



Graphic Design: A New History

Stephen J. Eskilson

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This exciting new history of graphic design explores its evolution from the late 19th century to the present day. Organized chronologically, the book illuminates the dynamic relationship between design and manufacturing as well as the roles of technology, social change, and commercial forces on the course of design history. The layout of each chapter reflects the unique style of the period it describes, and some 450 illustrations throughout the volume provide a visual record of more than one hundred years of creative achievement in the field.

Under the influence of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement in the late 19th century, a new era began for design arts. Fueled by popular Art Nouveau advertising, the work of graphic designers became central in the growing consumer goods economy. This book traces the emergence of varied modernist design styles in the early 20th century and then examines the wartime politicization of regional styles through American government patronage and revolutionary Soviet ideas. Richly contextualized chapters chronicle the history of the Bauhaus and the rise of the International Style, followed by the postmodern movement of the 1970s and '80s. After highlighting recent developments in graphic design around the globe, the author discusses the impact of inexpensive, powerful design software and the challenges facing designers now.

Graphic Design: A New History Details

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From Reader Review Graphic Design: A New History for online ebook

Mike Bell says

Great to revisit the history of design. Really points out the effect Japanese wood cuts had and are still having. Easy to make connections between advancements in technology and their effect on design. I highly recommend it.

HeyT says

The thing I liked about this book is that instead of doing a strictly timeline approach to graphic design history it chooses to group things by stylistic movements. Some chapters were awkward in how movements were paired off strictly by timeline relationships. Another downside was that a large portion of the graphics were not on the same page as the text that elaborated them was causing the reader to flip back and forth repeatedly. Overall, it was an interesting read about the movements that shaped what we see in graphic design today.

sarah says

Comprehensive and helpful.

Morgan says

I enjoyed this text considerably more than previous ones I have been forced to trudge through for the sake of my education. For a chronicle of design from the late 1900s to the present day, it managed never to feel like a dry recitation of dates and names in all the years it covered and succeeded in reflecting the tone of each period it covered by delving into aspects of production, technological developments, culture and politics - things which too often end up as bullet points when you're trying to cover so many years. I'd say it was a solid introductory to the history of contemporary graphic design and was full of some of the better quality visuals I've come across in art surveys. Really, it was just a nice change to open an art text and not start with classical wonders of ancient Rome or a diagram of a pyramid.

Nicole Haan says

An interesting text on western graphic design full of full color images.

Tim says

Had to read this book for my class. He is actually my professor too. Great historian, great teacher.

Meg Dilnot says

One of (if not THE) best GD reference books I've come across over the years

Leighwoosey says

Everything that Meggs' Meggs' History of Graphic Design wasn't interesting enough to mention. This book is thankfully keener to situate graphic design socially and historically, and provides fresh insights as a result.

Mike Worthington says

Very Informative and detailed.

Liz De Coster says

A comprehensive and surprisingly readable look at the history of graphic design (loosely defined as printing press to present). The book is a richly illustrated, which makes it a bit unwieldy, and I think the chapters on recent graphic design (post-Internet) are a bit on the weak side as they lack the depth and perspective of the earlier sections. Still an interesting and thorough look at graphic design and its intersections with art, politics, commerce, etc.

Marty says

I feel that it is probably best to pick and choose the areas that interest you rather than reading it cover-to-cover.

The layout was very stale, funny since its supposed to be a book on graphic design. He fails to explain the relevance of many of his examples and few of them have the photo and description on the same page so you can see what he's talking about. Other examples he provides contain too much unnecessary detail that you can clearly see in the graphics.

It is definitely a nice reference to have around though. No complaints there.

Lorraine Wild's in-depth review VIA *Design Observer*

Davey says

I actually wish history books were written like this -- lively. Awesome examples of designs.

Line says

Disclaimer: I've never read a book on the history of graphic design before, so I have nothing to compare to.

However, I have read several art history books, and know that they can be quite dry. This wasn't. I didn't read the whole book cover to cover, but rather jumped around, and I enjoyed it. I liked how it grouped the different design/designers by style rather than just following a strict timeline, and I also liked that there seemed to be equal parts text and images, so you could actually see and understand better what the author was talking about. Sometimes you have to flip back and forth between the pages to see the text and the accompanying example, but that didn't really bother me.

Ananda says

This is a fascinating read that includes socio-political context and critical insight. Thoroughly enjoyable.
