

# History of Graphic Design

Cynthia Clabough, Fall 2008

## The Style Notebook

*From Steven Heller and Seymour Chwast, Graphic Style: from Victorian to Digital*

Graphic designers today freely rummage through a big closet of historical styles looking for ones that are adaptable for their purposes. Sometimes, as they reprise a vintage graphic style, it will be an appropriate and graceful use—being linked to another place and time enhances the product image. More often designers without distinctive visual characters of their own attempt to adopt a once viable style without regard for the factors that brought it about in the first place.

At times however, “re-appreciated” graphic design produces a nostalgic conceit that says little about the time in which it is produced. Instead of using style to influence and shape new vision, the graphic designer re-employ’s style as a casual toy, copying the surface qualities without regard for original intent. Although style divorced from its *raison E’être* by time and circumstance is just an empty shell, some designers may see it as a tempting refuge when faced with the necessity for original thinking.

Food for Thought:

*Style*—A way of doing something, especially a way regarded as expressing a particular attitude or typifying a particular period (often used in combination).

*Influence*—The effect of something on a person, thing, or event

*Inspiration*—Something that stimulates the human mind to creative thought or to the making of art.

*Derivative*—An idea, language, term, or other thing that has developed from something else that is similar to it.

## WHAT TO DO

For Each Style Selected...

- 1) Prepare a brief description of the style in which you defined that styles visual indicators; describe the time period and geographical area the style occurred in; dissect an artwork attributed to that time period in terms of how it best represents that style.
- 2) Select a contemporary/current example of a graphic design piece that visually connects back to this particular style. This example should be of ephemeron produced within the past ten years. Your ephemera must be actual graphic design pieces, not imagery found in design annuals or books. They must be actual products. You can use web sites and video or televised imagery, but you must screen capture the work). For each contemporary example, you must provide a written description of the piece that supports your premise that the work is an example of a specific style. Be sure to list style indicators and are similar as well as those that are not.
- 3) Consider the overall design of your notebook. For each style, design your page to reflect the original style. Be sure to pay attention to grid and type selection, as well as approach to image placement.

## How Many?

Six, one per style of movement listed below:

Victorian	Art Deco	Polish	Fontism
Art Nouveau	DaDa	Psychedelic	Controlled Chaos
Plakatstil	International	Japanese	Rave
Pictorial Modernism	Typographic	Post-Modern	Kinetics
Futurism	Swiss School	New Wave	New Simplicity
Constructivism	New York School	Punk	
De Stijl	Revival	Deconstruction	
Bauhaus	Eclectic	Émigré	

### Criteria for Grade:

- Quality of the writing and organization
- Quality of the research
- Your ability to interact with the information and demonstrate absorption
- The construction and design of the notebook itself

### Due Dates:

- Styles 1 & 2 Due 10/10
- Styles 3 & 4 Due 11/12
- Styles 5 & 5 Due 12/3