

THE

POSTER

Thames & Hudson



Edited by
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London Book Fair 2019
Stand 6A30

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Specification

- 320 pages
- c. 300 illustrations
- 29.8 x 24.0 cm (11¾ x 9½ in.)

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The Poster

Edited by Gill Saunders and Margaret Timmers

The ultimate, popular history of poster design from the 19th century to the present day. Created in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum. A visual feast for all with a love for posters and their power.

Marketing points

- **A comprehensive graphic resource** – over 300 posters, many reproduced at full page size and from the V&A's world-class collection.
- **Features work from the great masters**, including A.M. Cassandre, Toulouse-Lautrec and Alphonse Mucha, across the full spectrum of styles and purposes – from food and drinks adverts to posters issued for the Olympic Games.
- **A celebration of a democratic art form** – this is the one book that all with a love of and interest in posters should own.

Description

The Poster is a vibrant visual history of one of the most powerful, memorable and effective means of mass communication. Even in the digital age, the printed poster retains an important, much-loved role in connecting with audiences in a way that both entertains and informs.

The V&A was one of the first museums to start collecting posters and to recognize the importance of doing so. Far from ephemeral, posters are both a representation of the time in which they were produced and distributed and, in many instances, have shaped the societies in which they were seen. The story of the poster is both one of changing styles and new innovations in design, illustration and printing, and a visually compelling social history.

The Poster brings together over 300 examples that tell a comprehensive visual history of poster design and the various ways the poster has been used to tell, to sell, to charm and to spur on change. Organized into seven thematic chapters that tell the story of the poster as a medium, each poster is accompanied by a concise commentary that explains the work in terms of its design, printing, content, message and the commercial, social or political impact it may have had.

Featuring works by the masters of poster design that have become popular and highly collectible classics, charting the ebb and flow of styles such as Art Nouveau, Modernism, Art Deco, Psychedelia and Punk and featuring the nostalgic glow of much-loved brands as well as posters that shook and changed the world, *The Poster* will be an essential visual resource for graphic designers and illustrators – a reference for anyone with an interest in collecting posters and an engaging design and social history for all who appreciate this most popular of art forms.

GENERAL JOY





AFFICHE d'INTÉRIEUR

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THE

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PERFORM-

ANCE &

MARGARET TIMMERS

ENTERTAIN- -MENT



Anonymous
Siege of Troy or The Giant Horse of Sinon
Great Britain, 1833
Woodcut and letterpress · S.2-1983

By the 1830s, Astley's Circus, founded by Philip Astley in 1772, was advertising itself by means of colourful broadsides – long, thin posters with 'broad sides', illustrated with woodcut or wood-engraved imagery and blocks of text. This poster promoted equine spectacles and other attractions staged at Astley's Circus at Westminster Bridge Road, London, during the week beginning 29 April 1833. Its striking central image of a towering 'Trojan Horse' would have been a great draw, the visual impact especially important at a time when not everyone could read. That the poster is credited to the printer, T. Romney, rather than to the artist or engraver is indicative of the contemporary importance of printers in commissioning designs for playbills, ballads and broadsides. To increase publicity, Astley's Circus also adopted the French technique of displaying posters on a horse-drawn cart, in a form of mobile advertising.

By the late 19th century, in the richer European nations and the USA, opportunities for entertainment, sport and recreation – once the privilege of the wealthy – had increased for all levels of society, creating a receptive audience for the promotion of every branch of leisure. The evolution of colour lithographic posters over the same period offered advertisers an exciting new means of reaching this mass market. The effectiveness of their design was crucial to their success. Posters conveying the attractions of fleeting events, made for performances such as theatre, circus, cabaret, concert and film, were to develop into a vibrant genre. They were often designed by artists who were involved in some way with the entertainments they were promoting.

Performance posters have a long history in the printed notices and playbills issued by 17th- and 18th-century theatres. Although sometimes embellished with woodcuts and engravings, often these were text-only announcements, depending on skilful typography for their effect. By the early 19th century such typographical designs had become dramatically larger, and as their scale increased so did the importance of their imagery. Advertisements for the circus, which had become a popular and affordable form of entertainment, were also evolving thanks to the

recognition that images had greater impact than lengthy descriptions. By the 1830s, grander operations such as Astley's Circus were producing broadsides with an arresting central design and eye-catching text arranged vertically down the two long ('broad') sides.

Developments in colour lithography in the late 19th century, largely due to the pioneering contribution of the artist and printmaker Jules Chéret, had a transformative effect on the industry. It became possible to mass-produce colourful, unified compositions that combined vivid impact with sensory appeal. Pasted up in the 'art gallery of the street', Chéret's numerous posters for theatre, music-hall, circus and other entertainments helped to raise the status of colour lithography from reproductive medium to respected art form.

Attracted by its artistic potential, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec took up the poster medium. His posters often portrayed (sometimes sardonically) the performers and characters who inhabited the bohemian world of concerts, cabarets and dance halls in Montmartre that he himself frequented. In contrast to Chéret's somewhat rococo muralistic style, Lautrec's highly original compositions are characterized by bold forms and simplified colours, his subjects often seen from unusual viewpoints. The oeuvre of Swiss illustrator Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, another Montmartre inhabitant during the 1890s, also included

posters for entertainment, notably his magnificent poster for the *Chat Noir* (1896), which advertised one of the first modern cabarets.

Two artists drawn to the decorative aspects of the poster were Eugène Grasset, who often drew on medieval sources and forms, and Alphonse Mucha, who evolved his own poetic version of Art Nouveau. Both artists were commissioned to design for the triumphant Paris appearances of the legendary stage actress Sarah Bernhardt, whose fame was such that she could command her own publicity.

The British artist and illustrator Dudley Hardy, who knew the work of the French poster designers, found success designing lively, often humorous posters for musical comedies such as *The Gaiety Girl* (1893) and for Gilbert and Sullivan's Savoy Operas. In stylistic contrast was Aubrey Beardsley's Art Nouveau design for The Avenue Theatre (1894) which depended for its effect on a purely aesthetic appeal. The *Beggarstiffs* (the pseudonym of artists James Pryde and William Nicholson) also saw posters as a new branch of art, creating bold, simplified designs such as *Don Quixote* (1895) that became influential through their reproduction in contemporary European publications, though they were not always commercially produced.

In yet another style, Victorian and Edwardian posters for touring productions of melodramas such as *East Lynne* illustrate a branch of popular culture aimed at a broader audience with a taste for sensation and colourful spectacle.

In Germany, the early 20th-century style of *Sachplakat* (object posters), in which the product itself was dramatically highlighted, also influenced advertisements for performance. Ludwig Hohlwein's poster for Richard Strauss Week in Munich in 1910, for example, focuses on a singer isolated in her operatic stance. Germany's traditional appeal as 'The Land of Music' was proclaimed in a powerful poster of c.1935 by Lothar Heinemann, issued by the German Railway Publicity Bureau. From the early 20th century, ballet also inspired remarkable posters, such as Jean Cocteau's arresting portrait of Vaslav Nijinsky in graceful arabesque in the Ballets Russes' 1913 performance of *Le Spectre de la Rose*.

Albert Morrow's poster for a projection of Edison's Animated Pictures in the Curzon Hall, Birmingham (c.1900–2), captures the fascination and wonder of an audience for early public cinematographic screenings. As film moved from novelty event to mass entertainment, film producers required designers to convey the attractions and sensations of the film they were promoting. One design convention combined key visual elements derived from the film narrative; another, the single-image tradition, depicted either

the leading star(s), as in *La Nouvelle Profession de Charlot* (c.1914), or a climactic moment from the narrative, as in *The Ghost of Slumber Mountain* (1919).

The Soviet state was supportive of its cinema industry, and in the 1920s the Stenberg Brothers created a Constructivist style of poster design that owed much to their knowledge of theatre and filmmaking. *Heroes of the Blast Furnace* (1929) is a poster by an anonymous artist in their style. Russian design styles also influenced American theatre and opera, thanks to émigré designers such as Sudeikin, whose posters advertised Broadway productions like *The Chief Thing* (1926). Avant-garde German film posters of the late 1920s included a powerfully Expressionist design by Fritz Lang for *Spione* (1928), a film that he himself directed. In the 1930s, cinema would also become a powerful propaganda tool, exemplified by two films proclaiming Soviet advances: *Moscow* (1932) trumpeted USSR achievements in the field of light industry, while the exported *Golpe por Golpe* (*Blow for Blow*) (1937) disseminated Soviet ideology to Spain.

Post-war advertisements for Hollywood films continued to focus mainly on portrayals of the lead actors, as in the French screening of Paramount's *The Blue Dahlia* (1946) starring Alan Ladd. In India, too, where cinema was entering a golden age, a poster for the iconic drama *Mother India* (1947) focused on the main star, Nargalis. Taking an original approach, a stream of film posters produced for the Ealing Studios during the 1940s and '50s by British artists such as Edward Bawden created a genre where the imagery was in artistic harmony with the quality of the classic films produced.

Under the state patronage of Poland's post-war Communist regime, designers of posters for the arts such as theatre, ballet, film and circus were allowed an unusual degree of free expression. The so-called Polish School of Posters that evolved from the 1950s to the late 1980s was characterized by a highly individual graphic approach, a delight in visual metaphor and allusion (seen in film posters by Waldemar Świerzy and Andrzej Pagowski) and an eye for fantasy and surreal humour. The strong, vivid colours deployed by artists such as Jan Młodożeniec and Hubert Hilscher recall the traditions of Polish folk art.

Sergei Yurievich Sudeikin (1882–1946)

The Chief Thing
USA, 1926

Colour lithograph · E.573-2004 · Gift of the American Friends of the V&A; Gift to the American Friends by Leslie, Judith and Gabri Schreyer and Alice Schreyer Batko





Jules Chéret (1836–1932)
Folies-Bergère: La Loïe Fuller
 France, 1893
 Colour lithograph · E.112-1921

Jules Chéret's best-known posters capture the joie-de-vivre of the cabarets, music and dance halls, operas and theatres of Paris. The American star Loïe Fuller chose him to design the poster for her Paris début at the Folies-Bergère in 1893. Fuller began her career as an actress but later became a dancer, her performances combining graceful movement with the skilful manipulation of soft, billowing fabrics, illuminated by various lighting effects projected onto a darkened stage. In Chéret's exuberant image she is suspended in one of these light-and-movement-dances. The poster was printed in variant colourways, possibly to reflect the four different dances she performed on this occasion: the Serpent, Violet, Butterfly and White Dances. It reveals Chéret's artistry as both a designer (he drew his designs directly onto the lithographic stone) and colour lithographer. It was printed by Imprimerie Chaix, where Chéret had artistic control of all his poster output.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901)
Ambassadeurs... Aristide Bruant dans son cabaret
 France, 1892
 Colour lithograph · Circ.551-1962 · Given anonymously

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec designed several posters for Aristide Bruant (1851–1925), all portraying the singer and songwriter, who specialized in a biting delivery of topical material, as a powerful, almost menacing figure in his black cloak, large hat and signature red scarf. This two-sheet poster advertising Bruant's appearance at Les Ambassadeurs café-concert was the first of these, and although the club's director disliked its uncompromising style, Bruant himself insisted it was used. Its impact derives from the dramatic simplicity of the composition, with its bold outlines and solid blocks of colour, the distinctive lettering forming part of the overall design. de Toulouse-Lautrec's keen interest and consummate skill in colour lithography contributed greatly to the recognition of the poster as a major art form. He liked to mix the inks himself to create the exact colours he wanted, often applying spatters with brushes to achieve tonal effects. This poster was printed at the print workshop of Edward Ancourt in Paris.





Eugène Grasset (1845–1917)
Jeanne d'Arc: Sarah Bernhardt
 France, c.1889–90.
 Colour lithograph · E.189-1921 · Given by Mrs J.T. Clarke

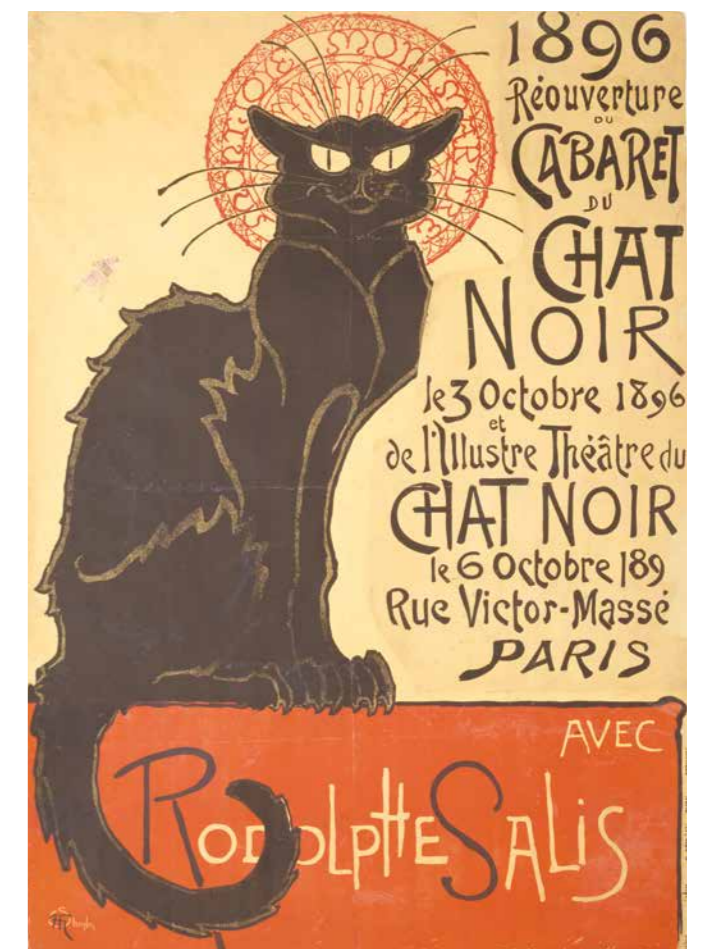
As manager of the Théâtre de la Porte St Martin, Paris, Sarah Bernhardt had absolute authority over publicity and was a keen guardian of her own image. It was probably for this reason that Eugène Grasset designed two posters for her title role in Jules Barbier's drama *Jeanne d'Arc*. The first showed the actress with a short crop, while in the second, shown here, she sports a pageboy hairstyle. Grasset was a versatile designer and book illustrator who drew inspiration from medieval decorative arts such as stained glass, tapestries and illuminated manuscripts. Here, Bernhardt is seen heroically defying an onslaught of arrows, as if she were a martyr pictured in stained glass; the Gothic-style lettering is an integral feature. Alphonse Mucha acknowledged Grasset as a powerful influence, especially in his pioneering use of the bold, stained glass-style outline and his fascination with decorative plant forms.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901)
Divan Japonais
 France, c.1892–3
 Colour lithograph · Circ. 272-1964

During the late 1880s and 1890s, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec produced brilliant posters depicting the nocturnal world of Montmartre's bars and cabarets and their colourful habitués, many of whom were his friends. This poster was commissioned by Édouard Fournier, proprietor of the *Divan Japonais*, to attract visitors to his café-concert with its fashionable Japanese-themed decor. The dancer Jane Avril (in elegant silhouette) is seen seated beside the art critic Édouard Dujardin. In the background is the well-known singer Yvette Guilbert, immediately recognisable by her signature long black gloves and pose, despite her head being abruptly cropped from the design. From the orchestra pit rise the shapes of two double basses and the conductor's hands. The poster, printed by Edward Ancourt, Paris, reveals de Toulouse-Lautrec's delight in real life subject matter, bold colours and the dramatic distortion of form, and also the influence of the Japanese woodblock prints he admired.

Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen (1859–1923)
1896 Réouverture du Cabaret du Chat Noir
 France, 1896
 Colour lithograph · E.321-1978 · Given anonymously

The impresario Rodolphe Salis (1851–1897) opened his first Chat Noir cabaret in Paris in 1881, attracting writers, artists and musicians to Montmartre's emerging bohemian culture. To announce its re-opening in 1896, Steinlen created this image of a wild-eyed black cat staring defiantly from its lofty perch. Around the cat flows equally characterful lettering, and inscribed within its saint-like halo are the words 'Montjoie Montmartre', subverting the French medieval battle-cry 'Montjoie!' into a proclamation for the cabaret's Montmartre location. The cat's silhouette also refers to the shadow-theatre performances that were a popular feature of the Chat Noir. Steinlen's association with the Chat Noir extended back to his early days in Paris, when Salis had first commissioned him to execute mural paintings of cats to decorate the walls of the nightclub. The poster was printed by Charles Verneau in Paris.



Alphonse Mucha (1860–1939)

La Dame aux Camélias: Sarah Bernhardt
France, 1896

Colour lithograph · E.515-1939 · Given by Mr Noel D. Sheffield

For Sarah Bernhardt's appearance as the consumptive Marguerite Gautier in Edmond Rostand's play *La Dame aux Camélias* at the Théâtre de la Renaissance, Mucha depicts the actress in elongated profile, almost saint-like in her ornate, star-spangled niche. In a Symbolist touch, a disembodied hand holds a spray of camellias whose stem is entwined with the curvilinear lettering below. Apart from Bernhardt's glowing red hair, the colours are delicate pastel shades, evoking her suffering in the tragic role, which she performed frequently to rapturous applause. This poster, in the artist's quintessential Art Nouveau style, was printed in Paris by F. Champenois. Mucha's first poster for Bernhardt had portrayed her as an exotic Byzantine noblewoman in *Gismonda* (1894). His artistic vision of the actress matched her own, and she contracted him to design posters, sets and costumes for her performances over the next six years. Her patronage made Mucha's name.



Dudley Hardy (1867–1922)

A Gaiety Girl
Great Britain, 1893

Colour lithograph · E.379-1921 · Given by Mrs J.T. Clarke

Dudley Hardy's image of an exuberant dancer advertises a production of the musical comedy *A Gaiety Girl* at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London, 1893. Produced by George Edwardes, the show ran for 413 performances and would lead to further musical comedy successes for Edwardes at London's Gaiety Theatre.

With whirling lines and a simplified palette of black and brilliant red, Hardy captures the vitality of his subject. Having made his name originally as a painter and illustrator, Hardy's bold venture into poster design in the 1890s gave him new opportunities. Originally influenced by designers of the French 'artistic' poster such as Jules Chéret, he developed his own distinctive style based on simplified forms and integrated lettering. After initial success with his 'The Yellow Girl' image advertising the magazine *To-Day* (1893), many of his early posters were commissions for theatrical productions.





Ludwig Hohlwein (1874–1949)
Richard Strauss-Woche
 Germany, 1910

Colour lithograph · E.348-1921 · Given by Mrs J.T. Clarke

Ludwig Hohlwein's poster advertises a Richard Strauss week in Munich, 23–28 June 1910, and possibly portrays the soprano Zdenka Fassbender in the title role of Strauss's *Elektra*. Having first studied architecture, Munich-based Hohlwein began his career as a graphic designer in 1906. He was influenced by the work of the Beggarstoffs, before going on to work in the German *Plakatstil* (poster style) pioneered by his compatriot, Lucien Bernhard, which used reductive imagery, bold lettering and flat colours. Hohlwein's aesthetic, however, included a greater use of colour, pattern and texture – for example, in this poster the figure of the singer is inset against a subtly textured background that adds depth.

In May 1913, the leading Berlin periodical *Das Plakat* devoted a whole issue to Hohlwein's work – a mark of his significance.

Albert Morrow (1863–1927)
Curzon Hall/Edison's Life-Size Animated Pictures
 Great Britain, c.1900–2

Colour lithograph · E.3312-1932 · Given by Mr Norman B. Stone

In the early 20th century, projections of cinematographic films became an extremely popular form of entertainment. This image, by the illustrator, poster designer and cartoonist Albert Morrow, promotes a screening at the Curzon Hall in Birmingham, a venue which could seat 3,000 people. The programme included pictures of the Second Boer War (1899–1902) and the 'China War' – presumably the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901) – as well as 'Reproductions of Life in Birmingham'.

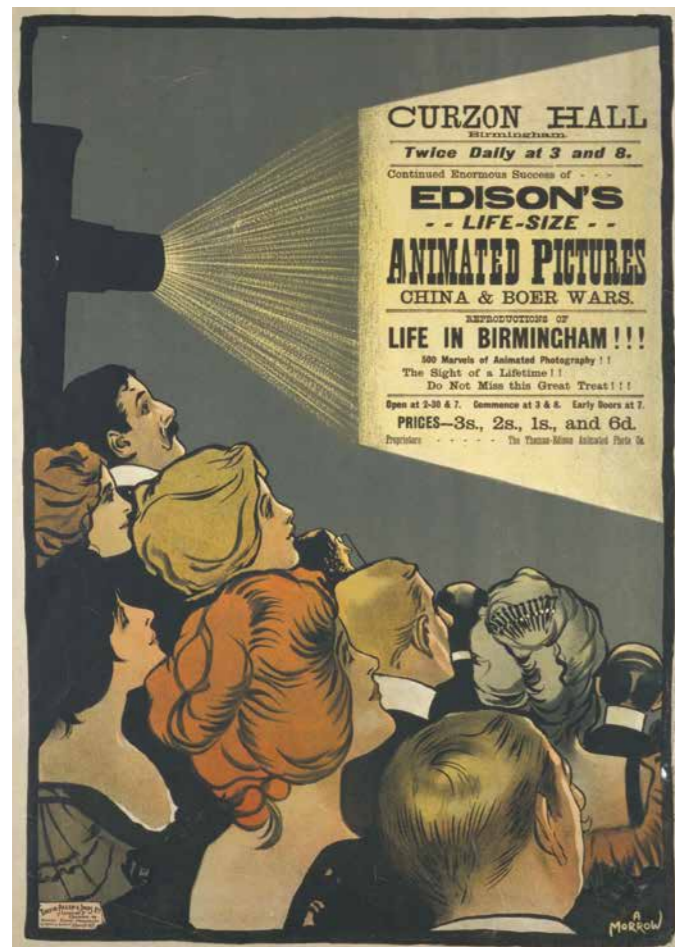
Morrow portrays a smartly dressed audience gazing at a screen lit by the projector's rays. This was a clever design device, as the lettering on the 'screen' could be adapted to suit any of the picture shows projected by the Curzon Hall's manager, Walter Jeffs.

Jean Cocteau (1889–1963)
Théâtre des Champs-Élysées/Ballets Russes
 France, 1913

Colour lithograph · S.562-1980 · Given by Mlle Lucienne Astruc and Richard Buckle in memory of the collaboration between Diaghilev and Gabriel Astruc

This poster promoted the Ballets Russes' first season at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, and appeared on advertising columns across the city. It re-uses a Jean Cocteau image of Vaslav Nijinsky (1890–1950) dancing *The Rose* in *Le Spectre de la Rose*, originally created to advertise the ballet's première at the Ballets Russes' 1911 opening season in Monte Carlo. The Art Deco Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, which opened in 1913, was built for Gabriel Astruc, Sergei Diaghilev's Parisian business associate, to present contemporary opera and dance.

Cocteau was entranced by Nijinsky and became a devotee of the Ballets Russes. He dedicated poems to the dancer and executed caricatures of Diaghilev and his entourage that impressed the stage designer Léon Bakst. In this poster, Cocteau portrays Nijinsky suspended in one of his famous 'hovering leaps'. He wears the costume covered with silk rose petals designed for him by Bakst.

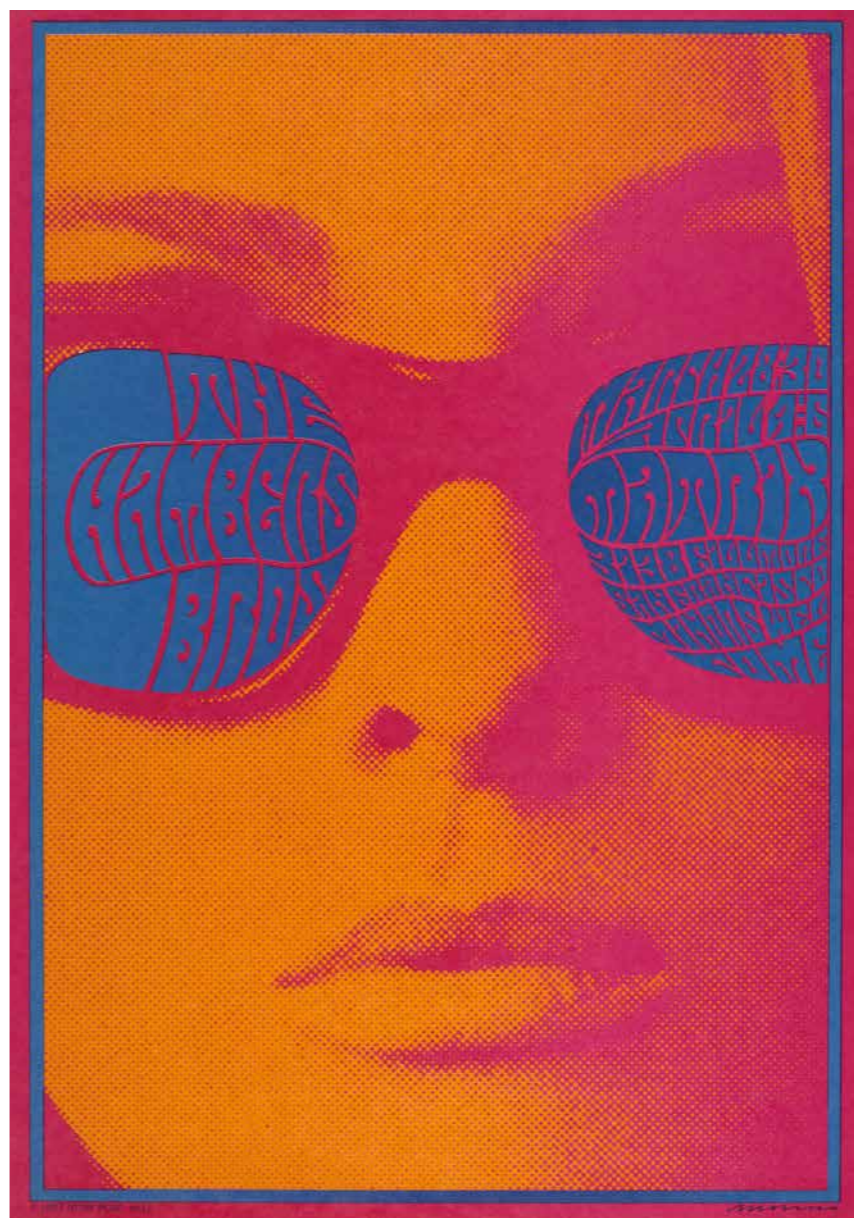




Bonnie MacLean (b. 1939)
The Yardbirds The Doors
 USA, 1967

Colour offset lithograph · E.421-2004 · Gift of the American Friends of the V&A; Gift to the American Friends by Leslie, Judith and Gabri Schreyer and Alice Schreyer Batko

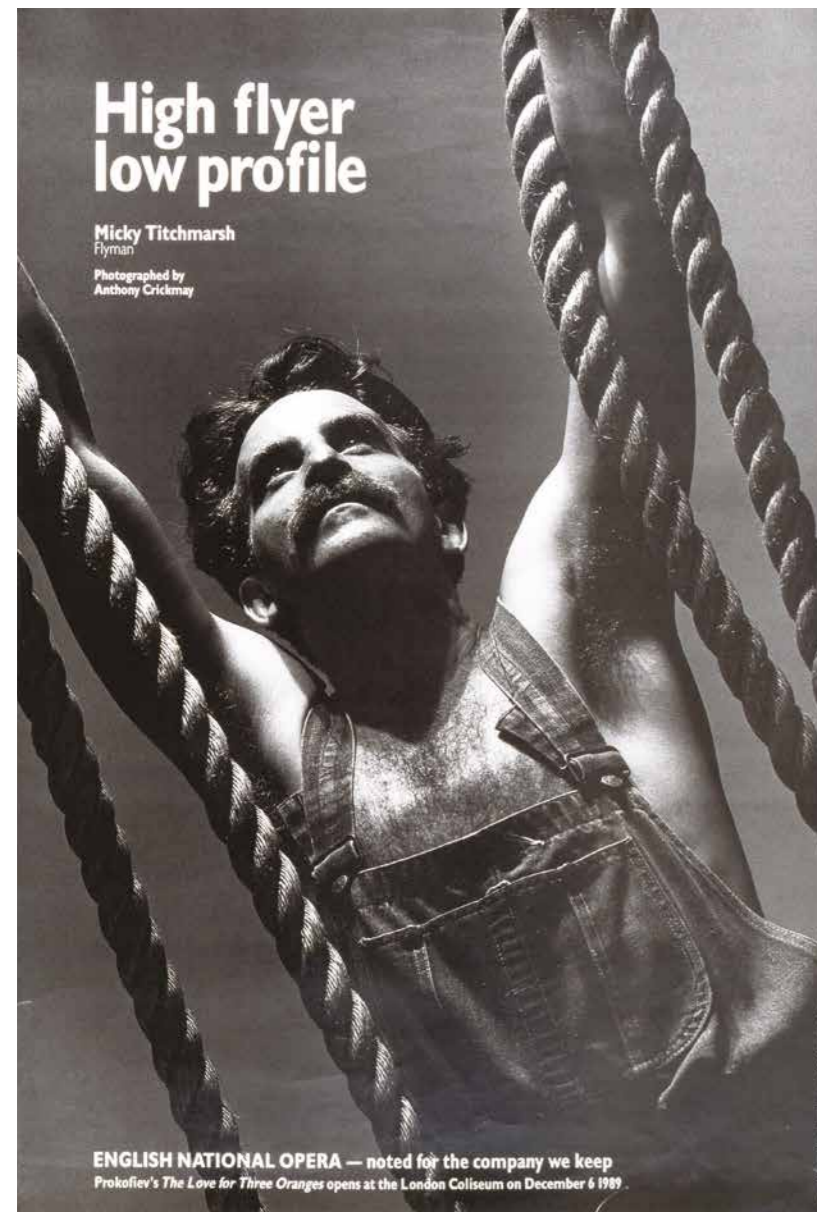
Bonnie MacLean was one of the avant-garde designers linked to the celebrated music promoter Bill Graham in San Francisco, producing posters and other artwork for the rock concerts he managed during the 1960s and '70s. She was one of very few women among the group of psychedelic artists who were then experimenting with vivid colours, optical illusions and convoluted lettering to evoke the effects of hallucinatory drugs. Psychedelia drew on earlier stylistic movements, particularly Art Nouveau, and this image seems to have been inspired by an Alphonse Mucha portrait of Sarah Bernhardt that appeared on the front cover of *La Plume* on 15 December 1896. In MacLean's image the tendrils of the woman's hair have morphed into peacock feathers (a favourite Art Nouveau motif) and the organic lettering, advertising rock concerts at the Fillmore Auditorium, San Francisco, 25-30 July 1967, swells and stretches around her face.



Victor Moscoso (b. 1936)
The Chambers Bros
 Published by Neon Rose #12. USA, 1967

Colour lithograph · S.726-2010 · Given by the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum

Victor Moscoso's powerful design promotes a 1967 concert by the soul band The Chambers Brothers at The Matrix club, 3138 Fillmore, then a key San Francisco music venue. He adapted a fashion photograph of a model wearing sunglasses, hand-drawing the intricate lettering within the glass frames then saturating the image in vibrating pink, orange and electric blue. He deliberately ignored traditional rules of poster design – that lettering should be legible, the message communicated immediately and disturbing colours avoided. Having studied with Josef Albers, by the mid-1960s he was exploring his own theories of colour interaction, transforming his approach to poster design. Moscoso was one of San Francisco's 'Big Five' artists, sought after by concert promoters such as Bill Graham at the Fillmore, and Family Dog at Fillmore and the Avalon Ballroom. In 1966, he set up his own publishing company, Neon Rose, to retain artistic control of his work.



Sue Coffey (b. 1962) (designer);
 Antony Crickmay (b. 1937) (photographer)
High Flyer, Low Profile
 Issued by English National Opera. Great Britain, 1989
 Offset lithograph · S.2806-1995

English National Opera (ENO)'s idea to create a set of posters that featured photographs of backstage staff instead of performers was the result of an in-house brainstorming session between the ENO's marketing and press departments. Their aim to promote the accessibility of opera was successfully executed in this campaign, which featured images by some of the best theatre photographers. This dramatic portrait of Flyman Micky Titchmarsh, advertising the opening of the ENO's production of *The Love for Three Oranges* at the London Coliseum on 6 December 1989, was taken by Anthony Crickmay, celebrated for his insightful photographs of theatre, fashion and dance. Crickmay reveals Titchmarsh's powerful movements, positioned in the flies above the stage to raise and lower scenery. The poster campaign's unconventional approach was rare in performance advertising at the time and sparked media attention.

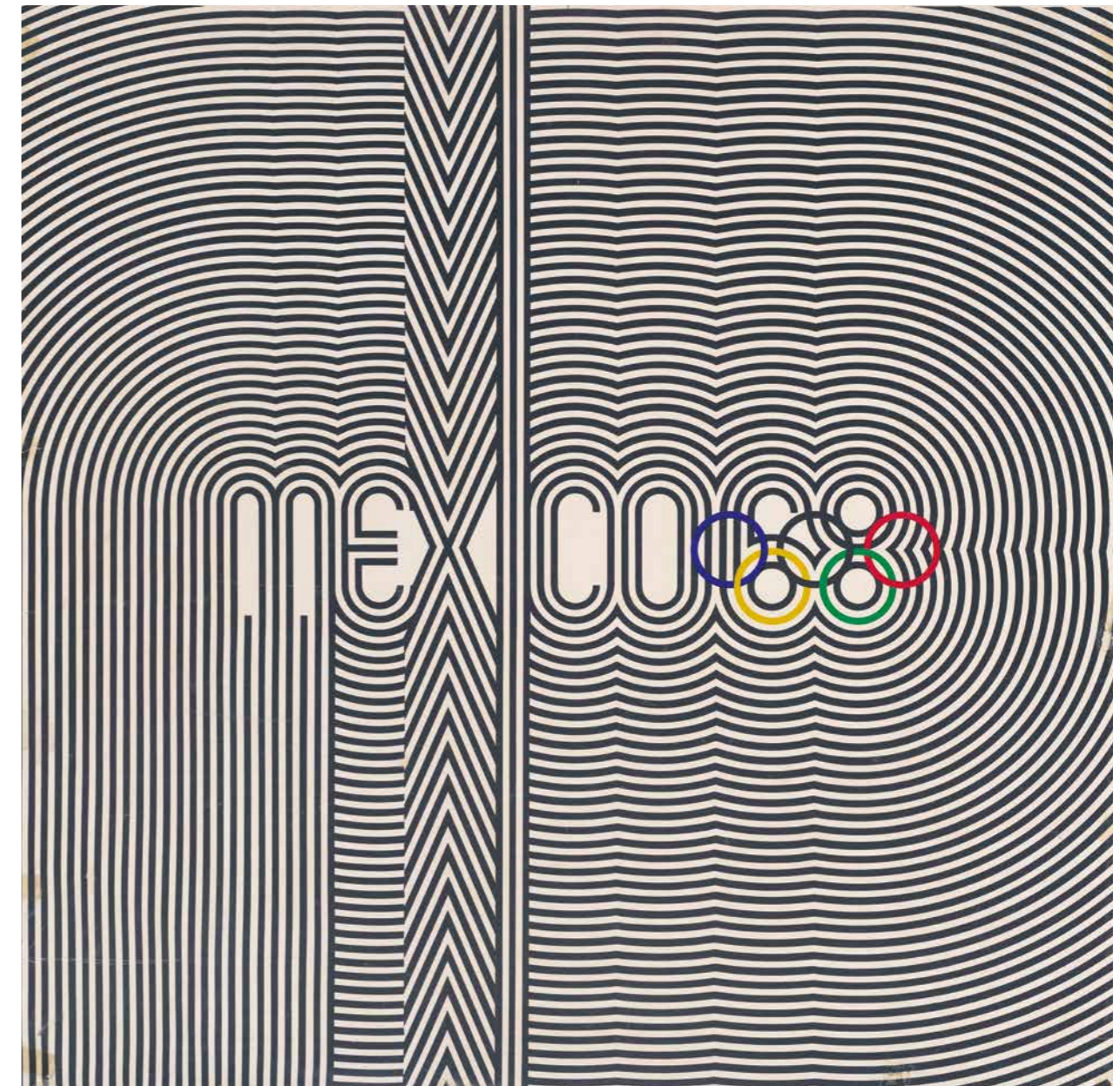
Paula Scher (b. 1948) for Pentagram Design Ltd.
Him
 USA, 1994
 Colour screenprint · E.3320-2018

Advertising a production of the play *Him* by Christopher Walken at the New York Public Theater in 1994, Paula Scher's poster is almost cryptic in its bold simplicity. The central motif of a man's greased black quiff is a shorthand visual reference to Elvis Presley, the subject of the play, and was requested by the play's author. This was one of Paula Scher's first posters for The Public Theater after she was employed to design the organization's graphic identity. In keeping with the theatre's community role, Scher drew inspiration from the streets of New York to create graphics that drew on urban life, fashion and contemporary culture. Scher has been described as one of the world's most influential graphic designers, with a knack for creating sharp, original graphics that are also accessible and instantly familiar. She has been a partner in the design consultancy Pentagram since 1991.





TOKYO  **1964**



Yusaku Kamekura (1915–1997) (art director); Osamu Hayasaki (1933–1993) (photographer); Jo Murakoshi (photo direction)
The Start of the Sprinters, Tokyo 1964
 Issued by the Tokyo Olympic Organizing Committee. Japan, c.1962
 Colour photograph - E.341-2006

Tokyo 1964 was the first Olympic Games to be held in Asia – and under the art direction of Yusaku Kamekura, a pioneer of post-war graphic design who fused European Modernism with a new Japanese aesthetic, the four official Games posters were also groundbreaking. In *The Start of the Sprinters*, a photograph by Osamu Hayasaki was used to suggest the real-life drama of athletes powering away from their starting blocks. In reality, the picture was taken on a winter's night in February 1962 and portrayed amateur Japanese athletes and American servicemen stationed at the Tachikawa Air Base. Below the photograph appears the emblem for the Games, jointly designed by Kamekura and Masaru Katsumi – Japan's red sun symbol rising above the Olympic rings, with the text 'Tokyo 1964' boldly lettered in gold. This dynamically simple design was in tune with the confidence of Japan's post-war revitalization.

Eduardo Terrazas (b. 1936); Pedro Ramirez Vázquez (1919–2013) (art director); Lance Wyman (b. 1937) (designer)
Mexico 68
 Issued by the Organizing Committee of the XIX Olympiad. Mexico, 1967
 Colour lithograph - E.338-2006

In 1968, Mexico City became the first Latin American location for the Olympic Games, heralded by a vibrant official poster that expressed the idea of modern Mexico. Printed in a distinctive square format, it was a development of the elegant 'Mexico 68' logotype designed by the American graphic designer Lance Wyman, and it captured both the contemporary moment and a sense of Mexican cultural identity. Wyman's neatly geometric concept was inspired by the Olympic symbol, whose five rings he radiated into the number '68'. Dazzling parallel lines referenced both 1960s Op Art and the pattern-making of pre-Hispanic indigenous cultures. 'Mexico '68' was a key element in a celebrated programme of visual communication, applied to posters, promotional literature, signage, three-dimensional installations and clothing. It had a lasting impact on the way that Mexico City was visualized both by its inhabitants and by the rest of the world.

ADVERT-

ISING &

ART

GILL SAUNDERS



Fritz Buchholz (1890–1955)
Plakatkunst
Published by C.G. Naumann, Leipzig,
Germany, 1920
Colour lithograph · E.1500-1926.

To advertise an exhibition of poster art (*plakatkunst*) in Leipzig in 1920, designer Fritz Buchholz placed an advertising column, commonplace on city streets in France and Germany since the mid-19th century, at the centre of his composition. He used bold, rectangular blocks of colour to represent posters pasted to the column, arranged in a manner that could be read as a reference to the art movements of the time: the simple geometries and strong colours of Constructivism and the asymmetric grids of De Stijl. The implication is clear – despite its commercial origins and functional purposes, the poster was by this date aligned with the avant-garde in art and design.

From the beginning, posters had appeared not only on the street but also in art exhibitions. The avant-garde Paris gallery Salon des Cent (1894–1900) commissioned posters to advertise its exhibitions, but also showed them alongside prints. Posters promoting the exhibitions situate them as the equal of painting, drawing and printmaking, as in an 1895 'portrait' by R.G. Hermann-Paul. In this vivid poster – plausibly a self-portrait – the subject boldly proclaims his professional identity as an artist. These and other, similar exhibitions made it clear that the poster was considered not only an independent art form, but also saleable and collectable on a par with other artistic media.

The status of the poster as art, though much-debated, is perhaps least contentious when a poster's purpose is to advertise an exhibition of art or architecture – particularly when it is the work of an individual acknowledged as an artist and is designed to promote their own work. In such cases the poster serves almost as a manifesto; it gives the artist an unrivalled opportunity to choose how to 'frame' their work for public consumption. Of course, it also presents challenges: how can the work be 'translated' into the poster format and into a different graphic medium? How might it be received in a public arena, where it must compete with 'the mediocre, the vulgar and the absurd'?

Sometimes the problem was resolved by simply reproducing a work from the exhibition. Others used the poster to give the flavour of the exhibited works without directly reproducing any one piece – a route taken by C.R.W. Nevinson for a London exhibition of his pictures, and in 1918 by Paul Nash, who produced a stark black and white design for a show of his paintings documenting the horrors of the war. Posters for group shows likewise tended to avoid privileging a single artist or artwork, preferring to allude in more general terms to the subject matter or style, or some other unifying factor such as the nationality of the exhibitors. This approach was adopted in 1903 for a poster advertising an exhibition of Dutch art, where distinctively Dutch motifs were incorporated into an Art Nouveau design.



Willi Baumeister (1889–1955)
Die Wohnung [The Dwelling]
 Exhibition at Werkbund Ausstellung, Stuttgart,
 July–September 1927. Germany, 1927
 Lithograph · E.266-2005 · Purchased through the Julie
 and Robert Breckman Print Fund

This poster publicized 'Die Wohnung', an exhibition about housing organized by the Deutscher Werkbund (the German association of artists, designers and architects) and held in Stuttgart in 1927. With participants including Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier, it marked an important moment in the development and promotion of Modernist architecture.

In a cursive script (often used for intimate or personalized address in graphics), the poster asks 'Wie wohnen?' – 'How should we live?' A photograph of a cluttered, ornate turn of the century interior is graphically cancelled out by a bold red cross, signalling a radical repudiation of such outmoded styles. Though some critics saw this interior as an easy target which unfairly tilted the balance of consumer choice in favour of Modernism, Baumeister's poster makes the argument with verve and attack. A significant and influential figure in German and European art, Baumeister was a respected painter, typographer and graphic designer.

Ernst Mumenthaler (1901–1978)
Typenmöbel
 Exhibition at the Gewerbemuseum, Basel,
 2 June–7 July 1929. Switzerland, 1929
 Lithograph · E.267-2005 · Purchased through the Julie
 and Robert Breckman Print Fund

Here, Swiss designer Ernst Mumenthaler advertises an exhibition of *Typenmöbel* (standardized-type furniture), held at the Applied Arts Museum in Basel in 1929. The exhibition aimed to demonstrate that contemporary furniture should be functional and flexible; it promoted designs that were rational, unadorned and industrially manufactured for economy of production and assembly. This chimed with the Modernist aspirations concerning housing reform shown opposite, in Willi Baumeister's poster for 'Die Wohnung'. Mumenthaler's poster, a fine example of the contemporary Swiss graphic design school, reflects the simplified Constructivist style of 1920s Bauhaus. The axonometric view of a wardrobe is intended to convey the idea that standardized furniture offers logical spatial and structural solutions. The diagonal emphasis of the design, reduced almost to a geometric abstraction, is overlaid with bold, red text, set horizontally in lower-case Modernist type to reinforce this idea of rationality.



Hendrikus Theodorus Wijdeveld (1885–1987)
Frank Lloyd Wright Architectuur Tentoonstelling
 Exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam,
 Netherlands, 1931

Letterpress · E.1436-1991

This poster was designed in consultation with the architect Frank Lloyd Wright for his one-man exhibition in Amsterdam, opening on 9 May 1931. The show, which documented Wright's work to date, toured the USA and Europe.

As in this example, Wijdeveld's designs were characterized by a simplified geometric layout and constructed typography, and owed much to the Dutch De Stijl designers and the German Bauhaus School. He often used printers' brass rules to build letter forms and the geometric elements of his graphic designs. The distinctive lettering on this poster was allegedly printed from type specially cast by the Haarlem firm Enschedé, who sponsored the exhibition by printing the poster free of charge. Using geometry, symmetry, repetition and emphatic horizontal lines, the poster resembles an architectural elevation. It is credited with a key role in bringing Wright's work to a wider European audience.

Austin Cooper (1880–1964)
Exhibition of British Industrial Art in the Home,
 London, June 20–July 12
 Great Britain, 1933

Colour lithograph · E.133-1961

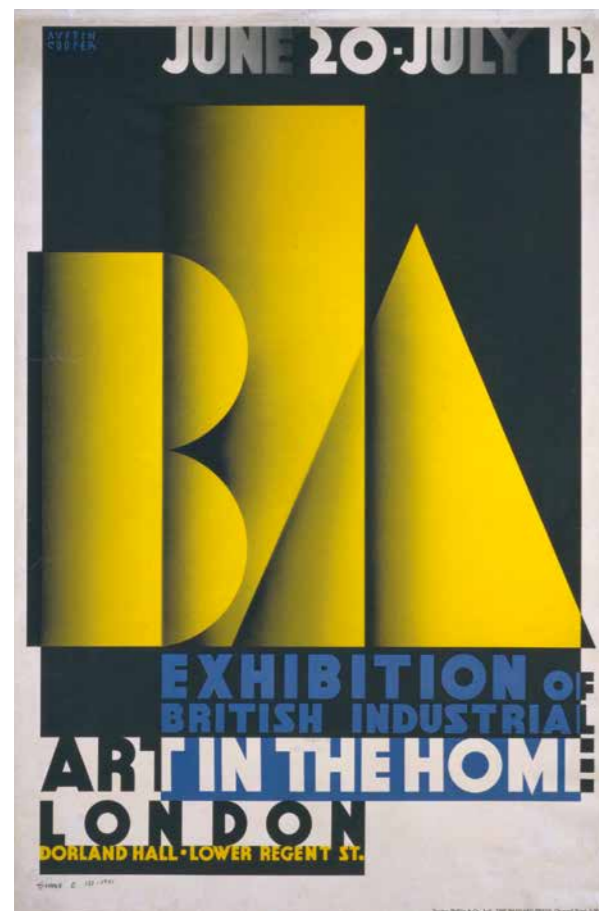
This exhibition was intended to raise the standards of design in everyday life, and was aimed at the general public rather than the design industry. Many of the exhibits reflected Modernist ideas of functional efficiency; this is carried through into the design of the poster, which is uncompromisingly modern and relies entirely on boldly conceived typography and an unconventional layout for its effect. Cooper had clearly been influenced by Bauhaus design principles, and the letters BIA, based on the three-dimensional forms of cone, ball and cube, have an architectural solidity and monumentality. The visual impact of the design is enhanced by the interplay between two and three dimensions and between light and dark. In allowing the edges of letters on the right-hand side to intrude almost arbitrarily into the white border, their colours changing abruptly in the process, Cooper showed a radically experimental sensibility.

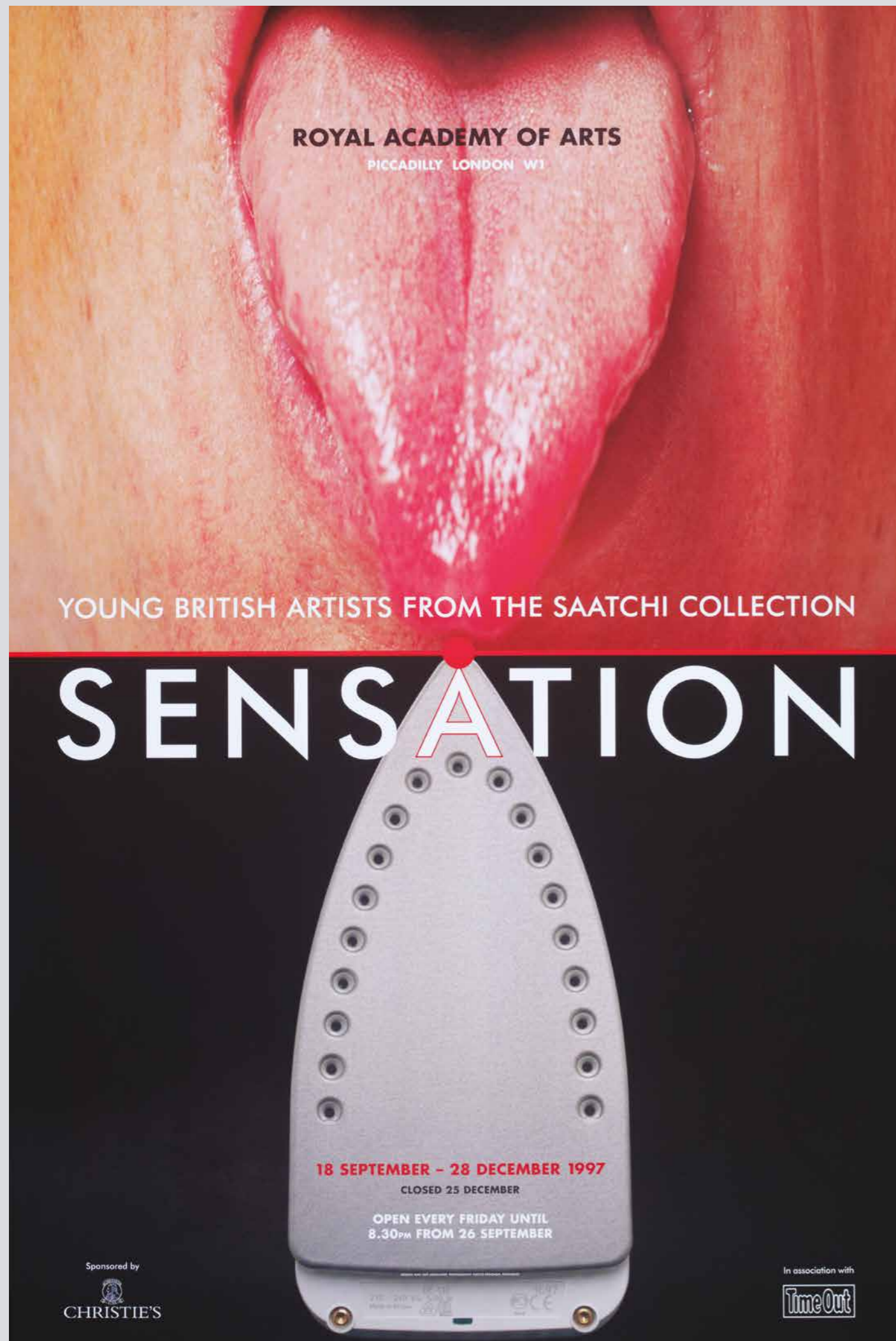
Leonetto Cappiello (1875–1942)
Paris 1937, Arts et Techniques Exposition Universelle
 Issued by the Ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie,
 France, 1937

Colour lithograph · E.286-2006

The Paris World Fair of 1937 proved to be one of the most significant of the interwar years, and the last to be held in Paris. France at that time was suffering from political divisions, high inflation and low employment, so the Exposition emphasized arts and technologies that would help to alleviate the economic situation and improve employment figures. Cappiello's poster shows two allegorical figures, one representing the Arts and the other, holding a compass and protractor, Technology. With rich colours and a flame held aloft, the poster expresses the idealism, optimism, modernity and innovation that the Exposition represented.

Leonetto Cappiello was an Italian artist and caricaturist who lived and worked mainly in Paris. His style evolved over the years, but his posters often feature figures highlighted against a dark background, as in this design.





Why Not Associates (est.1987)
Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection
 Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, London. Great Britain, 1997
 Offset lithograph · E.323-2018 · Given by Why Not Associates

The 'Sensation' exhibition featured works by the so-called YBA generation, including Damien Hirst, Tracy Emin and Sarah Lucas, all from the collection of advertising agency founder Charles Saatchi. It proved to be one of the most controversial London's Royal Academy has ever hosted. Described in the press as 'gory images of dismembered limbs and explicit pornography', the show outraged the media and politicians, who focused on the graphic sexual imagery and in-your-face provocations that characterized many of the exhibits. Without reproducing any of the works from the exhibition, the poster nevertheless conveys its spirit, slyly alluding to both its content and its title. It was designed by Why Not Associates, a British design studio formed by Andy Altmann, David Ellis and Howard Greenhalgh after they left the Royal College of Art in 1987. It exemplifies their reputation for work that was irreverent and provocative.

Anthony Burrill
I Like It. What Is It?
 Great Britain, 2004-11
 Woodblock letterpress on recycled paper · E.411-2011 · Given by the artist

Anthony Burrill is an inventive and prolific graphic designer who works with digital media as well as traditional print processes. He has been described as 'the godfather of the graphic art scene', a reference to the growing trend for graphic designers to self-publish posters and other printed materials which are marketed directly to the public as independent products, rather than being commissioned by a commercial client. Working with a local printer, Adams of Rye, Burrill has created a number of enigmatic and playful posters with upbeat statements and affirmations printed in black block type on coloured papers. He works with letterpress, using a limited selection of typefaces, because he likes the limitations imposed by the process and the impact it has on the design and layout of the posters. The messages come from his own life experience.

Lester Beall (1903–1969)

Light

Issued by the Rural Electrification Administration, USA, 1937

Colour screenprint · E.265–2005 · Purchased through the Julie and Robert Breckman Print Fund

Light is from the first set of three series of posters designed by American graphic designer Lester Beall for the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) between 1937 and 1941. The REA, created in 1936 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programme, was responsible for making cheap electrical power available to rural America. Beall illustrates the benefits of connecting to the distribution network, visually linking the monumental light bulb in the foreground to the illuminated windows of an isolated dwelling on the horizon. Beall absorbed influences from various European avant-garde art movements into his own distinctively American modernist aesthetic. Here, his use of a simplified pictographic style combined with clear and concise typography was effective in reaching out to a rural audience in which there was a high degree of illiteracy.

Gihachiro Okuyama (1907–1981)

Marubiru kado, Nikke: Sebiro to obā-kōto (Marunouchi Building, Nikke: Business Suits and Overcoats)
Japan, c.1935

Colour woodblock · E.184–1935 · Given by the Editor of Commercial Art and Industry

Japanese department stores had advertised extensively from the early 20th century, their posters often featuring attractive Japanese women in traditional costume. The 1920s and '30s saw a new development, as a number of Japanese designers became interested in Western art and design. This poster, advertising the Nikke clothing store in the Marunouchi Building in Tokyo, is by Gihachiro Okuyama, who worked as a woodblock artist for most of his life but designed commercial posters and graphics during his early career. His dynamic compositions, with abstract figures and block-like lettering, reflect the combined influence of German Expressionism and Russian Constructivism as well as the Japanese woodblock tradition.

Nikke, the Japan Wool Textile Co. Ltd., is Japan's largest wool manufacturer. Okuyama joined their advertising department in 1928, and his designs often incorporate a woollen sock lettered with the Nikke brand. He founded the Tokyo Advertisement Art Association in 1931.

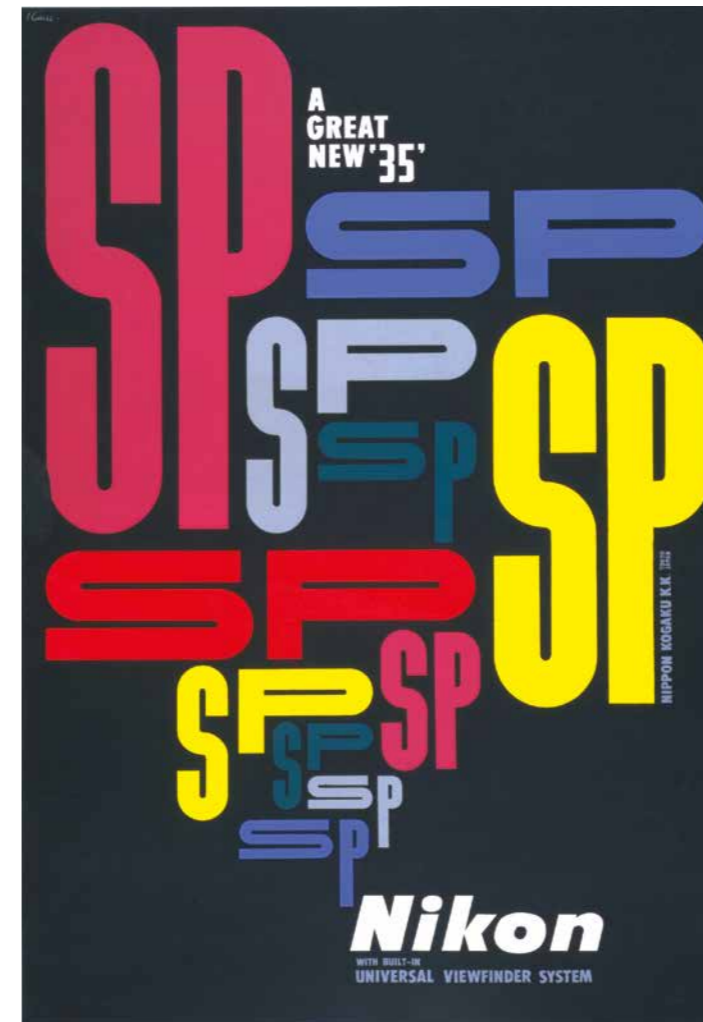




Herbert Leupin (1916–1999)
Pause Trink Coca-Cola (Pause Drink Coca-Cola)
 Switzerland, c.1954
 Colour offset lithograph · E.627-1981

The Swiss graphic designer Herbert Leupin is well-known for his cartoon-like style, which often juxtaposes photomontage with innovative typography. Among the many commercial posters that he created during the 1950s and '60s is this advertisement for Coca-Cola,

in which Leupin incorporates the photographic image of a Coca-Cola bottle into the cartoon of an absent trumpet player taking a break. The notice hanging on the musician's stand combines the lettering 'Pause' in a freely drawn hand above the Coca-Cola company logo, continuing both the visual joke and the succinct advertising message. Although at the time commercial television was becoming the dominant advertising medium, humorous illustrative posters such as this continued to be popular into the 1960s.



Yusaku Kamekura (1915–1997)
A Great New '35' SP Nikon
 Japan, 1957
 Colour screenprint · E.760-1963

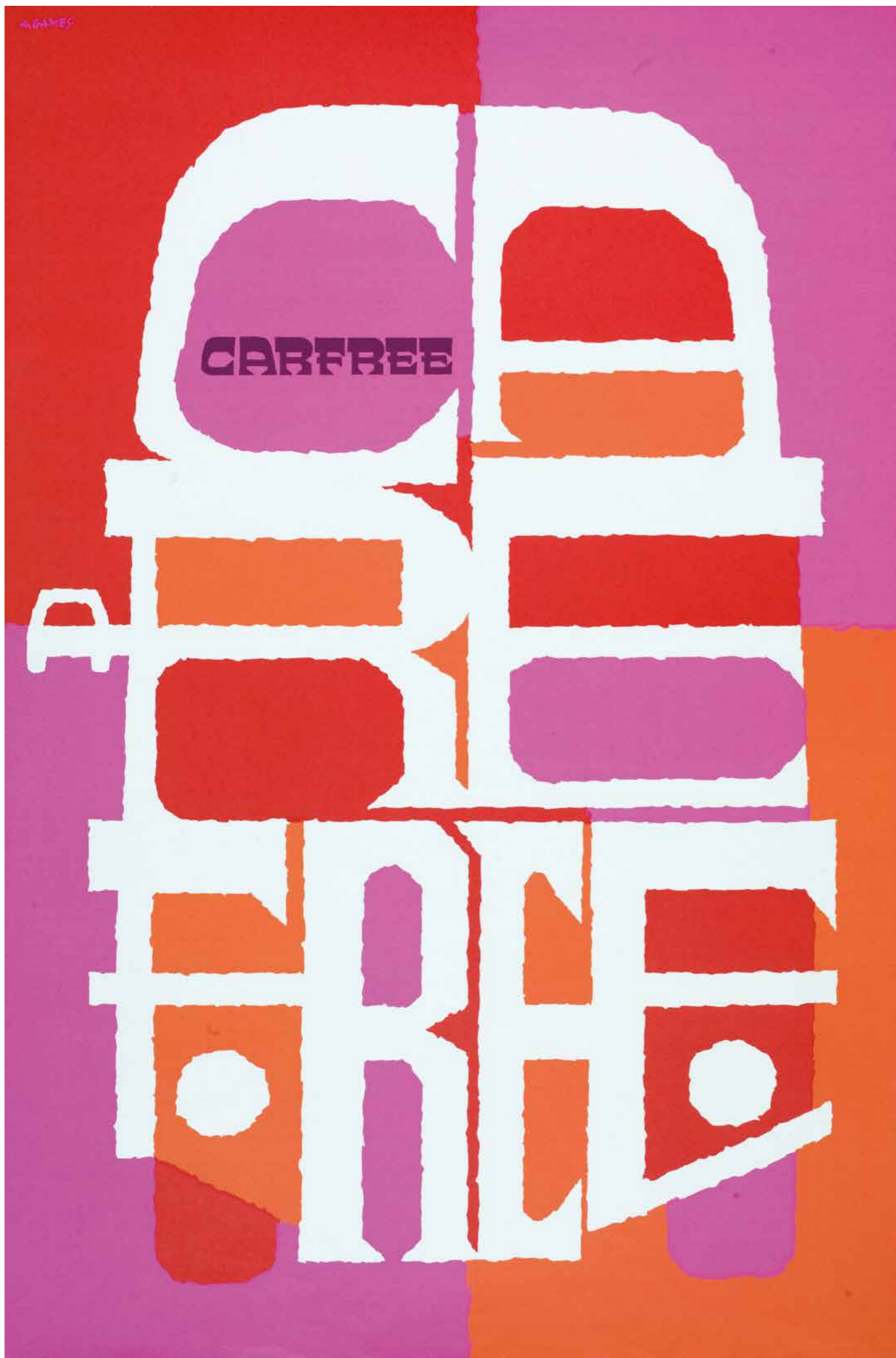
The eminent Japanese graphic designer Yusaku Kamekura studied at the Bauhaus-oriented Institute of New Architecture and Industrial Arts in Tokyo, and came to prominence in the 1950s. One of his key clients was Nippon Kugaku K.K. (Japan Optical Co.) of Tokyo, the maker of Nikon cameras, who allowed him the opportunity to experiment. He developed his own uncluttered, abstract style, which found a synthesis between the contemporary rational design systems of the West and the aesthetic harmonies of traditional Japanese design. In this poster for the new '35' SP camera, he works in a universally recognisable graphic language, creating a composition of abstract forms from the letters 'SP' and using a limited range of bright colours against a black background, perhaps to suggest the multiple functions of the product. Kamekura's work won many awards, and he contributed to the establishment and universal recognition of graphic design as a profession in Japan.



Michael Engelmann (1928–1966)
Roth-Händle
 Germany, 1959

Colour lithograph · Purchased through the Julie and Robert Breckman Print Fund

The graphic designer Michael Engelmann worked mainly in Germany and in America, where he became schooled in American advertising practice. His style is characterized by simplified imagery, a surreal wit and an interesting combination of graphic, photographic and photomontage techniques. His mastery of the art of reduction – eliminating extraneous design elements to focus with great clarity on the product itself – influenced a whole generation of leading German graphic designers. Engelmann produced his first poster for the tobacco company Roth-Händle in 1955, helping to create a cult following for their low-priced cigarettes made primarily using dark tobacco, then marketed as 'naturrein' ('pure nature'). Here, he depicts a red hand (echoing the company's trademark) extracting one of its classic filterless cigarettes from the traditional red 'soft-pack', itself lettered in black with the company brand.



Abram Games (1914–96)
Carfree. Carefree.
 Issued by the British Bus and Coach Council.
 Great Britain, 1967
 Screenprint · E.314-1981 · Given by the artist

Posters for public transport regularly stressed its convenience, presenting this as one of its chief advantages over the private car. Here, this idea is summed up in a simple slogan which itself structures the image. The front of a London bus is described in the 'torn paper' typography of the word 'Carefree', set against a vibrant checkerboard of red, pink and orange. The colours themselves embody the spirit of the slogan, and in a punning aside – literally – a tiny car is dwarfed by the bus.

Games' work at this time was mostly produced by screenprinting, a process which allowed him to work with flat planes of colour and simplify his designs, reducing them to their absolute essentials. In spirit and style, this poster is typical of his playful, exuberant work of the later 1960s.

Roger de Valerio (1886–1951)
10me Salon de l'Aviation
 France, 1926
 Colour lithograph · E.1482-1929 · Given by Mr C.G. Holme

The Salon de l'Aviation, an exhibition dedicated to all things aeronautical, was staged at the Grand Palais, an exhibition hall on the Champs Elysees, Paris, from 1909 to the outbreak of the First World War. It resumed in 1919, and showed every two years from 1924 until it was again interrupted by war. Now known as the Paris Air Show and based at the Le Bourget airport, it continues biannually. De Valerio's stunning Art Deco design shows planes flying in formation, their vapour trails lit by the setting sun and doubling as search lights tracking their arrow-like flight across the golden sky. The streamlined, dynamic imagery captures the drama and modernity of air travel.

Theyre Lee-Elliott
As The Crow Flies – Only Faster!
 Issued by British Airways. Great Britain, c.1937
 Colour lithograph · E.1372-1979 · Given by the artist

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AS THE CROW FLIES—ONLY FASTER!



Edward McKnight Kauffer (1890–1954)

American Airlines to Chicago

Issued by American Airlines. USA, 1950

Colour offset lithograph · E.1896-1952 · Given by the Editor of Modern Publicity

Edward McKnight Kauffer spent the early years of his professional career in Great Britain, where he was a prolific designer of posters for clients such as London Transport, Shell-Mex and the Great Western Railway. With his sophisticated adaptations of modern art styles, ranging from Constructivism and Cubism to Surrealism, he helped to raise the status of poster design to a fine art. In 1940, at the outbreak of the Second World War, he returned to his native America and settled in New York, where he designed graphics for war relief agencies as well as corporate clients. Between 1946 and 1953 he produced more than 30 posters for American Airlines. Less radical than much of his earlier work, for the most part they depicted the various destinations served by American Airlines flights. This is typical – a bright, appealing view of Chicago, seen as the backdrop to yachts skimming across the waters of Lake Michigan.

Peter Gee (1932–2005)

American Airlines 747 Astroliner

Issued by American Airlines. USA, 1969

Colour lithograph · E.2191-1992

Peter Gee, a British-born artist and real estate developer, lived for most of his life in New York, where he was active as a Pop artist in the 1960s. In this poster, he brought bold Pop-Art colours and slick styling to the promotion of American Airlines' new Boeing Astroliner, which launched a coast-to-coast service in 1970. The company ordered a number of these planes from Boeing in 1966. They were the biggest commercial airliners at the time, each able to carry 303 passengers; as the name suggests, they were considered the sky-borne equivalent of the great ocean liners and were likewise designed with an emphasis on comfort, space and luxurious detailing. The planes were ordered when American Airlines was optimistic about the growth of air travel. Gee's poster, with its bold graphics in neon pink and metallic silver, reflects this market confidence, but in fact demand had declined by the time the new planes were delivered.

