

Task 2.1

Research on the Swiss International Style

Swiss International Style also goes by the name International Typographic Style, and for a good reason. This style is known for its typographic style with the use of sans serif fonts like Helvetica. Helvetica (also known as Neue Haas Grotesk) was developed in 1957 by the Swiss typeface designers Max Miedinger and Eudard Hoffman. They wanted to design a font that was easier to read at a distance, and the font therefore has got a tall x-height. They also wanted the font to be simple and neutral. The font has got tight spacing between letters which makes it appear as very dense and solid.

Swiss style is known for using mathematical grid systems and asymmetrical layouts. The style has got precision and simplicity, and personally I think the phrase “Less is more” fits this style perfectly. Photographs are often used in Swiss style accompanied by suitable typography. However, the style should still be held simple and neat. Geometrical shapes and different colours are also an important part of the Swiss International Style, but are used wisely.

My thoughts on the Swiss International Style, is that it is a timeless, simple, yet clever style. It is still used to this day, and I think the simplicity is a big reason for it. I also think that the style has got so many different possibilities that it never expires or becomes boring. I see that the Swiss International Style is used both on web designs and posters, and I think the reason behind this is that the typography plays such an important role in communicating the content. Think of a festival poster. One of the most important things to communicate through the poster is the location, and the time and date. The list of artists are also a huge part of the festival. Without typography the festival wouldn't be able to communicate those things, and by letting the typography be the main part of the design, the message is conveyed in an easy and esthetical way.

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Influences on the Swiss International Style

The Swiss International Style was influenced by many different things, but one of the most important keywords is communication. Armin Hoffman thought that one of the best and most efficient ways to communicate something was through a poster. He spent much of his career designing posters for instance for the Basel Stadt Theater.

The Swiss International Style also practiced new techniques of photo-typesetting, photo-montage and experimental composition and heavily favored sans-serif typography.

Another important designer from the Swiss International Style was Josef Müller Brockman. He is known for his clean use of typography, shapes and colors. He was especially inspired by music and saw it as an abstract art. He was also influenced by other design movements such as Constructivism, De Stijl, Suprematism and Bauhaus.

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Analysis of the Swiss International Style

The Zurich School of Arts and Crafts (today known as Zurich University of the Arts) and The Basel School of Design were both important contributors to the Swiss Style/International Typographic Style. They both thought that the style should be all about simplicity, legibility and objectivity. Armin Hoffman, who worked as a teacher at Basel School of Design, is a well-known name when it comes to the Swiss Style. He had teaching methods that were unorthodox and broad based, and he was therefore setting new standards that became widely known in design education institutions throughout the world.

Josef Müller-Brockmann was professor of graphic design at Zurich University of the Arts from 1957 to 1960, and is also an important person when it comes to the Swiss style. He is especially known for his use of mathematical grids, and wrote a book in 1987 named Grid systems.

Some big similarities between the schools when it comes to the Swiss Style are: the use of sans-serif fonts, the use of shapes, the use of colors, simplicity and of course communication - the fact that the design should communicate something.