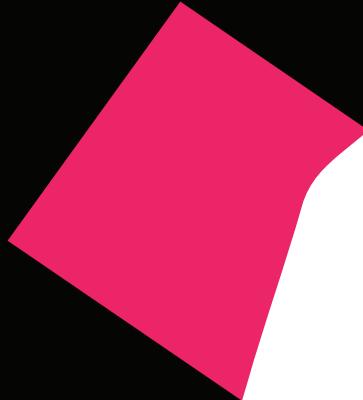
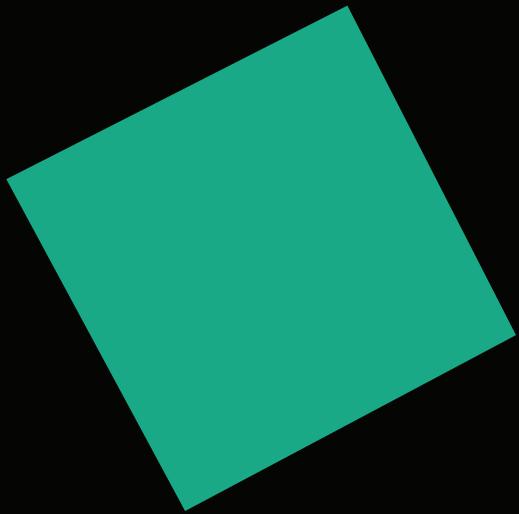


Paul Rand



“To all children who like ice cream”

Paul Rand, *Sparkle and Spin*, 1957



Scuola del Design
Design della Comunicazione - C2
Laboratorio di Fondamenti del Progetto
Anno Accademico 2016 - 2017

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DESIGN\ERSO

DesignVerso: una collana dedicata ai designer della comunicazione immaginata come allegato alla rivista Multiverso, Università degli Studi di Udine.

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A

“An idealist and a realist using the language of the poet and the businessman. He thinks in terms of need and function. He is able to analyze his problems, but his fantasy is boundless.” These are the words that Moholy-Nagy used in order to describe the manifold and fleeting nature of one of the most acclaimed graphic designer of the last century: Peretz Rosenbaum, the man, the designer, the artist.

The one who has reinvented the language of the visual communication with method and irony. Brand identities, magazines, advertisings and children books: metaphors that go beyond the simple visual impact. Through these communicative artifacts he explored the minimalism and essentiality in a disarming manner, and above all in a successful way. We were also interested in showing the child who cuts and pastes, throws together and experiments new combination of shapes and words. In order to become the designer that we all know, he never forgot the importance of the game, as a method to reach creativity and modernity.

In this monograph we tried to explain the versatility of his personality and of his works. Moreover we'd like to express his multiverse, controversial and multi-colored soul. The goal was to design a monograph using his stylistic choices of simplification, bold colors and solid hues.

The insert is a little book which contains interviews to Paul Rand or to people who worked with him. With this insert we tried to show Rand's personality through his own words or with the personal experiences of his collaborators.

This monograph is divided into two parts: one is about Rand's life and character, while the other shows his works. The two sections are characterized by different page orientation. This features is taken from the magazine “Multiverso”, to which this monograph is bundled. Each section is dived in two topics.

Beatrice Corso

Randesigner

Paul Rand, photograph by Joe A. Watson



Logocentrism

By Jessica Helfand

Graphic design is easily the most ubiquitous of all the arts. It is everywhere, touching everything we do, everything we see, everything we buy: on billboards and in Bibles, on taxi receipts and on web sites, on birth certificates and on gift certificates, on the folded circulars tucked inside jars of aspirin and on the thick pages of children's chubby board books. [...]

It is complex combinations of words and pictures, numbers and charts, photographs and illustrations that, in order to succeed, demand the clear thinking of a thoughtful individual who can orchestrate these elements so that they all add up to something distinctive, or useful, or beautiful, or playful, or subversive, or in some way truly memorable. It is a popular art, a practical art, an applied art, an ancient art. It is informed by numerous disciplines, including art and architecture, philosophy and literature, politics and performance.

Simply put, graphic design is the art of visualizing ideas.

Until World War II, it was better known in the United States as commercial art. Practiced by printers and typesetters, it was more a vocation than a profession, more a reflection of the economic realities of a newly industrialized culture than an opportunity to engage the creative expression of an individual or an idea.

Unlike the experimentation that characterized design as it was being practiced and taught in Europe in the early years of this century—led by Cubism and Constructivism, pioneers of DeStijl and disciples of the Bauhaus — what we now think of as graphic design was, in this country, driven by the demands of commerce, and fueled by the prospect of eliminating the economic hardships that had plagued the nation during the Depression.[...]

By the early 1930s, however, a small but accomplished group of American and European expatriate designers began to experiment with new ways to approach the design of commercial printed matter.

Combining the experimental formal vocabularies of their European colleagues with the material demands of American commerce, they helped to inaugurate a new visual language that would revolutionize the role of design as both a service and an art. Of this group — which included Lester Beall, Bradbury Thompson, and Alexey Brodovich, among others — none was so accomplished, or would produce as many lasting contributions to the field, as Paul Rand, arguably America's most accomplished graphic designer, who died last year at the age of 82.

More than any other designer of this century, Rand is credited with bringing the modernist design aesthetic to postwar America. Highly influenced by the European modernists — Klee and Picasso, Calder and Miro — Rand's formal vocabulary signaled the advent of a new era.

Using photography and montage, cut paper and what would later become known as *The New Typography* — asymmetrical typography that engaged the eye and activated the page — Rand rallied against the sentimentality of stolid, commercial layouts and introduced a new, sharper, cleaner, and forward-looking vocabulary of the kind that he had observed in such European design magazines as the German *Gebrauchsgraphik* and the English *Commercial Art*. To look at Rand's work today — work that dates from half a century ago — is to see how an idea can be distilled to its most concentrated and salient form. The style is playful, the message immediate, the communication undeniably direct.

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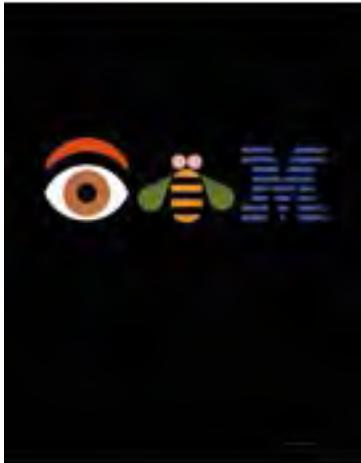
Born in 1914 in Brooklyn, the son of Viennese immigrants who were Orthodox Jews, Rand began drawing as a child and went on to attend the Pratt Institute, the Parsons School of Design, and the New York Art Students League, where he studied with George Grosz. He opened his own studio in New York in 1935; two years later he was named art director of *Esquire*. In his twenties, he suffered a terrible loss when his identical twin brother, a jazz musician, died in an automobile accident; his divorce and subsequent remarriage followed not long after.

During these turbulent years, he remained busy designing layouts for *Apparel Arts* magazine, as well as covers for the antifascist magazine *Direction*, where, between 1938 and 1941, he developed his skills in connection with complicated political issues: the Nazi seizure of the Sudetenland, for example. In 1941, at the age of 27, Rand left to join the William H. Weintraub advertising agency, where he would spend the next 13 years producing advertisements for, among others, El Producto, Dubonnet, Orbach's, and Revlon. He was hired as the graphic design consultant for IBM in 1956 (the same year he was hired by Josef Albers to teach in the graduate design program at Yale), where he collaborated with Thomas Watson Jr. and Eliot Noyes on the famous striped letter forms that are still in use today.

Rand was also one of the few distinguished practitioners of graphic design who saw fit (or found time) to publish on the subject. A contributing writer to numerous design publications here and abroad, he went on to publish four important books: *Thoughts on Design* (1946); *Paul Rand: A Designer's Art* (1985); *Design, Form and Chaos* (1994); and, most recently, *From Lascaux to Brooklyn* (1996). Consequently, he was perhaps the only designer of his generation to articulate a sustained theoretical position about graphic design.

POSTER EYE, BEE, M (1981)

Paul Rand's popular Eye-Bee-M poster, a type of word puzzle known as a rebus that uses pictures to represent letters, was created in 1981 in support of IBM's motto, THINK.



6



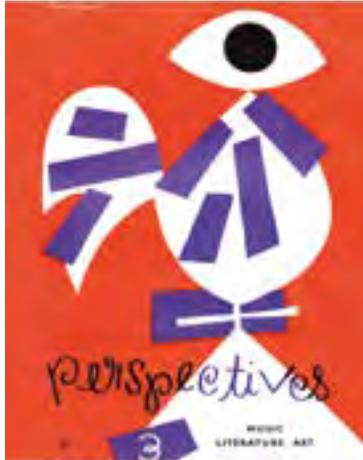
SOME COVERS OF GEBRAUCHSGRAPHIK MAGAZINE

First published in 1924 in Berlin - Gebrauchsgraphik (published as Novum from 1970s) is a leading and influential design magazine. Each month this journal presents the best in graphic design, illustration, photo-design, corporate design, paper, packaging, advertising and typography.

COVER OF PERSPECTIVES U.S.A.
ISSUE 3, SPRING 1953

Published by James Laughlin as part of the Cultural Cold War against the Soviet Union, Perspectives U.S.A. was a journal about American arts and literature. The cover illustrations of every issue were designed by some of the great Modernist designers and illustrators of the era. Paul Rand designed the cover right below.

7



SOME COVERS OF GEBRAUCHSGRAPHIK
MAGAZINE

For over 90 years Gebrauchsgraphik has been providing professionals with an inspiring mix of international graphic design and advertising, and it also delivers a unique haptic experience in terms of an exciting array of cover materials and treatments. During these years of publications it has become a source of inspirations for a lot of graphic designers, like Paul Rand.

Rand was a modernist not only in the reductive vocabularies of his design, but also in the intellectual curiosity of his writing. His books typically consist of short, staccato-like essays in which he considers the fundamental factors that shape our understanding of visual communication. In each of his books, he scrutinizes the relationship between art and design, between design and aesthetics, between aesthetics and experience.

At length, he examines the role of intuition and ideas, the balance between form and function, and the universal language of geometry.

He believed these topics to be timeless. «My interest has always been in restating the validity of those ideas which, by and large, have guided artists since the time of Polyclitus,» he wrote. «It is the continuing relevance of these ideals that I mean to emphasize, especially to those who have grown up in a world of punk and graffiti.» There is a personal, almost spiritual quality to Rand's work. The promises of modernism, in which the harmony of formal relationships gesture to a higher order, and seek to embrace a purist ideal, must have held, for Rand, a kind of divine appeal.

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While it is true that Rand's celebration of pure form gestured to an economy of means that might be characterized as quintessentially modern, it is also true that his resistance to new, more abstract forms of expression revealed itself repeatedly in his writings and interviews, thus branding him, in his final years, as outmoded and conservative.

Throughout his professional life, the words most frequently associated with Rand were *irascible*, *ornery*, and *curmudgeon* - characteristics which led to such statements as «The development of new typefaces is a barometer of the stupidity of our profession.» True to form, his last book was dedicated «to my friends and enemies.» A lifelong advocate of the axiom «less is more», he was criticized for his rejection of a more contemporary design idiom. Rand scorned what he saw in his later years as a postmodern free-for-all, in which sentiment and subjectivity supplanted logic and clarity. The teacher in him saw an opportunity to redefine and to restate the great lessons of the modernist legacy; his writing is tireless in this regard.

And the artist in him saw the necessity of promoting the same exacting standards that he used not only to evaluate his own work, but to assess the quality of any great work of art. «The quality of the work always precedes everything else,» he explained in an interview not long before his death. «And the quality, of course, is my standard.» Throughout his books, Rand sustained his arguments through repetition that sometimes verged on dogma. He wrote in the rhetoric of the manifesto.

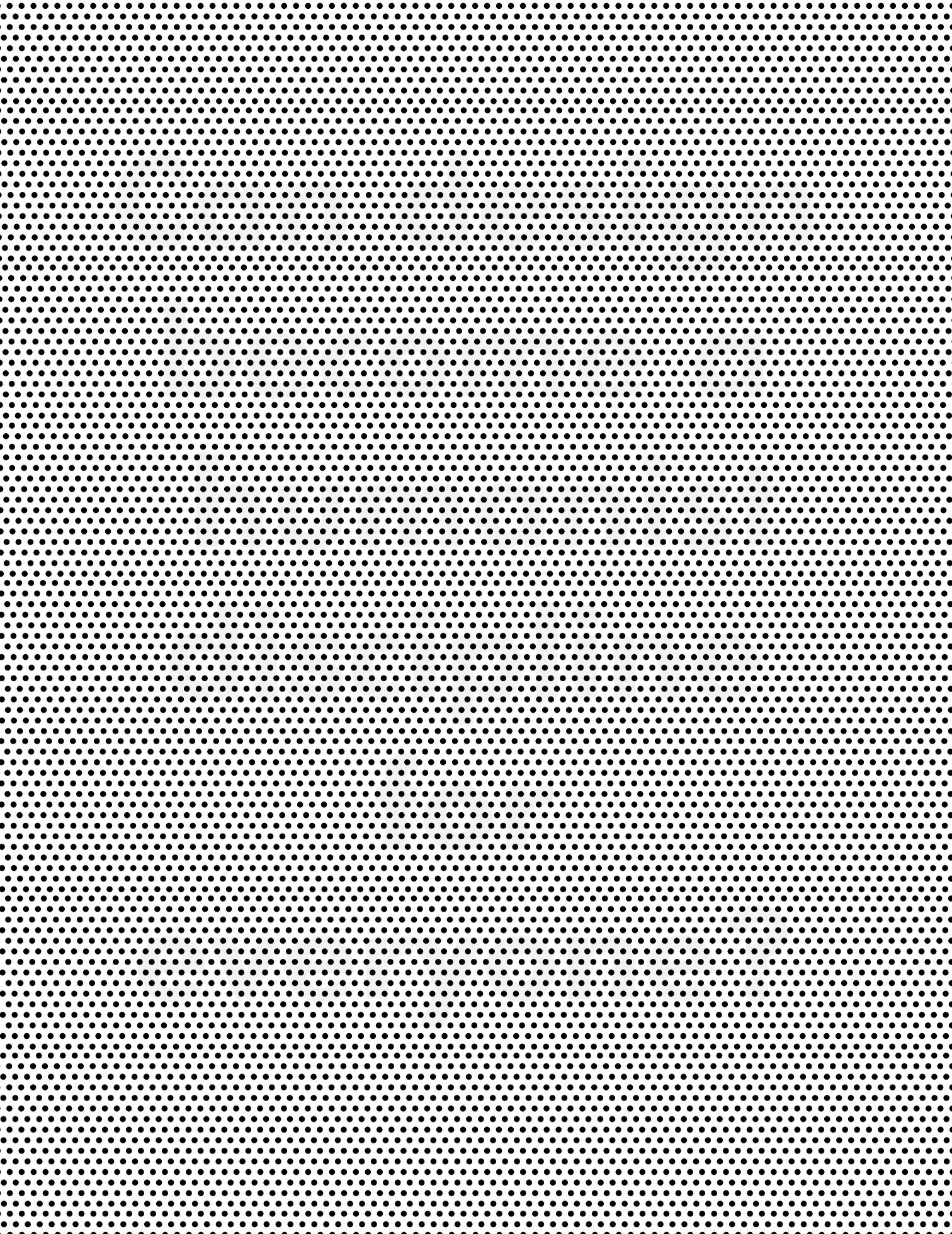
Written primer-style on such topics as *The Beautiful and the Useful*, *Design and*

the Play Instinct, and *Intuition and Ideas*, his essays were extensively illustrated by visual examples from his own portfolio, and footnoted with citations from his equally extensive library. In Rand's writings, design became a humanist discipline; and his insistence was amplified not only by references to, say, Leger and Albers, but also to Kant, Hegel, Dewey, Whitehead, Bergson, James, and others. «To design,» Rand writes in *Design, Form and Chaos*, «is much more than simply to assemble, to order or even to edit: it is to add value and meaning, to illuminate, to simplify, to clarify, to modify, to dignify, to dramatize, to persuade, and perhaps even to amuse. To design is to transform prose into poetry.»

9 For Rand, design was an orchestration of rhythm, contrast, balance, proportion, repetition, harmony, and scale — a philosophically sophisticated vocabulary of simple form, specific function, and symbolic content. In his vision, a circle could be a globe, an apple, a face, a stop sign; a square became a gift-wrapped box (the UPS trademark), an Egyptian frieze (the IDEO trademark), or a child's toy (the Colorforms trademark). Over the course of a career that spanned more than six decades, Rand produced a prolific body of work that included advertising and posters, books and magazines, illustration and — perhaps most important — a host of extraordinary trademarks for such corporations as ABC, IBM, UPS, and Westinghouse. It is for these ubiquitous icons that he is best remembered.[...]

Looking back on his prolific career, it is paradoxical to think that the man who gave graphic life to such technological giants as IBM, IDEO (the international technology think tank based in Northern California), and Steve Jobs's NeXT should himself have been so averse to the computer. How could Rand, the devout modernist, be so openly resistant to the progressive changes brought about by the machine, the symbolic child of modern industry? It is as though the same geometric forms that embodied the logic of mechanical reproduction, the same formal vocabulary that inspired his mentors and defined the very spirit of modernism, were available to Rand only in theory.

Such contradictions underscored his entire career. The darling of corporate America for decades, Rand rejected the lure of city life, choosing to work alone in his home studio in Connecticut for the better part of his career. He claimed to despise academia, but he remained a devoted member of the Yale faculty for over 35 years. It is likely that the orthodoxy that characterized both his relationship to design and his relationship to God was an attempt to resolve these contradictions, to right the balances, to establish order in the studio and in the spirit. But the contradictory impulses remained: «Five is better than four, three is better than two», he often announced to



his students, claiming that the mind worked harder and received a greater sense of reward when resolving asymmetrical relationships on the page.

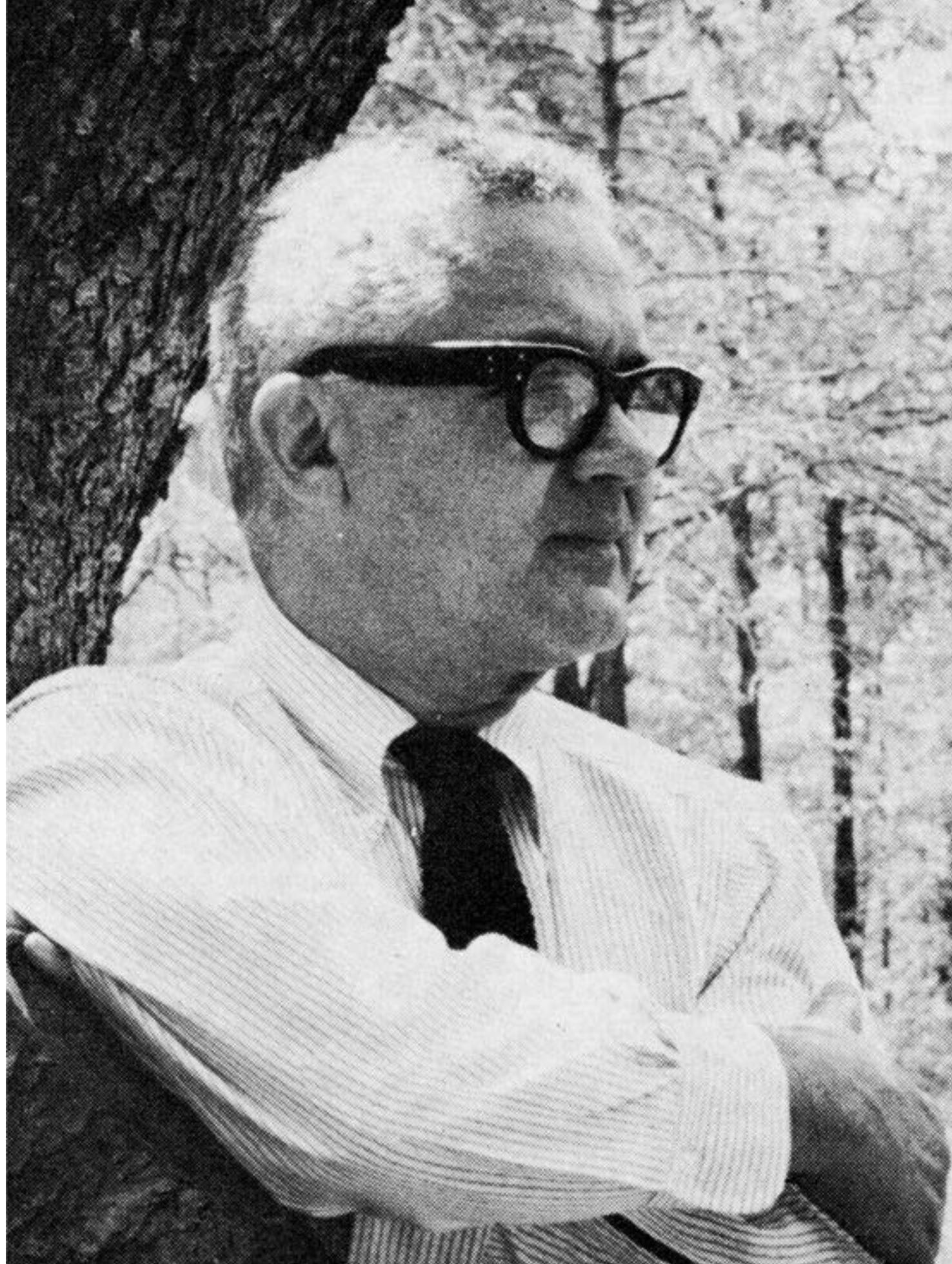
As Rand grew older, such lessons were taught with even greater passion and emphasis. At the same time, in his own work, the pioneering spirit that led him to push the boundaries of expression in the early years grew decidedly less ambitious. With each successive book, the editorial organization is looser, the type is larger, and the writing is weaker. Rand's last book, *From Lascaux to Brooklyn*, is in many ways his weakest book. The precision that qualified the earlier essays is missing, the ideas follow a less logical path, and the marginalia from philosophy, aesthetics, and literature combine somewhat randomly with Rand's brazen, ex cathedra statements. And yet it is a passionate and exuberant book. «The impulse to creation knows no exception, fashionable or practical», he writes. «Cosmetics or jewelry, flatware or footwear, hammers or nails — it is the urge to invent, to solve problems, visual or mechanical, that really matters.» There is Rand's testament, there is Rand going out in a blaze of brains and glory.

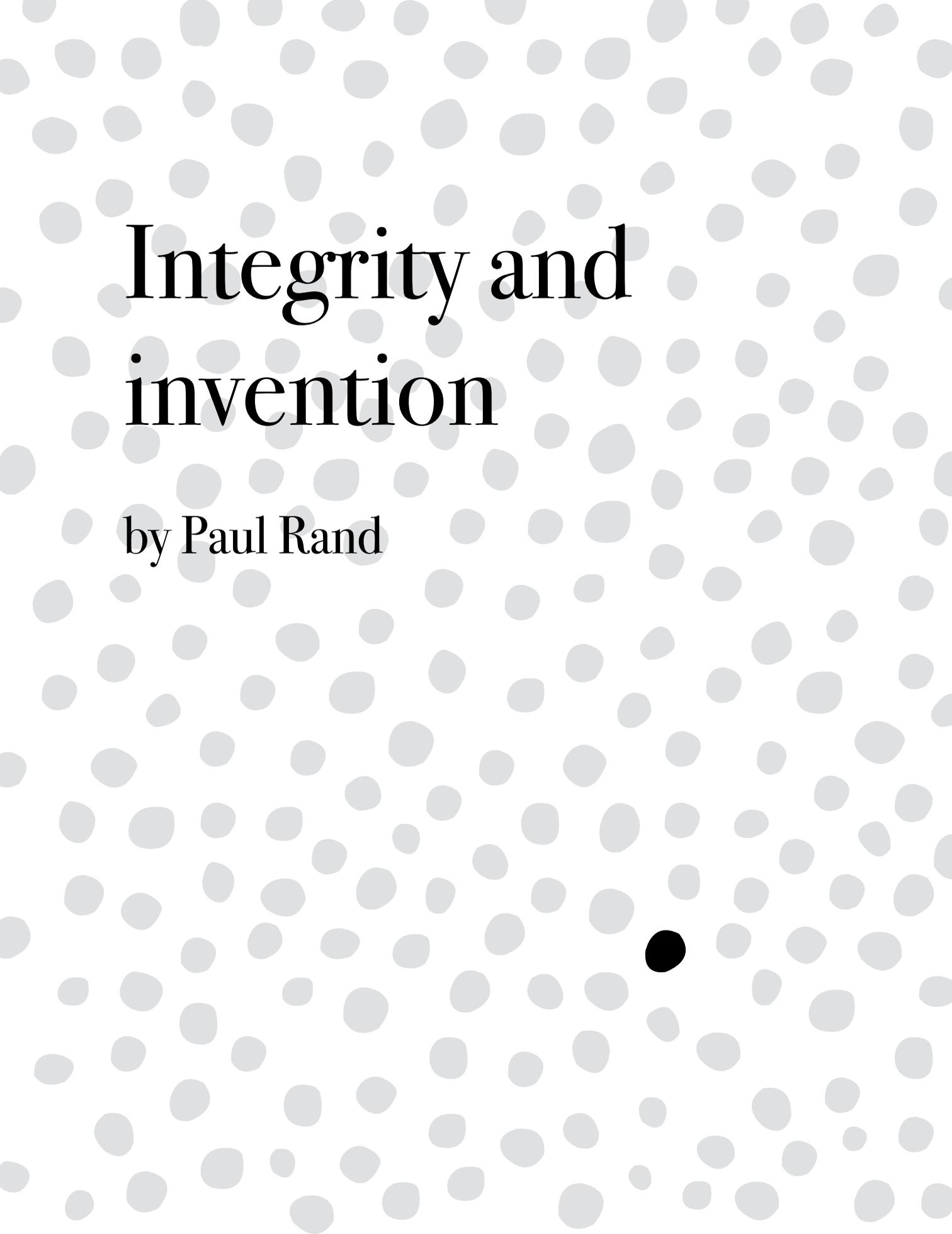
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JESSICA HELFAND, a founding editor of *Design Observer*, is an award-winning graphic designer and writer. She is a member of Alliance Graphique Internationale and a recent laureate of the Art Director's Hall of Fame. Jessica received both her BA and MFA from Yale University where she has taught since 1994. In 2013, she won the AIGA medal. She is the author of numerous books on design and cultural criticism, including *Paul Rand: American Modernist* (1998),

Screen: Essays on Graphic Design, New Media and Visual Culture (2001), *Scrapbooks: An American History* (Yale University Press, 2008) (named that year's best visual book by the *New York Times*) and *Design: The Invention of Desire* (Yale University Press, 2016).

This article has been published in a longer form for the magazine *New Republic*, December 29, 1997, Vol. 217, Issue 26





Integrity and invention

by Paul Rand



W

We are told «One picture is worth more than a thousand words», but is it? Does any one ad, poster, trademark, book jacket, letterhead, or TV commercial tell us of the compromises, doubts, frustrations, or misunderstandings that went into its making?

Some years ago I was asked to contribute a paper on the subject of the visual arts. Those problems I chose to write about have, if anything, become even more apparent today than they were then. For the most part neither time, nostalgia. Victoria-na, Art Deco, nor any other fashionable revival has warranted any substantial alterations in my views.

COURAGE AND CREATIVITY

To function creatively the artist must have the courage to fight for what he believes. Courage in the face of a danger that has no element of high adventure in it—just the cold, hard possibility of losing his job. Yet the courage of his convictions is, along with his talent, his only source of strength. Frank Lloyd Wright put it this way:

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Il work as 'Il think as I am
No thought of fashion or sham
Nor for fortune the jade
Serve vile Gods of trade
My thought as beseemeth a man.
(Frank Lloyd Wright, *Work Song* (Oak Book Workshop, 1898))

The businessman will never respect the professional who does not believe in what he does. The businessman under these circumstances can only use the artist for his own ends. And why not, if the artist himself has no ends? 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, scientific and technological included.

Business has a strong tendency to wait for a few brave pioneers to produce or underwrite original work, then rushes to climb on the bandwagon. The bandwagon, of course, may not even be going in the right direction. The attention and admiration evoked by the high calibre of XYZ's advertising have induced many an advertiser to say, "Let's do something like XYZ" without considering that it might not be at all suited to his needs. Specific problems require specific visual solutions. But both XXX's and YYY's advertising and products can be made to fulfill their functions and also be aesthetically gratifying. Both can express respect for and concern with the broad interests of the consumer. Against the outstanding achievements in design by some companies, there stands the great dismal mountain of lacklustre work. On the whole, industry lacks confidence in creative talent and creative work, and this is the most serious obstacle to raising the standards of design.



Vittorio Cassoni (Ing. C. Olivetti & Co.) with Steve Jobs at the Personal Computer Forum, 1990. Photograph by Ann Yow-Dyson

In 1986, Steve Jobs recruited renowned graphic designer Paul Rand to create a brand identity for his new company, *Next*. He spent \$100,000 for Rand's project.

«I asked him if he would come up with a few options, and he said, “No, I will solve your problem for you and you will pay me. You don’t have to use the solution. If you want options go talk to other people.”»

(Steve Jobs on working with Rand, 1993)

ORIGINALITY AND SUBJECT-MATTER

Ideas do not need to be esoteric to be original or exciting. As H. L. Mencken says of Shaw's plays, «The roots of each one of them are in platitude; the roots of every effective stage play are in platitude.» And when he asks why Shaw is able to 'kick up such a pothole', he answers, «For the simplest of reasons. Because he practises with great zest and skill the fine art of exhibiting the obvious in unexpected and terrifying lights.»

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From Impressionism to Pop, the commonplace and the comic strip have become the ingredients for the artist's cauldron. What Cezanne did with apples, Picasso with guitars, Leger with machines, Schwitters with rubbish, and Duchamp with urinals makes it clear that revelation does not depend upon grandiose concepts. 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. For years I have worked with light bulb manufacturers, cigar makers, distillers, etc., whose products visually are not in themselves unusual. A light bulb is almost as commonplace as an apple, but if I fail 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 fault.

ARTISTIC INTEGRITY

There are those who believe that the role the designer must play is fixed and determined by the socio-economic climate; that he must discover his functional niche and fit himself into it. It seems to me that this ready-made image ignores the part the artist can play in creating this climate. Whether we are advertising tycoons, missile builders, public figures, or private citizens, we are all human beings, and to endure we must first of all, be for ourselves.

Only when man is not accepted as the center of human concern does it become feasible to create a system of production which values profit out of proportion to responsible public service or to design ads in which the only aesthetic criteria are the use of fashionable illustrations and *in* typefaces.

«The problem
of the artist is
to make the
commonplace
uncommonplace.»

Paul Rand, *Thoughts on Design*
New York: George Wittenborn, Inc., 1947



“Brillo Box of Andy Warhol, unlike the pile of Brillo boxes in the supermarket storeroom, is transfigured by “a certain theory of art”. It is the theory that takes it up into the world of art and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is.”

Arthur C. Danto,
*The Transfiguration of the
Commonplace: a Philosophy
of Art,*
PaperBack, 1983

Andy Warhol
poses with his
artwork titled
The Brillo Boxes
at the Tate
Gallery in
London on
February 15,
1971

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 programs. 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 trademark, logotype, letterhead), nor by the number of avant-garde prints or Mies van der Rohe chairs that 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 activity and production of a company, a corporate image is at best mere window dressing, and at worst deception. Things can be made and marketed without 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 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 areas 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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ART AND COMMUNICATION

The lament of the graphic designer that he is not permitted to do good work because good work is neither wanted nor understood by his employers is universal. It is indeed very often true. But if the artist honestly evaluates his work he will frequently find that the *good work* the businessman has rejected is really not so good. Many times when the *square* client says «It's too far out» he may be unconsciously reacting to inappropriate symbolism, obscure interpretation of an idea, poor typography, an inadequate display of his product, or simply bad communication.

This text is taken from Paul Rand's book A Designer's Art, published in 1985. "It was the first book to look at a graphic designer's output intelligently, as opposed to just visually," says Steven Heller, a design critic who knew Rand professionally. Unlike other monographs, A Designer's Art was meant to be read, not

flipped through. Rand's essays cited academics. Prints of his logo work for IBM, ABC, and Westinghouse, along with indie work for magazine and book covers, supported his arguments. It was a lot to digest. "You could read it in one sitting, but it still requires time to absorb the ideas," Heller says.

Graphic design
which fulfills aesthetic needs.
complies with the laws
of form and the exigencies
of two-dimensional space;
which speaks in
semiotics sans-serifs, and
geometrics; which abstracts,
transforms, translates,
rotates, dilates, repeats,
mirrors, groups, and regroupes
is not good design if it is
irrelevant.

Graphic design
which evokes the symmetria
of Vitruvius, the dynamic
symmetry of Hambidge, the
asymmetry of Mondrian;
which is a good gestalt,
generated by intuition or by
computer, by invention
or by a system of coordinates
is not good design
if it does not communicate.

Paul Rand

Yale University Professor Emeritus
Designer of many of the canonical identities of corporate
America including ABC, IBM, Westinghouse, UPS, and Next.



Rachele Micol Barazzetta

Fun never Rand

Design

and the

Play
Instinct

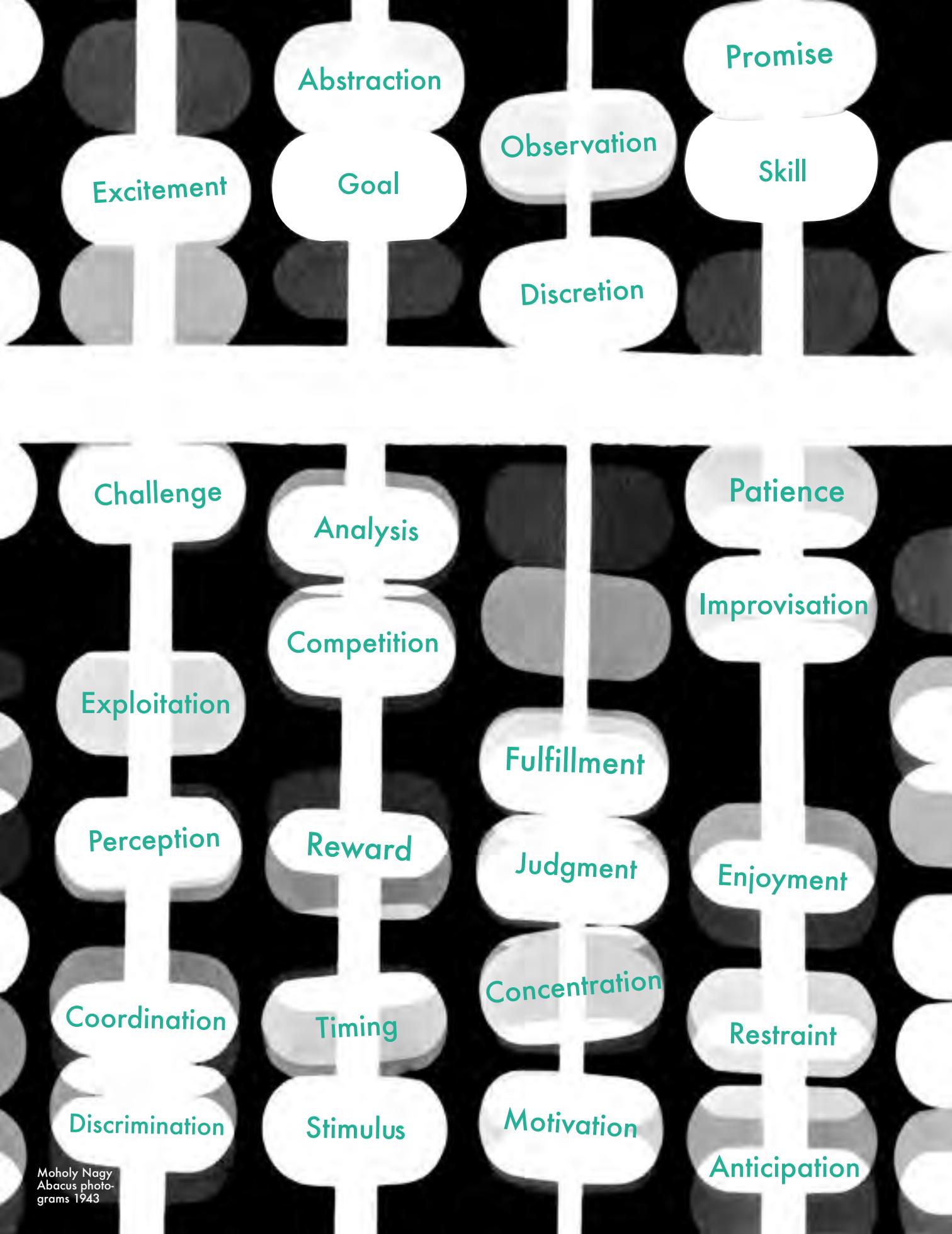
by PAUL RAND

The absence in art of a well-formulated and systematized body of literature makes the problem of teaching a perplexing one. The subject is further complicated by the elusive and personal nature of art. Granted that a student's ultimate success will depend largely on his natural talents, the problem still remains: how best to arouse his curiosity, hold his attention, and engage his creative faculties.

Through trial and error, I have found that the solution to this enigma rests, to a large extent, on two factors: the kind of problem chosen for study, and the way in which it is posed. I believe that if, in the statement of a problem, undue emphasis is placed on freedom and self expression, the result is apt to be an indifferent student and a meaningless solution. Conversely, a problem with defined limits, implied or stated disciplines which are, in turn, conducive to the instinct of play, will most likely yield an interested student and, very often, a meaningful and novel solution.

Of the two powerful instincts which exist in all human beings and which can be used in teaching, says Gilbert Highet, one is the love of play." The best Renaissance teachers, instead of beating their pupils, spurred them on by a number of appeals to the play-principle. They made games out of the chore of learning difficult subjects—Montaigne's father, for instance, started him in Greek by writing the letters and the easiest words on playing cards and inventing a game to play with them."

Depending on the nature of the problem, some or all of the psychological and intellectual factors implicit in game-playing are equally implicit in successful problem-solving:



Abstraction

Promise

Excitement

Goal

Observation

Skill

Discretion

Challenge

Analysis

Patience

Competition

Improvisation

Exploitation

Fulfillment

Perception

Reward

Judgment

Enjoyment

Coordination

Timing

Concentration

Restraint

Discrimination

Stimulus

Motivation

Anticipation

Without the basic rules or disciplines, however, there is no motivation, test of skill, or ultimate reward—in short, no game. The rules are the means to the end, the conditions the player must understand thoroughly, and work with, in order to participate. For the student, the limits of a well-stated problem operate in much the same way. “Limited means,” says Braque, “beget new forms, invite creation, make the style. Progress in art does not lie in extending its limits, but in knowing them better.”

Unfortunately, in some of our schools little attempt is made to guide the student’s thinking in a logical progression from basic design to applied design. We are all familiar with the so-called practical problems which attempt to duplicate the conditions of industry—the atmosphere of the advertising agency, for example. Such problems are frequently stated in the broadest terms with emphasis, if any, on style and technique in advertising, rather than on interpreting advertising in terms of visual design principles.

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Without specific formal limitations, without the challenging possibilities of introducing the element of play, both teacher and student cannot help but be bored. The product may take the form of a superficial (but sometimes “professional looking”) literal translation of the problem, or of a meaningless abstract pattern or shape, which, incidentally, may be justified with enthusiasm but often with specious reasoning.

Similarly, there are badly stated problems in basic design, stressing pure aesthetics, free expression, without any restraints or practical goals. Such a problem may be posed in this fashion: arrange a group of geometric shapes in any manner you see fit, using any number of colors, to make a pleasing pattern. The results of such vagaries are sometimes pretty, but mostly meaningless or monotonous. The student has the illusion of creating great art in an atmosphere of freedom, when in fact he is handicapped by the absence of certain disciplines which would evoke ideas, make playing with those ideas possible, work absorbing, and results interesting.

The basic design problem, properly stated, is an effective vehicle for teaching the possibilities of relationships: harmony, order, proportion, number, measure, rhythm, symmetry, contrast, color, texture, space. It is an equally effective means for exploring the use of unorthodox materials and for learning to work within specific limitations.

To insure that theoretical study does not end in a vacuum, practical applications of the basic principles gleaned from this exercise should be undertaken at the proper time (they may involve typography, photography, page layout, displays, symbols, etc.). The student learns to conceptualize, to associate, to make analogies; to see a

“The crossword fulfills the human urge to solve the unknown”

sphere, for example, transformed into an orange, or a button into a letter, or a group of letters into a broad picture. “The pupils,” says Alfred North Whitehead, “have got to be made to feel they are studying something, and are not merely executing intellectual minuets.”

If possible, teaching should alternate between theoretical and practical problems-and between those with tightly stated “rules” imposed by the teacher and those with rules implied by the problem itself. But this can happen only after the student has been taught basic disciplines and their application. He then is able to invent his own system for “playing the game”. “A mind so disciplined should be both more abstract and more concrete. It has been trained in the comprehension of abstract thought and in the analysis of facts.”

29

There are many ways in which the play-principle serves as a base for serious problem-solving, some of which are discussed here. These examples indicate, I believe, the nature of certain disciplines and may suggest the kind of problems which will be useful to the student as well as to the teacher of design.

The crossword puzzle is a variation on the acrostic, a word game that has been around since Roman times. There have been many reasons given for the popularity of the game. One is that it fulfills the human urge to solve the unknown, another that it is orderly, a third that it represents, according to the puzzle editor of the New York Times, “a mental stimulation... and exercise in spelling and vocabulary-building”. But the play in such a game is limited to finding the exact word to fit a specific number of squares in a vertical and horizontal pattern. It allows for little imagination and no invention or aesthetic judgment, qualities to be found in abundance, for example, in the simple children’s game, the Tangram.

The Tangram is an ingenious little Chinese toy in which a square is divided into this configuration. It consists of seven pieces, called “tans”: five triangles, one square, and one rhombus. The rules are quite simple: rearrange to make any kind of figure or pattern.

Here above is one possibility. Many design problems can be posed with this game in mind, the main principle to be learned being that of economy of means-making the most of the least. Further, the game helps to sharpen the powers of observation through the discovery of resemblances between geometric and natural forms. It helps the student to abstract: to see a triangle, for example, as a face, a tree, an eye, a nose, depending on the context in which the pieces are arranged. Such observation is essential in the study of visual symbols.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | | | | | 15 | | | | | | 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | | | 18 | | | | | | 19 | | | |
| | 20 | | | | 21 | | | | | 22 | | | | |
| | | | | 23 | | | | | 24 | | | | | |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | | | | | | 28 | | | | 29 | 30 | 31 |
| 32 | | | | | | | | 33 | | | | 34 | | |
| 35 | | | | | 36 | 37 | | | | | 38 | | | |
| 39 | | | | 40 | | | | | | | 41 | | | |
| 42 | | | | 43 | | | | | 44 | 45 | | | | |
| | | | | 46 | | | | | 47 | | | | | |
| 48 | 49 | 50 | | | | | | 51 | | | | 52 | 53 | |
| 54 | | | | | | | 55 | | | | | 56 | | 57 |
| 58 | | | | | | | 59 | | | | | 60 | | |
| 61 | | | | | | | 62 | | | | | 63 | | |

ACROSS

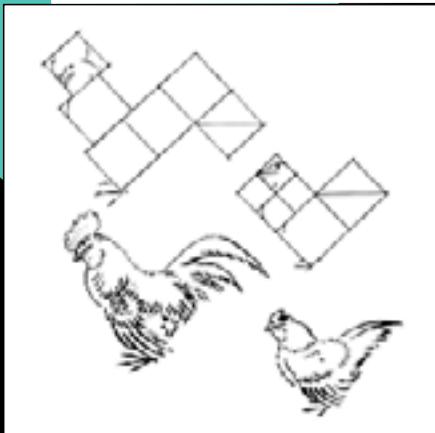
- 1. Makes a choice
- 5. Adored, with "on"
- 10. Tubular water transport
- 14. Snare
- 15. The first Hawaiianborn United States president
- 16. Hawaiian-born instruments
- 17. Medical condition popular on soap operas
- 18. Monroe, Mansfield, and Page, e.g. 20. Auto-maker Enzo
- 22. It may give you closure
- 23. Like many a Chinese dinner
- 24. Humorous Bombeck
- 25. Chipotle chilis
- 32. Contribute two cents?
- 33. Narrow inlets
- 34. Poker prize
- 35. Beehive State college team
- 36. Oleo, often
- 38. Venetian magistrate
- 39. What to do with a table or a stage
- 40. Kind of bet
- 41. Signal once more
- 42. Monsoons, e.g.
- 46. Large ref. work
- 47. "A pop"
- 48. Karate Kid master played by Morita
- 51. Like some truth or translations

DOWN

- 1. Not requiring an Rx
- 2. Lit-Crit lecturer
- 3. Docile
- 4. The 300, e.g.
- 5. One-a-day, e.g.
- 6. Titania's spouse
- 7. Prepare for flight, perhaps
- 8. Ambulance initials
- 9. The domain of Eos
- 10. Decorative auto feature
- 11. "Enough already! I get it!"
- 12. Pitch
- 13. Brutus's being
- 19. One-time childhood disease
- 21. Noose necessity
- 24. DeMille specialty
- 25. Practice Maryland's state sport
- 26. More fitting
- 27. Practice to deceive
- 28. Projecting window

- 29. Geologic time period
- 30. Word with state or elephant
- 31. Direct
- 36. Hardly prolix
- 37. Student's improvised sled
- 38. Stop the reign
- 40. Burn a bit
- 41. It may be Great at the movies, or Amazing on TV
- 42, and 54 across Robert Stockton
- 43. Rang out
- 44. Flake
- 45. Dines at the dining room table
- 48. Amt. at a car dealership
- 49. Slanted writing; Abbr.
- 50. Symbol of servitude
- 51. Information beltways? (Abbr.)
- 52. "May I say something?"
- 53. Actress Singer of "Footloose"
- 55. Like Marvell's mistress
- 57. Word which might describe 18, 25,

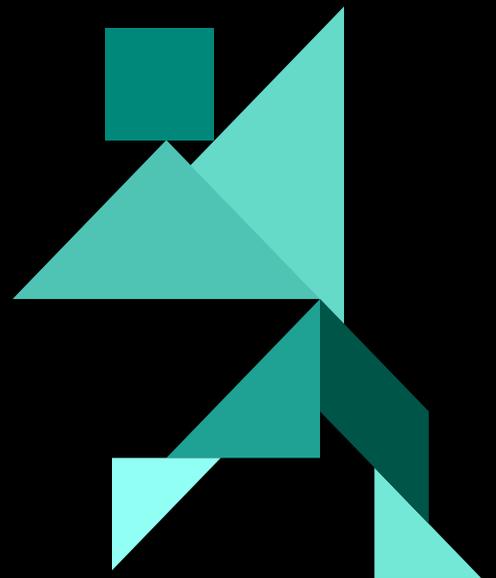
Let's draw a chicken using geometrical shapes:





The game helps to sharpen the powers of observation through the discovery of resemblances between geometric and natural forms.

The #tangramchallenge

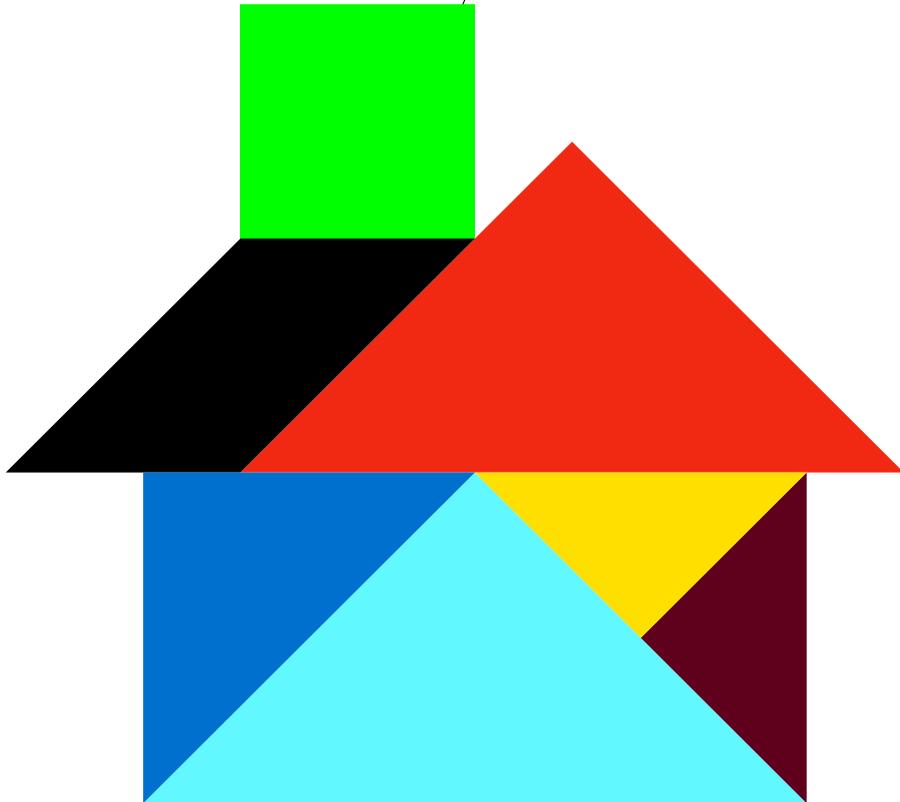


Instagram



instagram

now is your turn



28 likes

instagram#PaulRand #designverso #TangramChallenge
#IsTangram

This drawing is reproduced from the first volume of Hokusai's Rapid Lessons in Abbreviated Drawing (Riakougwa Hayashinan, 1812). In the book Hokusai shows how he uses geometric shapes as a guide in drawing certain birds. This exercise may be compared to the Tangram in that both use geometric means. The Tangram, however, uses geometry as an end in itself to indicate or symbolize natural forms-whereas Hokusai uses it as a clue or guide to illustrate them. In the artist's own words, his system "concerns the manner of making designs with the aid of a ruler or compass, and those who work in this manner will understand the proportion of things".[...]

The Modulor is a system based on a mathematical key. Taking account of the human scale, it is a method of achieving harmony and order in a given work.

35

In his book, *The Modulor*, Le Corbusier describes his invention as "a measuring tool (the proportions) based on the human body (6-foot man) and on mathematics (the golden section). A man-with-arm-upraised provides, at the determining points of his occupation of space-foot, solar plexus, head, tips of fingers of the upraised arm-three intervals which give rise to a series of golden sections, called the Fibonacci series." (1, 1, 2,3,5,8, 13, etc.) (Italics are mine.)

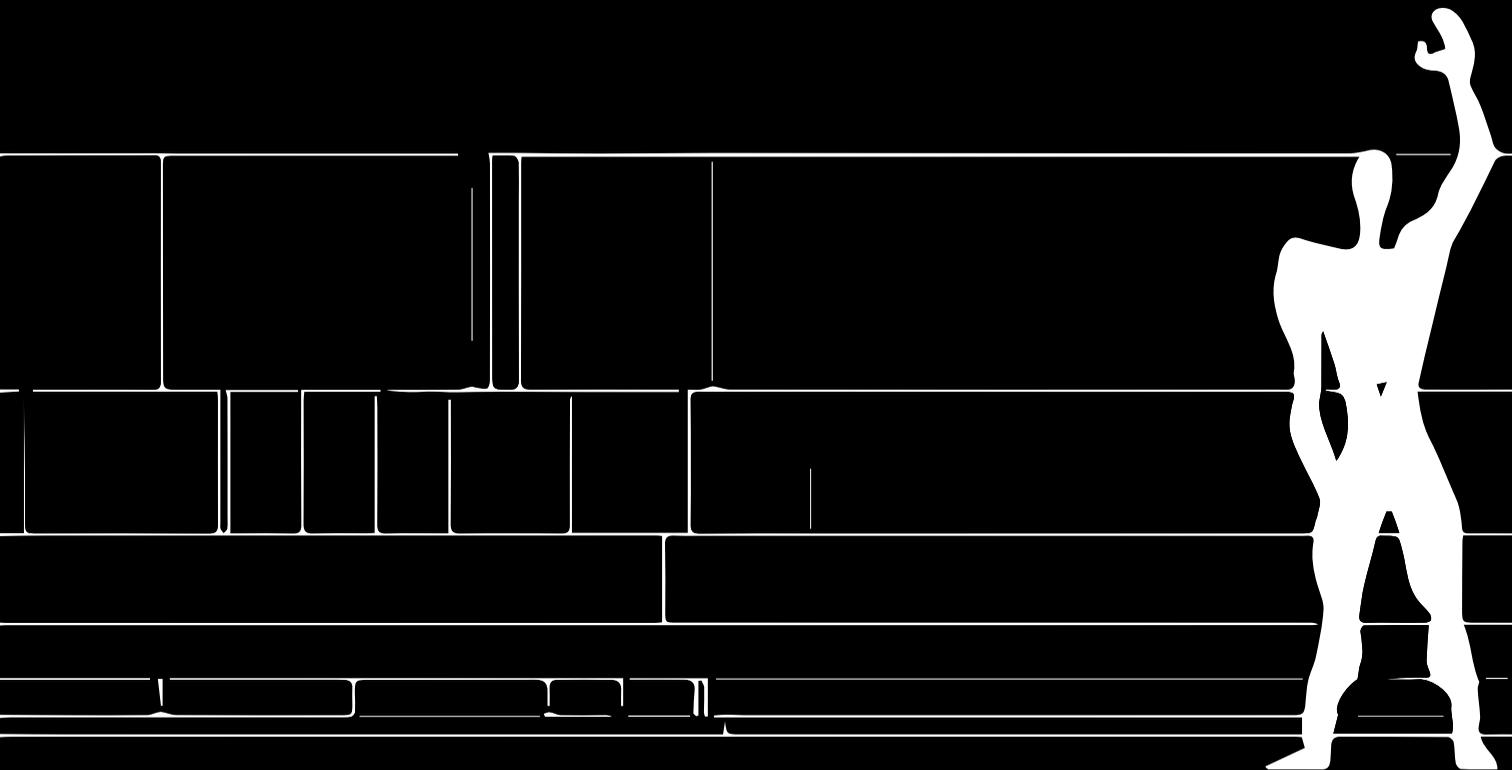
The Modulor is a discipline which offers endless variations and opportunities for play. Le Corbusier's awareness of these potentialities is evident from the numerous references to the game and play in his book, such as: "All this work on proportioning and measures is the outcome of a passion, disinterested and detached, an exercise, a game." Further, he goes on to say, "for if you want to play modular..." In comparison to most so-called systems of proportion, the Modulor is perhaps the least confining. The variations, as will be seen from this illustration, are practically inexhaustible (and this example utilizes only a very limited number of possibilities). If, however, the system presents any difficulties which happen to go counter to one's intuitive judgment, Le Corbusier himself provides the answer: "I still reserve the right at any time to doubt the solutions furnished by the Modulor, keeping intact my freedom which must depend solely on my feelings rather than on my reason."

Like the architect's plan, the grid system employed by the graphic designer provides for an orderly and harmonious distribution of miscellaneous graphic material. It is a system of proportions based on a module, the standard of which is derived from the material itself. It is a discipline imposed by the designer.

Unlike the Modulor, it is not a fixed system based on a specific concept of proportion, but one which must be custom-made for each problem. Creating the grid calls for the ability to classify and organize miscellaneous material, with sufficient foresight to allow for flexibility in handling content which may, for one reason or another,

“All this work on proportioning and measures is the outcome of a passion, disinterested and detached, an exercise, a game.” Further, he goes on to say, “for if you want to play modular...”

Le Corbusier; Le Modulor, 1948



be altered. The grid must define the areas of operation and provide for different techniques, pictures, text, space between text and pictures, columns of text, page numbers, picture captions, headings and other miscellaneous items.

Here is a simple grid system for a booklet. Devising such a grid involves two creative acts: developing the pattern that is suitable for the given material and arranging this material within the pattern. In a sense, the creative ability required for the former is no less than that for the latter, because the making of the grid necessitates analyzing simultaneously all the elements involved. But once it is evolved, the designer is free to play to his heart's content: with pictures, type, paper, ink, color, and with texture, scale, size and contrast.[...]

37

Much of the painting of Josef Albers is based on this geometric pattern. The pattern is not used, however, in the same manner as the masons' lattice. Here it is the painting itself. It represents a strict, immutable arrangement (theme) in which the artist, by juxtaposing colors (variations) plays the fascinating game of deceiving the eye. The squares as we see them here appear to recede into the picture plane. However, by skillful manipulation of colors, the painting flattens out and is thus seen as a two-dimensional picture.

The many variations based on this and similar designs attest to the fascination the artist finds from the interplay of a great variety of color schemes and an extremely limited geometric format.[...]

There are disciplines other than those based on geometry, among them availability of materials, reproduction processes, mechanical limitations, economic considerations, legal requirements, time factors, physical handicaps. Some of these are self-imposed, others are involuntary, but in the hands of the artist each may contribute to, rather than detract from, the end product.

It is inconceivable to consider Matisse's compositions with cut paper without, in some way, linking them to the play element—the joy of working with simple colors and the fun of “cutting paper dolls”. But the greatest satisfaction, perhaps, is derived from creating a work of art with ordinary scissors and some colored paper—with so simple means, such satisfying ends.

Similarly, the early Cubist collages, in which cut paper played an important part, are products of strict rules, limited materials: newspaper mounted on a surface, with the addition of a few charcoal or pencil lines, usually in black and white and sometimes with tan or brown or similarly muted colors. These elements were juggled until they satisfied the artist's eye. The playfulness and humor in the production of some of these compositions in no way detracts from the end result—a serious work of art. One can-

not underestimate the importance of restraint and playfulness in almost any phase of Picasso's work. Here, for example, one sees a restrained use of the brush and one flat color. The drawing of the child's face, the ornament and the lettering are all one. Lettering is not used as a complement to the drawing, but as an integral part of the drawing. It serves as both a garland and a verbal image—a visual pun. What emerges is a kind of game itself, revealing the ingenuity and playfulness of the artist, his ability to deal with problems in the simplest, most direct, and meaningful manner.

Similarly, this ability to do much with little—to find a bull's head in a bicycle seat and handle bars—is another aspect of Picasso's wizardry, his humor, his childlike spontaneity, his skill as a punster and ability to improvise and invent with limited, often surprising means.

This monochrome, *Persimmons*, by Mu Ch'i, a thirteenth century Zen priest and painter, is a splendid example of a painting in which the artist plays with contrasts (the male and female principle in Chinese and Japanese painting): rough and smooth, empty and full, one and many, line and mass, black and white, tint and shade, up and down. It is a study in the metamorphosis of a fruit, as well as of a painting. (The artist, incidentally, never used any color but black.)

The reader may find a parallel, at least in spirit, between this painting and the preceding one by Picasso. Both employ a single color, and exploit this limitation to achieve as much variety as possible, and both undoubtedly were painted very rapidly, a condition often conducive to utmost simplification and improvisation.

In modern times artists like Man Ray and MoholyNagy, working with the most limited photographic means, the photogram, created highly significant pictures. This technique offers the artist ample opportunity to play with light and a great variety of materials, opaque, translucent, and transparent, to produce, very rapidly, rich and unexpected effects.

The photogram, at the left, made by the writer some years ago, shows how simply one is able to capture movement and achieve interesting tonal effects. Because the technique itself dictates a certain degree of speed the time factor becomes an additional discipline, which acts as a creative stimulus.

The de Stijl movement, founded in 1917, had a profound influence on painting, architecture, and typography. Piet Zwart, the designer responsible for this advertisement for the Dutch firm *Nederlandsche Kabelfabriek*, was associated with this group.

The disciplines which de Stijl encouraged—functional use of material and meaningful form, and the restrained use of color (black and/or primary colors)—are

evident in this design. With a few simple typographic elements and an ingenious play on the letter “O”, a humorous, yet significant design was evolved. A picture is created by typographic means: a few type characters and type rules are so manipulated as to make a useful product, an advertisement. Many examples of this artist’s work reveal

This same playful approach and are worthy of serious study. The earth colors of Africa, the ice of the polar regions, the bamboo of Japan, are among the many challenging materials with which artists and artisans create their idols, their utensils, and their houses—all natural limitations which provide their own built-in disciplines which, in turn, contribute to the creative solution.

39

Some years ago in Kyoto I was fortunate enough to witness a young Japanese craftsman make the “chasen” you see here. It is a whisk used in the tea ceremony and is cut from a single piece of bamboo with a simple tool resembling a penknife. Both the material and manufacturing process (about one-half hour) are the quintessence of discipline, simplicity and restraint. The invention of such an article could not possibly have been achieved by anyone lacking the ability to improvise and the patience to play with a specific material: to see the myriad possibilities and discover the ideal form. It has not been the purpose of this discussion to provide a glossary of disciplines or recipes, but merely to indicate the virtue of the challenge implicit in discipline. “I demand of art”, says Le Corbusier, “the role of the challenger... of play and interplay, play being the very manifestation of the spirit.”

This version of the article was originally published in “Education of Vision”, 1965. The broad objectives in the creation of this volume have been stated by the editor: “The living reintegration of all aspects of our life on the new parameter of the 20th century knowledge... is our great contemporary challenge, and in this work the imaginative power of creative vision could have a central role... A key task of our time is the education of vision—the development of our neglected, atrophic sensibilities. We need

to integrate the knowledge we have about the process of vision, the didactic devices to develop it, and the concrete territories where creative vision can be put to service. The first step is to define the scope and nature of our image-making faculty. The, based upon this knowledge, we must survey the factors that can facilitate its development” the impact of the visual environment on the one hand, and on the other the pedagogical processes that can train our visual sensibilities.”



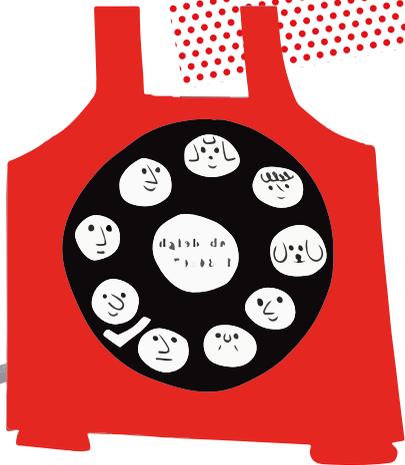
Paul and Ann's children books

by Maria Popova

M

My background is in graphic design. I am not a trained illustrator, for this reason, I am hesitant about making a children's book. I decided to research other graphic designers that also made children's books. I like Paul Rand's Style, it reminds me of Matisse's paper cuts (see previous post). His style is fun, playful and dynamic. Below are a selection of his children's books.

“Paul Rand did not set out to create classic children's books, he simply wanted to make pictures that were playful. Like the alchemist of old, he transformed unlikely abstract forms into icons that inspired children and adults and laid the foundation for two books that have indeed become children's classics.” — Steven Heller, author of Paul Rand. (Books by Paul Rand: Sparkle and Spin)



SPARKLE AND SPIN

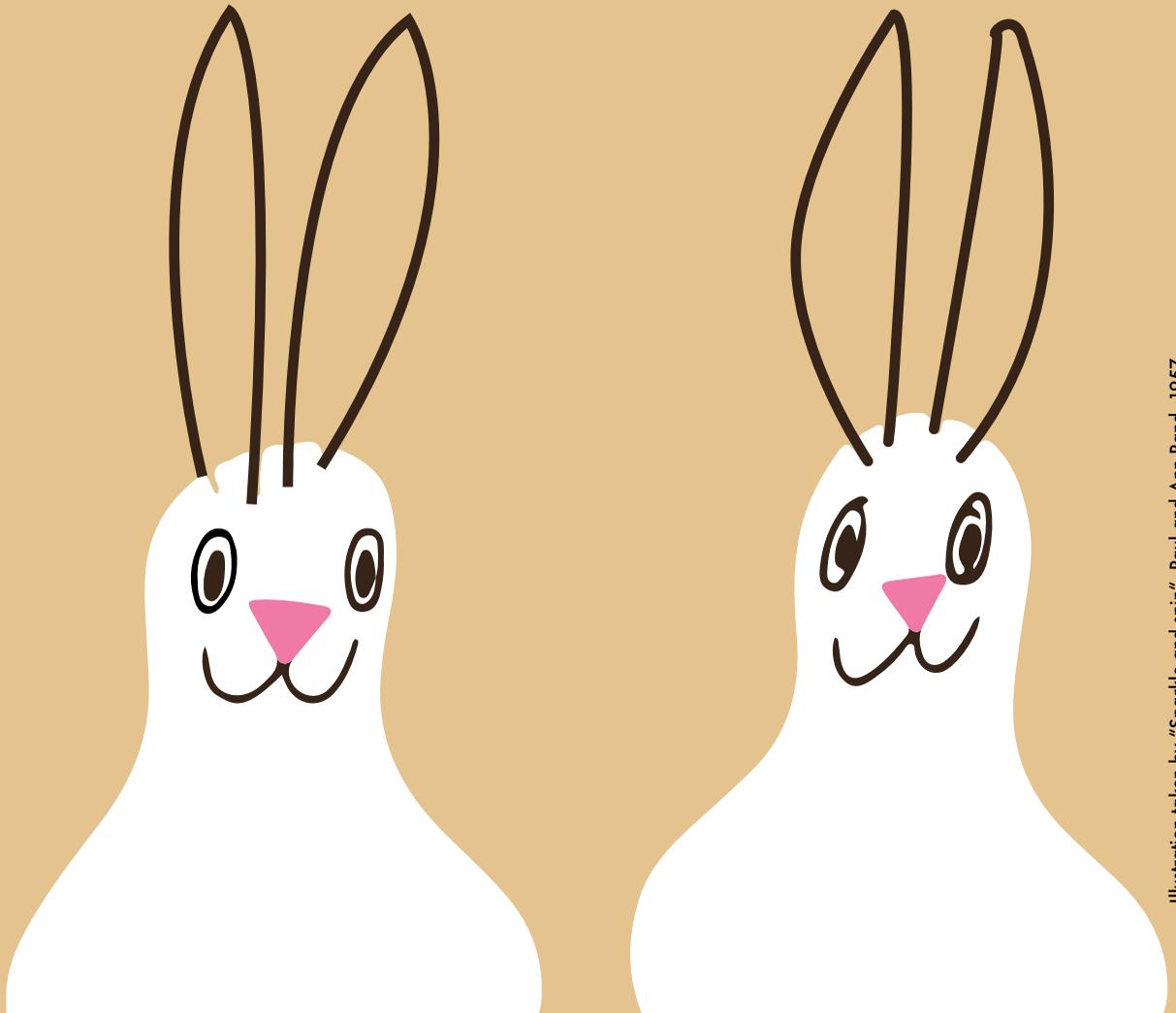
“Sparkle and Spin: A Book About Words” (public library) — an utterly, perhaps paradoxically, delightful 1957 children’s book illustrated by legendary designer and notorious curmudgeon and imagination champion Paul Rand, and written by his then-wife Ann.

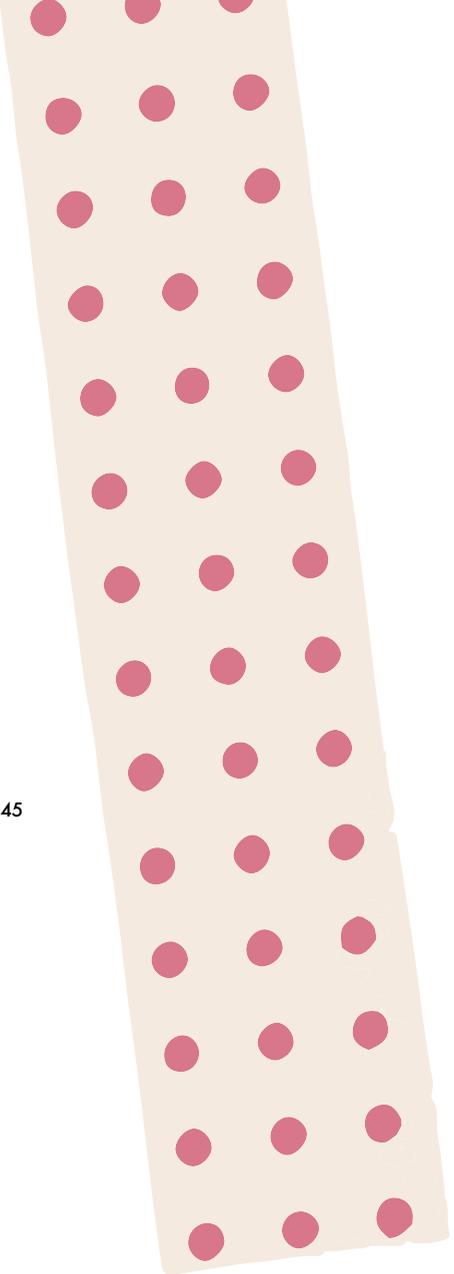
I came across the book in the excellent *Children’s Picturebooks: The Art of Visual Storytelling*, a treasure trove of seminal vintage children’s books.

With its bold, playful interplay of words and pictures, the book encourages an understanding of the relationship between language and image, shape and sound, thought and expression, a lens we’ve also seen when Italian novelist and philosopher Umberto Eco introduced young readers to semiotics in the same period.

Though the cover of the 2006 reprint, with its all too literal glitter gimmick, would have likely sent Rand into a vapid fury, the book is an absolute treasure, one I’m happy to see survive the out-of-print fate of all too many mid-century gems.

Sparkle and Spin is part of a Rand trilogy, including *Little 1* (1962) and the out-of-print, incredibly hard to find *Listen! Listen!* (1970).

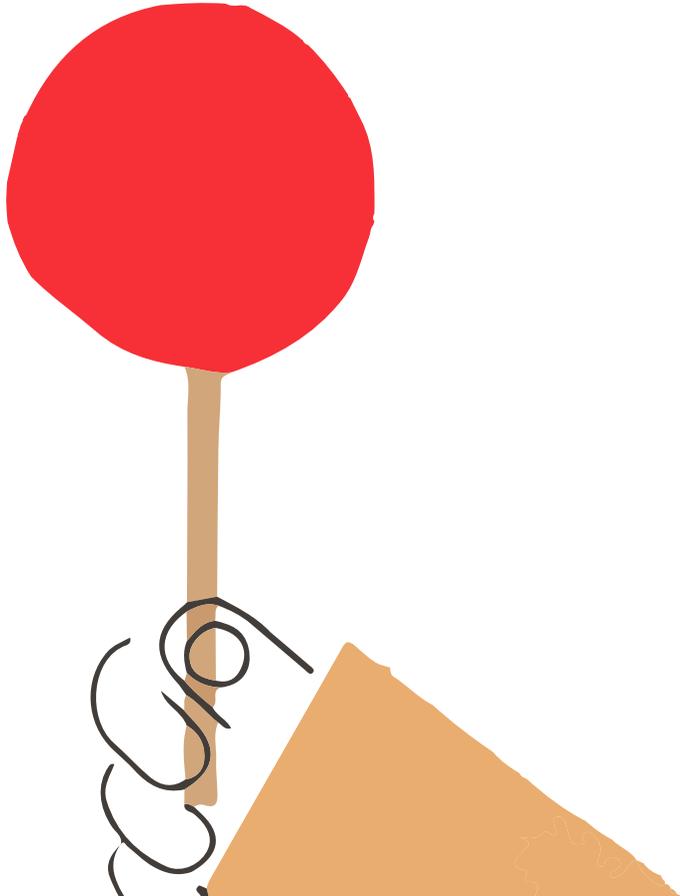


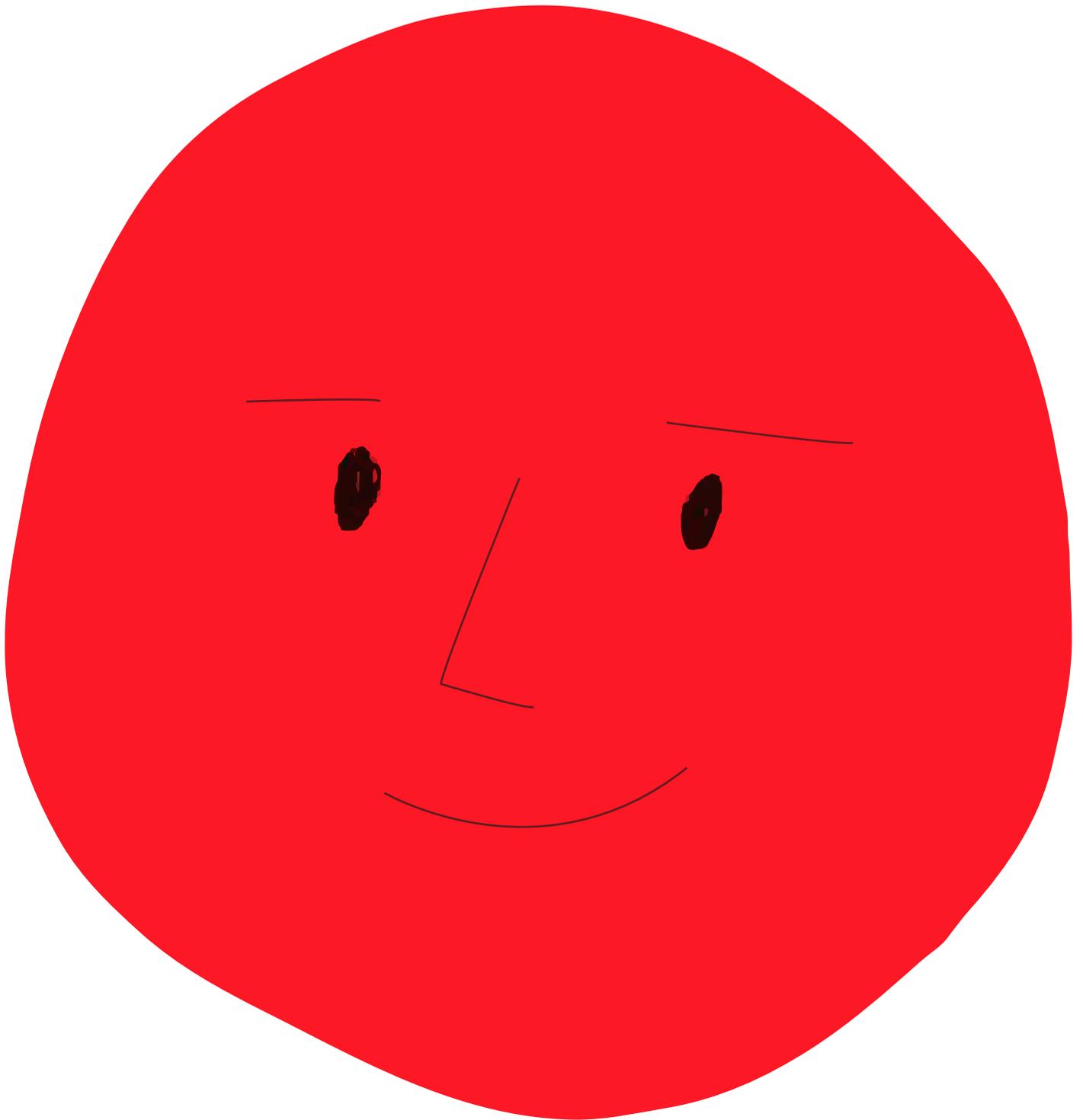


Words are the names of people
you like:

Sally and Mary,
Thomas and Harry.

Words tell how you feel:
fine and dandy
and I like candy.





Ann & Paul Rand

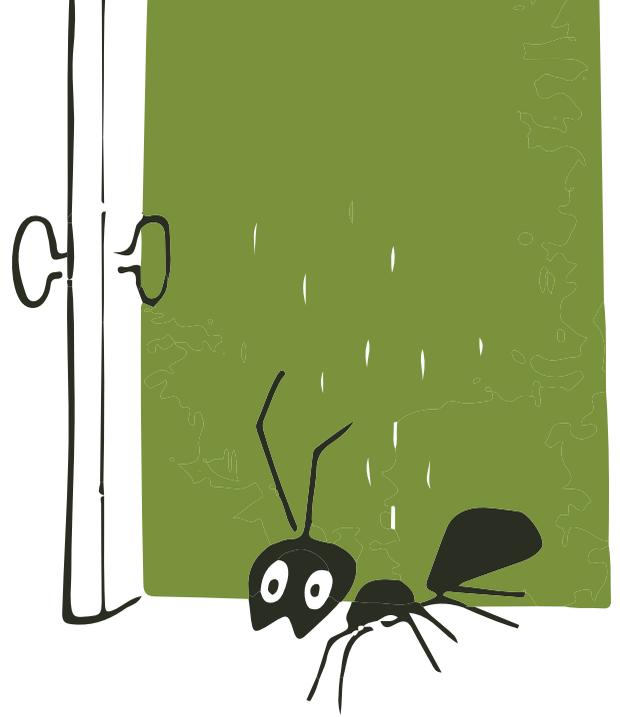
Little 1



LITTLE ONE

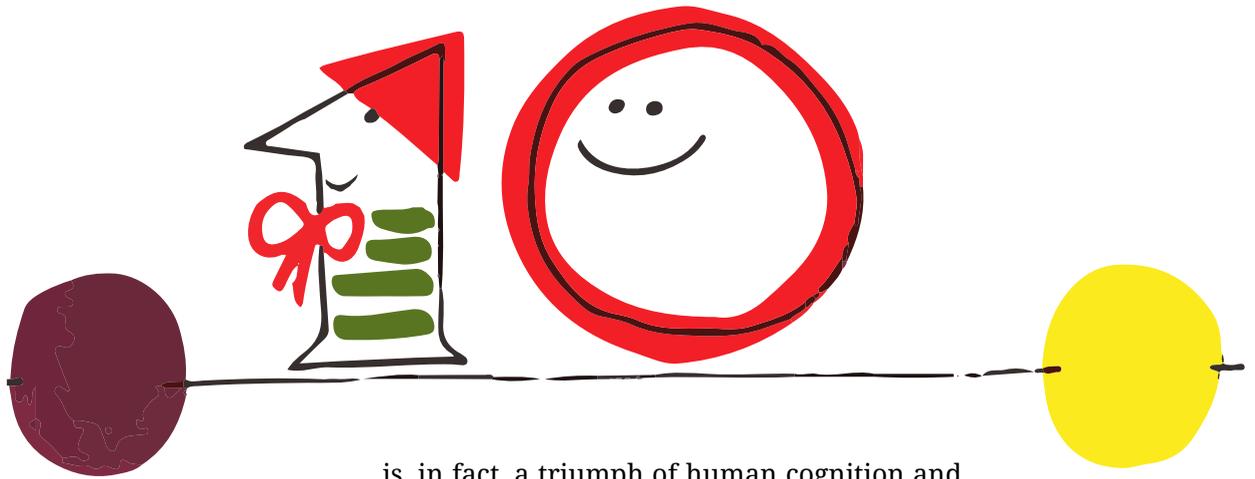
The second book in the series, Little 1 (public library), was published in 1961 and enlisted the same playful dance of wordplay and bold, vibrant, minimalist images in introducing the young reader to the numbers from 1 to 10 through a heart-warming story about friendship and belonging.

The deceptively simple illustrations juxtaposed with seemingly basic concepts — like, for instance, the concept of “how many,” the idea of sets that we take for granted but that



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is, in fact, a triumph of human cognition and a cognitive challenge for the young brain — parallel Umberto Eco's infatuation with semiotics in serving a bigger mission of exploring the symbolic relationship between text and image.

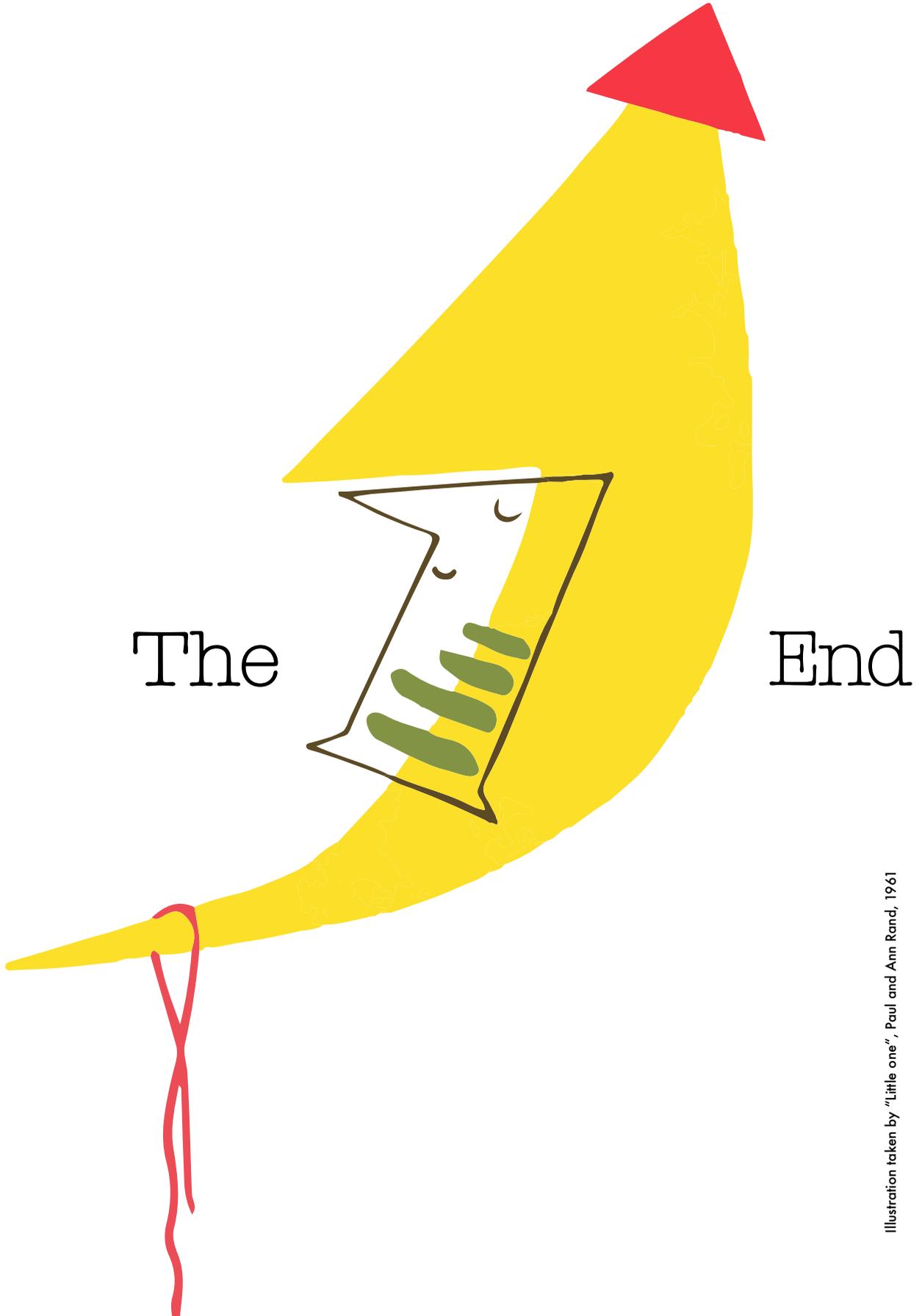
Some three decades later, in a 1993 interview, Steve Jobs, who worked with Rand on the design of the NeXT logo, captured a defining quality of Rand's character that seems to permeate his children's books, one that lived beneath his public persona as a professional curmudgeon:

He's a very deep, thoughtful person who's tried to express in every part of his life what his principles are. And you don't meet so many people like that today.

Little 1 was followed by the third and final book in the series, Listen! Listen!, in 1970. It is long out of print and currently nearly impossible to find.

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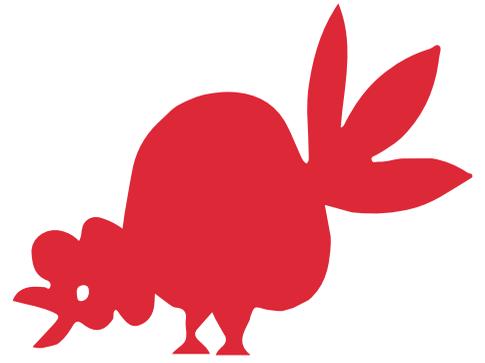
The

End

Ann & Paul Rand

Listen! Listen!





LISTEN, LISTEN!

Listen! Listen!: A Vintage Invitation to Presence and Attentive Attunement with the World, Illustrated by Graphic Design Legend Paul Rand

From the plop of a raindrop to the crunch of buttered toast, a celebration of life through the soundscape of everyday aliveness.

Legendary graphic designer Paul Rand was a creative genius who wore his kindness in cantankerous camouflage. His timeless wisdom on design continues to influence generations of creators and visual communicators. Steve Jobs, who hired Rand to design the identity for his second company, NeXT, admired him as “a very deep, thoughtful person who’s tried to express in every part of his life what his principles are.”

Among the principles Rand most passionately espoused was his faith in the power of the relationship between word and image, negotiated in the intricate language of visual communication — a language mastered throughout life, but first acquired in childhood.

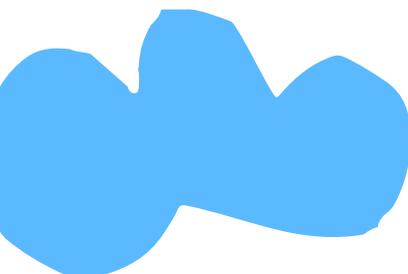
In the late 1950s, Rand and his then-wife, Ann Rand — a prolific and imaginative children’s book author who had been trained as an architect — began collaborating on a series of unusual, semi-semiotic children’s books nurturing that formative relationship with word and image. Listen! Listen! is one of them. It was published (public library) in 1970, conceived for the Rands’ young daughter, Catherine —it is a marvelous celebration of presence through the soundscape of daily life, reminiscent of Margaret Wise Brown’s little-known yet enormously wonderful Quiet Noisy Book, published two decades earlier.

This forgotten gem, long out of print, is now brought to life anew by Princeton Architectural Press. Ann Rand’s warmhearted verses wink at Paul Rand’s unmistakable primary colors and collage-driven illustrations to extend an openhanded invitation to attentiveness and attunement with the living world.

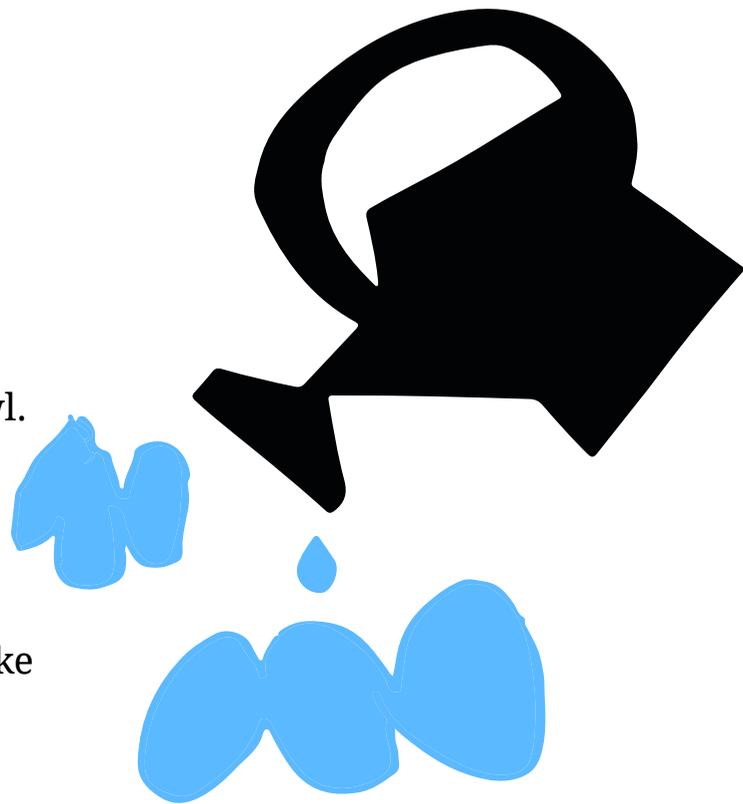
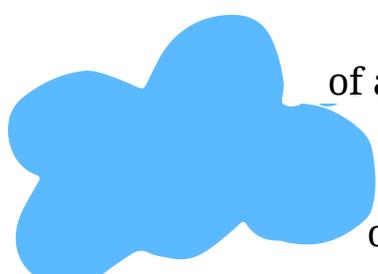
Now that’s not a door, because a door goes wham! Complement Listen! Listen! with the lovely Japanese counterpoint

The Sound of Silence, then revisit Ann Rand’s What Can I Be? — her wonderful vintage concept book about how the imagination works, written in the same era but only discovered and published in our time.





if you slam it,
nor a dog,
and as for a at,
it certainly isn't that.
A bear would growl
and a wolf would howl.
None of you knows
what that roar was.
I like the whir
that the wings
of a hummingbird make
when it flies,
and the Psssst!
of fireworks as they
sputter in the sky.



But the noise I like
the very best
is early morning before sunrise
because then
(when I keep my eyes tight shut)
I can hear
the world wake up.
It's a wonderful mixed-up sound.
From far and near
from air and ground,
it comes from all around.
Listen.

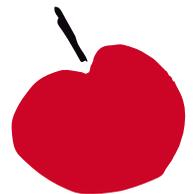
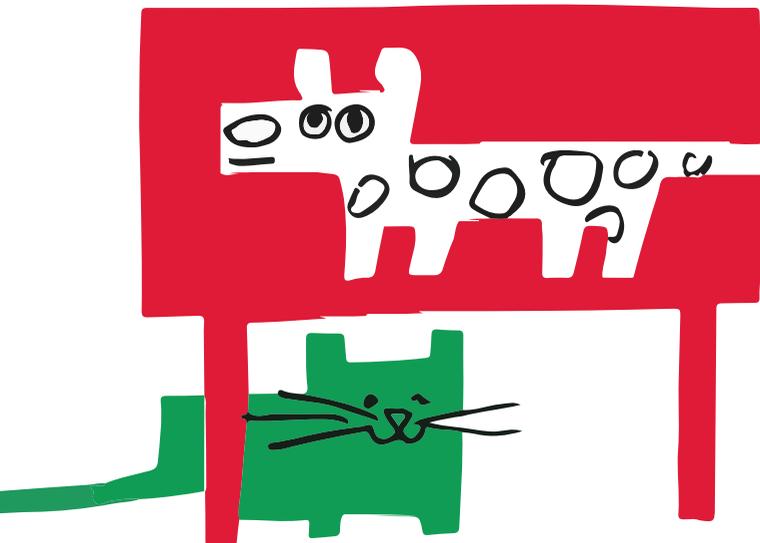




Illustration taken by "Listen, Listen!", Paul and Ann Rand, 1970

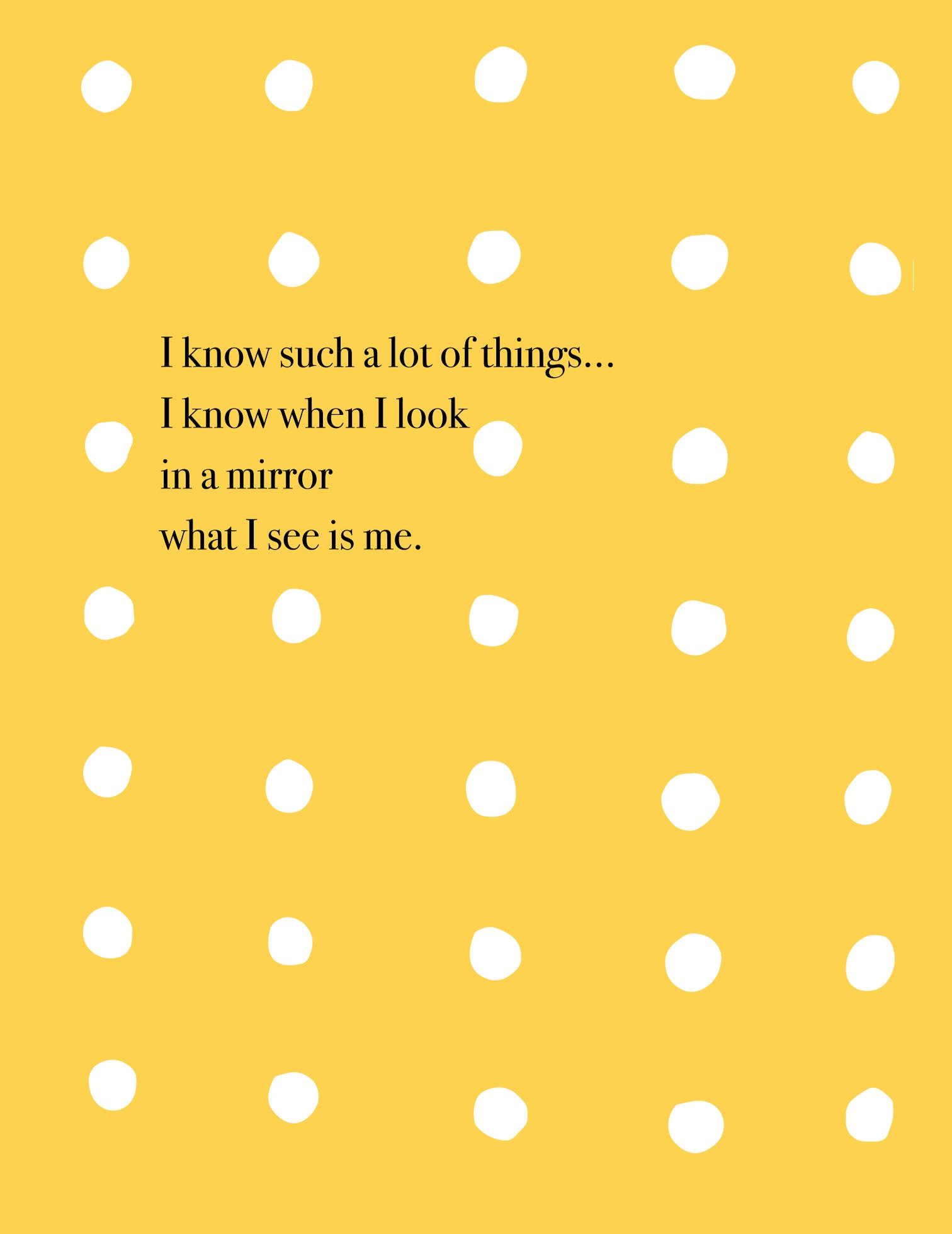
I know
a lot
of
things



How many things can one discover,
simply by observing the world!



Illustration taken by "I know a lot of things", Paul and Ann Rand, 1956

A yellow background with a grid of white circles. The circles are arranged in a 5x5 grid, with one circle missing from the second row, second column. The text is centered in the middle of the grid.

I know such a lot of things...

I know when I look

in a mirror

what I see is me.



I KNOW A LOT OF THINGS

A leaf could be a ferry for a snail, and the moon is a light for the night: there's no border between reality and imagination, and everyday I'll discover to know one thing more, and as I grow I know I'll know much more. Bright and rhythmic, Ann Rand's text is a catalogue of little-everyday-wonders that only need to be discovered; colourfully illustrated by Paul Rand, *Quante cose so (I know a lot of things)* is a classic among children's books, originally published in 1956. Paul Rand (1914 - 1996) studied at Pratt Institute and Parson's School of Design, as well as with George Grosz, the celebrated figure of German Expressionism. His most widely known contribution to graphic design are his corporate identities (for firms such as IBM, Westinghouse, ABC and UPS), many of which are still in use. Rand's approach to advertising was much like an artist, and his ability to grasp the familiar object and convert it into a charming yet commanding symbol made his works famous the world over. He is author of many articles about graphic design, and he also continued his interest in education by occasionally teaching and lecturing and by illustrating children's books. Ann Rand wrote five children's books, four of which illustrated by her husband, Paul Rand. Together they created spontaneous and light books, based on the immediateness of images and words.

Illustration taken by "I know a lot of things", Paul and Ann Rand, 1956





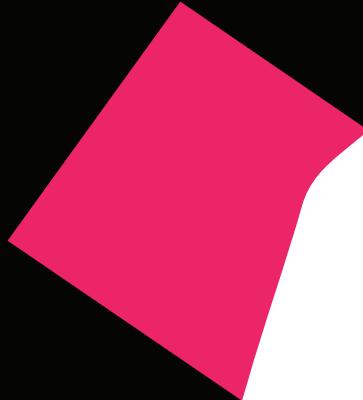
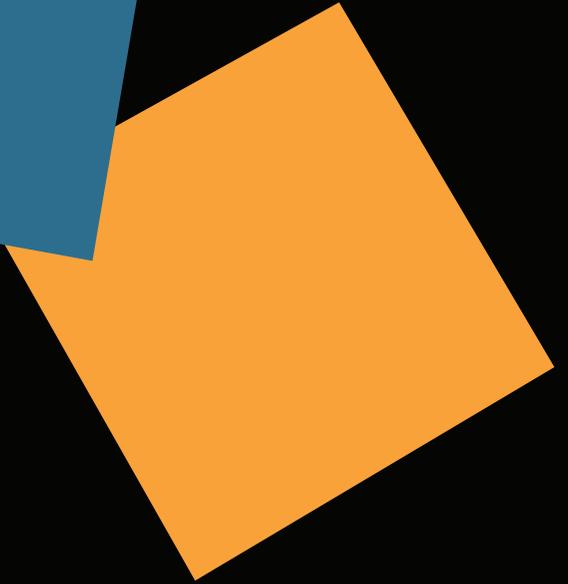
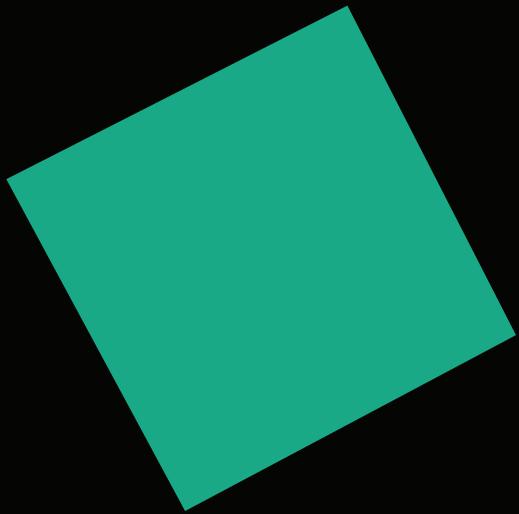
or wave hello to a mushroom who's just a little fellow with a big umbrella.

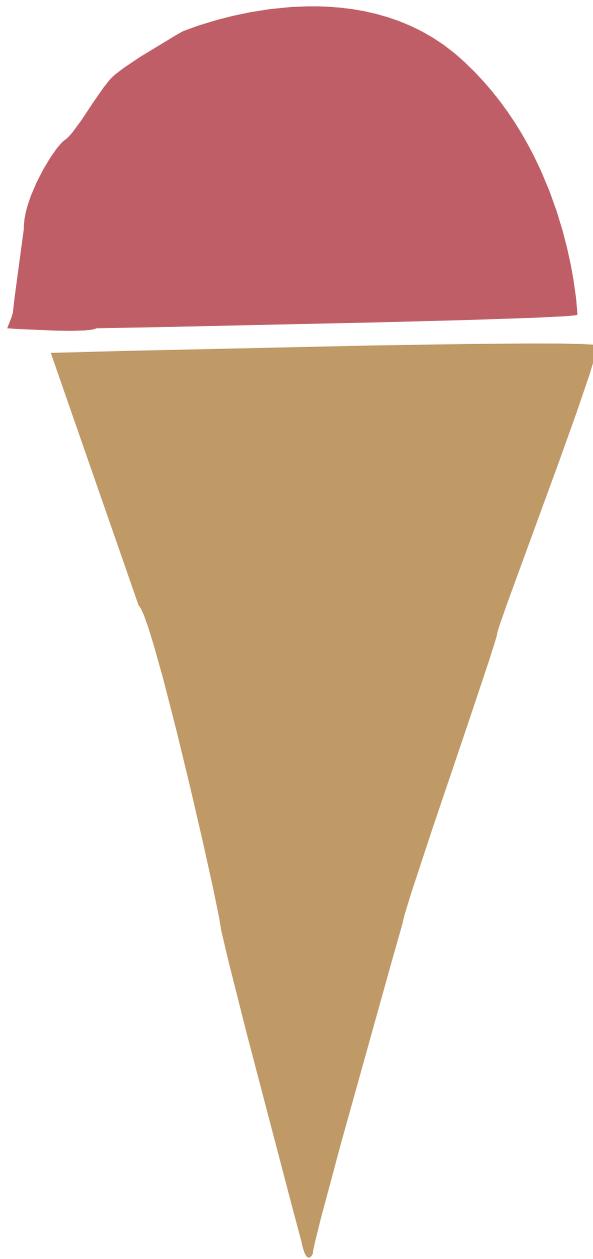


These articles were taken by the site Brain Pickings, which is written by Maria Popova. She is a reader, writer, interestingness hunter-gatherer, and curious mind at large. She is previously written for Wired UK, The Atlantic, The New York Times, and Harvard's Nieman Journalism Lab, among others, and is an MIT Futures of Entertainment Fellow. Brain Pickings is a one-woman labor of love — a subjective lens on what matters in the world and why. Mostly, it's a record of her own becoming as a person — intellectually, creatively, spiritually — and an inquiry into how to live and what it means to lead a good life.

Founded in 2006 as a weekly email that went out to seven friends and eventually brought online, the site was included in the Library of Congress permanent web archive in 2012. The core ethos behind Brain Pickings is that creativity is a combinatorial force: it's our ability to tap into our mental pool of resources — knowledge, insight, information, inspiration, and all the fragments populating our minds — that we've accumulated over the years just by being present and alive and awake to the world, and to combine them in extraordinary new ways.

Paul Rand





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Paul Rand working with his staff, 1984



Paul Rand in front of the Coronet Advertisement Poster

by Steven Heller

Published in "Communication Arts", March/April 1999

If the word legend has any meaning in the graphic arts and if the term legendary can be applied with accuracy to the career of any designer, it can certainly be applied to Paul Rand (1914-1996). When I first met him in 1951 at a lunch with Arnold Gingrich, the founding editor of Esquire magazine, the legend was already firmly in place. By then Paul had completed his first career as a designer of media promotion at Esquire-Coronet and as an outstanding cover designer for Apparel Arts and Direction. He was well along on a second career as an advertising designer at the William Weintraub agency which he had joined as art director at its founding. Paul Rand's book, *Thoughts on Design*, with reproductions of almost 100 of his designs and some of the best words yet written on graphic design, had been published 4 years earlier—a publishing event that cemented his international reputation and identified him as a designer of influence from Zurich to Tokyo.

Paul Rand was only 32 years old when he completed *Thoughts on Design* and he was still in his 30s when we met. My impressions of that meeting are still vivid—the quick, curious and intensely analytical look in his eyes framed by dark-rimmed glasses; the close-cropped hair above a forehead where a frown always seemed to lurk ready to pounce on the first banality that had the effrontery to rear its ugly head; all of this over a conservative suit marked by a black knit tie—the trademark of his Madison Avenue days. Paul recalled a time when, in a somewhat less conservative mood, he was wearing a bright red viyella shirt and matching red socks that prompted his friend Saul Steinberg to remark, "That must be the longest underwear I ever saw." There was little change since the Madison Avenue period—his hair was certainly grayer after twenty years—his frown was less evident and his glasses had become trifocal; but the eyes continued their curious analysis of anything that had the nerve to cross his field of vision.

In an interesting way the chronology of Paul Rand's design experience paralleled the development of the modern design movement.

In America, unlike Europe where the poster was dominant, new design directions came first to magazine design and media promotion. By the 1940S this emphasis began to shift to advertising design following the pioneering work already being done at N.W. Ayer in Philadelphia and at Young & Rubicam and Calkins and Holden in New York. At the end of the 1950S, with the rapid growth of rational companies into multinational corporations, another shift of emphasis placed the spotlight on coordinated corporate design programs.

Paul Rand's first career in media promotion and cover design ran from 1937 to 1941, his second career in advertising design ran from 1941 to 1954, and his third career in corporate identification began in 1954. Paralleling these three careers was a consuming interest in design education and Paul Rand's fourth career as an educator started at Cooper Union in 1942. [...]

The Rand apprenticeship in graphic design began in 1935 when he worked for George Switzer, an innovative designer whose package and advertising design helped set the style for modern merchandising. In 1937 Paul launched his first career at Esquire. Although he was only occasionally involved in the editorial layout of that magazine, he designed extensive promotion and direct mail material on its behalf and turned out a spectacular series of covers for Apparel Arts, a quarterly published in conjunction with Esquire. In spite of a schedule that paid no heed to regular working hours or minimum wage scales, he managed in these crucial years to find time to design an impressive array of covers for other magazines, particularly Direction. From 1938 on, his work was a regular feature of the exhibitions of the Art Directors Club.

“When I designed a cover of Direction, I was really trying to compete with the Bauhaus. Not with Norman Rockwell,” clarified Rand. “I was working in the spirit of Van Doesburg, Leger, and Picasso.”

It was not old fashioned.

To be old fashioned



Above:
Direction, March 1941

On the right:
Direction, March 1939
Direction, April 1940



is, in a way, a sin.”

Paul Rand, “Thoughts on Design”, 1947



Direction, March 1940

“Rand avoided conventional propagandistic tools in favor of imagery...”



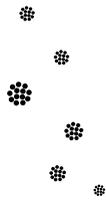
...He believed would serve as both art and message”

Steven Heller

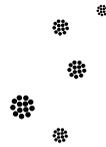


Most contemporary designers are aware of Paul Rand’s highly successful and often compelling contributions to advertising design. What is not well-known is the significant role he played in setting the pattern for future approaches to the advertising concept. Paul was probably the first of a long and distinguished line of art directors to work with and appreciate the unique talent of William Bernbach. It was shortly after Bernbach’s stint with the New York World’s Fair and several years before he was to become the principal creative force at Doyle Dane Bernbach that he worked briefly with the recently formed Weintraub agency. Paul described his first meeting with Bill Bernbach as “akin to Columbus discovering America,” and went on to say, “This was my first encounter with a copywriter who understood visual ideas and who didn’t come in with a yellow copy pad and a preconceived notion of what the layout should look like.” A few years later when Bill Bernbach had moved on to the Grey Agency, Paul and Bill were brought together again to create advertising for Ohrbachs, a New York department store. For over two years they created the now-famous series of intensely visual newspaper advertisements. During this period Paul worked at Weintraub and served the Ohrbach account as a design consultant.

You can’t quite say that it all began there, because it was a time when too many things were happening in advertising in too many places, but it is reasonable to assume that from this point on the isolation of the art and copy departments was destined to give way to a closer if not always harmonious working relationship between these two creative forces. The William Weintraub Company originally consisted of a small staff drawn largely from the business side of Esquire, but by 1951 it had a staff of over 100. The agency continued to function under a different name, but it was a far different agency from the one that was built around Paul Rand’s talent in 1941 when he was 27 years old. During the years when Paul was at the agency, Weintraub served many impressive accounts including Schenley, Revlon, Kaiser, Seeman Brothers, Stafford Mills and El Producto Cigars.



Paul Rand, "Coronet Advertisement"



“The Coronet Brandy
and Ohrbach’s advertisements
are based on a common object in

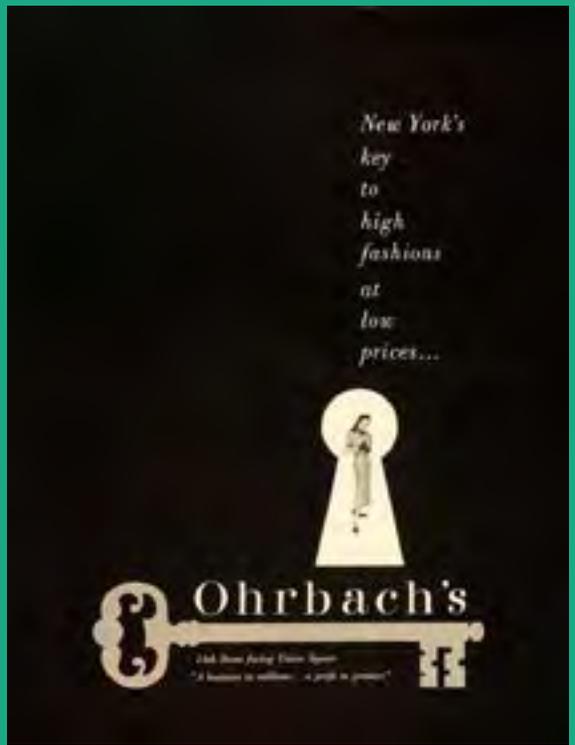
animated

for

Paul Rand, "A Designer's Art", 1985

m

Paul Rand, "Ohrbach's Poster, 1963



Paul Rand, "Ohrbach's Poster, 1964

His advertisements for Air-wick that combined modern typography with 19th century engravings not only introduced a new product, but succeeded in turning a local distributor into a nationwide success story overnight.

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Paul spent fourteen years in advertising and left a mark that would last for many more. He was a primary mover in the fusing of visual ideas and persuasive communication. He demonstrated the importance of the art director in advertising and helped break the isolation that once surrounded the art department. He played a key role in establishing the art and copy team as the base for the advertising concept. But perhaps his overriding contribution was the inspiration that his brilliant approach to design brought to a generation of future advertising art directors.

To me, an even more significant contribution was his sense of responsibility to the reader and his emphasis on quality and good taste. Today this contribution may be more honored in the breach than in the observance in many agencies, but scores of responsible art directors around the world continue to demonstrate that the Rand influence was considerably more than a brief moment of an advertising Camelot.

The final thought of his Thoughts on Design is worth repeating: “Even if it is true that commonplace advertising and exhibitions of bad taste are indicative of the mental capacity of the man in the street, the opposing argument is equally valid. Bromidic advertising catering to that bad taste merely perpetuates that mediocrity and denies him one of the most easily accessible means of aesthetic development.”

Rand also pointed out that when an art director translates a literal approach into a “visual message which is not only arresting and persuasive, but imaginative, dramatic and entertaining as well, he has fulfilled his obligation to his audience, and perhaps he has fulfilled his obligation to more personal standards.”

By the time he decided to leave advertising, Rand had gained considerable experience in the not so gentle art of working with difficult people. It began with David Smart and William Weintraub at Esquire which in its early days was a pressure cooker par excellence. He recalled a time when Dave Smart stuffed him with artichokes in his

luxurious hotel apartment so that Paul could go back to the loft and work through the night on a special Esquire Christmas promotion. William Weintraub was himself a legendary accomplished, but unusually tough salesman, who had once tried to convince the Steinway people through an elaborate presentation that by advertising in Esquire they could increase the sale of pianos in bordellos.

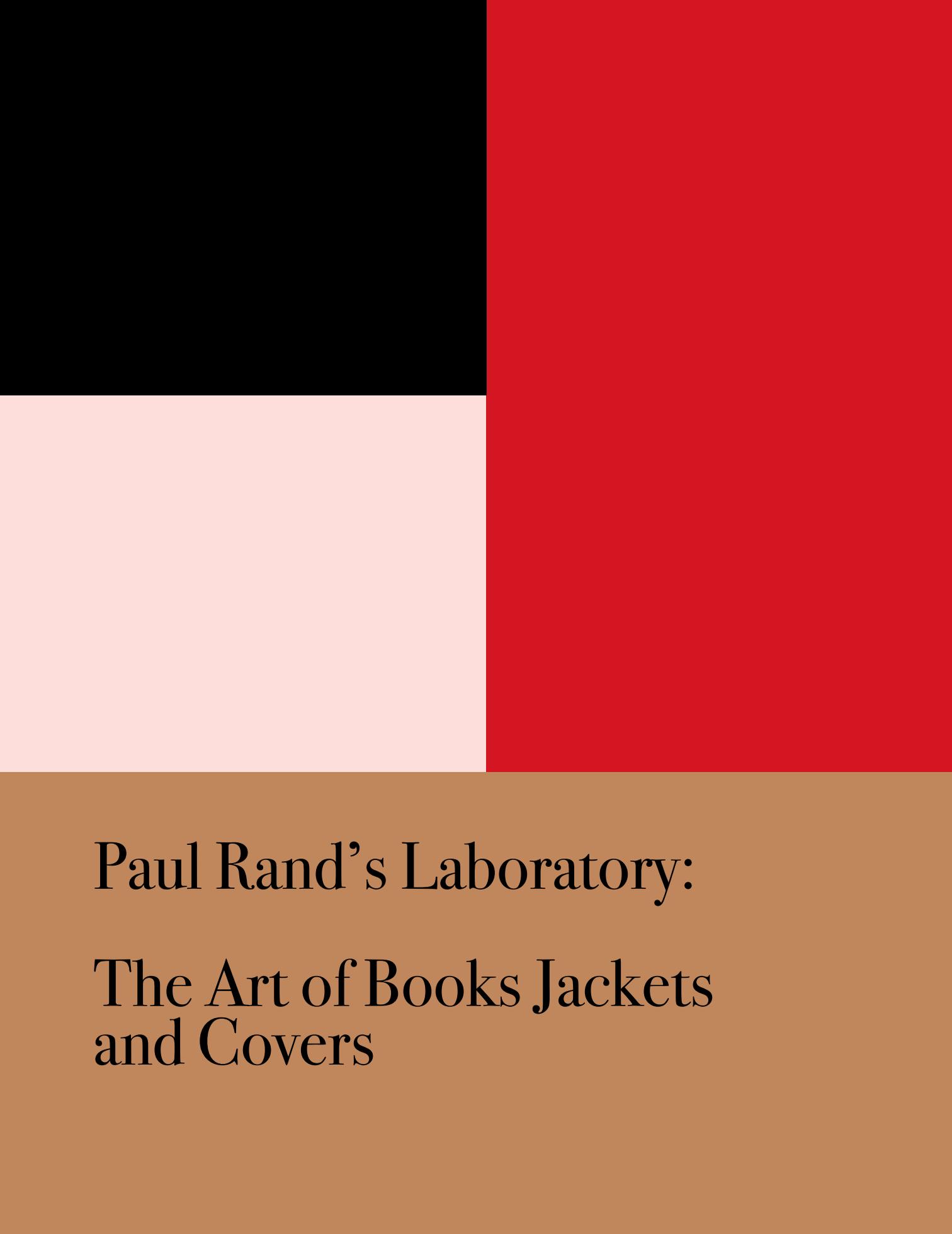
Bill Weintraub was a formidable impresario who you remembered as being taller than he actually was. He appreciated and exploited the commercial value of Paul Rand's talent and taught him how to make and enjoy money, but he was never an easy man to work for. He was a master of the demeaning gesture, and it was sometimes his style to create tension and conflict among his staff in the misguided belief that controversy had something to do with creativity.

Client relations at the agency were no bed of roses either with clients like Revlon's Charles Revson and Schenley's Lewis Rosenstiel. In fact, one of the more absurd myths surrounding the Rand legend was the notion that while other art directors were forced to face day-to-day pressures, Paul operated in the splendid isolation of some ivory tower. Nothing could be further from the truth. One of the outstanding, but little-known, attributes to his success was his ability to bridge the gap between creative communication and business needs, and he achieved all of this without any assistance from representatives and without compromising his principles.

Although he was never at ease with the time-consuming and rarely productive meetings of the plans board, and he avoided these sessions whenever he could, he was excellent in the all-important face-to-face meetings with major management executives where most of the real decisions are made.

STEVEN HELLER *Wears many hats (in addition to the New York Yankees): For 33 years he was an art director at the New York Times, originally on the OpEd Page and for almost 30 of those years with the New York Times*

Book Review. Currently, he is co-chair of the MFA Designer as Author Department, Special Consultant to the President of SVA for New Programs, and writes the Visuals column for the New York Times Book Review.



Paul Rand's Laboratory:

The Art of Books Jackets
and Covers



Like a painter who reaches catharsis moving paint, Paul Rand moved type, juxtaposed geometric forms, and manipulated colour masses to frame ideas. ‘Looking at Rand’s designs,’ an admirer wrote, ‘one never has a doubt whether this line should go that way, whether this shape should not be a little larger or smaller, or whether a green star might not be better than the blue circle.’

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And this was never more evident than in his book jackets and covers created between 1944 and the late 1960s.



overshadowed by his early advertising and later corporate careers, Rand's book jackets and covers are arguably just as significant, and crucial in defining him as a pure artist with a unique vision. Amidst his overall experience book design was simply a logical expansion of his general practice. But this was a field particularly mired in mediocrity, governed by marketing conventions, and more often than not, indifferent to content.

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Many publishers scrutinized the interior typography of their books, but surprisingly few were concerned with how their books were wrapped. Jackets were considered necessary evils, the province of marketing departments designed as advertisements to hook customers into consuming on impulse. Book designers and editors alike referred to them as unwanted appendages of the pristine book. Nevertheless, the jacket was prime for revamping when Rand was hired to help improve a few progressive publishers' presentations.

For Rand, book jackets were no different than any other medium that could benefit from good design. In fact, they were better. A jacket did not have to be slavishly literal but rather convey moods or interpret content. Not only were graphic symbols the perfect shorthand; colour, shapes, and lettering could evoke the requisite cues. Presumably the designer could have more control if the advertising and marketing experts could be kept at bay. And since Rand was already rather skilled at controlling this particular foe, he had no stumbling blocks. In fact, Rand always worked with sympathetic clients. Wittenborn & Company (later Wittenborn, Schultz), for instance, gave him ample licence to push the boundaries of their artbook jackets and covers.

He used all the methods in his growing repertoire to give each book an individual presence, as well as an overall Wittenborn identity. Advertising had taught him the virtue of anchoring concepts to a consistent design element, such as a logo. In the case of the Wittenborn books, consistency was achieved through gothic titles typeset unobtrusively to underscore the contemporary spirit of the books.

“Rand’s
interpretation
evoked the pith of
the revolutionary
artform.”

Steven Heller



Guillaume Apollinaire, "The cubist painter",
Wittenborn & Co, 1945
Jacket by Paul Rand

Down: Alan Harrington, "The revelation of Dr. Modesto", Knopf, 1945, Jacket by Paul Rand

AIGA logo, designed by Paul Rand



Above: W.R. Valentiner, "Origins of Modern sculpture", Knopf, 1946, Jacket by Paul Rand

Poster for Aspen Design Conference, 1966
designed by Paul Rand

Rand's earliest jacket for Guillaume Apollinaire's *The Cubist Painters* (1944) was his first attempt at pure, non-representational abstraction; smudges of colour adorn the jacket, with a simple, unobtrusive line of sans serif type for the title. This jacket was the prototype for *The Documents of Modern Art* series, and not only did it differ from typical American artbook jackets, which convention dictated were either all-type or showed a detail of a painting, Rand's interpretation, which was consistent with his dictum against copying, did not even mimic the Cubist style. Rather it evoked the pith of the revolutionary artform. Designing artbooks in such an 'artistic' way might seem quite appropriate to the subject, but before Rand it was exclusive primarily to European avant garde designers. By using Italian Futurist and Bauhaus books among other touchstones, Rand developed a vocabulary of shapes and colours that evoked modernity. He also used a medley of antiquated visual elements in collages to illustrate ancient and classical art. For the jacket of *The Origins of Modern Sculpture* (Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc. 1946), he juxtaposed two silhouettes an ancient sculpture and Brancusi's sculpture of an egg (a pun on 'origins') divided by a small line of sans serif type. Through this iconic pairing he astutely summarized centuries of artistic evolution.

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In 1945 Alfred A Knopf, one of New York's most prestigious, small literary publishers and a design conscious bookman with a penchant for fine typography and illustration, invited Rand to join an eclectic repertory of classical and modernistic designers, including W A Dwiggins, Rudolf Ruzicka, Ernest Reichl, and Warren Chappell, among others. As a condition of his initiation he was asked to do a version of Knopf's Borzoi logo. The sleek Russian hound whose running silhouette was stamped on every spine, was rendered by other designers in pen and ink or woodcut usually in a traditional manner. Always inclined to be contrary, Rand graphically reduced the sleek canine to a few simple straight lines at right angles, with a full stop for an eye. Prefiguring his later make overs of venerable corporate logos, this was a textbook example of Rand's ability to redefine a visual problem and devise an alternative solution that pledged allegiance to the original form. Knopf was quite taken with the audacity of the designer in transforming the mark yet retaining its essential mnemonic quality.

Like the Borzoi logo, Rand's first jacket for Knopf, *The Law* (1945), raised eyebrows at the time publication. It was certainly Knopf's most reductive jacket. The image was a dramatically lit, mortised photograph of the head of Michelangelo's 'Moses' partially covering the stacked lines of gothic type, which screamed out, 'The Law.' The solid brown background did not fill the entire image area but like a window shade stopped before reaching the jacket's bottom, leaving a channel of white space that gave an illusion of three-dimensionality against the base of the image. The jacket's ad hoc quality gives an impression that Rand cut and pasted the art and type together in an instantaneous burst of creative energy reminiscent of a Dada collage. In fact, he labored over his solution until he achieved the appearance of an accident, everything was precisely composed, yet slightly off kilter.

Manipulating ragged cuts of paper and torn photographs, often using an informal, hand-scrawled script, Rand's jackets and covers were like playthings. Perhaps in another life he would have been a toymaker because he enjoyed combining shapes, colours, and objects into sculptural cartoons. Yet there was a serious side to this. 'I use the term "play", but I mean coping with the problems of form and content, weighing relationships, establishing priorities', Rand explained years later in *Graphic Wit*. Each book title offered him the stimulus and rationale to play with or manipulate a multitude of forms, from drawing to collage, from lettering to type. There was never a preordained format or formula.

Scores of jackets and covers illustrate Rand's play principle at work, but two of his favourites, created 12 years apart, exhibit how Rand's experiments evolved. The first was a jacket for Nicolas Monsarrat's *Leave Cancelled* (Knopf, 1945), a tragic tale of lovers separated by war. The second was for James T Farrell's *H L t*, an analysis of the social critic's most biting essays.

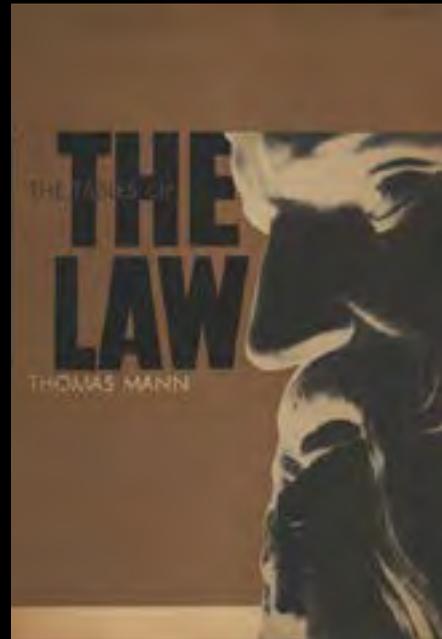
For *Leave Cancelled* Rand requested that 'bullet' holes be die-cut through the cover photograph of Eros, the god of love. The technique was unheard of with a trade book at that time indeed everything about this jacket was so unprecedented and fanciful that Alfred Knopf's wife was reported to have called the final result an 'expensive

“The jacket’s ad hoc quality gives an impression that Rand cut and pasted the art and type together in an instantaneous burst of creative energy reminiscent of a



Dada Collage

Thomas Mann, "The Law", 1945, Knopf Jacket by Paul Rand



DADA COLLAGE

Steven Heller

”

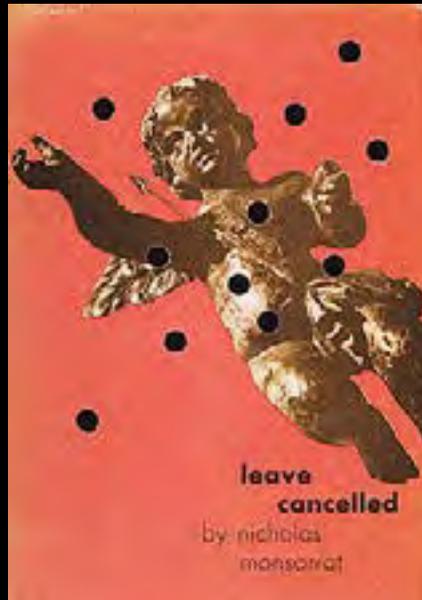
extravagance.’ Rand also designed the binding, which featured an embossing of a simple line drawing of the broken hands of a clock, symbolizing the protagonist’s premature return to the battlefield. Rand took his inspiration from European avant garde art books, but he also prefigured contemporary artists books in the introduction of tactile materials.

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Rand was more limited in what he could do for the cover of H L Mencken: *Prejudices: A Selection*. The budgets for paperback covers were even smaller than for hard cover jackets, consequently the printing options were fewer. Yet Rand recalled that his solution was built into the raw material that he was given. Starting with a ‘lousy’ photograph of Mencken he magically produced a comic image that became a virtual logo for the writer. ‘What could one do with a bad portrait of the guy?’, Rand explained in *Graphic Wit*: ‘I cut up the photo into a silhouette of someone making a speech, which bore no relation to the shape of the [original] photo. That was funny, in part because of the ironic cropping and because Mencken was such a curmudgeon.’ The result was a kind of paper doll in the form of an oratorical statue. The ragged contours of cut photograph dictated that a hand-scrawled title and byline be dropped out of irregularly cut and randomly positioned colour boxes. Each of these elements was crude, but in total the pieces fit perfectly together. The Mencken cover echoed the informality of Futurist and Constructivist book covers from the 20S, but was far ahead of its time in American trade publishing of the 50S.

At Knopf, ‘Rand’s ideas were never questioned,’ recalls Harry Ford, production manager and art director from 1947 to 1959. ‘We bent over backwards to give Paul what he wanted because he was so good.’ Booksellers were ‘bowled over, simply taken aback by his work,’ continues Ford. ‘They would always give prominent display to his book jackets.’ In fact, competitive publishers were also impressed with Rand’s talent, but Ford presumes that ‘since most publishers were set in their ways, few wanted to copy what Rand did, Nevertheless, there was widespread agreement that his method was revolutionary.’

Although the Knopf (and then, later Vintage, Doubleday, Atheneum, Harvard, and Harvest Books) jackets and covers were ostensibly illustrative in a modern sense, Rand



Above: Nicolas Monsarrat, "Leave Cancelled", Knopf, 1945, Jacket by Paul Rand

Right: H.L. Mencken, "Prejudices, a selection", Knopf, 1947, Jacket by Paul Rand

“

• • • there was wide agreement that his method was revolutionary

”

Steven Heller



continued his exploration of pure abstraction with jackets produced between 1956 and 1964 for the Bollingen series, published by Pantheon Books. Using colour fields, geometric and amorphous shapes, and random splatters combined with his distinctive scrawl, these jackets were more akin to small canvases than conventional wrappers. And while they were overtly less playful than his other, mass-market jackets, they were no less eye-catching and in a way even more timeless.

The Bollingen Foundation was founded in 1947 by the Andrew W Mellon family to publish works by psychoanalyst Carl Jung. In addition to Jung's own books and essays, and those by Jungian scholars, Bollingen also supported art and 'social histories, notably E H Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*, and published papers presented at the prestigious A W Mellon lectures. Rand's jackets were never killed and in return, he developed an unmistakable identity that underscored the serious aim of Bollingen while telescoping the accessibility or 'friendliness' of the list. Rand did the Bollingen jackets until 1964. Among the designers in the modern camp with whom Rand had an affinity, and perhaps a healthy rivalry, Alvin Lustig, an American-born designer of books, magazines, textiles and sign systems, was the most prolific. Lustig (along with former Bauhausler Herbert Bayer) was also invited by Alfred Knopf to design jackets. But Lustig had made his name starting in 1940 as a designer for the small literary publisher, *New Directions* (which shared the same floor as Pantheon Books). At that time he was making imagery from hotmetal typecase 'furniture,' a similar method to that for Russian Constructivist books by Lasar, El Lissitzky and Alexander Rodchenko. In the mid 40s, however, when he was designing all the jackets in *New Directions*' New Classics series, Lustig had combined modern type with abstract line drawings, or what he called symbolic 'marks,' which owed more to the work of artists like Paul Klee, Joan Miro, and Mark Rothko than to accepted commercial styles. Like jazz improvisations, these non-representational images signaled the progressive nature of his publishing house. In the mid 40s, however, when he was designing all the jackets in *New Directions*' New Classics series, Lustig had combined modern type with abstract line drawings, or what he called symbolic 'marks,' which owed more to the work of artists like Paul Klee, Joan

Miro, and Mark Rothko than to accepted commercial styles. Like jazz improvisations, these non-representational images signaled the progressive nature of his publishing house. During the late 40s he introduced collage/montage and reticulated photography, evoking surrealist fantasies. And in the early 50s he developed a series of paperback covers for Noonday and Meridian Books using only gothic and slab serif typography. Rand and Lustig clearly shared certain traits since they were both fluent in the language of modernism each had a similar preference for contemporary typefaces and child-like scribbles but each interpreted modernism in their own ways, and no doubt competed for who could alter the form faster. Some insist it was a dead heat.

24

“I use the term “play”, but I mean coping with the problems of form and content, weighing relationships, establishing priorities’, Rand explained years later in *Graphic Wit*.”

Paul Rand

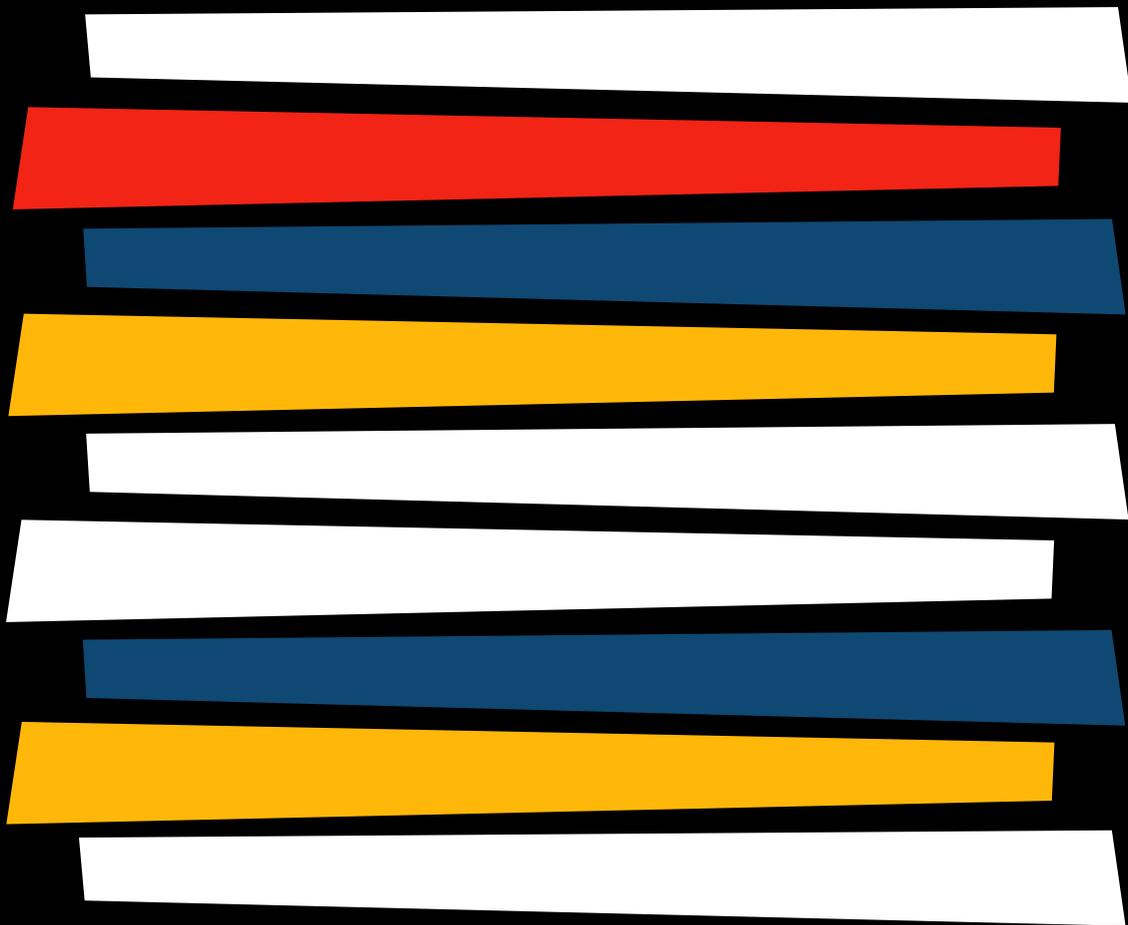
STEVEN HELLER *Wears many hats (in addition to the New York Yankees): For 33 years he was an art director at the New York Times, originally on the OpEd Page and for almost 30 of those years with the New York Times Book Review. Currently, he is co-chair of the MFA Designer as*

Author Department, Special Consultant to the President of SVA for New Programs, and writes the Visuals column for the New York Times Book Review.

The article is taken from Baseline Magazine No. 27, 1999

BRAND IDENTITY

Logos, Flags and Escutcheons



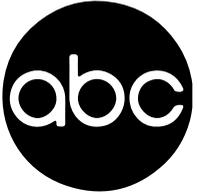
by PAUL RAND

«It reminds me of the Georgia chain gang» quipped the IBM executive, when he first eyed the striped logo. 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.

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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, 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.

Illustration created by Alicia Invernizzi inspired by a poster of Paul Rand’s exhibition at the MoMa, New York (22 - 29 september 1976).



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.

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.

In the left page: Westinghouse's logo (1960), Abc's logo (1962), Ups' logo (1961), Yale University Press' logo (1985) and Enron's logo (1996), all designed by Paul Rand.



It is only by association with a product, a service, a business, or a corporation that a logo takes on any real meaning...

...If a company is second rate, the logo will eventually be perceived as second rate.”

Paul Rand

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 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.

Rand then explains how the quality of logo is tied to the quality of the company it represents. If your company sucks, a pretty logo won't save you. Often, the subject of the logo doesn't even matter: surprising to many, the subject matter of a logo is of relatively little importance, and even appropriateness of content does not 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 it symbolized is very often impossible to achieve and, under certain conditions, objectionable. Ultimately, the only mandate in the design of logos, it seems, is that they be distinctive, memorable, and clear.

Finally, Rand stresses the importance of presenting design work. You must tell a unique story that's catered to your audience: canned presentations have the ring of emptiness. The meaningful presentation is custom designed—for a particular purpose, for a particular person. How to present a new idea is, perhaps, one of the designer's most difficult tasks. This how is not only a design problem, it also pleads for something novel. Everything a designer does involves presentation of some kind—not only how to explain (present) a particular design to an interested listener (client, reader, spectator), but how the design may explain itself in the marketplace. A presentation is the musical accompaniment of design. A presentation that lacks an idea cannot hide behind glamorous photos, pizzazz, or ballyhoo. If it is full of gibberish, it may fall on deaf ears; if too laid back, it may land a prospect in the arms of Morpheus.

Originally published in 1991 by AIGA, the professional association for design. AIGA brings design to the world, and the world to designers. As the profession's oldest and largest professional membership organization for design - with 70 chapters and more than 25,000

members - AIGA advance design as a professional craft, strategic advantage, and vital cultural force. AIGA works to enhance the value and deepen the impact of design across all disciplines on business, society, and our collective future.

The effectiveness of a good logo depends on:

distinctiveness

visibility

useability

memorability

universality

durability

timelessness

Bee from the IBM poster (1981) designed by Paul Rand.





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

Paul Rand

How to design an enduring logo: Lessons from IBM and *Pantano*

by ANNE QUITO



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any tech companies these days obsess over constantly redesigning and tweaking their logos. In that context, IBM's 43-year-old logo is veritably the branding equivalent of ancient sacred scripture.

Its iconic eight-bar logo is the marquee for IBM's awakening to the power of design in the 1950s. The story goes that after seeing a particularly compelling store display of Olivetti typewriters in New York City, IBM's then newly installed CEO, Thomas J. Watson, Jr. had an epiphany. "Good design is good business," he declared. It became the company's mantra and mandate and signaled a profound design-conscious evolution in the company's operations. Until then, IBM reflected the conservative taste of Watson's father who founded the company, an aesthetic that the younger Watson compared to a "first-class saloon on an ocean liner." Guided by Eliot Noyes, an architect who was the curator of industrial design at the Museum of Modern Art at that time, Watson sought to overhaul IBM's image from a nondescript corporation that sold punch-card timekeeping machines, data-storage diskettes, and tabulating machines (with a rather generic name too—International Business Machines) to a company with a modern sensibility, a distinct character and a colorful lore, much like Olivetti.

The IBM logo was designed by the pioneering graphic designer and art director Paul Rand, who is celebrated for translating the tenets of European modernism to American corporate communications—introducing motifs from Bauhaus, Cubism, de Stijl, and Constructivism in his commercial work. Until the Brooklyn-bred designer came to the scene, most advertising work was controlled by copywriters. Along with Eero Saarinen, Isamu Noguchi, and Charles and Ray Eames, Rand was part of the design dream team that Noyes assembled for IBM. Aligning with Watson's treatise on good design, Rand understood that a distinguishing mark was essential to a company's success. "In the competitive world of look-alike products, a distinctive company logotype is one if not the principal means of distinguishing one product from that of another," Rand wrote in the introduction of IBM's logo-usage manual. "The value of the logotype, which is the company's signature cannot be overestimated."

Illustration created by Alicia Invernizzi inspired by Paul Rand's poster "Idea. Special Issue 30 Influential Designers of the Century".

“Good design is good business”

Thomas J. Watson, Jr



From the top: Reception area of IBM facility in Rochester (MN) designed by Eero Saarinen & Associates, 1958. The IBM logo on the façade of an office building, 1968. Selectric Magnetic Tape Packaging, 1965.



1888



1891



1911



1924



1947



1956



1972

SUBTLE, STRATEGIC CHANGES

The logo's redesign did not happen overnight. Working with IBM's existing mark that already carried some cachet with its customers, Rand's first design intervention was subtle. To improve the mark's legibility, he replaced the font Beton with a similar but stronger-looking typeface called City. Rand tooled with the shape of the letterforms too, he lengthened the serifs and made the stacked squares in the letter "B" larger. But there was still something about the shape of the logo that bothered the detail-oriented designer. "I felt there was a problem with the sequence, going from narrow to wide without any pause, without any rhythmic possibility," explained Rand, bugged by the disparity in visual weight of the three letters. Experimenting with variations of the logo for over a decade, in 1972 Rand introduced stripes to establish a better sense of unity in the monogram and suggest a sense of movement. It has remained unchanged since then.

40

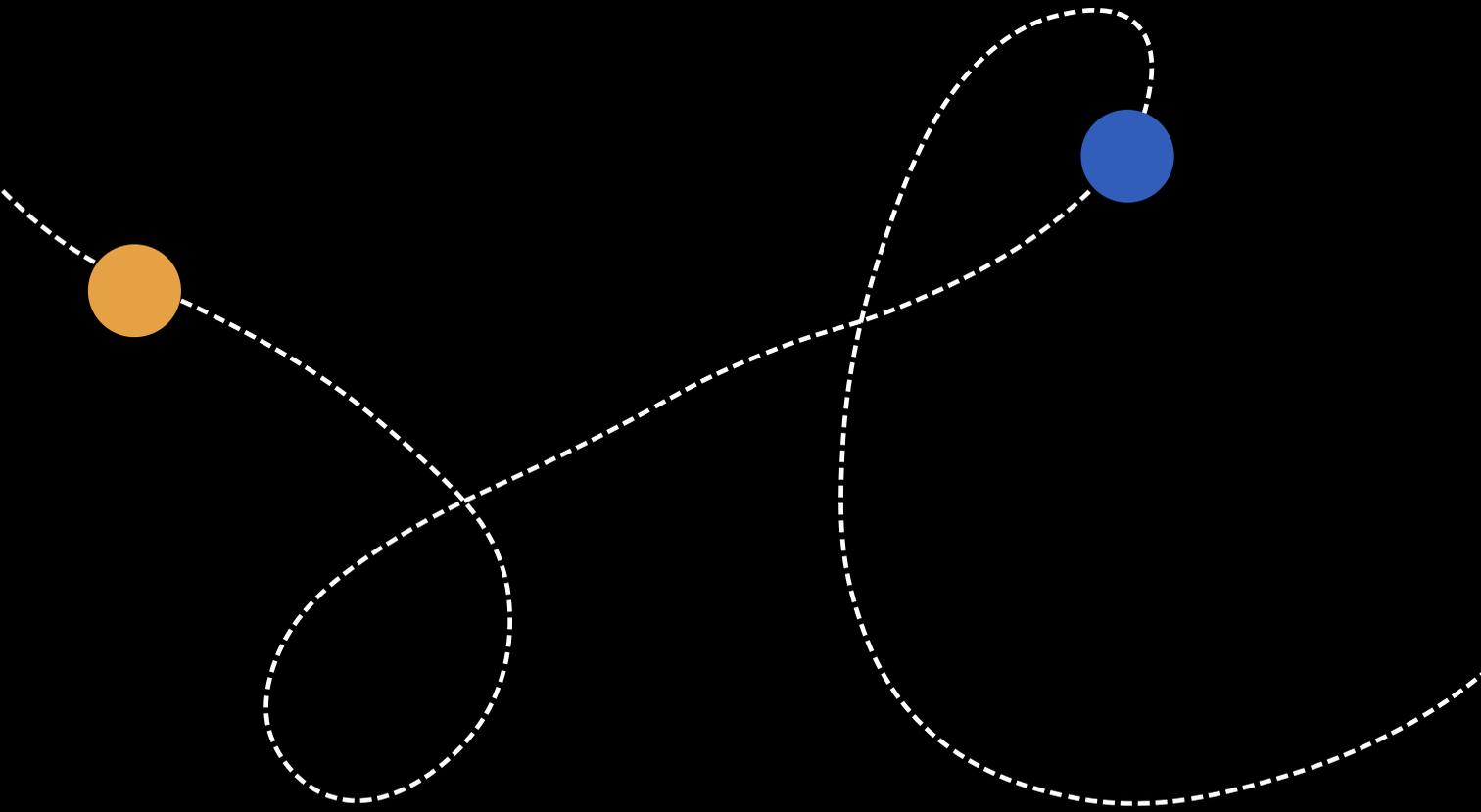
BEYOND THE PAGE

But Rand approached the logo redesign with more than aesthetics in mind. He made sure that the logo worked in all conceivable applications—brochures, magazine ads, TV commercials, stationery, communication materials, building signage, trucks, and packaging. At that time, this meant anything from diskette sleeves, to boxes of carbon paper, printer ribbons, ribbon cartridges and microprocessing cards to the repeating pattern on IBM's egg-shaped pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair.

Rand, who also designed the logos for UPS, Westinghouse, Enron, ABC, and Steve Job's short-lived NeXT, was known to present only one design concept to his clients. But the single design approach is not to speak of Rand's stubbornness or lack of effort. Rand presented his proposals in the form of elaborate booklets that showcased the mark's versatility across numerous spreads. In doing so, he was able to stretch the client's imagination beyond the page.

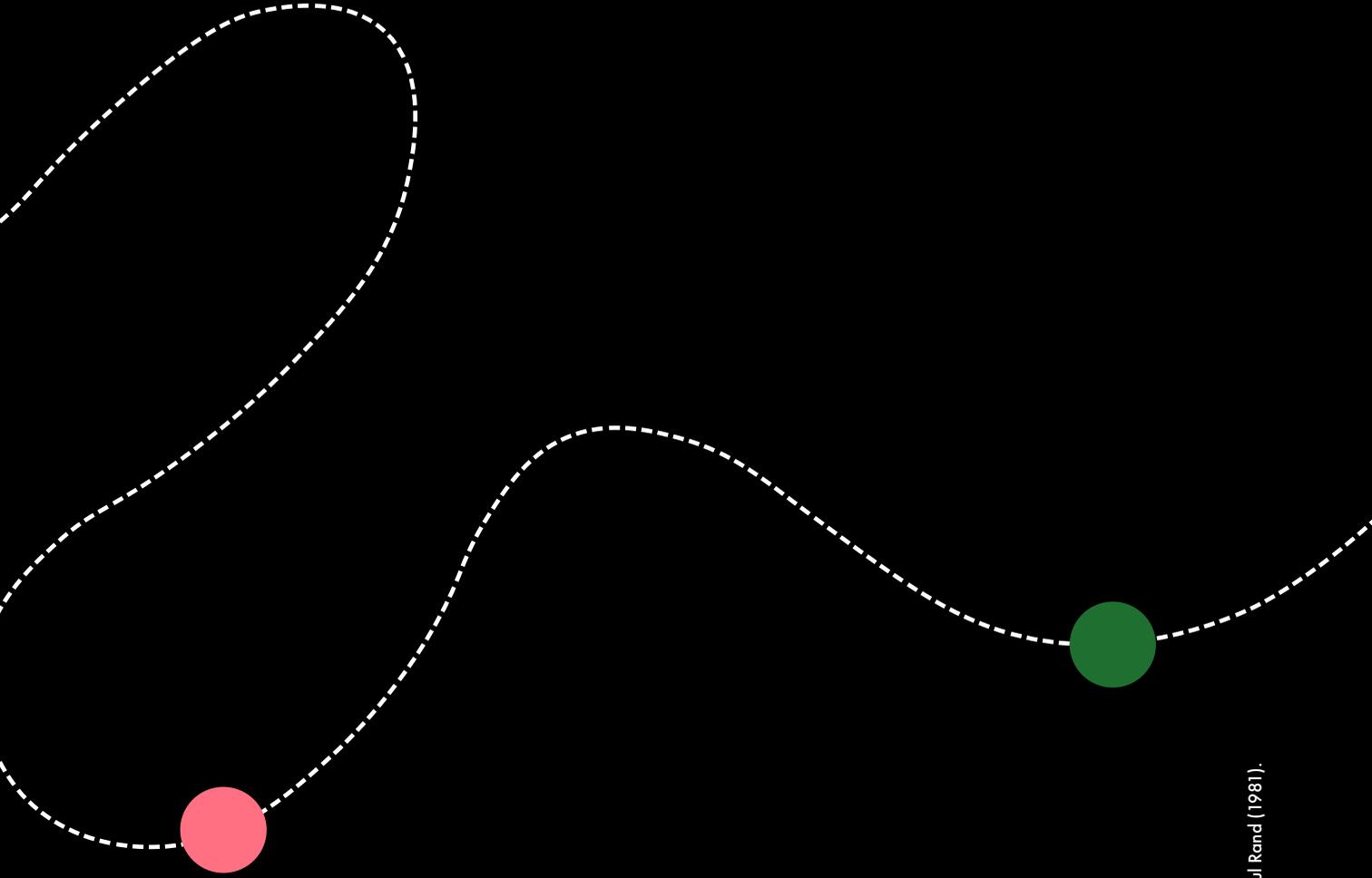
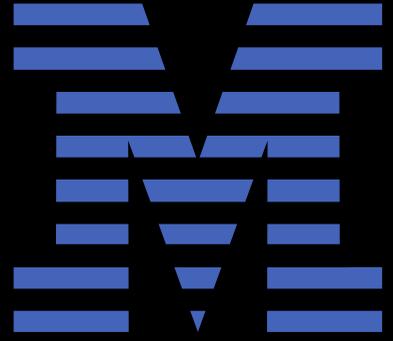
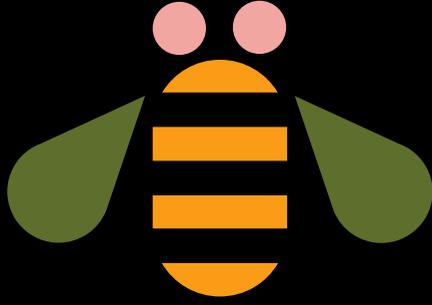
Rand also wrote and designed guidance materials like the pamphlet *Use of the Logo / Abuse of the Logo: The IBM Logo, Its Use in Company Identification* and a frame-worthy "IBM House Style" poster showing the various sizes of the eight-bar logo.

In this page: Evolution of IBM logo from 1888 to 1972. Founded on 16 June 1911, IBM was previously known as the Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company (C-T-R) resulting from the merger of three companies (the Herman Hollerith's Tabulating Machine Co, the International Time Recording Company and the Computing Scale Company). C-T-R became to be known as International Business Machines, or IBM, on 14 February 1924.



“In the competitive world of look-alike products, a distinctive company logotype is one, if not the, principal means of distinguishing the maker of one product from that another”

Paul Rand



The specificity of the language on these materials testifies to Rand's acuity about the quirks in the anatomy of the mark. "Black stripes are drawn thicker than white stripes. White stripes look thicker especially when lit (signs, TV screens). Black and white should appear similar optically," Rand noted.

"As precise as he was in his own work, he was twice as precise in how others used his logos," wrote Steve Heller, who collects many of Rand's manuals and has written the quintessential biography on Rand.

MANAGING A MODERN BRAND

Like he did for many of his clients, Rand remained involved in the stewardship of IBM's visual branding for decades. Today, that mantle partly falls on the shoulders of Terry Yoo, IBM's VP of brand strategy and experience design. After so many years, does she ever feel tempted to redesign the logo? Considering the changes in tastes and technologies, is the demise of Rand's type-and-stripe design in sight?

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"You don't throw away something that special very easily," Yoo tells Quartz. She explains that Rand's graphic legacy has actually given her and IBM's many designers around the world a solid foundation to build upon, and one that they are very proud to have. As much as he valued precision, Rand was not opposed to play. In 1981, Rand designed a witty rebus poster Eye-Bee-M to commemorate IBM's THINK campaign. Under his guidance, IBM published reports, brochures, and advertisements that played with variations on the logo's typography, stripe pattern, and color. After Rand's passing in 1996, IBM continued the playful tradition in the covers of its annual reports, and memorably in the visuals for the 100 Icons of Progress for its centennial in 2011. Yoo has a pragmatic outlook on how the IBM logo ought to be managed across the company with over 300,000 employees worldwide. Instead of constantly policing its use and insisting on stringent adherence to manuals, she spends time explaining the logic of how and why things are done, to champion and empower local expressions of IBM's message using their graphic vocabulary. "The logo stays. If something has to change, we can work with the stuff around it," she says.

"To build a great brand, you have to build a great company," Yoo says, which is another way of saying that nitpicking at a company's logo is not always the best solution—even when stocks fluctuate and things go a bit awry. Yoo's tempered observation about a logo's significance—even a great one like IBM's—echoes Rand's reflections too. He wrote, "It is only by association with a product, a service, a business, or a corporation that a logo takes on any real meaning. If a company is second rate, the logo will eventually be perceived as second rate."

ANNE QUITO covers design and architecture for Quartz. She holds a master's degree in visual culture from Georgetown University and an MFA in design criticism from the School of Visual Arts. Her MFA thesis on the nation branding of the world's newest country, South Sudan, has been recently featured on NPR. Anne has contributed to numerous publications including *Works that Work*, *AIGA Design Eye*, and *Core 77*. An experienced art director, she is

also the founding director of Design Lab, a design practice within an international development organization.

This text is taken from Quartz, that is a digitally native news outlet, born in 2012, for business people in the new global economy. Quartz publishes bracingly creative and intelligent journalism with a broad worldview.



Over: Carbon Paper Folder IBM Graphic Design Corporate Identity 60s.

In this page: Example of typewriter and vintage IBM Film Ribbon Packaging design by Paul Rand.

POST

of the logo

POST

of the logo

The IBM look...and the IBM logo...

In the competitive world of look-a-like products, a distinctive company logotype is one, if not the, principal means of distinguishing the maker of one product from that another. The value of a logotype, which is a company's signature, cannot be overestimated.

It is the graphic designer who, in a myriad of ways, is confronted with the problem of using the logo effectively. Effective use implies not only an awareness of special design problems, but also an awareness of semantics - the meaning and relationship of words and pictures. It further involves some understanding of people's reactions to visual things. Often we say that a thing is beautiful if it works. A beautiful looking chair that offers little comfort is not a beautiful chair. The idea of discomfort affects the viewer's impression of its appearance. Similarly, a printed piece that is attractive to look at but difficult to understand is not beautiful because it is not useful. In short, form and function are inseparable.

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In an age of mass culture and accelerated change, the visual arts seem more and more to lean toward the commonplace. The rapid communication of ideas which, on the one hand, encourages initiative and invention, tends also to invite imitation. A certain sameness seems to pervade all fields of design: architecture, product and graphic. A well-designed piece for electrical appliances. The emphasis on simple shapes, the absence of ornamentation, and the universal acceptance of certain art forms, tend to encourage anonymity. Similarly, conscious striving for modernity, and the universal use of certain tools and materials further tend to complicate this problem. In brief, it is extremely difficult to be or even to look original. As individuals or as corporations, we reflect in our behavior and in our appearance the age in which we live.

In typography the preference for sans serif typefaces by most designers seems in itself a contradiction of the idea of uniqueness. It is one of the factors which prompts the "where have I seen this before?" reaction. This is to confuse words with usage, tools with skills. To avoid a well-designed sans serif typeface or resort to stylistic clichés is hardly a solution to such a problem. It is more useful to focus on those aspects of a problem which are timeless and which deal with design, visual perception, and function: proportion, color, contrast, logical arrangement, and readability. Even more important is the question of content, of idea, of relevancy; finding unique solutions to commonplace problems.

Given the problems of sameness, of anonymity, of a common language of design, the need for a distinctive means of company identification is abundantly clear.

Not unlike its products, a printed piece is a company's silent salesman. What a brochure or nameplate looks like is part of its effectiveness. If a logotype is too big or too small, awkwardly placed, too often repeated, omitted, given the wrong emphasis, or otherwise confusing, it does not help a company image. It is the purpose of this brochure to point out some of the problems we face from day to day using the company logo. In the end, it is the designer who must decide how best to use it.

Except for the Penguin cover on page 5, all work shown in this brochure has been selected at random from IBM printed material to demonstrate the most meaningful use of the company logo. The solutions shown are not meant to be the only ones possible. Other examples could have been used to make these same points.

Paul Rand, April 1982

Excessive use of the logo:

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The dictionary describes the word logo as deriving from the Greek "logos" and a combining form meaning word or thought. It further states that a logotype is a single type body containing two or more letters. Common usage of the shortened form "logo" has broadened its meaning to signify any trademark or device which stands for a company and its products. How the IBM logo is used is the subject of this discussion.

One of the most frequent problems the designer faces is the excessive use of the logotype with its equivalent in a typeface. This happens most frequently when IBM is part of a title or selling statement. The logo is then shown elsewhere as a singrature. At times this condition is unavoidable; at other times, as we shall see, various solutions are possible.

It is always a difficult typographic problem to combine a logotype with a typeface. The tendency is to avoid this situation by setting IBM in the same face as the rest of the message.

Although repetition is an effective design device, the combination of the logo with its type equivalent is not the same as repetition of the logo itself. Such redundancy is confusing to the reader, creates more than one focal point, always at the expense of the selling statement, and otherwise complicates what should be a simple, straightforward message. Following are some of the problems areas and possible solutions.

Use of the Logo / Abuse of the Logo: The IBM Logo
As precise as he was in his own work, he was twice as precise in how others used his logos. His insistence on quality was best stated by Rand in an article in Print magazine in 1969: "Quality deals with the judicious weighing of relationships, with balance, contrast, harmony, juxtaposition, between

formal and functional elements - their transformation and enrichment."
He attempted to lay down his rules of the qualitative road in a booklet for IBM, Use of the Logo / Abuse of the Logo: The IBM Logo, Its Use in Company Identification. This is a companion to another booklet The IBM Logo.

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“Design is
the silent
ambassador
of your
brand.”

Paul Rand



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