Fundamentals of graphic design

Gavin Ambrose
Paul Harris

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Gavin Ambrose + Paul Harris

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of graphic design

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Introduction

This book is about graphic design rather than being a book of graphic design. The distinction may seem slight, but it is fundamental to this volume as it covers the graphic design industry and its processes rather than simply functioning as a coffee-table book. However, this book also contains works from highly imaginative creatives, which are used to illustrate the fundamental principles and working methods that graphic designers employ in their day-to-day activities.

Transport and Water Management

This installation was created by Studio Myerscough for the Design Museum in London for an exhibition of Work In Progress by Ettore Sottsass. Its large-scale presence means a viewer is captivated from afar due to theimpact of the glasses worn by the architect-designer in the main panel. Notice how effective the subtle use of colour is to draw attention to the name and titles as it contrasts with the black-and-white backdrop.

Transport and Water Management

Pictured is a folder created by Faydherbe / De Vringer for the Transport and Water Management Inspectorate following the addition of new divisions, which contains postcards with panoramic views from the archives of the Dutch Photo Museum by photographer Frits Rotgans, a pioneer in this field. Each photo is used to represent a division and the folder was a present for employees and their families.

Pure Design Classics poster

This poster by Parent Design promotes an avant-garde furniture supplier. It uses a strong grid and is printed on bible paper.

Graphic design is a broad discipline that encompasses many different aspects and elements. It can be difficult to explain as a fractured discipline because designers work in varied environments and may rarely, or never, engage in some aspects of the practice. However, as a creative pursuit, there will always be a reason to engage in other areas of the discipline. This book attempts to look at some of these areas and provide a useful resource for designers, irrespective of the particular field in which they work.

Think! (opposite)

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Chapter 1

Graphic design as a discipline

This book is about graphic design rather than being a book of graphic design. The distinction may seem slight, but it is fundamental to this volume as it covers the graphic design industry and its processes rather than simply functioning as a coffee--table book. However, this book also contains works from highly imaginative creatives, which are used to illustrate the fundamental principles and working methods that graphic designers employ in their day-to-day activities.

What is graphic design?

Graphic design is a broad discipline that encompasses many different aspects and elements. It can be difficult to explain as a fractured discipline because designers work in varied environments and may rarely, or never, engage in some aspects of the practice. However, as a creative pursuit, there will always be a reason to engage in other areas of the discipline. This book attempts to look at some of these areas and provide a useful resource for designers, irrespective of the particular field in which they work.

The evolution of graphic design

The evolution of graphic design Graphic design developed from the printing and publishing industry, with the term itself first used in the 1950s. At that time there was a clear demarcation within the different stages of the print production process, with specialist professionals or trades performing each one. These stages involved printers, scanners, photographic reproduction, graphic design, typesetters, print buyers, film, proofreaders and production managers.

The consumer economy that emerged in the western world following the Second World War brought with it the emergence of bright and attractive packaging as competition between products intensified. The number of magazines also began to increase, resulting in greater demand for visually appealing designs. These coincided with developments in print technology and opened up new production possibilities that designers were well placed to take advantage of. The success of graphic design helped to make it even more indispensable.

As the power of colourful visual communication became widely appreciated, graphic design grew from the need to provide visual communication to the consumer world and spread throughout different sectors of the economy, while continuing to harness the technological developments that progress brought forth. Technological development, particularly in the digital age, has revolutionised and rationalised the processes of print production. Trades such as typesetting and artwork preparation have become obsolete, as they can now be performed by a designer. As a consequence, graphic design has developed into a multifunctional role that sees the designer playing a pivotal role in the production process. This demands great versatility and the need to communicate effectively with many different professionals. In the past, designers would have undertaken all aspects of a job from the generation of ideas to hand-drawing

The Fundamentals of Graphic Design offers a unique overview of a challenging and dynamic profession, covering a wide range of disciplines and media, whilst exploring the role of the graphic designer.

This book examines the various aspects of the graphic design process including working methods, typography, art direction, environmental design, self-promotion and print finishing.

Broken down into six chapters, The Fundamentals of Graphic Design looks at graphic design as a discipline, its influences and creative elements, the graphic design process, delivering key messages, procuring work and the production process. This book is an ideal guide for anyone starting out, or seeking a role in the world of graphic design.