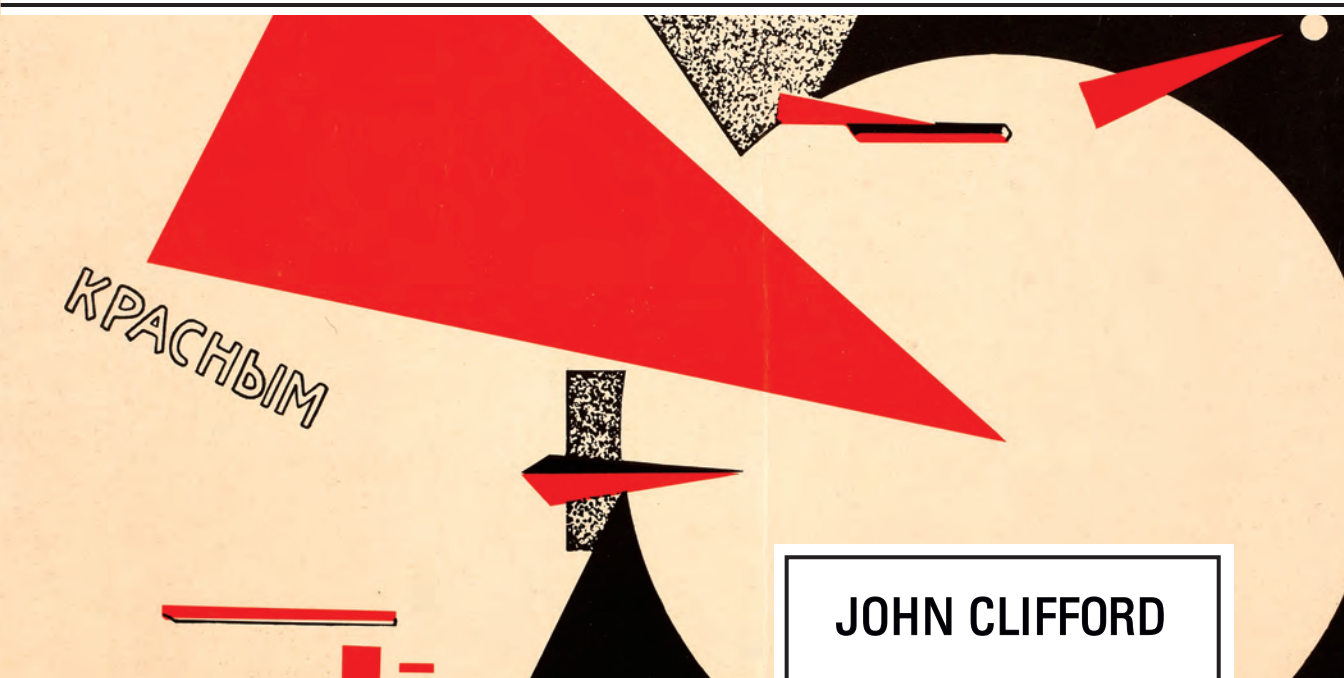




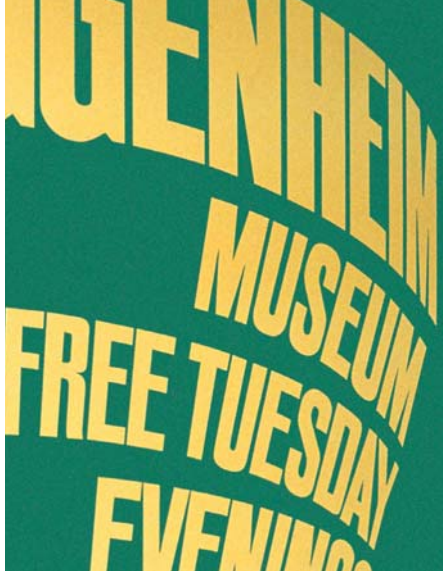
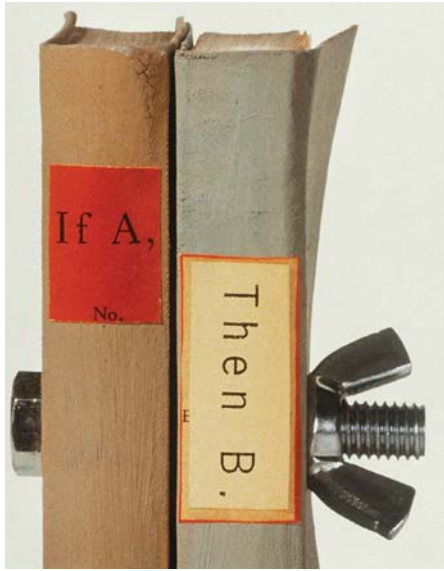
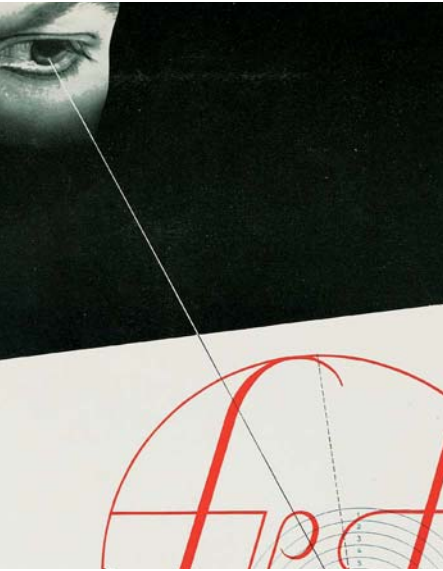
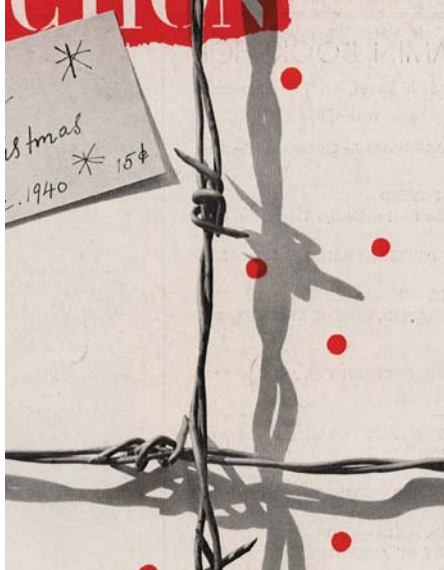
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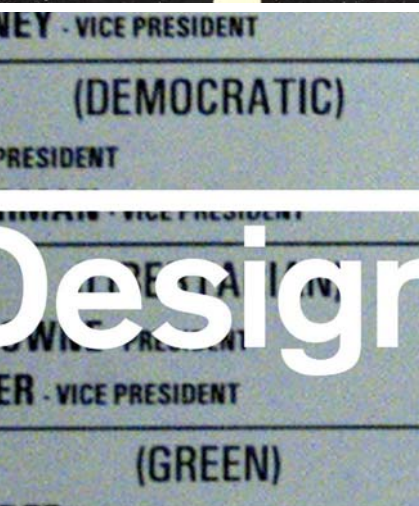
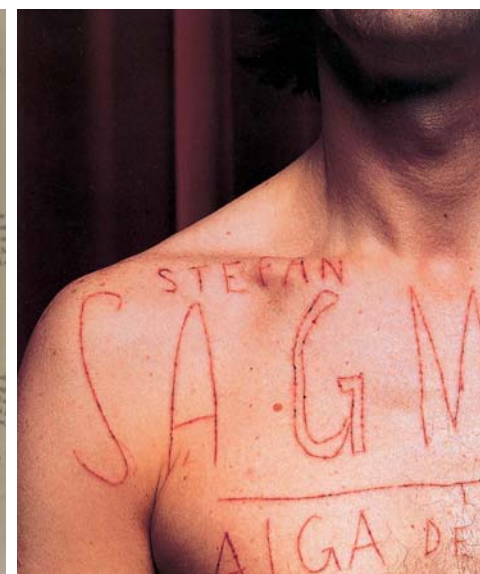
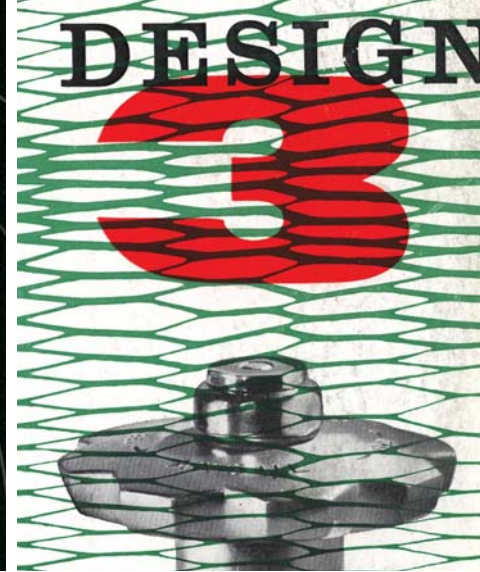
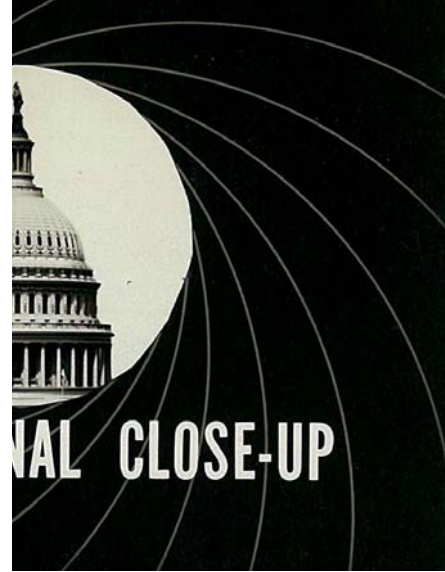
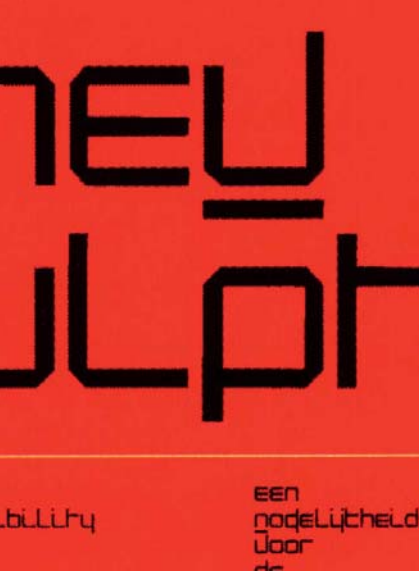
VISIONARIES WHO SHAPED MODERN GRAPHIC DESIGN



КРАСНЫМ

JOHN CLIFFORD





GRAPHIC ICONS

**VISIONARIES WHO SHAPED
MODERN GRAPHIC DESIGN**

JOHN CLIFFORD

Graphic Icons: Visionaries Who Shaped Modern Graphic Design

John Clifford

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Printed and bound in the United States of America

To my family, Tim and Will

**FRONT COVER, TOP ROW, L-R: Milton Glaser, Herbert Matter, Muriel Cooper
BOTTOM: El Lissitzky**

BACK COVER, L-R: Saul Bass, Cipe Pineles, Theo van Doesburg, Paula Scher

**PAGE 1, TOP ROW, L-R: April Greiman, Hans Rudi Erdt, Paul Rand
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BOTTOM ROW, L-R: Michael Bierut, Edward McKnight Kauffer, Jan Tschichold**

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LISSITZKY

El Lissitzky, 1922

PREFACE

This is a book about names. Many people know the names of architects, artists, and fashion designers, but not many know the names of graphic designers. It's strange to me, since graphic designers create so much of our everyday world: books, magazines, web sites, logos, posters, packaging, infographics, wayfinding signs, mobile apps, and film and television graphics.

This list of influential 20th century graphic designers is not, and cannot be, definitive. There are designers I wanted to include, but couldn't get permission to publish. For example, two designers in this book name Tibor Kalman as an influence, yet his work isn't featured. Not because I don't think he's worthy, but because I couldn't get permission, much as I tried. There were others who were simply too expensive to feature. (Believe it or not, design books don't have unlimited budgets.)

This book is about people, not about themes or movements. I've loosely grouped the designers chronologically, within four broad time periods. So while a particular work may not technically be considered early modern, for example, I've opted to include it in Chapter 1, more as a reference to its era than to a particular artistic movement. Many of these designers had (and have) lengthy bodies of work that grew and evolved over long careers, so I didn't want to label them under any one movement or style.

I was a design student at California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of the Arts) in the 1990s. Graphic design, or at least the design I noticed, was pretty complex then, with layers upon layers of texture, distorted images, and blurred or distressed type. It was chaotic. Messy. Sometimes illegible. I liked it in a way, I guess, but didn't think I could ever design anything like that. I've always preferred being neat and clear and direct. In my uneducated mind, since all designers seemed to be doing grunge (or, *the* grunge, as my friends and I called it), you had to do grunge if you wanted to be a designer. That, and the fact that I struggled through my first studio classes, made me unsure about this whole design thing.

Then I took a graphic design history class with Steve Reoutt. I used to think of history classes as stuffy and dull. Not this one. I was floored: the simplicity and starkness of El Lissitzky; the bright colors of Edward McKnight Kauffer; the bold type of Herbert Bayer; the asymmetry and white space of Jan Tschichold; the abstraction and restraint of Herbert Matter. Each of these designers gave me hope: If they could accomplish a lot with a little, maybe I could, too.

This is the book I have always wanted for myself. Although I'm not an academic, I teach, and I want a simple primer on history for my students. I'm a practicing designer, not a historian, and I'd love an easy reference on modern designers for inspiration.

Of course, there are excellent design history books already out there, like the classic textbook *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, by Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis. This book doesn't attempt to replace them. Instead, I hope it will lead readers to them. Suggestions for further reading and exploring pop up throughout this book.

Ultimately, *Graphic Icons* is a very personal list. These are the people who have influenced me and my work. In addition to the pioneers I learned about in school, the dean of my design school is here, along with my old boss. Some of those messy designers from the '90s are here, too. While this list is personal, I think a strong case can be made for all the designers in this book: They changed the field of graphic design. I hope you'll learn something from reading it, as I've learned from writing it.

Casino de Paris

Entrée 2^{fr}

Camille Stéfani

Tous les Soirs

**CONCERT-SPECTACLE
BAL**

PÊTE DE NUIT LES MERCREDIS
& SAMEDIS

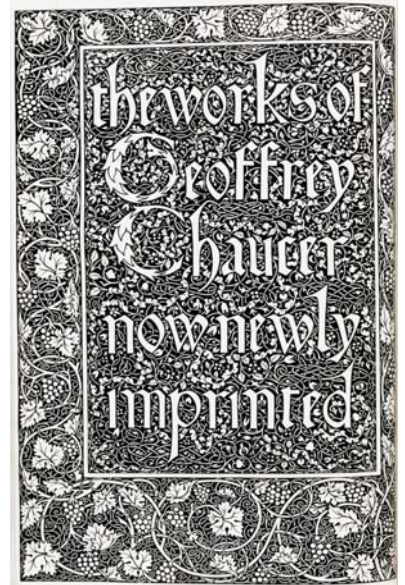
INTRODUCTION—ARTS AND CRAFTS, ART NOUVEAU: INDUSTRIALIZATION SHAPES VISUAL CULTURE

As the 20th century approached, the world had already experienced huge changes. The Industrial Revolution, which began in the mid-1700s in England and continued through the 1800s in Europe and the United States, created new ways of doing almost everything—manufacturing, traveling, and communicating. The rise of the machine enabled mass production, making goods more accessible and inexpensive. It also created jobs in growing, centralized urban areas. People left farms in the country for work in the city.

Population shifts, industrialization, mass communication: All of these forces would shape visual culture—and the artists and designers who created it—across the world for decades to come.

As cities grew, street posters became the most efficient way to reach consumers. Steam-powered printing presses could produce posters, books, newspapers, and magazines faster and in greater quantity than manual processes. Printed materials were no longer precious, handmade items available only to the wealthy; they were accessible to working classes, as well. As education became more widely available, literacy rates rose—which furthered the development of printed communication.

Not everyone embraced mass production and efficiency, however. William Morris rejected the machine aesthetic and founded the Arts and Crafts movement in England around 1880. Its goal? To unite aesthetic excellence and traditional craftsmanship. Morris wasn't against just the machine; he was against the mediocre: Most mass-produced goods were low-quality and clichéd. Morris founded the Kelmscott



ABOVE: William Morris, title page, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 1896

OPPOSITE: Jules Cheret, *Casino de Paris* poster, 1891



ABOVE, LEFT: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Reine de Joie par Victor Joze* poster, 1892



ABOVE: Kitagawa Utamaro, Chojiya *hinazuru hinamatsu*, woodblock print, between 1798 and 1801

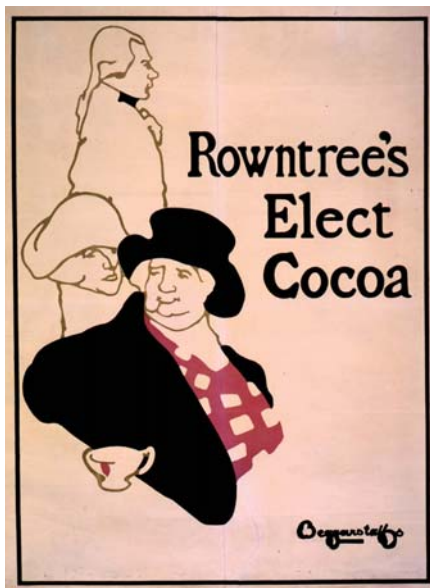
OPPOSITE: Alphonse Mucha, Sarah Bernhardt American tour poster, 1896

Press and published his own books, using detailed woodcut borders and decorations, and typefaces inspired by type from the 15th century. However, running a publishing house at that time without mechanization was unsustainable: Kelmscott's labor-intensive books were very expensive, putting them out of reach for the general population. The movement's influence carried on, though, as decorative forms based on nature and plants continued, becoming a big part of Art Nouveau.

In Paris, poster art thrived—not just for advertisers, but also for collectors. Artists found opportunities creating work that promoted products and entertainment. Jules Cheret, often called the father of the modern poster, married art and utility: He didn't just paint the posters, he also developed a method for reproducing them. Cheret's overprinting technique lent texture, splashes, and scratches to his brightly colored designs. Cheret and other European artists were influenced by the asymmetrical simplicity and flat color of Japanese woodblock prints, an art form that reached the continent after Japan began trading with western countries in the mid-1800s. Cheret developed a distinct style with his use of female figures and hand lettering. The women in his posters were usually animated and enjoying life—dancing, drinking, and smoking—an unusual depiction at the time. Artists, such as his fellow Frenchman Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Italy's Leonetto Cappiello, followed suit.

Czech-born Alphonse Mucha worked in Paris and exemplified the decorative Art Nouveau ("New Art") movement: flat color, creative lettering, and stylized organic forms. He added detailed mosaic backgrounds, and often gave his female subjects long, flowing curves of hair. The actress Sarah Bernhardt, convinced that Mucha captured her as no other artist had, signed him to an exclusive contract under which he designed her posters, theater sets, and costumes.





In England, illustrator Aubrey Beardsley simplified forms from nature and became well-known for his black-and-white images, heavy outlines, and distorted bodies. While Beardsley separated image and lettering (usually in different boxes), painters James Pryde and William Nicholson, brothers-in-law who were known as the Beggarstaffs, integrated lettering into their compositions. Their illustrations, made of flat shapes of colored paper, were often incomplete, inviting viewers to mentally finish the picture. The Beggarstaffs' partnership was short-lived: although their work was admired in art circles, they didn't make any money.

Will Bradley introduced Art Nouveau to the United States, reflecting the influence of Aubrey Beardsley and William Morris in the design of his posters, books, and journals, many of which he published through his Wayside Press in Springfield, Massachusetts. The look he developed, though, was his own, as he worked at unifying the visuals with the text.

In Germany, Art Nouveau was known as *Jugendstil* ("Young Style"); German artists and designers experimented with the style before moving on to something new. Peter Behrens was initially inspired by French Art Nouveau, but started stripping his work of ornament around the turn of the century. Behrens and other designers became more objective, moving away from floral motifs toward a more geometric logic and order. The shift to more geometric designs was also taking place with the members of the Vienna Secession in Austria, like Gustav Klimt and Koloman Moser.

Printed materials—posters, books, periodicals—became increasingly simple and structured in their design as modernism spread throughout Europe after the turn of the century. Soon, the artists and craftsmen who created them would have new titles: graphic designers.



ABOVE, TOP: Aubrey Beardsley, poster, 1894

ABOVE, RIGHT: Beggarstaffs, Rowntree's elect cocoa poster, 1895

ABOVE: Peter Behrens, *The Kiss*, 1898

OPPOSITE: Will Bradley, Springfield Bicycle Club Tournament poster, 1895

SPRINGFIELD BICYCLE CLUB TOURNAMENT



WILL H. DRAYLEY '95

SPRINGFIELD MASS SEPT. 11 AND 12, 1895

Copied from the original

Hermann Scherrer.

Breechesmaker
Sporting-Tailor
München
Neuhauserstr.32



LUDWIG
HÖHLWEIN



LUDWIG HOHLWEIN

1874–1949 | BORN: Wiesbaden, Germany | EDUCATION: Technical University in Munich; Dresden Academy



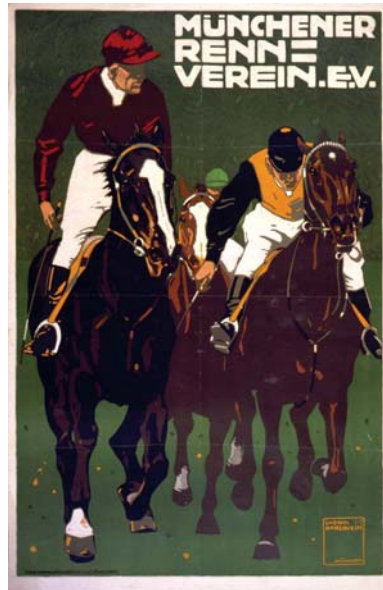
Incorporated depth and pattern in poster designs

**Evolved stylistically throughout his career,
from flat to painterly to severe**

Another influential German designer, Ludwig Hohlwein, drew inspiration from the Beggarstoffs and their flat, simple, graphic style. Trained as an architect, Hohlwein left Munich in 1911 for Berlin, where he worked as a poster artist. While he worked in the *Plakatstil* (poster style) that Bernhard had pioneered, the two differed in some important aesthetic ways. Rather than total flatness, Hohlwein incorporated depth in his poster designs; pattern, texture, and color gave his work more volume, which was well suited for his clothing and retail clients.

Hohlwein's designs evolved as the world around him changed. His work became richer and more painterly. His posters during World War I used light and shadow to give them more of a human touch. For instance, in his poster promoting an exhibit of artwork by German prisoners of war, the balance of the graphic cross with the soldier's expressive face appeals to the viewer's emotions.

As Adolf Hitler rose to power, Hohlwein designed many posters for the Nazi party. His work grew more sharp and severe, and featured figures that exhibited muscular, Aryan ideals. Although Hohlwein was a very talented designer, his legacy has been tainted by his close ties to the Nazi party.



ABOVE: Poster for Munich Racing Association, 1909

OPPOSITE: Hermann Scherrer poster, 1911



ABOVE: Red Cross Collection Drive fund-raising poster, 1914

OPPOSITE: Berliner Sport Club poster, 1914

BERLINER

SPORT CLUB



SPORTS -
KUNSTSTOFF
PUMPER

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