

International Typographic Style

During the War

Remaining neutral during the war, allowed Swiss designers (and newly arriving immigrants) to remain focused to the progression of modernist principles.



18-1 Ernst Keller, poster for the Rietburg Museum, undated.

Roots

Geometric Exercises involving the Cube and the Line, begun in 1908



18-2 & 18-3. Theo Ballmer, posters, 1928. Traces of the grid and squares used to construct these posters remain.

After the War

- International corporations needing identity systems and strategic communications fostered a new rationalist design approach in the International Style.
- By the 1950s a design movement emerged out of Switzerland that became known as the International Typographic Style.
- Swiss design philosophy propagated through two major schools, one in Zurich and one in Basel.



Max Huber, Sirenella Dance Hall, 1946

Max Bill and a Quest for Purity

- Trained at the Bauhaus, Bill was a pioneer of the Swiss Style
- Became director of the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, which allowed him to spread his rationalist approach to design across Europe
- The evolution of Bill's art and design was based on the development of cohesive principles of visual organization. Important concerns include:
 - Linear division of space into harmonious parts
 - Modular grids
 - Arithmetic and geometric progressions, permutations, and sequences
 - Equalization of contrasting and complementary relationships



18-5. Max Bill, exhibition poster, 1945. [Meggs]

Swiss International Style Characteristics:

- Copy that presented visual and verbal information in a clear and functional manner
- Strove to create Chaos while also maintaining visual balance and alignment.
- San Serif Type—Flush left, rag right
- Asymmetrical organization
- Mathematically Constructed Grid
- Objective Photography



18-6. Anthony Froshaug, cover for the Quarterly Bulletin of the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm, 1958.



18-7. Max Huber, yearbook cover, 1951.

Basel School

- Schools methodology derived from the idea that abstract structure is the vehicle for communication.
- It relies on an analysis that rigorously questions and accounts for all parts of a message
- Goal is to isolate the primary essence, ideally resulting in a metaphor that has universal appeal



18-19. Emil Ruder, book jacket for an anthology of Dada poetry, 1967.

Basel School

Armin Hofmann

- Taught at the Basel School
- Replaced traditional pictorial ideas with the modernist principles of point, line, and plane.
- Sought a dynamic harmony, where all parts of a design are unified
- Saw contrasting elements a invigorating a design



18-21. Armin Hofmann, poster for the Basel theater production of *Giselle*, 1959.



522. Armin Hofman, *Konzerte Tonhalle-Gesellschaft*, concert poster, 1969. [Heller & Chwas]

Zurich School

As Swiss design began to coalesce, artists in Zurich were also furthering the order and refinement of Swiss Design.



18-31. Josef Müller-Brockmann, public awareness poster, 1960. The red type declares "Less Noise," while the photograph graphically depicts the discomfort noise causes. [Meggs]



18-25. Carlo L. Vivarelli (designer) and Werner Bischof (photographer), "Für das Alter" (For the Elderly) poster, 1949. The contrasting juxtaposition of an organic, human, and textured photograph with sharp geometric typography intensifies the meaning of both. [Meggs]

Zurich School

Josef

Müller-Brockmann

- Sought an absolute and universal form of graphic expression through objective and impersonal presentation without subjective or propagandistic techniques.
- Treated the images as an objective symbol using neutral photographs at extreme scale of perspective
- Used geometric form as metaphor



526. Josef Müller-Brockmann, *Schützt das Kind!* (Protect the Child!), automobile club poster, 1955. [Heller & Chwas]



18-33. Josef Müller-Brockmann, "Der Film" exhibition poster, 1960. [Meggs]

Master

Typographers

- German and Swiss designers forged the International Typographic Style
- Adrian Frutiger
- Bruno Pläflfi
- Edouard Hoffman and Max Miedinger
- Herman Zapf



18-13. Adrian Frutiger, schematic diagram of the twenty-one Univers fonts, 1954. [Meggs]

Helvetica
Helvetica Italic
Helvetica Medium
Helvetica Bold
Helvetica Bold Condensed

18-15. Edouard Hoffman and Max Miedinger, Helvetica typeface, 1961. [Meggs]

18-16. Herman Zapf, typefaces. Palatine, 1950; Melior, 1952; and Optima, 1958. [Meggs]

Palatino
Palatino Bold
Palatino Semibold
Palatino Bold
Melior
Melior Italic
Melior Semibold
Melior Bold Condensed
Optima
Optima Italic
Optima Semi Bold