Good Design is good Business

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[**design**verso]

A series dedicated to communication designers, imagined as an attachment to the magazine Multiverso, Università degli Studi di Udine.

"Every art director and graphic designer in the world should kiss his ass."

George Lois

Editorial

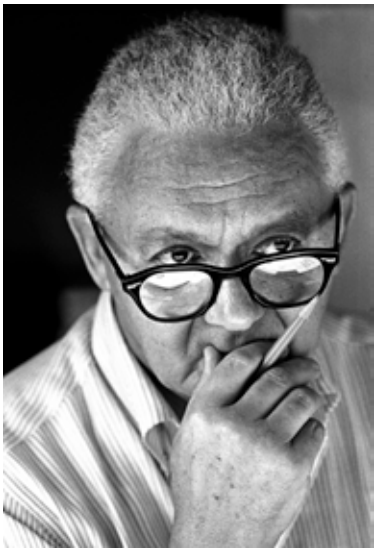
In the decades following World War II, Paul Rand, more than any other single designer, was responsible for defining visual culture in America.

In every form, Rand's work reflects his conception of good design, one which seems utterly obvious today but was largely foreign – at least in America – before Rand demonstrated it so convincingly. It was a simple idea: Graphic design can, and should, be both beautiful and functional.

The purpose of this monograph is to express how, without Rand, the graphic design industry as it is known today would likely not exist. As effective a designer as Rand was, he was also an effective salesman. He had the ability to sit down with the chiefs of the world's largest organizations and convince them of the value of his work. During his lifetime, he persuaded corporations that design was not only a powerful asset, but an essential one. Design can influence a how a corporation is perceived and remembered and add a great deal of value to the product itself.

The four sections follow Rand's evolution through the years: from working as a young art director for renowned magazines like Esquire or Direction, to being responsible of the whole corporate identity of big companies (such as ABC, UPS and IBM), designing everything from logos to advertisements and packaging.

The Editorial Staff



Paul Rand (born as Peretz Rosenbaum; New York, 1914 – Norwalk, 1996) studied in New York at the Pratt Institute, the Parsons School of Design, and the Art Students League. A pioneer of Modernist graphic design, Paul Rand was influenced in his early work by Cubism and Constructivism as well as the Bauhaus, applying the principles learned from these avant-garde schools of art to graphic design. From 1936 to 1941, Rand was art director of Esquire and Apparel Arts magazines while from 1938 to 1945 he also designed the acclaimed covers of Direction magazine. From 1941 until 1954 he was art director of the William H. Weintraub Advertising Agency in New York. From 1956 Rand freelanced as a graphic designer and consultant for Westinghouse and IBM. He was the designer who developed many of the celebrated logos of such big companies and famous institutions as Westinghouse, NeXT Computer, IBM, UPS, and ABC. In addition, Rand found time to be a professor of graphic design at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Paul Rand is the author of several important books on design, including *Thoughts on Design* (1947), *Design and the Play Instinct* (1955), *A Designer's Art* (1985), and *Design, Form and Chaos* (1993).

curated by
Filippo Testa

the young
modernist

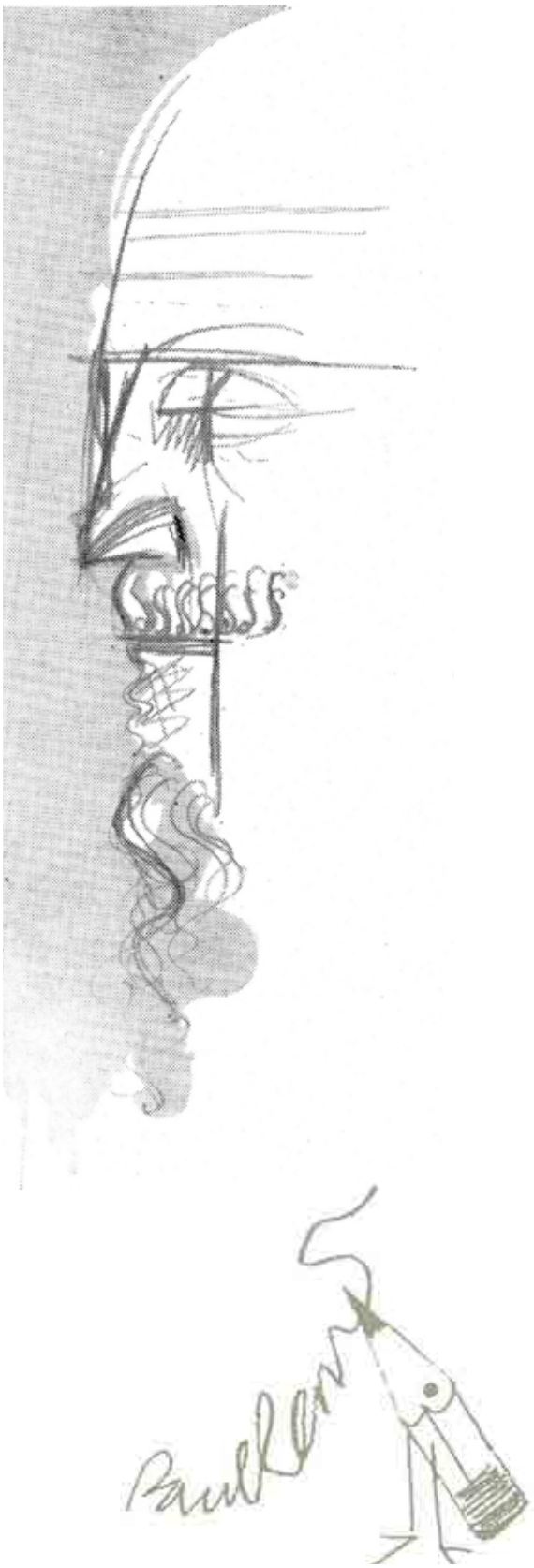
Written by Steven Heller
"Paul Rand", London, 1999

How Paul Rand became Paul Rand

In 1934 Rand took his first professional part-time job as an illustrator for Metro Associated Services, a syndicate that supplied maps and stock advertising cuts to newspapers and magazines. Along with the art director and four much older men sitting elbow to elbow at a row of drawing boards, Rand made all kinds of graphic cliches – from cuts of Fourth of July festivities, butter-and-eggs, farm animals, snow scenes, children at play and men at work, to novelty headlines forgoing-out-of-business or fire-sale ads. Though he was not particularly prud of the "junk"'that they produced, he learned more about graphic techniques – the invaluable tricks of the trade – than he had in school. He was also earning money – less than $10 a week, but enough to make his own way in New York. Although he had no visual persona of his own, his professional self-confidence was growing. Rand's professed goal was to earn $50 a week – a king's ransom during the Depression – and this prompted him in early 1935 to rent a "closet-sized" studio at 331 East 38th Street with designer C. W. D. Stillwell (who later became the assistant to the industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes). In this space, on the periphery of Manhattan's advertising district, he launched his first freelance practice and landed a few minor accounts.

After some months on retainer doing layouts and spot advertisements for his biggest client, Glass Packer magazine, he had a viable portfolio that he said "was terrible stuff, but I managed".

Rand was never satisfied doing such menial work, so he sought advice, and perhaps even presumed he would get offers of better jobs, from designers he had read about in the trade magazines. First on his list was F. G. Cooper, a comic illustrator and letterer well known at that time for his witty "Father Knickerbocker" trade character promoting the Consolidated Edison Company.



Sketches

Left

Paul Rand's man sketch for PM magazine.

Below

First Paul Rand's signature.

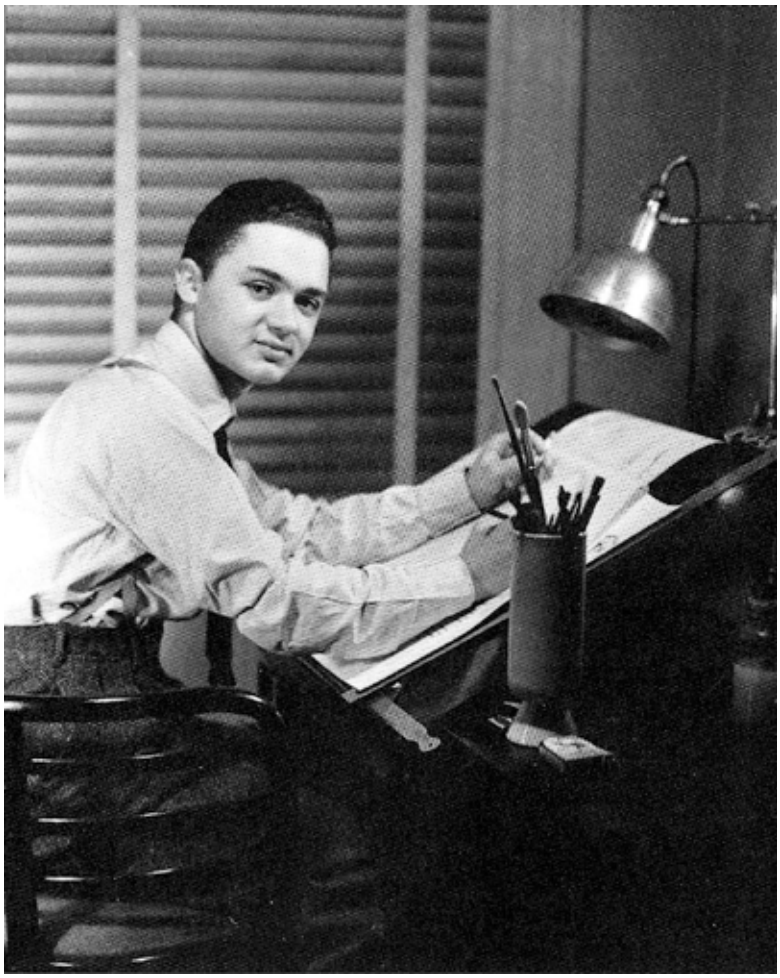
Cooper, however, was abruptly dismissive of Rand's efforts, which mimicked the advertising posters of German émigré Lucian Bernhard.
Undeterred, Rand's next stop was the upper East Side studio of Bernhard himself, one of Germany's maestros – inventor in 1906 of the Sachplakat (an object poster with a minimalist, though often colorful, design, and a graphic representation of the product) and proponent of graphic design thai rejected superfluous decoration in favour of a stark prop or object. After emigrating from Berlin in 1922, Bernhard established a successful business in New York designing typefaces, logos and poster/billboard campaigns for major corpor-ations. Rand greatly admired the austerity of Bernhard's 1906 poster for the Priester Match company. A masterpiece of graphic erudition, this poster (which showed two colorful match-sticks against a dark maroon background, topped with the word Priester in block letters) set the standard for twentieth-century simplicity and at the same time was an unmistakable signature for its maker. Rand aspired to work in this manner and with the master. Nevertheless, Bernhard was not the least bit interested in conversing with his uninvited acolyte. "He was not welcoming at all," Rand recalled, "rather he played the big-shot." Disappointment never held Rand back. He regrouped quickly; he also began to emulate the Secessionist style of Gustav Jensen, "designer for industry".

"He accumulated a very impressive portfolio for somene of his age. [...] it was skillful, imaginative and clean enough to prove that he had special abilities."

Steven Heller

New York
Skyline view from Brooklyn, 1940s.

This former aspiring opera singer's elegant, classically inspired, moderne drawing style (inspired by the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris, 1925) stood out among the faux romantic/heroic (Art Deco) mannerisms of the day. While more decorative than Bernhard, Jensen nevertheless used ornament purely as functional architecture – a foundation on which his selling messages were built. Known for his streamlined packages (notably the Golden Blossom Honey jar and label), advertising campaigns for Charles of the Ritz perfumes, and sleek designs for cutlery and hand-basins, Rand saw in Jensen the quintessence of the integrated artist/designer and a model on which to base his own practice. "I desperately wanted to work for him," he recalled; "I would have done it for free." Jensen, however, declined Rand's offer but in an agreeable way, explaining that he always worked alone.



Rand's tenacity kept him knocking on more and more doors in search of work until he met Ervin Metzl, a successful typographer, poster and book cover designer known for his famous calli-graphic lettering and modernistic illustrations for Fortune and other magazines. Metzl immediately acknowledged Rand's innate talent and helped him land freelance rendering jobs from Young and Rubicam, the agency handling the Nabisco and Camel accounts, and R. H. Macy's art department doing ads for Saybrook fabrics. But Metzl's most enduring contribution to Rand's career was an introduction to George Switzer, which resulted in an apprenticeship with the successful package and industrial designer, whom Rand noted was influenced by progressive French and German designers. At the time of this introduction, a new breed of self-proclaimed "industrial designer" had already succeeded in convincing major American businesses that they were the white knights of commerce. "Styling the goods", which is how they described the transformation of old products into new ones by changing their outer skin and pac ages, was how these designers injected themselves as experts. Switzer ranked just below the acknowledged leaders, Norman Bel Geddes, Raymond Loewy, Henry Dreyfuss and Walter Dorwin Teague, in terms of national notoriety, but in his own right was a respected, award-winning exponent of modern practice with highly visible clients. Al Switzer's, Rand was finally on the right trajectory. No longer doing tawdry, piecework, but rather designing handsome packages for Hormell meats and daily newspaper advertisement for Squibb, the pharmaceutical company, he was able to put the dictum "less is more" into practice in layouts there were functionally elegant and conceptually

Left

Paul Rand
A young Rand at a drafting table.

Below

Paul Rand
Self-portrait, 1944.

astute. He accumulated a very impressive portfolio for someone of his age.
The work was not radical – he had not yet created a design idiom out of whole cloth – but it was skillful, imaginative and clean enough (a real virtue amid the clutter of the times) to prove that he had special abilities. Rand was, nevertheless, convinced that the quality of his work was not enough to guarantee and his success.
During the 1930s the sons of immigrants filled many of the bullpens and art departments in advertising agencies and industrial design firms, while the majority of the account executives, vice presidents and presidents were drawn from America's dominant Protestant class. Executives belonged to an exclusive club that hobnobbed with clients who belonged to the same club; there was a gentleman's agreement that Jews need not apply. Ms was not, of course, unique to the advertising or design industries, and it was common for many different professionals to change or shorten ethnic surnames in order to fit in – or at least not stand out. Convinced by friends that an overtly Jewish to of name might he an impediment to getting meaningful work, Rand reluctantly changed his name. Morris Wyszogrod explained it thus: «…he start looking for jobs, going for studio to studio, and they said, "What's your name?" And he would say, "Rosenbaum." And they would ask, "What's your first name?" And he was afraid to say Peretz, so he said, "Paul." He remember that an uncle in the family was named Rand. So he figured that "Paul Rand", four letters here, four letters there, would create a nice symbol. So he became Paul Rand.»

Written by Steven Heller
"Print", May/June, 1997, Vol 51, Issue 3

Thoughts on Rand

When Paul Rand died at age 82 in November 1996, his career had spanned six decades and numerous chapters of design history.

He was the channel through which the radical ideas of Russian Constructivism, Dutch De Stijl, and the Bauhaus were introduced to American commercial art, and he wed these formal principles to native wit and humor.As a student, Rand borrowed his style from reductive German advertising known as Sachplakat, or object poster. He also admired Gustav Jensen, one of the leading designers of the day, whose elegant, ornamental design contributed a degree of civility to mostly crass American graphics.Some of Rand's early, more illustrative work was influenced by Jensen. He even offered to work for Jensen for free, but was turned down.

Ultimately, a chance meeting with typographer/designer Ervin Metzl resulted in an introduction to Joe Switzer, an advertising and package designer with offices on Madison Avenue.

In 1936, at just 21 years of age, Rand was hired to lay out an anniversary issue of Apparel Arts, a men's fashion magazine published by the Esquire-Coronet company. His remarkable talent for transforming mundane photographs into dynamic compositions, which did not merely decorate but gave editorial weight to the page, earned him a full-time position. Of course, there was no distinctive Paul Rand look at that time, but a unique sensibility started to emerge with the covers he designed for Apparel Arts. The witty collages and humorously cropped photographs, unburdened by cover lines, were unlike anything on the newsstand.

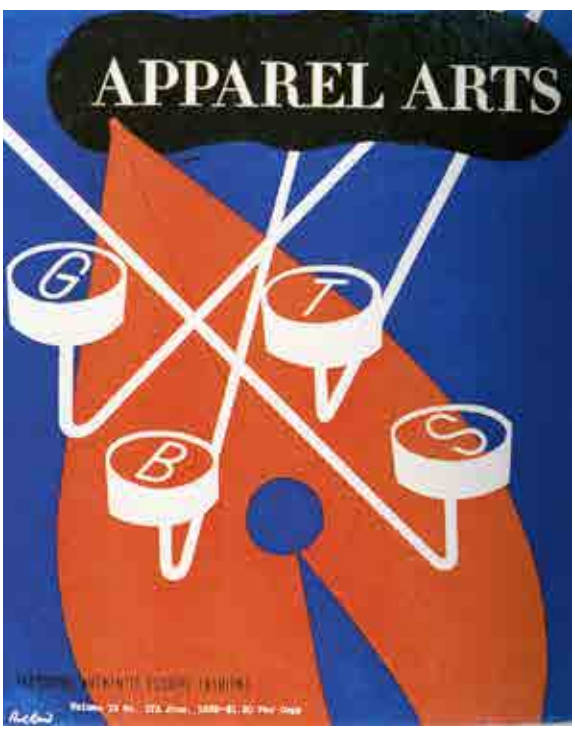
APPAREL ARTS

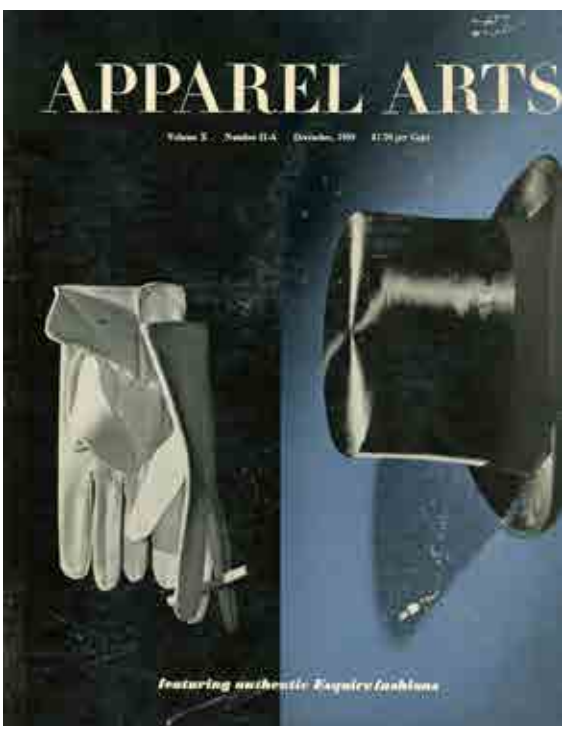
VOL. VIII NO. II OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1937 $1.50 PER COPY

Previous page

Apparel Arts, *cover, October/November 1937, Vol. 8, No. 2.*
One of the first cover for the Apparel Arts Magazine.

A year later, he was offered the job as art director of the New York office of Esquire-Coronet. He refused, insisting that he was not yet ready. A year later, however, he accepted the assignment and was given responsibility for special sections in Esquire – primarily fashion. In 1938, when Rand was only 24, he was hailed by PM, the leading graphics trade magazine of the day, as a major influence on American design. From a large field of veterans, including European emigres, he was singled out for editorial, advertising, and promotion design that was revolutionary for its asymmetric compositions and clever montages. "Rand is unhampered by traditions," the magazine stated. "He has no stereo-typed style because every task is something new and demands its own solution. Consequently, there is nothing labored or forced about his work."
In a remarkably brief time, he had established a presence that never diminished. Three years after Rand was the subject of a cover story in PM, he appeared in the February/March issue of the magazine, now titled AD. By this time he had so thoroughly synthesized the European Avant-garde vocabulary that the article offered no hint of derivation.
The visual language that would later underpin his approach to corporate design was developed during this period.
Its unique and striking character was recognized by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy in his introduction to the AD article:"When I came to this country I was greatly surprised to find that we Europeans were, to a certain extent, more American than the Americans. I found that our imagination went too far. It is true all this technological progress was developed on the highest level in this country but the Americans did not care too much for it.





Far left

Apparel Arts, *cover, June 1939, Vol. 9, No. 4a.*
Although he did not think of himself
as a "fashion magazine" designers,
Rand's earliest cover designs
challenged the cliches of fashion art.

Left

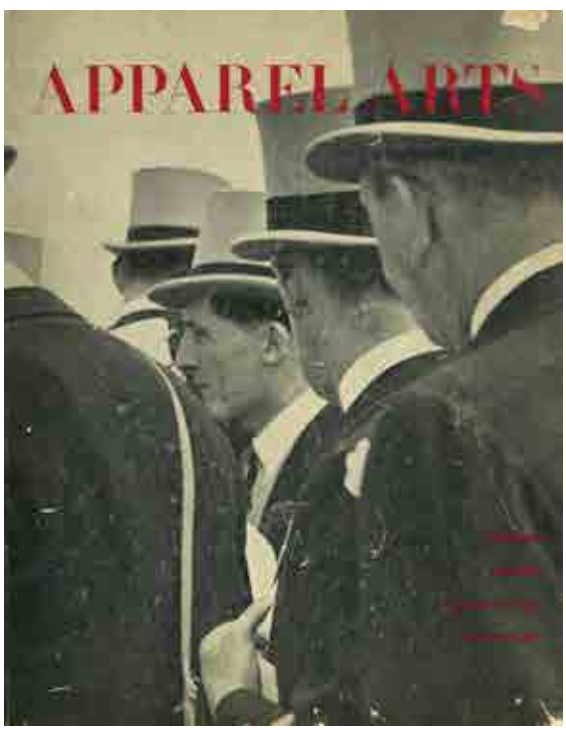
Apparel Arts, *cover, December 1939, Vol. 10, No. 2a.*
Hats and Gloves were important
accessories for the well-dressed man
and were used thus used in various composition.

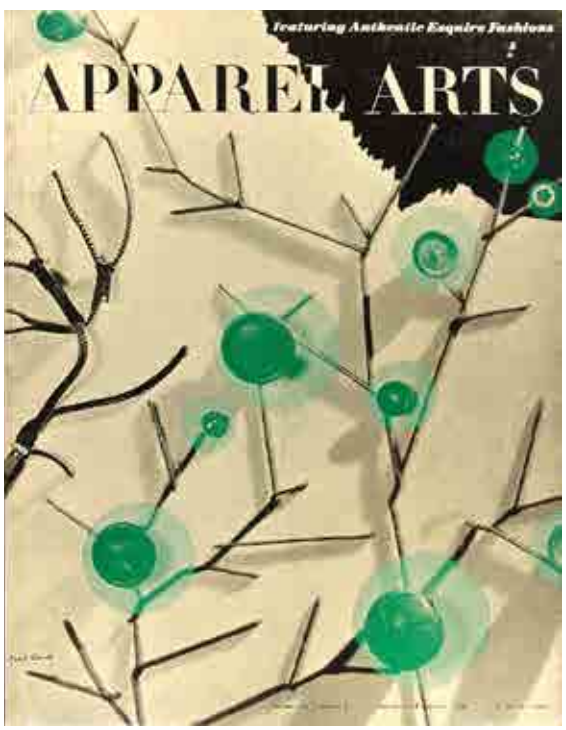
Clockwise from top right

Apparel Arts, cover's detail, October/November 1939,
Vol. 10, No. 2.
Summer offered an endless supply
of visual symbols and quirky juxtapositions.

Apparel Arts, *cover, March 1940, Vol. 10, No. 3a.*

Apparel Arts, *cover, July/August 1938, Vol. 9, No. 1.*
Rand was hired in 1936 as a freelancer
to help produce layouts for an anniversary
issue of Apparel Arts. In this issue he revealed
his talent for transforming ordinary photographs
into dymanic compositions. he understood
keenly the impact of the repetition of figures
as this drammatically cropped image demonstrates.






Summer
Paul Rand

Left

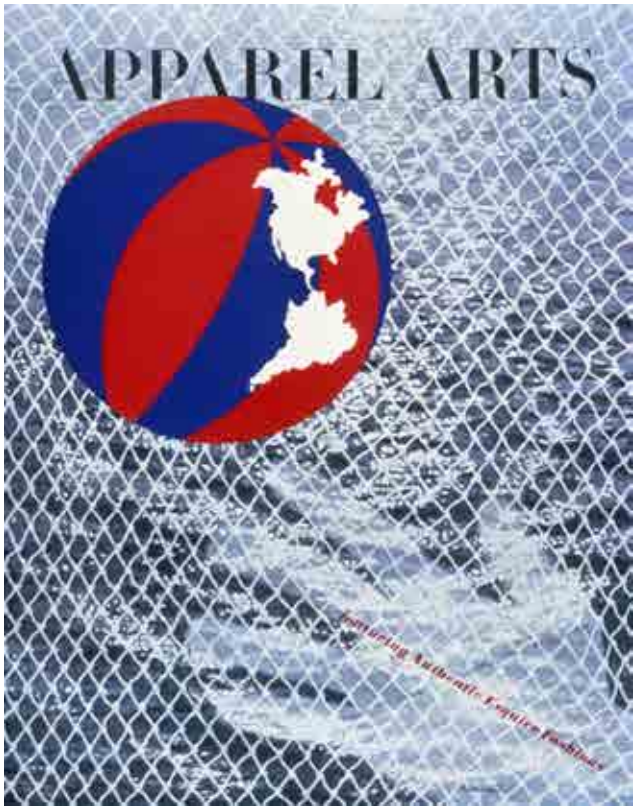
Summer, *interior page for Apparel Arts, 1936.*
Influenced by the European Moderns, Rand made collages which, to him, were 'not imitations of reality but rather juxtaposed pieces of different realities' that engaged the viewer in the creative process.

Below

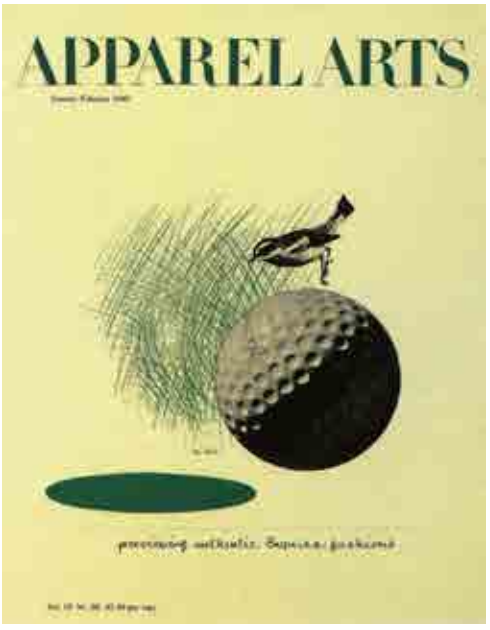
Apparel Arts, *cover, April/May 1940, Vol. 10, No. 4.*
Rand juxtaposed a ball/globe, net and hand and transformed ordinary images into a unique whole in this summer issue.

Far below

Apparel Arts, *cover, January/February 1941, Vol. 11, No 3.*
Rand's characteristic wit is evident in this golfing pun: a montage and drawing of a golf ball and a "birdie".

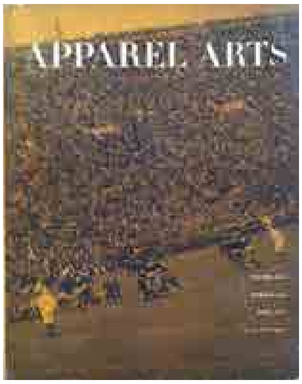


They created their high civilization by instinct, introducing invention after invention into their daily routine.
However, they did not attach any philosophy to it as we did in Europe. For them, the nostalgia remained for the "good old" traditional art. This was a strange experience for me, as I felt that our efforts in Europe to live up to the contemporary status of the Americans proved to be without a real background. It took me a long time to understand the Victorian dwellings, the imitations of colonial architecture or the old fashioned advertising. Fortunately, I soon saw that a new generation was rising with the potentiality and discipline of that America imagined by us in Europe.
Among these young Americans it seems to me that Paul Rand is one of the best and most capable He is a painter, lecturer, industrial designer, [and] advertising artist who draws his knowledge and creativeness from the resources of this country. He is an idealist and a realist, using the language of the poet and business man. He thinks in terms of need and function. He is able to analyze his problems but his fantasy is boundless."



From left to right

Apparel Arts, every cover designed by Paul Rand
in cronological order from 1937 to 1941.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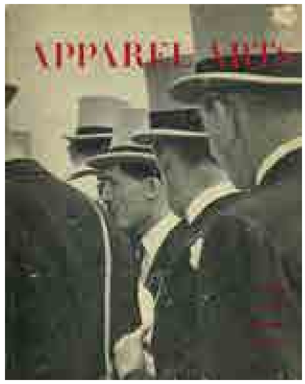
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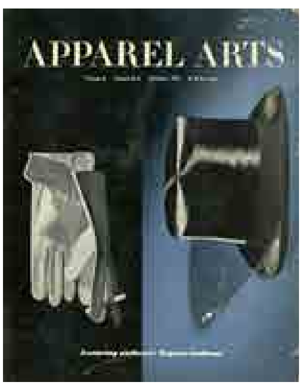
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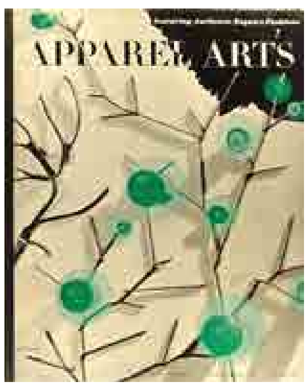
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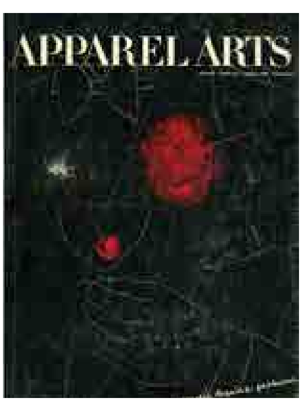
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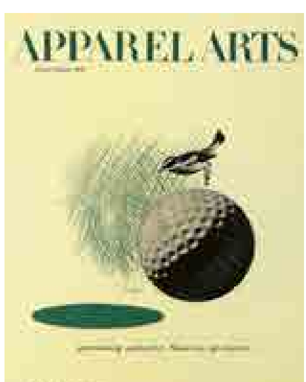
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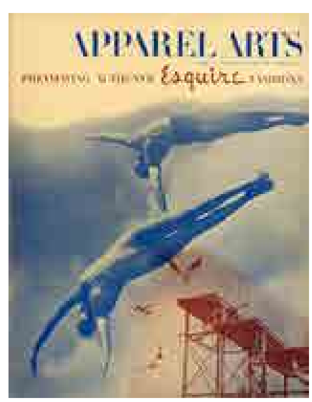

APPAREL ARTS
Esquire

Written by Steven Heller
Published in "Design Literacy", 1997.

Direction

He favors Le Corbusier's underlying philosophy… his avoidance of ornament, his dependence upon masses, proportions, and inherencies for success in the solution of a problem, exclaimed the October–November 1938 issue of PM magazine of Paul Rand (1914–1996), at twenty-four years old the leading American proponent of functional design. "Artistic tricks divert from the effect that an artist endeavors to produce, and even excellent elements, such as bullets, arrows, brackets, ornate initials, are, at best, superficial ornamentation unless logically and reasonably employed," Rand explained.

But at that time these graphic accouterments were considered soothing to most clients. So how did Rand succeed in expressing himself, and otherwise change conventional practice? The answer can be found in a series of covers designed for Direction magazine between 1939 and 1943. Rand was reared in the commercial art bullpens of New York and understood the needs of American commerce. He never intended to be a radical, but from the outset of his career he had an instinctive understanding of modern painting, a passion for popular art, and a flair for wedding the two. He was harshly critical of the lack of quality in American design practice, and believe that even the most common aspects of everyday life could be enriched by an artist's touch.

DIRECTION

march 1939 . . . volume 2 number 2

Although he was enthused by the new currents in art and design, he refused to mimic or follow them blindly.
Rand insisted that it was not only wrong but also "uneconomical from the aesthetic point of view" merely to borrow or separate from context without understanding the factors that brought an original into being. He further the credence to Le Corbusier's dictum that it is necessary to understand history, "and he who understands history knows how to find continuity between that which was, that which is, and that which will be."
Rand's artistic awakening came in the late 1920s at the New York Public Library where he explored the stacks and pored through volumes of Commercial Art, the British trade journal that published articles on the European avant-garde practitioners, including expatriate E. McKnight Kauffer.

He had a second epiphany at a little magazine store adjacent to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, where in 1929 he bought his first issue of Gebrauchsgrafik, the most influential German advertising arts magazine ever published. It was in this periodical that Rand learned about the practice of, and the term, graphic design.
By 1938 Rand had produced enough noteworthy design that he caught the eye of Marguerite Tjader Harris, the daughter of a wealthy Connecticut munitions manufacturer. She was intent on having Rand design covers for Direction, an arts and culture magazine that she published on a shoestring, which featured articles by Le Corbusier, Jean Cocteau, and other avant-gardists.
She offered Rand no recompense, but plenty of freedom and, ultimately, a couple of original Le Corbusier drawings.

Left

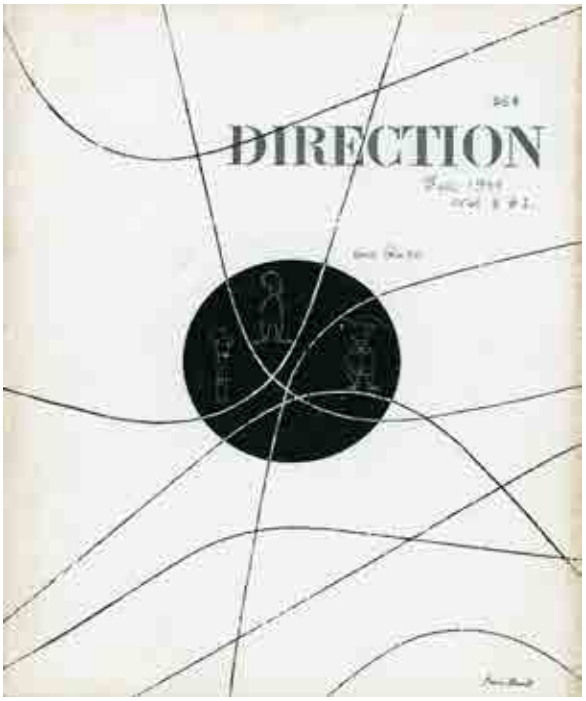
Direction, *cover, Summer 1944, Vol. 7, No. 4*
The large capital "D" with a cross and helmet in the centre represents the D-Day and the death of the Nazi occupation of Europe. This poster-like image is not typical of conventional propaganda imagery but, without resorting the cliché, Rand suggest the monumental effect of the D-Day invasion.

Clockwise from top right

Direction, *cover, Fall 1945, Vol. 8, No. 1.*
"Less is more" is operative with this drawing, contrasting light and dark, on the theme of "one race".

Direction, *cover, Summer 1942, Vol.5, No. 3.*
For the "Summer Number", Rand makes a subtle political statement, as the ghoulish face these fish are those of the Axis leaders. This perceptive image is reproduce in black, white and greys (not summer colours at all) to add a further level of drama.

Direction, *cover, November 1943, Vol. 6, No. 3.*
Rand illustrated the idea that "French culture lives on", by affixing a heart containing the Eiffel tower to the Loure's Victory of Samothrace.



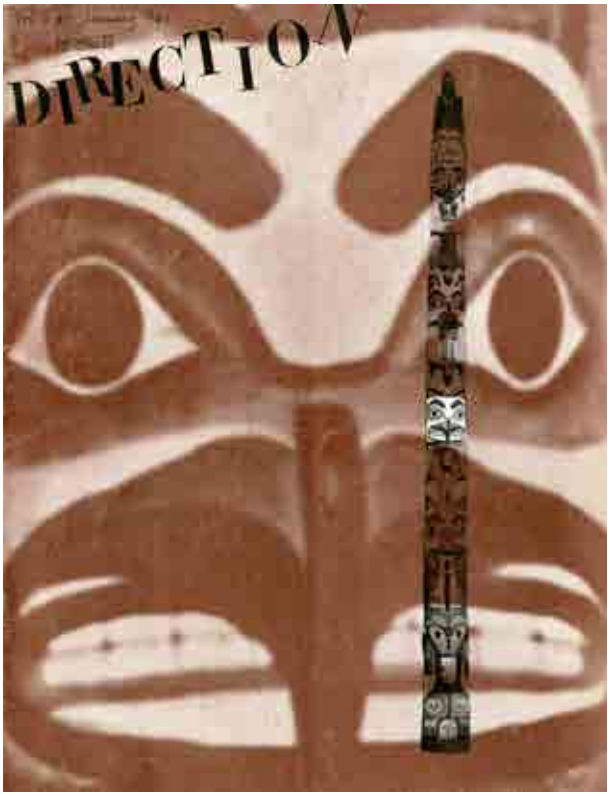
Clockwise from right page

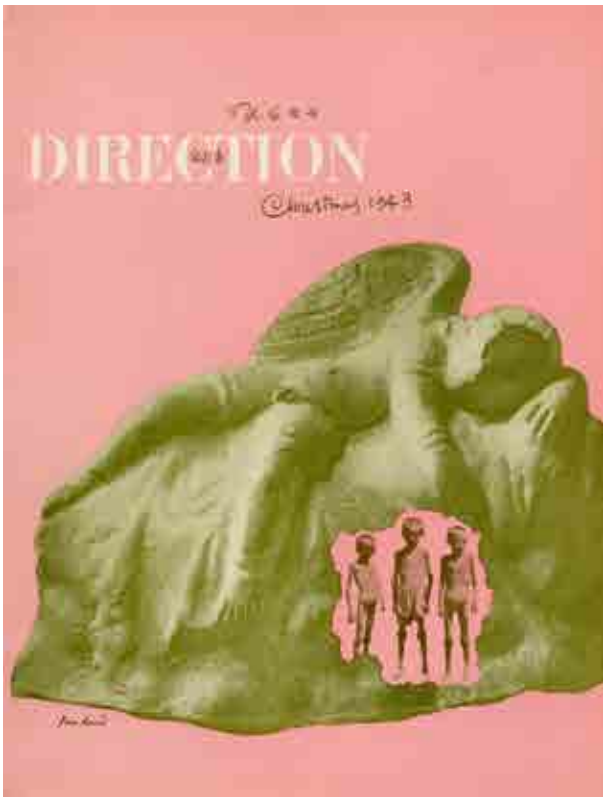
Direction, *cover, Summer 1940, Vol. 3, No. 6.*

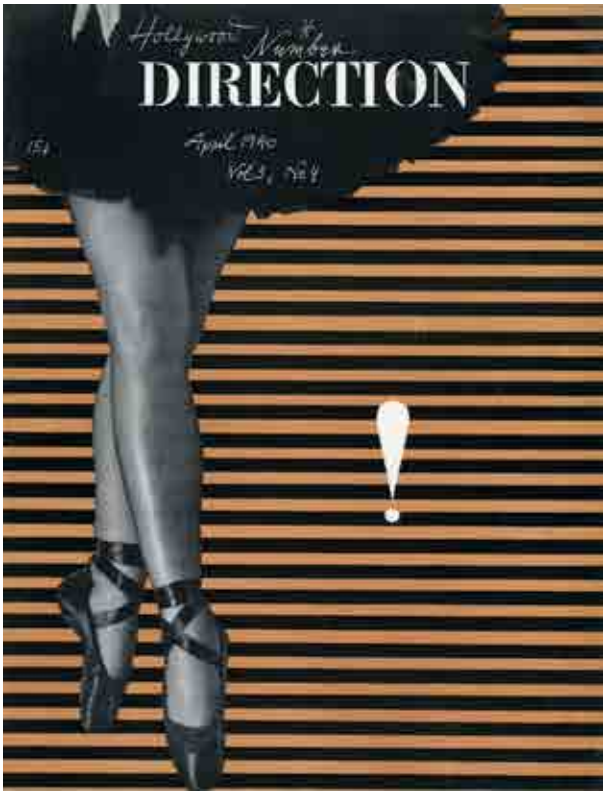
Direction, *cover, April 1940, Vol. 3, No. 4.*

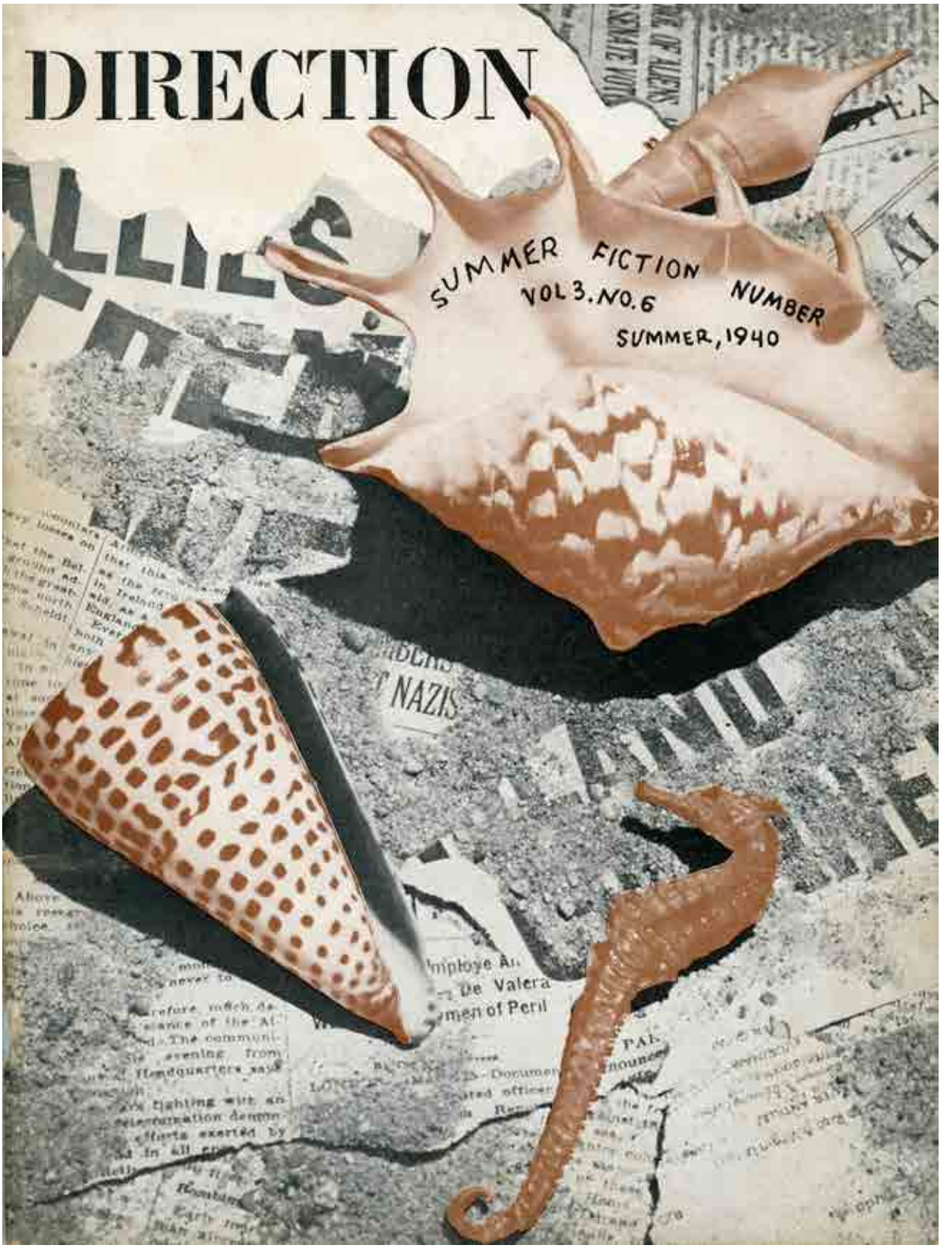
Direction, *cover, January 1941, Vol. 4, No. 1.*

Direction, *cover, Christmas 1943, Vol. 6, No. 4.*
As a testament to the horrors in the war-torn Europe, Rand created a montafe of three starving children and a sculpture of a fallen angel.








DIRECTION
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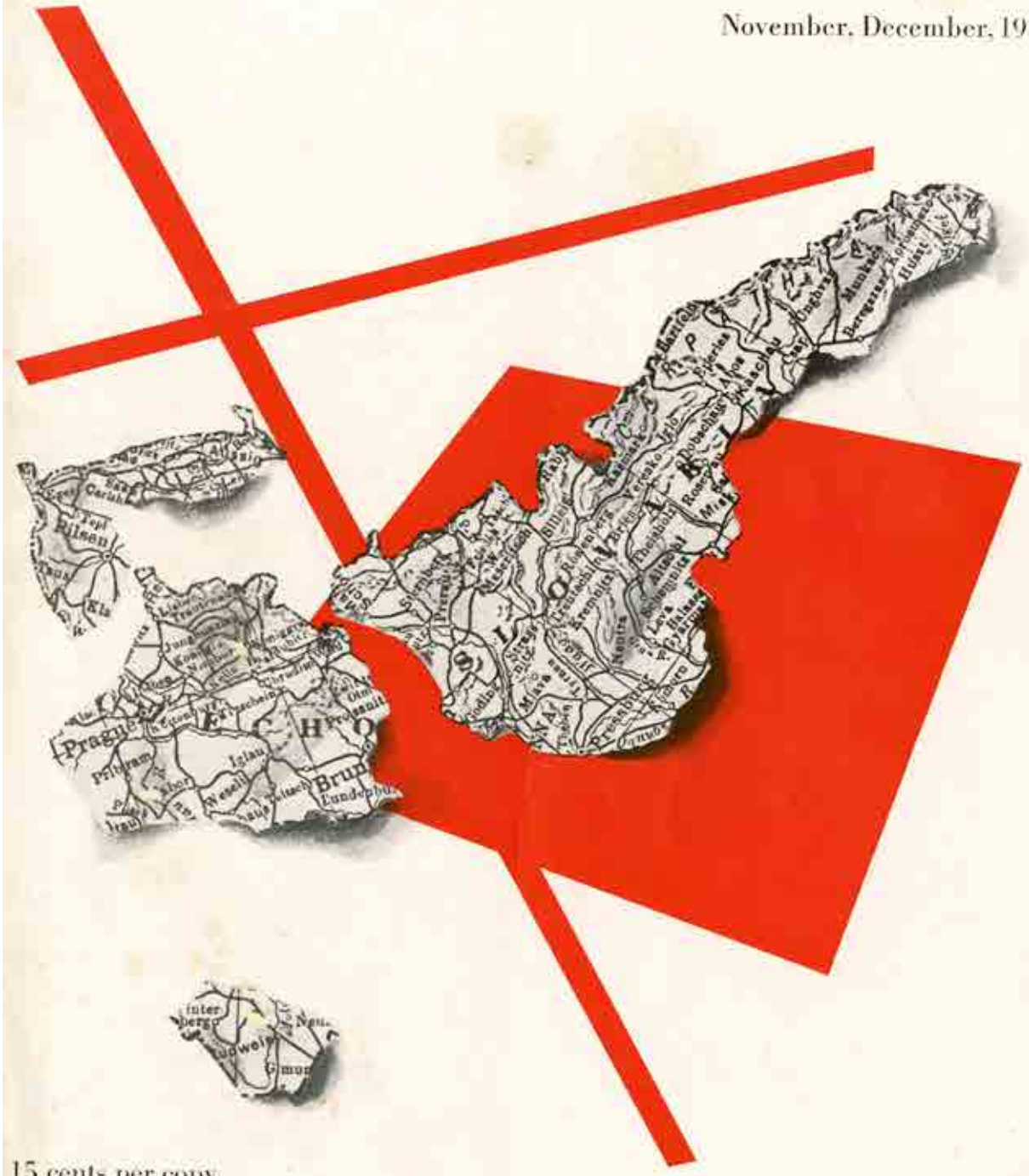
VOL 3. NO. 6
SUMMER, 1940
NAZIS

DIRECTION

Vol. 1 Number 9

November, December, 1938



15 cents per copy

Far left

Direction, *cover, November/December 1940, Vol. 1, No. 9.*
Rand noted that the somewhat abstracted cross on this, his first *Direction* cover, was designed "to suggest a pair of shears cutting up the map of Czechoslovakia."

Left

Direction, *cover, Summer 1941, Vol. 4, No. 5.*

Below

Direction, *cover's detail, Winter 1942, Vol. 5, No. 4.*
Rand made a trenchant anti-Nazi statement in this freehand drawing of a rat with Hitler's iconic moustache.

But Rand has another motive, "In a country that was used to decorative work, the common sense way to have what I was doing accepted was to do it for free," he explained. More than any other projects, the Direction covers exemplified the timelessness that Rand attributed to the most significant art and design.

Each Direction cover illustrated a particular theme or point of view; the first, and his most politically astute, showed a map of Czechoslovakia torn in half, representing the nation's evisceration by the Nazis. Contrasted with an E.McKnight Kauffer Direction covers showing a realistic hand impaled by a Nazi dagger, Rand's abstract depiction was both subtle and eloquent. Rand avoided conventional propagandistic tools in favor of imagery he believed would serve as both art and message. His 1940 "Merry Christmas" cover was a visual pun that substituted barbed wire for gift wrap ribbon.

Rand photographed real barbed wire against a white background lit to pick up the shadows. Little red circles made by a hole punch represented spilled blood. The barbed wire was a striking mnemonic symbol for oppression. The surprising juxtaposition of visual elements and universal symbols was born of necessity. Messages had to be conveyed quickly and efficiently. Since there was no budget for materials he often used handwriting instead of type for many of the covers. He even pieced together the stenciled masthead (a precursor of the stenciled IBM logo, perhaps) from the letters in type catalogs. His images were often assembled from various elements. "Collages don't imitate reality," he stated. "The machine aesthetic dictated that you don't do things by hand anymore."

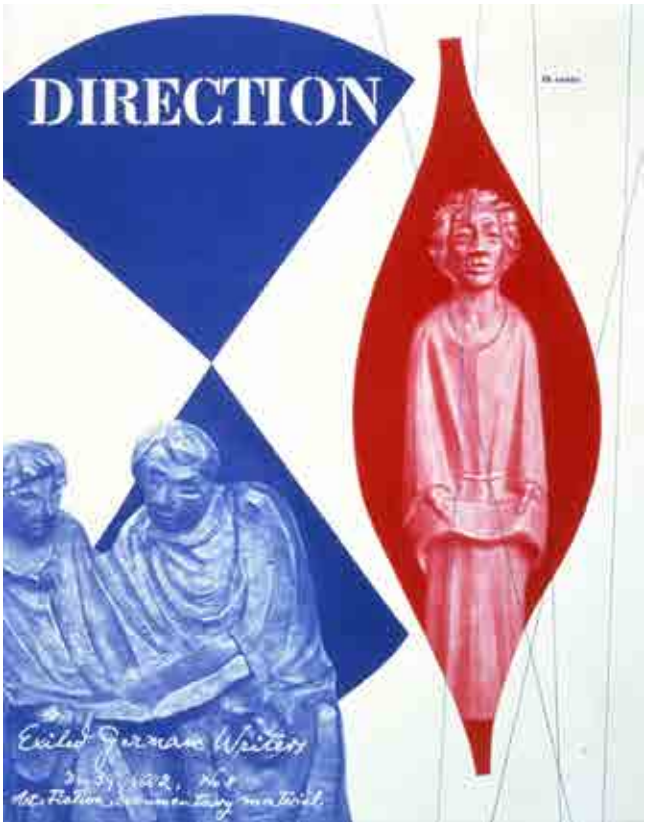
Nevertheless, the Direction covers did not slavishly conform to such modern principles, and hand drawing was used on occasion. Rand was the first to confess that these breakthrough covers were not entirely unique. But even though he admitted to paying homage both to Picasso and the surrealist art magazines Verve and Minotaur, Rand created a unique visual vocabulary – and a collection of memorable magazine covers – that was unlike anything being done in the United States at that time, or for a long time after.

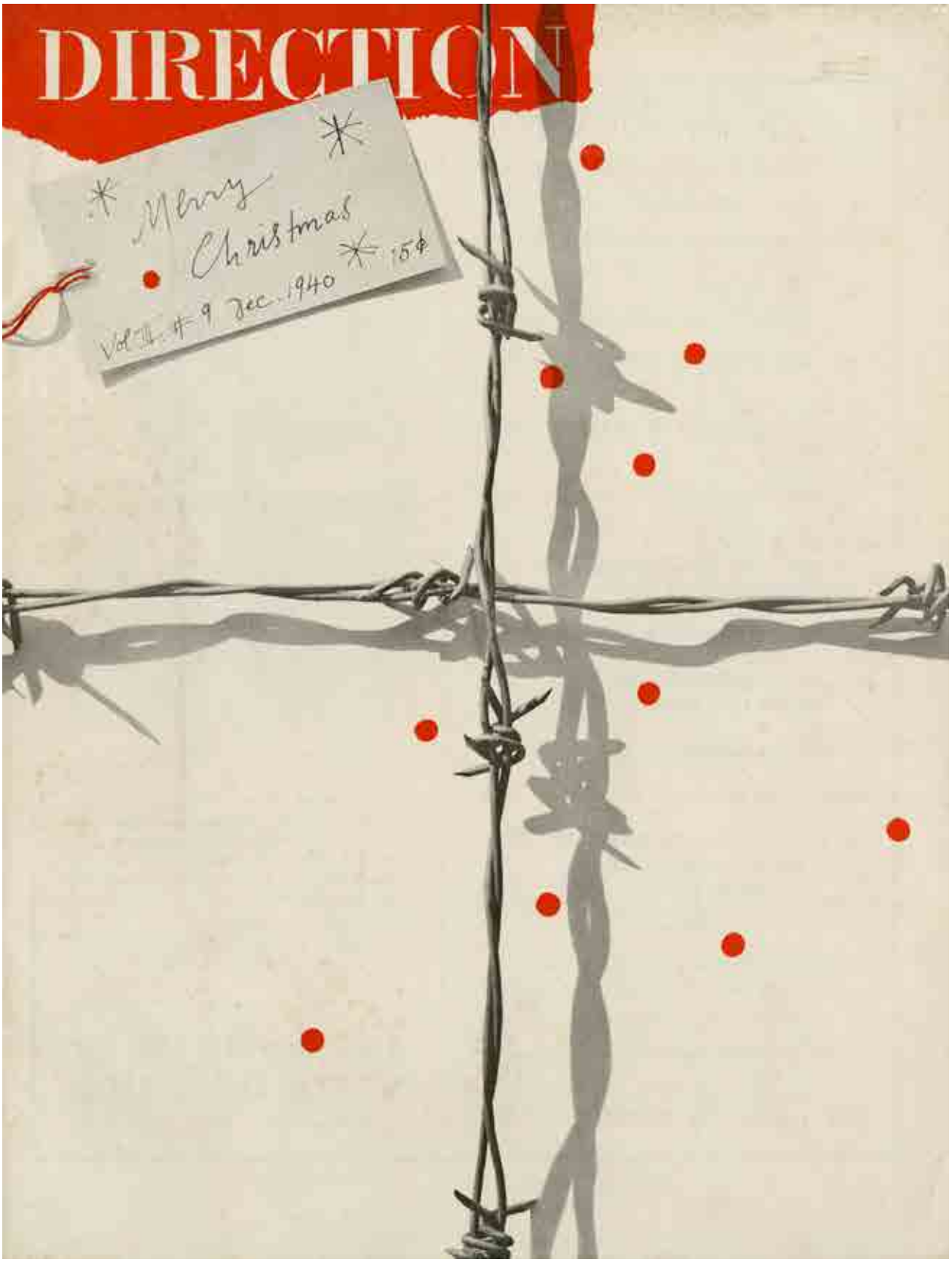
Right

Direction, *cover, December 1940, Vol. 3, No. 9.*
The covers created for this small anti-fascist, left-leaning magazine of art and culture represent Rand's most experiment period. In the spirit of the European avant-garde, Rand played with drawing, collage and lettering. Transcending the conventions of mass magazine cover design. In this issue, what appears to be a Christmas package is tied with a barbed-wire ribbon. According to Rand, "the form is intensified by dramatic naraative association. The literal meaning changes according to context: the formal quality remains unchanged."

Below

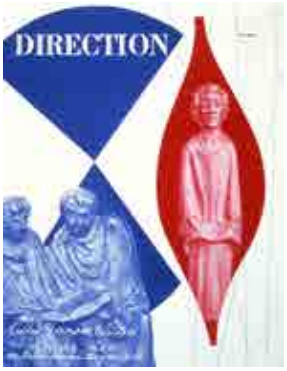
Direction, *cover, December 1939, Vol. 2, No. 8.*




DIRECTION
Merry
Christmas
15¢
Vol. II. #9 Dec. 1940

From left to right

Direction, every cover designed by Paul Rand
in cronological order from 1938 to 1945.


DIRECTION


DIRECTION


DIRECTION


DIRECTION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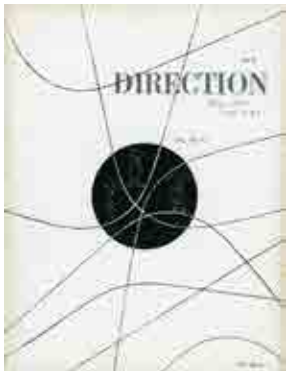
DIRECTION


DIRECTION


DIRECTION


DIRECTION


DIRECTION

curated by
Emanuele Coppo

the art of selling

Written by Steven Heller
Induction to The One Club's Creative Hall of Fame, 2007

At Weintraub's Agency

When in 1941 William H. Weintraub left the Esquire-Coronet magazine company to start an advertising agency at Rockefeller Center, Paul Rand, who had worked for three years at Esquire, left with him. As the art director of the Weintraub Agency he was given license and power, and within a short period Rand was working on campaigns for Dubonnet, Shenley liquors, Lee Hats, Disney Hats, Revlon, Hilbros Watches, El Producto Cigars, Stafford Fabrics, Kaiser Corporation and Auto Car.

He hired a relatively large staff, but by his own admission, he never acted like a traditional art director; he would rarely delegate, but instead he'd design everything himself, except for certain illustrations by the likes of Ludwig Bemelmans, William Steig or Richard Lindner. Most of the time he would only come into the office for half of the week, sometimes only for half a day. The other time he attended to freelance projects for such companies as Smith Klein and French and Ohrbach's (where he worked with Bill Bernbach as copywriter).

The staff at Weintraub's was there to serve his creative needs according to his strict requirements, and they were afraid of him. When Rand was unsatisfied with someone's work, he would say so. But at the same time he would explain what was wrong. "He was a good teacher, but not always a pleasant one", Wyszygorod remembers. "He did not have the patience to go into lengthy discussions with someone who questioned his authority. He would digest it and come back with a bunch of answers and designs to explain what he meant." His keen ability to use design to sell quotidian products was earning him a considerable reputation. By the late 1940s Rand as a name had become so popular that he demanded that Weintraub give him double the pay for half the time.

CORONET

makes the lighter highball

...because Coronet itself
is lighter...kinder...
cleaner-tasting!

lighter with soda...

lighter with ginger ale...

lighter with cola...

On the previous page

Coronet Brandy
Magazine advertisement, ca. 1945.

Left

Kaufmann's
Magazine advertisement for Kaufmann's department store, 1947.

Rand's importance at this period was the modernization of advertising design. Before he came to Mad Ave in the '40s, very little American advertising was really designed, but rather simply laid out by board men. Conversely, Rand was intimately involved in the entire design and typographic process. He brought to advertisements his unique appreciation of Modernist collage, which underscored his playful use of type and image. Rand was also influenced by Jan Tschichold's *New Typography*, the Modern typographic bible, and accepted the dogma – "I took it literally," he once said. "You don't do illustration, you use photography; you don't do handmade things, you do it by machine. I did it that way because that's how one learns. Even if you disagree you do it that way and then later throw it away." But Rand being Rand inevitably took liberties.

Although he never studied calligraphy – because it was unnatural and stuck in time – he used his own informal handwriting whenever he could. Handwriting, he said, "is the most natural form of communicating." His advertising was also a blend of modernist economy and American wit. Of his work at the time he says: "You don't imitate anything. Collages are important, because they are not imitations of reality, but rather juxtaposed pieces of different realities."
What made Rand's work so extraordinary was the fact that they were advertisements for common products, produced in uncharacteristically witty, imaginative and memorable ways. Of this shirt-sleeve style he said, "I knew that not too many other guys were doing this in the US, but I never claimed that this was original stuff, because other guys were doing it in Europe."

A salesman from a graphic arts house said, "My boss says the great Paul Rand works here, and I thought I might get a look at him." Just then Rand swept through the room. Asked if he was impressed, the salesman said, "But he's so young."

The Insider, September 1939

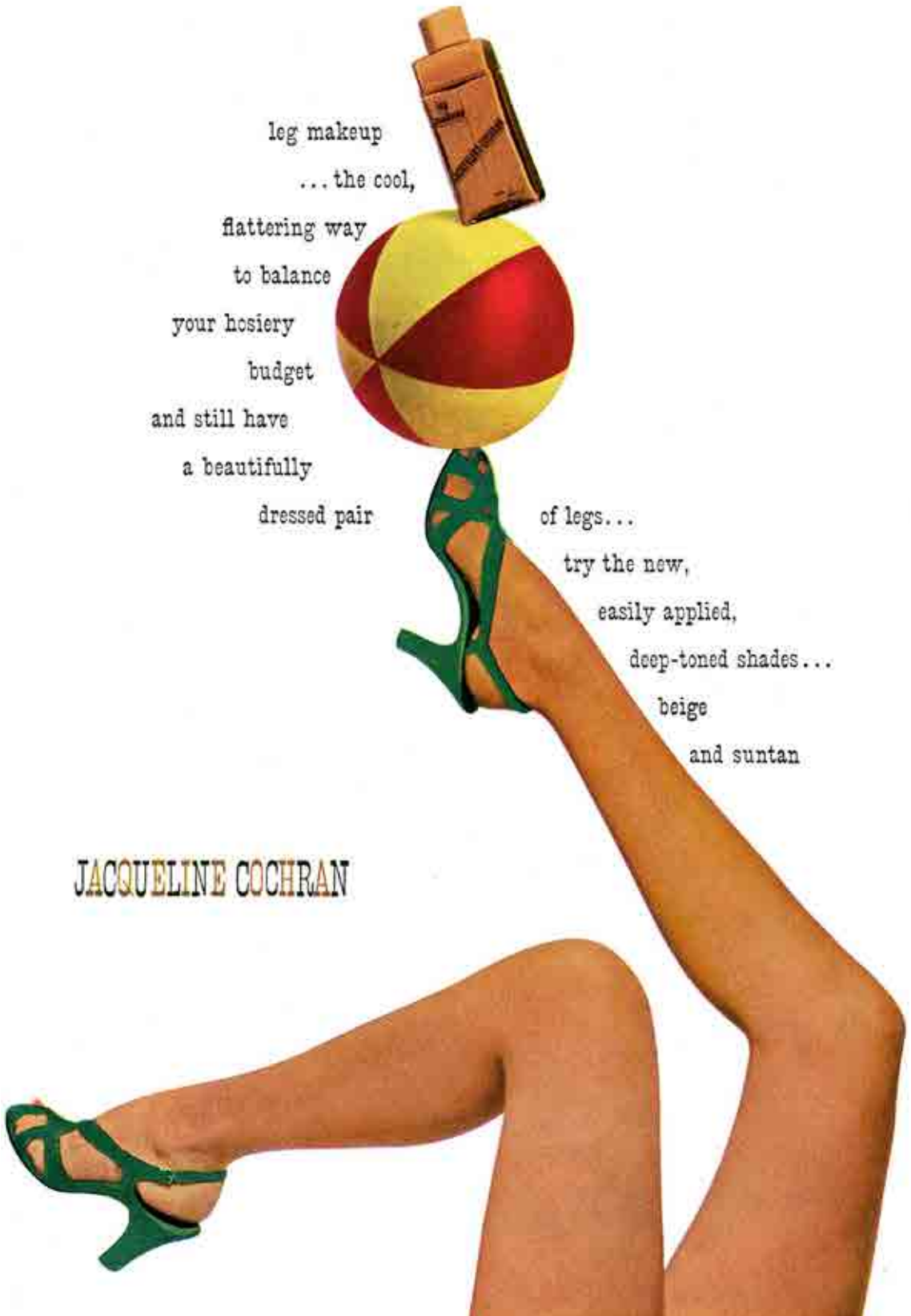
His campaigns were never cookie cutter; they showed range and versatility. Moreover, they proved how Rand's intelligent application of abstract form was highly successful in a competitive market. About this he wrote: "For an advertisement to hold its own in a competitive race, it must be led off the beaten path by some more interesting device: the abstract symbol. If this symbol is too obscure in itself, it should be balanced with universally recognized forms." In his ads, as well as in his book cover design he combined shapes, colors and objects.
Rand loved the use of found objects, cut papers and minimal typography.
While making silk purses from found materials was not new to Rand (and was certainly in keeping with modernist tradition), it was unusual in the agency environment, where copywriters reigned supreme and usually give layouts to art directors who would make them pretty.

On this page

Kaiser-Frazer
A clear example of Rand's Modernist style can be seen in these advertisements for the Kaiser-Frazer car company: colorful and simple shapes, collages and typographic experiments (1950s).

Right

Jacqueline Cochran
Magazine advertisement, 1944.


leg makeup
... the cool,
flattering way
to balance
your hosiery
budget
and still have
a beautifully
dressed pair
of legs...
try the new,
easily applied,
deep-toned shades...
beige
and suntan
JACQUELINE COCHRAN

Right

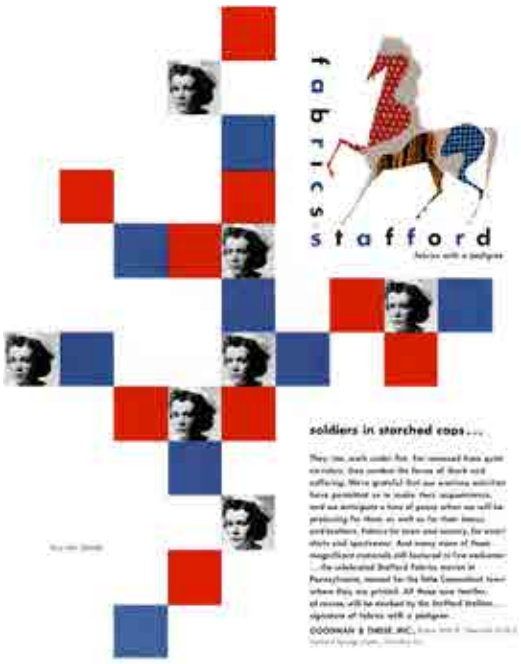
Stafford Fabrics
Magazine advertisement, ca. 1942.

Bottom right

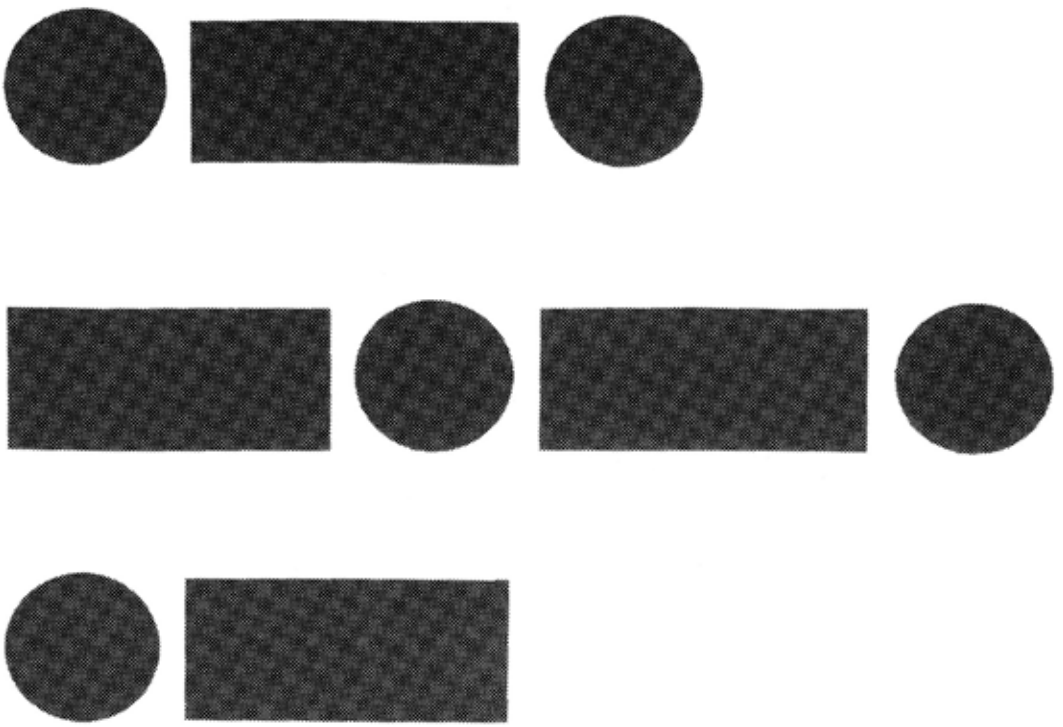
Ohrbach's
Magazine advertisement, 1946.

On the next page

RCA
Newspaper advertisement for the Radio Corporation of America, 1954. The name of the company, "RCA", is represented with the Morse code. To the general public, unfamiliar with these symbols, they nevertheless served as a powerful attention-compelling device.



To the consternation of many copywriters, Rand took great pleasure in tearing up their layouts, particularly those that he thought were "lousy," and would often rewrite the headline. Rand was not known for his patience in such matters. "I was not going to let myself be treated like a job printer on Pitkin Avenue," he recalled.
In his advertising work Rand frequently used *Futura* instead of the more common calligraphic fonts. His advertising was simpler looking and in turn more eye-catching that the typical ads. Rand brought ideas and intelligence to advertising, but kept in mind that whatever he was doing, should communicate, so the guy in the street knew what they were trying to sell. For every product he defined the problem and customized a solution. His advertising was conceptually sharp and visually smart. Every detail was meant to attract the eye. He often divided designs into two components; a large mass that drew the attention and a smaller mass that needed closer attention.
Rand's ads often contained sketchy drawing with visual puns, which at that time was unique and alluring. The El Producto, Coronet or Dubonnet ads were a typical example of his way of working. He developed a logo which could be seen as an icon, a touchstone for everything that followed. He wouldn't just put the logo at the base of an advertisement, it became a potential illustrative feature, a character.

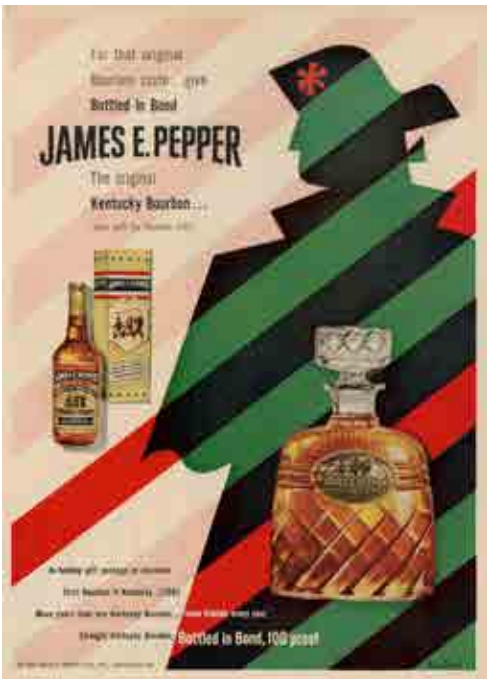


To the executives and management of the Radio Corporation of America:

Messrs. Alexander, Anderson, Baker, Buck, Cahill, Cannon, Carter, Coe, Coffin, Dunlap, Elliott, Engstrom, Folsom, Gorin, Jolliffe, Kayes, Marek, Mills, Odorizzi, Orth, Sacks, Brig. Gen. Sarnoff, R. Sarnoff, Saxon, Seidel, Teegarden, Tuft, Watts, Weaver, Werner, Williams

Gentlemen: An important message intended expressly for your eyes is now on its way to each one of you by special messenger.

William H. Weintraub & Company, Inc. *Advertising* *488 Madison Avenue, New York*



Top-left

Dubonnet
Magazine advertisements for Dubonnet's Aperitif Wine, 1954.

Top-right

James E. Pepper
Magazine advertisement for James E. Pepper's Kentucky Bourbon, 1951.

On the next page

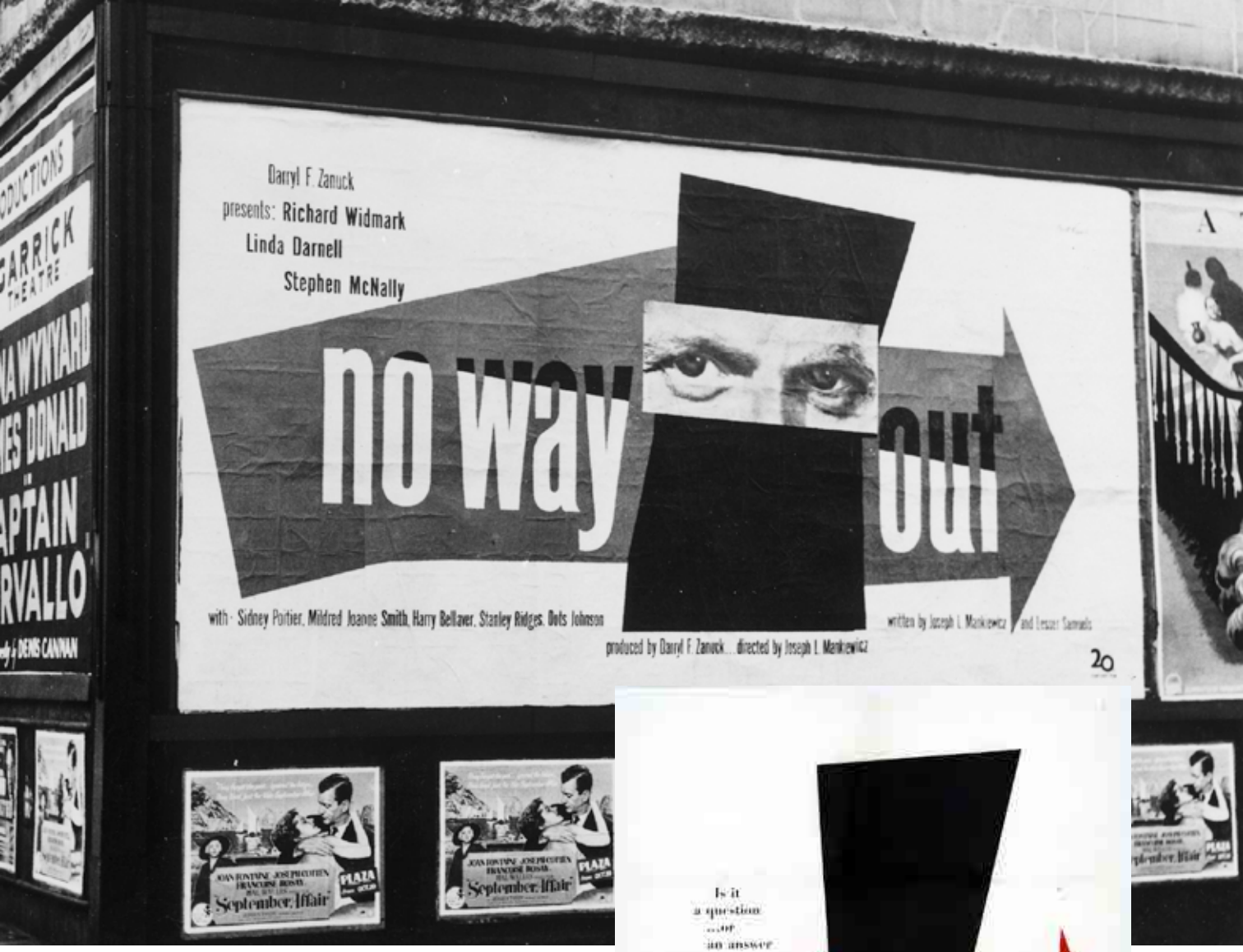
Weintraub's staff
Portrait of the Weintraub's staff. William Weintraub is sitting at the head of the table, while Paul rand is standing on his left.

Incidentally, Rand was the first to sign his work, which at the time (and even today) was no mean feat. Signing ads was common in Europe, but very rare in America, where designers were subordinate to the overall identity of the agency. When one day Weintraub called him into his office and demanded that he take his name off an ad, Rand said "this is your agency and I'll take it off, but then take my name off your door, because I'm leaving." The signature stayed on almost all his ads. But he admits that if a client had asked, he would have acquiesced. No client ever made such a request. Rand didn't sign his ads because he believed they were art, but rather for self-promotion. Since he never took out ads in the Art Director's annuals, nor sent around flyers soliciting work, the signature was all the personal advertising he needed. For a similar reason, yet with a decidedly different result, he agreed in 1946 at the age of 32 to write a book about his work, entitled *Thoughts on Desig*n, published by Wittenborn the following year. This book was evidence that Rand, the street-smart kid from Brooklyn, who altered the way advertising was created, was also a vigorous design thinker with lots to say.

Written by Paul Rand
Published in "Posters", 1952

Posters

The essence of the "art of the poster" is not a matter of literal content nor technique but one of creating visual ideas appropriate to the medium. Countless so-called posters are not in fact posters at all – they are merely enlarged illustrations which ignore the fundamental functional considerations of size, distant viewing, and speed of the viewer which should be the determinant of poster design.
By demanding that the poster be simple, bold, and striking these factors distinguish the poster unequivocally from the illustration which, like a miniature or easel painting, is intended for close and leisurely inspection and can therefore be complex and subtle. Unfortunately where it has been recognized that a poster must be immediately and potently attractive this has been widely interpreted to mean a blow up of a "pretty girl" or the rendering of a fantastically elongated motor car. It has been forgotten that color and design are the basic elements of attraction in the same sense that flags, pennants, flowers, bright fabrics, and heraldic devices are the age old means of dramatization and advertisement. Clearly the appeal of these purely plastic elements cannot be calculated by surveys, polls, and pulse takers; therefore in this age of reverence for statistics it is apt to be ignored or lightly dismissed. Hence, the poster becomes formulized into the above mentioned pretty girl plus product or oversized product plus label.Consequently to see one poster is to see all, and the prime and crucial factor in poster design is flouted – i.e. sensory appeal.
A poster must attract as quickly and boldly as a banner and excite sensations of pleasure and interest in the observer. This the standardized poster cannot do but it can and does succeed in boring the observer with its triteness and vacuous design.



***No Way Out* movie**
Rand's posters for the 1950 movie *No Way Out*. The one on the right is a vertical format, while the one above is the traditional 24 sheet billboard.

Bottom

Coronet Brandy
Horizontal poster, ca. 1945.

Right

IBM Rebus
The iconic "Eye-Bee-M" poster, 1981. Rand replaced the first two letters of the IBM logo with the pictograms of an eye and a bee. He described it as "a kind of game designed to engage the reader and, incidentally, lots of fun." The text on the bottom of the poster says:

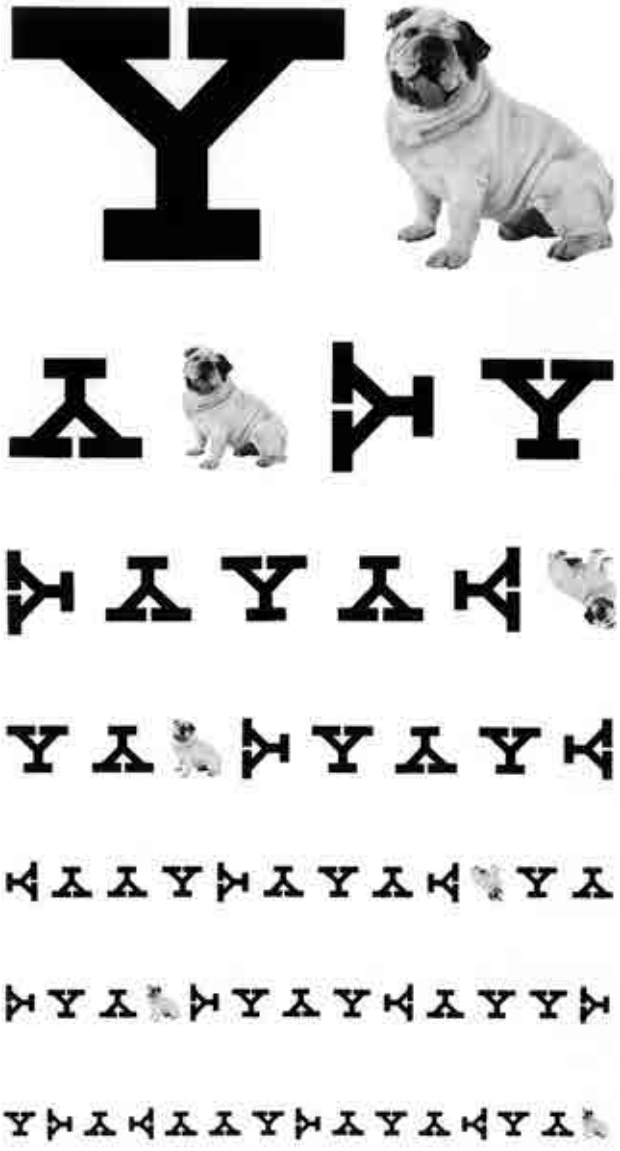
an Eye for perception, insight, vision.
a Bee for industriousness, dedication, perseverance.
an M for motivation, merit, moral strength.

A good poster is, however, only half the battle for the best poster if badly displayed cannot only be revitalized but can actually become a visual irritation if it interrupts architectural forms or obtrudes rudely into the landscape. It is unnecessary to remind the reader of the ravages done to city and countryside by the wanton plastering of posters on every available space. But apparently it is necessary to remind the advertiser who defeats his own purpose by rendering his advertising obnoxious rather than pleasurable. The placing of the poster and its design should be interdependent.

The American poster producer's obsession with size, i.e. 24 sheet, not only leads to monotony but makes the poster difficult to place. The virtues of the small poster are overlooked and 24 sheet billboards are posted in alleyways or along sidewalks where the small size poster is obviously more practicable. Likewise the flexibility of the small poster is not appreciated, for instance it can be shown not only single but repeated within larger frames – a device widely and effectively used in Europe and one which by creating a repetitive pattern, can render even a mediocre poster exciting.

an Eye for perception, insight, vision
a Bee for industriousness, dedication, perseverance
an "M" for individuality, health, moral strength

A noteworthy unusual perspective of the familiar IBM logotype, and a light reminder of some of the basic mental qualities that have come to characterize the hardworking men and women who have built, and who continue to build, the success of the IBM company.



Furthermore the small poster being ideally suited for peripatetic inspection, can be displayed with great impact if instead of being haphazardly pasted on walls it is exhibited within an appropriate architectural framework – for example the cylindrical kiosk. This kiosk which is found all over Europe is worth special mention because it can combine competing posters. Its circular form permits each poster to be viewed in comparative isolation and, because it is not merely an effective sidewalk display device, it makes a positive contribution to the gayety and architectural beauty of the urban scene.
In America isolated efforts have been made to correlate the poster with its setting as for instance in subway advertising where size and spacing of posters is controlled. If these efforts multiply, and the quality of poster design improves, outdoor advertising could easily become a pleasure to the community as well as an effective advertising medium.

Top-left

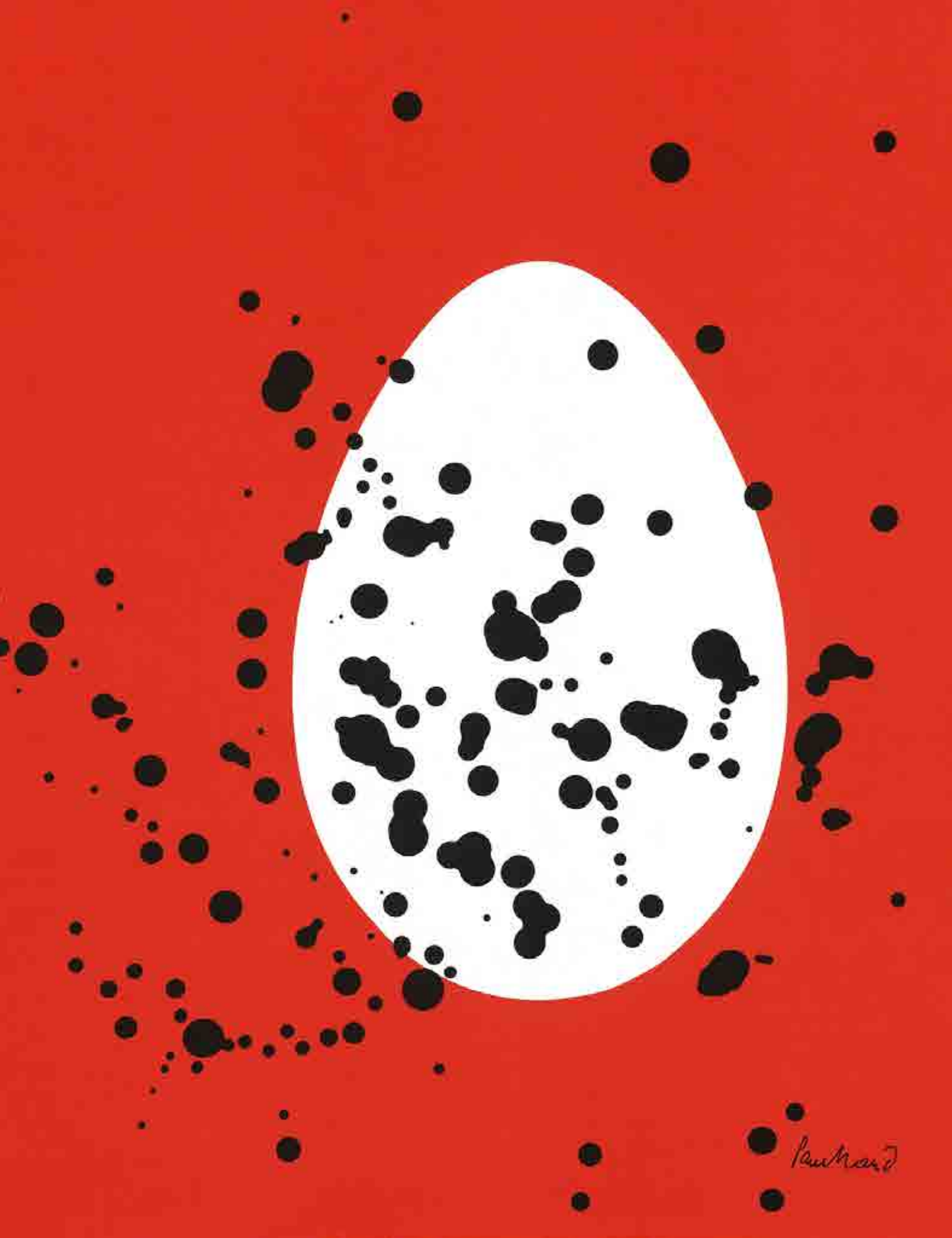
Advertising Typography Association of America
Poster, 1965.

Top-right

Yale University
"Eye chart" poster, 1988.

Right

Aspen Design Conference
Poster, 1962.



Written by Paul and Ann Rand
Published in "Dedalus: The Visual Arts Today", 1960

Advertisement: Ad Vivum or Ad Hominem?

Never in the history of mankind has a visual artist been subjected to such a barrage of sensory experiences as is the commercial artist of today. As he walks through that urban landscape for which his art is designed, he is bombarded with a fusillade of news and noise. His own art forms (billboard, sign, and advertisement) do not communicate with him, they scream at him from all sides in a crazy cacophony. He is confronted with a massive multiplicity of things – of products and events. Unlike other artists, he cannot detach himself from nor ignore this environment – it is his world. He works in it, with it, and for it.

Can the advertising artist, overwhelmed as he is by so many stimuli, have those deep and valid experiences which are the necessary basis for a genuine art?

Perhaps "change" is the key word in this new world. Today we are committed to change at so dizzying a speed on all levels, in all directions. We scarcely have time to apprehend changes, let alone evaluate them. This, however, is precisely what the popular artist has to do if he wants to work effectively. Change is his milieu. As an artist for industry, he designs the myriad products of an industrially productive age. As a painter, he is rarely, and often only incidentally, accepted by men of business. What has aesthetics to do with selling? The probable answer is: very little, directly; indirectly, perhaps a great deal. The commercial artist who wants to be more than a "stylist" must either become clear as to what his cultural contribution may be, or else be overwhelmed by the demands of clients, myths about public taste, consumer research surveys, etc.

IBM Corporation
Poster for the IBM Customer Support Center, 1980.

Rand was first employed by IBM in 1956 to redesign the company's logo. He continued consulting for the company for more than 30 years, designing posters, advertisements, packagings and everything concerning the company's corporate identity.

Precariously perched between economics and aesthetics, his performance judged by the grimly impersonal yet arbitrary "Does it sell?" the commercial artist has great difficulty in finding his artistic personality, let alone asserting it. If he can think independently and logically, the popular artist may come to see continuous and accelerating change, not as confusion compounded, but as the present form of stability.
As a product designer he is increasingly required to consider what has been called "the newness factor;" as an advertising designer he is told by the copywriter that the resultant product is *New! Amazing! Different! The First Time in History!* All too often this "newness" has nothing to do with the innovation that is genuine change – an invention or an original method of doing or a mode of seeing and thinking. "Newness" frequently consists of contrived and transitory surprise effects such as pink stoves, automobile fins, graphic tricks. The *novelty-for-novelty's-sake* boom, with its concomitants of hypocrisy, superficiality, and waste, corrupts the designer who is taken in by them.
The differentiation of fact from fiction gives the commercial artist a basis for the

On the previous page

Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Rand worked as a graphic designer and consultant for Westinghouse from 1959 to 1981, producing minimal but very creative ads, like the two below (1961).

Top

Cummins Engine Company
Poster, 1994.

Right

UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles)
75th anniversary poster, 1994.

far-reaching decisions he must often make. It is because of his relationship to industry that these decisions have effects far beyond the immediate aesthetic ones. When the artist designs a product, not only are millions of industry's dollars risked, but so are the jobs of those people involved making the product. Even the graphic artist by "selling" a product helps secure jobs as well as profits. Under these circumstances it becomes a matter of social responsibility for the commercial artist to have a clear and firm understanding of what he is doing and why.
The profession or job of the artist in the commercial field is clear. He must design a product that will sell, or create a visual work that will help sell, a product, a process, or a service. At the same time, if he has both talent and a commitment to aesthetic values, he will automatically try to make the product or graphic design both pleasing and visually stimulating to the user or viewer. By stimulating I mean that his work will add something to the consumer's experience.
Ideas do not need to be esoteric to be original or exciting. What Cezanne did with apples or Picasso with guitars makes it quite clear that revelation does not depend upon complication. In 1947 I wrote what I still hold to be true, "The problem of the artist is to make the commonplace uncommonplace." If artistic quality depended on exalted subject matter, the commercial artist, as well as the advertising agency and advertiser, would be in a bad way.

Bottom

Olivetti
Two advertisements designed for the typewriter *Lettera 22*, by the Italian company Olivetti. The colorful and essential shapes suggest the idea that even a child can use it (1953).

Right

Minute Man
Poster for the Minute Man National Historical Park in Massachusetts, 1974.

For a number of years I have worked with a cigar-manufacturing company whose product, visually, is not in itself unusual. A cigar is almost as commonplace as an apple, but if I fail to make ads for cigars that are lively and original, it will not be the cigar that is at fault. What is important about visual ideas is that they express the artist's experience and opinions in such a way that he communicates them to others, and that they, in turn, feel a sense of discovery on seeing the work, a sense similar to the artist's own. Only this can enrich the spectator's personal experience. Further, in the case of the graphic artist, these ideas must be so conceived as to help sell the product.
Products do not have to be beautifully designed. Things can be made and marketed without our considering their aesthetic aspects, ads can convince without pleasing or heightening the spectator's visual awareness. But should they? The world of business could, at least for a while, function without benefit of art – but should it? I think not, if only for the simple reason that the world would be a poorer place if it did.

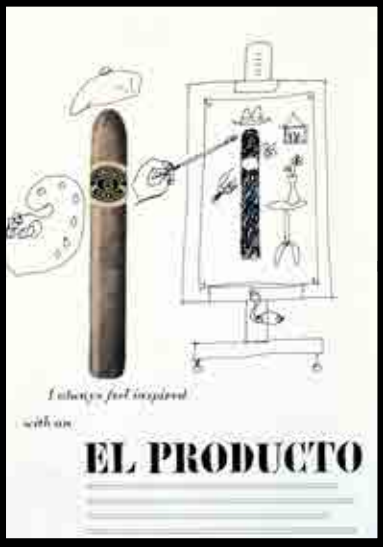
MINUTEMAN

Minuteman National Historical Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior


I feel
Like an
All
American
with
an
EL PRODUCTO


I feel like
the Champ
with an EL PRODUCTO


I feel like going places
with an EL PRODUCTO


I always feel inspired
with an
EL PRODUCTO


I always feel like traveling
with an EL PRODUCTO

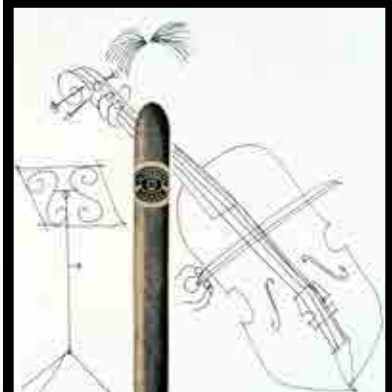

I feel like the
National Open Winner
with an EL PRODUCTO

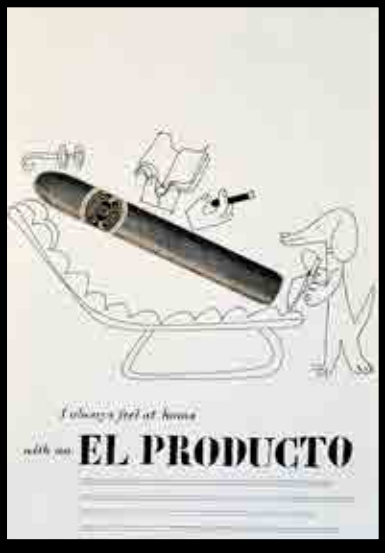

I always feel my best
with
an EL PRODUCTO


I feel like a V.I.P.
with my EL PRODUCTO

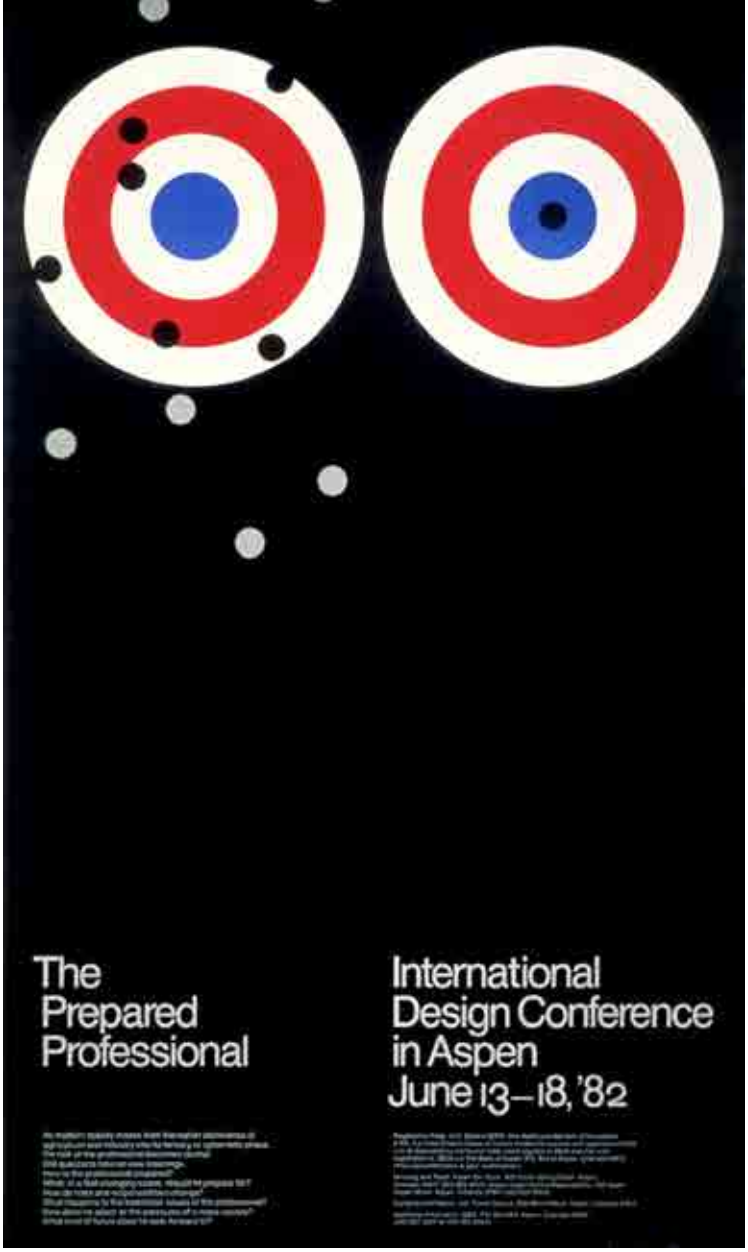

I always feel like singing
with an EL PRODUCTO


I feel so proud
with an EL PRODUCTO





El Producto
The series of playful newspaper advertisements realized for the cigar-manufacturing company El Producto, 1950s. The "familiar" feeling is achieved through the use of the collage technique and sketched drawings.



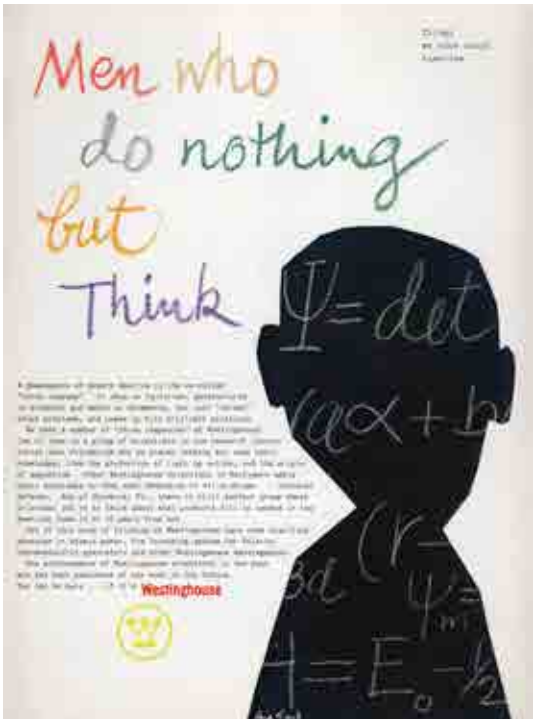
The very *raison d'être* of the commercial artist, namely, to help sell products and services, is often cited by him as the reason he cannot do good work. But there is nothing wrong or shameful in selling. The shame and wrong come in only if the artist designs products or ads that do not meet his standards of artistic integrity. If there is nothing wrong with selling, even with "hard" selling, there is one type that is wrong: representative selling. Morally, it is very difficult for an artist to do a direct and creative job if dishonest claims are being made for the product he is asked to advertise, or if, as an industrial designer, he is supposed to exercise mere stylistic ingenuity to give an old product a new appearance. The artist's sense of worth depends on his feeling of integrity. If this is destroyed, he will no longer be able to function creatively. On the other hand, it is surely more consoling to the commercial artist to see himself betrayed by the shortsightedness of commerce or to believe he is forced to submit to "what the public wants" than to think he himself may be at fault. Yet actually it may not always be the lack of taste on the part of client and public that accounts for bad work, but the artist's own

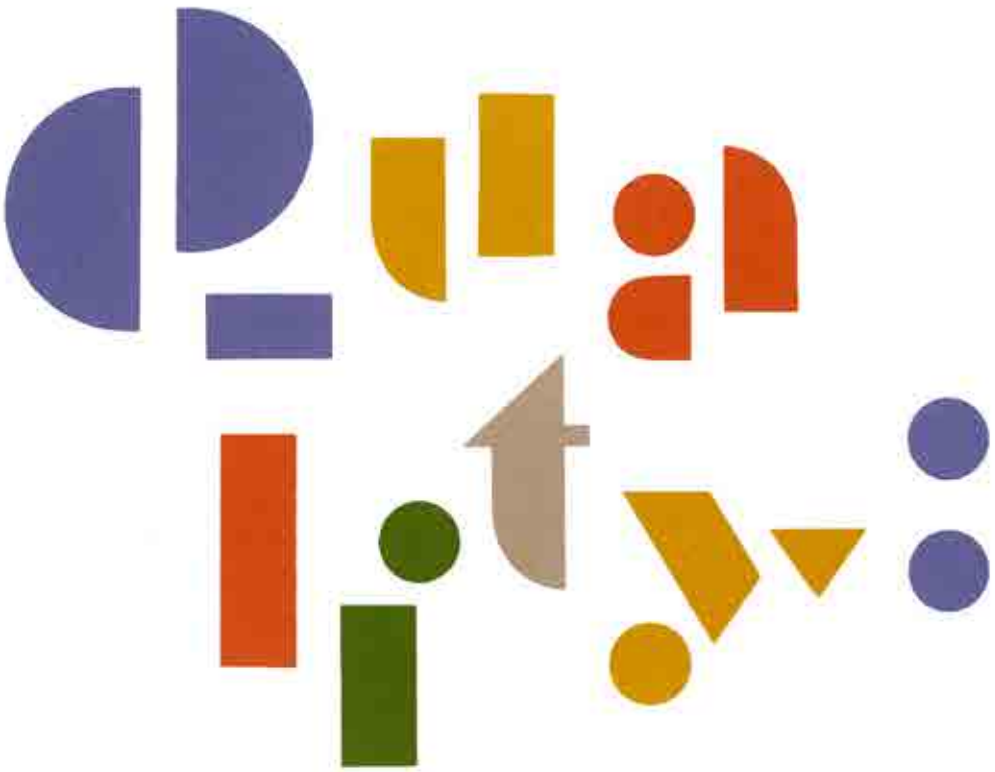
Left

Aspen Design Conference
Poster, 1982.

On this page

Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Magazine advertisements (dates are, clockwise from top left: 1962, 1962, 1971, 1963).





The concept of quality is difficult to define, for it is not merely seen, but somehow intuited in the presence of the work in which it is embodied.
Quality has little to do with popular notions of beauty, taste, or style; and nothing to do with status, respectability, or luxury. It is revealed, rather, in an atmosphere of receptivity, propriety, and restraint. Paul Rand

IBM

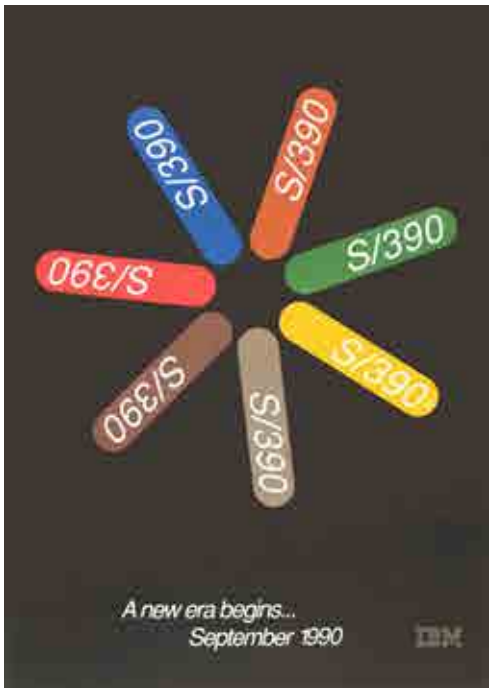
IBM Corporation

Left

"Quality" poster, 1990.

On this page

Poster "A New Era Begins...", 1990;
Poster with a quote by Oliver Cromwell, ca. 1985.



lack of courage. The client can be right. And the artist must, without bias, sincerely try to interpret these reactions.

In asking the artist to have courage, we must ask the same of industry. The impetus to conform, so widespread today, will, if not checked, kill all forms of creativity. In the world of commercial art, conformism is expressed, for example, by the tenacious timidity with which advertisers cling to the bald presentation of sex, sentimentality, and snobbism. Business has a strong tendency to wait for a few brave pioneers to produce or underwrite original work, then rush to climb on the bandwagon – and the artist follows. The bandwagon, of course, may not even be going in the right direction.

Specific problems require specific visual solutions. Both ads and both products can be made to fulfill their functions and also to be aesthetically gratifying.

It is unfortunately rare that the commercial artist and his employer work together in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and cooperation. Against the outstanding achievements in design made possible by such companies as Olivetti, Container Corporation, IBM, CBS, El Producto Cigar Company, CIBA, and a comparatively few others, there stands the great dismal mountain of average work. The lack of confidence that industry in general evinces for creative talent and creative work is the most serious obstacle to raising the standards of popular art. Business pays well for the services of artists who are already recognized and are consequently "successful." Success is a perfectly legitimate reward for competence and integrity, but if it is a precondition for acceptance, it leaves the beginner and the hitherto unrecognized innovator in an economic *cul-de-sac*.

video essay

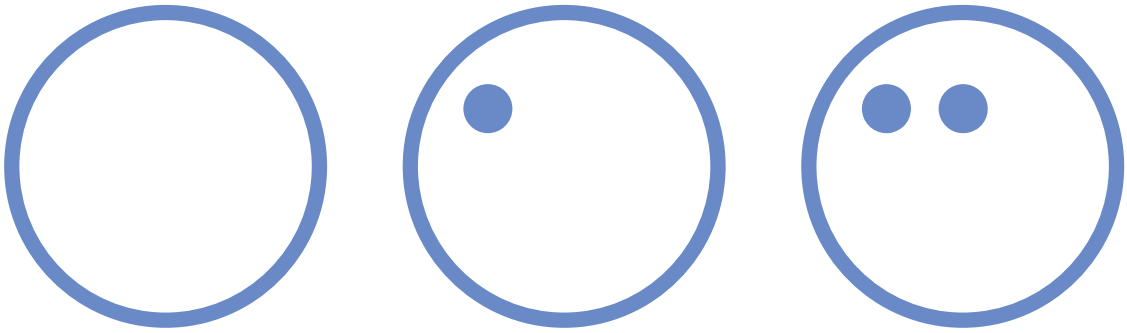
Good design is good business
with Steven Heller

Steven Heller is an eminent American graphic designer, art director, art critic and author. For over thirty years he held the position of senior art director at New York Times Book Review and U&lc magazine. He prolifically authored and co-authored books tracing the history of typography, illustration and other subjects related to graphic design. He was a close friend of Paul Rand and in 2000 he published the first comprehensive survey of Rand's powerful body of work. We interviewed him and made a short video essay about Rand's idea of design and his influence in our society.

Scan the QR code to watch the video.

curated by
Lorenzo Bernini

shaping identities



Written by Paul Rand
Published by AIGA, 1991

Logos, Flags and Escutcheons

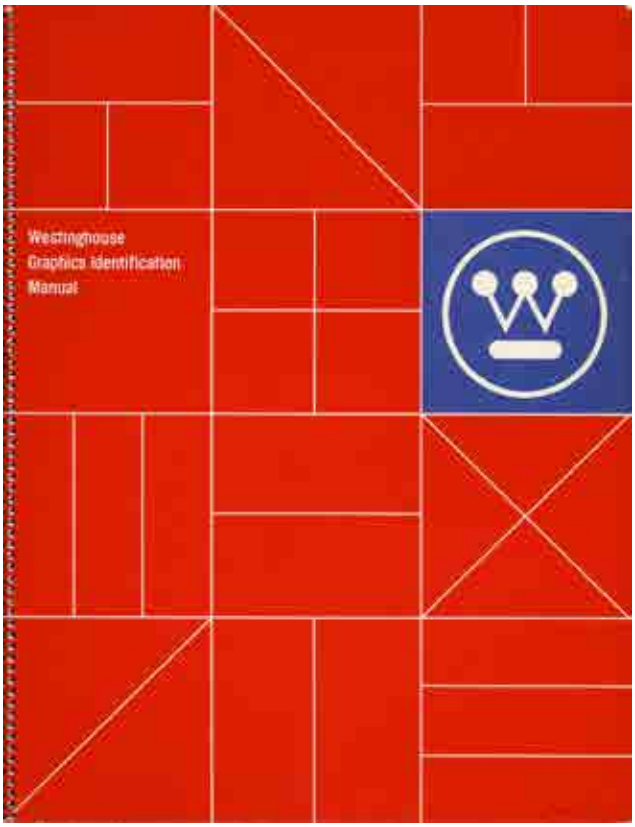
When the Westinghouse insignia (1960) was first seen, it was greeted similarly with such gibes as "this looks like a pawnbroker's sign." How many exemplary works have gone down the drain, because of such pedestrian fault-finding? Bad design is frequently the consequence of mindless dabbling, and the difficulty is not confined merely to the design of logos. This lack of understanding pervades all visual design.

There is no accounting for people's perceptions. Some see a logo, or anything else seeable, the way they see a Rorschach inkblot. Others look without seeing either the meaning or even the function of a logo. It is perhaps, this sort of problem that prompted ABC TV to toy with the idea of "updating" their logo (1962). They realized the folly only after a market survey revealed high audience recognition. This is to say nothing of the intrinsic value of a well-established symbol. When a logo is designed is irrelevant; quality, not vintage nor vanity, is the determining factor.

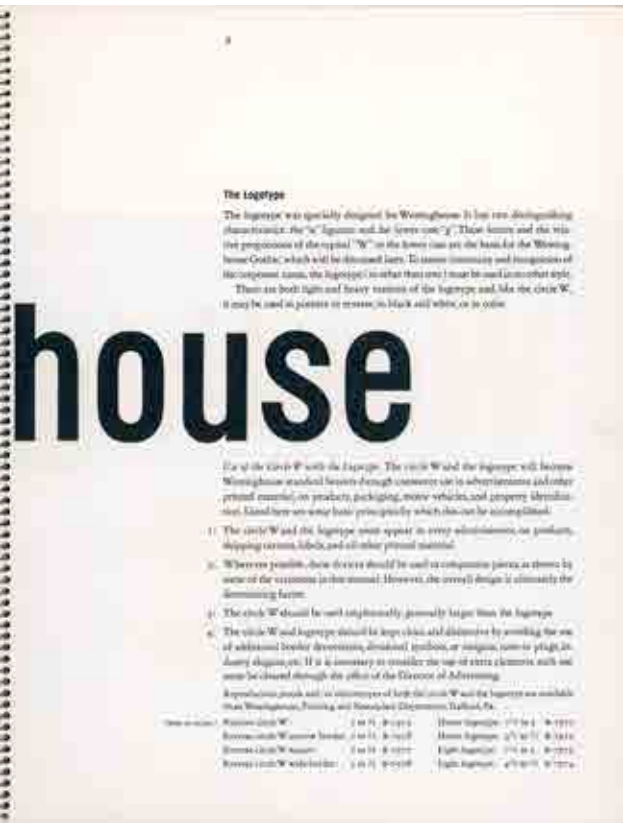
There are as many reasons for designing a new logo, or updating an old one, as there are opinions. The belief that a new or updated design will be some kind charm that will magically transform any business, is not uncommon. A redesigned logo may have the advantage of implying something new, something improved-but this is short-lived if a company doesn't live up to its claim. Sometimes a logo is redesigned because it really needs redesigning-because it's ugly, old fashioned, or inappropriate. But many times, it is merely to feed someone's ego, to satisfy a CEO who doesn't wish to be linked with the past, or often because it's the thing to do.

Opposed to the idea of arbitrarily changing a logo, there's the "let's leave it alone" school-sometimes wise, more often superstitious,

Westinghouse
Manifacturing company, 1960
Realizing that a radical departure would meet resistance, Rand combined elements of the old logo (the circle and underline lozenge) with the circuit board W.
Rand did not foresee the animated potential of the logo when he first designed it, but the possibilities for bringing it to life soon became perfectly clear.



Westinghouse Graphic Identification Manual, 1961
This manual explain and illustrate the proper usage of the Westinghouse logo in every possible situation and itineration, from matchbooks to water towers.
"The purpose of this folder is not to hamper but to encourage individual initiative. The few limitations set forth, namely: diligent and thoughtful adherence to the basic design of logotype and trademark, and proper use of the selling statement are merely tools for creating a cohesive corporate image."


The Logotype
house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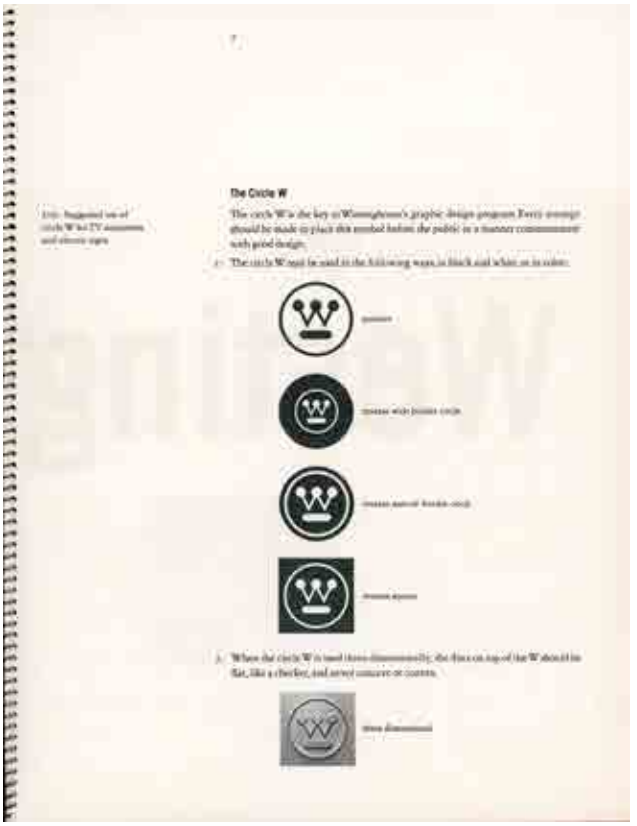

The Circle W

Left

UPS

Package delivery company , 1961

The old logo on the right and the new design on the left. Prior to Rand's involvement, various designers failed to redesign the UPS logo. Rand decided to retain the shield, replaced the typeface and added the 'gift' box. Before showing his proposal to UPS, he asked his daughter, Catherine, for her opinion – according to Rand she said: 'That's a present, Daddy.'

occasionally nostalgic or, at times, even trepidatious. Not long ago, I offered to make some minor adjustments to the UPS (1961) logo. This offer was unceremoniously turned down, even though compensation played no role. If a design can be refined, without disturbing its image, it seems reasonable to do so. A logo, after all, is an instrument of pride and should be shown at its best.

If, in the business of communications, "image is king," the essence of this image, the logo, is a jewel in its crown.

Here's what a logo is and does:

- A logo is a flag, a signature, an escutcheon.
- A logo doesn't sell (directly), it identifies.
- A logo is rarely a description of a business.
- A logo derives its meaning from the quality of the thing it symbolizes, not the other way around.
- A logo is less important than the product it signifies; what it means is more important than what it looks like.

A logo appears in many guises: a signature is a kind of logo, so is a flag. The French flag, for example, or the flag of Saudi Arabia, are aesthetically pleasing symbols. One happens to be pure geometry, the other a combination of Arabic script, together with an elegant saber-two diametrically opposed visual concepts; yet both function effectively. Their appeal, however, is more than a matter of aesthetics. In battle, a flag can be a friend or foe. The ugliest flag is beautiful if it happens to be on your side. "Beauty," they say, "is in the eye of the beholder," in peace or in war, in flags or in logos. We all believe our flag the most beautiful; this tells us something about logos.

Should a logo be self-explanatory? It is only by association with a product, a service, a business, or a corporation that a logo takes on any real meaning. It derives its meaning and usefulness from the quality of that which it symbolizes. If a company is second rate, the logo will eventually be perceived as second rate. It is foolhardy to believe that a logo will do its job right off, before an audience has been properly conditioned. Only after it becomes familiar does a logo function as intended; and only when the product or service has been judged effective or ineffective, suitable or unsuitable, does it become truly representative.

Below and bottom-left

Paul Rand, 1990
Going through his UPS job bag in his home in Weston, Connecticut, Paul Rand showed off different versions of the logo. While he created dozens for himself, he only showed one to the client.

Bottom-right

UPS logo
The logo on a delivery truck.

"Good design doesn't date. Bad design does."

Paul Rand

"He almost single-handedly convinced business that design was an effective tool. Anyone designing in the fifties and sixties owed much to Rand. We went from being commercial artists to being graphic designers largely on his merit."

Lou Danziger

On the previous page, top

Paul Rand
discusses with clients.

On the previous page, bottom

Paul Rand
sitting at his drawing board, whit his daughter Catherine, in his studio in Weston, Connecticut.

Logos may also be designed to deceive; and deception assumes many forms, from imitating some peculiarity to outright copying. Design is a two-faced monster. One of the most benign symbols, the swastika, lost its place in the pantheon of the civilized when it was linked to evil, but its intrinsic quality remains indisputable. This explains the tenacity of good design.
The role of the logo is to point, to designate-in as simple a manner as possible. A design that is complex, like a fussy illustration or an arcane abstraction, harbors a self-destruct mechanism. Simple ideas, as well as simple designs are, ironically, the products of circuitous mental purposes. Simplicity is difficult to achieve, yet worth the effort.
The effectiveness of a good logo depends on:

- distinctiveness
- visibility
- usability
- memorability
- universality
- durability
- timelessness

Most of us believe that the subject matter of a logo depends on the kind of business or service involved. Who is the audience? How is it marketed? What is the media? These are some of the considerations. An animal might suit one category, at the same time that it would be an anathema in another. Numerals are possible candidates: 747, 7-Up, 7-11, and so are letters, which are not only possible but most common. However, the subject matter of a logo is of relatively little importance; nor, it seems, does appropriateness always play a significant role. This does not imply that appropriateness is undesirable. It merely indicates that a one-to-one relationship, between a symbol and what is symbolized, is very often impossible to achieve and, under certain conditions, may even be objectionable. Ultimately, the only thing mandatory, it seems, is that a logo be attractive, reproducible in one color and in exceedingly small sizes.
The Mercedes symbol, for example, has nothing to do with automobiles; yet it is a great symbol, not because its design is great, but because it stands for a great product. The same can be said about apples and computers. Few people realize that a bat is

Left

Steve Jobs

QR codes

Videos
Scan these QR codes to know more about Rand relationship with NeXT.

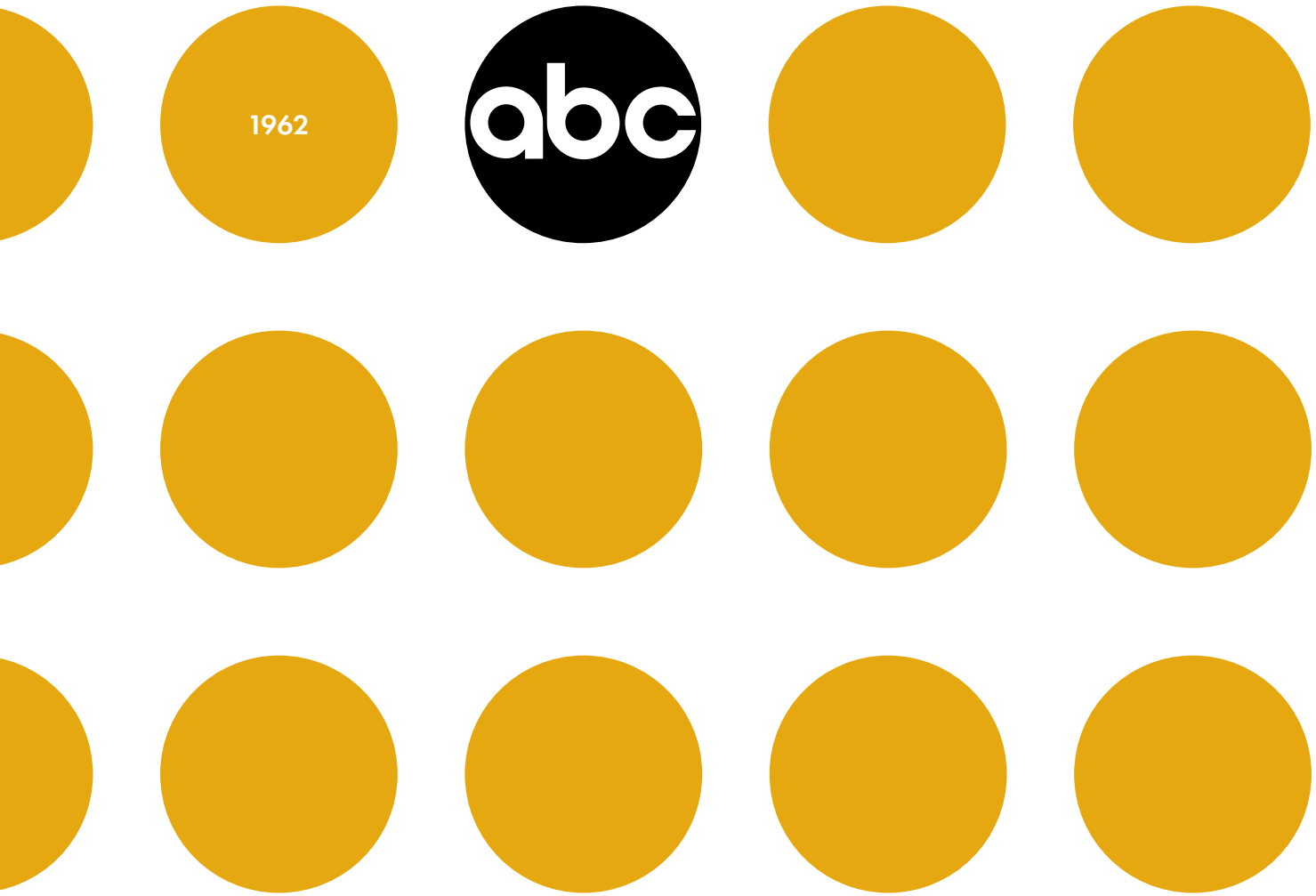
Paul Rand presents for the first time the logo to the NeXT team.

Steve Jobs interviewed talks about working with Rand.

the symbol of authenticity for Bacardi Rum; yet Bacardi is still being imbibed. Lacoste sportswear, for example, has nothing to do with alligators (or crocodiles), and yet the little green reptile is a memorable and profitable symbol. What makes the Rolls Royce emblem so distinguished is not its design (which is commonplace), but the quality of the automobile for which it stands. Similarly, the signature of George Washington is distinguished not only for its calligraphy, but because George Washington was Washington. Who cares how badly the signature is scribbled on a check, if the check doesn't bounce? Likes or dislikes should play no part in the problem of identification; nor should they have anything to do with approval or disapproval. Utopia!
All this seems to imply that good design is superfluous. Design, good or bad, is a vehicle of memory. Good design adds value of some kind and, incidentally, could be sheer pleasure; it respects the viewer-his sensibilities-and rewards the entrepreneur. It is easier to remember a well-designed image than one that is muddled. A well design logo, in the end, is a reflection of the business it symbolizes. It connotes a thoughtful and purposeful enterprise, and mirrors the quality of its products and services. It is good public relations-a harbinger of good will. It says, "We care."

NeXT
Computer company, 1986
The CEO Steve Jobs kept a tight lid on the design of his new educational computers. Yet Rand cleverly incorporated the image of the top-secret black and square product into a distinctive mark.

ABC
Television network , 1962
Rand designed logos for endurance. 'I think permanence is something that you find out,' he once said. 'It isn't something that you design for. You design for durability, for function, for usefulness, for rightness, for beauty. But permanence is up to God and time.' In 2007 ABC rolled out a new identity package where the logo would always appear in 3D as a shiny black disc. In 2013 a slight redesign simplified the logo, bringing it back to Rand design.



2007

2013

Written by Paul Rand
published in "A Designer's Art"

The 'Corporate Image'

In this, the speed generation, practically any corporation, large or small, can have its 'image' made to order. A vast army of image makers have made a business out of art large enough almost to rival the businesses they help to portray.

Much has been touted about the virtues of corporate identification programmes. Because the corporate image so often conveys the impression that it is all-encompassing, it leaves little doubt in the mind of the onlooker that the image he sees represents a company which is really in the swim, that it's the best, the first, and the most. However, being with it is not always being for it.

It seems to me that a company can more easily be recognized for what it really believes not by its 'made to order image' (its trade mark, logotype, letterhead), nor by the number of avant-garde prints or Mies van der Rohe chairs which embellish its offices, but by its more mundane, day-to-day activities: its house organs, counter displays, trade advertisements, packaging and products. Unless it consistently represents the aims and beliefs as well as the total production and activities of a company, a corporate image is at best mere window dressing, and at worst deception.

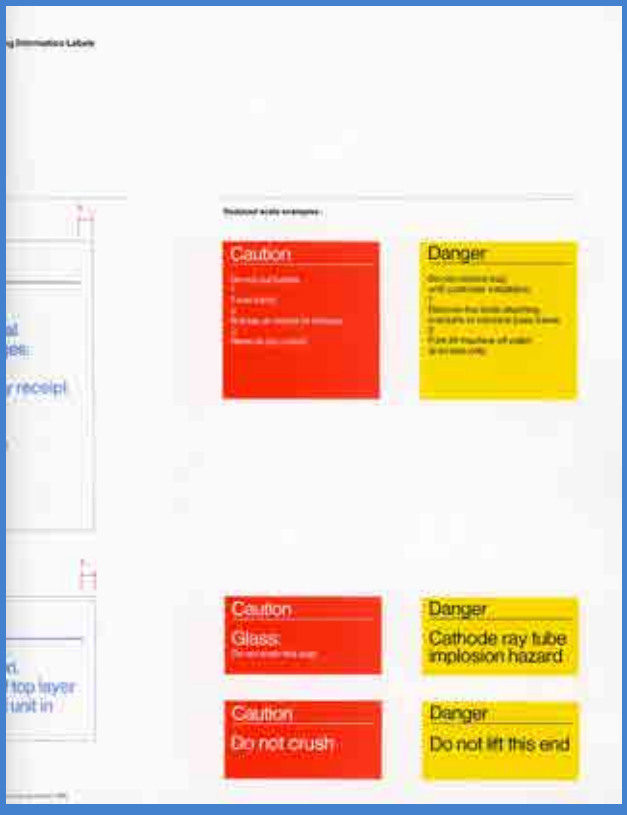
Things can be made and marketed without our considering their moral or aesthetic aspects; ads can convince without pleasing or heightening the spectator's visual awareness, products can work regardless of their appearance. But should they? The world of business could function without benefit of art-but should it? I think not, if only for the simple reason that the world would be a poorer place if it did.

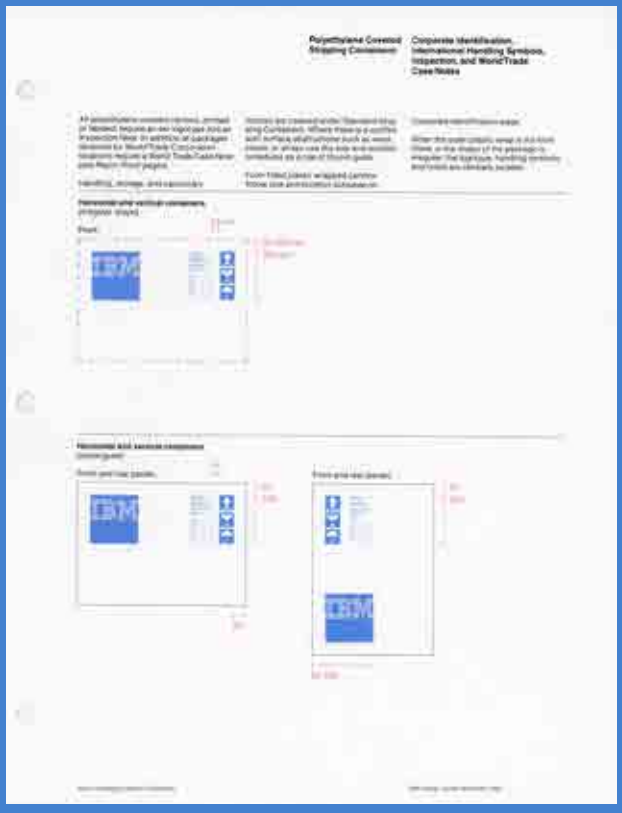
The commercial artist (designer) who wants to be more than a mere stylist and who wishes to avoid being overwhelmed by the demands

Up
IBM showroom
Toronto, 1963.

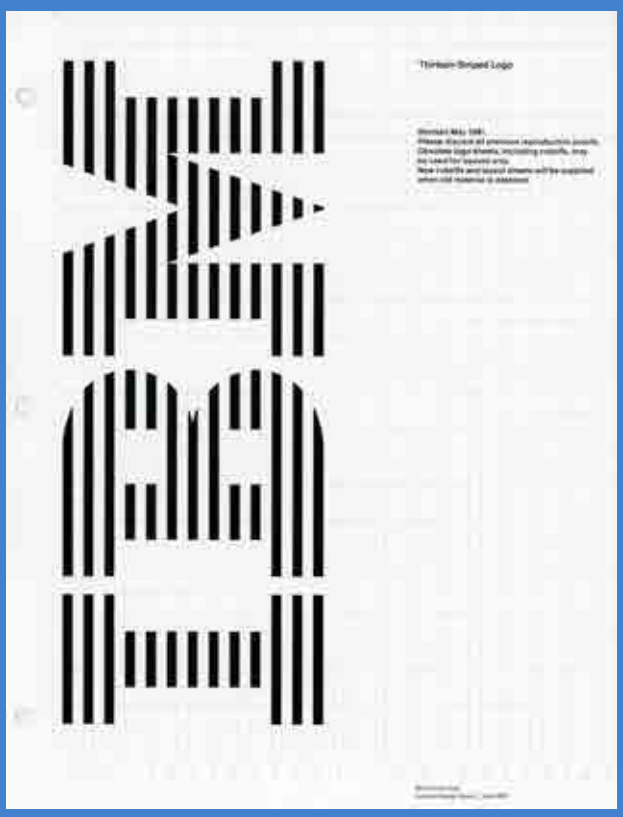
IBM Graphic Design Guide
1970-80

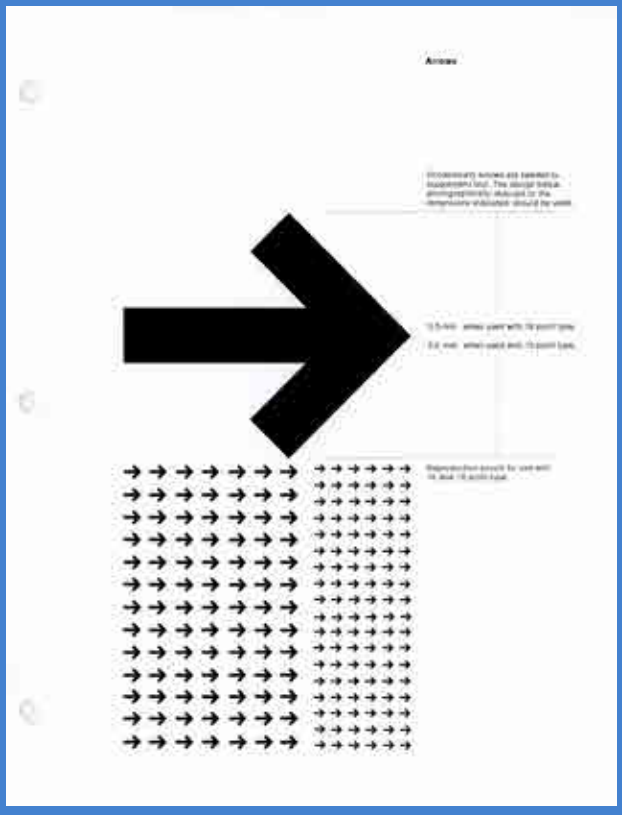
Before defining the IBM company's graphic look in 1956, Paul Rand had never designed an entire corporate identity. It was his first foray into the conservative realm of big business communications, as well as a turning point for him. This manual offers an in-depth look at the further evolution of IBM's house style, from logotypes, fonts, numerals, and type specimens, to highly detailed information on imprinting binders, signage, packaging, and related material. It shows how the graphic designer selects and fits together material to produce visual relationships.

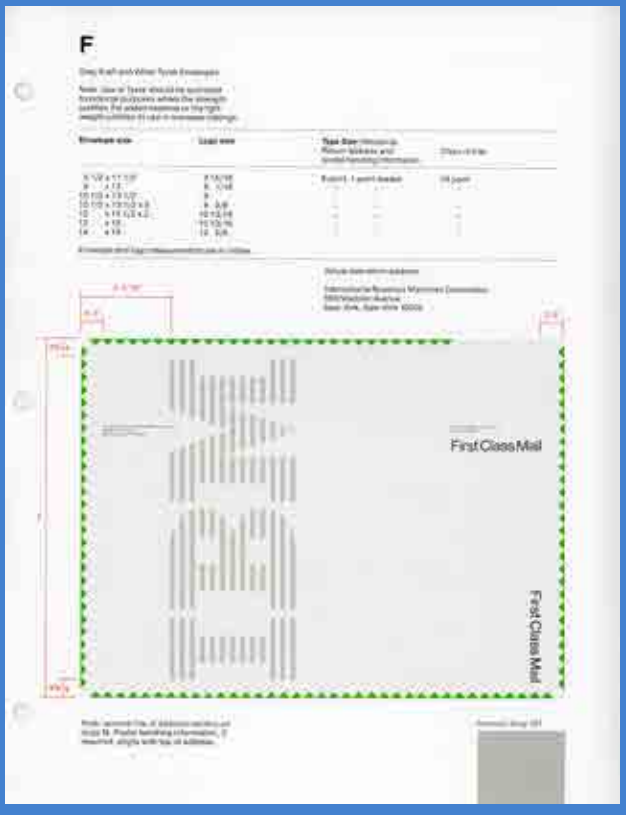





Eight-Striped Logo (Negative)


Thirteen-Striped Logo


Arrows


F
First Class Mail
First Class Mail

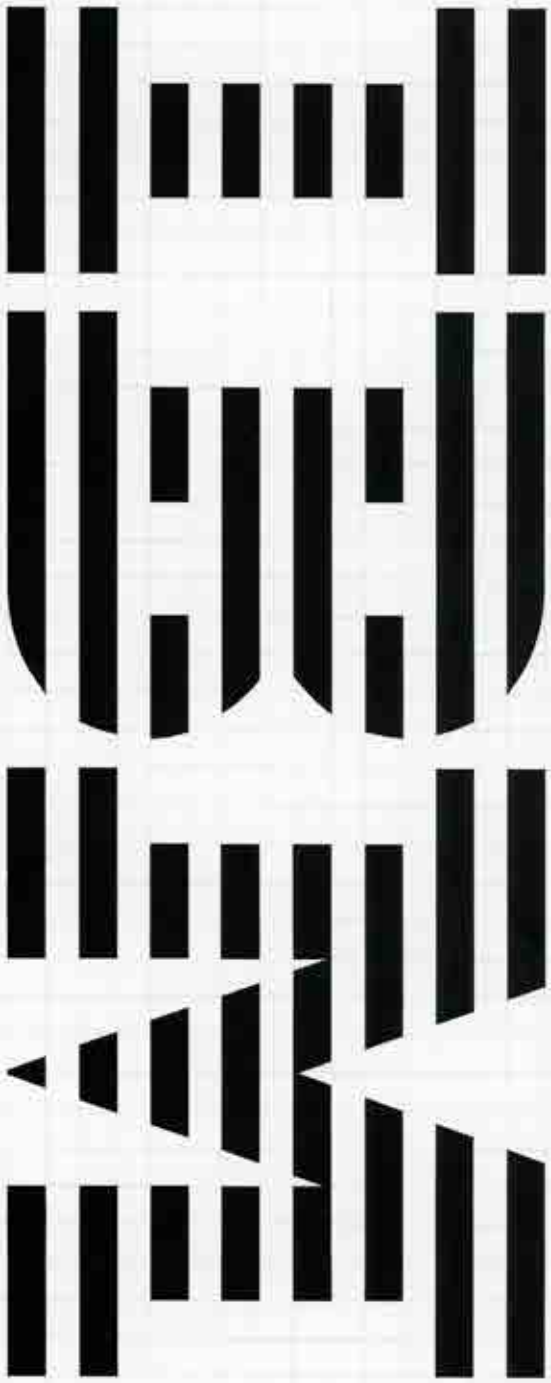
Eight-Striped Logo (Positive)

Please discard all previous reproduction proofs.
Obsolete logo sheets, including ruboffs, may be used for layouts only.
New ruboffs and layout sheets will be supplied when old material is depleted.

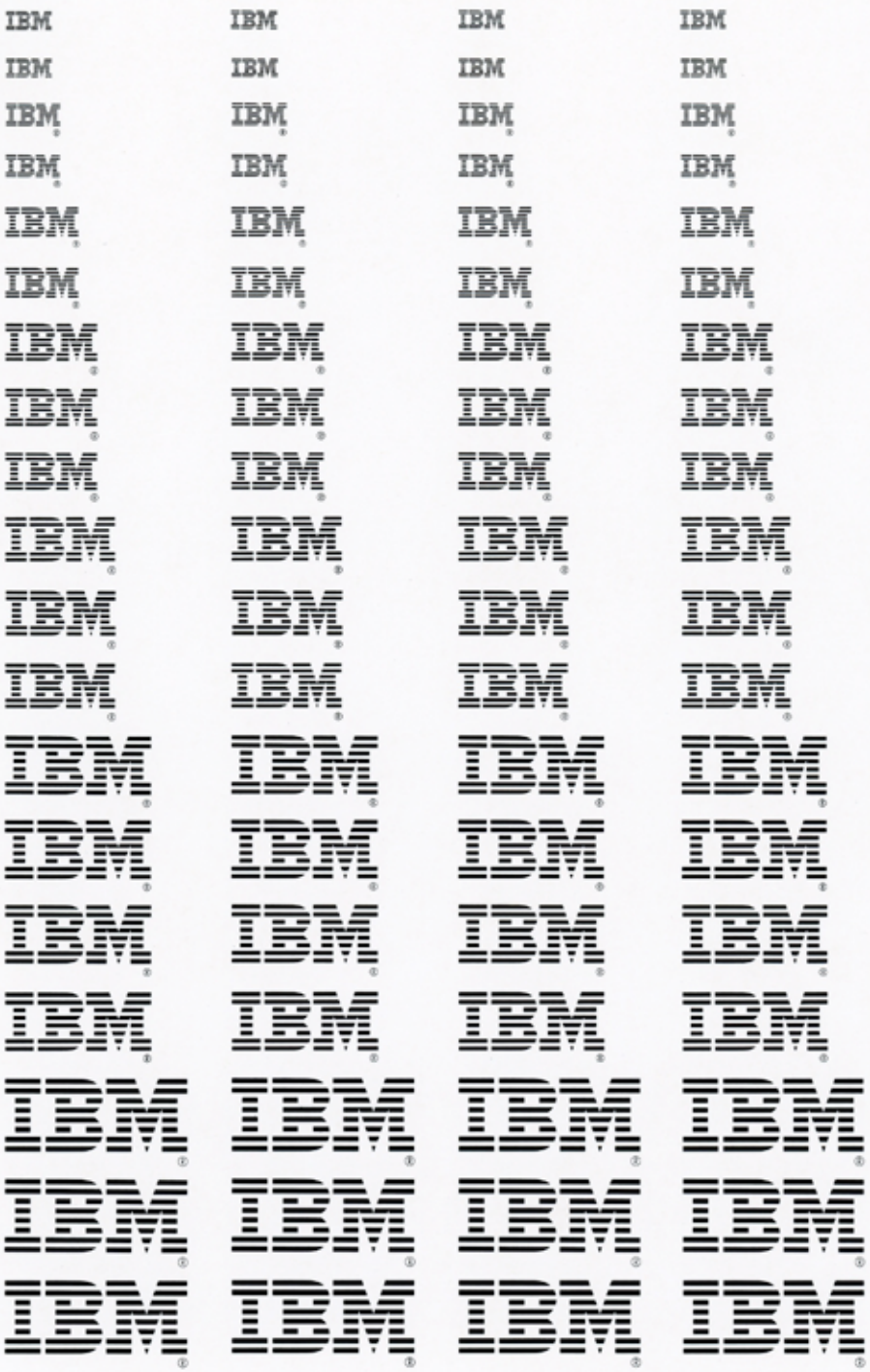
Positive and Negative reproduction proofs require different artwork and are not interchangeable.

Black stripes are drawn thicker than white stripes.
White stripes look thicker, especially when lit (signs, TV screens).
Black and white stripes should appear to be similar optically.
To avoid errors, mark all your negatives.
Exercise special care in making photographic exposures.

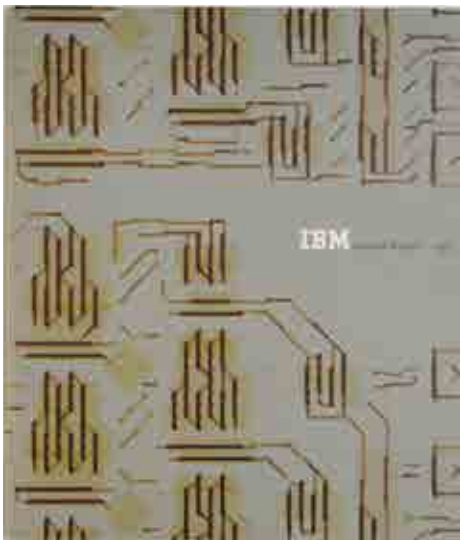
Graphic standard for all reproduction on a two-dimensional surface.



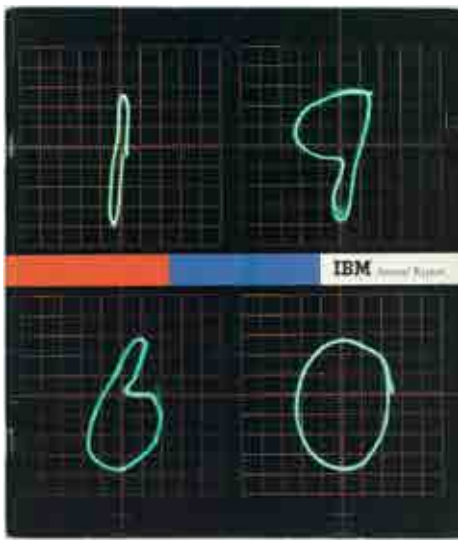
Eight-Striped Logos



IBM Annual Report
The annual report is the most important line of communication to corporate shareholders. Rand designed them to be inviting, often by cropping in so close on details that they appeared to be of abstract artworks. Throughout his tenure it was one of the many components of corporate culture over which Rand exerted a strong creative influence.



of clients, the idiosyncrasies of public taste, and the ambiguities of consumer research surveys must clarify what his cultural contribution should be. In all these are he must try to distinguish the real from the imaginary, the sincere from the pretentious, and the objective from the biased.
If the graphic designer has both talent and a commitment to aesthetic values, he will automatically try to make the product of graphic design both pleasing and visually stimulating to the user or the viewer. By stimulating I mean that this work will add something to the spectator's experience.
The artist must believe his work is an aesthetic statement, but he must also understand his general role in society. It is this role that justifies his spending the client's money and his risking other people's jobs. And it entitles him to make mistakes, He adds something to the world. He gives it new ways of feeling and thinking. He opens doors to new experience. He provides new solutions to old problems.
There is nothing wrong with selling, even with "hard' selling, but selling which misrepresents, condescends, or relies on sheer gullibility or stupidity is wrong. Morally, it is very difficult for an artist to do a direct and creative job if dishonest claims are being made for the product he is asked to advertise, or if, as an industrial designer, he is supposed to exercise mere stylistic ingenuity to give an old product a new appearance.
The artist's sense of worth depends on his feeling of integrity. If this is destroyed, he will no longer be able to function creatively.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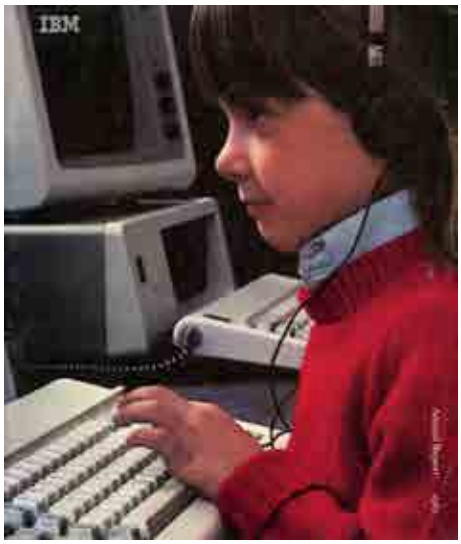
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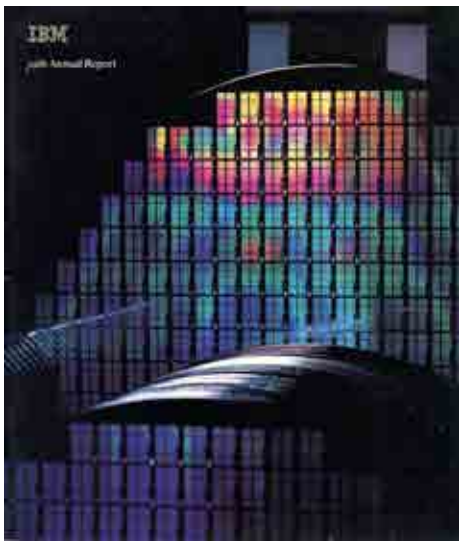
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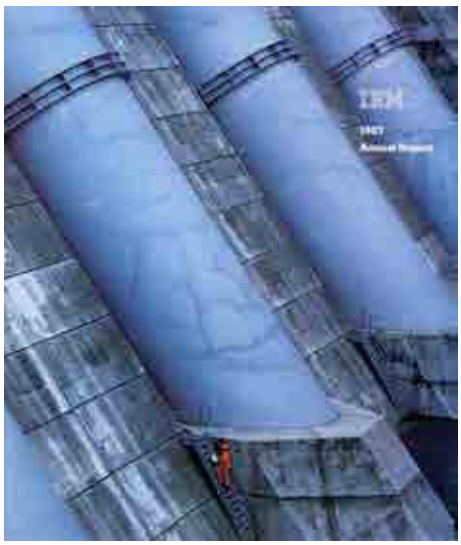

IBM

Written by Stanley Mason
Published on Graphis nº 153, 1972

How Paul Rand Presents Trade-Mark Designs to Clients

The trade mark, which in the spacious days before the invention of the corporate image could afford to live in a measure of ornamental luxury, has today become a sharply functional thing, a bright weapon for the attack on the overworked and often sluggish attention of the public. Not only must it serve as the focal point of corporate design programmes: it is often the only medium through which large sectors of the public identify a company and its products at all.
The design of a trade mark thus becomes an undertaking of the most exacting acuity. Such a mark 'should be distinctive, memorable, and reflect in some way, however abstractly, the nature of the product or service it represents. Furthermore, it should be practical and easily adapted to a variety of applications. It should be reproducible in one or two colours, in positive and reverse form, and in sizes as large as building signs and as small as, or smaller than, calling cards.' As a logotype it should be 'legible enough to be read and unusual enough to be remembered'. Its purpose is, after all, 'to identify appropriately, to lend authority, and to help create the right visual climate in which a company can operate'.
These requirements, redoubtable as they may seem, are not all. For however good a trade mark may be, it is certainly not the slightest use till it has been accepted by the company it is to epitomize. And here is the rub: modern companies are usually topped by a hierarchy of executives, many of whom have little understanding of design, but who would hardly renounce their right to share in the choice of a company symbol. How is good design to be sold to them?
Illustrated on these pages are some of the graphic layouts-usually made up into large booklets of some 20 to 40 pages-with which Paul Rand presents his trade-mark designs to his clients.

Insert

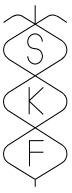
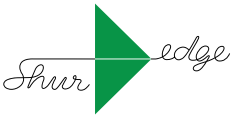
Ford
Automaker company , 1966
The problem posed in the presentation illustrated here was to bring an old trade mark up to date while retaining its essential character. Direct comparisons of the old and the proposed new trade mark were made, in addition to a fairly wide range of examples of application. These are a few pages of the booklet produced in 1966. Although the new mark was not adopted, its presentation remains an impressive example of the genre.

Below

Logo presentstion books
From top to bottom: NeXT, English First and American Express.

These custom-made booklets may go to anything from 25 to 100 top-ranking executives. Characteristically, Rand avoids what he calls 'sound, music and lights presentations'. Believing that 'graphic designers are really silent salesmen', he thinks that trade-marks should convince by their own impact and quality. The presentations usually begin with a lucid exposition of the thinking which has led to this particular trade-mark design. They then follow up with examples of use, from visiting cards and letterheads to large outdoor signs. Occasionally skilful use is made of 'animated' sequences. Colour is used where needful, and the booklets are always impeccably produced.
The texts that accompany the graphic layouts are likewise by the designer. Although Paul Rand says that 'he finds the problem of writing very distressing', words originally spoken of sound design might easily be applied to his texts: they are 'marked by imagination and constraint, by brevity and wit'. This quotation, like all the others in these paragraphs, is borrowed – need we add? – from Paul Rand himself.

Every logo Paul Rand ever designed
In cronological order by row.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FRAZER

Kaiser

ups

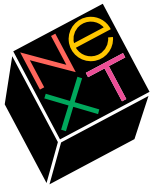
abc

IBM

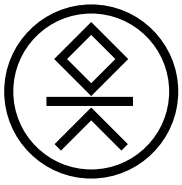
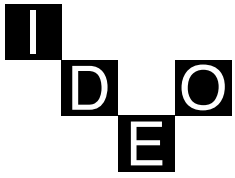
Cummins

ATLAS

AGA


NeXT

CAD


MORNINGSTAR


IDEO



XGA


ENRON

dougevans
partners

SERV
ADOR

curated by
Alessia Arosio

the third dimension

Written by Paul Rand
Published in "Print", January/February 1960

The art of package

"I'm not so concerned with the art or graphics of package design as I am with new developments in packaging technique–new materials, new construction and new applications."

This statement was made some years ago by a specialist in package design. Today any grocer or druggist's shelf is testimony to the fervent enthusiasm with which such views have been endorsed. Technical advance in the field of packaging has been impressive indeed: the one-piece "flip-top," the push-button container, the shining array of new plastics with ingenious closures, the cleverly contrived shapes that stack, fit refrigerators or pockets, collapse, expand, etc. But does all this make a package? No! There is more to a package than convenience; it has to be looked at. How many flip-top cigarette packs or regular cigarette packs, for that matter, afford any pleasure to the eye? How consistently are we blinded by the dazzling display of vulgarity eagerly provided by most push-button cans, cereal boxes, soaps, bread wrappers, etc? Many, admittedly, are cleverly packaged. Technologically, scientifically and hygienically, packages of today are practical, but are they beautiful?
Functionalism does not preclude beauty, but it does not guarantee it either.

Outshout the competition!

Indifference to aesthetic factors and the espousal of vulgarity probably derive mainly from the advertiser's single-minded preoccupation with having his product noticed and then quickly identified. In the frantic hope of "standing out," he tries to outshout, outcolor, and outglitter his competitor.

Below
Paul Rand
at IBM Gallery.

He approves gaudy color schemes, oversized or misshapen lettering embellished with outlines, double or triple shadows, and other exhibitionistic devices of design. Good surface design is a complex matter. It does not automatically result from the felicitous discovery of new materials, ingenious closures or novel gimmicks, any more than it derives from blatant display. "Surface design" should in no way imply superficiality, for it is this which often gives the designer the opportunity to enrich and personalize and articulate an otherwise bare and anonymous shape. Such a goal can be arrived at through a design as simple as the Chanel label or one more complicated like the Guinness label. The obsession with functional shapes and new materials is a dangerous limitation even for the conscientious designer blessed with a sensitive client. It tends to promote a misconception of simplicity, translating this admirable quality into bareness or rendering it self-conscious to the point of vapidity. This tendency is pronounced in a number of the cigarette packs which have recently invaded the market. It is not my intention to promote a movement towards fancy or complicated package design, but rather to stress the point that preoccupation with anyone element of a visual object at the expense of others is impoverishing, and poverty in the literal sense is not a virtue of design. It is my contention that all the formal elements which comprise a package must be treated with understanding, with love, and with an equal amount of dignity.

On this page

IBM Corporation
Package designs, 1973-84.

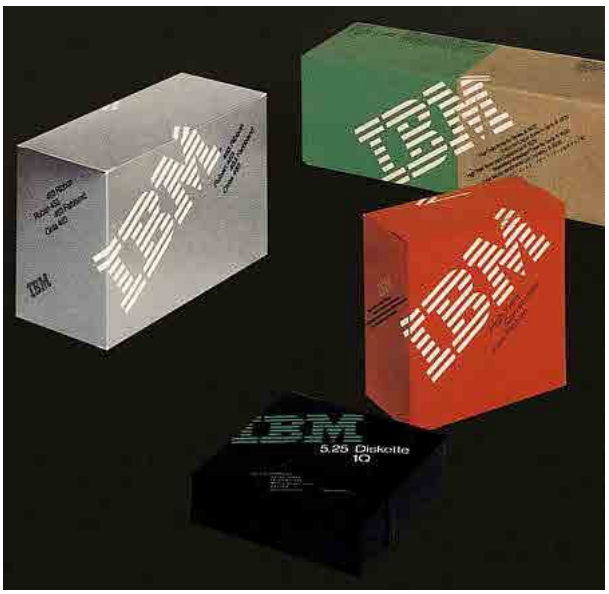
IBM Corporation
Orange and Striped package.

Right page

IBM Supply Kit
Package designs, 1979.

Dignity, respect and guides

Understanding means, among many things, that the designer must appreciate the difference between metal and plastic, glass and pottery, or paper and foil in terms of their graphic implications. "Dignity," like understanding, is a general term, a principle of action. It does not mean that a product name should be small when a large one would be more effective or that ornaments should or shouldn't be used. It means that a sense of dignity and the respect for work which accompanies it are indispensable guides to the designer in determining such formal problems of when, where and how. If a designer treats his work with love, he will, for instance, recognize the anecdotal or associative aspects of packages. He will know that buyers have visual memories and fondness for the familiar. He will then be better able to decide in the redesign of an old package which elements should be retained, discarded, altered or refined. He will be aware of the nostalgic appeal of old cigar boxes, Pears Soap wrappers, Victor's barking dog and will wonder about the wisdom of streamlining the 'White Rock girl. Although it is only possible to deal in generalities when it comes to a description of artistic principles, it is useful to show them in action, to make them more concrete by example. Chanel packaging is perhaps a classic in its field. Each formal ingredient makes a contribution of itself and for the whole-the color and quality of the paper used, the trademark and how it is placed as well as its size and weight, the type face (traditionally considered more suitable for Mack Trucks) the black border complementing the circular trademark, and finally the shape, size and proportion of the boxes and bottles themselves. The combination of ingredients is indivisible and to remove anyone would destroy the package's identity and beauty. The Chanel design is an excellent study in visual contrasts: here is black and white, round and straight, big and small, hard and soft.



Label should enrich shape

In a recent exhibition of packaging at the Museum of Modern Art, a bottle of Odol mouthwash was prominently displayed, but it could only be identified by those familiar with its unusual shape since the label, ironically, was removed. This; I imagine, was because the bottle looked better without it. The actual label is far from attractive, yet one can conceive of a label design which would not only serve its prime function-product identification but which would enhance the already beautiful form by enriching or emphasizing its shape.

The Chinese jardinière (Kang Hsi, 1662-1722), although not in the strictest sense a package, poses the same problems that the design of any cylindrical package does-namely, working on a rounded surface. It is virtually impossible to imagine this vase without the bands of calligraphy which cover its entire surface, so in harmony with its form is the applied design. True, shape and proportion would remain unchanged, but the enriching exploitation of material, the emphasizing of contour, excitement of pattern and the interest of the message (poem) would unhappily be lost.

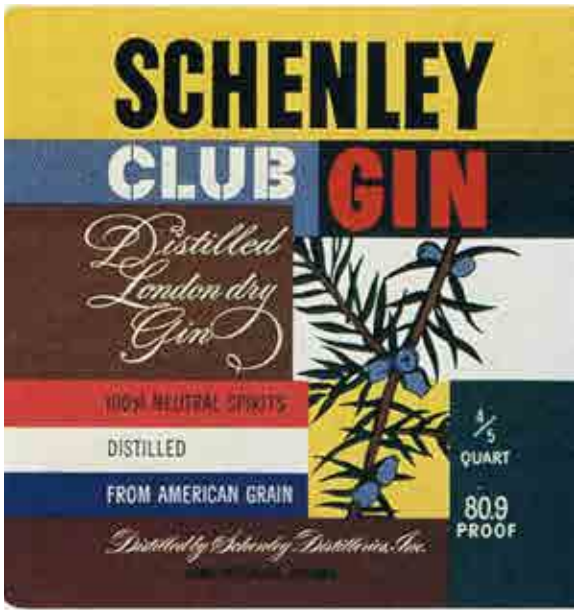
At first glance it is difficult to ascertain why the package of tobacco (on page 96) is so attractive. Is it the ornament, color, type, paper, texture or mere nostalgia? Looking analytically, we find it is a fine study in contrasts: plain brown paper, white label, ornamental border and simple typography. It is a soft package which contrasts with the brittle ornamentation of its surface design. The package suggests its contents and does so with grace and dignity. Similar qualities characterize the Garnier Elixir wood bottle.

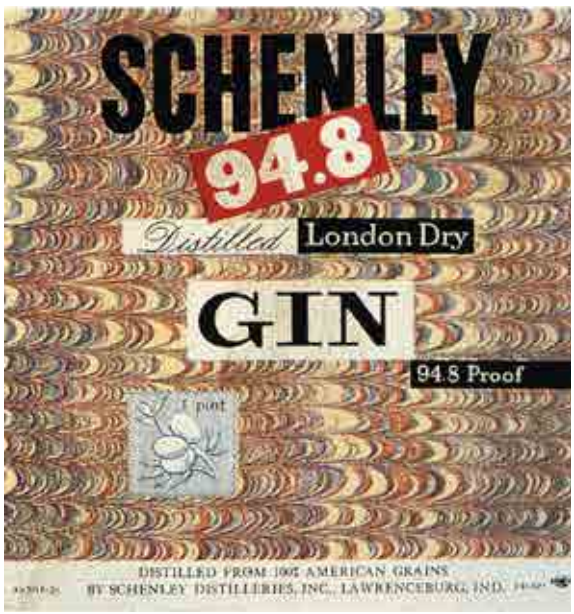
Left page

Coronet Brandy
Label design.

On this page

Schenley Distillers Inc.
Label designs, 1942.





On this page

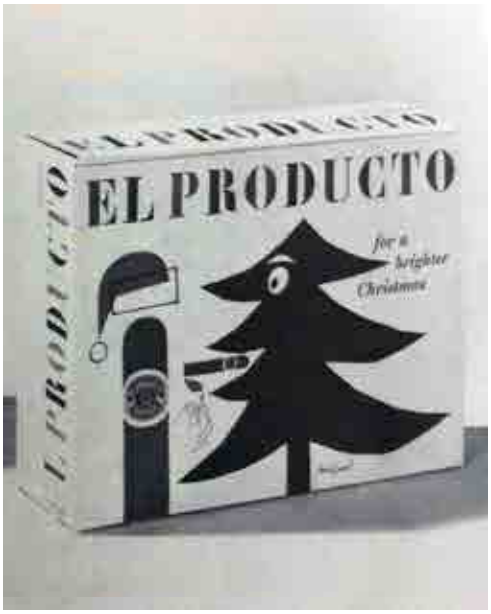
El Producto
Cigar boxes.

El Producto
Cigar Baby Tin Boy.

Right page

Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Bulb Packaging 25w Color Tone.

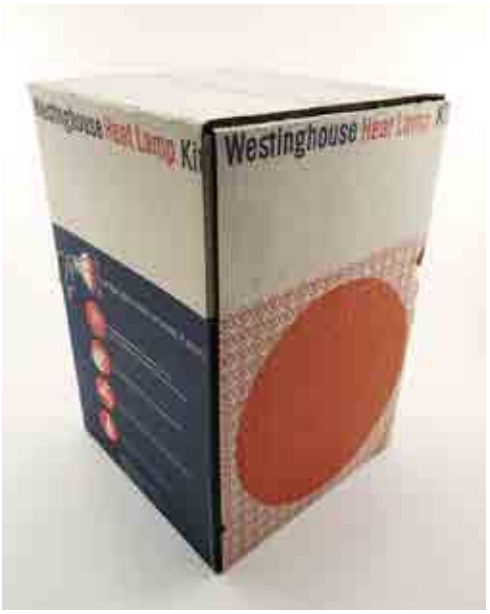
Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Bulb Packaging Heat Lamp.




color-tone
25 watt
light bulb
color-tone


25 watt
color-tone


Westinghouse Heat Lamp


Westinghouse Heat Lamp

"If artistic quality depended on exalted subject matter, the commercial artist, as well as the advertising agency and advertiser, would be in a bad way. For years I have worked with light bulb manufacturers, cigar makers, distillers, and others whose products are not visually unusual. A light bulb is almost as commonplace as an apple, but if flail to make a package or an advertisement for light bulbs that is lively and original, it will not be the light bulb that is at faul."

Paul Rand - A Designer's Art

Left page

Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Bulb packaging, 1962.

Bottom

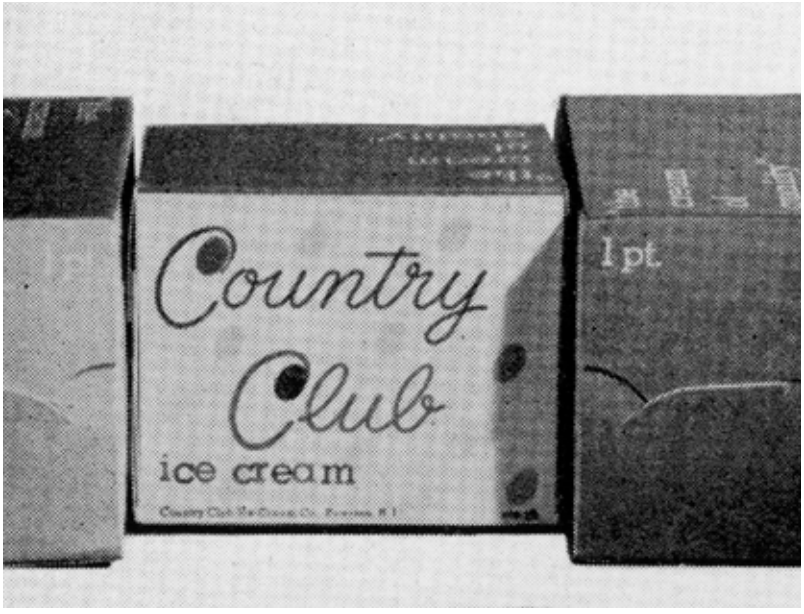
Westinghouse Electric Corporation
Bulb Packaging 100w Beauty Tone.

Respect for materials

The other examples shown, both simple and complex, demonstrate that the package designer's problem is not essentially one of looking for new materials, but of understanding the importance of the artist's hand in relation to those materials, whether they be old or new. A good package of yesterday, today, or tomorrow as well, expresses the respect of the artist for his materials in that he neither overwhelms them with meaningless or contrived ornament nor strips them of all interest and excitement out of a kind of engineering fetish. In a good package the designer does not seek to exploit the consumer's visual memories and attachments by sentimental distortion but to express his objective appreciation of the fact that people do have strong affective reaction to "things." This appreciation should promote a wider view of the designer's job-he does not seek merely to convenience the hand nor to please the eye, but he may also, however lightly, touch the emotions and gratify the human spirit.
Rene Huyghe of the Louvre Museum has said, "Art was born of man's need to leave his mark on Things" and the art of the package, it too, was born of this same need.

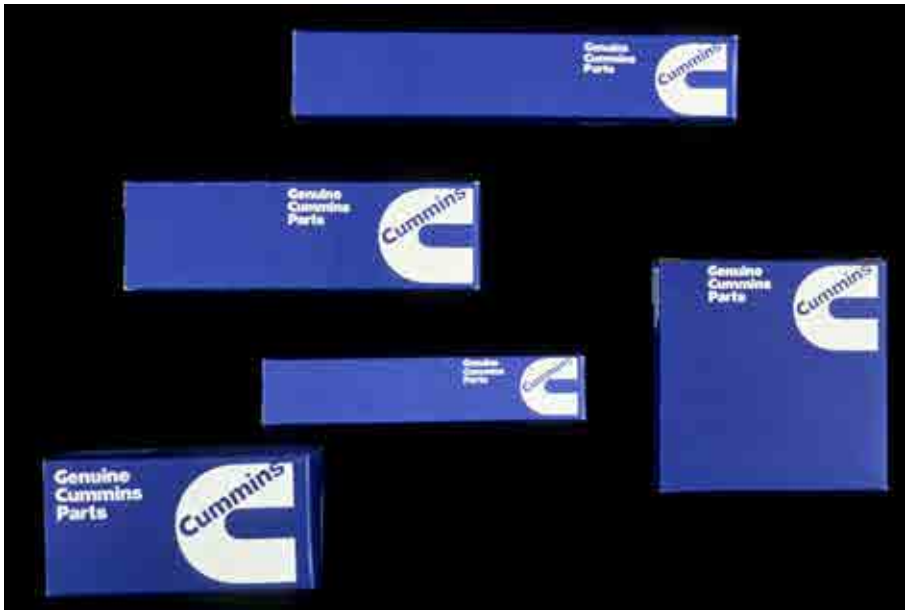
Below

Country Club
Ice Cream package.



Below

Cummins
Packaging design.



Written by Steven Heller
Published by AIGA 2016

User-Friendly Paul Rand

Paul Rand did not coin the term "user friendly". He would have hated such trendy jargon. Yet he did, arguably, introduce the "friendly" concept, creating the first friendly computer-user packages that paved the way for human-centric digital age products. Rand probably would say my assertion was "for the birds", but consider the following.

Decades before Apple introduced its Newtonian-inspired rainbow-colored logo, Rand helped develop IBM's populist aura through commercial packages for Selectric typewriter starter packs, ink ribbons and type balls that were vibrantly festooned with multi-colored stripes, pastel confetti and abstract flower blooms. Not your run-of-the-mill identity for a serious business machine manufacturer, these cheerfully designed boxes were gifts intended for IBM's consumers from a company whose historic edict – "Good Design is Good Business" – continues to resonate.

"Ideally, beauty and utility are mutually generative," Rand wrote in his first monograph, *Thoughts on Design* (1947). It was an ideal made real at IBM, which enabled him to inject his Klee-Matisse-Picasso-inspired graphic good vibrations into IBM's product line. Rand's zealous belief in the power of wit and play was an outgrowth of a childhood passion for comics, which in turn fed his impish side. "I always steered towards humorous things," Rand once told me. "People who don't have a sense of humor really have serious problems."

Despite Rand's often misinterpreted dogmatic adherence to a Modernist credo – the so-called "rightness of form" – and his total commitment to "Design is a way of life," he had an incredible sense of humor. Moreover, he believed that design had transformative powers that in part, through wit, could positively appeal to the masses while also serving the client. "To design is to transform prose into poetry,"

IBM Corporation
Packaging details.

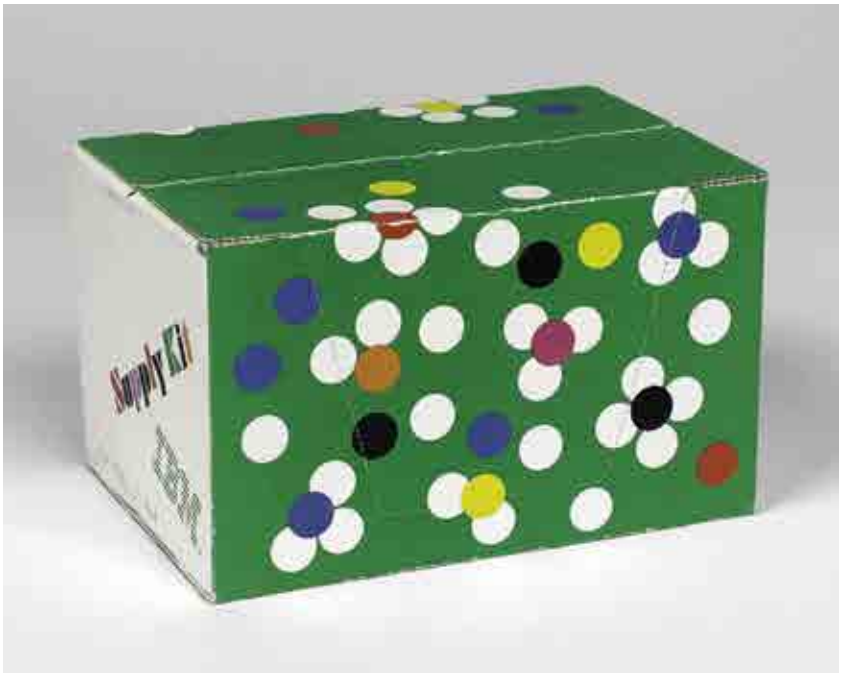
Clockwise from top-left

El Producto
Cigar boxes, 1953-54;

IBM Corporation
Supply Kit Stripes;

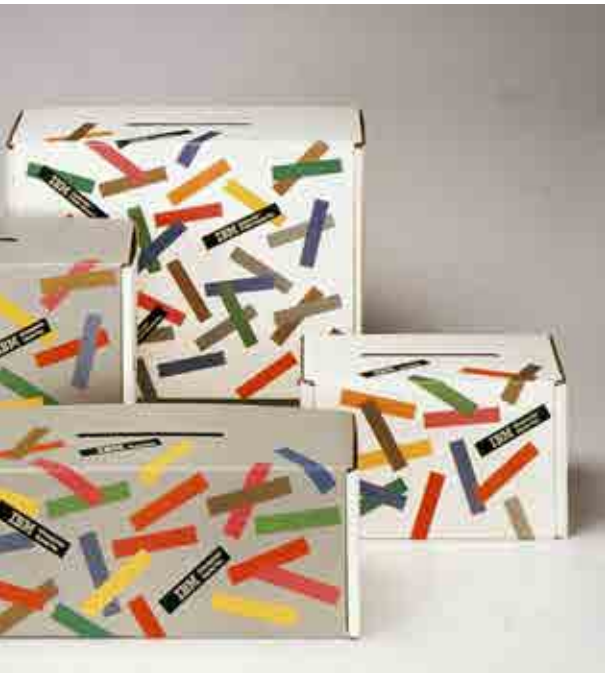
IBM Corporation
Supply Kit Flowers;

IBM Corporation
Supply Kit Confetti.




EL PRODUCTO
PRODUCTO
PRODUCTO


IBM



On this page

El Producto
Series of cigar boxes, 1954-56.

Right page

Paul Rand
in home studio.

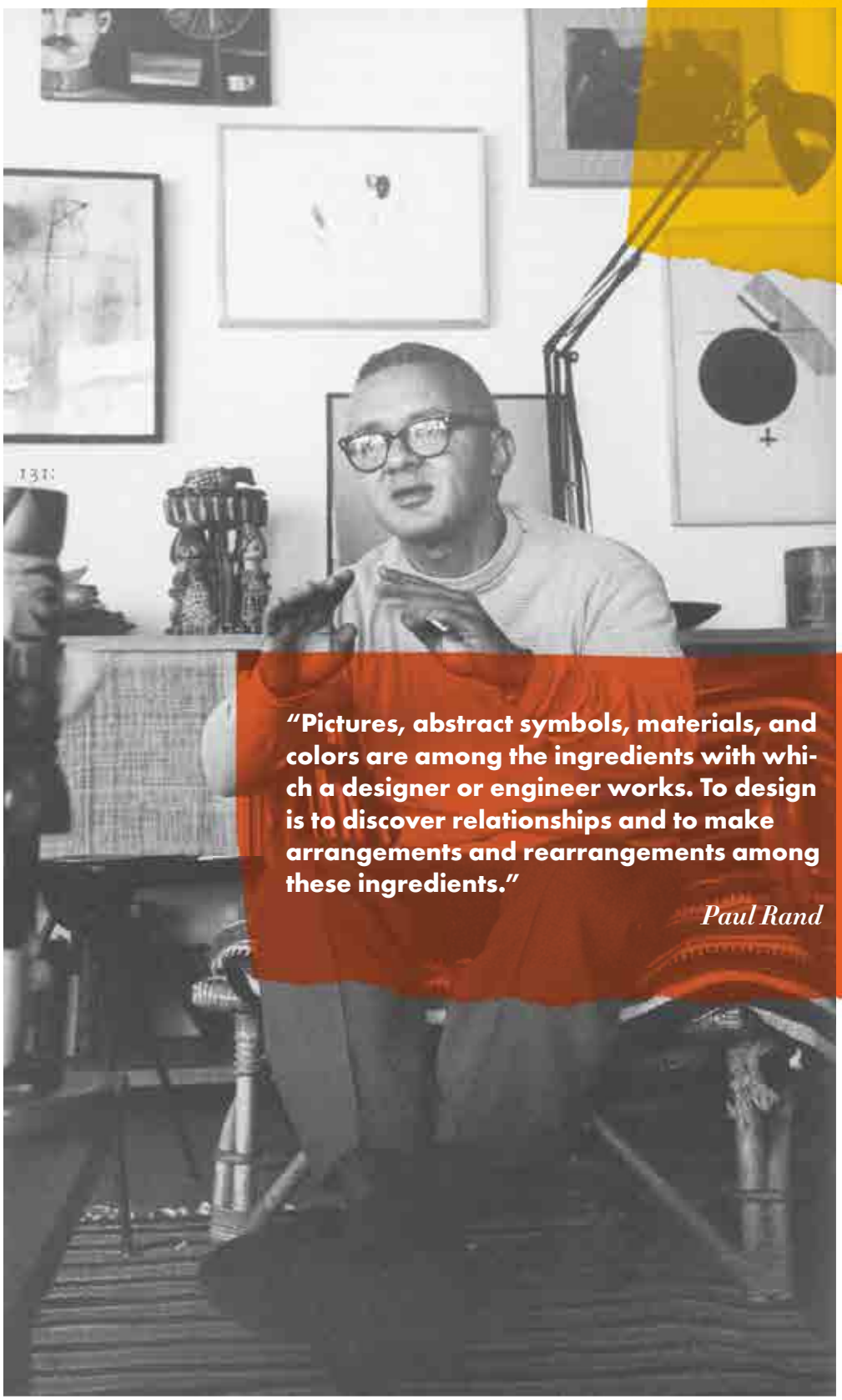
he wrote in *Design, Form and Chaos* (1993). Designing with joy was his means, resulting in a better relationship with the consumer. Yet it was IBM that benefited most from Rand's compulsion for play, or as he called it "experimentation." But the computer giant was not the first. In the 1940s, his covers for Direction magazine were inspiring.

As chief art director at Weintraub advertising agency in New York, Rand challenged the antiquated Victorian conventions of cigar packaging through comic El Producto gift boxes and tins, where we see bright and friendly packaging for typewriter ribbons and cartridges using pink, blue, green and white, and Rand's original solid block letter logo. He designed an advertising campaign around it that was to be part of his first independent corporate design program. This coordinated campaign included some of the best package designs for such products since the invention of the cigar box.

His handmade cartoon drawings, collages, photograms and other playful visual treats were dada-esque approaches that also emerged in his book covers and jackets, and later in posters and children's books.

Much of this playful abandon was intuitive. "Imagination begins with intuition, not the intellect," he wrote in the self-effacingly titled From Lascaux to Brooklyn. But Rand often vacillated between crediting the subconscious and the conscious for his design smarts. The creative spark lasts only a second, he insisted, refinement of any given visual idea could then take months. "I don't think that play is done unwittingly," he asserted in Graphic Wit (1991). "At any rate, one doesn't dwell over whether it's play or something more serious – one just does it."

Whatever the reason or method, the IBM boxes are the roots – and represent the innocence – of user-friendliness. Considering their inviting simplicity, I wonder how Rand would package new digital products into something that makes the consumer feel they are getting something truly user-friendly.



"Pictures, abstract symbols, materials, and colors are among the ingredients with which a designer or engineer works. To design is to discover relationships and to make arrangements and rearrangements among these ingredients."

Paul Rand

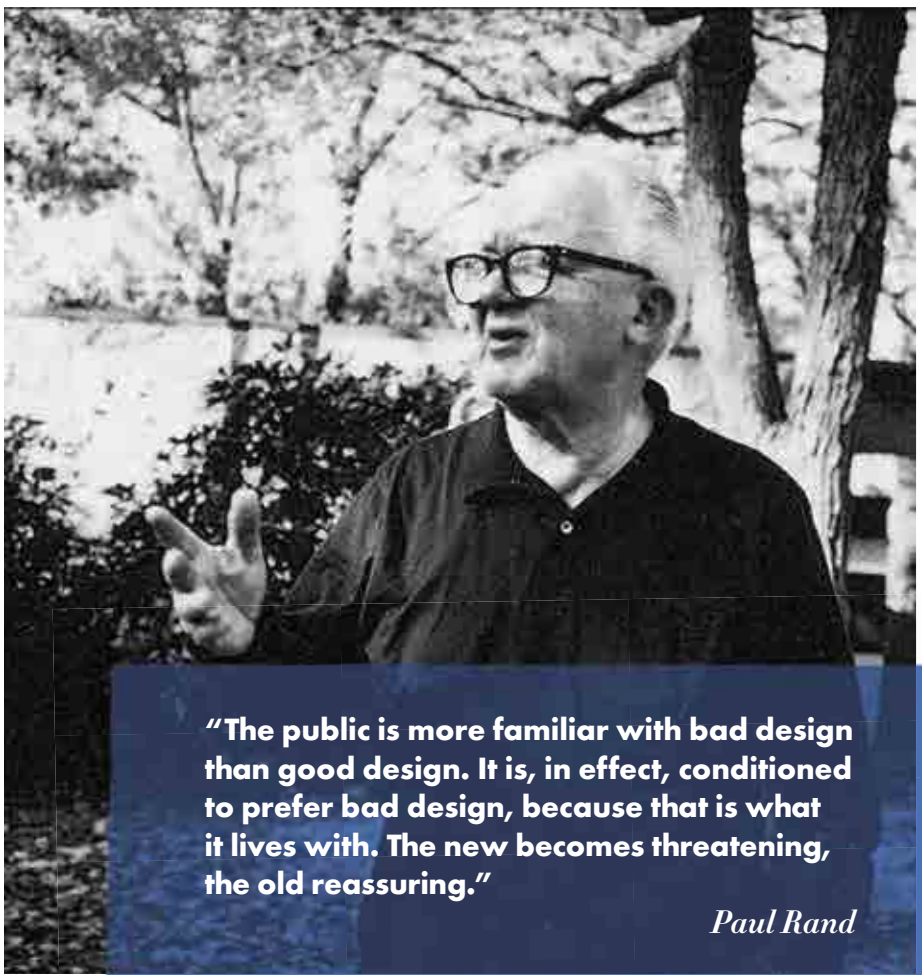
Written by Paul Rand
Published in A Designer's Art , 1985

Corporate Identity

Rand, more than others in advertising business, believed a brand identity was more important than a billboard.
In the decade following the end of the Second World War multinational corporations started to spring up. The corporate identity business became the fastest growing and most lucrative graphic design specialty in the world.
At IBM, while entering the electronic era, there was some questioning about the image this company presented to the public. They were in need of a makeover. IBM posessed a corporate mark but Rand decided to clean up the logo and designed packaging and marketing materials for IBM from the early 1970s until the early 1980s.
"A graphic designer deals principally with printed matter-with two-dimensional space problems. Frequently, directly or in-directly, he ventures into the world of the three dimensional. Packaging must be dealt with as a two and three-dimensional problem. The angles from which a bottle or package may be viewed are important considerations for the package designer. The problems of optical illusion and visual distortion are but a few considerations about which the designer must be aware."
Corporate design became the key aspect of his career, and makes him one of the pioneers in using a new formal language, that we can see on the artful use of color, typography, photograms and repetition, the latter as kind of rhythm that imbues design and visual communication with the same powerful pleasure:
"The emotional force generated by the repetition of words or pictures and the visual possibilities (as a means of creating texture, movement, rhythm, indicating equivalences of time and space) should not be minimized. The possibilities of repetition are limitless. Repeat patterns are only one familiar form. There is repetition of color, direction, weight, texture, dimension, movement, expression,

On this page
Paul Rand
at home.

shape, and so on. Repetition is an effective way of achieving unity.
The geometric patterns that adorn the surfaces of many Romanesque buildings demonstrate an awareness of the significance of unity, scale, and the decorative possibilities of repetition. The surprising and often humorous variations of the patterns are a lesson in how to avoid monotony. Repetition also means remembrance. The efficacy of a trademark, for example, is dependent less on its design than on its repeated exposure to public view. Familiar things, as well as touch of humor, are effective mnemonic devices."
Rand created not only a link between European modern art and American commercial art, he was gutsy enough to break with the traditions that preceded him and independent enough to be himself.



"The public is more familiar with bad design than good design. It is, in effect, conditioned to prefer bad design, because that is what it lives with. The new becomes threatening, the old reassuring."

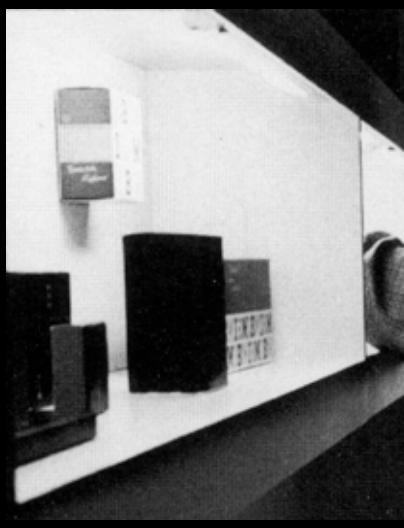
Paul Rand

From left to right

IBM Corporation
Chain Printer Ribbon;

Paul Rand
in home studio;

IBM Corporation
Print Ribbon Cartridges.



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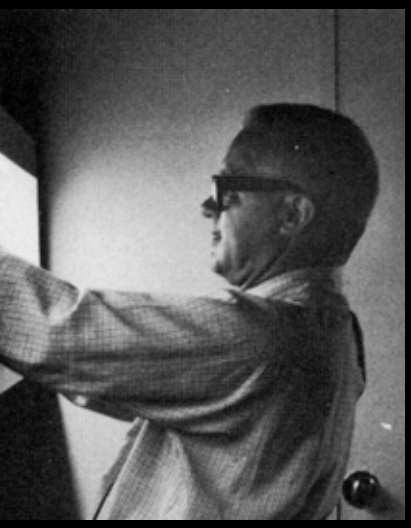

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IBM Corporation
Print Film Ribbons boxes, 1959.


IBM
Film Ribbons


IBM


"Don't try to be original.
Just try to be good"
Paul Rand

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