

Modernism

Post Modernism

Reasoning	From foundation upwards: Linear reasoning	Multiple factors of multiple levels of reasoning. Web-oriented
Science	Universal Optimism that all will be uncovered	Realism of Limitations
Part v. Whole	Parts comprise the whole	The whole is more than the sum of its parts: Gestaltic
God	Acts by violating "natural" laws" or by "immanence" in everything that is	Top-Down causation: Whose God?? and by what form. . .
Language	Referential to western culture	Meaning in social context through usage over time and cultural enviro-conditions

Nature of Post-modernism:

“There is a sense in which if one sees modernism as the culture of modernity, postmodernism is the culture of postmodernity” (Sarup 1993).

“Modern, overloaded individuals, desperately trying to maintain rootedness and integrity...ultimately are pushed to the point where there is little reason not to believe that all value-orientations are equally well-founded. Therefore, increasingly, choice becomes meaningless. According to Baudrillard (1984: 38-9), we must now come to terms with the second revolution, “that of the Twentieth Century, of postmodernity, which is the immense process of the destruction of meaning equal to the earlier destruction of appearances. Whoever lives by meaning dies by meaning” (Ashley 1990).

Ryan Bishop, in a concise article in the Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology (1996), defines post-modernism as an eclectic movement, originating in aesthetics, architecture and philosophy. Postmodernism espouses a systematic skepticism of grounded theoretical perspectives. Applied to anthropology, this skepticism has shifted focus from the observation of a particular society to the observation of the (anthropological) observer.

Guy Debord- Society of Spectacle

The spectacle in general, as the concrete inversion of life, is the autonomous movement of the non-living.

visual example: George Romero's Zombies . . . "Night of the Living Dead " or "Dawn of the Dead"

Some people consider the Reagan Administration in the 1980s as a prime example of the "Society of Spectacle." A man (a former actor) whose image was more important than his intellect or the substance of his words took a leadership position with mixed results when it came to telling the truth or doing the "right" thing.

For example:

"A few months ago I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages. My heart and my best intentions still tell me that is true, but the facts and the evidence tell me it is not."

Pres. Reagan, March 4, 1987, in a speech acknowledging that dealings with Iran had deteriorated into an arms for hostages deal funded by illegal transactions with Nicaraguan rebels who fought as freedom fighters against a democratically elected but pro communist regime.

Marshall MacLuhan- Media is the Massage:

- “A point of view can be a dangerous luxury when substituted for insight and understanding.
- “A typewriter is a means of transcribing thought, not expressing it.”
- “Ads are the cave art of the twentieth century.”
- “Advertising is an environmental striptease for a world of abundance.”
- “Advertising is the greatest art form of the 20th century.”
- “Affluence creates poverty.”

All media exist to invest our lives with artificial perceptions and arbitrary values. As Graphic designers invested in the “First Things First” manifesto, our primary goal is to first “do no harm” when we devise ways to influence the “creative discourse” related to “desire” that we generously call design.

First Things First 1964 a manifesto

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable means of using our talents.

We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as: cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped toothpaste, aftershave lotion, before shave lotion, slimming diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons and slip-ons.

By far the greatest effort of those working in the advertising industry are wasted on these trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity.

In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached a saturation point at which the high pitched scream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are other things more worth using our skill and experience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books and periodicals, catalogues, instructional manuals, industrial photography, educational aids, films, television features, scientific and industrial publications and all the other media through which we promote our trade, our education, our culture and our greater awareness of the world.

We do not advocate the abolition of high pressure consumer advertising: this is not feasible. Nor do we want to take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication. We hope that our society will tire of gimmick merchants, status salesmen and hidden persuaders, and that the prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purposes. With this in mind we propose to share our experience and opinions, and to make them available to colleagues, students and others who may be interested.

Edward Wright
Geoffrey White
William Slack
Caroline Rawlence
Ian McLaren
Sam Lambert

Ivor Kamilish
Gerald Jones
Bernard Higton
Brian Grimby
John Garner
Ken Garland

Anthony Froshaug
Robin Fior
Germano Facetti
Ivan Dodd
Harriet Crowder
Anthony Clift

Gerry Cinamon
Robert Chapman
Ray Carpenter
Ken Briggs

Naomi Klein: “No Logo”

As an example of this marketing concept of quality over actual quality (**aka** the “Society of Spectacle” where perception is substituted for truth” Tommy Hilfiger brand epitomizes this approach. One of the first to make new customers walking advertisements of their brand.

“...in 1923 publicity (and design) helped corporations find their souls.” {no Logo} Corporations like Nike, Macintosh, and Starbucks were part of the leaving-no-place-free-of-publicity phenomenon created by Hilfiger’s walking ads. Michael Jordan and Nike forged a union to make publicity and style be more important than quality. Image creation rather than investing in sustainable approaches to design substitute truth for fiction, and spectacle replaces reality. Do we, as designers, have a responsibility to our clients first or the fundamental principles of “first things first?”

The Corporate Takeover of American Modernism

The stylistic influences of Modernism and The International Style on American graphic designers originated WITH the work of the European Futurists, the Constructivists AND the designers of the Bauhaus. ALL PHILOSOPHIES BASED ON SOCIAL UTOPIANISM . . . THE STYLE WAS CO-OPTED BY CORPORATE AMERICA BUT NOT THE PHILOSOPHY. (DUBORD'S . . . SPECTACLE?)

Global capitalists promote their large multi-national corporations AS NEUTRAL ENTITIES. The abstraction and simplicity of this style worked well as a unifying language of corporate identification across continents. Do designers have an ethical responsibility to do work which is not only “art,” not only commerce, but “right” in a “moral sense?”

The Appearance of “Cool” in Swiss Design

Basel Design School:

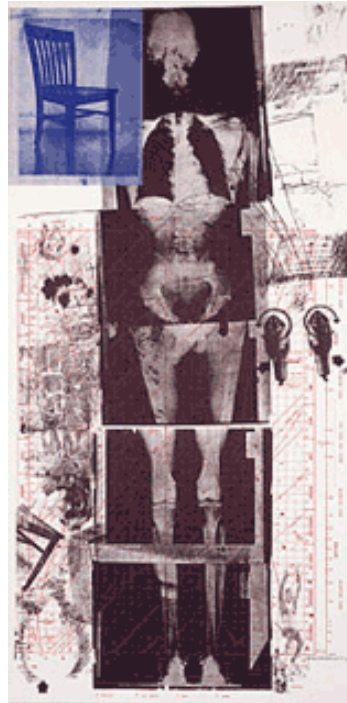
Wolfgang Weingart:

Formally breaks the Grid of Swiss Design-

relying on an “intuitive” approach. “New Wave” typography . . .

new wave reflects the “second” wave of european influences on American culture, the first wave being reflective of the 60s and the British “invasion” aka “The Beatles.”

New Wave



Robert Rauschenberg's "Combines"
Using photography and technological advances in the creation of his artwork, Rauschenberg's influence is evident on the world of Graphic Design.



"It's not just Graphic Design anymore. We don't have a new name for it yet."
Ms Greiman synthesized the complex layering style of artists like Rauschenberg and the aesthetic of "New Wave" typography with the new capabilities of the computer to become a visionary pioneer of digital design.

(Above) Being one of the first to use the Apple/Mac platform as a design tool. Greiman's 1987 life-sized centerfold for Minneapolis Walker Art Center's Design Quarterly has become an icon of digital design, but is derivative of Rauschenberg.

According to Weingart,

“I took ‘Swiss Typography’ as my starting point, but then I blew it apart, never forcing any style upon my students. I never intended to create

A
“style”.

It just happened that the students picked up — and misinterpreted—

a so called
‘Weingart style’
and spread it around.”



Greiman and
Dan Freidman: 1971 go to study under Weingart.

Freidman, a corporate identity designer, never owns up to being new wave but rather prefers to reinterpret Swiss design. His “citibank” work is featured in our text.



Dan Friedman (1945-1995)
New Wave/Radical Modernism

Known for his work at Ansbach and Grossman and Pentagram, Friedman grew to feel that modernism (swiss design) had devolved into a bland, soulless surface treatment. (His Citibank logo of 1975 above.) He invented the term Radical Modernism to distance himself from both the formal constraints of Modernism and the post modern label.

Primarily a corporate Identity designer Friedman's philosophy reflected a rejection of "absolutism of swiss design" for a new "readability" governed by aesthetics founded by DADA and Constructivism.



PUnK: Abandons legibility for contextual expression.





International Style: Las Vegas Version

Robert Venturi-Richard Neutra

vernacularism redefined
so that the best elements are incorporated
in an efficient and minimalist fashion.

Art Chantry:

Inspired by the likes of Big Daddy Ed Roth
and Harley Earl, Chantry reinvents horror vacui with a
sense of vernacularism creating a new niche for shock
rock posters using the language of pulp magazines and
copy heavy ads of the fifties and sixties.

