

Swiss Graphic Design: The Origins and Growth of an International Style 1920–1965

A presentation by Richard Hollis
followed by a discussion
with Derek Birdsall, Ruedi Rüegg,
Richard Smith and Cornel Windlin,
supported by USM

at Central Saint Martins,
Cochrane Theatre,
Southampton Row, London,
5.30 pm, 16 May 2006

Swiss Graphic Design: The Origins and Growth of an International Style 1920–1965, by Richard Hollis gives the first comprehensive account of the development of the Swiss Style. Originating in Russia, Germany and The Netherlands in the 1920s, stimulated by the artistic avant-garde and alongside the International Style in architecture, Modernist graphic design and typography found a firm foothold in Switzerland before and after the Second World War.

By the 1950s Switzerland had developed a uniquely clear graphic language which matched the country's reputation for efficiency and precision. Evident not just in posters but in advertisements, brochures and books, *Neue Grafik* or *Swiss Style*, as it became known, was respected internationally for its formal discipline: simple methods that could make posters dramatic and give an order and elegance to typographic design. Sharing the disciplines of Swiss Concrete Art, designers organised images and text into geometrical grids. With sans-serif typefaces such as Helvetica and Univers, these were the chief components of the Swiss Style which spread across the world.

Its influence is still seen today, recognisable in corporate publicity and highway signs from Amsterdam to Tokyo and from London to Los Angeles.

5:30pm Cochrane Theatre, Central Saint Martins, Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AP

A presentation by Richard Hollis followed by a discussion with Derek Birdsall, Ruedi Rüegg, Richard Smith and Cornel Windlin.

Admission free. Please book in advance by calling the Cochrane Theatre box office on +44 (0)20 7269 1606 or visit us at www.cochranetheatre.co.uk.

7:30pm Lethaby Gallery, Central Saint Martins, Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AP

A reception to mark the publication of *Swiss Graphic Design: The Origins and Growth of an International Style 1920–1965* by Richard Hollis, published by Laurence King.

By invitation only.

We wish to thank our guest speakers for their contributions and Peter Cleak, Penny Cook, Nicki Frech, Daniel Haener, Chaja Lang, Martin Lee, Anton Messerli, Flavio Milani, Dani Salvadori, TheRedBox, Benoit Santiard, Laura Willis and Jannuzzi Smith for their help.

Richard Hollis

Born in England, Richard Hollis has been a freelance graphic designer since 1958. He has worked as a printer, art editor, production manager, writer, teacher and lecturer.

He studied art and typography at Chelsea, Wimbledon and Central schools of art in London before working in Paris as a freelance graphic designer in the early 1960s. From 1966–1968 he was art editor of the weekly magazine *New Society* and since 1963 he has designed the quarterly journal *Modern Poetry in Translation*. In 1972 he created John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, a seminal book integrating text and images in a continuous narrative sequence. In two phases, from 1970–1972 and 1978–1983 Hollis produced publicity material and catalogues for the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London.

In 1964 he co-founded the Graphic Design Department at the West of England College of Art in Bristol, where he was Head of Department until 1967, and he was for six years Senior Lecturer, alongside Anthony Froshaug, at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. He is the author of *Graphic Design: A Concise History* (Thames & Hudson, 1994).

He lives and works in London.

Derek Birdsall

Derek Birdsall was born in England in 1934. In a career spanning almost fifty years Derek Birdsall has gained a reputation as the 'godfather' of British book design.

He studied at Wakefield College of Art from 1949–1952, and at Central School of Arts and Crafts, London from 1952–1955 under Anthony Froshaug. Co-founder of Omnific in 1967, Birdsall was consultant art director of the first Independent Magazine and has been a consultant designer to Pirelli and the Mobil Corporation. His work ranges from Penguin paperback covers in the 1960s to a recent complete redesign of The Church of England's *Book of Common Worship*. Among Birdsall's projects are award-winning art books, catalogues raisonné on major artists such as Mark Rothko and Georgia O'Keefe, and books on wine, chess, architecture, and fine paper.

From 1987–1988 he was Professor of Graphic Design at the Royal College of Art in London. He is the author of *Notes on Book Design* (Yale University Press, 2004). In 2005 Birdsall was awarded the prestigious Prince Philip Designers Prize for his career achievements.

He lives and works in London.

Ruedi Rüegg

Born in Switzerland in 1936, Ruedi Rüegg is an educator, writer and one of the most highly-regarded Swiss graphic designers.

After leaving the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich he worked with Josef Müller-Brockmann in Switzerland and then with Paul Rand in the USA. As a designer he was part of the Nakamoto International Agency in Japan from 1964–1965 before returning to Zurich as partner and co-owner of the design and advertising agency Müller-Brockmann & Co. In 1984 he set up his own practice with Max Baltis that would become Designalltag in 1992. Amongst his designs: the literature periodical *Orte*, the pictograms and information system for Zurich Airport, the posters for Opernhaus Zürich and with Adrian Frutiger the corporate identity of the Swiss PTT.

Since 1988 he has been lecturer for graphic design at the Ohio State University, Carnegie Mellon University, Cooper Union School of Design and Schule für Gestaltung St Gallen. Rüegg is the author of *Basic Typography: Design with Letters* (ABC Verlag, Zurich, 1989).

He lives in Hombrechtikon, a small town near Zurich.

Richard Smith

Richard Smith was born in England in 1967. He is a graduate of Brighton Polytechnic and the Royal College of Art.

He worked for the publisher Mitchell Beazley before entering the Royal College of Art in London in 1990. He joined the design consultancy Williams & Phoa in 1992 and in 1993 he co-founded Jannuzzi Smith. The studio's clients include Birkhäuser, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, Embassy of Switzerland in London, Locarno International Film Festival, Nationwide Building Society, Royal College of Art, Royal Mail, Sainsbury's, Presence Switzerland and Sotheby's.

He is co-author, with Michele Jannuzzi, of *Dotlinepixel – notes on cross-media design* (GCE, 2000). He is a regular lecturer in universities in the UK and across Europe. His work features in magazines, books and exhibitions, including *Communicate: British Independent Graphic Design Since the Sixties* at the Barbican Art Gallery, and he has been awarded numerous distinctions such as the prestigious D&AD Yellow Pencil, and a Silver Medal from the Art Directors Club of New York.

He lives and works in London.

Cornel Windlin

Born in Switzerland in 1964, Cornel Windlin graduated from the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst in Lucerne and moved to London in 1988 to work with Neville Brody and later as art editor of *The Face* magazine.

In 1993 he returned to Switzerland and started his own design practice. Windlin has created corporate typefaces for Mitsubishi and the Herzefeld Memorial Trust and design for a number of clients in both cultural and commercial fields, among them Tate Museums London, Kunsthaus Zürich, Kunstmuseum Basel, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, Schauspielhaus Zürich, Vitra, Parco Department Stores and Fosters Beer.

With Stephan Müller he co-founded Lineto, a digital type foundry which has developed into an internationally acclaimed platform for typography and graphic design. Windlin's posters and book designs have won numerous awards and have been widely published in design books and international graphics publications like *Eye Magazine*, *I.D.* and *Idea*. He has lectured in the United States, England, Germany, Austria, Italy, Israel and Switzerland.

He lives and works in Zurich.

