

Unpacking Tschichold's
References and Addresses
in *Die neue Typographie*
Davide Fornari

The research project “The Sources of Jan Tschichold's *The New Typography*” focused on one specific book: *Die neue Typographie* (The New Typography),¹ authored by Jan Tschichold and published in 1928 by the Bildungsverband der Deutschen Buchdrucker (Educational Association of German Printers). A facsimile edition of the original book is available in German.² Since the author's death, the book has been translated in multiple languages (Spanish,³ English,⁴ Russian,⁵ Polish,⁶ French,⁷ and Czech⁸). During his lifetime, tenets from Tschichold's book were mediated by other authors for Japanese⁹ and Flemish¹⁰ audiences. *Die neue Typographie* recently enjoyed renewed interest thanks to publications in Korean,¹¹ as well as exhibition and research projects all over the world.¹² **(fig. 13)** For those unfamiliar with this book, suffice it to say that it is a critical essay on the state of art in graphic design at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as a manual for graphic design. It is a book written by a young author, published when he was only twenty-six years old. It builds upon reasoning that the author had already presented in a monographic issue of the technical journal *Typographische Mitteilungen* in 1925.¹³ **(fig. 14)**

The book caused a large debate and contributed, among other reasons, to the arrest of its author who “threatened German morality and culture” and his emigration to Switzerland.¹⁴ Further and more heated debate arose when the author seemed to stray from the principles he himself had set out there, including a quarrel with the Swiss graphic designer Max Bill, developed in 1945 after Tschichold's conference in Zurich on the “invariants of typography”.¹⁵

In response, Max Bill published an article entitled “Über Typographie” (On Typography) in 1946 in the journal *Schweizer Graphische Mitteilungen*, which discussed Tschichold's work and his non-adherence to the principles of New Typography.¹⁶ The publication triggered Jan Tschichold to respond with another, equally critical, article.¹⁷ This “typographical quarrel of the moderns”, accurately described in the essay by Hans Rudolf Bosshard,¹⁸ took up a lot of space in the graphic design discourse, to the point of overshadowing the principles at its origin, which are presented in Tschichold's book.

1 Tschichold 1928.
2 Tschichold 1987.
3 Tschichold 2003.
4 Tschichold 2006.
5 Tschichold 2011 a.
6 Tschichold 2011 b.
7 Tschichold 2016.
8 Tschichold 2021.
9 Hara 1929.
10 Peeters 1956.
11 Korean Society of Typography 2015.
12 Ide and Kirchhoff 2002, Testen 2020.
13 Tschichold 1925.
14 See: Burke 2007: 135–145.
15 Jan Tschichold, “Konstanten der Typografie” (Constants of Typography), conference held in Zurich, 1945.
16 Bill 1946.
17 Tschichold 1946.
18 Bosshard 2012.

What is The New Typography?

The “New Typography” is both the title of an essay by László Moholy-Nagy published in 1923,¹⁹ (**fig. 15**) and the title of the book by Tschichold published in 1928, as well as the name of an informal movement that interested the European graphic design scene between the two world wars.²⁰

In Moholy-Nagy's text, this New Typography is described as a communication strategy, which must be clear and as persuasive as possible. According to him, the most important technical innovation for typography is zincography, which makes it possible to create photographic reproductions in all formats. Already in 1923, Moholy-Nagy made a clear distinction in the tasks within communication processes: photography was in charge of narration and typography of persuasion.

Tschichold's book is announced on the cover as *Ein Handbuch für zeitgemäss Schaffende* (A Handbook for Modern Designers). It guides graphic designers through the process of industrialization of books and printed matter. To this end, it advocates a series of reforms: such as the systematic use of lowercase and sans serif typefaces; the standardisation of paper formats according to DIN standards (i.e., the A series); the priority to content and information (serving the text in a functional way); the disruption of symmetrical lay-out traditions, therefore, the use of asymmetrical compositions on pages, the use of modular grids, and the treatment of photography as an illustration. One can already see how most of these principles have become the norm nowadays, and therefore how much the New Typography foreshadowed the graphic design to come.

The Sources of Die neue Typographie

For the research project carried out at ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne with Matthieu Cortat, type designer and head of the Master in Type Design, we decided to take a closer look at this book.²¹ In particular, the publication of a rather accurate French edition gave us the chance to notice the differences in the bibliography of this book: the list of sources. (**fig. 16**) They appeared in a different version compared to the English edition published by the University of California Press, which replicated the bibliography of the original edition. Obviously, typos emerge from all editions. And if we add to these typos the inaccuracies of the young author of the book, the result is a list of references that are somehow difficult to identify correctly.

As the writer and bibliophile Marguerite Yourcenar once wrote, “One of the best ways to reconstruct a man's thinking is to rebuild his library”.²² We therefore began to rewrite the list of sources for *Die neue Typographie* to reconstitute part of Tschichold's library, which went through the typical vicissitudes of nomadic intellectuals of the 20th century.²³ Jan Tschichold left Germany in 1933 following his arrest by the Nazi police, on the charge of being a Bolshevik. As a German immigrant in Basel, he had to accept

less relevant commissions than at the beginning of his career, and he developed a commercial spirit linked to his books, on the one hand those he had written, on the other also those he had collected. Notably, he sold books, the intellectual rights of some of his books, and had to ded-

19 Moholy-Nagy 1923. See also: Eisele, Naegele and Lailach 2019.

20 See: Stirtion 2019; Rössler and Brodbeck 2022.

21 Barbieri 2023.

22 “L'une des meilleures manières de recréer la pensée d'un homme: reconstituer sa bibliothèque”, Yourcenar 1982: 524 (English translation: Yourcenar 1977: 247).

23 See: Hochuli 2016.



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- fig. 13 Title page of Jan Tschichold, *Die neue Typographie*.
Ein Handbuch für zeitgemäss Schaffende,
Verlag des Bildungsverbandes der Deutschen Buchdrucker, Berlin 1928
(facsimile edition, 1987).
- fig. 14 Iwan Tschichold, "Elementare Typographie",
in *Typographische Mitteilungen*, 10, October 1925.
Photo by Vincent Levrat
- fig. 15 László Moholy-Nagy, "Die neue Typographie",
in *Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar 1919–1923*,
Bauhausverlag, Weimar/Munich 1923;
Facsimile edition, Lars Müller, Zurich 2019.
Photo by Vincent Levrat





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16 b

icate himself to very commercial works. It is in this way that the Museum of Modern Art in New York came into possession of a large collection of books, magazines, posters and various printed matters from Tschichold's collection, acquired by the former design curator, Philip Johnson.²⁴

However, it is difficult to reconstruct the original library: even at MoMA, the selection of works is partial and does not include a series of items that we would now call "grey literature", such as the standards of the DIN (Deutsches Institut für Normung), or the lithograph editions that have become far too valuable to be handled without gloves and outside a museum.

To quote Marguerite Yourcenar again:

It cannot be said enough that a rare, out-of-print book, obtainable only on the shelves of a few libraries, or an article published in an old issue of a scholarly publication, is totally inaccessible to the vast majority of readers. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, the reader who is curious to learn, but lacking the time and a few slender techniques familiar to the professional scholar, remains willingly or unwillingly dependent on popular works chosen more or less at random, the best of which, not always being reprinted, become in turn unobtainable. What we call our culture is, more than one might think, a culture with closed doors.²⁵

We therefore wanted to "open the doors" and bring the sources to an audience of curious people. We went through the rewriting of the list of edited and corrected sources, then through a search for and collection of actual books in their different and varied editions: originals, reprints, translations, facsimiles. In some cases, the project entailed research through design by producing new facsimile editions. This allowed us to reconstitute an archive, or better, what is called an "anarchive",²⁶ which fills in factual voids, where the original copies were too difficult or even impossible to locate. Some of the sources cited by Tschichold were not available in conditions that would allow their use, beyond their preservation in a museum or bibliophile collection. We therefore began to create facsimiles ourselves, with the support of those libraries and archives which, in turn, created digital copies of particularly fragile journals or very precious brochures.

This re-enactment went even further: the typeface used to lay out Tschichold's book, most likely developed by Wagner and Schmidt under the

name *Neue moderne Grotesk*, went lost during World War II. We therefore commissioned Davide Tomatis, a former student of ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne, to produce a faithful digital version, named *Aurora*, after one of the trade names of this typeface in the catalogue of Weber font distributor. This project then gave life to a new revival typeface, named *Metodo* and marketed by the Optimo foundry, based in Lausanne. The *Aurora* font is the basis of the visual identity of our project, and is thus used for all the paratexts²⁷ needed for the facsimiles we have

²⁴ Stirton 2019: 233–235.

²⁵ "On ne dira jamais assez qu'un livre rare, épuisé, procurable seulement sur les rayons de quelques bibliothèques, ou un article paru dans un numéro ancien d'une publication savante, est pour l'immense majorité des lecteurs totalement inaccessible. Quatre-vingt-dix-neuf fois sur cent, le lecteur curieux de s'instruire, mais manquant de temps et de quelques minces techniques familières à l'érudit de profession, reste bon gré mal gré tributaire d'ouvrages de vulgarisation choisis à peu près au hasard, et dont les meilleurs eux-mêmes, n'étant pas toujours réimprimés, deviennent à leur tour improcurables. Ce que nous appelons notre culture est plus qu'on ne le croit une culture à bureaux fermés", Yourcenar 1982: 551. Our translation.

²⁶ See: Baldacci 2017.

²⁷ See: Genette 1997 (1987).

produced. The very fact that this lost font from the 1920s was recreated and included in the catalogue of the Optimo foundry confirms how “new” is Tschichold's New Typography, or how something that is almost a hundred years old, is still speaking to us today.

The Reference List of Tschichold's Book

The bibliography of *Die neue Typographie* allows for several levels of reading. A hierarchy is established by the indexes: the letters “b”, “d”, “t” or a middle dot inform us that the author considers the source particularly relevant for its illustrations (“b” for *Bilder*, images), for poetry (“d” for *Dichtungen*, poems), for its typographic composition (“t” for *Typographie*, typography) or it is simply recommended to readers (middle dot). (fig. 17)

Through the indexes, Tschichold allows us to wander through his books, by means of monographic paths. As a reminder, in German-speaking countries, there were two types of training in what is now called “graphic design”: a curriculum focusing on images, mainly in illustration and reproduction techniques using engraving of these illustrations, and training in typography in letterpress printing, such as page layout and composition of lead characters by hand or through a Linotype machine.²⁸ One might recognise these two different curricula as the “b” (images) and “t” (typography) indexes in the references, as marks of two different levels of reading in Tschichold's bibliography.

In addition, Tschichold provides the readers with a list that distinguishes three typologies: first, magazines and special issues; second, works in several languages; and finally, standards. All the works are then organised alphabetically by language, and listed chronologically. These might seem somewhat bizarre decisions, as bibliographic sources are normally listed in alphabetical order.

What are the reasons behind this multi-layered hierarchy? In the magazines that Tschichold cites – and therefore, read by him, such as *Der Arbeiter* – we found a similar operational mode: the information is provided “by country”, with a geographical approach. (fig. 18) What we have in front of us is no longer just a list, but a real report on what Tschichold considers to be the most interesting publications in each country. In these last pages of his book, he sets up a sort of graphic design festival, with the same approach as the Venice Biennale, established in 1895 and organising biennial art and architecture exhibitions in the context of national pavilions, with a national approach that has been widely criticised as it has become a geopolitical representation of the world.²⁹ Yet, the countries listed in the references nearly perfectly overlap with the distribution of pavilions at the 15th Venice Biennale of 1926, including a pavilion for Italian Futurism.³⁰ (fig. 19)

Tschichold adds a layer of complexity: he lists the books in the editions that he owns, which are in different languages from the original editions. This is why we find most of the sources by Italian Futurists in the

French section,³¹ or why the same book illustrated by Lissitzky appears in two editions: the original in Russian,³² as well as the Dutch translation published in France by Theo van Doesburg;³³ or the same book by Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*,³⁴

28 See: Aynsley 2000.

29 See: Martini and Martini 2011.

30 See: *Catalogo della XV Esposizione* 1926.

31 For example, see: Marinetti 1909.

32 El Lissitzky 1922a.

33 El Lissitzky 1922b.

34 Le Corbusier 1923.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

Innerhalb der Sprachgruppen in zeitlicher Folge.

Die nachgesetzten Buchstaben bedeuten:

b = selbständige Bildfolgen.

d = Dichtungen

t = nur der Typographie wegen genannt.

Die mit * ausgezeichneten Werke sind dem Studium des Lesers besonders empfohlen, Über die Preise geben die Buchhandlungen und Verlage Auskunft.

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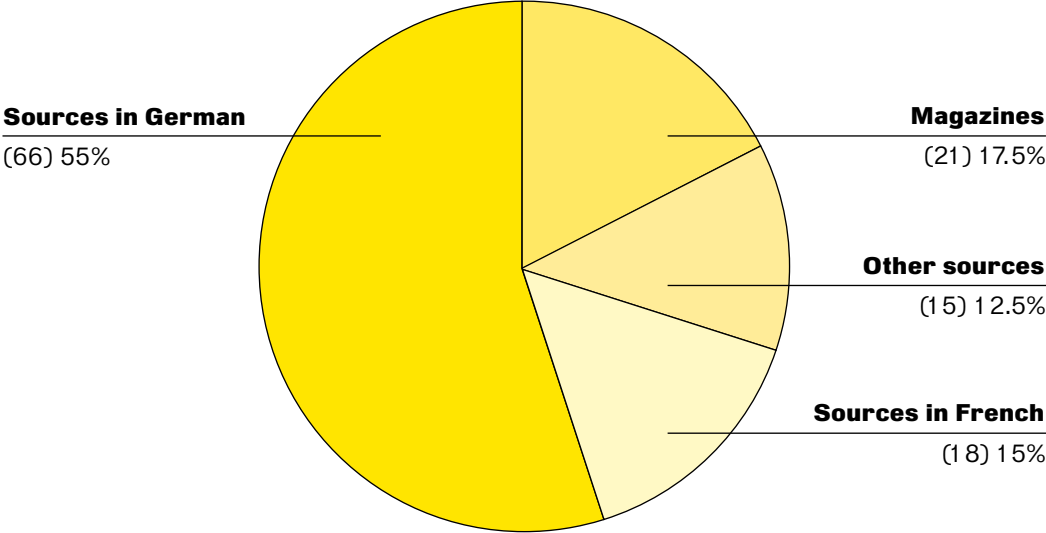

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fig. 17 Legend to bibliographic categories,
from *Die neue Typographie*, 1928.
Photo by Niccolò Quaresima

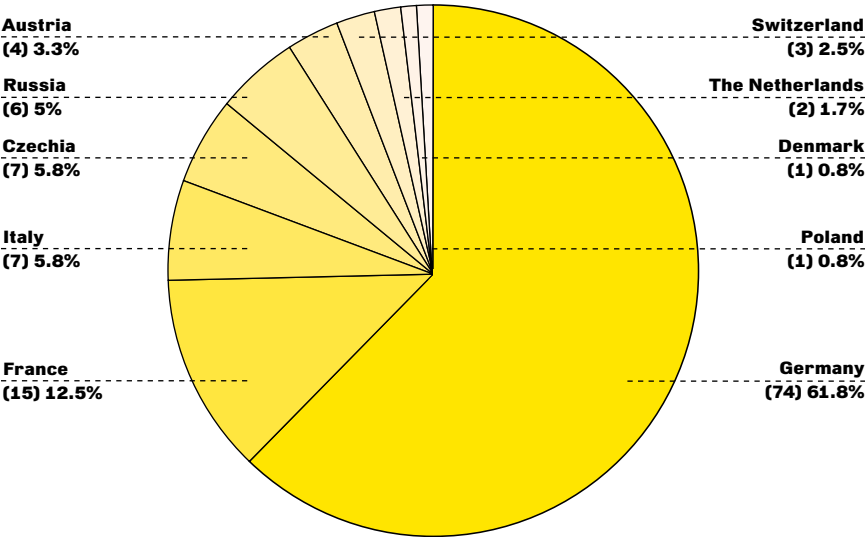
fig. 18 Spread from the magazine *Der Ararat*.
Glossen, Skizzen und Notizen zur neuen Kunst
(Glosses, Sketches and Notes on New Art), 4, January 1920.
Photo by Vincent Levrat

fig. 19 Catalogue of the 15th Venice Art Biennale, 1926;
cover and spread with site plan of the foreign pavilions.
Photo by Niccolò Quaresima





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fig. 20 Pie chart showing the breakdown of sources from *Die neue Typographie* by publication type.

fig. 21 Pie chart showing the breakdown of sources from *Die neue Typographie* by country of publication.

in the original French edition and in its German translation, under the title *Kommende Baukunst*.³⁵

Moreover, it should be noted that Tschichold often includes works in his bibliography that he does not cite, these being nevertheless important references for him, like a list of good examples. It is therefore a bibliography that also serves as a “mood board”, that is a selection of works providing inspiration and visual references to designers of all sorts.

A Statistical Approach

If we treat the bibliography of *Die neue Typographie* as a corpus, we can also draw some statistical information from its different categories: most of the works cited are in German (42%); around 13% are foreign sources (in Italian, Dutch, Czech, Russian, Polish, Danish), 15% are French sources; 17% are magazines and special issues, and the remaining 13% are standard.

(fig. 20) If we mix magazines, books and grey literature and focus on their provenance, the figures change slightly: most of the sources come from Germany (61.7%), 12.5% from France, around 5.8% from Italy, 5.8% from Czech Republic, and 5% from Russia, while Austria (3.3%), Switzerland (2.5%) and The Netherlands (1.7%) account for minor shares, and Denmark and Poland account for less than 1%. **(fig. 21)**

This is not surprising, since the list includes the works by Le Corbusier, the manifestos of the Surrealists and the Italian Futurists, as well as the books by Man Ray. What is interesting is that this New Typography finds its principles as much in the standardisation of the industry (paper and printed matter sizes), as in the principles of the avant-garde, which refer to a superior, irrational and oneiric world – such as Surrealism – or to an anti-traditionalist velocity-imbued movement like Futurism.

The large number of references to Le Corbusier's books betrays one of Tschichold's ambitions: to build a pamphlet with a structure similar to those of Corbu. An essay that expresses a very critical view of the state of the art in the discipline, followed by an operational manual that promises a complete renewal of the graphic designer's work. The genealogy of *Die neue Typographie*, from a special issue of an existing magazine to a book on its own, is no different from a number of essays that Le Corbusier extracted from his – sometimes vitriolic – articles for *L'Esprit nouveau*.

Recommended Books

Looking at the selection of books particularly recommended to readers by Tschichold, without further specification, one finds above all journals, which in the 1920s allowed the ideas and principles of the avant-garde movements to circulate, and volumes which take the temperature of photography, typography and art of the time, in particular works from the Bauhaus book series.

G. Material zur elementaren Gestaltung / *G. Zeitschrift für elementare Gestaltung* (G. Materials for Elementary Design / G. Journal of Elementary Design) was an avant-garde journal edited and published in Berlin by Hans Richter in six issues from 1923 to 1926.³⁶ “G” is the abbreviation of the word “Gestaltung”, while the square in the title of both first issues pays homage to Theo van Doesburg. From the third issue the title changes to *G. Zeitschrift für elementare Gestaltung* (Journal for Elementary Design). The authors of the contributions are well-known names, such

35 Le Corbusier 1926.

36 Mertins and Jennings 2010.

as El Lissitzky or Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The contributions cover different subjects, ranging from cinema to photography and typography, from urban planning to design and fashion, in the quest for elementary constructive forms in all fields. El Lissitzky was also responsible for the graphic design of the first two issues, in large format: the front and back covers, as well as the two inside pages, are designed as a large visual field rather than as separate text pages. With the arrival of Mies van der Rohe in the editorial board, and especially with his financial support, the magazine took on a more manageable format, more qualitative papers, a cardboard cover printed in colour. Although it is a recommended reading, the magazine is not mentioned in the text of *Die neue Typographie*.

In 1922, El Lissitzky and the writer Ilya Ehrenburg founded the trilingual international magazine *Veshch / Gegenstand / Objet*.³⁷ The magazine was published between 1922 and 1923 by the Russian-language publishing house Skythen in Berlin. *Veshch / Gegenstand / Objet* defends Russian Constructivism and Suprematism and aims to disseminate ideas about the role of art in a revolutionary society, encouraging dialogue between the Soviet Union and Western Europe. This dialogue is fostered on one hand by the attempt of reaching an international readership (it was a trilingual magazine in Russian, German and French) and on the other by the inclusion of very different modern artistic movements, which transformed the magazine into a rather disordered collection of documents on different artistic movements and various forms of art, often drawn from the magazines *L'Esprit nouveau* and *De Stijl*, translated into Russian. The journal was only published in two issues. *Veshch / Gegenstand / Objet* is mentioned and reproduced in the sections "The History of the New Typography" and "The New Book" of *Die neue Typographie*: for Tschichold, the design of this magazine is a fundamental reference in the field of typography.

The avant-garde magazine *Merz*,³⁸ edited by Kurt Schwitters, was published in Hanover intermittently between 1923 and 1932, in various formats and layouts. Each issue of *Merz* is monographic and, in its own way, a special one. Some issues are lithograph portfolios – by Kurt Schwitters himself or by Hans (Jean) Arp – two issues are children's stories, other issues are rooted in the theory of New Typography, with texts by Max Burchartz or El Lissitzky. Schwitters was a protean personality, who had also founded his own advertising agency in 1927 (*Merz Werbezentrale*), which also provided consulting services to the municipality of Hanover. In the section "The New Book" of *Die neue Typographie*, Tschichold mentions *Merz* as an example of Dadaist exploration of the many possibilities of typographic techniques applied to the design of magazines.

Junge Menschen was a monthly magazine illustrated and edited by German writer and publisher Walter Hammer, which tackled a variety of topics including politics, art, literature and lifestyle and is aimed at a young readership.³⁹ The November 1924 issue is dedicated to the Bauhaus Weimar school. The magazine's cover and layout are designed by Joost Schmidt, and it features contributions from Josef Albers, Wilhelm Wagenfeld and Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack. This issue is illustrated with images of Bauhaus buildings by Walter Gropius, furniture by Albers, Marcel Breuer and Wagenfeld, along with

objects that became Bauhaus icons, such as Josef Hartwig's chess set. This magazine special issue is one of

³⁷ *Veshch / Gegenstand / Objet*

³⁸ Schwitters et al. 1975.

³⁹ *Junge Menschen* 1924.

the many references to the Bauhaus, which Tschichold had experienced during his first visit to the school's exhibition in Weimar in 1923: a visit that was a real revelation for the young Tschichold.

Typographische Mitteilungen was the official organ of the Bildungsverband der Deutschen Buchdrucker (Educational Association of German Book Printers). It was distributed in an edition of 20,000 copies to printers and typesetters in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In October 1925, Tschichold was invited to be the guest editor of a special issue dedicated to elementary typography, which was key to the development and dissemination of the New Typography.⁴⁰ The article "Die neue Gestaltung" (The New Design) is a manifesto of the New Typography, listing the ten tenets of Tschichold's new approach to practise. Printed in red and black, the special issue clarifies, demonstrates and presents – in both text and visual form – the principles of New Typography to practitioners. In addition to his own works, the author uses examples by Max Burchartz, Johannes Molzahn, Kurt Schwitters, László Moholy-Nagy, El Lissitzky, Herbert Bayer and Otto Baumberger. These visual references are accompanied by texts: one by Moholy-Nagy on "typo-photo", one by Lissitzky and Mart Stam on advertising, and one by Natan Altman on basic considerations. A supplement sheet featuring Adolf Behne's text on new housing was also included in the special issue. Tschichold mentions this special issue in his 1928 book: he reminds the reader that it has generated lively debate among printers' associations and professional journals. Although at the time of its publication it had been strongly criticised and attacked, by 1928 most journals accepted its validity. Thus, *Die neue Typographie* is presented as a sequel to this special issue.

The second issue of the Basel architecture magazine *ABC. Beiträge zum Bauen* (ABC. Contributions on Building) includes two articles on aspects related to graphic design,⁴¹ an article by Paul Artaria on standardised paper size, and an article by El Lissitzky and Mart Stam on advertising. The Swiss government had adopted the DIN (Deutsches Institut für Normung, or German Institute for Standardisation) system for paper size in 1924 (the surface of an A0 sheet of paper is one square metre, and the sides measure 84.1 × 118.9 cm). In his article, Artaria proposes instead to adopt the length of one metre as the basic size. Lissitzky and Stam define a strict set of rules for the design of advertising posters: limiting the use of text to the essentials and omitting any personal touch or individual expression. Tschichold does not quote these texts, but develops them in his own book.

Launched in 1914, *Das Werk* (The Work) was the official organ of the Association of Swiss Architects and the Swiss section of the Werkbund. The magazine's issue of July 1926 was edited by architect Hannes Meyer, future director of the Bauhaus, and included articles by Meyer himself, Willi Baumeister and Lajos Kassák.⁴² The book reviews section features Bauhaus books and a list of suggested titles, including *Die Scheuche* (The Scarecrow) by Kurt Schwitters, *About Two Squares* by Lissitzky, the catalogue *Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar 1919–1923*, a selection of books by Le Corbusier, and avant-garde magazines such as *Merz*, *ABC*, *G*, *Der Sturm* and the October 1925 special issue of *Typographische Mitteilungen*. In short, there is a perfect harmony with the pages of *Die neue Typographie*.

In 1924, the Austrian architect, theoretician, scenographer and artist Friedrich Kiesler organised the

40 Tschichold 1925.

41 ABC 1926.

42 Meyer 1926.

Internationale Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik (International Exhibition of New Theatre Techniques) as part of the Vienna Music and Theatre Festival.⁴³ Embracing both theatre and film, the exhibition included examples of avant-garde theatre set design, scenography and costume design, as well as posters from Russia, Italy, Germany, France and Austria. The exhibition and accompanying events fostered exchanges between Futurist and Constructivist artists, and representatives of the Bauhaus and the De Stijl movement. Kiesler also designed the catalogue, poster and other printed artefacts for the exhibition. Yet, the catalogue is not mentioned by Tschichold except for its inclusion in the references.

Adolf Behne was a critic and historian of art and architecture, a leading figure in German Expressionism. With his book *Von Kunst zur Gestaltung. Einführung in die moderne Malerei* (From Art to Design. Introduction to Modern Painting),⁴⁴ he offered the reader an introduction to modern art. His approach is socio-political: Constructivism is presented as the art of Socialist Revolution. The book was designed by German painter and graphic designer Oskar Fischer. The cover features a Constructivist geometric composition in black, red and grey. In the title page, the principles of the New Typography are applied, such as asymmetrical layout and the use of rulers. The book is richly illustrated with colour and black-and-white reproductions of works by artists such as Piet Mondrian, Gino Severini or Kurt Schwitters. However, Tschichold does not discuss the book in his text.

Published in 1925, *Die Kunstismen 1914–1924* (The Isms of Art 1914–1924)⁴⁵ is one of the first essays to retrace a history of the avant-gardes: Abstract Film, Constructivism, Verism, Proun, Merz, Neoplasticism, Purism, Dadaism, Simultanism, Suprematism, Metaphysicians, Abstract Art, Expressionism, Futurism and Cubism find their place in it. The authors, Hans (Jean) Arp and El Lissitzky, brought together a heterogeneous collection of their own texts, excerpts from the writings of other artists, reproductions of works (painting, sculpture, architecture, interior decoration and exhibition design) and portraits of artists. With more than seventy black-and-white illustrations, the book offers a visual account of avant-garde movements with three-language texts (German, French and English). An advertisement of this book is included in *Die neue Typographie*.

Among the *Bauhausbücher*,⁴⁶ the series of books published by the Bauhaus, Tschichold recommends three to the reader. First, he mentions *Neue Gestaltung. Neoplastizismus* (New Design. Neoplasticism) by Piet Mondrian, the fifth volume in the series.⁴⁷ Although not being an active member of the Bauhaus circle, Mondrian discusses in this publication the dominant hierarchy between painting and architecture and presents the future of Neoplasticism. Most of the essays had already been published in the journal *De Stijl* and translated into German for the first time in this publication.

Next, Tschichold highlights the sixth volume in the series, titled *Grundbegriffe der neuen gestaltenden Kunst* (Principles of Neo-Plastic

Art) by Theo van Doesburg, published in 1925.⁴⁸ The other co-founder of the De Stijl movement with Mondrian had already published this text in defence of Neoplasticism in 1919. During his stay at the Bauhaus in Weimar between 1921 and 1922, Van Does-

43 Kiesler 1924.

44 Behne 1925.

45 El Lissitzky and Arp 1925.

46 Gropius and Moholy-Nagy 1925–1930 (2019–2021).

47 Mondrian 1925.

48 Van Doesburg 1925.

burg translated it into German with the collaboration of Max Burchartz. The typographic layout of this volume, as with all the others in the series, was designed by László Moholy-Nagy, while the dust jacket was designed by Van Doesburg himself. While Van Doesburg is mentioned in *Die neue Typographie*, this book is only cited in the bibliographic references.

Tschichold finally points to *Malerei, Fotografie, Film* (Painting, Photography, Film) by László Moholy-Nagy, the eighth volume in the Bauhaus series.⁴⁹ Published in 1925, this photographic book asserts that the human eye is not fully adapted to the simultaneity and rapid pace of the modern world, thus it is no longer a reliable source of perception. Instead, the new conditions of perception require the use of photography as a complement to our insufficient visual abilities (providing an idea of truthful, rational, augmented photography). Moholy-Nagy presents photography above all as a reproductive medium, but also a productive one, thanks to its capacity to expand the visible world. This book is mentioned by Tschichold as an extensive reference on the subject of photograms.

The list of recommendations continues with the special issue dedicated to *Neue Kunst* (New Art) of *Der Bücherkreis*, the magazine of a social-democratic book club founded in the Republic of Weimar;⁵⁰ the special issue of the magazine *Offset, Buch- und Werbekunst* edited by Joost Schmidt and dedicated to the Bauhaus;⁵¹ the 1920 book *Sprache und Schrift* (Language and Writing) by Walter Porstmann, who advocated for the use of lowercase alphabet and was highly influential in Bauhaus circles;⁵² as well as the 1926 book *DIN Formate und Vordrucke* (DIN Formats and Templates) by Richard Kiencke and Otto Frank, who present and explain the standardisation system promoted by the Deutscher Normenausschuss (German Standards Committee), as the DIN, Deutsches Institut für Normung (German Institute for Standardisation) was called at the time.⁵³

All these recommended sources present the variety of fields and scenes that Tschichold explored in view of the preparation of his critical text and manual for designers. These might be identified with El Lissitzky, the Bauhaus, German avant-garde art theory, as well as the supporters of standardisation and innovation in German culture.

Wholly Illustrated Books

The books that Tschichold recommends as “b” (wholly illustrated works) are symptomatic of his interest in new art: they are mostly image portfolios (by George Grosz, El Lissitzky or Man Ray), or poetry books accompanied by illustrations, by Hans (Jean) Arp or Max Ernst.

The book by El Lissitzky entitled “About Two Squares” is present in the references in two editions, both recommended for their poems and illustrations. While this publication might be considered as the first abstract book for children, it can be interpreted in multiple ways: it is also an allegory of a new society whose socio-political message challenges the current order and proposes a revolutionary transformation. It is also a tribute to the painter Ka-

zimir Malevich, whose *Black Square* was the founding stone of Suprematism in 1913: Lissitzky had met him in Vitebsk in 1920, while preparing the original Russian edition of this book.⁵⁴ By adopting a visual language

49 Moholy-Nagy 1925.

50 *Der Bücherkreis* 1925

51 *Offset, Buch- und Werbekunst* 1926

52 Porstmann 1920.

53 Kiencke and Frank 1926.

54 El Lissitzky 1922a.

that mixes typography and abstract images, this book represents a radical rethinking of book design, which demands an active approach to the reader. In 1922, Theo van Doesburg recognised the importance of this book and translated and published it in Dutch, both as a book and as a special issue of the magazine *De Stijl*.⁵⁵

Champs délicieux. Album de photographies (Delicious Fields. Photo Album) is a limited-edition album (forty numbered copies) containing twelve rayographs (photographic prints made by placing objects on photosensitive paper and exposing it to light, without the use of a camera) by the American photographer and visual artist Man Ray.⁵⁶ (fig. 22) The title is modelled on a volume of automatic writings by André Breton and Philippe Soupault from 1919, *Les Champs magnétiques* (The Magnetic Fields). This collection was completed by a preface by Tristan Tzara, entitled “La photographie à l’envers” (Photography Upside Down). The subjects of the rayographs are common objects, such as a comb, a pipe, a key. For Tschichold – who includes images from the album in *Die neue Typographie* – the relevant issue is that Man Ray invented this photographic technique, which makes it possible to obtain images that are poetic, unreal and supernatural at the same time: in the section “The New Art” of his book, Tschichold announces rayographs as a modern form of visual poetry.

The portfolio of lithographs by George Grosz *Mit Pinsel und Schere: 7 Materialisationen* (With Brush and Scissors: 7 Materialisations) published in Berlin in 1922 is informative on the circulation of artistic images in the 20th century.⁵⁷ These are seven black-and-white reproductions of paintings made by Grosz between 1919 and 1922, some of which survived the artist’s inclusion in the *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibition and are now in public collections in Berlin and Madrid, while others are lost. The folder is interesting in its own graphic design, with its mix of fonts: Venus, Akzidenz Grotesk and an unidentified sans serif typeface. Tschichold includes this collection in his bibliography, without citing it otherwise, but of course Grosz’s vitriolic criticism of German society was not far removed from his opinions.

Two portfolios by El Lissitzky are recommended by Tschichold. *Figurinen. Die plastische Gestaltung der elektro-mechanischen Schau “Sieg über die Sonne”* (Figurines. The Three-Dimensional Design of the Electro-Mechanical Show “Victory Over the Sun”) is a well-known collection of ten colour lithographs published in 1923 in an edition of seventy-five copies – several of which are preserved in museums such as the MoMA in New York.⁵⁸ Lissitzky represents the cast of mechanical puppets for the Russian Futurist opera *Victory Over the Sun*, written in 1913 by Aleksei Kruchenykh, Velimir Khlebnikov, Mikhail Matyushin and Kazimir Malevich. Each lithograph represents a character from the opera: the Announcer, the Globetrotter, the Sentry, the Old Man, the New Man, the Anxious People, the Sportsmen, the Gravediggers, as well as the drawing for the scenography. Tschichold recommends the portfolio, but does not cite it elsewhere in his book.

The other collection by El Lissitzky *Proun 1. Kestnermappe* is also used as an illustration of the section “Die neue Kunst” (The New Art) of *Die neue Typographie*.⁵⁹ This is a portfolio of six lithographs that Lissitzky produced as a New Year’s gift for the members of the Kestner Gesellschaft, the independent association that ex-

55 El Lissitzky 1922b.

56 Ray 1922.

57 Grosz 1922.

58 El Lissitzky 1923a.

59 El Lissitzky 1923b.

hibited and promoted contemporary art in Hanover. The six lithographs, conceived between 1919 and 1923, date back to his Russian period, when he had imagined his *Proun* as an abstract art between painting and architecture based on the positions of Malevich. Lissitzky had exhibited at the Kestner Gesellschaft in 1922, and there met his future wife Sophie Küppers, married to and then widow of Paul Erich Küppers, the association's artistic director.

Poetry Books

The list of poetry books recommended by Tschichold should not deceive the reader: while he might have read and enjoyed poetry, the impression is that these works interested him above all for the potential for free, expressive and innovative typography composition, that poetry allows as a genre, and in a culture still centred on text rather than on image.

Cinéma calendrier du cœur abstrait. Maisons (Cinema Calendar of the Abstract Heart. Houses) is a collection of thirty-three poems published by Tristan Tzara in 1920, illustrated by nineteen black-and-white woodcuts by Hans (Jean) Arp.⁶⁰ The two collaborated on several publications during their careers, in this case by correspondence, one living in Paris and the other in Berlin. Tschichold does not cite this source, but he marks it both as a remarkable book of poetry and for the quality of its illustrations. He nevertheless identifies in Tzara and Arp the representatives of a lyrical side of the Dada movement, as opposed to the more political and radical production of artists like George Grosz or Richard Huelsenbeck.

Les Malheurs des immortels (Misfortunes of the Immortals), published in 1922, is one of the first books illustrated by Max Ernst.⁶¹ The result of a collaboration between the German painter and the French poet Paul Éluard, this book is a collection of twenty-one poems by Éluard and twenty-one black-and-white reproductions of collages by Ernst, placed side by side. Each spread of the book thus includes an illustration, a title and a poem. In his collages, Ernst brings together fragments of woodcuts he found in books and magazines to create new compositions, producing a sense of playful, dreamlike nonsense.

Pantomima (Pantomime) is a collection of poems by Vítězslav Nezval, co-founder of the Czech Surrealist movement and member of the Devětsil movement.⁶² Designed by Karel Teige, this book accompanies the poems with expressive typographic compositions: the poem *Ade* (Adieu) is an obituary, where the letters are arranged to recall the curves traced by birds in flight, thus suggesting the departure of Harlequin and other comedians whom the poet mourns. *Pantomima* also includes a cover and six drawings by Czech artist, photographer and poet Jindřich Štyrský. The cover, in particular, is an example of the "pictorial poems" created by artists of the Devětsil movement at the time, combining photomontage and text.

Menší růžová zahrada (A Smaller Rose Garden) is another collection of poems by the same Vítězslav Nezval, published in 1926.⁶³ Karel Teige took care of the typographic design of the book, while the cover design is by two Czech artists, based in Paris at the time: Toyen (Marie Čermínová) and Jindřich Štyrský. Conceived in the form of a pictorial poem, the cover

mixes the text of the title and the name of the author with a photomontage. Although these two books are not mentioned in the main text of *Die*

60 Tzara 1920.

61 Ernst and Éluard 1922.

62 Nezval 1924.

63 Nezval 1926.

neue Typographie, Karel Teige is quoted and praised by Tschichold, for his remarkable book design skills.

Die Scheuche. Märchen (The Scarecrow. A Fairy Tale) is a children's book by Kurt Schwitters and Käte Steinitz, in collaboration with Theo van Doesburg.⁶⁴ In 1925, it appeared simultaneously as issue 14–15 of *Merz* magazine and as a book published by Apos-Verlag in Hanover. The composition is the most important and experimental aspect of this book, and therefore Paul Vogt must be mentioned alongside the authors, as he took care of the typographical layout. In *Die Scheuche*, Schwitters tells the story of a scarecrow, mixing an absurd text with the conventions of the literary genre of fairy tales. The illustrations in the book are entirely composed of typographic elements. As in Dada and Futurist sound poems, the tone and accent of voice in which the words should be read are suggested by different font sizes and slanted words: a perfect example of expressive composition of the text, which refers to the experiments of Lissitzky.

Die Märchen vom Paradies (Fairy Tales of Paradise) is another illustrated children's book. Published in 1924, it is written and illustrated by Kurt Schwitters and Käte Steinitz.⁶⁵ It contains three absurd stories: the illustrations, of significantly different styles, are inserted into the text. The variation in fonts and sizes, spacing and layout show an experimental approach to typography. In this case, Tschichold includes in his book a reproduction of a text announcing the publication of *Die Märchen vom Paradies* to illustrate the section on the design of advertising material: designed by Kurt Schwitters, the ad is reproduced in full size on a red background. In the text, Tschichold remarks on the functional use of the vertical black ruler, emphasising how it provides a strong contrast to the horizontal lines of the type.

I nuovi poeti Futuristi (New Futurist Poets) by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti is a collection of poems and *tavole parolibere* (words-in-freedom boards).⁶⁶ The book also includes experimental typographic compositions on fold-out pages. While this is one of the many references to Italian Futurism that Jan Tschichold included in the bibliography of this book, it is the only one in Italian. It should be noted that for Tschichold, "It is to a 'non-technician', the Italian poet F.T. Marinetti, the founder of Futurism, that the credit must be given for providing the curtain-raiser for the change-over from ornamental to functional typography".⁶⁷ This statement was followed by the reproduction of Marinetti's manifesto "Typographic Revolution and Free-Expression Orthography" in *Die neue Typographie*.

Ziemia na lewo (Earth to the Left) is a collection of revolutionary poems promoting communist ideology that was published in 1924 by Polish Futurist poets Anatol Stern and Bruno Jasieński.⁶⁸ Figurative illustrations are replaced by geometric figures, while the photomontage reproduced on the cover juxtaposes parts of machinery and portraits of the authors. The graphic designer is Mieczysław Szczuka, a Polish avant-garde artist, whom Tschichold recognises as an artist producing works in the same vein of the New Typography.

Dlia golosa (For the Voice) is a book of poems by Vladimir Mayakovsky intended, as the title suggests, to be read aloud.⁶⁹ Mayakovsky had asked El Lissitzky to design the volume in such a way as to facilitate rapid location of

a particular poem during the performances, where he declaimed his own verses. The idea was also to encourage readers to become speakers. In response, Lissitzky uses thirteen address-book-inspired tabs, one for each

64 Schwitters, Steinitz and Van Doesburg 1925.

65 Schwitters and Steinitz 1924.

66 Marinetti 1925.

67 Tschichold 2006: 53.

68 Stern and Jasieński 1924.

69 Mayakovsky 1923a.

poem, instead of a regular table of contents. The book is extensively quoted by Tschichold and even reproduced in a still life provided by El Lissitzky.

Pro eto (About This) is a love poem dedicated by Vladimir Mayakovsky to his lover Lilya Brik.⁷⁰ It details the suffering inflicted on the poet following a two-month separation and the definitive rejection of Lilya. On the cover, Lilya's wide-open eyes stare at the reader. The book was illustrated by Alexander Rodchenko with eleven photomontages that feature Mayakovsky and Lilya by photographer Abram Petrovic Sterenberg. For Tschichold, this is the first example of a book illustrated with photomontages, as well as an example of New Typography from Russia.

Among these highly innovative works, Tschichold also recommended *Na vlnách TSF* (On the Waves of TSF, Télégraphie Sans Fil), a collection of poems by Jaroslav Seifert designed by Karel Teige,⁷¹ as well as more traditionally typeset books, such as *Die Wolkenpumpe* (The Cloud Pump),⁷² *Der Pyramidenrock* (The Pyramid Dress),⁷³ both by Hans (Jean) Arp, or *Anna Blume. Dichtungen* (Anna Blume. Poems) by Kurt Schwitters.⁷⁴

Books and Their Typographic Layout

The books marked by letter "t" (typography) are symptomatic of a certain tendency among graphic designers to write historiographical accounts and to include their own works in them as a Darwinistic consequence of the evolution of the discipline. It must be said, though, that Tschichold was very selective: there are only four books recommended for their typography, and only one of them was designed by himself.

The portfolio of brochures for the Bochumer Verein für Bergbau und Gussstahlfabrikation (Bochum Association for Mining and Cast Steel Production) is a series of ten brilliantly coloured leaflets, designed by the Werbe-bau agency that Max Burchartz founded in 1924 with Johannes Canis (who was in charge for copywriting) in Bochum, in the Ruhr region.⁷⁵ This is one of the first applications of experimental photomontage and New Typography to the visual communication for a major industrial client such as a steel company. Each page highlights an industrial product, with details and textual information arranged on a grid. Tschichold mentions these brochures widely in his text and includes several pages in *Die neue Typographie*, apologising for the poor quality of the reproductions.

The book *50 Jahre Stadttheater in Magdeburg* is a commemorative publication from 1926, published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Magdeburg city theatre.⁷⁶ In the 1920s, Magdeburg was an extremely lively city, in full development, and the local administration was well aware of the importance of visual communication. The book was designed by Johannes Molzahn, a very talented photographer and painter. In 1923, upon recommendation of architect Bruno Taut, he started teaching in the local school of applied arts. The book is visually rich, with text printed in three colours and several shades of grey, fold-out pages, lavishly illustrated with portraits, images

of the building and reproductions of documents – in short, a book that would be quite complex to produce even today.

Ausstellungskatalog der Richmod-Galerie is the catalogue of an exhibition held at the Richmod Gal-

⁷⁰ Mayakovsky 192 3b.

⁷¹ Seifert 1925. ⁷² Arp 1920.

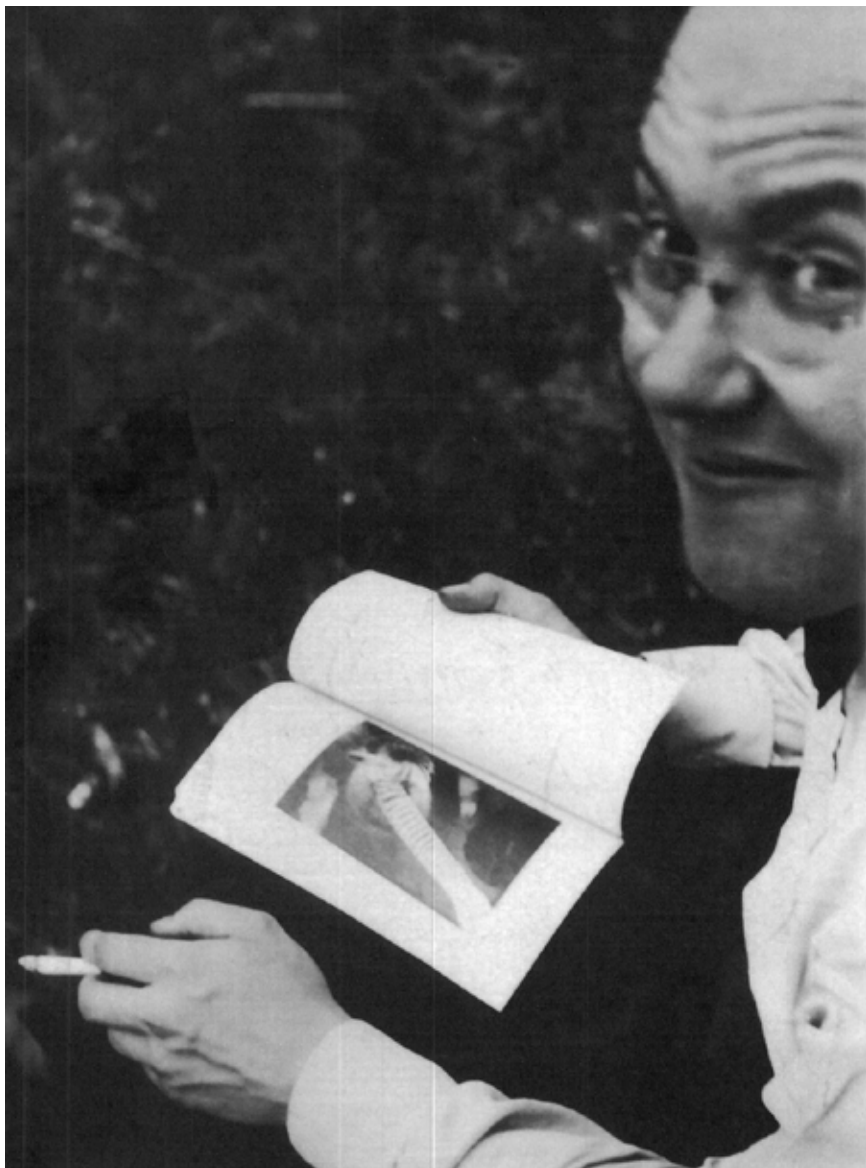
⁷³ Arp 1925.

⁷⁴ Schwitters 192 2.

⁷⁵ Burchartz and Canis 1925.

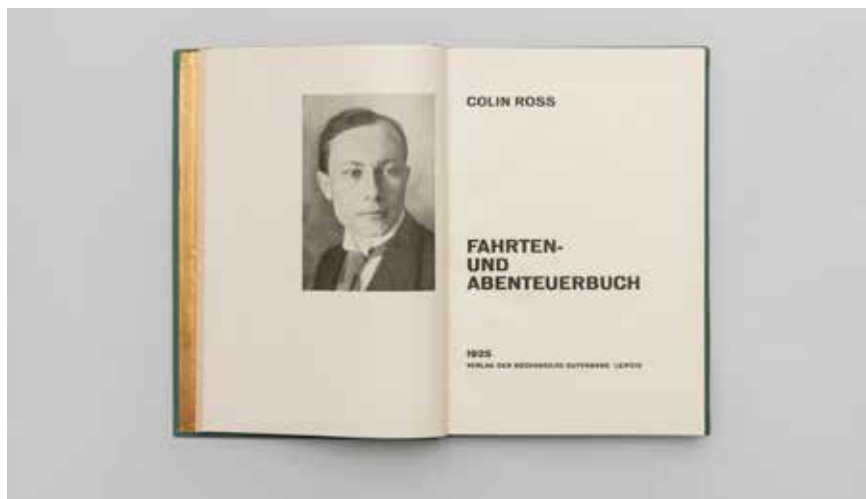
See: Stürzebecher 1999.

⁷⁶ *50 Jahre Stadttheater in Magdeburg* 192 6.



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fig. 22 Jan Tschichold leafing through *Champs Délicieux*
by Man Ray, date unknown.
Photo by Hilde Horn



23



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- fig. 23 Title page of *Fahrten- und Abenteuerbuch* by Colin Ross, Büchergilde Gutenberg, Berlin 1925, designed by Jan Tschichold. Photo by Niccolò Quaresima
- fig. 24 Jan Tschichold's original design for the title page of *Fahrten- und Abenteuerbuch*, as featured in *Die neue Typographie*, 1928. Photo by Niccolò Quaresima
- fig. 25 Adolf Hitler and Colin Ross, Berlin, 1940. Photographer unknown

ADRESSENVERZEICHNIS

Willi Baumeister	Frankfurt a. M., Neue Mainzer Str. 47
Herbert Bayer	Dessau, Bauhaus, Friedrichsallee 12
Max Burchartz	Bochum, Herner Str. 42
Dr. Walter Drexel	Jena, Fuchsturmweg 15
Théo van Doesburg	Clamart (Seine), Frankreich, 64, avenue Schneider
Lajos Kassák	Wien XIII, Amalienstr. 26
El Lissitzky	Moskau, Strominka 26, Quartier 50
Ladislav Moholy-Nagy	Dessau, Burgkühnauer Allee 2
Johannes Molzahn	Magdeburg, Sternstr. 24
Joost Schmidt	Dessau, Bauhaus, Friedrichsallee 12
Kurt Schwitters	Hannover, Waldhausenstr. 5, II
Franz W. Seiwert	Köln a. Rh., Eigelstein 147, III
Jan Tschichold	München, Prandlstr. 2
Karel Teige	Praha, Tschechoslowakei, Černa 12 a
Tristan Tzara	Paris XIV, 15, rue Delambre
Piet Zwart	Wassenaar, Holland, Rijksweg 290

lery in Cologne in 1926.⁷⁷ The exhibition *Neue Kunst, Alte Kunst* (New Art, Ancient Art) mixed pieces from the collection of art dealer and gallery owner Casimir Hagen from the Middle Ages to the present, with works by the group of artists known as the “Kölner Progressive”: Jankel Adler, Gert Arntz, Max Ernst, Marta Hegemann, Heinrich Hoerle, Anton Räderscheidt, Franz Wilhelm Seiwert, Gert Wollheim. The catalogue includes portraits of the artists, taken by August Sander, and is designed by the painter Anton Räderscheidt, a leading figure in the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity). It is an interesting choice by Tschichold, who recommends for its typographic layout this book, designed by a painter. Yet the book is not cited or reproduced anywhere in *Die neue Typographie*.

The book *Fahrten- und Abenteuerbuch* (Travel and Adventure Book) by Austrian journalist and filmmaker Colin Ross is one of the books designed by Jan Tschichold in 1925 as part of the editions of the Büchergilde Gutenberg, a book club born in the 1920s in order to distribute publications of good quality at a reasonable price, and often with progressive or even socialist content.⁷⁸ **(fig. 23)** For a monthly subscription of one German Mark, members could receive four books a year. This book is a perfect example of the application of the principles of the New Typography to book design: on the cover, a bold sans serif typeface, whose size and colours (black and gold) are used to differentiate and highlight the content. Inside, photographs are used for illustrative purposes and the page numbers are set in a bold sans serif font, larger than the body used for the text. According to Tschichold, when it comes to novels and scientific publications, a radical change is not needed, but rather more subtle changes to the traditional conception of the book. The book also illustrates the attempt to achieve a harmonious contrast between typographic and photographic elements through the use of light, space and direction. Tschichold includes in *Die neue Typographie* a version of the title page which was refused by the publisher due to an image rights issue concerning the author's portrait. **(fig. 24)** Tschichold, a fervent left-wing intellectual who subsequently had to flee Germany, designed this book by Colin Ross, one of the most popular travel writers in Germany and Austria. Ross, described as a political opportunist, devoted himself to National Socialism shortly after Hitler's seizure of power. **(fig. 25)** As a staunch supporter of Nazism, his fear of being caught by Allied forces led him and his wife to commit suicide in late April 1945.⁷⁹

A List of Addresses

The intertwining of individual stories and history resurfaces in another section of Tschichold's book, namely the *Adressenverzeichnis* (address list), which is placed after the bibliographic references and before the acknowledgments to those who provided the clichés of the images reproduced in *Die neue Typographie*. It is a list of sixteen names of graphic designers and artists, followed by their addresses. The author does not tell us more than that: today we would say that he “tagged” them. **(fig. 26)**

Yet, with this address list, he paints an ideal atlas of his view of the avant-garde, dotting the map of Europe from Clamart to Moscow, from Wassenaar to Vienna, with the network of colleagues he admires. Note that

⁷⁷ Richmod Galerie 1926.

⁷⁸ Ross 1925.

⁷⁹ Baumunk 1999 (1991).

Tschichold includes himself in this list, where he is the youngest member, aged 26. The fifteen other persons

are between 28 and 45 years old in 1928, and already had established careers: Karel Teige and Herbert Bayer (both 28) as graphic designers for books and advertising; Tristan Tzara (32) as a poet and playwright; László Moholy-Nagy (33) and Joost Schmidt (35) as teachers at the Bauhaus; Franz Wilhelm Seiwert (33) and Johannes Molzahn (36) as painters; Walter Dexel (38), El Lissitzky (38) and Willi Baumeister (39) as polymaths gifted in all fields; Kurt Schwitters and Lajos Kassak (both 41) as artists and intellectuals; Max Burchartz (41) and Piet Zwart (43) as advertising graphic designers; and finally Theo van Doesburg (45) as an artist and theoretician.

What is striking in the biographies of these sixteen individuals is the combination of political commitment and poetic inspiration. Six members of the list (Baumeister, Burchartz, Dexel, Teige, Tschichold and Schwitters) were part of the Ring "Neue Werbegestalter", the Circle "New Advertising Designers",⁸⁰ a group established in 1928 around the principles set out in *Die neue Typographie* and aimed at promoting a common idea of the avant-garde through collective exhibitions, such as the one held in 1929,⁸¹ or by contributing to Werkbund shows. **(fig. 27)** The goal of the Circle was to claim a role as graphic designers, independent of the practical activities of printing. In the words of Dutch designer Paul Schuitema:

The designer is not a draughtsman, but rather an organiser of visual and technical factors. His work should not be manual; rather, it should be limited to noting, grouping and technical organisation.⁸²

In short, the members of the Circle envisioned an authorship behind a profession, the typographer, which until then had been identified with layout activities and technical and craft skills of those who worked in the typographic workshop.

Generally speaking, this group of men aged between 26 and 45 suffered under several political regimes. Theo van Doesburg died of a heart attack shortly after the publication of Tschichold's book, in 1931, at the age of 48. Franz Wilhelm Seiwert died in 1933, at the age of 39 due to the consequences of a radiology treatment he had received in 1901. Jan Tschichold, Herbert Bayer, Kurt Schwitters, László Moholy-Nagy and Johannes Molzahn all left Germany between 1933 and 1938. Willi Baumeister, Max Burchartz, Walter Dexel and Joost Schmidt stayed in Germany during the war, but with severe limitations in the possibility of teaching, working or exhibiting.

Moreover, some of them – Kurt Schwitters, Walter Dexel, Johannes Molzahn and Franz Wilhelm Seiwert – were featured in the exhibition "Entartete Kunst" (Degenerate Art) organised in Munich in 1937 (19 July – 30 November) by the Nazis.⁸³ **(fig. 28)**

Outside Germany, Tristan Tzara took part in the French Resistance against the Nazi occupation; Piet Zwart was interned by Nazi occupation forces in the Netherlands until 1945.

El Lissitzky remained a key figure in Russian culture even after 1932, when the communist regime had tightened its control over the arts. He died of tuberculosis in 1941.

⁸⁰ Lottner and Cizinsky 1990.

⁸¹ I.e.: *Neue Typographie (Sonderschau: Ring Neue Werbegestalter)*, Ausstellungshallen am Adolf-Mittag-See, Magdeburg, 3–19 August 1929.

⁸² "Der Entwerfer ist kein Zeichner, sondern Organisator der optischen und technischen Faktoren. Seine Arbeit soll nicht handarbeitlich sein; sondern soll sich beschränken auf Notieren, Gruppieren und technisch Organisieren". Paul Schuitema, cit. in: Rasch and Rasch 1930: 79. Our translation.

⁸³ See: Barron 1991.

Lajos Kassák had already had to leave Hungary because of his political activities and had settled in Vienna. Upon his return to Budapest in 1926, he had been elected to Parliament, but his relations with the communist regime were never positive. Karel Teige was declared an enemy of the people by the communist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1948, and died shortly afterwards, at age 51 from a heart attack.

A Patriarchal Perspective?

Reading through the address list of Tschichold's fellows and their biographies, one might think of a patriarchal perspective in *Die neue Typographie*. Recent studies on Germany's most progressive school tell us that even the Bauhaus tended to favour applications from men over those from women (who made up a third of the student body) and that, due to gender prejudice, most female students enrolled in the textile department, which was seen as more suitable for them than architectural design.⁸⁴ However, hidden within the pages of Tschichold's book are some of the most remarkable women of their generation.

Anna Berliner (née Meyer, in Halberstadt in 1888) is one of the three female authors cited in Tschichold's bibliography. (**fig. 29**) In 1925, she published *Japanische Reklame in der Tageszeitung* (Japanese Advertising in Daily Newspapers), a study comparing advertising in Japan with that in American and German newspapers.⁸⁵ While emphasising cultural differences with Japan, she avoided establishing a cultural hierarchy, thus avoiding the risk of falling into exoticism or Orientalism, which was quite common in the 1920s. Berliner was also an extraordinary woman: an experimental psychologist, holding a PhD, she moved to Japan with her husband Siegfried Berliner. Far from being a housewife, she had obtained permission to continue her studies at the Imperial University – a rare thing for a foreigner, even more so for a foreign woman. With the outbreak of World War I, her husband was interned in a Japanese prison camp – she had the right to visit him. She then moved to the United States, where she continued her studies, before returning to Japan in 1920, when her husband was released. She was a consultant to the future mayor of Tokyo, and her book on advertising inaugurated the then novel branch of “industrial psychology”. Upon her return to Germany and her definitive departure for the United States in 1938, she became an authority in the field of visual perception. She died in 1977 in Oregon, murdered by a teenage boy out of rage.⁸⁶

The German Käthe Steinitz, born Fanny Elisabeth Käthe Traumann in Beuthen (Bytom, Poland) in 1889, daughter of a judge of Jewish origins, is the author of two books cited in the bibliography. (**fig. 30**) Before marrying the art collector Ernst Steinitz in 1913, she studied fine arts in Berlin. Forced to follow her husband, a military doctor, she left the capital for Hanover. There, she met Kurt Schwitters and joined the Dada movement. In 1924, she published with Schwitters two fairy tale books, appeared as special issues of *Merz*.⁸⁷ She then studied art history, organised festivals with Schwitters, co-founded the Aposs and Merz publishing houses, and wrote for magazines such as *Koralle* and *Die neue Linie* (whose graphic design was by László Moholy-Nagy and Herbert Bayer). When the Nazis

came to power, her husband was put on leave from his job and emigrated to the United States. His wife followed him in 1936, after being accused of

⁸⁴ See: Otto and Rössler 2019; Otto 2019.

⁸⁵ Berliner 1925.

⁸⁶ Uffelman 2002.

⁸⁷ Schwitters and Steinitz 1924; Schwitters, Steinitz and Van Doesburg 1925.

Bolshevism just like Tschichold. A watercolour portrait of children she had painted was confiscated as Degenerate Art and destroyed. In the United States, she became an expert on Leonardo da Vinci through her work as a librarian in the Elmer Belt collection – now known as Elmer Belt Library of Vinciana – in Los Angeles, where she died in 1975.⁸⁸

Lu Märten, born Louise Charlotte Märten in Charlottenburg, Berlin, in 1879, and known by several pseudonyms – including Luzifer, Raa Bonares, Allan Loeben – was a writer, art critic and activist for women's rights. **(fig. 31)** Tschichold includes in his list of references her book *Wesen und Veränderung der Formen/Künste* (Nature and Change of Forms/Arts) published in 1924, without citing it in his text.⁸⁹ Coming from a poor family, with her parents, brothers and sisters who eventually died of tuberculosis, too weak to study at school, she was trained at home. A member of the German Social Democratic Party since 1903, Märten had contributed to the party's cultural agenda with her writings on art and literary politics. In 1922, the Russian State Publishing House commissioned Märten to develop her reflections on Marxist aesthetics. This book is therefore a treatise on aesthetics and materialist history that examines the changes in artistic forms since the Industrial Revolution. Märten argues that form is defined by its social use, that is, by its function in daily life – a position that resonates with the principles of the New Typography. She fought for gender equality, whether in her political texts, her novels and essays, which are among the un-German books burned in 1933 in Berlin's Opera Square. She found herself unable to work. Finally, after the war she represented an atypical voice: neither aligned with the West in West Berlin, nor an orthodox communist in East Berlin. She died in 1970 in Berlin.⁹⁰

Finally, a pseudonym appears in the descriptions of two of the books cited by Tschichold. Toyen, an abbreviation of the French word *citoyen* (citizen), but also a pun in Czech: *to je on* which means "that's him", was the pseudonym of Marie Čermínová (born in Prague in 1902, the same year as Tschichold), an artist and illustrator who refused stereotypes of the female gender, as her nickname says, sometimes adopting male clothing. **(fig. 32)** She obviously had a position that resonates with today's debates on gender identity.

After her studies at the School of Applied Arts in Prague, in 1923 she joined the Devětsil movement (Devětsil is the Czech name for the butterbur plant, the first flower that blooms in spring, which symbolises the new forces represented by this movement). Devětsil was the publisher of *Pásmo* (The Zone), a magazine published between 1924 and 1925 and also quoted by Tschichold – a real beacon on the European avant-gardes from the point of view of Czechoslovakia.⁹¹ From 1922, she collaborated with Jindřich Štyrský, with whom she moved to Paris in 1925. They co-founded the Artificialist movement, and then joined the Surrealist movement. Toyen returned to Prague in 1929, but during her time in Paris she illustrated the covers for poetry books by Vítězslav Nezval and Jindřich Honzl,⁹² which Tschichold had noticed, added to his bibliography, and marked with the index "d" (for *Dichtungen*, poems) books. The German invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939 forced Toyen to hide, unable to paint, but still active in drawing.

In 1947, she moved to Paris, where she remained active until the end of her life in 1980.⁹³ Of the sixteen men listed in *Die neue Typographie* only Herbert Bayer survived her.

88 Jürgs 1999.

89 Märten 1924.

90 Chichester and Sölch 2021: 116–135.

91 *Pásmo* 1924–1926.

92 Honzl 1925; Nezval 1926.

93 Huebner 2020.



27

fig. 27 Poster of the exhibition *Neue Typographie, Sonderschau: Ring neuer Werbegestalter* (New Typography, special exhibition: Circle "New Advertising Designers"), Magdeburg, 3–19 August 1929, design Walter Dexel, lithograph, 84.1 × 59.7 cm. Photo by Jolie Simpson



28

fig. 28 A page from the catalogue of the exhibition *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art), first shown in Munich, 1937, p. 23. The text on the page – “Selbst das wurde einmal ernst genommen und hoch bezahlt!” (Even this was once taken seriously and highly paid for!) – denigrates artworks by Johannes Molzahn, Jean Metzinger and Kurt Schwitters.



29

fig. 29 Portrait of Anna Meyer Berliner,
date unknown.
Photographer unknown



30

fig. 30 Käte Steinitz at the *Zinnoberfest*
(Cinnabar Festival) in Hanover, 1928.
Photo by Jos Link



31



32

fig. 31 Lu Märten in the atelier
of Stephanstraße 4,
Berlin-Steglitz, 1917.
Photographer unknown

fig. 32 Portrait of Toyen (born Marie
Čermínová) published in the
magazine *Rozpravy Aventina*,
23, 5 March 1930.
Photographer unknown

Unpacking Tschichold's Library

To explore all these issues and stories, the research project produced a travelling exhibition, which was shown in Paris, Lausanne, Urbino and Ghent, mostly in the framework of graphic design schools.⁹⁴

The title of the exhibition is borrowed from a rather famous essay by Walter Benjamin, titled *Ich packe meine Bibliothek aus. Eine Rede über das Sammeln* (Unpacking My Library. A Talk About Collecting), originally published in 1931.⁹⁵ The essay exposes the pleasures (and pains) that all book lovers experience when moving their collection: the fatigue of filling and emptying boxes, but also the joy of arranging and rearranging their books.

I am unpacking my library. Yes, I am. The books are not yet on the shelves, not yet touched by the mild boredom of order.⁹⁶

The exhibition was designed by the French-Swiss agency Work Matter, while the visual identity was curated by Italian graphic designer Federico Barbon.⁹⁷ At the exhibition, most of the books – the sources cited by Tschichold – can be touched by the audience. Some publications proved extremely difficult to find: Russian books, already rare, became nearly impossible to obtain after the occupation of Ukraine due to sanctions, forcing us to produce facsimile editions. As for magazines, Tschichold's references were really problematic, since he only quoted their titles, often requiring us to buy or reproduce entire collections, meaning significant quantities of issues published over ten or twenty years.

Each source is numbered, and refers both to the present book and to the website of our project.⁹⁸ Here one can find documentation texts explaining the focus of each source, how it is used by Tschichold in his work, what other references can be consulted for further information, who are the graphic designers, artists and photographers who contributed to it (where this information is known), the dimensions of the object, and finally which edition of the source we worked on.⁹⁹

What's New in and About the New Typography?

To conclude this essay, what is new about this New Typography promoted by Tschichold? On the one hand, there is what still speaks to us in *Die neue Typographie* almost a hundred years later. Apart from the reform of the German language for lowercase writing, which has not become reality, most of the world today uses the A paper format established by DIN standards 198 and 476. Sans

serif fonts have become the standard – and serif fonts are also accepted, ecumenically and without discrimination. Some books require a symmetrical layout, some others don't. The photographic image is so ubiquitous that we talk about visual pollution. Of course, Tschichold's youthful vigour involves a measure of exaggeration that made him reconsider some of his positions. Yet, if we approach *Die neue Typographie* as a historical document, as an indicator of its time, then we recognise many elements of novelty.

94 *Déballer la bibliothèque de Tschichold*, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (BNF), Paris, 24 March – 15 April 2023; *Unpacking Tschichold's Library*, L'Elac Gallery, Renens, 27 April – 26 May 2023; *Togliere i libri di Tschichold dalle casse*, ISIA, Urbino, 16–20 October 2023; *Tschicholds bibliotheek uitgepakt*, KASK, Ghent, 29 March – 21 April 2024.

95 Benjamin 1999 (1931).

96 *Ibid.*: 486.

97 The identity of the project was awarded by Tokyo Type Directors Club. See: Tokyo TDC (Type Directors Club) 2024: 69.

98 See: die-neue-bibliographie.ch (accessed 10 November 2024).

99 See exhibition's reviews: Bothorel 2023; Pierini 2023.

The sixteen polymaths in the list of addresses seem to announce a modern condition: curious personalities, gifted in multiple disciplines, politically committed to the progress of society as well as to the renewal of their disciplines, nomadic or dispersed by the diaspora imposed by the Nazi or communist regimes. If women are not formally included in the list, the four who authored or designed books cited by Tschichold embody the features of current debates: gender equality, political struggle, gender identity, support for the arts, innovative scientific research.

On the other hand, there is what we discover in the references of this book, which offers a bibliographic portrait of the European avant-garde of the 1920s, equally exposing its complexity and contradictions. Isn't it interesting that this cohort of graphic designers and artists committed to opposing totalitarianism recognise themselves under the title of commercial artists or even advertising artists? The rhetorical language of advertising and political propaganda was a theme of interest both for Lissitzky, who supported "das zielbewusste Schaffen" (the goal-oriented creation),¹⁰⁰ and for the members of the Bauhaus. All those who became protagonists in the debates on advertising and propaganda in Germany or the countries, where the 1933 diaspora had brought them – such as Herbert Bayer in Germany,¹⁰¹ Xanti Schawinsky in Italy,¹⁰² Iwao Yamawaki in Japan,¹⁰³ among others. Architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri once described the work of the historian as follows:

The problem for the historian is to understand with the greatest possible accuracy the true mentality of an era, because when we use words such as architecture, man, freedom, state, nation, woman, we assume that these same words used in the 14th, 15th, 16th century had the same meaning, which is not true at all.¹⁰⁴

If we talk about "advertising" today, it is difficult to recognise any commitment or a political goal. Yet advertising, as we see it nowadays, derives from the principles of the New Typography, from Anna Berliner's studies on perception, as well as from many other sources. But this connection between culture in the broad sense, graphic design and advertising seems to be somewhat lost, and nevertheless important. It is up to designers to keep the discipline alive, without falling into a lifeless style. As Heinrich Wölfflin, a Swiss art historian and teacher of Walter Drexel, wrote:

A gradual estrangement occurs, and the style becomes a lifeless thing that continues to maintain itself only by tradition. The individual forms are used but not understood, and are applied inappropriately, and thus utterly deadened. The pulse of the age must be sought elsewhere: in the minor decorative arts, in the lines of ornament, in lettering, and so on. Here the sense of Form satisfies itself in the purest manner, and here too must one search for the birthplace of a new style.¹⁰⁵

100 Glazova 2003.

101 Rössler and Bauhaus Archiv 2013.

102 Barbieri and Fornari 2024.

103 Čapková 2014.

104 Tafuri 1983: 87.

105 Wölfflin 2017 (1886): 58.

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