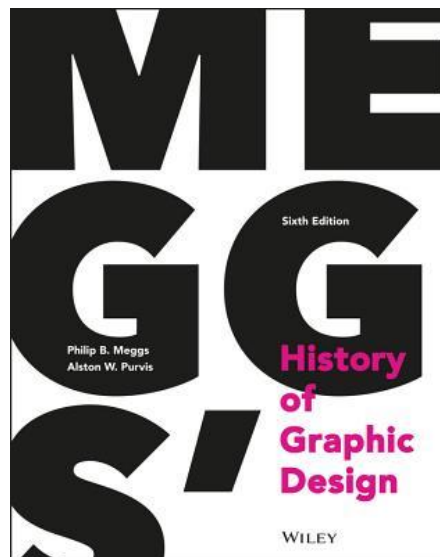




Meggs' History of Graphic Design

Philip B. Meggs , Alston W. Purvis

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The bestselling graphic design reference, updated for the digital age *Meggs' History of Graphic Design* is the industry's unparalleled, award-winning reference. With over 1,400 high-quality images throughout, this visually stunning text guides you through a saga of artistic innovators, breakthrough technologies, and groundbreaking developments that define the graphic design field. The initial publication of this book was heralded as a publishing landmark, and author Philip B. Meggs is credited with significantly shaping the academic field of graphic design.

Meggs presents compelling, comprehensive information enclosed in an exquisite visual format. The text includes classic topics such as the invention of writing and alphabets, the origins of printing and typography, and the advent of postmodern design. This new sixth edition has also been updated to provide:

The latest key developments in web, multimedia, and interactive design

Expanded coverage of design in Asia and the Middle East

Emerging design trends and technologies

Timelines framed in a broader historical context to help you better understand the evolution of contemporary graphic design

Extensive ancillary materials including an instructor's manual, expanded image identification banks, flashcards, and quizzes

You can't master a field without knowing the history. *Meggs' History of Graphic Design* presents an all-inclusive, visually spectacular arrangement of graphic design knowledge for students and professionals.

Learn the milestones, developments, and pioneers of the trade so that you can shape the future.

Meggs' History of Graphic Design Details

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From Reader Review Meggs' History of Graphic Design for online ebook

Victoria says

I took a summer class on the History of Graphic Design and had to read this book...not cover-cover, but pretty close. It's the only class I've actually had the time to complete all of the assigned readings for, and I'm really glad I did. This book is the only one of its kind that I've found. I learned so much from it. It's always been very confusing to try to find where our history is (as graphic designers)...Meggs was the first to really pool all the information in one place.

The only qualms I had with this book was that for being a book ON graphic design, they really didn't take great care in designing it too well. The book is long and slightly dull as you'd expect any textbook to get after a while, but the sans-serif made it slightly even more painful, and the layout was very disorganized (figure references don't show up until pages after they're already been discussed, you can read a full spread of straight text -which is agonizing- and then skim through a full spread of pictures, etc). The book is set up to give you a general overview of each movement, so it can be a little frustrating when your favorite designer gets a paragraph of recognition and Herbert Bayer gets ten pages, but in all honesty you can't expect a subjective topic like design to be perfectly aligned with what you view as more important.

All in all, I think its essential for any designer. Just like with painting, it's kinda hard to find your niche when you haven't had a chance to study the renaissance. It's definitely enriched my design background and vocabulary. You have to know your rules before you can break them, but you also have to know your history so you can see why people made the rules in the first place.

Kass Johns says

I used to teach a course based on this book. The book, while the information contained within is good... is a great example of how to NOT design a book. The layout of the book makes this difficult to read and understand. The entire book is typeset in a swiss sans serif for the body copy. This made it extremely difficult for not only my students to read and comprehend, but also for myself. EVERY halfway decent Graphic Designer knows that body copy is always to be set (for any lengthy publication of mostly text) in a SERIF typeface to ease the reader into a flow and continue to advance when reading. My students and myself found ourselves constantly tripping over the fact we were re-reading paragraph lines of text we had already read. The typesetting and layout made advancing through the copy very difficult. Too bad the layout was terrible while the content was of good quality.

Because this book is the only complete book on this subject I was forced to continue to use it. I used this bad layout/typesetting as a prime example of what NOT to do in design. It demonstrated to my students how a good message can be lost in bad design. (And vice versa) This topic generated many a good classroom discussions on the subject.

4D says

An interesting and informative read, as well as inspiring. However, the last couple of chapters start ok but

rapidly descend into what seems like a who's who, which becomes a little tedious.

In terms of layout too I found myself flipping backwards and forwards, marrying up images with the text references, which became slightly annoying. Bad design, in a design book?

James says

An excellent overview of design from the origins of the word/symbol to nearly the present day. My only quibble is that Meggs drops descriptions of production techniques near the beginning of the 20th century-- details that are informative in their own right and help you better understand the underlying art.

Serith says

Can't say I'm a huge sucker for art history, though this book somehow managed to make it pretty interesting. Some parts could be a touch dry, but it covers *a lot*. It was bought for college and kept for its relevance. For some reason I enjoy having it on my shelf and I don't even know if I can pin point why? It did not always feel like work reading it ...and I have a hunch I may want to brush up on it again someday. Plus it's very pretty (referring to the sample images – the book's typesetting could use some work).

Chris says

The first text in this book, a quote from the Austrian Bauhaus artist Herber Bayer, "the creative process is not performed by the skilled hand alone, but must be a unified process in which "head, heart, and hand play a simultaneous role," guides this exhaustive examination of the graphical development of language through speech, writing, and eventually print and video. Covering most of the major developments in the graphic arts throughout historical times. Extremely comprehensive in scope.

Michael Scott says

TODO full review:

! Read the fifth edition (2012), which includes updates in Part V until 2010.

+++ Overall, an outstanding overview of graphic design, from prehistory to the digital age. I learned much. Mandatory reading for all interested in design.

+++ Part I, Prologue. Subjects cover: the invention of writing and a concise but deep incursion into the known history of alphabets, up to the highly designed Korean Hangul; the contribution to graphic design Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian sources; the contribution to graphic design of illuminators, including the Arabic thread.

+++ Part II, the Renaissance: presents the birth of European typography and image-text prints. Gutenberg, Dürer, Luther are the main figures, with technology for printing enabling so much of the European arts and crafts that characterized the Renaissance.

+++ Part III, the Industrial Revolution, through Arts and Crafts, to Art Nouveau: a good, selective but deep, coverage of creativity between 1760s and 1910s.

++ Part IV, the Modernist Era: the huge factory (Ford) and massive urbanization leads to a new life for

many, and art follows (or leads). Cubism (Picasso), Constructivism (Lissitzky), De Stijl (Mondriaan), and Bauhaus (Gropius et al.) lead the modern movement. (Unfortunately, Communism and Nazism appropriate the methods of some of these schools as useful propaganda tools).

+/-- Part V, the Information Age: covers 1940s/1950s through 2010s, but already shows its age. The rise of corporate identity is well covered, but new advances in personal identity, cross-medium branding, manga fetishism, and cross-pollination with gaming do not appear here. Perhaps a new Part VI, FTW?

Jessica says

I absolutely love art history, but am working on my degree in graphic design. This book was a recommended text to supplement a class and it is absolutely the most engaging textbook I've ever read. I do not think there are many other history books specific to design, and there certainly are none that could compare with the depth, detail and quality of information presented in Megg's History of Graphic Design.

Tony says

I have an earlier version of this book, but this was the book that established who was who in the history of graphic design for me. We had this book in lieu of a graphic design history course at my undergraduate school.

A must read for all graphic design and art history students. I wish it had more images, but I think that about every book. :)

Amy says

Ugh. I really wanted to like this book. I wanted it to grab my attention and shake the creative out of me. I wanted to read it until my eyes were bleeding genius font. I wanted it to ask me on a date and take me away to a distant time and place, never turning back. I suppose had high expectations for a textbook, my fault. As some have already mentioned, the layout of the book is awful.

With so much history involved, I think it's important to arrange pages in a way that will force/keep the reader focused. It's one of those awkward-sized books that is too big for both lap and table reading. It would be a great coffee table book, but it's got way too much information to be a random coffee table book. It's heavy. Having this book in my bag, on my back, with other books is a complete pain in the ass.

The writing is rambling and sometimes I want the author to hurry up and get to the point. I could take a sharpie to many paragraphs and still get all pertinent information.

It is very informative, there's nothing the author has missed. So those with a love of dry history textbooks will love it. Those wanting a brief introduction... there's nothing brief about this book.

UPDATE:

After the end of the course I was taking using this book, I decided I like it better than I had originally thought. My 3 star rating has increased to a hearty 4. It's very informative and can feel a bit overwhelming to start. It gets better. I get it. I dig it. I didn't sell it back to the campus bookstore, and that's saying something.

Graham Herrli says

The first couple chapters of this book are full of interesting information about the evolution of written language. After that the book bogs down in personal details of the designers' lives. For example, I now know that in the 1700s Bodoni in Italy and Didot in France were rivals in the development of more modern fonts, each borrowing from the other, and both drawing upon the earlier type designs of Baskerville. A lot of words are wasted on telling how so-and-so designer went to so-and-so place at so-and-so time...for the purposes of understanding how various aspects of design history impact present work, the designer's personal lives are of little use to me.

Instead, I would have found it more useful to see a comparison of similar styles with information on how to tell them apart and indications of the sentiment (including culture, time, place, and philosophy) evoked by each. The trivialities that make up much of the text (titles of the works, the names of the designers and their acquaintances, their education, and the names of the publications and presses they worked) for would be far better relegated to sidebars or appendices so that I wouldn't need to slog through them to find the useful information.

Carrie says

Okay, so I didn't read the entire book, but I read enough that I can write a good review of it. This book was my first introduction to Graphic Design. This book should be mandatory for anyone who designs documents, marketing materials, or other medias for the public. It establishes a progressive history of where design ideas came from and what influenced the designers, along with the consequences (good and bad) of their actions. The writing style is easy to follow. My only criticism is that the scope often seems narrow in a way that I feel I'm not seeing the big picture, but focusing on the details. Since a book that covers all the details and all of the big picture would be more than I can handle, I do ultimately prefer the style of this book (and know that I have to do more research on the topic to get a more rounded perspective).

Jihad Lahham says

a great read for every graphic designer. it's shame that they teach this book in college very briefly that students most likely hate it enough to never read it cover to cover. this is the kind of book that needs to be read more than one time and kept in proximity as a reference and constant inspiration.

Bertrand says

There is a special place in my heart for big, hard-back, fully colour-illustrated design histories. It brings me its own kind of joy, maybe because it is easier to forget how subjective any historical account must be when the narrative is organised around images. Megg's History provide just that, and on top of this it is also part of that very select club of textbooks which have achieved near hegemonic status. This means you can scoop it for a few quids online, and were you not to finish it will still make a great door-stopper.

It does what it says on the tin: a chronological history of visual communication, carefully skirting around the notion of 'art' and focusing on the genealogy of those fields we today associate with graphic design: typography, layouts, logos, posters, branding, etc. This it does by small paragraphs focusing often on

individual designers, or sometimes movements, nearly all of which are illustrated with well chosen examples. My only reproach - but then again given the scope of the volume, it would have been difficult to do otherwise - is that the size of the images does not allow the reader to really grasp the subtleties of many of those, especially when it comes to typography.

The book starts with pre-history, moves through a general examination of the emergence of writing, and goes on to consider Greek, Roman and some East-Asiatic traditions. We move to the Middle-Ages, the invention of minuscules and the variations of textura, before reaching the Gutenberg moment, which gets a more thorough examination. XIXth and especially XXth century have pride of place, taking up about half of the book. We conclude with the post-war period, the submersion of the international style and the rise of post-modernism's various strands. The last part examines relatively contemporary evolution, in particular the emergence of those now ubiquitous digital tools.

The period between the Renaissance and the XIXth century is probably one with which many of us are less familiar, and although I was looking forward to it (emergence of humanist type, engraving, etc.) it turned out to be rather dull, a litany of names and events which the author failed at relating convincingly to elements of the designs he presented - something he did well in many other chapters. More characteristically, there was also a complete lack of ties to 'the broader picture': graphic design is presented as a self-contained and autonomous field, influenced at best by technology and the sister disciplines of art and architecture, but how and how much it might relate to politics, religion or science was completely left out. This, again, might be an unavoidable sacrifice for such a project, but it also contributes to make the book extremely repetitive at times, more akin to reading an encyclopaedia than a history.

To sum up: this is a useful and valuable resource for someone either dedicated to the subject, or to someone with already solid bases in visual and design history. For anyone else, it might prove of little interest, except as a reference book to be pulled occasionally out of the bookshelf, in which it is however bound to take much space.
