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The Story Of Graphic Design



Synopsis

This comprehensive illustrated history begins with the origins of the alphabet itself and carries the reader through the first handwritten books, the invention of printing in the Renaissance, the explosion of graphic styles (and printed media) in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the impact of digital technology on design today. Like E.H. Gombrich's magnificent *Story of Art*, *The Story of Graphic Design* is a compelling narrative that explores the evolution of styles under the pressure of social, cultural, and technological change, accompanied by a comprehensive selection of illustrations of key works in typography and design since the invention of writing. It covers a remarkable number of topics, from the art of the medieval manuscript to the birth of advertising to the workings of modern mass media. Unlike all other historians of design, Patrick Cramsie is able to bring a designer's eye to the analysis of visual communication. *The Story of Graphic Design* is an indispensable book for designers, historians, and students, and will find a wide readership among people who are interested in the visual arts or concerned about the future of the printed word.

Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams (May 1, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0810972921

ISBN-13: 978-0810972926

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 1.2 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #468,090 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #179 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Electrical & Electronics > Digital Design #196 in Books > Arts & Photography > Decorative Arts & Design > Design History & Criticism #1378 in Books > Arts & Photography > Graphic Design > Techniques

Customer Reviews

"Diligently referenced and sensitively insightful, an updated thorough appraisal such as this is not before time." Peter Saville "Mr. Cramsie's insightful focus on the frequently overlooked analysis of specific formal properties...sets this book apart from other design histories and makes it a valuable resource for students and professionals" William Longhauser, Graphic Designer, Professor, and

Director of the Outside Institute --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Patrick Cramsie is a graphic designer whose work has centered on corporate identity and book design. It was while reviewing books for the Times Literary Supplement in London that he felt the need to have a comprehensive history of graphic design that also served as an introduction to the subject. He lives and works in Herefordshire, England.

The book is a fascinating read, filled with carefully curated imagery. It is fully footnoted, indexed, and referenced. It covers a lot of the same ground as Meggs' definitive tome in a briefer space, but adds a wealth of anecdotes and insight. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and would recommend it to anyone serious about understanding design. However, I purchased the book for consideration review as the text for the Graphic Design History undergraduate course I teach. It's not a great solution for that purpose, as the structure is one of continuous narrative in long chapters, unbroken by subheads, sidebars, or any of the other things that help convert masses of information into more digestible chunks for a reader unfamiliar with the subject. Even the generous volume of illustrations and photographic examples doesn't offer enough contrast to the endless gray column of text to make it an inviting learning environment for the non-devotee, and the lack of margin space prevents the sort of hand annotation that would be required for anyone to study effectively from the volume. These structural weaknesses are all related to undergraduate students. I think this would make an excellent choice for a graduate course in design history. While I will definitely add this title to the recommended reading list for my course, I'll stick with Meggs for the primary text.

Excellent book! Hardcover, which I wasn't expecting. Lots of informative text, very knowledgeable. Hard to believe it is out of print, so get a copy now while you can.

Bought this as a design resource; it touches on all of the key designers of history and tells you everything you need to know. Ironically, the design IN the book is pretty terrible... to say, the book itself isn't well designed. Still a great resource.

Surprisingly, this book has turned out to be one you are anxious to return to. It puts graphics in context to our modern society. Highly recommended

I have used Meggs, Poyner and Eskilson, yet I find I always return to Cramsie for my 2nd year

university undergraduate students. The canon is well represented and the photographic reproductions are excellent. I disagree with the reviewer who finds the text passages too long for undergraduates. My students are serious about studying graphic design, and they all plan on becoming graphic designers; with that motivation, there is no reason to "baby feed" with call-outs and emphasis boxes. Cramsie's readable and engaging text tells the story in a compelling way. Cramsie remains the best bargain value for my students while delivering the essentials in a way that excites them. There is a slight British emphasis to the book (unsurprising given Cramsie's nationality) but that is by no means a problem especially when you supplement the book with frequent lectures bringing in additional material. Terrible hokey-jokey backwards dust jacket, but just toss that and you have an enduring text here. — Steven Skaggs, University of Louisville

The Story of Graphic Design, by Patrick Cramsie (British Library, 2010) is a very personal journey through the evolution of Western Graphic Design narrated via stories of designers, design creations, technological innovations and social changes. The Story of Design is richly illustrated - surprisingly, this is not always the case in Design books! - and makes reading itself a very pleasurable experience of transitions between words and visuals. In 329 pages, filled with examples and case studies, Patrick Cramsie takes the reader through the main stages in the evolution of Western Graphic Design, from its earliest mural, stone and ceramic expressions to the latest digital creations. There are twenty stages, each clearly marked by the emergence of a new way of doing; with many overlaps and coexistence of styles; some radical ruptures and many gradual evolutions. The overall image is that of a relatively linear evolution, driven by constant exploration, social and technological change; at times accelerated by radical, disruptive approaches. The twenty stages, each covered in a dedicated chapter, are:

- The origin of the alphabet (c. 34000 - 1100 BC)
- Ancient Greece and Rome (c. 2000 - c. AD350)
- Illuminated Manuscripts (c. 350 - c.1500)
- The Birth of Printing & Early German Printing (c. 1455 - 1530)
- Renaissance Italy and France (c. 1460 - 1600)
- Dutch Renaissance & Popular Prints (c. 1530 - 1700)
- Rococo, Transitional and Modern (c. 1700 - 1820)
- Display Types and Victoria Design (c. 1800 - 1880)
- Neo-Gothic and the Arts and Crafts (c. 1840 - 1910)
- Art Nouveau (c. 1880 - 1914)
- Sachplakat and First World War Graphics (c. 1880 - 1920)
- Futurism, Dada, De Stijl and Constructivism (c. 1900 - 1930)
- Bauhaus and the New Typography (c. 1919 - 1933)
- Traditional Typography (c. 1910 - 1947)
- Commercial Modernism (c. 1920 - 1960)
- Swiss Typography (c. 1945 - 1972)
- Illustrated Modernism and Psychedelia (c. 1950 - 1970)
- Punk (c. 1975 - 1985)
- New Wave and Postmodernism (c. 1970 - 1990)
- Digital Expressionism (c. 1984 -)

The Story of Design is narrated from the perspective of style: "that recognizable way of doing or making something

Patrick Cramsie's guided walk through history is full of wonderful details. He blends art with history and technology in a way that allows you to immediately connect with the people of that time period and understand how their conditions reflected in their creations. I especially enjoyed his detailed explanations of why certain designs are important. He has a gift for seeing small details and connecting them to visual themes, language and human emotions. Now we just need an annual supplement to keep it updated!

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