The Roots and Impact of Jan Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie*

Edited by

Davide Fornari, Jonas Berthod, Chiara Barbieri

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Triest

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Reassessing the Roots and Impact of the New Typography

Chiara Barbieri
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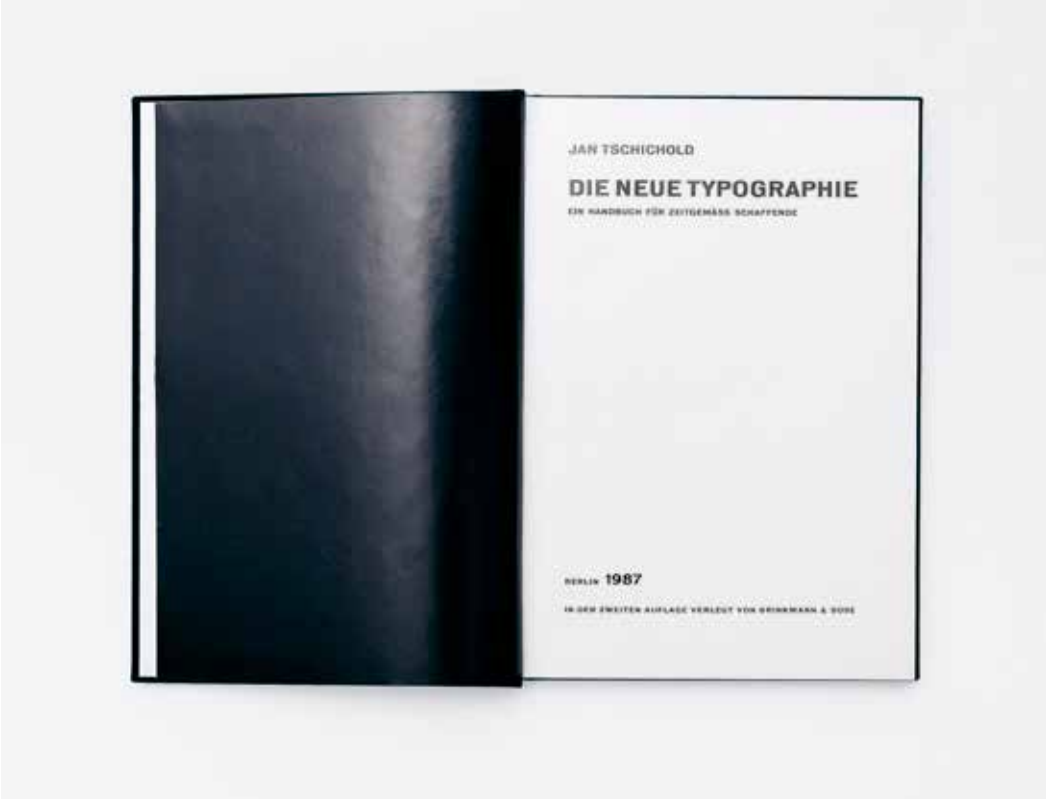
This publication originates from the research project "The Sources of Jan Tschichold's *The New Typography*" and the ensuing international conference held at ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne (HES-SO) in April 2023. It aims to expand our knowledge on Jan Tschicholds' *Die neue Typographie* and the New Typography[1] as a movement on two fronts: the recognition of their roots in the national arts and design histories, which have often been treated as secluded scenes, and the adoption of a circular approach to Modernism; in other words, a mutual exchange, as opposed to a former rather unilateral idea of its impact. **(fig. 1)** Far from being a final step, this book calls for further investigation on a pivotal text in 20th century graphic design and the broader milieu that enabled its production.

Through this series of essays, scholars specialised in the national histories of graphic design analyse the situation of the various scenes in the years preceding the publication of *Die neue Typographie* and the impact of the same book on the respective scenes. Such "national" logic is motivated by a feature found in Tschichold's book, which is at the origin of the research project conducted by Davide Fornari and Matthieu Cortat at ECAL on the sources of the New Typography and supported by the Strategic fund of HES-SO/University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland.

In the bibliography of his book, Tschichold adopted a multi-layered logic: he organised sources by typology (journals, special issues, books, norms) and by country (corresponding to the language of publication of the texts at his disposal). This bibliography is therefore offered as a sort of reportage of the national graphic scenes (Germany, France, Italy, Denmark, Holland, Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia), of the avant-garde movements (Futurism, Suprematism, Surrealism, Dadaism), and of the disciplines that were engaged in the definition of a new modern aesthetic at that historical moment: art, architecture, photography, poetry, cinema and, obviously, graphic design.

The present publication arises from an international conference organised by ECAL on 25 April 2023 with the support of the SNSF, Swiss National Science Foundation. This allowed us to invite eight international scholars to Lausanne to share the results of their research and, from a scientific visit equally supported by the SNSF in April 2024, to conduct research on the relationships between the graphic scenes of Switzerland, France, and Belgium. Further essays were commissioned to offer as complete a view as possible of the status quo in the years following the publication of Tschichold's book.

1 For the sake of clarity, we refer to Jan Tschichold's 1928 book as *Die neue Typographie*, and the ensuing movement as New Typography.



1

fig. 1 Frontispiece of Jan Tschichold, *Die neue Typographie. Ein Handbuch für zeitgemäss Schaffende*, Verlag des Bildungsverbandes der Deutschen Buchdrucker, Berlin 1928 (facsimile reprint: 1987). Photo by Niccolò Quaresima

The Historiography of *Die neue Typographie*

As Robin Kinross concisely put it in his introduction to the English edition, Jan Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie. Ein Handbuch für zeitgemäss Schaffende* (The New Typography. A Handbook for Modern Designers) is "the most detailed and best-illustrated exposition of the New Typography [and] remains unsurpassed as the best single document of and about the New Typography".[2] Published in Berlin in 1928, the book is a manifesto and a textbook for graphic designers, printers, typesetters and typographers with guidelines on layout, typefaces, paper sizes and the use of photography, among others. The text followed an earlier statement by Tschichold entitled "Elementare Typographie" (Elementary Typography), published in October 1925 in a special issue of the German trade magazine *Typographische Mitteilungen* (Typographical Notices).[3] Both titles contributed to establishing Tschichold as the spokesman of the New Typography. With their principles for a new typography, the two publications formalised the tenets of the 20th century avant-garde in the field of graphics. The author had trained as a calligrapher and designer; unlike others proponents of Modernism, he did not stem from neighbouring fields such as arts or architecture, and therefore took up the challenge of defining a cultural role from the perspective of a professional working in the typographic atelier among lead characters, zincograph clichés, paper and ink. What characterised his writing and distinguished it from that of other leading exponents, such as László Moholy Nagy or El Lissitzky, was Tschichold's ability to formulate the new approach to visual communication through clear and detailed instruction that could be easily transposed into the daily practice by ordinary printers and typographers.

The term "New Typography" was first used by Moholy-Nagy in his text entitled "Die neue Typographie" appearing in the catalogue that accompanied the 1923 exhibition at the Bauhaus.[4] Also known as "elementary" or "functional" typography, the New Typography is the manifestation of Modernism in the sphere of visual communication and printed matter. Its rules include the preference for sans serif typefaces and lower-case letters, asymmetrical page layout and grid, photography and photomontage over illustration, standardised paper sizes, and the active use of white and negative spaces. These principles have over time become a standard language of modern graphic design. However, the vehemence used by Tschichold to enunciate them in his book led to criticism and rethinking. Victim of its own success, it was only translated into other languages and made available to wider international audiences after the death of its author. After World War II, Tschichold gradually distanced himself from the New Typography. He condemned the rigidity of the movement from both a political-moral and a strictly typographical perspective. Equating his juvenile book to fascist political alignment, Tschichold's post-war statements fuelled a heated controversy within the graphic design community. Contemporaries, and Max Bill in particular, went head to head with Tschichold and interpreted his change of mind as a betrayal of the Modernist cause.[5]

Although challenged, criticised and questioned by design scholars, the worn-out rhetoric of the "pioneers" of graphic design still endures, and Tschichold and his book *Die neue Typographie* have fallen into the myth-making pitfall of Modernism. Tschichold has been the subject of several monographic studies.[6] These have focused

2 Kinross 1995: xv.
3 Tschichold 1925.
4 Purvis 2008: 40.
5 Bosshard 2012.
6 McLean 1997, Doubleday 2006, Le Coultre and Purvis 2007, Burke 2007, De Jong et al. 2008: 40, Fleischmann 2013, Jacobs and Rössler 2019, Guégan 2016.

on different aspects of his career as graphic designer, theorist and teacher during different periods of his life: his formation and early career in Germany, the move to Switzerland with the Nazis' rise to power in 1933, and his stay in the UK where he worked for Penguin Books in London. Overall, they have contributed to the inclusion of Tschichold and his work into the historiography of 20th-century graphic design.

Archival and contextualised studies have offered an antidote to a distorted view based on the pioneer rhetoric. In the aforementioned introduction to the English edition, Kinross investigated the context and unpacked the concerns of *Die neue Typographie* by exploring its origins, main themes, rhetoric, design principles and their implementation.[7] In 2007, Christopher Burke took a major step towards a more complex understanding of Tschichold in his context.[8] Focusing on his Modernist years, Burke reconstructed Tschichold's strategies of mediation of the principles of the New Typography, not only through books and articles, but also via a rich correspondence with colleagues across Europe.

Since the mid-2010s, an increasing number of scholars has begun to move beyond a celebratory, hagiographical approach to writing of graphic design history, focusing on professional networks, mediating channels and transnational design exchanges. They have explored the international impact of *Die neue Typographie* by looking at issues of mediation and dissemination, as well as addressing the ways in which Tschichold's ideas were incorporated into everyday mainstream practice or otherwise rejected. Studies on the reception of the New Typography are usually geographically specific. This is the case with Carlo Vinti's study on the interest raised by the New Typography in 1930s Italy, Julia Meer's book on its reception amongst the German-speaking typographic and printing scenes, and Trond Klevgaard's analysis of its domestication in Scandinavia.[9] These scholars' contribution to the present volume adds to their previous attempts towards a critical rewriting of 20th-century graphic design history.

A closer look at primary sources has brought a critical insight into Tschichold and his work. In 2019, Paul Stirton studied and put on display at the Bard Graduate Center in New York Tschichold's collection of contemporary design ephemera.[10] Three years later, in 2022, Patrick Rössler and Mirjam Brodbeck adopted a similar approach with their exhibition and publication that explored Tschichold's personal collection of small-format typographic works held at the Schule für Gestaltung in Basel.[11] Both exhibitions and publications employed Tschichold's private collection as a means to uncover some of the roots of *Die neue Typographie*, while illustrating his enviable network of artist-designers across interwar Europe. The printed matter assembled by Tschichold in the interwar period also demonstrated his efforts to build a rich repertoire of graphic artefacts illustrating the articulation of new ideas in visual communication to be used as source material for his writings and teaching. Jost Hochuli's investigation into Tschichold's library, transferred from the Deutsches Bucharchiv München to the Kantonsbibliothek Vadiana in St. Gallen in 2006, revealed yet another aspect of his private collection.[12]

7	Kinross 1995.
8	Burke 2007: 73–82.
9	Vinti 2020, Meer 2015, Klevgaard 2020.
10	Stirton 2019.
11	Rössler and Brodbeck 2022.
12	Hochuli 2016: 28–46.

Roots and Impact: The Structure of the Book

This publication is split into two complementary volumes. *The Sources of Jan Tschichold's Die neue Typographie* offers a visual journey through the books selected and featured by Tschichold in *Die neue Typographie* as examples for typographers and printers. Almost all of these books were collected – as originals when possible, and as facsimile editions and replicas when needed – and brought together for the first time in the travelling exhibition *Unpacking Tschichold's Library*, which stopped in Switzerland, France, Italy and Belgium.[13] The illustrated volume, which serves both as a catalogue of the exhibition and as a stand-alone reference, reproduces these books along detailed descriptions. In addition to biographical profiles of the designers whose publications were selected by Tschichold, it includes an essay by graphic and type designer Davide Tomatis discussing Aurora Grotesk, the typeface used in the original edition of *Die neue Typographie* (and which Tomatis used as a starting point to draw the typeface used in this book), as well as conversations with the type and graphic designers Matthieu Cortat, Gilles Gavillet and François Rappo.

A perfect companion to the visual reference formed by that volume, the present publication is its discursive and critically informed counterpart. Through twenty-two academic essays, it expands the narrative of the New Typography beyond the confines of Tschichold's work. These contributions widen the frame of *Die neue Typographie* by extending its temporal scope, and geographical context as well as enriching the discourse on the movement. Organised over two sections, the present volume retraces the roots and impact of Tschichold's publication.

In the first section, "Roots", Christopher Burke takes us back to the origins of the New Typography by focusing on the avant-garde movements that Tschichold recognised as influential. Paul Stirton analyses the years leading up to "Elementare Typographie" (1925), Tschichold's first substantial contribution to the New Typography. Jessica Brier then examines the less discussed aspect of images in the current, notably through the use of *Typophoto* and New Photomontage. Following these, Lada Hubatová-Vacková outlines how closely connected Czechoslovakia was to German ideas, while Matthias J.E. Horneman-Thielcke and Sofie Beier examine the Danish predecessors to the New Typography in their case study of architect and designer Knud V. Engelhardt.

The second section, "Impact", is divided into two parts. The first one maps the dissemination of the New Typography; the second discusses the reception of these ideas in European and extra-European scenes. Finally, the third part examines the aftermath – or legacy – of the New Typography. Opening the first part, "Dissemination", Sandra Bischler-Hartmann demonstrates how Basel immediately proved to be fertile ground for Tschichold and his ideas. Sandy Jones turns our attention to London, where the graphic designer was active between 1935 and 1938 as an exhibition maker, designer and New Typography advocate. Juliet Kinchin then takes us across the Atlantic to the MoMA in New York, which fell "under the spell

13 *Déballer la bibliothèque de Tschichold*, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (BnF), Paris, 24 March – 15 April 2023; *Unpacking Tschichold's Library*, ELAC, Espace Lausannois d'Art Contemporain, Renens, 27 April – 26 May 2023; *Togliere i libri di Tschichold dalle casse*, ISIA, Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche, Urbino, 16–20 October 2023; *Tschicholds bibliotheek uitgepakt*, Zwarte Zaal, KASK & Conservatorium, Gent, 28 March – 21 April 2024.

of Tschichold" in the 1930s. Louise Paradis continues this westward trajectory by examining the presence of the Jan and Edith Tschichold papers at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, California.

In the first essay of the second part, "Reception", Julia Meer provides an alternative story to the common narrative in which printers rejected the movement. In Germany, some were its most ardent supporters and contributed significantly to its success. Catherine de Smet moves us West, to France, to discuss the French examples included in *Die neue Typographie* and the complicated reception of Modernism in the country. We then look at Italy, where the movement only caught momentum with considerable delay, as Carlo Vinti explains, due to language barriers and prevailing traditionalism. In Belgium, Katrien Van Haute examines the alignment of Tschichold's ideas with the scene, where they were adopted with a local twist, whereas in Scandinavia printers were more influenced by "Elementare Typographie" than by *Die neue Typographie*, as Trond Klevgaard demonstrates. In Spain, like in Belgium, the New Typography was adapted to local tastes, as Andreu Balius assesses. In neighbouring Portugal's interpretation of the New Typography also remained fairly traditional, as Sofia Leal Rodrigues explains. Taking the Romanisation of the national script in 1930s Turkey as a case study, Emin Artun Ozguner discusses how Modernism was renegotiated in the context of nationalism. Alyona Sokolnikova offers an extensive history of the influence Tschichold's work had on Soviet design from the 1910s until the mid-1930s, as well as the post-war revival of the New Typography. Closing the "Reception" part, Mariko Takagi illustrates that Japan was open to the New Typography, but also that the country equally influenced Tschichold.

The last part of the volume, "Aftermaths", brings a contemporary perspective to *Die neue Typographie*. In South Korea, it was only in the 1980s that Tschichold was translated; Yongkeun Chun examines how designers responded to his ideas. Instead, Yun Wang describes Tschichold's book's reception in China, where it was only translated in the mid-2010s but never published. Lastly, Yevgen Anfalov discusses the KTF Yermilov grid-typeface, which he designed based on the style of *palochniy shrift* (block typeface) commonly seen in the context of the 1920s avant-garde in the USSR.

Expanding the Canon on the New Typography

With its dual focus on the roots and impact of *Die neue Typographie* and the New Typography as a movement, the present volume fosters a more complex and multifaceted understanding of Tschichold's work. Its contribution to the history of 20th-century graphic design is twofold. On the one hand, the following chapters expand our perspective both geographically and temporally. Geographically, they contribute to a transnational reading of graphic design history, by focusing on design exchange among different local scenes, some of which have been treated as isolated and rarely acknowledged in the literature thus far. Temporally, they indirectly answer the question of what is new about the New Typography by addressing the cultural, professional and artistic lineage in which Tschichold's book is rooted. At the same time, they also explore its long-lasting relevance showing how its appeal to new generations of graphic designers has not yet faded. On the other hand, what is to follow provides fresh insights into histories of Modernism, by challenging its artificially unified, design celebrities-centred and unidirectional narrative. The focus on local and transnational networks of design exchange, that either

promoted or contrasted *Die neue Typographie*, investigates the dissemination of Modernism as a multidirectional movement. Instead of looking at the New Typography in terms of novelty and originality, the volume contextualises Tschichold's work within contemporary discourses, and analysed his ideas on visual communication as the subject of debates among practitioners and critics involving strategies of negotiation, adaptation and resistance.

Overall, the book generates new knowledge and opens up new directions for future research. For instance, the development of Modernism in French-speaking Europe deserves a further analysis. In a similar vein, local interpretations of the New Typography offer insights for a more detailed analysis. Moreover, commonalities and differences in typeface design between different linguistic and cultural areas could prove a fertile ground for research. The relationship between avant-garde and common-or-garden printers, as evoked by Julia Meer, could benefit from examination in other geographical contexts. Certainly, gender is one of the research paths that awaits further exploration. This publication has taken some steps towards a more gendered understanding of the New Typography and the history of 20th-century graphic design in general. It has done so by identifying and acknowledging the four women mentioned in *Die neue Typographie*: the psychologist Anna Meyer Berliner,[14] the art historian Louise Charlotte "Lu" Märten,[15] the artist Käthe Traumann Steinitz[16] and the painter, drafter and illustrator Toyen (Marie Čermínová)[17]. These fields of studies remain open to further analysis and reading of *Die neue Typographie* and how Tschichold's book drew on pre-existing sources and experiences, and impacted on different scenes on the short and long run.

14 Uffelman 2002.
15 Chichester and Sölch 2021: 116–135.
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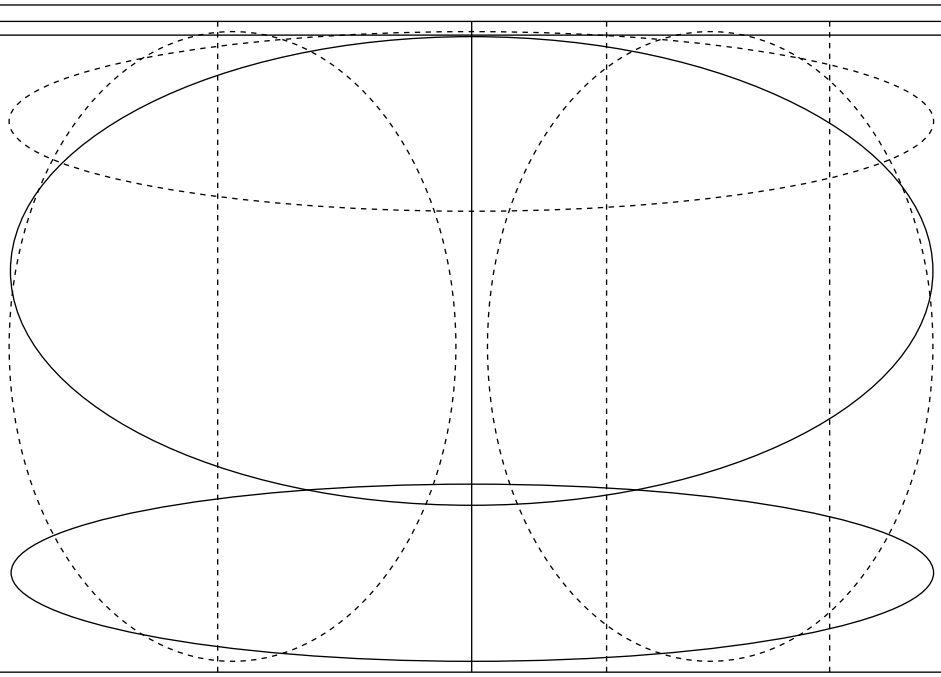
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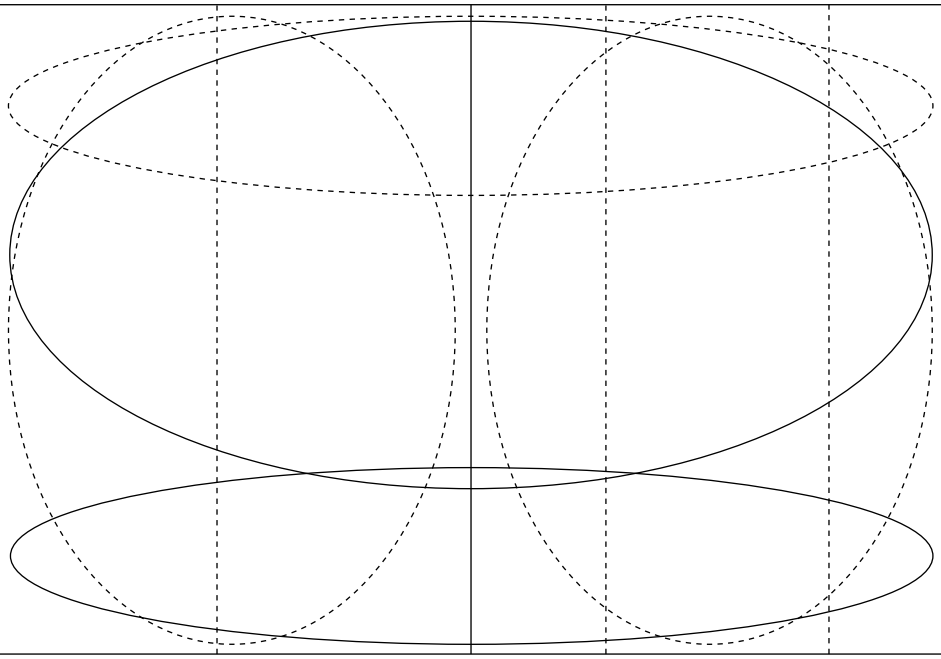
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ROOTS



13

Origins of the New Typography

Christopher Burke

Tschichold prefaced his famous book *Die neue Typographie* with a quotation from Mondrian and, before discussing the New Typography itself, he included a chapter on "the new art". Yet, the connection between art and typography is never fully explained. Rather vaguely, he stated: "In the period after the war the creators of abstract painting and Constructivism worked out the rules for a contemporary style of typography in practical work"; this meant "design coming from basic form and proportion", which had also led to purely abstract painting.[1] He was thinking of people like El Lissitzky, Willi Baumeister, Walter Dexel, and Kurt Schwitters – all artists who did typography in the 1920s and 1930s as a way of earning a living in times of recurrent financial crisis. However, while Tschichold recognised that the look of New Typography borrowed heavily from abstract painting and montage, with the use of geometric shapes and primary colours, he stressed that a superficial application of these elements would lead to formalism. In other words, it would result in typography that was as bad as the old typography he sought to reject.

In his section on the history of the New Typography, Tschichold hints that some steps towards it were made by Peter Behrens, an applied artist who became seriously involved in typography. Tschichold was no doubt intrigued by Behrens's frequent use of sans serif types, like the wonderful grotesque used for the text of his book *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst* (Celebrations of Life and Art, 1900). **(fig. 2)** Tschichold thought that Jugendstil graphic artists preferred sans serif for its simplicity, seeing it as a kind of "prototype" or *Urform*. On the other hand, the decorative elements that were characteristic of Jugendstil did not meet with Tschichold's approval.

Tschichold did make it clear that, in his view, "the change-over from ornamental to functional typography" was begun by the Futurist Filippo Marinetti, whom Tschichold called a *Nichtfachmann* (non-specialist) – someone from outside the profession of printing and typography. This notion became the conventional view, accepted by subsequent historians such as Herbert Spencer and Robin Kinross. Marinetti was a poet and journalist, not a visual artist, but he took concrete poetry in visual directions. Tschichold quoted at length from his book of 1919, *Les mots en liberté futuristes* (Futurist Words in Freedom), although the text by Marinetti that Tschichold quotes about the "typographic revolution" originated in a manifesto of 1913.

The revolutionary aspect of Marinetti's *parole in libertà* (words in freedom / mots en liberté) is that they explode the horizontal and vertical

1 Tschichold 1995: 56–57.



2

fig. 2 Double page from the book by Peter Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst: eine Betrachtung des Theaters als höchsten Kultursymbols* (Celebrations of Life and Art: A Consideration of Theatre as the Highest Cultural Symbol), Diederichs, Leipzig 1900.

constraints of metal types, making something between painting and poetry, which is impossible to read in any linear way. **(fig. 3)** They operate on a graphic as well as a semantic level, with extreme contrasts of size and weight of types. Such typographic collage is difficult to do with traditional letterpress printing. Marinetti lived close to a printing workshop, and he was able to borrow pieces of type and experiment with them, but his compositions mostly took advantage of modern techniques of photographic reproduction. They embody a kind of "ransom-note" typography: letters are taken from various sources and stuck together for artwork. These graphic poems were an innovative expression of Futurism, and they were made by other Futurists as well as Marinetti. Newspapers such as *Lacerba* and *L'Italia Futurista* included whole pages of words in freedom as poetic reportage of actions during World War I, in which many of the Futurists were fighting.

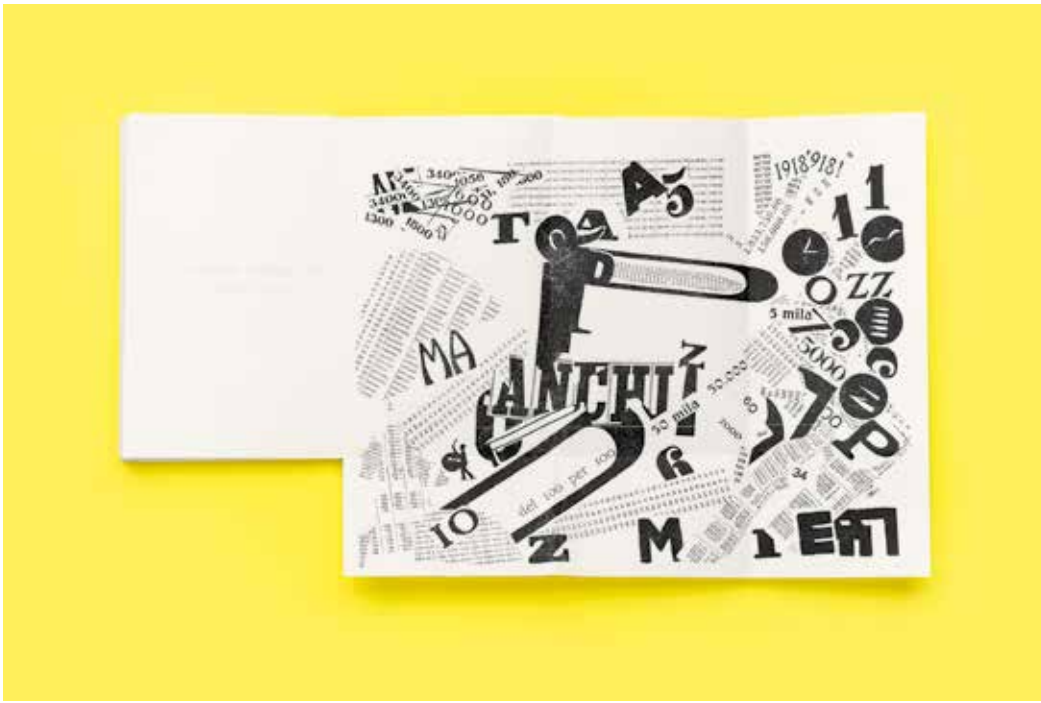
Tschichold recognised the graphic innovation of Futurism, but he kept quiet about the nasty parts of it: the warmongering and the misogyny. It would not have helped Tschichold's case that Futurism had strong links with Italian fascism, given that there is a strong socialist subtext to his book *Die neue Typographie*. Tschichold tried to get in touch with many of the people whose work he admired, but apparently not with Marinetti. Later, he did contact another Futurist, Fortunato Depero, in order to acquire his book *Depero Futurista* (1927), which Schwitters had shown him. This was published in 1927, but it seems that Tschichold had not seen it early enough to include it in *Die neue Typographie*. It is much closer to Tschichold's definition, sticking to type material itself, composed with great ingenuity. But again, the quotation from Mussolini in it would not have pleased him.

Marinetti made a lecture tour all over Europe in 1913, during which he performed his poems in noisy renditions expressing the noisy typography. One of his stops was London, and his lecture there sparked a British variation of Futurism, named Vorticism. From 1914, the Vorticists published a journal called *Blast* that expressed anarchic sentiments similar to those of Futurism, but it seems that Tschichold had not seen it because Britain is excluded from the zone covered by his book. *Blast* features sans serif types more consistently than Marinetti's work, in a way that anticipates later developments. **(fig. 4)**

The avant-garde movements that Tschichold definitely recognised as influences on the New Typography were Dada, De Stijl, and Constructivism. The founders of Dada, exiled in neutral Switzerland during World War I, did not share Marinetti's fascination with machines and war, but they were inspired by his writings. Tschichold illustrates the invitation to a Dada soirée of 1923 and credits it to the Romanian Tristan Tzara, but evidently it was designed by Ilia Zdanevich, who was from Georgia. **(fig. 5)**

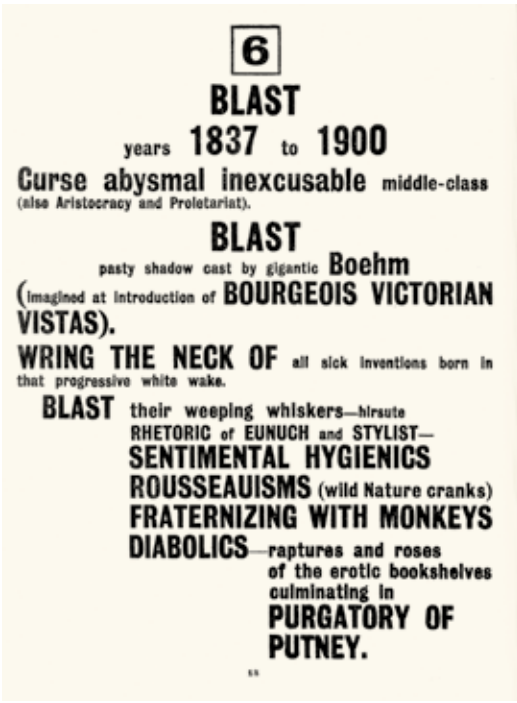
Dada established itself in Germany too, with the work of pioneering photomonteurs Hannah Höch, Raoul Hausmann and John Heartfield. In an advertisement of 1917 for a portfolio of lithographs by Georg Grosz, Heartfield used typography in an anarchic manner, with lines arranged at various angles. As with Futurist examples, it is obviously difficult to lock metal or wooden types in a composition like this, because all the elements are rectangular and have to fit the procrustean bed of typography. Heartfield had a different solution to Marinetti's: he poured wet plaster between the elements to set them in place for printing.

Another kind of Dadaist was Kurt Schwitters, the artist and poet from Hanover, who had close connections to De Stijl. Together with Käthe Steinitz



3

fig. 3 Pull-out page from the book by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Les mots en liberté futuristes* (Futurist Words in Freedom), Edizioni Futuriste di Poesia, Milan 1919. Photo by Vincent Levrat



6

BLAST

years 1837 to 1900

Curse abysmal inexcusable middle-class
(also Aristocracy and Proletariat).

BLAST

pasty shadow cast by gigantic Boehm
(imagined at introduction of BOURGEOIS VICTORIAN VISTAS).

WRING THE NECK OF all sick inventions born in that progressive white wake.

BLAST their weeping whiskers—hirsute
RHETORIC of EUNUCH and STYLIST—
SENTIMENTAL HYGIENICS
ROUSSEAUISMS (wild Nature cranks)
FRATERNIZING WITH MONKEYS
DIABOLICS—raptures and roses
of the erotic bookshelves
culminating in
PURGATORY OF
PUTNEY.



CHAOS OF ENOCH ARDENS

laughing Jennys
Ladies with Pains
good-for-nothing Guineveres.

SNOBBISH BORROVIAN running after
GIPSY KINGS and ESPADAS
bowing the knee to
wild Mother Nature,
her feminine contours,
Unimaginative insult to
MAN.

DAMN

all those to-day who have taken on that Rotten Menagerie,
and still crack their whips and tumble in Piccadilly Circus,
as though London were a provincial town.

WE WHISPER IN YOUR EAR A GREAT SECRET.

LONDON IS NOT A PROVINCIAL TOWN.

We will allow Wonder Zoos. But we do not want the
GLOOMY VICTORIAN CIRCUS in
Piccadilly Circus.

IT IS PICCADILLY'S CIRCUS!

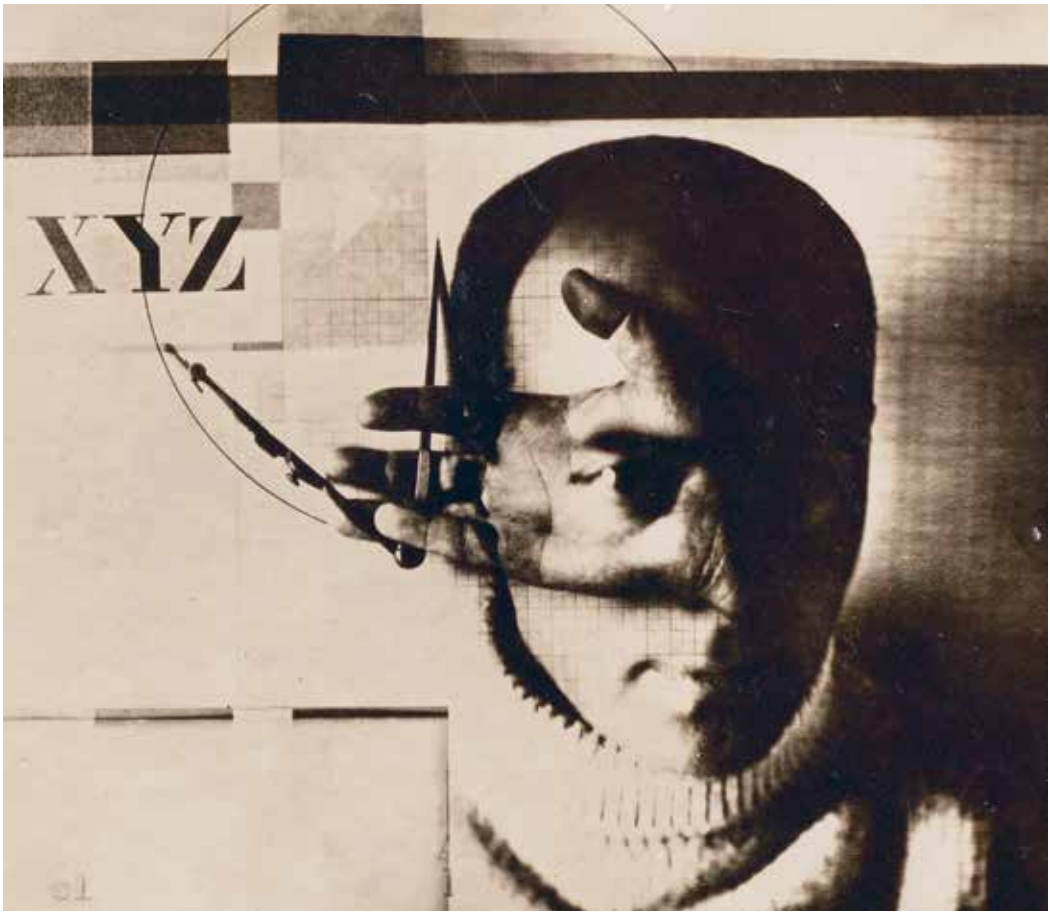
4



5

fig. 4 Manifesto of Vortex, double page from issue 1 of *Blast* magazine, 20 June 1914. Letterpress. Facsimile reprint: Black Sparrow Press, Santa Barbara CA 1981. Photo by Christopher Burke

fig. 5 Announcement of *Soirée du coeur à barbe* (The Bearded Heart Soirée), Paris, 6 and 7 July 1923, graphic design by Ilia Zdanevich. Letterpress. Merrill C. Berman Collection Photo by Jolie Simpson



6

fig. 6 *Self-Portrait* (The Constructor), photo by El Lissitzky, 1924. Collage of lithographic and drawn elements added to a photographic image, gelatin silver print.



7

fig. 7 El Lissitzky, *Typographische Tatsachen* (Typographic Facts), double page from *Gutenberg Festschrift*, Verlag der Gutenberg-Gesellschaft, Mainz 1925. Photo by Niccolò Quaresima

and Theo van Doesburg (the founder of De Stijl), he created a series of fairytale books featuring elementary typography. Schwitters also designed advertising, and he published a magazine called *Merz* from 1923 as a showcase for Modernist typography. (The title is a nonsense word arrived at by chance when Schwitters ripped some paper with the word *Kommerz* printed on it, and ended up with *Merz*). The style that we think of as the New Typography coalesced here, with large sans serif types, geometric shapes, and a lack of symmetrical layout. Schwitters published his own typographical manifesto in *Merz*, called "Theses on Typography", showing his Dada credentials with an anarchistic tone: one of his principles was "Do it as nobody else has done it before".

Schwitters also published a manifesto by the Russian designer El Lissitzky in 1923, called "Topography of Typography", which Tschichold reprinted in *Die neue Typographie*. Lissitzky represents the principal "-ism" which laid the foundation of the New Typography: Constructivism, which began in Russia but had direct links to Italian Futurism. Lissitzky was trained as an architect, but worked in many fields – he called himself "The Constructor", which is the name of his famous photomontage self-portrait showing the tools of his trade. **(fig. 6)** Constructivism was concerned with making objects from everyday materials, and integral to it was a cult of the artist or designer as a worker, as one might expect in the early days of Soviet Russia. One of Lissitzky's best known achievements was the edition of Mayakovsky's poetry "Dlia golosa" (For the Voice), published by the Soviet State in 1923. Here he used all available typographic elements to create a kind of concrete poetry, including its famous tab index with symbols of the different poems.

Lissitzky even broke into the traditional confines of the *Gutenberg Festschrift* (Gutenberg commemorative publication) of 1925 with an essay called "Typographic Facts". **(fig. 7)** There was also an essay by Bauhaus teacher László Moholy-Nagy in the same volume. These two Eastern Europeans were among key figures of the New Typography who congregated in Germany in the early 1920s: additionally, Van Doesburg came from Holland and set himself up as a kind of unofficial teacher at the Bauhaus school in Weimar. All three met in Berlin in the early 1920s and swapped ideas. Van Doesburg and Lissitzky even co-founded the Constructivist International, which makes clear the affinities of Constructivism with Communism. Lissitzky was influential in spreading word of Russian ideas, although he was not in the innermost circle of Constructivists linked to the Soviet State.

When in Berlin, Lissitzky collaborated with another Russian, Ilya Ehrenburg, to produce the trilingual magazine *Veshch* (Object) – perhaps the first such multilingual journal about art and design. It featured contributions by Le Corbusier, whose books were important for Tschichold too, perhaps more for their text than their design. Tschichold seems to have absorbed the cult of the engineer from Le Corbusier, writing in *Die neue Typographie*: "Car Aeroplane Telephone Wireless Factory Neon-advertising New York! These objects, designed without reference to the aesthetics of the past, have been created by a new kind of man: **the engineer**!"[2]

Tschichold's most intense exchange in this formative period of the New Typography was with Lissitzky. He was evidently inspired by the title-page of Lissitzky's book *Pro dva kvadrata* (About Two Squares, 1922) when designing an advertisement for the Polish publisher Philobiblon in 1924. Intriguingly, Tschichold signed it in a Polish form,

2 Tschichold 1995: 11 (words set in bold by the author).

so that his surname required fewer consonants than in German – Czychold; but he also used the Polish and Czech form of his given first name, Johannes – Jan. He only settled on Jan as his first name in 1926, and before that, due to his enthusiasm for Russian Constructivism, he briefly renamed himself Ivan (or Iwan in German). With this identity, he experimented with Constructivist designs for his personal letterhead that were clearly inspired by Lissitzky. In the first letter that Tschichold wrote to him, he declared: "I am the only typographic Constructivist in Leipzig". **(fig. 8)**

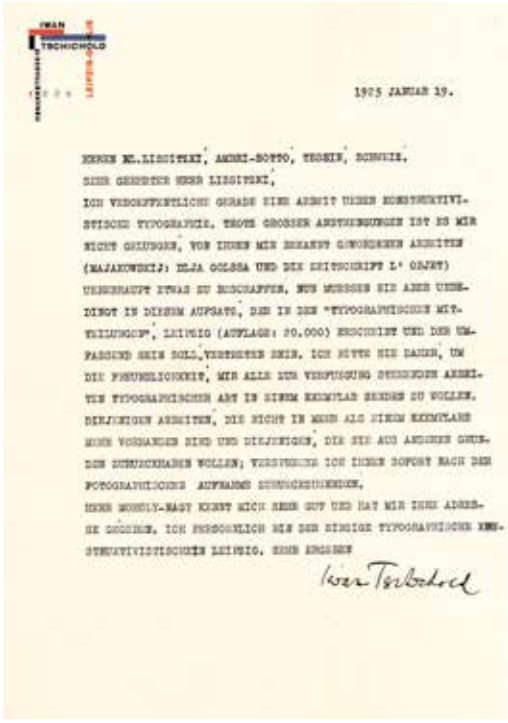
Tschichold was inclined to look eastwards more generally, and was also fascinated by Czech and Polish typography. One principal figure in Modernist Polish typography, Henryk Berlewi, escaped Tschichold's attention in the 1920s. This is perplexing because Berlewi came to typography via their mutual friend Lissitzky. He co-founded an advertising agency called Reklama Mechano. The advertisements they made are examples of Constructivist typography that are as impressive as Lissitzky's work, and more consistent in the use of typefaces (all sans serif) as opposed to lettering drawn by hand. **(fig. 9)**

The defining group in Czechoslovakia was Devětsil (literally "nine forces"), led by Karel Teige. Photomontage played a major part in Czech Modernism, which tempered utilitarianism with a more playful and poetic element that Devětsil called Poetism – Teige described this in its manifesto (1924) as a "modern Epicureanism", or "the art of wasting time". Delightful examples of this poetic form of photomontage were applied to book covers by the painters-typographers of Devětsil, Jindřich Štyrský and Toyen (Marie Čermínová).

Although Tschichold did not regard the Bauhaus as synonymous with the New Typography (as some historical accounts do), the importance of this institution in his development should not be underestimated. Tschichold had a traditional printing education, and worked in a kind of classical, calligraphic style until he saw the Bauhaus exhibition at Weimar in 1923 and, by his own account, he was converted immediately – it shook him up, and he saw the light.[3] Moholy-Nagy was the key person in defining the functionalist approach to typography at the Bauhaus, which relates to his connections with Constructivism. Yet, before he replaced Johannes Itten as teacher of the Bauhaus *Grundkurs* (Foundation Course) in 1923, elements of both Futurism and Dada seemed to be present in a unique typographical creation of 1921 made at the Bauhaus: a typographical construction of a text by Itten for a publication called *Utopia*. **(fig. 10)** Tschichold seemed to be unaware of it (at least he did not mention it in his book). It is a real curiosity, and is perhaps still under-appreciated. It was not designed by Johannes Itten but by the Austrian artist Frederika "Friedl" Dicker-Brandeis, who had studied with Itten at his private art school in Vienna. She then went and studied with him at the Bauhaus. The volume relates more to concrete poetry than later Bauhaus typography, but seems to indicate future developments there with its mixture of typefaces and use of only black and red.

The fundamental text in which Moholy-Nagy defined the Bauhaus approach to typography was his short essay in the catalogue for the 1923 exhibition that was such a revelation for Tschichold. The title of Moholy-Nagy's essay was the first use of the phrase "Die neue Typographie". He advocated breaking the horizontal/vertical grid of typography and using all kinds of typefaces and geometric forms in an "elastic, variable, and fresh typographical language", in contrast to the flat,

3 Tschichold remembered being "aufgewühlt" (in turmoil) in his memoir. Tschichold 1988: 17.



1925 JANUAR 29.

HERRN M.LISSITZKI, AMERI-SOTTO, ZÜRICH, SCHWEIZ.

SEHR GEEHRTER HERR LISSITZKI,

ICH VERÖFFENTLICHE GERADE EINE ARBEIT ÜBER KONSTRUKTIVISTISCHE TYPOGRAPHIE. TROTZ GROSSER ANSTRENGUNGEN IST ES MIR NICHT GELUNGEN, VON IHNEN MIR BEKANNT GEWORDENEN ARBEITEN (MAJAKOWSKIJ; ELJA GOLOSA UND DER ZEITSCHRIFT L' OBJET) ÜBERHAUPT ETWAS ZU BESCHAFFEN. WIR MÜSSEN SIE ALSO ÜBER-HAUPT IN DIESEM AUFSATZ, DER IN DER "TYPOGRAPHISCHEN MITTEILUNGEN", LEIPZIG (AUFLAGE: 20.000) ERSCHEINT UND DEN UMFANG HABEN SOLL, VERZICHTEN. ICH BITTE SIE DAHER, UM DIE FREUNDLICHKEIT, MIR ALLE DEN VERFÜGUNG STEHENDEN ARBEITEN TYPOGRAPHISCHEN ART IN EINEM EXEMPLAR SENDEN ZU WOLLEN. DIEJENIGEN ARBEITEN, DIE NICHT IN MEHR ALS EINEM EXEMPLARE MEHR VORHANDEN SIND UND DIEJENIGEN, DIE SIE AUS ANDEREN GRÜNDEN ZURÜCKHABEN WOLLEN; VERSPRECHE ICH IHNEN SOFORT NACH DER FOTOGRAPHISCHEN AUFNAHME ZURÜCKZUSENDEN.

IHRER WERTEN KUNST WICH SEHR GUT UND BAT MIR IHRE ADRESSE GEGEBEN. ICH PERSÖNLICH BIN DER EINZIGE TYPOGRAPHISCHE KONSTRUKTIVISTISCHEN LEIPZIG. IHRE ERGEBEN

Iwan Tschichold

8



9



10

fig. 8 Letter from Jan Tschichold to El Lissitzky, 19 January 1925. Typewritten letter on headed notepaper, from the book *J. T.: Johannes Tzschichhold, Iwan Tschichold, Jan Tschichold*, edited by Philipp Luidl, Typographische Gesellschaft, Munich 1976.

fig. 9 Advertising brochure for Plutos chocolate brand, graphic design by Henryk Berlewi, 1925. Letterpress.

fig. 10 Johannes Itten, *Analysen alter Meister* (Analysis of Old Masters), from issue 1–2, 1921, of the magazine *Utopia. Dokumente der Wirklichkeit* (Documents of Reality), lettering by Johannes Itten, typesetting by Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. Letterpress.



IWAN TSCHICHOLD:

DIE NEUE TYPOGRAPHIE

1 TYPOGRAPHIE ist die exakte graphische Form der **Mitteilung** auf dem Wege des Hochdruckverfahrens.

2 Diese Mitteilung kann sein **1)** werbend,
2) abhandelnd.

3 **Werbende** TYPOGRAPHIE: **Plakate,** Inserate, Prospekte, Umschläge.
Abhandelnde TYPOGRAPHIE: **Artikel,** Abhandlungen, „Literatur".

4 Eine Mitteilung soll die **1)** KORZESTE
2) EINFACHSTE
3) EINDRINGLICHSTE Form haben.

5 Kürze, Einfachheit, Eindringlichkeit werden umso zwingendere Notwendigkeiten, je mehr sich die Mitteilung von der Form der „LITERATUR" entfernt und sich dem Wesen des PLAKATS nähert.

6 Die neue Typographie ist **zweckbetont** — : siehe **4** und **5.**

7 **Typographie IM SINNE NEUER GESTALTUNG** ist konstruktiver Aufbau zweckmäßigsten Materials
1) einfachster FORM
2) sparsamster MENGE
gemäß den Funktionen der zu schaffenden Mitteilungsform.

8 Die MITTEL der neuen Typographie sind **ausschließlich die DURCH DIE AUFGABE gegebenen:** die BUCHSTABEN und MESSINGLINIEN des Setzkastens. Ornament auch einfachster Form (feinste Linien!) ist, da überflüssig, unmöglich.

9 Die einfachste, darum allein übersetzende **Form** der europäischen **SCHRIFT** ist die **Block-**(Grotesk-)**Schrift.**

10 Durch Anwendung **fetter** und **MAGERER** Charaktere und verschiedener Schriftgrade können stärkste Gegensätze gestaltet werden.

11 Im fortlaufenden Textsatz ist die heutige Form der GROTESK schwerer lesbar als die bis jetzt meist angewandte MEDIAVAL-ANTIQUA. Lesetechnische Gründe, vertieft durch ökonomische Erwägungen zwingen also zur restlosen Beibehaltung des Textsatzes aus ANTIQUA.

12 Alle wichtigen Teile (Überschriften, Zahlen, wichtige Satzteile) werden aus GROTESK verschiedenster Grauwerte gesetzt.

13 **Nationale** Schriften (Straffist, Fraktur, Abdruck) werden als nicht allgemein verständlich und der Geschichte angehörend von der Verwendung **ausgeschlossen.** Ökonomische Erwägungen verlieren diese Notwendigkeit.

14 Um das **Sensationelle** Neuer Typographie zu steigern und zugleich um den statischen Ausgleich zu schaffen, sind neben horizontalen auch vertikale und schräge Zeilen**richtungen,** auch die **SCHRÄGSTELLUNG GANZER GRUPPEN,** möglich.

9

11



12



13

fig. 11 Iwan Tschichold, "Die neue Typographie", in *Kulturschau*, 4, Spring 1925, pp. 9–11. Letterpress. Photo by Christopher Burke.

fig. 12 Herbert Bayer, *Katalog der Muster* (Catalogue of Designs), Bauhaus, Dessau 1925, graphic design by Herbert Bayer. Letterpress.

fig. 13 Front cover of the magazine *The Next Call*, 8, February 1926, design by Hendrik Werkman. Letterpress. Photo credit by Jolie Simpson

grey texture of traditional typography. The text design of the catalogue is a little naïve, filling the width of the page with lines that are far too long to be comfortably legible – most likely decided by a compositor or printer.[4] When Jan Tschichold emulated this text, exactly two years later, in his first manifesto, also named "Die neue Typographie", he took the opportunity to demonstrate the point about using contrasting styles and weights of type in the typography of his text itself. **(fig. 11)**

Some of Moholy-Nagy's early typography seems to take his ideas very superficially, putting text in a block, and introducing the contrast with heavy bars and often enormous page numbers. Just a few years later, Moholy-Nagy thought that the heavy details in this kind of typography were a mistake, distracting the eye from the unity of the visual impression. He said that they were not necessary, and that pure typography could achieve the desired aims of "clarity, concision and precision".[5]

Moholy-Nagy was more of a *graphiste* than a typographer, and he was keen to use the newest technology to make things: indeed, he stated that the most important thing for modern typography was photography. At this time, photographs were still printed "typographically" – in other words, with letterpress technology. Moholy-Nagy called this fusion "typo-foto", and provided an iconic example in his "Dynamic of the Metropolis" from one of the first Bauhaus books, *Malerei*, *Fotografie*, *Film* (Painting, Photography Film, 1925). The expressive typography, combined with references to abstract painting and filmic devices, reflected Moholy-Nagy's view that film would soon make much literature redundant.

Two of Moholy-Nagy's students at the Bauhaus followed his lead and became lecturers there: Joost Schmidt and Herbert Bayer. But typography was really only a sideline at the Bauhaus; the main interest there was architecture and product design. There was no proper typography workshop until 1927, and it was called the "advertising department". Most of the graphic work we know from the Bauhaus is publicity material designed by the typography lecturers for the school itself. The catalogue for its design business is an archetypal example: it was designed by Bayer, who wrote manifestos about the scientific nature of the Bauhaus approach to typography, and its functional nature in conveying clearly the sense of words. **(fig. 12)**

Another aspect of Bauhaus typography, which is common in most works by Modernist typographers, is the use of sans serif typefaces. This was not an absolutely essential part of the New Typography, as defined in the earliest manifestos by Moholy Nagy and Tschichold, but sans serif typefaces were a significant feature of it from the outset. These typefaces were not new, having been common since the middle of the 19th century, but in the opinion of theorists like Jan Tschichold and Paul Renner, sans serifs expressed best the impersonality of modern industrial life. They represented a kind of technical form, designed by engineers, equivalent to the industrial buildings that Le Corbusier praised so much. Some new sans serifs were designed, but the only one which became really popular in New Typography was Renner's Futura, released in 1927, which brought the idea of geometric construction to a usable typeface.

4 There are some peculiar, old-fashioned details in its text composition: Roman type is used as more modern than the German Fraktur, but the convention for emphasis is adopted from Fraktur – letter spacing instead of italic.

5 Moholy-Nagy 1925; and (uncredited) *Typographische Mitteilungen* 1931. See also Burke 2007: 98.

6 Spencer 1982: 58–59.

A different kind of engineering element that was important to Tschichold's conception of the New Typography was standardisation, in particular the adoption of the DIN norms on paper sizes and layout, which were new at that time. This seems to be in contradiction with the rule-breaking creativity of Futurism and Dada, for example, but one typographer who combined the two aspects in some way was Piet Zwart, whose work Tschichold appreciated very much. Another Dutch designer whom Tschichold contacted in 1926 was Hendrik Werkman, who published the magazine *The Next Call*. **(fig. 13)** Werkman was mentioned in *Die neue Typographie* but his work was not illustrated; it probably did not correspond to Tschichold's utilitarian ideas for what New Typography should be. The New Typography, defined by Tschichold as a functionalist approach in his book, was not a direct continuation of some of the work that inspired it. Tschichold's emphasis on clarity and direct communication is quite different to the aims of Futurism or Dada, for example, which often aimed to destroy clarity. Marinetti also was not afraid of ugliness and imbalance, which were qualities alien to Tschichold's own work as a designer.

A criticism that Herbert Spencer made in his book *Pioneers of Modern Typography* (1969) was that Tschichold codified these early efforts and made them into something boring.[6] This is a questionable criticism, especially as British typographers of the 1950s and 1960s, like Spencer, were very much influenced by Tschichold. It is not quite clear how this influence happened, because few of them had read or even seen *Die neue Typographie*, which was only published in English and other translations from 1995, almost seventy years after the original; and there was no facsimile reprint until the 1980s. Those who got hold of an original copy may have found its cover even more mysterious than it already was: it never had a jacket, and the silver blocking on the spine, which revealed the title, did not always survive very well.

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The Private Press, the Bauhaus, and the Beginnings of the New Typography

Paul Stirton

This essay looks at the years leading up to "Elementare Typographie", the special issue of *Typographische Mitteilungen* from October 1925, which was Jan Tschichold's first substantial contribution to the new approach to design for print. What I am aiming to do is sketch in some of the tendencies that were open to a young typographer embarking on his career in the early 1920s, especially one with an ambition to make this discipline meaningful beyond the simple expression of its craft skills.

In 1922, before he had completed his studies at the Staatliche Akademie für graphische Künste und Buchgewerbe (State Academy for Graphic Arts and Book Production) in Leipzig, the young Jan Tschichold made a trip to Offenbach, near Frankfurt, to meet the celebrated calligrapher and type designer Rudolf Koch. This may have been prompted by an exhibition of Koch's work in Leipzig that year, but Koch was already the presiding genius of German *Schriftkunst* (lettering art) and well-known for his Blackletter typefaces, especially Deutsche Schrift of 1910 and Frühling (1914), two lively and expressive typefaces that preserved the essential character of the late mediaeval and more recent Gothic faces.[1] This reflected Koch's belief in the relevance of historic German script, not merely as repositories of German history and culture, but as a repertoire of letterforms that could be used in different contexts, leaving room for imaginative expression. For Koch, therefore, and for many of his followers, Gothic script was not a reactionary form or merely revivalism. Instead, it offered potential for creative design linking the historic and the modern in an essentially Germanic context. This was not unusual in the late Wilhelmine culture of pre-war Germany. Wilhelm Worringer had published *Formprobleme der Gotik* (Form Problems of the Gothic) in 1912, a pointed exposition of certain ideas that had appeared in his *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (Abstraction and Empathy) of 1907–8. Furthermore, these ideas were still current after the war, a time which saw the reassertion of Expressionism among progressive circles, especially in the mediums of film, painting and printmaking.[2]

In fact, Tschichold made two trips to meet Koch before deciding that the older man's approach to lettering and type was too nationalistic and historicist to engage with the complex issues of modern life.[3] This has been regarded as a sign of Tschichold's development from a traditional craft outlook towards the full-blown Modernist principles of the New Typography that would appear over the next few years. Indeed, I wrote as such in my book.[4] However, that seems a bit too glib and deterministic. Instead, I want

1 For information on Koch in English, see Cinnamon 2000.
2 Worringer 1912.
3 *Jan Tschichold 1924–1944*, unpublished typescript, quoted in Burke 2007: 19.
4 Stirton 2019: 21.

to consider the range of styles and practices open to a young typographer in the 1920s, and how these options might be regarded in relation to loaded concepts like "progressive" and "modern".

In 1922–23, Tschichold was still producing work, albeit trial pieces or personal exercises, in the manner of Koch. His sketchbooks of the period, in the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek in Leipzig, include examples of calligraphy in Koch's Gothic and modern manner; Tschichold even designed a bookplate for Koch.[5] It is often repeated that Tschichold's change of direction was prompted by a visit to the Bauhaus in the summer of 1923, when the famous *Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar 1919–1923* exhibition was held. This was soon after László Moholy-Nagy had been appointed to the teaching staff. In fact, the exhibition opened less than three months after Moholy's arrival in Weimar. One of his first tasks must have been to prepare the catalogue of the exhibition, which he did in a new format, employing asymmetrical text in blocks, setting titles at different orientations, and employing sans serif type. **(fig. 14)** Despite this bold assertion of a new typographic style, one might ask what it was that so impressed Tschichold at that time. After all, the Bauhaus taught little or no typography or even setting of type. The *Druckerei* or print workshop, led by Lyonel Feininger and Walther Klemm, was mostly employed in producing artists' prints by prominent avant-garde painters. By a stroke of good fortune, Walter Gropius discovered that the college had a large stock of handmade papers that were ideal for producing limited edition prints, in relief, intaglio and lithography. Seeing the potential to raise funds for the college, Gropius initiated a project known as "Neue Europäische Graphik" (New European Graphics), folios of artists' prints to be sold both directly from the Bauhaus and through print dealers in Germany and beyond.[6] Alongside its financial potential, this was an excellent move for the college's reputation, placing the Bauhaus at the centre of an international network of progressive modern artists.

But it could hardly conceal the internal problems, especially in the print workshop. It is apparent from first-hand reports that there was little or no continuity in the teaching in the *Druckerei*. The bookbinder Otto Dorfner had kept the print workshop going independently during the war, and in 1919 his private workshop was incorporated into the Bauhaus. Dorfner was a good craftsman, but he was quite traditional in outlook, and he clashed with the form masters, especially Paul Klee and Lothar Schreyer, before leaving in 1922.[7] This should be seen against the backdrop of quite intense criticism of the Bauhaus among some avant-garde circles. During 1921–22, Theo van Doesburg was resident in Weimar, attracting a number of students opposed to the Expressionist ethos of Itten, Feininger and others on the Bauhaus staff, and he followed this up with articles dismissing the current Bauhaus ethos.[8] He was not alone. Vilmos Huszár wrote an excoriating article in *De Stijl* in 1922, attacking the "inconsistency, arbitrariness and self-indulgence of the masters and students", to which Feininger wrote an equally vitriolic reply attacking Van Doesburg.[9] This might sound like personal animosity, but it was a prel-

5 Tschichold's early designs, collected in three albums, have been digitised by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig.

6 In all, five folios were planned and four were completed between 1921 and 1923. For information on this and the Bauhaus *Druckerei* in Weimar, see Krischke 2019.

7 Dora Wibiral had been employed briefly in 1919 to teach type design, and Lothar Schreyer taught a course on Typeface Theory in 1920–1921.

8 Van Doesburg 1925: 363–366, translated in Van Doesburg 1990: 71.

9 Huszár 1922: 136.



14

fig. 14 László Moholy-Nagy, page from the catalogue of the exhibition *Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar 1919–1923*, with photograph of the printing workshop. Photo by Niccolò Quaresima

ude to the simmering debate between Expressionists and the proponents of the Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity) that would come to a head in the mid-1920s, and in which Tschichold himself would play a part.

Returning to Tschichold's visit to Weimar, one wonders what he must have thought of the presses and technical equipment in the *Druckerei*, quite apart from whatever he made of the masters. As is clear from the photograph in the 1923 catalogue, there were only three presses: an etching press, a litho press, and a 19th-century Washington-style handpress, of a type commonly used for proofing, not finished printing on any scale. Tschichold was just completing his studies at the State Academy in Leipzig, one of the principal trade and craft schools in the entire country, which had extensive modern printing equipment and technical staff to supervise the students as well as introduce them to new printing technologies.

This state of affairs was hardly the fault of the Bauhaus. In fact, the college authorities were caught in a dilemma that severely restricted their ability to teach printing to any professional level. When the college was created in 1919, this involved the amalgamation of two earlier colleges, one of fine arts and the other of applied art. The latter, the Großherzoglich-Sächsische Kunstgewerbeschule (Grand-Ducal Saxon School of Arts and Craft), had previously been directed by Henry van de Velde, one of the leaders of design reform in pre-war Germany, and a designer who had himself come through book and lettering design before moving into interior design and architecture. Van de Velde oversaw a lively print and book design department in the college. However, there are conflicting reports of what happened to this. Joost Schmidt, the last person to teach advertising design in the Bauhaus, reported that the presses under Van de Velde's jurisdiction were confiscated by the state, probably in 1915, when Van de Velde, a Belgian national, was interned and later deported as an enemy alien.[10] That may explain why printing or typography did not appear in the Bauhaus curriculum diagram.

There is, however, an alternative story behind this. Van de Velde was originally invited to Weimar in 1903 at the behest of Harry Graf Kessler, a cultural advisor to the Grand Duke, to lead the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Arts and Crafts) as part of a campaign to make the city of Weimar a centre for progressive culture inspired by the teachings of Nietzsche. Despite his nickname of the "red duke", Kessler harboured a dislike of Walter Gropius, both personally and ideologically, at one point referring to the Bauhaus in his diary as "a host of Bolsheviks and Jews".[11] It is not clear how this arose, but Kessler seems to have withheld the main presses taken from the old college, which may explain the paucity of printing equipment at the Bauhaus and the absence of any practical instruction in the field of print. In fact, teaching of the cluster of subjects that we would describe nowadays as "graphic design" did not commence until 1926 at Dessau, and was only ever a minor part of the curriculum.

Kessler had another reason to requisition the presses at the Kunstgewerbeschule. In 1913 he and Van de Velde had set up the Cranach Press in Weimar to produce finely printed and imaginatively designed books in limited editions, very much along the lines of the English private presses.[12] Kessler had visited William Morris in the 1890s, when Morris was most preoccupied with the Kelmscott Press. However, the model for Cranach was the Doves Press, set up in Hammer-

10 Loew and Nonne-Schmidt 1984: 19.
11 Kessler 2007: 268.
12 See Schröder 1968.

smith in 1900 by Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker, each of whom had been close to William Morris.[13] The Doves Press was distinguished by the quality of its materials and presswork, but, unlike Morris's Kelmscott Press, it was intended to be "modern", as seen in their austere layouts, plain calligraphic capitals and the "Doves Roman" typeface, which departed from the more decorative faces adopted by many in the private press movement. The Doves Press lasted only a few years, closing in 1909 amid a bitter dispute between the two founders, but it laid the groundwork for many private presses, not least the Cranach. **(fig. 15)**

In re-launching the press after the war, Kessler and Van de Velde sought the advice of the Doves Press circle, in particular, Emery Walker, Edward Johnston and Eric Gill. This was, for Kessler, a personal project, but it was also one committed to an ideal of cosmopolitanism and modernity, in defiance of the introverted nationalism that dominated post-war Germany. The first book to be published by the press was *The Eclogues of Virgil* (1926) using type designed by Kessler himself, cut by Walker, with capitals by Eric Gill, and illustrations in woodcut by the French sculptor Aristide Maillol. More significantly, however, the second book from the press was an attempt to integrate the most advanced ideas about stage design and dramaturgy with the ideals of fine printing. This was the Cranach Hamlet, completed initially in German in 1928, employing the stage design principles and woodcuts of Edward Gordon Craig.[14] **(fig. 16)**

Craig is not well known outside of the field of drama, so it may be worth recounting something of his work for the Cranach Press. Growing up in a theatrical family, Craig had a colourful life, but he remains best known for the innovative stage productions of Shakespeare, which he mounted in the Moscow Art Theatre at the invitation of Konstantin Stanislavsky. Craig had a modest reputation in Britain as a printmaker, but it was an adaptation of his dramaturgy that led to the book. Noticing how he used small figures cut from plank wood in a "toy theatre", it was suggested that these figurines could be used to print from directly. The initial trials worked well, so Craig's drawings and figurines were handed over to a specialist engraver to prepare blocks for full printing. Craig had already put forward the view that the true creator in the theatre is not the playwright or actors, but the director; only he can organise and balance the elements of the staging, the sets and costumes, the lighting, the emphases of the text, the movement and interaction of the players, using "action, words, line, colour and rhythm".[15] Craig did not like excessive action, preferring to move figures and groups around the stage like participants in a masque. Instead, he relied upon light and texture, mostly communicated by bare props creating an abstracted setting within which the action unfolded. This was the effect that he and Kessler sought to translate into a book; not just the text with illustrations, but a visual, readable, and tactile equivalent to the experience of the drama.

So, in the Bauhaus and the Cranach Press, we have two different forms of modern design existing just a few hundred metres apart in a small town in Thuringia. Until 1923, Tschichold was on the fringes of these contrasted approaches to design for print. His early sketchbooks show a diverse range of styles and practices. Not only was he an accomplished calligrapher in both the Gothic manner and in the

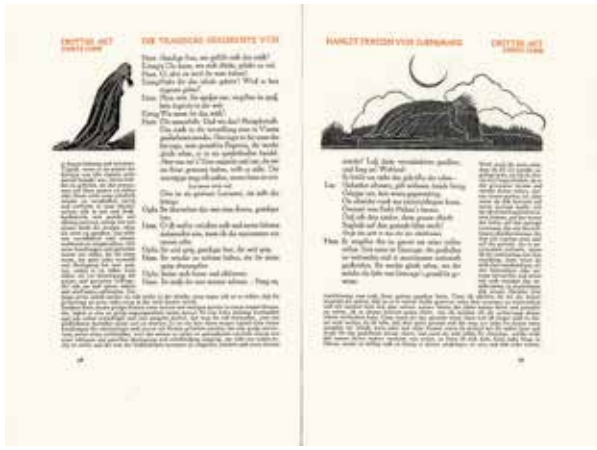
13 On the movement in general, see Franklin 1991.

14 Shakespeare 1928. For a detailed account of the planning and execution of the Cranach *Hamlet*, see Newman 1995.

15 Craig 1911.


IN THE BEGINNING
GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH. ¶ AND THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM, AND VOID; AND DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP. & THE SPIRIT OF GOD MOVED UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS.

15



16

fig. 15 Page from *The English Bible*, The Doves Press, London 1903–1905, typography by Emery Walker and calligraphic capital by Edward Johnston.

fig. 16 Double page spread from Hamlet – *Die Tragische Geschichte von Hamlet Prinzen von Dänemark* (The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark), Cranach Presse, Weimar 1928 – with woodcut illustrations by Edward Gordon Craig.

more expressive style that Koch himself was developing in the years after the war. But Tschichold was also on the fringes of the private press movement and the general design reform movement for higher standards of fine printing. In 1919, he began providing calligraphy for Karl Schnabel's Palatino series of poetry books.[16] Tschichold also became a *Meisterschüler* (master student) at the academy under Walter Tiemann, the director. At this time, Tschichold also began volunteering at the printing house Poeschel & Trepte, whose director Carl Ernst Poeschel was an admirer of the English private press movement. More significantly, however, in 1907 Poeschel collaborated with Walter Tiemann in founding the Janus Press in Leipzig, the first of the private presses in Germany, which was run from the offices of Poeschel & Trepte. Like the Cranach Press, Janus-Presse books were directly inspired by the values of the Doves Press; simple page layouts, high quality types, ink, paper, and bindings. While the private press movement is often regarded as a British phenomenon, the special status of typography and *Schriftkunst* in Germany in the early 20th century meant that the movement was taken up there enthusiastically. The Janus Presse may have been the first, but it was soon followed by other presses, many of which were represented at the *Internationale Ausstellung für Buchgewerbe und Graphik*, or BUGRA (International Exhibition of Books and Graphic Arts) in Leipzig in 1914, which Tschichold had attended and is sometimes credited with inspiring him to take up typography. While there was a virtue in essential typographic qualities at these presses, it would be wrong to regard them solely as exponents of conventional, even reactionary, aesthetics. Poeschel & Trepte produced work for avant-garde artists and writers, including Wassily Kandinsky and Oskar Kokoschka.[17]

But while the worlds of fine printing and avant-garde culture in Germany were "entangled", there were clearly different camps and mutually hostile tendencies. This is what makes Tschichold's activities in the two years between 1923 and 1925, in fact the eighteen months or so between his visit to the Bauhaus and the preparation of "Elementare Typographie", so consequential for the history of typography, and graphic design.

It is clear from the early manifesto in the journal *Kulturschau* that Tschichold's ideas were already quite well formed by the spring of 1925. Entitled *Die neue Typographie*, it includes many of the key concepts that will be repeated by Tschichold and others over the next few years: text and layout should be brief, precise and purposeful; design should be relevant to most forms of printed matter, employing the most suitable materials (*konstruktive*, or constructive), and rejecting all ornament; of course, it should employ exclusively sans serif types (no "national typefaces" such as Fraktur and the likes).[18] This initial statement also had the more radical proposals of diagonal line directions for animation, and photography for illustration. That Tschichold equated these rules with Constructivism is also clear from the images by El Lissitzky and Moholy-Nagy and the captions that he used to illustrate the article.

This is remarkably early to be proposing such a comprehensive programme of reform of typography and

16 Two titles are known to have been printed in litho from Tschichold's calligraphy: Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hymne an die Freiheit*, and Friedrich Schiller, *An die Freude*, both published by Karl Schnabel, Berlin 1919.

17 Wassily Kandinsky's *Klänge* (Sounds), R. Piper & Co, Munich 1913, and Oskar Kokoschka's *Die Chinesische Mauer* (The Great Wall of China), Kurt Wolff Verlag, Leipzig 1914, were printed by Poeschel & Trepte.

18 Tschichold 1925: 9–11.

graphic communication. Constructivism, as a term, was relatively new and still unclear in the minds of many, but Tschichold had already grasped its relationship with objectivity (*Sachlichkeit*), industrial materials and processes, and radical socialist politics. El Lissitzky, the key figure in transmitting this material to the West, had himself undergone a dramatic conversion in late 1919, when coming under the influence of Malevich at the VKhUTEMAS (Higher State Artistic and Technical Studios) in Vitebsk.[19] Moholy-Nagy had been introduced to recent Russian theories of art in 1920, and only encountered El Lissitzky himself in late 1921 or early 1922.[20] Just three years earlier, Moholy was serving in the Hungarian army having suspended his law studies, and the extent of his artwork was mostly coloured drawings of relatively conventional subjects. Moholy was an immediate convert to Constructivism and a quick learner, if the *Buch neuer Künstler* (The Book of New Artists) is anything to go by.[21] It seems likely that Tschichold became aware of recent Russian art and theory around the series of exhibitions and events that were held in Germany in 1922, at just the moment when he was turning away from the examples of Koch and the "national" school of *Schriftkunst*. 1922 was the year of two exhibitions of Russian art in Germany, and two congresses of Constructivists and Dadaists, the one in Weimar in September being perhaps the most notable. It is significant that six of the participants went on to write theoretical works on the role of typography in the new aesthetics. **(fig. 17)**

What I am outlining here, therefore, is an intense, almost revelatory discovery of new ideas and forms in the years from 1922 to 1925. Tschichold first made contact with El Lissitzky in early 1925, through Moholy, but there was no doubt about the status Tschichold awarded to the Russian in "Elementare Typographie", whom he described as the "leading figure" and "the archetype of the new designer who counts among the best practitioners of the New Typography". It was at this time that Tschichold adopted the first name "Ivan", referring to himself in a letter of January 1925 as "the only typographic Constructivist in Leipzig".[22]

Where was the Bauhaus in all this activity? It is quite clear that Tschichold and his wife Edith were warmly received there; a portrait photograph of Edith by Lucia Moholy probably taken c. 1926, testifies to their friendship, as does the correspondence between the two women over the decades.[23] But Tschichold, who throughout his career was a stickler for high standards of design and presswork, can hardly have been impressed by the equipment or teaching of typography in the Bauhaus. After all, in 1970 he was very critical of the teaching he himself had received at the Academy in Leipzig, between 1919 and 1922.[24] In *Typographische Mitteilungen*, Tschichold made a point of the fact that the Bauhaus was "only one of several streams leading to modern design".[25] I would suggest that the significance of the New Typography at the Bauhaus had more to do with the construction of a public image for the college, rather than subscribing to the ideals in their teaching. Most of the college's publicity, like the headed notepaper, was prepared by staff and sent out for printing; this was especially true

19 Lampe 2018.
20 Botar 2006.
21 Kassák and Moholy-Nagy 1922.
22 Tschichold to El Lissitzky, 19 January 1925, reproduced in Burke 2007: 40.
23 There was also a correspondence between Tschichold and Gropius, initially over the purchase of a rug designed by Klee, but developing later into a more familiar exchange of views.
24 Tschichold 1992 (1970): 361–362.
25 *Typographische Mitteilungen* 1925: 212.



17

fig. 17 Photograph of the Congress of Constructivists and Dadaists held in Weimar on 25–26 September 1922.
From top to bottom and from left to right:
1st row: Lucia Moholy, Alfréd Kemény, László Moholy-Nagy; 2nd row: Lotte Burchartz, El Lissitzky (with pipe and cap), Cornelis van Eesteren, Bernhard Sturtzkopf; 3rd row: Max Burchartz (with child on his shoulders), Harry Scheibe, Theo van Doesburg (with paper hat), Hans Vogel, Peter Röhl; 4th row: Alexa Röhl (in all black), Nelly van Doesburg, Tristan Tzara, Nini Smit, Hans Arp; 5th row: Werner Graeff and Hans Richter (on ground).
Note: "Nini Smit" close to Hans Arp is Sophie Taeuber (who would marry Arp on 20 October 1922). Kurt Schwitters is also thought to have attended the congress although he does not appear in the photograph.
Photographer unknown



18

fig. 18 "Die Sport Ausstellung" (The Sport Exhibition), poster designed by Walter Dexel for the exhibition held in Magdeburg, 25 September – 13 October 1929. Photolithograph.

of the *Bauhausbücher* (Bauhaus Books) series overseen by Moholy, and the college magazine designed by Herbert Bayer, who ran the Advertising Design course for one year in 1926–27. Even at Dessau, the print workshop had only a marginal role in the curriculum. The significance of this is not to reveal the inadequacies of the Bauhaus so much as to offer a more precise recognition of the true achievements of the college. As early as 1980, it was suggested that the Bauhaus had only a modest impact on design for industry, but that it had exerted a huge influence on teaching and on the lifestyle and working methods of the Modern Art and design student.[26]

It is also true that many practitioners of the New Typography were quite hostile towards the Bauhaus which they regarded as an elitist and remote institution, at a time when Modernist designers were seeking a collective front against reactionary opposition. The members of the Ring "Neue Werbegestalter" (Circle "New Advertising Designers"), the association set up in 1928 by Kurt Schwitters and Robert Michel, of which Tschichold was an enthusiastic member, were annoyed by the high-handed treatment they received from the Bauhaus authorities when approached about collaboration on exhibition projects and publications. When Schwitters circulated the comments from the Bauhaus to Ring members, he received a stream of critical responses, one of which stated: "There is a risk that our tendency could be viewed as being influenced by the Bauhaus. [...] it is neither pleasant, nor beneficial, to be put in the same pot as the Bauhaus".[27] As a result, *Gefesselter Blick* (The Captivated Gaze), the 1930 survey of modern graphic design which was largely organised through the Ring, included only one representative from the Bauhaus, Moholy-Nagy, who had long since left the college.[28]

These resentments did not disappear through time. Walter Dexel, who had been at the Bauhaus in 1922 when the dominant ethos was one of quasi-mystical Expressionism, remained unimpressed by the achievements of the Bauhaus, a view that turned to indignation as the college's reputation grew in the post-war years to encompass all innovation in modern design. This prompted Dexel to write an article entitled "Der Bauhausstil. Ein Mythos" (The Bauhaus Style. A Myth), to set the record straight about what the Bauhaus had actually achieved: "It is clear that the new ideas that emerged in the 1920s did not originate at the Bauhaus. [...] The term 'Bauhaus style' is a myth, an unauthorised simplification and an unfair concealment of the many important forces that have worked to create the style of that time".[29] In terms of the New Typography, it was colleges like the Kunstgewerbeschule at Bielefeld, Breslau and Magdeburg (where Dexel taught), or the Städelschule in Frankfurt, as well as the Meisterschule für Deutschlands Buchdrücker (Master School for Germany's Book Printers) in Munich, where Tschichold and Paul Renner taught, that were more likely to train up the next generation of modern graphic designers. **(fig. 18)**

The conclusions I draw from this are fairly simple. First, that reputations grow for many reasons, so an institution like the Bauhaus can accrue great prestige in an area like print and graphic design, although that was never a major element in

26 In *Industrial Design*, John Heskett (1980: 103) states, "Bauhaus products appear no more than a miniscule contribution from an avant-garde fringe group". For an indication of the new fashions and self-presentation of Bauhaus students, see the exhibition *Bauhaus: Art as Life*, London, Barbican Centre, 3 May – 12 August 2012.

27 Cited in Kees Broos, "Das kurze, aber heftige Leben des Rings 'Neue Werbegestalter'", in Rattemeyer and Helms 1990: 9.

28 Rasch and Rasch 1930.

29 Dexel 1976: 17–20, translated in Dexel 2020: 108.

the curriculum of the college. The New Typography was only ever a minor aspect of the teaching but a powerful element in shaping the image of the Bauhaus. Secondly, this brief account of the reformers and private press advocates in the years before and after World War I suggests that a different mind-set was needed to break out of the conventions of *Buchkunst* and fine printing, moored as it was to a combination of traditional values and established technical possibilities. El Lissitzky and Moholy-Nagy belonged to a world unconstrained by tradition and available technology, so were already thinking of the potential of printed text and imagery beyond the technical means of achieving it. Tschichold said as much in his tribute to his friend: "Lissitzky was probably not concerned how the compositor was to set up his sketches. Drawing was often the only course open to him, because type was incapable of producing what he wanted. [His work], original and powerful though it might be, betrays the struggle of the amateur typographer with the ancient and intractable mysteries of printing".[30]

This could be interpreted as criticism, but it also indicates how the amateur or the avant-gardist may conceive of possibilities that cannot be achieved with the technologies available. In some cases, the absence of formal training may be beneficial, allowing for more liberated thinking. But equally, that serves to emphasise why Tschichold's position was so crucial for the development and acceptance of the new manner. Operating between the two camps of fine printers and the Constructivist avant-garde, while not compromising either, the publications "Elementare Typographie" and *Die neue Typographie* were an essential conduit between practice and theory at a time when these two worlds must have seemed incompatible.

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Typophoto and The New Photomontage c. 1930

Jessica D. Brier

> "Photomontage will be the means of expression of the future. It enables a new type of combination of fragments of reality – on all levels of logic, into an illogical bond – as well as a field for the desire for fantasy".[1]
> Max Burchartz

When Jan Tschichold first adopted *Typophoto* as a core tenet of the New Typography in 1925, he championed photographic illustration as precise, efficient, and objective.[2] However in practice, the New Typographers used photography as much more than a tool for objective representation. Accordingly, Tschichold's writings from around 1930 suggest a significant refinement of his thinking about photography and typography – both in terms of the relationship between visual and verbal representation and how that relationship is shaped by graphic design. In *Die neue Typographie* (1928), he had distinguished *Typophoto* from photomontage, describing the latter as a process of cutting, arranging, and pasting by hand, and sidestepping the material construction of *Typophoto.*[3] By emphasising photomontage as a process of handwork, he had implied Typophoto as a product of machine work – supporting the claim that photographic illustration fortified type with technological precision, efficiency, and objectivity.

Despite these earlier claims, Tschichold sustained a major preoccupation with photomontage in graphic design. Around 1930, he planned to author a book, *Fotomontage* (c. 1930–31), which was never realised. What follows is a reconstruction of its intended argument using an extant typescript, recovering Tschichold's thesis that "the new photomontage" encompassed a capacious set of practices including experimental photography, collage, and graphic design. Tschichold intended to outline the experimental techniques of photography as integral to modern visual communication. He had evidently come to understand *Typophoto* as a form of composite image making, akin to Dada and Surrealist collage and printmaking.

After publishing *Die neue Typographie*, Tschichold came to understand photography's efficacy in design as a set of techniques that evoked active construction and affective response in the minds of beholders. This thinking was deeply influenced by German art historian and critic Franz Roh, who became an important interlocutor when Tschi-

A longer version of this essay was originally published as "Typophoto and the New Photomontage, 1928-1933", in Jessica D. Brier, *Typophoto: New Typography and the Reinvention of Photography*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis MN 2025, © by the Regents of the University of Minnesota. Used by permission.

1 Burchartz 1926: 42.

2 See the section titled, "Photographie und Typographie", in Tschichold 1987 (1928): 89–98. See Moholy-Nagy's 1925 *Malerei, Fotografie, Film* (Bauhausbücher 8).

3 Tschichold 1987 (1928): 87–95.

chold moved to Munich in 1926. Indeed, *Fotomontage* was planned as the fourth book in Roh's "Fototek" series.[4] Given Tschichold's original claim that photomontage was antithetical to the objectivity of *Typophoto*, it is striking that Roh would charge Tschichold with editing this book. The collaborations of Tschichold and Roh, though little studied, signified a larger shift in the connotations of New Typography around 1930.

Tschichold's unrealised book on photomontage foregrounds an important paradox: the New Typography encompassed a dialectic between its own aspirations toward universal legibility and objectivity – encapsulated by "Functionalism" – and the strategies of Dada and Surrealism that the New Typographers employed in practice. The New Typography similarly destabilised photography as mimetic representation, betraying a strong link between surrealist approaches to photography and what Moholy-Nagy called "super-photography" in advertising.[5] In order to be "functional", commercial design incited desire through word-image combinations that upended the expectation that text explains images and in turn, that images illustrate text. The dependency of functionalist graphic design on surrealist strategies of representation illuminates the extent to which the Weimar craze for rationalisation was fuelled by utopian fantasy and experiments with the human mind. The New Typography is thus perhaps best understood as emblematic of the utopian aspirations of Weimar Germany, rather than as an example of rationalisation that actually took place.

Photomontage, Old and New

All that remains of Tschichold's "Fototek" book is a typed outline and page of handwritten notes.[6] However, they represent nearly a decade spent thinking and writing about photography and graphic design. The outline is rich with ideas that correlate to discourses found in contemporaneous exhibitions and books. Advertisements for the "Fototek" series promised that *Fotomontage* would illuminate "significant possibilities that lie in this new manner of form-production" with "excellent examples".[7] An announcement for "Fototek" touted the timely relevance of the book: "Especially, Tschichold's book on 'Photomontage' will be awaited with impatience, since this new area – so important to our graphic arts – has not been worked on to this day, although there exists already a wealth of excellent material of great beauty".[8]

Tschichold had three major goals for *Fotomontage*. First, he proposed that the technique of photomontage was not new, but rather had a history that began in the 19th century. "This [book] is a historical survey", he wrote, "a conscious historical document, showing what is

4 Only the first two books in the "Fototek" series were published: Moholy-Nagy 1930 and Biermann 1930. This advertisement for "Fototek" was designed by students at the Meisterschule für Deutschlands Buchdrucker, where Tschichold taught from 1927 to 1933.

5 Moholy-Nagy 1989 (1927): 92 (originally published: Moholy-Nagy 1927: 257–260).

6 These materials are located in Box 5, Folder 6, Jan and Edith Tschichold papers, 1899–1979, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Additionally, a typed set of notes that appears related to both *Fotomontage* and *Die neue Typographie* is included in Box 74, *Nachlass Jan Tschichold*, Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig.

7 "An Hand hervorragender Beispiele wird aufgezeigt, welche bedeutsamen Möglichkeiten in dieser neuen Gestaltungsweise liegen". "Fototek" advertisement, printed as back matter in Biermann 1930: n.p.

8 "Gerade das Buch von Tschichold über 'Fotomontage' wird man mit Ungeduld erwarten, da dieses für unser grafisches Gewerbe so wichtig und neues Gebiet bis heute noch nirgends bearbeitet wurde, obwohl schon eine Fülle hervorragenden Materials von großer Schönheit vorliegt". *Werkbund Gedanken* 1930: n.p.

good and bad. Examples and counter-examples".[9] He intended to situate what he called "the new photomontage" as a reinvention of the technique in early 20th-century avant-garde art – namely Constructivism, Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism – as well as in Modernist graphic design.[10] A key ambition of this publication was to show that contemporary graphic design was inextricably linked to avant-garde art.[11] However, Tschichold also countered a narrative about the Modernist "invention" of photomontage. By identifying the origins of the technique in the 19th century, and by elaborating its applications beyond art making, Tschichold offered a counter-narrative to that of Raoul Hausmann who, in his remarks at the opening of the 1931 Berlin exhibition *Fotomontage*, defended Dadaists as "the first photomonteurs".[12]

Hausmann and Tschichold claimed photomontage for different ends. Hausmann insisted on the future importance of photomontage to promote the continued relevance of Dada. Tschichold was interested in expanding the definition of photomontage by drawing meaningful connections between its many uses, including in advertising. Dutch artist and designer César Domela-Nieuwenhuis aggregated their diverging perspectives in his 1931 exhibition, *Fotomontage*, which included political propaganda and commercial graphics alongside art.[13] Although Hausmann agreed to participate, he objected privately to the inclusion of commercial design by Tschichold, Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, and others. In a letter to Hannah Höch, Hausmann pointedly referred to these designers as "our descendants", dismissing their work as "quite weak", and praising Höch's contributions by contrast.[14]

Tschichold's unrealised book and Domela-Nieuwenhuis's exhibition shared both a title and thesis about photomontage as a paradigm for dissolving boundaries between art and design, and between history and Modernism. Like Tschichold, Domela-Nieuwenhuis defined photomontage broadly, situating Modernist

9 "Es gibt einen geschichtlichen Querschnitt, will also bewusst historisches Dokument sein, und zeigt auf, was gut und schlecht ist. Beispiele und Gegenbeispiele", Tschichold n.d. (1930–1931): 4. All translations of this document are the author's own. The penchant for *Kleinschreibung* was a signature of New Typography. Designers including Herbert Bayer, Kurt Schwitters, and Jan Tschichold sought to optimise the Latin alphabet as "universally" legible by simplifying letterforms, abolishing letters unique to the German language, and dispensing with the convention of capitalising German nouns. This practice was strongly advocated by German engineer and theoretician Walter Porstmann in his highly influential book. Porstmann 1920.

10 The typescript includes a note about "Constructivist" design and names Futurist painting as an "influence" on contemporary photomontage. He did not explicitly discuss Dada or Surrealism, but many of the artist he names as potential examples of different kinds of photomontage were associated with these movements. He distinguished between historical precedents and current uses of photomontage, naming precursors from the 19th century "als Urheber der neuen Fotomontage" (originators of the new photomontage). Tschichold n.d. (1930–1931).

11 This was clearly also true of *The New Typography*, which included a section called "The New Art", contextualising New Typography in part as an extension of Modernist tendencies in art that had begun with Impressionist painting. Tschichold 1987 (1928): 30–51.

12 Hausmann made this statement in a speech delivered at the opening of the 1931 exhibition *Fotomontage* in Berlin, which was also printed in the journal *A bis Z*. Phillips 1989: 178 (originally published: Hausmann 1931).

13 *Fotomontage* was organised by César Domela-Nieuwenhuis at the former Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin (today the Martin-Gropius-Bau), on view from 25 April to 31 May 1931 in the museum's atrium. The exhibition also showcased works by graphic designers including Johannes Canis, Georg Trump, John Heartfield, Paul Schuitema, Karel Teige, Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart, Kurt Schwitters, and Piet Zwart. *Fotomontage* 1931: n.p.

14 "Unsere Nachfahren, Tschichold, Bayer, Errell, auch Moholy-Nagy und Nerlinger sind recht schwächlich, leider". Hausmann, letter to Hannah Höch, April 1931, Berlinische Galerie, BG-HHC K 695/79.

photography within longer traditions. The exhibition's first gallery displayed non-photographic works from the 18th and 19th centuries, referred to in the catalogue as "curiosities that can be seen as precursors of photomontage".[15] Domela-Nieuwenhuis borrowed from the private collection of German photography historian Erich Stenger.[16] He historicised photography as a technology that touched every aspect of modern life, defining the medium broadly, including techniques of "manipulation" such as photomontage and spirit photography.[17] In his unpublished notes, Tschichold cited Stenger's collection as proof of photomontage's historical precedents.[18]

By characterising photomontage as historically rooted in the 19th century, Tschichold suggested that the origins of photomontage were not easily pinpointed, which Hausmann regarded as both threatening and false.[19] Hausmann, Tschichold, and Domela-Nieuwenhuis did concur on one important score: all three defended photomontage as thriving and socially relevant around 1930. Domela-Niewenhuis refuted a cacophony of declarations in the German press – including art and advertising journals – that the medium of photomontage was a waning trend, or already dead: "It would be quite mistaken to think of it as a mere fad", he wrote, stressing that "photomontage is by no means passé, as one often hears, but rather in the initial stage of its development".[20]

In a review of Domela-Nieuwenhuis's exhibition, German critic and art historian Adolf Behne at first credited Dada for "the invention of montage", thereby making "the rigid photograph mobile and thinking".[21] However, he continued, somewhat provocatively:

> But … is the coat of arms of the old knight shields not the real ancestor of this new art form? Of course, there are the formal beginnings of montage, in those heraldic divisions of the surface, in the combination of half eagles, horse-tailed tails, double heads with mythical creatures, with crenelated walls and gates, with stars, suns, and comets.[22]

15 "Herr Prof. Stenger ließ uns aus seiner wertvollen Fotografiensammlung Kuriositäten auswählen, die als Vorläufer der Fotomontage angesehen werden können". *Fotomontage* 1931.

16 Erich Stenger authored one of several prominent surveys of the medium's early history. His approach to collecting photography and writing its history are evident in his *Geschichte der Photographie* (1929), and in his transcribed remembrances, published in Halwani 2014.

17 Stenger 1939: viii.

18 Jan Tschichold, unpublished notes, page 67. Box 74, *Nachlass Jan Tschichold*, Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig.

19 Hausmann's objection to the application of photomontage in graphic design was at least partly due to personal animus toward Tschichold. In April of 1930, Tschichold received a letter from Hausmann admonishing him for excluding Hausmann from his 1928 treatise on New Typography, specifically in the narrative of Modern Art presented in the section, "The New Art" (Burke 2007: 115). In a letter to Hausmann dated 3 April 1930, Tschichold replied: "Ich möchte Ihnen in voller Ehrlichkeit versichern, dass ich Ihren Namen nicht absichtlich an den Stellen die Sie zitieren, weggelassen habe, ich bin mit Kurt Schwitters wie Sie befreundet, und vielleicht nehmen Sie Veranlassung ihn zu fragen, welche Erfahrungen er mit mir gemacht hat". (I would like to assure you, in all honesty, that I have not purposely omitted your name from the passages that you are quoting. Like you, I am a friend of Kurt Schwitters, and perhaps you will have an opportunity to ask him what experience he has had with me). In the same letter he also suggested that it was futile to pinpoint photomontage's "reinvention": "Ich glaube, dass es zu endlosen und unnützen Streitigkeiten führt, wenn man sich ernsthaft darüber unterhalten will, wer die Fotomontage neu erfand". (I believe that it leads to endless and useless disputes to seriously discuss who reinvented photomontage). Jan Tschichold, letter to Hausmann, 3 April 1930, *Nachlass Raoul Hausmann*, BG-RHA 1029, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin.

20 Domela-Nieuwenhuis 2012 (1931): 130.

21 "[…] die Dadaisten durch Erfindung der Montage das starre Lichtbild beweglich und denkend machten". Behne 1931: n.p.

22 "Aber […] ist nicht das Wappen der alten Ritterschilde der eigentliche Urahn dieser neuen Kunstform? Natürlich, dort liegen die formalen Anfänge der Montage, in jenen heraldischen Aufteilungen der Fläche, in der Kombination von halben Adlern, von Roßschweifen, doppelten Köpfen mit Fabelwesen, mit Mauerzinnen und Toren, mit Sternen, Sonnen und Kometen". *Ibid*.

Behne reinforced and extended the exhibition's thesis by invoking photomontage's deeper history. He suggested that Modernism had emerged from a tradition of "divisions of the surface" in composite image making, which transcended boundaries of medium, material, and purpose.

Tschichold's typescript shows that he had clearly intended to weigh in on this debate about the past and future of photomontage. At stake was an understanding that photomontage had fundamentally altered perception. In one of the few fully-formed theses for his own project, Tschichold wrote: "My book intends to offer an overview of the possibilities of photomontage, established on the basis of its previous creation, to prove that the talk of the 'survival' of these graphics is empty chatter".[23] He would certainly have refuted Hausmann's accusation that photomontage had been debased by commercial design, instead upholding its broader use as proof of its staying power.

Tschichold's second goal was to produce a publication that would serve as both a theoretical text and practical handbook, offering prescriptions for "good" and "bad" photomontage illustrated with examples and counterexamples. The didacticism of this premise recalls that of *Die neue Typographie* and *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung* (A Lesson in Printing Design, 1930). He had made a case for New Typography similarly, situating the movement as the natural progression of typography and printing and promoting the New Typography as a universal design programme, providing examples and counterexamples of his argument. Yet, the outline for *Fotomontage* also suggests that this book would have departed somewhat from the format of Tschichold's other publications.

Tschichold intended to blend the format of the design handbook with the theoretical premise and format of *Foto-Auge: 76 Fotos der Zeit* (Photo-Eye: 76 Photos of the Time, 1929), a book he made in collaboration with Roh in conjunction with the Deutscher Werkbund exhibition *Film und Foto* (Film and Photography, 1929–1931), which described and illustrated myriad uses of photography from its invention to the present.[24] *Foto-Auge* was an important prototype for Roh's "Fototek" series, inaugurated the following year. It consists primarily of a visual essay of photographic and photography-based images, preceded by Roh's introduction (printed in German, French and English). The book posited photography as a vehicle for new ways of seeing. It included anonymous press and archival photographs; aerial, astronomical and X-ray photographs; designs for book covers, posters and advertisements; and collage and photomontage, including examples of Dada and Surrealism. The book showcased photography as inherently heterogeneous, riddled with contradictions, ultimately undefinable according to any single criteria. Their sequencing suggested that photographic images are best read dialectically. In his introduction, Roh argued that photography could extend the capacity of the human eye, or even replace it as a superior optical prosthesis.[25]

23 "Mein Buch will a Hand des bisher geschaffenen einen Überblick über die Möglichkeiten der Fotomontage geben und nachweisen, dass die Rede von der 'Überlebtheit' dieser Graphik leeres Geschwätz ist". Tschichold n.d. (1930–1931): 4.

24 Roh and Tschichold 1929. For studies of *Film und Foto*, see Eskildsen and Horak 1979; Lugon 2010: 88–105; Stotz 1929; Zervigón 2014: 27–48.

25 Roh drew heavily from the distinction made by László Moholy-Nagy between photography as a "reproductive" medium that produced mimetic images of the world, and as a "productive" medium that could extend the capacity of the human eye and inculcate *Neues Sehen* (New Vision), a way of seeing commensurate with the technological revolution born of modernity. See especially Moholy-Nagy 1989 (1922); Moholy-Nagy 1925. See also Stetler 2014.

For Roh, photography included not only the mechanical production of images with a camera, but also myriad manipulations of photographic chemistry and printing. New ways of seeing engendered by photography, he argued, permeated the boundaries between the "isms" of contemporary art; between machine production and handcraft; and between art, design, technology and science.

Tschichold's third goal for *Fotomontage* was to situate the "new photomontage" as a paradigm for making, using and perceiving images. He intended to show that photomontage's myriad applications were part of a modern impulse toward montage that transcended divisions between mediums, between fine and applied art, and between techniques of production. The first extant page of the typescript lists a number of different applications as subcategories of photomontage, with shorthanded names of artists and designers under each, indicating possible examples.[26] Based on the formats of the two extant "Fototek" publications, these names likely stood for images in a photographic essay, consisting of sixty reproductions, preceded by Tschichold's introduction.[27] He included the category of "freie Fotomontage" (free photomontage) in the outline, but offered no examples, enumerating instead its many uses.[28]

The first applications of photomontage listed are "politische Fotomontage" (political montage, exemplified by the work of George Grosz and John Heartfield) and "Fotomontage als Witz" (photomontage as joke or satire, exemplified by Höch and Moholy-Nagy). As examples, he may have used works incorporating photomontage that had also been reproduced in *Foto-Auge*, such as Grosz's *"Der Sträfling": Monteur John Heartfield nach Franz Jungs Versuch, ihn auf die Beine zu stellen* ("The Convict": Monteur John Heartfield after Franz Jung's Attempt to Set Him on His Feet, 1920); Höch's *Von oben* (From Above, 1927); and Moholy-Nagy's *Leda und der Schwan* (Leda and the Swan, 1925).[29] **(figs. 19–21)** Notably, he named individuals who worked between avant-garde art and graphic designers between the two wars.[30]

The typescript pays particular attention to the use of photomontage in graphic design. These included "Fotoplakate" (photographic advertising posters) and photomontage in book design and illustration as applications of the technique by graphic designers.[31] Tschichold may well have used one of his own designs for the Phoebus-Palast cinema in Berlin, made in 1926 and 1927, as examples of poster design. **(fig. 22)** These are among the few examples of applied photomontage in his own work. Despite Hausmann's disapproval of commercial photomontage, Tschichold's poster for the film *Die Frau ohne Namen* (Nameless Woman, 1927) anticipated what Hausmann later described as "photography and printed texts combined and transformed into a kind of static film".[32]

Importantly, the typescript points beyond examples of hand-held printed matter to include the design and representation of built space as the

26 The outline includes only last names of artists and designers and, in just a few cases, minimal notes indicating specific examples, but for the most part, specific works that Tschichold would have reproduced in his book are unknown.

27 Advertisements for the "Fototek" series specified that each volume was to include sixty large image reproductions, as in the published volumes on László Moholy-Nagy and Aenne Biermann.

28 I am grateful to Adrian Sudhalter for her generosity in thinking through this term and its translation.

29 Reproductions of these works appear as plates 49, 55, and 60 in *Foto-Auge*. The latter also appears in Moholy-Nagy 1930 as plate 3.

30 Notably, Tschichold's outline excluded Hausmann. However, in a separate typed set of notes that are likely related to the outline for *Fotomontage*, Tschichold acknowledged Hausmann as an innovator of Dada photomontage. Tschichold, unpublished notes, page 67. Box 74, *Nachlass Jan Tschichold*, Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig.

31 *Ibid.*: 2–3.

32 Hausmann 1989 (1931): 178–179.



19

fig. 19 George Grosz, *"Der Sträfling": Monteur John Heartfield nach Franz Jungs Versuch, ihn auf die Beine zu stellen* ("The Convict": Monteur John Heartfield after Franz Jung's Attempt to Set Him on His Feet), 1920. Watercolour, ink, pencil, and cut-and-pasted printed paper on paper.



20

fig. 20 Hannah Höch, *Von oben* (From Above), 1927. Cut-and-pasted printed paper on paper. Collection Louise Rosenfield Noun, Des Moines, Iowa. Photo by Rich Sanders



21

fig. 21 László Moholy-Nagy, *Leda und der Schwan* (Leda and the Swan), 1925. Gelatin silver print.

purview of both experimental photography and graphic design. Yet another application identified in the outline is "Fotomontage in der Architektenzeichnung" (photomontage in architectural drawing), naming Swiss architect Le Corbusier and Czech architect Jaromír Krejcar as examples. These notes may well have referred to representations of built architecture by Le Corbusier or Krejcar, who both employed photomontage in different forms, or to preparatory architectural drawings that integrated photographic elements. Le Corbusier used extensive airbrushing to isolate the "pure" forms of his Villa Schwob, built in 1916, in photographic reproductions for the magazine *L'Esprit nouveau*.[33] He also used photomontage to create what he called a "parallel discourse" among images in *L'Esprit nouveau* as well as in his books *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (1925) and *Vers une architecture* (1923).[34] **(fig. 23)** Krejcar used photomontage to envision his 1923 Olympic department store in Prague, emphasising its structure as an assembly of pure geometric forms and its exterior planes as ready-made surfaces for advertising.[35] **(fig. 24)**

Both architects demonstrated a savvy awareness of the habits of the modern reader, who might flip through a book or magazine, skimming for visual content.

In the category of "Fotomontage in der Ausstellungsarchitektur" (photomontage in exhibition architecture), Tschichold named Moholy-Nagy and German graphic designer Joost Schmidt. Moholy-Nagy and Schmidt had become known for their experiments with photography in the design of exhibitions and advertising signage under the auspices of the Bauhaus sculpture workshop, which Schmidt re-established in Dessau in 1928.[36] Commercial projects of the Bauhaus sculpture workshop under Schmidt's direction included a display promoting Junkers water heaters at the 1929 Gas und Wasser (Gas and Water) trade exhibition in Berlin, attributed to Schmidt and fellow Bauhaus instructor and Swiss artist Xanti Schawinsky. Of Moholy-Nagy's use of photomontage in exhibition design, Tschichold may well have had in mind the first room of *Film und Foto* (1929).[37] **(fig. 25)** Schmidt and Moholy-Nagy presented photography and text as detached surfaces – often suspended on wires or freestanding armature and seemingly exempt from the rules of engineering – which suggested the exhibition as an extension of the magazine.

Tschichold named El Lissitzky as an exemplar of photomontage in both architectural drawing and exhibition architecture. Long influenced by Lissitzky's typography,[38] Tschichold featured his designs for the Soviet sections of the 1930 *International Hygiene* exhibition and the 1928 *In-*

33 *L'Esprit nouveau* was a journal published from 1920 to 1925 in Paris, primarily concerned with contemporary architecture and design and dedicated to the promotion of the Purism movement, led by Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier. The journal was produced under the direction of Paul Dermée and edited, typeset, and printed by Maurice Darantière. For more on Purism and *L'Esprit nouveau*, see Eliel 2001; Von Moos 1987.

34 Cited in Colomina 1987: 15. Colomina has noted that Le Corbusier used images to "construct the text", rather than to illustrate it. She argues that, through his role soliciting advertising for *L'Esprit nouveau*, the architect began appropriating found commercial photography in his own writing and assimilating strategies of combining text and image from advertising.

35 This image was reproduced in Karel Teige's *Práce Jaromíra Krejcara* (The Work of Jaromír Krejcar, 1933) but likely circulated in the 1920s as well. Krejcar's use of photomontage was also well known to Tschichold from the cover design for the second issue of the Czech journal *Život* (Life) published in 1922. This design was reproduced as plate 19 in *Foto-Auge*.

36 See Bergdoll and Dickerman 2009; Paret 2007.

37 For more on Moholy-Nagy's exhibition designs, see King 2016: 139–150.

38 Lissitzky's typographic work was featured heavily in Tschichold's earliest publications on New Typography. See *Typographische Mitteilungen* 1925; Tschichold 1987 (1928).



22



23



24

fig. 22 Jan Tschichold, *Die Frau ohne Namen* (Nameless Woman), 1927. Offset lithograph. Photo by Jolie Simpson

fig. 23 Le Corbusier, "Autres icônes, les musées" (Other Icons, Museums), first published in *L'Esprit nouveau*, 20, January-February 1924, is a chapter of *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, Éditions Cres, Paris 1925. Photo by Niccolò Quaresima

fig. 24 Drawing with photomontage by Jaromír Krejcar reproduced in the book Karel Teige, *Práce Jaromíra Krejcara* (The Work of Jaromír Krejcar), Václav Petr, Prague 1933.

ternational Press Exhibition in Cologne, commonly known as *Pressa*, in an article for *Commercial Art*, "Display that has Dynamic Force: Exhibition Rooms designed by El Lissitzky", published in January 1931.[39] **(fig. 26)** He praised Lissitzky's "visual design of the exhibition space and its contents", which incorporated "glass, mirrors, celluloid, nickel and other materials; by contrasting these new materials with wood, lacquer, textiles and photographs", as well as type in various thicknesses, sizes, colours, and orientations.[40] The result was an exhibition space that Tschichold described as "a sort of stage on which the visitor himself seemed to be one of the players".[41] These examples would have demonstrated photomontage as a means of sensory immersion in exhibition design. As in the window display of a department store, the intermingling of photographic materiality with other surfaces and textures in Lissitzky's exhibitions was intended to absorb the viewing public into these environments.[42] These immersive spaces implicated visitors as embodied participants. In a set of notes related to the *Fotomontage* typescript, Tschichold wrote that the "value [of photomontage] consists in the fact that one can use it to form optical associations".[43] Thus he sought to enumerate its seemingly limitless applications in design as demonstrations of how to see and live in the modern world.

39 Tschichold 1931: 22–26.

40 *Ibid.*: 22.

41 *Ibid.*

42 Though these examples of Lissitzky's exhibition designs were mounted as political propaganda on behalf of Soviet Russia, Tschichold's discussion of them (especially in the context of an article for *Commercial Art*) tacitly recognised the strategies of communist propaganda and commercial design as closely related, if not entirely analogous.

43 Tschichold, unpublished notes, page 67. Box 74, *Nachlass Jan Tschichold*, Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig. This phrase is repeated, almost verbatim, in Tschichold 1930: 237–49.

44 In 1926, Paul Renner invited Tschichold to teach at the newly founded Meisterschule für Deutschlands Buchdrucker in Munich, connected to the Graphische Berufsschule of which he was director. According to Ruari McLean and Christopher Burke, Renner originally invited Tschichold to take the position Renner had previously held at the Kunstschule Frankfurt (Städelschule), but then followed up with the invitation to teach in Munich. See McLean 1997: 32; Burke 2007: 53. When Tschichold moved to Munich in 1926, he and his wife Edith became neighbours with Roh while living in Munich's Borstei housing project. Correspondence in the Jan and Edith Tschichold Papers at the Getty Research Institute indicates that the Tschichold and Roh families sustained a friendship long after the Tschicholds emigrated from Germany in 1933. See also Burke 2007: 105; Graeve Ingelmann 2014.

45 "Fototek" advertisement. The book on kitsch photography, referred to in advertisements for "Fototek" as "Das Monströse" (The Monstrous), was to draw from the collection of Austrian journalist and collector Raoul Korty. See Graeve Ingelmann 2014.

46 Moholy-Nagy 1930; Biermann 1930.

Franz Roh and New Typography: Between Reportage and Gestaltung

Tschichold's capacious concept of the "new photomontage" betrayed the strong influence of Roh. During his years living in Munich, Tschichold became personally and professionally acquainted with Roh as a neighbour, friend and collaborator.[44] After working on *Foto-Auge* together in 1929, Roh inaugurated the "Fototek" series on "new photography" in 1930. Eight books were planned, including thematic volumes on police photography, kitsch photography, nude photography, sports photography and a monograph on Lissitzky, including "Fotos und Typofotos".[45] In 1930, the first and only two books in the series were published: monographs on Moholy-Nagy and German photographer Aenne Biermann, both designed by Tschichold.[46] Their uniformity suggests that Tschichold's design would have served to unify the series visually.

A page of Tschichold's handwritten notes referenced Roh's ideas and



25



26

fig. 25 Installation view of Room 1 (Wohin geht die typografische Entwicklung? / Where is Typography Headed?) in the exhibition *Film und Foto*, inaugurated in Stuttgart in 1929. Exhibition design by László Moholy-Nagy. Published in *Schwäbisches Bilderblatt. Wochenschrift zum Stuttgarter Neuen Tagblatt*, 23, 7 June 1929. Stadtarchiv Stuttgart. Photographer unknown

fig. 26 Documentation of El Lissitzky's design of the Soviet section of the 1930 *International Hygiene* exhibition in Dresden, reproduced in the article by Jan Tschichold, "Display that has Dynamic Force: Exhibition Rooms designed by El Lissitzky", *Commercial Art*, January 1931, p. 24.

their ongoing discussions about the nature of photography and relationship between fine and applied art in the late 1920s. In the *Fotomontage* typescript, Tschichold referenced several texts by Moholy-Nagy and Roh to be reprinted or excerpted in his own book:

> Roh on the glued photographic image
> extreme fantasy with extreme sobriety,
> freest composition with realistic imitation
> cubist nesting of pure illustrations
>
> Tsch:
> "constructivist" versus "organised"[47]

Here, Tschichold quoted directly from Roh's brief discussion of photomontage in his 1925 book, *Nach-Expressionismus: Magischer Realismus. Probleme der neuesten europäischen Malerei* (Post-Expressionism: Magical Realism, Problems of Recent European Painting), which introduced the term "Magical Realism" to describe contemporary trends in painting and, to a lesser extent, photography.[48] Perhaps Roh's single most enduring idea about photography was that its potency as a tool of communication and means of expression inhered in its contradictions, especially its dual capacity to index objective reality and visualise fantasy. Roh understood photography to be defined as much by its uses – including the arrangement and pasting together of fragments – as by production with a camera or in a darkroom. This was a position with which Tschichold, as a graphic designer, found kinship.

Roh understood photography's social and artistic relevance to reside in its inconsistency. Rather than devise a theory of medium specificity, he raised questions about how a single medium could be used in so many contradictory ways. In Moholy-Nagy's terms, Roh understood photography to be both "reproductive" and "productive", holding these modes perpetually in tension. This dialectic became embedded in the term *Typophoto* in the late 1920s and early 1930s as a paradigm for verbal-visual communication under the auspices of New Typography.

Roh upheld Moholy-Nagy's photographic work as exemplary of the dialectic inherent in photography. In his introduction to *Moholy-Nagy, 60 Fotos* (1930), Roh championed him as a figure of art historical importance and described photography as follows:

> Experience and formation, that often had been a troubled mixture yesterday, are separated more emphatically today. They are directed to their specific poles and placed in ingenious opposition to each other. The modern emphasize of [sic] problems of form on the one hand (the most liberal and unincumbered possibilities of formation), and on the other hand the keenness with which the concept of "reportage" is emphasised, reportage in all fields, is characteristic. Photography is above all *reporting*. But between reporting and forming (Gestaltung) there is after all only a difference in degree, no absolute distinction.[49]

47 "Roh über das Fotoklebebild / äußerste Phantastik bei äußerste Nüchternheit, / freiestes Komponieren bei Wirklichkeitsabklatsch / kubistische Schachtelung bei barem Abbild / Tsch: / "Konstruktivistische" Gestaltung gegenüber "organizistische". Tschichold n.d. (1930–1931).

48 "Nichts kann so deutlich die völlige Durchdringung der beiden großen Wesenheiten neuester Kunst zeigen: äußerste Phantastik bei äußerste Nüchternheit, freiestes Komponieren bei Wirklichkeitsabklatsch, kubistische Schachtelung bei barem Abbild". Roh 1925: 46. For an account of the interactions between Franz Roh and Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub, who coined "Neue Sachlichkeit", and their conceptual overlap, see Fuhrmeister 2015: 41–49.

49 Moholy-Nagy 1930: 6. Emphasis in italic is original to Roh's published text.

In proposing that "there is [...] only a difference in degree" and not an "absolute distinction" between reportage and Gestaltung, he identified poles located at opposite ends of a spectrum of photographic representation. Like Moholy-Nagy, Roh understood photographic "Realism" to be predicated on, rather than undermined by, the choices of photographers, including mechanical and chemical manipulations. The dual capacity for reportage and abstraction enabled photography to create reality, rather than merely represent it.

Tschichold borrowed Roh's theory of photography as a more sophisticated framework for defending *Typophoto* in visual communication than he had initially proposed. He came to understand objective visual communication and propaganda not as opposites, but as two poles on a spectrum of graphic representation. Although he had emphatically declared the photographic halftone and sans serif type as equivalently "objective", he also acknowledged photography and typography as fundamentally different modes of representation that fused in dynamic contrast.[50] His notes for *Fotomontage* suggest that, in the years just after the publication of his first book, he continued to reflect on reading as a process of optical and cognitive negotiation between photographic and typographic communication. Despite its decisive tone, *Die neue Typographie* had posed unresolved questions about how images and text work together – or clash – in representing and conveying information. Perhaps most importantly for New Typography, Roh acknowledged Functionalism and Surrealism as two sides of the same coin: an idea succinctly expressed as "Magical Realism".[51] He and Tschichold shared a belief that Surrealist expression was latent in photography's trustworthiness, which Tschichold came to understand as key to the efficacy of *Typophoto*.

50 Tschichold 1987 (1928): 96.
51 Roh 1925.

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Tschichold's Links to the Czechoslovak Avant-Garde

Lada Hubatová-Vacková

In 1918 Czechoslovakia became independent. Shortly afterwards, in 1919, the Bauhaus school was founded in Weimar, and Jan Tschichold acquired his first professional competences in typography, decorative types, calligraphy and book design at the Staatliche Akademie für graphische Künste und Buchgewerbe (State Academy for Graphic Arts and Book Production) in Leipzig and the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Arts and Crafts) in Dresden.[1]

After World War I, Czechoslovakia emerged from the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian monarchy and embarked on the path of an independent democratic republic. Even in the cultural field, it was gradually opening to modernising tendencies, which represented a new restart and, in visual terms, declared a break with the conservative traditions of the old monarchy. For most Czechoslovakians, German was no obstacle, as the country continued to have a relatively large and influential German minority. Despite Czechoslovakia's territorial autonomy, not only the transport but also the cultural infrastructure of the larger cities (with bilingual Czech/German names such as Praha/Prag, Brno/Brünn, Plzeň/Pilsen, Liberec/Reichenberg, Teplice/Teplitz, Bratislava/Pressburg, Moravská Ostrava/Mährisch Ostrau) remained closely linked to Austrian and German cities, such as Wien, Munich, Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, and Breslau.

Cultural exchange between Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany continued to be intense, albeit with a certain degree of political caution and distance, even as the young Czechoslovakia searched for its own distinctive and recognisable identity.[2] Through a network of personal relationships – often based on collegial relationships between (former) schoolmates – the art scene in Czechoslovakia was continuously and naturally connected with Austrian and German artists, designers and architects of the Art Nouveau and Cubo-Expressionist generations, and later also with young followers of functionalism. In the 1920s and 1930s, there was a clear awareness of the German Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity)[3] and the modernisation reforms set in motion in German schools at the initiative of Hermann Muthesius and the Deutscher Werkbund. So-called Czech, Moravian and Slovak Germans and Jews often identified themselves artistically with the Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity). On the local level, the semi-autonomous Czech-German Werkbund was created, following Muthesius' example[4] and especially the official – state-protected – *Svaz československého díla* (Czechoslovak Werkbund), which clearly adhered to effective elementary forms of international functionalism towards the end of the 1920s. The magazine *Die Form*,[5] the promotion platform

1 Jong 2008.
2 Bartlová and Vybíral 2015; Knobloch and Vondráček 2016.
3 Habán 2018.
4 Janatková 2018.

of the Deutscher Werkbund, was also known and read in Czechoslovakia, as were a wide variety of other European avant-garde magazines.[6] The clearly structured graphic design of *Die Form* was certainly inspiring for comparable association magazines (for instance, *Výtvarné snahy* and *Panorama*) and books devoted to home culture, designed by Ladislav Sutnar.

For the Czechoslovak interwar avant-garde, the Bauhaus school was gaining particular attention. Its *Bauhausbücher* (Bauhaus Books) series was part of the local libraries and soon became an inspirational model for many graphic designers and typographers.[7] The Bauhaus reformist conception and elementary aesthetics advocated and promoted by Tschichold were also followed by some newly established schools, especially the Škola uměleckých řemesel (School of Arts and Crafts) in Bratislava, and partly also the Škola uměleckých řemesel in Brno and the Škola umění (School of Art) in Zlín.

In addition, several students from Czechoslovakia attended the Bauhaus.[8] Karel Teige – without any doubt the leading personality of the Czechoslovak avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s – gave a comprehensive lecture entitled "Towards a Sociology of Architecture" in Dessau in early 1930, at the invitation of Hannes Meyer.[9] As can be seen from the above, the cultural "climate" in Czechoslovakia was conducive to an understanding of Tschichold's progressivist views, which, among other things, the author summarised in the pages of *Die neue Typographie*, and was well informed. Supported by contemporary sources and a relatively rich secondary literature, the following sub-chapters will present a selection of topics that are closely related to Tschichold's reception in Czechoslovakia.[10]

A Typographic Revolution? Teige, Štyrský, Toyen and Odeon Publishing House

A key figure in the Czechoslovak avant-garde, who was thoroughly informed about Tschichold's views and ideological positions in the field of graphic design, was his generational contemporary Karel Teige (1900–1951). The Czech left-leaning critic, a theorist active in disciplines ranging from free art, design and home culture to architectural theory, was also a practising artist and graphic designer. László Moholy-Nagy reportedly described him as the most informed European artist.[11] On the Czech cultural scene, Teige was the main initiator of the formation of the important avant-garde group Devětsil (literally meaning "nine forces", was an association of Czech avant-garde artists), whose aim was to bring art to the widest possible audience, initially mainly the proletariat. In 1922, the same year the group was founded, the magazines *Devětsil* and *Život* (Life) were published, on the initiative of Karel Teige and with the help of the group members.[12] In 1923, the

5 The cover of the magazine *Die Form* was made in the sober spirit of the New Typography (first designed by Joost Schmidt, after 1928 by Walter Drexler). Together with Walter Drexler, Paul Renner and others, Jan Tschichold took part in a competition for a magazine cover. On the competition, see *Die Form* 1928: 368–372.

6 On the network of relationships that was formed, among other things, through the international exchange of Modernist journals, see Ingerle and Česálková 2014; De Puineuf 2015.

7 Svobodová 2016.

8 *Ibid*.; Prešnajderová, Bérešová and De Puineuf 2021. Originally from Czechoslovakia, Jindřich Koch, Zdeněk Rossmann, Marie Doležalová-Rossmannová, Ladislav Foltýn and Irena Blühová studied at the Bauhaus.

9 Švácha 1998.

10 Given the breadth of the topic and the necessary limitation of the text, this is a rather radical, simplifying selection.

11 Knobloch 2016.

12 *Život* 1922; Toman 2015.

first issue of the international review *Disk* followed.[13] **(fig. 27)** In addition to the Prague core of the Devětsil group, which was joined in 1923 by painters Jindřich Štyrský and Toyen (Marie Čermínová),[14] an active and distinctive Brno branch of Devětsil[15] was gradually formed in 1924, encouraged by the main protagonists Artuš Černík and Jaroslav B. Svrček and the left-wing theoretician Bedřich Václavek. In the spring of 1924, the first issue of the international journal *Pásmo* (The Zone) was published with a cover designed by Eduard Stavinoha. It became a polemical-critical platform, the size of a newspaper leaflet. Pásmo became a tribune of Constructivism, Poeticism and Futurism directed against the "anachronistic" Cubism; the second issue was devoted to the question of modern advertising and typography.[16] From 1925 onwards, Zdeněk Rossmann also participated in the activities of the Brno Devětsil, but even before he became a follower of Tschichold, he co-created masks, posters and invitations for the "eccentric carnivals" of the Brno Devětsil artists.

In the first sections of the *Die neue Typographie*, Tschichold dealt, among other things, with the "history of the new typography", in which he drew attention to the relatively progressive steps leading to the "typographic revolution and the orthography of free expression". In this context, he drew attention to the graphic practices of the Wiener Werkstätte[17] printmakers, who favoured spare abstract-geometric décor to the early works of Peter Behrens, but also to the typographic practices of the Italian Futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, who radically subverted the rules of traditional symmetrical typesetting and text block in order to test the limits of legibility and the possibilities of meaning of words with visual expression. Marinetti's *parole in libertà* (words in freedom / mots en liberté), Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, the Dada-typographic "circus of dynamic values", montages, and the exploration of abstract signs, symbols, pictograms, and ideograms created a new experimental grammar for the research typographer.

Teige and the members of Devětsil developed these impulses in an original way in the first half of the 1920s. Teige attempted a kind of local alternative to international Modernist tendencies, which he called "Poetism".[18] The aim of the avant-garde conception of Devětsil – and of Poetism – was to combine rational construction with emotional poetry, the objective meaning of words with imagination.[19] Traditional artistic genres, such as painting on canvas or bronze sculpture, were viewed with a certain contempt by left-wing avant-garde positions as elitist objects in gallery halls that belonged to the past. The artefact of the present, on the other hand, could become the everyday object: the poster, the advertisement, the book – the results of a collective multi-genre collaboration, which, moreover, reach the widest audience.

Teige had the bold plan to replace the hanging image with a "typographic poem" or "pictorial poem"

13 The magazine *Disk. Internacionální revue* (Disc. International Magazine) was published in two issues (no. 1, 1923; no. 2, 1925), edited by Jaromír Krejcar, and published by U.S. Devětsil, in Prague–Brno. The cover was first designed by Karel Teige, the second edition was redesigned by Zdeněk Rossmann.

14 Toyen, born Marie Čermínová (1902 Prague – 1980 Paris), was a Czech-French painter. She was a member of Devětsil and worked in the vein of Poetism, imaginative abstraction and Surrealism. From 1947 until the end of her life she worked in France, where she was in close contact with André Breton and Benjamin Péret. See Srp 2000; Huebner 2020; Pravdová, Le Brun and Görgen-Lammers 2021.

15 Ingerle and Česálková 2014; Ingerle 2019.

16 Kassák 1925.

17 Cooperative enterprise for crafts and design founded in Vienna.

18 Chvatík and Pešat 1967.

19 Teige 1927.

(*obrazová báseň*) that would carry a textual message, while also containing the evocative power and potency of the image. In 1923, he wrote:

> We feel that the tableau, within the limits of its convention, however revolutionarily altered, no longer satisfies us. Our thirst for images and our need for artistic enjoyment are satiated by picture magazines [...] the poster is a modern and ephemeral fresco, a magnificent art of agitation. It has an extensiveness and intensity worthy of its time, a modern pathos, an exact refinement, clarity and synoptic distinctness. [...] Painting is dying as the last manufactory [...] Poetry is the only art of the constructive age [...]. Poetism arrives at a fusion of image and poem. Today we are trying to create a new form of image and poem – the pictorial poem.[20]

The pictorial poem (*obrazová báseň*) in which the two finished arts came together, and which could be as striking and seductive as a poster in its effect, strongly affected the artists of Devětsil, in particular Jindřich Štyrský and Toyen.[21] For their book covers, they purposefully worked with tension, visual contrasts and paradoxical juxtapositions made possible by photo/typo/montage. In 1928, Tschichold specifically drew attention to three early works by Štyrský and Toyen.[22] The graphic design historian Jindřich Toman states that Honzl's *Roztočené jeviště* (The Spinning Stage) and Nezval's *Menší růžová zahrada* (A Smaller Rose Garden) have no significant parallels in European book design; according to Toman, only Rodtchenko's photomontages for Pro eto (About This) from 1923 can be compared to them.[23] **(figs. 28–29)**

Toyen was particularly active in the field of book design, designing covers and illustrations for both large publishers and limited editions of bibliophile books. Rather than austere Constructivism, she was closer to the Dadaist-Surrealist position, and had an extraordinary sense of the evocation of the uncanny. She illustrated several children's books, but her lapidary line drawings also furnished several private erotic editions.[24] Toyen also collaborated directly with Teige as illustrator on several books. Two books in particular come to mind, in which Teige used Tschicholdian minimalist graphic design with lower-case types, and Toyen accompanied the text with abstract drawings of eerie fragments of disintegrating bodies.[25] **(fig. 30)** At a time when she was already close to phantomatic Surrealism, she collaborated artistically on the children's book *Náš svět* (Our World)[26] with Ladislav Sutnar and depicted in it the seemingly relaxed atmosphere of the modern world with its technical conveniences – cars, aeroplanes, the gramophone. For the cover of Jean Giono's book *Zelené mládí* (Blue Boy / Jean le bleu), Toyen chose a well-known photograph by Max Burchartz of a girl with a mesmerising look.[27]

20 "Cítíme, že nás tabulový obraz v mezích své konvence, třebas nejrevolučněji pozměněný již neuspokojuje. Naši obrazovou žízeň a potřebu výtvarného požitku sytí obrázkové magazíny... plakát je moderní a efemérní freskou, velkolepým uměním agitačním. Má extensitu a intensitu důstojnou své doby, moderní pathos, exaktní rafinovanost, srozumitelnost a synoptickou zřetelnost. [...] Malířství zmírá jako poslední manufaktura...Poesie jest jediným uměním konstruktivní doby [...]. Poetismus dospívá k fúzi obrazu a básně. Pokoušíme se dnes vytvořiti nový tvar obrazu a básně – obrazové básně." Teige 1927.

21 Bydžovská and Srp 2003.

22 Nezval 1924; Nezval 1926; Honzl 1925.

23 Toman 2021.

24 Sade 1932.

25 Neumann 1931; Neumann 1932.

26 Marčanová 1934.

27 Giono 1934. Burchartz's photograph, or detail of the eye, was used by Zdeněk Rossmann in his book *Písmo a fotografie v reklamě*, Index, Olomouc 1938. See Císař 2015.

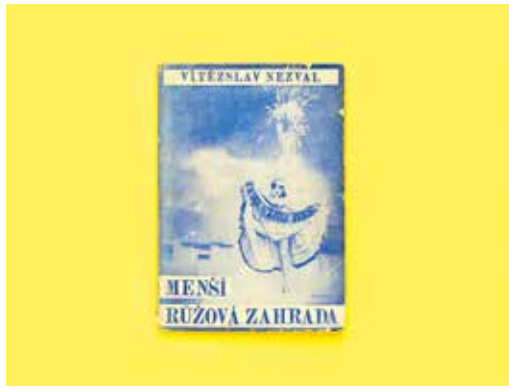


27

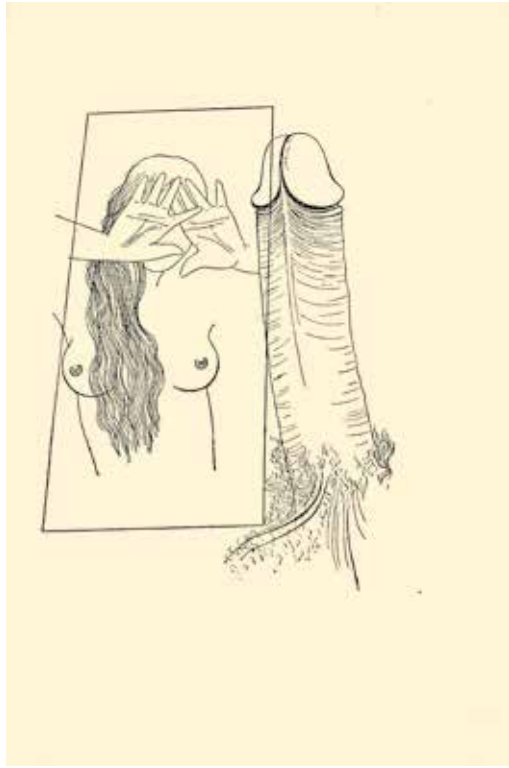
fig. 27 Front cover of the magazine *Život. Sborník nové krásy* (Life. An Anthology of the New Beauty), 2, 1922. It was edited by Bedřich Feuerstein, Jaroslav Krejcar, Josef Šíma and Karel Teige, published by Umělecká beseda (Artistic Society) typography by Karel Teige, photomontage by Feuerstein, Krejcar, Šíma and Teige. Photo by Vincent Levrat



28



29



30

fig. 28 Jindřich Honzl, *Roztočené jeviště* (The Spinning Stage), Jan Fromek-Odeon, Prague 1925. Typography by Karel Teige, cover by Štyrský and Toyen. Photo by Vincent Levrat

fig. 29 Vítězslav Nezval, *Menší růžová zahrada* (A Smaller Rose Garden), Odeon, Prague, 1926. Typography by Karel Teige, cover by Štyrský and Toyen. Photo by Vincent Levrat

fig. 30 Markýz de Sade (Marquis de Sade), *Justina, čili, Prokletí ctnosti* (Justine, or The Misfortunes of Virtue), Edice 69, Jindřich Štyrský, Prague 1932. Typography and illustrations by Toyen.

A number of books that correspond to Teige's concept of the pictorial poem were produced with the support of the publisher Jan Fromek and his publishing house Odeon[28] in the first half of the 1920s. In the bibliography of *Die neue Typographie*, Tschichold highlights six books produced in the close circle of Karel, Devětsil and Odeon.[29] All of the Czechoslovak examples reflect what Tschichold considered a "book typographic revolution", acting as a kind of catalyst, a temporarily tumultuous, cleansing phase between the old typography and the prospective project of a disciplined, normative new typography.[30] **(fig. 31)**

Between 1927 and 1931, thirty issues of the magazine *ReD* (*Revue Svazu Moderni Kultury Devětsil* / Review of the Union for Modern Culture Devětsil), whose editor and typographer was Teige, were published by Odeon. **(fig. 32)** *ReD*, with its textual content and visual form, became an important intersection of the European avant-garde. Teige often reinforced the punchiness with intense blush and chose a robust stencil font for the magazine's title. His intention was to move as far away as possible from the Morrisian ideal of decorative, elitist bibliophilia, and instead to clearly demonstrate the spirit of social progress and revolution. On the recommendation of Tschichold, Teige took part in some of the activities of the Ring "Neue Werbegestalter" (Circle "New Advertising Designers"), after 1928,[31] although he was not a nominal member of the association in the same way as Lajos Kassák or El Lissitzky.

Excursus. The First Czech Photomontage (1922) and Tschichold

Tschichold repeatedly reproduced the typo-photomontage that appeared on the cover of the magazine *Život* (Life) by four contemporaries from the Devětsil group – Bedřich Feuerstein, Jaromír Krejcar, Josef Šíma and Teige. The first Czech photomontage cover shows part of a fluted Doric column and a car wheel with a sea surface background.[32] As previously mentioned, the authors here freely referred to motifs coming from the Purist magazine *L'Esprit nouveau*, in which in 1921 the editors placed photographs of an ancient temple and a modern automobile side by side, as examples of a perfectly organised order. Le Corbusier later commented on the similar comparison, observing that even "Phidias would have liked to live in a standardised age".[33]

The photomontage in question was reproduced in Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie* in 1928 (p. 207) and was subsequently reproduced in a limited selection of seventy-six recent photographic works in Franz Roh and Tschichold's *Foto-Auge* (Photo-Eye) book, printed in lower-case types. In the preface, Roh stated about the experimental possibilities of the photographic medium:

28 Hubatová-Vacková 2018a.

29 The six books are: issue no. 2, 1922, of the magazine *Život. Sborník nové krásy*; Vítězslav Nezval, *Pantomima* (Ústřední studentské knihkupectví a nakladatelství, Prague 1924); Karel Teige, *Film* (Václav Petr, Prague 1925); Jindřich Honzl, *Roztočené jeviště* (Jan Fromek-Odeon, Prague 1925); Jaroslav Seifert, *Na vlnách TSF* (Václav Petr, Prague 1925); and Vítězslav Nezval, *Menší růžová zahrada* (Odeon, Prague 1926).

30 Rous 2021.

31 Srp, Bydžovská and Bregantová 2009. In 1928, many advocates of the New Typography belonged to the Ring "Neue Werbegestalter" (Circle "New Advertising Designers"), which eventually included twenty-five members. Founded by Kurt Schwitters, the main purpose of this association was to promote the work of its members (Willi Baumeister, Max Burchartz, Walter Dexel, Hans Leistikow, Robert Michel, Georg Trump, César Domela, Piet Zwart, Paul Schuitema). From 1928 until 1931 the Ring sponsored meetings, exhibitions and design conferences.

32 Toman 2009.

33 Le Corbusier 1923.



31



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fig. 31 Inside pages of the book by Jaroslav Seifert, *Na vlnách TSF* (On the Waves of the Télégraphie Sans Fil), Václav Petr, Prague 1925 (reprint). Typography and cover by Karel Teige. Photo by Vincent Levrat

fig. 32 *RED. Měsíčník pro moderní kulturu* (RED. Monthly for Modern Culture), 7, April 1928, cover by Karel Teige (typographic composition) and Jaroslav Rössler (photomontage).

> [...] there is furthermore the combination of photography with graphic art or painting to point to, of which examples are given (see Max Ernst marvellous works). To maintain that there is a mingling and heterogeneous element that can never combine is but an empty doctrine.[34]

While some photomontages, according to Roh, suggested decomposition – the demolition of form, a chaotic whirl – others show systematic construction and an almost classic moderation and calm. Roh illustrated this visual calm with a reference to a photomontage from the magazine *Život*.

"The Leading Graphic Artist of Today's Germany". Reception of Tschichold in Czechoslovakia

Signed "Ivan Tschichold", a study entitled "Nová Tvorba" (The New Work) was published in the specialist journal *Typografia*, a translation from the German *Typographische Mitteilungen*, which briefly put into the Czech context the ideas that were later published comprehensively in the book *Die neue Typographie*.[35]

In the Czech periodical press, Tschichold was mentioned in connection with the *Werbewissenschaftliche Woche* (Advertising Week) exhibition in Munich. A short article entitled "Vědecký týden o reklamě v Mnichově" (Scientific Week on Advertising in Munich)[36] drew attention to specific stimulating speakers and also mentioned Tschichold by name, who gave a lecture entitled "On the Good Use of Photography and Typography in Advertising".

In the same magazine, *Výtvarné snahy* (Art Endeavors) which was edited by a trio of avant-garde Czechs – the theoretician Karel Herain, the educator Josef Vydra and the graphic designer Ladislav Sutnar – translated excerpts from Tschichold's book *Die neue Typographie* were published (in Czech under the title *Nová typografie*).[37] They were divided into several subchapters based on the content of the book for the sake of clarity. In the same issue of the journal, Tschichold's essay was followed by a text consistently set in lower-case type and entitled "Ještě nové písmo. Příspěvek k otázce nového písma" (Another new font. Contribution to the issue of the new alphabet),[38] in which Tschichold promoted "the eradication of the double alphabet and the radical use of only lower-case letters". In this article, he drew attention to several authors who had put the lower-case type print into practice and tried out the "utopian reform of typography". While "albers, renner and the author of the typeface of the art school in halle assume the use of both alphabets" and "Schwitters again uses only capital letters", according to Tschichold, three authors, "bayer, burchartz and teige", had so far attempted a more consistent use of lower-case type.[39]

Surprisingly, Tschichold's attempts at reform in the field of typography can also be traced outside the avant-garde professional journals, even in the antagonistic field of opinion represented by, for example, the agrarian conservative press *Venkov* (Countryside). Given the publication of the text, it is indeed surprising that a relatively detailed critical analysis of Tschichold's practices, intended for a

34 Roh and Tschichold 1929
35 Tschichold 1927.
36 *Výtvarné snahy* 1927–1928.
37 Tschichold 1929–1930a, b, c. The magazine *Výtvarné snahy* was a monthly art magazin dedicated to art work, drawing and vocational education, and was associated with the Czechoslovak Werkbund. Its editors were Karel Herain, Josef Vydra and the graphic designer Ladislav Sutnar, who was also the author of the graphic design of the magazine.
38 Tschichold 1929–1930b.
39 *Ibid*.

readership of rural officials and farmers, could have been potentially interesting, comprehensible and relevant to this social segment as well. The article in the agrarian newspaper was a direct response to Tschichold's contributions published in the pages of *Výtvarné snahy*, and read:

> Jan Tschichold, a German modern graphic artist, a Bauhaus follower, provides here [...] two essays contributing to the present problem of new typography, and then to the solution of a new typeface.[40]

The author of the contribution to the agrarian press commented with a sharp criticism and disbelief on the proposals for a "modern simplified printing typeface", which he glossed as follows:

> In agreement with the German type reformers, Tschichold rejects the use of double alphabets, and himself constructs a new type of them from the straight line and the circle, based on minuscules.[41]

The author harshly criticised the use of lower-case letters for lack of clarity – even in Czech, where capital letters are only used at the beginning of a sentence.

In the autumn of 1930, the *Nový plakát* (New Poster) exhibition was held in Prague, and it was a travelling collection of modern posters compiled by Tschichold.[42] **(figs. 33–34)** In 1931 the same exhibition probably travelled to Brno[43] and perhaps also in Bratislava. Ladislav Sutnar was included in the selection, which represented modern posters in the spirit of the New Typography.[44] At the beginning of 1931, Tschichold visited Czechoslovakia.[45] Sutnar welcomed him at the Prague railway station; on 3 January he gave a lecture on photomontage in the same city,[46] and on 5 January another in Brno on the normalisation of typography.[47] The press gave it a positive review, commenting:

> Tschichold's lecture was one of the most important events of the cultural season. Clearly and convincingly presented, in a concise form and supported by a large number of well-chosen slides [...]. The lecturer, who is well known as the author of excellent books on modern typography and photography, is now rightly considered an "authority".[48]

However, the author of the text hinted at a certain risk of Tschichold's declared normative typographic methods, which in their result could lead

40 "[...] dvě stati přispívající k přítomnému problému nové typografie, a potom k řešení nového písma", *Venkov* 1930.

41 "V souhlase s německými reformátory písma Tschichold zavrhuje užívání dvojí abecedy, a sám konstruuje nový jejich typ z přímky a kroužku, vycházeje z minusculí". *Venkov* 1930.

42 Tschichold 1930a.

43 *Výstava soudobého plakátu* (Brno, Vaňkova galerie, 1931). Sylvestrová and Toman 2015.

44 The authors of the exhibited works were Arp, Baumberger, Baumeister, Bayer, Burchartz Cassandre, Cyliax, Dexel, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, Molzahn, Schawinsky, Schlemmer, Schuitema, Sutnar, Tschichold, Zwart.

45 Teige 1931; Srp, Bydžovská and Bregantová 2009.

46 Tschichold's lecture in Prague was organised by Svaz československého díla (Czechoslovak Werkbund), the Spolek faktorů a spolek Typografia (Factor Society and the Typography Society), Dům zemědělské osvěty (House of Agricultural Enlightenment).

47 Tschichold's lecture in Brno was organised by the branches of the above-mentioned organisations together with the Brno group of Index and Levá fronta (Left Front).

48 "Tschicholdova přednáška byla jednou z nejvýznamnějších událostí kulturní sezony. Jasně a přesvědčivě přednesená, ve stručné formě a doložená velkým počtem vhodně vybraných světelných obrazů [...]. Přednášející, jenž je dobře znám jako autor znamenitých knih o moderní typografii a fotografii, platí dnes už právem za 'autoritu'". Teige 1931.



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figs. 33–34 Cover and spread from Jan Tschichold, *Nový plakát*, exhibition catalogue (Prague, Alšova síň, 9 – 29 November 1930), Umělecká beseda, Prague 1930.

to "the fact that these principles could dry up into rules and regulations and eventually become a straitjacket for typographic invention".[49]

In 1931 or 1932, Tschichold went to Bratislava, where he was invited by Josef Vydra to give a lecture at the Škola umeleckých remesiel (School of Arts and Crafts).[50] Also in Slovakia, Tschichold had his followers in personalities such as Zdeněk Rossmann, Ľudovít Fulla, Ladislav Csáder and Józef Rybak, who worked for the *Slovenská Grafia* magazine.[51] Probably on the occasion of the lecture, Tschichold presented an exhibition of posters in Bratislava at the same time.[52]

Typographic System: Zdeněk Rossmann, Ladislav Sutnar, Josef Sudek and Krásná jizba Družstevní práce Association

Rossmann, who had met Tschichold in Brno and Bratislava, and Sutnar followed the rules of the New Typography consistently.[53] In the field of visual communication, Sutnar concentrated on precision and clarity of visual perception, using sans serif types, diagonals, asymmetry, contrast and a limited basic colour scale. As the artistic director of the Krásná jizba Družstevní práce Association and working with the photographer Josef Sudek, he developed sophisticated advertising strategies including posters and window display designs[54] based on Tschichold's premises and the Neue Sachlichkeit.[55]

In Tschichold's book *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung*, the works of Rossmann and Sutnar were reproduced alongside the first Czech photomontage from the 1922 *Život* magazine.[56] According to the design historian Iva Knobloch, who has long been interested in Sutnar's graphic work, in 1934 Sutnar asked Teige to hold an exhibition of his graphic work.[57] His edited speech was later published in *Panorama* magazine.[58] Teige emphasised consistency, maturity, clarity, sophistication, and systematicity in Sutnar's approach. According to Teige, certain typographic works can be categorised as "artistic creation"; conversely, he classified Sutnar's as a sophisticated "scientific project". Within this rational scientific framework of typography, Sutnar, like Tschichold,[59] dealt with data visualisation and so-called pictorial statistics in the context of Neurath's Isotype system.[60] In the book entitled *Malá vlastivěda* (Little Civics Reader), Sutnar cooperated with the graphic designer Augustin Tschinkel to process complex statistical data obtained from the census in Czechoslovakia in the form of infographic systems.

Epilogue: The Aged Avant-Gardist in Prague Again

Between the wars, Tschichold had close professional ties with personalities such as Teige, Sutnar, Rossmann, Vydra and František Kalivoda.[61] For at least two decades after 1945, he was in contact with František Muzika, Method Kaláb and Jan Rajlich Sr, who in 1963 founded the Internation-

49 "[…]že by tyto principy mohly seschnouti v pravidla a regule a býti posléze svěrací kazajkou typografické invenci". Teige 1931.

50 Prešnajderová, Bérešová and De Puineuf 2021.

51 Longauer 2013.

52 *Výstavu plakátov Jána Tschicholda* (Exhibition of Posters by Jan Tschichold), Umělecká beseda slovenská (Slovak Art Council), Bratislava, 1 November – 1 December 1932.

53 Janáková 2003.

54 Hubatová-Vacková 2021.

55 Vlčková 2006; Hubatová-Vacková 2018b; Vlčková and Hekrdlová 2019.

56 Tschichold 1930b.

57 Knobloch 2010.

58 Teige 1934.

59 Münchner-Helfen 1932 (cover by Jan Tschichold).

60 Mendel 1935 (graphic design and pictorial statistics made by Ladislav Sutnar in collaboration with Augustin Tschinkel).

61 On Jan Tschichold's contacts with František Kalivoda see Svobodová 2011.

al Biennial of Graphic Design held in Brno.[62] As is well known, in the 1940s Tschichold began to distance himself from the avant-garde. When he came to Prague in 1965, he presented a paper entitled "Význam tradice pro typografii" (The Importance of Tradition for Typography) at the Památník národního písemnictví (National Literature Institute).[63] The lecture was attended by his former friends, who, just like Tschichold, were avant-gardists who had grown old. Among them was František Muzika, a former member of the avant-garde group Devětsil, who, like Tschichold, turned to the historical type models of the past.[64] Tschichold donated to Muzika his book on the alphabets of the past with the dedication "To their dear friend František Muzika from Jan and Edith Tschichold, December 1965".[65]

62 Rajlich 2005.

63 Tschichold 1965b.

64 Muzika 1958.

65 Tschichold 1965a. A copy from the library of the Uměleckoprůmyslové museum in Prague states: "Ihrem lieben Freund František Muzika von Jan und Edith Tschichold, Dezember 1965".

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The Genesis of the New Danish Typography

Matthias J. E. Horneman-Thielcke, Sofie Beier

Introduction

The Danish architect and designer Knud V. Engelhardt (1882–1931) was a man ahead of his time. Designing for modern industrial life through rationality, standardisation, and objectivity, Engelhardt incorporated various principles of design that would later be published in Jan Tschichold's well-known 1928 manifesto, *Die neue Typographie* (The New Typography). Unfortunately, scholars have failed to recognise Engelhardt's inspiration from and influence on the international design movements of the era. His archives, located at the Designmuseum Danmark in Copenhagen, his cultural contemporary context, his personal relations, and his travels altogether indicate that Engelhardt was inspired by the same ideology that would later influence the Bauhaus movement, which in turn influenced the principles of the New Typography. Engelhardt died in the beginning of April 1931, just a few years after *Die neue Typographie* had been published. By this point, Engelhardt had long been working with various typographic principles of the New Typography.

Until now, the literature has primarily presented Engelhardt's typographic work as rooted in and inspired by the Danish national architectural and craft tradition, using conventional serif typography, illustrations and centred layouts. Most famous publication records include the ones for Ringsted Kloster (1915) and Faaborg Museum (1929).[1] We will demonstrate that, in addition to drawing on national sources for information, Engelhardt found inspiration beyond the borders of Denmark, particularly from international acquaintances who were interconnected with key persons in the avant-garde and the Bauhaus movement. These new findings place Engelhardt as an avant-garde designer relevant to this wider international context.

The Danish Tradition

Engelhardt is considered one of the founding fathers of the Danish type design tradition and the first Danish designer who designed for mass production within the Danish Functionalism movement.[2] Unlike in other countries, Danish type and lettering design in the 20th century was created almost exclusively by "a number of architects with a penchant for designing alphabets [...] and graphic design".[3] Engelhardt has always been recognised for being inspired by the previous generation of Danish architects, especially the architect and artist Thorvald Bindesbøll (1846–1908), who was the "godfather" of the Skønvirke Danish art movement (similar to the International Jugendstil and Art Nouveau).[4] However, the graphic style of Engel-

1 Ejlers 1997; Ejlers 2015; Frederiksen 1965.
2 Ejlers 1997; Frederiksen 1965.
3 Ejlers n.d.
4 Frederiksen 1965.

hardt which used sans serif typography, clear typographic hierarchies and limited colour palettes, was revolutionary at its time. Equally revolutionary was his work with custom lettering, which did not compromise on legibility or quality. Altogether, Engelhardt's work was a typographic U-turn from Danish conventions and traditions, and a different approach than that of his Danish predecessors.

Today, Engelhardt's legacy and typographic forms still appear in the work of renowned Danish design agencies such as *Kontrapunkt*, Urgent Agency and e-Types. Custom typefaces for DSB (Danish State Railways), the Danish Design Award, Noma, The Royal Danish Academy and the contemporary art exhibition space Den Frie are just a few examples that echo the work of Engelhardt. His legacy is also identifiable in typefaces by Danish and international designers such as Henrik Kubel (in the Biilmann typeface), Sofie Beier (Ovink), Trine Rask (Akademi), Jonas Hecksher (Willumsen), design studio NORM (LL Replica) and Mårten Thavenius (Skilt Gothic).

Yet, despite the significant impact Engelhardt had on Danish design culture, literature on his modern typographic work is limited. Among the few publications is an influential 1965 book that celebrated his work: *Knud V. Engelhardt: Arkitekt & Bogtrykker 1882–1931* (Knud V. Engelhardt: Architect and Printer 1882–1931) by Erik Ellegaard-Frederiksen (1924–1997), a well-known Danish architect and graphic designer.[5] In the eyes of the public, this curated selection of work has become the main legacy of Engelhardt. The Danish architect and lecturer Steen Ejlers (b. 1951) has also researched the Danish type design tradition for decades, resulting in multiple publications and lectures for Danish students at the Royal Danish Academy of Arts.[6] However, as we will show, Engelhardt's legacy extends far beyond the pages of Ellegaard-Frederiksen's book or other previously published material.

The Traditional and The Modern Publication Records

The work of Engelhardt can be divided into two: the conventional design that he is primarily known for (hereinafter, "Traditional publication records") and the modern design that the archives reveal (hereinafter, "Modern publication records"), which is the focus of this chapter. Most of Engelhardt's personal archives show that, within the Modern publication records he was a master of typographic hierarchies and clarity, though not in the radical way of Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie*. Although Engelhardt was using centred layout and capitals for headlines, in terms of thinking function, objectivity and practicality in his designs, he was using various typographic principles that would later be described in *Die neue Typographie*.

Engelhardt was passionate about the crafts of his métier. In 1908, during his architectural education at the Royal Danish Academy of Arts (1901–1915), he simultaneously earned a diploma as a certified letterpress and art printer.[7] At the Academy, he quickly transformed from being inspired by the Skønvirke art movement into a more rational, objective and functional approach to design.[8] At this point in history, the Royal Danish Academy of Arts was itself in a state of transition. While it was known as a classical and traditional craft-based institution, new architectural styles and new materials such as reinforced concrete were finding their way into the Academy's teachings.[9] Contemporary Danish ar-

5 *Ibid.*
6 Ejlers 1997; Ejlers 2015.
7 Frederiksen 1965.
8 *Ibid.*; Rode et al. 1954.
9 *Ibid.*

chitects, like Carl Brummer, advocated for the incorporation of the new ideas of the modern avant-garde, especially those pioneered by the Deutscher Werkbund, founded in 1907.[10] This transition must have had a strong impact on Engelhardt, who was already recognised as an innovative student within print design and lettering.[11] The Academy even credited him as a lonely pioneer within the modern *Saglighed* movement (objectivity).[12]

In proposing a novel approach to understanding Engelhardt's influence and work, we triangulated information from the period 1901–1927 on his personal relations and travels, contemporary exhibitions and magazines, and as well as archive material showing his designs. This method allowed us to see that Engelhardt found inspiration for his work in the ideas of the international avant-garde movement.

Personal Relations and Travels

As a student, Engelhardt travelled in 1906 to northern Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and London. In 1910 he travelled to Paris, northern Italy, Tyrol, southern Germany and Berlin.[13] His sketchbooks from these travels, archived at the Designmuseum Danmark, reflect a passion for typography and an eye for detail and materials. At the time, the cities he visited, especially Paris and Berlin, were showing state-of-the-art architecture within the avant-garde movement. Among these, the 1909 AEG Turbine Hall in Berlin by Peter Behrens (1868–1940) and the 1906 Garage Ponthieu in Paris by Auguste Perret (1874–1954) were considered quite disruptive and sensational at the time. These buildings were to be a "must-see" for architecture students.

Engelhardt's transformation was also likely influenced by his personal acquaintances during those years. Among his close friends was the Danish avant-garde architect, photographer, researcher, writer and information designer Knud Lønberg-Holm (1895–1972).[14] He attended the Royal Danish Academy of Arts at the same period as Engelhardt and is known for his opposition to the traditional Danish craft-based approach to contemporary architecture. Lønberg-Holm was interested in the German and Dutch architectural avant-garde, such as the works of Peter Behrens, and he was one of the early Danish architects to grasp the core ideas of the avant-garde.[15] From 1918 to 1921, Lønberg-Holm designed the six building halls of Køge Værft (Køge Shipyard) and the worker dwellings in reinforced concrete, which was aligned with the avant-garde preference in building materials. Engelhardt designed the site's logo and corporate identity with a heavy sans serif custom logo (and a stencil version).

In 1923, Lønberg-Holm emigrated to the United States, where he lived, worked and taught modern architecture and design based on the ideologies of the De Stijl and Bauhaus movements. He was in touch with people including Cornelis van Eesteren from the De Stijl movement as well as Walter Gropius, El Lissitzky and László Moholy-Nagy from the Bauhaus.[16] Hannes Meyer, the second director of the Bauhaus, later invited Lønberg-Holm to teach

10 Brummer and Larsen 1918.
11 Rode et al. 1954.
12 *Ibid.*
13 Frederiksen 1965. A 1913 letter from Engelhardt to Joakim Syirtkovgaard documents his visit to Berlin in 1910. Engelhardt 1913.
14 Adrian Täckman, ongoing research project documenting the work and legacy of the Danish-American architect Knud Lønberg-Holm. This project has been featured in an article, see Täckman 2015.
15 Täckman 2023.
16 *Ibid.*

architecture at the Bauhaus school.[17] When Lønberg-Holm emigrated to the United States, he brought a portfolio of Engelhardt's designs with him,[18] presumably to promote the work of his friend. In 1923, Lønberg-Holm invited Engelhardt to come to Detroit to work with him, but Engelhardt declined the invitation because he was on a two-year scholarship to travel around Asia, where he collected everyday craft objects.[19]

This close friendship between Engelhardt and Lønberg-Holm, their collaboration on Køge Værft and the international connections of Lønberg-Holm suggest that the latter must have been a direct link for Engelhardt into the international avant-garde movement.

Contemporary Exhibitions and Magazines

To understand the cultural context in which Engelhardt found himself, we must go back to the beginning of the 20th century, where the avant-garde movement slowly began to bloom in Europe. At the turn of the century, Danish museums were showcasing international art and design. The Designmuseum Danmark archives show that in 1913 the museum hosted an exhibition arranged by Peter Behrens and Walter Gropius which showed Deutscher Werkbund works selected from the Deutsches Museum in Hagen. The exhibition included pieces by Peter Behrens, Walter Gropius, Fritz Helmuth Ehmcke and Lucian Bernhard, alongside works from the Wiener Werkstätte and the Wiener Kunstgewerbeschule (Vienna School of Arts and Crafts).

In 1912, the first Futurist exhibition in Denmark organised by Herwarth Walden (publisher of *Der Sturm* magazine and owner of the homonymous gallery in Berlin) was held at Den Frie Udstilling, contemporary art exhibition space.[20] The exhibition met a "*succès de scandale* that received comprehensive press coverage".[21] This was followed by other avant-garde exhibitions in Copenhagen arranged by *Der Sturm* in 1913, 1917, 1918 and 1919.[22] In 1914, the *Baltic Exhibition* in Malmö, Sweden, exhibited works by Kandinsky, Jawlensky and Werefkin,[23] for which Engelhardt designed a sans serif grid-based alphabet used for the signage in the Danish section.

During the same period, the Danish architecture magazine *Architekten* was exploring national and international architecture and design by showcasing reviews from architecture conferences held in London, Berlin and Vienna; the architects Otto Wagner and Peter Behrens were featured from time to time.[24] Engelhardt himself was also mentioned several times and even redesigned the layout of *Architekten* in October 1908.[25] He must therefore have been familiar with the journal's articles which presented the international avant-garde and industrial architecture. Other possible Danish references for Engelhardt are the avant-garde and Expressionist magazine *Klingen* (1917–1920), and the Constructivist broadsheet *Pressen* (1923–1924).[26] The work of the Futurist author and poet Emil Bønnelycke (1893–1953) was frequently published in *Klingen*, and he even became a co-author of

17 *Ibid.*
18 Strum 2018.
19 This is documented in letter correspondences between Engelhardt and Knud Lønberg-Holm found by Adrian Täckman. The two letters are dated 9 November 1923 and 20 October 1924.
20 Aagesen 2002; Jelsbak 2016.
21 *Ibid.*
22 Aagesen 2002; Enders and Pirsich 2021.
23 Aagesen 2002.
24 See the Danish trade magazine *Architekten* from 1907–1914.
25 Engelhardt's redesign appeared in *Architekten*, 11 (1), 3 October 1908.
26 Klevgaard 2021.

the magazine in its last years. In 1918, Bønnelycke commissioned Engelhardt to design the publication *Asfaltens Sange* (Songs of the Asphalt), an extensive collection of Futurist poems.[27] This demonstrates Engelhardt's connections with the epicentre of the Danish avant-garde.

Visual Inspection of Archival Material

A close inspection of works from Engelhardt's Modern publication records shows a visual language close to that of Behrens, one of the founders of the Deutscher Werkbund.

Engelhardt's design for the signage of the Danish section at the international *Baltic Exhibition* included a rational block letter alphabet, standardised for sign painters to implement, where the letters were constructed in square modules placed on an underlying grid. It is similar to Behrens's lettering for the 1905 Delmenhorster Linoleum Fabrik pavilion at the Northwest German Art Exhibition.[28] Parallels are most notable in the letters A and E, the high-centred M, the wide S and the dots in the spaces dividing the words.

Engelhardt's work on typographic hierarchy used centred sans serif typography in capitals, all in a similar fashion to Behrens. **(figs. 35–36)** Unlike Behrens, Engelhardt often differentiated words by colour (black and red) to enhance navigation and information and he used white space, margins and type size as active design components. **(figs. 37–38)**

The archives at the Designmuseum Danmark show that Engelhardt often included custom sans serif lettering in his designs, which can mostly be categorised as heavy bold, rough and compact. Engelhardt's integration of ligatures is also characteristic of his style, which is mirrored in some examples of lettering by Behrens. However, Engelhardt cut off the diagonal strokes of the letters to space words better, enhance legibility and enlarge words on small surfaces.

Like Behrens, Engelhardt often constructed and framed his graphic compositions with thick black lines and solid squares in each corner. **(fig. 39)**

Finally, Engelhardt's way of drawing and shading illustrations was quite rough and visually aligned with his lettering. **(fig. 40)**

These comparisons suggest that Engelhardt was visually rooted in the avant-garde of the beginning of the 20th century and was especially close to Behrens' and the Deutscher Werkbund's approaches. The same legacy had influenced Walter Gropius (a former employee of Peter Behrens) when he founded the Bauhaus in 1919).[29] Furthermore, Engelhardt innovatively added his own characteristics to the designs, thereby contributing to the movements of the era.

This innovative approach is similar to Tschichold's professional journey. Both were craftsmen with an utmost sense of detail, and both worked towards rationalising print design and typography. Moreover, the two knew their crafts from the inside – Engelhardt as a letterpress printer, and Tschichold as a typographer. This in-depth knowledge distinguishes their work from the typographic work of Behrens, who had no similar basis in text composition, being educated in the visual arts. Furthermore,

27 Jelsbak 2010.

28 The characteristics of the custom block letter alphabet by Behrens are described in Burke 1992.

29 Munch 2021; Sommer 1988; Windsor 1981.

Engelhardt's professional and personal transformation in the "new world" is similar to that of Tschichold, who much later encountered the avant-garde at the Bauhaus exhibition in 1923 and converted to Modernism. In what follows, we will further visually analyse Engelhardt's work in relation to Tschichold's writings in *Die neue Typographie*.

Form and Function

In *Die neue Typographie*, Tschichold stated that "the New Typography is distinguished from the old by the fact that its first objective is to develop its visible form out of the functions of the text".[30] In his typography work from the Modern publication records, Engelhardt was using sans serif typography for headings, highlights and emphasis; various hierarchical type sizes; and a dynamic layout system intended to be as functional, objective and readable as possible. **(figs. 37–38)** The content of the publication dictated its form. Thus, Engelhardt used all the features that a professional typography designer would use today. Of course, as the technologies of the era were limited, some of Engelhardt's decisions might have been defined by the availability of resources. For instance, for body text he often used more conventional Roman typefaces, with Plantin later becoming his favourite.[31] It is possible that Engelhardt, like Tschichold, was limited to the typefaces available to printers at that time and therefore could not find a suitable or readable sans serif for body text.

Like the principles of the New Typography, Engelhardt's preferred colour palette was limited to black, red and the colour of paper: "In the New Typography colour is used functionally, i.e. the physiological effect peculiar to each colour is used to increase or decrease the importance of a block of types, a photograph, or whatever".[32] Engelhardt also used contrast and functional colours to differentiate, highlight and separate words and images. The printed matter shown in **(fig. 38)** demonstrates Engelhardt's work with grids, margins and especially white space as an active design element.

At the Designmuseum Danmark, Engelhardt's personal archives also show an unrevealed approach for experimenting with and creating asymmetric typography, dynamic movement, functional geometric forms and photomontage. **(figs. 41–43)**

Signs and the Geometric Sans Serif

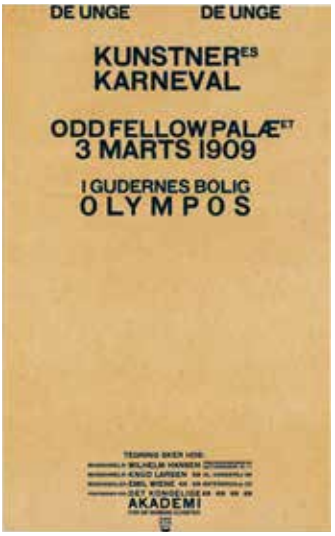
According to Tschichold's first manifesto on typography, "a communication should have the 1) briefest, 2) simplest and 3) most urgent form".[33] The road signs Engelhardt designed in 1916 for the KGL Dansk Automobil Klub (Royal Danish Automobile Club) include all of this.[34] Bold sans serif custom lettering together with simplistic icons create a brief and urgent message, that is made highly legible by the white on a dark blue background. **(fig. 44)** The symbols Engelhardt designed resemble some of the symbols and flags presented as a simplistic state of the art by Tschichold in *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung* (A Lesson in Printing design. 1930).[35]

While Tschichold was designing geometric sans serif alphabets in the period 1926–1930,[36] Engelhardt was already designing alphabets for standardisation and industrial use

30 Tschichold 2006 (1928).
31 Frederiksen 1965.
32 Tschichold 2006 (1928).
33 Tschichold 1925 cited in Burke 2007.
34 Frederiksen 1965.
35 Tschichold 1930: 26–27.
36 Burke 2007.



35



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37

fig. 35 Cover of the book by Peter Behrens, *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst: eine Betrachtung des Theaters als höchsten Kultursymbols* (Celebrations of Life and Art: A Consideration of Theatre as the Highest Cultural Symbol), Diederichs, Leipzig 1900.

fig. 36 Poster for *De Unge Kunstnernes Karneval* (The Young Artists' Carnival), Copenhagen, 1909. Graphic design by Knud V. Engelhardt. Comparing designs by Behrens and Engelhardt shows that Engelhardt's work was aligned with the avant-garde at the beginning of the 20th century.

fig. 37 A directory designed by Engelhardt showing his work with typographic hierarchy, 1909.



38



39

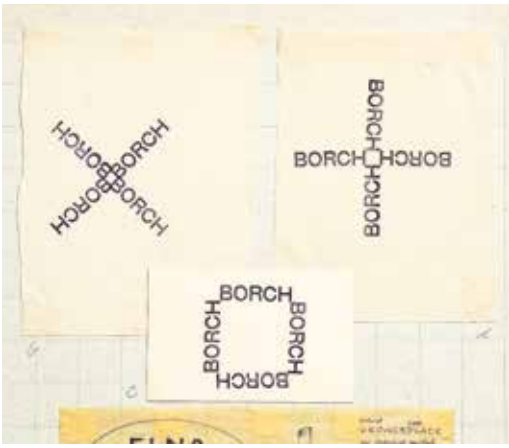


40

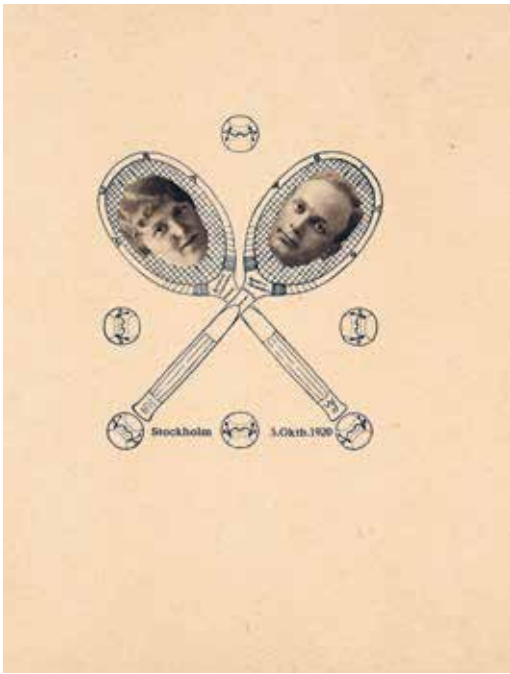
fig. 38 An example of Engelhardt's work in which he creates a functional hierarchy by using sans serif typography, colour, margins and whitespace to differentiate, highlight and separate words, 1909.

fig. 39 Tram ticket for Cophenhagen Tramways, graphic design by Knud V. Engelhardt, 1909. In 1908, Engelhardt began a total redesign of the Copenhagen Tramways including both the exterior and interior: the tramcar, the signage, the sans serif lettering and numbering, a new rational graphic design for the tickets, time schedules and more.

fig. 40 Letterhead for the painter decorator Rob Rasmussen, graphic design by Knud V. Engelhardt, 1909.



41



42

fig. 41 Graphic experiments for Borch, graphic design by Knud V. Engelhardt, c. 1910–1920.

fig. 42 Photomontage showing a woman and a man in tennis rackets, Stockholm, graphic design by Knud V. Engelhardt, 1920.



43



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fig. 43 Poster with hand-drawn type, graphic design by Knud V. Engelhardt, 1910.

fig. 44 Road signs for the for Kgl. Dansk Automobilklub (The Royal Danish Automobile Club), graphic design by Knud V. Engelhardt, 1916.

from as early as 1914. Engelhardt's alphabet for the *Baltic Exhibition* (1914) and especially his work with the rational, modular and geometric alphabet for the street signs of the Gentofte Kommune (Gentofte Municipality, Denmark, 1923) are quite unique. This alphabet was designed for large-scale industrial implementation and is still in use to this day, celebrating its 100-year anniversary. **(fig. 45)** Engelhardt's work preceded other early geometric sans serif solutions, such as Joost Schmidt's Universal typeface (1924), Herbert Bayer's Universal Alphabet (1926) and Paul Renner's Futura (1927). Engelhardt designed his sans serif alphabet as a modular system of letters and segments that "built" upon the same "skeleton". As the letters are slightly condensed, the alphabet also features key "Engelhardt-signatures" like cutting off the diagonal strokes of the letters (to reduce the kerning in street names), the opening junctions inspired by ink traps (to enhance legibility) and the dot as a heart above the letter "j". Furthermore, the letters are designed with a large x-height and appear white on a black background, also to improve legibility. These signs were originally designed in enamel, but were later changed with metal for practicality.[37] These characteristics and letterforms established the foundation for what we today call the Danish type design tradition.

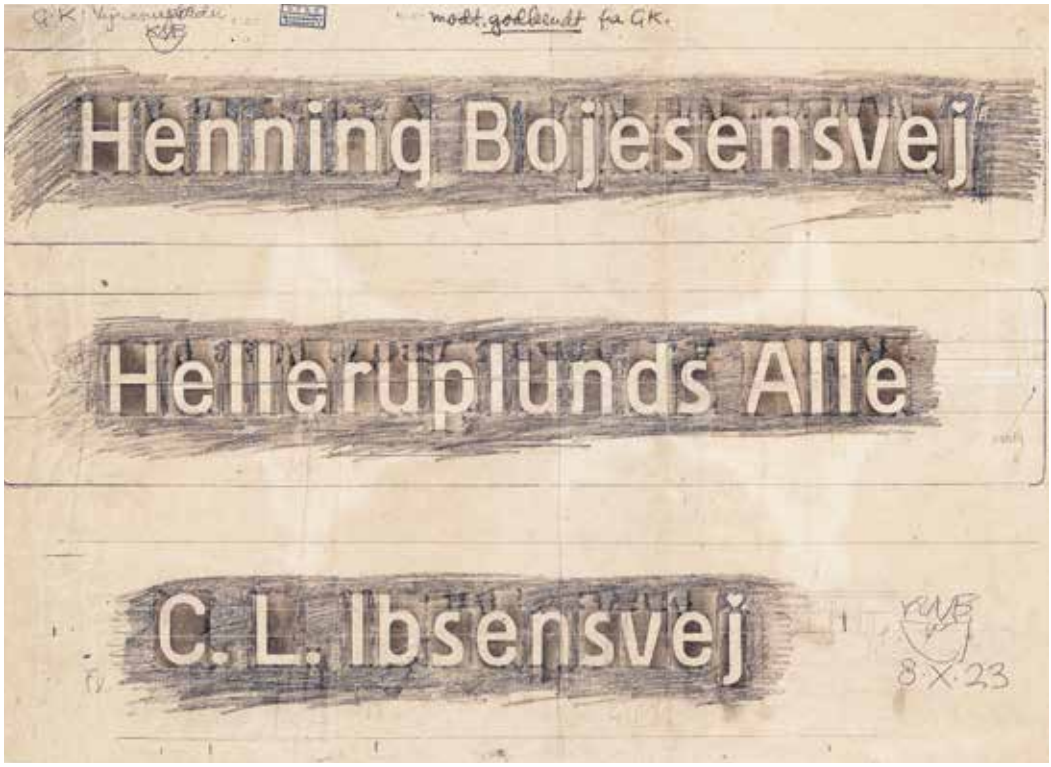
Discussion

The unpublished Modern publication records of Engelhardt's work indicate that he was ahead of his time and was already using various typographic principles from 1908, which would be outlined later in *Die neue Typographie*. This illustrates that Engelhardt was indeed a visionary architect and, like Behrens, designed for the industrial future.

In *Die neue Typographie*, Tschichold credits Behrens "as the true forerunner of the Modern Movement in typography".[38] If we acknowledge that Engelhardt's Modern publications stand alongside the contemporary work of Behrens, we must also recognise him as a forerunner in the history of modern typography. Indeed, in a review of Engelhardt's design for the Copenhagen telephone directory from 1909, Frederiksen stated that Engelhardt was working with a style of typography which would be seen much later in Germany under the influence of Tschichold.[39]

As mentioned above, Engelhardt was primarily known for his Traditional publication records, as evidenced by design historian Trond Klevgaard.[40] Referring to Engelhardt's work on the 1909 Copenhagen telephone directory as a good example of modern typography, Klevgaard argues that the absence of avant-garde designs in Engelhardt's portfolio makes it unlikely that he could be a precursor of *Die neue Typographie*. Klevgaard recalls that Engelhardt had an obvious chance to demonstrate that he was an avant-gardist when he was commissioned to design the Futurist work *Asfaltens Sange* (Songs of the Asphalt, 1918), written by the Futurist author and poet Emil Bønnelycke. He further argues that it is doubtful whether Engelhardt had a direct impact on the development of the avant-garde principles in Denmark, as no one mentioned him in relevant trade journals. While it is unknown why there is a lack of reference to Engelhardt's ideas in journals, it is clear from our analysis that he was deeply embedded in the avant-garde. His unpublished archives found

37 Ejlers 1997; Frederiksen 1965.
38 Tschichold 2006 (1928).
39 Frederiksen 1965.
40 Klevgaard 2021.



45

fig. 45 Sketches for street signs in the Danish Gentofte Municipality, graphic design by Knud V. Engelhardt, 1923.
Engelhardt employs a rational, modular and geometric alphabet.

at the Designmuseum Danmark, including the examples shown in this article, clearly demonstrate that he was an avant-gardist who worked and experimented with various avant-garde principles.

Conclusion

When analysing the roots of the New Typography, the work and the personal archives of Knud V. Engelhardt must be considered in the international historical records. Engelhardt's work is unique and reflects the zeitgeist of the early 20th century avant-garde, particularly the design approach of Peter Behrens and the Deutscher Werkbund. Engelhardt's archives, his cultural contemporary context, his personal relations, and journeys strongly indicate that he was inspired and innovated by the same ideology that influenced the Bauhaus movement, which subsequently influenced the principles of the New Typography. Engelhardt was an innovative forerunner who worked with the various typographic principles that would later be published in *Die neue Typographie*. All this points to an international awareness of his work amongst his contemporaries that until now has not been recognised, discussed or fully understood. These new findings place Engelhardt as an avant-garde designer and make him relevant not only to the Danish national context, but also to international movements. Engelhardt died in the beginning of April 1931, aged only forty-nine, just a few years after *Die neue Typographie* was published. Therefore, thanks to the new findings of this chapter, it is now time for his resurrection and the acknowledgement that the Dane Knud V. Engelhardt was among the forerunners within the Modern Movement of typography.

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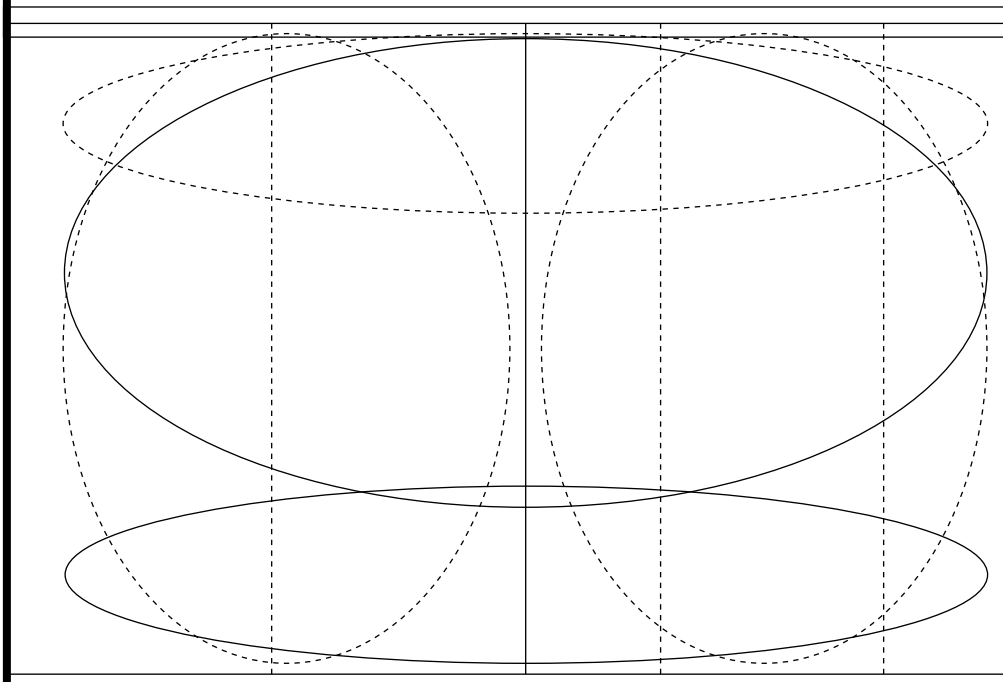
Täckman 2023
Adrian Täckman, "Knud Lønberg-Holm: The Invisible Architect", conference held at the Royal Danish Academy, 29 March 2023.

Tschichold 1925
Iwan Tschichold, "Die neue Typographie", in *Kulturschau*, 4, Spring 1925, pp. 9–11.

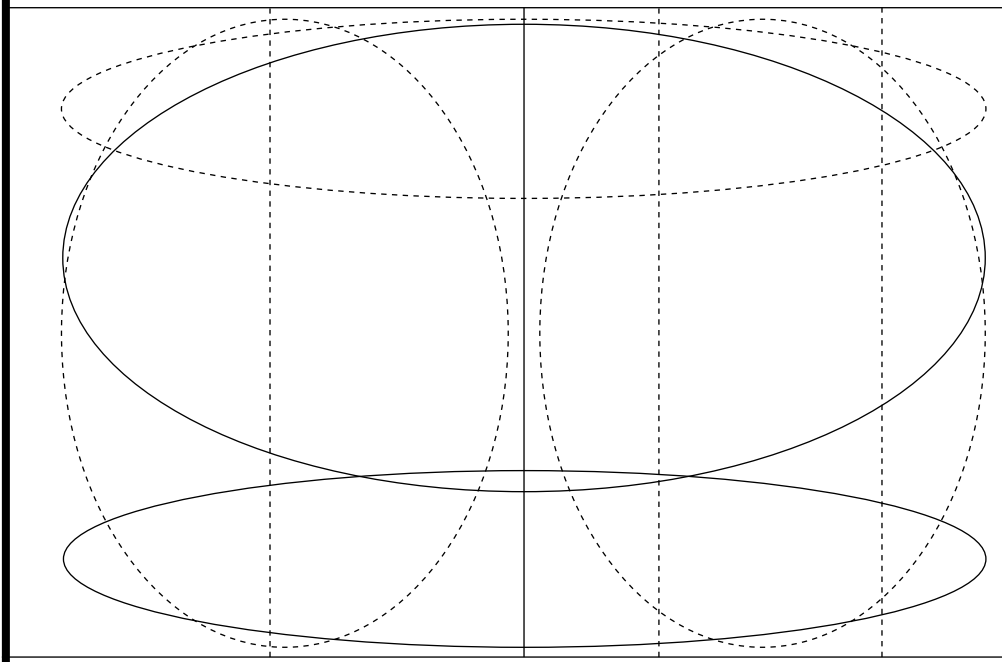
Tschichold 1930
Jan Tschichold, "Typosignete und *Flaggen*" (Typographical Symbols and Flags), in *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung*, Akademischer Verlag Dr Fritz Wedekind & Co., Stuttgart 1930, p. 27.

Tschichold 2006 (1928)
Jan Tschichold, *The New Typography. A Handbook for Modern Designers*, original ed. 1928, University of California Press, Berkeley 2006.

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IMPACT: DISSEMINATION



The "New Direction" at the Basel School of Design of the 1930s

Sandra Bischler-Hartmann

The Basel School of Design – or, as it was officially called from 1886 to 1980, the Arts and Crafts Department of the Allgemeine Gewerbeschule (AGS) Basel – is considered one of the most relevant educational institutions when it comes to teaching mid-20th century Swiss Style graphic design and typography. In a comprehensive study on Swiss graphic design published in 2006, design historian Richard Hollis emphasised the essential contribution of AGS Basel's teaching to the "growth of an international style".[1] However, the focus of design history on the AGS Basel as the "Swiss Style School" has obscured the view on its institutional history and the origins of graphic design education there. It is lesser known that the school's graphic design teaching did not emerge parallel to the consolidation of the Swiss Style during the 1950s, but comes from a much longer tradition, with its first full-time graphic design programme dating back as early as 1915. This text will briefly outline how this programme came to be founded and what understanding of graphic design it was based on. It will then focus on the period of the late 1920s and 1930s as a case study and show that those years marked a period of great change – and exchange – in terms of graphic design pedagogy.

The AGS Basel was founded in 1886 by nationalising an existing private drawing school. Like many arts and crafts schools founded in late 19th-century Europe, the school's initial purpose was to provide drawing lessons for a variety of professions, with the goal to improve the general design quality of manufactured goods by providing arts and crafts training to young professionals. In the first three decades after its foundation, the AGS Basel mainly offered open, unspecialised, drawing courses, in which the imitation of historical models and the design of ornaments played an important role. About thirty years later, in the course of the school's major reorganisation in 1915, a specialised, full-time graphic design programme was established: the *Fachklasse für Graphik* (Specialised Class of Graphic Design). The programme was the school's reaction to a completely new professional profile that had emerged since the beginning of the century: that of the graphic designer – a professional working exclusively on applied tasks such as posters, advertisements, logo design, package design etc. The teachers of the Graphic Design course were now experienced graphic designers and printers. Also, a design made in class was no longer an end, but was executed in the final material in the school's workshops.[2] Paul Kammüller

1 See the chapter *Basel: Hofmann and Ruder* in Hollis 2006: 214–221. Hollis focuses on teachers Emil Ruder and Armin Hofmann, whose courses, starting in the 1940s, were crucial for the success of Swiss Style graphic design and typography.

2 STABS, *Erziehung NN 22*, Hermann Kienzle, Die Schülerausstellung der Allg. Gewerbeschule, Manuscript, 1923: 5–6.

became the first main teacher at the Graphic Design course, teaching poster and package design. Kammüller himself had completed his training at AGS Basel around the turn of the century, before there had been any specialised graphic design courses. He had first been a painter, then a graphic designer and, according to his supervisor, AGS Basel director Hermann Kienzle, held the conviction that graphic design was primarily an artistic matter.[3]

Contrary to that, Kienzle, who had been director of the AGS Basel since 1916, found that graphic designers had to put artistic aspirations and individual expression in the background. Graphic design had first and foremost to fulfil its purpose – that is, the communicative or advertising function.[4] Kienzle remained the director of AGS Basel for almost thirty years until his retirement in 1944 and, parallel to that, was also the director of the affiliated Arts and Crafts Museum, the Gewerbemuseum Basel. During the 1920s and 1930s, Kienzle and his museum assistant Georg Schmidt – both trained art historians – initiated several ground-breaking exhibitions reflecting the above-mentioned functionalist attitude. These included the exhibitions *Neue Typographie* (New Typography) in 1927, and *Neue Werbegraphik* (New Graphic Design) in 1930. The museum's intense collaboration with Jan Tschichold also began during the 1920s. Tschichold had already become one of the spokesmen of the New Typography movement and was teaching typography and lettering at the Meisterschule für Deutschlands Buchdrucker (Master School for Germany's Book Printers) in Munich at the time. He contributed some of his typographic works to the Basel *Neue Typographie* exhibition and, for *Neue Werbegraphik*, he made the selection of posters to be displayed from his own collection, compiled the exhibition catalogue and designed its cover.[5] He also published a text in the same catalogue in which he introduced visitors to the design principles of the New Typographers, who preferred "impersonal" sans serif typefaces and "objective" imagery, meaning photography instead of illustration.[6]

After *Neue Typographie*, the Gewerbemuseum also held the Deutscher Werkbund's exhibitions *Neues Bauen* (New Building) in 1928, and *Die neue Fotografie* (New Photography) in 1931.[7] In 1929, the museum was the first venue for the *Bauhaus Dessau* travelling exhibition. From 1927 the Bauhaus was headed by Basel-based architect Hannes Meyer, whose radical reorientation of design pedagogy and theory was presented in the catalogue of the 1929 Gewerbemuseum exhibition by Ernst Kállai. Design, he wrote, was not the task of an individual artist-personality, but a cooperative work.[8] According to Hannes Meyer, "pure construction" had to be the main characteristic of a new, progressive world of forms.[9] Part of the exhibition was dedicated to the Bauhaus advertising department's teaching under Joost Schmidt, who taught geometrically constructed letterforms, as can be found in the exhibition poster by Bauhaus student Franz Ehrlich.[10] **(fig. 46)**

3 STABS, *ED-REG 8, 4–1*, Hermann Kienzle, Brief an Regierungsrat Fr. Hauser. betr. Stundenpläne Sommer Sem. 1940. Basel, 20 February 1940: 3.

4 Kienzle 1929: 56.

5 Gewerbemuseum Basel 1927.

6 "Wie sich der neue typografische Gestalter beim Schriftplakat der unpersönlichen Grotesk als Type bedient, so verwendet er beim Bildplakat unpersönliche, 'objektive,' sachliche Darstellungen: vorzugsweise die Fotografie". Tschichold 1930: n.p.

7 In 1933, the Gewerbemuseum Basel hosted the exhibition *Die neue Fotografie in der Schweiz* (The New Photography in Switzerland).

8 Kállai 1929: n.p.

9 Meyer 1926: 221–222.

10 As for Schmidt's teaching, see Brüning 1995: 193.

The Gewerbemuseum and the AGS were located in the same building in the old city centre of Basel, which enabled teachers and students to have low-threshold access to the ideas and design approaches presented in the museum. The museum direction was convinced that the New Typography would prevail, especially in the design fields which "depend on motion, colour and power of impact, that is, in the field of advertising in the broadest sense".[11] Since the AGS graphic design programme was the place where advertising in the broadest sense was taught, it was clear that the New Typography had to be integrated into its teaching. Accordingly, in 1929, Hermann Kienzle proclaimed a new orientation of the AGS's graphic design pedagogy in the German trade journal *Archiv für Buchgewerbe und Gebrauchsgraphik* which corresponded to the demands of the New Typography, announcing the integration of the previously non-existent subjects of typography and photography into the curriculum of graphic design students.[12]

The exhibitions and published statements mentioned above already suggest that there was an internal strategy at AGS to align the school's pedagogic concept with the avant-garde ideas. Another indicator is Hermann Kienzle's personnel policy during the 1930s. Letters that Kienzle wrote to the school's committee give evidence of his goal to reduce the influence of the main teacher of the graphic design programme, Kammüller, in favour of younger, more progressive teachers who were proponents of the "new direction" in graphic design.[13] During the 1930s, the AGS Basel hired many designers who had participated in the 1927 *Neue Typographie* (New Typography) exhibition: the graphic designers Theo Ballmer and Ernst Keiser, the painter and graphic designer Max Sulzbachner and the architect Ernst Mumenthaler.[14] Jan Tschichold also began teaching at the AGS Basel through the mediation of Hermann Kienzle, after his forced emigration from Germany in 1933. With Tschichold, Kienzle had employed the New Typography movement's "expert, mouthpiece and figurehead"[15] all in one and he was well aware of how prestigious this nomination was: Tschichold's publications, Kienzle wrote, were of "fundamental importance [...] for the new conception of typography"[16] and his teaching at AGS Basel was highly "stimulating".[17]

Student work from Tschichold's "typography sketching" courses show that he taught the principles of the New Typography – such as asymmetric compositions and the reduction of typographic means – to journeymen typesetters by setting them the tasks to redesign advertisements.[18] In the mid-1930s, he redesigned the AGS Basel's printed matter according to the principles of the New Typography and went on designing posters and books for the school and its museum. **(fig. 47)** Tschichold also continued to be involved in the Gewerbemuseum's exhibition projects, for instance *Planvolles Werben. Vom Briefkopf bis zum*

11 Direktion des Gewerbemuseums Basel 1927: 4. Original: "wo es auf Bewegtheit, Farbe und Schlagkraft ankommt, also auf dem Gebiet des Werbewesens im weitesten Sinn".

12 Kienzle 1929: 56.

13 STABS, Erziehung NN3, Hermann Kienzle, Brief an AGS-Kommissionspräsident Fritz Mangold betr. Fachklasse für Graphik, Basel, 24 March 1931: 1. Original: "neuere[n] Richtung".

14 Gewerbemuseum Basel 1927: 13.

15 Kurz 2018: 52. Original: "Fachmann, Sprachrohr und Galionsfigur".

16 STABS, *Erziehung NN 2*, Hermann Kienzle, Brief an das kantonale Arbeitsamt, Basel, 20 July 1934. Original: "von grundlegender Bedeutung [...] für die neue Auffassung der Typographie".

17 *Ibid.* Original: "anregend".

18 Brenneisen 1936: 178–180.

Werbefilm (Planned Advertising: From Letterhead to Commercial Film) in 1934. The exhibition advocated a major topic of the New Typography: the standardisation in graphic design, which was to be achieved through a planned and unified design of a client's complete print and advertising material.[19]

In the AGS's graphic design programme, Typography had been introduced as a course in 1933, which was a novelty in Swiss graphic design education then. Tschichold did not teach there right away – the first typography teacher for graphic design students was Karl Becker, AGS Basel long-time typesetting teacher. Becker had already integrated the design principles of the New Typography into his courses; however, he taught them on an equal footing with the traditional, "well-established form".[20] Starting in 1938, Tschichold joined Becker and began teaching typography in the graphic design programme. However, at about the same time Tschichold also began to distance himself, at least in part, from the radical principles of the New Typography of the 1920s.[21] He considered it unsuitable for book design now, and found it had "proven to be suitable only for advertising and other small printed matter".[22] Mainly advertising printed matter was designed in the graphic design programme, and it is therefore likely that Tschichold, despite his change of mind, did not completely discard the principles of the New Typography in his courses for graphic designers. Ultimately, however, it was not Tschichold who was the main driving force behind the implementation of avant-garde design principles in the AGS Basel graphic design programme, but the Swiss graphic designer Theo Ballmer.

Auguste Théophile Ballmer, born 1902 in Lausanne, was a trained lithographer who had been working as a graphic designer since the 1920s. From 1926 to 1929, he worked for the Basel chemical company Hoffmann-La Roche, where he experimented with the integration of photography and graphic design. The Gewerbemuseum Basel commissioned him to design several exhibition posters starting in the late 1920s, for example *100 Jahre Lichtbild* (100 Years of Photography) in 1927 and *Neues Bauen* in 1928. Shortly after the Bauhaus travelling exhibition in Basel in 1929, Ballmer moved to Dessau, Germany, to enrol at the Bauhaus with the goal to further educate himself for a teaching position at the AGS Basel. In 1930, after his return to Switzerland, he started teaching in the graphic design programme, where he became the first teacher of the newly created Photography course and taught advertising graphics and lettering.[23]

Ballmer's Advertising Graphics course was methodically structured, and the students worked on basic design exercises which gradually increased in complexity. They started by constructing letterforms using basic geometric shapes such as the square, rectangle and circle. Ballmer favoured similar constructed letter-

19 Gewerbemuseum Basel 1934.

20 STABS, Erziehung NN 11, Karl Becker, Semesterbericht Typographie, AGS Basel, Summer Semester 1930: n.p. Original: "Die neue Typographie wurde wieder gepflegt, dabei aber die alten bewährten Formen nicht vernachlässigt".

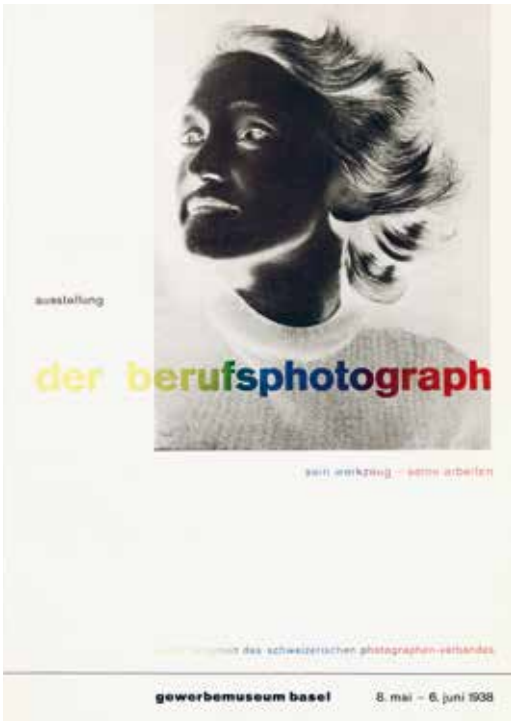
21 Bosshard 2012: 11, 27.

22 Tschichold 1946: 233. Original: "Die neue Typographie ist zwar noch nicht überholt, eignet sich aber erwiesenermaßen nur für Werbe- und andere kleine Drucksachen. Für das Buch, besonders für das literarische, ist sie im Allgemeinen völlig ungeeignet".

23 STABS, ED-REG 8b 11–3 (1), Allgemeine Gewerbeschule Basel, Stundenpläne Sommersemester 1931 und Sommersemester 1938.



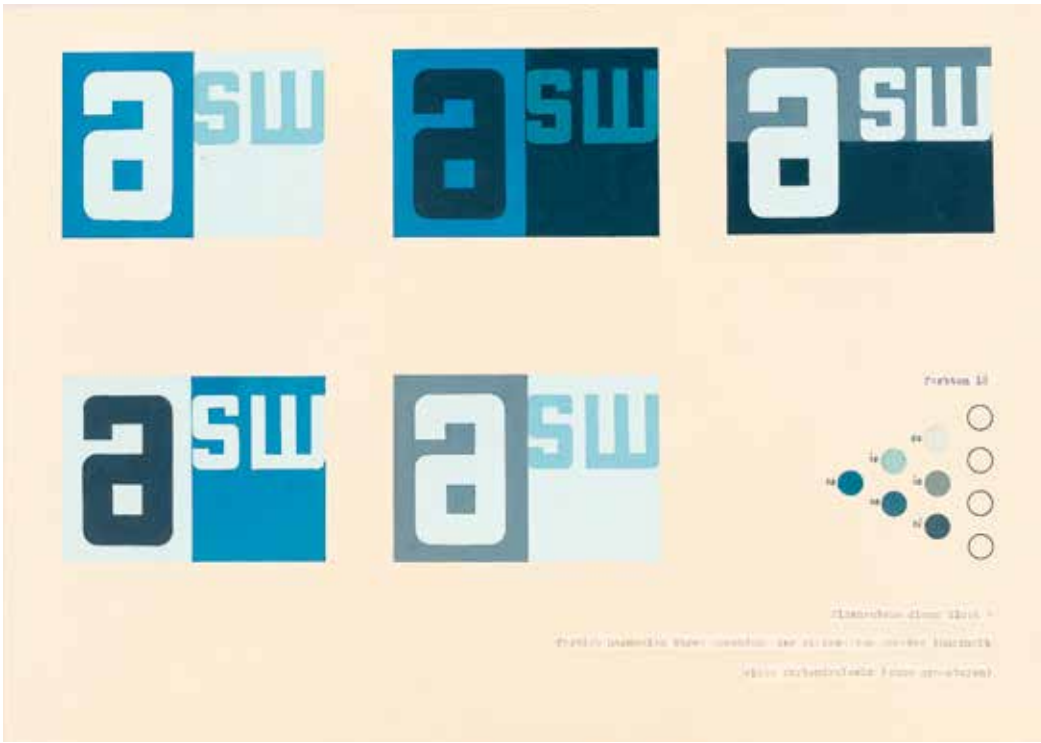
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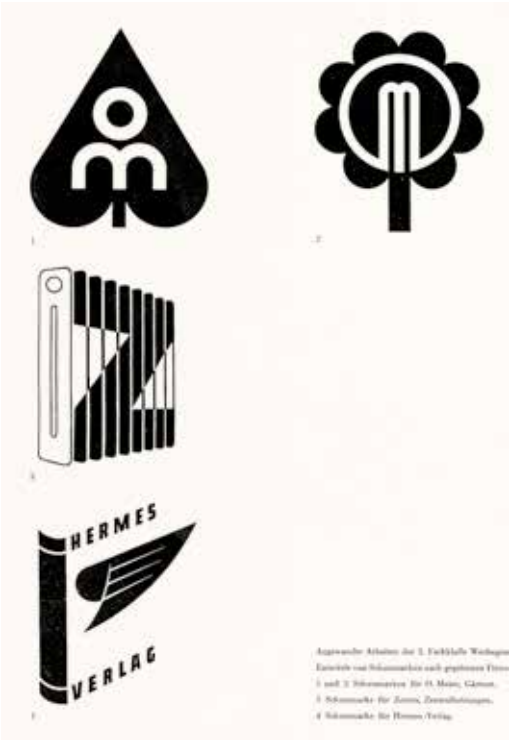
fig. 46 *Bauhaus Dessau*, poster designed by Franz Ehrlich for the exhibition held at the Gewerbemuseum Basel, 21 April – 20 May 1929. Lithograph.

fig. 47 *Der Berufsphotograph* (The Professional Photographer), poster designed by Jan Tschichold for the exhibition held at the Gewerbemuseum Basel, 8 May – 6 June 1938. Photolithograph.



48

fig. 48 *Flächenbehandlung Blatt 9* (Surface treatment, sheet 9), teaching template by Theo Ballmer, for the Graphic Design course, using constructed type in combination with Wilhelm Ostwald's colour theory, Allgemeine Gewerbeschule Basel, ca. 1930.



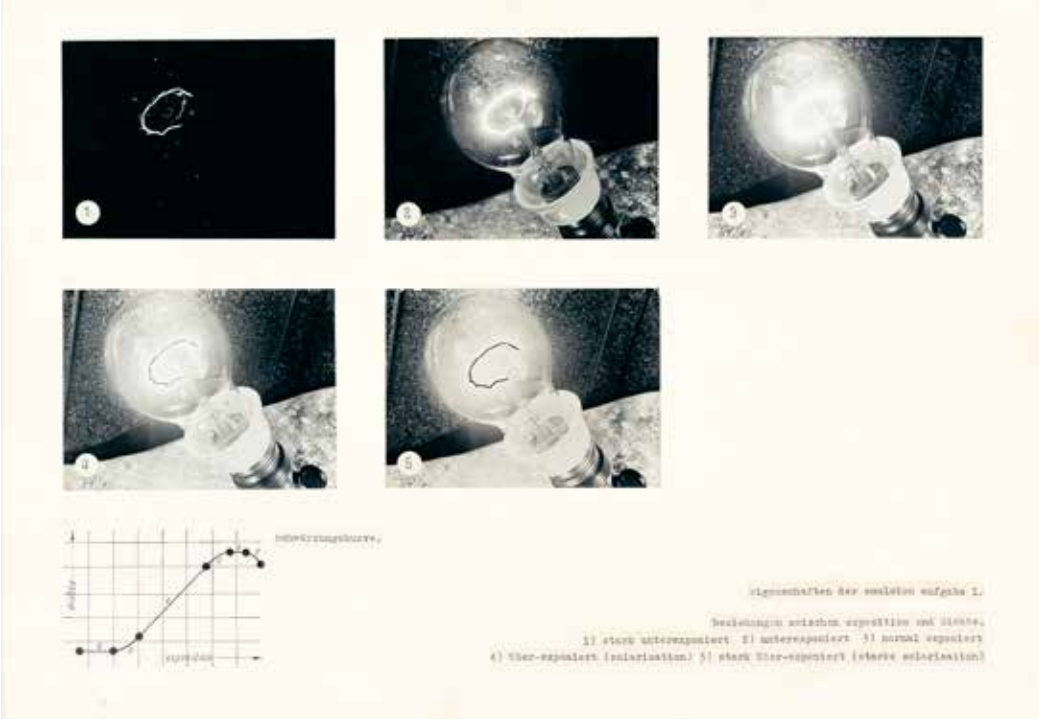
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fig. 49 Exercise for logo designs for different clients, teachers Theo Ballmer and Ernst Keiser; top right logo, design by Beatrice Afflerbach-Hefti, other designs by anonymous. Allgemeine Gewerbeschule Basel, ca. 1930s.

fig. 50 *Wintersport St Moritz*, exercise for advertisement, teachers Theo Ballmer and Ernst Keiser, anonymous designers, Allgemeine Gewerbeschule Basel, ca. 1930s.



51

fig. 51 *Eigenschaften der Emulsion, Aufgabe 1* (Property of the emulsion, Exercise 1), teaching template for the Photography course, Teacher: Theo Ballmer, Allgemeine Gewerbeschule Basel, ca. 1930. *Nachlass Theo Ballmer*, Box X 5068 1, Swiss National Museum, Zurich.

forms in his own graphic design practice since the 1920s, for example in his famous poster for *Büro: Internationale Bürofachausstellung Basel* (Office: International Office Exhibition) in 1928. He shared this passion for constructed lettering with Joost Schmidt, who headed the advertising department when Ballmer studied at the Bauhaus. Through Schmidt's courses, constructed letters were omnipresent at the Bauhaus at that time.[24] In his classes at the AGS Basel, Ballmer taught the so-called *Flächenbehandlung* (surface treatment) exercises. Using a given rectangular area, the students explored the basic principles of design and composition and constructed the types in black and white, before finally adding colour in the next step. **(fig. 48)** Ballmer introduced Wilhelm Ostwald's colour system into the AGS Basel graphic design programme, where students were to work with "functionally determined harmonies" taken from Ostwald's system of colour triangles.[25] Ostwald had first published his colour theory in *Die Farbenfibel* (The Colour Primer) in 1917 as an attempt to provide a scientific system to produce colour harmonies.[26] His system was also used – and heavily debated – at the Bauhaus and in Joost Schmidt's graphic design teaching.[27]

Ballmer's graphic design methodology was based on the conviction that design interventions – for example, changing an element's colour or variating a background pattern – had to be observed in isolation to understand their effects. Therefore, in his exercises, certain basic elements were always retained and only one component at a time was changed to observe the effect of this manipulation. Through this, according to Ballmer, the students learned to weigh the smallest interventions and gained the necessary experience to make design decisions.[28] Only after having completed the basic exercises on form, colour and composition would the students work on applied tasks, such as posters, advertisements and logos. **(figs. 49–50)** The goal here was to eventually combine lettering, graphic forms, colour and photography into a unity.

To this end, starting in 1930 Ballmer – who was a passionate, self-taught photographer – gave a Photography course for graphic design students at the AGS Basel, where they learned the basics of black-and-white photography and darkroom techniques. If we consider that at that time, according to Swiss graphic designer Walter Cyliax, the majority of Swiss graphic design professionals were still very sceptical of using photography instead of illustration on a regular basis, the permanent integration of a Photography course into a public trade school's graphic design programme was a far-sighted move.[29]

When studying at the Bauhaus, Ballmer had attended Walter Peterhans's Photography courses, where he learnt about technical subjects such as optics and sensitometry.[30] Peterhans was sceptical about experimental, artistic photography, and instead found creativity within photographic techniques. His attitude towards the object to be photographed was characterised by an aim for sobriety and rationality. To teach his Bauhaus students, Peterhans gave precise exercises concerning lighting, aperture of the lens, chemicals and photographic paper.[31] Ballmer's photo teaching

24 Brüning 1995: 193.

25 SNM, *Nachlass Theo Ballmer*, LM 165 114.3, Unterrichtsmaterial, Flächenbehandlung Blatt 12, Aufgabenbeschreibung von Theo Ballmer. Original: "zweckmässig bestimmte Harmonien".

26 Ostwald 1917.

27 Ball and Ruben 2004: 4952–4953.

28 BfGB, *Sondersammlung*, KSCV310/1–5+a, AGS Basel Kursbroschüren, Theo Ballmer und Ernst Keiser, Unterricht für Werbegraphik, ca. 1938.

29 Cyliax 1929: 29–30.

30 SNM, *Nachlass Theo Ballmer*, LM 165 315.3, Theo Ballmer, Notizbuch Optik / Notizbuch Sensitometrie, Bauhaus Dessau, ca. 1930.

31 As for Peterhans' photo teaching at the Bauhaus see Pastor 1986: 44, 46.

method at the AGS Basel shows clear references to Peterhans's method. Ballmer developed exercises for the graphic design students that demanded equally precise execution, and prepared numerous reference sheets to be used as teaching materials and visual aids, for example, on the topic of camera distance, angles, exposure etc. **(fig. 51)** Similarly to his gradually more complex exercises in the Advertising Graphics course, Ballmer created photographic exercises, so that his students had to adhere to a fixed constellation of camera adjustments, only changing one parameter at a time to make sure they recognised its impact.[32] In terms of style and approach, Ballmer's reference sheets and teaching methods were based on the New Photography movement, consolidating in Switzerland during this time, with Ballmer being one of its protagonists.[33] According to the exhibition catalogue of *Die neue Fotografie in der Schweiz* (New Photography in Switzerland) at the Gewerbemuseum Basel in 1933, the New Photography's goal was to reclaim photography's originality in terms of technique and spirit.[34] Instead of formally imitating painting, the specific means of photography were to be celebrated and its technical aspects explored. This effectively resulted in high-detail reproductions of materials, structures and surfaces, in experiments with photograms, negative-exposure, over-exposure and in extreme photographic angles. Ballmer's AGS Basel Photography courses were featured in the exhibition as a paragon of New Photography in Switzerland.[35]

As shown above, Ballmer taught most of the formal principles of New Typography and New Photography at the AGS Basel graphic design programme. This included the reduction of formal means, the use of geometrically constructed design elements on a structured surface, strong contrasts between printed and unprinted areas, "objective" photography instead of figural illustration and the preference for constructed typefaces instead of ornamental lettering.

However, he also implemented New Typography's theoretical concepts, such as the systematisation of colour and the standardisation of printed matter. As Tschichold put it in his essay "Die Gestaltung der Werbemittel" (Design of Advertisements), published in the 1934 Gewerbemuseum Basel's exhibition catalogue of *Planvolles Werben* (Planned Advertising) the use of standardised (DIN) paper formats and layouts, the consistency of typefaces and logos, and the formal unity of all kinds of printed matter for a company were supposed to replace common, "aimless" advertising.[36] Theo Ballmer's design for the poster, brochures, and so on for the *Internationale Bürofachausstellung Basel's* (Basel International Office Equipment Exhibition) was presented as a successful example of such standardisation in the same catalogue.[37] Ballmer was convinced that his students could not create decent graphic work before they understood the basic principles of standardisation and therefore gave his advanced graphic design students exercises to redesign letterheads, envelopes, postcards and so forth with regard to consistency.[38]

Another theoretical concept followed by many New Typographers and to which Ballmer agreed was the abolition of capital letters and the introduction of phonetic spelling. This demand originated from

32 SNM, *Nachlass Theo Ballmer*, Box X5068 2, Lehrplan für Fotografie von Teo Ballmer, Lehrer an der Allgemeinen Gewerbeschule Basel, ca. 1930.
33 Gasser 2007: 23, 29, 43.
34 Direktion des Gewerbemuseums Basel 1933: 3–4.
35 Gewerbemuseum Basel 1933: 26.
36 Tschichold 1934: 26.
37 Gewerbemuseum Basel 1934: 27.
38 STABS, Erziehung NN 11, Allgemeine Gewerbeschule Basel, T[h]eo Ballmer, Semesterberichte, Wintersemester 1931/1932.

the intensive reception of Walter Porstmann's type reform programme, published in the book *Sprache und Schrift* (Language and Writing) in 1920.[39] Ballmer used both lower-case and phonetic spelling with great consequence: in his graphic designs, such as those for the *Internationale Bürofachausstellung Basel* – Ballmer's German spelling of "büro" instead of the usual French "bureau" was completely unusual at that time[40] – in his teaching templates, **(figs. 48 and 50)** and in his written correspondence as well. In the latter, the lower-case and phonetic spelling was not limited to private correspondence, but extended to the semester reports he sent to his AGS Basel supervisor, where he simplified words that would look strange to the reader's eye such as "alfabet" instead of "Alphabet" and "staben" instead of "Buchstaben" (letters). The extent to which Ballmer was convinced of these ideas is also shown by his temporary removal of the silent letter "h" from his name; he called himself "Teo" for some time.[41]

Parallel to his courses at the AGS Basel, in the 1930s Ballmer designed several election posters for the Swiss Communist Party, in which he was also involved. His close interweaving of design activity and political commitment did not go unnoticed. In 1931, it led AGS Basel commission president Fritz Mangold to worry about Ballmer bringing politics into the classroom. Though he agreed with Hermann Kienzle that Ballmer was suitable to teach at the AGS Basel in terms of his design attitude, he wrote: "I fear that Mr B will be active in secret, in line with his political beliefs".[42] Indeed, political allusions can be found in Ballmer's teaching materials of the 1930s. The template sheets he prepared for his photography courses – to demonstrate technical photography exercises – contain photographic motives such as a hammer and sickle and cut-outs from the *Basler Vorwärts*, the Communist Party's newspaper.[43] This may be due in part to the fact that Ballmer reused photographs from his freelance work. However, he could also have chosen less politically charged motifs. Apparently, he was not aware of (or indifferent to) the attention his political graphic designs attracted and of the disadvantages this could create for his career at a public trade school, where political opinions were considered out of place.[44]

This blending of a critique of design attitude and political conviction can also be seen in relation to Tschichold's teaching. In 1934, there was a joint complaint by a group of Basel-based graphic designers and the *Faktorenvereinigung* (Association of Master Typesetters) concerning Tschichold's appointment as an AGS Basel typography teacher.[45] The complaint was based on two lines of argument: on the one hand, it was a criticism of Tschichold's design conception of the New Typography, perceived as too ideological. His works appeared

39 Porstmann 1920. On the reception of Porstmann's theory by the New Typographers, see Grütter 2019: 93–113.

40 Grütter 2019: 221.

41 Ballmer's spelling in the AGS Basel semester reports. STABS, *Erziehung NN 11*, Allgemeine Gewerbeschule Basel, T[h]eo Ballmer, Semesterberichte, Wintersemester 1931/32 und 1934/1935.

42 STABS, *Erziehung NN 3*, Fritz Mangold, Handwritten note on Hermann Kienzle's Letter, Basel, March 24, 1931. Original: "wiewohl ich fürchte, Herr B. werde etwa im Sinne seiner polit. Anschauung insgeheim tätig sein".

43 SNM, *Nachlass Theo Ballmer*, Box X5068 2, Theo Ballmer, Teaching templates, ca. 1930.

44 An example of political involvement being banned from AGS Basel is the "communist" student magazine *Der Stift*, which was published in 1934 and forbidden right away. Bischler 2021.

45 The written complaint itself was not preserved, however, Hermann Kienzle repeated the accusations in a letter to the cantonal employment office to then refute them. See STABS, *Erziehung NN 3*, Hermann Kienzle, Brief an das kantonale Arbeitsamt, Basel 20 July 1934.

"tendentious"[46] and dilettante, therefore he was considered unfit to work as a typography teacher at AGS Basel. On the other hand, the complaint had an anti-immigrant undertone: by working for companies such as the publishing house Benno Schwabe & Co and the chemical company Ciba's advertising department, Tschichold would have taken commissions from Basel-based graphic designers. His "appointment from Germany"[47] would oust the previous typography teacher from his position at the AGS Basel. The complaints thus aimed at replacing the German Tschichold with a Swiss graphic designer or typographer. For Tschichold, this could have meant the loss of his residence permit and thus expulsion to National Socialist Germany. However, Tschichold found a vehement defender in his superior Hermann Kienzle, who refuted the accusations and vouched for his professional competence and irreplaceability with respect to the cantonal employment office.[48]

These two examples show that the intense reception of the New Typography's design principles and reformatory theory at AGS Basel during the 1930s, the resulting reorganisation of graphic design teaching and the replacements of teaching staff were not entirely well received. The critical voices, however, seemed to be expected, given the AGS Basel's mission statement, published in 1929 (shortly before the *Bauhaus Dessau* exhibition), which already set the tone for the changes to come: "If a school, an institution, is supposed to stay alive, it has to be willing to abandon outdated ideas and try new things, in brief: it has to keep pace with the present day and its demands".[49]

46 *Ibid*. Original: "tendenziös aufgemacht".

47 This statement, which was also an accusation of Kienzle as the one who employed Tschichold, was vehemently contradicted by him: Tschichold had not been appointed but had come to Switzerland on his own accord. *Ibid*.

48 *Ibid*.

49 Gewerbemuseum Basel 1929: 3. Original: "Jede Schule, jede Institution muss, wenn sie lebendig bleiben soll, den Willen haben, Überlebtes aufzugeben und Neues zu versuchen, kurz: mit dem Tag und seinen Forderungen schrittzuhalten".

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Acronyms

SNM
Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum, Zurich

BfGB
Bibliothek für Gestaltung, Basel

StABS
Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, Basel

The Museum, the Printer and the New Typography: Jan Tschichold in London (1935–1948)

Sandy Jones[1]

In May 1935, Jan Tschichold arrived in London from Switzerland to explore opportunities for employment and turned to his international network of friends and supporters to ask for assistance. Having fled from Germany following a period of *Schutzhaft* (protective custody, or extra-legal detention) on the charge of "cultural Bolshevism", his financial situation was precarious. As an emigrant he was restricted in the number of hours he could work, so it made sense to look further afield. By then, he had already established a reputation as the key spokesperson for the New Typography through his published articles in British trade journals such as *The Penrose Annual* and *Commercial Art*. With London the locus for Britain's response to Modernism, Tschichold's visit was well timed and would prepare the ground for his future projects and collaborations.

The focus of this essay is Tschichold's activities in London between 1935–1938 as an exhibition maker, designer and New Typography advocate, through the lens of two case studies: the printer, Percy Lund Humphries and the museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). It considers the extent to which his principles of the New Typography were accepted in British commercial art printing and asks why attempts to publish his texts in 1948 were unsuccessful.

Context

It was no coincidence that an interest in modern architecture, art and design arose in Britain during a period of economic depression in the early 1930s. Discontent with standards of design in manufacturing, felt to be inferior to French and German methods, was combined with a belief that an improvement in the design and quality of consumer goods would enable Britain to compete more successfully in international markets. Initiatives led by the Government and commerce were launched with the aim of improving design standards, influencing public taste and persuading the manufacturing industry to invest in design.

In late 1933, the Council for Art and Industry (CAI) was established on the recommendation of the Gorell Report, which had been commissioned by the Board of Trade to assess "the production and exhibition of articles of good design and everyday use".[2] A direct descendant of the British Institute of Industrial Art and a precursor to the Design Council, the CAI was chaired by London Transport's Chief Executive, Frank Pick, a founder of the

1 The author would like to thank Jeremy Aynsley, Ruth Hibbard, Richard Hollis, Robin Kinross, Lucy Myers, Alan Powers, Graham Twemlow and Deborah Sutherland.

2 Gorell 1932.

Design and Industries Association (DIA), where he was appointed President in 1932. These organisations shared similar aims: to unite manufacturers and designers in the improvement of the quality of industrial design.

Pick was one of several influential figures in commerce with a marked bias towards Modernism, who were convinced that advanced forms of contemporary design were the best way to attract the public's attention and communicate the qualities of modern products and services. Together with Jack Beddington at Shell-Mex, C. F. Snowden Gamble at Imperial Airways, William Crawford of advertising agency W. S. Crawford and Stephen Tallents at the General Post Office, Pick provided essential employment for artists, some fleeing oppressive regimes, and brought Modern Art into the public realm through architecture, advertising and exhibitions. In a review of the *Exhibition of Pictures in Advertising by Shell-Mex & BP Ltd.* (1938) they were dubbed "the new Medici" by art critic Cyril Connolly, who proposed they had changed the paradigm of art patronage and the exhibition "marked the beginning of a new era in the relations of creative Modern Art and big business".[3] Commerce and contemporary design, therefore, could play a decisive role in broadening the reception of Modernism.

With the involvement of Modern artists, perceptions of commercial art began to change and it was exhibited in galleries. The Zwemmer Gallery, an extension of its bookshop, actively promoted Modern Art with exhibitions from artists Matisse and Picasso (1933), Eric Ravilious (1933) and commercial art from fine printers Curwen Press (1932) who also provided employment for Modern artists. The London Gallery staged solo exhibitions for Herbert Bayer and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (1937) with the latter opened by Walter Gropius. Significantly, the *Exhibition of British Art in Industry* (1935) organised by The Royal Academy and the Royal Society of Art (RSA) included a display on commercial art.

Other currents of Modernist cross-disciplinary thinking came from artists, architects and educators who formed groups, published manifestos and held exhibitions such as Unit One (1933–1935) and The Modern Architectural Research (MARS) Group (1933–1957). Journals such as *Axis*, *Signature*, *Typography*, *Commercial Art and Industry* were influential in introducing contemporary European trends to the British trade together with overseas journals *Gebrauchsgraphik* and *Arts et métiers*. The London outpost of the Reimann School and Studios of Industrial and Commercial Art, a private school of German origin, was established in 1937 with an advisory council that included Edward McKnight Kauffer and Jack Beddington.

There was still, however, a broad acceptance of New Traditionalism, a movement with its foundations in William Morris' Kelmscott Press. Yet, unlike Morris, New Traditionalism accepted machine composition and rejected overuse of decoration. Stanley Morison's *First Principles of Typography* (1930) summarised the movement's design philosophy and played an important part in the revival of historic typefaces during his tenure as typographical advisor to the Monotype Corporation. Highly visible sans serif typefaces such as Edward Johnston's standard alphabet for London Underground (Johnston Sans, 1916) and Gill Sans (1928) had emerged, but traditional typefaces were still in wide circulation.

3 Connolly 1934.

The Printer

In the early 1930s, Tschichold had begun to build his reputation through articles in trade journals, such as *Commercial Art*, which published his influential text "New Life in Print" (1930) and referred to *Die neue Typographie*, as "little short of a revolution".[4]

In March 1935, Tschichold wrote to his friend, artist Ben Nicholson, to request the address of Edward McKnight Kauffer in London. Nicholson obliged and wrote back to encourage Tschichold to visit, "it will be most important for the development of the contemporary movement here if you are able to come and I think you will find many friends and receive a good welcome".[5]

Lund Humphries' joint managing directors Eric Beresford Humphries and Eric Craven (Peter) Gregory had appointed Kauffer as design director in 1933. Lund Humphries had a tradition of placing design and technical innovation at the heart of their business strategy and had appointed Stanley Morison as consultant in 1923. Humphries brought technical printing knowledge and an interest in modern typography, while Gregory was based in London and an important figure in the contemporary art scene. In 1932, the sales office moved to Bedford Square and installed a design studio and dark room, which Kauffer shared with commercial artist Maurice Vaughan Bennett and photographers Francis Bruguière and Man Ray. As a former employee, Anthony Bell recalled on the culture of the business, "something of the spirit of the Bauhaus rubbed off in our composing room, even before the arrival in our midst of Jan Tschichold, the high priest of asymmetry".[6] Unusually, Lund Humphries extended an open invitation to artists to use their facilities and opened an "exhibition room" in 1933. The first exhibition was from Bruguière in collaboration with Kauffer (1933). **(fig. 52)** In 1934, the programme included shows from Hans Schleger and Man Ray, as well as the *Exhibition of Commercial Art*, which showcased the work of eight commercial artists including Edward Bawden, Theyre Lee Elliott and Stella Steyn. With Lund Humphries actively promoting contemporary design, it is not surprising Tschichold was offered an exhibition when he visited London in May 1935.

Lund Humphries staged the *Typographical Work of Jan Tschichold* from 27 November to 14 December 1935. In the introduction to the exhibition, they took the opportunity to clarify their position: "We do not therefore imply that we dogmatically abide by his principles of typography. We simply are anxious to let his work, which we believe to be of outstanding merit, speak for itself".[7] In a review, Robert Harling, a supporter of Tschichold, observed that his work was "far ahead of even the most advanced of the modern school in England", yet he proposed it would take another twenty-five years before he would be accepted, commenting that it was "not so much a distance of technique as a distance of mind".[8]

In 1936, Tschichold's work was displayed in Lund Humphries' *Exhibition of Printing and Commercial Design* and he received two further commissions: the redesign of their letterhead which would serve as an effective form of personal advertising with its inclusion of "designed by Jan Tschichold" and the highly significant design of issue 40 of *The Penrose Annual* (1938), in which he demonstrated that classicism and the New Typography were not mutually exclusive.

Tschichold's move away from the more rigid principles of the

4 *Commercial Art* 1930.
5 Nicholson 1935.
6 Bell 1981.
7 Lund Humphries 1934.
8 Harling 1936b.

movement had already been voiced in an article, "New Typography", published in *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art* (1937) where he wrote: "the form should arise clearly and unequivocally out of the requirements of the text and pictures only, and according to the functions of the printed matter. New traditionalism in typography demands exactly the same".[9] That spring, an opportunity arose to network with the key figures of the publishing and printing establishment including New Traditionalists, Morison and Eric Gill when he was invited by the Double Crown Club to read his paper on "A New Approach to Typography"; Tschichold would become an honorary member in 1949.

The Museum

In addition to his own design work and promotion of his typographic beliefs in his writings, Tschichold's impact on British design came about through his interest in collecting and archiving modern designs from across his international network of designers.

Another collector of modern design was the Deputy Keeper of the National Art Library at the V&A, Philip James, who established the Jobbing Printing Collection between 1936 and early 1940. James wrote to high-profile companies and designers from Britain, Europe and North America including Ashley Havinden, Edward Bawden, Herbert Bayer, Hans Schleger, Draeger Frères and Bauersche Giesserei to request examples of their work to create "an open reference collection of commercial typography". **(fig. 53)** He shared the view that commercial art was an effective tool for business and believed that British design was lagging behind Europe, commenting: "Continental jobbing printing responds far more quickly to current movements in art and design than does the work produced at home".[11]

James launched the collection with an exhibition at the museum, *Modern Commercial Typography* (1936–37) and an article in Typography (1936), where he acknowledged the collection of ephemera that must have surely inspired his own, John Johnson's "Sanctuary of Printing" at Oxford University Press.[12] On display were ninety-nine objects from forty-four designers with overseas work from the Bauhaus, Herbert Bayer, László Moholy-Nagy, Tschichold and, somewhat surprisingly, Fauvist Raoul Dufy. In his curation, James drew attention to modern typography's connection to abstract art, as Tschichold had done in his published work.

The British material, representing around fifty per cent of the exhibition, expressed a tendency towards illustration and wood-engraving, evident in Eric Ravilious' cover design for the BBC and Rex Whistler's Valentine's Day telegram for the General Post Office (GPO). The influence of Modern Art movements was apparent in Ceri Edward's abstract illustration for ocean liner *SS Orion*, Serge Chermayeff's Colours trade catalogue, influenced by Constructivism, for Nobel Chemical Finishes and Hans Schleger's Surrealist "eye" illustration for Shell-BP. **(fig. 54)**

The exhibition received praise and criticism, reflecting the mixed views that much Modern Art and design was receiving at the time. *Art and Industry* commented: "A careful balance between the Continent and England. Nothing parochial here".[13] The *Architects' Journal* criticised its curation: "No straightforward

9 Tschichold 1971.
10 James 1936.
11 *Ibid.*
12 James 1939.
13 Harling 1936a.



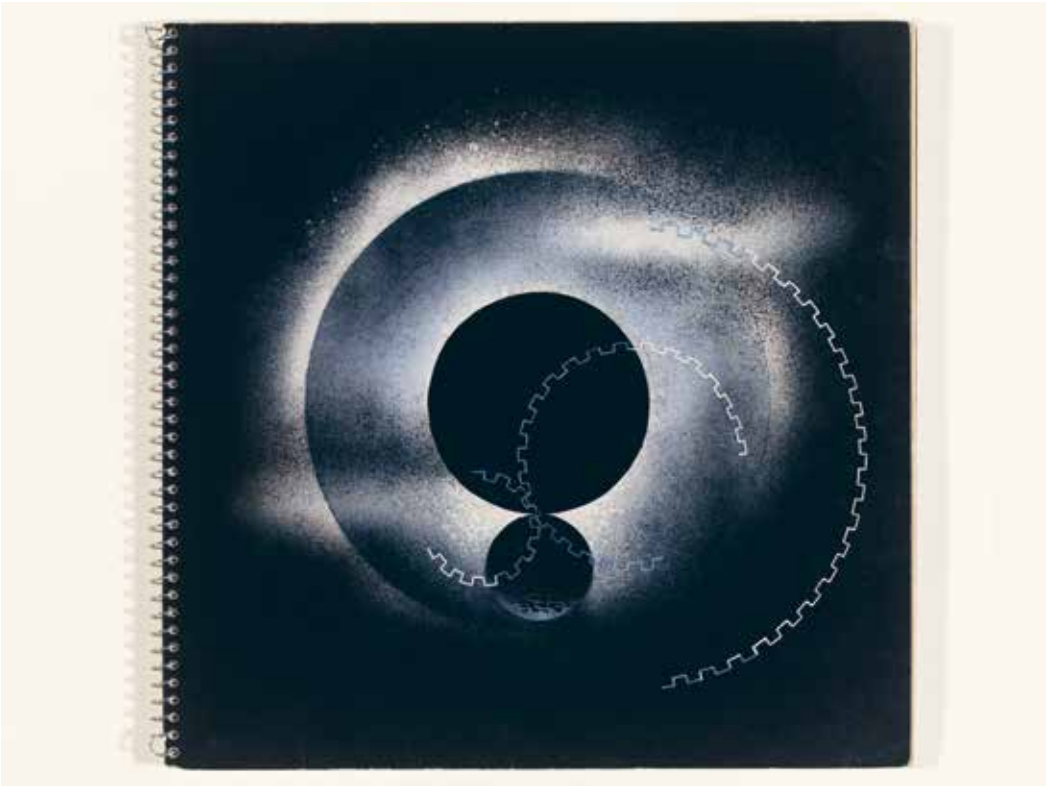
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fig. 52 The Lund Humphries exhibition room, Bedford Square, London.
Carpet and Curtains designed by Marion Dorn, 1930s.
Photo by Lund Humphries



53

fig. 53 Examples of modern commercial typography collected by Philip James, Keeper of the V&A's Library, for the Jobbing Printing Collection he initiated between 1936 and early 1940.



54

fig. 54 "The Self Changing or Pre-selective Epicyclic Gear",
cover design and illustration by Hans Schleger (Zero)
for Shell-Mex & BP Ltd. and printed by Percy Lund Humphries, 1937.
Jobbing Printing Box 3.

jobbing is included in this collection, and there is some dull Continental work inspired by one -ism or another".[14] BBC journal *The Listener* noted: "These are excesses which a hopeful critic will take as due to an abundance of vitality and over-stimulated imaginations".[15]

In London for his Double Crown Club talk, Tschichold visited James' exhibition twice and promised to sell him material from his personal collection of New Typography. In July 1937, the museum purchased twenty books and more than one hundred and fifty examples of commercial art including his own work and that of Herbert Bayer, El Lissitzky, Max Burchartz and Ladislav Sutnar amongst others for 206 Swiss francs (corresponding to ca. 1100 CHF in 2025). **(figs. 55–57)**. A roll of "more than 57" posters was declined and brokered for sale to Beaumont Newhall at MoMA.[16] Tschichold also included fragments of personal correspondence from Josef Albers and the Bauhaus. **(fig. 58)** Significantly, this would be the only purchase for the Jobbing Printing Collection.

Kinross suggests that Tschichold's motivation to sell was either due to his change in approach to design or the need to generate income, or possibly both.[17] I suggest he also wished to safeguard his collection with trusted institutions and insert himself into the narrative of the movement as its key advocate.

During World War II, the Jobbing Printing Collection was moved to a back office, where it remained for almost twenty years. Designer and educator Richard Hollis recalls that he came across Tschichold's collection around 1958, housed in a red box under the library counter and because of the correspondence, it was easy to identify and connect the material with *Die neue Typographie*.[18] In the 1960s, he was allowed, with Nicholas Biddulph, a fellow teacher at the Central School of Art, to photograph some of the material for lecture slides.[19]

Influence

Assessing the extent to which the New Typography influenced British commercial art printing during the 1930s is problematic. As ephemeral objects, the majority of commercial art in circulation would have been disposed of and was never intended for collection, exchange or display. As Attfield observes about what is perceived as ephemera, "its value lies in its consequence to the moment [...] yet its quality of impermanence can make a lasting impression".[20] As a snapshot of commercial art during this period, the Jobbing Printing Collection provides a useful starting point, although it is important to acknowledge that it is a curated collection regarded as best practice. The contemporary views of those working in the trade also provide valuable insights.

Looking at a cross-section of Jobbing Printing boxes, those influenced by the New Typography are easily identified through their use of asymmetry, photomontage, contrast of scale and accents of colour. **(figs. 59–62)** Illustration also features strongly providing a particularly British inflection. Who produced this material and for what purpose? A closer reading shows that it was the "new" industries – energy companies, plastics, travel, broad-

14 V&A Archive 1936b.
15 V&A Archive 1936a.
16 V&A Archive 1937.
17 Kinross 2018.
18 Kinross 2023.
19 Haworth-Booth 1971.
20 Attfield 2000.

casting and construction – which used these techniques to project their progressiveness. However, it remained just one expression among many rather than an exclusive commitment.

For those working in the trade, views on the New Typography were divided. John C. Tarr, writing in *Commercial Art and Industry*, observed it held "little appeal for the English-speaking printer, and when used was greeted with ridicule or indifference", but conceded that some commercial artists such as Kauffer were doing "excellent work".[21]

Two papers presented as part of the Cantor Lectures[22] series on typography held at the RSA in 1938 further illustrate this division. Harold Curwen, Director of Curwen Press, was critical of what he called "geometrical continentalism" and lamented its lack of clarity in bookwork: "Modernism comes before considerations of readableness [...] the message it was intended to convey is often lost in a welter of another 'isms'". Adding that a foundation in traditional techniques was essential to master modern fonts, "The typographer who, without any grounding in traditional form, lets loose amongst these types is, however, in a very dangerous paradise".[23]

> Bertram Evans, editor of *Industrial Arts*, held an opposing view: Great Britain, and to a lesser extent, America, were shut off by an indomitable ignorance of what was going on. Never has the isolation of this country appeared in a less splendid light. Walls of prejudice, general inability to read the German language, and a fortified self-complacency, excluded this country from any share in this new birth of typography. The number of those in this country who have any grasp of the new principles, is very small.[24]

There can be little doubt that the movement was polarising, attracting both admiration and hostility.

By mid-1939 the war had intervened and I suggest that it was the Ministry of Information that assumed the role of the "new Medici" in its brief exploration of Modernism as an effective weapon of propaganda in wartime exhibitions and posters.[25] In Switzerland, Tschichold consolidated his reputation as a book designer with projects including fifty-three titles in the Birkhäuser Classics series and a publication on early Chinese colour printing.

In May 1945, typographer Anthony Froshaug wrote to Tschichold to propose a collaborative project with designer and writer Ruari Maclean to publish English translations of three of his texts: *Typografische Entwurfstechnik* (Typographic Design Technique, 1932), *Typographische Gestaltung* (Typographic Design, 1935) and *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung* (A Lesson in Printing Design, 1930).[26] Layouts were designed, contracts signed and publication of all three texts initially proposed for 1946. *Technics of Typographical Layout*, a translation of the manual *Typografische Entwurfstechnik* (1932) would be the first one published.[27]

21 Tarr 1935.

22 The Cantor Lectures were named after Edward Theodore Cantor, who was a surgeon in the Indian Medical Service. Upon his death in 1860 he bequeathed a large sum to the Royal Society of Arts in order to promote their objectives (encouraging arts, manufacture and commerce). It was decided to begin a course of lectures on industrial technology which ran annually and began in 1864. The last series of Cantor Lectures took place in 1990.

23 Curwen 1938.

24 Evans 1938.

25 Jones 2015.

26 Froshaug 1945.

27 *Ibid*.



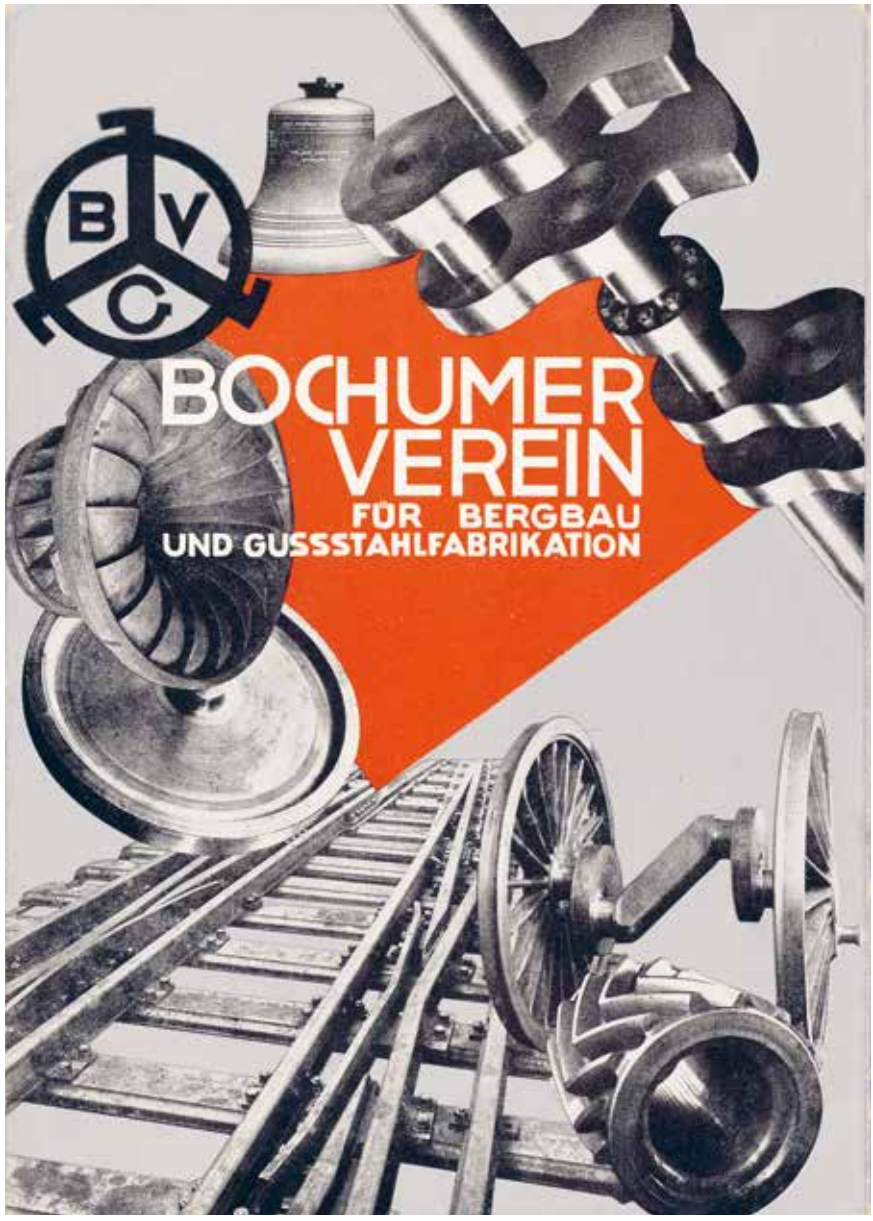
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fig. 55 The examples shown, drawn from the collection sold to the museum's library by Jan Tschichold illustrate the key principles of the New Typography such as: asymmetry, a bold use of colour, sans serif fonts, shifts in scale and perspective and a dynamic use of photomontage. "Sommerblumen am Funkturm" designed by Herbert Bayer and Kurt Kranz, Gemeinnützige Berliner Ausstellungs-, Messe- und Fremdenverkehrs GmbH, 1934. Jobbing Printing Box 22 (a).



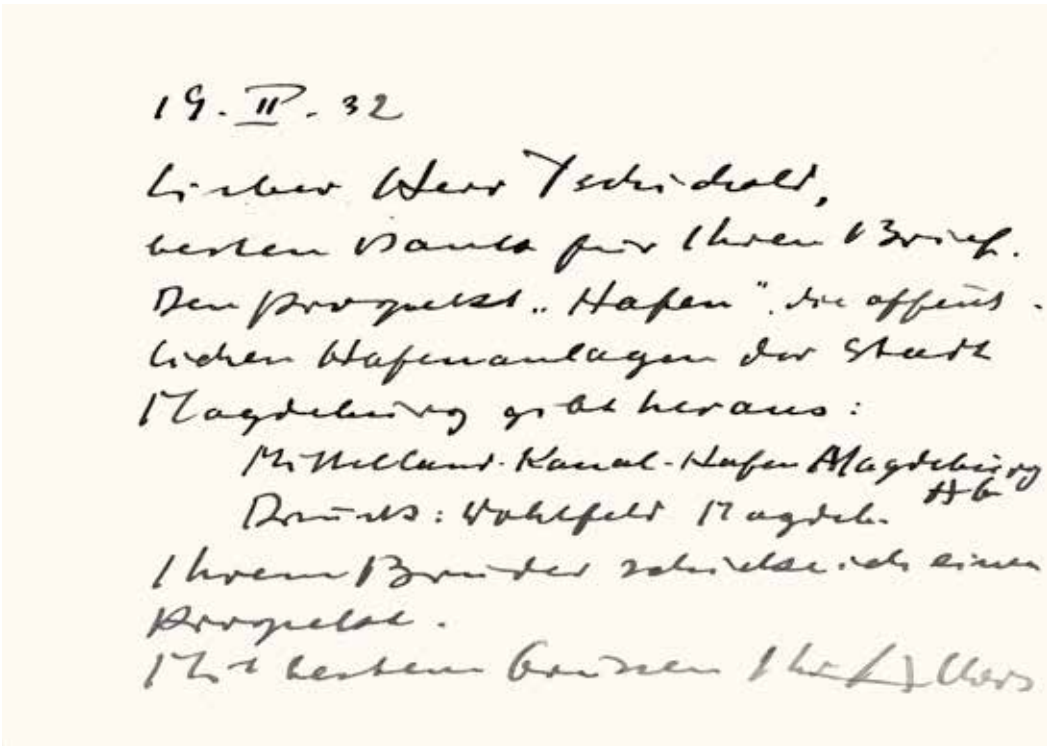
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fig. 56 "Mit der Strassenbahn nach Hildesheim", advertisement and timetable designed by Kurt Schwitters, printed by C. L. Schrader. Jobbing Printing Box 22(a).



57

fig. 57 "Bochumer Verein für Bergbau und Gussstahlfabrikation", trade catalogue designed by Max Burchartz and Johannes Canis, c. 1928. Jobbing Printing Box 22(a).

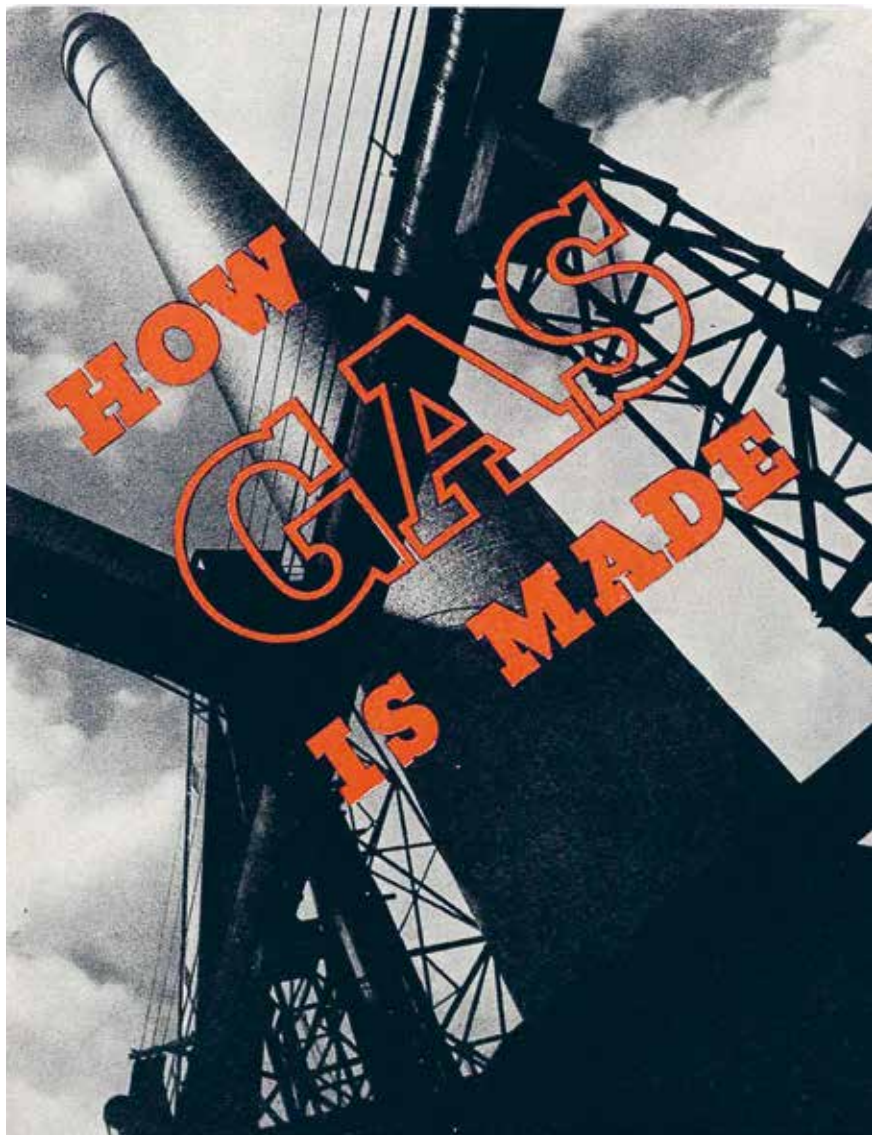


19. II. 32

Lieber Herr Tschichold,
besten Dank für Ihren Brief.
Den Prospekt „Hafen" der offenbar
neben Hafenanlagen der Stadt
Magdeburg gratis heraus:
M. Mittelland-Kanal-Hafen Magdeburg
Druck: Vohlfeld Magdeb.
Ihrem Bruder schreibe ich einen
Brief.
Mit besten Grüssen Ihr

58

fig. 58 Postcard to Jan Tschichold from Josef Albers about acquiring a prospectus, 19 February 1932. File Box Jobbing Printing 34(a). National Art Library.



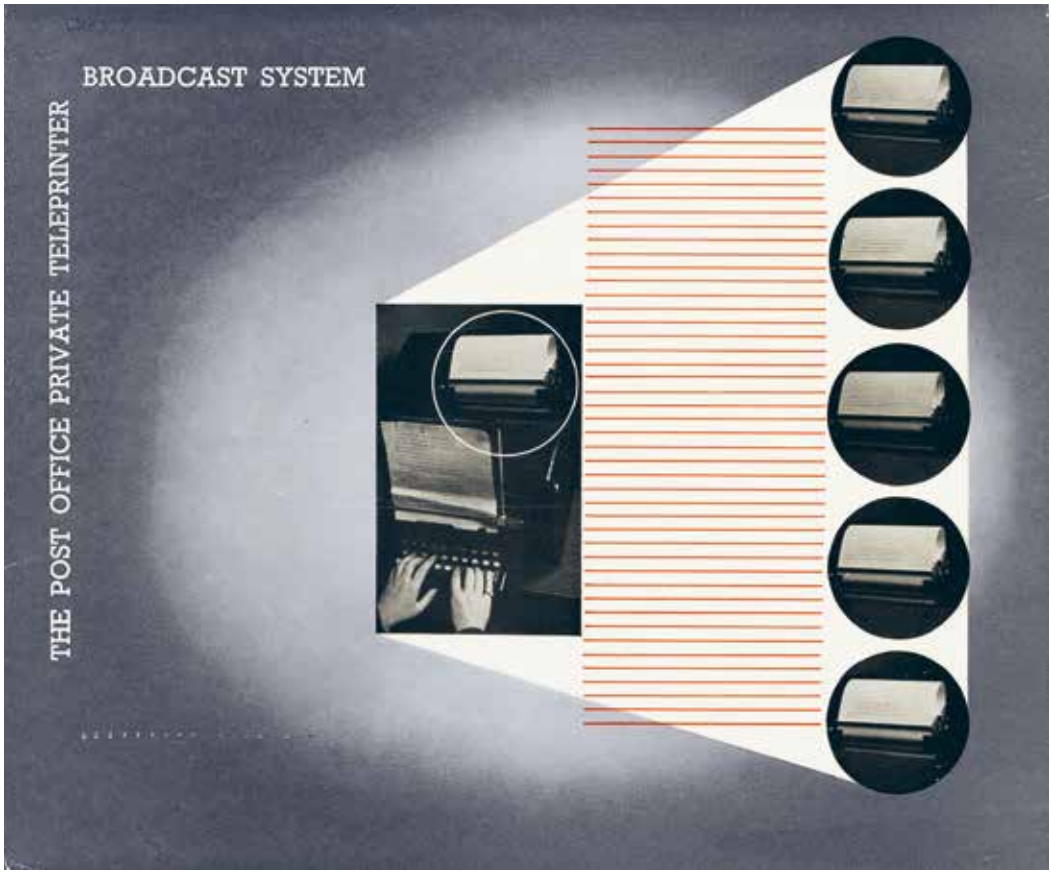
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fig. 59 These British examples show how the "new" British industries of the 1930s embraced New Typography techniques to project their organisations as modern and technologically advanced. "How Gas is Made Trade", trade catalogue, designer unknown, published by the Gas, Light and Coke Company, 1930s. Jobbing Printing Box 33.



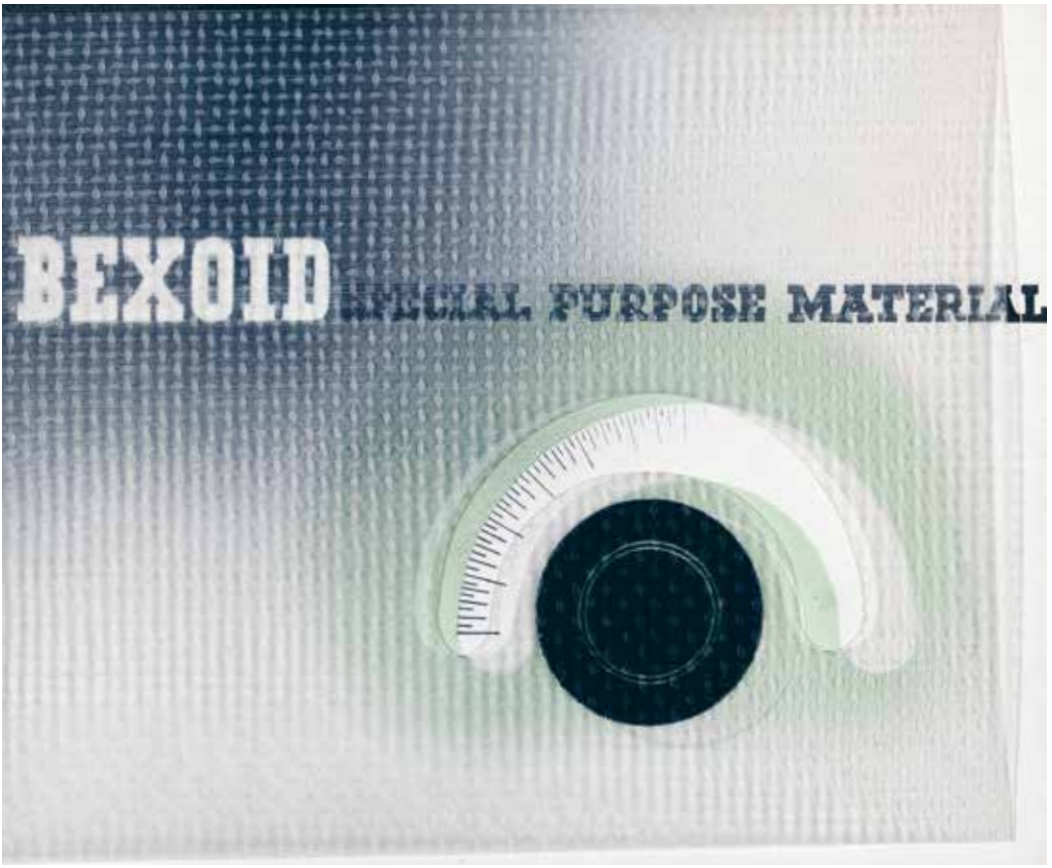
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fig. 60 "Zn", designer unknown, published by the Zinc Development Association Limited, 1930s. Jobbing Printing Box 7.



61

fig. 61 "The Post Office Private Teleprinter Broadcast System", trade literature, designed by Richard Beck and published by the General Post Office, 1938. Jobbing Printing Box 8a.



62

fig. 62 "Bexoid Special Purpose Material", brochure designed and printed by Lund, Humphries Ltd. and issued by the British Xylonite Co. Ltd., 1936. Jobbing Printing Box 7(b).

In 1948, Tschichold, restricted by a contract at Penguin Books, withdrew from the project and explained:

> The time for publishing this book is past [...] I don't think it is a useless book, and I even like typography as you do it sometimes, which proves to me that it has now become good old wine, but actually I prefer still older wine now, and would not like people to be confused by a book of a very different old Tschichold!'[28]

It was now twenty years since he had first published *Die neue Typographie* and in his view it was no longer "new", it was "old". An English translation of *The New Typography* would not be published until 1995.

Conclusion

Tschichold's activity in London reached its zenith between 1935 and 1938 and he was viewed as crucially important for other advocates of Modernism in design, for whom he served as a catalyst and exponent, and a model to follow. However, his approach described in the trade as an "uprooting of convention"[29] provoked both admiration and criticism.

A cross-section of British commercial art from the Jobbing Printing Collection has shown that the "new" industries were amongst those experimenting with the New Typography, although not exclusively. In British commercial art printing a plurality of styles co-existed, as Conekin observes: "British modernity was always a balancing act between innovation and tradition".[30] However, this pluralism was not just a feature of British design, as Jeremy Aynsley notes: "Modernism was far from the mainstream or most commonplace choice for the everyday German household".[31]

A trade broadly committed to tradition, World War II, Tschichold's change in design philosophy and work for Penguin Books, the lack of English language versions of his key texts and a new world order rendered the New Typography the spirit of a bygone age, yet its influence on typography practitioners in Britain endures.

28 Tschichold 1948.
29 *The Penrose Annual* 1938.
30 Conekin 1999.
31 Aynsley 2009.

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"Under the Spell of Tschichold". MoMA and the New Typography

Juliet Kinchin

The identity and typographic voice of The Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA) has been bound up with the sans serif clarity, geometric precision, and architectonic heft of the New Typography since the institution first opened in 1929. **(fig. 63)** The MoMA typo-logo – tweaked over decades by designers including Ivan Chermayeff, Paula Scher, Matthew Carter and most recently Christian Schwartz in 2017 – is among the most recognisable of any cultural institution in the world, and makes a statement of principle, a declaration of faith in the modern and contemporary. Initially, three curators gave the museum a powerful steer in the direction of Jan Tschichold and the New Typography in the 1930s: Alfred H. Barr Jr, the museum's founding director; Philip Johnson, first director of the Department of Architecture; and Ernestine Fantl, who assisted them both before assuming Johnson's position in 1935–37. Through an important series of exhibitions and design competitions Barr, Johnson and Fantl positioned the New Typography within the institution's interdisciplinary framework. They made acquisitions that laid the foundations of the museum's graphic design collection, including materials designed and collected by Tschichold, and used the New Typography as a tool for exhibition installations, publications, and publicity materials. It was Fantl, the first and only woman to head the department, who later described herself as having fallen "under the spell of Tschichold".[1]

The establishment of MoMA coincided with the rise of the advertising industry and the professionalisation of graphic design in the United States. In the 1920s, American consumer culture was booming, and New York seethed with competitive advertising. Émigré designers – among them Lucian Bernhard from Germany, Fortunato Depero from Italy in 1928–30, and Frederick Kiesler from Austria – were attracted by the city's energy but found difficulty in translating their European success in the context of the conservative print culture in the United States. **(fig. 64)** In 1926, three years before MoMA opened to the public, John Cotton Dana, founding director of the Newark Museum in New Jersey mused: "Will the work of the printer never find in art museums the high place it should have there?"[2] He was speaking at the American Association of Museums' annual conference. Lauding the beauty of modern typography that was gaining momentum in Europe but making little headway in the US, Dana continued: "In its more studied forms it is as beautiful as are the outgivings of art [...] Yet the printer's products occupy no high place among 'museum pieces'. Is this because printing is an industry? Or of today? More probably it is because the museum eye is blinded by conventions".[3] Dana

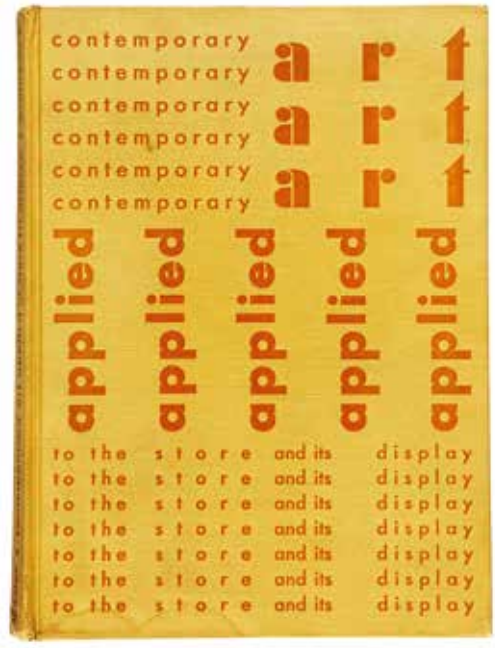
1 Carter 1974: 35.

2 *The New York Times* 1926: 24. The conference took place in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

3 *Ibid.*

The Museum of Modern Art
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fig. 63 MoMA Sans family of fonts designed by Christian Schwartz, 2017.

fig. 64 Frederick Kiesler, cover of *Contemporary Art Applied to the Store and its Display* (New York, Brentano's, 1930).

had long actively promoted modern German graphic design, but did not live to see MoMA pick up where he left off in seeking to elevate the status of contemporary commercial art.[4]

Alfred Barr shared Dana's belief in graphics as an accessible and technologically progressive form of expression meriting as much attention as painting or sculpture, and the New Typography was in his sights before he assumed his post as founding director at MoMA in 1929. Analysis of contemporary posters and printed materials featured in the revolutionary course on Modern Art he taught at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. As a stimulus to discussion, Barr encouraged his students to bring to class well-designed advertisements or magazines and organised a small exhibition in the college art gallery of *Modern European Posters and Commercial Typography* in 1929, shortly before his move to MoMA. The materials were largely drawn from his personal collection of printed matter scooped up during a sabbatical trip to Europe and the Soviet Union in 1927–28, and many later found their way into MoMA's permanent collection, library, and archive. On his travels, he had assembled posters for the London Underground, for rail travel in France, and steamship lines from the Netherlands; also, for recent German films, fairs and art exhibitions, and for political, social and economic propaganda from the USSR; **(fig. 65)** as well as a variety of brochures, journals, and Russian children's books. Barr's exhibition narrative emphasised the connection of Modern Art to the "utilitarian ends of modern life", and explained advances in relation to the direct influence of modern painting, rather than generated from other technological social and economic influences within the print-related industries.[5] In this respect, the Wellesley College exhibition provided a template for Barr's better-known landmark survey at MoMA in 1936, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, for which he used many of the same posters: Edward McKnight Kauffer's poster "Winter's Gloom" (1927), for example, was installed above the heading "Influence of Cubism" picked out in sans serif capital letters and at the other end of the wall Yakov Guminer's "May First" (1923) above "Influence of Suprematism". **(fig. 66)**

Barr's friend Philip Johnson also identified with the New Typography in his personal and professional life.[6] Independently wealthy and an ardent Germanophile, Johnson had visited the Weißenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart in 1927, while still a student at Harvard University. Among the many German books and posters that he subsequently presented to the museum was an example of Willi Baumeister's iconic poster for this event. **(fig. 67)** Johnson returned to Germany frequently and, like Barr, made repeated visits to the Bauhaus in Dessau. He was so inspired by the architecture and exhibition design of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and his partner Lilly Reich, that in 1930 he commissioned the couple to redesign his first New York apartment. "It would be the first room entirely in my latest style in America", he wrote to his mother, adding "I think it would be the greatest possible kind of publicity for my style".[7] In the same letter he drew her attention to a new letterhead for

4 Dana imported a massive exhibition of Modern German Applied Arts assembled by the Deutscher Werkbund, including 124 recent posters. After the Newark Museum, the exhibition travelled to a further six American venues.

5 Label copy survives in the Wellesley College Archives and the exhibition was reviewed in *Wellesley College News* 1929a; 1929b.

6 It seems likely that they first met at Wellesley College where Johnson's sister Theodate (Theo) was a student.

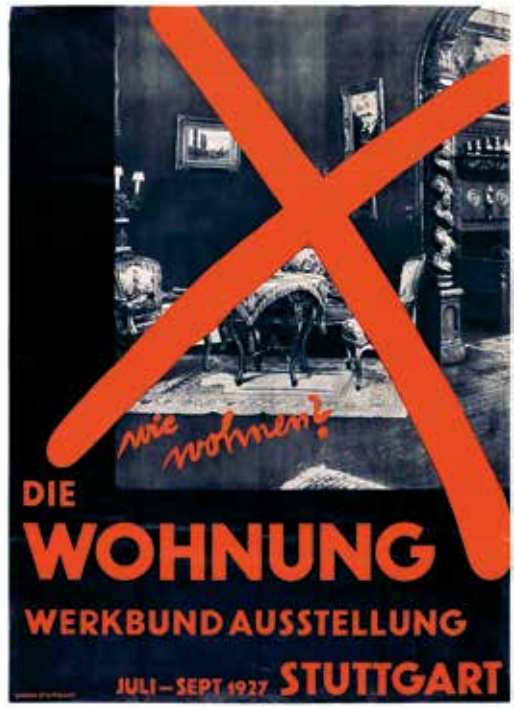
7 Letter from Philip Johnson to his mother, 30 August 1930. Copy in Architecture and Design Research Center, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



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fig. 65 Herbert Bayer's poster for the *Ausstellung Europäisches Kunstgewerbe* (European Arts and Crafts Exhibition), Leipzig, 1927. Lithograph. Photo by Jolie Simpson

fig. 66 Installation view of *Cubism and Abstract Art*, 1936, showing Edward McKnight Kauffer's *From Winters Gloom to Summers Joy* (1927) and Yakov Guminer's *May First* (1923).

fig. 67 Willi Baumeister's poster for *Die Wohnung. Werkbund Austellung* (The Dwelling. Werkbund Exhibition), Stuttgart 1927. Lithograph. Photo by Jolie Simpson

his Berlin apartment designed by Jan Ruhtenberg, an architect in Mies's Berlin office and his lover at the time, describing it as a "masterpiece". The letterhead was set in upper case using Paul Renner's Futura, the typeface of choice among the architectural avant-garde and originally designed for the Bauer Type Foundry as part of the New Frankfurt programme of urban redevelopment in 1927. The foundry had recently opened a New York office and were keen to market Futura in the United States. Both the stationery and the apartment, furnished in a minimalist style with tubular steel furniture, were a manifesto for Johnson's personal identity as an avant-gardist, and a touchstone for his planned career as an interior architect and curator.

As part of MoMA's educational mission, Barr was committed to demonstrating continuities between all manifestations of the modern spirit in art and to introducing American audiences to new European developments in graphic design and architecture. In 1930 he invited Philip Johnson, who was not yet directly employed by MoMA, to start preparation of the museum's first exhibition of contemporary architecture. At Barr's suggestion, Johnson took on Ernestine Fantl, a former Wellesley student, to assist with the project. *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* opened to critical acclaim two years later. **(fig. 68)** While Johnson collaborated with architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock on the exhibition content, it seems likely that Ruhtenberg designed, or at least advised on, the graphics, in that the letterhead for Johnson's role as "exhibition director" closely resembles that for his Berlin apartment. In Germany, Johnson had been struck by the conceptual and aesthetic synergy between the New Typography and the New Architecture and wanted to reflect this in the *Modern Architecture* exhibition's graphic identity. Renner's Futura was used, in upper case, on the loose jacket of the museum's catalogue. The layout – tectonically ordered on a grid with a single full-bleed photograph above minimal text printed in red on an otherwise empty white ground – exemplified principles outlined in Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie*, the definitive treatise of the New Typography movement published in Berlin in 1928. (These principles were not carried through, however, to the body of the catalogue, nor to Hitchcock and Johnson's influential "how-to" guide for architects, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922*, published independently by W. W. Norton & Co. as a supplement to the museum catalogue).

In the wake of *Modern Architecture*, in July 1932, MoMA established the world's first curatorial department of architecture headed by Philip Johnson, and Fantl moved from Johnson's personal payroll to that of the museum. Her first task was to supervise a two-year tour of the architecture exhibition throughout the United States. The museum was already producing an avalanche of printed material – stationery, announcements, invitations, catalogues, posters, etc. – and Johnson was keen to modernise and unify the institution's graphic identity, setting a standard for modern typographical design in the United States that others might follow. In 1933, with Fantl's assistance, he organised a series of poster and typography competitions to stimulate wider debate among artists, architects, and industrial designers.[8] Entries for the typography competition came from as far afield as California, Indiana and Nebraska, but gave Johnson a dispiriting indication of "what America is thinking about typographically". He concluded that the American typographer was "more at home

8 *Typography Competition and Exhibition*, Mar 27 – Apr 6, 1933, exhibition file 25a.1–3, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.

when he is designing conservatively and traditionally. He is not apparently so well informed about or practised in the possibilities of the asymmetric layout as is the German typographer".[9] To offer inspiration, Johnson planned a substantial exhibition of German posters and graphic ephemera organised by the Bund Deutsche Gebrauchsgraphiker (Association of German Graphic Designers) in September 1933. The exhibition was cancelled at a month's notice, however, by A. Conger Goodyear, chair of the Trustees – hardly surprising given discussion within the museum about extricating artists and designers from Germany following the Nazi regime's dissolution of the Bauhaus in August.

Fantl herself was no stranger to the arts of typography and printing. Growing up she had spent extended periods of time with an aunt and uncle who ran a multistorey stationery and printing store in Sumter, South Carolina. At MoMA her interest grew in this subject, especially after she assumed responsibility for the museum's publications around 1934. She even learned to typeset during evenings spent at the Spiral Press, the museum's printers, becoming further attuned to the physicality of type and the spatial, rhythmic relationship of letter forms on the printed page. Her grasp of printing technicalities and dual involvement in the departments of architecture and publications was translated into a small exhibition, *The Making of a Museum Publication*, that opened in October 1934. The aim was to give visitors a sense of the many skills, processes and sophisticated machinery involved in transforming an author's manuscript into a finished book.

The culmination of the Barr-Johnson-Fantl partnership was the now legendary *Machine Art* exhibition staged in 1934, which celebrated everyday objects of industrial design as art. The curatorial aim was to provoke manufacturers and consumers to look at familiar, everyday objects anew, and to focus on the machine aesthetic of their pure geometric shapes, rather than being distracted by any technical, social or functional aspects. In October 1933, Johnson had lured Ruhtenberg to New York to assist with the art direction of both the exhibition installation and catalogue – crucial elements in this exercise in visual propaganda and showmanship. According to Ruth Bernhard (daughter of the preeminent *Sachplakat* designer Lucian) it was Ruhtenberg who approached her to photograph the exhibits. (He had moved into an apartment upstairs from her in New York.) Bernhard's photography of spot lit objects like the self-aligning ball-bearings on the catalogue cover suggested that the objects existed above and beyond interactions with people, noise, or use. **(fig. 69)** The Modernist feel of the exhibition was further emphasised by the sans serif typography of the Bauhausler Josef Albers on the catalogue cover, and the use of capitalised sans serif wall titles throughout the exhibition installation.

There was growing unease among museum staff and trustees at Johnson's increasingly blatant Hitler worship that was syphoning his energies away from the museum in the summer and autumn of 1934. Together with Alan Blackburn, MoMA's Executive Director, Johnson established a fascist group known as the Gray Shirts. By that December the two men were asked to resign their posts and take their political campaigning elsewhere, leaving Fantl in charge of the department.

The first project she brought to fruition in May 1935 was a small circulating exhibition, *European*

9 Undated news cutting, "Traditional Design Wins Museum of Art Award", microfiche PI 3.620, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.

Commercial Printing of Today. A selection of book and journal covers from England, France, Italy, Russia, Germany, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Sweden was used to demonstrate how the Modern Movement in printing and layout had its beginnings in several countries simultaneously, although, as noted in her introductory label, "for the most part the development of more radical ideas has been neither rapid nor widespread".[10] At the heart of the displays was a copy of Jan Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie*, the theoretical and practical touchstone for this movement that served as a model of utility, clarity, and affordable design. In her selections, Fantl was assisted by Otto Fuhrmann, a specialist in the Gutenberg press and history of printing at New York University, and a representative from the Bauer Type Foundry. Still more significant was her mentoring by two pioneering art directors, Mehemed Fehmy Agha (known as Dr Agha) of Conde Nast Publications (including *Vogue*), and Alexey Brodovitch of *Harper's Bazaar*, who taught her to look beyond type-specimens and consider "the real problems of working with type and layout".[11]

Influential support for Fantl's initiatives in graphic design came from museum trustee Helen Resor, one of the advertising industry's first female copywriters and an executive in the leading advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson. In 1935, Resor arranged for *European Commercial Printing of Today* to be shown at her agency headquarters and kick-started the museum's collection of graphic design with a gift of twenty-one posters by the internationally renowned designer Cassandre (Adolphe Jean-Marie Mouron), who considered posters as industrially produced multiples on a par with automobiles. In January 1936, Fantl, now officially a curator, structured the museum's first monographic poster exhibition around this gift and authored the catalogue. She not only wrote it, but took control of its typography and layout to complement the design principles demonstrated in the exhibition. For the cover, Cassandre produced a succinct metaphorical image of the power of posters to pierce the vision and mindset of passers-by: a figure of Cupid topples backwards, his eye and head transfixed by an arrow of desire for the invisible products and services advertised. Fantl typeset the catalogue interior herself, described in her autobiography as "a valentine to sans serif".[12] For the title page she chose Acier, a caps-only alphabet designed by Cassandre for the Peignot Foundry in 1930. **(fig. 70)** Acier was Cassandre's second typeface design, its crisp geometric forms marketed in America by the Continental Type Foundry. For the first time in a MoMA publication the text in the interior was also set in a sans serif.

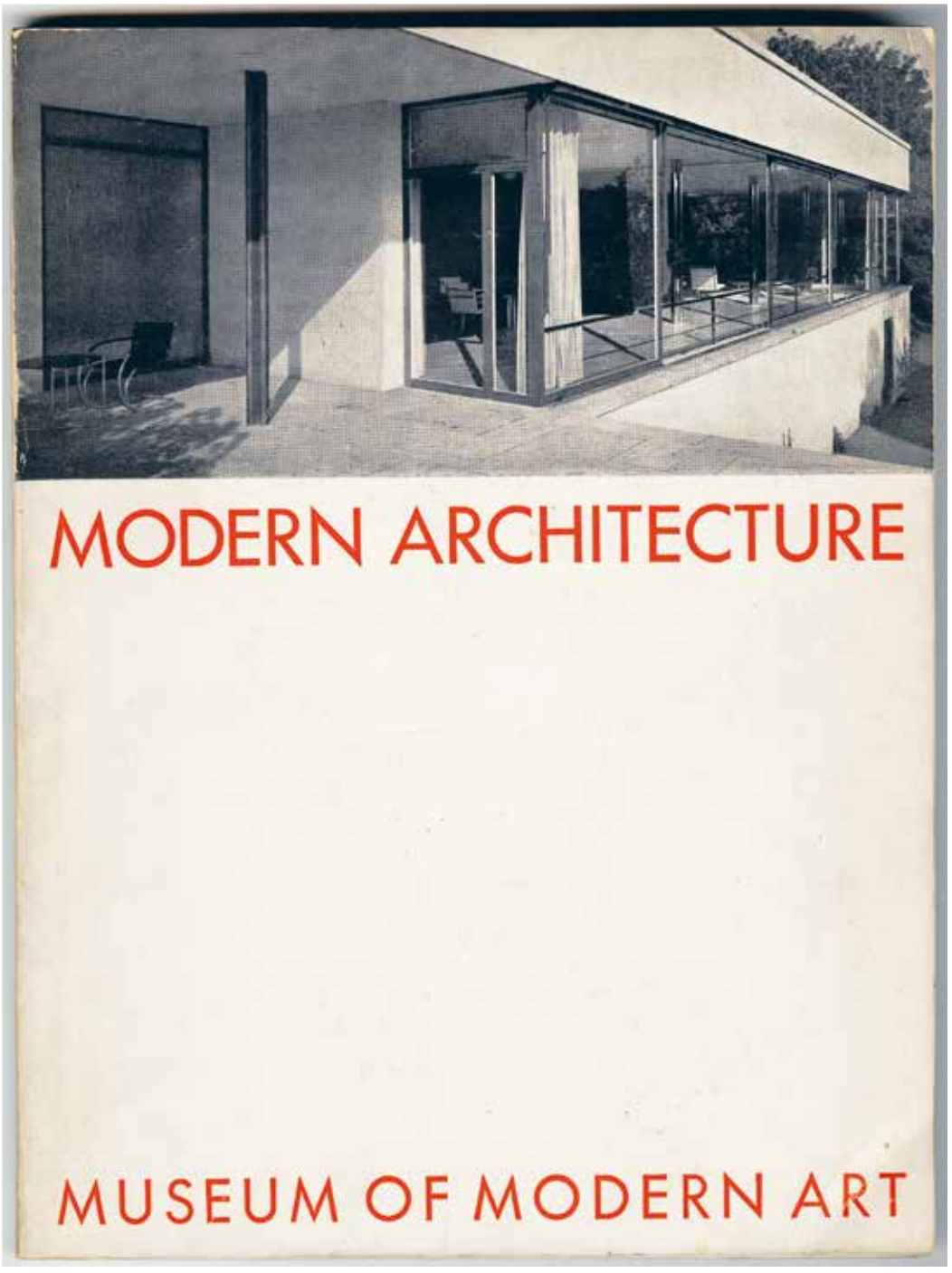
In 1937 a second poster exhibition, *Posters by E. McKnight Kauffer*, featured the American designer best known for pioneering a modern graphic style in Britain. Barr owned several Kauffer's posters and book designs and had long admired the way the designer drew upon the emerging visual languages of Cubism, Vorticism, and Surrealism. Following the example set by *Posters by Cassandre*, the catalogue had an exceptionally strong cover designed by the subject of the exhibition. Kauffer described it as "the most recent experiment I have made [...] an endeavour to dramatise shapes in space, to give an excitement to the mind with the use of non-naturalistic symbols".[13] In tandem with her graphic design exhibitions, Fantl also worked furiously on a lively and ar-

10 *The New York Times* 1935; *Emporia Daily Gazette* 1935.
11 Carter 1974: 35.
12 *Ibid.*: 36.
13 Kauffer 1937: n.p.

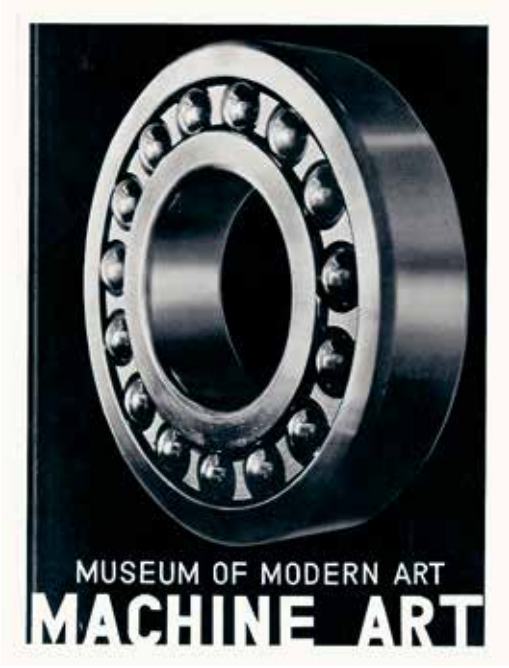
chitectural programme, but in February 1937 she left MoMA to start a new life in London with her English husband, John Carter, a rare book specialist. One of her last acts was to work with Barr on acquiring sixty-four posters from Tschichold's collection for the museum **(fig. 71)** and preparations for the 1938 exhibition *Bauhaus: 1919–1928*. Herbert Bayer's design of the exhibition installation and catalogue affirmed MoMA's alignment with the New Typography.

During World War II in London, Fantl worked with a dozen or so extremely talented architects, writers, and graphic designers in the British Ministry of Information (MoI). She and other "aliens" in the group, notably Frederick H. K. Henrion, who had fled Nazi Germany in 1933 and with whom she worked closely, brought their experience of avant-garde European design and advertising to bear on expressive combinations of words and images to visualise government injunctions and restrictions in an entertaining way. The exhibitions relied heavily on photographic enlargements, photomontages and infographics. On behalf of the MoI, she sent MoMA a selection of forty "compelling, comprehensible and memorable" posters, in September 1942, illustrating British government campaigns on topics such as hygiene, blackout precautions, safety at work, and careless talk.[14] These posters were exhibited as *New Posters from England* and then circulated under the museum's auspices for two years. After the war, she turned to a career in journalism, while retaining an interest in graphic design and the work of Jan Tschichold, not least through the activities of her husband (author of *Printing and the Mind of Man*) and the typography of her brother-in-law Will Carter, who ran the Rampant Lions Press in Cambridge. Back in MoMA, after a spell in the wilderness, Johnson was rehabilitated as the head of architecture in 1949. And not long thereafter, at the behest of Barr and Mildred Constantine, the new curator responsible for developing the graphic design collection, he stepped in to fund the purchase of the second tranche of modern printed materials from Tschichold's collection.

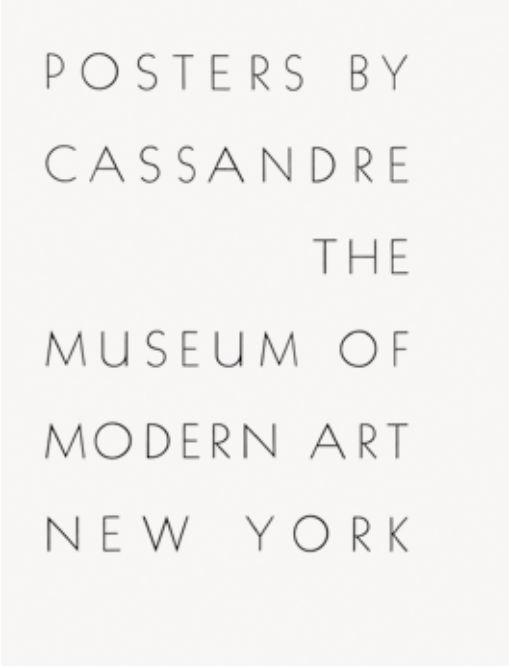
14 *New Posters from England*, Circulating Exhibitions file, CE II.1.94.5, The Museum of Modern Art Archives.



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fig. 68 Loose cover of MoMA catalogue, *Modern Architecture. International Exhibition*, New York 1932.

fig. 69 Catalogue cover for the exhibition *Machine Art*, MoMA, New York 1934.

fig. 70 Title page of the catalogue for the exhibition *Posters by Cassandre*, MoMA, New York 1936.



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fig. 71 One of sixty-four posters acquired from Jan Tschichold in 1937: Max Burchartz's *Tanz Festspiele* (Dance Festival), Essen 1928. Letterpress and gravure.

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The New Typographic Wave[1]

Louise Paradis

A Dynamic, Interrelated and Overlapping History of Typography

A pivotal figure of 20th-century typographic development, Jan Tschichold became a champion of the Modernist movement that developed between the two world wars. Though Modernist ideas were especially popular in Central Europe, they also had global currency and came to America through various channels, including organisations, publications, exhibitions, conferences and migration. Today, Tschichold's work keeps on being disseminated by means of collections held by museums and private institutions. These collections continue to present the work, imbuing it with their specific positioning, sensibility and approach to preservation. Through this institutional presentation, his oeuvre has come to attract an increasingly diverse public ranging from researchers to curators, designers, historians and amateurs, each of whom approaches the work with different motives. For instance, Richard Hendel writes in the foreword of the 2006 edition of *The New Typography*: "It is appropriate that the University of California Press includes [*The New Typography*] in a series devoted to German cultural criticism, because it is perhaps now more pertinent as a piece of design history than a graphic design manual".[2]

Tschichold's estate is dispersed amongst several institutions, most of which are in Europe.[3] It is therefore surprising that the Jan and Edith Tschichold papers are held by the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles – at quite a distance from their European origins.[4] An entity of the J. Paul Getty Trust, one of the world's wealthiest art institutions, the Getty Research Institute maintains a research library, organises exhibitions and other events, sponsors a scholars residency programme, publishes books and produces electronic databases. The substantial Tschichold collection consists of the correspond-

1 The title of this text was coined by Roland Früh for a sub-chapter discussing the dissemination of Weingart's ideas in the book *30 Years of Swiss Discourse in the Typographische Monatsblätter*. Merging "The New Typography" and "New Wave", the wordplay seems even more relevant in the context of this essay to describe the meeting of the legacy of the New Typography with Californian culture.

2 Tschichold 2006 (1928): xlv.

3 The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek in Leipzig, Germany, the Kantonsbibliothek in St Gallen, Switzerland, and the Bibliothek für Gestaltung in Basel, Switzerland, have dedicated Tschichold collections. There are many other organisations that hold some documents related to Tschichold, such as the Haushofer Archive and the MAN Historisches Archiv und Museum in Germany the Roche Historical Collection and Archive in Switzerland; the Westerdahl Archive in Spain; the Békés Archive in Hungary; the University of Bristol Library Special Collections, the Hyman Kreitman Research Centre for the Tate Library and Archive, the St Bride Library and the V&A in the United Kingdom; MoMA, the Archives at Yale, and the Merrill C. Berman Collection in the United States, to name just the commonly known ones. Burke 2007: 326.

4 Jan Tschichold, Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer et al., *Jan and Edith Tschichold Papers, 1899–1979 (bulk 1920–1938)*, 1899, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, primo.getty.edu/GRI:GETTY_ALMA21137821510001551 (accessed 4 July 2023).

ence between Jan Tschichold and his wife, Edith, and a number of artists, many of whom are figures associated with the Bauhaus. The correspondence is mainly written in German. Although the US Census Bureau lists over fifty million Americans claiming German ancestry, English is the de facto national language in the country, and most Americans are unilingual. The second most spoken language in the US is Spanish, which is commonly used in Los Angeles, partly due to the proximity of Mexico. This linguistic landscape underscores the disconnection of Tschichold's correspondence and redefines the significance of popular diffusion, but does not compromise other institutional objectives, such as providing researchers access to the resources. Besides, Los Angeles (or more broadly, California) is a location that does not seem to hold any particular importance in the life or work of Tschichold, save for his acquaintance with Jack Stauffacher from San Francisco, who he met in the 1950s.[5] The displacement of the collection may then appear as a decontextualization.[6]

The Gradual Development of Modernism in the United States

Tschichold published *Die neue Typographie* in the aftermath of World War I and alongside the development of avant-garde movements, Modernism and the Bauhaus – all culturally and geographically distant from 1920s California and the United States. Modern Art, styles and ideas were gradually gaining ground in the US at the time, but they were doing so at a slower pace than in Europe. The arrival of Modernism in the US is marked by the renowned 1913 Armory Show, which sparked a widespread outcry and led to a dismissal of Modern Art and design by the American public.[7] Commenting on the works in the exhibition, former president Theodore Roosevelt exclaimed: "That's not art!"[8] It was only with the opening of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City in 1929 that Modern Art would finally be acknowledged on the country's East Coast. "In the nation", the art historian Lloyd Goodrich observed, "the foundation of the new museum marks the final apotheosis of Modernism and its acceptance into respectable society".[9]

On the West Coast, however, the presence of Modern Art was still in its infancy. While the San Francisco Museum of Art was founded in 1935, it was only in 1975 that it added "Modern" to its name and became SFMoMA, California's flagship site of Modern and Contemporary Art.[10] In Los Angeles, the Ferus Gallery, which operated from 1957 to 1966, greatly helped to build a Modern Art scene "from scratch", as described in the documentary *The Cool School*.[11] In parallel, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) became a separate, art-focused institution in 1961.[12] Marcel Duchamp's first career retrospective in 1963 also seems to have generated momentum for the Modern Movement. The artist chose to present the exhibition in the unlikely location of Pasadena, a quiet, upscale Los Angeles suburb. Finally, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) opened in Los Angeles in 1979.[13] The opening dates of these museums and galleries offer an in-

5 Pullman 2017.
6 Hallman 2005: 201–224.
7 Meggs and Purvis 2006: 336.
8 Roosevelt 1913. According to the biographer Edmund Morris, Roosevelt's review looked with some favour upon the new American artists (Morris 2010: 267–272, 660–663).
9 Eskilson 2012: 259.
10 Baker 2009.
11 *The Cool School* (United States, 2008, colour, 60'), directed by Morgan Neville.
12 LACMA n.d.
13 MOCA n.d.

dicator of the timeline of recognition for avant-garde and contemporary in California, a timeline which differs from that of Central Europe.

Comparing it with an American publication from the same year, *Die neue Typographie* helps to outline the difference in attitude towards Modernism between the United States and Central Europe. *Layout in Advertising* was published in 1928 by the American type designer, calligrapher and book designer William Addison Dwiggins (1880–1956) and is considered a standard of the period. Both books are modern reflections of the spirit of their time. Though they both suggest design techniques and present exemplary works, their aesthetic sensibilities differ significantly. The choice of typefaces (sans serif vs. serif), alignments (centred vs. asymmetric), images (illustrations vs. photography), ornamentation (decorative vs. minimalist) appear as near-opposites. On the American side, we notice a wider variety of components and compositions than in *Die neue Typographie*, which is much more dogmatic. In the book's postscript, Dwiggins writes: "'Modernism' is not a system of design – it is a state of mind. It is a natural and wholesome reaction against an overdose of traditionalism".[14] This excerpt points at the differences and similarities between American and European Modernism. As the graphic designer and essayist Jeffery Keedy explains: "Unlike Tschichold, Dwiggins never embraced the Modernist movement, nor was he deified by it. However, he was absolutely committed to being a modern designer".[15]

Tschichold and Socialist Principles

Another aspect that could be examined is the broader context, including the designer's ideological perspective. Design historian Stephen Eskilson explains that

> like the other members of the avant-garde, Tschichold considered *Die neue Typographie* to be exemplary of the merging of art and life that was a fundamental tenet of the modern design movements such as De Stijl, Constructivism and the Bauhaus. Rather than being simply a visual style, *Die neue Typographie* was to serve as the basis for a more just and equitable society administered according to socialist principles. However, it is unclear whether Tschichold was a "true believer" in the Soviet state or whether he was simply going through the motions of associating Constructivism and Socialism.[16]

Die neue Typographie was criticised by designers who believed that Tschichold lacked a clear political position. During Hannes Meyer's directorship, an anonymous review in the *Bauhaus* journal criticised Tschichold, referring to him as a dogmatic formalist.[17] Nevertheless, Tschichold's book became a pivotal text on modern "functionalism" often misinterpreted as completely apolitical. It is likely that the truth of Tschichold's work lies between these two polarised distortions.

As for the political context of Los Angeles, a connection can be made to a certain disposition to socialism during the period. As the writer, activist and historian Mike Davis describes in *City of Quartz*, Los Angeles had notable ties to socialism in the early 20th century.[18] Firstly, there was the influential socialist politician, Job Harriman. In 1900, he ran for Vice President of the United States along with Eugene Debs on the ticket for the Socialist Party of America. He later ran twice

14 Dwiggins 1928: 193.
15 Keedy 1998.
16 Eskilson 2012: 237.
17 *Bauhaus* 1929: 28; Eskilson 2012: 237.
18 Davis 2018.

for mayor of Los Angeles, drawing considerable attention and support in each campaign. Harriman was also the founder of the Llano del Rio Cooperative Community. It was deemed "the most important non-religious utopian experiment in Western American history", which at its height in 1916 "contained a thousand members and was a flourishing communitarian experiment dedicated to the principle of cooperation rather than competition".[19] Due to various challenges and financial difficulties, the project did not survive beyond the 1930s. Upon immigrating to America, escaping both the war and Hollywood, the author of *Brave New World* Aldous Huxley resided in a former Llano del Rio ranch house in the early 1940s, meditating on the fate of utopia.[20] California in the 1920s and 1930s also saw the rise of Upton Sinclair, the most famous socialist in Southern California. Davis writes: "[Upton's] campaign was a crusade that lit fires in the hearts of millions of ordinary Californians, most of whom had never previously paid any attention to ideas from the Left".[21] The movie *There Will Be Blood*, which offers a critique of capitalism through the story of a silver miner turned oilman on a ruthless quest for wealth during Southern California's oil boom, is actually partially based on the 1927 novel *Oil!* by Sinclair.[22] Though these instances demonstrate a certain adoption of socialism in the American West, the cause remained marginal, whereas the mainstream continued to be focused on capitalism. If socialism was in fact Tschichold's true inclination, there is a certain irony to his correspondences being housed in an institution that was created by virtue of one of the biggest American oil fortunes.[23] The intention here is not to confine art to institutions aligned with the artist's beliefs; on the opposite, institutions should actively foster a diversity of perspectives and voices. This comparison exercise aimed to offer a thoughtful exploration of the context surrounding the creation of an artwork and to evaluate its enduring impact. Having said that, ultimately, the contextual milieu may undergo inevitable transformations, as noted by Robin Kinross in the introduction of the first English edition of *Die neue Typographie*: "the context of the present edition of *Die neue Typographie* is different from any that its author knew. Equally, the present edition will have an afterlife in contexts that we cannot imagine".[24]

Nationalism and Internationalism

The archival folder itself offers clues to the reasoning for the Getty Research Institute's acquisition of the Tschichold papers. On the description sheet, the justification for this acquisition states: "The Centre's Acquisition of the Tschichold Archive will strengthen the position of Los Angeles as an American centre for the study of typography and printing". The collecting of artefacts by institutions is a complex issue, and in some cases, can be seen as a manifestation of a colonising impulse. The situation described here is clearly not an act of looting. Though the Tschichold acquisition by the Getty has been made through legal mechanisms, involving a mutual, contractual agreement between two Western organisations, it remains a displacement of cultural objects from their place of origin. A parallel could be drawn with the current discussion about repatriation and cultural property. A collection housed in a single

19 Office of Historic Preservation n.d.
20 Davis 2018: 10, 48.
21 *Ibid.*: XXVI.
22 *There Will be Blood* (United States, 2007, colour, 158'), directed by Paul Thomas Anderson.
23 Whitman 1976.
24 Tschichold 2006 (1928): xxxix.

place would certainly offer the clearest understanding of the life and work of Tschichold, but the question of which place remains. Notable efforts have been made by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek to digitise Tschichold's and make the collection accessible online.[25] However, as a physical location, neither Germany, Switzerland nor England seem entirely appropriate; Jan Tschichold lived in six cities over his lifetime (Leipzig, Berlin, Munich, Basel, London and Berzona, Switzerland) and to select one of these locations would further arguments for cultural nationalism.

Tschichold's stance on nationalist typography and, by extension, on nationalism appeared to consistently evoke negative emotions. For example, in a section of *Die neue Typographie* called "Type", Tschichold writes: "The emphatically national, exclusivist character of Fraktur – but also the equivalent national scripts of other peoples, for example of the Russians or the Chinese – contradicts present-day transnational bonds between people and forces their inevitable elimination".[26] Circa 1946, Tschichold began to openly reject the principles of *Die neue Typographie*, resulting in an intriguing paradox in which his publication was simultaneously receiving mainstream attention and Tschichold was proposing that the dogmatic manner in which he had defined the style in the book resembled the authoritarian mandates of the Nazis. In a seminar titled "Quousque Tandem…" (How Long…), Tschichold clearly states his new position: "I do not believe in the value of a 'national' typography. The attempt to create a 'national' typography is certainly, to my mind, a fallacy". He goes on to add: "In general, we should consider the typography of the western world as one and the same thing".[27] Throughout his life, Tschichold thus embraced a spirit of openness and internationalism.

A Correspondence Collection

From the first look at the content of the nine boxes that compose the Getty's Tschichold archive, it is clear that Tschichold built an impressive, international network based on these values of openness and internationalism. He quickly emerged as a central figure in international design discourse, particularly due to his ability to skilfully integrate and synthesise discussions about design and society.[28] His network included some of the most forward-thinking avant-garde artists and designers of the early 20th century. Dispersed across Europe (France, Germany, Russia, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Holland, Poland, Romania etc.), these artists and designers were active in Dadaism, De Stijl, Constructivism, Surrealism, had connections with the Bauhaus (as students and teachers) or were involved in some other kind of expression of modernity. The archive includes about sixty correspondents, including El Lissitzky, László Moholy-Nagy, Kurt Schwitters, Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, Max Bill, Piet Mondrian, Ladislav Sutnar, and Piet Zwart among others.

Partly through his correspondence, Tschichold was able to curate an extensive collection of contemporary graphic design, which would come to illustrate his written works. The Tschichold collection at the Getty includes many letters and postcards to which graphic samples were attached. The collection offers researchers a unique opportunity to see the artwork that Tschichold used

25 Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, "The Jan Tschichold Estate", dnb.de/EN/Sammlungen/DBSM/Nachlaesse/nachlassJanTschichold/nachlassJanTschichold.html (accessed 4 July 2023).

26 Tschichold 2006 (1928): 74–75.

27 Tschichold 1964.

28 Stirton 2019: 5.

to illustrate his discourse in *Die neue Typographie* in "real life" and "in action" (carrying messages, addresses, stamps and postage marks), such as a Bauhaus letterhead designed by Herbert Bayer, **(fig. 72)** an envelope designed by Piet Zwart, **(fig. 73)** a postcard designed by Walter Dexel and a book designed by El Lissitzky. The asymmetry, the colours (black and red), the composition, the choice of typefaces and the paper size are all elements presenting a spirit of the age. Through keeping correspondence with his expansive network, Jan Tschichold functioned as a curator, selecting graphic samples that demonstrated the theory he was forwarding in his publications.

Avant-garde artists and designers often exhibited a sense of mobility, evidenced by their frequent changes of address and the various origins of the correspondence. The political situation in Germany, compounded by the war, prompted many avant-garde artists to emigrate. America emerged as a promising destination where they could continue their work, and the 1930s saw a significant increase in the number of European immigrants to America. A postcard from New York by the French painter Jean Hélion – whose abstract work of the 1930s established him as a leading Modernist and who lived in America in the 1930s – addressed to Tschichold aptly describes the situation. **(figs. 74–75)** He writes: "I am very happy to work in this environment so different from Europe and to get to know people that war problems didn't affect".[29] The archive also includes letters from Josef Albers and László Moholy-Nagy, **(fig. 76)** both of whom migrated to the United States. They participated in the creation of new design and art schools that are understood as continuing the legacy of the Bauhaus and in doing so contributed to the dissemination of the New Typography: the New Bauhaus, in Chicago and the Black Mountain College in North Carolina.[30] A letter from Josef Albers attests to this continuation. **(fig. 77)** He used the Bauhaus Dessau stationery, on which he ruled out the letterhead and pasted on the information of Black Mountain College in its place.[31]

From New Typography to New Wave

Overall, *Die neue Typographie* found a receptive audience in the United States largely thanks to the integration of European émigrés who became influential figures in American graphic design and advertising.[32] American-born designers would also adopt the modern style, imbuing it with their unique approaches.[33] A second wave of European influence arrived in America throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The Swiss Style, a descendant of the New Typography which was developed in neutral Switzerland during World War II, expanded its horizons from Europe to America and Asia and came to be known as the International Style. This style was detached from socialist ideals and was quickly embraced by corporate America.[34] Paul Rand, one the most celebrated American modern designers, stated: "When I was first aware of what the

29 Letter and postcards from Jean Hélion, including an aerial view of Manhattan Island, 1931–1935, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Translated from French to English by the author.

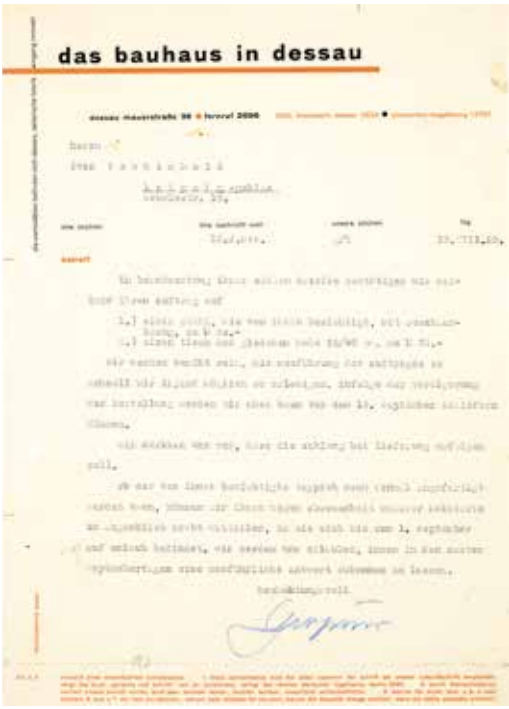
30 Letter from László Moholy-Nagy to Jan Tschichold regarding the New Bauhaus, Chicago, 24 March 1938, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

31 Letter from Joseph Albers using Bauhaus Dessau letterhead, but with the Black Mountain College info glued over to Jan Tschichold, 12 March 1934, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

32 Stirton 2019: 184–185.

33 Heller and D'Onofrio 2017.

34 Eskilson 2012: 286.


das bauhaus in dessau

72



73

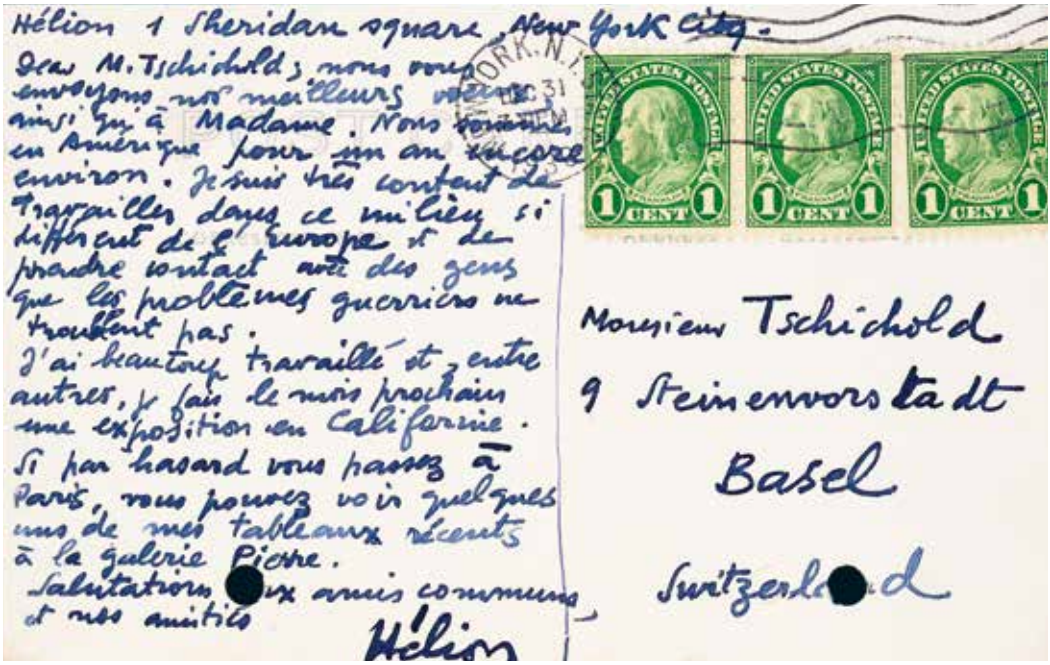


74

fig. 72 Letter from Walter Gropius to Jan Tschichold, 17 August 1925.
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

fig. 73 Envelope addressed to Jan Tschichold from Piet Zwart, 1930.
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

fig. 74 Postcard to Jan Tschichold from Jean Hélion
featuring an aerial view of Manhattan, ca. 1938.
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.



75

fig. 75 Jean Hélion's postcard to Jan Tschichold, 1938.
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles



the new bauhaus

American School of Design
founded by the
ASSOCIATION of ARTS and INDUSTRIES
1905 Prairie Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
Telephone VIDaro 2100

The Director

March
24
1938

Mr. Jan Tschichold
9 Steinengraben
Basel, Switzerland

My dear Tschicholds:

The long distance certainly does not help the intensification of correspondence, also I feel that you in Europe have to have a most intensive contact with us who are fortunate enough to be on a little bit safer continent.

I would like very much to know what you are doing now and how the family is coming along and also I would like very much to help if you have certain wishes here in America.

The new Bauhaus is developing excellently, we are busy with the preparation for a new building and the equipment of our next year classes, and I am happy with the results so far.

The American students are very talented and very intelligent and very well informed about the arts. I could almost say that this generation is more interested in art than in practical life and they are willing to sacrifice the commodities of life if they can get the assurance that they will become artists. But you know our program, that we do not wish to educate artists, but designers; however, we will be only too happy if some of the students become really grand artists.

I thank you very much for the money that you sent. I almost think it is a pity that you did because this could have been my reserve in Europe, which we certainly will visit--perhaps next year. For the time being I am eager to learn the country here, but unfortunately the Bauhaus does not allow me to go too far and the vacation time I am sure will be filled up with the organization of the new year. Sometimes of course I go out of town when I have lectures near Chicago, in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Milwaukee, Iowa City, and Grand Rapids. When I say 'near' this means five or six, or eight or nine hours travel.

Please write me soon about yourself and about the friends and we greet you heartily to both from both and to all the friends.

Ever yours,

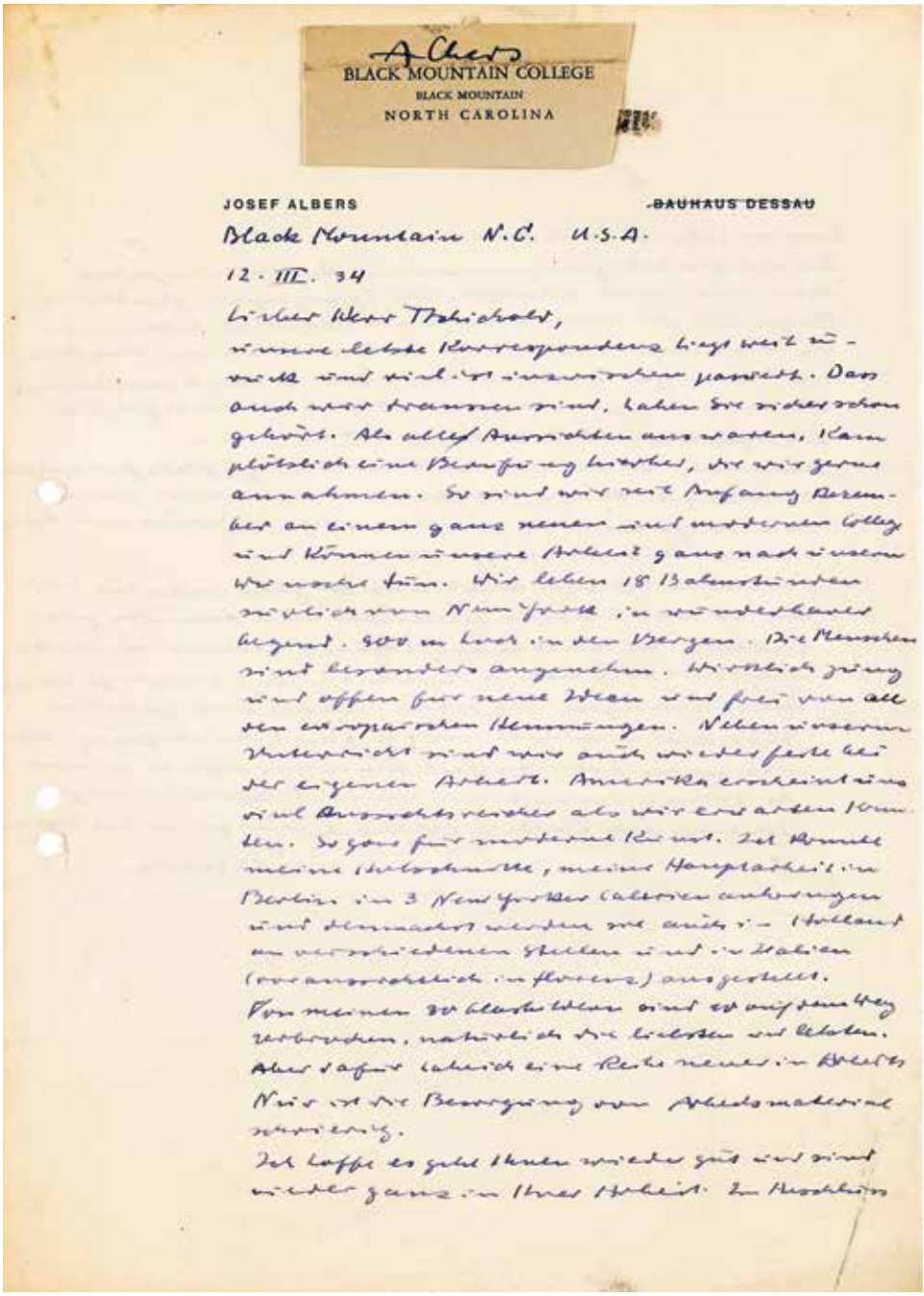
L. Moholy-Nagy

Jan, kannst du mir schreiben wie man eine Seite schräg setzt mit normalen Hilfsmitteln? (Stell zipsen, oder papier zu kann mal den satz damit zu halten.) ein dicker finger mich darauf.

gelb! und optisch getrennt!
ihr sollt mich schreiben!

76

fig. 76 László Moholy-Nagy's letter to Jan Tschichold, 24 March 1938.
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles



BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE
BLACK MOUNTAIN
NORTH CAROLINA

JOSEF ALBERS ~~BAUHAUS DESSAU~~
Black Mountain N.C. U.S.A.

12. III. 34

Lieber Herr Tschichold,
unsere liebe Korrespondenz liegt weit zu-
rück und viel ist inzwischen passiert. Dass
auch wir traurigen sind, haben Sie wieder schon
gehört. Als alle Aussichten aus waren, kam
plötzlich eine Berufung hierher, die wir gerne
annahmen. So sind wir seit Anfang Septem-
ber an einem ganz neuen und modernen College
und können unsere Arbeit ganz nach unserem
Wie wollen tun. Wir leben 18 Bahnstunden
südlich von New York, in wunderschöner
Gegend. 800 m hoch in den Bergen. Die Menschen
sind besonders angenehm. Wirklich jung
und offen für neue Ideen und frei von all
den europäischen Hemmungen. Neben unserem
Unterricht sind wir auch wieder sehr bei
der eigenen Arbeit. Amerika erscheint uns
viel Aussichtsreicher als wir es erwarten konn-
ten. So ganz fürs moderne Reich. Ist Ihnen
meine Uebersiedlung, meine Hauptarbeit in
Berlin, in 3 New Yorker Ausstellungen anerkannt
und demnächst werden sie auch in Holland
an verschiedenen Stellen und in Italien
(vor ausschließlich in Florenz) ausgestellt.
Von meinen 30 Glasbildern sind es auf dem Weg
zerbrochen, natürlich die schönsten und größten.
Aber dafür habe ich eine Reihe neuer in Arbeit.
Nur ist die Besorgung von Arbeitsmaterial
schwierig.
Ich hoffe es geht Ihnen wieder gut und sind
wieder ganz in Ihrer Arbeit. Im Frühjahr

77

fig. 77 Letter from Josef Albers to Jan Tschichold, 12 March 1934.
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Swiss were doing, I used to ridicule it… But then I changed completely… There is not a counterpart to Swiss design in terms of something that you can describe, that you can follow, that you can systematically understand".[35]

Though Modernist protagonists were active in California, New York remained the American forefront of design. It was only by the time a third wave arrived from Europe that California came to the fore. In the 1970s, Wolfgang Weingart pioneered innovative typographic designs in Basel, engaging in extensive experimentation within the realm of Swiss typography as a sensible starting point. These burgeoning ideas – arriving in America by way of his American students returning home to the United States – became known as the New Wave.[36] The current found fertile ground in the United States, where Los Angeles and New York became the new nuclei of this style. In California, the combination of the latest technology (Apple released the Macintosh personal computer in 1984, which would be followed by an impressive series of technological developments) and the thriving New Wave ideas allowed California to become an international epicentre for avant-garde graphic design and typography. *Émigré* magazine and the work of April Greiman are exemplary of the avant-garde alliance between style and technology in the 1980s and 1990s.

This design-centric identity might have been a motivation for the Getty Research Institute to acquire the Jan and Edith Tschichold papers in 1993, as a means of solidifying this status for Los Angeles. Coincidentally, around the same period, the University of California Press published the first English edition of *The New Typography* in 1995, creating an atmosphere akin to a zeitgeist. Despite the intriguing timing of these two events, it has been confirmed as "purely coincidence",[37] leaving lingering questions. Nonetheless, the Institute's collection grew to include Lissitzky, Sutnar, and Zwart archives, in addition to their Bauhaus archives which were already part of their Special Collection.[38] To gain a comprehensive understanding of the Jan and Edith Tschichold papers' acquisition, it would become essential to delve into the motivations of the sellers (presumably the family through an antique art dealer[39]) and to investigate to whom the collection was offered, who were the potential buyers and what the conditions of the transaction were.

Die neue Typographie should be understood as the collective work of like-minded artists and designers. Tschichold wasn't the originator of many of the ideas presented in the book. Even if his role was essential in synthesising and disseminating them, they came from international avant-garde artists and designers who were actively sharing their work.[40] From this perspective, and understood as a dynamic, interwoven and overlapping history of typography, it seems completely valid that the Edith and Jan Tschichold papers are housed in California. The displacement can be seen instead as a continuation and dissemination of their work to an international audience. Additionally, the Institute is commendably preserving the Tschichold papers in optimal conditions and making them accessible to a diverse audience – an accessibility which greatly contributes to research and education efforts.

35 Heller 1999: 158.
36 Hollis 2006.
37 Email from Edward Dimendberg to the author, 12 December 2023.
38 Online Archive of California n.d.
39 Email from Alain Moirandat to the author, 18 April 2023.
40 Stirton 2019: 3–4.

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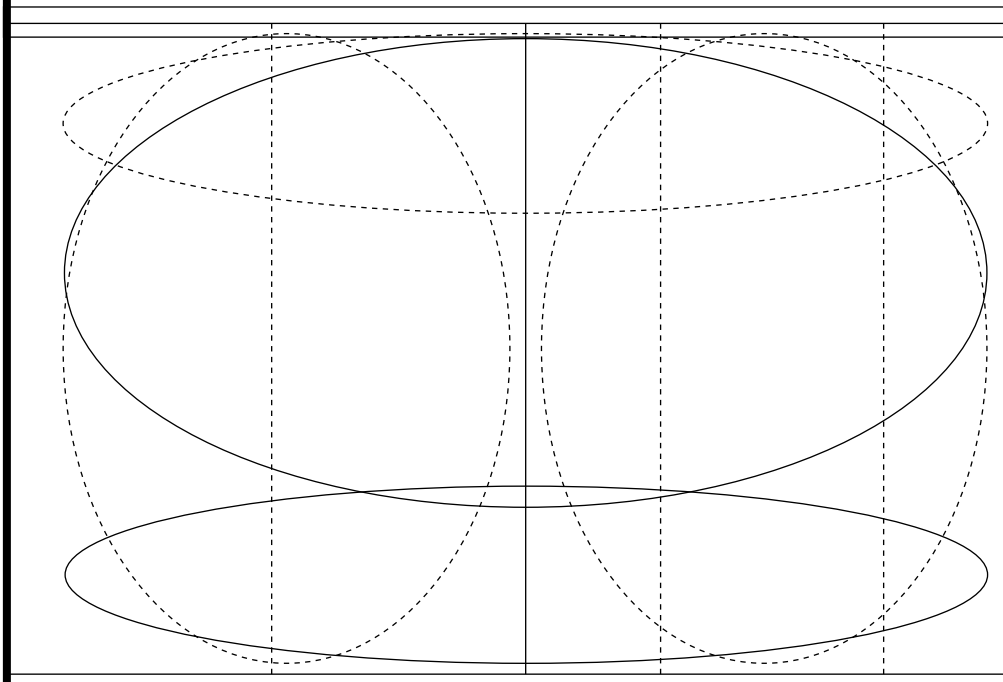
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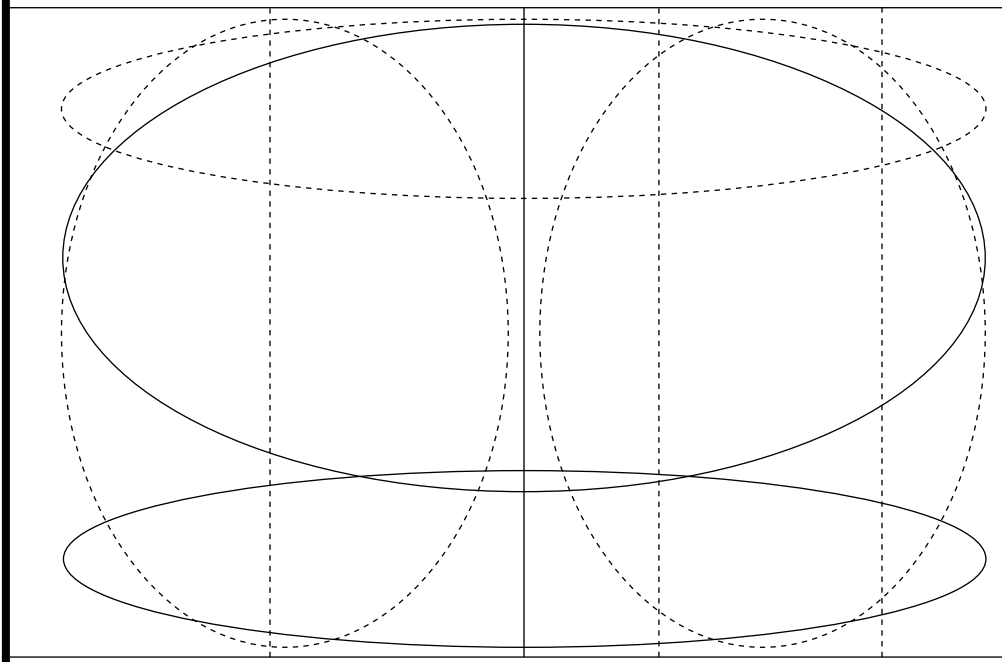
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IMPACT: RECEPTION



How New is New? Jan Tschichold and the New Typography

Julia Meer

The "new" arises through contrast, requiring something "old" to appear novel. The mention of its conservative opponents is therefore an essential element in the narrative of the New Typography's ascension. Jan Tschichold wrote in 1930: "The views of the New Typography were the object of savage attack on all sides – today none but a few disgruntled die-hards ever think of raising their voice. The New Typography has won through".[1] In 1933, László Moholy-Nagy added: "almost without exception, the former opponents have come around and joined us with all flags flying".[2] But who were these opponents and what were their arguments against the New Typography? And how were they finally convinced? This article focuses on a specific group: the so-called *Buchdrucker* – literally "book printers", although these practitioners produced a wide range of printed products.[3]

Up to now, the role of the *Buchdrucker* has not been widely acknowledged in the history of graphic design – which is surprising, because they were the forerunners of today's communication designers. In addition to the actual printing process, their work also included the design of printed materials: layout, choice of typeface and typesetting.[4] In the common narrative on New Typography, they are at best generically categorised as conservative sceptics or even opponents of New Typography, who needed to be convinced of the value of the "new".[5] This assessment is not entirely wrong, and indeed many *Buchdrucker* expressed sharp-tongued and condescending criticism of New Typography.[6] However, they were also some of its most ardent supporters and contributed significantly to the success of the movement. How and why will be explained below.

In Favour of the New – Promoting the New Typography

The first notable reception of the New Typography among the *Buchdrucker* came in 1925 with the special issue "Elementare Typographie" (Elementary Typography), which was compiled and designed by Tschichold.[7] **(fig. 78)** It appeared as the October issue of

1 Tschichold 1930a: 7. Translation taken from Bierut et al. 1999: 47.

2 Moholy-Nagy 1933: 2.

3 This essay is based on the doctoral thesis *Neuer Blick auf die neue Typographie: die Rezeption der Avantgarde in der Fachwelt der 1920er Jahre* (New Perspectives on the New Typography: The Reception of the avant-garde in Professional Circles in the 1920s) and draws primarily on an analysis of trade journals of the time (Meer 2015). The analysis is based on a study of trade journals for *Buchdrucker* from the years 1924–1933, including *Archiv für Buchgewerbe und Gebrauchsgraphik, The Fleuron, Der graphische Betrieb, Gutenberg-Jahrbuch, Jungbuchdrucker, Klimschs Allgemeiner Anzeiger für Druckereien, Klimschs Jahrbuch, Korrespondent, Offset. Buch- und Werbekunst, Typographische Mitteilungen, Zeitschrift für Deutschlands Buchdrucker*.

4 Meer 2015: 84–90, and for more detail Von der Vring 1965.

5 Leu 1986: 1.

6 Meer 2015: 91–104.

7 *Typographische Mitteilungen* 1925. Among the professional circles of *Buchdrucker*, Jan Tschichold's publication *Die neue Typographie* by no means marks the culmination of attention to the New Typography and is therefore not the focus of this article.



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fig. 78 Cover of "Elementare Typographie", special issue of *Typographische Mitteilungen*, October 1925, edited and designed by Jan Tschichold.
Photo by Vincent Levrat

Typographische Mitteilungen, the official communication organ of the Bildungsverband Deutscher Buchdrucker (Educational Association of German Book Printers). This sub-group was responsible for education and training within the central professional association of printers in Germany. The fact that so much prominence was given to the New Typography highlights the fact that influential supporters of the movement already numbered among the association's ranks in 1925.

In the years that followed, New Typography became a central theme and the authors of *Typographische Mitteilungen* made a concerted effort to introduce their more conservative colleagues to modern design ideas. An especially patent example is the fictitious conversation between a progressive and a conservative printer that featured in the fourth 1926 issue.[8] The positive qualities of New Typography are mentioned alongside the objections. In the end, neither of the opposing viewpoints overcame the other, however the dialogue-based presentation helped to mitigate New Typography's radical reputation. By weighing and acknowledging the objections, conservative printers were given the opportunity to open up to the new ideas; the article is notably less dogmatic and confrontational than the manifestos of the New Typographers.

Another communication strategy adopted by the *Typographische Mitteilungen* can be seen in the attempts to provide relevance. Printed over four issues, the compilation of "Voices from the Professional World" on the subject of New Typography, for example, gives the impression that discussions in professional circles from 1925 onwards were dominated by the movement.[9] In its subsequent issues, the *Typographische Mitteilungen* also refers to several publications on the New Typography as well as lectures and exhibitions.[10] In these articles, the editors overtly advocated the New Typography with only a few exceptions. While the authors of other journals took a negative stand towards the movement, *Typographische Mitteilungen* explicitly addressed the faulty reasoning behind their arguments.[11]

In addition to the mediating role of the articles, the open support for New Typography is also evident in the printed work and design of the journal. Most trade journals published so-called "typesetting specimens" featuring exemplary works. Those included in *Typographische Mitteilungen* often embrace the design principles of New Typography; they are formally reduced and characterised by the use of abstracted and geometric shapes, diagonals, photographs and dynamic white space. From 1926 onwards, more such typesetting specimens regularly appeared in *Typographische Mitteilungen*; as of June 1927, the journal was published in a Modernised layout; and after 1929, many articles were typeset in all lower case.

In 1930, the editors provided a further incentive to engage with the New Typography. From the May issue onwards, the editorial staff – explicitly aiming to promote modern typography – defined design tasks for contexts that were to be worked on in the style of the movement. The tasks related to the design of everyday printed matter, such as a book title and a double page spread in DIN A5 format for two books with different contents. This series of tasks was justified with the explanation that New Typography was "not yet as widespread as would be desirable".[12]

8 *Typographische Mitteilungen* 1926a.
9 *Typographische Mitteilungen* 1926b, 1926c, 1926d, 1926e.
10 *Typographische Mitteilungen* 1927, 1928; Sarmatzki 1927.
11 Schuster 1928.
12 Schuster 1930.

In September 1930, the printers were even asked to educate their clientele in matters of taste, because only then would customers learn to distinguish good works (meaning, works designed in the style of the New Typography) from bad ones.[13]

These remarks demonstrate that the New Typography did not in fact face widespread opposition among the *Buchdrucker*, but instead could claim many influential and adamant supporters. Thus, the question arises: why were the *Buchdrucker* such dedicated supporters of the New Typography?

A key reason is that the *Buchdrucker* were under tremendous pressure in the 1920s. Mechanisation and automation threatened jobs and wage levels.[14] In addition, they faced growing competition from so-called *Gebrauchsgrafiker* (commercial graphic designers) an emerging profession specialising in the design of illustrative advertising posters, advertisements and other applied graphics, which overlapped with the activities of the printers. Commissions in the field of advertising, in particular, were increasingly awarded to this group of professionals rather than to the *Buchdrucker*, as the printing process of colour lithography became more affordable in the 1920s and many clients wanted to make use of the advertising appeal of the drawn motifs. These were difficult to reproduce using the letterpress technique employed by the *Buchdrucker*. Photographs, on the other hand, could be easily reproduced, as could type and coloured bars – in other words, the very elements of New Typography.

The advocacy of the New Typography must therefore also be viewed against the backdrop of competition with graphic artists. The New Typographers demanded designs that dispensed with drawings, handwriting, and the simultaneous use of many colours in a single motif – everything that could be better produced using lithographic printing processes than with letterpress printing. As the *Buchdrucker* Heinrich Grote stated plainly: "elementary typography has shown practitioners new possibilities and given them the opportunity to test their skills in unexpected ways".[15]

The *New* New Typography – Adapting and Transforming New Typography

However, the *Buchdrucker* by no means adopted the New Typography without criticism. In particular, the early reactions of such printers to the New Typography were accompanied by disparaging remarks about the quality of the craftsmanship and typography of the works. It was said of El Lissitzky and his design of *Pro dva kvadrata. Suprematicheskii skaz v 6-ti postroikakh* (About Two Squares. A Suprematist Tale of Two Squares in Six Constructions) for example, that the "typographic material was being alarmingly butchered".[16] The avant-garde typeface designer and author Paul Renner opined that the New Typographers often introduced good ideas, but understood nothing about the technical aspects.[17] In its early form, moreover, New Typography was only deemed suitable for a narrow range of commissions – for the advertising subjects "emanating from a similar spirit" such as industrial products, but not for music, dance and the like.[18]

Based on this criticism – and their accumulated expertise in typography and often also in advertising – the *Buchdrucker* further developed the New Typography style. The works printed in *Typographische Mitteilun-*

13 *Typographische Mitteilungen* 1930.
14 Von der Vring 1965: 324–332.
15 Grote 1930: 20.
16 Bauer 1925: 2.
17 Renner 1930: 8.
18 Leonhardt 1926: 76. He made the same statements in early 1925, in relation to Schwitters' "Theses on Typography". Leonhardt 1925.

gen and other journals were strongly influenced by the movement, but differ considerably from the avant-garde works that appeared, for example, in the special issue "Elementare Typographie". **(fig. 79)** The design is finer in composition and colouring and stands out from the radical early form of the New Typography through the precise letter spacing of the typefaces and the clear influence of classical design principles. In addition to sans serif typefaces, Antiqua variants were employed, especially in classical and italicised formats. Furthermore, there was a "calming of the world of forms, a tendency towards modest manifestations", as Tschichold himself noted in 1930.[19] Diagonals are used, but typography is never arranged vertically. There are neither bold bars nor heavy squares or dominant arrows. Larger areas of colour are often reduced in intensity through raster screens. **(figs. 80–81)** The combination of image and text elements also appears more coherent, often creating the illusion of space. This visibly expanded the applications for New Typography; perfumes, soap, luxury products and certainly also music and dance could be advertised with this further adapted version of New Typography. **(figs. 82–83)** In 1998, Christopher Burke called the design a "flexible adaptation of the Modernist style to suit a variety of commercial printing tasks".[20]

This further development was decisive in the increasing acceptance of the New Typography. In the *Klimschs Allgemeiner Anzeiger für Druckereien* (Klimsch's General Gazette for Printers), for example, the author is "convinced that elementary typography will become more and more accepted [...] when it has freed itself from certain exaggerations and confusions of the initial period".[21] The "matured" form of New Typography supplies the "presently rather sterile advertising typography of the daily and trade press with valuable suggestions, [...] so that it is certainly worth the time for every businessman to take a closer look".[22] It becomes clear that many of the alleged opponents of New Typography contributed significantly to its acceptance – both through their instructive journalistic campaigns and their design competence. So, what role did Jan Tschichold play in this constellation?

Jan Tschichold and the New Typography

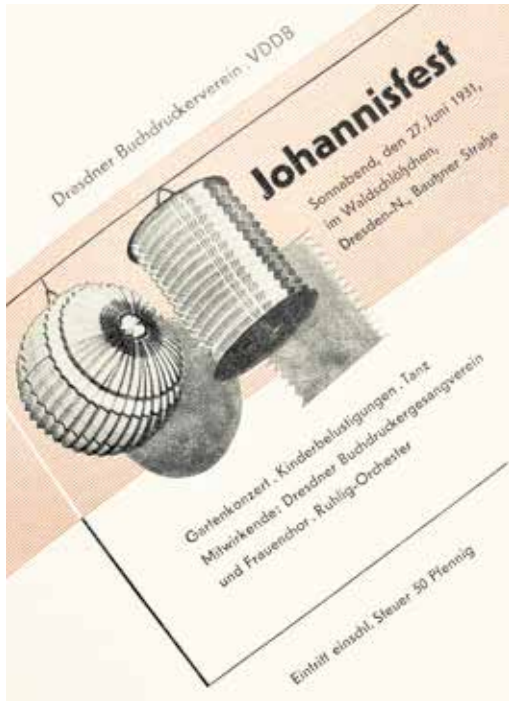
Konrad Friedrich Bauer, director of the Bauersche Schriftgiesserei (Bauer Type Foundry), called "Elementare Typographie" the "first summarising presentation" of the New Typography. This assessment is only partially correct in view of the numerous publications issued by the protagonists of the New Typography themselves (e.g., the advertising issue of the *Merz* journal in 1924), but it is proof that the publications of the avant-garde were either scarcely considered or went entirely unnoticed by the *Buchdrucker*. Periodicals such as *De Stijl* or *Merz* and books such as the *Die Kunstismen* (The Isms of Art) or the *Buch neuer Künstler* (The Book of New Artists) were primarily received in avant-garde art circles. The 1923 Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar made the New Typography accessible to a broader public, but addressed those interested in art rather than advertising and printing professionals.

The special issue "Elementare Typographie" can therefore be considered a turning point in the development of the New Typography. It was read not only by the artistic avant-garde, but also by members

19 Tschichold 1930b: 1801.
20 Burke 1998: 63.
21 Hartmann 1930. The trade journal *Korrespondent* (Correspondent) was also of the opinion that "the beginnings of New Typography [...] were more off-putting than encouraging" (Zeh 1932: 7).
22 Hebsacker 1927: 376.



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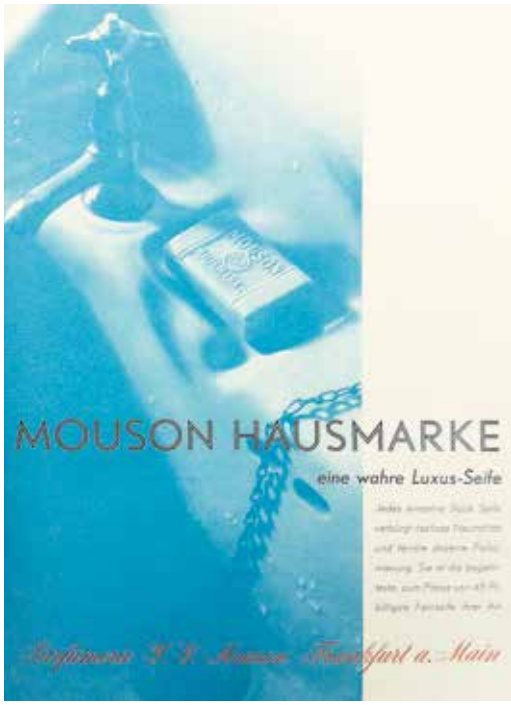


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fig. 79 Works shown on the pages of "Elementare Typographie", special issue of *Typographische Mitteilungen*, October 1925, edited and designed by Jan Tschichold.
Photo by Vincent Levrat

fig. 80 Example of the later form of the New Typography: advertisement for the 1929 Midsummer Party organised by the Dresden Letterpress Association, from *Typographische Mitteilungen*, 2, February 1929.

fig. 81 Type specimen of Berthold-Grotesk, designed by Georg Trump, from *Gebrauchsgraphik*, 10, 1930.



82



83

fig. 82 Example of advertising for luxury products and cosmetics in the latest style of New Typography, 1932.

fig. 83 Example of the latest form of New Typography: advertising for a jewellery brand, from *Typographische Mitteilungen*, 5, May 1932.

of the Verein Deutscher Buchdrucker (Association of German Book Printers), and thus by a broad group of professional typographers and printers. Furthermore, the special issue functioned as the starting point for New Typography's entry into the training institutions for *Buchdrucker*, as the *Typographische Mitteilungen* served as the communication platform of the trade association's educational wing, the Bildungsverband Deutscher Buchdrucker (Educational Association of German Book Printers).

But why, in comparison, did the publications of other New Typographers go largely or entirely unnoticed in professional circles? One reason is certainly the publication of the special issue "Elementare Typographie" as the October issue of *Typographische Mitteilungen*. It was part of the routinely read professional literature – many book printers received the *Typographische Mitteilungen* by subscription – while the other publications of the avant-garde were easily overlooked. But Tschichold also attained recognition in the professional world beyond the educational association, as evidenced by the number of journal articles he wrote and the numerous requests for lectures, as well as the success of his textbooks. Among the most important of these are *Die neue Typographie* (1928) and *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung – Grundbegriffe der neuen Typografie in Bildbeispielen für Setzer, Werbefachleute, Drucksachenverbraucher und Bibliofile* (A Lesson in Print Design – Basic Concepts of New Typography in Visual Examples for Typesetters, Advertising Professionals, Print Consumers and Bibliophiles, 1930).

Tschichold also wrote two books especially for training schools: *Schriftschreiben für Setzer* (Lettering and Calligraphy for Typesetters, 1931) and *Typografische Entwurfstechnik* (Techniques of Typographic Design, 1932). In addition to the already sympathetic book printers, the Verband Deutscher Reklamefachleute (Association of German Advertisers) also reviewed the book very positively. In the journal *Die Reklame* (Advertising) published by the association, the book is recommended for "reading in its entirety" and the association's news sheet also had words of praise. Even the type designer Rudolf Koch, who had been criticised by Tschichold, said: "The whole booklet makes a mature, very well-educated impression and is highly instructive for everyone, not only for typesetters".

But what qualified Tschichold to serve as a "mouthpiece"[23] for New Typography? In addition to his established commitment as a publicist, lecturer and teacher, it was his style of language and attitude that distinguished him from other avant-gardists and predestined him for the role of mediator in communicating with professionals. For one thing, Tschichold chose a comprehensible mode of expression. El Lissitzky wrote cryptically of "topography of typography" and "pressure and tension of textual content"; likewise, Kurt Schwitters formulated sentences of questionable content and comprehensibility. Ise Gropius noted in her diary in 1924: "In the afternoon, desperate efforts to read Moholy's stage essay. It is all expressed in such a complicated manner that no layperson will understand the writing".[24] Tschichold, on the other hand, enumerates in plain language the characteristics of the New Typography. The *Klimschs Allgemeiner Anzeiger für Druckereien* states that Tschichold "fortunately [refrains] from those unpleasantly exaggerated formulations familiarly used in similar publications".[25] Tschichold focused on formal aspects in his texts, while

23 Lewis 1977: 50.

24 Tagebuch Ise Gropius (Diary of Ise Gropius), 7 September 1924, Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin (unpublished).

utopian superstructure and ambitions to change society took a secondary role.[26] He neither wrote of the "New Man", nor did he justify the advantages of photography over drawing with a "New Perception". Tschichold limited himself to arguments relevant to book printers and explained the New Typography with applications in mind, not as an ideology.

A comparison with other programmatic texts reveals how Tschichold constructed his texts with a clear eye toward the target group of professionals. Most of the programmatic texts of the New Typographers were not conceived as educational texts; the aim was not to enable readers to design according to the precepts of the New Typography. Rather, the authors wanted to demonstrate the significance and correctness of their own artistic position and preferred design elements and stylistic devices: László Moholy-Nagy – author of the book *Malerei, Fotografie, Film* (Painting, Photography, Film) – always emphasises the potential of photography and film in his texts, and El Lissitzky in turn – painter of the *Proun* series – focused on "tensions" in the division of surfaces, while the early texts of the Dadaist Kurt Schwitters show a clear affinity for to the *Merz* art he developed, in which the combination of different materials plays a central role. Later, Schwitters – the author of the *Ursonate* (original sonata) – concentrated on language and rhythm. The varying format, irregular appearance and changing subjects in the *Merz* journal that he edited also underline the fact that Schwitters' aim was not informative reporting. Rather, he used the publication to create a forum for topics that interested him – which occasionally extended to advertising, as documented in the 11th issue of *Merz*.[27]

Tschichold, on the other hand, aimed at an enduring and practice-oriented examination of typography. His texts are structured accordingly and formulated in a comprehensible way. Not surprisingly, Tschichold's theses were reprinted, quoted, paraphrased and used as references far more often than other texts. Even authors critical of the avant-garde, such as Rudolf Engel-Hardt, cited the theses formulated by Tschichold and his "manifesto"[28] printed in the special issue as having a particularly strong influence on the reception of the New Typography – so much so that until the late 1920s, many outsiders reduced the New Typography to Tschichold's theses. Similarly incisive and application-oriented texts, such as Willi Baumeister's essay "Neue Typographie" (New Typography), were also cited.[29]

In correlation to the practice-oriented focus of his texts, Tschichold identified himself as a typographer,[30] not as an artist. He repeatedly demonstrated to be an experienced practitioner expressing a detailed knowledge of the printing process.[31] In demonstrating detail and expertise, he set himself apart from the other New Typographers who were self-taught. The latter were often rejected by professional printers as "intruders" who – according to the accusation – demanded designs that were "tastefully deviant" and "technically impossible" due to their lack of practical experience.[32] Although Tschichold had never worked full-time as a printer, he

25 Newspaper clipping, n.d., *Estate of Jan Tschichold*, Box NLTsch 88/59, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig.
26 Tschichold 1925.
27 Haldenwanger 1990.
28 Tschichold 1925.
29 Baumeister 1926. For example, he was cited in Zahn 1926.
30 Although the professional group of "typographers" was not yet established at that time, the first references to them can be found in the gazettes of the Bund Deutscher Gebrauchsgraphiker (Association of German Graphic Artists, Knodel 1927).
31 Tschichold 1930c: 236.
32 Kolb 1930; Meer 2015: 91–104.

was much more familiar with the work of book printers than artists such as László Moholy-Nagy or Kurt Schwitters. His typographic training made him familiar with the discussions on the subject and he mastered the language of the *Buchdrucker*. The intensity of Tschichold's efforts to integrate himself into the trade can be seen in the body of holdings from Tschichold's Estate at the German National Library in Leipzig. The Estate contains an extensive collection of newspaper articles on new techniques, printing processes such as multi-colour rotary printing and mechanical typesetting, as well as articles on the cooperation between printers and bookbinders.[33] Accordingly, Tschichold was well versed in the needs of the printing trade – and the professionals were, in their own words, glad "to have this artist at work within our walls".[34]

It ended badly for both parties. Even with the aid of the New Typography, the *Buchdrucker* failed in defending the creative aspects of their work from the invading *Gebrauchsgrafiker*. Today there is a clear differentiation between "design" as the domain of graphic designers and "production" as the purview of printers. And in the end, Tschichold also "lost". He succeeded in helping New Typography become known and widely established – but the movement now overshadowed his own professional evolution over the ensuing decades. Despite all his subsequent attempts to distance himself, his name is irrevocably associated with New Typography.[35] His later works are far less known and celebrated. A key reason for this is the enduring prominence of *Die neue Typographie* and other relevant publications to the survival of New Typography, including in Swiss typography. *Die neue Typographie* did not allow itself to be silenced, not even by its author.

33 Collection of newspaper clippings and texts, *Estate of Jan Tschichold*, Box NLTsch 3, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig.

34 Watzal 1927.

35 Cf. Bosshard 2012.

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Can the New Typography Be Written in French?[1]

Catherine de Smet

N'aimez que moi (Love only me) pleads the advertisement for Caron perfume in lower-case lettering visible on the transparent bottle.[2] **(fig. 84)** Not much French is spoken in the illustrations to *Die neue Typographie*, where the German language prevails, yet the variety of examples reveals the international scope of Jan Tschichold's documentation for his book. That scope reflects, on one hand, a concern to demonstrate the strength of a trend that already extended across Europe and was destined to spread, and on the other hand, a desire to transcend the typographic specificities advocated by the author in order to promote "present-day transnational bonds between people".[3]

Alongside printed material in English, Dutch, Russian, Czech and Japanese, a few examples in French back up Tschichold's argument, reinforcing the "transnational" spirit of the New Typography all the more when they are works by artists expressing themselves in French rather than their mother tongue, such as the Romanian Tristan Tzara and the Italian Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. The chapter on the history of the New Typography includes both men as precursors of the movement, reproducing Tzara's poster for a Dada event – *Le Coeur à Barbe* (The Bearded Heart) show at the Théâtre Michel in Paris – as well as a poem drawn from Marinetti's *Les mots en liberté futuristes* (Futurist Words in Freedom), "Lettre d'une jolie femme à un monsieur passéïste" (Letter from a Pretty Woman to a Traditionalist Man).[4] Tschichold's field of investigation extended not just to space but also to time: a highly decorative 18th-century announcement for a French funeral mass (not a garden party, the caption blithely explains) to be celebrated at the church of the Discalced Carmelites supports the idea that typography expresses above all its period, whatever the subject.[5] Meanwhile, "the whole-page [Caron] advertisement" for *N'aimez que moi* was remarkable not only 'as a photograph', but also as a particularly effective advert in which "no lettering [was] used except that on the objects photographed".[6] It was taken from an issue of the French edition of *Vogue* magazine, as was another advert, this time mainly typographic: *Tous les élégants connaissent / avenue du bois / c'est le dernier parfum de rosine* (All stylish people know avenue du bois, it's rosine's latest scent), which demonstrated "the independent use of lower case only" in fashion, as allegedly often employed in France.[7] **(fig. 85)**

These last two examples at least show that Tschichold, an attentive observer, detected some promise in contemporary design in France.[8] French output, for that matter, extended far beyond the illustrations discussed in

1 Translated from the French by Deke Dusinberre.
2 Tschichold 1995: 89.
3 *Ibid.*: 74–75.
4 *Ibid.*: 55, 57. In his book, Tschichold credits the poster to Tristan Tzara, but it was designed by Il'ia Zdanevich.
5 *Ibid.*: 20 (announcement), 77 (commentary).
6 *Ibid.*: 88.
7 *Ibid.*: 79–80.
8 The Rosine advert is not dated, but the caption to the Caron illustration gives the year 1926.



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fig. 84 Advertisement for Caron's *N'aimez que moi* perfume, created in 1916, featured in a 1926 issue of *Vogue* magazine and in *Die neue Typographie* published in 1928. Photo by Niccolò Quaresima

fig. 85 Advertisement for Rosine's *Avenue du bois* perfume, originally featured in *Vogue* in 1926, and published in *Die neue Typographie* in 1928. Photo by Niccolò Quaresima

his book. We will not dwell here on the considerable role unsurprisingly played by French – or France-based – artists in Tschichold's history of "The New Art", from Manet to Man Ray (always described as "the American Man Ray, now living in Paris"), nor on the analysis of the work of Swiss Dadaists in Paris during the war, pictorially interesting as abstract art but incomprehensible to typographers.[9] Instead, we will focus on Tschichold's allusions to a more recent past, discussed as contributions to the development of the New Typography. Thus, in his chapter on illustrated posters, alongside Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, and himself, Tschichold – at the end of a long passage otherwise vaunting the advantages of photography – mentioned Cassandre, citing "some outstandingly drawn posters, full of the spirit of our times", and adding that they are "worthy to be called classical achievements".[10] There follow two long quotations from *Der Querschnitt* (The Cross Section),[11] a Francophile German monthly, by Fernand Léger and Robert Delaunay respectively, both described as "founder members of the Cubist movement"; their viewpoints on what a poster should be – orchestral music to accompany the theatre of the street according to Léger, a scientific arrangement of colours for Delaunay – reinforced and legitimised the link made throughout the book between art and typography in their latest incarnations.[12]

Although Tschichold explicitly mentioned that the passages in question were taken from *Der Querschnitt*, he did not include that magazine in the bibliography at the end of his book. There, the list of periodicals was limited to the ten titles most representative of the avant-garde, as defined both by their editorial content and their form. The inclusion in that list of *L'Esprit nouveau* (the only French-language publication to be found there)[13] may seem surprising in view of its layout – far removed from the Modernist experiments implemented elsewhere[14] – and its typographic design, which in no way adhered to the principles followed by those magazines recommended in the book itself.[15] The titles of articles in *L'Esprit nouveau*, only occasionally set in the bold or semi-bold sans serif advocated by Tschichold, are consistently inevitably centred and often underscored by one or two lines; symmetry always prevails, including in the layout of illustrations, and there is never any reprieve from "the mysterious groups of three stars" that conclude articles. Meanwhile, the covers, although limited to an alphanumeric presentation, do not employ purely typographic means – displayed in the middle, on a scale giving it the impact of an illustration, is a drawing of the number of the given issue, with the illusion of depth. **(fig. 86)**

This conventional appearance was not adopted by default, but on the contrary represented a deliberate choice by the editors – artists Amédée Ozenfant and architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) – who soon took over the

9 Tschichold 1995: 56.

10 *Ibid.*: 186.

11 The German magazine *Der Querschnitt* reflected the Francophilia of its founder, Berlin art dealer Alfred Flechtheim, as well as the strong Parisian connections of its editor-in-chief, Hermann von Wedderkop. See Esau 2013: 868–887.

12 Tschichold 1995: 186, 191.

13 The magazine *Vesc, Objet, Gegenstand*, edited by Ilya Ehrenburg and El Lissitzky, also included in Tschichold's list, published a few French texts in its three issues, but Russian and German were heavily predominant.

14 Apart from *L'Esprit nouveau*, of the ten periodicals listed in the bibliography, only *Der Ararat* consistently employed a traditional layout.

15 Tschichold 1995: 208–211 "On the typographical design of periodicals". Stanislaus von Moos has commented on the divergence in layout between *L'Esprit nouveau and the Bauhausbücher*, comparing it to the difference between Adolf Loos's design of *Das Andere* and the experimental compositions in Ver Sacrum, concluding that both Loos and Le Corbusier rejected efforts to bring "art" into industry. See Von Moos 1987: 29.

magazine by elbowing out of the way the poet who had co-founded it with them in 1920, Paul Dermée.[16] Although fully aware of French and foreign avant-garde publications, Ozenfant and Jeanneret wanted to situate *L'Esprit nouveau* within a certain French publishing tradition that reflected their classic aspirations and their "institutional ambitions", as Iuliana Roxana Vicovanu has pointed out.[17] There can be no doubt about their awareness of the importance of visual presentation; Ozenfant himself had founded a magazine in 1915, *L'Élan*, in which he occasionally indulged in experiments he called "typometric" and "psychotypic", combining many typefaces, bodies, and fonts[18] when setting poetic texts.[19] The final issue also constituted a remarkable example of asymmetry, with its title running diagonally across the cover. In order to explain his views, Ozenfant quoted the comments of two critics sympathetic to his experiments. "The new typography already has a name: psychotypy, the art of making typographic characters participate in the expression of ideas and the depiction of moods, no longer as conventional symbols but as though having their own meaning". These experiments came on top of "those by Restif de la Bretonne, Mallarmé and Apollinaire".[20] Ozenfant thereby claimed a literary kinship for his "visual artist's intentions", which were similar, if not as radical as, Futurist free-wordism;[21] although they remained an isolated experiment, they clearly reflected a consideration of issues related to typesetting. It should be noted that this literary connection underpinned the magazine's agenda, having been named after a lecture given by Apollinaire in 1917, "L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes" (The New Spirit and Poets), in which he asserted that "typographical stratagems [...] can go much further, consummating a synthesis of the arts, music, painting and literature".[22] Meanwhile, Le Corbusier devoted a chapter of his *Étude sur le mouvement d'art décoratif en Allemagne* (Study of the Decorative Art Movement in Germany, 1912) to the reform of typography and rejuvenation of book design, underscoring the role played in this movement by Peter Behrens.[23] Finally, it should be pointed out that Paul Dermée, after having failed to fully influence the direction of *L'Esprit nouveau*, launched another magazine in 1927, one more in keeping with his views and apparently much closer to the experimentations of New Typography. Titled *Documents internationaux de l'Esprit nouveau* (International Documentation on the New Spirit),[24] it was co-founded by Michel Seuphor, which is very probably why the latter's name was mentioned by Tschichold in his list of artists who were "producing new work in our field".[25] **(fig. 87)**

Although hardly exemplary of the New Typography, *L'Esprit nouveau* nevertheless was an influential supporter of the people promoting it, given the magazine's international scope, its wide range of interests (which included the arts, letters and sciences in its analysis of contemporary events), and its original illustrations, notably the photographs ac-

16 Paul Dermée edited only the first four issues of *L'Esprit nouveau*.

17 Vicovanu 2009: 68, 210–249.

18 Translator's note: Font is used here in the technical sense of a specific variant (say, 12-point italic) of a given typeface (say, Times New Roman).

19 Amédée Ozenfant identified himself as the designer of the "typometric layout" of poems by Sébastien Voiret in *L'Élan*, 8 (1916): 14, and 9 (1916): 8, as well as the author of the "psychotypic essay" in *L'Élan*, 8 (1916): 18–19.

20 The critics were André Billy and E. Depuis, quoted in Ozenfant 1916: 2.

21 It should be recalled that Marinetti opposed Mallarmé at an early date, seeking to counter the latter's "decorative, affected aesthetics" and "static ideal". Marinetti 1914: 25–26.

22 Apollinaire 1991: 944.

23 Le Corbusier 2008: 173.

24 Only one issue of *Documents internationaux de l'Esprit nouveau* appeared, in 1927.

25 Tschichold 1995: 60.



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fig. 86 Cover of *L'Esprit nouveau*, 20, January–February 1924.

fig. 87 Cover of *Documents internationaux de l'Esprit nouveau*, 1, 1927.



Une Traduction
Résolutions

LA TYPOGRAPHIE [1]

par

CHRISTIAN

II

LES TYPES

C'est à bien considérer les choses, le sujet primordial de la technique du livre et le sujet qui tout en exigeant la minutie entraîne aux considérations les plus générales. — Dans l'ordre de la pensée, la lettre, ou le type quel qu'il soit, est le signe certain d'une extériorisation de l'esprit. C'est par le signe que le génie humain a dressé sa présence. Le type élémentaire assaillerte l'abstraction et, somme toute, l'alphabet représente une symbolique simplifiée dont la particularité réside dans les combinaisons permises par la mobilité des signes. Comme toutes les écritures les plus anciennes à leur époque, la nôtre n'est plus idéographique. Elle ne symbolise plus un objet ou une idée-image par un équivalent plus ou moins formel.

Caractère Maya : Le Maïeur.

Notre écriture n'est plus une science de la représentation des valeurs par leurs exhibitions équivalentes. Elle est devenue une convention

(1) Lire *L'Esprit Nouveau*, n° 1.

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ARTS ET MÉTIERS GRAPHIQUES

N'OUBLIEZ PAS
QUE LA TYPOGRAPHIE
SUIT ELLE AUSSI
LES CAPRICES DE
LA MODE

BERTHAUD — PEIGNOT
CRÉENT
LA MODE TYPOGRAPHIQUE

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fig. 88 Christian [Georges Herbiet], "La Typographie", in *L'Esprit nouveau*, 11–12, November 1921, p. 1245.

fig. 89 Advertisement in *Arts et métiers graphiques*, 2, December 1927, p. XX.

companying the articles that Le Corbusier republished (under that name) in his books of the 1920s.[26] The main themes addressed by Tschichold – standardisation, the role of engineers, the primacy of function, the opposition to ornament, the fusion of energies through collective effort – were raised again and again in *L'Esprit nouveau*, which even devoted two articles to typography, although the subject did not receive sustained attention. Those two articles, published respectively in 1920 and – several issues later – in 1921, were written by Christian, the pen name adopted by Georges Herbiet, an artist and writer close to the Dadaists, a friend of Picabia and, at that time, a bookseller in Saint-Raphaël.[27] **(fig. 88)** Christian wanted to "come up with new elements that would help to produce a Modern Art of book design [...] in order to escape the errors of archaism".[28] He hailed the "concise rigor and simplicity of a handsome typeface" with no flourishes, and a "continuous ascent toward clarity in the design of letterforms".[29] Christian's argument accorded with ideas set forth in both *Die neue Typographie* and *L'Esprit nouveau*, including his conviction that "true future innovation would involve reducing the number of symbols in our writing systems",[30] which echoed Tschichold's desire to simplify writing. He concluded that we had to "respect the machine spirit that has long imposed its law on us".[31] However, his argument was qualified – if not undermined – by several considerations. Indeed, Christian questioned the relevance of changes to the canons of typography, "for which there are often underlying reasons".[32] He also admired the "perfect, and apparently definitive" forms of certain letters,[33] adding that "if no true originality is possible, wouldn't it be better to restrict oneself to the use of perfected letterforms? Messrs Peignot & Sons, to whom modern French typography owes so much, have performed a useful task by recasting old typefaces".[34] Finally, Christian felt it was "regrettable" that mankind was henceforth subject to mechanical forces, and he stressed the "inelegant, inevitably geometric" action to which every machine reduced its users, "whether that be a simple press or a typesetting machine".[35] Yet, even though Christian expressed reservations about potential novelty in typography, and even though he stressed the losses induced by mechanisation, he glimpsed new possibilities via the figure of Mallarmé who, thanks to "Un coup de dés" (A Throw of the Dice), was responsible for "new norms in the art of book design" and "crucial changes that typography has brought to typefaces in the past half century".[36]

This consistently literary perspective seems to characterise the French approach to the issue of typography. The example of Mallarmé constituted a key reference, sometimes mentioned directly (by Ozenfant) and sometimes merely implied (by other exegetes). Thus, in his introduction to a new English edition of Le Corbusier's 1923 book *Vers une architecture* (Toward an Architecture), Jean-Louis Cohen suggested that the handling of space on the page is "an extension of Mallarmé's explorations with scattered 'blanks' and Apollinaire's with calligrams".[37] Cohen's allusion to this heritage was based on Le Corbusier's acknowledged admiration for Mallarmé; yet, although the architect quoted the poet various times in his letters and books,[38] such references were limited to the *verbal* register; the *visual*

26 See Vicovanu 2009: 100–110.
27 See Ernoult 2005.
28 Christian 1920: 343.
29 Christian 1921: 1249.
30 *Ibid.*: 1254.
31 *Ibid.*: 1255.
32 Christian 1920: 347.
33 Christian 1921: 1248.
34 *Ibid.*: 1252.
35 *Ibid.*: 1255–1256.
36 *Ibid.*: 1252.
37 Cohen 2007.

impact of Le Corbusier's books, published by Crès, can be traced to less scholarly, less modern sources, such as the 19th-century illustrated press.[39] It is precisely the five books published by Crès between 1923 and 1926 that are included in the French bibliography of *Die neue Typographie*,[40] making Le Corbusier the author with the largest number of entries, especially since the German translation of *Vers une architecture* is included in the German section. The originality of the layout of these books – basically the same one used for *L'Esprit nouveau*, the direct source of their content – lies in "the explicit argument revealed through illustrations" (as stressed by an advertising brochure for the French edition of *Vers une architecture*), in the striking juxtapositions of photographs, and in the countless variations on body size, weight of face and typeface used to enhance the rhetorical efficacy of the discourse (Guillemette Morel Journel counted no fewer than seventeen different variants in the book).[41] But there is no evidence of any radical visual transformation in the direction of the New Typography. Of course, throughout Le Corbusier's long career – marked by the publication of thirty-five books, often designed by himself – several counter-arguments can be found,[42] beginning with his recognition, in the 1920s of the industrial nature of book production, which made him complain of the traditionally uncut pages of the first edition of *Vers une architecture* and then demand that the pages be guillotined when it was reprinted. Much later, in 1963, for new editions in a series that featured a serif typeface on the cover, Le Corbusier insisted that the publisher, Gonthier, use the extended sans serif that he had often selected for his titles down through the years. "Your paperbacks can well tolerate that Le Corbusier is (typographically) modern whilst Plato remains classic". Le Corbusier occasionally used photomontage, examples of which can be found in his 1938 book, *Des canons, des munitions? Merci! Des logis... s.v.p.* (Guns, Ammunition? No Thanks! Housing, please), in which one page is exceptionally typeset on the diagonal. Yet at the same time, he could write to the publisher of *Quand les cathédrales étaient blanches* (When Cathedrals Were White, 1937), "Layout and typeface have been decided, right? Classic look, please – no Modernism". Finally, he claimed the full paternity of his *Oeuvre complète* (Complete Works), published in Zurich by Girsberger from 1929 to 1965, stating that he designed "the format [...], the type of layout [...] [and] standardised grids". Yet, the Swiss publisher oversaw the general appearance and, whilst traces of the New Typography can sometimes be detected (sans serif for running text, asymmetrical layout of illustrations), it is hard to see Le Corbusier's hand alone (especially once one knows that Max Bill, among others, worked on it).

Thus, Tschichold's conviction that Le Corbusier was a kindred spirit (having not only listed him in the bibliography but also mentioned him twice in the text) never resulted in the architect's conversion to the

38 *Ibid.*, Cohen mentions one letter from Jeanneret to William Ritter (p. 65) and another to Auguste Perret (p. 13), both quoting Mallarmé, plus several potentially Mallarmé-inspired passages in the text of *Toward an Architecture*.
Le Corbusier wrote out by hand a line of Mallarmé on his mural for the Swiss Pavilion in 1948, the motif of which was used as a cover drawing for his book *Poésie sur Alger* (1950) and as an illustration to his *Poème de l'angle droit* (1955).

39 Elsewhere I proposed *Le Magasin Pittoresque* as a model. See De Smet 2005: 72 and De Smet 2007: 31.

40 The five titles were *Vers une architecture*, *Urbanisme, L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui, Almanach and La Peinture moderne* (this last attributed to Le Corbusier alone, even though it was published under the names of Ozenfant and Jeanneret).

41 Morel Journel 1984: 70. See also Morel Journel 1997: 24–29.

42 On this subject, and for the references to the quotations and examples that follow, see De Smet 2007, *passim*.

principles of graphic innovation envisaged by the New Typography. However, this did not prevent Le Corbusier from retrospectively stressing his own novelty upon Vincent Fréal's publication of a new edition of *Vers une architecture*: "The layouts of my (collected) articles sparked amazement and indignation at our printer, the Arrault print shop in Tours. They said, speaking of me and the profession (typography): 'He's mad enough as it is! And when it comes to typography – a madman!'" Le Corbusier and Tschichold were both convinced there was a profound link between architecture and typography, as asserted by Tschichold in his book[43] and by Le Corbusier on many occasions – very explicitly in *Le Modulor*.[44] But their conclusions differed. Tschichold, nevertheless, seemed to continue to detect signs that the French might align themselves with the movement. The rejection of his 1929 proposal to the Deberny & Peignot Foundry for a new sans serif typeface designed by himself seemed to prove him right: the firm rejected his offer on the grounds that it already planned to produce a similar typeface, having just bought the rights to Paul Renner's Futura from Bauer in Frankfurt. Futura had been marketed since 1927 and won the New Typography's approval. Deberny & Peignot would launch it on the French market under the name Europe.[45] In a 1931 article for *Die Form* – the year after *Arts et métiers graphiques* published one called "Qu'est-ce que la nouvelle typographie et que veut-elle?" (What is the New Typography and What Does it Want?)[46] – Tschichold judged France's participation in the effort to be "wonderful" thanks to the work of Maximilien Vox and above all to Deberny & Peignot's production of the Bifur typeface by Cassandre, "a decisive step in the right direction".[47] It was nevertheless not until 2016 that *Die neue Typographie* was translated into French[48]; significantly, the first book by Tschichold in French was a collection of later writings, which marked the distance he had adopted from the avant-garde enthusiasms of his youth.[49]

Unlike the books by Le Corbusier, the thirteen other publications listed by Tschichold in the French bibliography of *La Nouvelle typographie* – by Futurist, Dadaist and Surrealist authors, plus Jean Epstein's *Cinéma*, dating from 1909 to 1929 – related to the New Typography in one way or another, notably to its roots. It was the subsequent application of its principles that seemed more problematic. Optimistic about future developments, Tschichold suggested the causes for the delay of full French endorsement: classic typographical rules were still in force; powerful conventions functioned as a standard which avoided poor taste; and, despite insufficient adaptation to the needs of the age, vestiges of an authentic liveliness made change less urgent.[50] *L'Esprit nouveau*, with its quest for a "modern classicism" and its ambiguities – wavering between cosmopolitanism and nationalism[51] – also supplied a possible clue to understanding certain reticences, as clearly expressed in the sphere of typography by Christian's

43 Tschichold 1995: 13.

44 Le Corbusier 1950: 9.

45 Tschichold 1995: described Futura as "a significant step in the right direction" and would even use it himself. On Tschichold's proposal to Deberny & Peignot, see Burke 2007: 150–151 and 159–161. On Europe, see also Dumas de Rauly 2011: 70–71.

46 Tschichold 1930: 46–52.

47 Tschichold 1931: 382–384. It should be noted that Charles Peignot, who launched the magazine *Arts et métiers graphiques*, was the art director at the Deberny & Peignot Type Foundry, which hired Maximilien Vox as a typographic adviser.

48 Tschichold 2016. The last chapter of *The New Typography* had previously been translated into French.

49 Tschichold 1987.

50 Tschichold 1931.

51 Vicovanu 2009: 108, stresses *L'Esprit nouveau's* "closed-mindedness with respect to Germany". See also Vicovanu 2014.

articles: French tradition was sufficiently rich, and innovation in the field of literature, notably "Un coup de dés", arguably sufficed to reinvigorate it. A 1927 advert for the Deberny & Peignot Type Foundry read: "Don't forget that typography also follows the whims of fashion".[52] **(fig. 89)** Almost in echo, Maximilien Vox – praised by Tschichold in 1931 for his ability to discover fresh, witty uses for familiar materials[53] – having become the apostle of the traditionalist Graphie Latine movement, voiced some self-criticism: "Our era has learned to do charming things with any old, outmoded material; it has also strictly followed, not unprofitably, certain foreign disciplines. Antique (i.e., sans serif) letterforms, the least "antique" thing in the world, have effected a healthy purge of our typography. Such totalitarianism, however, ill suited to French sensibility". He added, "the fashion to Germanise, Slavicise or Americanise passes, and has passed".[54] That was a patriotic way of settling scores with the New Typography, relegated to the level of a whim to which it might be doubted that many succumbed.

52 *Arts et métiers graphiques* 1927.
53 Tschichold 1931.
54 Vox 1950, n. p.

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"Giovanni T." and the New Typography in Italy. Discussion and Renegotiation of Tschichold's Ideas in Italian Graphic Arts Magazines

Carlo Vinti

Prelude: Paul Renner at the 5th Milan Triennale

On 10 May 1933, the 5th Triennale opened in Milan in the newly completed Palazzo dell'Arte, designed by the architect Giovanni Muzio. At a time of maximum alignment between architectural Rationalism and the fascist regime, the exhibition hosted the work of many prominent European figures in contemporary architecture. Attention from various observers in the press was notably drawn to the "white German section", devoted entirely to the graphic arts and arranged with "white linoleum on the floor, thin glass cases supported by chrome metal slats" and "only two succulent plants for decoration".[1] **(figs. 90–91)**

The exhibit was organised by the Deutscher Werkbund and curated by Paul Renner, who at that time still held the position of director of the Meisterschule für Deutschlands Buchdrucker (Master School for Germany's Book Printers) in Munich. Renner's Futura typeface was prominently displayed in large polished nickel-plated metal inscriptions, on the white walls of the two rooms arranged by the Munich architect Walther Schmidt. At the core of the exhibition, alongside a selection of German publishing production (mostly photographic and "useful" books), were numerous examples of printed matter of all kinds, such as postage stamps, labels, packaging, industrial catalogues and other commercial and advertising graphics. Remarkably, *Die Form* magazine observed that in this specific field, German graphic art "developed a completely new style in the combination of typography, photography, and drawing".[2] While this new approach was exemplified in the show through the works by leading figures of the New Typography movement, such as Willi Baumeister or Max Burchartz, the Werkbund section also paid homage to the history of letterforms, from Roman capitals to the present. In the introductory hall leading to the first room, four automatic projectors displayed sixty illustrated examples compared with German architectures and works of art from the same era.

1 Ojetti 1933: 3. "Vien fatto di chiedersi se la bianca sezione germanica, quest'anno dedicata tutta alle arti grafiche, dal libro ai manifesti, dai francobolli ai modelli di caratteri, sarebbe stata così perfetta nell'ordinamento – linoleo bianco sul pavimento, sottili vetrine rette da liste di metallo cromato, pareti bianche, scritte nere, due piante grasse per solo ornamento".

2 *Die Form* 1933: 189. "Man kann wohl ohne Überheblichkeit sagen, daß hier die deutsche Graphik in der Verbindung von Typographie, Photographie und Zeichnung einen völlig neuen Stil entwickelt hat [...]".



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fig. 90 Exhibition view of the hall of the German Werkbund section at the 5th Triennale in Milan, curated by Paul Renner, from *Die Form*, 8, June 1933.

fig. 91 Exhibition view of the second room of the Werkbund section at the 5th Triennale in Milan, curated by Paul Renner, from *Die Form*, 8, June 1933.

Following this, visitors encountered various calligraphic and typographic samples that represented the "writing of the present" in Germany,[3] including a text set in Futura, taken from a well-known speech delivered by Mussolini in 1926: "We must not exploit the heritage of the past. We should create a new art".[4] This Mussolini discourse composed in Futura vividly embodied the transfer of Central European Modernist graphic culture into fascist Italy, steeped in contradictions and ambiguities as it was.

The German section, curated by the Deutscher Werkbund, at the 5th Triennale opened mere months after Jan Tschichold's arrest and only a few days after the final closure of the Bauhaus in Berlin. Shortly before the opening of the exhibition in Milan, Renner himself had been briefly detained by the Gestapo, and he was subsequently obliged to resign from his position at the Munich school. As predicted by Edoardo Persico – the writer and art critic who at the time was co-editor and responsible for the new layout of the *Casabella* magazine – Germany would no longer be represented in Milan with Modernist works in the coming years.[5] However, it was precisely during this period, when the Modern Movement faced setbacks across continental Europe, that discussions on New Typography took root in Italy.

The exhibition curated by Renner received extensive coverage in Italian graphic arts magazines, in opposition to the disappointing Italian *Mostra dell'Arte Grafica* (Graphic Art Exhibition) at the Triennale. Yet, for Italian typographers and graphic artists, the Deutscher Werkbund section at the 5th Triennale was neither the first nor the only occasion of contact with the New Typography. Texts and examples from Germany and other European countries circulated through different mediating channels, among which trade magazines played a crucial role. Although much later than in other European countries, in Italy the New Typography was widely discussed in graphic arts periodicals and became the focus of a cultural debate no less heated than the one that arose around Rationalist architecture. This contribution concisely reconstructs this discussion, drawing on a more extensive investigation conducted over several years.

Tschichold in Italian Graphic Arts Magazines

Existing literature on the history of Italian graphic design commonly emphasises a series of pivotal events occurring in Milan in 1933. In addition to the Deutscher Werkbund section curated by Renner at the 5th Triennale, these accounts often mention Edoardo Persico's influential new design for *Casabella*, the opening of Antonio Boggeri's studio – thus starting a fruitful collaboration with numerous designers who would later emerge as key figures in Italy's post-war design scene – and lastly the birth of *Campo Grafico. Rivista di estetica e di tecnica grafica* (1933–1939) designed and printed by a militant group of Milanese workers of the printing industry, who carried on a harsh battle against the neo-traditionalism of Raffaello Bertieri and the periodical that he edited, *Il Risorgimento Grafico* (1902–1941).[6]

3 *Ibid.* "Schriftschaffen der Gegenwart".

4 *Ibid.*: 187. "Non dobbiamo sfruttare il patrimonio del passato — noi dobbiamo creare un'arte nuova". The quote was given in Italian in the text, followed by the German translation. Both the review in *Die Form* and an article in *Gebrauchsgraphik* 1933 gave much emphasis to the presence in the exhibition of this passage from Mussolini's speech and wished that this warning would be heeded in Germany. The original speech was given by Mussolini at the Academy of Fine Arts in Perugia and was first published in *Critica Fascista* in 1926 (Soffici 1926). It was used very often in slightly reworked versions such as the one displayed at the *II Esposizione di Architettura Razionale* organised by Pietro Maria Bardi in Rome in 1931.

5 Persico 1934 (1968): 68–69.

6 Grizzanti 2022; Vinti 2019.

However, in the fateful year 1933, another important event occurred that history of Italian graphic design fails to mention. In February that year, the Turin magazine *Graphicus* published an opening article titled "Della nuova tipografia" (About the New Typography) and signed "Giovanni T".[7] **(fig. 92)** As far as can be proven, this was the first publication of a text by Jan Tschichold in Italy. Upon textual comparison, the piece turns out to be a synthetic and incomplete translation of an article that had already appeared in 1930 in the magazine *Arts et métiers graphiques* and that was indeed the French version of Tschichold's introduction to his second book *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung*. At the time, in the midst of his efforts to disseminate the ideas of the New Typography, Tschichold decided to have it translated in the international trade press; it also appeared in the British periodical *Commercial Art*.[8]

Apparently, someone in the editorial staff of *Graphicus* took the initiative of Italianising the name of Jan Tschichold, turning it into "Giovanni T".. More than being the direct effect of the fascist policies of linguistic Italianisation (which became official only later, in 1940), this alteration was probably motivated by the will to dissimulate the author's provenance in the eyes of the magazine's readers and some of its contributors. It is noteworthy that just a month after Tschichold's text was published, an article in the magazine cautioned against the adoption of an "international style" and feared the risk of "becoming slaves to theories and practices conflicting with our Latin sentiment".[9] In the following years, *Graphicus* gradually aligned itself with the Modernist approach of *Campo Grafico*, yet never abandoning the quest for a national typographic style, that was often identified with a modern fascist style.

Limited information is available regarding the circulation of the book *Die neue Typographie* in Italy.[10] However, language barriers and the prevailing traditionalism within the Italian graphic arts sector may have hindered the dissemination of the volume. An early introduction in Italy of the "new typographic style" coming from Germany can be found in a text by Guido Modiano published in 1929. Modiano was the owner of an important printing firm in Milan and during the following years became a key figure in the debate on typography. In 1931, he launched the *Tipografia* magazine for the Reggiani Type Foundry, which preceded *Campo Grafico* in aiming to align Italian typographic culture with European Modernism, albeit very short-lived, with only three published issues.[11]

After Giovanni T.'s article was published in *Graphicus*, Tschichold's real name appeared three times within the pages of *Campo Grafico*: initially as the author of a concise text on charts diagrams in 1935, then in a review of his book *Typographische Gestaltung* in 1936, and finally in the signature of an article discussing the proportions of the New Typography in 1937.[12] **(fig. 93)** Concluding the latter was Tschichold's expressed will "to contribute to the further advancement of the New Typography in Italy".[13] During this period, Tschichold had already relocated to Basel. Although

7 Giovanni T. [Jan Tschichold] 1933.

8 Tschichold 1930a, 1930b, 1930c.

9 Lagoni 1933: 9. "Rendersi schiavi di teorie e pratiche contrastanti col nostro sentire latino".

10 It is known that Tschichold asked Fortunato Depero for a copy of his book *Depero Futurista* and promised one of his books in exchange (Camillini 2020). It is also likely that the printer Carlo Frassinelli either owned or had access to a copy for reference of *Die neue Typografie*, as he referred to the book in his 1941 *Trattato di architettura tipografica*.

11 Modiano 1929. On the figure of Guido Modiano see Vinti 2005 and Chiabrando 2006.

12 Tschichold 1935; G. P. 1936; Tschichold 1937.

13 Tschichold 1937: 8.

he had begun to critically examine and soften various aspects of the New Typography, particularly with regard to typefaces and their combinations, his unwavering dedication to disseminating Modernist ideas on typography persisted. What is worth noting, however, is that at this point *Campo Grafico*'s readership was already acquainted with many of these ideas, including the relevance of abstract painting, the rejection of "typographic neutrality" in favour of contrast, and the "need to avoid any closure" to privilege asymmetry.[14]

Asymmetry, in particular, had been the focus of an article published by the magazine in 1935 and authored by another key figure in the New Typography movement: the Stuttgart painter and graphic designer Willi Baumeister.[15] In May of that year, he held a solo exhibition at the Galleria Il Milione in Milan, where he gave a short lecture in which, according to the gallery bulletin, he was able to communicate "even more with drawings [...] than with words".[16] *Campo Grafico* then published, alongside the Italian transcript of his talk, Baumeister's quick illustrative sketches that provided effective arguments in support of the free and asymmetrical balance in typographic composition. Furthermore, the magazine's editors supplemented these images with works from the Italian graphic production of those years, showing the precise desire to trace back to European roots the achievements of modern typography in Italy. **(fig. 94)**

The Suppressed Futurism

Tschichold's 1930 text published in Graphicus – originally the introduction to the book *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung* (A Lesson in Printing Design) – has been regarded as "perhaps his most compact and compelling statement of the principles of New Typography".[17] Like *Die neue Typographie*, it included a concise historical overview of the New Typography movement, with a specific focus on the contributions of the avant-garde. In the French version published by *Arts et métiers graphiques* (which is the source of the Italian translation) this part begins as follows: "En Italie, Marinetti, dans *Les mots en liberté futuristes* (1919), en Allemagne, le dadaïsme, antérieurement déjà, donnèrent une première impulsion à ce nouveau développement de la typographie".[18] A significant difference becomes evident when comparing this specific passage with the equivalent in the Italian version: "Dadaism gave the first impetus to this new typographic development, and in 1922 the first typographic experiments of some abstract painters took place in Germany".[19] Remarkably, there is no mention of Futurism. Its substantial contribution to the rupture of the typographic tradition is deliberately omitted. Such an omission is particularly striking considering that Tschichold himself regarded Marinetti's "typographic revolution" as a crucial step in the "change-over from ornamental to functional typography", as he claimed in his 1928 book.[20]

14 *Ibid.*

15 Baumeister 1935.

16 *Bollettino del Milione* 1935. "Anche più coi disegni [...] che forse con le parole".

17 Kinross 1995: xxxv.

18 Tschichold 1930b. This point in the English version (Tschichold 1930c: 10) reads: "Dadaism, through Marinetti in Italy with his 'Les mots en liberte futuriste [sic] (1919)' and even earlier in Germany, gave the first impulse to the new development of typography".

19 Giovanni T. [Jan Tschichold] 1933: 8. "Il Dadaismo diede un primo impulso a questo nuovo sviluppo tipografico, e nel 1922 si ebbero in Germania i primi esperimenti tipografici da parte di alcuni pittori astratti".

20 Tschichold 1995: 53. The paragraph *typographic revolution* from the manifesto *L'immaginazione senza fili e le parole in libertà* (1913) was also reported in the text, drawn from its republication in *Le mots en liberté futuristes* (1919).

According to him, by dismantling the conventional rules of typesetting, Marinetti and Futurists had liberated the expressive potential of the typefaces and opened the way to a true re-foundation of typography, in which the elements of the printed page finally became a "functional expression of content".[21] Why then, right in Italy, in the first known translation of a text by Tschichold, was Futurism totally dismissed? There are at least two plausible reasons behind the suppression, which seems even more surprising, considering that it came from a journal – *Graphicus* – dedicated to the promotion of a modern, yet national typography.

Firstly, despite the persistent image of inter-war Italian graphic design being dominated by Futurist aesthetics,[22] in reality, Second Futurism represented just one of the modern currents trying to gain hegemony in fascist Italy. While it is true that many Futurist poster artists continued to be active during the 1930s, Italian typographers and graphic designers were eager to embrace new contemporary trends. Much more than in Futurist art, models were now identified in Rationalist architecture and geometrical abstract painting. The editorial staff of *Campo Grafico* had close ties to the artistic, intellectual and Rationalist architect circles in Milan. One particular connection was with the Galleria Il Milione, a gathering place for the small group of abstract painters who opposed the more conservative approaches of the Novecento movement. During the 1930s, this space hosted not only Baumeister's solo exhibition but also Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart's, whose work was proposed in *Campo Grafico* as an example of "teaching abstract painting" for typography.[23] It was not until much later, in 1939 and 1941, that Futurism was retrospectively celebrated in two special issues of *Campo Grafico* and *Graphicus* that paid homage to Marinetti's "typographic revolution" also in order to counter growing accusations of internationalism.[24] **(fig. 95)**

Secondly, in the previous years, Futurism had fallen short of the objective to which *Campo Grafico* and other Italian new typographers aspired: the reception and acceptance of Modernism into the printing trade. The experiments in Futurist publishing with *parole in libertà* (words in freedom / mots en liberté) directly challenged the long-established form of the book, frightening the deeply traditionalist Italian graphic arts community. Trade magazines received Futurist experimentations on book typography as mere provocations and, until the late 1920s, they remained impermeable to any kind of influence coming from artistic avant-gardes. Contrary to the radical approach of Futurists, in the 1930s *Campo Grafico*, *Graphicus* and typographers such as Guido Modiano renounced to question traditional aesthetics in the book publishing realm. Instead, they embraced the belief that "the characteristic products of our time"[25] were not books, but rather magazines, brochures, and industrial catalogues – printed materials in which photographic images played an increasingly dominant role.

Photography and the "Two Pages in One" Scheme

Traditional typographic culture maintained a fundamental distrust towards photography, even though in a magazine such as *Il Risorgimento Grafico* there was no lack of significant

21 *Ibid.*: 56.
22 The chapter on Italy in Hollis 1994 is exemplary of this tendency.
23 Modiano 1934. In 1934, Galleria il Milione also organised an important Kandinsky exhibition.
24 *Campo Grafico* 1939; *Graphicus* 1942.
25 Modiano 1933.

GRAPHICUS
RIVISTA MENSILE DELLE ARTI DELLA STAMPA
AMMINISTRAZIONE: VIA MODENA 40, TORINO 122

ANNO XIII
N. 284
FEBBRAIO 1933-XI
ABBONAMENTI
ITALIA L. 12, ESTERO L. 20

DELLA NUOVA TIPOGRAFIA

Con questo nome è conosciuto quel movimento di rinnovazione tipografica iniziato prima dagli avanguardisti tedeschi e seguito da Olanda, Russia, Cecoslovacchia, Svizzera e Ungheria. Benchè gli inizi si debbano a propositi individuali, è certo che il successo è dovuto principalmente alle necessità pratiche del momento.

Per spiegarsi il sorgere e progredire di tale movimento, è opportuno ricordare lo sviluppo tipografico prima della guerra. Alla miscela di stili degli anni 1820 e seguenti successe il movimento originato da Morris (1892) delle arti applicate. Nel dominio tipografico la sua imitazione era soprattutto storica (imitazione degli incunaboli). Più tardi, verso il 1900, il *Jugendstyle* cercò di liberare il lavoro da ogni ossessione storica, ma il suo tentativo si concluse con imitazioni male studiate delle forme naturali e con una trasformazione dello stile Impero, ossia senza successo perchè anch'esse forme storiche. Allora si ritornò verso di queste, ma con imitazioni più intelligenti, e le stampe tedesche dal 1911 al 1920 diedero vari saggi meritevoli. Il risultato maggiore di tale ritorno alle forme storiche fu — contrariamente a ciò che si sperava — lo « scoprimento » dei caratteri Didot, Bodoni, Walbaum, Garamond, ecc., preferiti già da tempo.

L'idea tipografica orientata nel senso storico non conosce che uno schema per la composizione: l'asse centrale, il cui esempio più chiaro era la coperta dei libri. Tutti seguivano questo modello, tanto per giornali, annunzi o lavori commerciali. Solo dopo la guerra si giunse a realizzare delle forme nuove, nelle quali si distinguevano due scopi diversi: la comprensione e la soddisfazione delle necessità pratiche e, inoltre, la creazione d'un ordine ottico, che deriva direttamente dall'estetica.

La Tipografia si distingue dall'architettura in quanto mentre l'aspetto esteriore d'una cosa nuova può, nell'architettura, esser dedotto interamente dalle necessità pratiche, nella Tipografia, al contrario, si può riconoscere nettamente un lato estetico nelle questioni di forma. E' questa circostanza che avvicina la tipografia alla creazione libera in superfice (disegno e pittura) più che all'architettura.

Nelle opere, siano tipografiche, pittoriche o grafiche, si tratta sempre della conformazione d'una superfice. Questo fatto spiega perchè dovessero essere proprio i pittori moderni, gli astratti, i creatori della nuova Tipografia. La pittura astratta è un'espressione senza obiettivo di riferimento di colori e di forme pure senza interventi letterari. La Tipografia è l'ordine ottico (estetica) di determinati elementi (necessità pratiche, caratteri, incisioni, colori, ecc.) sopra una superfice. La differenza tra la pittura e la Tipografia con-

92

fig. 92 First page of the article "Della nuova tipografia" (About the New Typography), signed Giovanni T. [Jan Tschichold] from *Graphicus*, 284, February 1933.



93

fig. 93 Review of the book *Typographische Gestaltung* (Typographic Design) by Jan Tschichold on the pages of *Campo Grafico*, 1, January 1936.



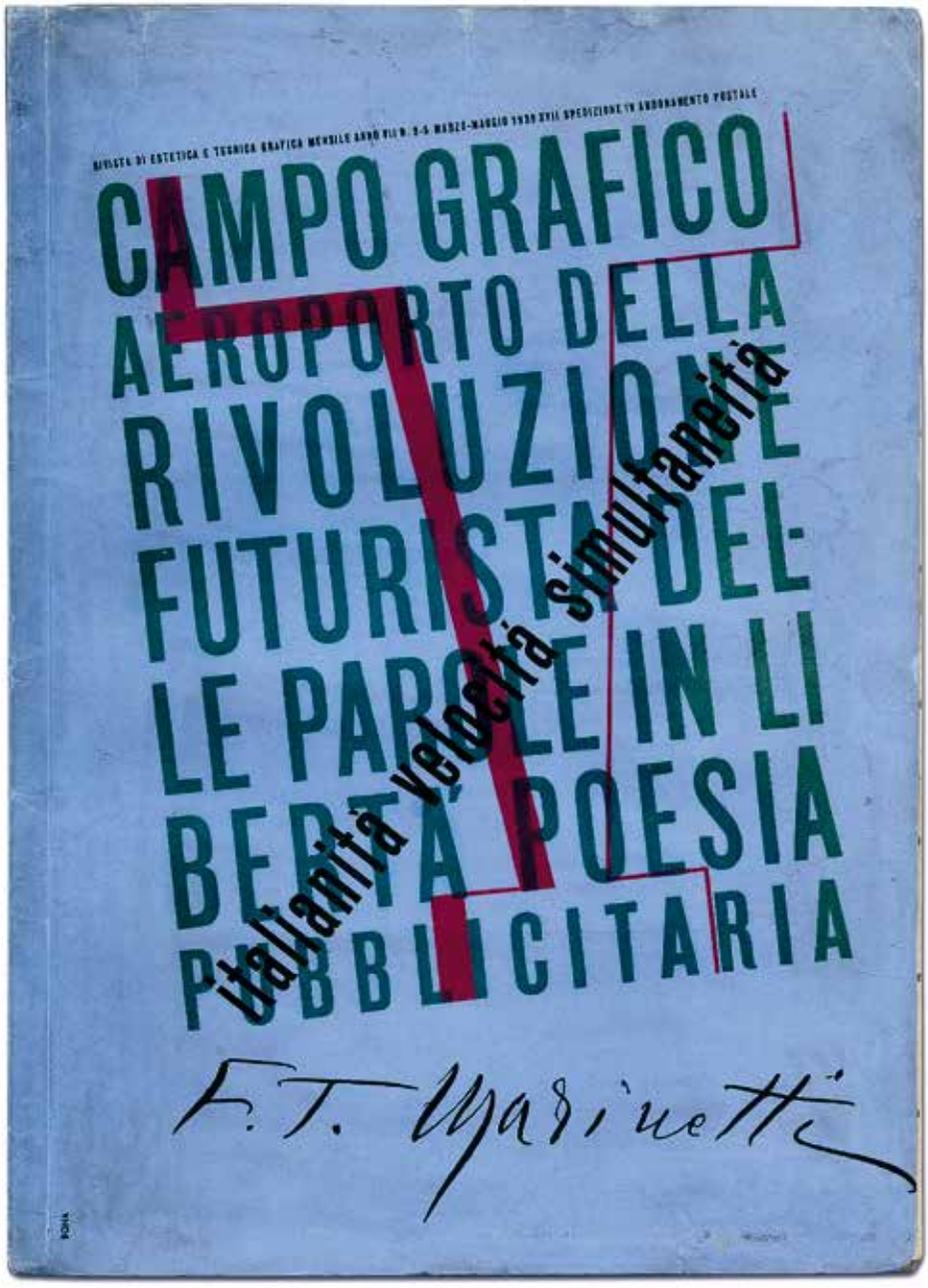
WILLY BAUMAEISTER

PADOVA

PADOVA

94

fig. 94 Text of the talk by Willi Baumeister ("Willy Baumaeister" in the title) at Galleria del Milione in Milan, on the pages of *Campo Grafico*, 5, May 1935.



95

fig. 95 "Aeroporto della rivoluzione futurista delle parole in libertà" (Airport of the Futurist Free-Words Revolution), cover of *Campo Grafico*'s last issue, 3–4–5, March–April–May 1939, design by Enrico Bona.

curiosity toward the subject. On the Modernist side, instead, the question of photography was considered crucial, insisting for its complete and definitive recognition as an essential element in the typographic composition. Photography, in the words of "Giovanni T"., should be considered as "a kind of typeface" or "another form of language" complementary to writing.[26] Furthermore, *Campo Grafico* – which devoted an entire issue to the subject in December 1934[27] – often highlighted that photography, besides being the quintessential modern illustration medium, played a significant role in breaking traditional typographic rules. According to Attilio Rossi, the urge to heighten the potential of photographic images first led to force the traditional page layout, by invading the large symmetrical margins with pictures. **(fig. 96)** Subsequently, the static and symmetric scheme, based on the book page, was replaced with asymmetrical solutions[28]: the resulting modular arrangement of the graphic elements was referred to as the "two pages in one" formula, which was first experimented by Guido Modiano and Edoardo Persico, respectively the printer and designer, as well as co-editor, of the *Casabella* magazine's new layout. In their early attempts, they disregarded the traditional symmetrical balance between the two adjacent pages, crossing the limit of the binding stitching, with headlines, photographic images and even the composition block of the main text. **(fig. 97)**

In 1933, *Casabella* came out with an almost square format to stress the horizontal dimension of the open issue and maximise the impact of photographs and architectural drawings. As Modiano explained in an accurate and comprehensive text on Persico's graphic work,[29] the new scheme amplified the constructive power of the white areas on the pages. According to Modiano, non-printed areas had always played a significant role in typographic design, but they were traditionally confined to framing text blocks with generous page margins. In *Casabella*'s pages, instead, margins were significantly reduced, so that it was sufficient to increase the leading role of the text to shift the white areas from the periphery to the interior of the composition. Additionally, by studying the position of voids on the whole area formed by the double spread, the white space could be transformed from a passive element into an active one, as Tschichold recommended since the publication of "Elementare Typographie" in 1925.

In proposing the "two pages in one" concept, the advocates of a New Typography in Italy pursued two complementary goals. Firstly, they aimed at adapting the Gutenberg tradition to the new "graphic rhythms" demanded by modern graphic production, in which Bruno Munari saw "a certain sense of movement akin to cinema".[30] The dynamic interplay of changing graphic elements was unified by a modular continuity, as if held together by an invisible line. Secondly, this new approach resolved "the meaning of Modern Art in typographic terms",[31] as Modiano put it. The two-pages spread, intended as the proper design area, became an open surface that paralleled both the canvas of the abstract painters – devoid of centre and closed frame – and the walls of Rationalist architecture, with their horizontal drive opposed to the tension of the force of gravity. **(fig. 98)**

26 Giovanni T. [Jan Tschichold] 1933: 8. "Una specie di carattere", "un'altra forma di linguaggio". In this point, the English version reads: "Photography because it is merely another method of visual speech is also regarded as type". Tschichold 1930c: 15.

27 *Campo Grafico* 1934.

28 Rossi 1937.

29 Modiano 1935.

30 Munari 1937: 32.

31 Modiano 1938: 399. "Aver risolto il senso dell'arte moderna in termini tipografici".

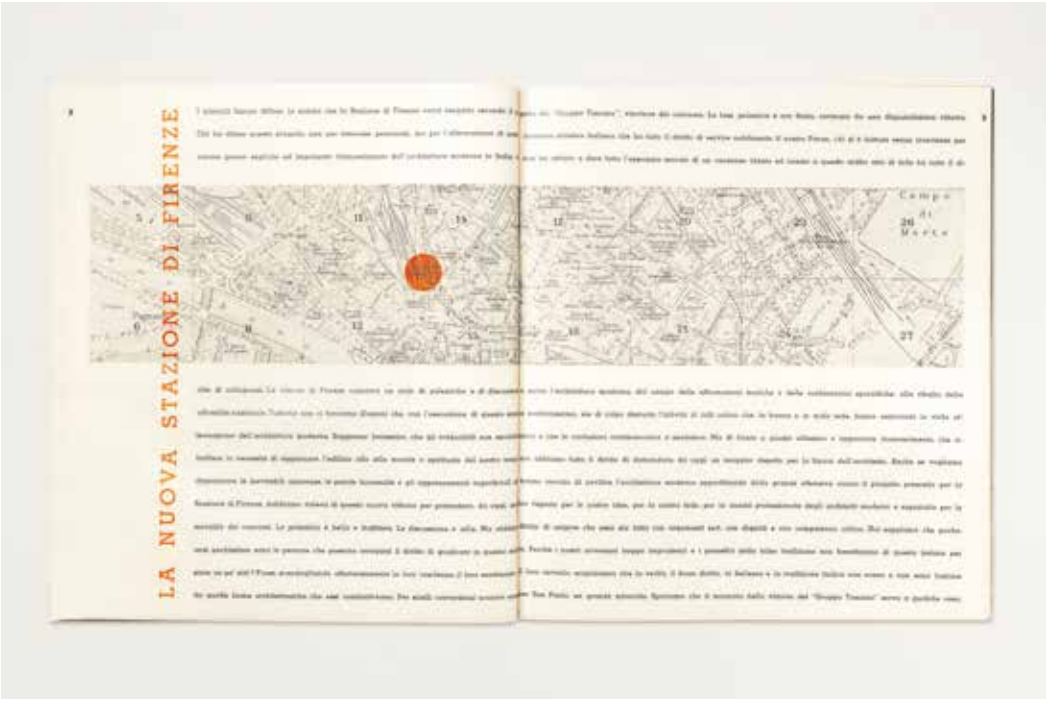


L'EVOLUZIONE DELLA

TIPOGRAFIA IN ITALIA

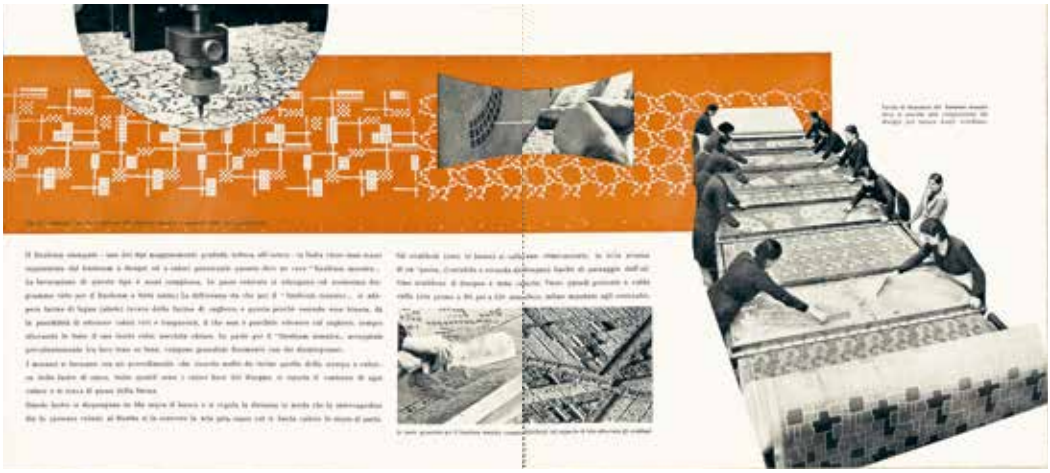
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fig. 96 "L'evoluzione della tipografia in Italia" (The Evolution of Typography in Italy), article by Attilio Rossi on the pages of *Campo Grafico*, 9, September 1937.



97

fig. 97 Double spread from *Casabella*, graphic design by Edoardo Persico, 1933. Photo by Niccolò Quaresima



98

fig. 98 Double page from the promotional booklet *Il Linoleum. Sua fabbricazione* (Linoleum. Its Fabrication), graphic design by Guido Modiano, Bruno Munari and Riccardo Ricas, 1938. Promotional booklets and industrial catalogues were another privileged field for the application of the "two pages in one" scheme, whose possibilities were in this case expanded by the use of the album format and spiral binding.

The Late Impact of New Typography in Italy
A Different Relation with Tradition

Jan Tschichold's ideas had a significant impact in Italy, albeit with a considerable delay. His writings began to be known in Italian graphic arts circles precisely when the New Typography movement in Europe was losing momentum. Tschichold himself was on the verge of revising his positions, as evidenced in his articles published in Italian trade magazines, which showed a slightly more accommodating attitude towards tradition. This circumstance, coupled with the different political context, likely contributed to the emergence of an Italian version of the New Typography, definitely distant from the avant-garde's radicalism. Restraint and a lack of extremism can also be observed in the infrequent discussions regarding typefaces. Sans serif types, which Tschichold in 1928 proclaimed as the typefaces "in spiritual accordance with our time",[32] also found their way in Italian print shops. Semplicità, produced by the Nebiolo Type Foundry in 1930, quickly gained widespread popularity and became one of the primary models for lettering on buildings and public spaces. However, in Italy, neither geometric sans serifs nor unicase or "universal" types held a central place in the discourse surrounding the New Typography. The time was rather that of modern reinterpretations of Bodoni, such as the Bayer type, which elicited some discussion in Italy as well.[33] Nevertheless, the Italian debate focused more on other aspects and, particularly towards the end of the 1930s, a mutual rapprochement, if not a reconciliation, between Modernist and traditionalist positions became apparent.[34]

Like Italian architectural Rationalism, the Modernist concepts of simplicity, logic and serenity were frequently associated to the idea of a modern classicism. One prominent figure who exemplified this perspective was Pietro Maria Bardi, a passionate advocate of Rationalist architecture and one of the influential intellectuals associated with the regime. Bardi argued against extreme typographic experiments, criticising the use of "clichés slipping off the page" and "vertical or crooked lines".[35] Despite his unwavering belief in the pursuit of modern taste, Bardi's idea of Rationalism in typography was rooted in a sort of "return to order". In his writings, he claimed an "Italian typography, clear, designed with constructive feeling, renewed without eccentricities and pondered with intelligence".[36] Bardi's aspiration for a Rationalist, Italian typography is not surprising. As I have highlighted elsewhere, New Typography in Italy developed in a cultural context in which the profession of faith for the modern could often coexist with a nationalist attitude and the latter did not exclude a profound awareness and even flaunting of European influences.[37]

Moreover, it is important to note that the examples and writings that arrived in Italy during the 1930s represented a movement that had already reached a level of maturity, being "equally distant from the older Bauhaus typography and Tschichold's initial elementary typography, as from the classicism of the bibliophile publisher".[38] This descrip-

32 Tschichold 1995: 73.
33 Modiano 1937; Mazzucchelli 1937.
34 Vinti 2005.
35 Bardi 1933: 553: "zinchi che scappano di pagina"; "righe verticali o di sghimbescio
36 *Ibid.*: 554: "Noi amiamo la tipografia all'italiana, chiara, architettata con sentimento costruttivo, rinnovata senza stramberie e considerata con intelligenza. Accettiamo qualsiasi rivoluzione purché fondata sulla logica. Pensiamo a un razionalismo tipografico: un ritorno alla elementarità, alla serenità, alla semplicità".
37 Vinti 2019.
38 Renner 2000 (1948): 88.

tion, adopted by Paul Renner in relation to the typography taught at the Meisterschule in Munich, can be reasonably extended to encompass many manifestations of the New Typography in the early 1930s, including Renner's selection of printed matter for the 5th Milan Triennale which, according to *Die Form*, achieved an "almost classical" spirit.[39] During the 1920s in Germany, printing trade magazines and schools were crucial in initiating a normalisation process of the early radical experiments of New Typography. As is well-known, Tschichold, who had trained as a typographer and calligrapher, succeeded precisely in mediating between the visionary proposals of avant-garde artists and the technical constraints of the printing practice.

In a similar way, during the 1930s in Italy, trade magazines and representatives of the graphic industry, such as typographers, owners and workers of printing firms, played an essential role in the affirmation of the Modernist current. The emergence of the early figures of consultant designers in the field occurred in a graphic scene still strongly dominated by the actors of the printing trade. As in other European countries, the issue at stake in Italy was not yet the birth of a new profession like that of the graphic designer (or at least it was not perceived as such), but the quest for a New Typography, i.e. an ambitious endeavour to regenerate the secular tradition of the art of printing by adapting it to the modern world.

39 *Die Form* 1933: 189. "daß hier heute schon geradezu klassisch wirkende Leistungen vorliegen".

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Traces of Jan Tschichold's New Typography in Belgium

Katrien Van Haute

There is undoubtedly a certain percentage of "Tschichold" in the DNA of Belgian graphic design. Starting in the 1930s, the concepts of the New Typography penetrated the practice of graphic designers, typographers, and printers in Belgium. They felt compelled to set themselves apart from the old and decorative printing, and got an idea of what the new printed matter should look like, and what criteria it should meet to be modern. The question here is how consciously or unconsciously the first generation of Belgian graphic designers embraced the ideas of *Die neue Typographie*. Were they directly or indirectly influenced by reading Jan Tschichold? In his many books and articles, Tschichold explicitly refers to Belgium only once. Nevertheless, enough other primary sources have survived to allow us to trace the figures or channels through which Tschichold's DNA arrived in Belgium.

Belgian Representatives Jozef Peeters and Pierre Flouquet in *Die neue Typographie*

Jan Tschichold included the names of Jozef Peeters and his French-speaking counterpart Pierre Flouquet, two pioneers of abstract art, as representatives of Belgium in a list of European abstract artists who were producing "new work" for "our field".[1] For Tschichold, the genesis of modern graphic design was apparently an "us versus them" story. By writing explicitly about "our field", he emphasised the dichotomy between the world of artists and that of printers, typographers, and designers. This gap was also present in Belgium. A few abstract artists in the early 1920s were on the same page and attempted to introduce new abstract imagery into printmaking. Peeters and Flouquet were among them. In their avant-garde publications, they published abstract black-and-white illustrations that Peeters referred to as Constructivist, as they were completely non-representational and thus autonomous. Sometimes the artists went beyond drawn illustrations and also experimented with typography. They preferred to arrange it as an abstract painting, with letters in varying point sizes, words in different reading directions, and black lines and rectangles that accentuated the whole construction. With the experimental design of a magazine like *De Driehoek* (The Triangle), Jozef Peeters was working in the same spirit as the many Constructivist avant-garde periodicals throughout Europe. However, this modern design was not theoretically based. Peeters and Flouquet only wrote about their Constructivist illustrations and paid no attention to the New Typography in Belgium at the time; the name "Tschichold" was not mentioned in any avant-garde magazine.

1 Tschichold 1928: 64.

One Belgian who probably did come into contact with Tschichold's theories early on was Jos Léonard (1892–1957). At one time, he was artistically and ideologically in complete agreement with Peeters and Flouquet and called himself a Constructivist. By the mid-1920s, he was the only abstract artist to choose the profession of graphic design, and soon felt that he needed the help of a professional printer if he wanted to elevate his Studio Novio above an amateur level. He associated himself with master printer Willy Godenne and did exactly what Tschichold would later advise beginning graphic designers to do.[2] Godenne was one of the few printers in Belgium who realised that the craft had entered an aesthetic crisis and that innovation would not come spontaneously from within.[3] Just as Léonard realised he needed Godenne's expertise, the latter knew he had to rely on Jos Léonard's talent and artistic vision.

The Specialised Subject Library of Jos Léonard

Léonard not only refined his skills by working closely with a printing expert, but also began building a specialised subject library,[4] including intact copies of *Die neue Typographie* (1928) and *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung* (1930).[5] Unfortunately, he did not have the habit of noting the date of acquisition or making annotations, so we cannot be sure that Léonard purchased the books shortly after their publication. But it is almost certain that he and his associate Godenne were aware of Tschichold's teachings in the early 1930s, whether in an abridged version or not. Indeed, we know that the pair had subscribed to the French journal *Arts et métiers graphiques*, which published their work in 1929[6] and featured Tschichold in French the following year. The article "Qu'est-ce que la Nouvelle Typographie et que veut-elle?"[7] was the translation of the introduction to *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung* and was undoubtedly much more accessible to the French-speaking Godenne than the German original.

The question now is whether Léonard was stylistically influenced by the reading of Tschichold. In his oeuvre, which is exceptionally well preserved,[8] one can easily select a number of works that broadly conform to the precepts of the New Typography and express the same appetite for elegance, order, and balance as can be seen in Tschichold's work. For example, see an advertising card for the Établissements Plantin type foundry in Brussels. **(fig. 99)** The way the photograph's background was removed and the image integrated into an asymmetrical, white and open composition gives this design a certain Tschichold factor, in particular with the orange bullets and especially the small arrow composed of a bar and a triangle.

It is difficult to say whether all these choices were directly influenced by Tschichold. Perhaps Léonard used a book like *Die neue*

2 Tschichold wrote unequivocally that New Typography could only emerge when the graphic artist worked very closely with printing experts. Tschichold 1930.

3 The Antwerp printer Gustave Jos. Buschmann had greater name recognition than Godenne but was much more protectionist and conservationist. Artists interested in the printing profession were strictly advised to stay within their field. Buschmann 1934.

4 Part of the subject library was donated in 1959 to the Ghent Art Printing School by Jos Léonard's widow Maria Van de Ven and can be consulted today at the library of Artevelde Academy.

5 The reconstruction of the subject library shows that Jos Léonard was also very interested in Jan Tschichold's later writings: Tschichold 1942; Tschichold 1946; Tschichold 1951; Tschichold 1952.

6 Sabbe 1929.

7 Tschichold 1930.

8 In the oeuvre catalogue, I described no less than 1308 graphic designs. Van Haute 2009.

Typographie as a source of inspiration, but not as a manifesto or a handbook. He never used the well-known DIN formats, for example, although this could be due to the availability from Belgian paper suppliers.

In his book *Modern Typography and Layout* (1929), American Douglas Crawford McMurtrie (1888–1944) shows a very different Léonard. In the chapter "Typography and illustration", he reserved a full page for the designs with abstract illustrations by Studio Novio, that, as far as he was concerned, were a paragon of modernity.[9] The book, which is considered an early American interpretation of *Die neue Typographie*, deviates from Tschichold's teachings here, and the author is aware of this. In this chapter, he argues that illustration had not yet been written off and could be as modern as photography in terms of efficiency and expressiveness.

It does not seem too far-fetched to assume that Léonard was aware of the New Typography and had seen European Modernist examples, and that this awareness might have been filtered through an Americanised interpretation. McMurtrie gave Léonard the recognition he had not received from Tschichold and, moreover, mentioned his name in the preface. There, the Belgian was in good company with the pioneers of modern graphic design. Following the example of Jan Tschichold, McMurtrie attached great importance to foreign contacts, whom he listed one by one.[10] The series of names largely overlaps with Tschichold's list and is roughly repeated by Herbert Spencer's *Pioneers of Modern Typography* (1969).[11] Since then, several authors have tried to move away from this canon of the same designs over and over again in a certain coherent historical logic. However, as the design historian Robin Kinross rightly noted, it is far from obvious for a researcher to escape from this, as the material available to the design historian is extremely limited.[12]

Moreover, the genesis of modern graphic design will remain incomplete until it is supplemented by a story from the point of view of printers, typesetters and typographers, for it was ultimately these craftsmen who – mostly anonymously – introduced modern graphic design into everyday life.

Grafiek: Belgian Magazine for First-Generation Graphic Designers

This is why *Grafiek* magazine is such an interesting research object. It was published by the alumni union of the Kunstdrukschool Onze-Lieve-Vrouw (KOLV, Art Printing School in Ghent),[13] the oldest Dutch-language course for a new profession called "art printer" at the time. The school started back in 1926 as a department of Sint-Lukas (Saint Luke) Art School, with a handful of students guided by a few Ghent graphic craftsmen and four friars. These friars, who initially had very little experience with printing, were given the task to start a new department. The main goal was to bind the new working group of graphic designers to the Catholic school.

Grafiek appeared with steady regularity for no fewer than sixty-four years (from 1936 to 2000) and houses an interesting amount of ephemeral printed matter that would have been irretrievably lost under normal circumstances. Thanks to the many designs pasted by hand in

9 McMurtrie and Gress 1929: 159.

10 "Prof. Willi Baumeister, Herbert Bayer, Dr Walter Dexel, Franz W. Seiwert, and Kurt Schwitters in Germany, El Lissitsky in Russia, Karel Teige in Czechoslovakia, Maximilien Vox, Theodore van Doesburg, and Tristan Tzara in France, Jos Léonard in Belgium, and Piet Zwart in Holland". *Ibid.*: 21.

11 Spencer 1969.

12 Kinross 1992: 49.

13 KOLV merged in 2000 with Artevelde University of Applied Sciences.

the magazine, we are well informed about the kind of design taught at this school. The course focused on ephemeral printing rather than book design.

The school's magazine distinguished itself from Belgian printing magazines such as *La Chronique Graphique* or *Graphica* because the editors did more than just show printed matter of excellent standard or report on the latest technological gadgets in the printing world. The magazine also wanted to theoretically educate its readers, mainly students and former students.

In the words of Tschichold, these graphic designers belonged both to the field of printers and the art world. Indeed, in addition to technical training as a printer, students at the KOLV received an artistic education, which is not surprising since the school originally started as a graduation course of an art college.

In the early years, there was little in-house expertise, which motivated the management to do expeditions abroad and invest in subscriptions to international trade magazines. The countries they had in mind were the Netherlands and Germany[14] – and this was no coincidence. As convinced Flamingants,[15] the brothers deliberately sought a connection with Germanic culture and wanted to stop centuries of French influence in printing. From the first volume of 1936 on, the ephemeral *Grafiek* designs were often purely typographic and asymmetrical. Unlike the typical painterly French Art Déco examples, that were usually based on drawings, the designers of the KOLV often used white space in their layout, which made their designs white and light. Sometimes their typography consisted only of lower cases, a fashion promoted at the Bauhaus that was also adopted by Dutchman, Piet Zwart.

It has yet to be seen whether the Bauhaus printing or Piet Zwart's designs served as examples. Much more likely, the Ghent designers were inspired by the advertising printing of the Brussels Établissements Plantin type foundry, the Brussels subsidiary of the Dutch Lettergieterij Amsterdam type foundry. *Grafiek* sometimes gives the impression of being Plantin's advertising magazine, as it paid so much attention to their latest fonts and printing machines. Through their close collaboration with Plantin, *Grafiek*'s editors soon came into contact with Léonard, who had been heading Studio Plantin since 1932. His job was to design printing models to demonstrate to printers in Belgium how they could design in a contemporary way using fonts of Dutch origin. **(fig. 100)** Moreover, when *Grafiek* chose to work with Plantin's Dutch typefaces, this choice presupposed a long-term commitment, as their typefaces could only fit on the in-house machines. Therefore, together with the typefaces and machines, a certain sense of form was also imported from the Netherlands in the long term, albeit filtered through Léonard. His influence on the school's artistic orientation probably extends much farther.

Traces of Jan Tschichold in *Grafiek*

A crucial question is whether the KOLV in Ghent was familiar with Tschichold's New Typography. I suppose that the school would not have been aware of his publications until *Typografische Vormgeving* (Typographic Design, 1938), the Dutch translation of *Typographische Gestaltung*, was published.[16] In principle, the teach-

14 The first headmaster Alfons Frans De Schepper (Brother Denis) undertook a study trip to Cologne, Mainz and Frankfurt. Wouters 2013: 130. Some magazine subscriptions date back to the school's founding: *Deutscher Drucker* and *De Tampon*.

15 Flamingantism is the movement in Flanders (the Dutch-speaking part in northern Belgium) that opposes the dominance of French. Flemish nationalism works for an independent Flanders.

16 Tschichold 1938; Tschichold 1935.



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fig. 99 Advertising sheet for the Établissements Plantin type foundry in Brussels, graphic design by Jos Léonard, after 1933.

fig. 100 Sample printed matter for the Établissements Platin type foundry in Brussels for the launch of the Succès typeface, graphic design by Jos Léonard, 1929. Published in McMurtrie and Gress 1929, p. 159.



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fig. 101 Wedding announcement for Willem Nijst and Elly Vredenborg, design by Jan Tschichold, from his book *Typografische Vormgeving*, featured on *Grafiek* magazine, 18, 1945. Note the misspelling of the author's name.

fig. 102 Page from *Grafiek* magazine, 10, 1940.

ers could have been introduced to his ideas much earlier, through their subscription to *Deutscher Drucker*, which published a short article by the German guru, "Wege ins Neuland der Typographie" (Exploring New Typographic Territory), in 1932.[17] It was written in a not-too-accessible German, in the stilted yet down-to-earth writing style that characterised Tschichold. Since the author kept the argument purely theoretical and gave no practical guidelines in this article, it likely did not have too great an impact on the teachers at the KOLV.

The curious thing is that the teachers' opinion of Tschichold's book *Typografische Vormgeving* changed completely in a few years. It evolved from indifferent and disapproving to curious and sceptical and finally fully positive. What can explain this curious history of perception? Looking back to the school's early days, Willy Schoon explained that the teachers at the time were "not yet ripe" for someone like Jan Tschichold, because they had not been able to develop sufficiently under French oppression.[18] Someone from the outside must therefore have stimulated a progressive understanding of Tschichold, and it seems very likely that this was Léonard. He had become an important authority, not only as the designer of Studio Plantin but also in his position as inspector of technical education since the mid-1930s.

Let me support this assertion with some notable passages from *Grafiek* written by teacher Jan Peeters (also called "brother Zephirijn"). In 1940, Peeters first mentioned the book *Typografische Vormgeving*. He called it "hopeless" and did not waste any further words on it.[19] This is odd, to say the least, since Peeters's texts have quite a lot in common with Tschichold's book. Like Tschichold, he reasoned that the graphic designer possessed artistic freedom once they had turned their back on the time-honoured symmetrical composition scheme. Unlike the symmetrical layout, where the leaf arrangement is already largely fixed, the choice of an asymmetrical composition implies greater input from the designer. In this case, the arrangement possibilities are legion, and it was no longer possible to set the print without prior design. This is why Peeters attached great importance to drawing and called the pencil the graphic designer's most important tool. This pencil almost became a trophy, the proof that graphic design belongs to an art school. The same reasoning can be found in Tschichold's *Typografische Vormgeving*.[20]

In the same book, Tschichold nuanced his earlier criticism of the central axis rule trap. His famous turn towards tradition had already begun. As a result, the gap between the leftist Marxist Constructivist and the Catholic brothers of the KOLV was minimised. After all, the school had never radically broken with the past, as it was under the influence of the anti-modern neo-Gothic spirit of the mother school, Sint-Lukas. This manifested itself, among other things, in Peeters's attitude towards centred symmetrical leaf arrangements. This had been handed down from the history of book design and could therefore be used for a "distinguished" message.

Tschichold and Peeters also seemed to agree on their views on typography. Both showed a keen interest in typeface history and praised modern sans serifs without rejecting historical typefaces. When using multiple typefaces, both felt it was important for the graphic designer to opt for the most contrasting combination possible.

17 Tschichold 1932b: 432–434.
18 Schoon 1945.
19 Peeters 1940.
20 Tschichold 1938: 58. Tschichold previously devoted an entire publication to pencil sketching: Tschichold 1932a.

A significant detail in this context is the vocabulary used by both authors. Peeters talks about *mengen*, the verb "mix" in Dutch, while the verb *combineren* (combine) would have been more obvious. It seems he copied the mistake by Charles Nypels made while translating the German *mischen*, which was frequently used by Tschichold in his book.[21]

After the war, Peeters was much more positive in his assessment of *Typografische Vormgeving*, which he now called "a neat little book".[22] In his opinion, it contained many ground-breaking designs that served as examples, but sometimes Tschichold exaggerated, for instance in the design of the wedding announcement for Willem Nijst and Elly Vredenborg. **(fig. 101)** It is difficult for contemporary eyes to understand what exactly annoyed Peeters. The little design is very sober, which was a key criterion in *Grafiek*, it is unadorned and gives predominance to white space. It also combines the typical combination, for Tschichold, of a sans serif with a script; a letter combination that one also encounters occasionally in *Grafiek*.

The question remains: what was so odious about this little innocent design? How did it differ from the style in *Grafiek*? Peeters probably did not find it "distinguished" or "grand" enough – adjectives he often used to express his appreciation. Anyone paying attention will immediately see it: in Tschichold's wedding card, there is not a single element that rises above the whole; all the graphic elements are secondary to each other. In other words, there is little hierarchy in this design. And this, Peeters probably thought, was inappropriate, especially for the announcement of a marriage, which is after all an important sacrament in the Catholic Church. The preference for hierarchy partly shaped the look of modern graphic design at the KOLV in Ghent, which should not be so surprising, as it mirrored the strict hierarchy in the Brotherhood School.[23] In their designs, hierarchical ordering was dominant. **(fig. 102)** This makes their layouts so different from Tschichold's graphic design from the 1930s, in which a principle of equality is visible. Stylistically, Tschichold had been a model, but his leftist ideology could hardly match the Catholicism of the Flamingants nationalist friars. This ideological contradiction may explain the earlier emotional reactions to *Typografische Vormgeving*.

The next issue of *Grafiek* contained a curious erratum.[24] The editors wrote that the "highly respected" Chief Inspector Jos Léonard had pointed out to them that Peeters had misspelt the name Tschichold. Since then, there had been no trace of criticism in *Grafiek*. Léonard had probably pointed out to them not only a spelling error but also a misjudgement of Tschichold's historical importance.

The young Tschichold may have been ideologically miles away from the KOLV, but the older Tschichold, who was more politically neutral and more connected to tradition, was welcomed with open arms. As librarian, the once critical Peeters bought another four Tschichold publications in the decades that followed.[25] His booklet in Dutch, *Letterkennis* (Letter Knowledge), inspired Peeters to publish a booklet a few years later with a near-identical title: *Letterkennis en Letterkeus* (Letter Knowledge and Letter Choice),[26] an initiative that had

21 Huib van Krimpen did not think the Dutch translation by Charles Nypels of Tschichold's (Tschichold 1938) text was too good. Van Krimpen 1976: 242–243.
22 Peeters 1945.
23 Wouters 2013: 32–38.
24 *Grafiek* 1945.
25 Tschichold 1948; Tschichold 1949; Tschichold 1955; Tschichold 1975.
26 Peeters 1956.

been encouraged by Léonard, as can be read in the acknowledgements. He had also been closely involved in the editing and perhaps the design as well.

The design of *Letterkennis en Letterkeus* appears to pay homage to Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie*. The size of the book, the thickness of the straight spine with pinch, the edge painting on the top of the book and the linen binding give Peeters's book a similar feel when held in hand. **(fig. 103)** Furthermore, both books are equally embedded in a particular ideology, which can be subtly seen in the colour of the endpapers. As a Constructivist, Jan Tschichold chose an all-black flyleaf opposite the title page. Kinross wonders if this black was there to draw attention to the typography of the title page and to emphasise the absence of ornamentation.[27] The black could also be a reference to Malevich's black square. Whatever the case, that black page was a statement. A similar black page can be seen at the beginning of Peeters's book, only the page opposite, the flyleaf, was not white like Tschichold's, but yellow. This yellow page can also be seen as a statement because, when paired with black, it recreates the colours of the Flemish Movement's battle flag.

Conclusion

In Belgium, even before World War II, the New Typography seeped into the practice of Léonard, the pioneer of professional graphic design. From Brussels, he taught the client-printers at the Établissements Plantin how to put the New Typography into practice. Through his connection with the KOLV in Ghent, Tschichold's visions also reached Catholic Flanders, where they were often adapted with a local twist.

27 Kinross 2006: xxvi.



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fig. 103 Blue linen binding, black pastedown, yellow flyleaf and half-title page of the book *Letterkennis en Letterkeus* by Jan Peeters (KOLV, Ghent 1956). Photo by Niccolò Quaresima

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Connecting Scandinavia and *Die neue Typographie*

Trond Klevgaard

Multiple connections between Jan Tschichold (1902–1974), his ideas of the New Typography, and Scandinavia have been documented. The 1925 special issue of *Typographische Mitteilungen* on elementary typography had significant impact on Scandinavian printing practice, albeit in forms adapted to the abilities, needs and preferences of compositors and master printers. Following a lecture visit to Copenhagen, Tschichold's 1935 book *Typographische Gestaltung* appeared in both Danish and Swedish translations. These books became important references in Scandinavian typography for the remainder of the decade. Scandinavian avant-garde groups and individuals also used the New Typography for their publications, but spent less time discussing its merits.[1] However, little has been written about *Die neue Typographie*'s impact on Scandinavia – or indeed about Scandinavia's impact on *Die neue Typographie*. For some, there must have been. Tschichold included the Danes Harald Landt Momberg (1896–1975), along with Torben Hansen (dates unknown) "and others" in his list of artists producing "new work" in the typographic field.[2] He also listed Momberg's pamphlet *Aktiv Reklame: Nye Principer i Annonceringens Kunst* (Active Advertising: New Principles in the Art of Advertising) (1924) in *Die neue Typographie*'s bibliography.[3] To investigate these connections, the following will first discuss *Aktiv Reklame* and its importance for *Die neue Typographie*, before examining *Die neue Typographie*'s impact on Scandinavian typography. In so doing, I will focus on Tschichold's book as an object, attempting to keep it distinct from the New Typography as a whole. To avoid confusion, I will refer to the book as *Die neue Typographie* and the movement as the New Typography.

Connecting Scandinavia to *Die neue Typographie*: The New Student Society

As mentioned above, the names Harald Landt Momberg, Torben Hansen "and others" appeared in *Die neue Typographie*. The "and others" acknowledged that Momberg and Hansen were members of a group known as "Det Ny Studentersamfund" (The New Student Society). Formed in 1922 as a communist alternative to the University of Copenhagen's existing student society, it issued publications on art, poetry, and politics. In addition to *Aktiv Reklame*, these included *Pressen* (Press), the weekly newspaper founded in response to a major scandal surrounding the collapse of Denmark's largest bank, Landmandsbanken (Farmers' Bank). Hansen served as editor-in-chief. **(fig. 104)**

Aktiv Reklame was a small sixteen-page booklet with a yellow cardboard cover. The front cover featured an asymmetrical composition where bold sans serif types were supported

1 Klevgaard 2020.
2 Tschichold 2006 (1928): 60.
3 *Ibid.*: 230.

by typographic rules to create geometric effects. A large black square was used as a *Blickfang*, or "eye-catcher". The back cover contained a small photograph of the author posing in front of Expressionist paintings, seemingly taken in Det Ny Studentersamfund's premises.[4] The interior pages contained the text set in a single column of justified roman types. Headings were set in bold and aligned right, most of them arranged over two lines justified to create rectangles. Twelve black-and-white illustrations, the majority from *Pressen*, were inserted directly into the text at appropriate places. These illustrations showed a front page, a flyer, a headline, and various typographic advertisements. **(fig. 105)** *Aktiv Reklame* was also published as two instalments in *Pressen*.[5] The instalments reveal that the design of Aktiv Reklame's text pages was derived from the newspaper, where it seamlessly filled two of five columns.

Although the subtitle *New Principles in the Art of Advertising* makes *Aktiv Reklame* sound like an advertising primer, it can more accurately be described as an essay on how Det Ny Studentersamfund reconciled advertising with their communist beliefs, and how Pressen's design formed part of a larger artistic and political project aligned to Constructivism. Although it may seem strange that a communist newspaper would accept paid advertisements, the following will explain that the unusual aspect of Momberg and Det Ny Studentersamfund's stance was not their willingness to engage in this practice. Rather, it was the manner in which they problematised it, and established an ethical framework adapted to their surroundings, balancing the pragmatic with the ideological. To appreciate the contribution, a short description of the wider context may be in order.

The relationship between advertising and Constructivism was first established in the Soviet Union during the years of the New Economic Policy (1921–1928). Conceived as a response to the failure of war communism's (1918–1921) radical economic policies, the New Economic Policy temporarily reintroduced elements of capitalism into the Soviet economy. The purpose was to rebuild the country's industrial base, thereby laying the foundations for a communist industrial state. The state retained ownership of most large factories and continued to control large-scale industry, but private trade and manufacture was allowed to assume a supporting role.[6] It was in this context that Constructivists Aleksandr Rodchenko (1891–1956) and Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893–1930), working under the name *Reklam-Konstruktor* (Advertising Constructor), created numerous advertisements for state manufacturers and distributors like Rezinotrest and Mosselprom. Because they were created in support of state industry, such advertisements could be considered a form of political agitation, as Mayakovsky explained in the manifesto "Agitation and Advertising" (1923).[7] Elsewhere, in Eastern and Central Europe, advertising continued to serve commercial interests as part of capitalist economies. The New Typographers in these countries nevertheless pursued advertising with considerable enthusiasm. This is surprising, as Paul Stirton notes, given that many of them were "leftist" to the point of anti-capitalist radicalism".[8] Although it has been suggested that the need to make money may have played a role, it seems the motivation to design for advertising was primarily ideological.[9]

4 Judging by an image of Hansen with a similar background, published in *Pressen*, 27, 1924.
5 Momberg 1924a and Momberg 1924b.
6 Kiaer 2008: 17–28.
7 Margolin 1997: 113–115.
8 Stirton 2019: 130.
9 Aynsley 2015: 374–379.

For Det Ny Studentersamfund, the decision to accept advertisements in *Pressen* was nevertheless partially motivated by the need to generate revenue. However, Momberg denied that they were somehow "selling themselves" in doing so.[10] **(fig. 106)** To ensure ethical practice, ground rules were established. *Pressen* refused advertisements from large companies, whose owners controlled the nation's capital. According to Momberg, these were false advertisers who were not primarily interested in selling products, but in controlling a newspaper's editorial line.[11] They were also involved in the Farmers' Bank scandal and its subsequent cover-up, which *Pressen* sought to expose. Advertisements for products considered harmful, like alcohol, were also refused.[12] Conversely, *Pressen* was happy to support the so-called genuine advertisers, honourable and modern manufacturers and retailers of useful things.[13] Informing the public about "better products, technical innovations or completely new inventions" was a positive act, Momberg implied.[14] *Pressen* also operated a so-called mutual guarantee of benefit to both reader and advertiser. If a reader could prove one of *Pressen*'s advertisements was dishonest, it would immediately be discontinued. According to Momberg, this also benefited advertisers, because readers placed their custom with companies they could trust.[15]

Pressen's design formed part of an artistic and political project which was aligned to Constructivism and in contrast to the disorder of the time.[16] Central to this work was the Advertising Laboratory, where artists working under Ove Johannsen's (1902–1951) leadership created compositions which demanded attention through an "intensive" and modern use of typographic material.[17] Instead of being placed together at the back page of the newspaper, as was the norm elsewhere, *Pressen*'s advertisements were integrated into its text columns and spread throughout the publication. Ads, headlines, and articles were all pieces of a "typographic work of art" resulting from a "harmonious typographic plan".[18] Distributing publicity throughout the newspaper was an egalitarian as well as an artistic measure. Because they did not compete for attention, Momberg argued, they were more likely to be read regardless of their placement. Wealthy advertisers could not pay more to have their advertisements in the most prominent positions. It was also the result of what Momberg claimed was "the most important new principle in *Pressen*'s advertising programme", namely "to give the advert equal rights to the [news] article".[19] Not only were advertising and journalism to be treated equally, Momberg credited Johannsen and *Pressen* with pioneering the use of two hybrid "persuasive" and "eye-catching"[20] forms in Denmark, labelled "typographic journalism" and "journalistic advertisement" respectively. Typographic journalism put editorial content into publicity form. Journalistic advertising was not as clearly defined, but seems associated with the truth value placed on *Pressen*'s adverts.

Det Ny Studentersamfund international orientation was displayed on *Aktiv Reklame*'s title page, with three places of publication: Copenhagen, Kristiania, and Berlin. These lo-

10 Momberg 1924c: 7.
11 *Ibid.*: 3–4.
12 *Ibid.*: 14.
13 *Ibid.*: 4–5, 8.
14 "Bedre Varer, tekniske Fremskridt eller helt nye Opfindelser". *Ibid.*: 5.
15 *Ibid.*: 13–14.
16 *Ibid.*: 7.
17 "intensiv", Momberg 1924c: 9.
18 "typografisk Kunstværk", "harmonisk typografisk Plan". *Ibid.*: 9.
19 "Det vigtigste nye Princip i Pressens Annonceprogram er at give Annoncen lige Ret med Artiklen", *Ibid.*: 9.
20 "overbevisende", "iøjnefaldende". *Ibid.*: 8–9.



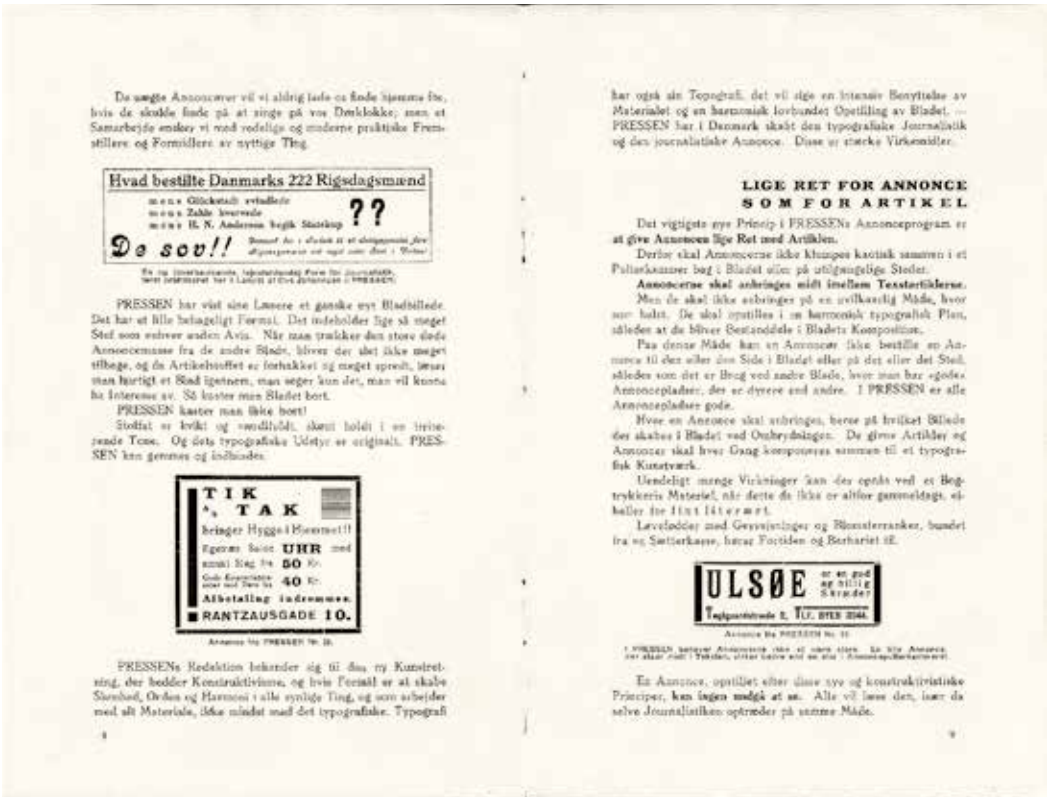
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fig. 104 Front cover of the book by Harald Landt Momberg, *Aktiv Reklame* (Active Advertising), DNSS (Det Ny Studentersamfunds Forlag), Copenhagen 1924.
Photo by Trond Klevgaard

fig. 105 Advertisement of the second part of *Aktiv Reklame* (top right), from the pages of *Pressen*, 33, 19 April 1924, designer unknown.
Photo by Trond Klevgaard



Da uægte Annoncører vil vi aldrig lade os finde hjemme for, hvis de skulde finde på at ringe på vor Dørklokke; men et Samarbejde ønskes vi med vedelige og moderne praktiske Fremstillere og Formidlere av nyttige Ting.

Hvad bestilte Danmarks 222 Rigsdagsmænd

mens Glückstadt svindlede
mens Zahle hvervede
mens H. N. Andersen begik Statskup

??

De sov!!

PRESSEN har vist sine Læsere et ganske nyt Bladstillede. Det har et lille behageligt Format. Det indeholder lige så meget Stof som enhver anden Avis. Når man trækker den store døde Annoncemasse fra de andre Blade, bliver der slet ikke meget tilbage, og da Artikelstoffet er forbavsket og meget spredt, læses man hurtigt et Blad igennem, man søger kun det, man vil kunne ha Interesse av. Så kaster man Bladet bort.

PRESSEN kaster man ikke bort!

Stoffet er kvikt og vedholdt, skønt holdt i en livtsyende Tone. Og dets typografiske Udstyr er originalt. PRESSEN kan gennem og indbinden.

TIK TAK
bringer Hygge i Hjemmet!!
Egentlig Salg UHR med
normal Rig fra 50 Kr.
Gode Kronometre 40 Kr.
Afbetaling indrømmes.
RANTZAUSGADE 10.

PRESSENs Redaktion bekender sig til den ny Kunstretning, der bedder Konstruktivisme, og hvis Formål er at skabe Skønhed, Orden og Harmoni i alle synlige Ting, og som arbejder med alt Materiale, ikke mindst med det typografiske. Typografi har også sin Typografi, det vil sige en intensiv Benyttelse av Materialet og en harmonisk forbundet Opstilling av Bladet. — PRESSEN har i Danmark skabt den typografiske Journalistik og den journalistiske Annonce. Disse er stærke Virkemidler.

LIGE RET FOR ANNONCE SOM FOR ARTIKEL

Det vigtigste nye Princip i PRESSENs Annonceprogram er **at give Annoncen lige Ret med Artiklen.**

Derfor skal Annoncerne ikke klumpes kaotisk sammen i et Pulterkammer bag i Bladet eller på utilgængelige Steder.

Annoncerne skal anbringes midt imellem Tekstartiklerne.

Men de skal ikke anbringes på en vilkaarlig Måde, hvor som helst. De skal opstilles i en harmonisk typografisk Plan, således at de bliver Bestanddele i Bladets Komposition.

Paa denne Måde kan en Annoncør ikke bestille en Annonce til den eller den Side i Bladet eller på det eller det Sted, således som det er Brug ved andre Blade, hvor man har «gode» Annoncepladser, der er dyrere end andre. I PRESSEN er alle Annoncepladser gode.

Hvor en Annonce skal anbringes, heroe på hvilket Billede der skabes i Bladet ved Ombrydningen. De gives Artikler og Annoncer skal hver Gang komponeres sammen til et typografisk Kunstværk.

Uendeligt mange Vanskeligheder kan der opstå ved et Bogtrykkeris Materiel, når dette da ikke er alfor gammeldags, eballer for lidt Interesse.

Løvelodder med Gevejninger og Skønsterranker, bundet fra og Sætterkasse, hvor Fortiden og Barbariet tilbage.

ULSØE er en god og billig Skrædder
Teglgaardsvejen 2, Tlf. BYEN 3044.

En Annonce, opstillet efter disse nye og konstruktivistiske Principer, **kan ingen undgå at se.** Alle vil læse den, især da selve Journalistiken optræder på samme Måde.

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fig. 106 Advertisements in the book *Aktiv Reklame*, 1924,
on the top left a "journalistic advertisement" (designer unknown)
from *Pressen* magazine.
Photo by Fotografisk Atelier, Royal Danish Library

cations likely did not refer to branches of the organisation itself, but reflected connections to the socialist *Mot Dag* (Towards Better Times) group in Kristiania and Herwarth Walden's (1879–1941) *Der Sturm* (The Storm) magazine in Berlin. Although *Aktiv Reklame* does not have a bibliography, a familiarity with El Lissitzky's (1890–1941) "Topography of Typography" (1924), recently published in Kurt Schwitters' (1887–1948) *Merz* journal, transpired from the text.[21] How Tschichold came to learn about *Aktiv Reklame*, Momberg and Torben Hansen is an open question. It is possible that Momberg, Hansen, or other members of Det Ny Studentersamfund sent him copies, as they did to other like-minded people.[22] After all, Tschichold concluded his special issue on elementary typography by asking "all friends of the New Typography" to send him new and relevant material.[23] Tschichold, who lived in Berlin during the first half of 1926, may also have encountered The New Student Society's publications at *Der Sturm*.[24] Rudolf Broby-Johansen's (1900–1987) provocative poetry collection Blod (Blood) (1922), banned in Denmark for indecency, could certainly be purchased there.

A comparison between *Aktiv Reklame* and *Die neue Typographie* shows some stylistic similarities. The preference for sans serif typefaces and asymmetrical arrangements demonstrated by *Aktiv Reklame*'s cover is expressed throughout *Die neue Typographie*. Tschichold would have approved the Danish publication's use of coloured cardboard to increase optical intensity. Moreover, Momberg and Tschichold agreed that advertising relied on strong contrasts created by every possible means, although Tschichold in 1928 would have judged *Aktiv Reklame*'s eye-catcher to belong to a past stage of the New Typography's development.[26] In terms of content, there are some important differences between the two publications. *Aktiv Reklame* is overtly communist and deeply concerned with advertising's role in society. *Die neue Typographie*'s political stance is less clear and more focused on how to solve various typographic problems, the majority being items of commercial jobbing print. As Christopher Burke has drawn attention to, Tschichold's book was criticised by left-wing commentators for precisely this reason. Reviews in the German Communist Party (KPD) newspaper *Die Rote Fahne* (The Red Flag) and the *Bauhaus* journal reproached Tschichold for a formalist approach to advertising, which ignored both the problems associated with its relationship to capitalism and its potential as a means of political propaganda.[27] There were also differences in the two publications' typographic recommendations. Tschichold recommended that advertisements in newspapers should be grouped and set in a single typeface, in direct contradiction to Momberg's ideas.[28] However, both texts attempted to define the place and expression of typographic advertising as part of a New World View.

21 Momberg wrote: "Typografi har også sin Topografi" (Typography also has its topography). *Ibid.*: 8–9.
22 Klevgaard 2020: 31–32.
23 "Alle Freunde neuer Typographie". Tschichold 1986 (1925): 214.
24 Burke 2007: 53.
25 Hansen 1923: n.p. (back page advertisement).
26 Tschichold 2006 (1928): 156, 178.
27 Burke 2007: 80–81.
28 Tschichold 2006 (1928): 199.

Connecting *Die neue Typographie* to Scandinavia: Reviews, Traces and Translations

In his introduction to the English-language edition of *Die neue Typographie*, Robin Kinross writes that the initial reception in Germany was "quiet" compared to the heated debate which followed the special issue

on elementary typography.[29] The situation was similar in Scandinavia. The Danish master printer Carl Volmer Nordlunde (1888–1970), a well-placed observer, later claimed that Tschichold's book "did not mean a great deal for the development of elementary typography" in Denmark, because domestic debate had already reached maturity.[30] There may be some truth to this. Scandinavian debate on elementary typography started when Swedish master printer Hugo Lagerström, spurred on by the appearance of German type samples set in the New Typography, published a 1927 article containing a translation of Tschichold's ten-point manifesto and "some words of warning".[31] By the time *Die neue Typographie* was published in June 1928, debate was at full force and increasingly informed by interpretations of Functionalism emanating from the forthcoming Stockholm Exhibition 1930.[32] Other factors also limited *Die neue Typographie*'s impact, including language and availability. Whilst close connections existed between the German and Scandinavian printing trades, knowledge of German was not commonplace, thus limiting Tschichold's readership. Getting hold of the book was not easy either, as it was sold out by 1931. Even so, several traces of *Die neue Typographie* can be found in Scandinavia.

Reviews were published in three journals, the Danish Society of Arts and Crafts' journal *Nyt Tidsskrift for Kunstindustri* (New Journal of Industrial Art), the master printer Arthur Nelson's (1878–1957) journal *Norsk Trykk* (Norwegian Printing), and the avant-garde journal *Monde*, published by figures previously associated with Det Ny Studentersamfund. The review in *Nyt Tidsskrift for Kunstindustri*, authored by Erik Zahle (1898–1969), appeared shortly after *Die neue Typographie*'s publication. The other two appeared a little over a year later.[33] Zahle's review was also the longest and most critical of the three. Although sympathetic towards the chapters on standardisation and photography, Zahle was unconvinced by how Tschichold had derived his principles from modern painting. He therefore predicted the New Typography would have a limited lifespan. In Zahle's view, psychotechnology offered a more promising path towards purposeful typographic arrangements. While drawing attention to *Die neue Typographie*'s "comprehensive, international bibliography of writings on 'The New Typography'", Zahle failed to mention Hansen, Momberg or *Aktiv Reklame*.[34] This curious omission may have been motivated by an antipathy towards Det Ny Studentersamfund.[35] Despite his reservations, Zahle recommended the book, as did the anonymous reviewers in *Norsk Trykk* and *Monde*. *Norsk Trykk* considered *Die neue Typographie* a "personally felt work" which showcased Tschichold's superb typographic skill and individuality,[36] whilst *Monde*'s brief but glowing review concluded that the book should be read by "every modern-minded person, but above all those who have to do with typography. They will not recognise themselves after reading".[37]

Although *Die neue Typographie* was only once reviewed by a Scandinavian printing journal, its traces can be found in trade literature. These include passing mentions, quotes, as well as the use, or adaptation, of images or content from *Die neue Ty-*

29 Kinross 2006: xviii–xix.
30 "betød ikke stort for Udviklingen af den elementære Typografi". Nordlunde 1940: 111.
31 "några varningsord", Lagerström 1927.
32 Klevgaard 2020: 54–63, 137–174.
33 In August and November 1929, respectively.
34 "udførlig, international Bibliografi over Skrifter om 'den ny Typografi'", Zahle 1928: 185.
35 Zahle's father, Carl Theodor Zahle (1866–1946), was a social liberal politician who served both as prime minister and justice minister in Denmark. He was also one of *Pressen*'s main targets.
36 "personlig følt arbeide", *Norsk Trykk* 1929: 77.
37 "ethvert moderne indstilet meneske, men fremfor alt a folk der har med typografi at gøre. disse vil ikke kome til at kende sig selv efter læsningen", Monde 1929: 5.

pographie – often without credit. A prominent example of the latter can be found in the first issue of *Grafisk Revy* (Graphic Review), a journal modelled on *Typographische Mitteilunge*n and published by the three Scandinavian compositors' unions. While not adopting the same promotional stance as its German counterpart, the New Typography was an important topic for *Grafisk Revy*, as demonstrated by the article in question authored by editor Nils Wessel (1866–1940).[38] Albeit much condensed, it was clearly based on the first half of *Die neue Typographie*, particularly the chapters on the history of old typography and new typography, as well as that on the new art. In his adaptation of the text, Wessel sought to make the content relevant to his readership by inserting references to Swedish artists, like Isaac Grünewald (1889–1946) and Georg Pauli (1855–1935), in his discussion of the new art and mixing visual examples taken from Tschichold's book with those from German and Swedish printing trade sources.

As a piece of book design, *Die neue Typographie* was more than once held up as a bad example. Its use of sans serif was criticised on readability grounds and seen as an instance of how a blind adherence to theory could undermine its stated focus on function and ease of reading. The Swedish printer Bruno Zachrisson's (1890–1981) criticisms were perhaps the most sharp. He argued it was impossible to read more than a few pages of *Die neue Typographie* before the monotonous letterforms and the glossy paper made one's eyes hurt, and that although the examples reproduced were interesting, the text pages were themselves "incredibly boring and lifeless".[39] When Tschichold visited Copenhagen in 1935 and published *Typographische Gestaltung*, writers began discussing *Die neue Typographie again*, as a way of showing how Tschichold's views had changed to align more closely with those of the printing trade, particularly how the single-minded pursuit of the sans serif had given way to a system of type contrasts.

Die neue Typographie also played a role in education. The Copenhagen *Typografernes fagtekniske Samvirke* (The Compositors' Trade-technical Cooperative) offered a two-year evening course in Constructive Design, led by compositor Viktor Peterson (unknown–1945). According to one of the participants, translated versions of Tschichold's writings featured heavily on the course.[40] This included *Die neue Typographie*. To coincide with Tschichold's visit, Peterson had published translations of the chapters on *Die alte Typographie* (The Old Typography) and *Die neue Kunst* (The New Art) in the Cooperative's journal *Grafisk Teknik*.[41] **(fig. 107)** Although the translations were faithful, the images used to illustrate The New Art were not those discussed in Tschichold's text.[42] Whether these or other translations were part of the curriculum on the course cannot be verified, but to judge by the Cooperative's library catalogue it seems unlikely that the students engaged with *Die neue Typographie* directly. Contrary to *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung* (A Lesson in Printing Design, 1930), *Schriftschreiben für Setzer* (Lettering and Calligraphy for Typesetters, 1931), and *Typografische Entwurfstechnik* (Typographic Design Technique, 1932) it was not listed there.[43] A different kind of translation can be found in a print manual for young compositors authored by

38 Wessel 1930.
39 "ofantlig tråkigt och livlöst", Zachrisson, Brolin and Ericson 1929: 380.
40 Jensen 1936: 60.
41 Tschichold 1935a; 1935b; 1935c; 1935d; 1935e.
42 Many of the images had previously featured in the book series *Arbejderkunst* (Workers' Art) (1932–1934) and *Social Kunst* (Social Art) (1930–1932), edited by *Monde* member Harald Rue (1895–1957).
43 *Grafisk Teknik* 1935a; 1935b.

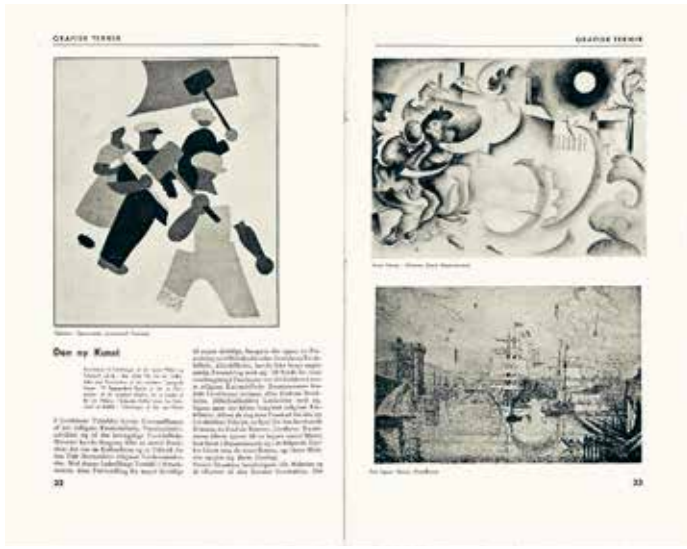
German-born Norwegian master printer Max Richard Kirste (1873–1948). Tschichold's Phoebus-Palast poster for *Iwan der Schreckliche* (Ivan the Terrible, 1927), which was reproduced in *Die neue Typographie*, informed the design of a "modern poster with asymmetric typesetting".[44] This was used as one half of a contrasting pair of typographic posters and was clearly intended as the exemplary of the two. The opposing axial composition was described as an "antiquated, less effective type arrangement".[45] In 1931 Stockholm, students at the Skolan för bokhantverk (School for Book Craft) could see several examples from *Die neue Typographie* in person, when Iwan Waloddi Fischerström (1906–1994), who had studied under Tschichold at the Master School for Germany's Book Printers, returned to his old school to arrange an exhibition of the Ring "Neue Werbegestalter" (Circle "New Advertising Designers"). **(fig. 108)**

Conclusion

To conclude, it seems that Tschichold, in writing *Die neue Typographie*, chiefly used *Aktiv Reklame* to expand the New Typography's geographic spread. It demonstrated that the New Typography had adherents in Denmark who could be added to the list of artists creating typographic work. Although this design may have reassured Tschichold that he was right to insist on sans serif typography and asymmetry, significant differences existed between *Aktiv Reklame*'s call for advertisements using typographic material in an "intensive" and modern way, whilst still forming part of a "harmonious typographic plan", and Tschichold's recommendations on how to arrange advertisements in a newspaper. In terms of content, *Aktiv Reklame* offered a political framework for advertising which, if used, may have fended off some of the criticism Tschichold received from the left. Although *Die neue Typographie* failed to dominate debate on the New Typography in Scandinavia, it was obviously read by German-speaking figures in the printing trade, some of whom used it for their own articles. Parts of the book, on the *Die alte Typographie* (The Old Typography) and *Die neue Kunst* (The New Art), also appeared in Danish translation. However, the chapter on *Die Grundbegriffe der Neuen Typographie* (The Principles of the New Typography) remained out of reach for those without the necessary language skills. Perhaps this material was thought to have already been covered through translations of other texts, like the elementary typography manifesto. Shorter texts like that were easier to translate and lent themselves more naturally to the trade journal format. It may also be that *Die neue Typographie*'s appearance made it less persuasive than it could have been in Scandinavia. The use of sans serif for running text was criticised and alienated readers like Carl Volmer Nordlunde, who described it as a propaganda text, rather than a textbook. So, although today it seems an iconic and unassailable manifestation of the New Typography, the importance of *Die neue Typographie* for Scandinavian printers was not as great as Tschichold's other publications, serving as a complementary text rather than a monolith.

44 "Moderne plakat med asymmetrisk sats". Kirste 1935: 81.

45 "Foreldet, mindre virkningsfullt satsarrangement", *Ibid.*: 80.



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fig. 107 "Den ny Kunst", Danish translation of the chapter on "Die neue Kunst" (The New Art) from Jan Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie* with alternate image selection, from the pages of *Grafisk Teknik* journal, designer unknown, 1935. Photo by Fotografisk Atelier, Royal Danish Library

fig. 108 Double page spread from the book by Max Richard Kirste, *Håndbok for unge settere. Annen del: aksidenssats* (Handbook for Young Typesetters. Part Two, Jobbing Printing) showing contrasting "past" and "modern" typographic posters, designer unknown, 1935. Photo by Trond Klevgaard

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Spanish Echoes of The New Typography

Andreu Balius

Spanish Avant-Garde in Context

Spain experienced a period of social and political changes during the first decades of the 20th century. After the colonial crisis caused by the Spanish-American War and the consequent loss of Cuba in 1898, Spain was involved in an ideological struggle between those who intended to recover the prestige of the extinguished Spanish "empire", and those who sought to build a national consciousness from a more modern and liberal perspective in the manner of other European nations. Different forms of government would alternate throughout the first half of the 20th century: the monarchy of King Alfonso XIII, the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera, the proclamation of the Second Republic, the Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship of General Franco.

In the artistic field, this was manifested in a debate between the traditionalists and the artists who embraced the new artistic movements from Europe. *Modernismo* was a local style, framed within the aesthetics of European Art Nouveau, which had a huge degree of acceptance by the flourishing bourgeoisie, especially in Catalonia, and covered all artistic areas, from fine arts and crafts practices to emerging commercial graphic art.

In Spain, although away from many currents of European intellectual life, the artistic avant-garde had its echo or equivalence. The neutrality of Spain in World War I favoured the arrival of artists such as Francis Picabia, Serge Charchoune, Arthur Cravan, Sonia and Robert Delaunay among others, who together with local artists such as Picasso, Dalí, Miró, Joan Salvat-Papasseit, Ramón Gómez de la Serna and Luis Buñuel contributed to the introduction of the new ideas of the avant-garde movements. These included Dadaism, Futurism, Cubism, Constructivism and Surrealism, in many different aesthetic forms. The tenets of the avant-garde were disseminated through the publication of magazines and literary meetings organised in cafes. Rather than an avant-garde movement, there were independent artists who were not necessarily connected, but embraced these new aesthetic ideas.

With the establishment of the Second Republic in 1931, intellectuals and artists took a more engaged political position. A debate opened about the role of the artist within a society in full transformation. The Second Republic meant a transformation and modernisation of the Spanish institutions, and Catalonia recovered its self-government. The ideas of modernity fit well in that moment of change within the country. Thus, many artists embraced and spread those ideas as an attitude in front of the nostalgic past – monarchy and dictatorship – in favour of the construction of a "New Spain". Nevertheless, political instability caused this enthusiasm to

be short-lived: the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) put an end to these airs of modernity and aesthetic freedom.

Modern Ideas in Typography

The establishment of the Republic encouraged the spread of new ideas in Spain. Some intellectuals and artists believed that the ideas of the avant-garde movements could modernise what they considered a backward country compared to other European nations. This aim for modernity and transformation was particularly reflected in architecture and design. The ability to influence design in all areas of the public sphere led to the appearance of a new aesthetics that had its origins in Central European trends.

According to the graphic designer Enric Satué, there were two main factors behind the qualitative change in graphic communication in Spain: first, the adoption of the new visual languages of typography and photography in the work of younger professionals, and second, the presence of foreign professionals fleeing from the rise of German nationalism.[1] Designers and commercial artists such as Josep Renau, Luis Seoane, Mauricio Amster, Mariano Rawicz, Enric Crous-Vidal, Karel Cerny, Pere Català Pic and Josep Sala, among others, contributed to the graphic aesthetics that shaped the modern image of Republican Spain.

Of course, the most radical aesthetic trends were not blindly accepted at the printing houses, but they influenced the general current of the moment and were widely accepted by a more socially committed audience. The use of photography, photo-collage, and photo-montage along with non-traditional typographic compositions, began to conquer the daily graphic language, from posters to book covers. But the most interesting examples can be found in advertising and magazine design. The idea of rationality was introduced into advertising by Pedro Prat Gaballí, who brought the scientific aspects of advertising through articles and books such as *Publicidad Racional* (Rational Advertising, 1934), which became one of the most rigorous advertising manuals published in Spain to date.

Magazine design assumed some of the aesthetic proposals derived from the New Typography principles. One of the most emblematic was *Gaceta de Arte*, an art magazine founded by Eduardo Westerdahl in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Islands, a province capital on the periphery of the country's important economic and cultural centres, in 1932. **(figs 109–110)** Westerdahl was one of the best internationally connected people on the Spanish scene of his time.[2] He had been stirred into publishing an art magazine by the cultural life of the cities he visited during a journey through Europe in the summer of 1931. On that trip, he visited the Bauhaus in Dessau. He also studied first-hand the works of the most outstanding artists and creators. Through the pages of the *Gaceta de Arte*, he disseminated the works of the main avant-garde artists and the ideas of Central European Rationalism. For instance, the header of the monthly magazine was designed using modular geometric elements that built up the letters of the magazine's name in the style of the Bauhaus stencil lettering system (Kombinations-Schrift) created by Josef Albers in 1926–1928, and in issue 37, Westerdahl praised Jan Tschichold's latest book, *Typogra-*

1 Satué 1997: 240.
2 Bonet 2017: 169.



Gaceta de Arte

4

tendencias evasivas de la arquitectura

1

2



A + a + A + a

a

franz roh. — münchen

por qué se escribe con minúscula ■

por qué cuatro alfabetos si todos se pronuncian de la misma manera (mayúsculas y minúsculas latinas, mayúsculas y minúsculas alemanas)? por qué construir cuatro claves distintas cuando cada una produce los mismos sonidos. qué pérdida de energía, paciencia, tiempo, dinero! qué complicación en máquinas de escribir, fundición de letras, cajetines tipográficos, máquinas tipográficas, correcciones, etc. por qué escribir substantivos con mayúscula si esto no es necesario en inglaterra, américa y francia? por qué señalar dos veces los principios de una frase (punto y mayúscula) en vez de tomar los puntos más gruesos? sobre todo, por qué escribir con mayúscula si no es posible hablar con mayúscula? por qué atormentar a los niños sobrecargándolos con cuatro alfabetos cuando falta en las escuelas el tiempo para materias de más importancia? solamente es difícil leer la minúscula mientras la gente no se acostumbre a ella. solamente es más estética la vieja manera de escribir para el tiempo pasado que reclamaba en la arquitectura los altibajos de tejados y torrecillas.
sería esta proposición purista? al contrario: nosotros pedimos un enriquecimiento de todos los movimientos reales de la vida, pero todas las cuatro claves expresan el mismo movimiento de vida.
y el sentimiento alemán de vida? necesitaba nuestra riqueza más original, la música alemana, producir una nación cuádruple?

■ publicado en foto-auge. franz roh y jan tschichold. ed. dr. wedekind & co, stuttgart.

109

110

fig. 109 Page 1 of the first issue of *Gaceta de Arte*, 1 February 1932.

fig. 110 Leaflet inserted in the first issue of *Gaceta de Arte*, 1 February 1932. The leaflet translates the text published in Franz Roh and Jan Tschichold's *Foto-Auge* (Wedekind, 1929) about the use of lower case.

phische Gestaltung (1935), as well as reviewed Tschichold and Roh's *Foto-Auge* (Photo-Eye, 1929).[3]

Westerdahl's interest in finding a new aesthetics for his magazine made him follow the guidelines set by Tschichold in his *Die neue Typographie*, such as the use of sans serif typefaces exclusively used in lower case. The four pages were designed employing a tabloid newspaper layout, where the text was arranged in four justified columns and typeset in a Roman font for the main text and Futura for the titles. A printed note included in the first issue of the magazine and justifying the use of lower-case letters demonstrated the direct influence of Tschichold's ideas. Perhaps because of the confusion it created for readers, capital letters started to be added in the January–February issue 23 (1934). Nevertheless, titles would continue to be typeset in lower case Futura Bold only. From issue number 27 (June 1934), Futura would be used for the main text too.[4]

Another magazine that followed rational aesthetic guidelines was *A.C. Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea*, an architecture and urbanism magazine edited in Barcelona by the GATEPAC group (Grupo de Artistas y Técnicos Españoles para el Progreso de la Arquitectura Contemporánea, or Group of Spanish Artists and Technicians for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture) between 1931 and 1937. **(fig. 111)** The magazine was directed by the architects José Luis Sert and Josep Torres Clavé and became a catalyst of Spanish and Catalan avant-garde architecture. Through articles on architecture, art, cinema, photography and design they intended to provide a unitary vision of the latest developments.

The layout was based on a squared format following a grid adapted to the same square. The text was laid out using a simple column grid with a fully justified composition and the exclusive use of Futura typeface in most issues. The overall design was inspired by that of *Das neue Frankfurt* magazine (1926–1933), used as a reference.

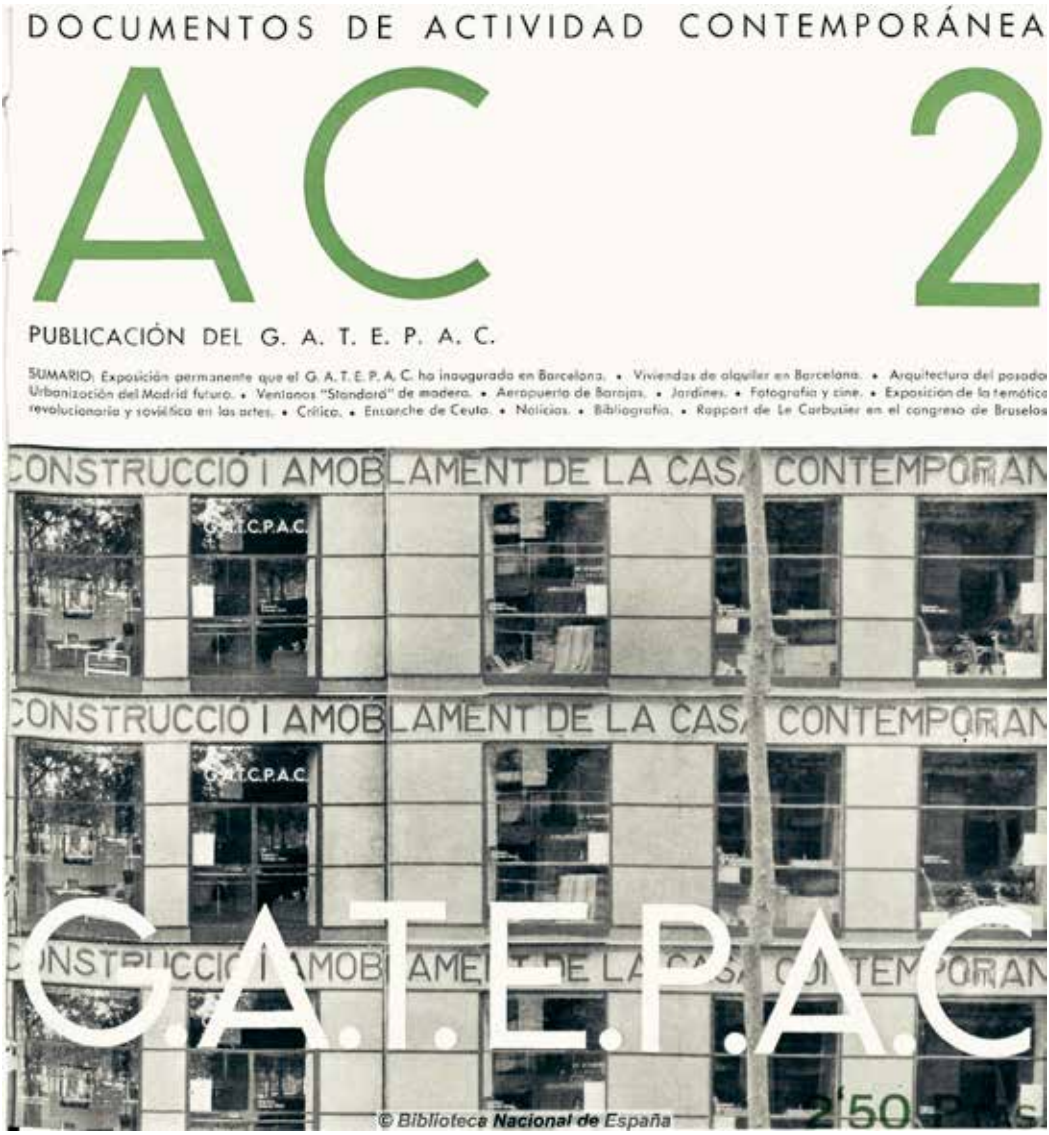
A.C. served as a platform for the expression and dissemination of Rational modern architecture and other concerns of the GATEPAC group. It paid special attention to the socio-cultural dimension of architecture and urbanism. For Juan Manuel Bonet, *A.C.* magazine is one of the best examples of functionalist typography in Spain.[5] In addition to the magazine and other activities, the GATEPAC group organised the visit to Spain of Le Corbusier, Gropius and Van Doesburg, giving direct access to the most innovative voices of European modernity.

Another publication worth highlighting was the cultural magazine *D'Ací i d'Allà*. Although it was a somewhat conventional magazine, where the aesthetics followed a more traditional model, from 1925 a new stage began characterised by the search

3 "Uno de los libros de mayor carácter positivo para la evolución de la tipografía moderna. Jan Tschichold, ayer en Alemania, hoy en Suiza, al frente de sus gabinetes, es la más firme garantía de un nuevo orden tipográfico. Tschichold trabajó junto a Franz Roh el libro *Foto-Auge*, en el que se recogían todos los últimos ensayos, que tenían que partir precisamente de manos de la afición, según ellos mismos reconocían. A base de aquella labor experimental (fotomontaje, fotogramas, negativos fotográficos, aplicaciones tipográficas, etc.), se iría formando una conciencia tipográfica que delataba un nuevo tiempo. Andaba mezclando en todo esto el movimiento constructivista alemán y las realizaciones se orientarían hacia una seguridad geométrica y una ordenación de ritmos matemáticos: como la misma arquitectura". *Gaceta de Arte* 1936.

4 The Futura typeface became characteristic of most magazines that sought new ways to master their content. The Neufville Type Foundry associated with the Bauersche Giesserei to distribute Futura in Spain shortly after its launch in Germany by the latter. It became very popular as a highlight of modern typography.

5 Bonet 2009: 157.



111

fig. 111 Cover of *A.C. Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea* (magazine published by GATEPAC, Grupo de Artistas y Técnicos Españoles para el Progreso de la Arquitectura Contemporánea), 2 (Second Quarter) 1931.

for modernity. **(figs. 112–113)** Carles Soldevila, responsible for the publication until its end in 1936, promoted a significant modernisation in contents, edition and aesthetics together with Josep Sala, who oversaw the art direction from 1932 to 1936. During this period, *D'Ací i d'Allà* became a milestone of printed modernity in Spain. It was one of the most important avant-garde publications of the first third of the 20th century. Although its contents were written in Catalan, the themes were highly topical and its design followed the latest trends of European currents. In its pages, creative photography was put into practice, and the use of sans serif typefaces and justified text compositions determined an austere and rational appearance of white space. The special Christmas issue, directly supervised by Joan Prats and Josep Lluís Sert and with the participation of Joan Miró (179, vol. 22, December 1934), dedicated to 20th century art, was the most representative publication of that period. The result of this joint effort was much more than a mere review of contemporary visual arts; it became a guide to the latest trends and avant-garde aesthetics, providing information on both the world of art and the latest advances in the field of housing and construction.

The case of *Gaceta de Arte* is not unique. The concerns of a small group of motivated young artists made possible the publication of another magazines using design to echo modernity in Lleida, a rural town in the middle of the countryside: the magazine *Art. Revista Internacional de les Arts* (Art. International Review of the Arts) was published under the artistic and literary direction of Enric Crous-Vidal, between 1933 and 1934. The ten issues of *Art* were another remarkable example of typographic modernity, which followed the model of the aforementioned magazines, although limited to the typographic possibilities of the local workshop where it was printed.

Other magazines that emerged during the period of the Spanish Republic that are worth mentioning, and followed a renovating aesthetics were *Brisas*, published between 1934 and 1936 in Palma de Mallorca; the film magazine *Nuestro Cinema*, printed in Seville, Barcelona and Madrid between 1932 and 1935, and edited in Paris; and the politically committed magazines *Octubre* and *Orto*. The latter, designed by Josep Renau and published in Valencia between 1932 and 1934, was a good example of a cultural magazine of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist labour movement. This magazine hosted some of the most interesting debates in the libertarian culture of the time. Instead, *Octubre* was a more literary magazine founded by Rafael Alberti and María Teresa León and published in Madrid between 1933 and 1934. It was related to the Communist Party of Spain, although it did not depend directly on it.

The aesthetics that emerged and were in use during the period of the Second Republic culminated – and reached its end – in the Spanish Civil War, where the emergency of taking sides reinforced visual ideas. The war confrontation, with all its radicalism, is what allowed aesthetics to be one of the conduits to disseminate a conception of Spain opposed to that of the insurgent fascist side.

One of the later examples of modern typography that better represents the aesthetics of republican policy was *Nova Iberia*, published by the Comissariat de Propaganda de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Commission for Propaganda of the Government of Catalonia). Only four issues could be carefully edited between January and April 1937, showing how modern visual aesthetics was also used as political propaganda. **(fig. 114)**

Modern Type Design

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Spanish typographic industry was led by two major foundries: the Fundición Tipográfica Neufville, established in Barcelona and linked to the German Bauersche Giesserei in Frankfurt, and the Richard Gans Type Foundry, also of German origin and located in Madrid. Both type foundries, with offices all over the country, contributed a good part of the typographic and printing material distributed in Spain. Therefore, most typographic novelties came from abroad through these major foundries, before the smaller local companies followed the trends marked by the larger ones.

By the end of the 1920s, the José Iranzo Type Foundry, a small foundry established in Barcelona, published, with the help of the printer Esteban Trochut, a series of geometric figures (circles, triangles, squared shapes, line blocks) – the so-called *Figuras geométricas*. **(figs. 115–116)** Those movable type shapes were units of auxiliary typographic material with a decorative purpose which had their references in similar material published by the Bauersche Giesserei, such as Futura Schmuck (1927). Those geometric shapes allowed, through their combination, the construction of geometric Decó style letters and decorative geometric elements that had become fashionable earlier in the decade. They became very popular among printers as they allowed them to solve small lettering jobs and construct letterforms from modular geometric shapes. The resulting geometric alphabets built up from these movable metal type blocks found their referents in Josef Albers' Kombinations-Schrift (Stencil Lettering System, 1926–1928) and Jan Tschichold's later Transito (1931) typeface. Those designs reduced the shapes of the alphabet to a combination of simple basic geometric modules. The search for simplicity and rationality ultimately led to the destruction of the established form of the letter to find its basic compositional and structural elements. **(fig. 117)**

Samples of works done with those geometric figures could be seen in the type specimens published by José Iranzo Type Foundry and in the ADAM[6] albums that Esteban Trochut, who was especially concerned about the dignity and quality of small printed matters, personally edited to demonstrate the use of type from a practical perspective. These ADAM albums – and later NOVADAM albums – published in Spanish and French, focused on the letter as the main decorative element, and were conceived, in the words of Trochut "for the study and rational modernisation of typographic art".[7] Although in these words we could see the spirit and influence of the New Typography, the ADAM and NOVADAM albums were not so much theoretical as practical manuals.

With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), the cultural wealth generated during the Republic years vanished, and the traditional and reactionary currents, relying on ideological confrontation, once again imposed a dark environment on Spanish culture. The forced exile brought artists and intellectuals to other countries, mainly to Latin America (Mexico, Argentina, Chile), where they would continue spreading their knowledge and design practices.[8] However, despite the difficult times, other designers less committed po-

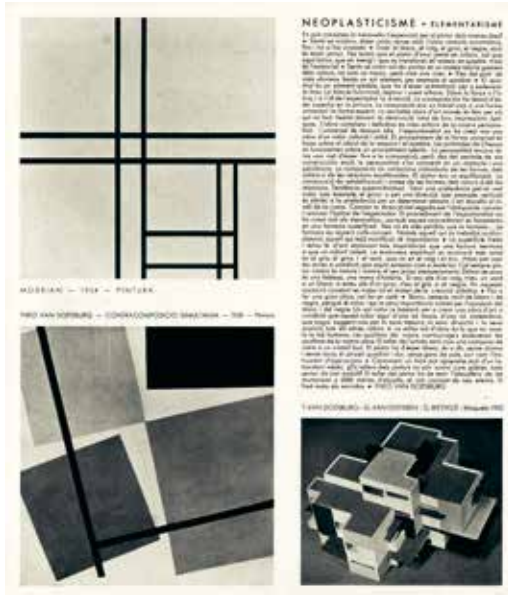
6 ADAM stands for Archivo Documentario de Arte Moderno (Documentary Archive of Modern Art).

7 Trochut 1942: 1.

8 A separate chapter would be necessary to deal with the repercussions of this Spanish exile in Latin America. It is important to emphasise the consequences of the presence of designers such as Mauricio Amster and Mariano Rawicz in Chile or Miguel Prieto and Josep Renau in Mexico.



112



113

figs. 112–113 "Numero extraordinari de Nadal dedicat a l'art del segle XX" (Special Christmas issue dedicated to 20th-century art), *D'Ací i d'Allà*, 179, December 1934, pp. 3, 21.



114



115



116

fig. 114 Page 40 of *Nova Iberia*, 3–4, 1937.

figs. 115–116 *Figuras geométricas*, type specimen brochure by Fundición Tipográfica José Iranzo S.A., type foundry, Barcelona, cover and inside pages.



117

fig. 117 Promotional leaflet for Super Tipo Veloz, Fundición Tipográfica José Iranzo S.A., type foundry, Barcelona.

litically decided to remain within the country and swim against the current to bring light to a grey and bleak landscape. The typographers Ricard Giralt Miracle and Joan Trochut Blanchard were formed during the Second Republic and became the carriers of the renovation ideas in typography in these dark times of dictatorship.

Shortly after finishing the Civil War and faced with moments of great precariousness and economic scarcity, Joan Trochut Blanchard – Esteban Trochut's son – created Super Tipo Veloz, a typographic solution for the improvement of ordinary commercial printed matter. It was a modular system of combinable movable type produced by the aforementioned José Iranzo Type Foundry, to offer a quick and economical response to the difficulties of the small printer faced with the demands of modern printed material. But far from being just a useful tool for small printers, it could be considered one of the most interesting experiments in modern type design in the first half of the 20th century in Spain and a link to the typographical experiments of the previous decades. Although its commercial launch took place in 1942, Joan Trochut had already worked on his project previously. He might have considered those experimental typefaces derived from the Bauhaus years that were in use before the war. With the Super Tipo Veloz, he mixed functional architectural thinking with a personal taste for ornament.

The typeface was distributed in a series of different collections in two point-sizes (72- and 36-points sizes). It featured more than three hundred metal pieces, including calligraphic swashes, geometric shapes, and curly lines, which could be combined in countless manners. To facilitate the use and learning of this complex system, several albums were published – the NOVADAM albums – where the possibilities of Super Tipo Veloz were displayed through printed samples. In those albums, lavishly printed and spiral bound, Esteban and Joan Trochut wrote articles about the practice of the profession to stimulate and promote the creative use of typography among professionals. They were not just promoting their own designs, but offering creative solutions to printers and typographers.

The versatility of this modular system allowed printers to create lettering for logos and trademarks, and even create artwork without the limitations of lead type and at costs commensurate with their budgets. In the presentation of the second NOVADAM album, Esteban Trochut wrote:

> Our readers will find numerous pages that catch their gaze and speak to their mind, without using drawings or photogravure. In all of them, the letter is dominant; and if the part occupied by the illustration is covered, the reader may be convinced that the set formed by the text forms a complete whole. The illustration is secondary. The typography remains the leading character of the pages. Also, we have been careful to get away from bare graphics and annoying ornamentation.[9]

Through these procedures, they reached what they called "Total Typography". A concept in which the functional aspects of typography are combined with the type as an element with expressive value,

9 "Nuestros lectores encontrarán, en consecuencia, y como respuesta a los deseos que nos han manifestado, numerosas páginas que atraen la vista y hablan a la mente, sin recurrir al dibujo y al fotograbado. En todas ellas, la letra queda como soberana, y se cubre la parte ocupada por la ilustración podrá convencerse el lector que el conjunto formado por el texto forma un todo completo. La ilustración es secundaria. La tipografía queda dueña y señora de las páginas. Hemos tenido, además, muy especial cuidado en alejarnos tanto de los grafismos desnudos como de las ornamentaciones molestas". Trochut 1942: 5–6.

without the use of another complementary element. It is the supremacy of the typeface over any other element on the page. Joan Trochut defined his Super Tipo Veloz typographic system as "a rigorously integral type", and defended the use of typography as a decorative element within the page:

> Today, however, in order to conform to the typographic doctrine, all ornaments are eliminated; even capital letters have been removed from titles, which are all composed in lower case. One merely takes note of these changes, without being able to explain what is gained by doing so, or simply where the elements to replace the eliminated ornamentation are to be found.[10]

Though Trochut's words contain some reproaches to Tschichold's principles, the rationality of the Super Tipo Veloz modular system nevertheless owes to modern typography. With his modular system, Joan Trochut tried to reconcile the ornament, as a characteristic of what he considered a peculiarity of the Mediterranean spirit, with those ideas of rationality that represented the air of change and transformation that the Spanish society longed for. This idea would be further developed in the 1950s, in the so-called Grafía Latina (La Graphie Latine) movement, which would face the Swiss International Style in type design.

As a Final Thought

Tschichold's theories were not translated into Spanish,[11] nor did they arrive directly. Rather, they were assumed in their practical and aesthetic aspects through the printed samples that came from abroad, or through professionals who had travelled and had contact with other European colleagues. According to Patricia Córdoba, "it was more a subsequent assimilation than an active participation in the development of this movement".[12]

Some of the publications printed in Spain incorporated the elements of the New Typography as echoes in the distance, as a result of aesthetic trends, rather than as a conscious adoption of Tschichold's ideas. Only Eduardo Westerdahl at the *Gaceta de Arte* shows a direct influence of Tschichold's statements within its pages. Certainly, the renovating spirit that conforms to the contents of all these artistic, cultural and political magazines was accompanied by a graphic design that fulfilled a modernising function.

In the local printing workshops, more attached to traditional typography, the radical use of lower case was not seen as a good practice. Nevertheless, the texts and printed samples published in Trochut's NOVADAM albums make us notice that they were aware of New Typography principles and that those ideas were spread among printers and graphic artists who were committed to their time.

The publishing projects that multiplied during the period of the

10 "Hoy, no obstante, para ser conforme con la doctrina tipográfica se suprimen todos los adornos; se ha llegado incluso a la supresión de las versales en títulos compuestos todos ellos en caja baja. No hacemos más que anotar esas destrucciones, sin poder explicarnos qué se ha ganado con ello o simplemente en dónde están los elementos que reemplacen a la ornamentación arrinconada". *Ibid.*: 22.

11 Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie* was translated into Spanish for the first time and published by the publishing house Campgràfic in 2003 (Tschichold 2003).

12 Córdoba 2008: 81.

Second Republic, as well as during the Civil War, reflected the evolving of modern spirit through the design of their pages. Some might have imitated the graphic style of others. Perhaps the important thing was not to respond, consciously or unconsciously, to certain principles. The important thing is that modern typography was assimilated to meet the aesthetic needs of an era.

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Fondo Biblioteca Nacional de España. Hemeroteca Digital, AC. *Documentos de actividad contemporánea*, hemerotecadigital.bne.es/hd/es/results?parent=890150f0-c8d9-4559-9ead-8a4b8b03e4d5&t=alt-asc&s=0 (accessed 15 April 2023).

ULPGC
Fondo Universidad Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. *Jable. Archivo de Prensa Digital*, jable.ulpgc.es/gacetaarte (accessed 5 February 2023).

ARCA
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In Search of a New Graphic Language: Explorations of the New Typography in Portugal (1915–1940)

Sofia Leal Rodrigues

Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century, Portugal was a country whose economic and industrial development was incipient. In 1911, 58% of its 5.5 million inhabitants worked in agriculture, with the remaining almost equally divided between industry and the tertiary sector.[1] Society was essentially rural – Lisbon was the only major city in the country, followed by Porto – and seventy per cent of the population over seven years old was illiterate.[2] The First Republic (1910–1926) was a period characterised by strong political and social instability, marked by attempts to establish a democratic regime that resulted in the succession of forty-five governments and culminated in 1926 in the military coup d'état that gave rise to the Estado Novo (New State), the dictatorial regime led by António de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970).

In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that the literature dedicated to graphic arts in the early decades of the 20th century was dominated by traditional typographic manuals. These included the 1908 *Manual do Tipógrafo* (The Typographer's Handbook) by Libânio da Silva and the 1929 *Iniciação do Compositor Tipográfico* (Initiation of the Typographic Composer) in by Apto de Oliveira. Da Silva's, in particular, became a reference justifying its reprint in 1962. These manuals prioritised topics related to book composition, though da Silva innovated by introducing a chapter dedicated to "commercial and fantasy works" which included guidelines for creating prospectuses, labels, menus and other kinds of ephemera. While book design adhered to fixed rules, "commercial and fantasy works" could enjoy greater graphic freedom. Anything excluded from the technical prescriptions of the traditional book format, such as newspapers, magazines and photograph albums, fell into a hybrid territory where the principles of book design intersected with the creative expression of commercial work.

This may explain why the principles of the New Typography primarily occurred through a series of innovative literary publications in Portugal. The magazines *Orpheu, Portugal Futurista, Contemporânea, and Presença. Folha de Arte e Crítica* explored new graphic forms to present and communicate their contents. During the Estado Novo, under the influence of foreign propaganda examples, the modernising language of the New Typography was adopted as the language for the new state. This article addresses the particularities of Portuguese graphic design's approach to European modern movements and

1 Pinto 2004: 12.
2 *Ibid.*: 15.

examines how this influence was incorporated into a graphic expression with a more native inclination.

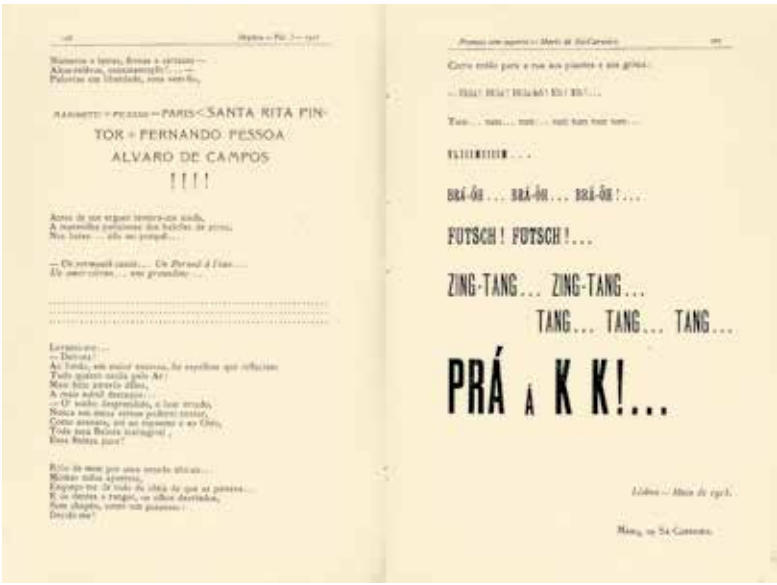
The Beginnings of a New Graphic Expression: The *Orpheu* Generation

In Portugal, the so-called *Orpheu* generation initiated the journey in search of a new visuality which saw typography as a functional expression of content. Edited by writer António Ferro (1895–1956), the eponymous magazine consisted of two issues. The first was published on 24 March 1915, under the direction of poets Luiz de Montalvor and Ronald de Carvalho. The second issue, released on 28 June, featured writers Fernando Pessoa (1888–1935) and Mário de Sá Carneiro (1895–1916) as directors. *Orpheu* stirred scandal and public ridicule due to its "formal and stylistic novelty in literary and artistic domains".[3] Its originality arose from its marked interior sobriety, the simplicity of the running text in an Old-Style typeface, the abundant use of white space, the asymmetry in the arrangement of titles in the poetry pages, and the lines that underlined and reinforced information. **(fig. 118)** As such, the magazine marked a pioneering ideological alignment with European Modernism.

The poem "Ode Triunfal" by Álvaro de Campos, one of Fernando Pessoa's heteronyms, closed the first issue of *Orpheu*. With its interjections, onomatopoeias, and repetitions, the poem showed a notable Futurist influence, resembling the "Free-Expression Orthography" proposed by the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in the manifesto "Distruzione della sintassi, immaginazione senza fili, parole in libertà" (Destruction of Syntax, Imagination without Strings, Words in Freedom) included in the book *Ls en liberté futuristes* (Futurist Words in Freedom).[4] Writing on the origins of the New Typography in *Die neue Typographie*, Jan Tschichold attributed to Marinetti, the founder of Futurism, the credit for establishing a shift "from ornamental to functional typography".[5] According to Tschichold, Marinetti's work pioneered the conversion of typography into a "functional expression of its content". The second issue of *Orpheu* came closer to the graphic Modernism that Tschichold considered a precursor to the New Typography. With a cover displaying only the title of the magazine and the oversized issue 2, both composed in Clarendon, the magazine incorporated some Futurist influences in the typographic play of the poem "Manucure" by Sá-Carneiro as well as Dadaist influences in the inclusion of four hors-texte with photographic reproductions of abstract assemblages by Santa-Rita Pintor (1889–1918).

The single issue of the literary magazine *Portugal Futurista*, published in November 1917, provides further evidence of the ways in which the *Orpheu* generation subverted the conventions of the old typography. **(fig. 119)** In the design of the publication, two elements stand out: the use of photographic reproductions and sans serif typefaces. The unexpected use of sans serif and grotesque typefaces, especially in titles and prominent elements, gives the publication a distinctive character. On the cover, the contrast between sans serif, geometric, and linear typefaces of different weights in a dynamically balanced layout tests the limits of the format. One of its bolder features is the composition of text in a diagonal line, as displayed in an advertisement within the magazine. The layout of the text "Saltimbancos (Contrastes simultâneos)", signed by Almada Negreiros (1893–1970) and Pintor, shows the experimental approach to typo-

3 Silva n.d.
4 Marinetti 1979 (1913): 134
5 Tschichold 1998 (1928): 53.



ZANNETTI + PESSOA — PARIS < SANTA RITA PIN-
TOR + FERNANDO PESSOA
ALVARO DE CAMPOS
!!!!

BRÁ-ÔH... BRÁ-ÔH... BRÁ-ÔH!...

FUTSCH! FUTSCH!...

ZING-TANG... ZING-TANG...
TANG... TANG... TANG...

PRÁ A K K!...

118



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fig. 118 Spread from the magazine *Orpheu*, 1, April–June 1915, pp. 106–107.

fig. 119 Cover of the magazine *Portugal Futurista*, 1, November 1917.

graphy adopted in *Portugal Futurista*. The text challenges the limits of the page with its tight layout and lack of punctuation. Composed exclusively in lower-case letters, the layout predates the 1925 calls by Moholy-Nagy and Tschichold to reduce the alphabet to minuscules for reasons of economy and rationalisation of writing.[6]

The magazine *Contemporânea* (1922–1926), directed by the architect José Pacheco (1885–1934), is characterised by a graphic sobriety that points to the foundations of the New Typography. However, certain elements depart from a canonical adoption of the New Typography, such as the residual use of photography, the incorporation of drawing in lettering and illustrations – sometimes with a markedly decorative tendency – and the exploration of an eclectic range of typographic choices. Printed at Libânio da Silva's printing press, which was synonymous with graphic quality, the signs of a new approach to typography and graphic design in *Contemporânea* became evident primarily in the significant visual impact created by the incorporation of geometric sans serif letters in titles, capital letters, and covers of some issues of the magazine. Tschichold's advocacy for simplicity included the use of sans serif typefaces, especially in titles and other prominent elements. For the text, however, he suggested keeping (temporarily) the use of Old-Style roman letters, as he considered them more legible than sans serif typefaces. The magazine *Contemporânea* followed this principle.

With its use of sans serif letters in the titles, *Contemporânea* stood out from contemporary publications. In fact, the limited availability of typefaces in Portugal hindered a more widespread adoption of sans serif letters. A similar situation was described by Tschichold in *Die neue Typographie*, where he complained: "The main reason why sans serif is so seldom used today for normal text setting is that in general there is not enough of it available".[7]

In *Die neue Typographie*, Tschichold emphasised the predominance of using sans serif typefaces, especially "grotesque" or "block letter" fonts, which, with their refined shapes, fully aligned with the demands of modernity for clarity and functionality. In situations where sans serif typefaces were not available, he advised the use of "bold romans" and "bold Egyptians" for emphasis, and "classic faces like Walbaum, Didot, Bodoni, etc" for text composition. His book, composed in an "ordinary jobbing sans serif" font to demonstrate "how readable it is", constituted a graphic manifesto showcasing the potential of sans serif fonts. While the typeface in question may not be a perfect choice, as he concluded, it was "preferable to all the romans".[8] Tschichold also regretted that, except for Paul Renner's Futura, the attempts to create new sans serif typefaces often suffered from an excess of "artificialism" and old-fashioned decorativism.

Interestingly, in Portugal, the adoption of Paul Renner's Futura was a clear sign of the influence exerted by the New Typography on European Modernism. The magazine *Presença. Folha de Arte e Crítica* (1927–1940), initially directed by writers João Gaspar Simões (1903–1987), José Régio (1901–1969) and Branquinho da Fonseca (1905–1974), began to use Futura starting from issue 22, in November 1929, in titles, almost always in lower case. This use explored the expressiveness of typography to accentuate the meaning of the content. Marking the beginning of the second Modernism in Portugal, the magazine

6 Moholy-Nagy 1969b (1925): 114–115; Tschichold 2007a (1925); Tschichold 2007b (1925).

7 Tschichold 1998 (1928): 75.

8 *Ibid*.

developed a literary programme based on "Literatura Viva" (Living Literature). Termed after an article signed by José Régio and published on the first page of issue 1, on 10 March 1927, "Literatura Viva" was a manifesto against "dead literature" and outdated formulas, in favour of originality and literary innovation, in content and form.

The concept of "living literature" guided the graphic design of the publication, essentially focusing on a typographic exploration that subverted the canonical precepts of the classic model through the typographic and compositional choices of titles, the dynamism of poetry texts, the expressive introduction of linoleum initials, or the contrasting effect of double-page spreads with different text columns and layouts. Futura and similar typefaces gained popularity in Portugal and were quickly incorporated into various types of publications, especially from the 1930s on. In 1935, for example, the typographer Luís Moita praised Futura for the modernity of its design in terms not dissimilar to Tschichold's.[9]

Portugal 1934: The Creation of a New Graphic Language Through the New Typography

With the establishment of the Estado Novo, Salazar created the SPN, Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional (Office for National Propaganda) in 1933, at the helm of which he placed António Ferro. As head of the Estado Novo's cultural policy and propaganda chief, Ferro established the so-called "Politics of the Spirit", a doctrine aimed at promoting the cultural development of the regime. The improvement of national graphic arts was part of the objectives of this policy, which aimed to stimulate the "creators of Beauty" by providing them with a "moral atmosphere in which the Spirit [...] is the triumph of the Spirit".[10] Ferro therefore advocated for the development of the national graphic industry, which he considered "the conveyer of the idea, thought, and propaganda of the Portuguese nation throughout the world".[11] He primarily blamed Art Nouveau for the spread of "bad taste" in Portuguese graphic arts, as it allowed the introduction of "terrible and hideous types of design", commonly referred to as 'fantasy' letters", which, in formal terms, adulterated the "classicism previously adopted".[12] In his view, the fight against "bad taste" involved "entrusting graphic work to artists (*and under no circumstances to amateurs*)",[13] following the "exemplary" guide of the magazine *Panorama* (1941–1973), under the graphic direction of the painter Bernardo Marques (1898–1962).

In 1934, the Prime Minister Salazar aimed to foster unity within the National Union, the single political party he had established a year prior. To this end, he decided to commemorate the 8th anniversary of the coup d'état that had established a military dictatorship on 28 May 1926. This commemoration involved two significant events: the First Portuguese Colonial Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in Porto and the National Union Congress at the Lisbon Geographic Society. These events were followed by a *Exposição Documental* (Documentary Exhibition) at the Exhibition Palace in Lisbon's Parque Eduardo VII, from 26 May to 15 June 1926. The exhibition was divided into two complementary subsections. The first, under the responsibility of António Ferro, was dedicated to the social and political antecedents of the 28 May 1926 Movement, and the

9 Moita 1935: 56–57.
10 Ferro 1950 (1943): 20.
11 Ferro 1934: 1.
12 *Ibid*.
13 Ferro 1943.

second, under the responsibility of engineer Carlos Santos (1884–1973), was dedicated to the work accomplished by the governments of the national dictatorship. The *Exposição Documental* consisted essentially of a selection of photographic reproductions and panels with statistical infographics. Visitors were led through a path of visual rhetoric, organised chronologically, "from tragedy and chaos to images of order and the 'resurgence' of the nation".[14]

Marking the exhibitions of 1934, the photographic album *Portugal 1934* exemplified the official adoption of Modernist aesthetics and techniques within State's visual communication. **(fig. 120)** *Portugal 1934* (1935) was part of a group of celebratory publications which included the *Álbum Comemorativo da Primeira Exposição Colonial Portuguesa* (Commemorative Album of the First Portuguese Colonial Exhibition, 1934) that featured illustrations by painter Eduardo Malta, and the *Álbum Fotográfico da Primera Exposição Colonial Portuguesa* (Photographic Album of the First Portuguese Colonial Exhibition, 1934), with photographs by photographer Domingos Alvão. Unlike these previous examples, the *Portugal 1934* album subverted the traditional album format, assuming a thematic continuity with the Documentary Exhibition and showcasing the work and entrepreneurial spirit of the Estado Novo. Ferro commissioned the album to the polymath José Leitão de Barros (1896–1967) – a painter, filmmaker, and journalist – who served as the director of the weeklies *O Domingo Ilustrado* (1925–1927) and *O Notícias Ilustrado* (1928–1935). These two newspapers had pioneered the use of rotogravure in Portugal, and de Barros selected the same printing technique for the album. He had previously undertaken two study trips abroad: one in 1926, accompanied by the painter Jaime Martins Barata, to learn the technique of rotogravure, and another in 1929, in the company of the filmmaker António Lopes Ribeiro, to deepen his knowledge of cinema. In both trips he visited Berlin,[15] the city that, in 1929, hosted the exhibition *Neue Typographie* (New Typography) at the Kunstgewerbemuseum.[16]

Portugal 1934 was produced under the direction of de Barros and Barata, who collaborated with a large team of photographers and technicians. Barros defended the graphic direction of the album in these terms: "We would seek a work of sober luxury, but in the European style. Exactly the type of publications of Mussolini and the Russians".[17] The cover, printed in three different versions (blue, green, and orange), uses sans serif typefaces with a strong visual impact, in a composition reminiscent of the *Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar 1919–1923* book-album. The album follows one of the main principles of the New Typography by using sans serif typefaces of various weights and values of black.[18] Inside, the introductory text clarifies that *Portugal 1934* is "merely the record of some remarkable works carried out by the national dictatorship". The following double pages are occupied by portraits of Salazar and the President of the Portuguese Republic, General Óscar Carmona (1869–1951), which precede and symbolically justify the entire work documented by the album: the development of roads and communications; the construction of public buildings, commercial ports, and social neighbourhoods; the financial balance of the country; Portugal's representation in international exhibitions; the Portuguese empire;

14 Serra and Parreira 2017: 26.
15 Pinto 2015: 37.
16 The section of the exhibition "Wohin geht die typografische Entwicklung?" (Where is Typography Headed?) was curated by Moholy-Nagy.
17 Barros n.d.
18 Except for the fact sheet at the end.

education, commerce, agriculture, and industry; the army and navy.

The embracing of the spirit of the New Typography is reflected in a departure from the conventions of text composition according to the classical model, in favour of expressing the content on the page. In most of the album, each subject is explored in a logic of double-page spreads with compositions featuring an asymmetrical arrangement of elements. In Tschichold's opinion, adopting an asymmetrical layout facilitated the reading process by allowing the fragmentation of information, guiding the eye from one point of interest to another. Thus, the layout of the album pages results from a dynamic balance between white spaces, the use of images of various formats, dimensions and arrangements, and the exploration of lines and coloured boxes that assist in the reading hierarchy. To accentuate compositional dynamism, the static nature of the orthogonal grid is subverted on certain pages by the introduction of text and image blocks in diagonal and oblique lines. **(fig. 120)**

The album focused on the communicative clarity of photographic images, another fundamental requirement of the New Typography. The dominance of images and the reduction of text to captions establish a reversal in the power relationship between text and image. The image moves beyond its secondary role as an illustrative element and becomes equivalent to or transforms into the text itself: the so-called "photo-text" as advocated by Moholy-Nagy.[19] The hegemony of the juxtaposed images speeds up the process of reading and enjoying the album. Through photomontage, the album constructs a cinematic visual narrative through the sequential combination of various frames that gain meaning through the unity of the whole.[20] **(fig. 121)** Due to its dimensions (44 × 31 cm) and the use of fold-out panels, the album invites immersion and interaction with the reader.

Through the use of typophoto, *Portugal 1934* explores the concept of Lissitzky's "bioscopic book" and Moholy-Nagy's "visual book". The album also aligns with the idea of the modern "picture book" advocated by Tschichold: a hybrid of text and image with a pronounced predominance of photographic images. Through photomontage, the album approaches the realm of Soviet propaganda publications, such as Lissitzky's catalogue for the Soviet Pavilion at *Pressa* in Cologne, published in 1928, and some issues designed by the Russian designer for the journal *SSSR na Stroike* (USSR in Construction). The photographs in the album are often associated with small illustrations and pictograms of statistical charts, displayed at the Documentary Exhibition, drawing inspiration from the work of Otto Neurath in the Isotype system, widely used in the 1930s.

The Aftermath of *Portugal 1934*

The exploration of the album format, or a book with a strong visual component, would continue in the propaganda production of the regime. In 1940, on the double centenary celebrations of the nation, which culminated in the Portuguese World Exhibition, the SPN published the album *Portugal 1940*, again under the direction of Barros and Barata. The comparison between *Portugal 1934* and *Portugal 1940* is inevitable, although they have distinctly different graphic identities. While the former clearly appropriates the Modernist language of New Typography, the latter echoes this influence in the hegemony of photographic imagery, the use of photomontage, and the concept of "photoplastics" by Moho-

19 Moholy-Nagy 1969a (1925): 40.
20 Tschichold 1998 (1928): 88.

ly-Nagy, as well as Tschichold's exploration of compositional asymmetries and articulation of contrasts, such as large/small or light/dark. The album encompasses a more nationalist vision, centred on a panoramic view of the country under the achievements of the Estado Novo, underscored by the choice of more historicist typefaces, such as Elzevirs, for prominent texts, or more classical ones, such as modern typefaces, for captions.

The album *Bairros de Casas Económicas 1934–1940* (Social Housing Neighbourhoods, 1934–1940), published by the Instituto Nacional do Trabalho e Previdência (National Institute of Labour and Social Security), explores the traditional album format while adopting a graphic language that filters the principles of New Typography. Sans serif typefaces dominate the album: on the cover, a "fantasy" display typeface is combined with a photographic image in an asymmetrical composition; inside, Renner's Futura is employed. The album explores the notion of a visual book by reducing the text to introductory contexts and short captions that assist in reading the photographic images. The sequentiality of the book, sometimes optimised by the introduction of fold-out pages, constructs a visual narrative that ranges from a comprehensive perspective of the neighbourhood to the details of the interior of its houses. **(fig. 122)** Although lacking the exuberance of the photomontage seen in *Portugal 1934* and *Portugal 1940*, the album *Bairros de Casas Económicas 1934–1940* heralds the refinement of the New Typography language that would form the basis of the "Swiss Style".

The publication in 1940 of the book *Vida e Arte do Povo Português* (Life and Art of the Portuguese People) also constitutes a good example of the graphic and aesthetic ideology characterising the propaganda of the Estado Novo. With graphic direction by the painter Paulo Ferreira (1911–1999), the book offers a folkloric and romanticised view of the Portuguese people, with their customs, crafts and traditions, through the integration of photography with illustrations that accentuate the vernacular character of the nation. The choice of 19th-century display faces to compose the title on the frontispiece, such as Tuscan-style letters, allowed for the construction of a graphic symbolism around the idea of "Portugueseness". This graphic language, which aimed to emphasise a nationalistic character, would be widely used in the quintessential object of the regime's propaganda, the magazine *Panorama*, and in numerous graphic materials, especially those directed towards tourism and the external image of the country.

Conclusion

In Portugal, the evidence of a new graphic expression marked by the progressive adoption of a more functionalist design is provided by the *Orpheu* generation. Influenced by European Modernism, especially futurism, this generation establishes an association between form and content, leading to occasional subversion of the classical model.

In an attempt to adhere to the trends of European Modernist design and the graphic language of propaganda of dictatorial regimes, such as the Soviet regime, the album *Portugal 1934* stands out for its full application of the principles of New Typography in a national publication. The graphic influence of *Portugal 1934* is also visible in the albums *Portugal 1940* and *Bairros de Casas Económicas 1934–1940*, which adopt and adapt the



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ENSINO
PRIMÁRIO
L'ÉCOLE PRIMAIRE S'EST
DÉVELOPPÉE SOUS LA DICTATURE
A HORA É NOSSA

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figs. 120–121 Spreads from the album *Portugal 1934*, published by SPN – Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional (Office for National Propaganda), Lisbon 1935.
Photo by Sofia Leal Rodrigues

fig. 122 Spread from the album *Bairros de Casas Económicas 1934–1940* (Social Housing Neighbourhoods 1934-1940), published by Secção das Casas Económicas do Instituto Nacional do Trabalho e Previdência (Social Housing Section of the National Labour and Welfare Institute), Lisbon 1940.
Photo by Sofia Leal Rodrigues

model of New Typography to their propaganda objectives. Although born with socialist purposes, the graphic language of New Typography, due to its Modernist aesthetics and communicative impact and effectiveness, proved adaptable to the ideology of dictatorial regimes. In Portugal, the permeability to the international model was a way to elevate the quality of national graphic arts, as António Ferro advocated.

However, as was the case with other dictatorships, in Portugal the language of Modernism and, consequently, of New Typography, would lead to the adoption of a more native symbolism emphasising the notion of nationalism, as seen in the book *Vida e Arte do Povo Português*. In the graphic design of Estado Novo propaganda, there was often an articulation between a Modernist language – utilising photography, photomontage, composition of text in Old Style, Modern, or sans serif fonts – and a nationalist language drawing on the plasticity of illustration, reverence for the classical model and "fantasy letters", which took on a more historicist and nationalist connotation.

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New Typography, New Nation: Emin Barın, a Revolutionary Classicist

Emin Artun Ozguner

In 1962, the seminal *Who's Who in Graphic Art* anthology justified the selection of the focused countries on their adoption of "Western industrial civilization" which would ascertain the "development of applied graphic arts".[1] While the second volume of the anthology keeps with this formulation, it does enlarge its scope with Turkey, Iran and Peru, amongst others, with an acknowledgement that a monolithic equation of design activity with industry from a Western perspective may have its pitfalls.[2] In this volume, the entry on Turkey, edited by bookbinder artist, graphic designer and calligrapher Emin Barın (Bolu 1913 – Istanbul 1987), concludes with the remark that the younger generation of Turkish graphic designers were now "applying Western techniques to the exploitation of the cultural heritage" in the broad context of Far East to Near East which summarises his design philosophy.[3]

The exploration of an aesthetic ideal, a synthesis between the principles of Western Modernism and local, traditional themes and heritage has long roots in Turkish modernity. In the 1930s, this presented a paradox for Turkish republican reformers who sought to negotiate international Modernism with the formulation of a new cultural identity, distinct from the Ottoman Islamic tradition. This was no less evident in type design. While new design actors were trained in Europe with the credo of Modernism, they were nonetheless expected to reconcile this training with local themes, crafts and materials on their return. It is perhaps no coincidence that most of these earlier state-sponsored designers were trained in Germany, a country that was equally grappling to tame the anti-historicism of Modernism with the evocation of a national spirit.

In this chapter, I examine how typography and a newly Romanised national script were instrumentalised in the discursive formation of Turkish cultural identity through the lettering works of Emin Barın. First, I investigate Barın's design formation as a state-led design actor by Jan Tschichold's opponent tutor Walter Tiemann. Although Barın's own ideas on Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie* (1928) remain obscure, as a student of Tiemann he must have been aware of Modernist discourses on typography. Second, I observe how Barın negotiated global tensions on elementary typography with local calligraphic traditions embedded in his practice, oscillating between the two.

Towards a National Script

Throughout the early modern period, Turkey had a peculiar relationship with the printing press. For the Muslim Ottoman elite and intelligentsia, Turkish-Ottoman script, using Arabic letters, preserved its sacrality. The

1 Amstutz 1962: 13.

2 Amstutz 1982: 11–12.

3 Barın 1982: 736. The reader must be warned against anachronisms here. The Turkish equivalent of "design", *tasarım*, was not a common word until the 1950s. The programmes within the Academy were called *atölye* as in *atelier* in French.

distinction between the vernacular and the official court dialects have remained stark well into the 20th century. This had significance in terms of the adoption of the printing press technology. The mechanisation of language through set type was legally banned for the printing of Koran, the most popular book of all. Consequently, early ventures of print capitalism in the 18th century have all but failed due to poor demand in other subjects. The political power of calligraphers also held considerable sway in this discourse, as it often clashed with modern reformers of the Ottoman Empire, who increasingly advocated for mechanisation beginning with the 1839 *Tanzimat* (Reforms) decree.[4] It is no surprise that lithography remained a more favoured technology well into the 20th century for the printing of the word, as it allowed the direct transfer of the calligrapher's strokes and evaded problems of standardisation.[5]

As the Empire employed education, jurisdiction and legislation to claim the powers of a central state, the mechanisation and standardisation of a print language became an important debate for 19th century Ottoman bureaucrats and intelligentsia. This is particularly true for the Young Turks reformers, who had been considering the Romanisation option since the late 1860s. The main obstacle towards mechanisation with the Turkish-Arabic script was that of vocalisation. The lack of vowels in the Arabic alphabet was incompatible with Turkish phonetics, leaving Ottoman orthography unfit for mechanisation and the printing press. This had further hindered the span of education and cultural expansion.[6] Indeed, in the entire imperial provinces literacy rates could hardly go beyond single digits, with drastic discrepancies between rural and urban areas, as well as genders. This scenery remained practically unchanged into the late 1920s.[7]

By 1923, Turkey self-assuredly rose out of the wreckage of World War I as a modern nation-state. In a set of prompt materially transformative reforms, including the civil and dress codes and a democratic constitution, the republican intelligentsia maintained that to avoid further imperialist plots, it was necessary to attain the level of Western civilization through a wholesale cultural transformation of the society.[8] What followed in 1928 was the Romanisation of the Turkish-Ottoman script. This language reform did not only concern the aspect of language, but was also led by a purification of its contents, reinstating the vernacular as the official language of the nation-state. The Romanised Turkish script would also isolate the sanctity of the Arabic script to the private sphere, contributing to the dissemination of a secular national modernity.

The Turkish reformers were no less zealous than Tschichold in ridding communication from its historical baggage. That same year, in *Die neue Typographie* Tschichold also advocated for the abandonment of historical, national scripts, which he called "retrograde", for the sake of internationalism. While he acclaimed the Turkish move, he ridiculed the German obsession with Gothic type, which was for foreigners "virtually unreadable!"[9] He was adamant in equating ornamentation in lettering to a childish primitiveness of the society.[10] It is in this light that the training of Barın in Germany, in the footsteps of Tschichold, becomes more significant.

4 Gratien, Shafir and Wilson 2013.
5 Kabacalı 2000: 68–72.
6 Lewis 1968: 278–279.
7 Fortna 2011: 20.
8 Göle 2013: 57–63.
9 Tschichold 1995: 75.
10 *Ibid.*: 69.

From Bursa to Leipzig

Barın is one of the many Turkish design figures whose life has been influenced and remarkably transformed by the discourse on Turkish national

modernity. He was born as the son of a calligrapher and bookbinder in 1913, in a traditional Bursa household. This made him well-versed in these crafts as a teenager. He was only a middle school student in 1928, when the script reform was launched. In 1934, he started attending the new capital, Ankara's state-of-the-art Gazi Eğitim Enstitüsü (Gazi Education Institute) and trained in the fine arts. The skills from his home training as a calligrapher must have helped him pass the specialisation exam of the Ministry of Education in 1938, to embark on a new education journey in Germany.

In Germany, Barın's educational milieu was similar to Tschichold's training. In Weimar, he studied under Otto Dorfner (Kirchheim unter Teck 1885 – Weimar 1955) in the Fachschule für kunstgewerbliche Buchbinderei (Technical School for Artistic Bookbinding) for about a year. He then transferred to Leipzig, where he attended the Staatliche Akademie für graphische Künste und Buchgewerbe (State Academy for Graphic Arts and Book Production). Here he was taught by Walter Tiemann (1876–1951), who held the office of director from 1920 to 1946 and was Tschichold's former tutor, and Rudolf Spemann (1905–1947).[11]

Barın's tutors in Germany demonstrated a variety of approaches to the application of Modernist principles. Tiemann had been an instrumental actor in modernising German typographic design at the turn of the century, against worries that photomechanical processes would deteriorate arts. Under his aegis as director, during which he opted for a rather classical pedagogy, the Leipzig Academy witnessed its most fruitful years. Tiemann was a fervent supporter of a strong manifestation of artistic intent in visual compositions and an opponent to the formulaic approaches of stylistic Modernism.[12] In his book designs he combined illustrative touches with functional typographic font solutions.[13]

Dorfner, who shortly ran the applied arts class at the Bauhaus, appointed by Walter Gropius between 1919 and 1922, had a slightly more methodical Modernist inclination. Advocating for the subordination of all graphic elements on the cover design to the contents of the book rather than to external stylistic influences, Dorfner had developed a personal style through linear abstractions. Instead of just adorning or decorating the bindings, he proposed a more systematic approach, aided by strict guidelines.[14]

Despite their cautious distance to the Reich and their less zealous adherence to a stylistic Modernism, or perhaps thanks to it, both Dorfner and Tiemann made it on the Ministry of Propaganda's Gottbegnadeten-Liste (literally "God-gifted list", or "Important Artist Exempt List"). This reactionary Modernism, as explored by the historian Jeffrey Herf, was common in the Weimar Republic collective consciousness.[15] These actors, central to the Leipzig book design tradition, were consonant with a more classical approach to graphic design and wary of internationalist and Modernist inclinations. Unlike their colleagues at the Bauhaus, their use of Modernist principles, printing processes, mechanisation, efficiency in industrial output, did not necessarily entail radically avant-garde, leftist political tendencies or an embrace of stylistic Modernism.[16]

This is well documented in the corollary aesthetic-political dispute

11 Müller 2017: 392
12 Hölscher 1968: 180.
13 Hübscher 1989: 66–113.
14 Eckardt 1960: 8, 12, 14.
15 Herf 1984: 1–6, 11.
16 Aynsley 1992: 55–56.

and escalating antagonism between Tiemann and his pupil Tschichold, between classical and Constructivist elementary (new) typography charged with wartime political trenches of the 1920s. Whereas the former sought diversity, richness, personality and beauty; the latter advocated clarity, efficacy in reading, objectivity and factuality. Inevitably, this alternative mode of modernity, less historical but nevertheless classical approach and a cautious attitude to the embrace of a sweeping international style must have informed Barın's design formation to a great extent.

An Official Design Actor

For Barın, the negotiation of this conservative German design pedagogy with the Modernist move of Turkish script Romanisation must have presented a paradox from early on in his career. Yet this must have been one he had learned to negotiate from the reserved approach of his German masters to Modernism. The overall ambitions of his earlier type designs are akin to a stripped-down classicism, in line with war-time aesthetic conservatism, with a keen eye on legibility and clarity.

Wrought by the war years, Barın completed his German education in 1943 and returned to Turkey to take a central role as a state-led design actor. He was immediately assigned to work in the state-of-the-art Milli Eğitim Basımevi (Printing House of the Ministry of Education). This facility, formerly known as the State Printing House, was able to produce the finest qualities of prints for official ephemera and international propaganda journals, including a facsimile of the 16th-century world map of cartographer Piri Reis, through colour separation technique.[17] It was now ran by the visionary Minister of Education, Hasan Ali Yücel (1897–1961), a pioneering figure in spearheading the state-led humanism of the 1940s with the translation of world classics into Turkish, mostly from French and Greek literature.

In 1943, Barın also organised an exhibition titled *Yazı ve Cilt Sergisi* (Scripture and Binding) at the Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts, where he exhibited his major projects as a student in Germany.[18] These included a notebook, bound with parchment and gilded with a floral corniche, which was then gifted to the President of the Republic, İsmet İnönü. The successful exhibition must have cemented a new role for Barın among bureaucrats of cultural policy, as he was soon admitted as a lecturer to the Academy, where he remained for forty-four years.[19] There he taught type design, compulsory for the Decorative Arts programme first years, including graphics, ceramics, textiles and interior design.[20]

The Academy was also a place to explore continuities with calligraphic tradition. In 1936, following its dissolution, the former Şark Tezyini Sanatlar Mektebi (School of Oriental Ornamental Arts), which specialised in calligraphy, binding and marbling, was placed under the Academy's Turkish Decorative Arts programme (1933).[21] Before embarking on his training in Germany, Barın had spent a year of internship at the School of Ornamental Arts. One of the prominent figures of this institution, calligrapher Kamil Akdik had required

17 Koloğlu 1993: 101, 193–194.
18 *Arkitekt* 1943: 237.
19 Karamani Pekin 2010: 102.
20 Turan 2002: 41.
21 Karamani Pekin 2010: 111. The institution, founded in 1914 as Medreset'ul Hattatın (Calligraphy Madrasah) was shut down due to the 1928 law on the secularisation of national education and the work of calligraphers still having religious affiliations. The school then continued to operate as the Hattat Mektebi (School of Calligraphers) until 1928, shut down again with the law on Romanisation. From then on, it operated as the School of Oriental Ornamental Arts until its integration into the Academy.

Barın to take a vow to never abandon traditional calligraphy.[22] Owing to this legacy, in 1955 Barın established a dedicated programme for lettering and bookbinding (Yazı ve Cilt Atölyesi) within the Decorative Arts programme along with his colleague Sacit Okyay. This was to be remodelled as the first national Graphic Design department in 1962.[23]

Reconciling the East with the West

The Academy years were prolific for Barın in terms of state commissions. In 1953, he was called to design a total of ten commemorative marble plaques for the occasion of Istanbul's quincentenary conquest celebrations. Commissioned by the populist Istanbul Conquest Association, the plaques not only explored a continuity with the Ottoman dynastic epigraphic inscriptions, but also created a web around the old city where the imperial conquest could be rewritten in the collective memory of the modern nation through the new Turkish Roman characters. **(fig. 123)** For this task, Barın came up with a capital, serif letterform that had triangular flourishes at the ends of concave horizontal crossbars, subtly mimicking Ottoman calligraphic work. Of note is also his dismissive attitude to Tschichold's call for the abandonment of capital letters for the sake of sheer monumentality.[24]

This plaque was followed around the same time by the gargantuan epitaphs for the mausoleum of nation's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, by architects Emin Onat and Orhan Arda. The mausoleum, called Anıtkabir, was to become an aesthetic synthesis of the earlier official meta-historical cultural identity postulations with loose interpretations of Hittite, Sumerian and Roman references meddled with folk motifs. Despite the sheer classic monumentality of the edifice, Barın's lettering design made use of elementary typography principles. **(fig. 124)** To optimise legibility on a height above human vision, Barın increased the letter size and kerning.[25] He also alternated the A letter by introducing varying swashes at their apex to balance the exaggerated kerning with neighbouring letters. This aimed to provide a smoother, uninterrupted reading experience from afar. At the same time, Barın was once again exploring the calligraphic tradition of *keşide*, the alternations in the composition of the letters by means of elongated swashes.[26]

With these works, Barın placed the newly adopted Roman Turkish letters in a remarkable place, in continuity with and on the same level of competence as the Ottoman monumental epitaph tradition. He claimed that Turkish aesthetics differed from the rest of the Islamic world in its adherence to simplicity and abstinence to ornamentation, especially in architectural epitaphs.[27] In this claim he resonated with Republican nationalist art historiographies of the early 20th century, which were equally zealous in looking for precursors of modern form in historic craft practices awaiting discovery and praise by the modern nation. This was namely the case of Celal Esad Arseven, Barın's contemporary, who in his writings equated alleged self-moderated national attributes with aesthetic ones. In his writings, he asserted that, since Turks were candid and despised deceit, so were their decorative arts and ornamentation; sincere and rational like the ancient Greeks.[28] In their endeavour to equate tradition with Modernism, the first generation of republican artists and art histori-

22 Turan 2014: 204
23 Barın 1982: 733.
24 Tschichold 1995: 79–80.
25 Taşçı 2002: 23.
26 Karamani Pekin 2010: 151.
27 *Ibid.*: 161.
28 Esad Arseven 1927: 389–394.

ans were no less reactionary Modernists than their German counterparts. Yet, rather than the German exaltation of the national character, theirs was more borne out of a necessity to reconcile the international, Western world with the East. As Barın proudly put forward, here lay his originality.[29]

A Revolutionary Classicism

Despite his success with the new Turkish script, towards the mid-1960s Barın felt that he could further this exploration of a new amalgamation of the calligraphic tradition with Modernist principles. For these early graphic design actors, including Sait Maden, calligraphy often lay at the foundation of their training and had to be reconciled with the modern and commercial functions.[30] In the 1930s, following the Romanisation law, the Turkish reformers and intelligentsia had a highly politicised type. The symbolic differences between Arabic and Latin letters were pitted against each other. Where the former came to signify a backward religious past and the latter the technically advanced future of national modernity.[31] Yet, Barın's sensibilities were wary of extremes. As much as he resented the eminent loss of the calligraphic tradition, he was also critical of its orthodox resistance to change, which made it incompatible with shifting socio-cultural dynamics.[32] Informed both by his traditional upbringing in calligraphy and his German training, cautious of the homogenising effects of internationalism, he set out to interpret the calligraphic tradition with modern Turkish letters and an abstract touch. This was a revolutionary take on the classical tenets of Turkish-Ottoman calligraphy.

It was for these reasons that Barın chose to work with *kufi* writing. As a pre-Islamic script, *kufi* had more secular roots and was therefore more flexible for new experimentations.[33] Its geometric layout also made it structurally more suitable to hybrid explorations with elementary typography. These are visible in his monogram, in which a central interlaced motif expands into bold lines filling the square composition with the repetition of his name on all four sides. **(fig. 125)** In these interpretations, as he called them, Barın not only used his modern training to create various new and different compositions, but also deliberately stepped out from the tradition of his calligraphy masters who, he argued, would merely repeat what their masters had been doing in a non-progressive way.[34]

Like Tschichold, Barın too acknowledged the end of historic script, the Ottoman calligraphy tradition, which no longer served modern functions and thus could not be revived. He advocated for the exploration of new principles of typography with contemporary necessities and traditional skills.[35] Yet, his affinities were more in line with those of his master, Tiemann, who advocated for a high level of artistic feeling, than with Tschichold's mere "rules and recipes", as Tiemann called it, or with a stylistic adherence to functional objectivism.[36] The manifestation of an individual character via function (effective legibility) and aesthetics (clarity and harmonious balance) laid the foundation of Tiemann's teaching. However, this individual character in type had its limits too, it could not be imposingly superficial or fashionable,

29 Barın 1974: 30.
30 Durmaz 2008. To avoid an anachronism here, until the 1950s, the figure of graphic or visual communication designer was often referred to as *matbaa ressamı* (print painter), similar to the Western designation of commercial artist.
31 Gencer 2013: 188–213.
32 Barın 1974: 30.
33 *Dergah* 2014: 23.
34 TRT Arşiv n.d.
35 Özpalabıyıklar 2002: 16.
36 Hübscher 1989: 76–79.



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124



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fig. 123 Emin Barın, epitaphs for the quincentenary celebrations of the conquest of Istanbul, 1953. Photo by Emin Artun Ozguner

fig. 124 Emin Barın, epitaphs for the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 1953. Photo by Emin Artun Ozguner

fig. 125 Emin Barın, kufi style monogram with roman Turkish letters, 1970.

it had to be reserved enough to allow future uses for designers.[37] Barın's design philosophy resonated with this approach, as he sought for a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total work of art in harmony with the whole composition, rather than the individual appeal of letters.[38]

Conclusion

In proposing this new hybrid aesthetic form, Barın was somewhat responding to Tschihold's orientalising discourse, that ornamental, historical, national type was a consequence of the primitiveness of the local culture not capable of change.[39] This zeal to reconcile ornamental craft traditions, abundant in Turkish culture, with modern principles of design, was consonant with the endeavours of design actors contemporary to Barın.[40] In the late 1930s, even Tschichold himself had taken a back step towards local character in type and had controversially reorientated his perspective to a more conservative and traditional approach in typography, likening the rigidity in *Die neue Typographie* to totalitarianism.[41]

Despite his state-endowed mission of creating a new canon of typographic designs with the Turkish Roman letters, Barın grew an empathy for the imminent decline of the calligraphic tradition. He aimed not at the revival of the old script, but at the exploration of how its creative principles could be explored with the Roman letters.[42] He was taking a challenging attitude towards history, as much as Tschichold in *Die neue Typographie*, but he was nonetheless eager to explore methods to make his classical essence survive in modern Roman type. His particularity in these abstractions, compared to Western or Eastern artists, was his attention to the anatomy of the letters and an aversion to distortion that put legibility ahead of style or expression. He argued that this was thanks to his ability to amalgamate his classical upbringing in calligraphy with his modern technical training.[43] In doing this, he seems to have echoed Tiemann's response to Tschichold's partisan embrace of New Typography in the 1920s, that the artist had "other tasks than feeling the pulse of the zeitgeist".[44] Hence, for Barın, tradition and modernity were not mutually exclusive, they rather constituted two poles that needed equal taming and reconciliation.

37 *Ibid.*: 106.
38 Karamani Pekin 2010: 124.
39 Tschichold 1995: 69–74.
40 A similar figure advocating this idea was painter Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu.
41 Müller 2017: 299–300, 321.
42 Özpalabıyıklar 2002: 16.
43 Emin Barin, in İpek, Ulusan and Budak 2013: 87.
44 Hübscher 1989: 79.

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New Typography in the Soviet Union: A Concise History

Alyona Sokolnikova

Jan Tschichold was known for his sympathies with the Soviet Union. The German art historian Albert Giesecke disapprovingly called him a *Kulturbolschewist* ("cultural Bolshevik"), because of his ideological and cultural inclinations,[1] and the Soviet graphic designer Vadim Lazursky referred to him as the "legendary Red Jan".[2] Known as an educator and typography theorist, he was also a journalist who wrote science and politics articles, occasionally styling himself as "Iwan" instead of "Johannes".[3] Yet, the influence that Tschichold's work had on Soviet design has been largely overlooked.

For the purposes of this review paper, I have identified and examined three major periods in the evolution of the New Typography in the USSR: from the generation of new ideas (Stage I), through their settlement and dissemination – a process that was interrupted due to certain changes in the politics – (Stage II), to their subsequent revival in the post-war years (Stage III).

The Generation of New Ideas

The first stage was where Jan Tschichold's main ideas originated. It covers the period from the avant-garde experiments of the late 1910s and the early 1920s, that had a major influence on his views, to the publication of his first book in 1928. At that time, the Soviet Union was actively involved in international cultural exchanges: Soviet avant-garde artists were relatively free to interact with their counterparts from Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands and other countries.

Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie* is liberally sprinkled with the names of the Soviet graphic designers he knew, including some of the most influential avant-garde artists of the 1920s, in particular, El Lissitzky, who offered his unique take on Suprematism and Constructivism and played a key role in promoting Soviet art in the Western world, Aleksandr Rodchenko and Aleksei Gan, the founding thinkers of Constructivism, and other designers who joined the movement – the brothers Vladimir and Georgii Stenberg (though the Stenberg brothers used to collaborate as a duo, Tschichold, for lack of information, mentioned only Georgii), as well as Gustav Klutsis and Sergei Senkin, the pioneers of colour photomontage.[4]

According to Paul Stirton, El Lissitzky, the Soviet artist of Lithuanian Jewish origin, was one of the three key personalities – the other two being László Moholy-Nagy, the Hungarian Constructivist artist who taught a preliminary course at the Bauhaus school in Germany, and Piet Zwart, the Dutch designer and critic with whom Tschichold had established a deep professional connection based on mutual respect and interest.[5]

1 Stirton 2019: 36.
2 Lazursky 1985: 133.
3 Aynsley 2000: 170.
4 Tschichold 2006 (1928): 61.
5 They were also among the names that Tschichold proposed to Kurt Schwitters in 1927 as best candidates to join the Ring "Neue Werbegestalter" (Circle "New Advertising Designers"), his new art and design group. Stirton 2019: 6.

It is no coincidence that in his final years, Tschichold dedicated a special issue of the *Typographische Monatsblätter* magazine, later published as a separate book, to Lissitzky, aiming "to introduce him to a generation that has never heard his name and yet stands on his shoulders".[6] In his own peculiar manner, Tschichold praised Lissitzky's work, emphasising that it was "one of the greatest inspirations, both for the Weimar Bauhaus and for typography",[7] while continuing to selectively criticise it. In particular, he referred to some of the conclusions made in Lissitzky's essay titled "Unser Buch" (Our Book, 1927) as cursory and misleading.[8]

Furthermore, it was for a good reason that in his statement essay titled "Fotomontazh kak novyi vid agitatsionnogo iskusstva" (Photomontage as a New Form of Propaganda Art)[9] Gustav Klutsis cites Tschichold's poster design for Rudolf Meinert's 1927 film *Laster der Menschheit* (The Vice of Humanity) alongside Lissitzky's photographic self-portrait titled *The Constructor* taken in 1924. **(fig. 126)** The latter had been referred to by Tschichold as Lissitzky's most brilliant work[10] and was used in the cover for *Foto-Auge* (Photo-Eye, 1929),[11] one of the most famous books on photography of the period, that he published together with art historian Franz Roh.

It is hard to determine exactly when Lissitzky first met Tschichold. For all we know, it happened sometime between 1922 and 1925. Indeed, Tschichold's "Philobiblon" advertising poster (1924) was clearly inspired by Lissitzky's layout for the book *Pro dva kvadrata* (About Two Squares, 1922).

At the very least, from 1925 onwards, they pursued an active correspondence with each other, exchanging highly emotional compliments and samples of their work.[12] A memoire by Lissitzky's wife, the German art curator Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, recalls the couple's Austrian holidays of 1928. She wrote: "Edith Tschichold, wife of the talented typographer, came to see us on a short visit; we had sought out the young couple in Munich. Lissitzky was very pleased to make personal contact with the foremost interpreter of his work. For many years, Tschichold had been sending him all his publications, for which Lissitzky had the highest esteem".[13] According to Tschichold, this correspondence lasted until 1934, and then ceased – as he (not unreasonably) believed it could be dangerous for Lissitzky to continue to receive his letters, given the changes in the political landscape.[14]

Unlike Lissitzky, Aleksandr Rodchenko did not speak any foreign languages; he travelled outside of his home country only once (to participate in the 1925 Paris Exhibition) and was better known abroad for photography and photomontage. The Rodchenko archive has several drafts of his letter to Tschichold (1929)[15] and the original of Tschichold's reply letter dated 10 October 1931.[16] In his letter, Rodchenko noted that he had had difficulty in obtaining Tschichold's address, and Tschichold replied that he too had been looking for a way to contact him for some time. This may sound strange, especially knowing that both had long been in contact with Lissizky and also with

6	"[...] eine Generation mit ihm bekannt zu machen, die seinen Namen noch nie gehört hat und doch auf seinen Schultern steht." Tschichold 1971: 8.
7	"El Lissitzky war einer der großen Anreger, sowohl für das Weimarer Bauhaus wie für die Typographie." *Ibid.*
8	"[...] doch sind manche Urteile zu summarisch und daher manche Schlüsse irrig." *Ibid.*
9	Klutsis 1931: 133.
10	Tschichold 1971: 6.
11	Roh and Tschichold 1929.
12	Lissitzky-Küppers 1968: 59, 68, 70.
13	*Ibid.*: 86.
14	"Unsere Korrespondenz hörte um 1934 auf. Ich mußte fürchten, daß sie ihm gefährlich werden könne." Tschichold 1971: 8.
15	Lavrentiev 1992: 126.
16	*Ibid.*, Gabbasov 2021.

László Moholy-Nagy – who had organised an exhibition of Rodchenko's photographs at the Bauhaus (1927)[17] and was planning to include his works in his *Bauhausbücher* series.[18] Regarding Rodchenko's complaint that his photographs would not be used in any anthology, Tschichold said it wasn't on purpose that his work wasn't included in the *Foto-Auge* (Photo-Eye) album. He also sent Rodchenko the catalogue of the Stuttgart exhibition that included a description of one of Rodchenko's works, as well as his own article in *Die Literarische Welt* (1927), devoted to Rodchenko's photomontages for Vladimir Mayakovsky's book *Pro eto* (About This, 1923). **(figs. 127–128)** Further, he encouraged Rodchenko to send in photographs and posters with photomontages for his "Fototek" series.[19] Though Rodchenko did select the materials requested by Tschichold, their plans never materialised.[20]

Though the Soviet designers that Tschichold refers to in *Die neue Typographie* came from different backgrounds and countries, what they had in common was that they were extremely active (as students and/or teachers) in the first Soviet school of art, architecture and design – the Moscow VKhUTEMAS/VKhUTEIN (Vysshie Khudozhestvenno-Tekhnicheskiye Masterskiye/Institut / Higher Artistic and Technical Institute), 1920–1930, as well as the INKhUK (Institute of Artistic Culture), 1920–1924, an institution with which the former maintained closed ties.

In the years following the Revolution of 1917, Moscow gradually became not only the Soviet Union's political centre, but also its cultural centre, attracting resources and talent from the rest of the country. At the same time, local avant-garde art schools, influenced among other things by the ideas of Constructivism and the new approach to typography, were springing up all over the country, in particular, the Technical Art Institute in Kharkiv (Ukraine), the ARKhUMAS school of art, architecture and design in Kazan (Tatarstan) and VKhUTEIN in Tbilisi (Georgia). These institutions are worthy of separate attention and study – an effort that would require strong engagement of local experts.

It should be noted that during the tenure of Vladimir Favorsky, who headed Moscow's VKhUTEMAS between 1923 and 1925, its Printing Department gradually turned into a training ground for graphic artists, rather than an educational institution for printing specialists.[21] A proponent of reviving and reinventing the tradition of woodcut printing in book design, Favorsky was clearly not overfond of Constructivism and opposed its teaching in the classroom. As the result, Constructivist artists had to find creative ways to pass on their knowledge, for example by setting up a Constructivist study subgroup at INKhUK, giving extracurricular assignments to students or including graphic design tasks in other study modules (as Rodchenko did at the Metalworks department).[22]

Tellingly, the first generation of Constructivist designers preferred to hand-draw or carve in linoleum the sans serif typefaces or geometrical letterings they wanted to use in their projects. This was due to a number of material and technical deficiencies, in particular, a shortage of modern typesetting fonts in the first years after the Revolution and the lack of relevant experience among former artists.[23]

Among the first-generation Constructivists, the two persons with the

17 Lavrentiev 1992: 82.
18 Rodchenko 1982: 117–118.
19 Lavrentiev 1992: 126.
20 Lavrentiev 2020.
21 Khan-Magomedov 1995: 60.
22 Sokolnikova 2021: 252.
23 Gabbasov 2021: 225.

most expertise and experience in crafting the layouts for multi-page publications were Aleksei Gan and Varvara Stepanova, Aleksandr Rodchenko's wife. Gan independently published the unique *Kino-fot* (Cinema-Photo) magazine (1922–1923) and designed the *SA. Sovremennaia Arkhitektura* (CA. Contemporary Architecture) magazine (1926–1928).[24] As to Stepanova, she created innovative cover and layouts for a number of magazines between 1928 and 1930, including *Zarubezhom* (Abroad), *Smena* (Change), *SA. Sovremennaia Arkhitektura* (CA. Contemporary Architecture), *Kniga i revoliutsiia* (The Book and Revolution) and *Sovetskoye Kino* (Soviet Cinema).[25] **(fig. 129)**

Though Tschichold held Lissitzky in high regard, he noted that the designer "did not derive his forms from the typesetting technique; he probably was very little concerned about how the typesetter would deal with the sketch. Often, he had to resort to drawing because the typesetting could not give him what he wanted. The technically impeccable typesetting of his own letterhead (1924), still standing radiantly beautiful to this day, is an exception".[26]

Meanwhile, the simplified geometric lettering that existed before the Revolution and had been used internationally – the stripped-down typefaces that were dubbed *bruskovie* (bar) or *palochnie* (stick) typefaces in the USSR because of their signature style and which Tschichold referred to as "skeleton letters"[27] – were widely used in Soviet Russia, not only by Constructivists, but also on a large scale, as the most accessible visual device for propaganda. Between 1924 and 1933, dozens of manuals for non-professional artists were published in the Soviet Union. These manuals usually contained detailed instructions for creating the simplest typefaces and tips for arranging them in the most efficient way.[28]

Another tricky issue is related to the history of indigenous languages and writing systems in the Soviet republics. In the 1920s and 1930s, there was a massive state-sponsored campaign aimed at converting the scripts used by the country's different languages to the Latin alphabet.[29] Technically, this was congenial to the early ideas of Tschichold and a number of other radically minded representatives of the avant-garde on crafting a universal writing system to communicate across cultures.[30]

The languages that used a writing system based on the Arabic script were the first to be Latinised. As the cultural historian Ivan Gaskell pointed out, "the Bolsheviks thus sought to make an even clearer departure from the tsarist regime, promote socialist revolution internationally and isolate the Soviet Muslims from their co-religionists elsewhere".[31] Eventually, between 1923 and 1939, Latin-based scripts were created for fifty of the seventy-two languages in the USSR that had a written form.[32] At the same time, this effort was part of a larger policy of *korenisatsya* (nativisation), a process aimed at expanding the social functions of the Soviet Union's indigenous languages.[33]

Remarkably, the Constructivists themselves did not leave behind any academic texts on the theory of typography in Russian. Neither Aleksei Gan's statement publication titled *Konstruktivizm* (Constructivism, 1922), nor the manifesto "Who We

24 Lavrentiev 2023: 84–115, 152–187.
25 Stepanova 1994: 300.
26 "Lissitzky entwickelte seine Formen nicht aus der Technik des Schriftsatzes; vermutlich hat es ihn wenig bekümmert, wie der Setzer mit der Skizze fertig wurde. Häufig konnte er sich nur noch mit der Zeichnung helfen, weil der Satz nicht hergab, was er wollte. Die technisch untadelige Satzweise seines eigenen, noch heute strahlend schönen Briefbogens (1924) ist eine Ausnahme." Tschichold 1971: 4.
27 Tschichold 2006 (1928): 73.
28 Krichevsky 2014: 5, 12.
29 Martin 2001: 182–207.
30 Tschichold 2006 (1928): 75.
31 Alpatov 2017: 12–14.
32 Martin 2001: 177.
33 Gaskell 2019: 13.

Are: Manifesto of The Constructivist Group" (1922) translated by Tschichold in 1925 offered in-depth insights into this topic. **(fig. 130)** Meanwhile, El Lissitzky's major texts on the theory of typography were written in German and were not officially translated into Russian until 1960s–1980s, or even until the 2000s. These core publications include a brief manifesto "Topographie der Typographie" (Topography of Typography),[34] an article titled "Die Reklame" (The Advertisement) co-authored by Mart Stam,[35] an article titled "Typographische Tatsachen" (Typographical Facts),[36] in recognition of which he was given honorary membership of the Gutenberg Society[37] and, lastly, "Unser Buch", an article that summed up the previous studies.[38] The only texts originally published in Russian were the article titled "Khudozhnik v proizvodstve" (The Artist in Production)[39] and an essay titled "Fotopis".[40] The archive of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam has a typewritten copy of the presentation "O metodakh oformleniia knigi" (Methods of Book Design) in Russian[41] and the handwritten text of "Poligraficheskoie oformlenie knigi" (Printing Design of the Book), a presentation made in 1931 by El Lissitzky at the Moskovskii Poligraficheskii Institut (Institute of Printing in Moscow).[42]

Given his exceptional talent and versatility that manifested themselves in his paintings, spatial experiments, architecture, object and space design, graphics and photomontages, Lissitzky felt it was impossible for him to prioritise typography. In 1924, László Moholy-Nagy wrote at least four letters to Lissitzky asking him to contribute to the *Bauhausbücher*, a series he had in mind.[43] In his first letter, he requested materials from Lissitzky's *Figurinen* lithograph prints portfolio (1923) that was eventually donated to the Bauhaus library,[44] while in another he proposed that Lissitzky authored a separate issue "on typography + advertising, or whatever else you wish".[45] In a letter of reply to his wife dated 16 May 1924, Lissitzky wrote: "Regarding the little book on typography, write him that I am busy just now with something quite different. But it is possible that I will also manage to fit this in [...] In any case I will collect material (for the illustrations)".[46] It is known that Lissitzky asked Kurt Schwitters to send him samples of early Dada literature and pages from *Merz*, a magazine Schwitters edited,[47] and that he also wrote to the Soviet avant-garde writer Osip Brik, co-founder of the *LEF (Left Front of the Arts)* magazine, requesting him to send in some samples of the Constructivist layout of the magazine that Rodchenko helped design.[48] Sadly enough, this was yet another project that was never completed.

Apparently, this was due not least to the rift between Lissitzky and Moholy-Nagy. In his more recent letters to his wife, Lissitzky extensively blamed László for borrowing Man Ray's ideas on abstract photograms and for churning out publications "in which everything before 1920 is treated as mere fertiliser for the Bauhaus, which then accomplishes everything and surpasses all that has gone before".[49]

In 1925, in the *Gutenberg Festschrift* (Gutenberg commemorative publication), alongside Lissitzky's article, there appeared a piece by Moholy-Nagy titled "Zeitgemäße Ty-

34 Lissitzky 1923.
35 Lissitzky and Stam 1924: 3.
36 Lissitzky 1925.
37 Lissitzky-Küppers 1968: 52.
38 Lissitzky 1926.
39 Lissitzky 2004b (1929).
40 Lissitzky 1929.
41 Lissitzky 2004a (1928?).
42 Lissitzky 2004c (1931): 197–208.
43 Miturich 2017: 93–94; Lissitzky 1977: 179–180.
44 *Ibid.*: 180.
45 "Vielleicht könnten Sie... ein typografisches+ Reklamenbuch zusammenstellen, oder anderes, wie es Ihnen beliebt." *Ibid.*
46 Lissitzky-Küppers 1968: 50.
47 *Ibid.*
48 Vakar and Mikhienko 2004: 159 (vol. 2).
49 Lissitzky-Küppers 1968: 53.

pographie. Ziele, Praxis, Kritik" (Contemporary Typography: Aims, Practice, Criticism).[50] In this article, the author elaborated the ideas he earlier expressed in *Die neue Typographie*, an essay published in 1923 as part of the catalogue for the famous Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar that he designed together with Herbert Bayer, who was a Bauhaus student at that time.[51] This second article was translated into Russian and published, in an abridged form, in *Poligraphicheskoye Proizvodstvo* (Printing Production, 8, 1928), a Soviet professional journal, under the title "Tipograficheskoe oformlenie nashikh dney" (Typographic Design of our Days)".[52]

Finally, Tschichold's one-off edition, a twenty-four-page insert titled "Elementare Typographie" (all words printed in lower case) that brought together the statement texts by leading authors from Germany, Holland, Hungary and the Soviet Union, appeared in the October 1925 issue of *Typographische Mitteilungen*. Though Tschichold's own manifesto, which was also published there, was not translated into Russian, his book titled *Die neue Typographie* (1928), based on it, found widespread acclaim and garnered many followers in the Soviet Union.

The Emergence and Dissemination of the New Typography

The second stage of the evolution of New Typography in the Soviet Union is associated with the appearance of major articles on the movement and its philosophy in German and their translation into Russian (from 1925 to 1932).

The first excerpts of *Die neue Typographie* by Jan Tschichold, translated into Russian by Nikolai Proskurnin and edited by Lev Kaplan, were published in a series of issues from 1929 of the magazine *Poligraphicheskoye Proizvodstvo* (Printing Production).[53] **(fig. 131)**

The publication was complemented by the following introduction: "This issue begins a series of selected chapters from Jan Tschichold's book *Die neue Typographie* that is widely known among the printers, translated into Russian. Though the original title literally means 'the new typography', within the terms that we use here, in the Soviet Union, this shall be understood as 'the new layout design'. The author attempts to provide a theoretical basis for the movement called Constructivism. The theory is neatly rounded off with a couple of examples. Given the fact that until this moment no rigorous justification of the new theory was available to the scientific and academic community in Russia, and considering that this is the first Western text that attempts to explore this topic, we sincerely hope that the extracts below will be of interest to our readers".[54]

Significantly, at the time, the Russian word *tipografiya* (typography) solely meant a print shop, a place where actual production took place, and there was no word for typography as a creative profession (what is now called *tipografika* in Russian). Many Constructivists, who,

50 Moholy-Nagy 1925: 307–317.

51 Stirton 2019: 28.

52 Krichevsky 2013–2014a.

53 The extracts appeared in the issues no. 6, pp. 15–19; no. 7, pp. 13–20; no. 8, pp. 15–21; no. 10, pp. 13–15 and no. 11–12, pp. 47–53.

54 "S nastoiashchego nomera mi nachinaem perevod otdel'nykh, naibolee blizkikh poligrafistam, glav iz knigi Jan Tscichold *Die neue Typographie*. Tochnyi perevod oznachaet 'novaia tipografiia', no v obshchepriniatom u nas v Soyuze ponimanii, eto oznachaet 'novoe ofomlenie'. Avtor pitaetsia dat' teoreticheskoe obosnovanie tomu techeniyu, kotoroe poluchilo nazvanie 'konstruktivizm'. V dal'neishem teoriia podkrepliaetsia riadom primerov. Poskol'ku my eshchio ne imeli na russkom iazyke podrobnogo obosnovaniia novogo techeniia, da i za granitsei kniga iavliaetsia pervoi popytkoi v etom napravlenii, my nadeemsia, chto chitateli nashego zhurnala zainteresuyutsia publikuemymi otryvkami." *Poligraphicheskoye Proizvodstvo* (Printing Production), 6, 1929: 15.



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fig. 126 A page from the essay "Fotomontazh kak novii vid agitatsionnogo iskusstva" (Photomontage as a New Form of Propaganda Art) by Gustav Klutsis, featuring Jan Tschichold's poster for Rudolf Meinert's 1927 film *Laster der Menschheit* (The Vice of Humanity) alongside El Lissitzky's self-portrait *The Constructor* (1924).

fig. 127 Cover of the poem *Pro eto* (About This) by Vladimir Mayakovsky, graphic design by Aleksandr Rodchenko, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo (State Publishing House), Moscow 1923.
Photo by Jolie Simpson



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fig. 128 An untitled photomontage by Aleksandr Rodchenko illustrating the poem *Pro eto* (About This) by Vladimir Mayakovsky, 1923. Photo by Jolie Simpson

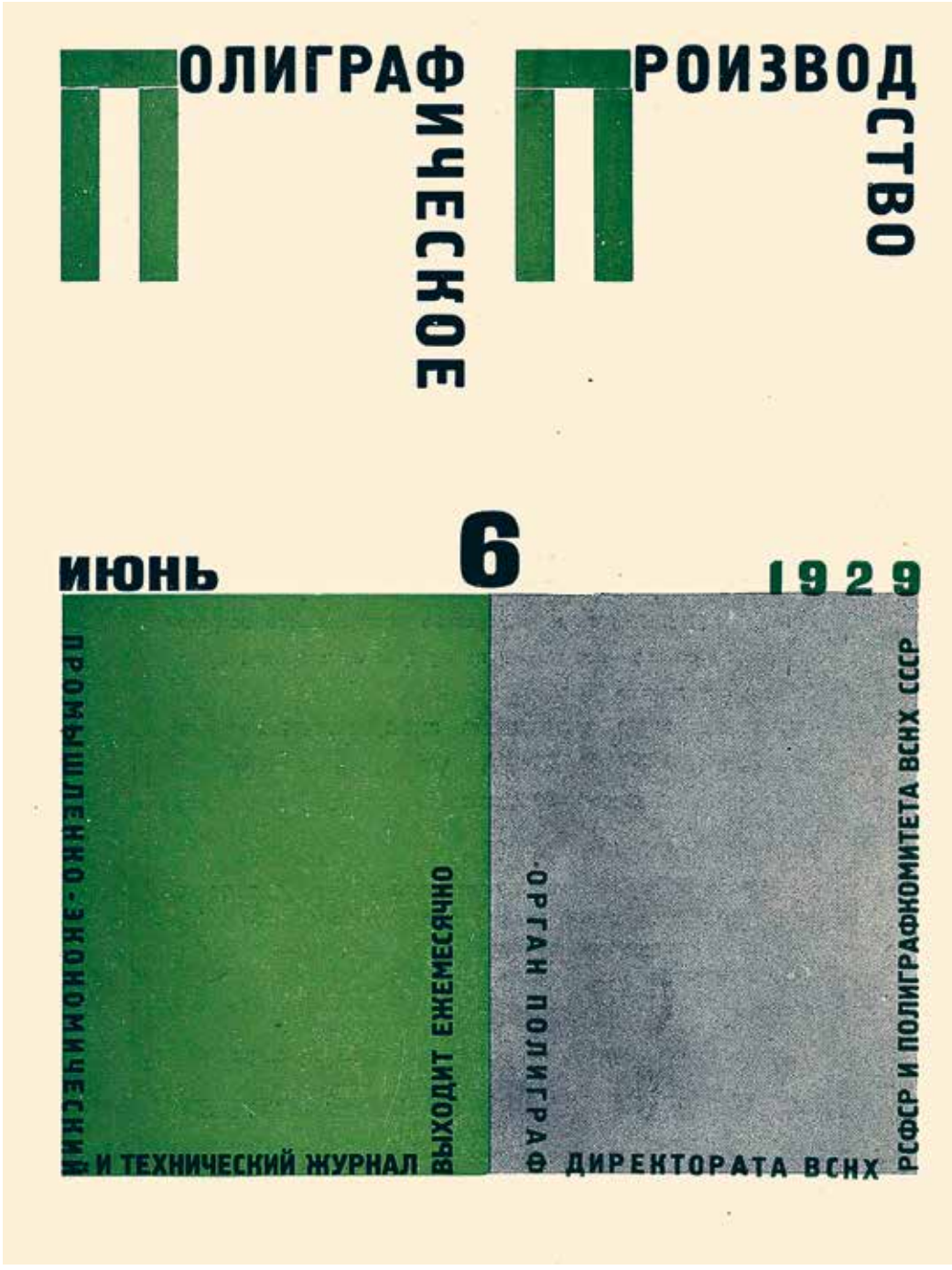
fig. 129 Cover of the first issue of the magazine *Sovetskoye Kino* (Soviet Cinema), graphic design by Varvara Stepanova, 1927.



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fig. 130 Cover of the book *Konstruktivizm* (Constructivism) by Aleksei Gan, graphic design by Aleksandr Rodchenko, Tverskoe izdatel'stvo (Tverskoe Publishing House), Tver 1922.

fig. 131 Cover of issue 6, 1929, of the journal *Poligraficheskoye Proizvodstvo*, (Printing Production), which featured the Russian translation of the first extracts of Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie*.


ПОЛИГРАФИЧЕСКОЕ ПРОИЗВОДСТВО
ИЮНЬ 6 1929
ПРОМЫШЛЕННО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЙ И ТЕХНИЧЕСКИЙ ЖУРНАЛ ВЫХОДИТ ЕЖЕМЕСЯЧНО
ОРГАН ПОЛИГРАФ ДИРЕКТОРАТА ВСНХ РСФСР И ПОЛИГРАФКОМИТЕТА ВСНХ СССР

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like Tschichold at the time, sought to break up with the traditional definition of "book artists", referred to themselves as "book builders".[55]

This first series of texts by Jan Tschichold was translated into Russian by Nikolai Proskurnin, a Soviet printer from Rostov-on-Don. He started as a typesetter in Imperial Russia back in 1906 and later trained at the Königliche Akademie für graphische Künste und Buchgewerbe (Royal Academy of Graphic Arts and Book Production) in Leipzig, like Tschichold himself, before graduating from the Höhere Graphische Bundes-Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt (Imperial Printing Institute) in Vienna in 1912.[56] In the 1920s, Proskurnin established the Donskaia Poligraficheskaia Shkola (Don Regional Printing School) later renamed to Severo-Kavkazskaia Kraevaia Poligraficheskaia Shkola (North Caucasus Regional Printing School) in his hometown, and in 1931 he was promoted to the position of senior research fellow at the Scientific Research Institute of Polygraphy Higher Council of National Economy of the USSR in Moscow. During his tenure, he developed a series of study guides published under the single title *Teoriia Nabora* (Theory of Typesetting), in which he summarised his experience abroad and introduced some of the more modern ideas that were congenial to the principles of the New Typography, for example: "When choosing a font for typesetting books, you need to pay attention to the fact that the font is easy to read. It should have simple forms without any unnecessary curls, additions and curvatures. Its shapes should be clear and distinct. It should not be too thin, but neither should it appear semi-bold".[57]

Furthermore, the highlights from Jan Tschichold's book were loosely paraphrased (with numerous references to the author's name) in the sixth chapter of the textbook *Arkhitektura Knigi* (The Architecture of the Book, 1931) by the technical editor and teacher Lazar Gessen.[58] Between 1926 and 1927, at the Leningrad State Technical School of Printing, Gessen read a course titled "Technical Design of the Book" which later became the basis of a series of publications. The title and content of the book draw a parallel between functionalist trends in architecture and new approaches to the structural layout design of multi-page publications. Notably, the other chapters of the book covered far more conservative examples. It is also interesting that both the book and the journal publications featured comparative examples of the old and the new layouts, which the authors had taken the trouble to adapt for the Russian readers. In particular, these featured texts in a Cyrillic font, which was carefully designed to resemble the original one.

The impact of these publications was particularly evident in the works of the next generation of Soviet Constructivist typographers, most of whom had been able to receive vocational education and training. This is to say that their works displayed a particular focus on typesetting, printing techniques and the specifics of working with printing plates.[59] Essentially, they turned crafting pictorial book and

55 For example, see Lissitzky's signature in Vladimir Mayakovsky's 1923 chapbook *For the Voice* (*Dlia golosa*).

56 Popovian 2018: 349–350. Editor's note: by the time Tschichold attended the Academy in Leipzig, it had been renamed Staatliche Akademie für graphische Künste und Buchgewerbe (State Academy for Graphic Arts and Book Production).

57 "Pri vybore shrifta dlia nabora knig neobhodimo obrashchat vnimanie na to, chtoby shrift byl' legko chitaem. On dolzhen obladat' prostymi formami bez nenuzhnikh zavitushek, dobavlenii i iskrivlenii. Ego formi dolzhni byt' iasny i otchetlivy. On ne dolzhen byt' slishkom tonkim, no i ne dolzhen kazatsia poluzhirnym." Proskurnin 1924: 12.

58 Gessen 1931: 97–113.

59 Gabbasov 2021: 225.

magazine covers using only typesetter's case materials into a true art form.

The list of most notable next generation designers[60] includes a number of figures, such as Solomon Telingater, Nikolai Ilyin, Faik Tagirov, Elbrus Gutnov, Efim Mezhbarg, and Nikolai Sedelnikov.

Solomon Telingater, an outstanding and highly acclaimed Jewish designer and typography theorist, studied in Baku and later at the Moscow's VKhUTEMAS. A member of the Oktyabr (October) creative group, he contributed to designing magazines, such as *SA. Sovremennaia Arkhitektura* (*CA. Contemporary Architecture*) and *Poligraficheskoye Proizvodstvo* (Printing Production), where he was also an editorial board member, and collaborated with El Lissitzky on a catalogue for the *Vsesoiuznaia Poligraficheskaia vystavka* (All-Union Printing Trades Exhibition) and some other projects. One of his most famous early works is the design for Alexander Bezymensky's *Komsomoliya* poetry book (1928).[61]

Nikolai Ilyin, a talented typographer from Nizhny Novgorod, worked for Detgiz (the State publishing house for children's literature) and then became art director of Goslitizdat publishing house. His works were selected for a number of European book fairs and won several awards in London (1923), Paris (1925), Leipzig (1927), Winterthur (1929) and more. In 1931, Tschichold wrote to Rodchenko saying that the cover-to-cover translation of his book should be done by Ilyin and published as early as in 1932, but due to a change in USSR's political landscape, this project was never completed, either.[62]

Faik Tagirov, typographer and educator, was one of the founders and active members of TatLEF (the Tatar branch of the Left Front of the Arts). He was educated at Kazan's ARKhUMAS and Moscow's VKhUTEMAS/VKhUTEIN. Starting in the late 1930s, he held senior positions at various research institutions in Moscow and was in charge of developing new typefaces. He greatly contributed to the development of the Tatar book design and the creation of new typefaces for both the traditional Arabic alphabet and the new Latinised versions developed in the USSR (Yañalif, 1927 and on) and its Cyrillic script variant. His best-known works inspired by the New Typography include book designs for *Baski, Byki, Arabi: Kniga ob Ispanii i Marokko* (Basques. Bulls. Arabs: A Book about Spain and Morocco) by Kasimir Edschmid (1929), a spelling and colouring book *Bezneñ Älifba* (Our A–B–C, 1929) and *New York* (An Outline) by Ivan Kashkin (1933).[63] **(fig. 132)**

Elbrus Gutnov, an Ossetian revolutionary, studied typography in Germany and was yet another member of the *Oktyabr* (October) creative group whose booklets he designed together with Solomon Telingater. He designed typeset-based covers for the *Poligraficheskoye Proizvodstvo* (Printing Production) magazine and the brochure for the *XVI S'ezd VKP(b) v voprosakh I otvetakh, Moscow, OGIZ-Moskovskii rabochii* (16th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, Questions and Answers, OGIZ Moscow) 1930. **(fig. 133)**

Vasilii Elkin, yet another member of *Oktyabr*, was educated at VKhUTEMAS and worked, together with Gustav Klutsis, as art editor for the *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* (Building Moscow) magazine and the Moskovsky Rabochiy (Moscow Workman) publishing house. He was purged in 1934 and sent to work on the construction of the Moscow-Volga canal but was subsequently permitted to return and work as a poster artist for IZOGIZ (State Publishing House of Fine Art).[64]

Efim Mezhbarg, a Jewish typographer born in Kyiv (Ukraine) became

60 Krichevsky 2013–2014a.
61 Konechna 2008: 32–52; Fomin 2015: 25–59.
62 Krichevsky 2013–2014b.
63 Ulemnova 2006: 5–9; Kashkin 1933.
64 Kuvyrkov 2015: 14.

a victim of Stalin's repression. Worked as a technical editor of the *Krasnoarmeets i Krasnoflotets* (Red Army Soldier and Red Navy Seaman) magazine and, together with graphic designer Aleksandr Druzhkov, designed several issues of *Smena* (Change), a magazine aimed at young people.[65] **(fig. 134)**

Nikolai Sedelnikov, a graphic designer who studied at Moscow's VKhUTEMAS, worked as book designer and illustrator for a number of Moscow's major publishing houses, including in cooperation with Solomon Telingater. He designed the catalogues *Periodika SSSR* (USSR Periodicals, 1930) and *Literatura molodoi revolyutsii* (Literature of the Young Revolution, 1931). He was awarded the Grand Prix and a Gold Medal at the world exhibitions in Paris (1937) and New York (1939), as well as other awards.[66] **(fig. 135)**

It is generally accepted that this stage of typography development ended between 1932 and 1934.[67] The dissolution of Moscow's VHUTEMAS/VHUTEIN in 1930, along with the 1932 resolution by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR (Bolsheviks) "On the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organisations" were some of the highlights of the state's clampdown on left-wing (avant-garde) art in the USSR. During Joseph Stalin's totalitarian regime, Soviet art critics were encouraged to condemn any artistic expression that went beyond the arbitrarily established framework of Socialist Realism, castigating it as "bourgeois formalism".[68] Interestingly, for typography, this abrupt about-face meant a return to the classical tradition of book printing, echoing the ideas expressed by Tschichold in his later works.

During the Stalin era, the language policy also took an abrupt turn: the nativisation was scaled back and replaced by Russification – a process that resulted in the dominance of Russian as the language of politics and culture, which prevailed until the collapse of the Soviet Union.[69] Among other things, this may explain why Russian remains the language of professional discussions on Soviet typography to this day.

The plan to convert the country's Cyrillic scripts to Latin was scrapped in 1930, by Stalin's decision. Instead, the state launched a campaign for the conversion of the country's existing scripts to the Cyrillic alphabet – a massive effort that started in 1936 and lasted well into the 1950s (by 1941, new Cyrillic alphabets had been invented for sixty of the sixty-seven languages of the Soviet Union that existed in the written form).[70]

The Revival of New Typography in the Post-War Years

The beginning of the third stage is associated with the death of Joseph Stalin and "the Thaw" – a time of cultural liberalization that followed in the late 1950s and 1960s. The achievements in graphic design made by Soviet avant-garde artists were gradually rehabilitated and adapted, first to the reality of the international mid-century Modernism and then to the emerging Postmodernist trends. In the 1960s, some authors trained in the tradition of 1920s Constructivism – among others, Solomon Telingater – welcomed the opportunity to revisit their past experience. This period also saw the rise of new authors and theorists advocating a functional approach (if less "radical" than that of their counterparts back in the 1920s) to typography – most notably, Volya Lyakhov. The introduction to his *O khudozhestvennom postroenii knigi* (On

65 *Otkrytyy Spisok* n.d.
66 Savenkova 2013: 1–4.
67 Krichevsky 2013–2014a.
68 Kemenov 1937: 20.
69 Martin 2001: 414–431.
70 Only a few languages, including Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Finnish, Georgian, Karelian, Armenian and Yiddish, were excluded from the process. Alpatov 2017: 14.

the Artistic Construction of the Book) whose cover featured a photomontage by El Lissitzky – said, most emphatically, that it was "the first Soviet work to attempt to break down the principles of systematic design of a publication and to describe the main objectives and techniques of functional analysis of the book as a whole and its individual elements".[71]

In 1964, three Soviet book designers – Solomon Telingater, the first Soviet national to win a Gold Medal from the International Gutenberg Society (1963), Vadim Lazursky who won the Gold Medal at the International Book Art Exhibition (IBA) in Leipzig (1959) for his Renaissance-inspired Lazursky antique typeface and Vladimir Favorsky's student Andrei Goncharov – were selected to attend the Bicentennial of the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst (Academy of Fine Arts) in Leipzig. **(fig. 136)** It was there that they met Tschichold for the first time. As recollected by Lazursky, Tschichold was immediately interested in getting to know him and Telingater as former colleagues of Lissitzky. But the very next day, after Tschichold gave his unexpectedly conservative speech, Telingater, who had hoped he had found a like-minded thinker – one who can remember the "turbulent" 1920s – found himself deeply disappointed. A livid and bitter Telingater rushed to Lazursky and spat out: "This one's a renegade!"[72]

Tschichold was no less scandalised by the message of Telingater's report titled "Organisation and Unification of Graphemes of the Alphabets Based on Latin and Greek".[73] He called for revisiting the idea of a universal and cost-efficient alphabet to be used by a number of international languages (including Russian, Bulgarian, Spanish, German, French and English).

Unlike Telingater, Lazursky fully shared Tschichold's new philosophy. He came up to shake Tschichold's hand and said: "You were and are the *enfant terrible* of the 20th century".[74] Tschichold was flattered and gave Lazursky a printed copy of his report. When they were leaving, Tschichold's wife Edith asked Lazursky which of her husband's books he would like to have, and he said, without the slightest hesitation, that we would like a copy of *Die neue Typographie*. She told him that she was not sure whether Jan had any left. Surprisingly, upon his return to Moscow, Lazursky received a signed copy of the book he had asked for, by mail.

Eventually, Lazursky published his own translations of Tschichold's Leipzig speech "The Significance of Tradition in the Art of Typography"[75]

71 "The book that you are about to read is the first Soviet piece that attempts to break down the principles of systematic design of a publication and explicate the main goals and methods of performing a functional analysis of a book as a whole and its individual elements design" (Predlagaemaia chitatelyu kniga iavliaetsia pervoi Sovetskoi rabotoi, v kotoroi delaietsia popytka razobrat' printsipy sistemnogo proektirovaniia izdaniia i rasskazat' ob osnovnikh zadachakh I priiomakh funktsional'nogo analiza knigi v tselom i eio otdel'nykh elementov). Lyakhov 1975: 6.

72 "Ved' on zhe renegat!" (But he is a renegade!) Lazursky 1985: 134.

73 His essay titled "Organisation and Unification of the Alphabetic Graphemes Derived Latin and Greek" appeared in the proceedings published in November 1964 in the German Democratic Republic in the run-up to the Bicentennial of the Leipzig Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst (Academy of Fine Arts). In 1965, it was published in the Soviet Union, as part of issue 11 of *Kniga: Issledovaniia i materialy* (The Book: Research and Materials). The same conference paper was reprinted by the Leipzig-based magazine *Papier und Druck* (Paper and Print) in May 1968, and in July 1968 it appeared in the US on *The Journal of Typographic Research*.

74 "Vy byli i ostayetes' *enfant terrible* XX veka" (You were and remain the *enfant terrible* of the 20th century). Lazursky 1985: 134.

75 "Die Bedeutung der Tradition für die Typographie. Vortrag, gehalten an der Zweihundertjahrfeier der Hochschule für Graphik und Buchkunst zu Leipzig am 9. Oktober 1964." The Russian translation of the original piece was titled "Znachenie traditsii v tipografskom issusstve" (The Importance of Tradition in Typographic Art) and published in volume 6 of *Iskusstvo knigi 1965–1966* (Art of the Book 1965–1966), 1970: 120–129.



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fig. 132 Cover of *Baski, Byki, Araby. Kniga ob Ispanii i Marokko* (Basques, Bulls, Arabs. A Book about Spain and Morocco) by Kasimir Edschmid, graphic design by Faik Tagirov, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo (State Publishing House), Moscow 1929.

fig. 133 Cover of issue 6, 1928, of the journal *Poligraficheskoye Proizvodstvo*, (Printing Production), graphic design by Elbrus Gutnov.

fig. 134 Cover of issue 6, 1931, of the magazine *Smena* (Change), graphic design by Aleksandr Vasilevich Druzhkov and Efim Mezhbarg.


Смена
Тот, кто в условиях обостренной классовой борьбы, в условиях приближающейся последней схватки с капитализмом, пропагандирует в среде пролетариата и трудящегося крестьянства военную грамотность и военные знания — делает поистине большое классовое дело
(А. КОСАРЕВ. Из доклада на IX с'езде ВЛКСМ)
1931
ОГИЗ
Молодая гвардия



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fig. 135 "Rabotnitsa! Uluchshai kachestvo, snizhai sebestoimost, podnimai proizvoditel'nost' truda, povyshai znaniia" (Female Worker! Improve Quality Reduce Costs, Increase Labor Productivity, Improve Knowledge), illustration by Nikolai Sedelnikov, c. 1930. Photo by Jolie Simpson



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fig. 136 Left to right: Jan Tschichold, Solomon Telingater, Andrei Goncharov at the symposium marking the bicentenary of the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst (Academy of Fine Arts) in Leipzig, Old Town Hall, 1964. Photographer unknown

fig. 137 Cover of *Novaya tipografika* (New Typography), Russian edition of Jan Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie*, art direction by Art. Lebedev Studio, Izdatel'stvo Studii Artemiya Lebedeva (Artemiy Lebedev Publishing House), Moscow 2011.

and the article "Free from Arbitrariness Ratios of Book Page and Typesetting Page Sizes"[76] in *Iskusstvo knigi* (Art of the Book) anthology.

Tellingly, Lazursky dared to mention Tschichold's radical ideas of the 1920s and his *Die neue Typographie* only in a brief commentary to the translation published in 1975 and in his own 1985 memoirs. He also informed the readers that, although Tschichold had abandoned his past views and had become an ardent supporter of the classical tradition of book art, many of the ideas of his "Elementary Typography" lived on in modern Switzerland, where "Emil Ruder, [...] Müller-Brockmann and others are credited with the rational and constructive development of this trend".[77]

Another milestone that influenced the evolution of late Soviet graphic design was the 1982 publication in the USSR of the Russian-language edition of Emil Ruder's 1967 classic *Typographie. Ein Gestaltungslehrbuch* (Typography. A Manual of Design).[78] The translation, commentary to the text and cover in Cyrillic were authored by Maxim Zhukov, a brilliant Soviet designer and student of Solomon Telingater. Thanks to his translation, the term *tipografika* has finally gained a foothold in the Russian-speaking professional community, as did the principles of modular design explained in the book.

Finally, in 2011 – two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union – Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie* was published in Russian as a separate edition bearing an accurately translated title. It has since been included in the curriculum of the country's graphic designers.[79] **(fig. 137)**

Conclusion

Although Tschichold never travelled to the USSR, his artistic heritage is intrinsically linked to the history of Soviet graphic design. Inspired by the ideas of the Constructivists of the 1920s, Tschichold created his own style thanks in no small part to the ideas expressed by El Lissitzky and Aleksandr Rodchenko – a fact that is evidenced by a number of chapters he dedicated to the works of his Soviet counterparts. Translated excerpts from Tschichold's original texts were widely circulated in the USSR in the 1929s–1930s and became a major influence for a new generation of Soviet graphic designers. The return to the basic principles of "classical" typography that took place in the USSR in the 1930s–1950s, following a change in the political agenda, temporarily curbed the spread of Tschichold's ideas in the Soviet Union. However, in the 1960s the contacts between Soviet designers and Tschichold were re-established, which not only allowed his new ideas on publishing design traditions to spread among the country's professional communities, but also enabled some of his "old" ideas on New Typography to be revisited.

76 "Willkürfreie Maßverhältnisse der Buchseite und des Satzspiegels" (1962). The Russian translation of the original piece was titled "Svobodniie ot proizvola sootnosheniia razmerov knizhnoi stranitsy i nabornoi polosy" (Free from arbitrary ratios of the sizes of the book page and the typesetting strip) and published in volume 8 of *Iskusstvo Knigi 1968-1969* (Art of the Book 1968–1969) 1975: 172–189.

77 "Shveitsariia iavliaetsia seichas tsitadelyu 'elementarnoi tipografii'. V dele razumnogo i konstruktivnogo razvitiia etogo napravleniia imeet zaslugi Emil Ruder [...] Myuller-Brokman i dr. Lazursky 1985: 172.

78 Zhukov 1982.

79 Tschichold 2011.

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A Mutual Attraction: Tschichold's New Typography and the Emerging Japanese Typography

Mariko Takagi

> That advertisements differing greatly in size and form can be arranged together in a really pleasing way is shown here by two pages from a Japanese newspaper. Its design shows paradoxically that Japanese culture is closer to European than to the North American pseudo-culture. In any case, some of the Japanese advertisements are remarkable for their typographic design. The many-thousand-year-old collective mental attitude of the East reveals itself in the astonishing similarity of this typography to our own. The Japanese, for long masters in the use of space, have also in this area much to teach us. In a book *Japanische Reklame in der Tageszeitung* (Japanese Advertising in Daily Papers) Dr Anna Berliner has written extremely well about this.[1]

With this praise of Japanese typography, Tschichold closes the chapter "Inserate",[2] a critical examination of the contemporary practice of advertising design in newspapers in the 1920s. The richly illustrated, short text in *Die neue Typographie* shows only one Japanese graphic, a double-page spread of *The Tokyo Asahi* from 1926, as the last image of the paragraph.[3] Tschichold's brief statement on Japanese typography is only food for thought and leaves the interested reader hungry, providing only a few hints as an appetiser. **(fig. 138)**

In particular, the claim about the "similarity" between Japanese typography and the New Typography perspective is relevant to this text. The narrative of the following essay is an investigation of the cause and effect of Tschichold's statement. Two scholars from Tschichold's time are of interest to this purpose. Anna Berliner and her publication on Japanese advertising will be used as a reference to investigate what initially moved Tschichold to make his statement on Japanese design. On the contrary, Tschichold's texts' effect on Japanese typography is described by introducing Hiromu Hara and his investigation into modern typography.

Tschichold refers to the publication *Japanische Reklame in der Tageszeitung* (Japanese Advertising in the Daily Newspaper), a comprehensive study compiled by the percep-

1 Tschichold 1998: 201–202.
In the original: "Daß selbst nach Größe und Form sehr verschiedenartige Inserate zu einer in diesem Fall sogar bestechend schönen Gesamtwirkung vereinigt werden können, beweisen die hier abgebildetem zwei Seiten aus einer japanischen Zeitung. Ihre Form zeigt auch, daß, so paradox es klingt, die japanische Kultur der europäischen näher ist als die nordamerikanische Pseudokultur. Übrigens sind einige der japanischen Inserate bemerkenswert durch ihre typographische Gestaltung. Die seit Jahrtausenden kollektive Einstellung des Ostens erweist sich in einer zunächst erstaunlichen Ähnlichkeit dieser Typographie zu unseren heutigen. Die Japaner, von je Meister der Flächengestaltung, haben auch auf diesem Gebiete hervorragende Leistungen zu verzeichnen. In einem Buche *Japanische Reklame in der Tageszeitung* hat Dr. Anna Berliner ausführlich über sie berichtet". Tschichold 1987 (1928): 206.

2 In the English translation by Ruari McLean, the chapter is named "Advertisements". *Ibid.*: 195–202.

3 Tschichold 1987 (1928): 199–205.



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Fig. 138 Two pages from the Japanese newspaper *The Tokyo Asahi*, 1926, shown in Tschichold 1987 (1928); Tschichold writes that he had a subscription to the newspaper. Photo by Niccolò Quaresima

tion psychologist Anna Berliner (1888–1977), published initially in Stuttgart in 1925. It seems evident that this publication was Tschichold's primary source for assessing Japanese typographic design in the 1920s. In fact, at this time, Japanese typography was still in its infancy. Opening the country's borders in the early 1860s marked the beginning of the introduction of hot metal typography and Western-style newspapers to Japan. What Tschichold recognised in the *Asahi* newspaper advertisements was built on the foundation of Western typography. However, it was too early to be based on the New Typography, which only reached Japan through Tschichold's publications. Berliner's publication will be used to reconstruct what Tschichold comprehends as "Japanese typography".

Almost simultaneously, Tschichold influenced the Japanese development of modern typography. As only a few years after his publications "Elementare Typographie" (1925) and *Die neue Typographie* (1928), the aspiring graphic designer, educator, and author Hiromu Hara (1903–1986) discovered his fascination for New Typography through the texts by Tschichold, Moholy-Nagy and Willi Baumeister, and translated them into Japanese. The ideas and concepts of the New Typography began to spread within Japan. This chapter explores the cross-cultural exchange of thoughts between Berliner, Tschichold and Hara.

Anna Berliner (1888–1977)

Anna Berliner (born Meyer) studied psychology focusing on perception in Leipzig and received her PhD under Wilhelm Wundt as the first and only female student. After graduation, she accompanied her husband, the physicist Siegfried Berliner, to Japan in 1913, after he was appointed professor of business administration at the University of Tokyo. During this politically unstable time, Siegfried was sent to military service, followed by a period in captivity. Anna stayed in Japan, applying her expertise in the psychology of visual perception to Japanese advertising design.[4] This research was published in 1925 as *Japanische Reklame in der Tageszeitung* by C. E. Poeschel Verlag, Stuttgart. Since Tschichold refers to Berliner's book in his text, I will briefly introduce and analyse the content and methodology in the following.

Berliner takes a highly systematic approach in her book. In the preface, she explains her method and decision to focus on the genre of newspaper advertising. To introduce the reader to the uniqueness of Japanese design, she explains that she intentionally decided against a comparison with European or American advertising methods. Her analytical text spans the book's first half, in which she repeatedly refers to the second half (pages 49–108), which presents sixty-five plates, using those advertisements as case studies.

After briefly informing the reader about the history and business of Japanese newspaper advertisements, Berliner first explains essential design methods, such as standardisation, stylisation and symbolic motifs. Asymmetry, the inclusion of white space, high black-and-white contrast, distortion and enlargement are layout methods already partly known to Europeans through Ukiyo-e at that time and were, in this case, related to advertising design. Berliner also looks at lettering. This requires a knowledge of language and writing. She points to lettering with pictorial qualities and liberal interpretations of calligraphic styles.

4 Anna Berliner learned Japanese and did not only research advertisement design, but also Japanese traditional arts, such as the tea ceremony. She collected her knowledge in the publication *Der Teekult in Japan* (The tea cult in Japan) of 1930. Besides, she published articles in Japanese newspapers and worked as a judge for a poster design competition organised by Calpis (a milk-based beverage manufacturer).

After describing visual characteristics, Berliner moves on to concepts, the technique of association applied in the advertisements, and developing coherence between design and copy, which we understand nowadays as branding. Berliner thus also describes how advertising works and which tricks are applied to package the advertising message more or less obviously in a visual. Berliner was, therefore, not only a pioneer in investigating Japanese design, but also ahead of her time in design research.

Through her thorough research, Berliner provides international readers access to Japanese culture, its aesthetic principles and design methods in a well-structured manner, refraining from stereotypical portrayals. Berliner's work is an essential contribution to cultural comprehension. For the young Tschichold, this book might have been a gateway to Japanese, if not Asian, visual culture, feeling a common ground for the attitude to aesthetics.

Hiromu Hara (1903–1986) encounters Jan Tschichold

Born in 1903 as the eldest son of a family in the printing industry based in Nagano, Japan, Hiromu Hara was a contemporary of Tschichold (1902–1974). At the age of 15, his family sent him to Tokyo to study the technology of printing at the newly founded Crafts and Printing Department of the Tokyo Furitsu Kogei Gakkō (Tokyo Prefectural College of Industrial Art).[5] The curriculum focused on training print engineers. Through one of his teachers, Takao Miyashita (1890–1972), Hara discovered his genuine interest: lettering and layout. Miyashita was fascinated by international design tendencies and shared his knowledge with his students. After graduating at eighteen, Hara remained at the school as a teacher of lithography and worked in this position for the next twenty-one years, while also working as a design practitioner. Hara is still regarded as a pioneering figure in Japan's early design of posters and books. However, it is not only his practical work that has shaped Japanese graphic design, but even more his theoretical exploration, notably his engagement in translating Western design theory.

The design critic Masaru Katsumi (1909–1983) once described Hara with "shikonshōsai", a term from the Meiji era meaning "soul of a samurai, wisdom of the West". In other words, Hara possessed "the mind of Japanese artisans while mastering Western design theory".[6]

Hara first encountered modern design in 1925, when he was twenty-two years old, upon reading the two-series article by Sadanosuke Nakada on his visit to the Bauhaus in Weimar, published in *Mizue* (Watercolour Painting), one of the leading Japanese art magazines of that time.[7] The report by Nakada was a comprehensive text based not only on what the author had seen, experienced, and felt, but on well-funded journalistic research. The first article describes the curriculum in detail, while the second introduces the teaching staff. Hara later reports that this was the first stimulus for his growing interest, but the "spirit of the movement" was something he could not yet comprehend.[8]

5 The Japanese official naming is Tokyo Furitsu Kogei Gakkō.

6 Citation from an article published in Katsumi 1986: 107. In the same article, Katsumi suggests for Hara the title "the Japanese emperor of book design". Katsumi 1986: 106.

7 Art critic Sadanosuke Nakada and architect Kikuji Ishimoto were the first Japanese visitors to the Bauhaus in Weimar in November 1922. Ishimoto first published his report about this visit in 1924 and Nakada in 1925. Although later visitors published first, the article by Nakada is regarded as the earliest holistic introduction of the Bauhaus to Japan
The article was published in 1925, in the June issue, volume 244 and in the July issue, volume 245 of the *Mizue* magazine.
Takagi 2019.

8 Hara 1970: 84.

About a year later, Hara came across the article "A Lesson in Typography" by Nicholas J. Werner, published in the American magazine *The Inland Printer*, to which Hara's school subscribed. According to Steven Heller, this review on "Elementare Typographie" might have been the first to discuss the New Typography in the United States. Hara described his feeling when seeing the typographical work of El Lissitzky's *Dlia golosa* (For the Voice) from 1922/1923 as "so fresh that it took my breath away", continuing that he learned more about layout and typography from the plates in the article than he could learn from contemporary Japanese textbooks on *zuan* (obsolete Japanese term for graphic design).[9] From then on, this encounter is continuously found in Hara's articles. A few aspects are of interest in Hara's interpretation and introduction in Japanese. Firstly, he notes that the article mentions El Lissitzky by name but not Tschichold.[10] In fact, Werner refers to Tschichold (in this case Ivan Tschichold) even before El Lissitzky and László Moholy-Nagy.[11] Furthermore, Hara does not bring up the critical undertone of Werner's article. Although Werner's text is richly illustrated, Hara only mentions El Lissitzky's *Dlia golosa* in his articles. Besides "Elementare Typographie", the article was illustrated with plenty of, such as *Pro dva kvadrata* (About Two Squares) from 1922, part of the letterhead and one design by Farkas F. Molnár, a cover of the magazine *MA* from an issue of the year 1924.[12] This leads to the assumption that El Lissizky's *Dlia golosa* particularly impressed Hara.

Being an educator, Hara did not keep his discovery of this new typographic expression by El Lissitzky for himself and wrote up an article. However, it took a while before Hara found a way to publish his text on "Elementare Typographie". In October 1929, the article "Oushu ni okeru kappanzuan no shinkeikou" (New Trends in Typographic Design in Europe) under the pseudonym Hiro Hara was published in *PTG*, a bulletin of the Crafts and Printing Department of the Tokyo Furitsu Kogei Gakkō (Tokyo Prefectural College of Industrial Art).[13] Almost two years later, in July 1931, Hara published a small booklet titled *Shinkappanjutsu-Kenkyu* (New Typography Research)[14] which described the New Typography movement. Hara himself took care of the compilation, translation, editing and design. Published in *PTG*, this issue also did not reach the shelves of the general trade.

In 1933, Hara's texts finally reached a broader readership. A series of articles comprising four episodes under the title "E–shashin, moji–katsuji, soshite Typophoto" (Typophoto, Picture – Photo, Letter – Type, and Ty-

9 "I found the typographical work so fresh it took my breath away. [...] In the introductory page of the [...] *Inland Printer*, I learned a lot about new typesetting design, or what we would now call layout and typography. There was no way of learning so much from the *zuan* books of those days." Hara 2005: 26.

10 Thus, Hara describes that he first learned Tschichold's name when he held the book *Die neue Typographie* in his hands. *Ibid*.

11 Heller 2019.

12 *Ibid*.

13 Hara 1929. PTG was published by educators and students of the research centre of the Furitsu Kogei Gakkō Printing Division Research Group, founded in 1918. Kawahata 2002: 47.

14 The publication includes four translations by Hara of the following original texts: László Moholy-Nagy, "Die neue Typographie", in *Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar 1919–1923*, 1923; Moholy-Nagy, "Zeitgemäße Typographie. Ziele, Praxis, Kritik", in *Offset. Buch und Werbekunst*, 7, 1926; Willi Baumeister, "Neue Typographie", in *Die Form*, 10, July 1926; Jan Tschichold, "Was ist und was will die neue Typografie?", in *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung*, Wedekind, Stuttgart 1930. Hara contributed the text "the technic of Elementare Typographie, a revised version of his first article on elementary typography from 1929. However, he did not include his personal note rejecting Tschichold's thesis of abandoning upper-case letters. The individual translations previously appeared one after the other in the *PTG* bulletin until compiling them into a single volume, a book printed in black and white, B6 format with forty pages.

pophoto) subsequently appeared in the *Koga* magazine[15] between February and May. Each text focuses on a particular aspect. The first text, only covering two pages, is a general introduction to the series. It discusses the relation between pictures and text as a visual communication system, contextualising the history of letterpress printing and Latin letter typeface design. The second eight-page contribution is richly illustrated and shows advertising graphics and magazine covers designed using typography and photography in the US, Germany, USSR, and Japan. All images were chosen by Hara for showing in this article, as none appears in *Die neue Typographie*. Hara only mentions the name of John Heartfield, Herbert Bayer and El Lissitzky in the caption. The other seven images are anonymous; only the country of origin is stated. On the text level, this article focuses on photography applied to photomontages and photojournalism.

While the fourth text summarises the central statements, the third text focuses on typography and is examined in more detail in the following. Hara begins this third article with a quote from Paul Renner, *Mechanisierte Grafik*, in which Renner states that all radically new inventions first meet rejection. From there, Hara moves on to a brief discourse on the history of typefaces and arrives at the choice of grotesque over Fraktur by the leaders of the New Typography movement. Citing Tschichold's article "Wo stehen wir heute?" (Where Are We Today?),[16] Hara quotes the first part of the paragraph on typefaces, in which Tschichold refers to grotesque as the style of the present. Next, Hara relates this to the situation in Japanese typography, where the so-called *goshikku-tai* is equated to the sans serif of Latin letters. Hara believes that Japanese *goshikku* is far from mature as a style, with many disadvantages compared to the longer-established mincho-tai (comparable to serif typefaces). Hara sees the core of this problem in the nature of the Japanese writing system: despite the varying complexity of the characters, they all need to fit into the same space. In particular, the complex characters, with their many and dense strokes, contradict the idea of simplicity and legibility inherent in the concept of the grotesque style.[17] And so, Hara also refers to Tschichold who, in *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung* from 1930, mentions the use of the Antiqua typeface for text as one option; in Japanese terms, this would be the *mincho-tai*.

Returning to the article from 1933, Hara disagrees with Tschichold on one point, namely the abandonment of upper-case letters. After citing Tschichold's argument and naming Jacob Grimm (1785–1863, who Tschichold also calls an early advocate of this thesis in *Die neue Typographie*), Adolf Loos (1870–1933), Stefan George (1868–1933) and the Bauhaus as proponents of the lower-case debate, Hara contradicts Tschichold on abolishing capital letters and argues his objection to the deterioration of readability.[18] Adding that from the Japanese perspective, having two alphabets (upper and lower case) is not a "big deal".[19] Hara does not elaborate on this statement and ends the article by pointing out that further research concerning typography and typesetting is still needed.

15 Founded in 1932 by photographers Yasuzo Nojima (1889–1964), Iwata Nakayama (1895–1949) and Ihei Kimura (1901–1974). Publishing only eighteen issues until 1933, the magazine became one of the leading media to present the new photographic approach in Japan, delivering translations of international texts alongside photographic works.

16 Tschichold's article was published in February 1932 in the *Typographische Mitteilungen*, just one year ahead of Hara's publication in Koga.

17 Hara 1933: 50–51.

18 "Regarding letters, Tschichold argues for the elimination of capital letters. The exclusive use of lower-case letters makes a text easier to read (with which I disagree), easier to learn, more economical, and more cost-effective, so that valueless and useless elements can be discarded." Hara 1929: 4.

19 Hara 1933: 51.

However, the hybridity of the Japanese writing system, consisting of four scripts – *hiragana, katakana,* and *kanji* (and Latin letters, which Hara did not mention) remained a matter of concern to Hara until the 1960s.

> The structure of kanji is still complex, and creating typefaces of distinctive design will only lead to poor readability. And the combination of *hiragana, katakana* – characters from very different backgrounds – makes their unified stylisation very difficult. […] In short, this is the problem of the Japanese script.[20]

All four texts have in common that Hara refers to German or English sources[21] and applies these theories to the conditions of Japanese culture, writing system and history. The broad referencing shows Hara's academic approach. The four articles reflect his continuous research on the New Typography.[22] Although Tschichold's publication from 1928 is undoubtedly the main resource, Hara's texts are not simply a summary or translation: he takes a clear stand.

The reference to well-known Japanese examples supports the readers' understanding and emphasises Hara's role as a critical figure in the early dissemination of Tschichold's work in Japan. On the other hand, it also shows that Hara sought arguments to adequately apply his new findings to the Japanese writing system. Therefore, he can be seen as a leading contributor to the Japanese New Typography movement.

Already proposed in *Shinkappanjutsu-Kenkyu* in 1931, Hara suggests that Japanese typographers should develop their own New Typography adapted to the unique writing system:

> We have much to learn from this movement in Europe. But their typography cannot be instantly applied to ours. In particular, the question of script and type, which arises from differences in writing systems, makes a decisive distinction in the concrete application of their theories. We must have our own new typography.[23]

The text by Hara is not a simple translation or report, as he connects the content to the Japanese character environment and typography and even raises his opinion. This is particularly interesting because it shows that Hara did not simply adopt Tschichold's theses and the aesthetics of the New Typography. Rather, he questions Tschichold's theories and critically reflects on what and how the ideas apply to the Japanese writing system. Hara was aware of being selective in the representation. In 1970, he stated:

> I thought that what I had acquired was a cultural technology for communication, and […] maybe I selectively kept what suited me from my previous Tschichold and Bauhaus studies.[24]

A question remains unanswered. Tschichold's statement about Japanese typography and advertising designs shown in the publication *Die neue Tupographie* remained uncommented upon by Hara. It is hard to imagine that it escaped Hara's

20 Hara 2005: 119. First printed in *Annual of Advertising Art in Japan*, Bijutsushuppan-sha, 1961.

21 In the first text, Hara is referring to Otto L. Bettmann's "The Relationship of Word and Picture" and Jan Tschichold "Photographie und Typographie" in *Die neue Typographie*. In the second, he refers to Franz Roh and William Morris, as well as Tschichold.

22 In February 1927, Hara bought the catalog *Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar 1919–1923*, which included the short text "Die neue Typographie" by Moholy-Nagy and deepened his understanding of the movement. Kawahata 2002: 44.

23 Hara 1931.

24 Hara 1970: 89. (English translation by the present author).

attention. Was the silence a deliberate decision? How this is to be evaluated is another interesting question.

Design is about elaborating a solution to a specific problem. As a discipline of design, this also applies to typography. In the case of intercultural inspiration, a "translation" takes place. Solutions worked out in the context of one culture cannot simply be adopted and applied by another, they can only serve as a source of inspiration. This is especially true for applications in typography when it comes to two different writing systems.

The poet, playwright, memoirist and actor Hiroshi Kashiwagi (1922–2019) once aptly said, "Hiromu Hara can be described as a designer who established the style of Japanese design while remaining aware of developments in modern design in the West".[25] Hara was the first to introduce Tschichold's *Die neue Typografie* in Japan. From then on, Hara's lifelong work as a designer, educator and author of countless texts on graphic design was shaped by his exploration of Modernism in typography. Hara was exclusively interested in *Die neue Typographie*, this particular phase of Tschichold's work. Tschichold's return to traditional typographic values and the contradictory nature of this step never found a way into Hara's recitations and reviews of Tschichold.[26]

Conclusion

Anna Berliner closes her preface with the words, "It is a joyful task for me to show that, despite foreign influence, something of value has arisen based on an old culture".[27] This assessment depicts not only the Japanese newspaper advertisements of the early 1920s and the design thinking and practice of Hara, but also the practice of "refinement", a Japanese cultural technique often misinterpreted as plagiarism or copying.[28] The term refinement can be defined as

> The ability to assimilate elements from a "foreign culture", blend them with one's own culture, translate them using one's own referential framework and incorporate them into one's own culture. [...] In refinement, the "Japanese" is not replaced by the Western ("foreign" and/or "new"), but rather the "foreign" positive impulse is adapted and absorbed by the Japanese culture. The original Japanese is enhanced and enriched by the "foreign" influence. Thus, refinement is not about adapting Japanese culture to the "foreign" but rather about assimilating the "foreign" impact into the Japanese culture.[29]

Hara thoroughly studied Tschichold's writings and designs in the spirit of the New Typography, keeping a critical mind before applying it to his

25 Kashiwagi 2005: 77.

26 Yamamoto 2013: 122. Starting with Hara's introduction of Tschichold, there has been constant interest in Tschichold's design and writing in Japan. In March 2013, the GGG Gallery in Tokyo hosted the exhibition *Jan Tschichold / Yan Chihyōruto*, with his life's work on display. In the exhibition catalogue, Taro Yamamoto summarises the Japanese review history of Tschichold in his text "Jan Tschichold in Japan".

27 "Daß tatsächlich, trotz fremden Einflusses, auf alter Kulturgrundlage etwas Eigenes, Wertvolles entstanden ist, das zu zeigen ist mir eine freudige Aufgabe". Berliner 1925: Vorwort (Foreword).

28 Copying or plagiarism is an old accusation that refers to the first encounters between Japan and the West. One example is Matthew Calbraith Perry, who wrote down the following observation of the Japanese between 1852 and 1854: "They are exceedingly quick in observing any improvement brought in among them by foreigners, soon make themselves masters of it, and copy it with great skill and exactness". Perry 1856: 50.

29 "Dabei handelt es sich um eine Fähigkeit, Versatzstücke einer 'fremden Kultur' aufzunehmen, mit der eigenen Kultur zu vermengen, unter der Anwendung des eigenen Referenzrahmens zu übersetzen und sich zu eigen zu machen. [...]
Das Japanische wird im Refine nicht durch das Westliche ('Fremde' und/oder 'Neue') ersetzt, sondern viel eher wird der 'fremde' positive Impuls der japanischen Kultur angepasst und aufgenommen. Das 'Eigene' wird durch das 'Fremde' aufgewertet und bereichert.
Demnach geht es im Refine nicht etwa um die Angleichung der japanischen Kultur an das 'Fremde', sondern viel eher um die Adaption des 'Fremde' in die japanische Kultur."
Takagi 2012: 422–423.

typographic work based on the Japanese writing system. This led Hara to become a pioneer in modern Japanese typography, which Naomichi Kawahata calls "New Typography made in Japan".[30]

On the other hand, Tschichold's interest in Japan, traced in the short section of the chapter "Inserate" in *Die neue Typographie*, was not a fleeting mood. His interest in Japan (and China) has emerged repeatedly. The images of the article "Japanische Typographie, Flaggen und Zeichen"[31] published in 1928, show trademarks that let us assume Tschichold owned an issue of the magazine *Present-day Japan* in 1926.[32] Tschichold's interest was not limited to visual appearances but also included printing techniques. *Der chinesische und der japanische mehrfarbige Holztafeldruck, technisch* (Chinese and Japanese Multicolour Woodblock Printing, Technical), published in 1959, shows Tschichold's continuing interest. Similar to Hara, who seemed to have found a common sense or attitude towards design in *Die neue Typographie*, Tschichold may have found it in the Japanese visual culture.

30 Kawahata 2003: 9.

31 The article in English "Japanese typography, flags and marks" was published in issue 2: 28–29 of the Graphische Berufsschule in Munich 1928.

32 During a visit to the Tschichold Archive of the National Library in Leipzig in May 2023, the present author discovered the year 1926 and text elements "NT-DAY JAPAN" on the edges of torn-out symbols (shown in the article mentioned above). These elements suggest the magazine *Present-Day Japan* as the source of the symbols.

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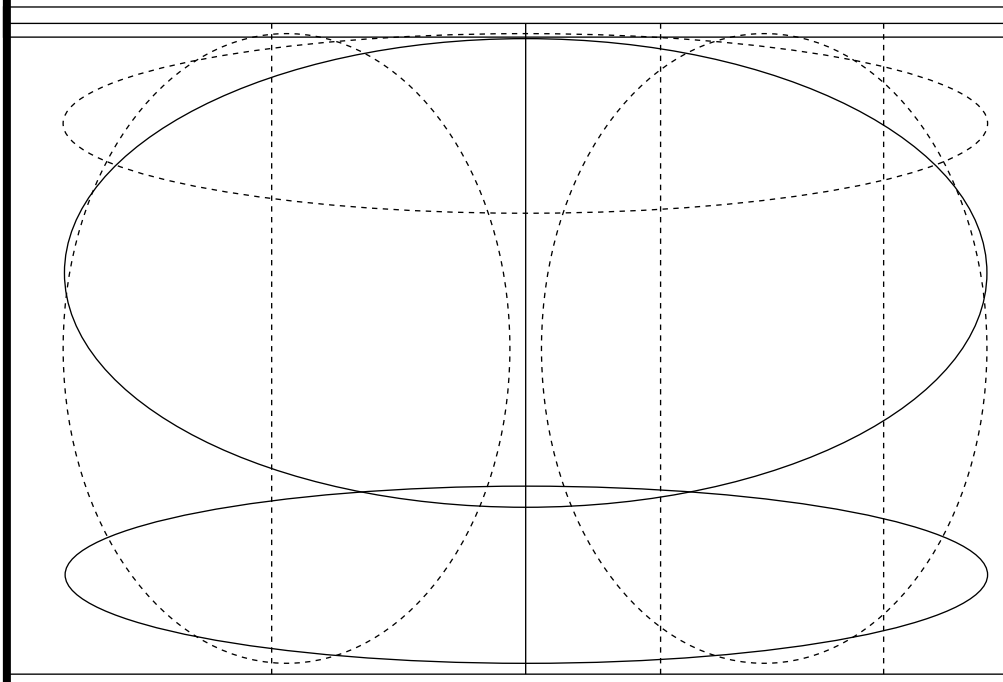
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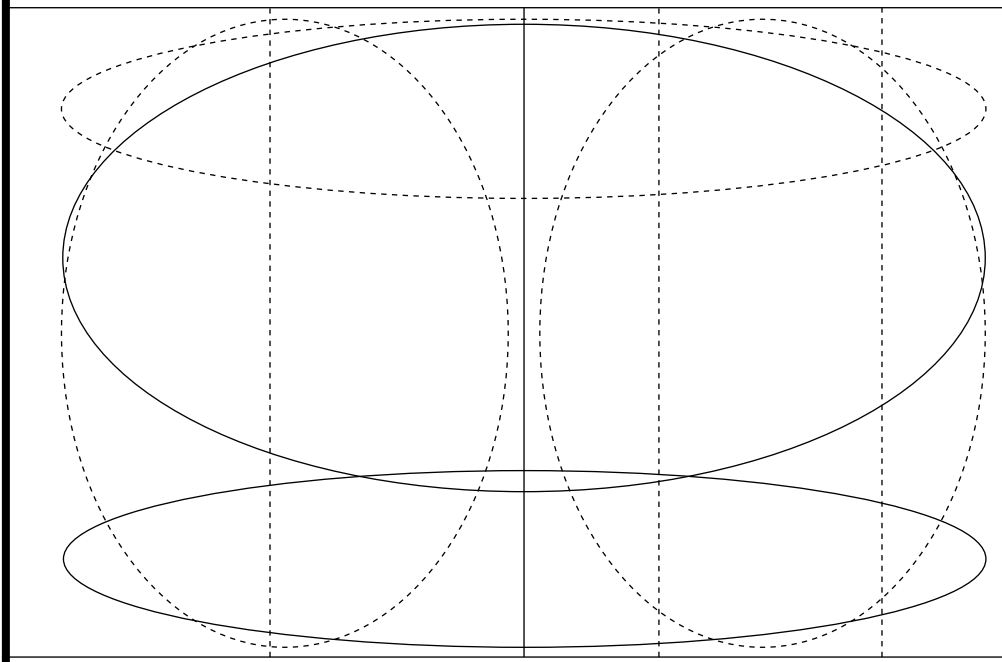
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AFTERMATHS



"A Mystical Source That Has Not Been Read": Jan Tschichold and New Typography in Post-War South Korea, 1977–2023

Yongkeun Chun

This chapter examines the impact of Jan Tschichold and New Typography in post-war South Korean design.[1] Designers and design historians in Korea generally agree that Sang-soo Ahn (b. 1952), the internationally renowned typographic designer who is often considered "the father of contemporary Korean type design",[2] was responsible for the introduction of Tschichold to the country. In 1980 Ahn first translated into Korean Tschichold's *Asymmetric Typography* (1967), the English-language edition of *Typographische Gestaltung* (1935), and published it as a series of articles in *Ggumim* (Decoration), one of the earliest design magazines in post-war Korea.[3] This was the first time that Tschichold's name and typographical theory reached Korean designers through a Korean-language publication.

About three decades later, by the early 2010s, Tschichold had become a *myth* or an *icon* in Korean design, as the *grand master* of typography and a *precursor* to the Swiss International Style.[4] But a renewed interest in Tschichold also emerged among some Korean designers and scholars. In 2013, the editor at Workroom Press in Seoul, Hwalsung Park, translated into Korean Christopher Burke's *Active Literature. Jan Tschichold and New Typography*, a book that revealed more nuanced stories behind the myth of Tschichold.[5] In 2014, Jinsu Ahn, a typographer based in Basel, translated the German edition of *Typographische Gestaltung* directly into Korean, providing a more accurate knowledge of the original.[6] The same year, the Korean Society of Typography (KST), one of the most influential groups of typographers and graphic designers in Korea, published a special issue of its journal, *LetterSeed*, dedicated to Tschichold (hereafter referred to as *LetterSeed* 10).[7] *Active Literature* and *LetterSeed* 10 shared the purpose of demystifying Tschichold and providing a deeper understanding of his typographic design and theory. Considering that in 2007 the editor and typographer Robin Kinross, in his foreword to *Active Literature*, called for a move "towards a critical

1 The significance of Tschichold in North Korea may be an interesting topic to explore, but due to my limited knowledge and access to North Korean material, I focus on South Korea. In this chapter "Korea" refers to South Korea.

2 Fu 2019. For a biographical account of Ahn, see Kang 2017.

3 The series was published from July 1980 to May 1981 under the title, "Yan Chiholteu ui bidaechingjeok taipogeurapi" (Jan Tschichold's Asymmetric Typography). Jun 2017b: 84–85.

4 Burke and Park 2015: 198.

5 Burke 2013.

6 Tschichold 2014.

7 Since 2013, the Korean Society of Typography has published *LetterSeed* bilingually in Korean and English. The society also re-publishes its journal in book form. In this chapter I reference the English texts in the book version of the special issue, Korean Society of Typography 2015.

understanding of Tschichold's work", the tendency found in the Korean design field in 2013 and 2014 may have been a response to design scholarship in Europe.[8]

In this chapter, I examine these key publications and related figures that have played significant roles in shaping the understanding of Tschichold in Korea. I aim to shed light on how Korean designers were introduced to Tschichold, how they accepted or responded to his practice and theory of typography and how their meanings may have changed, especially before and after the early 2010s. By tracing the significance of Tschichold in Korea, a lesser-known area in English-speaking design scholarship, I also aim to provide a foundation for comparative approaches to Modernist typography and contribute to a more nuanced and global understanding of graphic design history.

Sang-soo Ahn and the "Yellow Book"

About a decade after *Typographische Gestaltung* was published in *Ggumim*, in 1991, Ahn revised the translation and published a Korean edition in book form.[9] **(fig. 139)** It was the first book to be published by Ahn Graphics, the design studio and publisher that Ahn had founded in 1985.[10] In the translator's postscript he wrote:

> I was captivated by the world of typography after reading this book, a classic on typography. Finding a dusty and small copy of *Asymmetric Typography* in the corner of an imported bookstore in Mugyo-dong in 1977 was an encounter of serendipity. [...] This book was written according to the time in 1935. But apart from some technical factors, most of it is still applicable today. His [Tschichold's] timeless insight is astonishing.[11]

Although by 1977 the original edition of *Typographische Gestaltung* was more than forty years old, Ahn was fascinated by Tschichold's perspective on typography and found it relevant for typographic design in *Hangeul*, or Korean script. In an interview with the designer Byung-jo Kim in 2014, Ahn even recalled that "everything seemed to be correct to my eyes".[12] Ahn also noted that through the book he was able to "see the flow from Europe through Japan to Korea" of principles and terminologies of typesetting commonly adopted in Korea.[13] Because modern printing technologies were introduced to Korea mostly during the period of Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945), printing and typography in post-war Korea was still heavily influenced by Japanese standards.

Having discovered what he thought were the origins of modern typography, Ahn attempted a more theoretical approach to design and presented editorial designs that were new to Korean publishing. In an article he wrote in 1981 in *Dijian* (Design), the best-selling design magazine in Korea, Ahn argued that designing a book was more a matter of "communication" than "ornament" and the goal was to "make the readers understand and get interested in" the publication.[14] Here Ahn was repeating Tschichold's view that New Typography should prioritise clarity and function over ornament, to make the publication easier to understand and serve the readers.[15]

Ahn also applied Tschichold's typographic principles to some of his works in the early 1980s. The edito-

8 Kinross 2007: 7.
9 Tschichold 1991.
10 AG n.d.
11 Tschichold 1993: 180.
12 Ahn and Kim 2015: 216.
13 *Ibid.*: 213.
14 Ahn 1981: 12.
15 Tschichold 1993: 30.

rial design of the cultural magazine *Madang* (Yard), for which Ahn served as art director, was a result of such an influence.[16] **(figs. 140–141)** Most significantly, Ahn set most of the texts in the magazine flush left – justified is the standard in Korean-language typography – and used coloured photographs abundantly. Graphic designer and historian Kay Jun aptly suggests that the use of high-quality and carefully edited photography, combined with fresh typesetting techniques, gave *Madang* a clean and distinctive look that set it apart from popular magazines published in Korea at the time.[17] She argues convincingly that Ahn's designs for *Madang* were a practical pursuit of functional and mechanised hangeul typography, which laid a foundation for his later, more experimental works from the late 1980s.[18]

Tschichold's name and typographical theory slowly gained attention among Korean designers alongside Ahn's career as a prolific designer and educator. From 1982 to 2012, Ahn taught visual design at Hongik University, one of the most prominent institutions for design education in Korea.[19] At the school, he instructed students to read the Korean edition of *Typographische Gestaltung* and, regarding the book's influence, commented that "Tschichold must have influenced on their typography works either directly or indirectly".[20] From the 1990s, *Typographische Gestaltung* was repeatedly recommended by design magazines like *Dijain*.[21] The book gradually became a standard text on typography for Korean designers and design students more generally.[22] Among some designers, it even earned a nickname, the "yellow book", because of the colour of the cover.[23] A strong association between Ahn and Tschichold also persisted in Korea, as Ahn continued a successful career and earned international recognition as a pioneer of Korean typography.[24]

Active Literature and *LetterSeed 10*

In the foreword to *LetterSeed* 10, designer Jee-hyun Kim wrote: "A Korean version of a book [about Tschichold] was recently published. This would be the right time to honour him", indicating that the special issue of the journal was partly influenced by the publication of *Active Literature* in Korean.[25] Byung-jo Kim, who edited the special issue, wrote more provocatively: "Jan Tschichold made me have questions: 'Why still Jan Tschichold?' 'Why only talk about him?' I had doubts and tedium before preparing this issue", expressing his frustration with the idolised understanding of Tschichold.[26] He further explained the motive behind the special issue, writing:

> Tschichold's achievement is truly stupendous. His works and texts will forever remain classics representing the era, and we will still continue to read him. But perhaps we could create a work while using him as an apparatus for introspection rather than a goal to follow, because we cannot stay here forever. I would like to look back into that work one day, and I wish to find this very publication somewhere in the opening passage of that work.[27]

16 Ahn and Kim 2015: 216.
17 Jun 2017a: 264.
18 *Ibid*.: 264.
19 Ahn left the school in 2012 and founded PaTI (Paju Typography Institute), an alternative design school. Jeon 2012: 141.
20 Byung-jo Kim, who studied at Hongik University, suggested that "students were influenced by Ahn Sang-soo not Tschichold who influenced Ahn Sang-soo." Ahn and Kim 2015: 219–220.
21 Kim, B. 2015a: 164–179.
22 Jun 2017b: 84.
23 Kim, D. 2015: 296.
24 Ahn became a member of AGI (Alliance Graphique Internationale) in 1991 and was vice-president of Icograda (International Council of Graphic Design Associations) from 1997 to 2001. In 2000 he convened Icograda's congress in Seoul and in 2007 received the Gutenberg Prize from Leipzig. AGI n.d.
25 Kim, J. 2015: 6.
26 Kim, B. 2015b: 8.
27 *Ibid.*

To trigger such new approaches, *LetterSeed* 10 included various contents that explored different aspects of Tschichold and his influence in Korea, such as research articles on the Sabon typeface and the 1946 debate between Tschichold and Max Bill, interviews with Sang-soo Ahn and Christopher Burke, reproductions and reviews of Tschichold-related publications and a printed "exhibition" of graphic design works by KST members paying homage to Tschichold.

While diverse material was gathered in the special issue, contributors also acknowledged the lack of substantial knowledge about Tschichold. Pointing out that until 2013 *Typographische Gestaltung* was the only book by Tschichold translated into Korean and that "a meaningful academic book on him" had not been published in Korea, designer Dong-shin Kim suggested that Tschichold had been "a mystical source that has not been read".[28] The subsequent publications of *Active Literature*, the new edition of *Typographische Gestaltung* and *LetterSeed* 10 between 2013 and 2014 provided richer and more in-depth information about Tschichold beyond the "yellow book". Then we might ask: have these publications changed how Korean designers understand Tschichold? Did the designers actually demystify and examine him more critically, or use "him as an apparatus for introspection"? Has Tschichold "been read"?

An Interview with Sung Min Choi and Hwalsung Park

To answer the questions posed above, I interviewed two practitioners who have played important roles in further introducing Tschichold into Korean design in the 2010s. Byung-jo Kim noted that he felt that the Korean editions of Robin Kinross's *Modern Typography: An Essay in Critical History* (1992)[29] and Burke's *Active Literature* "made the illusion of Tschichold disappear".[30] The former was translated by Sung Min Choi of the graphic design duo Sulki and Min and the latter by editor Hwalsung Park of Workroom Press.[31] Choi and Park certainly cannot represent all those involved in typography and graphic design in Korea, but their views give us insight into how practitioners in the field experienced the impact of Tschichold from the 1990s to the 2020s.[32]

Choi and Park both contend that myths or illusions around Tschichold in Korea have not disappeared.[33] Choi thinks that the myth around Tschichold, if there was such a thing, "completely lacked substance". Tschichold's name may have been familiar to many Korean designers, but his design, theory and achievements were hardly examined or incorporated into their work. Park also explains that Tschichold may have been better known among some designers and students directly related to Sang-soo Ahn, such as those at Hongik University or Ahn Graphics, but his name was usually mentioned superficially as a subject in Korean design and publishing. He thinks that the myth around Tschichold itself, rather than being formed in Korea, was made in Euro-America

28 Kim, D. 2015: 297.

29 Kinross 2009.

30 Ahn and Kim 2015: 221.

31 Choi is a member of the KST, and although he was not directly involved in the publication of *LetterSeed* 10, he has incorporated historical perspectives in his work and has written and translated many texts on graphic design history, including Burke 2011, Kinross 2009 and Kinross 2018. Park is editor-in-chief at Workroom Press, the publishing house of the design studio Workroom.

32 I conducted the interview with Sung Min Choi and Hwalsung Park on 20 April 2023 at Choi's studio in Jongno-gu, Seoul. Choi and Park 2023.

33 Quotations in this section, unless noted otherwise, are from Choi and Park 2023.



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fig. 139 Front cover of Jan Tschichold's *Taipogeurapik dijain* (Typographische Gestaltung), translated by Sang-soo Ahn, Ahn Graphics, Seoul 1991. Designed by Se-young Lee. Photo by Yongkeun Chun

fig. 140 Front cover of *Madang* (Yard) cultural magazine, February 1982. Designed by Sang-soo Ahn. Photo by Yongkeun Chun

fig. 141 Layout design of *Madang* cultural magazine, February 1982, pp. 76–77. Designed by Sang-soo Ahn. Photo by Yongkeun Chun



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fig. 142 Sulki and Min, “Being Tschichold”, in *LetterSeed*, 10 (Jan Tschichold), 2015, pp. 48–49. Offset lithography.

and then imported to Korea. According to Choi and Park, Tschichold and New Typography in Korea can be better described as neglected rather than mystified.

Park's translation of *Active Literature* in 2013 has partly contributed to overcoming such an ignorance about Tschichold, but he explains that he translated the book more because Workroom was trying to establish itself as a publisher specialising in design and Burke's book was a well-researched one, not because he thought that Tschichold was particularly relevant to design in Korea at the time.[34] He also believes that, given the poor sales of the book for the past decade, only few people know, or were willing to know about Tschichold, even to the extent described in *Active Literature*. Choi and Park point out that, considering Tschichold's relative fame as a Modernist designer from the 20th century, ignorance about him alludes to a more general disinterest in design history in Korea.

Regarding *LetterSeed* 10, Choi recalls that Byung-jo Kim played a leading role in publishing the KST's journal at the time and was interested in historical matters, so the special issue on Tschichold may have been affected by Kim's personal academic interest.[35] But Choi found the proposed critical re-examination of Tschichold to be somewhat "out of the blue" at the time, as there had been little examination of the designer in the first place. He explains that Sulki and Min's contribution to the special issue, "Being Tschichold", a pair of photographs featuring the duo posing like Tschichold in one of his famous portraits, was "a little bit like a joke" that subtly expressed their doubt about the significance of Tschichold in Korean design. **(fig. 142)** He acknowledges that academic archiving and research gathered in the special issue are certainly substantial and meaningful, but he is unconvinced that they led to a more critical understanding of Tschichold.

Choi and Park also agree that Tschichold may have become even more irrelevant or uninteresting in Korea in the past decade, where younger designers and design students now tend to seek references within Korea, not from Europe, the US or Japan, as has been the case for decades in the post-war years. They think that this may be due to the cultural confidence that the younger generation of Koreans has developed, but it is also limiting their interest in Western historical references like Tschichold's New Typography. Despite their generally sceptical view towards the influence of Tschichold and New Typography in Korea, Choi and Park do not dismiss their significance completely. They think that if objects designed by Tschichold himself – not just reproduced images and theoretical texts – that show the complexity and diversity of his works become accessible in Korea in the form of exhibitions, they may attract fresh interest of design researchers and practitioners.

Rediscovering Tschichold's Relevance in Korea

Tschichold and his earlier Modernist typographic principles were introduced to Korea by Sang-soo Ahn, but their direct influence on graphic design practice was relatively short-lived. By the time *Typographische*

34 Since then, Workroom Press has published in Korean biographies of some key designers that are lesser-known in Korea than Tschichold, such as Paul Renner, the designer of the typface Futura (Burke 2011), and Hiromu Hara, the influencial typographer and graphic designer in 20th-century Japan (Kawahata 2017). More recently, Workroom-Specter, the imprint founded jointly by Workroom and Sulki and Min, published the Korean edition of Christopher B. Wilson's *Richard Hollis Designs for the Whitechapel* (Wilson 2021).

35 Unfortunately, Byung-jo Kim passed away in 2022 and I rely on his writings as reference.

Gestaltung reached a wider range of Korean designers in 1991, Ahn himself had moved from the functionalist design style presented through *Madang* to more experimental designs, symbolised by his "non-rectangular" (*talne-moggol*) *hangeul* Ahnsangsoo typeface and "avant-garde" art direction for the magazine *Bogoseo/bosogeo* (Report/report).[36] Nonetheless, Tschichold remained an important figure in the following decades in Korea, but mostly as a name or an image, without substantial research or critical adoption of his theories. Some texts published in the early 2010s offered a more multi-faceted knowledge on Tschichold, but as Sung Min Choi and Hwalsung Park point out, these approaches by more research-oriented practitioners had limited impact on the wider field of typraphy and graphic design. It seems that Tschichold generally remains "unread" in Korea.

Despite the doubts about their relevance to design in Korea, texts by or about Tschichold continue to be translated into Korean.[37] How these newer publications will impact and be accepted by younger generations of Korean researchers and designers remains to be seen. Choi wrote in 2014 that there is no need for designers in Korea to know Tschichold's principles of typography because many of them "have become useless" in contemporary Korean typography and others have been "accepted as common sense".[38] To rediscover Tschichold's relevance in Korea, in addition to translating works published elsewhere, original historical research into how his design principles became useless or how some others were slowly absorbed in Korean design is necessary.

36 See Noh 2017; Kim, B. 2017.
37 Bosshard 2017; Tschichold 2022.
38 Choi 2014: 152.

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The Unpublished Chinese Edition of *Die neue Typographie* and the Legacy of Jan Tschichold in China

Yun Wang

The Unpublished Chinese Edition of *Die neue Typographie*

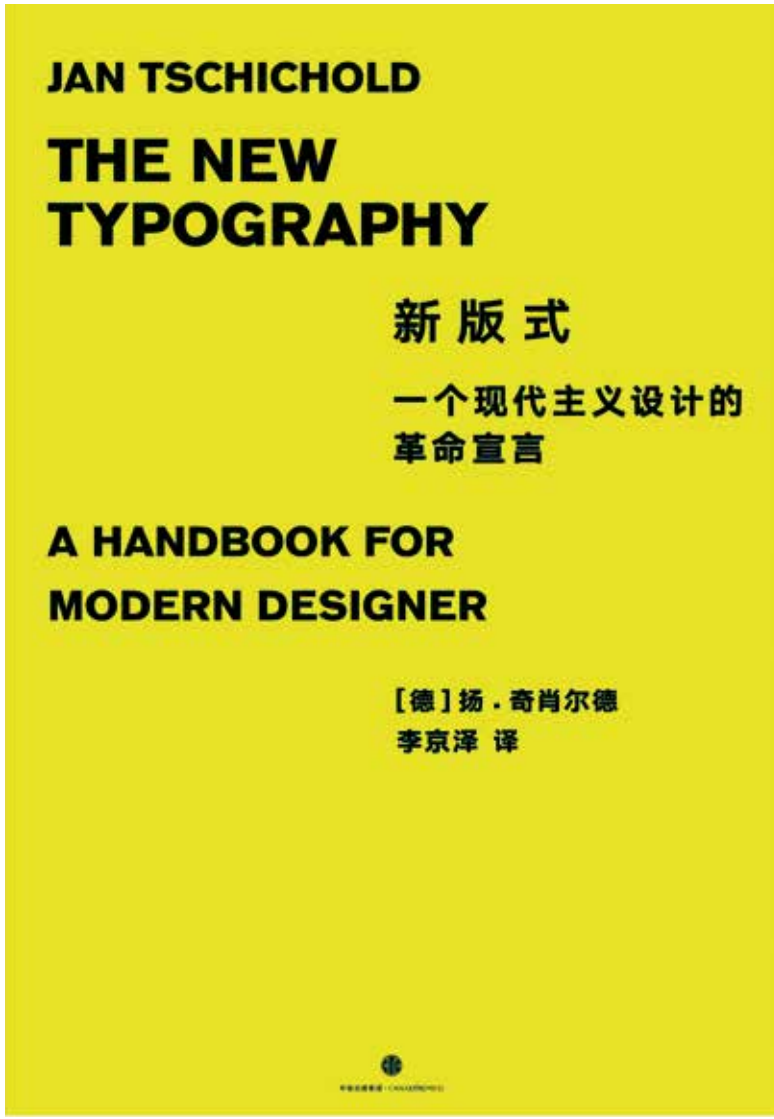
In the summer of 2015, Jiang Hua, a teacher at the Design School of the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing, enthusiastically accepted to review and design the Chinese version of *Die neue Typographie*. At that time, China Youth Publishing House (CYP) had purchased the copyright of the Chinese edition of the book. Jiang Hua's colleague Zhou Bo, also a teacher at the CAFA Design School and a design historian, was responsible for a series of modern design books that would be published by CYP, including *Die neue Typographie*. Dissatisfied with the quality of the translation, Zhou Bo approached Jiang Hua, a renowned graphic designer and design researcher with a particular interest in the comparative study of Chinese and modern international typography. When he first accepted the commission, Jiang Hua was not aware how difficult the job would be. He soon realised the challenge ahead. First, the book was professional – and the revision of technical terms took time. Second, the book was published nearly 100 years ago. As a masterpiece of design, *Die neue Typographie* had been revised and reprinted several times, and there were several versions in different languages, such as English and German. All this increased the difficulty of translation. At the same time, he also had to consider the layout design of the Chinese version. For such a classic design work, that took the layout as a demonstration, it was not enough to only consider the text, the layout style of the original book also had to be restored. Since the number of Chinese and English words could not be the same, this meant that the layout would be completely changed. In Jiang Hua's viewpoint:

> In Jan Tschichold's book, the content is the form, and the form is the content. His design will have to be revised due to translation, which will present great difficulties. The matching of Chinese fonts and Latin characters is a complex design problem in itself.[1]

He completed the preliminary design of the cover and inside pages. The cover was completely redesigned, but with a nod to Jan Tschichold. **(fig. 143)** He tried to keep inner pages in the same style as the original edition. The design of this book was exceedingly difficult and time-consuming. By the time he completed the revision a year later in 2016, however, the copyright had expired.

Although the Chinese version of *Die neue Typographie* was not published according to the plan, the revision and design work became an opportunity for Jiang Hua to understand this book in depth, twenty years since

1 Jiang and Wang 2023a.



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fig. 143 Jiang Hua, cover design for the Chinese edition of *Die neue Typographie*, 2016.

he first knew the designer and the publication. Around 1995, when he was doing research on the history of graphic design at the Graphic Design Department in the School of Design, Wuxi University of Light Industry (now Jiangnan University School of Design), Jan Tschichold and his design methodology were covered in some courses. At that time, Jiang Hua realised the importance of Tschichold as "an early Modernist designer who cannot be bypassed".[2]

In the 1990s, graphic design practice started to present an active picture in major cities in China, especially after the "Southern Tour Speeches" delivered by Deng Xiaoping, who emphasised that the policy of reform and opening up should be continuously implemented.[3] The Chinese economic reform, also known domestically as "reform and opening-up" refers to a variety of economic reforms termed "socialism with Chinese characteristics" and "socialist market economy" in the People's Republic of China, that began in the late 20th century. The important contents in the early stage of reform included the emergence of individual and private economy in the urban and rural areas. In addition to the reforms that allowed and encouraged a privately-owned and privately-run economy, China also comprehensively promoted opening up to the outside world.[4] In the field of graphic design, the private economy promoted the emergence of individual designer studios. Graphic designers were confronting an exciting but chaotic situation. On the one hand, well-known designers had the luxury of choosing to cooperate with the major state-owned, as well as privately-owned companies; on the other hand, some of their work that brought huge profit to the company did not get paid, since the definition and boundary of their work were not clear. Therefore, there were initiatives for Chinese graphic designers to gather, hold exhibitions and establish designers' associations to promote the government and the public's understanding of graphic design at a social level.

Chinese designers at the time were concerned with the prevailing design trends rather than design history. In terms of type design, they were influenced by the American graphic designer David Carson whose work was characterised by "dirty" types adhering to none of the standard practices of typography.[5] It was only after entering the 21st century that Chinese graphic designers began to pay more attention to international modern design theory. Increasingly, Chinese designers and design students turned their attention to the birthplace of modern design, as well as important designers who transformed the field. However, unlike Josef Müller-Brockmann's *Grid Systems in Graphic Design* (the Chinese version was published by Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House in 2016) and *Typographie. Ein Gestaltungslehrbuch* (Typography. A Manual of Design) by Emil Ruder (the Chinese version was published by CITIC Publishing Group in 2017), *Die neue Typographie* did not have a Chinese version. Therefore, the audience at large and professional designers in China knew very little about it. Two articles on Tschichold by the American design historian Richard B. Doubleday – Jan Tschichold's *Typographische Gestaltung: A Reference Manual for Modernist Design and Jan Tschichold at Penguin Books: A Resurgence of Classical Book Design* were published in *Zhuangshi*, the school journal of the Academy of Arts &

2 Jiang and Wang 2023b.
3 Deng 1993: 370–371.
4 BBC 2018.
5 Design is History n.d.

Design, Tsinghua University, on May 2012 and August 2013 respectively. Although *Zhuangshi* is one of the leading academic design journals in China, the audience of the journal is limited.

Historical Connections

However, although China's graphic design industry began and developed late, in fact, as early as the period of the Republic of China (1912–1949), there was already a group of Chinese artists and designers who went abroad to study. The concept of modern graphic design was applied to the covers of Chinese books and periodicals at the time. For example, the books and magazines cover by Qian Juntao and Chen Zhifo show the impact of modern typography. After the founding of New China (1949), Yu Bingnan, then an undergraduate student from the Printing Art Department, Luxun Academy of Fine Art, was sent to the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig in East Germany to study book design in the 1960s. He brought a selection of Tschichold's original works to the Central Academy of Arts & Crafts (currently the Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University) where he taught after returning to China. Among these books, *Ausgewählte Aufsätze über Fragen der Gestalt des Buches und der Typographie* (The Form of the Book. Selected Essays on Questions of Book Design and Typography) still in the library of the Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University. Under the influence of modern graphic design in Germany, Yu Bingnan compiled "Formal Laws of Layout Design", the teaching plan for the Layout Design course in the Graphic Design Department at the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts in 1981.

At present, the younger generation of students from the Visual Communication Department of the Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University, can still learn about Tschichold through the typography design class taught by Yu Bingnan's student Zhao Jian, a professor from the Visual Communication Design Department. **(fig. 144)** Interacting with students during the teaching process and sharing their successes and failures in implementing the classic design principles in Tschichold's book helped Zhao Jian recognise his blind spots while enriching his knowledge of space and typography, as well as the grammar and context behind these abstract structures. At the same time, he was looking for the inner connection between calligraphy, traditional Chinese culture and the typography design advocated by Jan Tschichold. His book *Fan shi ge ming: Zhongguo xian dai shu ji she ji de fa duan, 1862–1937* (The Beginning of Chinese Modern Book Design Paradigm, 1862–1937), published in 2011, explored how Chinese designers changed their books, from traditional thread-bound to international paperbacks, creating the concepts and style according to aesthetic needs in China during the period of social change and transition from 1862 to 1937. The cover of the book is his homage to and contemporary interpretation of *La Jeunesse* published in 1915. **(fig. 145)** Meanwhile, this book also reflects his understanding of the inner spirit behind the classic design rules of Modernist designers including Tschichold, through more than twenty years of teaching and practice, as well as the exploration to apply them in the current local context.

In the Chinese typography course at CAFA, Tschichold and his publications also proved to be important research objects. A dozen modern typography designers were studied in the course, including Wolfgang Weingart, John Maeda and Lu Xun.[6] In the course, Jiang Hua established a correlation between his research on Tschichold

6 Lu Xun is a pioneer of early Chinese text design and book design.



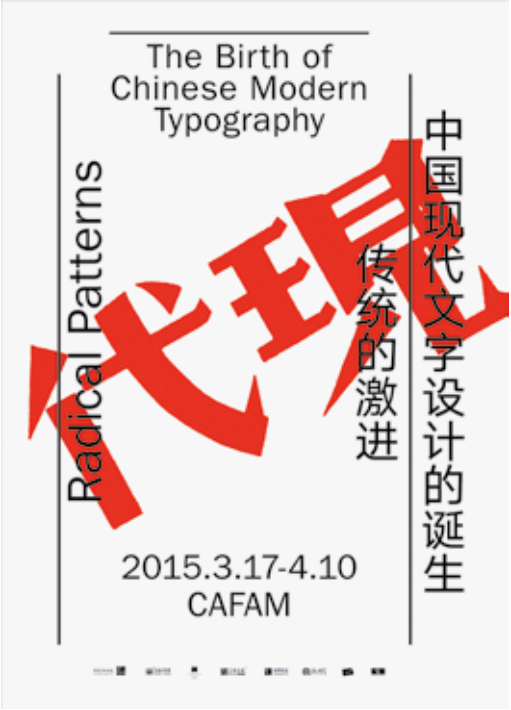
144



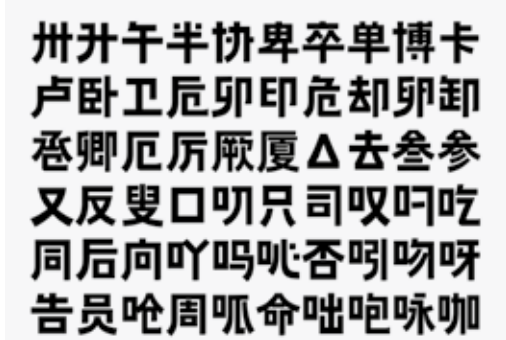
145

fig. 144 Undergraduate student works created for Typography Design Basic Training course under the guidance of Zhao Jian, Visual Communication Department, The Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University, 2008–2009. Clockwise: Chen Meng, Guo Hongguan, Chen Meng, Yan Chaoran.

fig. 145 Zhao Jian, *The Beginning of Chinese Modern Book Design Paradigm, 1862–1937*, 2011.



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fig. 146 Jiang Hua, *Radical Patterns: The Birth of Chinese Modern Typography* Exhibition (Beijing, CAFA Art Museum, 17 March – 10 April 2015), poster design, 2015.

fig. 147 Jiang Hua, Yibingshou, typeface design, produced by Tsanger, 2023.

and his research on modern Chinese calligraphy with an awareness that in early Modernist book design in China in the 1930s, some designers and design works have certain relationship with early Modernism. In his viewpoint, Jan Tschichold's practice has significant meaning because:

> On the surface, this [*The New Typography*] is a pamphlet that attempts to influence and transform society through specific operational design norms. It also reminds us that design has always been associated with the desire to innovate. The content and form of typography, as a way to spread beauty, transform the world, and establish norms and standards, needs to be pursued by every generation of designers and students.

The above-mentioned course, which Jiang Hua has been teaching, aims to creatively rediscover the most fundamental law of Chinese typography design, instead of directly following the Western methodology. In his view, the logic of Western typography is based on Latin characters and the "font-typesetting" system is quite straightforward compared to the sophisticated Chinese typography based on Chinese characters with numerous transformations. "Give me twenty-six soldiers of lead and I will conquer the world" is a sentence he frequently quoted to explain the different systems between Western and Chinese typography. For him, Chinese characters are a "meta-design" text system, therefore not only the object of design but also the source of design methods; the characters make it impossible to simply transplant the Western model directly.

Methodology Inspired by Jan Tschichold's Theory and Practice

What kind of creative paradigm should Chinese typography design have? How can an original design knowledge be developed from Chinese culture? How can a concise, radical and solid learning path be built? These are the questions Jiang Hua constantly thinks about in his teaching practice.[7] As the most basic issue of visual communication design, the discussion about type design would also directly lead to the issue of design methods in the Chinese context. This kind of thinking about tradition and the present coincides with Jiang Hua's understanding of Tschichold's practice and theory. In his viewpoint, the experience and form may become outdated, but the deep logic and theory behind the method Tschichold took when facing his own design problems at that time may be the eternal. Therefore, it is not contradictory that Tschichold later turned into a traditionalist, which reveals the unchanging key logic under the ever-changing forms.

Jiang Hua's thinking on this issue is accompanied by his research on modern Meishuzi and ancient Chinese characters. Meishuzi is a practical and artistic font – in a narrow sense, it also means "Modern artistic characters". It began to appear at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, and was formed in a context of rapid development of industry, commerce and the publishing and printing industries, while at the same time strongly influenced by Western Modernist thought and design styles.[8] Jiang Hua aims to return to the origin of these characters to innovate the development of Chinese type design. **(fig. 146)** His teaching experiments try to consider characters as one of the ontological

7 CAFA 2023.
8 Cao and Li 2022.

issues of design, not just the elements of type design, and explore their related "valuable and possible other dimensions".[9] "Chinese Characters as a Method" is one of the courses Jiang Hua has taught at CAFA. The activities arranged during the course include inscription visits and practices related to Meishuzi. Inscription visit has always been an important means of Chinese cultural inheritance. A notable recent example is Lu Xun, who in his early years visited inscriptions, making copies and collecting rubbings for several years, through which he gained a deep understanding of traditional Chinese culture. This helped him explore a creative way to combine local Chinese culture and Western design method in his early 20th century book design. Inspired by Lu Xun's creative trajectory, Jiang Hua also organises inscription visits for his students. In addition to observing classic Chinese calligraphy, another important purpose is to allow students to experience the relationship between Chinese characters and the context in which they exist. For example, a trip to the Forbidden City would help students understand why the calligraphy on the plaques hanging at the gate of the palace is huge, so as to help them understand how the weight of characters, which is particularly important in typeface design, is presented in ancient Chinese calligraphy. In addition, the inscription is also a technique of reproduction, while stone and wood are the media of communication. From the perspective of typeface design, the tools and materials – namely stone and the carving knife – have simply evolved into computers and vector software. Designers need to understand how to preserve the flexibility of writing in the most concise form.

These characteristics of Chinese type design are reflected in the creation of Meishuzi, which is considered the beginning of modern Chinese character design.[10] As a modern typeface of Chinese style, Meishuzi is a continuity of the Chinese writing tradition with a design logic from the printing era. By analysing the contribution of Meishuzi to the construction of modern Chinese type design, Jiang Hua tried to rethink the unique progress of modern Chinese type design and its modernity with the idea to put Meishuzi into the dialogue of international typography.[11] This is reflected in the diverse international background of the participants involved in his projects, including Ahn Sang-soo, a leading South Korean type designer; Terayama Yusaku, a Japanese designer whose research covers visual semiotics and visual information design; as well as Wang Min, previous dean of the CAFA Design School (2003–2016) and the founder of the CAFA Typeface Research Center. Wang Min was Jiang Hua's PhD supervisor and was previously Art Director and Design Manager at Adobe (1990–1998). He is an active promoter of Chinese type design research and a key figure who brought Latin typeface design education into China. Wang Min's type design is also deeply influenced by Tschichold. Since he migrated to the United States in 1985, whether during his studies at Yale under the guidance of Paul Rand or his work in Silicon Valley, his design has often been related to Tschichold. When talking about applying the methodology from *Die neue Typographie* in practice, Wang Min stated that asymmetrical text design was difficult to achieve at the time. After the emergence of computer typesetting, the feasibility of the typography advocated by Tschichold improved. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, using the computer, Wang Min made many attempts that broke the previous rules. This influence

9 Jiang and Wang 2023a.
10 Jiang 2009.
11 CAFA 2023.

was reflected on the great importance put on typography at the CAFA Design School, where a series of books on the topic were translated and introduced to students, including *Typography Today* (1980) by Helmut Schmid (the Chinese version was published by Shanghai People's Fine Arts in 2017) and Ruder's *Typographie*. Besides, a tour exhibition of Wolfgang Weingart's work was launched at the CAFA Museum in 2017. The research on Western designers from early Modernism to post-World War II provides a context for research on Tschichold.

Meanwhile, Jiang Hua's research and development into type design has led to an in-depth cooperation with the Tsanger Font Foundry. At present, they plan to launch the typeface Yibingshou, an innovative new Heiti.[12] **(fig. 147)** In doing so, they are trying to make the 2023 project productive. Different from other Heiti fonts, Yibingshou is not a modification of an existing typeface, but a modern interpretation based on the Clerical script, that was popular in the Han Dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), as well as its presentation by Yi Bingshou, a calligrapher in the Qing Dynasty (1636–1911). Therefore, this is not a simple retro, but an innovation with the essence of previous art and the current perception of typography. Its feature is that it is more in line with the technical beauty of Chinese character writing itself, and it is also suitable for the screen. For Jiang Hua, immersing himself in tradition, gaining insight into the relationship between past and current life, and digging out the real contemporaneity from tradition are the methodology to "grow" the contemporariness of Chinese typography design. This is the key idea he gained from studying the spirit of Tschichold's publications for years.

12 Heiti is a sans serif typeface for Chinese characters created in the 1930s. It was influenced by Western sans serifs. Li 2011: 38.

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Ivan and the Terrible Times

Yevgen Anfalov

Let me start with two modular typefaces. The first is a digital revival of a modular font sketched by Jan Tschichold in 1930 **(fig. 148)** which is used on the cover of Christopher Burke's *Active Literature*.[1] **(fig. 149)** Note the cover design's detachment from Modernist typography aesthetics. The book could well be a manual of medicine or a law lexicon, while still using a Modernist font for its title. This illustrates the inevitable disconnection between the context of creation of typefaces and their use. The second modular typeface is KTF Yermilov (2021), a grid-based font Oleś Gergun and I designed in 2021, which reconstructs sketches by the Soviet-Ukrainian avant-garde artist and designer Vasyl Yermilov. **(fig. 150)** In New York's Times Square, the viewer of the billboard "Be Brave like Ukraine" **(fig. 151)** knows nothing about either the circumstances in which KTF Yermilov was created or the reference on which it is based. **(fig. 152)** Instead, the audience focuses on the message: the bravery of Ukrainians in the face of Russian invasion.

These two typefaces are disconnected from their origins, and that is the theme of this essay – the uncoupling between an artefact and its context of creation – whether caused by lack of knowledge, misunderstanding, naïveté, romanticism, ignorance, or distance in space and time. For instance, Western scholars have held for decades a specific gaze at Constructivism or avant-garde in the USSR by consistently using the prefix "Russian". What these scholars and the public may sometimes forget is that the USSR was a multinational state formed on the territory of the Russian Empire. Thus, labelling the avant-garde coming from the territory of the former Soviet Union as simply "Russian" reduces a diverse ethnic landscape to one nation and ignores the existence of Ukrainian, Belarusian, Georgian, and Middle-Asian cultures, which all participated in the movement.

One important proxy of "Russian" avant-garde, the so-called *palochniy shrift* (a block typeface using mostly straight lines and angles, such as that appearing on fig. 5, is problematic. As part of the grand narrative, and for most Westerners, this font is an instant typographical "Russifier" which evokes "brutalism" or "rigid repetitiveness", as my Norwegian friend once said. I would like to ask instead: "What if these fonts only look 'Russian' because of the viewer's inability to read the language?" A better frame of understanding would be that of the international artistic Left of the 1920s, and their agenda which focused on breaking up with the old, reduction, economy, and purposefulness.

In 2014, another frame on the genre of *palochniy* was given by Vladimir Krichevsky in the book *Dva Shrifta Odnoy Revolucii* (Two Fonts of the Same Revolution), in which he argues that the block typeface's origins can be retraced to pre-revolutionary times in the Russian Empire and was influenced by German Jugendstil, thus signalling the finesse and frivolousness of the typeface.[2] By opposition, the

1 Burke 2007.
2 Krichevsky 2014: 9.

Constructivists saw these square letters as the most utilitarian and economic forms, and aligned with the political Left. The latter were not basing their work on other models. As Krichevsky says, "they started from scratch".[3] While he stresses parallel typeface developments in the USSR and the West, he insists on the USSR's often non-professional and naive particularities, which contrasted with Western "finesse". More importantly, and perhaps surprisingly, he later contradicts himself and denies any Western influence on *palochniy*, arguing that "in the West, this happened both before our Constructivists and later – not without direct Russian influence. The Soviet innovators of the 1920s did not seem to need a reverse influence".[4]

Krichevsky's fixation on the antagonism between Russia and the West is omnipresent in his writings and public lectures. He seems to forget a crucial aspect of the internationalist artists' modus operandi, namely the rapid and complementary flux of their multinational exchange in the wake of a global revolution attempt – with no exception for Soviet artists. One of the countries taking part in this exchange was the Weimar Republic, which was the first European state to recognise the Soviet regime as the only legitimate government of Russia in the Rapallo Treaty of 1922. El Lissitzky and Ilya Ehrenburg – like other Soviet artists – rented apartments in Berlin's Charlottenburg, debated, allied, fought, and fell in love.[5] Young Ivan Tschichold was also there. If Tom Tykwer ever decides to make a *Babylon Berlin* sequel, I hope it will be about avant-garde artists.

One of the frequent visitors to the German Reich was a scenographer of Swedish-Italian descent, Vadym Meller. **(fig. 153)** He was born in Saint Petersburg and spent his life in Soviet Ukraine. In 1927, he travelled to Cologne to work on the pompous USSR pavilion for the *Pressa* exhibition under Lissitzky's supervision. **(fig. 154)** The aim of the pavilion was to show Europeans the modern achievements of the Soviet media, which proved to be a considerable success. In the journal *Chervony Shliakh* (Red Way), Meller reports on his trip to Berlin and reviews the latest German artistic developments. He admires the high level of craftsmanship in outdoor advertising and is overwhelmed by its penetrating presence, but criticises the lack of ideas behind advertisements, which only exist to create a differentiation on the market and sell aggressively. On Germany more generally, he ironises: "VERBOTEN", he says, "stands everywhere, almost devalued in its initial meaning, and becoming a trademark" (...) "a patent for all things of good quality and accuracy".[6] *Verboten* (forbidden) was also imperative in Meller's home country, for his colleague Vasyl Yermilov – who had co-created numerous installation objects for the aforementioned pavilion – was banned from leaving the USSR. Meller desperately wanted to come back to the USSR as soon as possible to realise big projects,[7] one of which was designing the ambitious newspaper *Nova Generatsiia*[8] (New Generation), perhaps the only printed undertaking of the Ukrainian avant-garde movement, called Panfuturism, that received a state financing.[9] **(fig. 155)**

Apart from publishing poetry and theoretical articles in Ukrainian by figures such as Kazimir Malevich (who wrote ten articles in total) and Dziga Vertov, to name a couple, *Nova Generatsiia* also offered translations of European articles into Ukrainian, thus opening a "window to the West" for those unfamiliar with foreign languages. Its multilingual format

3 *Ibid.*: 10
4 *Ibid.*
5 The fate of El Lissitzky's wife Sofie Lissitzky-Küppers is explored in Samoilenko n.d.
6 Meller 1927: 180.
7 *Ibid.*: 183.
8 Sometimes transliterated as *Nova Generacija* or *Nova Generaciya*.
9 Tsymbal n.d.

(Ukrainian, German, French and occasionally Esperanto) demonstrates the journal's ambition to take part in international discourse and a will for mutual permeation between the Ukrainian and European avant-gardes. It is therefore no major surprise that Tschichold's *Napoleon* movie poster, which he designed for the Phoebus Palast München, is reproduced in *Nova Generatsiia* 11 (October 1928).[10] The same iconic references that were used in Tschichold's "little black book" appear on the pages of *Nova Generatsiia*: Piet Zwart, Kurt Schwitters, Otto Gedekker, and so on. **(fig. 156)**

With its small print run of 1000 copies, the journal's influence on the broader public must have been limited, and the role it played in disseminating Ivan Tschichold's work in the USSR remains unknown. However, this exemplifies the Soviet-Ukrainian left's attempts to introduce progressive Western typographic ideas to a local audience.

In his book, Krichevsky seems to know exactly the influence Moscow had on Ukrainian designers of the 1920s, but he does not bother with explanations. Instead, he uses disparaging irony when describing the idiosyncrasy of the Ukrainian artefacts he mentions. For instance, he muses whether examples of the letterform Я (ya) from Moscow, which he includes in his book, are "a contagious example of Ukrainians", or whether "a Muscovite independently came to such a decision".[11] **(fig. 157)** Strikingly, Krichevsky uses the Ukrainian adverb *samostyino* (independent, self-reliant) to describe the artefact. The term is used disapprovingly in Russian to describe something obstinate or unauthorised and is often employed in the context of Ukrainian independence as something unnatural and wrong. The year 2014, when Krichevsky's book was published, was also the year Russia annexed Crimea, which gives a whole new context to this kind of "irony". I encountered Krichevsky's texts relatively late, but I was attracted by his well-articulated, non-conformist style in design critique. Still, I could not take his vocabulary light-heartedly and my curiosity led to a short correspondence with him in 2022. One week before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, he wrote to me: "I am convinced that there will be no war because this cannot happen. Don't forget that Russia (unlike, say, the Yankees) has never attacked anyone".[12] Famous last words. What had originally attracted me in his texts suddenly became a blunt manifestation of the Weimar Syndrome, teaching us another history lesson. On 24 February 2022, I sent him an image of a nine-story building, partly burned after a drone was shot down over it, commenting that Russia had attacked Kyiv. His reply: "Aren't your words 'Russia *attacked*' naive?" I have not heard that he changed his mind since; someone please let me know.

Ironically, Krichevsky's book is typeset in Shkol'naya, a typeface of "Yankee" origins whose Cyrillic version was developed in 1937–1939 by the type design department of NII Poligrafmash (the Polygraphmash Research Institute). It was based on a design by Linn Boyd Benton and Morris Fuller-Benton, better known as "Century Schoolbook" (1918).[13] Polygraphmash was a state research institute and the only type foundry in the USSR. After the October Revolution of 1917, all typefaces were expropriated from private enterprises and became state-owned. According to the plan-based economy, all the industries, including printing and

10 Mudrak 2018: 260. Mudrak erroneously mentions *Nova Generatsiia* 12.

11 Krichevsky 2014: 69. Krichevsky seems to be referring to a stylistic difference between letter constructions, which were sometimes exaggerated in Ukrainian cases, and tended to be recognisably different from Soviet Russia.

12 Vladimir Krichevsky, email message to the author, 23 February 2022.

13 Bolshakov, Grechiho and Shizgal 1964.

type-making, were a matter of revision and centralization. For this purpose, the OCT 1337 commission was created, which was formed of printing and type specialists. Only thirty-one typefaces passed the revision.[14] The outcasted types were remelted for other purposes, and the missing ones had to be designed by the comrades at Polygraphmash. One of the new assignments was to create a font for schoolbooks, that later became known as "Shkol'naya". Its history covers five decades of intensive usage, proving to be a success.

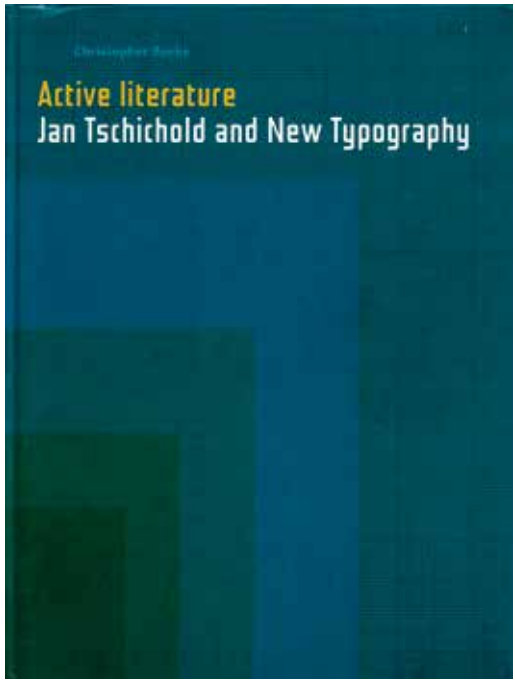
As one of the Polygraphmash designers, Mikhail Rovensky, recalled: "With the joint efforts of the Polygraphmash [...] our country not only got rid of the import of fonts and matrices, but also became an exporter itself". The life of Shkol'naya continued at Paratype. The foundry began its activities during the Perestroika and was initially a department of ParaGraph, an IT company, before launching independently in 1989 with many former Polygraphmash employees as its staff. Paratype was licensed to manufacture and distribute Polygraphmash typefaces. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, followed by the economic disaster and business opportunities of the unfolding free market, Paratype skilfully revamped the typographic heritage from Polygraphmash for the newly emerging era of desktop publishing and became a quasi-monopoly in the field of Cyrillic type design. In the spirit of Rovenskiy's quote above, Paratype took advantage of a policy called "import substitution". The policy was implemented following the imposition of international sanctions on Russia after the 2014 annexation of Crimea, sanctions which also covered typefaces. After these sanctions were imposed, Monotype refused to license Times New Roman, used thus far by Russia as the mandatory typeface for official documents. Paratype soon developed its own, metric-compatible substitute, based on PT Serif, an open-source typeface bearing a certain resemblance to Times New Roman. These events led the type designer Frank Adebiaye to declare: "It is probably not exaggerated to talk about a new Cold War in type".[15]

Far from being concerned with fonts, at the beginning of April 2022 we were facing the evidence of the mass killing of civilians in Bucha, a town near Kyiv, discovered after the Russian army retreated. In a public conversation on Facebook, the head of Paratype Anna Yakupova denied the mass killing, saying it must have been staged.[16] Moreover, in September 2022, she welcomed the referenda held in the occupied territories of Ukraine, which were largely considered void by the international community.[17] Yet I look at photographs of the DniproHES (Dnipro Hydroelectric Station) turbine hall and see "Yankee" generators with metal plaques bearing the General Electric logo. DniproHES was launched in 1932, and there is a photograph of El Lissitzky in front of huge waterfalls coming out of concrete structures adorned, of course, with *palochniy*, perhaps on the day of its opening ceremony.[18] **(fig. 158)** The Holodomor, the man-made famine which began the same year in Ukraine, took 3.5 to 5 million people's lives and is recognised by many governments as a genocide or at least a crime against humanity. Today, 28 May 2023, I still see Paratype's fonts as part of MyFonts, Google Fonts (where PT Sans is the thirteenth most viewed font), and Adobe fonts libraries; they are still sold online. The company is now registered in the US, its director supports a state sponsor of terrorism, and we want justice for Ukraine. And, perhaps, a New Typography for the country, supported by the Cyrillic type – made in Ukraine.

14 Golovchenko 2014.
15 Adebiaye n.d.
16 Rasskazov 2022.
17 *Ibid.*
18 Lissitzky-Küppers 1967: 60.



148



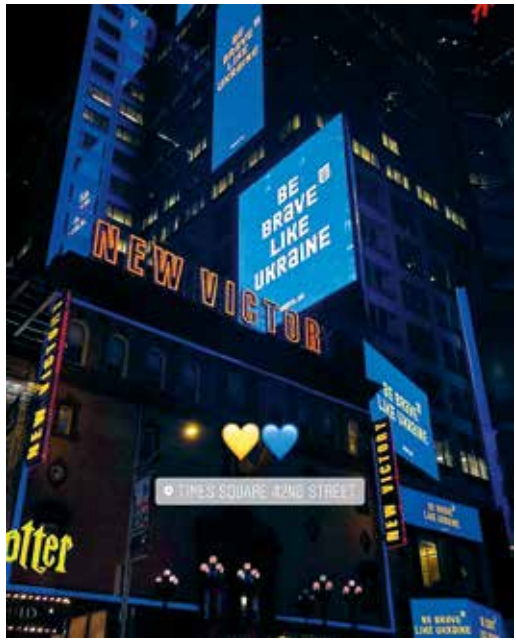
149

fig. 148 Tschichold's sketch for the title of *Typo Foto Grafik* magazine, 1930. Tschichold planned this magazine, for which he saw himself as editor, but it was never realised.

fig. 149 The cover of Christopher Burke's *Active Literature* (2007), which features a revival of Jan Tschichold's modular typeface. Photo by Yevgen Anfalov



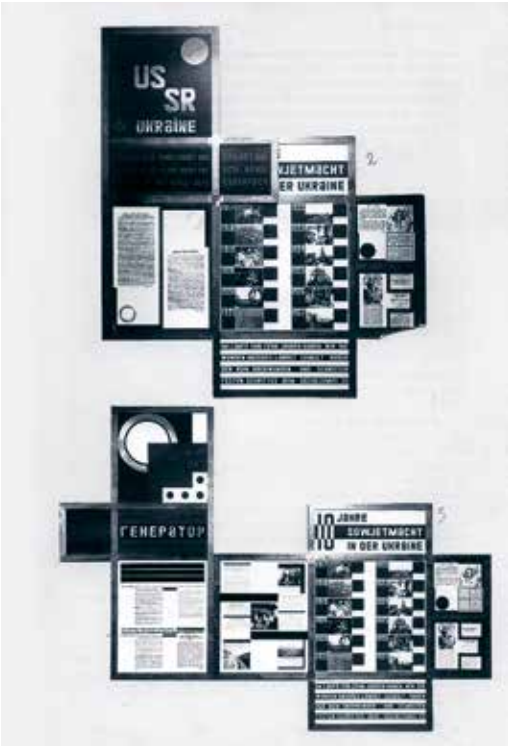
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151

fig. 150 KTF Yermilov, a modular display font following the typographical practice of Kharkiv avant-garde artist and designer Vasyl Yermilov, designed by Yevgen Anfalov and Oleś Gergun in 2021.

fig. 151 View of the billboard “Be Brave like Ukraine” in Times Square, New York City, April 2022.



152



153

fig. 152 Vasyl Yermilov, *Kanatka*, wall newspaper, 1928, as published in Mudrak 2018. The typeface used here became the source for KTF Yermilov. Photo by Yevgen Anfalov

fig. 153 Vadym Meller's set design – featuring *palochniy shrift* – for Les Kurbas's 1924 production of *Macbeth* at the Berezil Theatre in Kyiv.



154

fig. 154 View of the Ukrainian section of the Soviet pavilion at the 1928 *Pressa*, an international press exhibition held in Cologne in 1928. The pavilion was overseen by Lissitzky, who supervised designers including Aleksandr Naumov, Sergei Senkin, Gustav Klutsis and Vadym Meller.



155

fig. 155 *Nova Generatsiia* (New Generation), 1, 1927.
The Futurist magazine was published between 1927 and 1930 in Kharkiv.



156

fig. 156 Tschichold's "Napoleon" movie poster as featured in *Nova Generatsiia*, 11, October 1928.



Русский палочный шрифт изредка предстаёт в особых формах, не лишённых конструктивистской логики, но всё-таки отклоняющихся от стилевого стандарта дватых. Судя по тонким графическим признакам и именам дизайнеров, особые манеры присущи не собственно конструктивистам.

69

В заголовке *Нижегородская ярмарка* обращают на себя внимание знаки Я, Ж и особенно Ж, смахивающее на фигурку какого-то экзотического идола. Заразительный пример украинцев или москвич самостийно дошёл до прямых углов? Кстати, вот вам и нехитрый способ пространственного свёртывания длинного слова.

Очередной *Фронт* писан контрастным шрифтом со страшным инициалом. У Р.Мазеля, художника, вдохновлённого узорами туркменских ковров, стрёмно всё (см. также пример 107).

94 НИЖЕГОРОДСКАЯ ЯРМАРКА

95 ФРОНТ 1918-1919

В надписи *Изо* буквы расчленены, что знаменует органическое родство палочных и трафаретных построений. Но это всего лишь стилизация. К своему удивлению, я не знаю случая, чтобы кто-нибудь из палочников демонстративно набил шрифт по реальному шаблону.

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fig. 157 The page from the book *Dva Shrifta Odnoy Revolucii 1918–1919* (Two Fonts of the Same Revolution 1918–1919) by Vladimir Krichevsky (Moscow 2014) features an example of exaggerated letter constructions (see the letters Я, Ж and К for example).



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fig. 158 El Lissitzky and Max Alpert (?) in front of the DniproHES dam, Zaporizhzhia, 1932. The letters on the dam are typical of *palochniy shrift*.

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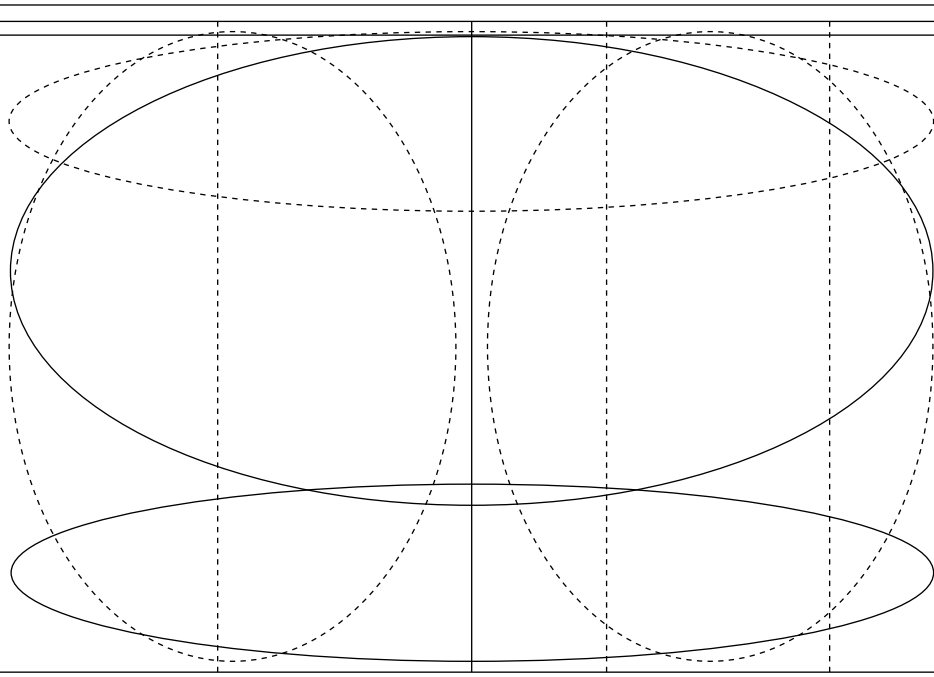
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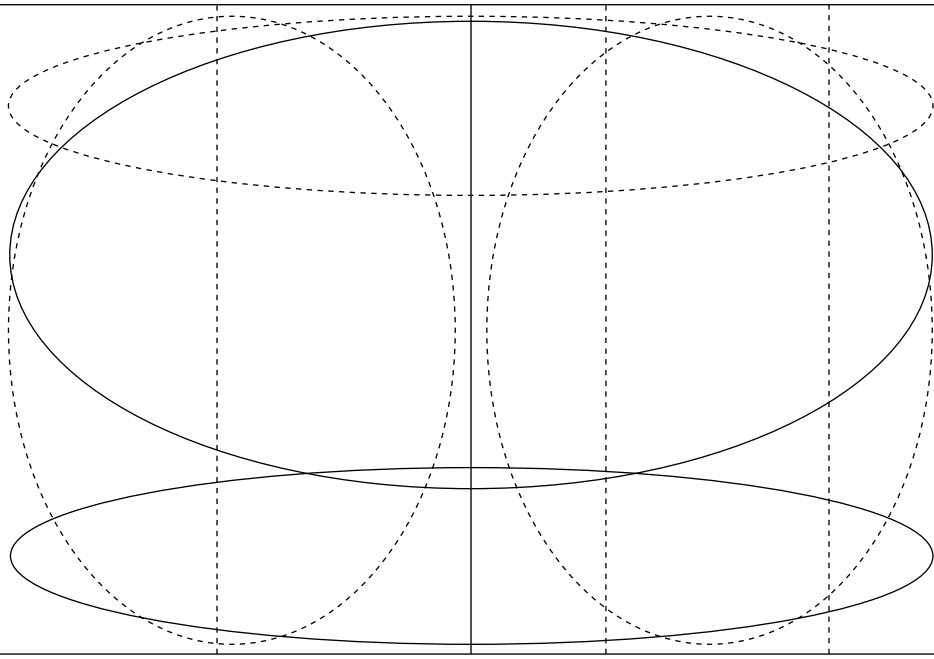
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APPENDICES



Contributors

Yevgen Anfalov
Type and graphic designer based in Germany. Born in Kyiv, Ukraine, in 1986, he studied Visual Communication at the Hanover University of Applied Sciences and Arts and ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne. In July 2021, he launched Kyiv Type Foundry, which offers a contemporary perspective on the Russian and Ukrainian heritage of type design.

Andreu Balius
Type designer and researcher based in Barcelona, Spain, he designs retail and custom typefaces at Typerepublic.com and has been awarded with several prizes for Excellence in Type Design for his type design work. He holds a PhD in Design from the University of Southampton, UK, and teaches Typography and Type Design at EINA, University Center of Design and Art, in Barcelona. Balius is the author of the book *Type at Work: The Use of Type in Editorial Design* (Bis Publishers, 2003). He is a member of AGI, ATypI and TDC New York.

Chiara Barbieri
Researcher in Design History at ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne (HES-SO). She holds a PhD in History of Design from the Royal College of Art in London with a thesis on the professionalisation of graphic design in Italy from the interwar period to the mid-1960s. Her research interests include visual and material culture in fascist Italy, national design discourses, transnational networks of design exchange, and everyday design practice.

Sofie Beier
Graphic designer and professor at the Royal Danish Academy, where she is head of the Centre for Visibility Design. She is the author of the "Type Tricks" book series and of *Reading Letters: Designing for Legibility* (Bis Publishers, 2012). She has furthermore published numerous academic papers on typeface legibility. Her research is focused on improving the reading experience by achieving a better understanding of how different typefaces and letter shapes can influence the way we read, and how eye tracking can be used to adjust typographic layout to the needs of individual readers.

Jonas Berthod
Researcher, lecturer and artistic deputy at ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne (HES-SO), where he has taught since 2013. He earned a PhD from the University of Bern with *The Prize of Success*, a thesis on the impact of cultural promotion in Swiss graphic design. He is currently a postdoctoral researcher on the SNSF, Swiss National Science Foundation, project "The Cultural Turn in Swiss Graphic Design from the 1980s to 2020" and serves as a lecturer at Kingston School of Art, Kingston University London.

Sandra Bischler-Hartmann
Design historian and graphic designer, holding a MA in Art and Design Science from the University of Duisburg-Essen and the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, Germany (2015). After working as an assistant curator at the Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, she was a doctoral student in the design

history research project "Swiss Graphic Design and Typography Revisited" from 2016 until 2020. Since 2020, she is a research assistant at the Institute of Digital Communication Environments at Basel Academy of Art and Design. There, she is responsible for the scientific supervision of the institute's archive and the associated design history collection. She is curating exhibitions on graphic design history and working as a Design History lecturer.

Jessica D. Brier
Curator and historian of art and design with a focus on Modernism and the intersecting histories of photography, print, and design. She serves as Photography Curator at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, NY, where she co-organised the exhibitions *Making a Life in Photography: Rollie McKenna* (2024) and *On the Grid: Ways of Seeing in Print* (2022), both accompanied by catalogues co-published by Vassar College and Scala Arts Publishers. Her first book *Typophoto: New Typography and the Reinvention of Photography* has been published in 2025 by the University of Minnesota Press.

Christopher Burke
Typographer, typeface designer, and design historian. He has written three books on key figures in typography of the 20th century, *Paul Renner: The Art of Typography* (Hyphen Press, 1998), *Active Literature: Jan Tschichold and New Typography* (Hyphen Press, 2007), and *Gerard Unger: Life in Letters* (Uitgeverij de Buitenkant, 2021). He co-edited Otto Neurath's "visual autobiography" *From Hieroglyphics to Isotype* (Hyphen Press, 2010) and *Isotype: Design and Contexts, 1925–1971* (Hyphen Press, 2013); he co-wrote (with Wim Jansen) *Soft Propaganda, Special Relationships, and a New Democracy: Adprint and Isotype 1942–1948* (Uitgeverij de Buitenkant, 2022).

Yongkeun Chun
Lecturer at Seoul National University, South Korea, where he teaches and researches design history and theory. He received a PhD in History of Design from the Victoria and Albert Museum/Royal College of Art in 2020. His research interests include East Asian design history and graphic design history, with a focus on transnational movements of artefacts and people and on the intersections between design and politics, culture, economics and technology.

Catherine de Smet
Professor at the Université Paris 8, Vincennes-Saint-Denis, she is the author of *Le Corbusier, Architect of Books* (Lars Müller, 2005), *Vers une architecture du livre: Le Corbusier – édition et mise en pages, 1912–1965* (Lars Müller, 2007) and *Le Corbusier, penseur du musée* (Flammarion, 2019), as well as *Paris couleurs: Gérard Ifert, Ektachromes 1953-1954* (Éditions B42, 2019). She has also co-edited several volumes, including *Graphic Design: History in the Writing* (with Sara De Bondt, Occasional Papers, 2012) and *Études sur le collectif Grapus, 1970-1990* (with Béatrice Fraenkel, Éditions B42, 2016). A collection of her writings on 19th- and 20th-century graphic design has been published as *Pour une critique du design graphique* (Éditions B42, 2020).

Davide Fornari
Full professor at ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne (HES-SO), where he leads the Applied Research and Development sector since 2016. He holds a PhD in Design Sciences from University IUAV of Venice. Besides ECAL, he teaches at SUPSI in Mendrisio, Switzerland, and at Design Academy Eindhoven, The Netherlands. Among his publications, *Carlo Scarpa. Casa Zentner a Zurigo: una villa italiana in Svizzera*, with Giacinta Jean and Roberta Martinis (Electa, 2020), and *Olivetti Identities. Spaces and Languages 1933–1983*, with Davide Turrini (Triest Verlag, 2022).

Matthias J. E. Horneman-Thielcke
Graphic designer, teacher and PhD fellow at the Royal Danish Academy. In the history-orientated research, Matthias focuses on identifying what has facilitated the development of the Danish tradition of grotesque type design. For more than a decade, he has worked as a designer, dealing with visual identities, editorial design and typography. Today, he runs his own private letterpress Studio in Copenhagen, where he lives together with his wife and kids.

Lada Hubatová-Vacková
Art historian and curator of exhibitions devoted to 19th and 20th century art and design. She lectures at the UMPRUM, Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová (AAAD, Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design) in Prague. She is the author of *Silent Revolutions in Ornament* (AAAD, 2011), the editor of *Theatre of the Street* (AAAD, 2023), the co-editor of *Things and Words* (UMPRUM, 2014), *First Republic 1918–1938* (National Gallery Prague, 2018), and *The Library. Books and eBooks, Collections and Databases* (UMPRUM 2019), and a contributor to *Building a State* (UMPRUM, 2016).

Sandy Jones
Assistant Curator of Architecture and Design at the V&A, Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Her research interests include graphic Modernism and the Jan Tschichold collection, part of the National Art Library's Jobbing Printing Collection, with a focus on tracing international networks of association. She has presented papers on Jan Tschichold at the German National Library (remote, 2021) and Bard Graduate Centre in New York (2019) and was curatorial researcher for the exhibitions *Plastic: Remaking our World* (V&A Dundee, 2022) and *The New Line: Works from the Jobbing Printing Collection* (De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea, UK, 2017). She co-curated *The People's Pavilion: Our First 70 Years* (De La Warr Pavilion, 2016).

Juliet Kinchin
Independent design historian and former curator of modern design at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, where she organised the exhibition *The New Typography* in 2009–2010. She has held faculty positions at the University of Glasgow (as the Founding Director of postgraduate studies in Design History), the Glasgow School of Art, and the Bard Graduate Center, New York; also, curatorial positions at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, as well as at Glasgow museums and art galleries. She holds a MA from the University of Cambridge, a MA from the University of London, The Courtauld Institute of Art, and is Doctor of Letters, University of Glasgow.

Trond Klevgaard
Associate Professor of Design History at Kristiania University College in Oslo, Norway. He completed a PhD in History of Design at the Royal College of Art, London, in 2018 and his research interests include Scandinavian design, typography and graphic design. In 2020, he published *The New Typography in Scandinavia*, the first comprehensive monograph dealing with the development of the movement in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Sofia Leal Rodrigues
Sofia Leal Rodrigues holds a PhD in Communication Design (2012), a MA in Theories of Art (2002) and a BA in Communication Design (1998) from the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon (FBAUL, Faculdade de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa). She is currently Assistant Professor in the Communication Design Department of FBAUL. She teaches in the Master's degree course in Contemporary Typographic and Editorial Practices and is the coordinator of the PhD course in Communication Design (Fine Arts). A researcher at CIEBA, Centro de Investigação em Belas-Artes (Artistic Studies Research Center) of the FBAUL, her work focuses on typography, graphic design and contemporary editorial practices.

Julia Meer
Designer, educator, curator and design historian. She majored in Communication Design, earned her doctorate with a thesis on the reception of New Typography and co-edited the volume *Women in Graphic Design 1890–2012* (Jovis, 2012). She has worked at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Cluster of Excellence "Image Knowledge Gestaltung" of the Humboldt University of Berlin, the Bergische Universität Wuppertal and the Fachhochschule Potsdam (University of Applied Sciences and Arts). Currently, she is head of the graphics and poster collection at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (Museum of Art and Design) in Hamburg, where among other projects she curated the exhibition *The F*word – Guerrilla Girls and Feminist Graphic Design*.

Emin Artun Ozguner
Artun Ozguner has completed his PhD at the Victoria and Albert Museum / Royal College of Art History of Design Programme in 2020. Since then, he has been working as a senior lecturer at the University for the Creative Arts, School of Communications, and as an associate lecturer at the Victoria and Albert Museum / Royal College of Art History of Design Programme since 2022. His main research interests include practices of commemoration, nationalisation of material culture and design resources, graphic design history, visual and print culture. He has published in various journals, including the *Journal of Design History*, and *Design and Culture*.

Louise Paradis
Tenure-track assistant professor, graphic designer and art director with a special interest for typography and history of graphic design. Before joining the École de design's professorial team of Université Laval in Quebec City in 2021, she was a sessional lecturer at UQAM, Université du Québec à Montréal, since 2014. She holds a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from the UQAM, and a Master's degree in Art Direction from ECAL/University of Art

and Design Lausanne (HES-SO). Paradis is lead researcher, co-author and co-designer of *30 Years of Swiss Typographic Discourse in the Typographische Monatsblätter*, published by Lars Müller in 2013. For several years, she worked as a graphic designer and art director in Los Angeles and Montreal, mainly in the fashion industry. She is also a long-time collaborator with the Swiss Optimo Type Foundry as a web content editor.

Alyona Sokolnikova
Independent researcher, writer, curator and lecturer based in Germany, specialising in national aspects of international design history. She holds a PhD in Design Education and is the founder of the "Women Designers. USSR" research project. Alyona co-curated several exhibitions in Moscow and Europe, including *Red Wealth: Soviet Design of the 1950–80's* (Kunsthal Rotterdam, 2015–2016; ADAM Brussels Design Museum, 2018) and *Retrotopia. Design for Socialist Spaces* (Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin, 2023). She worked as a curatorial advisor for Vitra Design Museum (*Here We Are! Women in Design 1900 – Today* exhibition, 2021–2022), the Barbican Centre (*Into the Unknown. A Journey through Science Fiction* exhibition, 2017–2018). She contributed to *Designed in the USSR 1950–1989* (Phaidon Press, 2018) and to the entry "Design in Russia" of *Encyclopedia of Design* (Bloomsbury, 2015).

Paul Stirton
Emeritus Professor of the History of European Design at Bard Graduate Center in New York, and editor of *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*. He was educated at the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and The Courtauld Institute of Art in London. He is the author of many books and articles, including *Is Mr Ruskin Living Too Long? Selected Writings of E. W. Godwin on Victorian Architecture, Design and Culture* (White Cockade, 2005, with Juliet Kinchin) and *Jan Tschichold and the New Typography: Graphic Design between the World Wars* (Yale University Press, 2019).

Mariko Takagi
German-Japanese typographer, author, book designer and educator. Her research and publications focus on writing systems, typography, Japanese graphic design, and the Bauhaus. After living and working in Germany and Hong Kong, Takagi has been teaching and researching as a professor specialising in typography and book design at Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts in Kyoto since 2017. She wrote her doctoral thesis at the HBK Braunschweig, Germany, in 2012 on the visual encounter between the West and Japan, with a focus on the representation of writing systems and typography. In 2014, she also completed a Master's degree in Type Design at the University of Reading, UK.

Katrien Van Haute
Professor at LUCA School of Arts (Hogeschool Sint-Lukas), Ghent, graduated in Art History at the University of Leuven and obtained her PhD in 2009 on the genesis of modern graphic design in Belgium. A specialist on Belgian graphic design during the interwar period, she contributed articles on several exhibitions (*Modernism. Belgian Abstract Art and Europe*, MSK Ghent,

2013; *Flouquet, Kassák, Léonard: The Architecture of Images during the Interwar Period*, Mu.ZEE Oostende, 2018). She is one of the authors of the book *Off the Grid. Histories of Belgian Graphic Design* (Occasional Papers, 2022) edited by Sara De Bondt.

Carlo Vinti
Associate professor at the University of Camerino. As a design historian, he has extensively published on Italian graphic design. His research has often explored the role of the printing trade and industrial clients in shaping design culture. In 2012, he co-curated the 5th edition of the Triennale Design Museum in Milan, *TDM5: Grafica Italiana*, and more recently he curated the exhibition *Italy and the Alliance Graphique Internationale* (Trieste, 2022). His latest contributions include: *Campo Grafico* (Tipoteca Italiana, 2019), *La questione moderna in Europa, 1923–1948* (Lazy Dog, 2023), co-edited with Alessandro Colizzi and Silvia Sfligiotti, and the chapter co-authored with Maddalena Dalla Mura "Italy 1945–2000. Product and Graphic Design" for the third volume of *World History of Design* (Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

Yun Wang
Yun Wang received her PhD from the Victoria and Albert / Royal College of Art History of Design Programme in 2020. She graduated with a BA and MA from the Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University. She was a project coordinator at AIGA China. She has been working for *Zhuangshi*, the leading academic design journal in China, published by Tsinghua University since 2011.

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Ali Filippini
Maria Àngels Fortea
Mònica Gaspar Mallol
Alexis Georgacopoulos
Javier Gimeno Martínez
Vincent Jacquier
Yulia Karpova
Hideyuki Kido
Sarah Owens
Giorgio Ruggeri
Silvia Sfligiotti
Martin Søberg
Anna Titus

AGI / Alliance Graphique Internationale, Baden
AIS/Design / Associazione Italiana Storici del Design, Milan
BIGO / Belgisch Instituut Grafisch Ontwerp, Ostend
DGTF / Deutsche Gesellschaft für Designtheorie und -forschung, Berlin
DHS / Design History Society, London
DNP Foundation for Cultural Promotion, Tokyo
DHWJ / Design History Workshop Japan, Tokyo
FHD / Fundació Historia del Disseny, Barcelona
NDG / Netzwerk Designgeschichte, Zurich
SDA / Swiss Design Association, Bern
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und Kunsthistoriker in der Schweiz, Bern

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Edited by
Davide Fornari, Jonas Berthod, Chiara Barbieri

Contributors
Yevgen Anfalov, Andreu Balius, Chiara Barbieri, Sofie Beier, Jonas Berthod, Sandra Bischler-Hartmann, Jessica D. Brier, Christopher Burke, Yongkeun Chun, Catherine de Smet, Davide Fornari, Matthias J.E. Horneman-Thielcke, Lada Hubatová-Vacková, Sandy Jones, Juliet Kinchin, Trond Klevgaard, Sofia Leal Rodrigues, Julia Meer, Emin Artun Ozguner, Louise Paradis, Alyona Sokolnikova, Paul Stirton, Mariko Takagi, Katrien Van Haute, Carlo Vinti, Yun Wang

Editorial Coordination
Davide Fornari

Translations
Deke Dusinberre (French to English)
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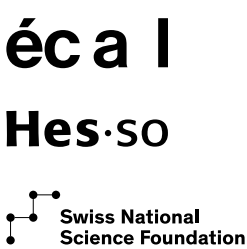
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Alexis Georgacopoulos
Director

Davide Fornari
Head of R&D

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Responsible importer
GVA Gemeinsame Verlagsauslieferung
Göttingen GmbH & Co KG
Postfach 2021
D-37010 Göttingen
info@gva-verlage.ch
+49 551 384 2000