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Conversation with Richard Hollis on Graphic Design History

Introduction

The following informal conversation took place in London in July 1991. The discussion was loosely centred around a list of themes and questions that I had given previously to Richard Hollis, and some reference is made to these in the course of the conversation. Afterwards, the transcript of the talk was edited by both parties. The dialogue was an attempt to raise issues of graphic design history that are sometimes discussed informally, but that have hardly found their way into print: this must be the excuse for its indirections, imprecisions, and occasional repetitions. Sometimes the topic changed abruptly as Hollis's attention was diverted by the view from the window. But we have decided to leave in these detours for the illumination that they gave to our theme. The notes at the end of the text, on some of the lesser-known names that were mentioned or discussed, may help readers unfamiliar with the subject.

The immediate pretext for the conversation, and its chief subject, was the short history of graphic design that Richard Hollis has been engaged in writing for the *World of Art* series of books, published by Thames & Hudson in London and New York. This book is due to appear later in 1992. Hollis (see the note at the end of the dialogue) is a practising designer, and relations between history and practice form one of the themes of the discussion.

'Graphic design' receives some definition in the course of the conversation, and particularly towards the end of it. By way of introduction, one might say here that, in this understanding, it is the activity that evolved out of what had been known as 'commercial art'. Where the latter had been intimately linked to advertising and, in its methods, to drawn or painted illustration, graphic designers saw themselves as professional designers able to work across quite a wide range of fields and with different media: for companies and corporate bodies, in book or magazine publishing, exhibition design, signing and architectural graphics, television graphics, and so on. Typically, and as in Hollis's case, the British graphic designers of this generation (born in the 1930s) studied in one of the London art schools and then—perhaps with the interruption of 'national service'—began to work in group practices or freelance, supplementing this with part-time teaching.

As the conversation suggests, for young British graphic designers at that time it was important to look beyond Britain. While there were a few older designers working in Britain who had made the transition from 'commercial art' to 'graphic design' (such as F. H. K. Henrion and Hans Schleger), it was work done in the USA and on the European Continent that provided inspiration. As this testimony confirms—from quite a typical member of this 'first generation'—as a young designer, Hollis was already engaged with the subject of 'graphic design' and its history.

Early in his practice, Hollis's commitments were—crudely and broadly—to 'Swiss' modernism. This came through his interest in 'concrete art', and in 1958 he visited Swiss artist-designers such as Richard Lohse. (Unusually for a British designer, he had a working knowledge of German.) As some index of interests and allegiances, it is interesting to note that when Hollis was teaching at the West of England College of Art at Bristol (1964–6), Emil Ruder and Paul Schuitema should have been among the designers whom he invited there on short teaching engagements.[1] Hollis's work as a designer has been especially interesting for the ways in which it has worked with and through the modern tradition, and—though this is not the place for an examination of it—it may be that his consciousness of the history of design has played a part in this development.[2]

Origins of the Project

RK: You are a practising designer. What are you doing writing about the history of graphic design?
RH: I often ask myself that. Because it's very difficult to do both designing and writing together. They're such different activities. How did I start to do it? It had in fact been begun by a colleague, Philip Thompson, who had co-written a book for Thames & Hudson, called *Art without Boundaries*, which overlapped designers and people who were really artists. One of the things that I've found is that most of the interesting designers up until the Second World War, and a bit beyond, were primarily artists: nearly all painters or sculptors. Kurt Schwitters, Willi Baumeister, Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart—these are among the most obvious. It is the sort of thing you don't immediately realize. It raises the most tricky problems about how you talk about their activity, and raises all kinds of ideas about the place of art in society and whether they could actually place art in society: insert art into everyday life by designing functional items. Anyway, that's another issue, which we'll get on to. Philip Thompson was commissioned by Thames & Hudson to do a book in their *World of Art* series. He started that around 1985, and worked away for two years, and eventually fell into despair. When I rang to ask if he'd finished it, he said he had just found it completely impossible, that he had lost two stone—he's a thin man—and was just in total despair . . . Eventually I offered to do it, and he recommended me—
RK: You weren't frightened by this story: that someone had been made ill by the project?
RH: No—this is the trouble. It's a story of vanity, really: that you just think that you can do it. It then becomes a kind of challenge, but you don't realize how extraordinarily difficult it is. It's all very well to do lectures in an art school, because you can just take completely independent topics, or designers whose work you think is important and talk about them. You show slides, usually in a chronological order. Maybe you make comparisons between one designer and another, or work from one period and another. But really you're talking about your enthusiasms and you're always showing pictures. Slides always look much more impressive than the work itself, because of the scale. And everybody's concentrating in the dark on this brilliant screen: it's an extreme distortion. So that—to digress a bit—when you have a tiny illustration in a magazine, it's a closer approximation to what the actual work is like. There's nothing more extraordinary than going to sale-rooms, where posters appear now, and seeing the actual thing. It's often produced by a technique which you don't imagine it to have been produced by, or, for example, it's printed by letterpress and litho together. It's both technically different and transformed by the scale. So that as soon as you reproduce anything, it's a very great distortion of what the original was like. It's interesting that when the magazine *Octavo* reproduced pieces by the Ring Neuer Werbegestalter designers, the work was shown so that it looked more like things as you handle them: in full colour, out of square, with shadows and so on.[3] It was an attempt to give a better idea of material presence. But it somehow *isn't* more satisfactory, in that it also makes things look embalmed, even chic, rather than what they were—part of everyday life. It was curious, because they were so beautifully presented. But it was good to see things that hadn't been seen before. As everyone said about John Lewis's books: as soon as he had reproduced something, that became the stereotype for work that was done at that period, and it was constantly re-reproduced. And that's one of the problems about most of the histories of the 'twenty centuries of graphic design' kind. They tend to be constantly regurgitating the same work, which is presented as the key work. Often it is, if it was recognized at the time as the key work. But a huge amount of material which isn't dross is beginning to surface now. Of course a great deal was thrown away or lost, in the wars and so on.
RK: Can I tell you a story about reproductions? John Lewis in his *Typography: Basic Principles* reproduces a booklet about Dessau, from the collection in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which he says is by Jan Tschichold (the script typeface perhaps suggests this). In fact it was designed by Joost Schmidt. I told this to James Sutton, who with Alan Bartram was doing a specimen book (*Typefaces for Books*), and they wanted to reproduce that image. We looked very carefully at the photograph of it: it seems to have a fold down the middle, and I argued that it was probably a folded leaflet, though fortunately he didn't put this in their caption. Last month in an archive I saw the leaflet itself—which

credits Schmidt with the design—and realized that it was never designed to be folded. It just has a heavy crease from the impression of a half-tone block on the other side of the paper. So this was a complete misreading of the photograph.

RH: It's typical. I'm sure I'll do the same thing. It's awful, often having to rely on photographs.

RK: And photocopies are even worse, of course. But back to the book.

RH: Yes, so I got a contract from Thames & Hudson—that must be three years ago now—which I kept for a year before eventually signing it, because I thought the terms were so miserable.

RK: Did you do a sample chapter?

RH: I wrote an introduction, which was supposed to say what graphic design was—and which they found completely unsatisfactory. But they approved a synopsis: a formality, because I've changed it a great deal. I think probably I then started writing. I should say that I did start a book years ago. But that was on the whole of graphic design: a practical book. It included a historical chapter, which was much more theoretical than I expect anything in this book will be. I'd just discovered Lévi-Strauss and I thought he was the key to communication in society and so on. That was when I was in Bristol, and teaching at the school of art there. But I found it was impossible to go on, because I was *working*, as a designer.

The Present Context for Writing History

RK: So how can you do this now? I suspect that it must fit into your development as a . . .

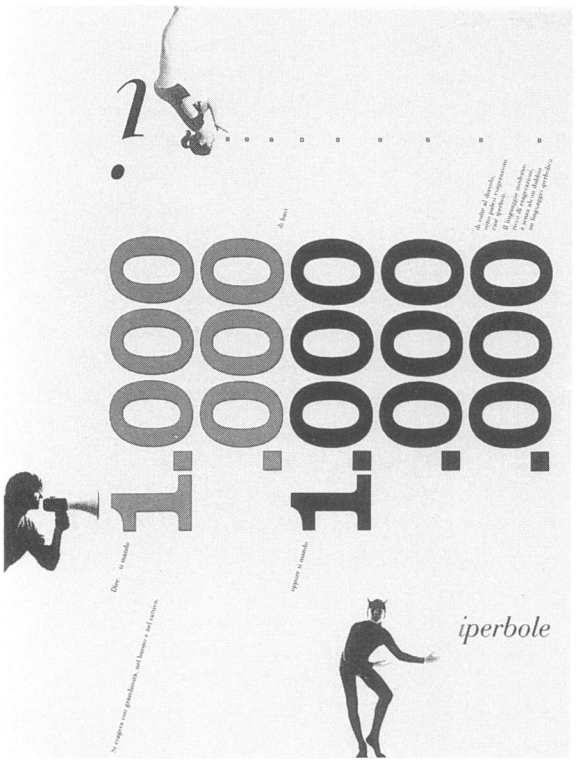
RH: It fits into the recession! Clients are going bust all around . . .

RK: But there wasn't a recession when you started.

RH: No, well you mustn't take that too seriously. But in a way it fits quite well. And in a way it was chance. So it didn't connect with my work at all. Although this is a more penetrating question than I might acknowledge. Because I was as aware as anyone that there was a kind of crisis in design. The computerized designers were going off in one direction, led first of all by Basel—Wolfgang Weingart, particularly—and developed commercially by April Greiman and the 'New Wave' Americans. This influence coincided with an expansion in retail business, so that things like the Next Catalogue (in Britain) were able to reflect this. It was something to do with graphic and typographic freedom and with making new images, presenting information as a decorative style. This emerged from the new technology of the computer. Maybe I can explain this better when we talk about general notions of what graphic design is. The graphic designer doesn't actually control the content of what he or she is designing. For that reason I have been inclined more recently to work for art galleries—where I *am* interested in the information. Here there is a problem about the form which the information can take. If you are dealing with paintings from up to and including the nineteenth century, you feel that perhaps it is proper to use symmetrical layouts, and to caption symmetrically. In Britain the extraordinary Thatcherite conservatism had as a side effect the mannered use of spaced capital letters and 'small capitals'. I've recently noticed that the Swiss really laughed at this in publications, saying 'How is it possible for designers in 1988 (as it was then) to use centred caps and small caps. Surely we have gone beyond that?' But in England it was bound up with notions of heritage. It wasn't really tradition, but a bogus notion of history. And I suppose for me there was—maybe unconsciously—a need to go back and find out what we were.

I should add that I had actually met many of the figures I'm now writing about, or certainly seen their work first hand. For example, I got to know Paul Schuitema quite well. I visited the design studios in Switzerland, went to Ulm, saw Chermayeff & Geismar's work at the 1958 Brussels exhibition, saw Saul Bass's work at the 1968 Milan Triennale, and so on. That helps in understanding and interpreting the material now.

Of course there was also post-modernism, of which a large element is eclecticism, in other words borrowing past styles and applying them. You begin to wonder, as you get a historical grasp on it, whether there aren't perhaps conventions of modern design, as there are orders in classical architecture; and to wonder whether these orders can be exploited, very much as Bruno Monguzzi has done [1]. He is a classic modern typographer, I think, and he has depended on his understanding of history. While he is an intelligent designer, he isn't highly original. That is the Miesian notion of 'I don't want to be interesting, I want to be good'. There has always been an element of that kind of puritanism.



1 Page from a publicity booklet, designed by Bruno Monguzzi, for the printers Arti Grafiche Nidasio, Milan, 1982. Offset lithography. The free handling of type and image recalls the work of Piet Zwart, on whom Monguzzi has written

Modernism, Technique and Graphic Design

RK: There's a big contradiction within the modern movement. On the one hand, always trying to be modern and new; but then saying that it's going to be timeless, eternal, and also something you don't notice anyway. Like the Braun philosophy of the dumb object, which is just there to service your life, but not to get in the way.

RH: There's a very clear connection between that kind of Ulm-ish attitude and Ulm-ish typography. I suppose I've adopted the Max-Bill-ian notion that art is pure aesthetic information. It's easiest to see graphics as information, and that inevitably some of that information is going to be aesthetic. And that it's quite easy to separate the two. I suppose the Ulm-ish view would be that the amount of aesthetic information is extremely limited. But of course with somebody like Mies, the actual richness of material—bronzed girders, marble, that sort of thing—gave a sense of luxury to spareness. The typographer hasn't had that. You don't normally use handmade paper. Such things are antipathetic to notions of spareness. Unlike marble, Whatman paper can't be made smooth. Well it can be, but then you wouldn't notice. Marble is much more obviously rich.

RK: You can see this richness in very good printing nowadays. But that didn't exist when modernism was new.

RH: Yes, the technology didn't lead itself to this idea then. In the book, I've drawn a parallel between the way in which Herbert Matter used vignetted half-tone letterpress blocks as though it was offset-litho [**2**], where you could feather away the edges of the half-tone image, and the way Le Corbusier used cement block, then rendered it to make it look like concrete: that kind of disjunction between appearance and function. The image of the use of materials came before you could *use* materials like that. I was astounded to see these Swiss posters produced by hand chalking. When you see them reproduced, you think it's just photo-lithography or photo-gravure, or sometimes photomontage, when it isn't at all. This is true of many Russian posters, particularly those by the Stenberg brothers. One astounding thing is Emil Ruder's poster for the 'Ungegenständliche Photographie' exhibition.[4] The image on the catalogue cover was enlarged, dot for dot, and a half-tone block was cut by hand out of lino: incredible. There's often such a distortion of—but enjoyment of—this extraordinary skill.

RK: Can I pick up this idea that modernism now forms a body of knowledge about how to do things, or maybe that it has a pedagogic application: that this is a way of learning how to do graphic design? One thing that gives me trouble is this coincidence between graphic design and modernism. I always think that, in a sense, they are the same phenomenon. Graphic design is modernism in the graphic field. So that 'typophoto'—or, more generally, the conjunction of image and text—is really what graphic design is all about. And this only comes with the modern movement. Does this make sense?

RH: Yes. The crucial thing *is* the relationship between image and text. But you can say that before the modern movement image and text were separated by the technology of letterpress printing. With lithography (from 1800) they could be joined, but only by hand, laboriously.



2 Double-page spread from a booklet designed by Herbert Matter, Switzerland, *c.*1935. The vignetted images suggest lithography, although the printing is in fact by letterpress.

Apart from the conjunction of text and image, there is also the conjunction of image and image. Photography changed this both by providing raw material for montage (as in John Heartfield) and by making surrealism more possible, since it depended on images which appeared to be machine-made. Dreams are thought to have an imagery which is closer to photography than to hand-made or confected surfaces. This is very clear in the wartime posters of Abram Games, who painted his 'photographs' with an air-brush.

But you're right, photography was the central generator of graphic design, especially when it's considered as part of the modern movement. Photography made it much more possible to integrate words and images. But the separation of words and images continued with photography used as illustration, to make clear oppositions of image and text, as in American advertising in general, and the Volkswagen advertisements in particular.

The USA and the Art Director

RK: That raises another big question: America and Europe. Is America a special case in all this?

RH: This is where the poor design historian gets into terrible trouble! Because you have the 'art director', who directs 'Art'. Usually the art they were directing was illustration. But they also came to direct the whole make-up of, for example, an advertisement. This is a strain which is terribly difficult to follow, because it has nothing clearly to do with the modern movement, but is an important element in design, particularly in America.

RK: So the presence of the art director seems to be intangible . . .

RH: The awful thing is that it probably is tangible, if you actually go—[*looking out of the window*] Look at that! Somebody's over-painted a British Telecom van, a new one [**3**]. We ought to photograph that . . . Oh it's just a new Telecom van . . . So that is it: it's kind of subliminal. [*Noticing a BT van in the old colours*] Look, you've got the two together. How extraordinary. That says everything about why you need graphic design history. It is this funny notion of marketing. I've just been writing about it. Did you see that correspondence describing the symbol [**4**] as the 'prancing ponce'? There's a terribly funny letter in one of the magazines.[5]

RK: It's such a pathetic, wispy image: pipe-dreams.

RH: It needs so many excuses. It's so badly drawn. But it is interesting. As far as I can tell, Wolff Olins were the first to reintroduce images that were not obviously relevant to their purpose. Like the fox on the Hadfields paint pots, which at the time puzzled designers, but came to be accepted as a possible way of doing it.

RK: Can you identify the individuals responsible for this?

RH: Oh, Michael Wolff: it was just after he joined the



3 British Telecom vans, London, October 1991. Left: the old identity (blue on yellow), designed by Banks & Miles in the 1970s. Right: the new identity (large symbol: white on grey), designed by Wolff Olins, implemented from 1991. The change summarizes the shift from graphic design to marketing



4 British Telecom symbol/logotype, designed by Wolff Olins, implemented from 1991

practice, before then he had been with Main Wolff. But I suppose we ought to get back?

RK: To the art director?

RH: I don't know. I'm so confused about that, I think it may be unwise. But I think it will be a perpetual confusion. Because some of the most brilliantly intelligent Americans are difficult to describe. For example, Bob Gage, who worked for Doyle Dane Bernbach, was obviously brilliant at organizing persuasive communication. And I have to think: well, is he someone that you include in the history of graphic design? There is an enormous number of very good people, whose position and importance you simply can't assess. So you tend to take people who are paradigms, in your view.

RK: Can you fit advertising into this. Does it have a clear place?

RH: I think it must do. Partly because a lot of the medium for design (not of course 'good design')—in magazines—was of course dependent on advertising. So the relationship is significant. Design was very affected by advertising, and advertising by design. They overlapped, in a rather curious way, in the 1960s. They almost came together in the Sunday-newspaper colour-supplement magazines. The same photographers were used for taking editorial photographs as were used for taking studio photographs that expressed some marketing idea. This then became part of company reports, which began to look like colour magazines. So there is a terrific interplay. And when the Americans, like Bob Gill, came to Britain in the early 1960s, they had worked in American advertising. I remember when the White Horse campaign started, with the level of the whisky tilted in the bottle. The Americans came with the idea that you had to have a 'concept'. When they taught in the art schools here they were ramming home the idea of a concept, 'you've got to have a concept'. It was totally anti-design, really, because it was anti-form. Students were reduced to tears because they had no 'concept', although they might have very good typography, with a decent headline and properly chosen type.

RK: But that won the day here: if you think of Fletcher/Forbes/Gill, now Pentagram.

RH: The content of much of their communication was excitement, and excitement isn't exciting thirty years later. They were good, particularly Fletcher, but there were a lot of designers and little design groups doing very good work then in Britain (or London). It is interesting how one says 'good work'. Then you have this terrible business of what the criteria of judgement are. Reputations were built, which when one examines them—big reputations in their day—one finds that what they have deposited is really very limited. And there is the accretion of interesting work by people who weren't apparently

so important, but this can build into a much greater 'reputation'.

Evaluation and the Processes of Design

RK: So what are the criteria?
RH: One criterion is simply what was thought good at the time and therefore reproduced; so that it is accessible. People who tended to keep things, tended to be people also who taught, and who then lost these things in the process of teaching—and now they are losing them to people like me, who are tracing history. And then with things that have been kept, the historian has to consider whether to pay £250 for a booklet designed by Piet Zwart, because that is the only way one is going to be able to reproduce it. But the only reason something like this has survived is because somebody recognized its quality.
RK: Because you know how design work gets done, you must look at these finished items and wonder how they really got to be like that. My suspicion about some historians is that they just accept the finished thing, without questioning it.
RH: Yes, I think that's right. It's not just a question of technique, of 'letterpress or litho', but of what could be done in the circumstances, and there is the limitation of time . . .
RK: . . . things that go wrong. In any job I've ever experienced, there's always something that goes slightly wrong. It's amusing to think that some historian will come along and regard this as all completely intended.
RH: But that's true of all human endeavour: expeditions of discovery, or scientific experiments, all kinds of things. It's recently been suggested that 30 per cent of one's decisions are likely to be wrong. There is a different mentality in the person who is actually making something. The person writing about it probably doesn't recognize the way things are improvised, in a way that can't be described. It is one of the problems about so-called functionalism: the areas of choice are actually very considerable. With metal typography, for example, the particular forms could be justified by invoking the technology. But, as the Futurists showed, the technology didn't necessarily inhibit—or didn't make it necessary for people to behave in any particular way, though of course it is easier to work by exploiting rectangular modules. But I suppose that modernism worked some things up into shibboleths. The Americans seemed to behave in a much freer way; there was more variety. But the difference between the masters who were then working in what you can call the manner of the modern movement, and people who were going through the motions some time later, is that the people who were innovating somehow have a particular finesse, a particular conviction. I think that is what is interesting about Anthony Froshaug's work, and one or two of his students—it has this terrific finesse. But of course most of that sort of work wasn't produced under pressure, and it didn't have art directors and all kinds of other people involved. And the difference between designing and advertising—and between designing as it has changed—is that there is much more team-work in the latter. So there is much more compromise, not only about what is acceptable to the client, but what is also acceptable to the other designers involved. This is one of the great changes. Whereas up to 1965, say, you tended to be talking about individual designers, you begin then to talk about design groups, and you don't know who in particular was involved. It may be for this reason that, generally speaking the quality of work has . . . Again, you see, I've started using . . . It is very interesting. I suppose that it is a matter of trying to establish what the standards are.

How do the two things, history and practice, relate? I don't think they do very much. Except very badly . . .
RK: But you're obviously a different kind of designer from someone like David King.
RH: He's passionately interested in history, but he wouldn't want to write about it.
RK: You can see that he's someone who loves a certain kind of work and it feeds into his production in some way. Whereas you are more . . .
RH: Eclectic? It's true!
RK: No, wider in your interests.
RH: Yes, I'm not passionately interested in any particular period. I'm interested in all of them. I can't pretend that I'm very interested in the use of graphic design in marketing, because I can't separate the graphics from the marketing. But there is this complicated business about who graphic design is for. It seems to me that graphic design is for the middle classes. It's a distinctly bourgeois activity,

which has occasionally, probably through pop music, had connections with some sort of mass culture. On a less evidently cultural level, in road signs, forms design, and that sort of area, it has been part of the social services. But I think that *design* is connected with middle-class culture.

RK: That sounds like a Cultural Studies explanation of the matter: you are locating it very clearly as the pursuit of this class. That it is done by middle-class people for middle-class people.

RH: Do you think that's true? I haven't talked about this in what I've written so far. And I don't know whether it's going to become the—[*distracted by a radio in the street, looks at the British Telecom vans again, now preparing to move off*] It is incredible: the old van and the new van. You see: there is 'graphic design' moving away, followed by 'marketing'. Right; that was a rather useful intervention, or confrontation. You didn't respond to my question.

RK: To be very provocative, I think that the answer in your case, if you are designing a catalogue for Fischer Fine Art, is that it is clearly a middle-class or upper-middle-class activity.

RH: I wasn't thinking of my activity . . . But, apart from pop music, I can't think of any area; and that's very much on the borders.

RK: It's refreshing to hear this uttered, but it denies the dreams about mass communication, and also the earlier socialist dreams of design for the masses: the dreams of the early modern movement.

RH: Politically, the problem with that is that it has somehow become associated with notions of social engineering. Plainly, my own view of design is that it is inevitably part of the social servicing, and that is why bad or incoherent design is offensive.

RK: What about British Telecom? Lots of people think the new identity is bad design.

RH: I suppose it was the middle class assuming they were satisfying the 'man in the street'. It is a horrible patronizing attitude: that design can't be understood by everybody. Whereas I think that everybody has said, in the face of British Telecom, that it is, in any way of looking at it, bad design. People don't like it. To what extent that's an aesthetic reaction, I don't know. Of course it also involves the fact that a lot of money was spent. But almost everything they touched seems so . . . The use of one of the nicest text typefaces, the Century italic, as a single word on the telephone boxes [5], white out of black, with a



5 Telephone boxes in the identity designed by Wolff Olins, London, October 1991. Coin-operated phones (left) are indicated by cerise markings, card-operated phones (right) have lime green markings

cerise stripe: it doesn't look like a piece of information. It doesn't look as though it is saying 'Telephone'. It looks descriptive, adjectival. It is those kinds of judgements which seem to be so inept. The quality of the decision-making appears to be so poor.

RK: And then there's an illogicality in the boxes labelled 'phonecard', as if they are *not* 'telephone'. But these are rather sophisticated criticisms: that this identity is not working in the terms in which it might be discussed in a design-office discussion. That it fails at the concept level, and in using the wrong visual language.

RH: Then you have to bring in the symbol. But we'd better not go into this.

RK: I don't know. I think that the ideal in writing about design is that you do actually have a completely detailed description of a symbol, which also brings in some sort of evaluation, both formally and in other ways, particularly socially. This would be my ideal: that you could talk about the way the hands were drawn on the symbol, and connect that with the boardroom ambitions for the company, the

value of the stocks, and everything else. It all goes together.

RH: It does. I suppose I have only talked about that kind of thing in one case. With Herbert Matter's design—because it's famous—for the New Haven Railroad. I have mentioned that the scheme couldn't be fully carried out, partly because of the protests about the service from commuters who used the trains. So that Matter was in a sense camouflaging the bad service, by giving it an image of cleanness and efficiency.

RK: How do you know that story?

RH: One piece that I found in *Print* magazine of the time: late 1950s. There was another source in an American magazine. Trade magazines.

RK: It is perhaps one level removed from talking with the people concerned: to read a contemporary report in a magazine. What I'm getting at is that behind every bit of graphics there is a story like this, if only you could get to it.

RH: I don't really want to talk too much about the context in which something is done. Even if you talk to designers involved, they have a very partial view of what happened. Unless you can find reports of meetings—rather in the way that you found the letters of Bayer, Morison, Herbert Read, about *Art and Industry*.[6] But the amount of actual work needed to find out this kind of thing is enormous. There simply isn't the time. Design history is very much dependent on people who do exactly that kind of work, which the very generalist person like myself can use. Even to write a superficial view is appallingly difficult. It is curious, starting to write about something which one thinks is deeply boring: more and more things crawl out of the woodwork and present themselves as being far more interesting than you thought they were. Things that you thought were important are far away in the perspective of the picture.

The Scope of Coverage

RK: What have the discoveries been: things that you have become more interested in?

RH: One develops passionate admirations. For example, the Italians after the Second World War, whom I'd always thought interesting: because this was connected with rebuilding the country and there was an optimism, together with a tremendous political activity, which preceded economic recovery. And the *number* of Italian designers—whose work often isn't easy to distinguish one from another. I've left out designers here, whose work would seem, in another country, of extraordinary brilliance. Then there were people who were so deeply committed to design that they would suddenly set off for another part of the world, to involve themselves in a literacy programme. They were kind of 'graphistes sans frontières', and have been overlooked. I'm very aware of this ignorance, and that I'm not dealing with it. Indeed, the whole of the African continent is completely ignored. It's not practically possible to deal with it. But it is crazy to excuse oneself, when also one leaves out Latin American—and Australia, which has extremely interesting designers. And, for example, Canada I can only mention, when in fact it had the most thorough-going corporate design for Canadian National Railways. And Eastern Europe gets a very raw deal, when in fact it's quite important. So my work will be extremely superficial, partial. I can only hope it won't be quite as inadequate as what has preceded it. But then when you look at the difficulties, you begin to have considerable respect for people who attempted to do anything at all. I just hope that the sources I use will be a bit less secondary. But not many of them will be actually primary.

To get back to your list of questions. I think we've dealt with the business of my sympathies being wider than they were twenty years ago?

RK: It sounds as if they've always been wide.

RH: I think they have. My generation of designers certainly had heroes. I get the impression that students don't so much now. But because graphic design hardly existed then, one did look at the people who were working at the time, not those in history. Certainly in the first few years of my awareness of graphic design—they were then American. People who are now almost unheard of, like Roy Kuhlman. People like Alvin Lustig, who now seem to be more important as personalities than for their work, except the work they did before the Second World War. If you look at Lustig's post-war work, it's not actually terribly interesting, apart from one or two book jackets. And it was really quite a long time before someone like Tschichold was mediated, through Froshaug. And certainly there was very little awareness of the Russians, whom I've

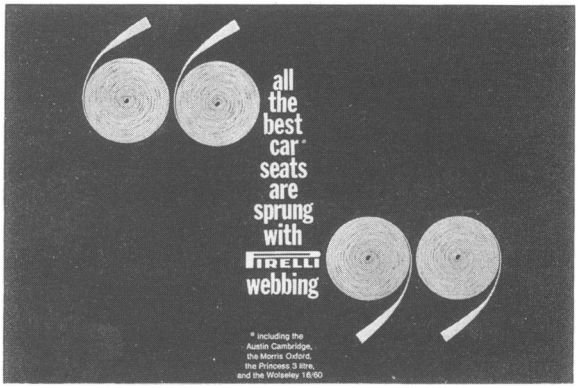
never been deeply interested in, partly because of the language. But from about 1960, the big influence was really the Swiss, and that was *pervasive*.

RK: You obviously weren't fixed by that. Presumably, if you had followed the theory, you would still be doing Swiss things now. For example, someone like Derek Birdsall seems to me still a lot more fixed in that period. This is not an adverse criticism: in a way it's a strength, that he somehow manages to stick with that Swiss-and-American thing.

RH: Yes, he found his influences, if you like—his way of working—young. Though it was what all of us were interested in then. He was actually a proper student of Froshaug. He knew what he was doing. And of course he was grounded in metal setting (as a compositor). He was very typical of that period. People had a terrific involvement with this new profession; there was an intensity, which I don't believe exists now, simply because there isn't that notion of cutting new paths. With a job that Birdsall had worked on, say until two in the morning, he would pin it up at the bottom of the bed, so that when he opened his eyes, first thing in the morning, he'd get a fresh, critical view of it, before he'd had the distraction of anything else. And you wouldn't call Derek a particularly . . .

RK: Critical?

RH: No, certainly critical, but not in that way. There was a climate of tremendous intensity then. He is somebody that I think is far more interesting than I had remembered. Maybe partly because I've seen him intermittently over the years, and perhaps it is only when you look at the work again . . . He did some extremely interesting things for Pirelli—advertising—I suppose in the early 1960s [**6**]. He's a kind of craftsman-designer. He never would take risks, and always had to have mad obsessions about reproducing bits of paintings in the same size as the original. But in a way they were the obsessions that an artist might have. And while he is not innovative, what he does is to do with design. And he has been extremely consistent. Whereas people who were much more aggressively or flamboyantly excellent, and who got involved in being part of a design group and in management, have become figures of fun. Which is very sad. But they haven't kept up that kind of craftsmanship. They are like imitation Paul Rands. So they then revert to being bad artists. It's just awful. You cannot get away with being arty and call it design.



6 Advertisement in a trade magazine for Pirelli webbing, designed by Derek Birdsall, London, early 1960s. A typical example of the new English graphic design of that time, showing a thorough integration of text and image

I think things have got beyond that. I'm deeply antagonistic to the uncritical interest in Shell advertising of the 1930s, under Colonel Jack Beddington. That was the worst kind of middle classism: forcing rather parochial art down people's throats. I suppose I'd assumed—if we are talking about reputations—that McKnight Kauffer was interesting. He's basically a pretty awful designer, who occasionally went beyond that. But because of his personality he somehow overcame his limitations. Unfortunately the clients didn't overcome his limitations. It's mysterious. There were no criteria then, whereas now there are. And I think that's why somebody who was obviously intelligent could get away with being so woolly.

RK: 'Woolly' sounds more precise as a criticism than 'awful'. But what really is the criticism?

RH: 'Woolly' is better, of course. But what happened was that in the 1960s you got this notion that design was something to do with solving problems. So you get 'The Graphic Artist and his Design Problems' (the English title of Müller-Brockmann's book). And people got interested in the idea that you could treat graphic design as industrial design. And, by techniques such as algorithms, you could do your work by solving problems.

RK: But where does this book stop?

RH: Well, there is going to be a kind of epilogue. It will arrive at 1968, with technological and political upheavals, with the change to a lot of different ways of looking at things, which will then elide into post-

modernism, and that will sum up where we've got to. I may have something more: with photography particularly as a way of generating words, then of course you get computers.
RK: All that's in an epilogue?
RH: I think it might be. And that's where the Japanese come in; which I'm just sorting out. Because of the West Coast they are very influential. And also they are extremely interesting, because of the uninhibited way in which they would just use graphic imagery, irrespective of whether it could be read, because the references would be to things that were entirely Western. I suspect there's a lot of designing for other designers. But then there are so many designers: quite a big audience! We ought to move on. You were going to ask?
RK: I was just going to commiserate with you. Whatever you do, people will pick holes with what you've left out. It seems a necessary thing to do, but also a thankless one. It seems like some slow leapfrog process, one book after another, which just has go very slowly.
RH: In fact, what's been left out is almost as important as what's been put in. There is a sifting process, through stuff you have to consider and instinctively reject as being not interesting. So inevitably one is imposing a view that is dependent on taste that one had, or which people had, some time ago. So you could say that the most important historians are people like Walter Herdeg or Charles Rosner: editors who were sifting the stuff at the time.

Illustration and Description

RK: Will you take pictures from those magazines and annuals?
RH: Sometimes I'll have to. But the reproductions will be very small. Fortunately it's not all that long ago, and I'm hoping I'll be able to reproduce from originals. The ideal is always from the original.
RK: But it's illustration as reminder or as snapshot, rather than as 'this is a substitute for the real thing'?
RH: Quite. As reminder, or 'it was something like this'. That sort of thing. What I want to avoid doing is taking the things that are very known. Because that prevents people thinking: it just refers people to the other books. I want to have colour at the beginning and the end: to discuss in some depth things produced in colour. Like that Tschichold poster 'Der Berufsphotograph' [7], which I've talked about at length in the text: to take some of these things, simply so that they can be properly looked at. Steven Heller, for example, in his books, never talks about the actual thing. The people who write about it don't look at what they are talking about. Partly because they don't understand how it was produced.



7 Poster designed by Jan Tschichold, Basel, 1938. Printed in black and in colours generated by 'rainbow printing': letterpress. 640 × 905 mm

They assume that just reproducing it helps people to see it, which it doesn't at all. So I hope that I can make people look at things.

RK: So with the Tschichold, you've seen the original (so-called) poster?

RH: Yes. There are so many things that you don't realize otherwise. But also it is just the way that something like that is so carefully constructed: controlled intellectually and formally. It's a masterpiece, that work—it is interesting that I use this term! I mean: that it is a key work, which you can use to talk about other works.

RK: It sounds like you're just talking about formal values?

RH: Oh no! No! If you're showing the idea of 'the professional photographer', what image do you use? As a designer you might be talking to the curator of the exhibition. Though nowadays you'd be talking to the marketing people, too. This is what is different: on any one job, the clients have multiplied; which probably accounts for British Telecom. But to get back to the Tschichold poster. Well what have I said? [*quotes from the manuscript as follows*]:

For an exhibition, 'Der Berufsphotograph' (the professional photographer), at the Gewerbemuseum Basel in 1938, the exiled Jan Tschichold produced the last large work which followed his precepts of asymmetric typography. This is a poster of extreme economy and precision. The image is a photograph in negative, its left-hand edge on the centre of the sheet. The word-element 'photograph' starts at the edge of the image. This is overprinted on the image, and so forms a unit of meaning with it, and is the first part of a subtitle 'sein Werkzeug' (his apparatus). The second half of the subtitle, 'seine Arbeiten' (his works) is placed after a dash. The dash bridges between the image area and the white paper of the sheet, so that the works are literally the outcome of the process. The rest of the textual information is related by size and position according to its importance. 'Where' (the museum) is aligned horizontally with 'what' (Ausstellung: exhibition). This is related vertically to 'who' (the name of the collaborating organization) at the top, and the start of the main title below. 'When' (the dates and opening times) is related with less coherent logic, by the device of reversing the dates in white out of black, making a further negative. The days and times are presented in tabular form, which emphasizes the Sunday morning and Wednesday evening openings. In a vertical line of text on the right are listed the designer, photographer, blockmaker, and printer. All the type, except the main title, is printed in black, with the photograph. In a single separate run through the press, with yellow on the inking rollers on the left, blue in the middle, and red on the right, the horizontal rules of the main title and subtitle are printed. Tschichold's and Herbert Matter's knowledge of the processes of the printing industry freed them to use the medium to extend the designer's expressive range. Over-printing was used not merely to create the effect of space, but by allowing the image and the colours to exist in the same space without cancelling . . .

And so on. So my editor is going to say 'what are you doing describing something which you're illustrating?', but I'm going to insist. Unless you describe it, people will not *read* this image, they will just see an image, and won't understand the terrific concentrated intelligence that has produced the image. 'Heroic' is a better term than 'masterpiece'. It is just that somebody took the trouble. It is that that is so impressive. Nowadays people don't take the trouble. The BT visual identity seems *so badly done*! Where is the intelligence or the craft? I do feel that in a sense it is a missionary thing. All these people were just so good. 'Oh they are just images, they are just designers.' But look at Matter's travel posters: produced in five, six, seven, eight languages, and he's got to allow for all of them [**8–9**]. People see the



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8 Poster designed by Herbert Matter, Switzerland, mid-1930s (German-language version in a multi-lingual series). Gravure. 1020 × 640 mm

9 Poster designed by Herbert Matter, Switzerland, mid-1930s (Dutch-language version in a multi-lingual series). Gravure. 1020 × 640 mm

image, just with one text in one language, not realizing that maybe it had also to allow for all these other contingencies. A masterpiece, a pioneering work, or whatever you take it to be—it makes a lot of art look just self-indulgent. That's why graphic design in those days was important. And why now it's lost the kind of wonder it had for people like Birdsall. When Birdsall did his Pirelli work, showing ice on a windscreen, he put salt on photographic paper [**10**]. It was a 'how do you do it?'. There wasn't a language of how you expressed something. There weren't all the routine things that theatre managers have for making special effects. They were innovating, making. Of course this is still being done on Apple Macintoshes today—'how do you do this?'—but there was much less of an inherited know-how. With so many things, it was innovation, innovation. They were real breakthroughs of human intelligence. Comparable with some scientific discoveries. A real wonder. I think it easily matched the modern movement in architecture. It did less damage!—with paper—when it wasn't making propaganda for something dire. But it was the imagination. There are many things that Max Bill did—or Stankowski—they leave you just astounded. How did they do something so original, with such confidence? They didn't say 'erm, oh well, what do you think?' There it was. It is extraordinary. Ruedi Rüegg in Switzerland told me that Americans haven't heard of Anton Stankowski. Yet there was somebody whose whole life is this consistent trail of activity—and he wrote a great deal, too. In his case it happily didn't particularly connect with politics, so it can be seen as a traditional adjunct to business, really. It is an extraordinary career.



10 Pirelli de-icer packet, designed by Derek Birdsall, London, early 1960s

RK: He stayed in Germany through the war?

RH: I'm not sure—I haven't got there yet—but I've dealt with him pre-war, and there the information came from Japanese magazines, which say he was a prisoner in Russia. He then became editor of the *Stuttgarter Illustrierte*. As far as I know he is alive, well, and living in Stuttgart. I should ask him!

RK: To go back a bit, I'm inclined to say that your description of that poster is heroic, too. It matches the endeavour of the poster, because you do talk about the thing in an internal way . . .

RH: They will probably cut it!

RK: It is the advantage you have, understanding how these things get produced. If you just see it as an image, you're terribly limited in the language you can use.

RH: And also for students. They see these images and think 'that's a good idea'. It's so removed from the way it was produced. It may not matter that it's seen as style, but it's not interesting—when a piece of paper is able to yield so much information about so many things. It is much more interesting than a lot of art. It is more interesting than a lot of Bill's painting, in my view . . .

RK: You're muddling up Bill and Tschichold.

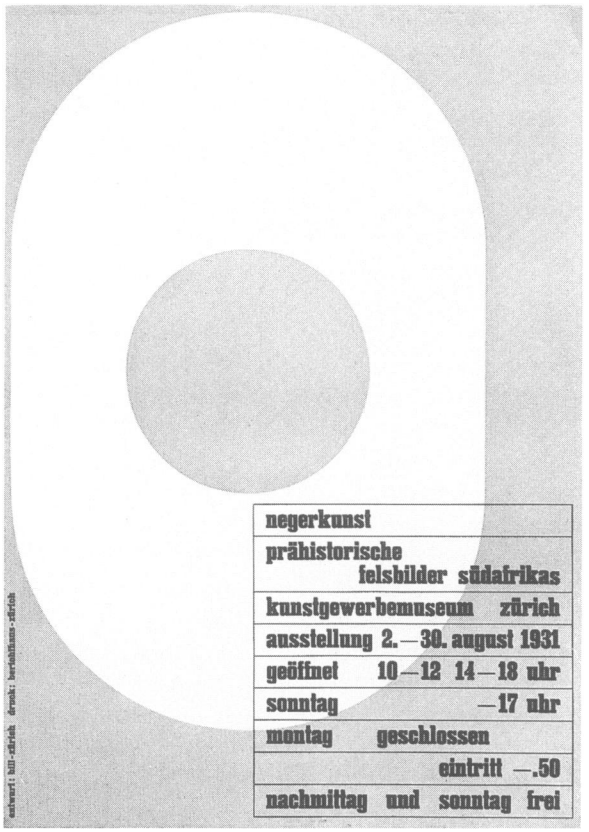
RH: Yes, because I go on to talk about Bill's *Negerkunst* poster [**11**]. With Bill, you have a key, and once you've got the key, you can unlock something pretty instantly.

RK: What are the other kinds of language you've found yourself using, in describing work? This example you've quoted is the language of production and also of ordering information.

RH: That's of course where this overlaps with my work as a designer, in exploiting process, and, with luck, in making people arrive at the museum when it's open.

RK: But, for example, your mention of Lévi-Strauss reminds me of other ways of describing images—as systems of meaning.

RH: I think in this kind of book, it would be good to write as simply as possible. It is directed at students and lay people, who will inevitably be switched off by anything that smacks of theory. Information and communication theory, Ulm-school ideas of visual rhetoric, semiology, are all useful, but not here. I've got somehow to find a way of talking about bits of



11 Poster designed by Max Bill, Zurich, 1931. Linocut, printed letterpress in brown and black. 1280 × 905 mm

paper without using words that are semi-technical. If you use words that you would use in painting, like 'support', it gets muddled: it's associated with something that is physically supported. But how do you talk about that plane (or plain) surface, without saying 'sheet of paper'? You want it to be more abstract. There's no word. You have to get round problems like this when you're talking to a lay audience. I suppose somebody has got to invent some terms that become acceptable. Or do we all talk about 'sheet', even if it's a piece of metal?

RK: 'Sheet' also means the *whole* sheet, from which smaller pieces are then cut. It has that problem too.

RH: Yes. It is something that carries the signs, the words and images. But we have no word to say what that is. It is difficult to have theoretical notions when you are still not sure what to call the specific object.

RK: It sounds like a very pragmatic approach.

RH: Absolutely. Not being a professional writer, one spends a lot of time struggling to find a way of saying something. It is all very well for the publishers to say 'don't worry, just get the facts down!'

RK: Is that what they said?

RH: Yes . . . There aren't too many facts in the book. I think there will be a serious lack of mentions of when particular people went to particular places, and when there were exhibitions of work. I may be able to introduce these, now I know more. One's constantly finding out little bits more of that sort of information.

RK: Will you acknowledge your constraints in doing the book? It seems that you are clearly constrained by what's available to you for illustration and for discussion: especially the constraint of what was reproduced in magazines.

A Definition of Graphic Design

RH: It is interesting that when you go beyond that, you seem to go beyond what is traditionally considered to be graphic design. The magazines, like *Graphis*, or the annuals, like *Modern Publicity*, seem to define what graphic design is. So that graphic design is not just 'visual communication', it is 'visual communication seen by graphic designers to be graphic design'. It's like the difference between architecture and building. The division is somehow to do with—what? is it to do with class? It's certainly to do with what is accepted to be a profession. There are all kinds of interesting distinctions between commercial art and graphic design, and where boundaries are drawn.

RK: To take a clear example, something like a Mars Bar wrapper . . .

RH: . . . is not graphic design, although it uses every aspect of graphic design. And (unless it's changed) it seems to me to be entirely suitable. It's like art: 'art' is what is done by artists, and 'graphic design' is what is done by graphic designers. It's an odd phenomenon.

RK: Sometimes in the company of Cultural Studies people, I feel a bit guilty that I'm interested in Graphic Design (capital letters), and I'm not much interested in Mars Bars wrappers, or even in something less unrespectable than that.[7]

RH: It is a funny convention, that something is 'graphic design'. But commercial art still exists: it calls itself 'packaging', which—like advertising—may contain graphic design or may not. It may be done by graphic designers, but it seems it can well not be. Graphic design is somehow adding some kind of cultural weight. Although it's all got very much more confused. And this is why I've asked myself whether graphic design hasn't finished. Quite seriously. Because if you look at things that inevitably had a heavy cultural component, like book covers, now they have a very low cultural component, apparently, in terms of graphic design. In fact they are packaged.

One can ask if there are any graphic designers left. There are typographers who design books. People do company reports, which look like commercial art. People who do road signs are presumably graphic designers? But then you wonder about Wolff Olins: they employ graphic designers, but probably they wouldn't call themselves a graphic design consultancy.

RK: Yes, they seem bigger than that. It sounds as if you do have a picture of the graphic designer: someone, whose name you can find out, who sits and controls where everything goes in this image which is on something we call a sheet or image-area. It sounds like this is the phenomenon that happened when artists entered this field, and that it still has this basis in—to go right back—the artist at the easel.

RH: When you asked if my views had changed, I suppose I hadn't realized that artists made graphic design. It was a profession constructed by the social and political aspirations of Dadaist artists. It's a very odd conclusion to come to—obviously it's not entirely true. Maybe writing this book is part of the same direction: a sort of social zeal. And it is that social zeal which has collapsed. The end of ideologies, maybe.

RK: Except that we know that ideologies reappear in some other form.

RH: Maybe graphic design was an ideology.

RK: And then tied in with the modern movement in some deep way. Could it be that graphic design is coming to an end because the modern movement has got into this terrible trauma?

RH: I'd have thought that what the modern movement has left—if we are talking about graphic design—is very good, useful designers, like Monguzzi, Birdsall, with a way of working that you could say is perpetually valid. You could also consider many of the ideas of the modern movement, particularly in domestic design: planning in terms of spatial organization, for every kind of activity. It's totally transformed this. Of course, it couldn't cope with market forces, because it was a social movement, it assumed a benevolent socialist state, or benevolent like a German grand-duke, or patronage of one kind or another. The awful thing is that, given the money, *that* [*pointing out of the window to two council blocks*] worked as a building and *that*—just because the money wasn't there to do all the things that were needed, like balconies and so on—didn't work. But graphic designers don't have that excuse. The only kind of excuse they have is that they were working with under-educated clients, particularly in England, whom they didn't bother to educate. Graphic design has had its extraordinary successes. Where the state has employed it, for example, in Switzerland, or with the Canadian National Railways, or indeed with bits of British Rail or the British road signs, it has contributed a great deal. And with enlightened local authorities—not in England—a lot has been done. People like Grapus have produced more interesting images than any recent French painters. So I think within the visual culture it has made a huge contribution.

ROBIN KINROSS/RICHARD HOLLIS
London

Notes

1 Schuitema came twice in that period; Ruder was ill and could not come. For some description of the school at Bristol, see Norman Potter, *What is a Designer*, Hyphen Press, London, 1989, pp. 204–7.
2 Richard Hollis's work has been little discussed in print; for a brief consideration by the present writer, see 'The new tradition', *Blueprint*, no. 46, 1988, pp. 38–9.
3 No. 7, 1990.
4 For the Gewerbemuseum Basel, 1960. Reproduced in Bruno Margadant, *Das schweizer Plakat*, Birkhäuser, Basel, 1983, p. 100.
5 The new visual identity for British Telecom was introduced from early 1991 onwards. The scheme was the subject of much adverse comment in the British newspapers, particularly because of the fees paid to the designers, and in the design press, because of the qualities of the result. For a defence of the scheme by its

chief architect, see 'The BT affair: Wally Olins talks to Deyan Sudjic', *Design Review*, no. 1, 1991, pp. 34–41.

6 Robin Kinross, 'Herbert Read's *Art and Industry*: a history', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1988, pp. 35–50.

7 For a short argument for the importance of investigating the consumer and consumption, which concludes 'The Mars Bar, rightly understood, has more to teach us than Baudrillard', see James Obelkevich, 'Myths and realities of the post-war "Consumer Revolution"', *Issue*, no. 7, 1991, pp. 4–5.

Biographical Notes

Alan Bartram b.1932
British typographer, working mainly as a book designer. As a writer and photographer his special interest has been public lettering in Britain. Books include *An Atlas of Typeforms* (with James Sutton), Lund Humphries, London, 1968; *Lettering in Architecture*, Lund Humphries, London, 1975; *The English Lettering Tradition*, Lund Humphries, London, 1986; *Typefaces for Books* (with James Sutton), British Library, London, 1990.

Derek Birdsall b.1934
British graphic designer. Trained as a compositor, then as a graphic designer at the Central School. A partner in some of the early graphic design group practices in London in the 1960s, then a founding partner of Omnific, which he still runs.

Doyle Dane Bernbach
American advertising agency. Celebrated for its development of 'the new advertising' in the 1960s, especially for Volkswagen: sophisticated, sardonic, graphically simple.

Anthony Froshaug 1920–84
Typographer and printer of Anglo-Norwegian parentage. A principal mediator of the pre-war Continental 'new typography' in post-war Britain. Worked as a printer with minimal equipment in Cornwall, 1949–52, then principally and influentially as a teacher in London (Central School, 1952–3, 1970–84; Royal College of Art, 1961–4) and at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm, 1957–61.

Bob Gill b.1931
American graphic designer and illustrator. Freelance in New York in 1950s, then came to work in London. At Hobson's advertising agency, 1960–2, and in partnership with Alan Fletcher and Colin Forbes (see below: Pentagram), 1962–7, then freelance until his return to New York in 1976. Strongly illustrative, unconstrained approach.

Grapus
French graphic design group, established in 1970 and disbanded in 1991. They worked as a collective, for political and cultural bodies, especially the French Communist Party: adventurous and uninhibited work, particularly posters.

April Greiman b.1948
American Graphic designer. After education in the USA, studied at Basel under Weingart (see below), 1970–1. Freelance designer since then, in New York, and since 1976 in Los Angeles. An early user of Apple-Macintosh computers, she has explored electronic and digital technologies in generating graphic imagery. See her book, *Hybrid Imagery*, ADT Press, London, 1990.

Steven Heller b.1950
American designer and writer on graphic design. At present an art director with the *New York Times*. A prolific magazine contributor (especially to *Print*), his books include *Graphic Style* (with Seymour Chwast), Thames & Hudson, London, 1988. In debates over American graphic design history, he has questioned the modernist 'establishment' view, calling for a much wider representation of subject matter.

Walter Herdeg b.1908
Swiss graphic designer and publisher. Education at the Zurich Kunstgewerbeschule and in Berlin. Ran his own studio in Zurich from the late 1930s. Edited and designed *Graphis* magazine from its inception (1944) into the 1980s, also many *Graphis* annuals and anthologies.

Richard Hollis b.1934
Education in painting, Chelsea School of Art; also attended evening classes in typography at Central School of Art. Entered graphic design through running his own silk-screen press. Taught lithography, London School of Printing, 1958–61. Freelance graphic designer in London from 1958. Worked as designer in Paris, 1963–4. Head of graphic design department, West of England College of Art, Bristol, 1964–6. Art editor of *New Society*, 1966–8. Then freelance in London again, with some long-term associations: house designer to the Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1970–2, 1978–85, and teaching graphic design at Central School of Art, 1968–78.

David King b.1943
British graphic designer. Education at London College of Printing, then work in magazine design (as assistant to Tom Wolsey and Robin Fior). Art editor on *Sunday Times* colour supplement, 1965–75. Since then, freelance designer and photographer, with special involvement in socialist campaigns and in books of Russian and Soviet history and culture, in which field he has been active as a collector.

Roy Kuhlman
American graphic designer. His work in advertising and publishing (especially jackets for Grove Press books) in the 1950s and 1960s was characteristic and influential.

John Lewis b.1912
British typographer and writer. For many years designer with the printer W. S. Cowell, where his work mixed

traditional approaches with some openness to contemporary developments. Teacher at the Royal College of Art in the 1960s. His books include: *Graphic Design* (with John Brinkley), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1954; *Printed Ephemera*, W. S. Cowell, Ipswich, 1962; *Typography: Basic Principles*, Studio Books, London, 1963; *The Twentieth Century Book*, Studio Vista, London, 1967; *Anatomy of Printing*, Faber & Faber, London, 1970.

Alvin Lustig 1915–55

American designer. Entered graphic design through magazine art-direction in the 1930s, in California. Worked as a freelance designer, in Los Angeles and New York, from 1936. Though active over a wide range of fields, he is best known now for his book-jacket design. See R. Roger Remington and Barbara J. Hodik, *Nine Pioneers in American Graphic Design*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1989.

Herbert Matter 1907–84

Swiss/American graphic designer and photographer. After study as a painter in Geneva and Paris, he undertook design work for French and Swiss clients in the 1930s. In 1936, he emigrated to USA: one of the European modernists who made this move. He then worked principally as a photographer for magazines, and as a graphic designer.

Bruno Monguzzi b.1941

Swiss graphic designer. Education in Geneva and London. At Studio Boggeri, Milan, 1961–3, then freelance principally in Milan. On his work, see an interview in *Eye*, no. 1, 1990, pp. 8–16. He has also written as a historian: 'Piet Zwart: l'opera tipografica 1923–1933', *Rassegna*, no. 30, 1987.

Josef Müller-Brockmann b.1914

Swiss graphic designer. After education and an apprentice job in Zurich, has run his own practice there from 1936. Professor at the Zurich Kunstgewerbeschule, 1956–9. His strongly formal approach to design has been widely circulated through his books, especially *Gestaltungsprobleme des Grafikers*, Niggli, Teufen, 1961. See also his *History of Visual Communication*, Niggli, Teufen, 1971.

Wally Olins b.1930

British design consultant. Entered graphic design through work in advertising in the mid-1950s. Formed practice with Michael Wolff (see below) in 1965, of which he is still managing director. Wolff Olins became leaders in exploring new approaches to corporate identity, particularly in moving away from modernist abstraction towards illustration: as for Hadfields, 1968. The new identity for British Telecom (applied from 1991) is their work. Olins has written two books: *The Corporate Personality*, Design Council, London, 1970; *Corporate Identity*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1989.

Pentagram

Long-running design practice in London, founded in 1972, which grew out of two preceding partnerships: Fletcher/Forbes/Gill, 1962–5, and Crosby/Fletcher/Forbes, 1965–72. Originally run by five partners (Theo Crosby, Alan Fletcher, Colin Forbes, Kenneth Grange, Mervyn Kurlansky), it has been enlarged by the addition of others. Although perhaps best-known for its graphic work, Pentagram has covered all design fields. The group has a 'federal' structure, each partner running jobs separately. This may help to account for the continuing energy of its work, which has come to epitomize established British design.

Charles Rosner

British writer on printing and graphic design, active from the 1940s onwards. Frequent contributor to *Graphis*.

Emil Ruder 1914–70

Swiss typographer and teacher. After apprenticeship as a compositor, he worked as a freelance designer and teacher in Basel. Taught over many years, 1942–70, at the Kunstgewerbeschule Basel, from which base he became one of the leading exponents and teachers of the modernist 'Swiss typography'. His principal publication was a manual: *Typographie*, Niggli, Teufen, 1967.

Ruedi Rüegg b.1936

Swiss graphic designer. Education at the Kunstgewerbeschule Zurich, after which he worked in the studio of Müller-Brockmann (see above), then in Mexico, USA, Japan. From 1965, as a designer in Zurich, with Müller-Brockmann, and later with his own practice. Has written a manual: *Typografische Grundlagen*, ABC, Zurich, 1972.

Paul Schuitema 1897–1973

Dutch graphic designer, photographer and film-maker. One of the 'pioneer' modernist graphic designers of the inter-war years in The Netherlands. Taught at the Academie van Beeldende Kunsten in The Hague, 1930–62. See Dick Maan & John van der Ree, *Typo-foto: Elementaire Typografie in Nederland*, Veen, Utrecht, 1990.

Anton Stankowski b.1906

German artist and designer. After studying at Essen under Max Burchartz, worked in advertising in Switzerland and Germany in 1930s. Spent the war- and immediate post-war years in the German army. Ran his own graphic design practice in Stuttgart from 1950 into the 1970s. A designer in the central tradition of the modern movement. See his *Funktion und ihre Darstellung in der Werbegrafik*, Niggli, Teufen, 1960.

James Sutton b.1929

British designer and occasional writer. Has run his own practice since 1956. His books are *Signs in Action*, Studio Vista, London, 1965, and two with Alan Bartram (see above).

Philip Thompson b.1928

British graphic designer and illustrator. Studied at the Central School under Anthony Froshaug (see above). Has worked in advertising, publishing and in general graphic design practice, also as a teacher. Co-author of *Art without*

Boundaries, Thames & Hudson, London, 1972, and *The Dictionary of Visual Language*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1982.

Wolfgang Weingart b.1941

Swiss typographer and teacher. After a compositor's apprenticeship, has branched out into graphic design. Has taught typography at the Basel Kunstgewerbeschule since 1968. A leader of Swiss 'new wave' in typography and graphic design. See his 'How can one make Swiss typography?', *Octavo*, no. 4, 1987.

Michael Wolff b. 1933

British graphic designer. After studying to be an architect, entered graphic design through work for Crawford's advertising agency, eventually forming his first partnership in 1964, as Main Wolff. In 1965, he joined Wally Olins (see above) in a partnership that still runs, although he left it in 1983.