

Pass it on

Pass it on
Design, teaching, life

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Foreword

Andrzej Klimowski

Graphic Design embraces many activities which include typography, illustration, publishing, design for the internet, animation and information design. It is visual communication, communication through words and images in a clear and vivid mode that leads to a better absorption of information and a comprehension of the world.

It is inevitable that a graphic designer will choose to operate in one or two of these focused disciplines, but in order for his or her work to carry weight and make its force felt, an understanding of many of these activities is helpful. The best of educational programmes will address this by offering students the broadest knowledge of design, its practice, its history and theory. A graphic designer with a broad practical experience and one who is also an educator, continually keeping abreast of new developments in the field as well as possessing a historical and theoretical knowledge of the subject is in the best possible position to influence the public and society at large.

Krzysztof Lenk was undoubtedly such an individual. So why is it that only until recently is he attracting wider attention? Most of the literature published on Polish graphic design has centred on the poster. It's had a long tradition stemming from the Secession to Art Deco and finally finding its true voice after the Second World War under state sponsorship of a socialist regime. Posters together with book and magazine publications were focused on images designed in a painterly manner

that allowed designers room for self expression and individual interpretation. Even the treatment of typography and lettering took on an expressive hand crafted flavour. Colour, composition, the use of visual metaphor and narrative tropes all derived from a painter's sensibility. The surrealists' clashing of disparate images to form new meanings and associations was prevalent; collage and photomontage were added to the designer's vocabulary. These factors boosted the romantic and individualistic image of the graphic designer.

There was however a second, no less important, trend running alongside this which stemmed from Constructivism and the teachings of the Bauhaus. An idealistic, social functionalism was manifested in the modernist architecture in Warsaw and the structural art and design championed by Władysław Strzemiński in Łódź. Strzemiński's work as an artist and pedagogue reached across fine art and design. His seminal Theory of Vision (Teoria widzenia) continues to exert an influence on the language of visual artists and designers. It was one of his students, the metaphysical painter Stanisław Fijałkowski, who invited Krzysztof Lenk to teach at the Łódź Art School.

Throughout the narrative of this monograph its title, Pass It On, reverberates forcefully. It's no surprise that Lenk accepted Fijałkowski's invitation and started his pedagogical work in Lodz, designing the course and syllabus of Magazine Design in the Graphics Department. The book that you have in your hands neatly traces the roots to Lenk's creative life. His father played a role in the development of the food cooperative Społem. The family lived in the modernist apartment blocks designed by idealistic, socialist architects who were intent on building a more equal and just society. The sense of beauty, functionality and social engagement pervade Lenk's life. Spurred by Ewa Satalecka's poignant questions Lenk paints a vivid and enthralling picture of a designer's profession. He comes across as both inspirational and self effacing. As the chapters unfold it becomes evident just how much we owe him for our understanding of information and data, the subject he chose to pursue in his practice and teaching in the USA. His visual eloquence shows an understanding

for the role of narrative and its various applications. Who would have thought of asking students to map out data statistics, taking a Shakespeare play as a template?

Data Visualisation had taken Lenk from the linear articulation of narrative in magazine and book design into the three dimensional, non linear narration of the internet soon to expand into the fourth dimension of time.

I met Krzysztof only a few times. I had the pleasure of welcoming him to the Royal College of Art on one of his visits to London and we met a couple of times in Warsaw. He invited me to teach at RISD, but I had to turn him down as it coincided with my students' final examinations and exhibition. Nevertheless I felt I knew him well and that I liked this man who shunned celebrity status but who contributed so much to the furthering of his profession and who left a significant impression on following generations of designers,

Andrzej Klimowski, June 2019

Better Shape of the World

Piotr Rypson

I had better steer clear of big words. One of Krzysztof Lenk's favorite expressions – strangely absent from this book – is 'understatement', which stands for subtlety of expression. This low-key term defines both the way Lenk talks and how he chooses to describe the achievements he has authored or co-created.

Why do I start with this word? Actually, I do so in order to defy it. Krzysztof Lenk belongs to a scarce group of brilliant Polish graphic designers of our times. In Poland, however, his works remain less recognized than those of his colleagues – he has spent a few decades working abroad. Turning the subsequent pages of *Podaj dalej*, many Polish readers will be surprised to discover that he was the one to design book covers for the Śląsk publishing house and for the National Publishing Institute (PIW) series of Contemporary Prose; that it was he who had come up with the layout of such periodicals as "Perspectives" and "Polish Art Review;" that they had seen his posters here and there, and that the visual narrative of the canonical albums *Polish Contemporary Sculpture* and *Reporter's Relay. Polish Sport Photography* had also been designed by Lenk.

I had been familiar with all of them before I met Krzysztof Lenk in person, and even then I was unaware of their authorship. I encountered him as an excellent academic teacher and outstanding expert on information architecture – the discipline he in fact co-created at the time. When I started conducting visiting classes at the Rhode Island School of Design (thanks to him, by the

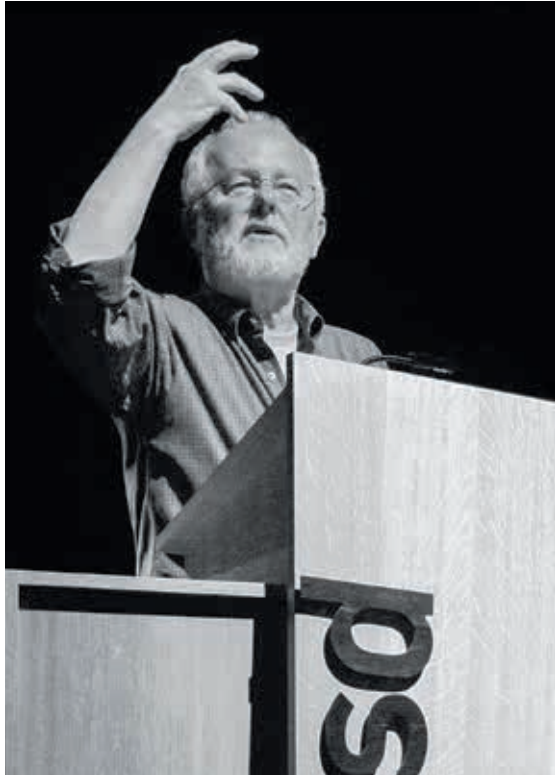
way), the Dynamic Diagrams studio he co-founded had already been well-established and I could witness his success – working on interactive *Encyclopaedia Africana*, hypertext, the whole series of designs for large international concerns and cultural institutions, such as the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

I was lucky enough to meet and befriend a person responsible for co-creating the contemporary methods of organization and presentation of complicated information systems in the digital space, which was developing in leaps at that time. While his method of mapping the systems and web pages in the form of isometric projection diagrams has been useful to corporations and improved the art of communication as well as education, I learned to apply mind mapping to my own projects.

Krzysztof Lenk has taught me much more than that, not only because he was a brilliant educator, but mainly due to his nature – so to speak – his vocation. When I was conducting classes at RISD in the nineties, Krzysztof and Ewa Lenk welcomed me into their hospitable home. As their adopted household member, I could enjoy their knowledge and exquisite company.

Here, I would like to refrain from the principle of understatement again – and I hope Krzysztof Lenk will pardon that, despite his disregard for grand words. It must be stated that he is a heavyweight Polish patriot. Not that he would ever parade any empty words or symbols. He did, however, manage to “Polonize” one of the best American art schools, bringing in a lot of his Polish colleagues.

Krzysztof Lenk has always closely followed events unfolding in the country and appreciated achievements coming about in his areas of interest, while disapproving of some elements of its public life. Living across the ocean, he regularly visited Poland to conduct workshops and lectures. He even named his flagship software for architecture of web pages and digital inventories Mapa (Polish for ‘map’). Poland seems to have gained more than it lost in the transatlantic remoteness of this designer. It did allow him to develop his skills to an extent unattainable back at home. His knowledge and experience, kind advice and assistance have



Krzysztof Lenk

benefited at least two generations of designers and culture makers. This book is a treasury of this knowledge and will prove useful to persons of diverse professions and interests.

Staying consequently infidel to the rule of verbal restraint, as cultivated by Lenk, I would like to conclude with two remarks characterizing this extraordinary man. I think the reason why he has achieved mastery in several areas of design, beside his vast knowledge and diligence, is that he has developed a skill of working in two modes of thinking – analytical and associative. Thereby,

his clarity of thought and sense of synthesis have been supported by his abilities to narrate and link some, often distant, phenomena and understand their complex co-existence. This marriage of skills has served him quite well – as the reader is about to find out – both in his design work and teaching activities.

The second reflection is connected with the very onset of this conversation, so expertly and tactfully led by Ewa Satalecka. In my opinion Lenk – born in the Warsaw Housing Cooperative, a prewar socialist enclave in the Żoliborz district – emanates that world, embedded in the Enlightenment tradition, upholding the principles of progress, self-education, social justice and common good. I would indicate it as the source of accomplishments and success of this brilliant designer and outstanding teacher, engaged with the very essence of these two professions: shaping a better world.

Piotr Rypson, January 2018

**The thirties and the forties.
Childhood**

**(...) The Red Army entered our village
in the form of one Russian soldier,
who strolled along the sandy road
one day, in the afternoon.**

(p. 20)

Where do we start our conversations? If you were to put the story of your life in order and turn it into an infographic, a diagram, what would it look like?

It would be a multilayered composition. Unless we talk about one, individual level of life: I could sketch a timeline of my professional career or one associated with places I happened to live in, or another.

You would start with a timeline?

Of course: my life began and has been taking its course; I would need to start from the beginning. Somebody might approach this differently. To me, a timeline will be crucial.

Which means that the layers of information would be drawn in relation to this line?

Right. Still, I am not sure if I would like to do that. I have lived my years, with their bright and dark points, but the passing time has softened it all up, made it sweeter - I don't know if I want to conduct such a vivisection on my life. Maybe I'm lazy, but I feel comfortable with my awareness and memory as they are. If I really had to, I would try and put them on such a timeline.

The reason why I object to the “doctor Tulp’s anatomy”¹ on my living memory is that this method of analysis and record of life works well in regard to facts: he was born, lived, attended the secondary school (one, then another), graduated, in the meantime he started drawing in the Youth Cultural Center (MDK)², he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, then moved to Katowice, and got his diploma in 1961. I could list events that had a good influence on me, but it would not be a complete picture. Let’s say you are looking at some prepared dish, you take it apart into ingredients and note each of them down; you can do that, but there is something about how it all tastes together – something difficult to describe. This calls for another language, which I don’t speak; it could be the language of Konwicki, or maybe Stasiuk.³ With proper encouragement, I could try to write a story of my life, of its delights and its dreads.

Let us give it a try anyway. We have a timeline marked with intervals and critical points. Is that right?

There are several possible options. We are going to refer to my works, so maybe we should follow the order of decades, like in the “Report” of my design activities I have been working on. This report starts in the early sixties, but we could go further back in time.

You were born in 1936. Do you remember anything of the 1930s?

Not much. The outbreak of war, in Warsaw; German air-raids on the Railway Station; my father’s return after he escaped from captivity; a few other dramatic events.

I was born in Żoliborz – a district of Warsaw. We lived in one of the developments of the Warsaw Housing Cooperative⁴.

1. Reference to *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, a 1632 oil painting by Rembrandt housed in the Mauritshuis museum in The Hague, the Netherlands

2. Polish: Młodzieżowy Dom Kultury – MDK

3. Tadeusz Konwicki (1926–2015), Andrzej Stasiuk (b. 1960) – renowned Polish authors

4. One of the oldest housing cooperatives in Warsaw, established in 1921, with its own cinema and theater. The cooperative was divided into subsequently built parts called “colonies”.



The 4th Colony of the Warsaw Housing Cooperative in Żoliborz – despite the war, a land of my happy childhood. I lived there for eight years: from the time I was born in 1936 till the last days of July 1944. Built on a quadrangular plan, the development surrounded a playground with a carpet hanger, a sandpit and a small pool. Our janitor, Mr. Pawłowski, kept it tidy. The world of dramatic events was locked out, and only sometimes forced its way in, when somebody was arrested or killed. The memories of that time are an inextricable part of my awareness. (photo: Piotr Rypson)



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My father was a manager of the “Gospoda Spółdzielcza” Consumer Cooperative running shops in the Żoliborz, Ochota and Rakowiec districts. My mom worked at the cinema, then at the local library, where they met. Our district had state-of-the-art residential architecture for its time: sunny, airy, with complete infrastructure. There was a library, and even the “Baj” Puppetry. My uncle, a future professor at the Academy of Music in Katowice, conducted the local orchestra. It was a suburbia enclave.

The 4th Colony development was a green quadruple with a sand pit and a small pool. Kids did not need adult supervision back then, we could run around free, it was paradise. What I remember are well-organized structures, independence and common kindness. The people who lived there were of similar age, mostly members of the Polish Socialist Party, but also many Communists: Bolesław Bierut – the future President of Poland – was one of the founders of this cooperative in 1922, and then administered the 2nd Colony development.

There were many assimilated Jews living in the Warsaw Housing Cooperative. It was a prejudice-free environment and that is why Jewish families were hidden there during the war. My mom was very engaged in this. I recall the sense of visual order. Walking into any house today, or simply looking at it, I measure it against the modernity standard acquired in my childhood: I find it modern, if it falls into the same category as the former residential designs of the Syrkuses or Lachert – the buildings that surrounded me.

When a camel was walking down the street, carrying the round “Pasta Dobrolin” shoe polish ads on its sides – I saw it on several occasions – it was a commercial emerging from beyond the horizon and slowly vanishing into the distance; it was exotic, and I remember it well. The community and infrastructure we lived in, however, were all within our development – and that thing came from the outside. I remember a Jewish vendor with his bag, he was buying used clothes, then he disappeared for good. There was a man sharpening knives, he came every few weeks. When we returned to Warsaw after the war, in 1947, to Narbutta Street in the Mokotów district on the other side of the city, I suddenly heard

a familiar voice: “Knives, I sharpen knives!” . I ran downstairs – it was the same man, he had survived and kept doing the same job.

During the war, there was an active cinema, but we were not allowed to go.⁵ I saw my first movie in 1944 in Sokołów Podlaski, at the Red Army’s propaganda railcar, turned into a viewing room. It was the Pudovkin 1926 film *The End of St. Petersburg*.

About your development: Do you remember any signboards, neons, lettering?

There was a neon sign over the movie theater for sure, but I do not recall any visually significant things from my childhood. I do remember artifacts: the jackboots and a shred of the navy-blue uniform of a policeman, who was lying dead on the Wilson Square sentenced by the Polish Underground State for capturing Jews – even today, whenever I see jackboots, they remind me of his. There are also some little things embedded in my memory, such as announcements of executions by firing squads printed on pink paper and pasted on the advertising columns, and the anchors⁶, painted on the walls at night, in black ink. I also remember the slogans sketched in black paint: “PPR – Paid Puppets of Russia”⁷.

As a child, you ran about the familiar area intuitively, naturally, you did not need any signs.

Certainly! I loved this part of the city and I knew it well. Żoliborz was the island of modernity surrounded by state-of-the-art developments, usually built by insurance companies. The most beautiful was the house at 34–36 Mickiewicza Street⁸ designed by a renowned architect, Juliusz Żórawski – it was a residential building of the Mutual Insurance of Office Workers⁹. If you asked me, where I really wanted to live, I would name this house.

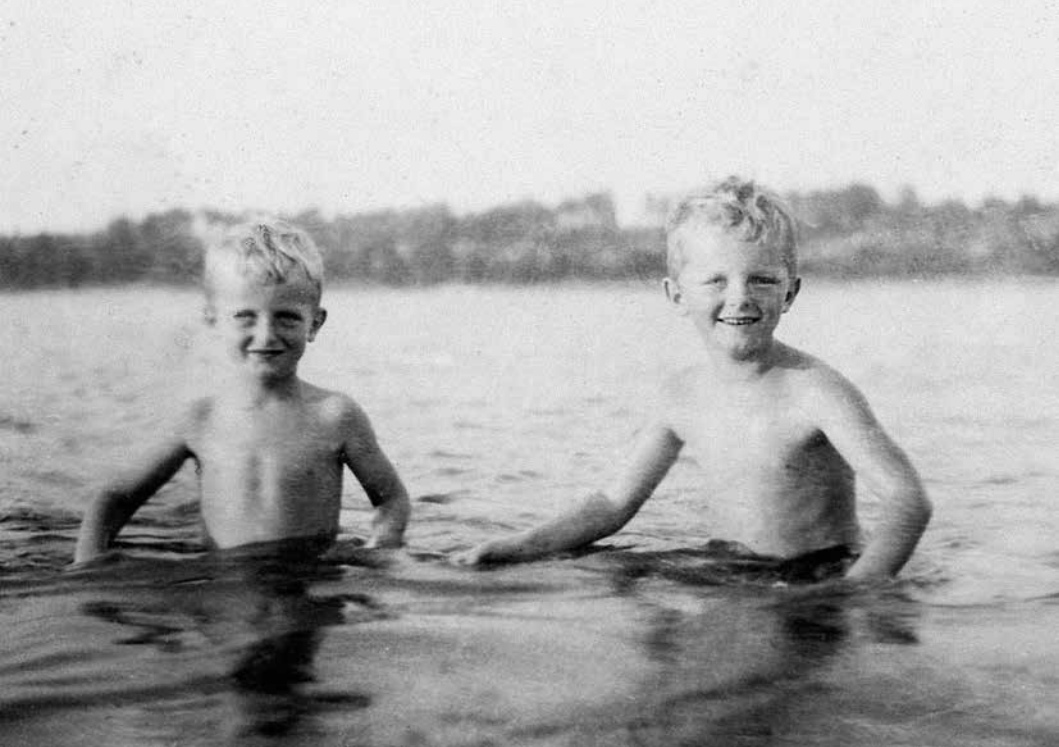
5. During the war Poles boycotted German-run entertainment.

6. The Kotwica (Polish for “Anchor”) was a World War II emblem of the Polish Underground State and Armia Krajowa (Home Army, or AK), which became a popular sign of resistance.

7. Polish: PPR – Płatne Pachołki Rosji was how people read the name of PPR (Polish Workers’ Party) – a communist party, formed by order of Stalin in 1942.

8. called *The Glass House* (Polish: *Szklany Dom*)

9. Polish: Państwowy Zakład Ubezpieczeń Wzajemnych Pracowników Umysłowych



Me and my brother Jurek (on the left) having a swim in the Bug River in 1942. During the war, our father headed a Społem division in Sokołów Podlaski, 120 km (70 miles) from Warsaw, and he organized our summer holidays in Krzemień, a remote village on the Bug. This place had long remained untouched by the war; it wasn't until 1944 that the Russians arrested half of the men in the village and transported them to Siberia.

What do you remember of the 1940s?

It is a more complicated story. The war, its end – for me – in the summer of 1944; Russians in Sokołów; our stay in Łódź and the sunny time of enthusiasm and hope until 1948. Next there came my father's trouble and hard times for the whole family. All I have left are little pieces of memories.

These traumatic experiences of a small boy are difficult to put into words. They are like something out of *A Dreambook of Our Time*¹⁰ by Konwicki. I can give a coherent account of some events, but then my stories will be stripped of the sensual

10. See T. Konwicki, P. Roth (ed.), *A Dreambook for Our Time*, trans. David Welsh, Penguin Books 1976 (Polish: *Sennik współczesny*, 1963)

impressions: fear and curiosity, when my mom and I were hiding under a coal wagon on the sidetrack watching the air-raid of Stukas¹¹, bombing the Railway Station, right next to us. Chattering with cold and terror in the basement, where we rushed to, awakened in the middle of the night by the Russian bombing of Warsaw¹², the roar of missiles, and the sky illuminated by phosphorus flares; the dreadful red glow over the burning ghetto we could see from our window; fascination and fear with the airplane dog fight directly over our heads, as we were clinging to the high river bank watching the missiles fall to the water, one after another. I can tell you about pieces of the mosaic, but I cannot describe the mosaic itself, as it is embedded in my memory. It think that the 1940s were the longest decade of my life.

I can describe the arrival of the first Russian – because the Red Army entered our village in the form of one Russian soldier, who strolled along the sandy road one day, in the afternoon. He carried a sack on his back, had a blanket, rolled over his shoulder, and a long rifle of the early 1900s. Our villagers welcomed him kindly, one farmer shot a salute with this rifle.

The day before the Russians arrived, a German veterinary hospital packed up from the forest next to our house. There was a sergeant, who spoke Polish fluently, a Silesian conscripted to the Wehrmacht. He was very friendly with me – he left me a slightly limping black horse.

One time I met the commander of the Treblinka extermination camp. I was on holidays in Sokołów Podlaski, where my father used to work as a manager of the Społem cooperative. He supplied foodstuffs to the Sokołów region. On the premises, beside the office and warehouses, in the yard, the Germans put up two wooden barracks, storage for their products. They were managed by an officer, a supervisor of this region. Sokołów is situated close to Treblinka. From time to time, maybe once a week, there

11. a Junkers Ju 87 or Stuka is a German dive bomber and ground-attack aircraft.

12. While the Soviets were bombing German military targets in and around Warsaw during the war, they also deliberately bombed the city's apartment buildings, food markets and other civilian structures. Discussing this destruction was a forbidden subject in post-war Poland.

came a gray truck, a tarpaulin-covered Opel Blitz, driven by a soldier. In this truck sometimes came the commander of Treblinka. People were frightened to death of him. When, on the gravel road between Sokołów and Treblinka, a farmer cut him off with his cart, he would take his machine gun, reach out of the window and shoot. I was just a kid, but I heard people call him a devil, and I could sense their terror. One sunny day, my little brother Jurek and I went out of the yard through the backdoor onto the downhill meadow, to the willow-grown river; we played, built sandcastles, it was a charming place. When we got back, there was a truck in the yard, and there was... Him! I knew he was the devil incarnate (I recognized the epaulets, he was not the driver, he was the commander), so we stopped midstep. He saw us and said, "Komm, komm!". We approached him fearfully. "Komm schnell!" The cab door was open, he reached inside... and gave us two pieces of candy; he stroked our heads – we were both little blondes – and turned away. As you consider this story closely, it has its historical, objective, subjective (the devil incarnate) associations – it could be turned into a narrative. I could recall many events like that, but it is a different sphere, it does not translate into objective records; in the old days, a blind man could maybe sing it as a kind of Iliad.

I remember these stories from Sokołów Podlaski – a small town, about one hundred kilometers (or sixty miles) east of Warsaw, where we arrived from the capital two days before the uprising.¹³

My uncle, one of the WNR¹⁴ leaders, was wanted by the Gestapo – they tried to reach him through my father. Społem, supervising the "Gospoda Spółdzielcza" cooperative, decided to move my father from Warsaw – to be out of sight – to the supply department in Sokołów Podlaski. There is little talk about millions of people buying staples – with ration coupons – supplied by the

13. The Warsaw Uprising was a major World War II operation, in the summer of 1944, by the Polish underground resistance, led by the Home Army (Polish: Armia Krajowa), to liberate Warsaw from German occupation.

14. Polish Socialist Party – Freedom, Equality, Independence (Polish: Polska Partia Socjalistyczna – Wolność, Równość, Niepodległość, PPS-WRN) was an underground political party in occupied Poland continuing the traditions of Polish Socialist Party.

cooperative network. At that time, Społem was under German supervision, but it did help the people survive in the cities, the same as the network of the “Peasants Self-Help”¹⁵ assisted people in the rural areas. My father was a manager of the division of Społem, which also had special warehouses with products for Germans. Every week he drove a truck to Warsaw, to the Społem wholesale, to bring the goods. As he was going there in the last week of July 1944, he had to burst through the German troops retreating chaotically under pressure from the Russian army. This made him really anxious and he decided it would be safer for us to stay in the provincial Sokołów, off the beaten track. And that was how we escaped the uprising.

We moved into a modern one-story house right next to the ruins of the Społem windmill, blown up by the Germans. In September 1944 I went to school, to the second grade.

Was it a regular school, or just courses?

Regular school. Before that I went to the kindergarten run by the Workers’ Association of Children’s Friends¹⁶ in Żoliborz, where I also took the first grade. The uprising was still going on in Warsaw, when I started the second grade in Sokołów. I was eight. After the liberation, my father became a Społem Secretary of the Board, first in Lublin, and then in Łódź. In June 1945, our whole family moved there – Łódź was a temporary capital of Poland at that time.

What textbooks did you use? Was it the Falski’s Primer?¹⁷

I think so, but I don’t remember any of that. I used a nib, dipped in the ink-bottle, for writing. The school building in Sokołów is still there; it used to be a part of a sugar mill workers’ development, close to a fenced park and a palace with four columns, two wings and a pool. When the Russians came, the owners were ousted, and the palace was turned into a military hospital. I clearly recall the

15. Polish: Centrala Rolniczo-Spożywcza “Samopomoc Chłopska”

16. Polish: Robotnicze Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci

17. *The Primer* (Polish: *Elementarz*) by Marian Falski was a textbook of reading and writing for the first-graders. The first edition, illustrated by Jan Rembowski, was published in 1910.

cream-white palace walls and the soldier on the ladder writing the Soviet war cry, in red paint: "Za Rodinu! Za STALINU! Wpie-riod!"¹⁸ The minium-red of these slogans would strike your eyes all over Sokołów. Where I lived, there was no Polish army, only the Russians going West. The soldiers wore belted Cossak shirts. I remember various Russian troops, like the Cossacks with the crosses on their black Karakul hats. They would wobble on their horses, they never rose in the stirrups. In this landscape, the western products from the American aid really stood out: trucks and Willys MBs, officers wearing the American greatcoats in different shade of green. The army was supplied with green tins of luncheon meat. The tanks were Russian, but the 155 mm howitzers – American. It was easy to distinguish what came from another civilization. The alien things, bearing English writing, stuck out against the cheap Russian material.

From Sokołów Podlaski you moved to Łódź, is that where you went to the third grade?

Yes. We came to Łódź in late June of 1945. Społem provided our family with an apartment in Julianów – a pre-war residential area, developed for the IRS employees. There were several identical houses surrounded by trees. They had their own water-tower, but no municipal sewerage. A horse-drawn tanker came every other day to empty out the cesspool. Our apartment was on the ground floor, we had a big garden with fruit trees. Compared with Sokołów, it was a dream land.

Was your apartment in Żoliborz destroyed during the war?

No, but my father got a job in Łódź, so that was where we went. That apartment was taken by my parents' friend, a photographer. Besides, it was small.

We came to Łódź and needed a temporary accommodation before we could move to Julianów. My father stayed at the Grand Hotel, on the fourth floor, with the view over Piotrkowska Street, so they put additional beds in his suite. We spent about three weeks

18. For Homeland! For STALIN! Attack!

there. We arrived in the afternoon and immediately ran up to the window: opposite the hotel there was the “Polonia” movie theater, its entrance crowned with a sort of ground-glass tympanum, illuminated with several tens of light bulbs. They would fire up one by one, making a sequence of light, floating around a movie title. Back then there were no neon signs, only the lit panels with changeable titles. Over the panels you got large-format ads, they could have been two and a half meters high. Trams were running along the streets, filled with swarming crowds. I was observing everything, fascinated.

The first night mom took us to this cinema. Łódź was a bustling industrial town, which the war never touched. The leap from Sokołów, the C-category Poland – Podlasie was a poor region – was stunning. During the war, we would spend summer holidays at the Bug River, where my father stayed, in very impoverished places – thatched roofs, no infrastructure. Although the main road from Warsaw to Siedlce was asphalt, the side ones were gravel or simply dirt. This way, from Warsaw, a very modern place, I was first tossed to the deep country, and then thrown back into a vibrant city, akin to American ones. I went to the third grade and at the end of the school year it turned out that I was more advanced than my peers. My mom found me a private tutor, so the fourth and the fifth grades I did as home schooling, in one year.

When we returned to Warsaw in 1947, I was in the sixth grade. Our freshly-rebuilt tenement house, now in the Mokotów district, stood among the ruins. Playing on the debris next door, we would find the sticks of dynamite they used to blow everything up. That was how my Mokotów adventure started and it continued long into my adult life as well.

Do you remember any artistic activities at that time? The museums were rebuilt – did you come in contact with art at all?

I remember my contact with art back in Warsaw, because I started to notice posters. *The Last Stage*¹⁹ by Trepkowski left a lasting

19. Polish: *Ostatni etap*, Tadeusz Trepkowski, film poster, 1948
(film dir. Wanda Jakubowska)



Tadeusz Trepkowski, a movie poster for *Ostatni etap* [The Last Stage], 1948

impression on me. There were no advertising columns yet; only ruins, and the posters were pasted wherever, on the walls, on the fences – until the city was built anew, it was not organized in any way. I had a very wise teacher in the seventh grade. She gave us a geography assignment – the world atlas. I drew the maps. We would go to the library, study, collect data about rivers, continents, larger countries. I made the color maps, outlined from some books, adjusted to scale. It was my first project.

As I returned to Warsaw in 1947, I became fascinated with the theater as well. A close friend of my parents held a high parliamentary position and received invitations to the premiers. He thought of me and my brother as his grandchildren and would take us to see them. From that time, I remember many spectacles: *Mr Jovial* by Fredro starring Ludwik Solski, Aleksander Zelwero-wicz and Mieczysława Ćwiklińska, *Le Cid* by Corneille with Jan Kreczmar and Nina Andrycz, and many more. What I remember the best, however, is the magic of the theater: when the gong sounds, the auditorium lights go off and the curtain is raised, we are invited into a different world of illuminated stage, where everything is fantastic, and the actors become someone else. It was always such a beautiful impression, which made me imagine I would become a stage designer one day. It was a long-standing fascination, even when I was a college student.

Before I began my studies, I used to go to Katowice to visit Gustaw Holoubek and Danuta Kwiatkowska²⁰, who was my cousin. It was so impressive: I was sitting in the loge, usually close to the stage, and I saw incredible things. I saw *The Misanthrope* by Molière; I saw *The Annuity* by Fredro; various plays. My contact with actors felt nearly physical, because sitting in the side loge you are practically on the stage. It was magical.

I also became familiar with the life off stage, after the spectacle was over. Once, on my way back from a skiing trip, I stayed at the Holoubeks' (it was 1955, I was a student of the second year) and after the theater we went to have dinner at the historic "Monopol"

20. Gustaw Holoubek (1923–2008) and Danuta Kwiatkowska (1924–2015) were famous Polish theater and film actors

hotel. Around the table I saw familiar actors and Tadeusz Kantor²¹, who was working in Katowice and told most amazing stories. At the time, he was preparing the staging of *The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife* by Lorca. Kantor was not only a director, but a set designer as well. At some point the conversation shifted to Surrealism. He told us a story from Paris, about one of the paintings, which left a lasting impression on him. It was a canvas by Salvador Dalí featuring a grand piano with candles lit on its keyboard and Lenin's heads looming in their flames. His story was a spectacle in itself, I was impressed. As I had never found this painting in any books about Dalí, I was convinced he made it all up. I used to tell this story as an anecdote about confabulation, until one day Agnieszka Taborska²² brought me a postcard from France – it featured Dalí's painting *Partial Hallucination: Six Apparitions of Lenin on a Piano* (1931).

What fascinated me was a different kind of materiality on the stage. It involves light, motion, something akin of condensed matter – and my artistic interests went this way. It was much later that I turned to graphics and typography.

21. Tadeusz Kantor (1915–1990) was a Polish painter, assemblage artist, set designer and theater director, renowned for his revolutionary theatrical performances in Poland and abroad.

22. Agnieszka Taborska (b. 1961) is a Polish writer, educator and translator.

The fifties

Education and first projects

(...) Professor Hoffmann, however, would come and ask, “How could we visually present the energy?” We went home and racked our brains.

(p. 39)

Let us move on to the fifties.

I attended the high school. I became a passionate reader and developed a taste for literature. The more I read, the less interested in school I was. My parents didn't know, what to do with me. I had inspiring teachers of history and organic chemistry, and became fascinated by these subjects. I flunked the tenth grade, but already went to the excellent art studio in the Youth Cultural Center (MDK); this absorbed me and probably saved me from going off the rails.

I was really interested in history back then – in the ninth or tenth grade. It was taught by Ms. Gizela Gebert, a prewar teacher. Her husband, Bronisław Gebert, was a university professor, and she worked in the high school; they wrote school textbooks before the war.

This very elderly lady was a fascinating person. She spoke Polish beautifully (later I heard a similarly alluring Polish language at Professor Kotarbiński's²³ lectures). Ms. Gebert was a classic example of a person raised with Latin and Greek who knew how to use the language at its most beautiful. Her utterances were characterized by impeccable pronunciation and segmentation, her speech came out in paragraphs and rhythmic phrases – you don't hear this anymore. She was telling stories. Back then, she

23. Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1886–1981) was a Polish philosopher, logician and ethicist.

was teaching us world history, which meant the history of the European civilization. We had the Mielnikov textbook, translated from Russian; we had to have these books on our desks and at the end of each lesson the teacher told us, on which pages we could find the topic but we never opened them in class. She made references to this book, but never actually used it in the classroom. Ms. Gebert told very interesting stories: about relations and connections. It was like a history theater. At the beginning of the lesson she would call a student to the front of the classroom and say, “Imagine it is 1704 – what is going on in Prussia, in Palatinate, in The Netherlands and in France?” You had to see these relations as a spatiotemporal system; each and every event was discussed in the context of others.

‘To see’ is the key word here, she forced you to see the map and the timeline.

Exactly so. We used our notes to prepare for the lesson, and that was what she required. Besides, every student would get a topic to study. I remember two of mine. The first one concerned the development of British parliamentarism from the Magna Carta – I had to find out what it even meant. Fortunately, there was The National Library nearby, where the students could access the reading room. The teacher would say, “When you enter the reading room, in the seventh bookcase, on the middle shelf, you will find the book you need.” The second topic came with a catch: when we reached the 17th century, I was obliged to present the history of the Khmelnytsky Uprising, the Cossack-Polish War. Obviously it was not included in the “official” history. The teacher said, “You, my boy, will go to the reading room, and in the first bookcase on the left, you will find Konopczyński’s *History of Modern-Day Poland*²⁴; all the materials you need are in there.” This book was black-listed by the communist regime; Władysław Konopczyński was a pariah-historian at that time.²⁵ I found, what I needed.

24. Polish: *Historia Polski nowożytnej*, author: Władysław Konopczyński

25. Professor Władysław Konopczyński (1880–1952) was a renowned Polish historian. Due to his vast political engagement towards Poland’s sovereignty against the repressive imperial regimes, after the war he fell victim to severe repressions and was removed from all positions in science, publication or academic circles.

The topic had to be developed and read out in class. It required a lot of work but was fascinating. The teacher would comment on our papers. The worst thing came at the end of term, when she entered the classroom and asked, “What grade would you give yourself, my boy?” It was a difficult question, I did not want to wrong myself, but it would have been inappropriate to ask for too much. We graded ourselves, and she corrected it up or down.

My other fascination in the tenth grade was organic chemistry. It so happened that our regular teacher had just had a baby, and we got a substitute – a thirty-something assistant professor from the Chemistry Department of the Technical University. I’m not sure if he had any teaching experience whatsoever, but he was passionate. He was able to present organic chemistry as a system, and this clicked for me. A simple carbon particle, a hexagon, from a diamond all the way to a protein – it is a modular system. This modularity I discovered back then still intrigues me. The visual record of chemical bonds was clear to me, I could see them. It was a revelation – an actual system operating in nature, noted down. You can represent a phenomenon you cannot see – I grasped that immediately! Which was advantageous as well, because many of my female classmates found this troublesome, and I was eager to help them out; seeing these issues through lasted long into the night – and they did not mind that at all. Neither did I.

Not all of my memories are so pleasant, though. During a Polish lesson – and I really liked the subject – I had a very unsavory experience with the teacher, her name was Bąbalina. We were discussing *The Peasants*²⁶ by Reymont, and because it was the Stalinist period in Poland, the focus was solely on social relations. The teacher gave us a homework, an essay: two of the topics were ideological, and as the third one you could choose any aspect of the novel. I had an idea: throughout the book there appears a seemingly secondary character of a parish priest who actually pulls all the strings. So I wrote an essay about the role of the parish priest. All the other students chose to discuss the socioeconomic relations, and I focused on the priest. It was 1952 or 1953. My friend, Jurek Najar, who was sitting next to me in class,

26. Polish: *Chłopi*, a novel in four parts written by Nobel Prize-winning Polish author Władysław Reymont between 1904 and 1909.

asked me to read my homework to him before the lesson and he liked it so much that, when the teacher had us present the essays, he suggested mine. I was called to the blackboard and I read my essay out. She listened attentively – I know that it was a well-written text – and then asked me where I had copied it from. I found it so impertinent that I was lost for words. Eventually I replied that I had written it myself, but she said that although she was unable to prove it, this essay must have been written by a university student. I took it as an insult – and I was deeply hurt.

I did not have a teacher of drawing until the eighth grade. He was trying to teach us principles of perspective. Supposedly he was a good artist. He suffered from tuberculosis and disappeared from school quite fast. We would do a perspective drawing of a stairwell by means of drafting triangles; it was interesting. I started to sketch portraits of my classmates – during dull lessons my mind wandered, and my hand would draw on the book margins all by itself. I liked to doodle.

Later, in the tenth grade, I attended a brilliantly run studio at the Youth Cultural Center. That was where I started to draw for real.

When you studied drawing, did you draw from nature or from imagination?

As a child I was making abstract drawings from my head, and I enjoyed them immensely. Then, before I went to the Academy, I drew from nature quite a lot. I think I could not manage drawing as a representation of reality because I was unable to turn the reality I saw into the abstract one. This reality – a tree, a bush, a stone – crawled onto my paper and I could not see it as a composition. It was as if photography entered my drawing; no matter how hard I tried, I could not disengage from the materiality of a landscape.

Was that the only Youth Cultural Center in Warsaw at the time?

There was another one in the Palace of Culture for sure, maybe in other districts as well. I attended the one at Konopnickiej Street, in the former building of Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). First, I went there to practice gymnastics and swimming, and then to the art studio. It was run by a married couple

of artists from the prewar Brotherhood of St Luke²⁷, Mr. and Mrs. Wdowiszewski. They were wise and kind people, who knew how to open each of us to art. We would make tons of sketches – unleashing our thinking, unloosing our hand, working in the studio, drawing a model, later painting as well. Also, Mrs. Wdowiszewski was an assistant professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, in Professor Antoni Łyżwiański's studio, so she could advise us on how to prepare our portfolios.

Were you certain about studying at the Academy? Who did you want to be in the future?

It was a process. As I said, initially I considered stage design. I used to make decorations, artistic applications for school balls, assemblies, proms. I was known for this, which made my life much easier, as I had let go of math and physics quite soon. Only later, in 1954, there came the final exams in eleven subjects and I was forced to catch up with these two. My classmate somehow managed to teach me enough math in three weeks that I passed both the written and oral exams. With physics I got a little help from my teacher. I was good at other subjects, though: biology, history, Polish. The school knew I had my faculty of choice where I would not need math or physics – no shame then. It looked like they decided to let me get away with those. I was accepted to the Academy at the first attempt. It was 1954. I brought my portfolio. The exam involved drawing: a still life and a composition from memory on a given subject; there was also an interview concerning the history of art.

That was how my artistic adventure started.

In 1958, I moved to Katowice, to the Department of Propaganda Graphics, which was a branch of the Academy in Kraków back then. I graduated in 1961.

27. Polish: Bractwo Św. Łukasza, an artistic group active in Poland between 1925 and 1939; its members referred to the 16th and 17th-century paintings with their historical compositions, landscapes, portraits, genre and biblical scenes.

Let us go back to Warsaw for a while. How many candidates were generally accepted to the first year at that time? About twenty?

More, I think. There were separate recruitments to painting and graphics, to interior design, and to sculpture. The studies lasted six years. The first two were preliminary, with three studios of painting and drawing, ten students each. We studied drawing, painting, and attended the classes in sculpture, art history and anatomy. There were the compulsory plein-air^s as well. Additionally, the male students were obliged to spend every Monday in Military Practice²⁸. There were no compulsory classes in composition.

Do you think that studies helped you become, who you are today?

Not really.

They did teach something after all.

Yes, and no. I don't remember any use I would make of the artistic subjects. The whole education meant a teacher setting up a still life for us to paint. Then he would do the critique and comment: "A little more of yellow; too much of..." Nobody gave us any rules: structure of composition, creation of image. We were not taught the Theory of Colors, building contrasts and so on.

And you were not obliged to do sketches at home?

Less than I would like.

Did you make many observational drawings?

I made a lot of them back at the Youth Cultural Center, before the Academy. There, the basics involved sketching and critiques. This method sharpened our analytical thinking. Often, we had to draw trees of various architecture; different angles of branches, proportions, characteristic features; each tree is unique. This

28. Polish: Studium Wojskowe, an officer-cadet program run by the army at the academies in People's Republic of Poland which allowed students to cover the basic military service. The military practice was a compulsory subject; avoiding or failing it resulted in discontinuation of studies.

sort of observation does not serve a realistic representation, but it teaches you to see the nature of things, their structure.

It is interesting how well you remember the moment when somebody taught systemic thinking and to notice relations between things. You can evaluate this from your adult life perspective, although you do not recall similar fascinations from the artistic education you received.

I remember very few intellectually stimulating things from that initial period at the Academy. After the two preliminary years, there was a division into graphics and painting. I obviously wanted to study the former. The first year of graphics, that is the third year of studies, was still general, without distinction between artistic and applied graphics. We had classes in lithography, metal techniques, woodcutting, as well as in lettering (the first term) and basics of design (the second) – packaging design, for instance, involving applied typography. Then, after the third year, we enrolled into specialist studios: Professors Henryk Tomaszewski and Józef Mrozczyk²⁹ led the Poster Studios, Professor Jan Szancer³⁰ – the Illustration Studio. Our graduation projects were created in one of them.

In the first year of graphics, that is the third year of my studies, I had a great typography professor, Andrzej Rudziński. Unfortunately, he is not portrayed in the history of Polish design as much as he should be. At the Academy, he taught lettering and basics of design to the third-year students and ran the Studio of Metal Graphics and Woodcut. He was a phenomenal typographer, who collaborated with Rafał Glücksman, the founder of the Auriga Publishing House³¹. He designed classical books about art and was a graphic artist at the same time. His studio supervised the graduation projects of such renowned Polish designers as Leon Urbański, Roman Duszek, Tadeusz Pietrzyk, Andrzej Zbrożek, and Piotr Kamler. The method of teaching lettering he used was quite

29. Henryk Tomaszewski (1914–2005) and Józef Mrozczyk (1910–1975) – both professors were great Polish poster designers

30. Jan Szancer (1902–1973) was a renowned Polish childrens' book illustrator

31. Polish: Oficyna Wydawnicza "Auriga"

ruthless – as I see it today. He tried to make students discover for themselves that a sequence of letters on the page relies upon the interaction between a figure and the background, and the interplay among figures as well; that it is a dynamic relationship and you can manipulate these elements. The way a graphic designer thinks should involve thinking about the white; its brightness is crucial. You need to use the black to light up the white. He made me realize that. We would practice our hands: with paint brush and water colors, with gouache. Once, I designed a package, a box for Raphacholin³², using the “o” brush, it was a great practice for the hand. This contact with Rudziński had given me a lot.

I also took extracurricular classes with Professors Oskar Hansen and Jerzy Sołtan³³. Hansen’s studio taught composition of two- and three-dimensional objects, mainly to the sculptors, but the graphics students could enroll too. He started with very basic but crucial assignments: he told us, for instance, to cover the letter-size paper with thirty-percent gray paint, cut out a two-centimeter (or one inch) white circle and situate it on the gray page so that it fulfilled this plane. It was like a Zen exercise: you move the circle and observe that when it goes left, there is a tension between the outside margin and the circle, and when it goes right, you leave the left side open – so you need to find a balance of forces, dynamic systems and tensions. My eyes were popping out, because I worked at night, obviously. Eventually, I managed to determine the best location of the circle, and, ever so proud, went to show the teacher. He looked at me kindly and said, yes, it was done well, but did I realize I had placed the circle precisely in the golden section? I didn’t really know what he was talking about. He also said, and this was not so positive anymore, that eighty percent of people would intuitively situate the circle in the center of the golden section. The trick was to fall within the twenty percent, who wouldn’t. It was probably about creating some kind of tension, responding to the challenge. And

32. an herbal drug against indigestion

33. Oskar Hansen (1922–2005) and Jerzy Sołtan (1913–2005) – both professors were well recognized Polish architects

I responded with harmony. Later, we discussed relationships among objects in space – his were extremely good classes, I still use this knowledge today. Thus, I have a skillful eye thanks to Hansen’s assignments, Rudziński’s lettering and also, to some extent, the classes run by Sołtan, who was a renowned architect.

One day Sołtan, this tall man, came to his class and said, “You know, there’s an exhibition of the Polish architecture at the Zachęta art gallery, and I was to present it to Bierut³⁴; it was not easy, because the whole time I was feeling smaller than he and I could not place myself in the position of a person, who knows his thing; I was feeling so embarrassed, he was Mr. President after all. I was racking my brain looking for a way out of this uncomfortable situation, until finally, while presenting an exhibited bathroom interior, I imagined him sitting on the toilet... It all went smoothly from there.” What he really told us was a story about perception and context. Sołtan used to come into the classroom with a particular attitude, worldview: he spoke of rules, codes, that you had to be brave and break them (if you knew why). We had such an assignment: we were given a drawing of a twenty-story ferroconcrete building with steel windows; we were supposed to divide the windows with muntin bars. We needed to find a repetitive module, that could not be boring, but would not create a visual tension in one spot of the elevation either. It was a very interesting assignment.

Let me return to the lettering for a moment. Although form is something abstract, in reality it constitutes a composition of visual elements and has a specific overtone. This overtone can facilitate the message, make it more aesthetically convincing. The elements of Gestalt that determine whether we receive a message instantly, in the intended way, can be discussed by analogy to building or disturbing the harmony of music. Rudziński punished us with one repetitive assignment, which had to be done to perfection – aware he was aware that students had to come to

34. Bolesław Bierut (1892–1956) was a Polish Communist leader, NKVD agent, and a hard-line Stalinist who became President of Poland after the defeat of the Nazi forces in World War II.

the point of revelation. Once they had got there, from then on they would simply know that there was, for instance, too much spacing between “r” and “z”³⁵ or between “A” and “T”. They would have a sensitive eye, which requires practice. That is what I owe to Rudziński.

This reminds me of an encounter I had much later, here in America. It refers to the idea of a sensitive eye. In my office in the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) I had a white metal chest of drawers for storing the Ao posters. On the way to school I walked past big chestnut trees. In the fall, the sidewalk was carpeted with shiny chestnuts and it was difficult not to pick them up. I would put them in my pocket and take them to school with me. I set them in various layouts on the white table top of the chest of drawers. They had to be arranged so that they fulfilled the plane. It was an assignment from Professor Hansen’s studio, as described before, and it was not an easy one. It required focus and getting into the composition. At some point a relationship, a connection would appear among the chestnuts, the plane and its edges, and nothing could be moved anymore. It was a fascinating exercise for the sensitivity of the eye.

As I came into my room one morning, I saw that one of the chestnuts from my layout had been set aside. I accepted the challenge and I formed a new composition, taking this chestnut as a starting point. What surprised me was not so much that someone had the key and access to my room, but that this person had worked it all out and invited me to play. This exciting dialogue with a mysterious stranger, who was always presenting me with a new challenge, continued for some time. One day I came to school very early. The door to my room stood wide open, and inside there was a Portuguese janitor, a nice elderly cleaning lady, hunched over my composition. We both cracked up with laughter. So pretty, isn’t it?

I remember close to nothing from my education in painting – even today it feels awkward that I could not have cared less. The Professors, Mr. and Mrs. Michalski, were post-impressionists,

35. ‘rz’ is a very common digraph in the Polish language

cultured, sophisticated people. I still cannot tell whether they radiated any kind of passion. Anyway, nothing resonated with me. I was respectful, but what they expected from me, I couldn't and wouldn't deliver. I did not see a point, or maybe I was unable. I preferred drawing to painting, but it was not thrilling either. Perhaps if I had been in some other studio, like at Jerzy Tchorzewski's, and he had approached the assignments differently...

In Warsaw, there were two events - neither of them directly connected with my studies - which influenced who I am today.

The first one was meeting Henryk Tomaszewski. In June 1955, my two friends and I made advertising boards for the "Czytelnik" Publishing House to be put up during The Book and Press Fair. The design involved copying the covers, boosting them and painting on the boards in waterproof paints, so they would not get washed out. This way, by means of an artistic activity, I earned my first money. On payday, we went to celebrate in Kameralna (a restaurant, where most of the artists', designers' and architects' day- and nightlife happened at the time). When the three of us sat down at the small table, we saw Professor Tomaszewski in the corner of the room. We asked the waiter to bring him a "unit" (half a liter of rye vodka and a can of grapefruit juice); we were in the first year, and Tomaszewski's studio accepted students from the fourth year up - he was like a god to all of us. Thirty minutes later, the waiter came over and put a "unit" on our table, from the Professor. He was closely followed by Tomaszewski himself, a little intoxicated, but in a lyrical mood. We introduced ourselves. It was as if Our Lord sat down with us; we were so happy. The Professor wanted to know about our plans, who we were and what we wanted to do, and then he said, "When I'm looking at you, I'm thinking of a nest, where the chicks have just hatched. The chicks cry, they are hungry, but they already flap their wings in an attempt to fly. As weeks pass by, the chicks become fledged, flap even harder, and then fly away. You are such chicks and I wish you to fly away when the time is right. If someone does not fly away when the time is right, he never will." It was not the academic moralism, he was telling us we had to try to leave the nest. We had to do all we could to come into a professional existence. As the Professor left,

we finished the “unit” and went home, taking this story with us. Tomaszewski was a violinist, he had beautiful hands with long, expressive fingers, which he used to show us how those chicks were attempting to fly away from the nest. I thought that time was working against me – as if I was worried that I would miss this right moment he was talking about – that I had to be off, without lingering, and try hard. It was one of the events that had marked me for life. Today I’m looking for some safe landing rather than the way to fly high, but I have always remembered that there is no escape: the clock is ticking, I have to make use of the opportunities as they arise and never postpone anything until tomorrow.

The other story is connected with Professor Aleksander Kobzdej³⁶. We were at some self-government meeting at the Academia; the students were sitting on one side of the table, and the professors one the other. It was a beautiful day, maybe in June, in the afternoon. On the long oak table there were ashtrays, overflowing with cigarette butts, because everybody smoked back then. I smoked the “Mazury” brand and I knew Kobzdej smoked them too. At some point I noticed that everyone was smoking, and he wasn’t, so I reached over the table to offer him a cigarette. He said, “No, thank you. I quit.” There was silence. Kobzdej was a man of all senses: an amazing story-teller, a skilled dancer, a womanizer (although he was as ugly as Socrates), he drank (as we all did), and of course – smoked. And then you could hear a pin drop because he announced something unthinkable – that he had quit smoking. All eyes were on him, so at last he said, “I was not feeling well in my stomach or something. I went to see the doctor, and he asks, “Do you drink?” “Yes, I drink.” “Do you smoke?” “Yes, I smoke.” So he says, “From now on you can only do one or the other.” I left the doctor’s office, it was in the afternoon, and I’m thinking: Which is better? It is better to drink than to smoke after all. So I bought two packets of cigarettes, I smoked them all, and I went to sleep. When I woke up in the morning, I did not smoke anymore.” We were stunned. In this silence I could hear myself asking a question:

36. Alexander Kobzdej (1920–1972) – a Polish painter, the most representative of Polish Social-Realist group and then the creator of Polish version of ‘matter’ painting.

“Was it difficult for you, Professor?” All eyes were on me this time, I felt so stupid. He gave me a very long look and then said, “Listen, young man: either you are a man, or you are not. If you are a man and you make a decision, don’t bitch about it.” I have always remembered that.

These two maxims, or life advice: from Tomaszewski, that time flies, so I must do things when the right moment comes, and from Kobzdej, that if you make a decision, you must bear the consequences – they are worth more than almost anything else I learned at the Academy.

After the third year you faced a decision, you had to choose a studio, is that right?

Yes. But at that point my Warsaw studies finished, and the Katowice adventure started.

From my studies in Katowice, I have very warm memories about Professor Zbigniew Rzepecki, who was a prewar architect, somehow broken by the war. He was a gentleman in a gray suit, with a suitcase, where he carried a thermos with coffee and some sandwiches. I remember him coming for his class of exhibition design, attended by three, sometimes four students. He was a brilliant story-teller, who could find connections between things and see them in contexts. I had to wait a long time to hear stories like that again. It was in 1979, in Ohio, when I watched the BBC program Connections with James Burke, who explained how particular events in the human history influenced another. This manner of thinking, looking for connections between various things, has stayed with me all my life.

I think you found your kindred spirit, as Anne of Green Gables would say, because you had already thought this way while in the high school, if I recall your history project.

I did. In a monotonous voice, Professor Rzepecki would speak about his fascinations, about Teutonic Knights’ castles (Ordensburgs), about the one in Malbork³⁷; how it all happened, that an

37. Malbork Castle, built in the 13th Century as the Teutonic Knights Order’s headquarters.

Ordensburg operated as a system, that there were kitchens in the basements and they had hearths; the fumes from the hearths were run up the chimneys, but right next to them there were pipes filled with air that got heated up in the process and then reached the rooms upstairs. I still remember his detailed stories. He told us that the rooms and the halls were carpeted on the floors and on the walls for insulation, and that was how the tapestries came about, and the story about tapestries followed. "Have you ever wondered where the idea of parks came from?" he would say to those three students (usually it was me and Alek Herman, a very talented guy, highly intelligent, keen on painting technologies; a great painter, a little like Klee). "Why parks? They used to be dedicated hunting grounds - a prince had a castle, so he would fence a stretch of the area, where the animals lived, to make his hunting easier. That was where the idea of parks came from." "And what is," he asked, "what is the difference between a park and a forest? Why do we call them: parks? Because the trees in the park grow apart." The remark that in the park the trees grow apart was a brilliant observation. I still recognize the significance of this way of thinking: that, for instance, the difference between a forest and a park boils down to the fact that the trees in the park grow separately, and that there is an English park, and a French park, and the two are not alike. These stories started at nine in the morning and finished at one in the afternoon. I had learned a lot.

Professor Adam Hoffmann, who came from Kraków on Wednesday morning, taught the basics of graphic design. He had a flask of a strong coffee; his classes were built on a paradigm much different from the other classes at the Academy.

The other studios had a still life put in the middle of the room, for instance, and a professor would come and say, "Paint that." or "Make it denser here." In the evening drawing class there was simply a fat woman sitting on the chair, and you had to draw her. At the Poster Studio Professor Bogusław Górecki would say, "How about some poster titled »Peace« or »The 1st of May«³⁸. Professor

38. These were popular propaganda posters at that time. The 1st of May was a Workers' Holiday with officially organized marches with propaganda slogans on banners etc.

Aleksander Rak was quiet, rarely spoke at all, and if he did, he said only, “Do the etching, please.” So we did the etching or the drypoint, and he took his time to explain how you hold a rocker³⁹. Mr. Nakraszewicz was an all-rounder who taught us every possible trade secret. That was the whole methodology.

Professor Hoffmann, however, would come and ask, “How could we visually present the energy?” We went home and racked our brains – how to draw energy? We made lots of sketches and brought them all the next week. Professor Hoffmann approached each of us individually and said that the concept was good, but there were other possible associations as well, and they led to yet another ones... His pedagogical thinking would lead the student towards the aware choice of form of expression and its application. What Hoffmann did was build our awareness of form and narration. He never said, “Let’s make a May Day poster.” Instead, he would say, “Let’s make a joyful poster. Let’s celebrate. Let it be a celebratory poster.” What attributes of form could you use to make the viewer aware of a celebration? Fantastic!

I met Hoffmann only once after that. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to sit down with him and tell him how important it was for me that his pedagogy never told a student what to do but started with what was supposed to be communicated and how. It was a lesson in semiotics and semantics of form. At the time when nobody had even heard of things like semiotics and semantics, Hoffmann was already teaching them. He was non-sentimental, very critical, but highly ethical all at once. He was honest. I left his studio armed with these values, too.

What Katowice gave me was, first and foremost, the associative thinking which matched my way of thinking quite well. Moreover, the classes with Professor Hoffmann grounded my priority: if you have a task, start with determining the expected result and the attributes of what you want to make, and then try to achieve this step by step. Nothing more, and so much.

39. A metal tool with small teeth used mainly in the mezzotint printmaking process

Later I came across this beautiful quote by Abélard, a medieval theologian and philosopher: “The key to wisdom is this – constant and frequent questioning.”⁴⁰ I have remembered that as well.

Where did you live? What did your day look like? In Warsaw you used to have cinemas, theaters, concerts, pubs where people could meet, and what did you have in Katowice?

I had no problems with accommodation, because my cousins lived in Ligota, a district of Katowice, and I could stay with them. Not much was happening for me outside the Academy though. I was very poor, often hungry. My uncle, a professor at the Music Academy in Katowice, sometimes invited me to a concert at the philharmonic, because he received some tickets from school. I also went to the theater quite a lot, as I said before.

One time I was walking back from school down the 3 Maja Street and I saw a signboard on an old tenement house – “Silesia” Publishing House⁴¹. I had my works with me, and decided to go in. It was an old apartment with high ceilings and eight rooms. I asked for the graphic department. Andrzej Czczot⁴² was sitting there, I introduced myself. We became friends. He had graduated two years back and got a job as an art director of this publishing house – he made covers, satirical drawings, also tried his hand at illustrations, which he later sent to a German satirical weekly, “Pardon”. He took a look at my portfolio and asked me to design something for him. I said I would try – and so, in 1958, I started designing book covers. “Silesia” published fiction: Wilhelm Szewczyk, Gustaw Morcinek – local authors. It also did books for children, such as *Adventures of Tomek Wilmowski* by Alfred Szklarski, and specialized in the Czech and Slovak literature. It published *The Good Soldier Švejk* by Jaroslav Hašek. All in all, it released lots

40. Pierre Abélard, *Yes and No. The Complete English Translation of Pierre Abélard's Sic et Non*, trans. Priscilla Troop, Medievalms, 2008, org. pub. 1120.

41. Polish: Wydawnictwo “Śląsk”

42. Andrzej Czczot (1933–2012), a young artist at that time but later a well-known graphic designer, author of animated films, and famous for his excellent commentary and satirical drawings.

of well-designed books, written also by the local philologists and researchers of Silesia.

Did you design individual books or the whole series?

I can't remember any series I would make. I started doing the actual designs in the fourth year. The lettering experience I gained at the Rudziński's studio provided me with technical skills and typographic imagination; I could make use of the letter and of what we call the sense of style. Andrzej, the art director, and I understood each other well. After my return to Warsaw in 1961, I continued working for him. He would call and say that he had a book to design and gave me the parameters. I designed it and sent it via the railway post in the morning. This symbiosis lasted for years, and we were good friends till the end of his life.

My aunt in Ligota got sick and died. My uncle had a secretary at the Music Academy – a girl from a traditional miners' family in Piotrowice, a neighboring district of Katowice. She was very nice. He was sixty-three, she was twenty-eight, but she agreed to marry him. The girl was only a little older than me, so I could not live with them any longer. Andrzej offered for me to move to his place in Pszczyna – a town thirty minutes away. I commuted by train for a year. It was a good time of self-development. I lived astride between Silesia and Warsaw, where I had another friend, Maciek Urbaniec⁴³, an art director of the "Peasants Self-Help" Agriculture & Foods Office. We had studied together, and then he gave me commissions as well. He would frequently leave an order to me. On Friday, after my classes, I would get on the train, arrive in Warsaw late at night, meet Maciek on Saturday, and work over the weekend. On Monday morning I would go to the publishing house to hand the ready design over, and in the afternoon I was on the train back to Katowice. I was able to live between Silesia and Warsaw somehow. When I graduated in 1961, I already had quite a lot of experience as a designer, and could support myself.

43. Maciej Urbaniec (1925–2004) was a great Polish poster designer.

In what form did you hand in the designs? Was it only the cover or something more? You could not really go wild with the typefaces, you had what was available.

Well, the catalog included Paneuropa, Póttawski, Excelsior, Nil.

What about the printing?

Most of the covers were letter-pressed⁴⁴, the publishing houses did the color separation. The “Czytelnik” Publishing House in Warsaw employed Zdzisław Topolewski, who was an expert in this work.

I usually made my designs in the A5 or B5 formats. They included a cover, a title page, and sometimes – with more sophisticated books – a dust jacket as well. If the text was divided into chapters, I designed the chapter pages too. There was no way to touch the typography inside the book.

I know, even when I was graduating in the 1980s, it was the technical editor who would inform the graphic artists about what had been done inside. If he happened to be really kind, he could show you the prepress copies⁴⁵.

Yes, that was the book production then. I had quite a lot of good designs. There was the whole collection on my shelf in Warsaw, but I did not take them to America with me, so they are gone. In the final year of my studies a regular attendance was not required, so I started working for the Foreign Trade Publishing House (WHZ); I was recommended by Maciek Urbaniec or Leon Urbański.⁴⁶ It was a large publishing house with many different editorial offices, a mine of projects. Working for a few publishers, I got very engaged with the design career. Still, I lived from one small paycheck to another and it was really hard sometimes.

I worked and studied poster design with Professor Bogusław Górecki. He was a tall, skinny man, very Gothic-like. It seemed

44. Letterpress printing is a technique of relief printing using a printing press, a process by which many copies are produced by repeated direct impression of an inked, raised surface against sheets or a continuous roll of paper.

45. Prepress refers to the processes and procedures that occur between the creation of a print layout and the final printing.

46. Leon Urbański (1925–2004) was a Polish graphic designer; he was a prominent typographer.

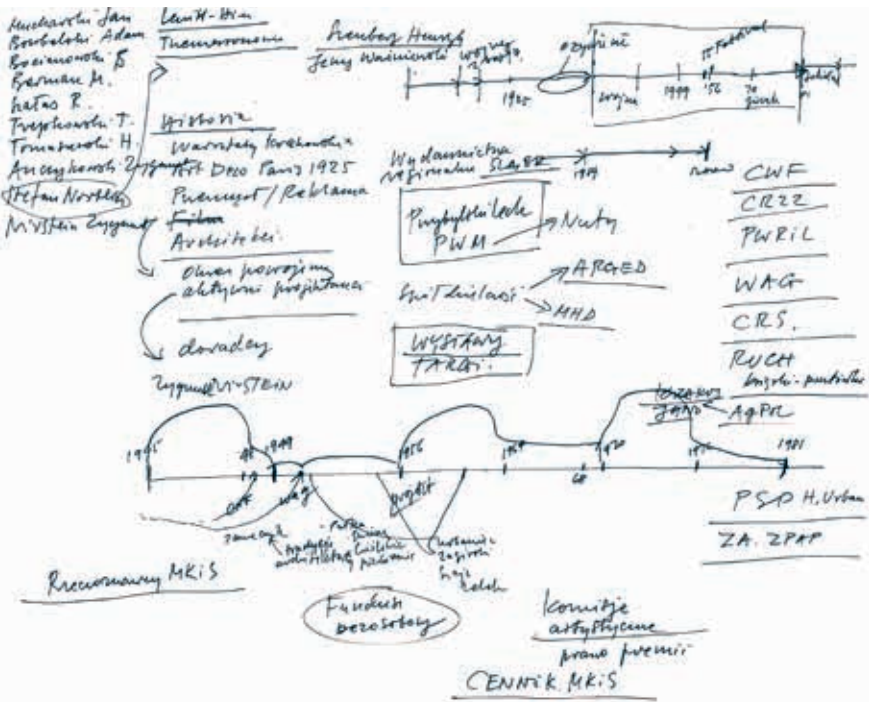
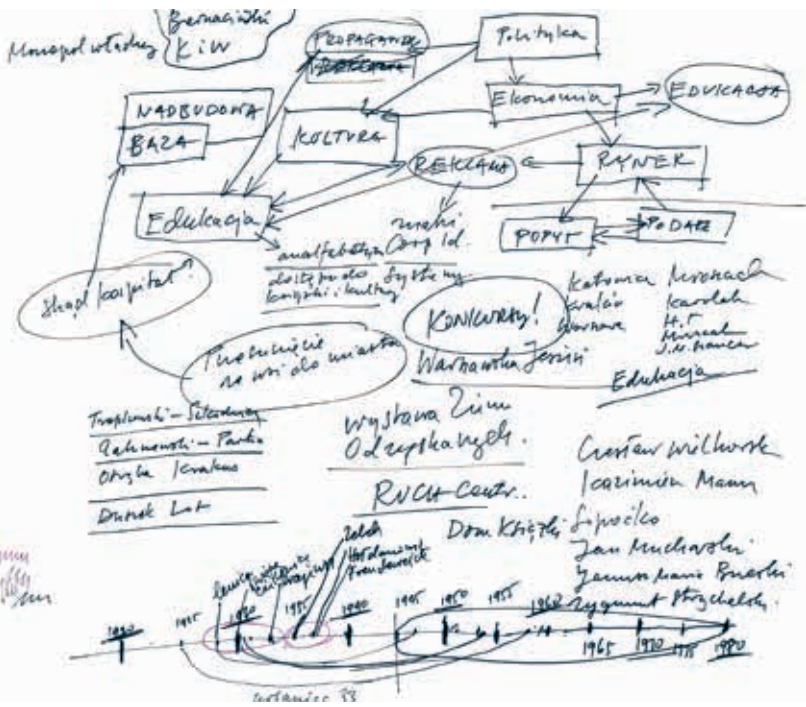
like he was composed of two profiles. He recommended a number of interesting books to me. Although he read a lot, he was not an actual designer, but a painter retrained for applied graphics.

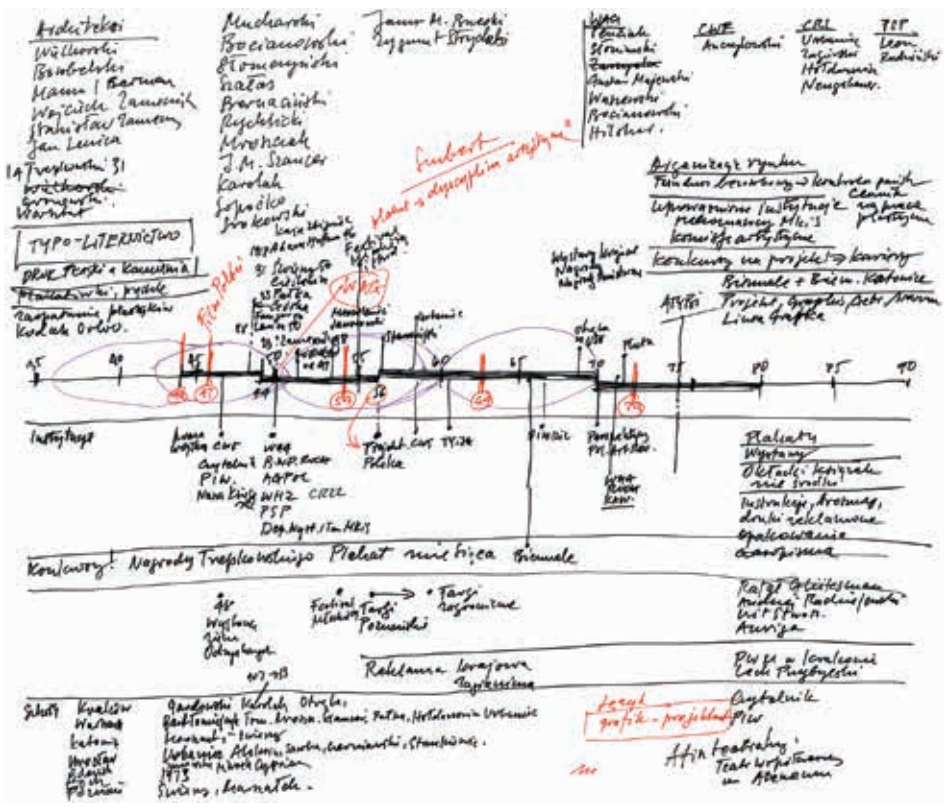
My graduation project consisted of several posters. A credit of that allowed us to take the diploma exam, which lasted for a few days. We had to design some brochures on the spot, and paint a still nature. I managed that. At last, there was an oral defense of our works. I was extremely anxious. One of the professors asked me about the metaphysics of art or something like that, and I froze. His question seemed so unrelated to what I had presented that I was lost for words and completely blacked out. They tried to help me somehow, but I did leave the room without uttering a single word. My grade was trimmed, and I graduated with the “good” stamp on my diploma, which did not even matter – the important thing was that I could finally apply for the card of the Association of Polish Artists and Designers.

I have two questions now. The first one is about the skill of associative thinking – do you see it as a talent or as something you can learn? The other question, on an unrelated topic, refers to the sketches. I would like to know your opinion about drawing as a tool for thinking.

I don't think I can answer the first question. I have no experience in this department. What I do know is that the good examples of associative thinking can be very inspiring.

The answer to the second question will be that to me that is exactly what drawing is – a tool for associative thinking. Which means that we are staying within the same topic after all. Drawing helps me to see the problem I'm about to tackle, to see its structure. Doodling during some dull meetings is another thing, then my associations run free, around one letter or any shape. Let's go back to drawing as a tool, though.





In 2014, Jacek Mrowczyk entrusted me with a difficult task of writing an introduction to one of the chapters of the English-language edition of VeryGraphic. These drawings – mental maps – present my process of gathering data about people, institutions and events, followed by the attempts of arranging them into coherent structures. I think it is a good example of using visual records for organizing one's thoughts.

Jacek Mrowczyk, the editor of *VeryGraphic. Polish Designers of the 20th Century*,⁴⁷ asked me to write an introduction to one of its parts. I have already prepared the first sketches and notes, because this is how I start my search for materials. Then I proceed to listing names, publishers, important political events, significant works. I look for connections. Eventually, there emerges a complex structure of the subject matter. A few pages of notes. All you need to do is develop them on screen or paper. Something will be in the foreground, the other elements will fall a little behind, but remain accessible.

This way I gradually hierarchize various sets of information, when I have something to write or design. I map and record the information. The target map includes the timeline and connections. I have put this at the end of my “Report” – the publication I have been working on, as I mentioned. What is design thinking for me? It is digging. And building.

But tell me about drawing...

And this is not one? Drawing, I think, can serve to present various material things as well as to record an idea or a plan of action.

I could say I have always drawn. I am one of these people. I have always doodled. I started to make actual drawings in the secondary school. The illumination, however – similar to the one I had about typography – happened to me in Katowice, during the evening drawing class with Professor Rafał Pomorski. In the studio, on the bed, there was a chubby lady, and you had to draw her. I had just had a conversation with Professor Hoffmann about starting a project with a conscious decision about its goals. As I entered the studio I was fuming, I don’t really remember, why. It could have been because, yet again, I had to draw some chunky bodies or maybe I was frustrated with the absurdity of the whole thing. I decided that my drawing would be cross. And so it was. I was drawing with charcoal, sometimes rubbing it off. I did not bother with

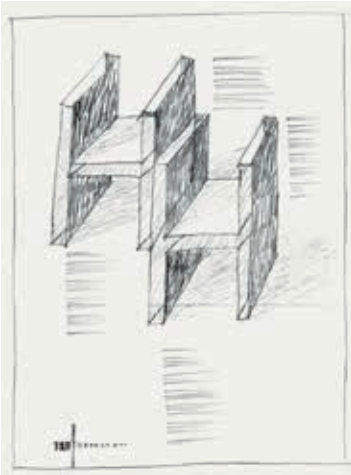
47. See Krzysztof Lenk, *Freedom under Control 1945–1980*, in: *VeryGraphic. Polish Designers of the 20th Century*, ed. Jacek Mrowczyk, Warsaw-Kraków: Adam Mickiewicz Institute–2+3D, 2015.

anatomic detail, all I wanted to express were the planes, the contrast, to make my drawing to show my anger. Professor Pomorski looked at the drawing, looked at me, twitched his mustache, and left. The evening session was over. The drawing remained on the easel until the next day. I came back in, made some corrections and that was it. I knew I had created something authentic in its form – there was flesh, dynamism and good composition. Having listened to Hoffmann’s advice that you should make an assumption first, I managed something I had not managed before. Professor Pomorski said it was very interesting. He rarely reacted that way.

The academic year came to an end, and there was an exhibition – my drawing was hung on the wall. As the best work, it was awarded a prize – one thousand zloty, which the school has not paid me to date. It was an expressive drawing. I realized that I could use drawing for many purposes, even to express emotions I usually kept to myself. This event has become embedded both in my awareness and in my subconscious, it has been a measure, a standard to apply. It made me see that drawing can be a tool for thinking, and my thinking remains in dialogue with what I draw. A drawing is a record of this process.

When I sit down to design several pages of a magazine, I first draw a small sketch, a miniature, where I lay everything out. This is a record of the whole thing. Then, if necessary, I redraw it twice the size, in more detail.

Exercising the hand and drawing letters are important elements of the student’s typographic education. Everything we can see on the screen today seems so easy. It seems like you can do anything. What you want to do, however, has to be defined in advance – just like Hoffmann taught us. Before you spring into action, you need to determine a reference point for your further work on the project. When you get an idea – note it down, sketch it in pencil and see, if it works. All my designs were made this way; I have even kept some of the sketches. I’m a firm believer that a pencil is in fact the extension of consciousness. At this stage your thinking materializes and provides you with a feedback. It is something very different from simply uploading a text to your computer and changing the weight of a font from Medium to Light.



Sketches for the book *Litery (Characters)*. I am all for using a pencil or a pen and sketching compositions or page layouts on a piece of paper. Having such notes, it is good to sit in front of the computer and watch how what is being designed might slowly divert from the original idea. The possibility of comparing these constant changes on the screen with a static sketch is invaluable, similar to a map held by a sailor in the middle of the ocean.

There is also a very personal memory connected with drawing I haven't told anyone before. At the Youth Cultural Center art studio I developed a habit of sketching. I would take my notebook and draw various things; I still did it at the Academy. Once I brought my notebook with me to the area of today's Świętokrzyska Street – where there used to be the ruins of some prewar houses and I found their forms fascinating. I made several drawings (it was my second year at the Academy, in 1956) and brought them to the “Po Prostu” magazine. At that time it was run by Jerzy Ćwiertnia, who dealt with the visual side of the weekly. I showed him my drawings. He liked them and told me to leave them in his office. Two weeks later I saw my works printed in “Po Prostu” and they covered half a page. It was the magazine of our generation, everybody read it, so my friends said, “Woow!” I was ever so proud. It made me believe that my doodles could be worth something, because first, somebody noticed and published them, and second, they were published in “Po Prostu,” which was like a catechism to me. This encouraged me, convinced me that it was good to be brave and try to prove myself.

Let us talk about art for a while. You knew lots of pieces from your textbooks and reproductions. At some point, however, you started to travel and visit museums – you could actually see the artworks you remembered from school. What were your reactions when you saw them live?

Diverse. In 1956, I took a student trip to East Berlin. At that time, Berlin was still an open city, no wall yet. A German student I met there took me to the Academy of Art (Berliner Akademie der Künste) to see the exhibition of the French painting of the late 19th and the early 20th centuries – let's call it the seventy years of the French painting from impressionists to Picasso. For me – a person who came from the country, where the only similar event so far (and not exactly about painting) had been the excellent French textile exhibition at the Zachęta gallery in Warsaw – it was beautiful. I was very excited and looked at it all closely.

In the Warsaw Academy we had a very good library which was able to import reproductions – they were not subject to censorship. There were albums by the Swiss publishing house “Skira” with excellent offset reproductions in eight and sixteen colors. I walked this exhibition in Berlin fascinated; it was wonderful that I could admire the real paintings. Still, I had some disturbing thoughts at the back of my head. Although I was happy to see all of them in the original, I actually preferred the “Skira” reproductions. Why? Was it because a reproduction was closer to my eyes, a condensed record of an artwork, a distillate? Looking at the paintings hung at the gallery, I had an impression that they were somehow ‘inflated’ and did not have the density of matter characteristic of a good reproduction. I was somehow disappointed and ashamed. Having returned to Warsaw, I ran straight to the library and asked for the “Skira” albums. Leafing through them I had a wonderful feeling that after I had seen the paintings in reality, I could look at them my own way once again. My impressions were more complete due to the memory of the originals, but it was the prints that felt so intimate to me.

While in Florence, I stood in front of *The Battle of San Romano* by Paolo Uccello many times, always delighted. The horses depicted in this painting are a representation, they are arbitrary

horses, and not the realistic ones, like in *The Battle of Grunwald* by Jan Matejko.

In this case as well, like in Berlin, I had the recurring doubt if I didn't, in fact, prefer to see all the details of *The Battle* in the reproductions, in the album.

It is like that with the philharmonic concerts. Last year, my friends and I went to see a cello concert of Dvořák at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. Although the venue has a brilliant acoustics, once again I had the same feeling that has accompanied me ever since I started going to any concerts: I need to sit with my eyes closed. All this colorful vibration of an orchestra deprives me of the ability to experience the sound, to detect every little acoustic detail, so important. Obviously, there is this great music and it is wonderful, but when I listen to a DVD recording of Claudio Abbado or Gustav Mahler at home, the impression becomes much more intimate. I turn it up, just the way I like it, and the camera shows me a single instrument, which is playing at that very moment. I'm literary inside the music then – as if I had my head inside a grand piano or a trumpet... And I'm living it, I'm really experiencing the music.

What I'm saying might sound barbaric to some.

Listening at home, I can turn the speakers down, let them whisper to me, and when an interesting fragment comes, turn the volume up. This way I can sense all the physicality of the sound. Depending on my mood, I can listen to jazz, change to another genre or simply tune to the BBC Music. My reception of music is very emotional. I experience it with all my being. It is the story of the "Skira" albums all over – here it is about music, though.

I like to go to a good jazz concert at a club. I drink in the atmosphere of a small room, the magic of the musicians' personalities – some evenings can be fantastic. I find it easier to listen to an instrumental recital than to a philharmonic orchestra.

And speaking of fantastic evenings, they happened at our place as well, with or without company, and they continued far into the night. We had great speakers and an enormous collection of records and CDs. One piece of music – as well as our mood – always suggested another, and then another, and another...

And what about literature? Which book – or books – have made a lasting impression on you?

I was a boy of fourteen, going on fifteen. Fed up with school, I stopped attending. It had nothing interesting to offer (but for history, and later chemistry) – my world was in the books, in literature. My parents were powerless, the situation was dramatic. I never wasted a moment. I read greedily all the days through; and I read smart. I carefully devoured the whole of French literature available at the time: The Boy's Library⁴⁸ from *The Song of Roland* to the works of Honoré de Balzac, then Proust; the Russian literature, apart from Fyodor Dostoyewski, who was not published at that time and the German literature. I was really well-read for my age. I wasn't able to read all the books, of course, but I did read plenty over the two years of my literature bender. That was when I came across a great Boy's translation of *Dangerous Liaisons* by Pierre de Laclos, where the narration took the form of letters. This book, so different from the simple accounts of events I had read that far, introduced me to the flavor of literature, and not only its content. It made me realize that the stylistic form is an integral part of a book. Before, I was fascinated with the plots, I gorged myself on the novels, but I lacked the distance to differentiate between the story and how it was written. It was the first time that I had seen how beautifully the form, the language and the content affect one another. Eva, my wife, told me later that *Dangerous Liaisons* had been a breakthrough reading for her as well. The other book I found equally important was *Jacques the Fatalist and his Master* by Denis Diderot, and yet another – *Candide: or, All for the Best* by Voltaire. Many years later, a text that affected me deeply was the already mentioned *A Dreambook of Our Time* by Tadeusz Konwicki.

And how do you respond to a small form? Haiku for instance?

When I was younger, poetry impressed me, I memorized long fragments. There is this poem by Apollinaire:

48. Polish: Bibjoteka Boya (org. spelling), an over 100-volume library of the French literature, translated by Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński.

In your pools, and in your ponds,
Carp, you indeed live long!
Is it that death forgets to free
You fishes of melancholy?⁴⁹

It is one of the poems that have stuck with me. Today, when I reach for Zbigniew Herbert or Czesław Miłosz⁵⁰, I do find some excellent verses, but I think that my sensitivity has gone in another direction. Haiku can be beautiful, the voice becomes suspended, some fragments call for reflection – I appreciate them, but it is not something I long for.

Have you actually read Shakespeare, or do you know his plays from the theater?

From the theater. I don't think I have ever read Shakespeare. I have been to lots of spectacles, though. Also, I have seen many of his plays adapted for films by Laurence Olivier.

Brecht.

I have always had a crush on Bertolt Brecht. His texts have felt so close to me. He came to Warsaw with his play *Mother Courage and Her Children* in 1952; it starred Helena Weigel. I managed to get a ticket, it was a fantastic spectacle with songs. The action would freeze and the choir chanted, like in the Greek theater. I was very impressed. The other spectacle I saw was *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* directed by Irena Babel in Kraków in 1954. Soon after, in 1956, The Polish Army House of Culture⁵¹ held a premiere of *The Good Person of Szechwan*.

It is a story of a Chinese prostitute, who, in order to get on in the world, puts on a mask and becomes a strong man. These – two actually – roles were played by one actress, Halina Mikołajska.

49. Guillaume Apollinaire, *The Carp* (French: *La Carpe*), translated by A. S. Kline

50. Zbigniew Herbert (1924–1998), Czesław Miłosz (1911–1924) were renowned Polish poets and prose writers; the latter was awarded The Nobel Prize for Literature in 1980.

51. Polish: Dom Wojska Polskiego, renamed as The Dramatic Theater (Polish: Teatr Dramatyczny) in 1957.

A coquettish woman turned into a brutal gangster. Her acting was phenomenal. I happened to talk about it with Henryk Tomaszewski, who had designed a poster for this spectacle, and he also considered it one of his greatest theater experiences ever.

In 1974, the National Publishing Institute⁵² published *Aphorisms*, a small book of Brecht's works, translated into Polish by Roman Szydlowski; one of its chapters included a collection of short anecdotes about Mr K. (Mister Keuner)⁵³ – they were a little like the Chinese parables:

“I once worked for a gardener. He handed me a pair of shears and told me to trim a laurel tree. The tree stood in a pot and was hired out for celebrations. For that it had to have the form of a sphere. I immediately began to prune the wild shoots, but no matter how hard I tried to achieve the form of a sphere, I did not succeed for a long time. First I lopped off too much on one side, then on the other. When the tree had at last become a sphere, the sphere was very small. Disappointed, the gardener said: ‘Good, that’s the sphere, but where’s the laurel?’”

Or:

“‘What do you do,’ Mr. K. was asked, ‘if you love someone?’ ‘I make a sketch of the person,’ said Mr. K., ‘and make sure that one comes to resemble the other.’ ‘Which, the sketch?’ ‘No,’ said Mr. K., ‘the person.’”⁵⁴

These little stories were a poetic revelation for me. Brecht kick started my mechanisms of dialectic thinking. It was followed by his theory of epic theater, reaching to the Greek tradition of presenting the opposing views, hiding the actor's face behind a mask (and not acting the emotions out like Konstantin Stanislavski⁵⁵

52. Polish: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy (PIW)

53. Bertolt Brecht, *Stories of Mr. Keuner* (German: *Die Geschichten vom Herrn Keuner*), first pub. 1958

54. See B. Brecht, *Stories of Mr. Keuner translated by Martin Chalmers*, City Lights Books, San Francisco 2001

55. Konstantin Stanislavski (1863–1938) was a seminal Russian theater practitioner, widely recognized character actor, considered the leading theater directors of his generation; famous for his ‘system’ of actor training, preparation, and rehearsal technique.

would have it). What Brecht said was that the emotions were something the audience should feel as they followed the lines of argument, observed the conflicts of attitudes, and listened to the choir commenting on the situation. As a poet, a playwright – he has always been my guru.

Dialectics. Marx and Engels.

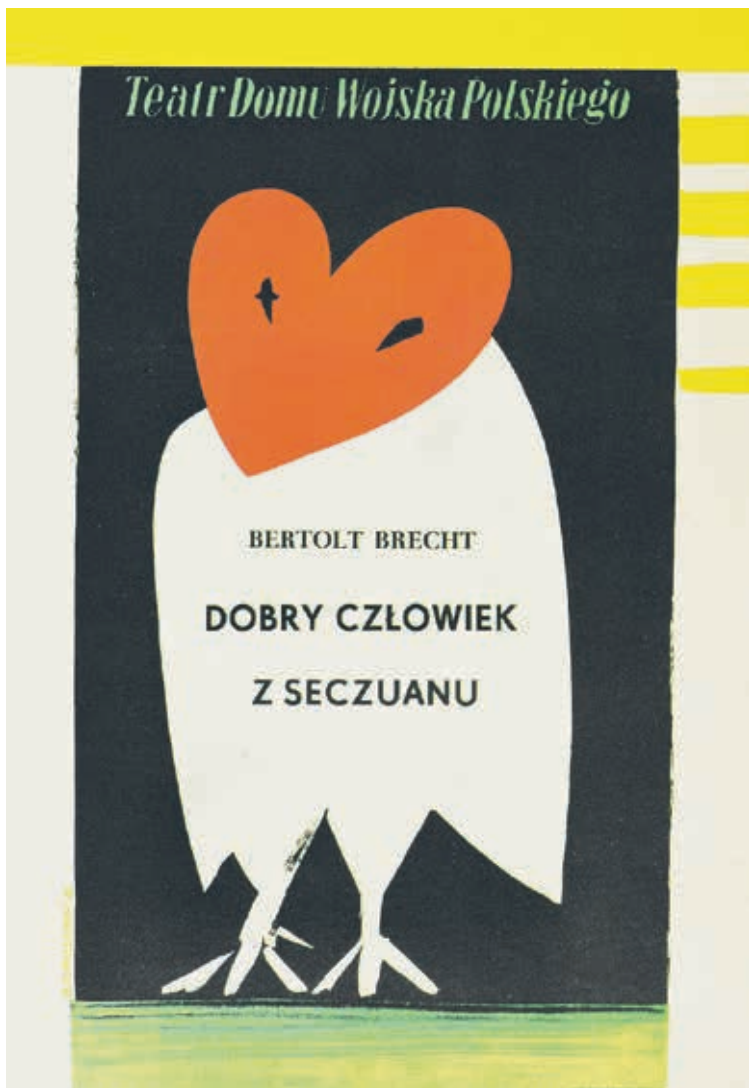
It was so long ago I barely remember anything. I cannot answer the question about Marx and Engels, because I never studied their theories. I did read *The Communist Manifesto*, but unwillingly, as it was an element of the political propaganda we were force fed.

I was born in a family of socialist views, a very progressive, anticlerical one. My parents were connected with the PPS – Polish Socialist Party and the cooperative movement. We entered the reality of the postwar Poland differently than most people did. My father worked for Społem, a huge cooperative organization, which supplied the country with food and thereby helped it survive the first years after the war. I remember the incredible enthusiasm among people at that time, because their anti-reformative, anti-capitalistic dreams of an enlightened and equal society were coming true. Back then, in 1948, it all seemed possible. They worked with devotion to rebuild their country. All this is yet to be written about by someone really smart. For my parents and the other people of the Polish Socialist Party, then independent of the Communists, Marxism in its pure form was a fundamental ideology. From a philosopher Stanisław Brzozowski and a sociologist Ludwik Krzywicki, from the beginning of the 20th century – it was the history of social justice.

I grew up in this environment. But the enthusiasm ended in 1948, when the Communists outlawed the Polish Socialist Party, Społem was split, and my father lost his job. Nobody even protested at that time, it was the rule of terror, and Marxism was practically replaced with Leninism-Stalinism. I never considered the Marxist ideas to be wrong, though.

What about philosophy?

We were never taught philosophy on some acceptable level, either at school, or the Academy. During my studies we had a teacher



A poster by Henryk Tomaszewski for *The Good Person of Szechwan*. This poetic design merges three signs: an owl – symbol of wisdom, a heart – symbol of love, and a mask – symbol of intrigues. It is a beautiful example of using the figures of visual rhetoric when the communication should elicit an emotional response in the recipient. It remains in agreement with the poetics of the ancient Greek theater, followed by Bertolt Brecht.

of the sociopolitical issues, General Eugeniusz Kuszko, a prewar Communist, who had fought in Spain. When Marshal Rokossovsky⁵⁶ was sent from Russia, our general was removed from the army and given this subject to teach at the Warsaw Academy. He was a wise, life-experienced man and he did not stuff us with any dingy propaganda. It had nothing to do with the actual philosophy, though.

Did you have any contact with philosophy outside of school?

The easiest answer would be: none.

My wife's nieces attended secondary school in France, and I listened enviously when they said they had eight hours of philosophy a week – not the study of philosophy, mind you, but philosophy per se – for several years: thinking, logic, philosophical analysis. Talking to them today, I notice the great results of their education. Communism was adverse to this sort of thinking and learning how to ask questions in pursuit of the truth. What they needed were malleable minds – prone to any propaganda – that could be steered in any which way. Therefore, the methodical asking of fundamental questions and the logical analysis applied by philosophy were banned from the public education system.

What I know comes from my own pursuits. In my youth, however, I preferred to read good literature rather than the philosophers. If you lack the basic education in philosophy and sufficient practice, reading philosophical books is grueling, especially in Polish. Later, when I read them in English, it was much easier for me. I followed mainly the publications connected with semiotics and visual communication. But that did not come until much later on.

56. Konstantin Rokossovsky (1896–1968) was a Soviet officer of Polish origin who became Marshal of the Soviet Union, Marshal of Poland and served as Poland's Defence Minister from 1949 until his removal in 1956 during the Polish October.

The sixties

Posters, covers, magazines

If you want the text you set to be received well (...), it should have a careful algorithmic relations among the three of its whites: between the glyphs, between the words, and between the lines; it should also interplay with the white of the margins.

(p. 89)

The sixties. Let us talk about the time right after you got your diploma.

I met Ewa Zembrzuska in 1961 and we got married in October 1963. I'm not sure if a graphic artist with no regular job was a dream candidate for a beloved daughter of a steady academic home, but I passed this exam somehow.

In 1961 I was twenty-five years old, and when I received my graduate diploma, I was independent. I worked for the "Silesia" Publishing House, for Maciek Urbaniec of the "Peasants Self-Help" Agriculture & Foods Office, and for others. In 1964, I started designing my first magazine, "Polish Machinery News". In 1968, I went to be an intern at the SNIP (Société Nouvelle d'Information et Publicité) advertising agency in Paris, and later I got a job in the "Jeune Afrique" weekly. I learned French, which later got ousted by my English, so I don't speak French anymore. In the summer of 1969 in Warsaw, I started to design the "Perspectives" weekly⁵⁷. In my final year of studies – or maybe right after – I designed book covers and also worked for the Foreign Trade Publishing House (WHZ). There were plenty of interesting commissions from various centers and enterprises as well. I designed for all of them until I left for Paris in 1968, so I had about six years of intensive work: it involved brochures, catalogs, calendars and – for the first time – magazines and professional periodicals.

57. Polish: "Perspektywy", an illustrated magazine on social and political as well as cultural and economic issues, established in 1969.



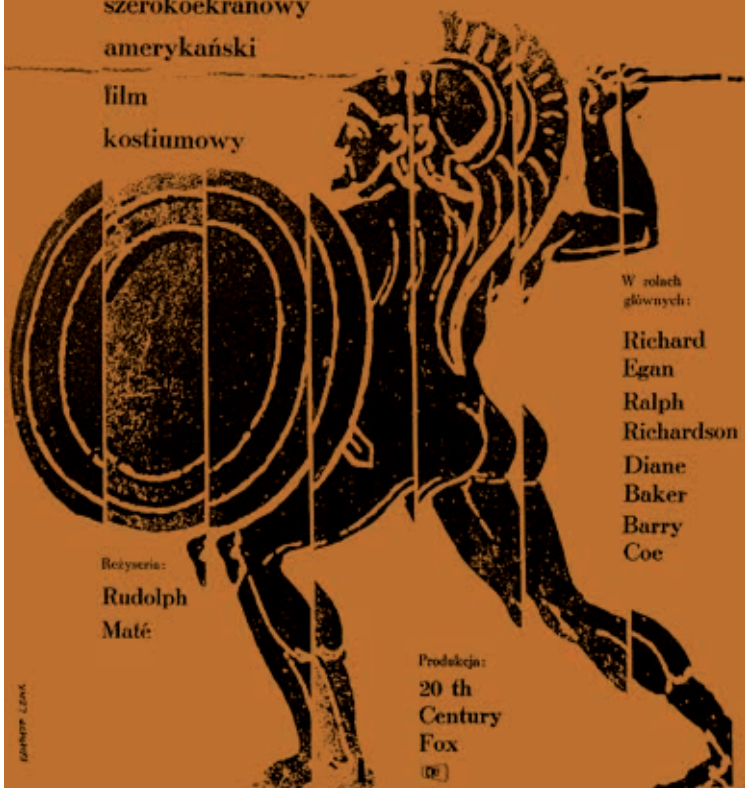
A cover for the Śląsk publishing house: canvas pressed cover and two overlapping title pages of the anthology of the Silesian Uprisings poetry and satire. The lengthwise format was used purposefully for a better exposition of poems, set in a chunky lettering. I applied various styles of the same typeface throughout the book.

I knew I was not the type of man who spoke in Haiku – short metaphors. I was more of a director dealing with narratives; I liked rhythms, sequences, structures that I could modulate. In order to secure my position on the graphic design market, however, I had to make posters. All the other areas of design remained in their shadow and went practically unnoticed. Still, I did design things that made me really proud, and they were not posters at all. I'll tell you more about them later.

So, I started designing posters, mainly for movies. It was quite absorbing. I met lots of interesting people and went to many film shows; I did not find it important, but it was pleasant. And my name gained recognition in the design circles.

300 SPARTAN

Barwny
szerokoekranowy
amerykański
film
kostiumowy



The movie posters for the Film Release Headquarters [Polish: Centrala Wynajmu Filmów] – above and on the two following pages – come from the mid-sixties. They were all made as compositions merging photography, typography and a very scarce, functional color. I wanted the most important elements of each poster to instantly catch the eye.

ŚMIERĆ BELLI

Francuski dramat kryminalny
wg powieści **GEORGES SIMENONA**

Scenariusz: Jean Anouilh

Reżyseria: Édouard Maloux

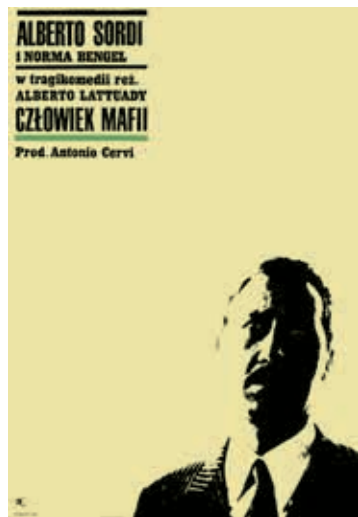
W roli głównej:

JEAN DESAILLY Alexandra Stewart

I Yves Robert. Produkcja: Lux Films



Reżyseria: Lux



I was interested in photography. In the kitchen of my mom's place, where I lived after my return to Warsaw, there was a recessed space which I turned into a darkroom. I installed the water pipes and covered the window. I was able to process the photo films. Applied photography had become my hobby. I had a Voigtländer photo camera of the early thirties with a double extension bellows and a very sharp Tessar lens. In the Foto-Optyka store you could get the glass photographic plates of various gradation, soft or more light-sensitive, as well as the plates similar to Kodalith of a very high contrast. My favorite format was 6×9 centimeters (2.3×3.5 inches). I was able to use photography for my poster projects. I joined Marek Freudenreich⁵⁸ in designing a series of ads for the machinery industry: diggers, bulldozers and such; we were also able to work on our own photos. Maciek Urbaniec and I, on the other hand, experimented with photography for his posters.

My first experience with an actual magazine design was in 1964 – it was “Polish Machinery News” published by the Foreign Trade Publishing House (WHZ) in English and Russian. As those were two extremely different markets, the advertisements of the heavy industry, machinery etc. (but also of the very precise devices for eye surgeries) had to be different, too. The WHZ was a huge publishing enterprise, but invisible on the domestic market, as its publications were dedicated for foreign readers. Consequently, although my portfolio was piling with the new designs, they went unnoticed on the Polish design scene.

The “Polish Machinery News” magazine had a problem with illustrations. It did contain the free form photos of machinery retouched with an airbrush, but they were made badly. I had to figure it out. In one issue there was a photo of a crankshaft which I extended to the whole page. Sometimes I did not have any photographs for an article, like for the one about an eye surgery conducted by Professor Krwawicz by means of a precise surgical mechanism he invented, so I thought of an illustration featuring a thin line entering an eye. It was a shocker. For one of

58. Marek Freudenreich (b. 1939) is a Polish graphic designer, educator, creator of many great posters.



"Polish Machinery News" quarterly

the two-page spreads of the magazine, the one with short news, I used a "hanger" (when all the texts start at the top and end at various places, so they do not cover the whole page). The editorial team wanted to "hang" me on it, they were furious at the waste of the unprinted space, but I stood my ground: it was working as an active graphic element and the balance between the text and the silence was building the tension on that page. It is not only the black that defines the white, but also the white defines the black.

It all looks very modern, of course, but we need to consider your decision in the context of the sixties. You left the unprinted space and the white functioned with the printed area at a ratio close to fifty-fifty.

Yes, I had to educate my editorial team. Luckily, I was dealing with a good and smart editor-in-chief. He was a grumpy young man but he cared about the quality of the magazine and valued our collaboration as very beneficial. The improvement was also noticed by the head office, so he advocated for me to the team. In case of any conflict, the head editor supported my decisions. Also later, working for "Perspectives" and other magazines, I usually managed to

**INFORMING COMPANY FOR RESEARCHERS
FOR INVESTIGATION OF DESIGN**

- Reviewing papers for the industry and for the...
 - All types of metal and non-metallic materials used in the fabric...
 - Production equipment for the industry, metal and non-metal...
 - Planning and control of manufacturing equipment in chemical, electrical...

Scientific research on the design of metal moulds and the development of new casting processes plays in the recent years an important role in the world's industry. The progress observed in foundry practice is extremely fast and is closely related to the development of modern industrial machines and equipment. New achievements in the field of the investigation of the properties of various metals allow to supplement the available strength data and the principles of the production of castings.

An instructive partner

In the article on the next page the results of work conducted in the Kraków Foundry Institute on casting technology are discussed and new material testing methods are reviewed.

New production engineering methods in the manufacture of crankshafts

The SE method - a success of a Polish production engineer

The SE method is a new method of manufacturing crankshafts. It is based on the use of a special tool which allows for the production of a crankshaft with a high degree of accuracy and a high degree of reliability. The method is based on the use of a special tool which allows for the production of a crankshaft with a high degree of accuracy and a high degree of reliability. The method is based on the use of a special tool which allows for the production of a crankshaft with a high degree of accuracy and a high degree of reliability.

The deficiencies of traditional production methods

Traditional methods of manufacturing crankshafts are characterized by a high degree of complexity and a high degree of cost. The traditional methods of manufacturing crankshafts are characterized by a high degree of complexity and a high degree of cost. The traditional methods of manufacturing crankshafts are characterized by a high degree of complexity and a high degree of cost.

The "USW" equipment

The "USW" equipment is a new piece of equipment which allows for the production of crankshafts with a high degree of accuracy and a high degree of reliability. The "USW" equipment is a new piece of equipment which allows for the production of crankshafts with a high degree of accuracy and a high degree of reliability.

This quarterly was set on Linotype machines with a commonly used Excelsior typeface – and this couldn't be changed. The titles, however, we set on the Monotype title generator with the newest typefaces, which gave the periodical a sense of modernity.

A new way for welding iron	Universal optical machine	Accelerator with an amplifier and relay unit	A new method for the production of iron or steel	A new building material	Automatically controlled writing transformer
<p>...the welding process is carried out in a special way... the iron is heated to a certain temperature... the welding process is carried out in a special way... the iron is heated to a certain temperature... the welding process is carried out in a special way... the iron is heated to a certain temperature...</p>	<p>...the machine is used for the purpose of... the machine is used for the purpose of... the machine is used for the purpose of... the machine is used for the purpose of... the machine is used for the purpose of... the machine is used for the purpose of...</p>	<p>...the accelerator is used for the purpose of... the accelerator is used for the purpose of... the accelerator is used for the purpose of... the accelerator is used for the purpose of... the accelerator is used for the purpose of... the accelerator is used for the purpose of...</p>	<p>...the new method is used for the purpose of... the new method is used for the purpose of... the new method is used for the purpose of... the new method is used for the purpose of... the new method is used for the purpose of... the new method is used for the purpose of...</p>	<p>...the new building material is used for the purpose of... the new building material is used for the purpose of... the new building material is used for the purpose of... the new building material is used for the purpose of... the new building material is used for the purpose of... the new building material is used for the purpose of...</p>	<p>...the automatically controlled writing transformer is used for the purpose of... the automatically controlled writing transformer is used for the purpose of... the automatically controlled writing transformer is used for the purpose of... the automatically controlled writing transformer is used for the purpose of... the automatically controlled writing transformer is used for the purpose of... the automatically controlled writing transformer is used for the purpose of...</p>



Cryoextractor the useful achievement of Professor Dr. T. Krwawicz



The cryoextractor is a device used for the treatment of eye diseases... it is used for the purpose of... it is used for the purpose of... it is used for the purpose of... it is used for the purpose of... it is used for the purpose of... it is used for the purpose of...

...the cryoextractor is used for the purpose of... the cryoextractor is used for the purpose of... the cryoextractor is used for the purpose of... the cryoextractor is used for the purpose of... the cryoextractor is used for the purpose of... the cryoextractor is used for the purpose of...

Modern bending method for profile bars

...the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of...

...the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of... the modern bending method is used for the purpose of...





Concrete wheel drive

...the concrete wheel drive is used for the purpose of... the concrete wheel drive is used for the purpose of... the concrete wheel drive is used for the purpose of... the concrete wheel drive is used for the purpose of... the concrete wheel drive is used for the purpose of... the concrete wheel drive is used for the purpose of...

convince the chiefs that it was worth looking for unconventional graphic solutions, which proved to be good editorial moves. It was not only about the way a magazine looked, we introduced a particular order: a good proportion between the shorter news and the bigger articles. It was a structure which made a coherent issue instead of a bunch of individual articles glued together at random. It all worked well and was noticed by the artistic board of the publishing house.

There was another thing as well. The magazine was printed for export on a very decent thick and glossy chalky paper. I convinced the editing team to add two eights of a brown packing sheet. Consequently, all the lettering had to be bolder to account for its absorbency and the fact that – despite its respectable quality – it still contained some sand, which compressed the letters. Although we used the linotype fonts, so there wasn't much loss at the composing room, I adjusted the design and used bold typefaces. The roughness of the packing paper collided with the glossy chalk – quite repulsive in itself – and made it look noble.

The other magazines of the Foreign Trade Publishing House came later. It published the representative “Made in Poland” designed by Tadeusz Jodłowski, who was leaving for a scholarship and asked me to replace him. This magazine was printed at Okopowa Street, just like “You and I”⁵⁹, but it was made on good paper, in color.

So you were working on two magazines at the same time?

I designed only a few issues of “Made in Poland” as a substitute for Jodłowski, but I also did the “Elektrim News” newsletter of the Foreign Trade Center⁶⁰. Obviously, I designed plenty of other prints – catalogs, brochures, calendars. My skills developed a lot, especially because the export publications cared about the quality of printing.

59. Polish: “Ty i Ja” was a monthly published in the years 1960–1973; it collaborated with many renowned Polish photographers and graphic designers

60. Polish: Centrala Handlu Zagranicznego

What works, what publications did you find inspiring at the time?

The well-designed foreign magazines available at the Book Clubs. I bought them, fascinated with how the pages were set in the West. My particular reference points were the three graphic magazines: the Swiss monthly “Graphis”, “Gebrauchsgrafik” of Munich (later renamed as “Novum”), and the Italian “Linea Grafica”.

I found “Graphis” especially important. I got a new issue every other month – I was lucky enough to subscribe to it – and it was a channel to see the best designs in the world.

All the things included in “Graphis” had already been distilled; it presented only the excellent projects. A similar situation referred to the books and movies imported to Poland from the West in the sixties and seventies – what came was *creme de la creme*. The foreign currencies were scarce, so only selected films could be purchased; it concerned the translations of fiction as well – only the best books were being published in Polish. Little is said about it today, but we did have access to the most exceptional products of a given country. At least to those politically neutral and not colliding with the Soviet propaganda, of course.

Looking at “Graphis”, there was something fascinating in every issue: they introduced interesting designers and curious design problems, presented various graphic forms – in spring, for example, they published a special edition about the New Year’s greetings sent by their readers. My design awareness was built on the standards of this magazine. They also published annuals: “Graphis Annual”, “Graphis Poster”, “Graphis Diagrams”. It enabled me to see the highest world level of design.

Is it good to consult your designs with somebody? I know you could wake Ewa up in the middle of the night to ask her opinion about your project.

I can still do it today. Her remarks are precious. We have a domestic tradition – she criticizes bluntly while I listen, then we discuss it and I agree with her or not.

It is good to trust somebody’s opinion. And the person does not need to be a graphic designer at all. It should be someone



Krzysztof and Ewa Lenk, in the nineteen-sixties

(photo: Krzysztof Gierattowski)

who is familiar with the assumptions of your work. Before you go and snap them out of sleep, however, take your design, put it upside down and inspect it closely. Go to the bathroom and look at it in the mirror. Only then wake this friendly person up so that they can use their fresh eye to see the things that your eyes, blood-shot with the all-night work, can't see anymore. It has to be a good friend, somebody you trust and with whom you are not afraid to be vulnerable. A good friend. Obviously, this works only when you design something isolated and material.

Have you met people who could give you their honest opinions?

I have. Maciek Urbaniec was such a friend of mine. We met at the Academy. He could tell me point blank that something wasn't working well or I had to do it another way. It was the same story with Leszek Hołdanowicz and Danka Żukowska⁶¹. When you trust someone and you know they mean well, you accept their criticism.

61. Lech Hołdanowicz (b. 1937), Danuta Żukowska (b. 1928) - Polish graphic designers. Lech Hołdanowicz is a Professor of Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and a renown poster designer.

I think such people are very important. It could be about small technical details we can't notice because we are tired or too far into the design to see the big picture. This refers to our lives as well. It is good to have somebody to tell us when something is going the wrong way. They are hard to find because our friends often try to be nice and polite, they don't want to hurt our feelings.

It is more like they try to mind their own business. You must learn to build relationships with people in such a way that the group of friends you have can be trusted to speak their minds. Leon Urbański was my guru as regards typography who told me flat out when he didn't like something and I respected his opinions. We happened to disagree, of course, but it did not affect our relations.

Your stories are filled with recurring names: they are mainly men who you met and worked with. And what about women?

There were women as well. I was lucky enough to work with several outstanding female graphic artists who ran the publishing houses and appreciated my designs. We had both the graphics and the way of thinking in common. One of these remarkable ladies was Danka Żukowska. Her mind has remained sharp, she is witty and incredibly intelligent, a great designer. For many years she had run the State Agricultural and Forestry Publishing House (PWRiL)⁶², which was excellent but stayed out of the limelight. It published for the agricultural sector, anything from academic textbooks (I contributed a little) to various guidebooks and professional literature. People working in the State Agricultural Farms (PGRs)⁶³ needed the knowledge of farming on the pragmatic rather than engineering level. We made numerous designs which did not get presented at the art galleries but were distributed only in the rural areas. You could buy them in the local or specialized agricultural bookstores, usually situated close to the higher schools of agriculture.

62. Polish: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Rolnicze i Leśne (PWRiL)

63. Polish: Państwowe Gospodarstwo Rolne (PGR) was a form of collective farming in the People's Republic of Poland.

It was a bit like throwing stones into a deep well: great, we had the satisfaction of doing interesting things but once the design was printed it dropped out of sight and you would not come across this project again. This publishing house was a conglomerate: it had editorial teams making books, textbooks, household magazines, innumerable handbooks – on embroidery, knitting, preserving eggs for winter when there were no refrigerators – plenty of things, plus magazines.

Andrzej Krajewski⁶⁴ was drawing comics for the “Young Tractor Driver” magazine, the last page was all his. There was a lot of well-done material – and it all needed careful editing. The collaborators recruited from most prominent graphic designers: Leszek Hołdanowicz, Waldek Świerzy, Maciek Urbaniec; nobody shied away because of the art director – for Danka, you would do a most unpleasant job. We had the utmost respect for her. The other person like that was Jolanta Barącz, the art director and head graphic designer of the National Publishing Institute. She knew perfectly well what she wanted. I enjoyed the trust and friendship of both ladies. Jola Barącz passed away, but with Danka we keep in touch, we respect each other and our friendship is twofold: personal and professional. She still makes interesting designs today.

Let us talk about your posters. Looking at this collection, I am amazed by the typography.

Typography is an integral part of their layouts. I think this typography matures well – these works were made in the sixties.

Was your thinking universal enough to make them timeless?

No, no. I tried to make a typography to match the idea of a given poster and that’s what it was.

What’s your special contribution? What distinguishes you from the others?

I cannot assess that objectively. I think that my highly functional

64. Andrzej Krajewski (1933–2018) was a Polish painter and graphic designer, creator of many posters and author of various illustrations, cartoons and comic books.

typography was designed with a gentle touch. Look at how the layout is organized in the *300 Spartans* with a classical Bodoni typeface.

Organized?

A typographic layout relies on finding connections. In this poster we have the noble marble-engraved antique writing accompanied by a cinematographic separation into components – they are motion-blurred but still come together as a whole.

So we can speak of layers of information.

Yes, about layers of information, of hierarchy, internal construction, internal structure.

There is an interesting relationship between typography and illustration in these posters. You can see the codependency between the graphic structure of a typeface and that of an image. To what extent were you able to make such decisions in the sixties? How many typefaces did you have at your disposal?

The Polish typefaces were scarce: Excelsior for typesetting, various weights of Paneuropa, Nil, Póttawski and some prewar fonts. Nearly all the other typefaces in there were copied – by hand – from a catalog.

How exactly? Is this a photomontage based on the specimen or are the letters hand drawn? The Polish poster is associated with a graphic artist reaching for a brush or another tool and making their own lettering. What you have is typography.

I used an American type catalog by Ben Rosen⁶⁵ (I still have it today) which I had bought after the International Book Fairs.⁶⁶ It was invaluable, because it presented all the typefaces from the forty-eight (and sometimes sixty-four) point size down. I would cut strips of thin tracing paper and draw a horizontal baseline.

65. See Ben Rosen, *Type and Typography: Designer's Type Book*, New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1963.

66. In the sixties, the books exhibited at the fairs could be purchased after the event from selected Warsaw bookstores.

With my technical pen, I drew the outlines of the letters I needed, one by one, and then I used a brush to fill them in with black.

I usually preset the strips on a cardboard sheet using rubber shoe glue. I took a photo, boosted it to a required format and glued onto the poster in the real size. So I did most of the longer texts manually. In some cases I used help from a friendly print shop at the Warsaw Academy, where the printers set texts with the available typefaces at a small expense on my part. Still, the main texts and those for which typefaces were not available – I did them all by hand.

This means that Rudziński, the typography professor who “slapped your hand” and repeatedly sent you home to correct the spacing, did a pretty good job.

He did. His assignments required decent craftsmanship combined with a sharp eye.

You employ mainly roman type – sans-serif, slab-serif. These typefaces could be used for setting longer forms as well. There are no decorative letters, calligraphy or freehand – widely present in the Polish poster of that time.

There are not.

There is, however, a great respect for organized typography.

Yes, I’m still satisfied with how well that typography was built. I preferred working with fonts rather than with calligraphy.

Did you have any memorable typography-related experiences?

I can think of one. Back then, it was not fashionable (or affordable) to organize big wedding receptions. At least in our circles it wasn’t. Celebrating the wedding in the era of the so-called free love and long-term premarital relationships seemed hypocritical. Ewa and I had a quiet wedding: there were only the two witnesses – our closest friends. Instead of the reception we had a formal dinner with our parents and siblings. Later, however, we wanted to invite our friends to a big party to celebrate the event after all. I had no access to a print shop, but Leon Urbański was working



Ben Rosen, *Type and Typography: Designer's Type Book* – page spreads of the typeface catalog

at the Visual Arts Studio (PSP)⁶⁷ at the time. I gave him the text of our invitation; he frowned, took a small red pencil (just like the one my lettering professor used – maybe that was where he picked this method up) and edited the text because it “sounded awkward in Polish,” as he said. He was right – his eye and ear were sensitive to the beauty of the language. He corrected the text and asked how many copies we needed and when. Some time later he called to say it was ready. When I got to his place, he gave me a rectangular box; I opened it and saw a text set in Garamond Italic along with two words in Univers. The text was black and the two words – dark blue. It was beautiful. He said: “I used Garamond, because it is vivid and pearly, and I wish you a merry life, while Univers 75 is sound and steady. I hope it all goes well for you.” It was a beautiful translation of typography into wedding wishes. I have borne this layout in mind.

How about your favorite typefaces? Wolfgang Weingart was very attached to Akzidenz-Grotesk and considered it a great font. They all were Akzidenz-Grotesk fanatics in Switzerland.

Massimo Vignelli loved Helvetica. Bruno Monguzzi claimed that Vignelli destroyed the Italian typography, because his ideas made lots of print shops get rid of the traditional fonts; they had no more room to store them. Helvetica was in fashion, so they bought it and disposed of the other typefaces.

It is a very simplified version of this story. In fact, Vignelli claimed and wrote that he needed five type families: Times New Roman, Helvetica Neue, Futura, Century and Bodoni. He said each of them had a unique characteristic and they sufficed. He designed a lot of visual information: the New York subway, airports. Helvetica was perfect for those, and for the map of New York as well (whatever you think of it). Designing the identity of the United States national parks, he used various fonts that were appropriate. He was a wise man and not somebody obsessed with a single typeface. You could not accuse him of promoting Helvetica – I listened to his

67. Polish: Doświadczalna Oficyna Graficzna Pracowni Sztuk Plastycznych

talks on many occasions, I met him at conferences, we sat in the discussion panels together; I never heard him advocate for a single font. A few years prior to the Helvetica fashion (1958), Adrian Frutiger designed Univers (1954) and it was promoted just as much. Univers was supported by lots of printers and designers who perceived its narrowings as more noble.

The French “Elle” magazine, set by young Swiss designers, tended to use Univers in larger formats and diverse combinations. Between 1958 and 1961, when Helvetica was still called Haas Grotesk and even the professional literature described it as a derivative of Akzidenz-Grotesk, there was a boom for both typefaces. Attributing it to Vignelli doesn’t make much sense.

Every designer favors some typefaces. Does it change with time? I know you match a font to the purpose a design serves, but which of them do you prefer and why?

I like Garamond, especially Italic. It is easy to talk about it now, when we have all the fonts uploaded to our computers. Before, this sort of conversation would be a bit ridiculous, as most of them were simply unavailable in Poland.

There used to be two sources of modern typefaces: in the fifties, the Graphic Workshops and the Scientific and Technical Print Shop⁶⁸ at Mińska Street in Warsaw, which published books for the National Scientific Publishing House (PWN)⁶⁹, purchased the Monotype system with a complete library of matrices; Leon Urbański got them for his print shop at the Visual Arts Studio (PSP) from there. When I was designing the “Perspectives” magazine, our composing room at Okopowa Street threw away all the Nil and Paneuropa types from their type cases and started using Times they got from the Graphic Workshops instead. These types – cast from the Monotype – were not as durable as the traditional ones of the manual set but they could be replaced every few months. The Garamond used by Urbański, the Univers libraries

68. Polish: Zakłady Graficzne “Dom Słowa Polskiego” and Drukarnia Naukowo-Techniczna

69. Polish: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, today Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN

and many other typefaces – they were all cast from the Monotype matrices. If you had connections at the print shop and the typesetters trusted you, it was possible to have a layout done. Few of us had such connections though. But I have gone off topic I think.

Let us get back on then: do you have any favorite letter, the form of which you particularly like?

I will say “h”, because it is similar to “m” and “n”. If I had to choose one letter, it would be “h”.

You often use “a” in your sketches while you are playing with space.

I use “a” because it is the first letter of the alphabet – it is like taking the first book off the shelf; I sometimes make a combination of “H”s as well.

What typestyles do you prefer – regular, thin, bold? Which would you rather see?

Regular and thin; I’m not a fan of bold types. It is not only about my personal preference – my practice has shown that the fonts between regular and thin, called light, are the most useful. Dealing with a long text, I usually try to find such a typeface. It all depends on the kind of project though.

Selecting a typeface for your composition and knowing what expression you are looking for, how do you check, match a typeface? Do you test-run your layouts?

Quite often.

And how do you go about that? Do you have a particular text you use for these tests?

While designing a concept of a book I have a “filler”, a text I use to determine which typeface, or a combination of typefaces, is going to work well. I try to make a font ring, sing in tune with another typestyle, the one I use for captions for instance. I usually prepare two or three versions. I’m aware that what I can see on the screen only partially corresponds to what we are going to

see on paper. You have to print a composition out in order to see it properly. I lay the versions out on the floor to check which of them harmonizes with my prior assumptions.

What is your opinion about the ever-changing fashion?

For pragmatic reasons, my fascination ended with Meta by Erik Spiekermann. Obviously, every issue of the “Eye”, or any other magazine for that matter, promotes new type designers. It does not excite me at all. Frankly speaking, I think a little like Vignelli: let them play with creating new fonts still and again, but in fact five typefaces are all you need.

You have never conducted any in-depth research on perception itself but you are a good observer. In contact with your clients, and through your experience, you have learned a lot. It might seem intuitive to you, but you have put this knowledge into practice.

The first general rule is: squint your eyes because it shows you how strong a signal is, which elements come to the foreground, what you can see, and what you cannot see with this blurred look. Another method is covering a design with the Mylar paper – the one used for animated movies – and raising it gradually. It is a matter of hierarchy. A multi-element composition has got an internal logic telling you what should be exposed in a better way and be made more noticeable than something else, and for what reasons. Testing this relies on reception, because it is a nonverbal element, that cannot be described; I want to direct the recipient’s attention to the hierarchical order I attempted to build. The issue of visual syntax boils down to one rule: what we have to regulate is the relationship between a figure and the background, or between several figures in relation to one another and the background. An individual letter, a word, a line of text or a paragraph is not only the black, but the black and the white, and they interact with the white or any other color they are written on.

One more practical remark: in the history of printing, the metal types for manual composition, and later the linotype ones, came with side bearings. The spacing was standardized and

accepted as optimum. The printed text used to have much more interglyph spacing than it does today. The transition to the digital typefaces has released the fonts from this physical connection with the metal foundation. At the moment, every character can be freely put next to another. Good designers try to keep the standard spacing but due to the pressure from the publishers, for instance, the spacing has become much slimmer than before.

Although it is possible to adjust the spacing by means of the tracking and kerning features, I have my InDesign default tracking of +10 and I hardly ever go below that. I frequently set the tracking of +25 which does not break the text up at all; it remains well-spaced. The tracking between 10 and 25 guarantees a harmonious flow of the black and the white; it does not overexpose the text density and therefore it does not create an unnatural glare within the counter of such letters as “o”, “e” or “b”; the text is balanced.

It used to be assumed that the inter-word spacing should be the equivalent of the “e” of the given alphabet. This sort of control is much more difficult today. In my experience, our eye acquires a harmoniously spaced text better and that was what I tried to teach my students. It is a physiological reaction related to perception we are rarely aware of, but which is very important.

If you want the text you set to be received well, to be attractive rather than offensive, to make a pleasant read – it should have a careful algorithmic relations among the three of its whites: between the letters, between the words, and between the lines; it should also interplay with the white of the margins, with its surroundings, and be exposed by it. I think that manipulating the white is a conscious procedure of setting a text that is coherent, easily acquirable and plausible. The Dutch designers still excel at that.

What about the typographic color? Should you make a text lighter or darker, and how does its reception depend on the reader’s age? I now find it easier to read a slightly darker text; a light, grayish one fatigues my eyes much faster.

Reading such a text I need a lamp right behind my head in order to make a sufficient contrast. The reception relies on it. Our abilities change with age. I also find it difficult to read a text set in a small point size.

I have noticed that many novels are set this way, for savings sake I gather. The leading is too small, not to mention the insufficient margins around the text. This is unacceptable! These books become vastly illegible. Such pages put me off. And I would have said the same forty years ago.

What point sizes are optimum for you now while reading a longer text? For me it is eleven points up on paper and fourteen points up on the screen.

I prefer the same sizes.

The user manuals and medicine inserts drive me to despair. I need to read how to apply a preparation and what I get is a red label with black print, six points at best, in a thin sans-serif typeface. I see nothing, even wearing my reading glasses.

The perception elements are crucial and do not exist by themselves. The properly adjusted attributes make a text pleasant to read. I don't really know about the physiology behind it, but I have always been sensitive to the matters of reception. Dealing with my students or the graphic designers in our studio I asked them to put themselves in the position of the recipients - they are rushed off their feet, somebody's talking to them; the atmosphere of reception is adverse. What level of signal do you have to generate to break through all of that and make it successful? This is a very important professional question. Although being professional requires a library of little things like that, it will not replace the design creativity. On the other hand, even the most creative design must be articulated by certain means of expression which provide for the intended reception.

And what about illustration?

I couldn't tell. I don't make illustrations, I'm only on the receiving end. I was delighted with the book illustrations by Janusz Stanny, Olga Siemaszko, the drawings by Henryk Tomaszewski and other great illustrators. It was a beautiful discipline.

Considering poster as the dominant genre of the Polish graphics, we should notice how illustrative it was. We used to live in a country which yearly published several thousand books from

various publishing houses, several or several tens of thousands of labels, catalogs, brochures, manuals, packages, outstanding logos – all the mass accountable for the visual reality of Poland at the time. Add to this about six hundred illustrative posters decorating the walls and improving the appearance of a city. There was a striking dissonance between the functional prints – all that was not a poster but constituted an object of design – and the illustrative poster perceived as a means of advertising as well.

We cannot say it wasn't functional, it was an ambivalent form.

Poster did function on its own accord, of course. It had its mechanisms, commissions, but different rules applied. It was a decoration, our pride, because it could be beautiful.

One day in the winter of 1960 I took the bus going down the snowbound Niepodległości Avenue. At the corner of Rakowiecka Street, in front of the Warsaw School of Economics, there was an advertising column. The bus windows were frosted, with only one little piece of clear glass. When the bus started, I caught a glimpse of the Moore poster by Tomaszewski on that column. It was a split second but the poster affected me so strongly that I simply had to do something to see it again. In the middle of the Avenue, at the Patent Office, there was a stop on demand. I got off the bus and ran back, knee-deep in snow, over five hundred yards – to have a closer look at the poster.

It was informative, but also a piece of Art, and it worked.

Yes, the poster informed about an exhibition at the National Museum, but it evidently was the art of our times. Thirty years later, still feeling the same delight, I wrote an essay about this poster for the book *Contemporary Masterworks*⁷⁰.

What else stands out in your mind from that time?

Oh, our life was so interesting back then! True – we did live in the Communist Block. If we wanted to listen to reliable news, we

70. See Krzysztof Lenk, *Contemporary Masterworks*, ed. Colin Naylor, Chicago-London: St James Press, 1991.

set our radios to Radio Free Europe⁷¹ or London Radio in Polish. We could not go abroad at will, and if there happened to be colorful towels or bedding in the shop, we all bought them. And true, there was a shortage of attractive goods. Even grocery shopping could be a drag with endless lines and heavy bags... But we were young and we had tons of friends. We visited one another all the time and the pay still wasn't bad. There were great theaters and cabarets. The National Publishing Institute (PIW) and Czytelnik publishing houses released interesting books – the whole significant world literature. All major streets were carnivals of posters created by artists, joy for the eye and thought-provoking at the same time. Every statement was meaningful back then – it was allegorical with a hidden agenda. Everyone could read between the lines. Jokes bloomed with punchlines. When we came here, to America, we found some movies and TV shows unpleasantly dull. Most of them are very straightforward, with tag lines explained at the end in case you missed the point. Our social life in Poland was so spontaneous! And all the true friendship, all the cheap alcohol! Here – still nice, but it was dinner parties, on schedule, with invitations three weeks in advance. Our life used to be much different. We were younger, of course, but that is not it. It was different working hours, different relationships between people. My professional life did not look the same either.

First, there were no design studios. Each of us worked individually. You had to pop in places to meet other graphic artists, the ones you had not studied with – to let them know you. There were several places like that in Warsaw. You also had to go to openings of exhibitions. And, very important, take part in graphic design contests – mostly poster design contests. Even better, you should win an award, or awards in such competitions (which was also a considerable influx of cash for designers). This way, almost everybody in the field knew one another as to what kind of an artist and what kind of a person everyone was.

71. During the Cold War, an anti-Soviet broadcasting organization operating in Munich, West Germany, funded by the U.S. government and banned in the Soviet satellite countries. The communist regimes often undertook steps to jam the signal of the station.

Our clients included publishing houses, theaters and the Film Lease Headquarters (CWF), which commissioned posters to announce plays and movies, as well as larger organizations or publishing agencies, such as Graphic Arts Publishing House (WAG), State Enterprise Visual Arts Workshop (PSP) and Foreign Trade Publishing House (WHZ) ordering special occasion posters, prints and packaging designs. There were publishers of various periodicals as well, with graphic artists employed full time. Each office mentioned above had an art director – one of our older colleagues. Such an art director would call a chosen graphic artist to offer him or her a job. You had to go to the editorial office, first thing in the morning, discuss the task with the director and the editors, agree on a deadline and come back home. In our small flats, each of us had a cubby we used for work. Some of us also had a dark room, which made working on projects that much easier. Movie posters designers would often go to screenings, one o'clock sharp – as they were informed over the phone the previous night or early that morning. It so happened that they could see the movies sooner than the censoring commission. This way they sometimes watched those which the propaganda did not allow in the cinemas. The screening finished by three o'clock, just in time for dinner, which we would often have with my wife, Ewa, and the group of designers, artists, also critics and actors in the club of the Association of Polish Architects (SARP) at 2 Foksal Street in Warsaw. This place was relatively close to the screening site, and on the way you could stop by at the National Publishing Institute bookstore, which also held a cafe (so, you could meet friends as well) or visit an art gallery, this or that. Otherwise, you could go to have dinner at the Association of Polish Theater and Film Artists (SPATIF) to meet a slightly different group of familiar faces or friends. The dinners were cheap, more like home-cooked meals, but delicious, and the desserts at the SARP cafe were famous for mouth-watering cakes made by Ms. Tyszkiewicz, mother of Beata Tyszkiewicz – renown Polish actress.

We used to sit there, chatting away, until five and then Ewa and I walked our long way home. Only evenings and nights were left for work. This lifestyle finished for us when our daughter,

Honorata, was born. We took to dining at home, Ewa stopped going to the screenings, and I did not design many posters anymore. I worked for the "Perspectives" magazine, I designed other periodicals and books, I also commuted to Łódź, where I taught at the Academy.

The ready projects were brought to the publishing house to be evaluated by the commission composed of editors, the art director and prominent graphic artists, invited as external experts, nominated by the Ministry of Culture and Art. The commission accepted or rejected the project; on occasion, it could also award a fee higher (even by two hundred percent) than that envisaged in the official, state-controlled price list. This happened rarely, though, as the publishing houses did not have money to spare. Unless it was Leon Urbański who did the job, because his designs were usually not only beautiful, but also very time-consuming.

Speaking of our pay, it worked like this: the official rate sheet for the artistic and graphic works was introduced in 1951 and remained in operation, unchanged, for thirty years. It was a lot of money back in fifties. But as the cost of living was growing, you can imagine that the relative value of the rates was systematically dropping. In the late sixties you could not buy much for such earnings. The only rescue was to win a competition or participate in the larger, well-paid exhibition projects, such as the Poznań International Fairs. In order to maintain passable living standards, you had to work your tail off or have a stability of a full-time employment.

Yet, our occupational group was privileged in a way. We held an independent profession which remained out of control of the personnel offices; we did not have to run to work in the morning, sign a list of attendance, be stuck in an office or a factory for eight hours a day; we did not have to belong to any organization beside our Association of Polish Artists and Designers. We could work or sleep; we had no superiors and nobody told us what to do. At first, the pay was not bad either. And that was how we were perceived – as people free of harness.

Ewa and I think of those times as colorful and interesting, but only on the interpersonal and artistic levels. What surrounded us

was politically gloomy, visually gray, wrapped in the Social Realism to begin with, although later the propaganda became less apparent. From time to time the helplessness was rattled by strikes and demonstrations but beyond our circles. We did support them with our artistic activities, which meant something, but it took years before we could even hope for any considerable change – until the Solidarity movement⁷² in the 1980s.

You mentioned Leon Urbański – when did he appear in your life?

Leon was my older colleague from the Academy in Warsaw, just as were Tadeusz Pietrzyk, Maciek Urbaniec, Romek Duszek – they graduated from the same department, a bit earlier though. There was a great company in our department: we played cards, organized various parties, it was very enjoyable; but at the same time we worked very diligently and participated in competitions. Our professional ambitions were high. Leon was a very lively man. Romek was quiet, but nice and friendly. Tadeusz stayed close to Leon and learned from him. Leon was a pet student of Professor Rudziński, who held him in high regard; they collaborated quite a lot. We were all one group of friends from the Academy, regardless of the age differences, which were considerable as some students were set back by the war. Leon was ten years older than me, Maciek – eleven.

What made you all stick together?

We all had the respect for Rudziński in common. There was also something intangible, difficult to describe. It could have been a certain way of thinking, decency, the criteria of what was right, some ideals. Leon and I remained friends till the end of his life. I used to bring him the computer discs with typefaces and digital guillochés from America – he enjoyed them a lot.

72. Independent Self-governing Labor Union “Solidarity” – a Polish labor union that was founded on 17 September 1980 at the Lenin Shipyard under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa. It was the first trade union in a Warsaw Pact country that was not controlled by a communist party. In the 1980s, Solidarity was a broad anti-bureaucratic social movement, using the methods of civil resistance to advance the causes of workers’ rights and social change.

Let us talk about your experiences in Paris now.

In 1967, I decided to go to Paris. Under the regime, the only way you could leave the country was if you got a reliable invitation. My friends sent me one from France. I spent three months there and returned with an invitation to a placement with the SNIP advertising agency. This official document from an institution allowed me to go back in the summer of 1968. Then, I got a job with the “Jeune Afrique” political weekly.

I was supposed to stay there for a month or two. Jacques de Pindrey of SNIP, who had offered me the internship, knew who I was and what I could do. He was aware that I designed interesting books, covers, leaflets and complicated presentations, some posters as well. My first task at the agency, however, was to formulate objectives for a promotional campaign of several companies of the Prouvost group, which was introducing the leading colors for the 1969/1970 fall-winter season: Hussar Blue and Pepper Red. So I was there sitting and thinking: Hussars⁷³, Hussar Blue, who are Hussars? They are like Uhlans⁷⁴. And who are Uhlans? They are boys wearing mustache, tall shakos with eye-shades, epaulets, vests – that much I remembered. I was looking for a Hussar. There was nothing about them in our office library. The manager of my studio told me about a nearby toy shop, which should be selling lead soldiers, various Hussars. And it did. As it turned out, there were kid’s bowling sets that looked like Hussars. I bought them on the agency’s account – everybody burst out laughing when I put them up in our studio. So, I had my Hussars, my inspiration, I knew what a Hussar looked like. I also knew that those passionate boys should get fired up... At the agency, we had a light table – a reversed enlarger projecting upwards. I drew a Hussar, I found a Balkan pepper. They had to be displayed to sell the concept.

We produced a prototype cardboard matchbox with Hussar-matches in gray-and-blue uniforms. It was all cut out by hand, we painted the red sulfur heads. Jacques de Pindrey made an

73. Hussars – one of the types of Polish cavalry in the period between 16th and 18th centuries, famous for the huge “wings” attached to their backs.

74. Uhlans – Polish light cavalry.

appointment with the marketing manager of the Prouvost concern later that afternoon. There she was: a French woman, aged fifty-five, very slim, sharp as a razor, highly intelligent, a great lady. We all sat down at the round Knoll table – the lady, Jacques de Pindrey and I. There was scotch, talking about the weather and such. At some point, Jacques reached into his pocket, took out a matchbox with those Hussars and tossed it across the table. The lady opened the box, looked at him, looked at me, and said: “Oui.” It was the way we sold the project. All we had to do was execute it. This project was unusual, but very important to me.

A year before that, when I was recommended by Szymon Bojko and visited Mr. Pindrey for the first time, I went there with my portfolio. As I started to unfold my posters on the floor, I quickly realized he wasn't much interested in looking at them. He asked me what he could do for me. I replied that I wanted to be accepted for an internship. Surprised, he told me that I was a fully-fledged graphic designer – he could see that from my works and he had also heard all about me from Szymon. “An internship is what students do,” he said. I told him I was lacking the know-how, the real professional experience, and I wanted to learn it. All I showed him was somehow intuitive. It did look like typography, but I wanted to see how it was really done in a modern studio. He agreed to that. In France, a recommendation opens every door. Nobody minded employing me for a while. So I went there to learn, and I did. It also turned out that I was capable of meeting their expectations. I had never done this kind of commercial, promotional projects before. It was a revelation – especially to me.

And how was it with “Jeune Afrique”? What was the process behind every issue?

The magazine used the offset printing, but the preparation and production was done in metal. There were always the blank dummies of spreads with three or four printed galleys on my shelf. A secretary came over and said, for example: “The pages 12–15 will have the editor's interview with the ambassador of Tunis – four pages according to the issue plan. Here is the text and the



Société Nouvelle d'Information et Publicité (SNIP).
This model of a shopping bag was an element
of a set promoting the seasonal colors: Hussar Blue
and Pepper Red.

photos, plus some additional materials, maps etc.” Instead of a typescript, I got the ready composed text, because all the columns of the magazine were set the same way. Still, you could say in advance if the arrangement needed to be ragged, for instance. Usually, however, you got the long strips of text with a fixed type size and spacing (preset in the composing room next door). I had to design the layout. The title typeface was fixed; I had to compose a page of text and photos. My job was to fit in a text and the photos, thinking also about their relation to the previous and the

following pages. If a text was too short, I would enlarge the photos; if too long – reduce them to some extent, and when this did not suffice, the end of a text was “left to bleed”⁷⁵ for the editors to fix. I glued the galleys on, and I marked and described the spots where the cropped photos would go. I had a small studio camera, so I was able to scale a photo to a format. I composed a dummy and handed it over to my secretary. He took it to the composing room, where they added some materials (titles for example), set the pages according to my design, printed them and sent back for editing. This revealed all the wrong word hyphenations, endings, too much text, too little text – and the editors and proofreaders processed the lot again.

In the meantime the photos were scanned and reproduced. The magazine was composed on the film sheets, two sets of thirty-two pages. We had an expert come from the city, he took these elements – composed pages on cellophane – and glued them on. The photos were brought separately, so he attached them with the Scotch tape. The first thirty-two pages were made into a blue line for the last proof and sent to Rome on Friday, 5 pm. Our printing house was there. Another thirty-two pages were sent on Monday. And on Wednesday we had the whole printed issue on our table.

My job was to build a repetitive structure. Together with an art director of the whole publishing house, a very nice Italian guy, we determined what typefaces would be used; they had to be changed from time to time, so the title types for the cases were ordered in advance. I participated in discussions about the architecture we wanted to use, and then I executed it in the form of the sixty-four pages every week. It was a very efficient work.

In “Jeune Afrique” you worked standing up. Although I had a tall stool to sit on, I never actually used it. It was believed that working standing up stimulated your brain. Moreover, the French claimed that standing or walking you had a better view over what was closer, and what was further away. I had a long, raised, slightly slanted table and a lot of room behind me. I could put several

75. A *bleed* is printing that goes beyond the edge of where the sheet will be trimmed.

spreads on the table and see them in one line from a distance. It gave me more control over the whole composition.

I usually arrived at the office a little past 9 am, the work started at 10. We worked on the materials as they were coming in, otherwise we would not be able to close the issue on time. The material was often delayed, so we had to work at night. If I stayed later than 6 pm, I had dinner in the same building – there was a restaurant where I had an open credit. When we worked past 8 pm, I took a taxi home and the agency paid for it. If I happened to work really late, I spent the night at a hotel nearby, and they paid for that, too. We worked intensively, with great efficiency.

This magazine had a color cover and the inside was mostly black-and-white?

Yes. There were some advertising inserts at times, but the magazine was bicolor: one sheet (thirty-two pages) was black-and-white, the other – black-and-red. The red was used for distinctions and the background.

About the photographs – did you decide which fragments would be used?

Yes, I glued a piece of tracing paper onto the photo and marked what I wanted to be selected.

Did this magazine have fixed sections?

It did, although magazines are prone to changes. Not in every issue, but there constantly appeared some new columns or small structural adjustments – any magazine is a living matter. It was all within reason, however, so it remained relatively stable.

Was the editorial team – I don't mean the reporters – a fixed group of people who would meet on a daily basis?

It was. There were three types of journalists: reporters, who went out to write a feature; authors, who followed the current events and wrote commentaries on the spot; and editors, who dealt with the production, processing of the text – what the others had written went through their filter and was trimmed to the necessary

volume of characters. They read it all again, checked the data, dates and so on. There was also the final proof done by yet another group of people. I worked with the editors.

There were also two secretaries in my room – one of them was from Tunis, the other – from Beirut. The former worked with me on the weekly, the latter focused on various forms of publications I worked on as well. I designed them when we had no materials for the magazine itself. Those were the advertising inserts of the African companies, brochures and books – this publishing house released books, too. All that was a great experience, I learned a lot.

I would like to ask you about the languages – visual and verbal; about a relation of a text to a picture. As we know, the grammar and styles used in different types of communications vary significantly. We have discussed the poster, one of the stylistic forms. How does it differ from a cover or the press graphics for instance?

The poster has always been a tool of advertising; it sells something. In my opinion a good poster employs the visual means, all the symbols, metaphors, allegories, in order to elicit an intended verbal or emotional association in the recipient's awareness.

The press graphics is a different thing altogether. Here, the texts and illustrations are merged into the verbal-visual narratives. A well-designed story should highlight the thesis put forth in a communication, make it more convincing, easier to understand. Let me present this by the examples of "Jeune Afrique" from the sixties – a few spreads I've managed to preserve on slides. One of them features Konrad Lorenz⁷⁶, with a goose or a duck, talking to animals. Peace and quiet. The title says: "Man, a dangerous animal in danger". It was 1968 – demonstrations and tension. Konrad Lorenz is a counterweight for all the hustle in the following photo. I applied a simple trick – the same photo of the crowd was repeated

76. Konrad Lorenz (1903-1989) was an Austrian zoologist and ornithologist, awarded the Nobel Prize in the field of physiology 1973.



“Jeune Afrique” weekly, cover

three times. You need a while to notice it, but the repetition is explicit. And I was not trying to hide it – I was building a narrative.

Next, there comes an interview with the ambassador of Tunis and different takes of his face as illustrations.

Another article is entitled: “The Africans discover Africa” and we can see an energetic African woman. We turn the page to find the photos of safari – tourism is the future of this continent.



"Jeune Afrique" weekly, page spreads

A photograph of nature – the zebras and a zebra-striped bus. I laid out the photos I got to build a semiotic association. You turn the page and see a great animal migration (Ewa and I witnessed a similar one in Tanzania). This great migration and some other details make up a story about the touristic attractions of Africa. Each of these spreads is a narrative, a story rather than an individual image.

A day after the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico the newsstands and bookstores were selling a ninety-six-page coverage of the event in a hard-cover album. We were setting it day by day – at nights, to be precise – along with the regular work on the weekly. The extremely well-organized team of correspondents in Mexico and the Paris editors, who took the materials and photos over from the information agencies, plus my two assistants who coordinated the assembly, proofs and typesetting of pages – we all came together and worked under tremendous pressure to keep up with the schedule dictated by the print shop. It was a great success of the publishing house, and for me, a lesson in instant decision making and picking the most adequate photographs out of the relentless stream of images constantly flooding my desk.



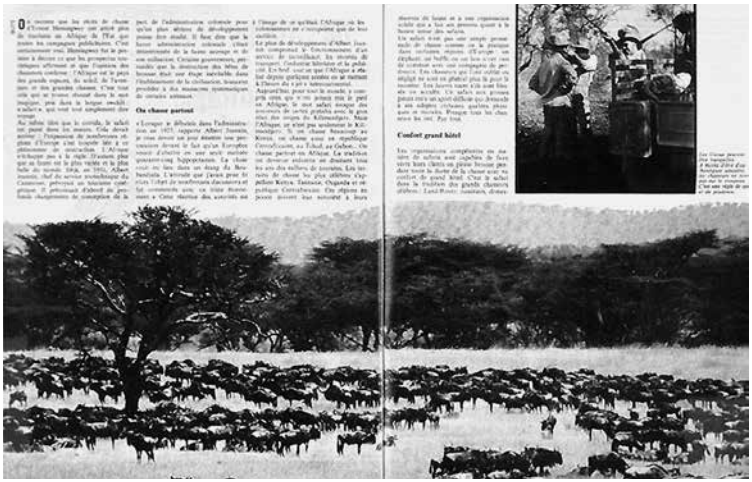
All the design had to be done on the fly, so I had printed a grid for the calendar part of the feature in advance – the two weeks of sporting events. Every day of the Olympics had its own spread. Unconventionally, my grid divided it in half, which gave me considerable flexibility in building a narrative. I had acquired this sort of design thinking from the magazines I used to buy from the Press Club, as well as from the projects featured in “Graphis”. In a sense, I was an internationalist, because my inspirations usually came from beyond the horizon. Looking at these layouts, however, you can probably tell they are original, they are “mine”.



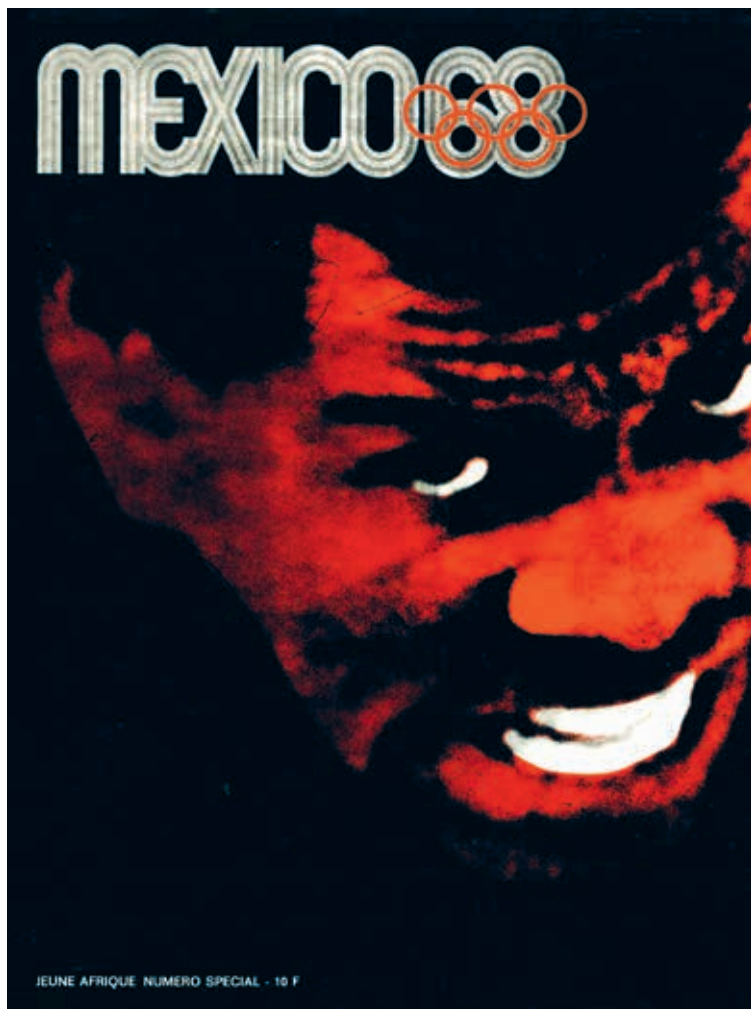
Although I think my drawings are not bad at all, I did not use them in my designs. I have always been interested in photography as a narrative element and wanted to create convincing stories that “come out” at the viewer.

Some of the designs took a lot of my time and almost tormented me. One of them was the Dürer – a cover for the book, *Faces of the Portraits*⁷⁷, which included several essays and illustrations.

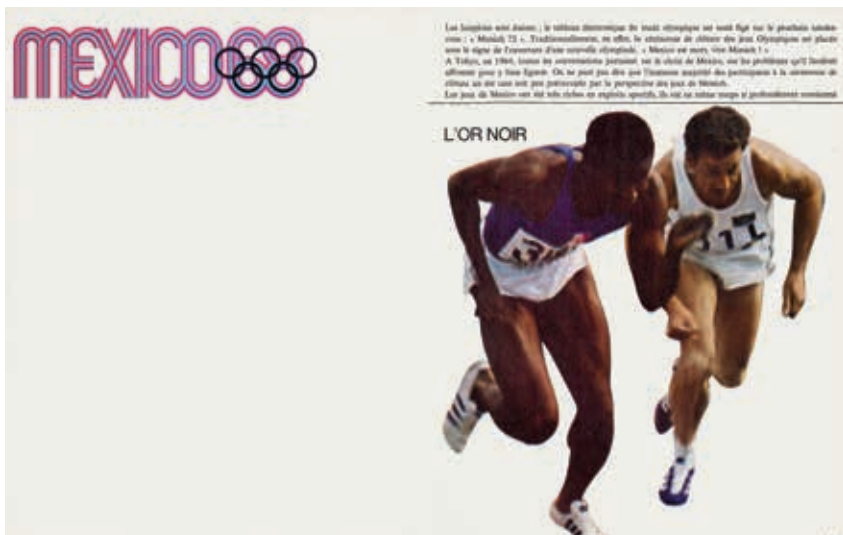
77. See Joanna Guze, *Twarze z portretów*, Warsaw: PIW, 1974.



I chose to use Dürer's self-portrait because I found it intriguing. It was sitting on my table and I could not think of a layout, Dürer would not "speak" to me. All of a sudden, I managed to crop the photo in such a way that he was looking directly at me. It took a long observation to come to this particular crop and make him look me in the eye. I thought the book would sell well with Dürer staring right at a person standing at the bookstore window.



Mexico '68 – cover and page spreads (on the following pages) of the album on the Olympic Games in Mexico. In the calendar part, presenting the most important events of each day of the Olympics, I used a horizontal line, dividing a spread into two, as an axis of composition surrounded by the events of the day. This made the chaotic materials more coherent.



In this case the drawing facilitated the conscious structure and composition.

It is all about the visual decisions. In the poster for the 1963 movie, *Love with the Proper Stranger*, I used the photo of Steve McQueen and Natalie Wood with a blue rhombus as a strong accent. I have always searched for a symbol that would accurately express a given situation, but I am a born narrator. I like telling stories – I prefer grouping photos together to create a narrative. I always bear the recipient in mind and try to imply the intended associations. Using the artistic means, operating with text and images, is analogous to directing a theater spectacle. My book *Short texts on the art of design*⁷⁸ includes numerous examples of similar thinking about the selection and layout of illustrations.

78. See Krzysztof Lenk, *Krótkie teksty o sztuce projektowania*, Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2011.

*Irena Kirzencziels (Pologne),
souveraine au 200 m dames.*



*Michael Wenden (Australie),
surnommé le «
Cassius Clay de la natation
», a surpris les Américains,
super-favoris du 100 m
et du 200 m nage libre.*

8

19 OCTOBRE

Si elle n'a pas suscité les émotions de la veille, l'avant-dernière journée de épreuves d'athlétisme a consacré deux authentiques champions.

Kurt Bendlin et Bill Toomey luttèrent depuis seize heures lorsque, vendredi, à 19 h 45, ils se rangèrent pour le départ du 1 500 m, la dernière épreuve du décathlon. 61 points les séparaient. D'un côté, Bendlin (25 ans, 1,83 m et 88 kilos), recordman du monde avec 8319 points, et étudiant en éducation physique. De l'autre, Toomey (29 ans, 1,85 m et 86 kilos), le corps couvert de poils noirs et drus.

La course est haletante. L'altitude, la fatigue augmentent les souffrances. Toomey, impitoyable, gagne ; Bendlin tombe à l'arrivée face contre terre et demeure les bras en croix. Toomey le relève ; les deux hommes restent enlacés pendant de longues secondes...

Au 800 m féminin, la Noire américaine Madelaine Manning l'emporte, sans être inquiétée, en 2 mn 0 s 9 (nouveau record olympique).

Mais c'est à la piscine de l'Alberca que se produit l'événement de la journée : la victoire au 100 m nage libre de l'Australien Michael Wenden. Chevalier roume, Wenden (18 ans) a battu les Américains



Walah, Marc Spitz et Zach Zorn super-favoris. Il a établi aussi un nouveau record du monde : 52 s 2 !

Perdants en nage libre, les Américains se sont rattrapés en trustant, à de très rares exceptions près, toutes les médailles d'or de la natation.

Au Teatro 1968, le colosse soviétique Leonid Jabotinski a naturellement conservé son titre d'homme le plus fort du monde en levant en trois mouvements 572 kilos de fonte !



*Madelaine Manning,
vainqueur du 800 m dames.*

*Leonid Jabotinski (157 kg) :
572,5 kg de fonte au bout des bras ;
une médaille d'or autour du cou.*

*Smith et Carlos
débarquent à Los Angeles
après leur expulsion
des jeux.*

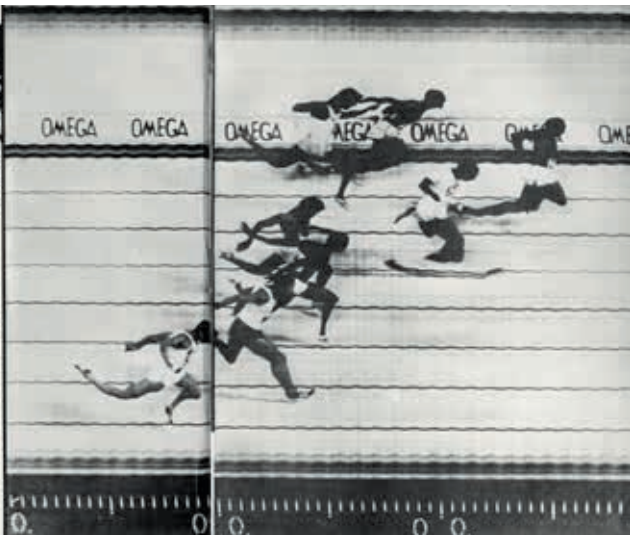




3

14 OTTOBRE

Il campionato mondiale di atletica leggera si è disputato dal 14 al 24 ottobre a Torino. La gara più attesa è stata quella dei 100 metri, vinta dal cubano José Ferrer. Il secondo è stato il britannico Peter Johnson. Il terzo è stato il cubano José Ferrer. Il quarto è stato il cubano José Ferrer. Il quinto è stato il cubano José Ferrer. Il sesto è stato il cubano José Ferrer. Il settimo è stato il cubano José Ferrer. L'ottavo è stato il cubano José Ferrer. Il nono è stato il cubano José Ferrer. Il decimo è stato il cubano José Ferrer.



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21 OTTOBRE

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What about the narrator's presence? How does his personality show? A brush stroke?

It depends on the designer. Look at Franciszek Starowieyski or Jan Lenica⁷⁹ – they are inseparable from their characteristic hand-drawn original posters. Others, as brilliant as Wojciech Zamecznik⁸⁰, prefer to remain backstage; they create the more objective symbols for the presented situations.

Does photography make the narrator's presence more objective in a sense?

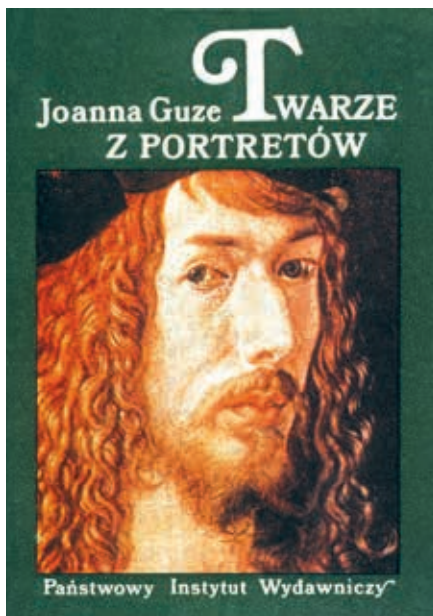
It does, because photography is an objective record in itself. As opposed to drawing or painting – it is an enclosed, frozen record of a given reality. Personally, I appreciate it for the documentary value; it contains encoded information about the world, the environment, the objects, and can symbolize them as well. Photography has been a better and more interesting construction material for my narratives. It provides things with a certain substance and recognizability, keeping me – the narrator – in the background.

It is essential how you set one photo with another, with the empty space and with typography. They all come together to communicate what you want to say.

I keep thinking about the viewers – what do I want them to read from a poster or another form of communication? The design process does not end until they have received the message. It can end well or end badly. It ends well if in the issue of “Jeune Afrique” we have discussed, for example, the readers find the incredible energy of these young women, the fascinating space of the prairies and the dread of manifestations juxtaposed with the tranquility of Lorenz. It ends well if they can read it in the text and my layouts enhance the feeling. Everything I do, I do in harmony with the text and, in case of typography, for the text.

79. Franciszek Starowieyski (1930–2009), Jan Lenica (1928–2001) were recognized Polish graphic designers; Jan Lenica was also a cartoonist and creator of animated films. He lived abroad since 1963.

80. Wojciech Zamecznik (1923–1967) was a Polish graphic designer known for his experimental use of photography in posters; a talented photographer.



A cover for the essay collection *Twarze z portretów* [Faces of the Portraits] by Joanna Guze. I built it around a self-portrait of young Albrecht Dürer.

The press photography we talked about is less processed than the one you use for covers and posters, right?

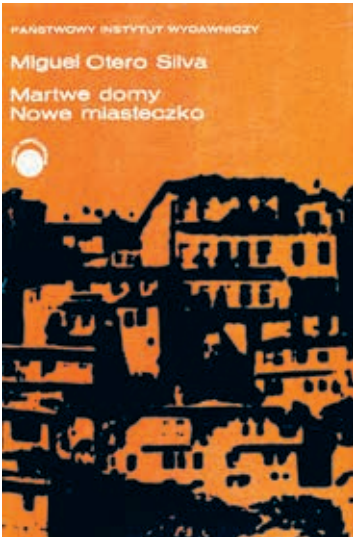
What kind of processing do you have in mind? A press photograph, as a document, is not subject to processing. The free-form selection I have mentioned only brings out what we want to present; it eliminates the unnecessary noise.

What I mean is the strong contrast, like when you brush a photo removing the details, for instance, leaving it black-and-white. I can also use some kind of grid effect.

Most of your cover designs strike with a very strong contrast. They are meant to speak fast and to the point. Covers are like small-format posters.

Let us focus on the work of others for a while. Whose designs, what artworks have impressed or fascinated you?

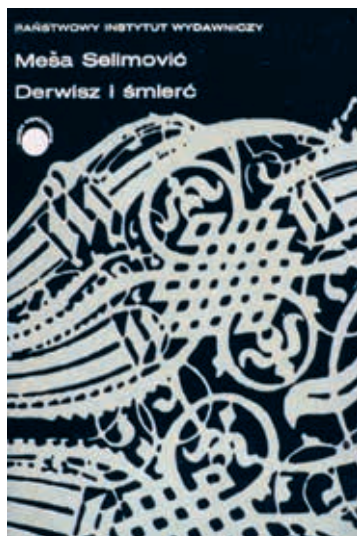
My first real fascination was the French weekly “Elle” in the late



Three book covers for the “Contemporary Prose” series published by the National Publishing Institute (PIW). Back then, I was fascinated with creating signs out of elements taken from diverse contexts. The high-contrast photography was the unifying characteristic of this series’ covers.

fifties. Earlier, it was published in a very traditional manner, but I think it was around 1957 that H elene Lazareff, the publisher and editor-in-chief of the magazine, decided to address it to the young women of sixteen to twenty-eight years of age. Today, the idea of who we call a “young woman” has shifted and the upper limit practically ceased to exist. At that point, however, a group of young graduates of the Zurich school of design, fascinated with typography and photography, started working on this weekly about fashion, adventure, holidays – the young French lifestyle. This brilliant team, including Peter Knapp, Jean Widmer, Antoine Kieffer (and later joined by Roman Cie slewicz⁸¹), began staging a show – in the best meaning of this word – a typo-photographic show. It was invigorating. I tried to buy every issue in the Press

81. Roman Cie slewicz (1930–1996) was a great Polish graphic designer, creator of many posters, art director for magazines, a creative artist and an educator. Since 1963 lived and worked in Paris.



Club. Their courage to do what had never been done in Europe before took my breath away.

Asked about their inspirations, they said they admired Alexey Brodovitch. They tried to stage his theater on the spreads of their weekly. It was the first team to show it was possible to crop photos, enter the margins, make the layout dynamic, text-wrap photos. Obviously, this required a modern typesetting and assembling the pages on films.

“Elle” pulsed with youth; I myself was young back then – and I was fascinated with this magazine. It was pure joy to open and leaf through every issue in search of new solutions. I started to watch closely what the others were doing as well. The Press Club was filled with the beautiful American magazines such as “Holiday”, “Look” and “Life”, full of documentary photos, with large photo-spreads followed by the text pages featuring small images. I discovered the purposeful use of the white spaces in the “Show” monthly designed by Henry Wolf. He knew how to employ

the white as an element of structure, a breath of fresh air. The American magazines were a great inspiration for me. "Oh dear," I would sigh, "if only I could work there, if only I could do that!"

My friends who traveled to the West started to bring me a German monthly (never distributed in Poland) - "Twen" designed by Willy Fleckhaus. He was a journalist by education and retrained as a graphic designer (many great names in design have been people who bring their experience and intellectual resources from other professions). "Twen" was a revelation, with the flow of black and white across the issue - it did use colors sometimes, but more often than not the whole magazine came in black-and-white. The photography was applied perfectly from cover to cover. The circulation was small, it was dedicated for the more intellectual reader. Frequently touching on the borders of provoking eroticism, it set your imagination in motion.

Going back to the American periodicals - there was one more monthly published in Chicago, similar to the Polish "Przyjaciółka". "McCall's" was a typical magazine for housewives of that time, no political news. It started with some useful advice such as columns on health, diets, babies, fashion etc. It was well-bound and designed. There were other topics as well, like cooking for example - and how it was photographed! The pictures were taken by Paul Radkai who specialized in culinary photography. Thinking of these photos, my mouth waters even today. The magazine was edited by a great photographer and typographer, Otto Storch, who had been through the Brodovitch school. Creating a page dynamic, he used a kind of visual integration where the typography and image interacted. It was excellent. The monthly circulated proudly in over eight million copies and created the style of the American household before 1968.

As far as the book design is concerned, my inspiration was Rudy de Harak and his series of covers with the Signet published by McGraw-Hill. This series about philosophy and civilization issues was the American counterpart of the Polish Library of Contemporary Thought by the National Publishing Institute. The Signet sign was always situated at the same spot; there was one fixed typeface and the back cover was designed as well. I saw these



A cover of a German monthly "Tween"

volumes in "Graphis" first, and later at the McGraw-Hill stalls during the fairs. The books were inexpensive. All the publishing effort went into a good, well-printed cover and the book block inside was much cheaper. I asked the ladies at the stall which bookstore was taking their publications after the fairs. I had just finished a big project, so I had some money. I ran to this bookstore first thing Monday morning and bought all they had. I got rid of the insides - I did not read in English back then - and I pasted half of my wall with the covers. Years later, I met de Harak

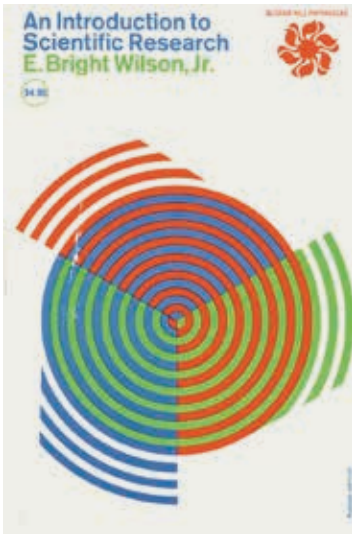
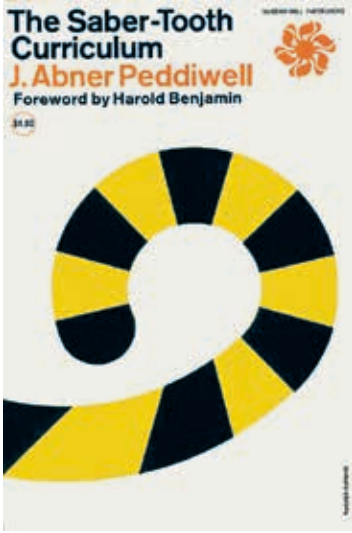


at RISD. We organized a series of lectures and he was one of the guest speakers. I invited him to lunch and took the opportunity to tell him how inspiring his designs had been to me.

In the seventies, I became delighted with the English papers. “The Sunday Times”, “The Telegraph”, “The Independent” started to publish their Sunday magazines. These were the illustrated rotogravure weeklies, edited to perfection, designed by excellent graphic artists. Each issue had a front page with a comprehensive presentation of a lead topic. Designing magazines, I became interested in the practical side of journalism. I was intrigued by the designs of the English weekly specials and the weekly supplement to “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”. Another paper I found very attractive was “Illustrated London News” which had more than a century of history and was slowly dying at that point. It was designed by Derek Birdsall, with outstanding typography - brilliant! It was my direct inspiration to think about layouts, flows, dominants, front pages, rhythm etc.



Page spreads of a German monthly “Twen”. This magazine, designed by Willy Fleckhaus, inspired many of us who worked on text-illustration narratives. The strong contrasts and bold cropping of the photos created a unique atmosphere and always came as a surprise.



Covers for the "Signet" series, published by McGraw-Hill in New York, which I found delightful every time. Rudy de Harak came up with lapidary signs so well matching the book subject. Simplicity and emphasis of his graphical solutions had become unrivaled examples to me.

The Polish periodicals I admired included “Ty i Ja” with a graphic concept created by Roman Cieślewicz and dynamically continued by Elżbieta and Bogdan Żochowski – this magazine was one of a kind.

I also appreciated the specific graphic solutions of “Przekrój” and the excellent journalism of the weekly “Świat”.

The seventies

How to think about design

**A modern magazine is (...)
a sustainable structure:
rigorous yet flexible;
uniform yet diverse;
logical and surprising.**

(p. 154)

Let us talk about the seventies.

In the seventies our children were born: Honorata in 1971 and in 1976 – Jacek (Jack). In 1972 we moved to our own house in the Sadyba part of the Mokotów district. Ewa found a job at the “Wilfon” Audio-video Recording Studio⁸² which released LP records and cassettes. She was responsible for collaboration with the graphic designers to create the covers. In the spring of 1969, I came from Paris to attend my father’s funeral and I had to stay for good. My passport was revoked and I was not allowed to go back to my work at “Jeune Afrique”. I needed to find my place in Poland again. It turned out that a new illustrated weekly, “Perspectives”, was being launched that fall and I became its head of design. So in the seventies I was making the “Perspectives” weekly as well as its monthly German edition, also the quarterly “Polish Art Review”, the “Problems” monthly, the “Technical Review” weekly as well as numerous designs for the State Agricultural and Forestry Publishing House (PWRiL) and for the National Publishing Institute (PIW). I also designed books and albums for other publishers. In 1973, recommended by Henryk Tomaszewski and Józef Mroszczak, I became the head of the Typography and Publication Design Studio within the Department of Graphics at the College of Fine Arts

82. Polish: Przedsiębiorstwo Nagrań Wideo-Fonicznych „Wilfon”

(now the Academy of Fine Arts) in Łódź⁸³ and I remained there until my leaving for RISD in 1982.

After the Congress of the Association Typographique Internationale (ATypI) in Warsaw and Kraków in 1975, which included a well-received exhibition of work by my Łódź students, I became the second – next to Roman Tomaszewski – Polish representative of this organization and I worked there in the group for typography education. My professional activity was gradually shifting from design to teaching – it absorbed me entirely.

In May 1977, I went to the United States for the first time to attend the Vision '77 conference on the future of typography in the context of new technologies. I met many interesting people and established some contacts that brought me the invitation to teach at the Ohio State University in Columbus, where I spent the spring and the fall of 1979. This, in turn, was surely a good recommendation to invite me to RISD.

So, after your experience in Paris you returned to Poland and started designing the Polish magazines. What was the design like in Poland?

In 1968 the weekly, “Świat”, edited by Stefan Arski was discontinued. It used to be a top-notch magazine for its journalism, reporting and photojournalism. It was excellent, like a Polish counterpart of “Life”. It had come to an end, however, its energy was exhausted. The best reporters had gone elsewhere. The magazine was shut down. There was nothing for a while, and then the vacancy was filled with the “Perspectives” magazine, which came with considerable privileges: a bigger team and more money for journalism, including higher lineage and higher rates. The important thing was the access the editorial team got to the photographic and journalistic agencies of the world.

83. Polish: Pracownia Projektowania Druków Periodycznych na Wydziale Grafiki Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Sztuk Plastycznych (PWSSP), today Wydział Grafiki i Malarstwa na Akademii Sztuk Pięknych w Łodzi

In “Jeune Afrique” there was a preexisting structure which you complemented with your character and ideas of design. Let’s say, I continued it. This magazine had always been edited very well.

In “Perspectives”, on the other hand, you had a chance to affect something as early as its formative period.

When I returned to Poland, I was offered this job by the editor-in-chief, Dobrosław Kobielski. The first test issue had already been done. I joined in at the second test issue, before it went onto the market. It was such a mess!

First of all, a grant or some technological support enabled this magazine to purchase the German linotype matrices. The person who had decided it would be Helvetica had no idea about the rotogravure – the print is transferred from the film onto copper cylinders and then treated with acid, which means it is an intaglio printing process. The letters, especially in small type sizes – and they used eight or ten points – will have their corners etched into rounded forms, kind of little “sausages”. That was the reason why in the fifties Hermann Zapf designed a typeface dedicated to a rotogravure technology – Optima; its corners were slightly broader, so the etching made them straight.

I didn’t think Helvetica was a good type for a longer text but as it had already been there, I had no choice. Besides, the articles were each designed separately, the titles were put at random places and they used different display types – in effect, every issue was a collection of individual texts. It was not clear whether the breaking news was to go on the first pages and where particular sections should be. It was all so chaotic, typically Polish at the time – no structure, no discipline. The magazine turned out to be too big a project for only one person and we had to form a team; there was me and my three colleagues: Mietek Wasilewski, who had just returned from Paris, Andrzej Krzysztoforski and Jurek Zieliński, two young graphic designers I used to work with at the Agpol Foreign Trade Publishing House (WHZ). So there were four of us and I was the art director of our studio.

You had to divide the work.

And we did, but I was the one responsible for developing the character of the magazine. It took me almost eighteen months to bring it all out of the woods – not only to introduce some technical changes, but also to educate the editorial team. For example, what to do when there is not enough text – we will have a short page. “What do you mean: a short page? It will look like the censor’s doing!” they protested. Let us put a small dot on the page to indicate that the white space is not the censorship blank. “Impossible, it is unheard of.” Previously, the text would have been spaced out, creating a different visual density on facing pages – and nobody frowned upon this typographic sloppiness.

In the “Perspectives” magazine I had to deal with the color photography and the photographers who went out to the field and brought back tons of the 6×6 cm (2.3×2.3 in.) diapositives which we spread on the light tables; although they had their favorites, I had to arrange the photos into a narrative. I was reading the text of a reportage, thinking which photos would be the best for illustrating the article’s content and could produce a good correlation between the text and the image. Some of them were sensational and then we built a story around them, but it was rare. The photographers believed their work was inviolable, so they often felt disrespected and complained to the editor-in-chief. He knew that the magazine was good for its consistency; he listened to their moans and comforted them, but he supported us. As designers responsible for the narrative, we were covered.

Although I respected the editors working there and their habits, I wanted to introduce a different system. My colleagues got it immediately and followed my lead. Eighteen months later it all fell into place: the journalists started to appreciate our opinions; before going to the field, the smarter of photographers came to us to discuss what was needed – it happened quite often. They had quickly come to understand our point of view and did their best to cooperate.

Some of the fixed sections were: an editorial, a table of contents, an imprint, letters to the editor, the news and comments – a larger section set narrowly in five columns. It included

PERSPEKTYWY

2K DRUGI • NUMER 18 (32) • ILUSTROWANY TYGODNIK POLITYCZNO-INFORMACYJNY • 18 KWIETNIA 1978 • CENA 6 ZŁ

Dr Stolting-

kocha zwierzęta nienawidził ludzi

Zasadnicze cechy zbrodniczej mentalności Hermana Stoltinga, aktualnego prezidenta „Zachodniemieckiego Towarzystwa Ochrony Zwierząt”, o którego osobie z uznaniem pisze się na łamach oficjalnych organów zionkoostat w NRF, poznali Polacy dokładnie w okresie okupacji, gdy dr Stolting sprawował urząd prokuratora w Bydgoszczy.



Uwaga, Holendrzy nadchodzą!

Katowickie jutro

O inwestycjach przemysłowych, głównych założeniach gospodarczych i sprawach socjalno-bytowych województwa pisze Jerzy Ziętek, Członek Rady Państwa, Przewodniczący Prezydium Wojewódzkiej Rady Narodowej w Katowicach.



Mówiło się o tym, jak o operacji militarnej. Używano wojskowej terminologii: desant, most powietrzny, inwazja. Nastroje wśród osób zorientowanych były wręcz paniczne. W pośpiechu mobilizowano się do obrony, koncentrowano siły w niewrażliwych punktach, toczono obrady w zamkniętych sztabach...

Illustrated information weekly “Perspectives”, cover



Illustrated information weekly "Perspectives". The page spreads feature a unified typographic system adapted for the whole magazine, connected with a dynamic use of photographic illustrations. We had never managed to find a proper formula for the cover design – it was usually an eclectic combination of the materials included in the issue.



the handmade vignettes we copied from the Letraset. I asked our print shop to remove all the display types from our type cases and they were replaced by the Monotype castings of the Times family. We adopted a unified identification system for the articles: above the headline it stated a country or a region, then the authors and the photographers. Additionally, under the headlines there were the introductions of various lengths, set in the twelve-point Helvetica. It was a repetitive structure. Our great technical editor, Ładysław Śladowski, would glue all of that in and send the lot to the print shop in Okopowa Street. We cropped the photos and so it went. The typesetters and clickers⁸⁴ at Okopowa were so grateful; they always welcomed us with a smile because our design had made their job so much easier. It was clear they would use our Times type cases; a double column headline was always set in Times, twenty-four points, and the three-column one – thirty-six points, and with the four columns you got forty-eight type size. There was a prescribed structure of sizes and everything was fixed. The composing room staff did not need to call and ask the editor's office about anything, because they knew it all in advance and were really happy that someone had taken them into account. Before, each article had been different and required various display types they might not have had at hand, so the types would have to be found, replaced, borrowed from other publications. Our idea made all this stress disappear.

The “Perspectives” magazine was also published in German as a monthly including the selection of the most interesting articles – it did not contain the current political affairs, however, which took quite a lot of space in the weekly. The monthly magazine was dominated by photography.

While working for “Perspectives”, did you find the time to do any other projects?

I did start designing some other magazines. At that time, our daughter Honorata was born and we were building a house. I had

84. Clickers are the workers of the composing room who form the pages of a publication.



Cover designs for the “Polish Art Review” magazine. Published in English and Russian by the Authors’ Agency, branch of the Polish Society of Authors and Composers (ZAIKS), it was a periodical promoting the Polish arts abroad.

to support my family. I also wanted to do something more than only one periodical.

Szymon Bojko told me that the Polish Society of Authors and Composers ZAIKS⁸⁵ had launched the Authors’ Agency to promote Polish art and design abroad. Among other things, it was publishing the “Polish Art Review” magazine presenting the Polish fine arts. The quarterly was to be released in English and in Russian. Szymon was nominated the editor-in-chief, and I was offered to design it. The magazine was published on good paper but they used the letterpress printing, so the restrictions were evident. One of the issues, the fourth I think, was devoted to the 1975 Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. There was an article with an illustration by Andrzej Czeczot featuring a realistic Franz Joseph and a woman’s silhouette as if cut out of the map of Europe. At that time, all the publications required a consent

85. Polish: Związek Autorów i Kompozytorów Scenicznych (ZAIKS)



"Polish Art Review" quarterly, page spreads

from the Central Committee of the ruling communist party and the Ministry of Culture. Włodzimierz Sokorski, the Minister of Culture at that time, called this drawing a sabotage, meaning our Soviet comrades could find it politically hostile. Needless to say, the issue did not go to Helsinki, and we did not work for the “Polish Art Review” magazine anymore. I still don’t understand what it was all about.

In 1971, the Erco company, a German manufacturer of lighting equipment, was launching a new series of lamps on the market. To create the lamps, Erco invited four international designers from Italy, England, France, and Germany. From Poland, I was invited to create the visual promotion for these new designs. Suggested: For my part, I collaborated with my colleagues Janek Fleischmann and Krzysztof Gieraltowski— both excellent photographers. As it turned out, I was lucky enough to participate in a project involving Ettore Sottsass, Terence Conran and Roger Tallon.

When the editor-in-chief of “Perspectives”, Dobrosław Kobielski, left the magazine, I tried to keep working there for several months but eventually I quit as well. I had a sufficient number of commissions from the Graphic Arts Publishing House (WAG) and other places; I did not need to struggle with the new chief.

You left the magazine whose structure you had designed from scratch. It must have been a sad parting.

Well, it was. After a while, however, Kobielski called to tell me about the Publishing and Propaganda Agency RUCH⁸⁶ in Wilcza Street which released books for children and postcards. He was going to become a chief there. It would not be as nerve racking because books for children and postcards were not politically involved. He offered me the chance to join his team as an art director of the whole publishing house as the former director, Jan Marcin Szancer (the professor who had run the Illustration Studio at my Academy), had retired. Kobielski had an idea to merge the RUCH publisher, the Central Photographic Agency⁸⁷ and the

86. Polish: Biuro Wydawniczo-Propagandowe RUCH

87. Polish: Centralna Agencja Fotograficzna

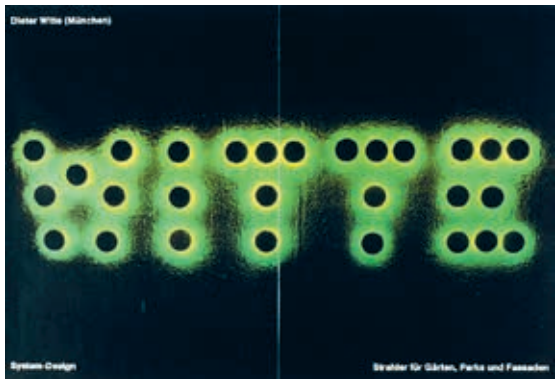
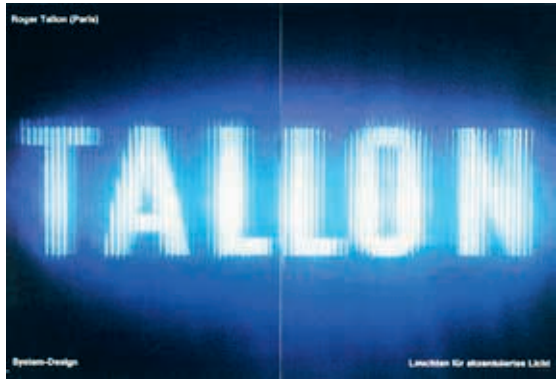


A poster and two (out of four) title pages of the catalog of lighting systems produced by the German company Erco Leuchten. I co-designed those with photographers Jan Fleischmann and Krzysztof Gieraltowski

Graphic Arts Publishing House (wAG) into one dynamic State Publishing Agency (KAW)⁸⁸. He confided his plans to me. I enjoyed working with him. He was an enlightened polyglot, very witty, and he knew what he wanted to achieve. I decided to take this job. Although I got the offer to teach in Łódź at the same time, I was able to juggle the two somehow.

The transformations Kobielski intended to conduct took a lot of effort. Each of the merging institutions had its fixed

88. Polish: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza (KAW)



manners of operation and the well-settled people, so any changes were frowned upon. I became a deputy art director of the State Publishing Agency. The first principle of managing such institutions is not to fix what is working well – and the Graphic Arts Publishing House (WAG) and the Publishing and Propaganda Agency RUCH did. The auspices had changed, but it was just another configuration within the Workers’ Publishing Cooperative “Prasa”⁸⁹.

89. Polish: Robotnicza Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza „Prasa”

I was focused on the new things we wanted to do – and our heads were buzzing with ideas.

We were planning to publish mainly the non-fiction. To start with, there was a series of monographs of continents illustrated with photographs and maps. It required a good design based on repetitive structures. We decided to find some young designers to work on that. The commission went to Jan Kubasiewicz⁹⁰ and Andrzej Olejniczak⁹¹, my former students from Łódź. They designed a really interesting series, exactly what we had in mind. It was recognized on the market. Next, Kobielski wanted to publish a series of small photo books entitled “All about...”. What we needed was a repetitive typographic concept, but with a photographic cover. Janek Fleischmann prepared the photographic for this series in his studio. We also published the board games and someone had to design those, so we kept finding the new young graphic designers. So far, the postcards had been as painterly as the books for children, but having the photographers and the atelier, we wanted to start releasing the photo postcards. We were recruiting photographers and stylists as the new forms of publication were made. The Graphic Arts Publishing House (WAG), which was first and foremost the propaganda arm of the party, continued its work but then came the additional editorial teams publishing different materials; I was commissioned to design a catalog of the Polish antibiotics, for instance.

In 1976, the school in Łódź wanted me to open the docentship⁹² proceedings, which I conducted at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw; the Department Board appointed me unanimously. There was a problem, however, because I wasn't allowed to have an academic job – a docent – at the same time as full-time employment in a publishing house. I had to make a choice. Kobielski

90. Jan Kubasiewicz – graphic designer and painter; now professor at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston

91. Andrzej Olejniczak – graphic designer and visual artist, partner at Envisioning Business Inc., visual communication design studio in NYC

92. In Poland ‘docent’, obtained in the process of habilitation, was a highest academic title to be achieved and then an appointment below that of a full professor.

expected me to remain with the State Publishing Agency, but I chose teaching. Although he was not happy about it, he understood my reasons and we still are good friends today. He didn't want me to leave entirely, because he trusted my opinions and we had a similar way of thinking. I became his adviser and we continued working together for several more years. I did focus mainly on teaching, however, and while in the Agency I gave expert opinions and restricted my design work to books.

***Polish Contemporary Sculpture*⁹³ is one of my favorite books on the subject. What assumptions did you make working on it? What's the story?**

Hanna Kotkowska-Bareja, a curator of the sculpture department at the National Museum, was publishing this book with the Interpress publishing house, which specialized in promoting the Polish culture abroad. The author intended to present twenty Polish sculptors she considered the most prominent; the book was published in four languages. According to the structure she suggested, each sculptor was featured on four pages devoted to his works and one spread containing his biography, information and photo. It was all very particular: the format and size were prescribed, and I had to select the sculptures and make a layout.

I received twenty envelopes with portfolios of all the sculptors – far too many photos to go in the book. The first problem was that the works of every artist had been photographed by a different person and they used various perspectives. After long consideration I had an idea of putting the horizon line close to the bottom edge of the page, which gave the impression that we were looking up at the sculptures. As the line of our sight is on this level, we got the upward display, starting with the Zemła monument on the dust jacket. Having found this point of reference (although not all the photos allowed it), I could present eighty-five percent of photographs in this manner. I wanted to break the pattern at points as well. I was aiming to lay the reproductions out

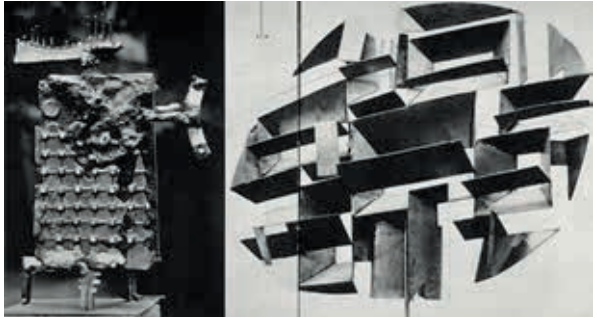
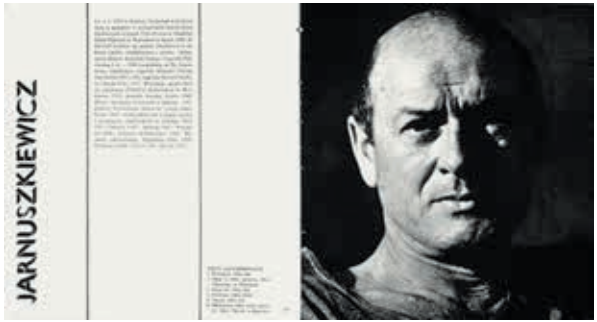
93. See Hanna Kotkowska-Bareja, *Polska rzeźba współczesna*, Warsaw: Interpress, 1974

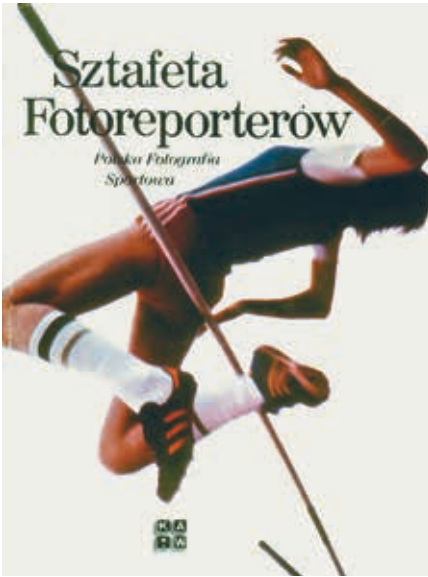
POLSKA RZEŻBA WSPÓŁCZESNA



Polish Contemporary Sculpture. A dust cover and page spreads from the album published in 1974 which presented twenty prominent contemporary sculptors. My task was selecting the works and laying them out on the pages.

in a harmonious way and yet - using some contrast for emphasis. The sculptors were featured alphabetically, which was a catch, because not all the works were compatible. It would have been better for the book if they had come in a different order. Where the material required it, I asked the print shop to free-form select a photo - and somehow it all came out not too bad. The curator fully accepted my selection of the sculptures. I think it is a good design and I still like it a lot.

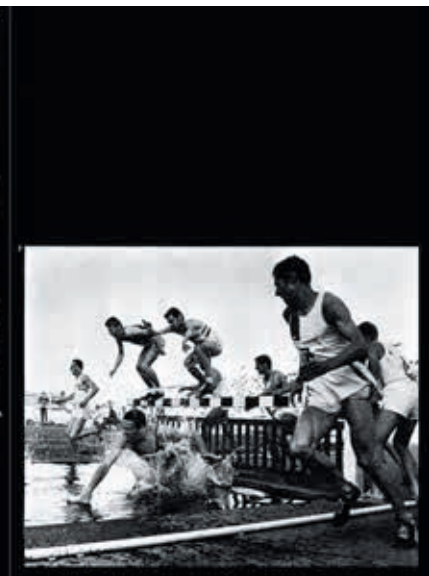
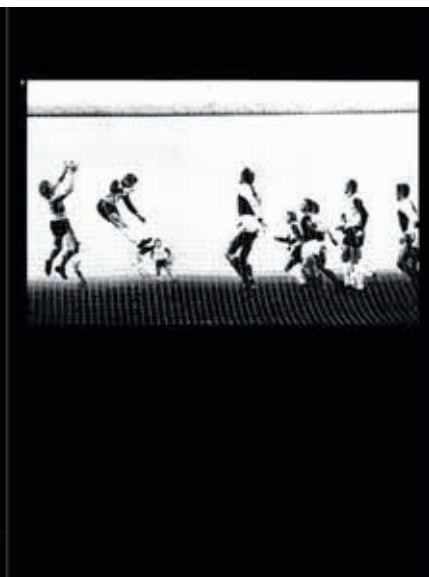




Reporter's Relay. Polish Sport Photography. I had to select seventy-five out of fifteen hundred photographs and present them in a layout telling a story about something more than just an individual event.

I have designed many more albums and books on art. I had been making them all through the seventies but I've only kept a few, including *Reporter's Relay. Polish Sport Photography*⁹⁴ – which I think was done well; I gave it my all. The book presented sport through success and failure alike. It featured the works of fifteen photo-journalists; there was an editors' foreword followed by presentations of each of the photographers. The rest was a selection of photos, chosen and laid out by me. We are talking here about narrating by means of image; it was not about me designing the pages, but about my attitude towards photography and how I perceived and used it in a narrative. Today, I would probably call it the editor's work – publication design in the spirit of Willy Fleckhaus. I learned this way of thinking about photography from him. His work affected me very strongly.

94. See Jacek Semkowicz, *Sztafeta Fotoreporterów. Polska fotografia sportowa*, Warsaw: KAW, 1980





12



In the seventies I was reading the French monthly “Photo”. One of the issues contained an article about Fleckhaus and Brodovitch. It was a story of how they had met on the patio of some restaurant in Paris and talked about their experiences, what they had in common, what methods they shared – I found it very interesting. Each of them, irrespective of the other, used a grid vertically divided into twelve units. They explained that a twelve can be divided into two, three, four and six parts, which was very useful in page layout design. Fleckhaus talked about what he would have asked of a photographer who was going to Naples to make a coverage of the city and life in this city – in six photos. It was planned down to the last detail. He knew exactly what features of Naples needed to be recorded and transferred to the pages. As if I was listening to Adam Hoffmann, later I used the idea of giving instructions to a photographer as an assignment for my students in Łódź.

Let us go back to this book on the sport photography.

The important things were the dialog with photography and how it was perceived, the cropping of photos and their mutual arrangement. The spreads of this book were composed on the basis of contrasts: victory and defeat, effort and reward, success and failure. A graphic designer is the person who selects the materials, sets them together and creates a narrative by means of images. While remaining in the shadows himself; he builds particular suggestions for the recipient. For example, he shows a collapsing hockey player and the fans in the arena clutching their heads in disbelief because the player was injured and cannot continue in the game. Although some of the layouts are obvious, it is a sort of directing work – the visual editing. In case of *Reporter’s Relay*, I had to choose from more than fifteen hundred photographs. The book used seventy-five.

You are the one who actually creates the book.

In some sense, yes. There’s more to it, though. Laying the photos out on the page, I turn it into a specific world. I move the photos about composing them and shaping the narrative; I create

tensions. I'm aware that the edges are sharp in form. I know the right page of the spread affects the reader stronger than the left. I understand these mutual relationships and I manipulate the photographs in a fully informed way, hoping to bring a nonverbal value to the book and thereby enrich the story.

Which of your designs make you proud?

Let me tell you about the failures first – some things that did not work out as planned. I have already talked about the publications I designed for the Foreign Trade Center. There were various kinds of prints: catalogs, brochures, reviews, calendars. One of their clients I collaborated with regularly was Metalexport, a company exporting machine tools for metal and wood processing: millers, lathes, grinders. They were manufactured in various configurations as modular systems – a basic set of machinery and supplementary tools. The machines came with all kinds of prints, which were each designed separately. However, when you spread the publications on the table, it turned out that the machine tools – normalized and standardized – were much more systematized than their printed representation, which was chaotic.

I offered to the head of publication department – with whom I could usually find common ground – that I would design a coherent system. This turned out to be a very interesting task. I spent endless days and nights creating the prototypes: a file holder with foldable directories and covers color coded separately for wood and for metal machine tools. Next, there were pages with basic information for each group of the millers, lathes and grinders. Finally, there were exchangeable pages with the supplementary equipment and tools. The point was that a sales representative on his way to the client could take a required combination of the ready-made printed materials, which were coherent. Today it is a very common solution.

My design was welcomed enthusiastically in Metalexport, but the State Enterprise Visual Arts Workshop commission rejected it, even though it was really good and needed. I was deeply disappointed. Their argument was that although the project was all right, it would set a dangerous precedent. By designing in this

modular way, all you had to make was a single stencil to be multiplied and filled in with content. This solution would take money away from the graphic design market (!). I found this much less important than a good modular presentation and efficacy of the system. I was really frustrated. To me, this design was an expression of the modern structural thinking. I figured it out myself and I made a functional prototype; I used the Univers typeface of various scales and weights (as available from the Monotype) as well as a coordinated color scheme. It being rejected felt like a defeat. Still, I took a great pride in this design.

One of the projects which did get accepted and turned out quite well was a catalog of antibiotics I designed for the Graphic Arts Publishing House around the same time. This large format brochure identified all the antibiotics available on the Polish pharmaceutical market and divided them into groups, medical indications and counter-indications. It was highly praised by the publisher's commission. Several doctors told me later how useful and helpful it was in their work, which gave me a great satisfaction.

Both of these designs were the introduction to modernity, to the real visual communication where a backstage director-designer creates a clear system, a spatial organization of typography, a functional set of colors. Although only one of the two projects was accepted, I was not discouraged from further pursuits in this area.

Working in Paris was a valuable experience for me. I did find my way as a graphic designer, which boosted my self-confidence and faith in my abilities.

I also think that it set in motion a course of interlocking fortunate events, or maybe they were coincidences: "Jeune Afrique" had led me towards "Perspectives" and that, in turn, to Łódź. My teaching work in Łódź brought me the invitation to Ohio State University. The joined experiences of Łódź and Ohio State resulted in the invitation to RISD, where a favor of teaching a class on diagrams changed the course of my professional career and eventually brought about the Dynamic Diagrams studio which took the leading position in information mapping for the world of interactive media and the internet of the nineties.

Graphic designs are mostly universal and usually can be read regardless of language; their contexts, however, are particular. As it turns out, I have been able to communicate freely in various environments. It all makes me very proud.

Along the way, I have met many brilliant people who believed in me and wished me well. And I too – coming across some young talented students and designers, and remembering the advice given me years ago by Henryk Tomaszewski – tried to create the conditions for them to “fly away from the nest” and be successful. Many a time, it proved to be fruitful.

Let us talk about the methods of organizing the entire project. I’ll refer to the already mentioned lessons of Professor Hoffmann. First and foremost, you need to define the aim you want to achieve with your design. Set a general objective: do you want it to be shocking, screaming loud or telling a tranquil story. Then, there are two approaches: from the specific to the general and vice versa. Which of them we choose depends on the contexts and conditions of a project. Sometimes, it comes from the moment of creative illumination as well.

Don’t you have a favorite method?

I don’t think you should have one. It all depends on the specifics of a task and on the discipline as well. Typography taught me to start from the smallest contrasts and gradually increase them, which gives you a mental and formal control over the process. You should add only as much as necessary, and not more. There are these creative moments, however, when you know exactly what you want to do and then you build a coherent whole around it.

What you have said about the graduation of contrasts brings to mind a painting technique of da Vinci: you start with the shadow and lighten it up, as with a mezzotint.

Yes, this is applicable mainly to the designs dominated by the text. In a magazine, the text can be perceived as a dominant element, but it is not the only one; you need to start with a general

question of what kind of magazine you want to design and define its general concept first.

I would like to give you an example of this “from the general” approach. Designing the “Tourism Illustrated”⁹⁵ magazine, I intended to make it as a dynamic periodical with a certain level of tension. Therefore, I assumed that it would have many vertical elements because when your instinctive horizontal left to right reading happens upon the vertical ‘obstacles,’ it makes the whole thing dynamic.

In case of other magazines, I often started off with the idea of making something vibrant; this is what the “from the general to the specific” approach means. I needed to consider all the components, from the important ones to the smallest, and figure out how to build a structure to achieve the intended effect: Which display type to use? How to correlate a large photo with a large initial? How to make the white shine as an element of the page? How does the horizon of the photo refer to the text? How do you juxtapose the vertical and the horizontal? And so on.

If you want the magazine you design to be characterized by a particular take at the initials or a certain layout of articles, you need to adjust all the other components to these repetitive elements in order to achieve the intended structure. In such cases we talk about a composition made from the specific to the general. I think this refers to every design form, not only to a magazine.

Talking about the means of visual language (visual syntax, visual grammar), I would say, although they are the same for art and design, the two disciplines should be carefully separated and differentiated. The notion of art has become very broad and is limited solely by the imagination and intention of the artist. It used to be homogeneous, though. For ages, until the Impressionists, there had been very particular canons. Today, every artist is at the mercy of his or her own imagination.

Design, on the other hand, is all about solving problems. Designers respond to the task they have been given. They deal with contexts in which the tasks operate, and therefore, both economic

95. Polish: *Ilustrowany Magazyn Turystyczny*

and temporal conditions need to be recognized and accounted for because they constitute the integral elements of the project. Although artists and designers share the same visual means, these also set us apart, because we use them differently. Paul Rand was very particular about it. In his books (and his life) he tried to convince us that there was something he called the *art* of design – after Aristotle – something that is functional and beautiful at the same time. Rand used the notion of ‘art of design’ claiming that while some designs are beautiful, others are not.

I borrowed his phrase and titled my book *Short texts on the art of design* because I wanted to show that I considered some projects to be high quality examples of the art of design. Because the notions of design and art are blurry and often overlap, people frequently don’t really know the difference. I also think we should avoid the far-reaching generalizations. Within the scope of ‘art’, however, the term ‘art of design’ implies a higher standard of design: design might be art.

The seventies marked the beginning of your teaching career. Can you tell me how it all started? Having finished your studies, didn’t you think of staying at the academy?

It did not cross my mind back then. My teaching in Łódź started in 1973, twelve years after I graduated and with fifteen years of design experience under my belt, some of that in Paris. In the fall of 1972, on a beautiful October day, I was sitting in the editor’s office, when Professor Stanisław Fijałkowski⁹⁶ called. He said that he and Roman Artymowski (head of the college in Łódź) were at the meeting of the Board of the Art Education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and they wanted to talk to me. We decided to meet early in the afternoon on the bench in front of the Rector’s office. I had a nodding acquaintance with Artymowski and Fijałkowski whom I knew only from his works – which I had always appreciated.

96. Stanisław Fijałkowski, b.1922, a great painter, was a long time professor at the College of Fine Arts in Łódź (currently Academy of Fine Arts).



“Tourism Illustrated” monthly. Several spreads presenting the idea of typography based on high contrasts between the horizontal and the vertical forms.

They said there was a newly launched Department of Graphics at the College of Fine Arts (now the Academy of Fine Arts) in Łódź and it included the Typography and Publication Design Studio. They were looking for a lecturer and turned to Professors Mroszczak and Tomaszewski, who recommended me. They asked me if I would like to join the faculty of their school in Łódź.

It took me by surprise. I felt I was in good shape as a designer, especially after my stay in Paris. What they offered, however, was a completely different, interesting and responsible job. I was careful to approach this challenge. They invited me to Łódź and there we continued our talks. I decided to take their offer. I started my classes at the beginning of 1973, from the spring term. The department did not have an open recruitment yet so only the students of the other departments could enroll. They included Jan Kubasiewicz, Barbara and Andrzej Olejniczak and others; some of them had even taken a step back in their studies in clothing or textile design in order to join the Department of Graphics.

The structure of the studies was as follows: the first two years in the Department of Graphics were general, then the students chose a specialty. There were four studios: Poster and Advertising led by Bogusław Balicki; Graphic Design in Space by Stanisław Łabecki; Packaging Design run by Stefan Krygier, and the Typography and Publication Design Studio which I got to lead; it had a long history, going back to Strzemiński⁹⁷. After the second year, students chose one main and one supplementary studio, with less hours. There were other subjects as well. In the third year they still attended painting and graphic arts. It was a reverse pyramid with the artistic subjects gradually receding to make room for graphic design.

I made a deal with Professor Fijałkowski that I would teach for a year. I had no idea if I was even able to do that, but I was willing to try. I was given total freedom in regard to program; sixteen hours a week. I was enthusiastic and became very absorbed with that. The only problem was that the fifteen years of

97. Władysław Strzemiński (1893–1952) a great Polish avant-garde painter, author of a revolutionary book *The Theory of Vision*.



Łódź 1978. Crit of a student's work. From the left: Krzysztof Lenk, an assistant Jan Kubasiewicz and a student Zbigniew Błaszczyk.



During a student strike at the College of Fine Arts (PWSSP) in Łódź, 1981

my design experience had settled in the intuitive hemisphere of my brain; it was not yet formalized. I knew what to do and how to do it, but I had never explained it to anybody, let alone formed any criteria. Surely, when a student brought me some sketches for a critique, I instantly knew which of them promised a better design, but I should have been able to clearly explain and support my opinion. Suddenly, I had to start using my other hemisphere to analyze and verbalize what so far had been amorphous and fluid. It was a great experience! During the first year I had learned more myself than I could teach my students. All my experience had been reformulated, and this process of distillation made me a better graphic designer.

Preparing the program, did you note down any objectives?

Thinking of assignments suitable for the students is much harder than it seems. You need to systematically teach something new. Each challenge you give your students should present them with another design problem. I started with things elementary for the medium of the press and continued to more complex assignments. Although I described them, I did not build the syllabus yet. I learned this later, in 1979, in Ohio State, where it was a standard.

If you had no syllabus, no one-year program, then you must have created it step-by-step. Where did you start?

I started with three questions. What should I teach my students? Which of my professional and intellectual experiences would I like to pass along to the future magazine designers? How can I shape this into a sequence of assignments? As a teacher I was starting from scratch. I came up with a “wish list” of skills necessary to be an efficient graphic designer and the sequence of assignments was set accordingly. There was a lot of trial and error as well as exercises that seemed to have been interesting but did not work out somehow. Slowly, I gained the experience, sometimes at the expense of my students. The list of objectives I made, as I remember it, was similar to the one below and answered the questions:

How would I like to shape my model student/designer? What skills do I want them to develop through the given assignments?

- Analyze the task quickly and efficiently.
- Think strategically and be able to connect the loose elements into structures.
- See their own designs from the viewpoint of the recipient.
- Be adept artistically, in order to imagine an unexpected solution.
- Be knowledgeable in their discipline: familiar with literature on praxeology; methodology of design; theory of perception, sociology and psychology; and know the works of the excellent contemporary designers as well as significant examples from the history of design.
- Be familiar with signs and meanings and how they function within culture and social communications – what we call ‘semiotics’ today – not necessarily the linguistic kind.
- Develop the ability to collaborate in teams and work with others who may have strong personalities.
- Achieve fluency at least one foreign language. (It could have been Russian, taught in the schools at the time.)
This, I was not able to teach them myself.

Attempting to head the Typography and Publication Design Studio, to teach how to lay out periodicals, I first had to define “periodical” – a newspaper, weekly, monthly. A periodical is a structure consisting of many interrelated elements. It is a dynamic editor’s metacomposition of texts and illustrations. Every issue constitutes an inextricable weave of the author’s text and graphical narrative.

Providing a periodical with an extraordinary form and structure requires two stages of design work. The first stage consists in creating a characteristic repetitive form (sort of a “matrix”). The next stage involves designing the particular issues according to the preliminary general objectives. While designing the general concept, the important rule to apply is the system of stylistic opposites:

- uniformity / diversity
- existing style / novel
- static / dynamic

A modern magazine is a form closer to the screen than to a book on paper. Its designer is a visual editor who creates the composition of the pages by means of a sustainable structure: rigorous yet flexible; uniform yet diverse; logical and surprising.

At both stages, the designer should make purposeful use of the elements of visual syntax. The artistic form is expressed through visual contrasts and their mutual relationships: size, position, shape and color.

- A designer knows the similarities and differences between the verbal and the visual description and which narrative method should be used for a given design.
- The recipient's attention can be directed in order to achieve the intended effect.
- A designer knows that all the events and actions in time and space must be presented as a sequence.
- The photographs can be commissioned according to the designer's idea or edited in order to extract their narrative essence.
- A designer knows that his or her design aims to make a particular impression to be registered in the reader's mind as opposed to just creating a nice printed issue.
- A designer of a periodical is like an alchemist mixing the given materials into an exciting whole, so that the person who reaches for a new issue gasps: "Wow!" and instantly takes to reading it.

That's all. These were the objectives I drafted back then; I tried to stick to them as I was building the sequences of assignments. One more thing, instead of repeating the same exercises, Janek Kubasiewicz and I came up with new ones every year. I knew from my experience that if an assignment was unexpected, its lessons were retained in the student's memory much longer.



Assignment *One day in a student's life*. The eight-page report merged text and photographs in an interesting typographic arrangement. Students created a coherent narrative of interweaving verbal and visual elements.

I have recently pondered whether the twenty-five years of computer dominance in our profession has changed anything on my list of objectives, except the obvious change of workshop. My conclusion is that they have remained up to date in referring to the designer's personality and attitude as well as defining the composition of a (paper) magazine and its "needs" – all of which seem to be independent from the ever-changing communication technologies.

There are some examples of what assignments I used first. In Łódź we tried to keep track of the projects on slides, some of which were made with good equipment in a lab, and others were taken by students by means of various lenses, often on the ORWO-COLOR films. These preliminary exercises in photography illustrate our teaching approach towards various communicative aspects of this medium. I wanted the future designers of periodicals to know what they could do with the photo material if only they had the will and proper skills.



Deconstruction of the *Princess Anne on the horse* photograph. The information extracted from the reporter's photo, featuring the British princess and her bodyguard, became a starting point for a series of five frames arranged into a narrative.

Let me describe one spatiotemporal assignment. Students presented a day of their lives as a sequence of small and big events. They had to choose the important points and organize them on a timeline into a textual narrative illustrated with photos. This original presentation had to be visually attractive and typographically consistent. They needed the assistance of their colleagues who would take the photos.

Another assignment aimed to develop the ability to analyze and understand all the information included in a given photograph – a skill necessary to any magazine designer. Every student received a photo and had to use its elements – in any way – to build a narrative in six images. This, and similar exercises, sharpened the ability to notice and interpret information.

As much as any other visual record, photography can be considered and described from two perspectives: what is featured – its content, and how it is featured – the formal aspects of the composition. You should help students develop the ability to see and analyze these two components separately as well as their interrelations.

It is said that a good photo is made in the photographer's head even before it is taken by the camera. This relates to the apparent superiority of creative thinking over the technical means. A designer who needs a staged photo for the project has to express these expectations directly. We practiced this with our students through a cartoon layout they had to make for the intended photo-advertisement of Coca-Cola.



Today, dynamic video recording and animation make it possible to present events as continuous or happening in the real time. Before, we used sequences of freeze frames relying upon the recipient's awareness to fill in the gaps between these elements and recreate the whole story.

How to present the time lapsing between two drops of water dripping from a faucet? In response to the task of showing the passing of time, the student had conducted an unconventional visual investigation. [see p. 166]

When designing magazines, we deal with visual and verbal narratives, usually built according to a timeline. The majority of assignments of varying difficulty conducted in the studio were designed to develop the student's ability to use these spatiotemporal stories in their projects. One of them involved remolding a lowercase letter into an uppercase one and back, in rotation. Another presented transformations over a longer stretch of time through morphological conversion of Roman capitals into Renaissance minuscule. Another involved conceptual deliberations over the inextricable relationship between matter and form, exemplified by the process of biting into an apple. [see p. 171] A similar group of assignments dealt with the verbal-sign narratives derived from an assigned text, such as two versions of Alexander Fredro's humorous poem, *Paweł i Gawęł*, – depicting neighbor's row and showing two completely different interpretations.

A much more difficult assignment, required joining numerous elements into coherent compositions and ordering them in



A dripping faucet.

How often do the drops fall?

It needs to be presented in an unconventional way.

Students responded to the assignment of visualizing

the passing of time without

featuring a clock. It was an

introduction to designing

the spatiotemporal narratives.

Egzemplarz „Książki i odzież” przeznaczony dla rodzin żyjących w slumsach Pekingu, podczas trwania obywatelskich wyborów w Chinach. Zdjęcie zostało wykonane przez amerykańskiego fotografa, który odwiedził Pekin w 1988 roku. W tym czasie w Chinach panowała polityka jednoosobowego dyktatora, który kontrolował każdy aspekt życia społecznego. W tym czasie w Chinach panowała polityka jednoosobowego dyktatora, który kontrolował każdy aspekt życia społecznego. W tym czasie w Chinach panowała polityka jednoosobowego dyktatora, który kontrolował każdy aspekt życia społecznego.



„Gdy do tysiąca
 policzysz składnie,
 Do tego trzy setki
 dodasz podwójone,
 Potem pół setki
 przez dwa pomnożone,
 I o dziewięć dziesiątków
 jeszcze powiększone,
 Ujrzysz obraz zagłady“

Content and formal analysis of photographs from Ireland and China. What we see in the photo constitutes its content. How we perceive the content, however, depends on the formal construction of a photograph – rhythms, verticals and horizontals, contrasts of white, grays and black. Students should notice and be able to name these formal components. Typography ought to be structurally coordinated with the photo it describes.



A—a, converting a Roman capital “A” into a Renaissance minuscule “a”. This illustrates a metamorphosis which had happened over several centuries. The square book presents a gradual transformation of a letter, originally chisel-carved in stone, into a hand-drawn sign. The glyph form evolves as a derivative of the traces left by the tools, changing over centuries.



a sequence. The students had to select six “words of wisdom” by Karl Marx and put them in a visually consistent sequence. Additionally, they had to select one lowercase letter in the first aphorism and transform it slowly into the uppercase letter (or vice versa) in the following ones. This exercise was wicked. The National Publishing Institute (PIW) released the Library of Aphorists: small books containing quotes, also by Marx. I brought this book to our studio and asked the students to leaf through it, select these six “words of wisdom” and complete the task. Some examples: “Nothing that is developing can be perfect”, but also: “The Chinese affairs won’t feed the skinny press”, “Competition distorts every image”, “In a despotic state all men are seen equally; maybe not equally worthy but surely equally worthless.”, “The truth is not only about the destination, it is also about the journey.”

I knew it was not my position to criticize the regime directly and risk the consequences; that would have gotten us nowhere. All I could do was teach the students critical thinking. Taking the 7.15 train to Łódź on Tuesday mornings, at the railway station I would buy two papers: the “Life of Warsaw”⁹⁸ for myself and the communist “People’s Tribune”⁹⁹ for the studio. In the latter, I searched for an article ridiculous enough to serve my purposes. Then we would do a press review. One person would read slowly then we would discuss the meaning of a given sentence or paragraph. What was it saying? What did it refer to? Even those of my students who had been broken by the communists, and who I knew were informants, participated in that exercise. There was no proof that anything improper was going on. Obviously, any intelligent person would have said, “Man, you are subverting the system by opening their minds! It is newspeak; this article means nothing but it must be this way”.

A very thought-provoking assignment was the analysis of the Thursday issue of “Life of Warsaw”. Thursday was the calmest day of the weekly cycle because the issue did not contain any

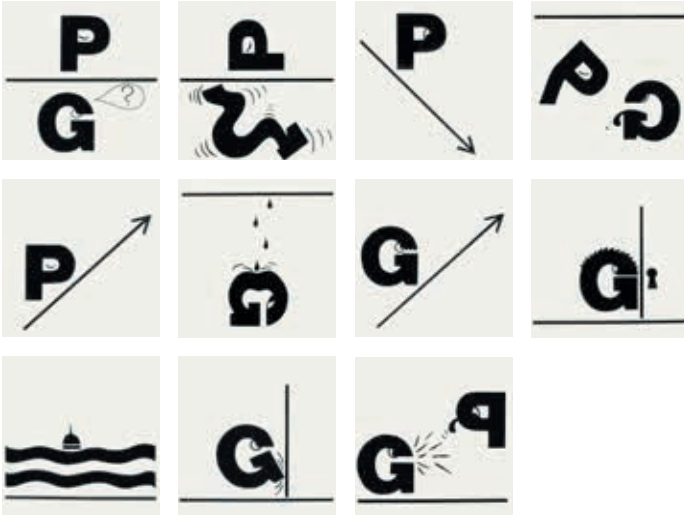
98. Polish: *Życie Warszawy*. During the communist era the paper was a semi-official organ of the Polish government.

99. Polish: *Trybuna Ludu* was the official media outlet of the communist Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR) and its propaganda.

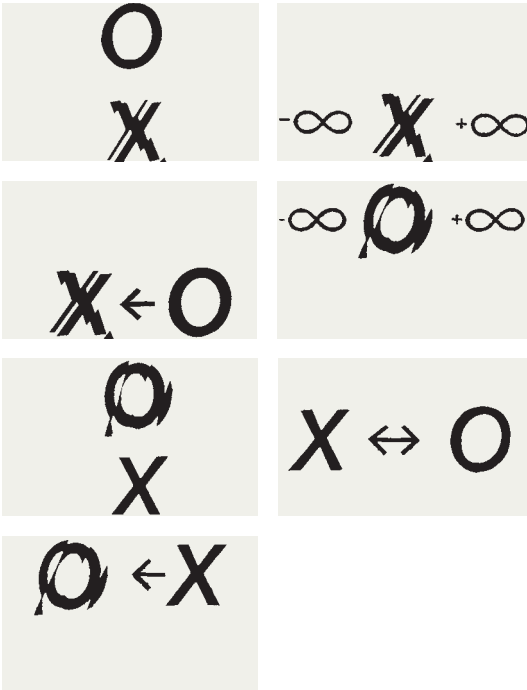


Inextricable content and form. Every existing object has its material content and characteristic form. An apple is an apple, and a pear – a pear. The process, recorded as a sequence of photographs, documents the gradual stripping the apple of its proper form.





Alexander Fredro's poem *Paweł i Gawęł* translated into the language of signs. The two designs show two different approaches to this task. The first one uses a library of pictograms, behaving like the characters of the narrative. Analyzing the mutual structure of influences and dependencies between the protagonists, the other design avoids illustrating the story.





Salus populi suprema lex – Let the welfare of the people be the supreme law. Students' project of the cover for the American typographic quarterly "U&lc". We can see the text as composed on a grid. It takes a while to realize that it is not a grid, but bars.

reports of the Party's Politburo. We took a few pages: the news (long form) and the commentary. One student, while reading the news, was whitening all the adjectives with a concealer. We then did the same with the commentary articles. It turned out that the news contained many more adjectives than the articles did. The question was, why? It was both logical and linguistic nonsense. The news should have contained mostly nouns and verbs. It was supposed to be factual – not some facts bubble-wrapped in adjectives.

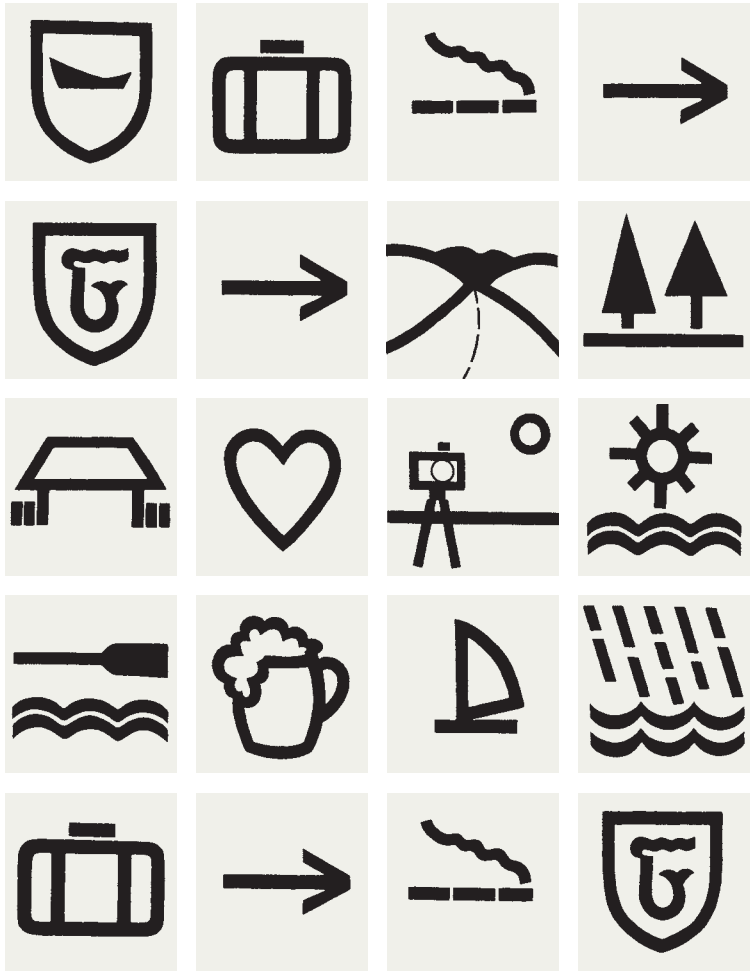
Another interesting assignment had to do with magazine covers. The students were to design a fictitious cover for the magazine, “Projekt” or “U&lc”. The cover, along with a characteristic vignette, represented the magazine. It had to correspond with the content of the issue. The special thing about a cover is that it works similarly to a poster – it should be noticed and understood at first glance. Sometimes, the scene depicted on the cover conveys broader associations, like the slogan “*Salus populi suprema lex*” (Let the welfare of the people be the supreme law) which the designer depicted behind the bars.

We also tried to familiarize our students with the notions of semiotics – the study of signs and their meanings. It had appeared in our practice quite early on as we were inspired by the experience of Ulm – *Semiotic Glossary* by Tomás Maldonado and Gui Bonsiepe¹⁰⁰ and the texts by Max Bense, accessible to us thanks to Ryszard Otręba. Several original and translated publications on the topic were also available at the bookstores. In the late seventies, we got a special issue of the “Visible Language” journal devoted to the use of semiotics in graphic design education. Among other excellent and inspiring material was a comprehensive description of the semiotic experience from Rhode Island School of Design, where I was to find myself just a few years later.

The process of analysis concerning the functioning of signs from the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic perspectives, as well as substitutions of signs and the relationships between semiotics and visual rhetoric, have become important elements of modern teaching programs. They have enriched the theoretical component of design and given us an effective tool for analysis.

David Crow talks about the term ‘sign’ (Latin *signans*, French *signifiant*) in the context of visual communication. It is a perceivable element of reality, irrelevant for its own characteristics but

100. See Tomás Maldonado, Gui Bonsiepe, *Computer System ELEA 9003, Design for the Alphabet of a New System of Signs: for Olivetti S. p. A., “Ulm” 1963, No. 8–9, pp. 20–24, 22.*



A series of signs: pictographic narrative about holidays. Designing signs was a permanent assignment in the program of my studio. Their diverse functions in the communication space were subjected to research and experiments. Students created narratives and translated them into the language of pictograms. The process wasn't easy, as it soon turned out that the pictorial language had no counterparts of verbs.

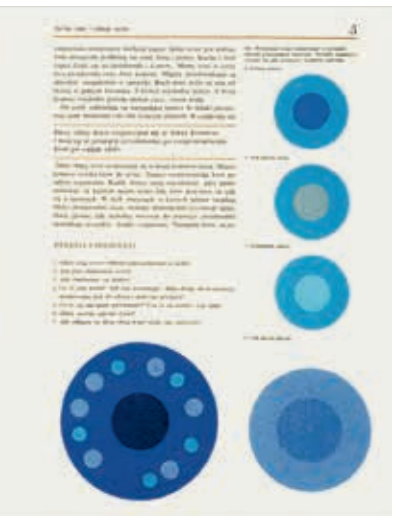
significant in relation to another element of reality to which it refers (Latin *signatum*, French *signifié*)¹⁰¹.

The introduction to the world of signs, their reference to the surrounding reality and how they function in communication, was the subject of many assignments, from elementary to very complex ones. An easy exercise was to make a synthetic drawing of an animal or fruit, find its dictionary definition and present the sign and the text together in form of a coherent composition. The complex projects included creating a universal and homogeneous system of signs for the various thematic sections of a newspaper.

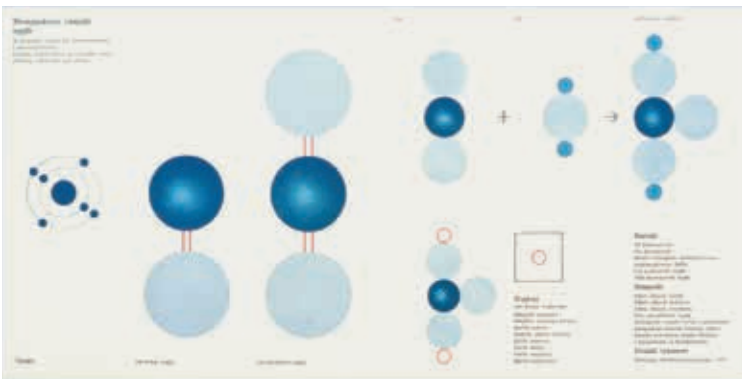
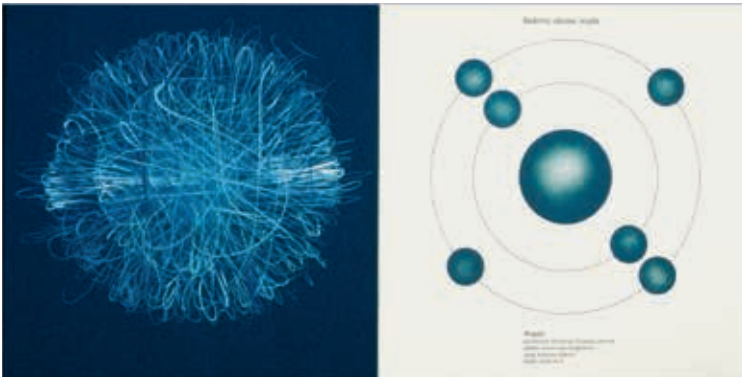
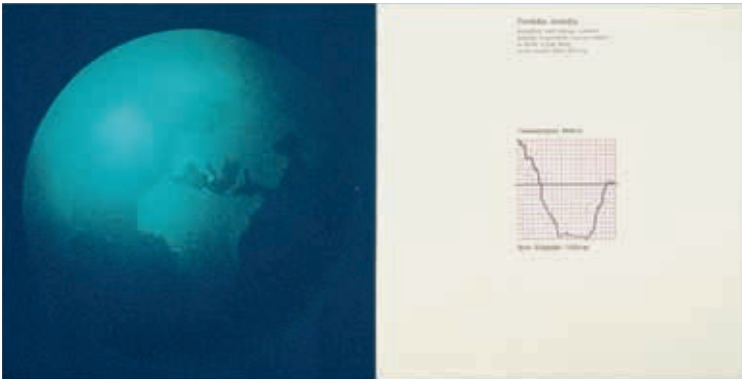
Designing a user's manual for tying a knot was a simple task which involved describing the process, dividing this description into smaller but significant pieces and finally presenting them in the form of info-signs. A similar but more complex exercise required using the language of signs to describe an event unfolding in time. The students were to first describe their holidays in words, divide the text into the smallest possible units of information and present them as a sequence of simple image-signs. They could use the 25 × 25 cm (9.5 × 9.5 in.) sheets of packing paper, a flat 2 cm (0.25 in.) brush as well as black and white poster colors. The signs were situated on a large format and they had to be homogeneous.

It soon became apparent that the visual language did not contain any verbs, so verbs had to be represented another way – by adjusting the distances between signs for instance. This narrative featured pictures of activities frozen in time and the distance between them had to be calibrated so that the viewer didn't lose track and was able to read the rhythm of consecutive events to figure out what it was all about. Later, I repeated this assignment at Ohio State University. I was surprised to discover that all the Ohio holiday stories referred to the students' summer jobs. In Poland, only one student went to Sweden to collect strawberries over the summer and saved enough money to buy himself a flat.

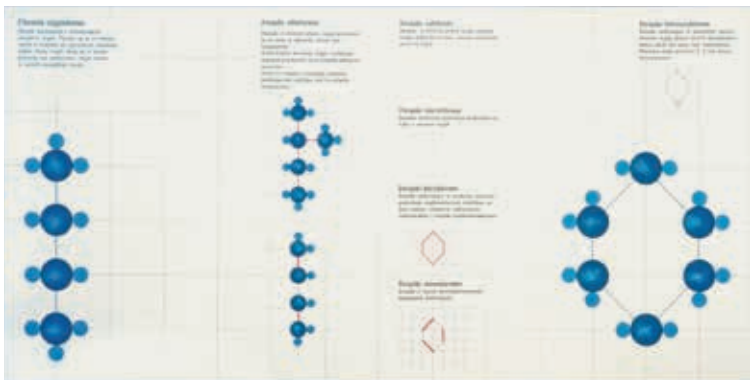
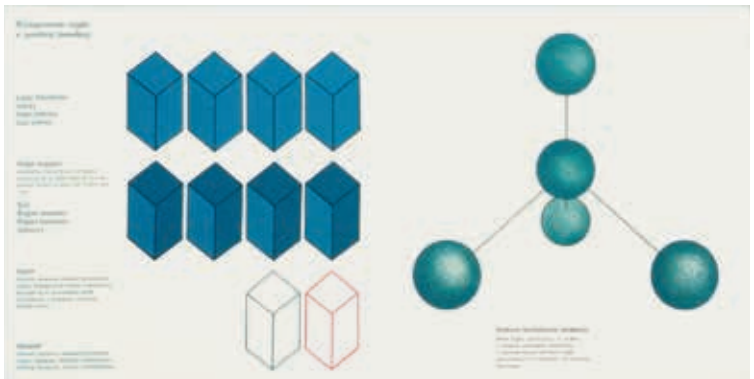
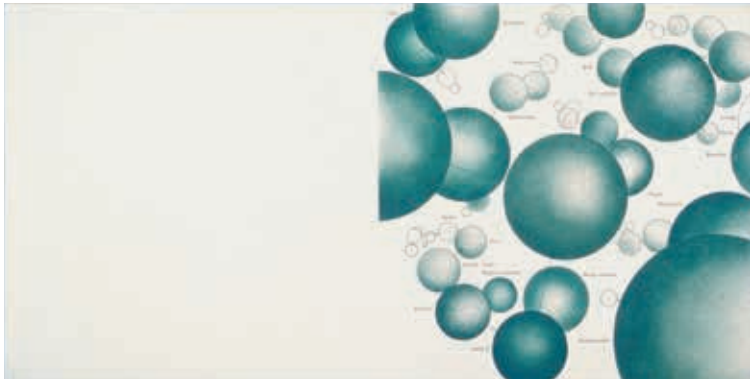
101. David Crow, *Left to Right. The Cultural Shift from Words to Pictures*, New York: Ava Publishing SA, 2006.



A prototype of a physics and human anatomy textbook. The objective records of knowledge, adapted to the recipient's abilities, were subject to research in the studio. Prototypes of school textbooks should use very simple and clear illustrations to explain the complicated issues of physics, anatomy and physiology.



A prototype of a chemistry textbook. The complex studies of carbon chemistry start with a single atom, through the more complicated particles and bonds, up to the model of a protein. This design attempted to show how inorganic chemistry gradually crosses over to organic chemistry.



We conducted assignments concerning book and textbook design as well. The textbook projects were very advanced and complex designs. Some of them were made in collaboration with the State Publisher for Education¹⁰². These included such publications as a lecture in organic chemistry and a textbook on anthropology. The description of skiing techniques, on the other hand, is an example of a manual.

The overall teaching objective of the studio was to have the graduates capable of producing the conceptual and executive designs of various types of periodicals. The sequence of assignments – from the easiest lettering contrasts to the most advanced semi-otic interpretations – aimed to shape the design awareness and provide the graduates with proper workshop skills. The students' layouts of magazine pages and spreads revealed the level of their readiness for a future independent practice. Looking at them today, forty years later, it is good to remember that they were made under very primitive technological conditions, incomparable to what students have at their disposal now in (my former) Studio No. 109. The designs presented here were the reinterpretations of titles existing on the market. Only the "Week" by Krzysztof Tyczkowski was a new enterprise. Nowhere in Poland had classes been conducted this way. The program we built was based on the very clearly stated extraordinary objectives, unknown and alien to other graphic departments. The only other studio offering a similar mode of education was that run by Ryszard Otręba in the Department of Industrial Design in Kraków.

In the seventies, were people interested in what was going on in the western design world?

I'm not sure. I think it was mainly the people of the industrial design departments who read about it. Their young professors were sent to the scholarships abroad. Ryszard Otręba read whatever he could lay his hands on, and so did Andrzej Pawłowski at the same Academy in Kraków. The latter was fluent in German and could read the Ulm materials. The common problem at the time

102. Polish: Państwowe Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne

PIERRE GUICHARD



Alles an ihnen ist

von **ANDREA CASARIT**

Es ist immer die Frage, ob es sich um einen professionellen Skifahrer handelt, der in den Winterurlauben ein Hobby betreibt, oder um einen Hobbyisten, der es ernst meint. In der Welt der Skifahrer gibt es zwei Typen: die sogenannten „Topchic“ und die „Professionellen“. Die „Topchic“ sind diejenigen, die in den Winterurlauben ein Hobby betreiben, während die „Professionellen“ es ernst meinen. Sie sind diejenigen, die in den Winterurlauben ein Hobby betreiben, während die „Professionellen“ es ernst meinen.

LEUTE MIT IDEE HABEN ERFOLG DURCH UNSERE ARB

von **ANDREA CASARIT**

Die Skifahrer sind diejenigen, die in den Winterurlauben ein Hobby betreiben, während die „Professionellen“ es ernst meinen. Sie sind diejenigen, die in den Winterurlauben ein Hobby betreiben, während die „Professionellen“ es ernst meinen.

Deshalb fallen Wintersport-Profis in Davos und Kitzbühl auf: außer ihrer Bräunehaut tragen sie ein Dress, das professionell aussieht. Die sprint-Modelle haben statt Skihasen-Firefanz den Topchic



CLICHES FOTOLITO BOZZET

Waschen und Trocknen in einem oder zwei Gebirgen?



CARL WITTLINGER

außer ihrer Bräunehaut tragen sie ein Dress, das professionell aussieht. Die sprint-Modelle haben statt Skihasen-Firefanz den Topchic der Ski-Professionellen. Alles an ihnen ist



Deshalb fallen Wintersport-Profis in Davos und Kitzbühl auf: außer ihrer Bräunehaut tragen sie ein Dress, das professionell aussieht. Die sprint-Modelle haben statt Skihasen-Firefanz den Topchic der Ski-Professionellen. Alles an ihnen ist

Foto von Fotografo

“Northern Panoramic” (above) and “Literature” (next page) are two fragments of the graduate projects redesigning the existing periodicals.



“Week” is a project of a new information magazine in the form of a tabloid.

was that people did not speak foreign languages. I don't think all the possible foreign scholarships were being filled.

When I started to teach, I realized that I needed some deeper knowledge about design. Kubasiewicz and I went to Kraków on several occasions to learn from Professor Otręba.

All in all, there were very few teaching programs of applied graphics. There was Ulm, focused more on industrial design, and the program of Pieter Brattinga, a Dutch designer who was invited to the Pratt Institute in New York in the mid-sixties. He was recognized in the field; back in Amsterdam he had a gallery and a small family print shop. Some smart person turned to him and together they defined the undergraduate program. It was described in a brochure I got as a gift from Ryszard Stanisławski in Łódź. I found it very useful. Besides, Roman Tomaszewski and Szymon Bojko had their shelves filled with the literature they brought from their travels. Roman had several issues of the "Journal of Typographic Research", which was later renamed "Visible Language". It contained very interesting articles about teaching typography, including the manifesto of the Society of Typographic Designers (STD)¹⁰³ - the best methodological text on what should be taught to students available.

Other articles included the one by Gui Bonsiepe of Ulm who wrote about the problem of normative aesthetic in typography. The starting point was a catalog of parts for Siemens. Before, similar attempts at finding a mathematical definition of form had been conducted by Professor George David Birkhoff of Harvard. Based on his assumptions, Bonsiepe and his students considered whether it was possible to apply the normative aesthetic to design and what the consequences would be. They described their attempt at creating such a catalog. It was really exciting. Andrzej Chętko used this as a foundation for a several page study of layouts for the "Life of Warsaw". As you can see, we did have various inspirations. The trouble was that the real typographic workshop remained unavailable to us behind the wall of censorship. All we had at the academy was the manual composing room with several

103. Today ISTD (International Society of Typographic Designers)

cases of type. We could experiment only on the conceptual level, not with the text sequences. Today, we set the texts on the computers and we can print them out instantly, in color.

You are like a mentor to me.

That is an overstatement. I am, or rather was, a designer and a teacher who had been lucky enough to be, and work, in interesting places and at a time when interesting things were going on. I had some good fortune and the support of people who appreciated what I was doing and who wished me well.

Tell me about them.

Some people are said to be lucky, others seem to be out of luck. I must have been lucky or maybe I've got a Guardian Angel, who allowed me to meet many sympathetic people along my way. It was the case in Paris, where after three months of futile job-search I came across Szymon Bojko in the subway and the next day he introduced me at SNIP. The same thing happened when Roman Cieślęwicz led me into "Jeune Afrique."

As I said, I was on the team of typography teachers at ATYPI, so I used to go to their conferences and seminars, where I met famous typographers: Herb Lubalin and his colleague Aaron Burns – of the International Typeface Corporation (ITC) – who promoted new typefaces for phototypesetting and sold new type families. Their company was run by a man of the old Polish emigration, John Prentki, a very skillful and shrewd manager. In 1976, I met him at the ATYPI conference in Lausanne, Switzerland. ITC was organizing the international conference Vision '77 in Rochester, New York, the following year. John invited me. I had to say, "Thank you, but I can't afford to come and my Academy won't fund this." He replied that although he could not pay for my flight, if I found myself in Rochester, he would cover my conference fee and the stay. I scraped up the money for the ticket and flew to Rochester.

The conference was very interesting. It was the first time I heard about dot matrix printing as the future of typography. I met lots of great people, including Colin Forbes of Pentagram, Massimo Vignelli and others – I never thought I would meet in person.



Studies of ascending use of minimal typographic means to build the newspaper pages using “Life of Warsaw” as an example. This project attempted to answer the question about how many algorithmic decisions must be made in order to build a proper, minimal newspaper page, so that it is ready for the reader’s reception. It was inspired by the studies of normative aesthetic conducted at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, as well as the studies of mathematical records of aesthetic values led by George David Birkhoff at the Harvard University.

Although I had had a very intensive course in English and I could communicate, I found it quite difficult to understand everything as my ear was not familiar with various accents. Luckily, the presentations were mostly based on visuals, so I was able to follow the comments.

From the hotel in Rochester I called Lou Danziger, who lived in Los Angeles. I had previously corresponded with him, and then he visited us in Łódź and in our home in Warsaw. Instantly, he invited me over. When I replied that I had no money or time to spare because I still wanted to see New York, he said: “Grab a pencil,” and dictated the telephone number of George Tscherny – a brilliant graphic designer and a wonderful person of Hungarian descent. Lou Danziger told me to call him on my arrival in NY. I did, right after I set foot at the bus station and George and his wife Sonia invited me for dinner on the spot. I bought a bunch of flowers and headed towards their house on 73rd Street. The stairs led to the second level; the space was beautiful. I remember a large round table. Sonia was a lovely lady from the Czech Sudetes Mountains. They had two daughters. At the table sat the Tschernys, James Miho – an American of Japanese origin, brilliant designer, and Tomáš Gonda, one of the most influential people in Ulm.

After dinner, George invited me to his studio downstairs, which opened onto the garden. He asked what I wanted to see in New York and recommended some things. Thirty minutes later, he brought me a typed itinerary for the following ten days: hours, places – I still don’t know how he managed to organize all that. Among other things, I had an appointment at the “New York Times” with Louis Silverstein, the art director.

By no means was I prepared for such visits. I did not have any formal clothing. Still, I went to see Silverstein. He was a short, stocky man, like a wrestler of sorts. I knew exactly who he was; he did not really know anything about me, but I had a great recommendation. I brought slides with my students’ work and with my own projects. I introduced myself and told him about my work. I put the folder on the floor and presented the sheets of slides one by one. As he was looking at them, I could tell he understood what they were about. I described our studies on the form of existing papers, and he said: “I have also done that, but never in color.”

He found several analogies. It was apparent that he appreciated me as a professional.

We went to have lunch in the directors' diner on the twelfth floor accompanied by Andrew Knerr, Tscherny's colleague, a graphic designer of Hungarian descent responsible for the "NYT" self-promotion. The room was small. White-clad waiters serving on silver platters – upper class style. Silverstein leaned in and said, "Can you see President Kennedy's sister at the next table?" And there I was – wearing jeans and a Wrangler jacket.

Then he led me downstairs to the in-house museum of the "New York Times" history presenting its development over time. From there we went to the area where particular sections of the paper had their tables, made matrices, designed layouts. In the tourism section he explained everything. When it was time to say goodbye, Silverstein was curious about my plans. I had a couple of days left, then I was heading back to Warsaw. He asked if I had to go. I said: yes, I had small kids, my family. He replied that if I ever found myself in New York again, I had a job with "NYT," and gave me his business card. I must admit I was glowing with pride. This convinced me that the program we created in Łódź was of real value, and my own design work was presentable as well.

I returned to Poland and my life took its regular course. A year later, I received a letter from the Department of Visual Communication Design at Ohio State University in Columbus saying that their structure included a vacancy for guest lecturers, and that George Tscherny had recommended me. The system consisted of ten-week terms and they would like to invite me for the spring term of 1979. After discussing this offer with my school authorities, I was given an unpaid leave and off I went. I was teaching in English for the first time and I must have done a good job, because mid-term the head of the department said, "There is a vacancy in the fall term, could you come again?" So, I came back to Poland for the summer break, extended my leave from the Academy, and left for September, October and November. All in all, I spent twenty weeks there. The second time was much easier. My ear started to actually hear what the students were saying and I was familiar with the procedures. We did some very good practical assignments, I still have them recorded on slides.



Analysis of a typographic form (or lack thereof!) of the first page of "The Banner of Youth" newspaper, published in Poland between 1950 and 1997. The true nature of the typographic mess on this front page was made apparent by marking each decision in color. The used styles and sizes of typefaces as well as the width and spacing of the columns contradict any typographic rules.



The eighties
How to teach others

**“Perfection is attained, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing more to take away.
(Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)”**

(p. 208)

How did you find yourself at RISD – Rhode Island School of Design?

In June 1981, Helsinki held a joint conference on integrated design which involved three organizations connected with the field: ICOGRADA – graphics, ICSID – industrial design, and IFI – interior architecture.¹⁰⁴ Having had much experience with ATYPI events, I was asked by the Association of Polish Artists and Designers (ZPAP) to represent Poland. I gathered documentation on integrated design in Polish architecture, interior design and graphics of the twenties and thirties, and our delegation went to Finland. I had my paper written, but as it turned out I was unable to present it as I had planned. I had never had any proper English lessons at school, I had not read texts out loud, it was tough. Grueling. I did present interesting visuals though, so it was received well. That was one time – last time that I had read a lecture out. Ever since, I would prepare points and speak. Everybody was kind and sympathetic. It was the summer of 1981 and the political situation in Poland – under the communist regime – was being discussed worldwide. The “Solidarity” pins were sought-after.

In the conference schedule I read that there were going to be presentations of programs run by Thomas Ockerse from the Rhode

104. ICOGRADA (International Council of Graphic Design Associations);
ICSID (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design);
IFI (International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers)

Island School of Design in the U.S.A., and by Jorge Frascara from the University of Alberta in Canada. I knew who Ockerse was, and that this school was a great one. From Ohio, I remembered a conversation about Joe Godlewski, a graphic artist of the old Polish emigration, who graduated from Yale. (I met him at the Indiana State University in Bloomington during my first stay in America in 1977 and I was delighted with what he was doing there). The Ohio school had a vacancy and I suggested Godlewski, but they replied: "D'oh, we wanted to employ him, but the Rhode Island School of Design got to him first. We could not compete with RISD." That was how I learned about its value. Later, I came across their brochures in the issue of "Visible Language" devoted to education. Being convinced that the presentation would be interesting, I brought the whole group to Thomas Ockerse's lecture. And we were not disappointed. He showed very good student works and the program built around the concept of visual semiotics. The next day we went to Lahti to visit design studios. At some point we took a break and were lying on the grass at the ski jump having lunch. Ockerse and I got to talking; I had brought the slides and documentation from Łódź with me. Thomas was surprised to see that many of our assignments and problems to solve were similar to what their students did at RISD. We exchanged business cards. Then we took a train back to Helsinki together. I spoke English with Thomas, and Polish with the others. Suddenly, a young man weighed in – speaking Polish as well – Peter Gyllan from Copenhagen. He emigrated from Poland in 1968, first got to England, graduated from Central Saint Martins, and then went to Denmark to work for Lego. Later, he became a professor in Copenhagen. Our train ride was very pleasant and we came back to Poland soon after.

Several months later, during martial law in Poland, on January 10 or 15, 1981, my door-bell rang. Through a peep-hole, I saw a soldier. "Citizen Lenk? Sign here," he said and handed me a telegram with triangular stamps of military censorship. Thomas Ockerse wrote that he would like to invite me for one academic year, starting September 10. Then, we were under martial law, so it was like the angel's descent to Babylon. I took this telegram and went to the Foreign Relations Department of the Ministry of Culture



RISD.
Graphic Design
Department

which had sent me to ATyPI on numerous occasions. There were nice ladies in this office, including Ms Mrozek, who was responsible for art and design issues. I entered the building – military men everywhere, guards, passes. The lady greeted me kindly, despite the gloomy situation. I smiled at her, she had always been friendly and helpful. Without a word, I put the telegram in front of her. “What do I answer? Could I ask my Academy and the Ministry for permission to leave?” And she said, “I don’t know, but I can look into that. It’ll take some time, come again in two weeks, on Friday.”



RISD. A part of the campus is situated by Narragansett Bay with Newport, which holds popular jazz festivals, on its other end. The old building in the bottom photograph is the Market House, erected in 1775, which was once used as a slave market. The one in the background on the right is a former bank. Its bottom part now holds a library with almost three hundred thousand volumes, and the top part is a dormitory.

We were all very excited – an invitation to America at the onset of martial law! There was an armored troop carrier at the corner of our street, soldiers keeping warm around a brazier, curfew, disconnected telephone lines. On the said Friday, I pushed through the barriers again only to hear Ms Mrozek say: “I have got no reply yet. Come back on Tuesday; I might know something.” I was not leaving as joyfully as I came in. On Tuesday, I went there once more – I could not call, because the telephones weren’t working – and she smiled, “Yes, you can submit your papers.” That was all I wanted to hear. Having filed an application with the ministry, I headed to Rector Garboliński in Łódź and said, “I have an invitation, the ministry has given the preliminary consent. Would you agree, would you endorse my application?” He signed it. I had to conclude a contract with the Polish Artists Agency “Pagart” stating that I would transfer some portions of my salary on their account. I filed the documents and obtained the final decision. Based on that, my wife Ewa and our kids received passports for a year, but... I did not. My passport had gone missing somehow. I had my air ticket booked, but I could not purchase it without an American visa, and I could not get a visa without my passport. It was a very hectic time. My passport finally did resurface at the last moment, and off we went.

Tell me about how you started in the States.

It was supposed to be a one-year stay and the pay would have been modest even for me alone. It was really hard. We had to save up to buy a car, as it was impossible to get around without it, even in Providence. We went with no heating during our first winter in America because we could not afford it. The upside was that without blasting radiators the cold humid air had cured our son Jacek of his chronically enlarged adenoid and the surgery scheduled in Poland in a year was not necessary after all.

At school, I was given two groups to teach – two levels of typography. Thomas needed a favor, though: Joe Godlewski, who used to teach Information Design, had just left and there was nobody to take this class. He asked me if I could do it. The class concerned diagrams and graphs. Obviously, I wouldn’t say no to

any of his requests. This is how both my love affair with diagrams and my twenty eight year adventure of teaching at RISD began.

In the eighties, I did not do much outside of teaching. I did one book about the language of Native Americans for Brown University, and a few in-house posters for RISD, that was it. I focused on learning in order to teach. A teacher in the United States is contractually obligated to twenty-one active teaching hours a week, and this also requires some preparation time, because the classes include lectures on the specialty you teach. All the components (a program, student assignments, evaluation criteria etc.) must be defined in detail in the so-called syllabuses.

So you started teaching classes at RISD without preparation or textbooks?

The typography courses were not a problem to me. I had my own design practice as well as the teaching experience of the ten years I had taught in Łódź. I had not, however, run any classes on diagrams before. At RISD it was called Design of Diagrams, Charts and Graphs. I was thrown into the deep end, because I was supposed to teach something I knew a bit about in practice, but my knowledge was not grounded in any theory. I had made a promise to Thomas Ockerse, however, so I started to learn what I was to teach. This required some time, and the classes were already underway.

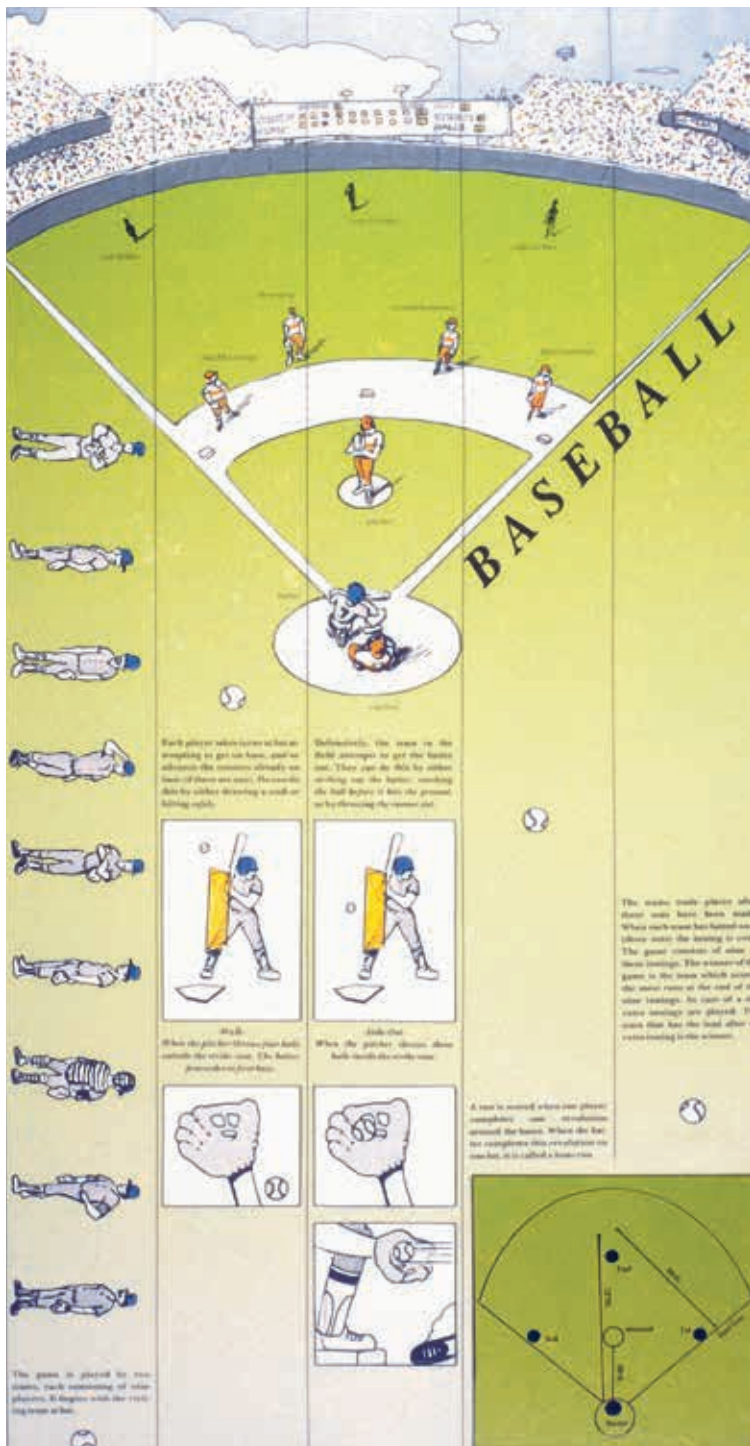
I got an idea to give my students an assignment where they would graphically present and explain something to me I could not understand. By means of diagrams, they were to show me what a game of baseball was all about. At home, we had a tiny black-and-white tv and I sometimes watched a baseball game, but nothing appeared to be going on. The guys were chewing something and spat a lot (later I learned it was tobacco), then something happened really fast, then nothing again, and the crowd was going wild. I could not understand anything; I wasn't native to the land of baseball. My students did know, of course, but knowing about something and presenting it are two different things. They would bring their sketches featuring the rules of the game and I was a litmus paper, saying, "I get it" or "I don't get it." This way I managed

to bypass a troublesome situation. It was up to my students to produce visual explanations that I could easily understand.

The baseball assignment opened my eyes to the idea that I could be both an instructor and a test subject, which made my work much easier. Luckily, during a few weeks of my first fall semester there, an excellent English designer Henri Kay Henrion was in the department. I had known him from Poland; he had been at the АТУП and at the congress of Alliance Graphique Internationale; Mroszczak and he were friends. Henrion was feeling lonely in Providence so we took him in. He turned out to be a nice and interesting companion who introduced me to the amazing world of diagrams. He used to work with the Neuraths, and after Otto's death, with his wife Marie, who took over the Isotype institute. He was a refugee from Germany, and she – from Vienna, so they had very much in common.

When I was complaining to him that there weren't any books about diagrams I could use in my class (and that it was the first time I had to teach this subject), he said, "Of course there are. Go to the library at Brown University and find the history of science section; the diagrams you need are in these books." Henrion was a wise man. He told me I could not expect to find books on how to design diagrams, because there were none. All I could do was study the examples. He also made me realize that diagrams were always made for a particular discipline and remained connected with it, so they had their respective characteristics and methods of the visual presentation of information.

As it turned out, at Brown University the history of science section took two floors of the library. I was able to see how the diagrams had developed in geology, astronomy, physics, mechanics – all of those disciplines had their own diagrams, their own language and manners of articulation. It was a gold mine of materials for me. I gathered a large collection of slides presenting various methods of translating data into visual language. This way I learned what I needed. The library had free access to the shelves, so I could walk around and explore, make scans and slides – it was fantastic.



Each player takes turns at bat, attempting to get to base, and to advance the runners already on base (if there are any). Runners may be either thrown out or sliding safely.

Defensively, the team in the field attempts to get the batter out. They can do this by either striking out the batter, catching the ball before it hits the ground, or by throwing the runner out.



Wait
When the pitcher throws, your batsman waits for the ball. The batter must be ready for the ball.



Strike
When the pitcher throws, your batsman swings at the ball. If the ball is not in the strike zone, the batter is out.



Ball
A ball is thrown when your player catches the ball. The ball is thrown from the pitcher's hand.



Strike
A ball is thrown when your player catches the ball. The ball is thrown from the pitcher's hand.



Ball
A ball is thrown when your player catches the ball. The ball is thrown from the pitcher's hand.

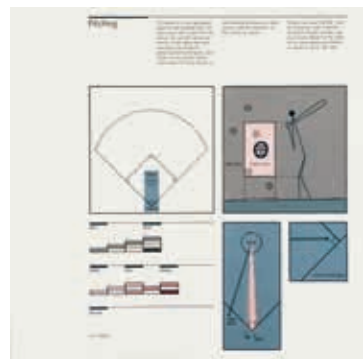
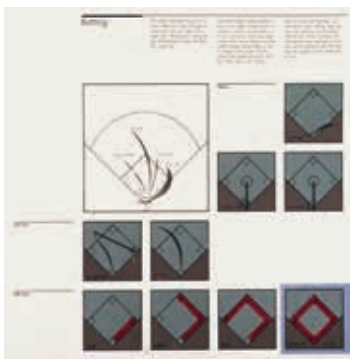
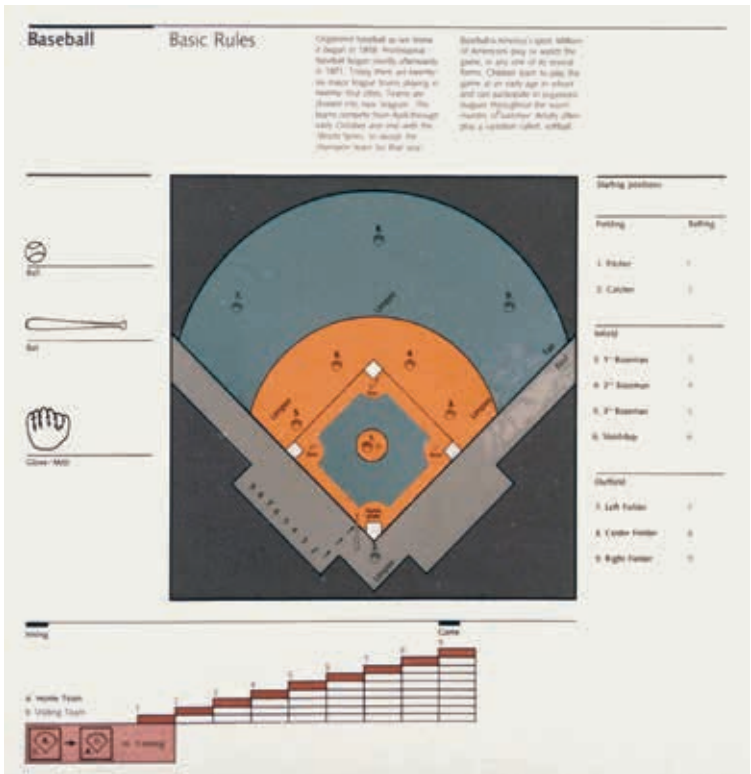


Strike
A ball is thrown when your player catches the ball. The ball is thrown from the pitcher's hand.

The game ends when the pitcher has thrown nine balls. Each team has nine innings to hit and run. The game ends when the pitcher has thrown nine balls. Each team has nine innings to hit and run.

A run is scored when your player reaches home. The ball is thrown from the pitcher's hand.





Introduction to baseball. The two designs attempt to explain the rules of the game. The first one assumed a form of a popular, rather naive illustration. The other used the language of diagrams and conveyed the information in a precise and direct way. Trying to understand the rules of this game, it turned out that the more "illustrative" presentations facilitated understanding more, because the information was considered in context of many other details. This conclusion took me by surprise.

I found this topic absorbing and the discussions with Henrion were passionate. He was fascinated with computers and longed for the time when computer technology would allow us to operate on the data, change them and see these changes on the screen in real time. The diagrams would become dynamic and would be formed before our eyes. We could enter the data, and the computer would process them and return the possible options.

The idea of dynamic diagrams was so exciting that when we launched our studio in 1990 and decided to work only with diagrammatic visual information, it was obvious to name it Dynamic Diagrams – after Henrion and his vision that, with time, the diagrams would become animated in real time. When we were talking about it in 1982, it was only a fantastic speculation. But here we are, not long after, and it has become reality!

Beside Henrion, I would also like to mention several people whom I should thank for their support. In 1985, when the 238 issue of “Graphis” with an article about my students’ diagrams was published, I got a call from Richard Saul Wurman. He was an architect and a promoter of diagrams and information architecture who organized conferences on the subject. He was a pioneer, a market leader. I had a few of his books and appreciated them immensely. He phoned me to say that he was delighted with my students’ works and he praised me and my program. It was fantastic, the master said, “Well done, my boy, well done.” After that he supported me throughout his professional career; he truly appreciated what I was doing at RISD. Wurman was the one to conceive and run the TED conferences until 2003. I was invited free of charge to them, and had my TED talk in 2001. He also asked me to collaborate on some of his information design book projects, as in *Information Architects* (1996) and *Understanding USA* (2000).

One of my true mentors in America was Lou Danziger, a Los Angeles graphic designer and professor with whom I corresponded since the early seventies. We exchanged letters and publications. I subscribed him to “Projekt” and he subscribed me to “Print”; he would send me some very useful books, like the one about symbols written by Dreyfuss¹⁰⁵. Danziger also recommended publications,

105. See: Henry Dreyfuss, *Symbol Sourcebook: An Authoritative Guide to International Graphic Symbols*, New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1972.

Diagrams Charts Graphs

Figure Eight

A series of interconnected diagrams and graphs illustrating various concepts. The diagrams use a grid system to show relationships between different elements. One diagram shows a path that starts at a point, moves horizontally, then vertically, and then diagonally, forming a shape reminiscent of the number eight. Another diagram shows a series of interconnected lines forming a complex, multi-dimensional structure.

The text accompanying the diagrams discusses the use of diagrams in design and how they can be used to communicate complex information in a clear and concise manner. It mentions that diagrams can be used to show the relationship between different parts of a system, and how they can be used to solve problems and make decisions.

The diagrams are presented in a grid format, with each diagram occupying a specific cell. The diagrams are arranged in a way that allows the viewer to see the relationships between them and how they build upon each other. The text is placed around the diagrams, providing context and explanation for each one.

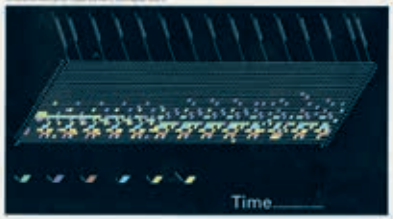
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Walter Herdeg is the editor of the Swiss bimonthly "Graphis". He has dedicated ten pages of the magazine to reproductions of the works of students from the Rhode Island School of Design. Herdeg is a well-known figure in the design world, and his work has been influential in the development of modern design.

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Page spreads of the No. 238 of the Swiss bimonthly "Graphis". Walter Herdeg, the editor, dedicated ten pages to the reproductions of my students' works. It was a significant event, which resulted in many interesting contacts and... earned me a few enemies as well.

resources and people who might provide me with direct or indirect inspiration. We became good friends. Another authority, and a very helpful person in my life, was Paul Rand; I will talk about him later. They were the main important figures.

Diagrams, however, I was studying on my own. When Edward Tufte published his book, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*¹⁰⁶ in 1983, I had already been ahead of that; I knew more. I would see something here, hear something there or somebody would suggest something. All the while I was gathering and blending it all together.

Coming to RISD, I brought several books with me. One of them was *Diagrams* published by “Graphis” – as if prophetic, because it presented the modern diagrams. It included no history, only the state-of-the-art solutions of the recent years. I found it very inspiring. As it turned out, it was also the only book on this subject at the RISD library.

Thomas Ockerse had in his collection an important book by Willard Brinton, *Graphic Methods for Presenting Facts*¹⁰⁷, published in 1914. He lent it to me, and then I bought my own copy. Looking for books about diagrams, I came across a larger, seven hundred pages long publication by Karsten¹⁰⁸, a student of Brinton’s, published in 1923. Both of these books concerned the methods of presenting numerical information: statistics; maps filled with data; structures of organization and what’s important – the knowledge was condensed. I also bought, *From Cave Painting to Comic Strip*¹⁰⁹ – the history of visual communication by Hogben. At the Brown University library I found the fundamental book of Neurath’s, published in 1939. *Modern Man in the Making*¹¹⁰ included most of Neurath’s diagrams that were in the general use, along with all the explanations behind them. Later Jacques Bertin’s *Semiology*

106. See Edward R. Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, Cheshire: Graphics Press, 1983.

107. See Willard C. Brinton, *Graphic Methods for Presenting Facts*, New York: Engineering Magazine Company, 1914

108. See Karl G. Karsten, *Charts and Graphs*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1923.

109. See Lancelot T. Hogben, *From Cave Painting to Comic Strip: A Kaleidoscope of Human Communication*, New York: Chanticleer Press, 1949.

110. See Otto Neurath, *Modern Man in the Making*, New York: Knopf, 1939.

of *Graphics*¹¹¹ was released, and I bought this one, too. Those were the essential publications.

Within the RISD scholarship I went to England, to Reading University, which held the Isotype archive. Michael Twyman, who had known me from ATYP1, gave me the key and let me go through all the drawers. It was one of the biggest adventures of my life.

The knowledge I have gathered is like a mosaic of gems.

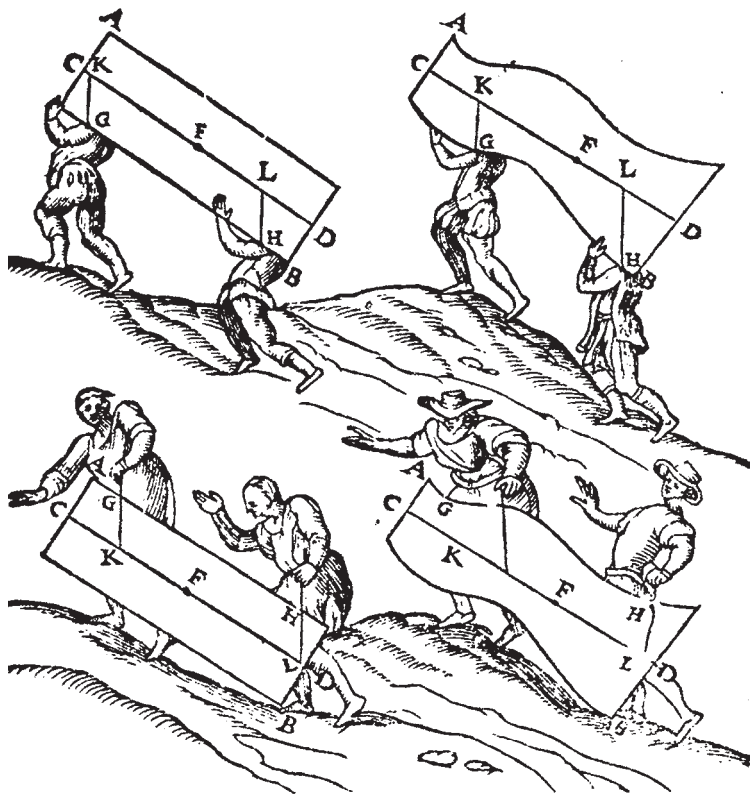
What are the key languages of diagrammatic communication in various disciplines? What absorbed your attention so much that you developed it formally with your students?

The answer will be complicated and a bit misleading. In American schools (the good ones for sure) the education is double-track, meaning the program, and the teacher who executes it, aim to equip the students with both practical skills and theoretical knowledge of the discipline – the two are inseparable. The professional knowledge, which includes the knowledge of the contexts of the discipline, is an inalienable part of the designer's education. Every class in the studio (five hours a week, twelve times in a semester) begins with a lecture; it is a monograph or a lecture about particular phenomena. For example, if it was about Eadweard Muybridge, who used cameras to record motion in 1880s. Wondering why he did that, you would ask questions about the basics of visual language.

We know there are two categories of records. One refers to a particular object and how it works, so it remains in close relation to the material world and is quite obvious. The a sender of a message knows that the viewer will be able to decode it and receive the information.

Another category involves talking about abstract things that have no material form. In that case, one needs to create a new, intermediate reality; the generated communication must be clear through its internal coherence and narrative. Maps are a good example of intermediate diagrammatic records. Although maps

111. See Jacques Bertin, *Semiology of Graphics*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.



A woodcut print from Simon Stevin's book on statics. It is a very peculiar illustration, merging the abstract, difficult to understand scientific information with the realistic image of the world. To the best of my knowledge, it is the first such case in the history of visual communication.

describe a physical reality, it is reality we might never entirely comprehend. You can draw a map of your room, your house, an architectural plan, a more abstract city plan. These you can still see and comprehend, but a country, for instance, cannot be imagined well based on the map.

In the academic bookstore at Ohio State I found a small book about statics illustrated with old woodcut prints. The illustrations were brilliant; they fueled my imagination and I still treasure them. As it turned out, they came from a 1586 book by

Simon Stevin¹¹², one of the founders of modern algebra, an engineer, who was a great figure of his times, as well as a professor, an educator. He published the work about statics dedicated to his students. In order to make his text and mathematical formulas clear and digestible, he engaged both the imagination and the former experience of the student through constructing a diagram on the realistic as well as abstract levels. This phenomenal method of sharing knowledge relies upon incorporating the new, abstract information into the preexisting bodily experience, the experience of life in the physical world. Later, when I applied this method in my own work, it functioned very well in my discussions with students.

Using diagrams in the science world is not easy. Sometimes, researchers turn to drawings in order to see some relationships themselves. Then, a drawing or a diagram becomes an integral part of their work and can be hard to understand for a layman. Other times, scientists use the visual records to share their discoveries or inventions with the world.

Let us think about textbooks. Studying is much easier when the text is complemented with diagrams-illustrations – to mention only Diderot's Encyclopedia and his attempt to note down the knowledge of that time. In my library, I have several interesting books on various applications of diagrams in science. The most absorbing one is *Tous les savoirs du monde*¹¹³, in French, which accompanied the inauguration of the new buildings of the Bibliothèque nationale – a four-thousand-year history of the visual records of human knowledge. Actually, the opening page of its section on Hypermedia contains a photo of my work from Dynamic Diagrams, taken from a lecture Paul Kahn gave in Montpellier in 1995.

By definition, a diagram is a simplification presenting the very essence of a problem; it is a model of this problem and its clear representation. The more accurate and simple the means of

112. See Simon Stevin, *De Beghinselen der Weeghconst* (Principles of Statics), 1586.

113. *Tous les savoirs du monde. Encyclopédies et bibliothèques, de Sumer au xxie siècle*, Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France-Flammarion, 1996.

expression, the more legible the whole diagram will be. This reminds me of a quote by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: “Perfection is attained, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing more to take away.”¹¹⁴

Obviously, what slips by are all the subtleties and characteristic features, possibly important if you approach a given subject from another perspective. A diagram usually shows only one selected aspect. This could be the reason why we tend to treat it as a “comic book” in relation to the entirety of the complex problem it presents. Nonetheless, it is an irreplaceable tool when it comes to things like: statistics; presenting the course of events over a period of time or in diverse geographical locations; showing the anatomy of an organism; the operation of mechanisms and devices, as well as forces and various organizations; the broadly defined navigation (even in the virtual space) and so on.

The history of statistical data visualization began between the late 18th and the early 19th centuries with William Playfair, but it was the censuses and development of large companies that opened the way for Willard Brinton and later for Jacques Bertin in France. It is one thing to collect such an amount of data, but the real challenge is to find the information they convey and extract the changes between the censuses – where some things rapidly appear and other collapse. That was how the data visualization started: to show at a glance that something has changed, was out of the ordinary.

All the things I’ve been talking about are part of professional knowledge, also the theory, which students should gain from the class on diagrams. Moreover, the program of our school includes the humanities: history, social sciences and literature. These subjects constitute one third of the credits students need to earn during their undergraduate studies.

114. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Airman’s Odyssey*, S. Gilbert, L. Galantière (trans.), Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1984 (first pub.1942), p. 40

time and budget

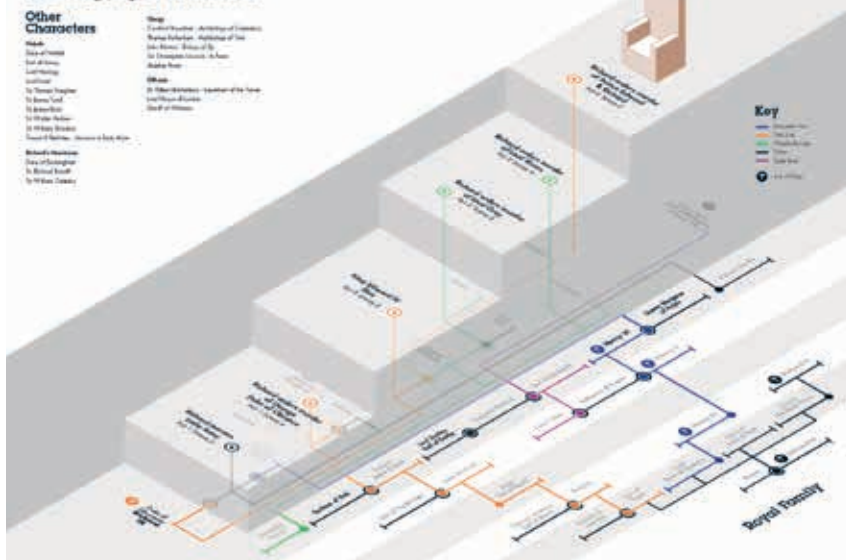
[September 16th - December 16th]

the visual analysis of my semester



RISD student's time and budget. RISD is an expensive school. The cost of one academic year is more or less seventy thousand dollars. Questions about the structure of expenses and use of a student's time had often recurred in the form of various assignments in the information design classes.

Steps to the Throne The Tragedy of Richard III



Presentation of Richard III's way to the throne.

You started your students off with explaining the game of baseball to you. It was their first assignment. You read a lot, and then?

I followed up with similar assignments and lectures. In one assignment, I asked students to illustrate how they spent their time between September 15 and December 15, which was the length of one semester. They were to present a budget in relation to time, how they used the space they lived in and show the typical routes they took around RISD and in town using three interrelated diagrams. I found it really interesting as well, because I could learn about the American students' lifestyle and what costs they bore.

If I recall well, you had also assigned them to analyze **Richard III by Shakespeare?**

Yes, but it was not an analysis of the play's structure, it was about the characters. I asked them to present the mutual relationships of the people featured in the play.

Millenium
Millenium **Decade**
Millenium **Century** **Decade**
Millenium **Century** **Decade** **Year**
Millenium **Century** **Decade** **Year**
Millenium **Century** **Decade** **Year**
Millenium **Century** **Decade** **Year**
Millenium **Century** **Decade** **Year**

Representing a four-digit number without the use of numerals is a more complicated design puzzle than it seems. As it turns out, you need to create a hierarchical system comprehensible to the recipient and only then fill it in with proper information.

What made you think of this assignment? Why did you refer to Shakespeare’s drama?

It features so many characters and diverse relationships that it made good material for interesting diagrams. Besides, a little out of spite. When I came here, to America, and made a reference to Shakespeare I discovered that few of my students had read his plays, even in this prestigious school. Those who had read or seen them, remembered nothing. This irritated me and I forced them to read Richard III, because I could remember the performance I had seen at the Ateneum Theater very well. The first question was: What are the characters of the drama and what are the relationships between them? The second: Who killed whom and how? (almost everybody dies in Shakespeare’s plays). As the students began reading, they came to the studio with their notes, which they exchanged during our discussions. Once we named all the *dramatis personae*, we could classify them: first, those in the royal court and those outside; second, the people of the court

divided into the members of the royal family and other notables; third, the royal family lineage as it was formed from the houses of Tudor, Lancaster and York had to be presented visually. Then came the second layer of illustrations showing who died and how. All this in one assignment generated some very interesting diagrams.

Another time, I asked them to show Richard's path to the throne through his marriages and intrigues. This play makes references to Henry IV and other works, so the students had to research Shakespeare's plays in search of information – they became more widely read and surely kept the memories of breaking through an Elizabethan text.

All of these assignments entailed group discussions and critiques, as well as comparison of the final results. I think it was a very important element of my students' education.

Was it difficult to create such assignments?

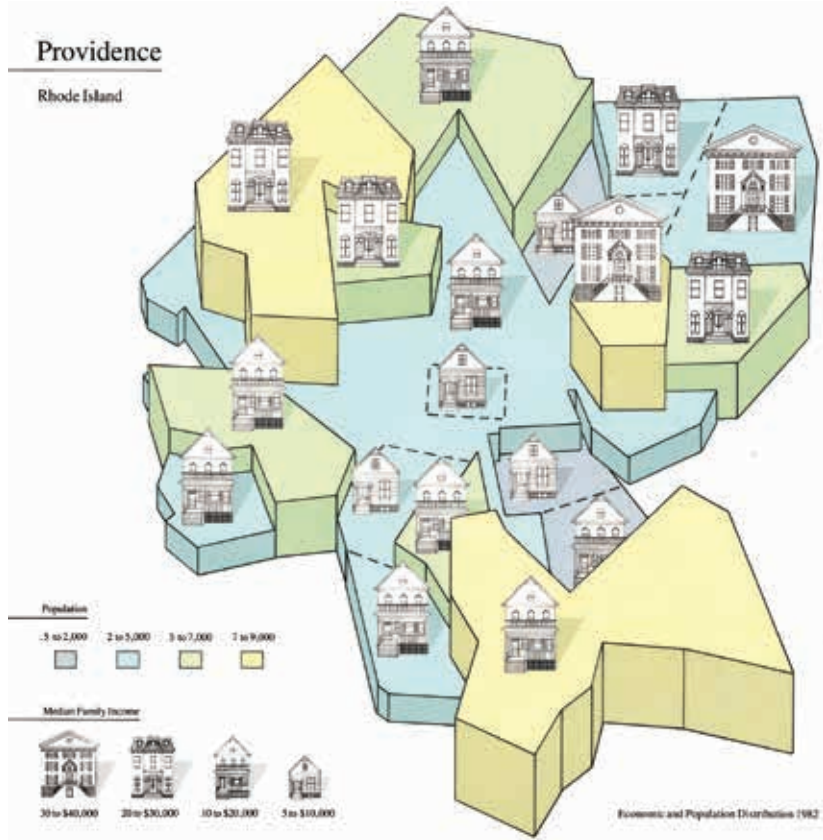
I don't know. It is expected of the teachers at RISD. When I arrived in 1982, RISD probably had the best undergraduate program in the world, while Yale had the best graduate program. I was invited because of the assignments I had thought of in Łódź – and I continued them. In any case, I used many of the Łódź assignments at RISD as well. The one about presenting a four-digit number using no figures I had done before with Jan Kubasiewicz.

I wanted to know more about Providence, the city where I lived, so I asked the students to show me the level of affluence and the density of population in one picture. Providence is divided into tax areas according to the income. As it turned out, in the areas of higher income the houses were built on larger allotments, so the distances between the families were greater as well. (This might seem obvious, but the students had to show it in their presentations.)

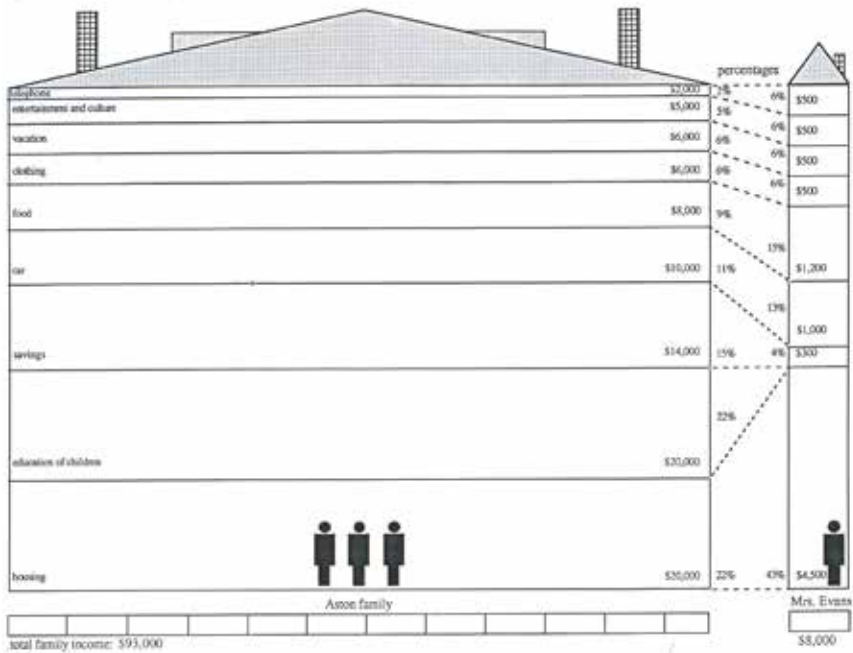
Considering the financial situation of an American family in the nineteen eighties, we came to the conclusion that a family with a significant income, where both parents worked and earned well, but had four children in good schools who took extracurricular classes and also needed shoes etc., was often worse off than

Providence

Rhode Island



Taxes in Providence. The assignment was to present the average family income in relation to the density of population in a given tax region. Colors stand for the population density and the characteristic styles of houses – for the affluence of families.



Family finances. Diverse aspects of the American family's economic situation were often the subject of our analytical studies. This chart was designed in 1986 on the first Macintosh computers and printed on a dot-matrix printer.

an elderly retired teacher living on a small pension, because her needs were very limited.

I had a two-level pedagogical objective behind these assignments: to teach the students how to analyze and visually present the data and - in the process - to make them reflect on social issues that might normally escape their attention. As the students discovered for themselves that affluence is something relative and dependent upon many factors, they became more socially aware.

Later, in 1994 I think, I assigned my students the task of comparing three wars: the First Iraq War of George Bush senior in 1991,

the Vietnam War and the Korean War. I was surprised, not for the first time though, at how resourceful the students could be, and that was before Google. They went to the libraries and found the published CIA reports, public specialist data; all they had to do was ask. A week later each of the three groups brought me a pile of statistical print-outs. As they had all the required materials, we talked about the methodology of information design. What differentiates data from information and what processing it needs in order to become a meaningful communication.

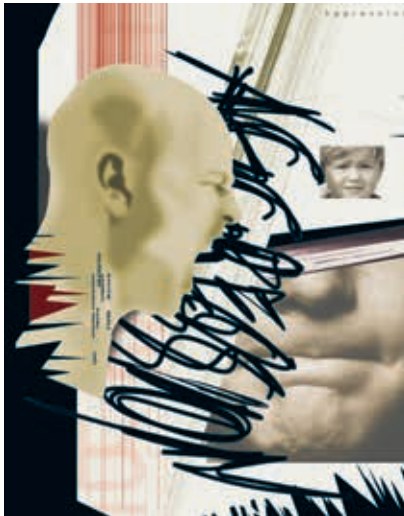
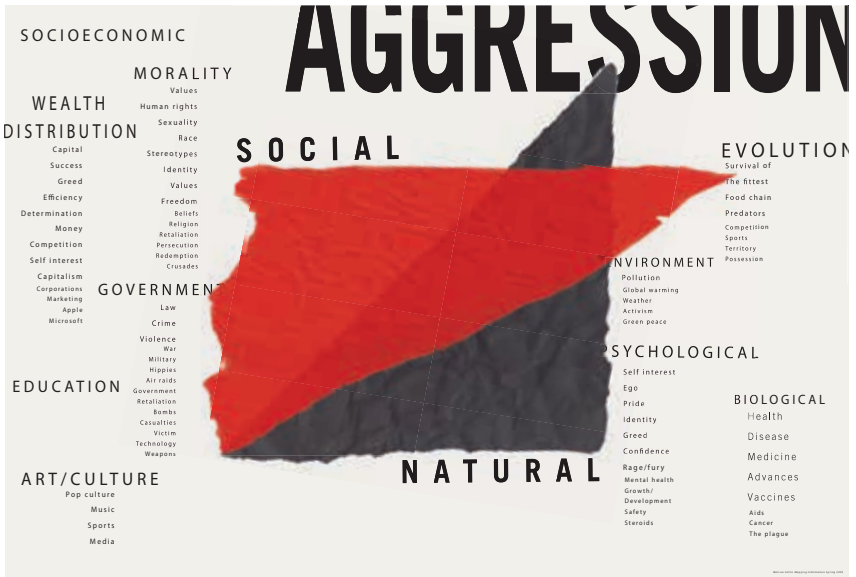
It turned out that if we took the total cost of the Vietnam War and the estimated number of the Vietnamese killed, statistically one dead Vietnamese meant the expenditure of one million dollars. It was a shocking piece of information obtained through the data analysis. We needed a visual interpretation, which was a much simpler thing – however, a designer had to dig through the data, analyze them and come up with the results.

About the First Iraq War there were three available statistical sources. One source reported that one hundred and fifty-seven American soldiers and their western allies were killed, and that ninety-two percent of them died as a result of friendly fire (in the bombings and indirect artillery fire). The estimates concerning the Iraqi casualties varied; the lowest spoke of a hundred and sixty-seven thousand, and the highest ONZ estimates said: two hundred and ten thousand. The simple conclusion was that for one western soldier killed, one American coffin, there were over one thousand Iraqi coffins. And those were not only of soldiers, but mainly of the civilians, women and children.

Those were poignant discoveries for the young people who had never seen such issues in that context before. They were told that their country had succeeded, that the war had been won in only twelve days; disregarding that two hundred thousand Iraqi had been killed. The assignments were intended to open their eyes – by merely putting the official facts together. I did not produce any propaganda, it was not my job; all I did was educate.

Some of the assignments were uncomplicated – like presenting some activities or instructions. One project was to design an abstract presentation of the future, the present and the past, as

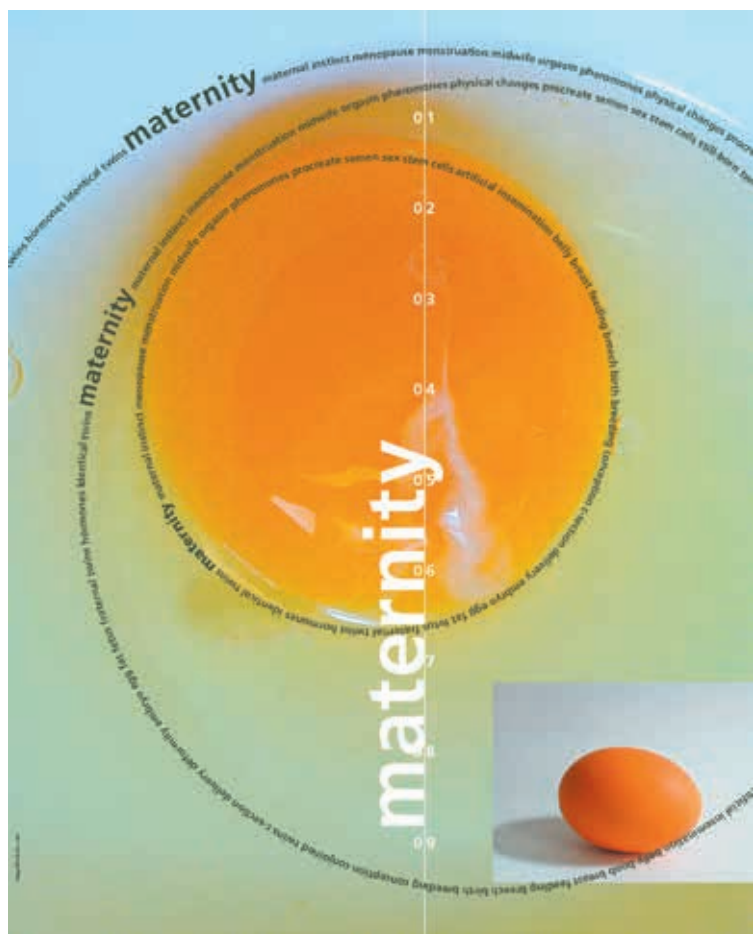




Aggression is an ambiguous term. This sheet of paper, covered in hand-written notes, contains the minutes of the open discussion students had during an information design class. Each of the three posters defines the phenomenon of aggression from a different angle: analytical, emotional and statistical.

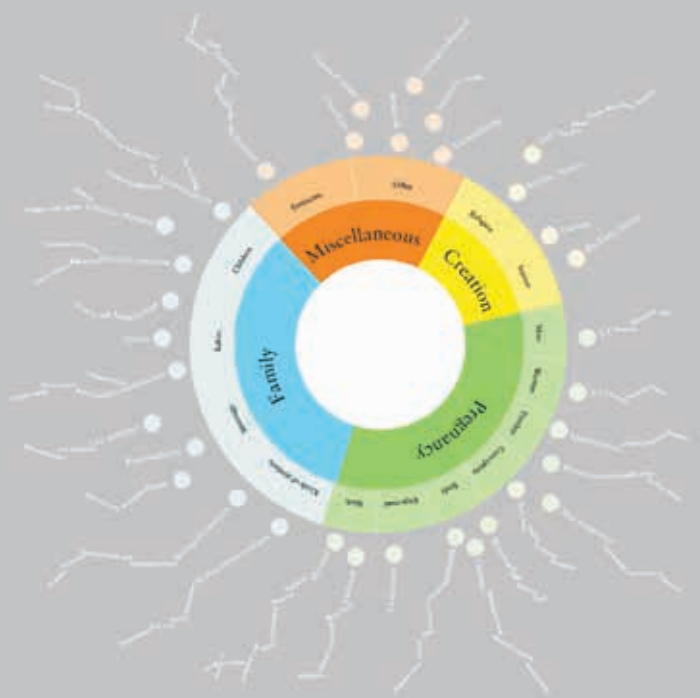


Visual interpretation of the term 'maternity'. Students participated in a discussion analyzing various aspects and contexts of this notion. The gathered material was a starting point for individual presentations of this problem in form of posters.



The poster with an egg is a design of a Polish MA student, Kinga Włodarska.

Maternity



in the history of one's family, for instance, as far back as the students and their parents could reach to discover what they knew about their roots. It was interesting because each of them brought in something else; we could see who the Americans really were.

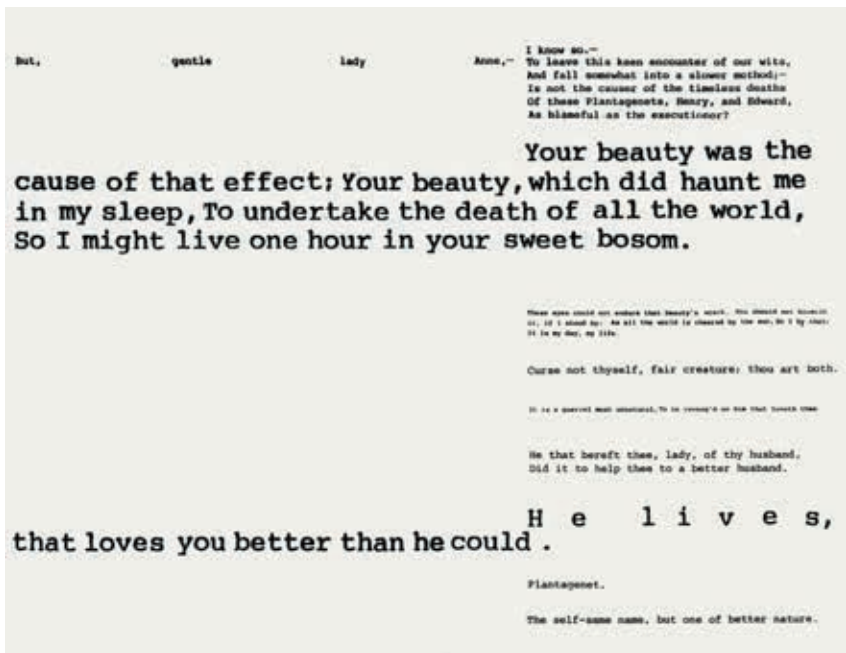
My teaching activity led the students to acquire methods of analysis, to be able to wade through a data set in order to find the key points, worthy of processing, and turn them into information – as well as define the best methods of presentation. The real language of visual communication is very broad, and the designer's invention can be highly valued. The important thing is to design a diagram that will be surprising and striking to the recipient, but most of all – legible.

Tell me something about the typography assignments.

The ability to efficiently apply typographic means should be embedded in the designer's awareness. It requires a combination of knowledge and skills which allows us to set the communication objectives on the one hand, and to select the accurate means to meet them on the other. There's no denying that, I think. It is only when you need to build an education program, that the questions about teaching priorities and effective methods of working with students arise.

There are many possible options when it comes to choosing teaching models. The discipline of typography is so broad that we must decide which aspects we want to teach in detail. In the mid-eighties, the RISD program divided the course of typography into three stages of teaching, in three semesters – a total of two hundred and forty hours in the studio, plus the homework. Each stage consisted of lectures on the history and theory of typography as well as design work in the studio. The first semester (the fall semester of the second year) and third semester (in the third year) both had sixty contact hours, and the second semester (the spring semester of the second year) – a hundred and twenty hours.

Our department had always followed the assumption that the accurately used typographic means make images out of words (type as an image). Therefore, our typography classes (except some assignments in the second semester) did not merge texts



Spoken Shakespeare. An exemplary page of a typographic design presenting voices (and the silence...) of the actors interpreting Shakespeare's text on stage. The design was made in 1983 on an IBM Selectric typewriter. All the manipulations concerning type sizes were done photographically, and then composed by hand.

with illustrations – other classes covered this area. It was essential, because the visually attractive illustrations could easily divert the student's attention from the much more difficult, typographic issues.

Let me tell you about one assignment we did in the early eighties. The students set the text on IBM typewriters, cut it, laid it out on the cardboard, reproduced photographically etc. In the course of advanced typography the assignment involved the typographic interpretation of a fragment of a play as spoken by

the actors. The actor can speak loudly and fast or loudly and slow, another time somebody whispers – so, how to translate this into the typographic notation? Should the text be spaced, broadened when it is spoken slowly? The students produced some very interesting solutions.

In this three-semester program, the first semester was dedicated to building the typographic layouts of one page. We taught the history and development of print types, typesetting technologies and printing through lecturing and presentation of the most beautiful examples of old prints, from Johannes Gutenberg, Aldus Manutius, John Baskerville and Giambattista Bodoni all the way to Adrian Frutiger. Our reference points were the textbooks by Emil Ruder and Robert Bringhurst.¹¹⁵

The second semester, with two five-hour classes a week, we devoted to studying the linear narratives in the form of books or non-serial publications. The final project was usually a printed and carefully bound book (or a considerable part thereof) with the complete structure of title pages, footnotes, indices and running titles. Visiting the great John Hay Library at Brown University, the students could see and leaf through recognized historic publications.

The type of assignment I had initiated, and I think it is still in use, was the one where the materials included a biography of a famous artist or designer and the texts written about as well as by the artist. The three components had to be interwoven and personalized in the typographic design. Each voice was to be clear but also work in a coherent composition with the others. Additionally, there was an index and other elements such as the running titles if necessary and so on. The pure typography as an image, no illustrations. The point was for the student to understand that typography is a complex spatiotemporal operation. The typography classes were essential in the second-year program.

The third semester was all about experiments with the typographic interpretation. It could be cover designs for Hemingway

115. See Emil Ruder, *Typographie: A Manual of Design*, Switzerland: Verlag Arthur Niggli Teufen, 1967; Robert Bringhurst, *The Elements of Typographic Style*, Hartley & Marks Publishers 1992

position of the corresponding points in the second image. I need only draw the center vertical in plan (I trace circles, and eliminate in order to draw the outlines). I have the figure appearing on the left in the second image. I have the figure appearing on the right in the second image. I have the figure appearing on the left in the second image. I have the figure appearing on the right in the second image.



In a planar construction this way... that is to be aware of what lines called a 'plane construction'... construction of all lines that will form the system of the figure is not... the following lines are called lines of perspective or 'orthogonals'... that is determined by the perspective drawing.



FIGURE 1. Three views of perspective construction of a rectangular object. The first view shows the object in plan, the second view shows the object in perspective, and the third view shows the object in perspective with lines of perspective.

Draw the eye in the picture plane. Instead of projecting the distance between the eye and the picture plane, I may be in a horizontal plane. I may be in a horizontal plane. I may be in a horizontal plane. I may be in a horizontal plane. I may be in a horizontal plane.

In order to guarantee a fully rational... that is, without exchanging and exchanging... upon the 'natural perspective'... that we see with a single and...



FIGURE 2. Three eyes looking at the same object. The lines of sight converge towards a central point.



FIGURE 3. Two views of a rectangular object. The first view shows the object from a higher vantage point, and the second view shows the object from a lower vantage point.

As the distance of the eye from the picture plane increases... the object appears smaller... the lines of perspective converge more sharply towards the vanishing point.

As the distance of the eye from the picture plane increases... the object appears smaller... the lines of perspective converge more sharply towards the vanishing point.

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Two examples of typography for Erwin Panofsky's book *Perspective as Symbolic Form*. It is one of the volumes where the main text is accompanied by considerably longer notes, traditionally situated at the end of a chapter. The assignment was for students to find such a typographic formula that would put text and notes side by side, and make each motif of the text speak in its own voice.



ballo n

BALLOON 1. a brightly colored inflated sac, inflated with air and then tethered at the neck, used as a children's toy or a decoration; also an inflated rubber ball, balloon, and various figurines. 2. a round or pear-shaped vessel in which the words or thoughts of characters in a comic strip or cartoon are written; a balloon message. 3. a large bag filled with hot air or gas to raise it from the air, typically carrying a basket for passengers. 4. an air balloon. 5. (also balloon glass) a large rounded drinking glass, used for brandy and other drinks. **ADJECTIVE** (written) 1. built out in a spherical shape; balloon. 2. the trousers ballooned out below his seat 3. built. 4. an inflated balloon. 5. (of an animal or thing) inflated rapidly. 6. an inflated ball or balloon in the air that provides joy in watching balloons go up and down. 7. used dramatically in literature or theater. 8. (of a person) increase rapidly and dramatically in weight. 9. inflated with air and tied to the air. 2. filled by hot-air balloons. 3. a balloon. 4. inflated with air or gas. **ADJECTIVE** resembling a balloon, puffed. a floppy balloon cap. **ORIGIN** late 16th century (denoting a game played with a large inflated leather ball). From French *ballon* or Italian *ballo* 'large ball'.

Dictionary entries. According to the idea of typographic appropriateness, every content has its most proper form, which should be applied depending on the conditions of a project. The notion was introduced with an assignment requiring a large-format (usually A1) presentation of a selected word and its definition so that the form of typographic composition is associated with the content. Many graduates told me later that this task had been an eye-opener.

novels or the typographic interpretations of dictionary entries, poetry and emotionally-loaded texts. They were presented in the form of a large poster.

The final project usually consisted of a printed illustrated monograph of a favorite artist or designer. The students had to gather all the necessary materials and create a design in reference to their protagonists' work.

Did you make presentations about the diverse forms your students could use or did they acquire this knowledge through working on the assignments?

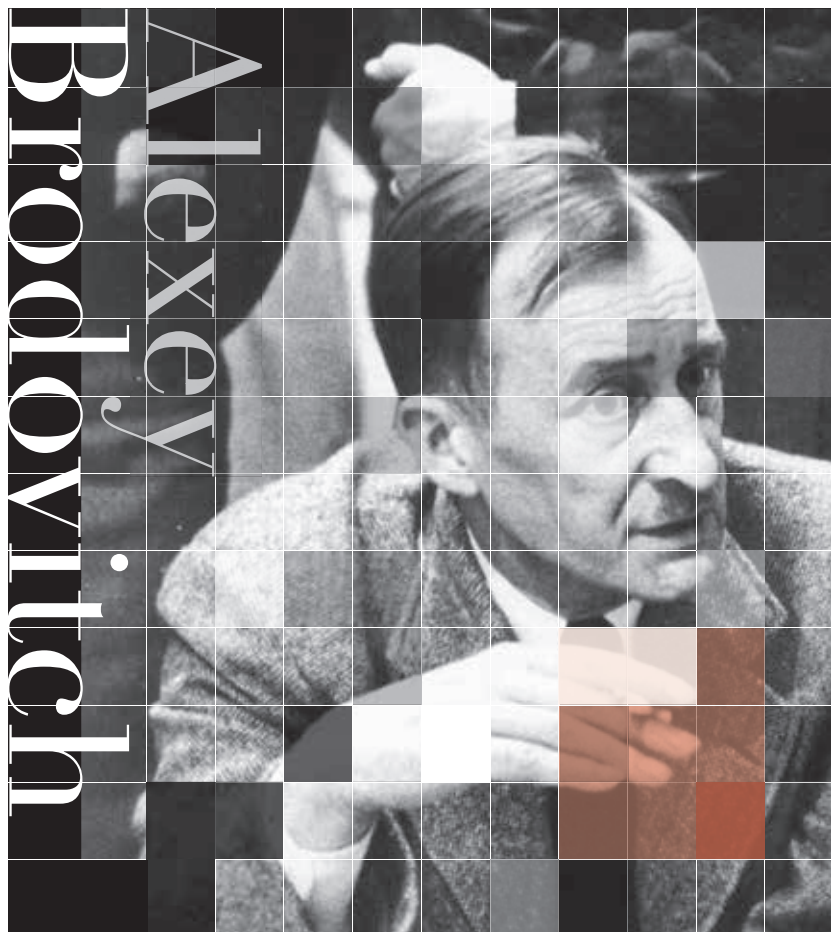
The two interlocked.

The program included typesetting, layout design, textual communication, but not type design. You didn't teach how to design typefaces?

No, not really. Not in those times. I did happen to have a student, however, who was completely devoted to type design. His name was Tobias Frere-Jones. In the third year, he took my typography classes. All of the students did the regular assignments and he wanted to design typefaces. I said yes. I was able to help him to some extent, but in fact I was not so advanced myself to be a partner in his work. I called Matthew Carter in Boston and asked him to find some time for Tobias and he agreed. Then, once the boy was able to manage on his own, he went his own way. Today, he is a great typographer, as much as another of our graduates, Cyrus Highsmith, who teaches type design at RISD at the moment. Our students can choose among various additional classes, so they can also take this subject. I did accept the enthusiasts who wanted to design typefaces for their diploma project on condition that the matter-of-fact critiques of their work would be done by experts. I was only responsible for the administrative issues in such cases.

Do all the teachers at RISD conduct classes based on the same objectives?

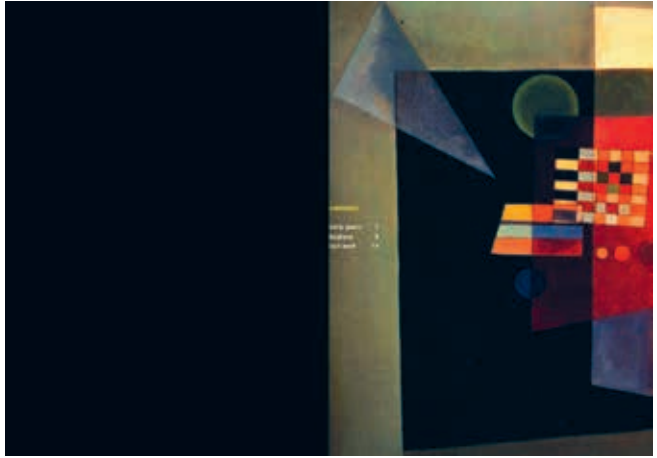
The mandatory classes, yes. This is characteristic of the American school. There is one common program. We have sixty to seventy



Monograph books. The final project in the third semester of typography involved designing a book about a chosen artist or designer. Students had to prepare a biography, statements and critical texts concerning this person, as well as illustrations. Next, they were obliged to provide the layout with a proper typographic form. The printed and bound book (usually of 24–36 pages) became an important element of students' portfolios, testifying to their creativity as well as their skills.







A characteristic of all Kandinsky's great works of this period is the "materialization of gravity," the process of pushing heavy elements in the upper part of the canvas, thus making the center of the picture appear to be shifting upward, as in the later abstract oil painting of 1911, in spite of the horizontal format, the "earthly" or other elements are instead led by an upward movement, making forms to much larger scale than of the Bauhaus days. The artist was greatly troubled by his own pleasure, since he was finally able to set any of his own own-ward picture.

The Kandinsky Museum in Moscow, Russia, has a collection of his works, including the painting shown here. The museum is located in the city of Moscow, and it is one of the most important art institutions in the world. The painting is a masterpiece of abstract art, and it is a testament to Kandinsky's genius as a painter and theorist.

The painting is a complex, abstract composition. It features a central circular form, possibly a face or a mask, surrounded by various geometric shapes and lines. The colors are vibrant and varied, including blue, yellow, red, and black. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and energy.

The painting is a masterpiece of abstract art, and it is a testament to Kandinsky's genius as a painter and theorist. It is a work that has inspired countless other artists and has become a cornerstone of modern art.

students in each year of studies who must take the mandatory subjects. The statute says that a group cannot consist of more than fifteen students in the second year, and between twelve and fifteen in the third and fourth year. The students are divided into five groups. Their five teachers follow the same program, but each of them comes up with different details. There is a program coordinator whose role is to make sure it is consistent.

How did you all agree on the content of this program?

As I have said, in our case the essential courses were Typography I and Typography II. They were conducted in the first year of graphics, which meant the second year of studies. We took a weekend on Block Island, where we strolled along the beach talking about the changes to the program. We decided (and noted down as part of a syllabus) what notions, terms and skills would be taught during the two semesters – what the student should acquire, know and be able to do having finished the courses. It was all about coordination. Each of us was given the same objectives, but the manner of meeting them was our original work.

In the fall semester of the third year there was a class called Making Meaning. It was about visual language and meanings; about building the image and communicating; about narratives and visual semiotics. Typography III, on the other hand, came later, in the spring semester of the third year, as the interpretative and experimental typography after the experience with Making Meaning. This order worked very well.

We used to have five computer labs where the students came to work. The rooms were open twenty-four hours a day, which generated considerable costs. The computers had to be replaced every two years and the programs required constant updating. Because these expenses consumed the major share of our department budget, we began to equip our students with lap top computers instead. Upon arrival in our department, each student received a personal Apple laptop and the suite of programs and fonts. The school bought the lot wholesale, and the students paid them off at a significant discount, in small monthly installments over three years. Today, all the students work on their own computers. The

rooms are equipped with scanners and printers, there is a huge high-definition screen on the wall. Everyone has equal access as far as the facilities are concerned and the five hours in the studio are filled with intensive work.

When you started working for RISD, it had a set curriculum to which you were completely new. How did you get a say about the shape of its program?

It was a brilliantly designed curriculum. A good program must be centered around a guiding principle. Thomas Ockerse and Hans van Dijk had built it around Peirce's semiotics – the theory of signs.

RISD's teaching program was comprised of interdisciplinary elements. It's philosophical background came from the semiotic approach, composed of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic values – because everything you want to show and name by means of signs has its connotations. Thus, the intellectual part of the program was anchored in semiotics, which was consistently introduced in subsequent classes. Another pillar of this curriculum, were the studies of visual form, transformations and Gestalt, helped students develop hand-eye coordination, and also the connection between shape and its perception. The teaching program at RISD was well written and the interdisciplinary relationships clearly outlined.

Thomas Ockerse invited me to RISD because he had seen elements of visual semiotics in our assignments from Łódź.

I do not deny that our approach then had been influenced by changes in the field of visual communication and how it was being taught worldwide. We were inspired by a new set of standards and we attempted to meet them — successfully, I would say. I must confess that I faced the challenge in RISD with enthusiasm and eagerness, which rubbed off on my talented students.

We designed the first program of teaching diagrams in America and the results were apparent quite soon – as I said before, in 1985 my beloved “Graphis” (No. 238) devoted ten pages to reproductions of my students' work. This was the highest possible recognition, and resulted in teaching invitations from all over the world. I started to travel with my lectures and to teach courses. Having

visited over twenty countries on several continents, I had become a renowned expert on information visualization – this “cool and calculated” area of visual communication, appealing to reason and logical thinking, rather than to the direct emotions of its recipients. It is a very Brechtian narration. When we launched the Dynamic Diagrams studio in 1990, I had a solid theoretical background for tackling this new challenge.

Let me briefly compare and contrast my teaching experiences at PWSSP in Łódź and at RISD. It has to be a bit complicated, as the two systems used to be extremely different in some respects.

PWSSP meant five years of constant studies focused on training in the scope of traditional visual methods and the practical skills of graphic design craftsmanship, as well as the ability to create communicating objects. Except for a general history of art, there were no specific theoretical subjects, not even the history of Polish graphic design. The vocational education was organized in the master’s studio as task-oriented training based on the personal experience and the master’s creative horizons. Learning about other aspects and contexts of the profession depended entirely on the individual initiative and effort of the student, without guidelines or inspiration from the teacher. This classical model of teaching originated from the long tradition of artistic craft, which first and foremost sought to create beautiful objects. Quite honestly, the state of graphic design market at that time did not inspire alternative solutions.

My role at PWSSP was not typical, however. I was asked to organize the education of the future periodical and press designers; the objective was clear and so allowed me to work outside this tradition. The challenge for my students was structural thinking and designing dynamic repetitive systems rather than the individual objects. Some systemic solutions were also introduced, in various degrees, in the studios of Stefan Krygier and Stanisław Łabęcki. I think that the objectives and assignments Jan Kubasiewicz and I came up with varied significantly from the standards back then, as I have shown before.

At RISD, the education is organized in a completely different manner, so let me start with that. Rhode Island School of Design

is a school of *design* (and art as well). The preliminary year is common for all the students, with classes in two and three dimensional composition, drawing, painting, as well as a comprehensive history of art and architecture. Students then choose a specialty, the specific department to study in for the following three years and obtain the BFA degree. In order to graduate, a student must earn one hundred and twenty-six credits. (Every subject passed in a semester equals three credits). The credited subjects are divided into mandatory and the elective ones. One third (42) of all the credits are assigned to the Humanities in three sections: Historical Sciences, Social Sciences, Language and Literature. Graphic Design Core Requirements earn students a total of forty-eight credits as follows: Typography = 9; Introductory Design = 12; Advanced Design = 18; Major Elective = 9. The remaining thirty-six credits are acquired in Freshman Foundation Studies and upon completion of studio, or in some cases non-studio, elective courses.

The two-year MA studies are a distinct structure with separate recruitment of candidates for each department. The school accepts one in three candidates to the BFA program on average. In the case of my department, we accept one in fifteen to the MA program. The studies are quite expensive. Today, one academic year costs about seventy-five thousand dollars, including sixty-five thousand in the tuition fees. Scholarships are not very common and while there is a system of student loans, those can take many years to repay. I think that is all the necessary introduction.

You do not get any master studios here. Instead, there are classes which last one semester (twelve weeks – sixty hours in the studio). This is very little time for introducing the students to the history of a discipline, presenting them with significant contemporary designs and their creators, and especially conducting a series of design assignments. The teachers must be very good specialists and possess broad and comprehensive knowledge of their field. In my case, it was the knowledge about information design and typography, as they were the subjects I taught systematically.

At RISD my role in the teaching process was different than in Łódź, where I was not only an instructor, but also a mentor or a tutor. I had lead students for three years assisting them in becoming



Krzysztof Lenk conducting classes at RISD, 1983

both skillful and enlightened designers. I recommended books and films. I sent them to the theater. I listened to their intimate complaints. Here, at RISD, I focused on providing professional education in particular disciplines. The students in Łódź required much more support with regard to skills as the design technology was not very advanced in Poland. At RISD, especially now, the students are well-prepared as far as the workshop is concerned; they have their own computers and know all the needed programs. So

the focus is more on the conceptual components and this enables them to achieve interesting results.

Most of the western academies require the candidates to have at least one year of documented professional practice before they can enroll in an MA program. Was this the case with RISD as well?

The terms and conditions of recruitment for the MA program included the requirement of a one-year professional practice. We wanted our graduate students to have some professional experience and be aware of what they were aiming to develop in their future careers.

What did the recruitment for the MA studies look like?

In America, the MA candidates are the ones who intend to become teachers or those who have exhausted their skills in a professional career and want to recharge their batteries. The third group are the professionals in other fields who already have a diploma but they feel drawn to graphic design because they have already been exposed to it and learned from their practice in this field. These are often the most creative students.

Candidates must submit a photograph, curriculum vitae and letters of recommendation along with a motivational essay, describing why they want to become a designer and why they have chosen this MA program. All these are considered by the recruitment commission. While I was teaching there, we sometimes had as many as twenty candidates for one place. First, we rejected the uninteresting applications – usually fifty percent of the lot. Then the shakeout was even higher and left us with about thirty candidates for fifteen places. These thirty were invited for interviews so we could meet them in person. The interviews were usually conducted by two or three teachers who paid particular attention whether a person seemed intelligent and could present their arguments well etc. We wanted to keep a balance of diverse personalities in the group we selected (e.g. a people-person, somebody with great professional experience who could advise the others,

a gifted humanist to argue or write well.) The students were meant to inspire one another.

When was the first time you had come across Gestalt and its principles?

In Łódź. One of the first books I brought from the West was a small publication about Gestalt and form: Donis A. Dondis, *The Primer of Visual Literacy*¹¹⁶. We tried to make it accessible to all the students.

Gestalt is not an inventive idea of the psychologists of perception. All they did was take it apart and name the elements of visual form, which had always been used to show something with a picture or a sculpture. Knowing these elements, you can use them purposefully and more effectively.

In what form did you introduce Gestalt to the program?

I know a bit about this today, mainly by experience. I also know how useful these things can be and how to put the elements of Gestalt into practice. Trying to explain this to my students, I encouraged them to read books, but also showed them practically how significant it was in compositions, systems and contrasts.

I think we are talking about one of the key aspects of teaching: the direct relationship between an instructor – a guide – and a student in pursuit of his or her own path. The student needs to see the difference between two formal solutions to the same assignment and understand why one of them is more convincing, more effective than the other. When looking over two or three solutions, I direct the student's attention towards the most important elements and suggest some improvements. This dialogue is always personalized. While one student needs mere suggestions, with another you may have to be more specific or even take a pair of scissors and demonstrate everything.

Tell me more about your teaching and your students.

I conducted the classes of typography, information design, graduation projects and others. The studies in our department lasted

116. Donis A. Dondis, *The Primer of Visual Literacy*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973.

three years and ended in a BFA diploma project. At the end of the fall semester, students presented their project ideas in the form of conceptual sketches, accompanied by stated objectives, to the supervisor of their group. As experienced teachers, we tried to coach them – so that their diploma would not be too trivial, but we also didn't want our students to set off on impossible missions. After the six-week winter break, which they usually spent doing internships, the good ones came back with the promise of employment, and the independent work on the graduation projects started. Every teacher organized it differently.

I used to meet with a group of students (usually twelve of them) once a week. Three of the students presented their project objectives and the progress in their work, and the whole group discussed them. After the presentations, I spoke with the remaining students individually. So every four weeks, a student had to present his or her progress, changes and various versions of the work. This system was efficient. The project ended with a verbal defense of it.

What projects did your students prepare? What did they want to do?

It depended on the student; they chose the subjects and justified their decisions.

One student designed a smartphone application, which was an interactive guide to the landmarks of Seoul. It required gathering and coordinating a large volume of data.

Another student was doing a project about wines: their categories, proper bottles for various kinds, types of glasses, with what dishes they should be served etc. It was a series of five feature posters, each dedicated to one kind of wine.

The family of another student had produced maple syrup for generations. In the early spring, metal tubes are inserted into sugar Maple trees and a thin, clear sap is drawn and collected. Then, the sap is cooked down until most of the water has evaporated. Forty gallons of sap yields one gallon of concentrated syrup. The girl prepared a large board with all the stages and processes connected with this production. Yet another person prepared a book.

Each of the students has a dream; the projects are diverse and our role is to support and consult the progress of that work. Besides, it is important for the graduation project to be realistic; it can even be a temporary installation, but it has to involve a graphic project and documentation in a form that can be included in the portfolio.

At the end of semester, in May, we held the diploma reviews wherein students defended their final projects. Our department had a tradition of inviting several recognized designers from outside the school and they were the main, objective critics. I enjoyed supervising the graduation projects because it was a breakthrough moment in every student's life.

Every year, in mid-March, the school held a voluntary portfolio review and invited recruiters from several design studios who were looking for new talent. Final year students who presented their portfolios had an opportunity to establish professional contacts. This way, many of them found employment after graduation. The review was also open to the younger students who were looking for invitations to the summer internship.

Observing how well my former students are doing brings me a lot of joy. They usually have good memories of our cooperation, too. I have the whole folder of the "love-thanksgiving" letters from my graduates. Reading them gives me immense pleasure. For instance, a girl who did a very good graduation project and left for Chicago wrote about the first-year review in graphics and reminded me how, on seeing her work, I told her that the typography was really poor and asked if she had considered a transfer to the illustration studio. She did not take it well but she accepted the challenge, sat down to work and became a great typographer. Although I sometimes made similar remarks, I always referred to the work and not to the person behind it. The graduates often thanked me later. Some of them were motivated, the others could change their area of interest a bit. Now, they are satisfied with where they are in their professional lives. Some of them have chosen to continue their academic careers.

The Dynamic Media Institute, an excellent MA program at Massachusetts College of Art and Design (aka MassArt) in Boston



Diplomas. A chart about a family enterprise manufacturing maple syrup.

white

White grapes are used to make white wine. When grapes are left on the vine to ripen, their natural sugars convert to alcohol. The natural acidity of grapes gives white wine its tartness. The color of white wine is determined by the amount of time the grapes are left on the vine. The longer the grapes are left on the vine, the more color they pick up from the skin. This light wine is popular with people who like a light, refreshing drink. It is also a good choice for people who are looking for a healthy option. White wine is often served with fish and seafood. It is also a good choice for people who are looking for a healthy option.

bottle

White wine is typically stored in light-colored bottles to protect it from light damage. The bottles are usually made of clear or light green glass. The bottles are sealed with a cork and a foil capsule. The bottles are often labeled with the name of the winery and the vintage. The bottles are often displayed on a shelf or in a wine cellar.



BORDEAUX

Bordeaux wine is a red wine from the Bordeaux region in France. It is made from a blend of grape varieties, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Malbec. Bordeaux wine is known for its rich, dark color and complex flavor profile. It is often served with red meat and hearty dishes. Bordeaux wine is a popular choice for people who enjoy a bold, full-bodied wine.

glassware



White wine is typically served in a tall, narrow flute glass to preserve its delicate aromas. The classic wine glass is used for red wine, while the shorter, wider bowl glass is used for white wine. The shape of the glass affects the way the wine is aerated and how the flavors are perceived. Choosing the right glass can make a significant difference in the wine-drinking experience.

White wine is typically served at a temperature of 45-50°F. Red wine is typically served at a temperature of 60-65°F. The temperature of the wine affects its flavor and aroma. Serving wine at the correct temperature can make a significant difference in the wine-drinking experience.



matching food

White wine is typically paired with light-colored foods, such as fish, chicken, and pork. Red wine is typically paired with dark-colored foods, such as beef, lamb, and game. The pairing of wine and food is an important part of the wine-drinking experience. Choosing the right wine for the occasion can make a significant difference in the overall dining experience.

Wine Type	Glassware	Food Pairing
White Wine	Tall, narrow flute glass	Light-colored foods (fish, chicken, pork)
Red Wine	Classic wine glass	Dark-colored foods (beef, lamb, game)
Bordeaux	Shorter, wider bowl glass	Rich, hearty dishes

Diplomas. Two out of five charts about the world of wines and associated customs..

bottle

BURGUNDY

Magnum bottles are usually available in 1.5 liter (50.7 oz) quantities. In the United States, magnum bottles are available in 1.5 liter (50.7 oz) quantities. In the United States, magnum bottles are available in 1.5 liter (50.7 oz) quantities. In the United States, magnum bottles are available in 1.5 liter (50.7 oz) quantities.



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red

Red grapes are used to make red wine. The only source of red grapes, and the only source of red wine, is the grapevine. The grapevine is a woody vine that grows in temperate regions. The grapevine is a woody vine that grows in temperate regions. The grapevine is a woody vine that grows in temperate regions.

Wine

Wine is a beverage made from grapes. It is made by fermenting the juice of grapes. Wine is a beverage made from grapes. It is made by fermenting the juice of grapes.

Wine

Wine is a beverage made from grapes. It is made by fermenting the juice of grapes. Wine is a beverage made from grapes. It is made by fermenting the juice of grapes.

Wine

Wine is a beverage made from grapes. It is made by fermenting the juice of grapes. Wine is a beverage made from grapes. It is made by fermenting the juice of grapes.



Red wine glasses are designed to enhance the flavor of red wine. They are typically larger and wider than white wine glasses. Red wine glasses are designed to enhance the flavor of red wine. They are typically larger and wider than white wine glasses.

glassware

Wine glasses are designed to enhance the flavor of wine. They are typically larger and wider than other glasses. Wine glasses are designed to enhance the flavor of wine. They are typically larger and wider than other glasses.

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matching food

Wine and food are often paired together. Each wine has its own unique flavor profile. Wine and food are often paired together. Each wine has its own unique flavor profile.

Wine	Food	Pairing
Red wine	Meat	Red wine
White wine	Fish	White wine
Sparkling wine	Appetizers	Sparkling wine
Champagne	Appetizers	Champagne
Wine	Food	Wine
Wine	Food	Wine

was launched by Jan Kubasiewicz. It used to be co-run by three professors: Jan and two others, who had also been my students at RISD. One of them, Brian Lucid, did both his BFA and MFA with us and the other, Joe Quackenbush, did the MFA and then worked in my studio for a while. Also Michael Rock, the author of *Multiple Signatures*¹¹⁷, is also a former student of mine.

You said you had been invited to RISD for one academic year. How is it that you stayed on?

I was invited for one year as a substitute for a colleague, who took a sabbatical – a yearly paid leave you can take every seven years of work to “refresh your brain”. It functions at the majority of American schools of higher education. During this one year it happened that another professor was taking a sabbatical, so I was asked to stay longer. The school in Łódź agreed to stretch my leave, so I was glad to accept the offer. Ewa and the kids did go back to Poland though. My wife didn’t want to stay away from her sick mother; also, we decided it would be better for our children. After two years in America, where the level of education was much lower, they would not have been able to go back and learn with their peers.

I stayed behind and continued teaching. It turned out that the other colleague would not be coming back to RISD after the break and a competition for the professor position was announced. The political situation in Poland was still dramatic, and I had a chance to prove myself in one of the best schools in America – I decided to go ahead and apply. There were very many candidates from thirty-seven countries. You had to present a portfolio, recommendations, offered program of teaching etc. In the spring of 1984 I learned that I had won the competition and I was employed as a full-time professor. Ewa and the kids came back in January 1985.

But even before that, at the end of the first year when I thought I would be leaving soon and the American adventure for our family would be finished, we took a grand road trip; we

117. Michael Rock, *Multiple Signatures: On Designers, Authors, Readers and Users*, New York: Rizzoli, 2013.

wanted to see the country. This expedition lasted throughout the summer of 1983. It so happened that in June that year there was the annual International Design Conference in Aspen, Colorado, and I was invited as an IBM Fellow.

Right after the end of the academic year at RISD we rented the camping equipment, packed up our car and off we went to see the country. We set off in June, visiting Chicago, St. Louis and other interesting places on our way. In Aspen, we spent a very absorbing week. I had my talk, we established new contacts, listened to some precious advice on what to see on the way, and we set off again – westward across the Rocky Mountains, all the National Parks, old Indian settlements, through the fantastic pristine nature, all the way to Los Angeles. There, we visited Lou Danziger in his house full of books and records. We also went to Saul Bass's studio, spent a day in Disneyland, wandered in Hollywood and the rich district of Malibu. We visited the bustling and colorful China Town – and then we went on southwards, to San Diego with its outstanding zoo, where the visitors were locked up in the cars, while the animals move freely in the open space. Our trip produced attractions for the parents and the children alike.

From San Diego, at the very border with Mexico, we turned east, visiting the cities and admiring the beauty of untamed nature. At the camp sites we usually met people living in that state who were taking a short break. In Europe, traveling to the Wild West had not been in fashion yet, so the local holiday-makers were delighted to see the out-of-state plates on our car. It was an absolute novelty to them. Rhode Island is the smallest state in America, at the other end of the continent, far away from the national parks we had a chance to visit. It was a fantastic journey! Let me say no more – I could write a separate book about it, but it is best to see all of this by yourself. America is an incredibly fascinating and magnificent country. Ewa had fallen in love with its majestic beauty and later she organized a similar trip with her sister and brother-in-law. We traveled to similar distances together many times after that.

The nineties
How to work

Asked about what the graphic designer job is, I think – and it shows in my works – that it is designing for the purpose of communication, being dependent on the medium while using the constantly changing tools.

(p. 261)

The nineties.

Honorata graduated from high school and after four years of college she was accepted to the very difficult and expensive veterinary school at the Tufts University. Jacek graduated from high school and began studying industrial design at RISD, and Ewa, while still working as an office interior designer, got to making some excellent ceramics. In 1999 we bought a small house in the mountains of New Hampshire. There, Ewa set up her studio and kilns for ceramics, and I installed a library and my music (and the computer along with the printers – they had become a necessity).

In the nineties, I was mainly teaching and designing visual information. The school was going in its natural rhythm. It had computers quite early because at the moment when Macintosh was launched, one of the Apple vps – responsible for design and a graduate of our department – managed to get us five computers, although they weren't of much use back then. The computers did gradually become useful, of course, as they ousted the traditional tools. Reproduction, gluing, assembling pages of photocopies – the entire traditional workshop was slowly but surely moved to the computer screen. In the late eighties, five or six years after the onset of Macintosh and along with the recession of 1990, the structure of the American graphic market changed. The existing work organization in studios was dictated by the available technologies. An art director, who ran the studio usually had the first contact with a client, discussed the commissions and later

sold the project. Next in line were senior designers, who got to work on the first concepts, noting them down on napkins during a work lunch with the client. They handed the sketches along with their guidelines down to junior designers, who had to materialize them. The lowest rank were *production designers*, who assembled and glued the pages and did all the production. All this looked like a pyramid: the creative top consisted of a few people, but the bottom level – the production – was very extensive.

The arrival of computers and first programs (such as Quark, Pagemaker and Illustrator), followed by laser printers – especially the color ones, with a good print preview – caused the design studios to downsize and people lost their jobs. Still, computers were merely production tools which hardly inspired any new activities. They were substitutes for pencils, glue, ruling pens. The designer's workshop had changed but only in terms of technology which accelerated and modified our work.

We had to change the methods of work in our school department as well. The darkrooms were replaced with computer labs, but this did not entail any new quality. All had remained static and the designs were still dedicated to paper – the teaching stayed the same. As I said, it was only the production that had been moved to the screen. We had to teach our students how to use the software. When the first interactive program, Director, appeared, the computer literate students started dealing with interaction design, but in a very limited scope.

At the turn of 1990/1991, together with Paul Kahn of the Brown University, I launched the studio Dynamic Diagrams – *Consultants in Visual Logic*. Visual logic, because everything we did was governed by its principles. It was funny that for so many years people to whom we handed our business cards didn't really know what dynamic diagrams were, but they had no problem with the notion of "visual logic."

All of our projects were connected with computers. It was the time when computers boomed, even before the Internet actually exploded in 1994. The studio started with designing pictograms for various interfaces and quickly moved to information architecture, its structures and maps. Our company developed



Paul Kahn and Krzysztof Lenk – co-founders of the Dynamic Diagrams studio

fast, fueled with commissions from IBM that we got thanks to Paul Rand, their chief consultant.

The '90s were the most intensive decade of my life. I worked seven days a week, fourteen hours a day. I still held the full-time teaching position at RISD, which obliged me to conduct fifteen hours of classes with students and three hours of consultations, as well as to sit in on all sorts of boards on behalf of the Department for another three hours every week. In parallel, I was running the studio, presenting projects to our clients, taking part in various conferences and workshops, which – in turn – expanded our contacts and brought us further commissions. My well-deserved privilege was that all my work for school was scheduled on three consecutive week days: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, or Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. I needed these longer weekends because, for Dynamic Diagrams we traveled a lot, to the West Coast, and more and more frequently to Europe. I had to juggle everything somehow. In my twenty-eight years at RISD,

however, I never missed a class. Twice, I came to school on crutches. I did have to reschedule my classes to Saturday or Sunday on several occasions, when I had a meeting in Great Britain or Germany, but my students understood that perfectly well and always attended them.

My adventure with Dynamic Diagrams finished at the end of the 20th century. Over those ten years, DD turned into a considerable studio: over forty people. We employed brilliant designers, analysts and programmers. The more I managed, the less I designed. I thought to myself that it was time to choose between the studio and the school. And, for the second time in my life, I chose school.

I sold my DD shares in 1999, and continued to work as a consultant for another two years. We had clients in America and worldwide, as well as a subsidiary in London. Launching the studio, I was fifty-four, and leaving it, sixty-five. A particular summary of our experience was the book Paul Kahn and I wrote together, titled: *Mapping Websites*¹¹⁸, which was translated into five foreign languages.

Why don't we stay with the Dynamic Diagrams studio for a while. How was it developed, what projects did you do?

The studio emerged in my bedroom; it had one computer and one printer. It was not easy to attract clients at first, but slowly we got it going. We had made a deal that we would only work with information design. I think we managed to stick to that; even in dry spells between commissions we did not take other projects. It all changed for the better when IBM was implementing their OS2. They needed complete visual information. Paul Rand, who had always advocated for me, offered us that project. We received a commission for user's manuals, catalogs and so on. The task was not an easy one, because IBM – like any other institution – had their

118. See Lenk K., Kahn P., *Mapping Websites: Digital Media Design*, London: Rotovision, 2001. See Lenk K., Kahn P., *Mapping Websites: Digital Media Design*, London: Rotovision, 2001. Also published in French, *Architecture des sites web* (Pyramyd); in Spanish, *Mapas de webs* (McGraw-Hill Mexico); in German, *Websites visualisieren* (rororo Computer), and in Korean.



A map for IBM ThinkPad, launched in 1994. Back then, it was the most state-of-the-art computer of its kind. The trouble was that this six-thousand-dollars laptop was delivered to the buyer in a box full of marketing garbage instead of a proper user's manual for setting up the computer the hardware (including the accessories). I suggested using a map – an A1 or A2 sheet (the laptop base fit on the A4 format). The foldable poster was delivered in a transparent plastic envelope along with the computer. On taking the device out of the package, you spread the map on the table, placed the computer on it and instantly saw where the other components had to be connected. IBM used this idea for years.

fixed methods that did not match the new reality. It was difficult to come up with something modern, and still preserve the IBM spirit. For instance, traditionally, the manuals had been printed automatically by a special computer station. We had to change that and adjust to the newest technologies, which was frowned upon as the employees had to change their ways as well. Nonetheless, the work was interesting. Upon receiving a commission, we formulated objectives in agreement with experts of IBM subsidiaries across America. Those connected with communication and production of the materials we designed were situated in Florida, so we would go there quite often. Our presentations were attended by people related to marketing, designers and manufacturers. Usually, we managed to achieve our goals and go beyond the stiff, traditional framework. Soon enough, they came to understand that this previously imposed muzzle failed to work under the new conditions and that the procedure needed to be modified.

The constant rotation of employees in IBM worked to our benefit, as those with whom we worked on one team, later remembered us and promoted our activities to another team. IBM was a source of interesting projects for Dynamic Diagrams for many years, always with Paul Rand's invaluable support.

There were two breakthrough moments in DD. The first one was a big interactive project for Siemens Nixdorf Informations Systeme, AG, which had its subsidiary on the outskirts of Boston. In 1994, the company received a commission from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs to build an interactive information kiosk "Facts about Germany" for the Goethe Institute. Up to that time, they published small information booklets about Germany: economy, culture etc. In the era of touch screens, the idea was to produce an interactive kiosk to be put up in the Goethe Institutes, consulates and embassies. Our job was to design visual information and a clear navigation system. First and foremost, the project required good information mapping. We had to consider the connections, all things behind the screen and the interface. The code was prepared by the Siemens IT experts, who processed the whole visual material we gave them. This

big, time-consuming project meant an influx of cash as well as a great promotion, because we could include it in our portfolio.

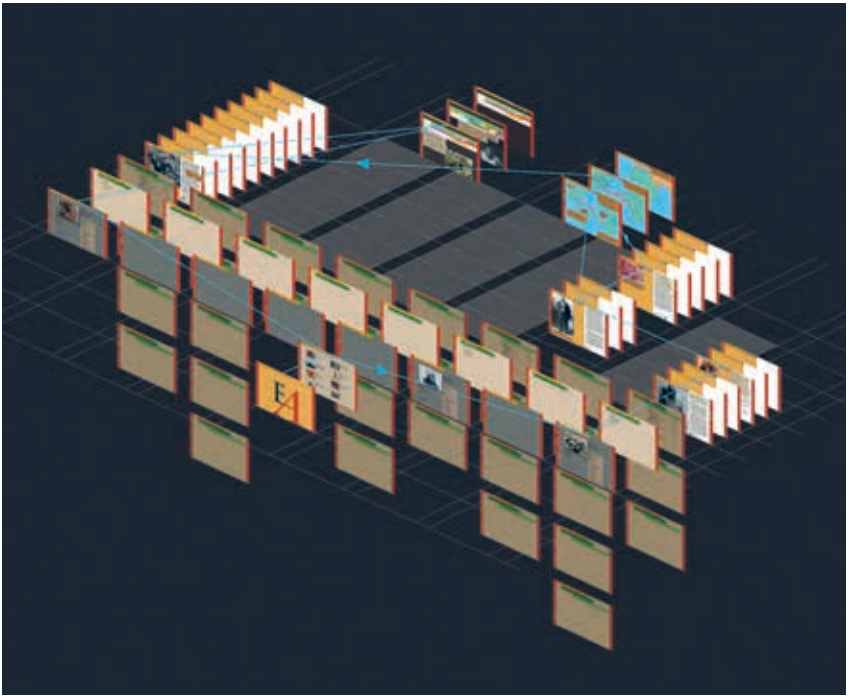
The second project on the interactive wave was *Encyclopaedia Africana*. Harvard University's w. e. b. Du Bois Research Institute has a rich archive connected with the history of African-Americans, slavery etc. that has been collected over the years. Many generations had dreamed of an encyclopedia on the subject. The cost of editing and printing of a multi-volume publication, however, would be enormous. As it suddenly turned out, this could be done on several CD-ROMs, escaping the limitations of paper. The editors approached us. Our presentation of the Siemens project had convinced them that we were good partners for their endeavor.

We got this job. We were to design a working on-screen prototype of only three articles in order to present their structure. The twenty-minute audio program we prepared helped us to receive further commissions. The concept of CD-ROMs misfired; the production lines were discontinued and the project was impossible to implement. It was worth the effort, however, as six years later Harvard asked us to design a book, *Africana*¹¹⁹. This extensive encyclopedia was over two thousand pages long and it went like hot cakes. In two weeks the bookstores sold a hundred thousand copies.

Around the same time, Richard Saul Wurman was publishing with Graphis the book entitled *Information Architects*¹²⁰, presenting twenty American information architects, including Paul and myself. Wurman worked with a great designer, Peter Bradford, who was the art and content editor of this book. I sent him fragments of *Africana* in the form of screen shots. He liked our material a lot and wanted to know about its organization and whether it was possible to present things hidden behind the screen. I started to search for typical models and my mind wandered back to the

119. See *Africana. The Encyclopaedia of the African and African-American Experience*, eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah, Henry Louis Gates Jr, Philadelphia: Basic Civitas Books, 1999.

120. See Richard Saul Wurman, *Information Architects*, New York: Graphis Inc., 1997.



Encyclopaedia Africana. A map of connections of a prototype encyclopedia planned to be released as a CD-ROM library in 1994. On the next page (above) – subsequent on-line subpages; (below) a two-page spread from the two-thousand-page book *Africana*, published ten years later.



architectural axonometric projections and to the art of the Far East, where they used the zero-point perspective.

It is a concept in which the world is continuous and the presented space has no vanishing points. For instance, looking at a picture with vertical perspective, the viewer understands the convention: things at the bottom are closer than those at the top. So I made a map of the structure by means of the overlap perspective and showed it to Peter. He liked it so much that he forced all the people presenting the structures of their projects to use my method. It did provide the book with a certain level of coherence. Thus, as a studio, we introduced a new convention of presenting the information structure.

It is a space-saver, based on your own observation and experience.

This method worked very well, it was accepted and has been functioning since. People often ask me if it is patented.

Indeed, it should be.

I'd rather see it in common use. After Wurman's *Information Architects* was published, we started to be invited to conferences and lectures. There, we would meet people delegated by various companies to learn about modern methods of organizing information. They came to our presentations and participated in workshops. Later, facing a similar problem, they called us for help. It was in this way we received a commission from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Their designer had been to our workshop in San Antonio and saw that we had something interesting to say.

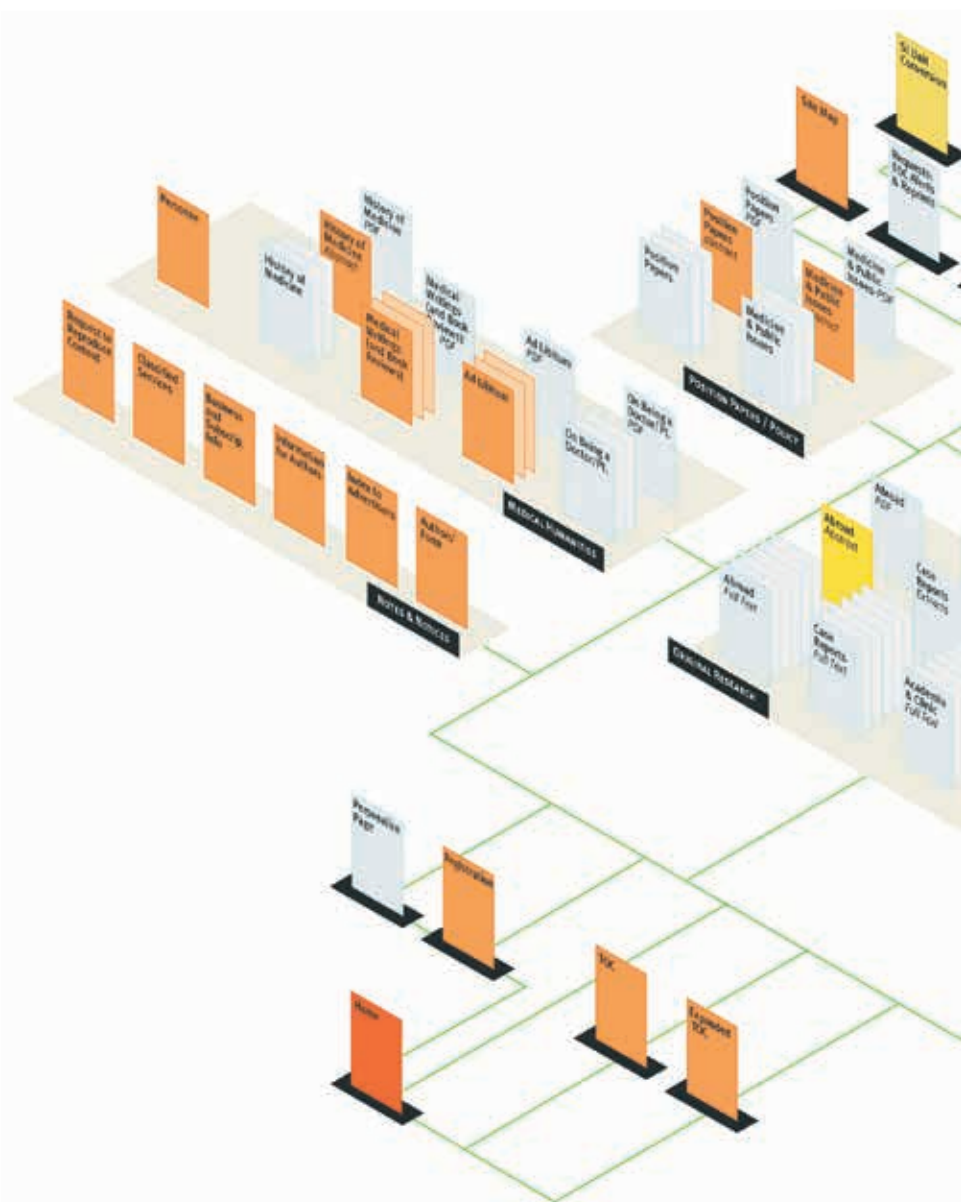
In the mid-nineties we specialized, among other things, at transferring the printed scientific magazines to the Internet. (They were still available on paper, but also on-line.) We signed a contract with Cadmus Journal Services Inc., the largest producer and distributor of scientific periodicals in America at that time. They had an excellent print shop and the whole distribution system: catalogs, subscriptions, postal delivery. When the Internet exploded, they planned to have the on-line editions as well.

The whole composing room and printing had already been computerized, so it seemed optimal for the people sitting upstairs and filling the matrices in with electronic texts and illustrations and sending them to the print shop downstairs to use another channel and upload them to the Internet as well. But it wasn't - the same material required a completely different organization of information on the screen and it could not simply be redirected.

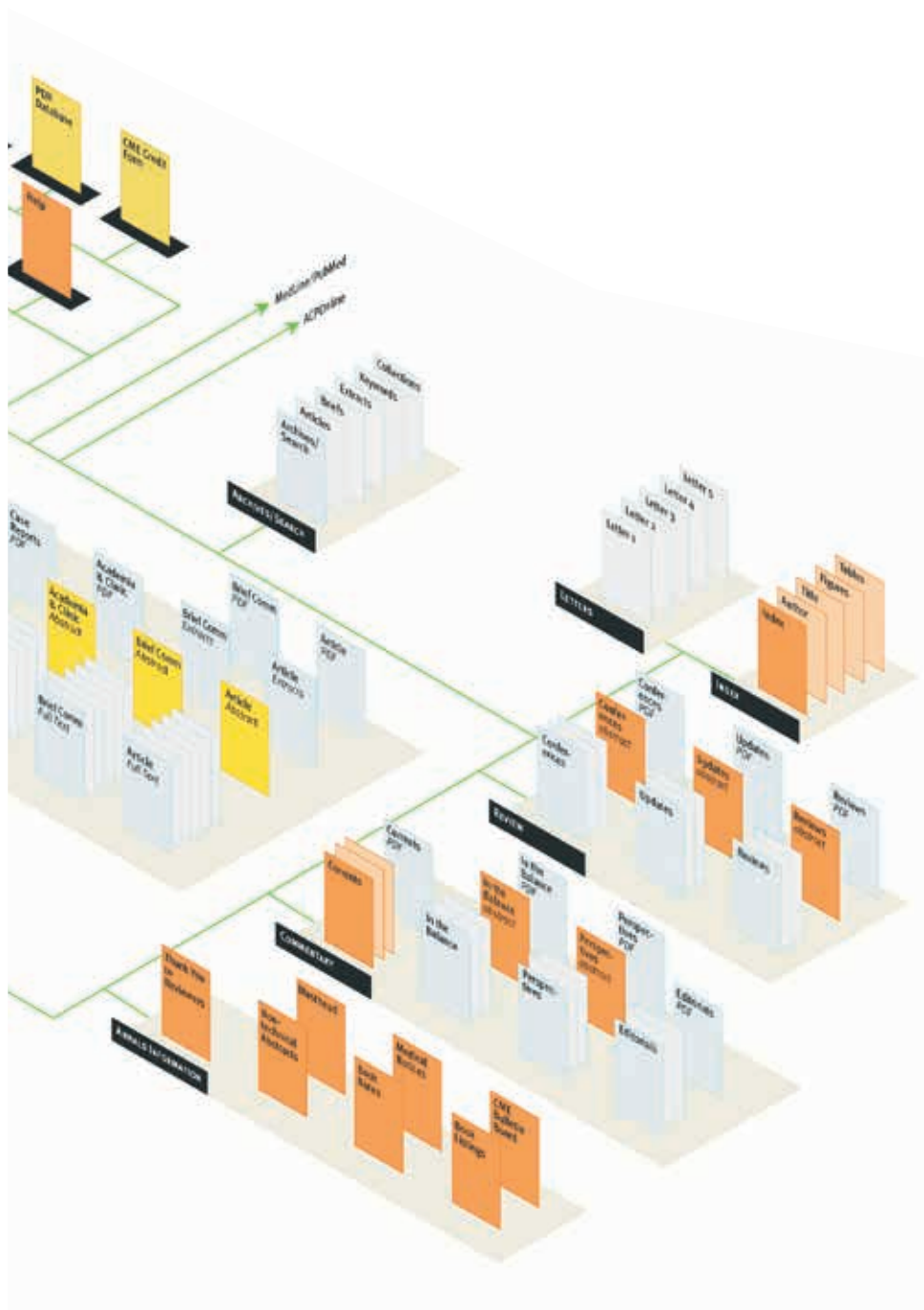
Neither could it be done manually, issue by issue; they needed a specific template, a system designed for each of their magazines that would upload them to the Internet semi-automatically. We started with determining the thematic groups of the material - making a structure map. Then, we designed the production system: not only the content template of the pages, but the whole organization, including the budget and the required number of employees. This we presented to the client in the form of a book. It was a serious expertise, long before the notion of service design appeared.

When the chairman of the company saw the information architecture we designed he knew how to organize the structure of his institution to make it efficient. He noticed the potential of using the information mapping as a corporate consulting tool and approached us with the idea of merging our companies. He was a smart guy, surrounded by brilliant people who brought in some interesting projects, so we agreed to merge as long as we could stay in Providence with our families. We accepted the position of their company unit, but kept the right to design for other clients as well. Their projects obviously had priority, but the remaining capacity of the studio could be used for external activities. The location was not an issue anymore, as the Internet allowed for instant communication.

They bought the majority of our shares, which was good for us. It was the first time Paul and I had been able to set our salaries to some acceptable level and also give pay raises to our designers. The merger with Cadmus had been the exact influx of cash we needed. We were able to open a subsidiary in London to work for clients in England and Europe instead flying back and forth with the projects.



A production system of an on-line scientific magazine. Expanding the publication by an on-line version is a complicated endeavor, which requires thorough planning. This chart comes from a report prepared by DD and the editors of the periodical. It presents a map of the entire website with color-coded access to the pages.

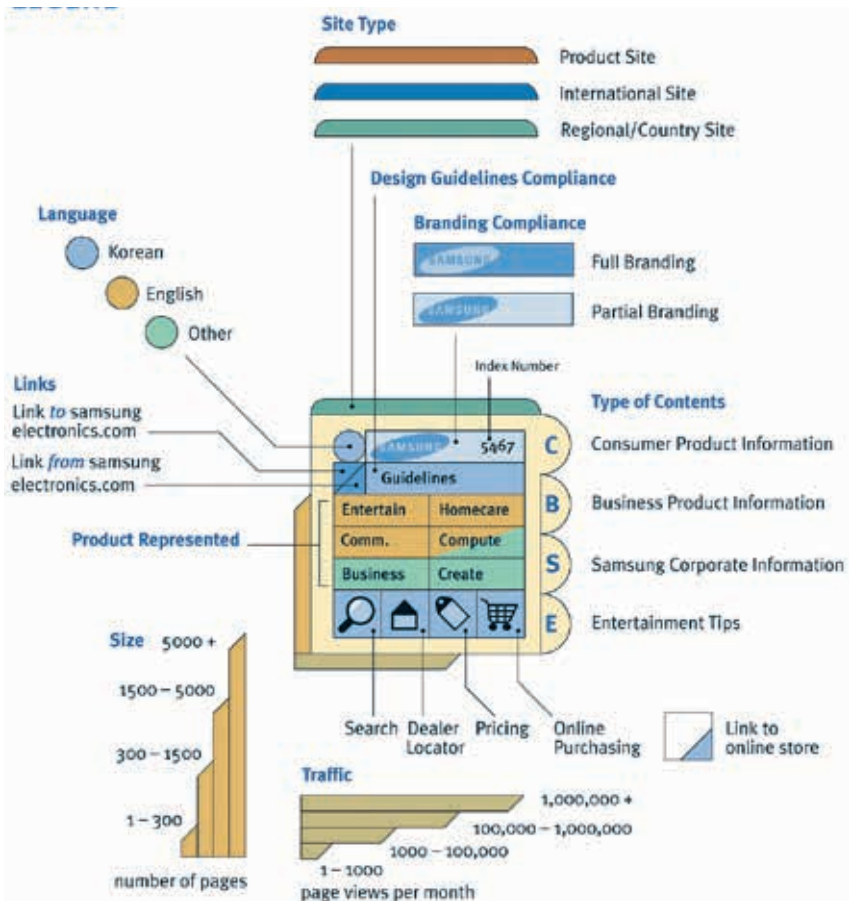


The story of Dynamic Diagrams is a story about designing under the constantly developing computer technologies. When we set off in 1990, some interactive stuff was appearing here and there, and then suddenly the interactive CD-ROMs exploded, followed by the Internet, which brought about mapping of large databases for large structures. The projects we executed were interesting and ahead of their time. Our employees designed an application called Mapa to be put on the IBM server which browsed through their whole domain – five hundred thousand web pages at that time – in one day, registering and ordering the data into a hierarchy. Clicking on the map on the top of the IBM page, you could determine your location within their domain. You could see where you were, where you had come from and what was ahead of you. Google arrived later, but their browsers use the same principles. We were discovering new forms of communication in the visual as well as intellectual spheres. It was an interesting experience. Most of what we designed distinguished us also in the front ranks of technological innovators at that time.

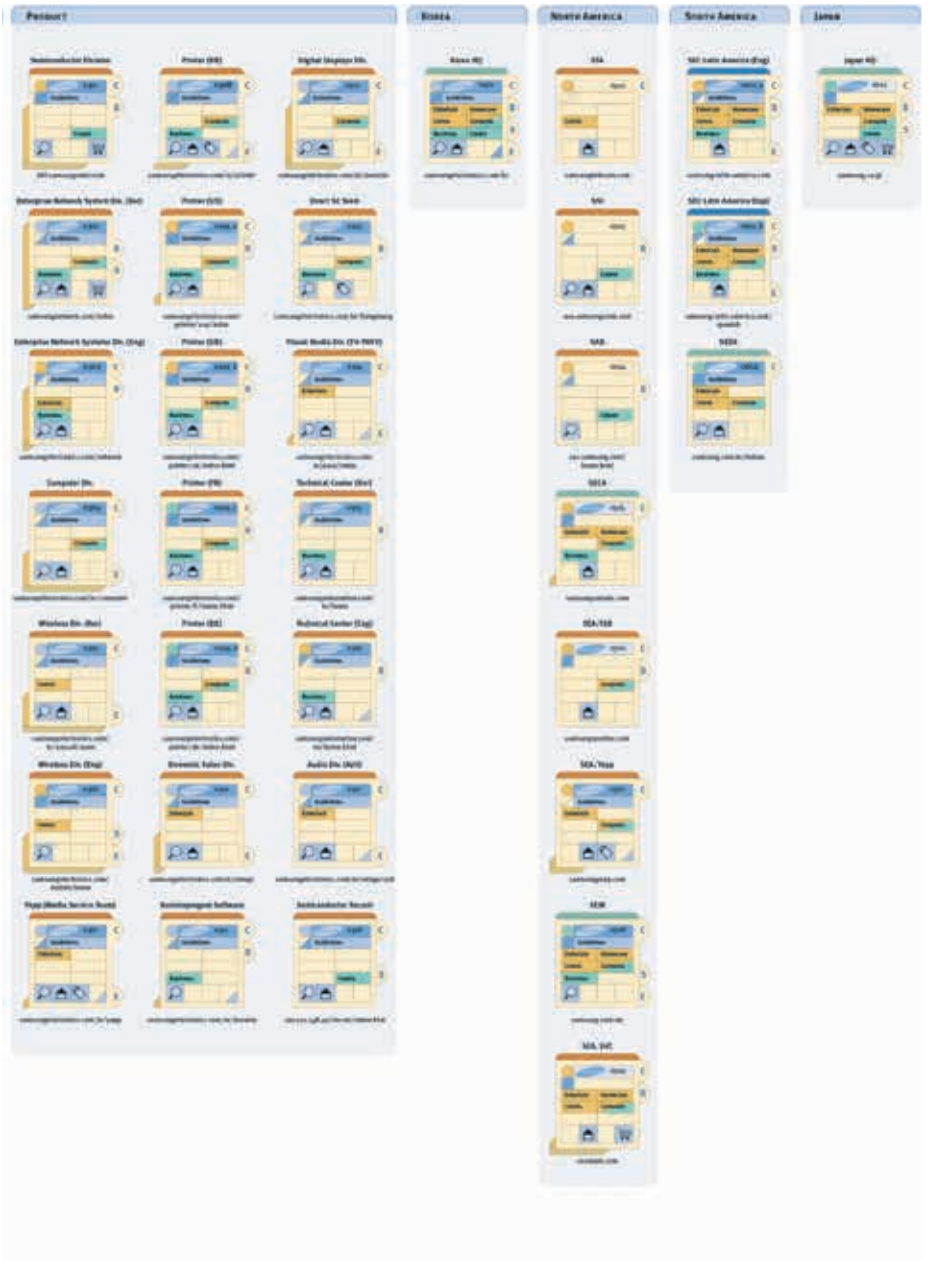
Among others, our clients included: Netscape, Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris, Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and Samsung Electronics, for which we designed websites for its subsidiaries in thirty-five countries and in eighteen languages – all launched at the same time. It could have been our largest project back then. Obviously, we co-created it with the Samsung employees, who came to us in Providence, and we, in turn, conducted workshops for them in Seoul. Working in Dynamic Diagrams was the capstone of my design career as well as a teaching experience, because I was a mentor to the young designers we employed.

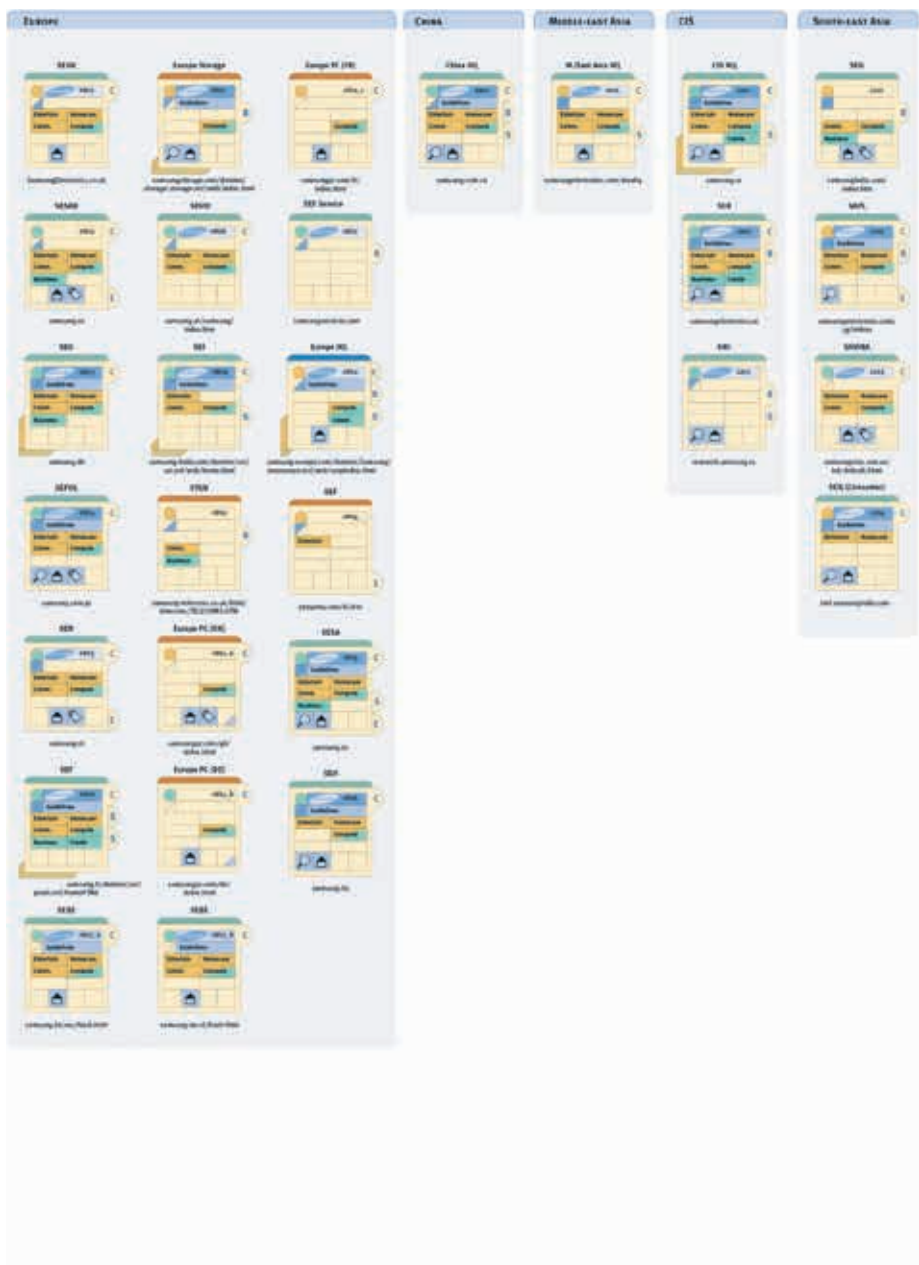
Launching DD, you returned to designing, although its definition had changed. How has your perception of design transformed over the years? It used to be a quite homogeneous discipline to start with; how has it branched out and changed?

The scope of design included packaging, prospectuses, books, magazines, ephemera, posters. Each of those had its own traditional imaging and required excellent graphic skills.



Analysis key and map of the existing websites from the redesign of the Samsung Electronics worldwide on-line domain. Samsung Electronics is a Korean company with subsidiaries in thirty-five countries. The Dynamic Diagrams studio was asked to rebuild and unify its whole on-line network. The project was divided into three phases: an analysis of the existing condition (presented on these illustrations), a suggestion of a new, global information strategy and a design of typical webpages (templates). Working on it were the teams of analysts and designers in Providence and in Seoul. On the DD part, this schema of the system was designed by Piotr Kaczmarek, one of the design directors of the studio. The illustration presents a legend – key to understanding the structure of particular pages on the next spread.





And each of them had its specific objectives, which had to be accounted for.

We were, and still are, restricted by these requirements. This has not changed. The onset of IBM computers in 1981 and Macintosh Apple in 1984 started a years-long revolution. Its first stage referred to the attitude and thinking about our profession, contacts with ordering parties and budgets.

Every new version of InDesign and Illustrator opened some new possibilities. My awareness, familiar with all the obstacles connected with the resistance of matter, was suddenly confronted with completely new tools. It was an adjustment for sure. Forget bypassing and clever tricks; you could get straight to it and take your chances.

This process came in two stages. First, the traditional method of graphic production was displaced. Instead of gluing the columns on the blue grid as the composition for offset printing, you could design a layout of texts and photographs on the screen in your studio and even Change Garamond to Bodoni in one click. Although designing became much easier, change still referred to replacing the old ways with the glamorous new. The second stage came a bit later. It took a while before the new tools inspired designers to think differently. As it will, that process provoked various experiments which gradually turned into new conventions and expanded the language of design.

Computers entering the design workshop had radically changed the manner in which the job was done and, importantly, its economy. Work had become less time-consuming, so the studio teams were cut in half. The dismissed young people immediately purchased their own computers and printers and started to compete, thereby bringing the market prices down significantly.

This overlapped with the rapid appearance of multiple new programs and the fascination with designing interactive text for screens and CD-ROMs that were popular in the early nineties. This became an open field for hypertext, and in 1994 – for explosion of the internet. These new tools not only affected the designers' workshop – they also affected the users who, instead of looking for information on paper, turned to their computer screens, which

initiated the development of dynamic media. Societies broadened their horizons of communication, crossing geographic borders at the same time. If you can read in English it makes no difference in which country you visit on-line. Information has become generally available.

Asked about what the graphic designer job is, I think – and it shows in my works – that it is designing for the purpose of communication, being dependent on the medium while using the constantly changing tools.

Since the early nineties, Dynamic Diagrams had been moving from creating static projects for paper and screen towards designing dynamic structures in virtual space. Further changes came with the rising popularity of laptops, iPhones and iPads. This way both the methodology of design – the way we work – and the expected results changed, because the major transformation referred to the manner of communication.

And so, the second stage of the new media revolution was completed.

Contemporary projects, especially those for the Internet, are incomparably more complicated than the ones we were doing in the past. The designer's ingenuity, visual as well as structural, has become invaluable. Everything can be done on the screen. A project is formulated visually from the first drafts to the final version and then saved on a proper carrier. Upon the client's approval, we can easily move the project forward to the execution stage.

Another factor connected with web design is the information capacity of the medium. When a print magazine article does not fit on one page, it can be continued on another. In a traditional book, when a designer receives additional material that exceeds the planned number of pages, more pages can be added.

Although the same can be in an e-book, we often work with material containing diverse and broad information that will not fit on one screen. In that case, we have to push the material deeper into virtual space, and arrange it so that individual parts can be sequestered and then presented on the screen when requested. This requires designing a structure, a record of proper connections between particular elements. Once defined, these elements

can be presented on different screen formats. Everything is dependent on the right interface. The art of arranging information within virtual space is called information architecture. In the world of interactive design, Information Architecture was our specialty at Dynamic Diagrams studio.

I'm interested in your transformation from a person who provided visual form for the content of others to someone who affects this form and what could be said.

It seems to me that as designers our job will always involve processing content produced by others. We do not affect what is said, but how it is said. We do this differently and to larger extent than we used to. In digitized communication, the record has been detached from the original substrate format and uploaded to organized databases equipped with browsing filters. Once recorded in a database, content can be directed to various channels and formats. The same information can be directed to a desktop PC, iPhone or a digital tv.

Screens of various formats, often quite small, now support static and dynamic illustrations better than texts. For this reason, social communication is shifting from text messages to images supported with diagrams. This has diverse implications for design. For example, type designers can adapt their work for two media formats. However, the analysis and architecture of communication is always built in collaboration with those who commission the project, regardless of the medium.

The text *On Design Education and Computers*, which I wrote in 1998 explains my attitude towards this subject at that time:

It seems that the appearance of computers on the designer table in the mid-eighties had forced changes in the designing process as well as in the design education. This can be presented on several examples. (...)

Texts, photographs and all illustrative records have been liberated of the physical dependence on paper and film, on which they used to be kept. Saved in the computer memory as a series of zeros and ones, they

became easily manipulated and independent from the physical resistance of the previous substrate matter, which had been possible to overcome, but very costly. Today, digital typography can do without typesetters, and the digital photography – without darkrooms and lab technicians.

The means of publication are generally available, and due to the advanced computer programs, the designing process has been stripped of the accompanying tricks of the trade.

The trouble is that good typography is not rooted in the technology of composition or printing, but in the complicated processes of human perception. A designer needs to understand and accurately apply these principles in order to elicit in the reader's awareness the pleasure of fluent reading and the sense of harmony and respect for a dynamic layout of a page. How a book feels to the touch, weighing it in our hand, the rustle of pages, the smell of paper and the newsprint – all these elements make up the cultural and semiotic context of reading, which enables the recipient to assess the whole book even before reading individual pages.¹²¹

I continued by noting that the traditional language of visual communication does not use verbs. All the events developing in time are presented as a sequence of images or by means of arrows or hands. These and similar methods rely upon an understanding between the sender and the recipient as to the imaging convention. Dynamic narratives had been used in film or in television, but producing them was costly and time-consuming. At the moment, our computers have installed the programs for real-time communication. We can design moving images and texts and – more importantly – merge individual fragments into larger wholes to create a network of hypertext connections.

121. Krzysztof Lenk, *O nauczaniu projektowania i komputerach* [On design education and computers], in: idem *Krótkie teksty*, op. cit., pp. 175–184.

The time and the interaction are with us. Design students often face difficulties while creating and editing a publication project. A good solution would be to closely collaborate with the teachers of humanistic disciplines. The results of their research, as well as the works done by their students, could be used in design studios to provide for efficient designing in the new social and cultural landscape. The traditional program of design schools, separating the design disciplines from the humanities, needs to be reformed. To become a good designer, today's student still needs solid visual training, but above all – a deep knowledge of the structural aspects of theory, language and processes of communication. These skills should be achieved through the proper humanistic studies.

I feel lucky to be living in the times of a revolution concerning the processes of social communication, and probably the most dramatic one since Gutenberg. I am, however, concerned with the domination of pictures, ready-made images of objects and the world, over the written word which fuels imagination. *Disney versus Hans Christian Andersen.*

I can see how much we rely on computers as tools of communicating with others. As thinking people, we should ask ourselves how to live well together as a society, and not as a collection of individuals permanently attached to the computers.

With multiple possibilities at their disposal, designers should apply them to the benefit of their clients as well as media consumers while respecting the basic elements of visual communication: grammar and syntax; the two are always present. They date back to Roman times, when the painters of Trajan's Column had to compensate the height of letters in different rows. One needs to account for how the viewer's eye and brain work, otherwise the message will not be received and understood according to your intention. When screens first appeared, I had to reconsider all the principles I had been taught at school, or rather what I had learned myself. I had to familiarize myself with the properties of this medium. In diagrams, for example, there are four different color bars data about four institution. The information is assigned to the height of the bars, so they are not even. However,

they should stay at the same level of color saturation. If you make one of them more intensive, it will stand out and make a particular institution seem more important than others.

If designing is a process, it must be an orderly one in your case. How would you describe or draw it as a manual?

There are two answers to this question: one general and one practical. The former, following from the methodology of design, is that every design process consists of a sequence of defined activities and their significance depends on the particularities of the problem being solved. The latter, practical answer, will be that each task is different. Although they bear some similarities and can be categorized, in reality every project requires an individual approach. Besides, solutions to some problems come to mind on their own, while others are much more difficult. We think differently about something isolated, like a cover or a label, than about something spatiotemporal.

So, some tasks are one-off and closed, and other...

Yes, and with the isolated ones there must be the “call of haiku”. You only say this one time, so it has to be hearty and distinctive. Obviously, the call of a poster will be different from that of a yogurt label.

Let us keep systematizing...

Surely, you can systematize into publishing categories and other. Basically, from the point of view of the design methodology we are discussing here, the isolated things require a more “poetic” answer. When you design jam labels, the labels must call out jam. A poster, on the other hand, a movie poster for instance, speaks of something that is not a one-element, one-off object – it speaks of continuity, narrative and dramatic events; the level of its intrinsic complication is different, but still its visual articulation boils down to one page and one-time print.

This is one category, and another will be the time-related projects?



Assorting colors for a statistic diagram. An example of proper juxtaposition of three different colors of the same saturation.

The second category involves the spatiotemporal projects. Traditionally, those were books, magazines, brochures.

A system of a book is a complex matter; historically, it has developed some fixed forms. Opening a cover, there is an end paper (if present), then you have a verso, a frontispiece, a title page, a colophon (if it is at the front of a book), a table of contents (depending on the type of book). If it is a novel, it has a defined composed page, margins and sometimes a running head, also a selected typeface. This is a structure you need to design and it has to work well. Looking at the books of such publishers as *Słowo/obraz terytoria* and *Czarne*, designed by Robert Oleś, or ones by *Karakter* run by Przemek Dębowski – we can see a well-designed system. They are books dominated by text. Other publications are dominated by illustration. Leafing through *VeryGraphic* released by 2+3D, you will see a consistent combination of texts and reproductions on nearly five hundred pages. This sense of coherence results from the adapted principles of

composition the reader does not have to be aware of. My book *Short texts...*¹²² is quite diversified, but it is a very precise structure – there is a grid, the proportions, columns: the body of text and extensive captions.

Do you include book series among the spatiotemporal publications?

Yes, of course, if the covers are designed as a series as well. Also, the books must follow a certain house style.

What about multimedia publications? Are they a separate category?

It depends on how you define multimedia publications. Do you mean the interactive ones?

We could say that a book is interactive as well. I mean everything moving, that is: audio, video, alternating illustrations, but also the option of going from a text fragment to a definition, like from an e-book to a dictionary.

What's more, there are in-text hotwords linked to a comment, Wikipedia or a search engine.

The traditional media have them, too.

They do, but it is all banished to the sidenotes, footnotes or endnotes – and most commonly to the bibliography. In the case of multimedia, it constitutes an integral part of a publication. Not to mention that you can read it on any Internet-enabled device.

This is a separate category, because several new phenomena have come into play. First of all, something designed for the dynamic multimedia requires a good interface. A well-built interface is a key element in the relation between the sender, as if standing behind the screen and “serving on a silver platter,” and the recipient sitting in front of the computer. The interface reflects the organizational structure present in any project. Being familiar with its language, we know that first we make general

122. Krzysztof Lenk, *Krótkie teksty o sztuce projektowania*, op. cit.

selections, then specific ones and so on. Recognizing what is where could be troublesome for the recipient.

Therefore, a proper structure of information is essential. To make something findable on the screen you first need to design a hierarchic structure. Opening an e-publication, we know that everything is connected and one selection leads to another. The proper and purposeful planning and arrangement of the materials involved in the structure is the realm of information architecture, as I said before. Actually, it should be called ‘information planning,’ but the term ‘information architecture’ coined by Richard Saul Wurman has been accepted and it will probably stay put.

We also know that information architecture involves only five fundamental manners of categorization: according to Location, Alphabet, Time, Category and Hierarchy.¹²³

When planning a multimedia publication by means of well-established methods, we decide that one thing will be one click down, the other two clicks down, and yet another deeper – three clicks down. It is all good if we organize this in a way facilitating navigation and finding the demanded information. Things located on the main page are like tips of icebergs. You can click on one short phrase (this tip) and go deeper down. Those are small units – the smallest *quanta* of information – necessary to assess what the publication is about; it is an introduction to the material continued deeper on the screen.

Designers have to bear in mind that they are not dealing with a closed publication, but with something changeable. Some important information will be permanent and some will appear in the form of comments. That was what it looked like five years ago, but it has been considerably simplified since then. Their task is to create a legible structure using the minimum of means. I am amazed at how it all unravels, how it is getting “undesigned”.

So we are designing now for a different reception?

123. LATCH, Richard Saul Wurman, 1996, see <https://parsonsd4.wordpress.com/resources/latch-methods--of-organization/> (Access date: January 2018).

Before, the material for publication was given to a designer who set it page by page according to a prescribed layout, linearly. In America, we speak of the 'push' system.

It is different with a multimedia publication. Here, the left-to-right course of a linear narrative has been merged with a narrative perpendicular to the plane of the screen and moving deeper into the virtual space. It is the reader who selects the next unit to be shown on the screen. This is the 'pull' system. It favors illustration, prefers the dynamic interactive materials and enforces text cuts. It is a completely different manner of communication between the sender and the recipient.

As I observe, there is a coupling and the printed media, competing against the on-line publications, are trying to overtake some stylistic and editorial elements and reapply them in print. This changes month to month. I'm watching these fascinating changes.

What has developed is phenomenal – a living, dynamic medium, which puts all the elements together. Soon, scent will be transmitted as well. Even now it sometimes feels like you can actually smell things on-line.

A web of connections is constantly being built. Sometimes I'm worried that it could be like the cobweb from Gulliver's voyage to Lilliput when he woke up restrained. This dominance of new technologies over ourselves can be hard to bear. Even the Pope tweets. No durable objects are produced in this world. It all bubbles up from the depth of a computer directly onto the screen. It feels fantastic but quite heavy as well.

When I think about my professional achievements, they make me proud, but I also realize I'm an old man and this ship has sailed. It was a great ship with many different things happening at the same time. Today, a designer has to respond to wonderful new challenges. All I can do is experience them as a user. I'm delighted with some publications: their functionality, logic, harmony, journalistic and editorial agility, and accurate proportions of typefaces. While opening the "New York Times" I think: How beautiful! Beautiful – in a purely Platonic sense. Or maybe in the sense dictated by Aristotle: it is all working so well, serving so well, that it is beautiful in its usability to a human.

I was there when the new world of communication was being born. I included the dynamic media in my program at RISD (they were the times of Director and Flash), but now everything has gone far ahead! All I can say is that I was lucky to be working at the onset of the Internet era. My colleagues at Dynamic Diagrams and I contributed to creating modern information mapping. Since the mid-nineties, we had been setting directions for its development. We were the authorities and innovators in the building and visualization of structures. Our presentations helped the business people understand complex problems. They would say: "Oh! I get it! I get this complicated stuff now!"

At what point do you think the conceptualization in design took over the actual execution of a concept? People with this very skill are highly valued.

I think that the turning point was the popularization of hypertext and through that a shift from linear to non-linear narrative. Analogically to the situation in the world of cinematography, where the top position is held by a producer: he is the captain, who manages cameramen, lighting directors, set and costume designers – tens of people, whose names roll in the end titles of a film. He also has a director, with whom he agrees on the concept and – between the script and the screened movie – they all come together to make it look and work a certain way. The producer is the one who holds the helm and the money.

Design studios hired a group of talented, smart people of diverse educations, not necessarily from design, who quickly retrained as new media designers. In DD, I felt like a producer. We had brilliant analysts figuring out the essence of a task, designers – specialized in visualization – and expert programmers. I plotted a strategy and then stood there looking over their shoulders and saying what was working and what wasn't. We discussed what was needed to achieve a particular objective and I had to secure that. Every project was made in close collaboration with our clients, who were the focus of our attention after all. Today, our son Jacek holds a similar function in the Tellart.com studio. As

a senior producer, his job is to carefully listen to the clients, plot strategies and coordinate the work of many designers.

Could we say that the design market has expanded?

Graduating from RISD, students have many more options than they used to. Before, they would start their careers as junior designers in a graphic studio and execute the ideas of others. Surely, there is still plenty of new packaging, labels and book covers to design. Our graduates are familiar with typography, contrasts, basics of visual forms, theory of color, the whole knowledge resulting from the psychology of reception, which is essential, permanent, and does not change along with technology. In order to work in a diverse design market, however, they need to adapt to its specifics.

Many disciplines require the constant flow of new ideas and attitudes. The relentless progress of the media opens new paths and places to be filled with design. Education is an uncomplicated, pragmatic thing, not at all metaphysical – a social objective. As a society, we need well-designed information. My teaching responds to this need. We could ask if and when it is going to become unnecessary. There is a difference between collecting data and turning them into meaningful information. This is what an intelligent and creative information designer has to do.

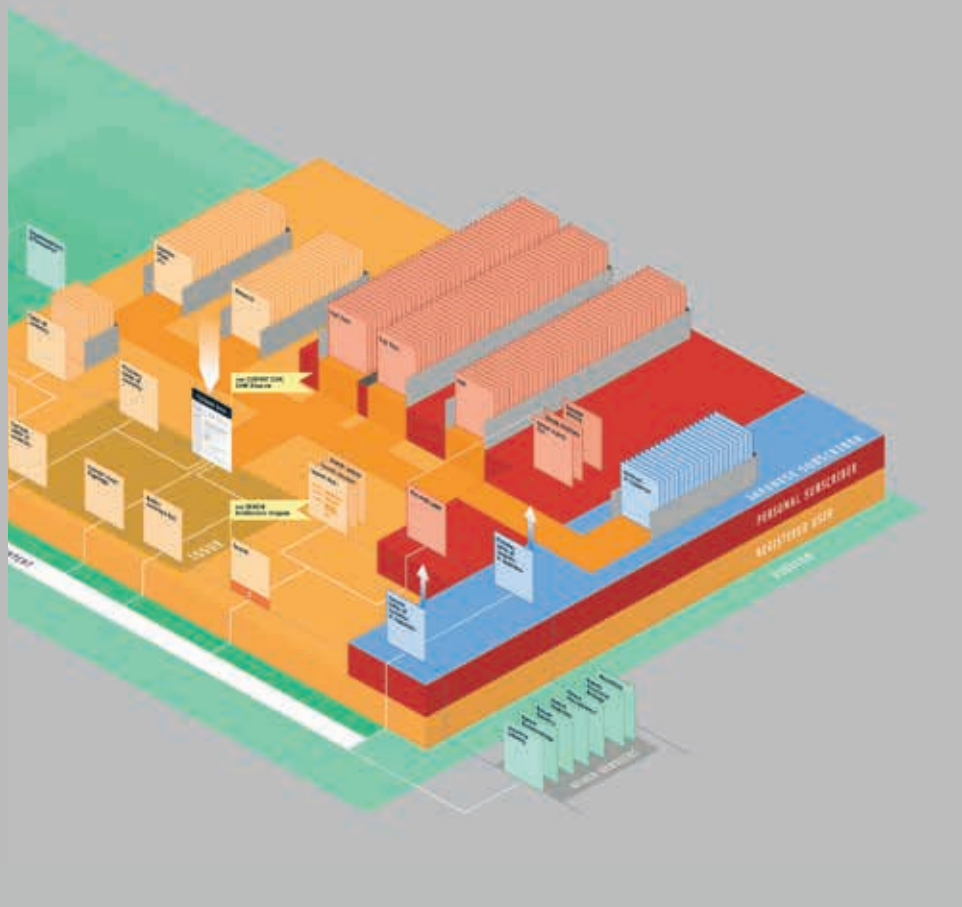
What would you include in the designer's education program? What should be put in the head which is starting to think?

If done well, design today involves numerous structural, sociological and semiotic elements.

Besides the fundamental knowledge that every designer has to acquire, as discussed before, besides the disciplines at our direct service, like the study of proportions, theories of communication, social sciences, sociology, psychology (of perception mainly), there are many scientific fields a designer should be aware of. This merger of theory and practice has long been present in the departments of architecture and industrial design. They found it necessary, so there appeared the critical and methodological literature on the subject. In the case of visual communication, critical studies had



A map of organization of the website for “Nature,” a scientific weekly. Colors show various levels of access depending on the purchased subscription. The lead analyst in this and many other projects was Magda Kasman.



not occurred before the nineties. At the moment, there is a quite an extensive library of books analyzing the discipline. They are worth reading. The time-restricted studies can't account for that. Trimming the study time down to three years (introduction of undergraduate studies) had been a horrendous mistake. It did, however, open new ways of self-education – the life-long learning.

Students should be recommended to publications connected with the processes of communication and social aspects of design by such authors as: Walter Benjamin, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Marshall McLuhan, Umberto Eco, Victor Papanek, Lev Manovich and Victor Margolin. Directing them to these books is the minimum required of a good teaching program. Modern educational programs have two segments: a pragmatic one, in the studio, where the projects are made by trial and error, students acquire the know-how and discuss their works. The other is a theoretical segment called *Critical Thinking* in America – students attend lectures on the profession, its history and creators, read assigned books and discuss the meanings of various aspects of their future job. The teachers are properly educated people, who can tackle this teaching process. Instead of master's studios, every semester there are different classes conducted by invited experts.

An additional way of obtaining knowledge is participating in the summer internship programs. At DD we also took in interns, mainly after their third year of studies. They were very happy about it. After graduation, many of them found employment with our studio.

Upon finishing school, students are equipped with various skill levels and have to face many challenges. They gain their own experience and observe how the others are doing. The mastery comes with designing – you work and try to store the experience in the form of knowledge. Besides the money, every project should bring deliberate practice. This is the context of our job. Catalogs, books, seminars, conferences – they all broaden our horizons and inspire new ideas.

Let's not forget about the two-level education system in America. What I have described refers to the fundamental studies: four years of college. Many students stop at that. The undergraduate

program gives them only the basic practical skills. You become a professional through practice on the job, reading, self-education or the two-year graduate studies – taken by few and usually limited to high-level considerations over specific issues. These could be the matters of languages and methods of communication, social contexts of design or advanced studies of history of design. Besides the practical classes, students receive a long list of compulsory readings to be discussed during seminars. The MA degree is required of everyone who intends to teach.

Designers who know more can see a bigger picture and are able to find contexts for their projects. They are also more efficient partners for the ordering parties; they can use arguments. This does not matter so much in low-budget projects such as traditional covers, packaging and posters. It is important, however, for commissions with budgets as high as several tens or hundred thousand dollars which engage a considerable number of people on both sides; we tackled such large projects at DD. A good example of how complex the modern design can be are the projects executed by the Tellart.com studio.

Do you think that teaching should go hand in hand with professional practice? Or maybe school should be a place of experimentation, and then students go out and are given a free hand to figure out the real projects on their own?

There are various models of teaching available. One of them is task-oriented and used especially in teaching industrial design. In this process, the designer contact with the client, the department accepts some tasks (usually research), which is solved in school and paid for; students learn through solving real problems. Obviously, they also take other, facultative classes, especially in America. Should school be connected with practice? It seems to be a good idea that in the final year the school takes on projects for various NGOs and students gain working experience in proper design. What I learned very quickly, while still in Łódź, was that although teaching and design are connected, they do constitute two different processes after all. Teaching is all about opening subsequent doors for the students, giving them opportunities

to go to the next level. I was quickly cured of the conviction that school should be just like life outside of it.

Should philosophy be taught to design students?

Maybe philosophical propedeutics, study of analytic thinking and asking questions. Surely, students should learn about Pythagoras, Fibonacci, and also history of Renaissance perspective and other concepts of recording space. A class in structuralism should definitely talk about Norbert Wiener and the science of cybernetics. In Poland, two researchers, Marian Mazur, a mathematician, and Ludwik Grzeniewski, a logistician, conducted serious studies on the subject of Cybernetics. Cybernetics with feedback, signal and its modifications was perfect for the model of communication I wanted to introduce teaching in Łódź. It was the first study of navigation and communication to inspire me, my students as well as many others within my circle.

Philosophy is best taught in form of seminars. We read and discuss a book – because it ignites thinking. However, at the undergraduate level it is hard to find the time and the partners to conduct such classes.

Could you refer to the form of expression once again? How does rhetoric¹²⁴ translate into visual language?

Let us consider the beautiful drawing *Cube's Dream II* by Saul Steinberg. It depicts the idea of representation: the second, diagrammatic cube, represents the first, realistic one. Let us also recall the construction of the *no!* poster by Tadeusz Trepcowski.

Rhetoric must be discussed in relation to various forms of narrative. It is the art of persuasion, the figures of which: all the allegories, allusions, parables, had been defined by the ancient Greeks. It is worth reading about as the most important study of the methods of persuasion of our civilization. Although rhetoric was formed as a tool for verbal communication, many of its

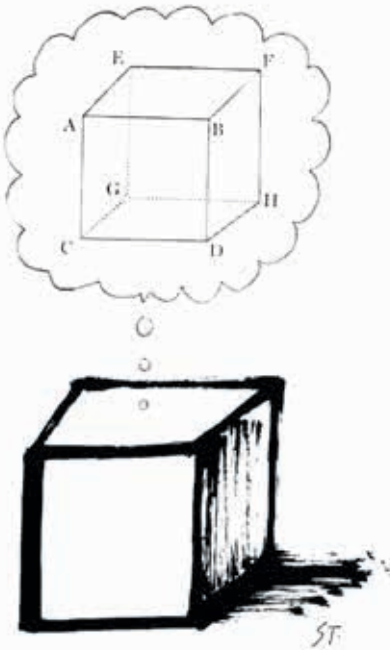
124. Rhetoric used to be an autonomous field of knowledge and the most important school subject, shaping the language fluency, proper and decorative expression of every thought, in speaking and in writing, as well as forming the social and political attitudes in the public activity.

methods are also applicable in visual communication, whenever we deal with representation. Rhetoric is a humanistic science familiar to by any aware graphic designer, and as for future poster designers – it should be a mandatory read. The conscious use of allegories and metaphors is useful in both verbal and visual language alike. *Radion sam pierze* [Radion washing powder washes by itself] by Tadeusz Gronowski is yet another beautiful example of how efficient rhetoric can be.

Visual rhetoric is the domain of advertising design, the art of suggesting intended associations to the recipient rather than speaking directly. In the kind of visual communication we are talking about, suggestion does not play such a significant role. Speaking directly, however, you still refer to the recipients' awareness and you should be able to anticipate their reactions. You will need to take into account for their education, background and social stratification, as well as cultural and ethnic identity – all elements that can influence perception. You model the message so that this necessarily reduced communication can be recreated according to your intention.

Psychology of perception tells us that only the messages which find some existing references in the recipient's memory will be retained. The eight-grader, for instance, can open a geometry textbook for the eleventh grade and see the drawings and the equations, but understand nothing. It is all going to be an empty sign, an unreadable communication. Only after a proper process of education, in the eleventh grade will it become obvious. Therefore, it is essential not to send confusing messages. Communication involves both senders and recipients. The former have their objectives, and the latter want or expect something. As designers, we are given content and guidelines to work with. We need to consider the recipient's perceptive abilities and also the technologies with consistent parameters on both the sender's and the recipient's end. When we make a very complicated animation and somebody has a poor-quality processor, they won't be able to play it. There are the technical, perceptive, social issues, and only then the individual expectations. If the expectations are in line with the objectives and the message comes through – we have done our job well.

Saul Steinberg, *Cube's Dream II*. In his drawing, Steinberg responds to a fundamental question about self-identification.



Visual language contains a noun, a subject, but there is no verb or it is abstract, expressed by means of arrows or sequences. And what about emotions which are usually expressed with adjectives?

There are adjectives, understood solely through relationships. For example, the notion of “small” exists only in relation to “big”. We have a color wheel and the opposite pairs within it. Like a chef, we take the ingredients, mix them and make a dish, which has to taste good. It can be spicy or sweet, but it must be tasty. The adjective elements of visual language are shapes, contrasts, colors providing the intended atmosphere (or taste, if we stay with the cooking metaphor) and you need to know how to use them. We know that the form communicates.

Any good design education should enable students in the use of these adjective elements. They are important components of visual language – accounting for tone, dimension and expression. Visual adjectives should be meaningful and relevant to the

recipients you have in mind. For example, when speaking to Hispanic communities, we might use contrasts and warm colors, because this population lives in a much more expressive world than the descendants of Lutheran Norwegians in America, for whom a matter-of-fact tone and condensed, blue-gray form would probably be more appealing – that is how I see it. Everything depends on the kind of message as well.

The elements of design are chosen according to the communication need. You make a decision as to whether the composition should leave plenty of white space or if it should fill the page up to the bleed etc. There isn't one universal recipe because every task is different and requires a dialectic analysis. Other elements come into play as well, non-artistic but equally important, are costs, durability and so on which must be considered and built into the process.

The basic question I asked my students during the critiques was: “Imagine you are the recipient of this project. How much does it appeal to you, surprise you, cause you trouble, come as a puzzle?” If a project is decent and has a clearly defined purpose and a particular function (packaging, catalog, magazine, book), it is subject to the stylistic principles of its category.

What is your opinion about the future of academic education in face of the changing structures in thinking? Can it, even partially, be done on-line?

I think what is changing are not the structures of thinking, but the circumstances and conditions. Surely, new things are happening. In America, on-line education is rising fast. Great schools, like Stanford and MIT, have been making some of their classes available on the Internet. In my opinion, this is useful in the case of the humanities or science, for the subjects built around a defined body of knowledge, and which can be complemented by accessing various databases.

I have a long-standing experience of conducting classes in many countries. Design is and will be a combination of quantifiable and intuitive elements. Teaching this discipline relies upon an instructor who serves as a guide, like in Buddhism, to lead the

students and ensure their progress. It might be because my mind was shaped in a different epoch, but I find it hard to imagine how teaching these skills could be transferred on-line. You can present the history of design, discuss some fundamental characteristics of its prominent representatives, but I don't think you can explain the process of design itself. This is a creative activity, which involves intelligence and talent. Projects with the same set of objectives will be conducted differently by every student. It is all about the subjective aspect of design. Teaching means discovering students' inherent abilities and helping them find their own voice. This requires a dialogue between the teacher and the student and it is hard to formalize. Is it even possible when the student and the instructor don't sit in the same room but look at each other on the screen? I don't think so. We are talking about the pursuit of the best FORM that communicates. It is the final, critical stage, when the objectives, preparations and arguments turn into a message, which has to be special and noticeable to the recipients and open them to the provided content.

I cannot imagine what could replace this final stage of discovering the mystery of form, which is so efficient in a direct dialogue between the guide and the student. A beautiful analogy is the tradition of master classes in music, where a fully-fledged musician comes to the master for lessons in interpretation. They have a notation sheet of a music piece; they discuss the differences in the sound of two notes related to the fingering, breath, rhythm and time. How to bring them all together into a unique whole? Can you have such a lesson on Skype? I really doubt that.

Could you come up with the designer's decalogue, and then indicate the seven cardinal sins?

As you get older and enter your more mature years, your perspective shifts a little. You become more tolerant, see things from a distance. Your knowledge and experience make you see the world as less specified. The sharp outlines fade away: something could be one way or another. Your perception becomes more relative, more understanding, and many things depend on their contexts. Let us treat these commandments as very general guidelines.

First: Do not commit adultery, because sooner or later it will bring a negative effect on your career; you are setting mechanisms against yourself in motion.

Second: Do not bear false witness; don't speak ill of others – it will boomerang and ruin your reputation.

Third: Know your abilities; know what voice you are given – being a lyric tenor, do not try to sing bass. A project you take on must fit your *emploi*. Before you get to work, analyze the problem and define the type of recipient. Besides, search, attempt, as much as possible, to do something new, go beyond the typical. Experiment, try. Easier said than done, of course, especially in contact with clients who have their own ideas and usually expect the designer to fit into their model and use the form they are familiar with. In the case of our studio, it took one meeting for us to know whether the client had eyes for IBM or for Apple. Those were two different models of thinking and approaching the projects: the consistence of IBM, consolidated by Paul Rand, very noble and dignified, versus the carefree experiments of Apple, clearly dedicated to a younger recipient.

Fourth: Build up your authority. Do not approach the client in order to dictate something, but listen carefully to what problem there is to solve. Designers must quickly show that they understand their client's objectives (corporate strategy) and means (marketing directives). You analyze this information and, if necessary, visualize the best solution, accounting for all the guidelines. When you don't put on airs or yield too easily, you put yourself in an expert position in the client's awareness.

Fifth: Be prepared; do your homework. Every visit with your client is a chance to learn something new about the company. Still, you should go prepared to the first meeting. In advance, obtain the information and draft a list of questions, general to specific. (What are your objectives? Why do you choose to do that? What do you want to emphasize? What is the hierarchy of information? etc). This is especially important with complex projects. Your questions force the client to consider and indicate the structure to be presented outside. They help your client see the relationships within the company more clearly. Asking such questions

also builds the designer's authority – you put yourself in a position of somebody who knows what questions to ask in order to achieve a desired effect – the one who wants to help deal with the difficulties in the most professional way.

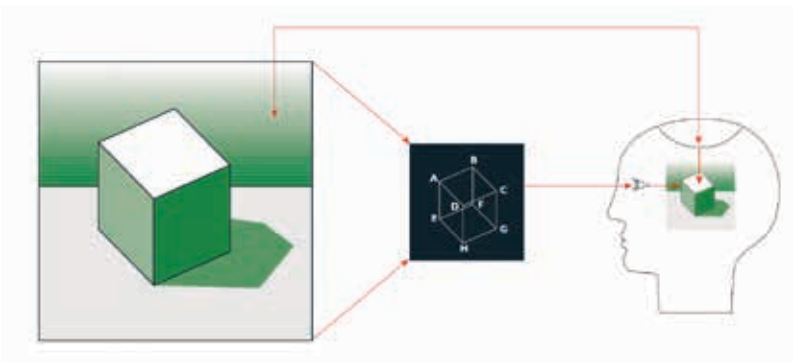
Sixth: Try to participate in conferences; let them know you. Our studio gave lectures, discussed interesting projects and conducted workshops concerning methodology of design and problematic issues. These presentations brought us many new clients. We were approached by people from various institutions who asked us to come to their companies and help them solve problems.

Design, like every other discipline, has its mechanisms of promotion. They differ between America and Europe, so there isn't one recipe. A completed project shouldn't be put on the shelf, but used to get another one. No pain, no gain. Go to conferences, send things around, make some fuss. It is quite easy to take part in a design conference, but designers don't usually employ one another. As much as it is important to build your name in the design circles, the actual clients come from outside it. You need to find a way to those who can give you commissions. Thinking about it is a part of this job.

Seventh: Be smart – as a designer, of course, but also in self-marketing, because you need to get another commission. Publish, participate in exhibitions and be present on the market. Don't be a big head, but care about your prestige; big heads tend to have many opponents. The Russians have this nice saying: “Tisze jediesz, dalsze budiesz,” similar in meaning to the biblical: “The meek shall inherit the earth.” Beware of opportunism, though.

Eighth: Support your younger colleagues. It is essential and pays back well, because they are the future – and also the ones who are going to remember that you helped them (referring to the Protestant idea of charity). Support the young whenever you can; don't feel threatened – many people in various institutions, academies, perceive the young as a threat. Those who know their worth are not afraid of the young. They know who they are and what they are doing. Supporting the young is a good thing to do.

If I were to formulate my private, and not only professional, decalogue – I would quote Max Ehrmann's *Desiderata* – a poem from 1927:



In order to be sent by means of a chosen medium, every material object has to be converted into its analogue or digital record. The recipients are able to recognize the communicated content only by identifying what they see, therefore their previously attained knowledge will be a prerequisite. One of the fundamental questions to be asked before a designer starts the project is: What to expect from the recipients?

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to

what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

This is my decalogue. Piwnica pod Baranami, a Polish literary cabaret sang it during their first performance under martial law. I have no clue why the censors let it fly, but I agree with it to the letter. I have not answered the question about the typology of sins and I don't think I can list the cardinal ones – and the trivial are not worth a mention. Every person deserves an individual approach and attention.

What mistakes were made by the students you worked with?

Talking about mistakes is not easy, probably because I usually think positively. I was dealing with a multi-ethnic group, so it is difficult to categorize the students' sins. After all, they do come here with their own codes of behavior and their sense of right

and wrong. The assertiveness I expect from the American students is completely alien to young Asian women, brought up in the Confucian tradition. Choosing to study in America, however, they should accept the customs of this country. All in all, everyone has to be considered and understood individually as well as provided with the tools for creative thinking, which will allow them to execute their ideas.

The school is meant for experimentation and learning by trial and error. I told my students to keep asking themselves: what are they aiming for, what do they want to achieve, how to define that. Approaching their task, they should sit for a while, put a pencil to paper and try to note down their goal. In the process of design, some elements will be added to this open list, while other elements will be dropped. I wanted them to build the habit of defining the parameters, so that further in the project they could confront their objectives with these assumptions.

I encouraged them not to close their conceptual process with some ephemeral vision; I suggested defining the intended result. Let us take such a typography assignment as an invitation a student's own wedding (in relation to their culture, if taken seriously). Are you and your spouse-to-be sending this invitation or is it being sent by your parents (it used to be customary in Poland, and surely in the Asiatic cultures). How to make all the parents satisfied? How to negotiate between customs and your (and parents') expectations, when you are the one to design the whole thing? This assignment started with a description of what they wanted to communicate.

The invitations resulted from such negotiations. It is one of the teaching methods which, when applied properly, makes a habit of asking questions. Many of my graduates later told me that it was the most important thing they had learned at school.

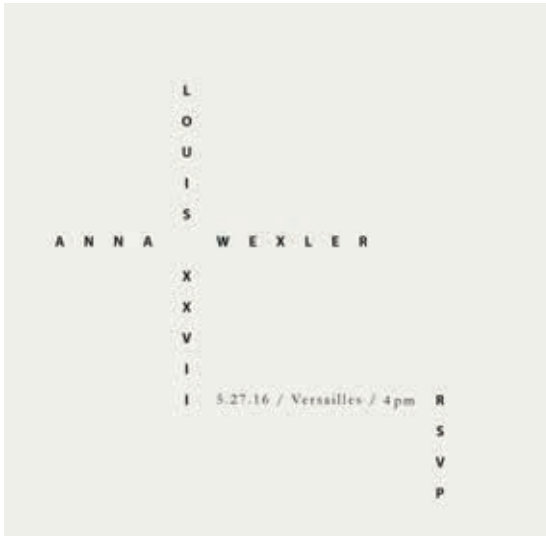
As it turned out, this principle allowed them to function efficiently in their professional careers. They asked questions and noted them down as reference points for making "to do" lists. Designing a house, an architect must know the assumptions: for how many people, how many bedrooms, bathrooms, how many floors, for somebody disabled maybe etc.

Let us talk about the potential frustrations of those students who were never taught how to work with clients.

It is a serious issue for every young graphic designer. This is a difficult job that requires the skills to develop successful artistic forms, as well as good working relationships with clients. It requires all kinds of skills—including having a thick skin. As much as you enjoy your successes, you also have to learn how to live with your failures and defeats. Let's say you've worked very hard on a project and think you have found a good solution. You go and present it to your clients and they say: "It is not what we expected." The point is, a certain amount of rejection is normal in our profession. You have to be ready for it, and learn to resilient. Developing the skills needed to handle rejection and interact with clients should be included in the teaching program— and not just commented upon in class, so it can go in one ear and out the other. It should be part the academic experience - and as such, reflected in the assessment of student projects.

In my view, we are far too liberal when giving out grades. A stricter, more selective grading process would establish higher standards for our students to strive for. They would understand that only very good work earns a high grade. Giving a higher grade than is deserved leads students to overestimate their work and encourages unrealistic expectations of success — leaving students unprepared for failure later. I think we sometimes avoid harsh criticisms or give a struggling student a good grade out of sympathy because it is just easier or because we want to be liked. However, if we fail to provide constructive criticism and the opportunity to defend their work while in school, we deprive our students of important skills they'll need to be successful in the real world. For a professional designer, the ability to capably argue in favor of a design concept, or project solution is a valuable skill. These competencies should definitely be considered when assigning grades.

Complementing a design program with a business component is another good idea. Designers need to know about market mechanisms and the methods of acquiring, conducting and selling projects as well as how to estimate project costs, write offers and maintain a constant flow of commissions. Whether you work



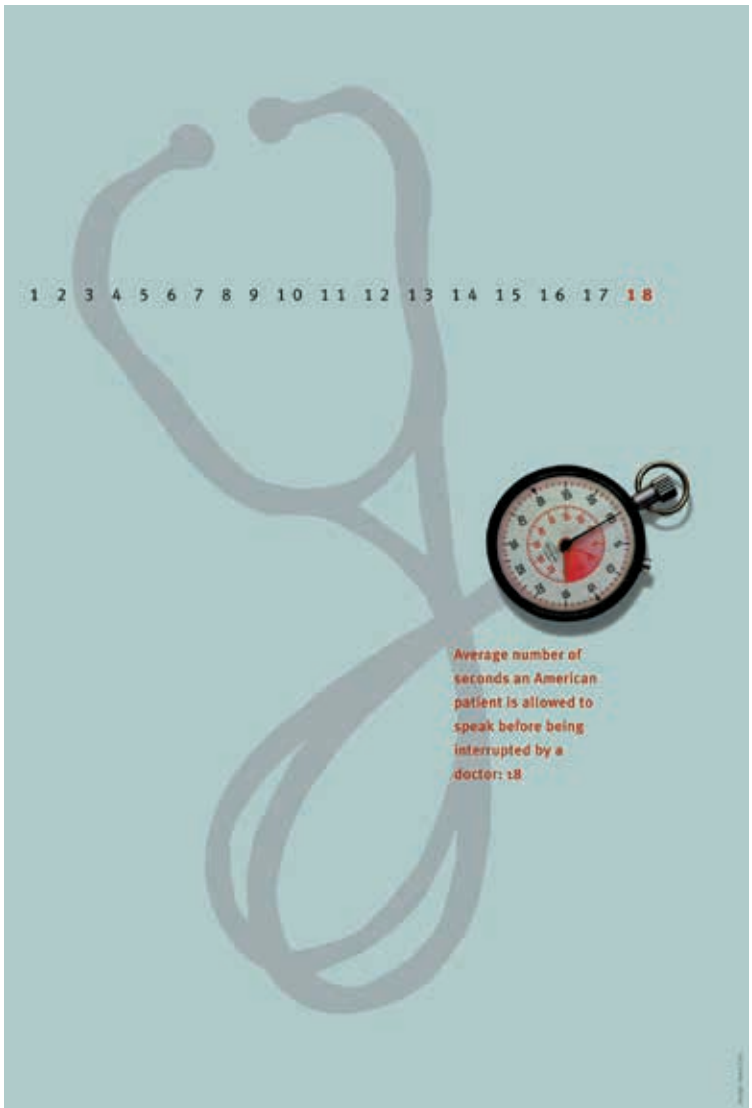
Invitations to one's own wedding. It was one of the most difficult assignments during the Typography I course. The essential idea was that the form of a typographic communication should account for the cultural contexts in which it will be received.

individually or in a studio, well executed projects result in a good relationships with your client, which often leads to another commission. It could materialize immediately or a year later, but clients will remember you in a positive light. If we want future designers have a strong presence in the marketplace, we can't just throw them into the deep end without any training. We must prepare them.

We should encourage students to take part in graphic design competitions, because it is one of the pathways to success. Participating in exhibitions allows for exposure and objective feedback. Even in a small town, several designers might join together and promote design as an effective economic tool. They could reach out to managers of local enterprises who often don't realize how much can be gained through efficient design. Designers should get into the habit of collaborating and taking the initiative to promote their work because nobody is going to do it on their behalf. (It is easy to sulk at the world rather than work for common good.) For resources: various associations, active on a domestic or international scale, may have local subsidiaries. It also useful to have experts to research the relationship between design and economy.

While still in school, young designers should be taught how to acquire the necessary data they will need to execute a project. While this is often hard to do, gathering accurate data and defining the parameters of of the project is the first stage of an efficient agreement. Sometimes new graduates, discouraged by what perceive to be a lack of understanding from their industry and business clients, will "escape" to cultural institutions, where they find it easier to communicate. I don't agree that it is easier to design for "culture", though. While they may share a common language, coming up with a good project is not easier at all.

You had to create the methods of communication with the clients yourself; they were formed over a long period of time and under various circumstances, in Poland and in America. Are there any particular steps you consider indispensable and to be taken in particular order when somebody approaches you about a project? Also, should they be taught to those beginning their design careers?



Visualization of data which were published by the “Harpers” monthly. Every issue contained a page of statistical data, which constituted a great source of inspiration for my students. This poster presents the average number of seconds during which an American patient can speak, before being interrupted by the doctor: 18.



Other visual presentations of “Harpers” data: percentage of Americans, who own at least five copies of The Bible: 27 %. On the next page: chance that a seventeen-year-old American is able to express $9/100$ as percentage: 1 in 2; the ratio of fatalities caused by the road accidents in the States to the deaths as a result of hospital infections: 1:1; 12 % of American population (38 millions people) live below the poverty threshold (annual income of 8000 dollars per person); the ratio of Americans killed by lightning (over five years since January 2002) to those killed in terrorist attacks: 3:2



In order to establish common ground with your clients, you must speak the same language. That means you both understand the task in the same way. Let's say your client wants to achieve a specific strategic goal: to sell more books or TV sets. They should translate it into marketing language, define the best path forward to the goal and select the accurate methods. If the analysis shows that visual means should be used, the marketing department formulates the objectives. If, for example, the product is meant for a young consumer, the marketing strategy will be informed by the preferences, needs and desires of that segment of the population. The analysis should also note other existing competitors in the marketplace. This information will inform your design solutions. Take the choice of colors. You will probably not use dull colors, but more likely colors with a high level of contrast (unless you decide to apply black-and-white as an element of surprise). Your design is meant to elicit a positive association in this young consumer. The list of criteria, be it long or short, is what you will discuss with your client before you begin work, and it must be approved by both parties.

The designer must understand the stated goal and presented criteria as well as think about the potential consumers and their preferences – these are the design objectives. As these objectives will have been drafted together, you stick to them. If you agreed on the high contrast, you use the high contrast in your design. If you agreed on the saturated colors, that is what you apply. It could happen that an agreed upon objective objective is not used in the final project, because you have replaced it with something else, that works and matches the project better. In this case you must be ready to justify your decision.

It is not an easy process and sometimes you are sent home with a promise of a prize, as a marketing person says: “Bring me three sketches on Monday and I'll tell you which one is the best” – because they can't, or won't, provide you with precise objectives. If you don't settle on the objectives, the assessment of your project will be arbitrary – you are at the mercy of the clients' good will or wisdom, which puts you in a difficult position. The designer should help clients define goals and set the objectives. This did prove impossible sometimes, so I would attempt to formulate them myself

based on the available information and my own knowledge and market awareness. I sent those to the client asking to confirm or reject them. My aim was to formalize the objectives and make sure I knew what I should emphasize in the project as well as to have reference points for its assessment.

Frequently, the subjective element comes into play; a design meets all the conditions, but something is off. Your design must be attractive and also justify itself. Visual language is diverse and very buoyant. The decision of what techniques to apply should follow from the objectives.

If the client was a big corporation wanting to construct a new website – or modernize an existing one, we would meet with the representatives of particular departments. We listened carefully to what they had to say about their experience and the expectations we were supposed to meet. There were always several departments: production, sales, marketing, maintenance. It is not easy to define and merge their interests when it comes to image. The production department is in conflict with the marketing department, because the marketing would like production to manufacture something other than it actually does. Or, the marketing department is not efficient enough in promoting what the production department makes. There is friction. This lack of cooperation has a negative effect on the customer service and so on.

Working with particular groups or persons, we applied various methods (visual, for example) in order to understand their expectations and obtain sufficient information to begin the design. The most difficult challenge was to come to the agreement among them, so that they all were satisfied. A designer often acts as a therapist running a group session. You appear from the outside, like an alien wasp flying into a hive – it will be torn apart by the drones. A company is working, everyone knows who is who, and suddenly there's an intruder. Nobody likes that. There is a threat response. The process of obtaining information should be the process of building mutual trust at the same time. It was one of the most interesting experiences of my life.

I have discovered that using proper visuals and arguments made me convincing and trustworthy. Defining the hierarchy and

order of information, we had to come to an agreement, so that they followed from the logic of the company's structure and were accepted by everybody. The information mapping process started with sketches and finished with a schema presenting the existing connections (in more complicated cases). It happened that after such a report a company changed its structure. This was the highest form of appreciation to me. As an information architect, I could show clients the errors and contradictions within their organization, so they could to fix them.

In the case of big projects, it is necessary to build a consensus – and it is created together. When ready, it looks clear and tidy, but what precedes are long weeks of work, analysis and discussions. After all has been said and settled, everyone knows what to expect and you can start designing.

One more thing. Whether you like it or not, we do live in a capitalistic system, which has its own rules – often ruthless, like the maximization of profit. As designers, we are built into this system with our projects and their assessment depends on many contexts and conditions, sometimes to our disadvantage.

What about the recipients' awareness? How do the recipients' habits respond to these changes? A contemporary person, learning and getting used to the new media, will find it increasingly difficult to browse for information in a traditional publication rather than modern ones, such as Wikipedia and Google. It will be easier to use a mobile device.

Well, there is always quid pro quo – we gain one thing and lose or give away another. I think young people find it easier to adapt to the novelties than the older generation does. Regardless of age, however, search engines and the possibility of googling information is fantastic. It is much easier to obtain what you need online than leaf through all the interesting volumes in the libraries. How broad and deep this information is – that is a different story. A great reference for such considerations is a book by Marcin Czerwiński *System książki*, published in 1976.¹²⁵

125. See Marcin Czerwiński, *System książki* [System of a Book], Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1976.

**After the year 2000
Reflections on the records
of communication**

One of the negative results of us doing everything on the screen – without any layout or drawing – is that we lose the sensitive eye. Slowly, we become unable to notice nuances.

(p. 330–331)

Let us move on to the two-thousands.

Our kids were living independently. Honorata worked as a vet, and Jack (Jacek's name changed in America to Jack) was initially employed in our DD studio in Providence, then in London, and now he works as a senior producer in the Tellart studio. Ewa was making beautiful ceramics, and I kept teaching and started to write more.

In 1999, as I said before, we bought a cottage in the mountains, where we used to spend our short holidays. Ewa could never bear the idea of working for some company in America where she would not have her vacations longer than a week. When we were traveling abroad, she took an unpaid leave and only when it did not collide with her projects. Our own house in the mountains, three hours from Providence and two - from Boston where we have many friends, was a great convenience. Instantly, Ewa organized her ceramic studio (it was her sole profession at that point) and spent more and more time there. I came for the weekends and our friends were always happy to visit.

Giving up my daily work in the studio has changed my life, so far filled with work to the brim. RISD had its rigorous timetable, but now all the remaining time was at my disposal: from mid-December until mid-February in the winter, and from the end of May until mid-September in the spring and summer. It was the first time Ewa and I could travel for pleasure and we could afford it.

I would still get invitations from foreign academies. For example, I was invited for two longer stays in Australia and a journey to Italy, which involved merging workshops in the Interaction Design Institute in Ivrea with spring travel across Tuscany and Umbria. Another memorable event was being invited to Tokyo for the wedding of one of my favorite graduates and co-workers, Chihiro Hosoe, and the opportunity for a longer journey across historic Japan.

We were also able to revive the family contacts, spending summers in Provence with Ewa's sister, who lives in Paris, and then taking the side roads through the South of France.

Deep in our memory we still have our travel across Kenya and Tanzania. With our son, Jacek, we went on an open truck across the Serengeti where we slept in tents at some makeshift campsites, with elephants – and even hyenas – walking around. We have experienced a sandstorm in Morocco and fabulous nights of festival in Barcelona. All the exotic places of which we had always dreamed.

To me, the two-thousands had also brought a fascinating rediscovery of the Polish students – a generation of intelligent, inquisitive, visually skilled people, who speak foreign languages and are determined to learn. I could see that during my numerous visits to Poland.

For the first time, I presented my teaching achievements in that country: information design at Zamek Cieszyn in 2010 and the typographic program in Poznań the following year. It allowed me to see the results of the twenty-eight years of my teaching work collected in one place. There were catalogs made of the exhibition presenting the diagrams of my students from RISD – in Zamek Cieszyn¹²⁶, as well as from the workshops – in Poznań¹²⁷ and Łódź¹²⁸. Occasionally, I designed for a client who used to

126. Krzysztof Lenk, *To Show. To Explain. To Guide*, Cieszyn: Śląski Zamek Sztuki i Przedsiębiorczości, 2010.

127. Exhibition of typography students' works, lecture "Słowa i teksty" [Words and Texts], typographic workshop: May 4–7, 2011, University of Arts in Poznań.

128. Information Design Krzysztof Lenk, <https://issuu.com/sto9/docs/katalog-warsztaty-26.03.2013/40> (Access: January 2018).

process manure into fertilizer and then moved to the Swedish technology of organic waste composting, but still needed visual information about his production¹²⁹.

I was working on that with a Korean student, who was drawing in Illustrator according to my sketches. Sometimes I designed posters for RISD – until 2010, when I retired and left the school. I was seventy-four. I came to the conclusion that after thirty-seven years of teaching it was high time to go. It wasn't easy. I had been mustering up courage to do that for two years.

I started to spend more time in the country, in our wilderness, where I could focus on my own projects, and travel.

What made you start giving the visiting lectures?

The projects of my students and graduates had been presented at many conferences and exhibitions, and the graduates of our department had no problems getting a job – they were perceived as talented, thinking designers, so it was worth investing several months of training in any studio, because they developed quickly and worked well. In the early spring I usually received phone calls from the designers running familiar studios asking me to send them some good diploma students. This worked for me, and my name was becoming increasingly recognizable. I was a teacher at an excellent, internationally renowned school, which had its contacts and invited professors from all over the world. As I said before, I also participated in many conferences and workshops. Another important thing was that “Graphis” published an article about my teaching results.¹³⁰ All this brought me invitations to other schools.

It started in the winter of 1989 – it was my sabbatical. I went to the National Institute of Design in Ahmadabad in India to teach there for six weeks. Then Ewa joined me, and after this fascinating journey, of which I spoke before, she returned home, and I flew to Rome, where RISD has its department. Students come there for

129. See *Information Design Source Book*, ed. Institute for Information Design Japan, Basel: Birkhauser-Publishers for Architecture, 2001, pp. 34–37.

130. See Szymon Bojko, *Diagrams, Charts and Graphs – Rhode Island School of Design (Professor Krzysztof Lenk)*, “Graphis” 1985, No. 238, p. 50–62.



Ewa Lenk's ceramics

a year. It is an interesting experience, especially for Americans, who have never been abroad and therefore have a different sense of history and the past.

The next part of this sabbatical I spent conducting workshops and lectures in various European schools, mainly in Scandinavia, the Netherlands and England. It was very constructive and exhausting at the same time. I became familiar with other programs and schools; in this context, I was able to assess what we were doing at RISD.

Later, when my teaching obligations in school were condensed to two semesters - and in Dynamic Diagrams I was only a consultant - I could conduct classes in other countries. I found teaching in New Zealand and Australia very interesting. With time, however, I started to limit my travels to lectures, short workshops and conferences.

Once, you had a lecture for the NGOs in Warsaw¹³¹. They wanted to present legislative processes and asked you for advice and consult. It was a fundamental lecture about visual language for people who had not received any design education. The audience loved it, because they could understand it. They understood what you were saying and there's a certain beauty to it. You made them realize that as much as the vocabulary changes over the epochs, the visual records differ as well.

In fact, the language of diagrams had not changed for many centuries, except for the style of drawing, if used, and the fact that along with the development of technologies and printing, the density of content was rising as well – diagrams became more detailed. The information presented on a diagram used to be frozen. Modern diagrams, such as the map of the U.S. presidential election, visualize the changing data in real time, and not only *post factum*. A diagram is not created by a graphic designer from A to Z – computer algorithms are applied. You must not forget, however, that this code is also written by talented designers.

You have worked with scientists during some very interdisciplinary meetings. The scientific language, and the professional language in general, tends to be hermetic. In your experience, do diagrams facilitate communication?

Let me tell you about an adventure I had at the Brown University. Many scientific institutions in the U.S. have adopted so-called “bag-lunches”. Once a week, everybody brings sandwiches and something to drink, and they invite external experts of different disciplines to talk about their work. I had the pleasure of being invited by Paul Kahn to the Institute for Research in Information and Scholarship, which employed about forty brilliant young professionals: specialists in Mathematics, Education, and other fields. They wore jeans and sneakers, were badly-shaven, all had

131. Lecture “Visual Information Design – infographics in the citizen-state communication,” April 9, 2013, Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology, Warsaw.

this slightly insane look – each of them sharp-minded with exceptional skills.

I went there with my croissant and gave an illustrated lecture (Jacek Mrowczyk later invited me to repeat it in Kraków, Poland) about visual communication and ways to record it, about narration and European and Eastern perspective. (The lecture I gave at Brown University was longer, and I think it is worth publishing in the form of a small book, otherwise it will be lost). I could see that all these people, who had been simply eating their sandwiches and sipping their colas, suddenly set everything aside and were staring at the screen in awe. It turned out that there was something these fine experts had no idea about. Obviously, they had known diagrammatic presentation of technical or scientific problems, but they had never considered it to be a discipline in its own right, with its long history, methodology, and which you could actually study. I was telling them a story. There is a whole world of visual language created in various epochs. Often, they are cool records rooted in logic, in different stylistics, made to communicate knowledge of numerous disciplines – geology, ballistics, physics or medicine. The mechanics of bones and joints, for that matter, can be presented as a system of physical dependencies, forces and tensions, possible to visualize in diagrammatic form. There are also various consequences of recording the space. I showed it all to them in my forty-five-minute lecture and I could tell they were fascinated and comprehended the significance of my presentation on the spot. They were undoubtedly able to write formulas to describe particular relationships, but the meaning of these formulas had to be articulated in various ways, with regard to their context. That was another thing I tried to show them. Those scientists had become our future allies.

Soon after, the Institute ceased to exist, the money had run out, and the project they were working on was not supported any more. It was five to seven years ahead of its time. Paul talked about it during various conferences and it was always a hit. When it was decided that the Institute would fold, its scientists were sought-after: Microsoft, Apple, IBM, Sun Microsystems and Silicon Graphics. They were as precious as gold. Within the companies

that employed them, they became our ambassadors. Whenever there was a problem with visualizing their projects, they remembered Dynamic Diagrams and asked for our help.

Reading a text describing relationships between elements may be intellectually pleasing, but the same thing presented as a diagram – reaches the recipient instantly.

What is more, seventy percent of memorization is connected with what we see rather than with a verbal message. I think this is understandable and very primary.

A German philosopher, Hanno Depner, claims that instead of ‘diagram’ such synthesized information used to be called ‘schema’; rather than for presenting ideas, this tool was used for teaching.

I think that the term ‘schema’ can be accurate for a short presentation of how a mechanism works or its construction. Diagrams, as we understand them today, were drawn to show progress or some dependencies. As early as the 13th and 14th centuries, Ramon Llull used diagrams for trees. Then followed Leonardo da Vinci, Luca Pacioli, Simon Stevin,

Athanasius Kircher and the whole Jesuit metaphysics, and especially the 17th century and Robert Fludd – concepts that could not, in fact, be presented verbally. Even in the era of Enlightenment, in the late 18th century, the scientific approach brought about the entire library of diagrams to describe physical phenomena and correlations between them: in ballistics, engineering. Those are very precise descriptions, images, and some of them probably could be called schemas. Whether you call a condensed visualization of a problem a schema or a diagram makes no difference to me.

We have already spoken of Willard Brinton and Karl Karsten. The power of good diagrams lies in building correlations. A skilled statistician considers and connects several elements such as quantitative changes, various factors which influence these changes, a timeline, maps etc. Gathering data and presenting relations, diagrams transform data into information.

Let us sum up what we know about visual language and diagrams.

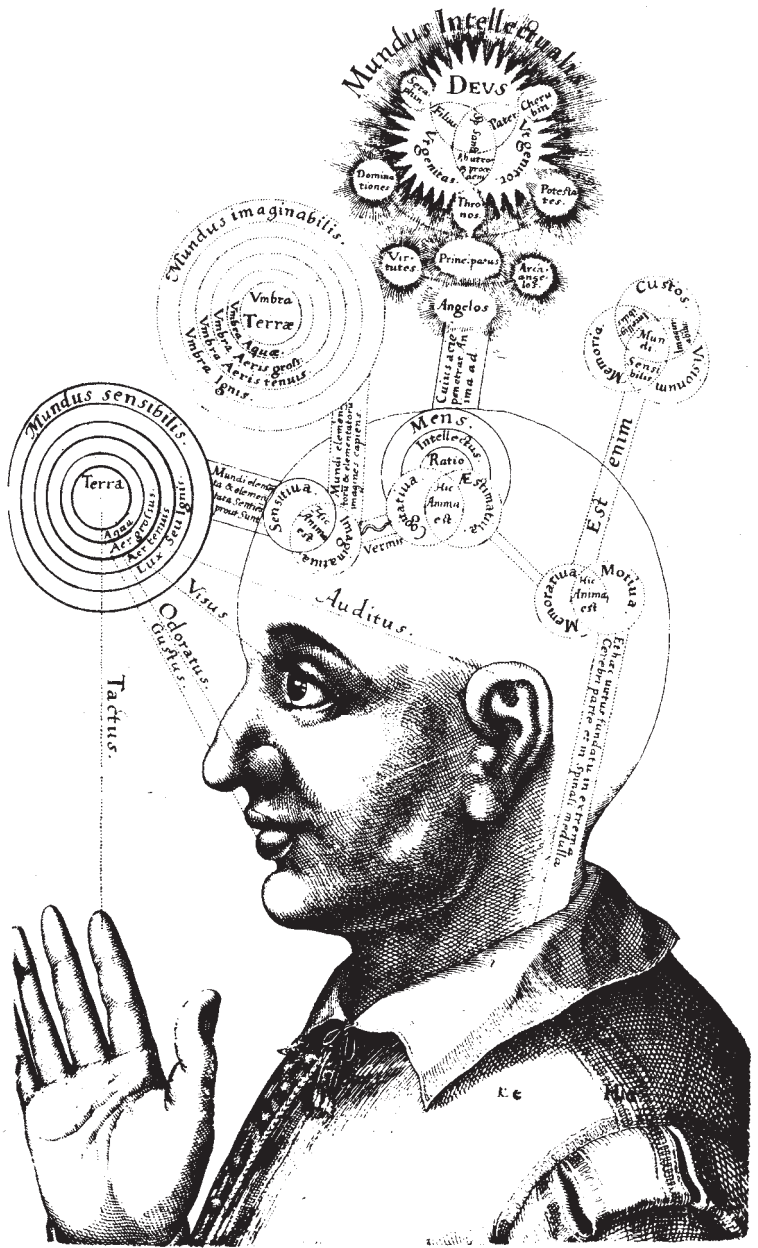
Every method of communication which becomes accepted in the society starts to be used, understood, gradually becomes part of daily life – and its borders expand. Today, most Polish newspapers use graphs, maps etc. What used to be a rarity not so long ago has naturally become part of social visual communication. Along with dynamic media and the internet, it enables us to describe phenomena, which used to be very difficult and time-consuming to present.

The experience we grow up with, and through which we learn about the world around us, is stored in our memory. It becomes a reference point for understanding and assessing the messages we receive, although, as Saint John of Damascus said, it is not always that simple:

Every image is a revelation and representation of something hidden. For instance, man has not a clear knowledge of what is invisible, the spirit being veiled to the body, nor of future things, nor of things apart and distant, because he is circumscribed by place and time. The image is devised for greater knowledge, and for the manifestation and popularizing of secret things (...) ¹³²

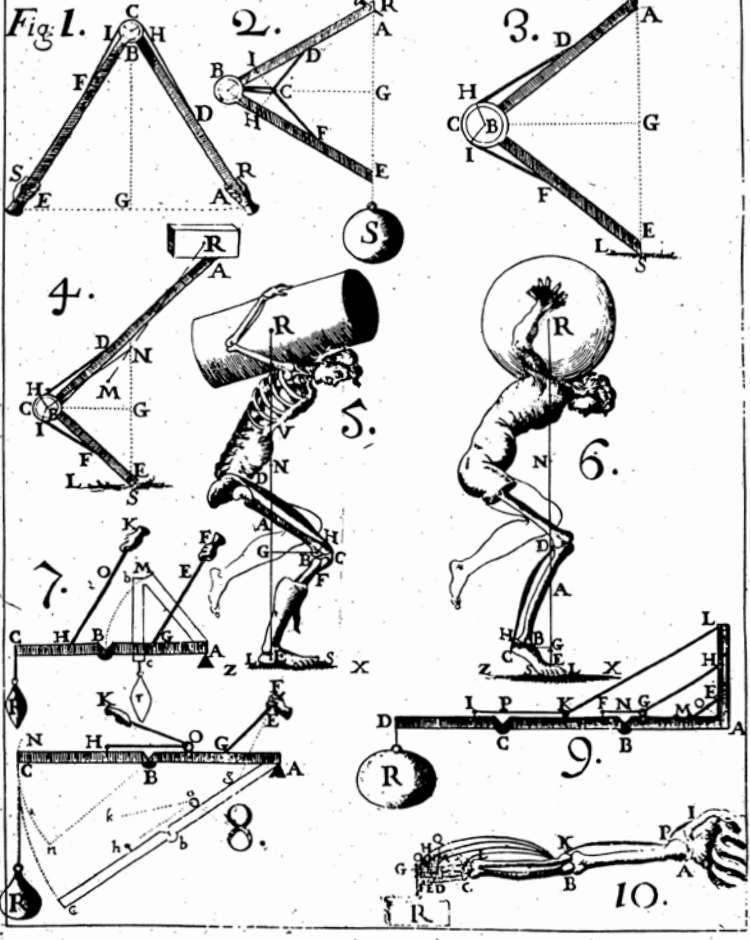
The language of information shows us things we usually can't see. It may refer to the material world and use its elements, but also constitute a record of ideas or notions you can only see in the form of more or less realistic languages of illustration. Diagrams and all the similar records in the language of visual information are either abstract or present the essence of nature, processed in some manner. The differentiation between 'to show' and 'to represent' is fundamental; you need to recognize it, assimilate it and learn to like it.

132. Saint John of Damascus, *Apologia of St John of Damascus Against Those who Decry Holy Images*, London: Thomas Baker, 1898, p. 93

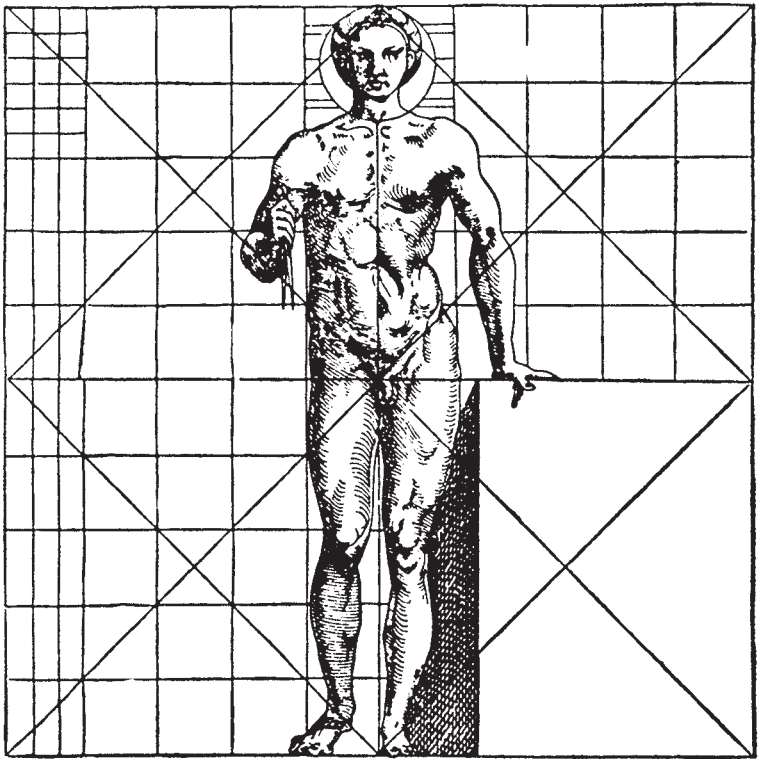


Robert Fludd, a 17th-century doctor, philosopher and mystic, presents the “interface” between the surrounding world and the world of human thoughts, concepts and beliefs – the metaphysical world – through five sensual channels.

TABVLA QVARTA. [R]



A French scientific diagram of the 17th century uses one image to present lifting of a weight from the perspective of a skeleton, muscles and complex principles of mechanics.



Vitruvius, a Roman architect and theoretician of the 1st century AD, shows proportions of a human body through the geometric relationship between the body parts.

Every discipline has its own methods of visual notation. This is probably why no textbook of diagrams has been made, as there are textbooks of typography, which is homogeneous. I have discussed this subject in my book *Short texts on the art of design*¹³³; it presents some examples of good diagrams. The essay *About two skeletons* shows that one subject can be treated in various ways. The idea that a diagram is an effective means of persuasion when it refers to the recipient's previous experience has been discussed in my article *Forth Rail Bridge*, published in the "2+3D" magazine.¹³⁴

Information presented in diagrammatic form is a wonderful discipline to study. It has become especially significant in our times, as the world is gradually moving away from printed verbal communication towards interactive media and visual messages.

How do diagrams change along with the changes in the channels of information? Sometimes we get beautiful but highly complicated forms, which could use a manual themselves. What paths of development do you see for this discipline?

The computer and its derivatives – tablets and smartphones with their smaller format, which often requires different solutions for transferring data – are not new anymore. There are still books and brochures published as well, and they include static diagrams...

As I said before, every diagram is a schematic transfer of information, a simplified model, explaining some action or process. When it is done in an optimal way and its form and colors correlate with, even emphasize, the content – we can call it beautiful. If, on the other hand, it is illegible to the recipient, then regardless of its most beautiful form – it is a bad diagram. Obviously, a diagram explaining a given phenomenon will be different depending on the intended recipient – I mean diagrams illustrating scientific issues for example. The language scientists use when communicating with one another is different from the one they use to explain something to their students.

133. See Krzysztof Lenk, *Short texts on the art of design*, (Krótkie teksty o sztuce projektowania) słowo/obraz terytoria op.cit.

134. See idem, *Most nad rzeką Forth* [Forth Rail Bridge], "2+3D" 2004, No. 11.

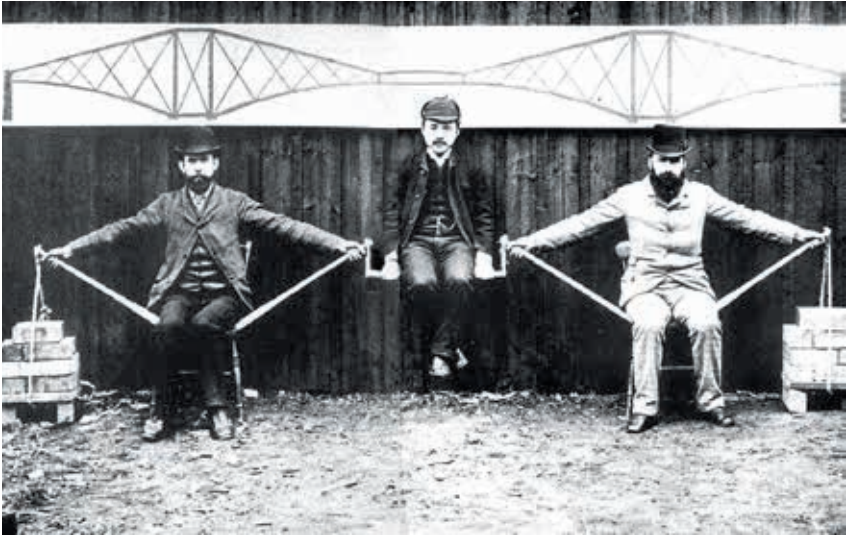
I think that the future of diagrams is in animation – something taking its course over time is much easier to describe dynamically than when it was statically noted down, frozen on paper. Looking at the diagrams in “New York Times” on-line I can see how much easier it is to acquire things presented in sequence, so that they illustrate complicated theses in ascending order.

What you teach your students at the Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology in Warsaw, or what Jan Kubasiewicz does at Massachusetts College of Art, is invaluable – all this practice in dynamic presentation of data is the future of communication, especially that we are moving from print to the real-time media.

Still, I would like to share some doubt I have. Noting any concept down by means of words already makes it deformed in relation to what we think. “The tongue belies all thought”¹³⁵ The same refers to image. I think that a disadvantage of the rapid development of media and the progress of communication technologies is that everything becomes flat – reduced to a short form; the image dominates the text, and verbal statements are restricted to a few paragraphs. The new media requires reduction; people do not want to read on the screen more than one–two pages on a given subject. Recently, the “New York Times” has decided to publish on-line some long articles that used to take several printed pages. Typographically, they are done well, in a large type size, illustrated, and the topics are fascinating – I read them, even though I can’t sit on the sofa with a paper. Looking at these pages, however, I can’t resist the feeling that they don’t fully belong to this medium and I suspect that very few people of the younger generation actually read them. I hope I’m wrong.

Let me remind you how skeptical the humanists were about the rapid development of printing after Gutenberg – human culture was considered to be the culture of memory (we have lost this ability by now). An educated person was supposed to memorize information, as followed from the great Greek tradition: building the memory palaces, the art of Mnemosyne. I have read that in

135. “The tongue belies all sound, and sound all thought,” Adam Mickiewicz, *Forefather’s Eve part III*, trans. Dorothea Prall Radin



The decision to build a huge railroad bridge over the Forth River in Edinburgh was made after the supervisory board was presented with this photograph/model. The physical experience of each of these gentlemen convinced the board that this seemingly hazardous construction made sense.

ancient Greece, where they wrote on papyrus, there was strong resistance against writing down the spoken texts – it was perceived as vulgarizing. The same reaction happened when printing was developed. And when the motion pictures were invented – film, and especially television – it was said that the movie adaptations were superficial in relation to novels and they would do away with the culture of reading whatsoever. (Isn't it just a little true?) Similarly, the new media are great for their informative function, but they don't seem to be the best means of conveying deep knowledge, which remains the domain of book and print.

I am very negative about the manner of presentation, where a lot is happening on the screen at the same time – my perception mechanism does not receive that; I wasn't born having a smart-phone for my third hand like my grandchildren seem to be. On the screen, I can trace one, maybe two changeable elements, that is how my perception works. The development of new media has negative effects as well. I'm not alone in my attitude. Nicholas



The same bridge in reality

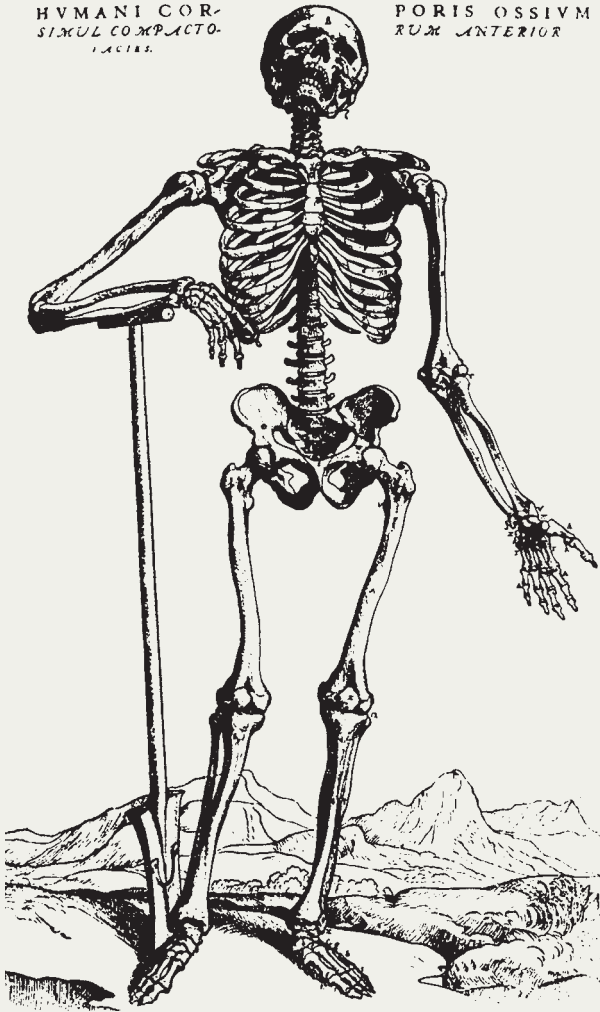
Carr writes about it in his book *The Shallows – What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*¹³⁶.

Let us talk about something tranquil then – space. Tell me what you think about the space around you. And what about the maps of space?

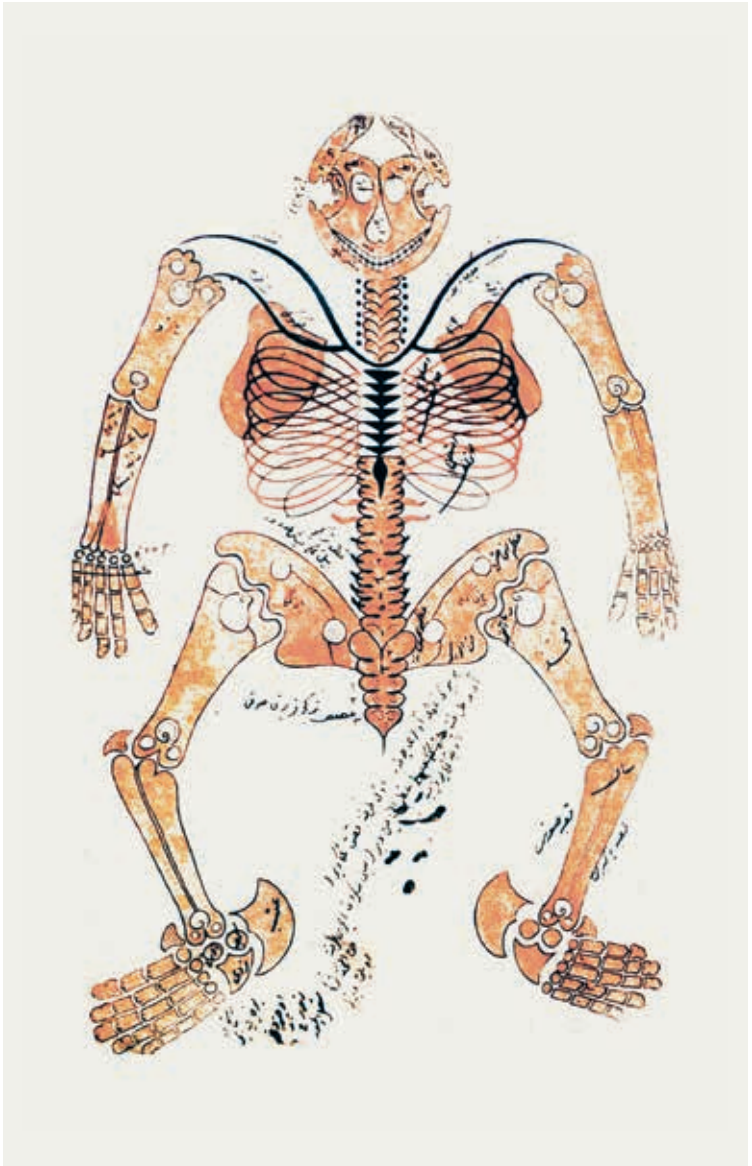
Let me tell you a story. In New Hampshire, one of our windows overlooks a large meadow, behind the meadow there is a forest, and behind the forest, far on the horizon – the mountains. Sometimes, when the clouds hang low, you can't even see them. For several years now, I have been photographing this vast space in front of my house, always from the same spot. I have taken several thousand photos and no two of them are identical. I'm recording a process, observing constant change. This space is alive. The

136. Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows – What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011

HUMANI FABRICA LIBER I.
HVMANI COR-
SICUL COMPACTO-
TACIAE. PORIS OSSIVM
RUM ANTERIOR



In the process of communication, we often use models of reality. They show the world as we know it and not as we see it. This 17th-century gravure presents all the bones of human skeleton down to incredible detail. The illustration was included in an anatomy textbook, which had been used by medical schools for several ages.



This chart of a skeleton from a Muslim textbook is characterized by similar precision. However, we can see “signs” for bones rather than their actual forms, as representation of the human body was forbidden by the Muslim religion.

image seems the same, but it differs every time – a different sky, different light, humidity, different colors...

In your reception, it is spatiotemporal.

I think it is. Thinking about space and its representation, I would like to give a few examples from the history of maps which had a lasting impression on me.

Sometimes, even thinking of diagrams, you need to remember about space. Our Western, post-Renaissance, perspective manner of presentation of objects in space, with the vanishing points on the horizon, like in photography, is not always useful for diagrammatic presentation, as it is rigorously subordinated to the rigid geometric principles. The case is very much different in the traditional representation of landscapes and maps in the Far East.

My private discovery – as a man insufficiently educated in history of art – were the Far-Eastern notation systems, which allowed a stipulated convention between the sender and the recipient. I found it fascinating. It is a convention of continuous space, which makes a horse at the bottom of a drawing the same size as a horse by the upper edge – as if the same horse were stamped twice. There are not perspective vanishing points and the observers are unable to determine their position. The resulting image presents what we know about the object, but not necessarily how we see it in nature. A similar thing refers to the discipline of diagrams, where the material world gets transposed into a symbolic record. David Hockney beautifully describes the whole phenomenon, it is worth reading his texts.

Talking about maps and cartography to the Brown employees, and later to the audience of my lecture in Kraków, I started with a drawing by da Vinci. It features the downtown of Milan, represented how he saw it, and above the same view is transposed into a map. The former constitutes a record of the material world, and the latter – his interpretation, a diagrammatic record. Further, I presented a map of Imola; it is a small town in Italy surrounded by walls, with a river nearby. The map marks all the houses, and each of them has its function indicated in a different color (the inn, the bakery etc.). In the late 15th century, when the map

was drafted, it had not been possible to set Leonardo's flying machine in motion and see the town in the bird's eye view – he and his assistants had to go into town and measure everything. This representation is very precise, even though the streets weren't straight. What we see on this map resulted from a distillation process, transposing the three-dimensional observations into a two-dimensional plan view. Mapping is an intellectual process.

Let us take a look at the extremely detailed map of China of the 12th century – engraved in stone. When the contemporary maps were lain upon it, the map turned out to be accurate, except for the outline of the rivers, which had changed their courses a bit over nine hundred years. One side of every square on this map equaled two hundred Chinese miles (I don't know what distance it is in contemporary units). The fundamental question is: How could this have been done?

We can imagine the emperor in Peking saying: "I want to have a map of our country"; his mandarins hand this order down to the subordinates and it reaches the regional authorities. Somebody had created a consistent methodology of collecting and recording information and forwarded the instructions to be executed. One field after another, square by square were defined and filled in with information about the terrain, villages, roads and rivers. Then, the individual segments were put together into a coherent whole. During this tremendous work, it had to be decided which elements were important and which would be continued in the neighboring segment. It is one of the most impressive examples of the diagramming process by means of distillation of three-dimensional reality and its transposition into two-dimensional record.

The Hokusai woodcut¹³⁷, 43.9×58.3 cm, features Mount Fuji and the entire imperial road between two main cities Edo (later renamed as Tokyo) and Kyoto, the seat of court. The inns at the road were marked with vertical tags. The whole thing – considering how extensive this area was – had been done to incredible scale.

137. Hokusai, *Tōkaidō meisho ichiran Katsushika* (Panoramic View of the Noted Places of Tōkaidō Highway), 1760–1849, after: Rare Books and Special Collections, University of British Columbia Library.



A landscape in front of my window

I had a personal adventure with this map: in a way, it appeared to me on my flight from Shanghai at about 1pm on a beautiful winter day. The plane was flying across a clear blue sky over the ocean. At some point, I saw a landscape and I recognized it, although I had never been there before: Mount Fuji. I was wondering how I knew it. Then I realized that I was looking at the Hokusai map. I was 11 kilometers (c. 7 miles) up in the air. He hadn't - he did the whole thing conceptually. I could see all the details (as much as possible from this height): it was exactly the same terrain as on the woodcut. How did he do that? What incredible documentary and cognitive work must have been done to draw that!

As we have discussed the records of space, why don't we talk about sculpture now?

My relations with sculptures are strange. Very personal. I would rather tell you about my reception, how I experience sculpture.



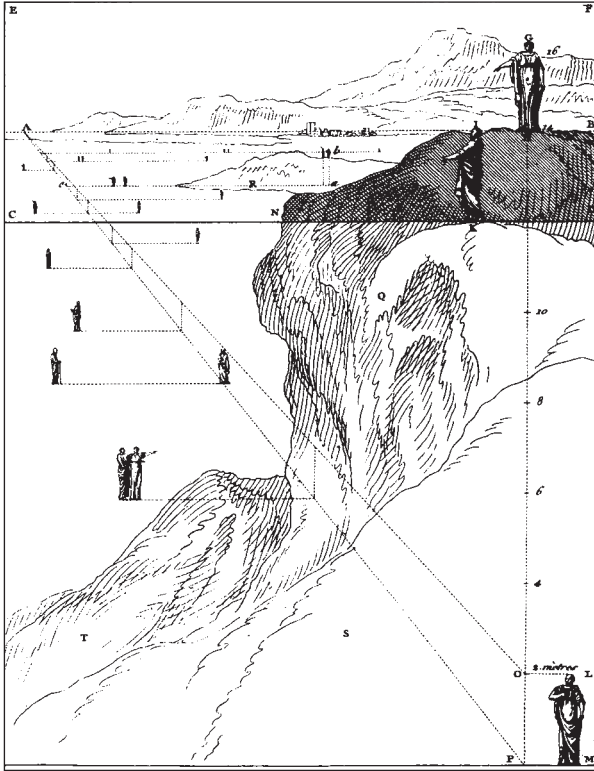
In 1953, the peak of social realism, there was the National Sculpture Exhibition¹³⁸ at the Zachęta gallery. It was, of course, the exhibition of social realism as well, and the plaster sculptures represented Bierut, Stalin, Lenin – pompous figures. You had to be there and so I was. Looking at those completely bleak forms, I suddenly stopped in front of a sculpture by Alina Szapocznikow *Stalin*. Nobody even remembers that in 1953 Szapocznikow sculpted Stalin. It was amazing – as if I had received a signal of sorts – this sculpture was talking to me! It was pulsating. I was walking around it – forget Stalin – it was the sculpture. Looking at it, I was possessed; I could not walk away. The feeling was purely sensual; it was about the matter, the vibration of space – it was magic. Later, I had a similar sensation with one of Henry Moore’s works. Then, with an unfinished sculpture by Marian

138. 3rd National Art Exhibition: painting, sculpture, graphics, satire: December 1952–February 1953.



Wnuk. I'm not sure if I could describe my reception of sculptures in any particular criteria.

I happened to have such an emotional reaction to architecture as well. In 1989, I went to India to teach at the National Institute of Design in Ahmadabad, in the state of Gujarat. This area had first been invaded by Alexander the Great (some influences from that time remained), then there came Islam - the original one, with the caliphate in Baghdad - which assimilated all the



The Far Eastern concept of space presentation is a convention of a frame, where the objects located closer to the bottom edge are read as closer to the viewer, and the objects of the same size at the top – as being further away. This method often comes in useful in contemporary information design.

The post-Renaissance convergent perspective has the sizes of objects proportional to their distance from the horizon line.

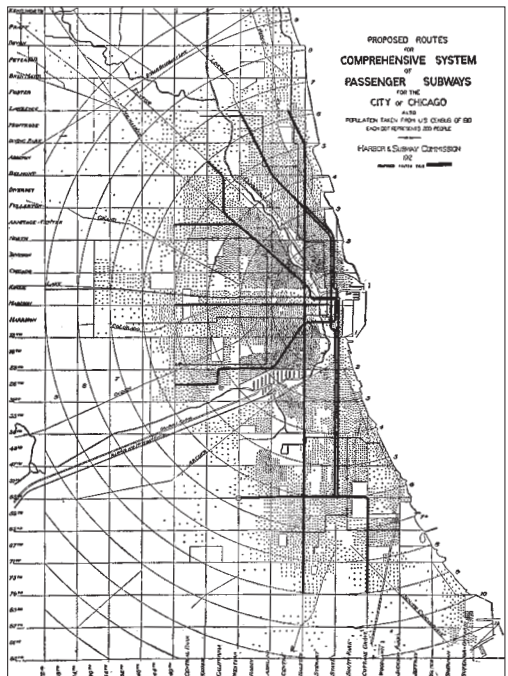
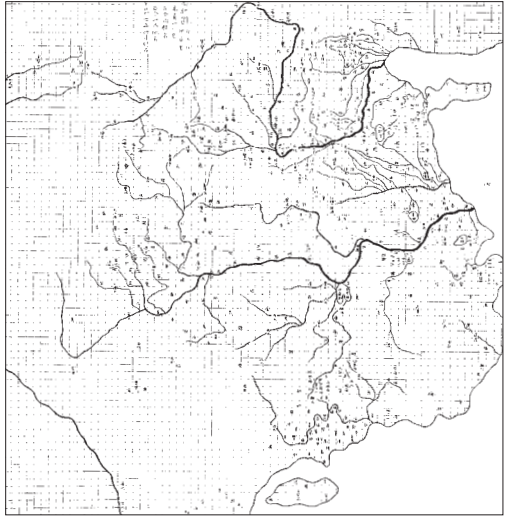
good things on its way. It had absorbed most of the sophisticated Persian civilization, which was four thousand years old. Actually, the first wave of Islam had come to India from Persia, with its social hierarchy and institutions. New architecture and art appeared. The alien culture gradually became integrated with the culture of the local community.

Our friends decided to show us one of the important landmarks and told us its interesting history. One of the new rulers

chose to set up a capital of his province in Ahmadabad – the city situated by the river. On his order, in the early 12th century a new city was designed for eighty thousand residents; it had streets, water supply, sewer system, the whole infrastructure. It was adapted to the climate, with six months of monsoon, when the streets are knee-deep in water and it had to be drained, followed by six months of drought, heat, when people needed shade and natural drafts. The city had to be “built” into the forces of nature. A perfect urban structure was created, with bazaars and mosques, and it was meant to serve people: craftsmen, merchants, all the residents. Several miles outside the city, the ruler had erected an airy summer mansion for himself. A 200×200 meters (c. 650×650 ft.) artificial pond was built. It was square and surrounded by steps. In the center, there was an arbor accessible by boat. A palace was erected on one side and on the other there was a tomb of some important Islamic saint – the entire complex was made of white marble. The windows were the openwork arabesque, which allowed a pleasant draft. When we arrived, there were some people, including beggars, in the yard. I separated from the group and went inside. It was all built on the ground floor: the rooms, the halls, the passages, various angles of space, the yards; some rooms were roofed, the other open. At some point, I started to feel that I was not alone. I looked around to check if anybody was following me, but there was no-one. My steps became more careful, it felt like I was being led. There was an astonishing relationship between my senses and this space.

Back home, I started to look for materials about the Islamic culture of that time and I came across a fantastic book by Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar: *The Sense of Unity*¹³⁹. It presents the notions of philosophy and metaphysics of Sufism, which affects Iranian art, architecture and urban planning. Nobody had ever told me that Islam understands space much differently from the Western civilization. Physically and mentally, we live in closed spaces, there’s maybe a window, some rooms, each of them has

139. See Nader Ardalan, Laleh Bakhtiar, *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.



The first illustration is the 12th-century map of China discovered several tens of years ago. The other one – which looks a bit similar – is the 1912 map of Chicago. In reality, it was a project for a local railway network. The thick lines stand for the planned route, each black dot is one thousand residents, and the circles – the planned commuting time to downtown (in minutes).

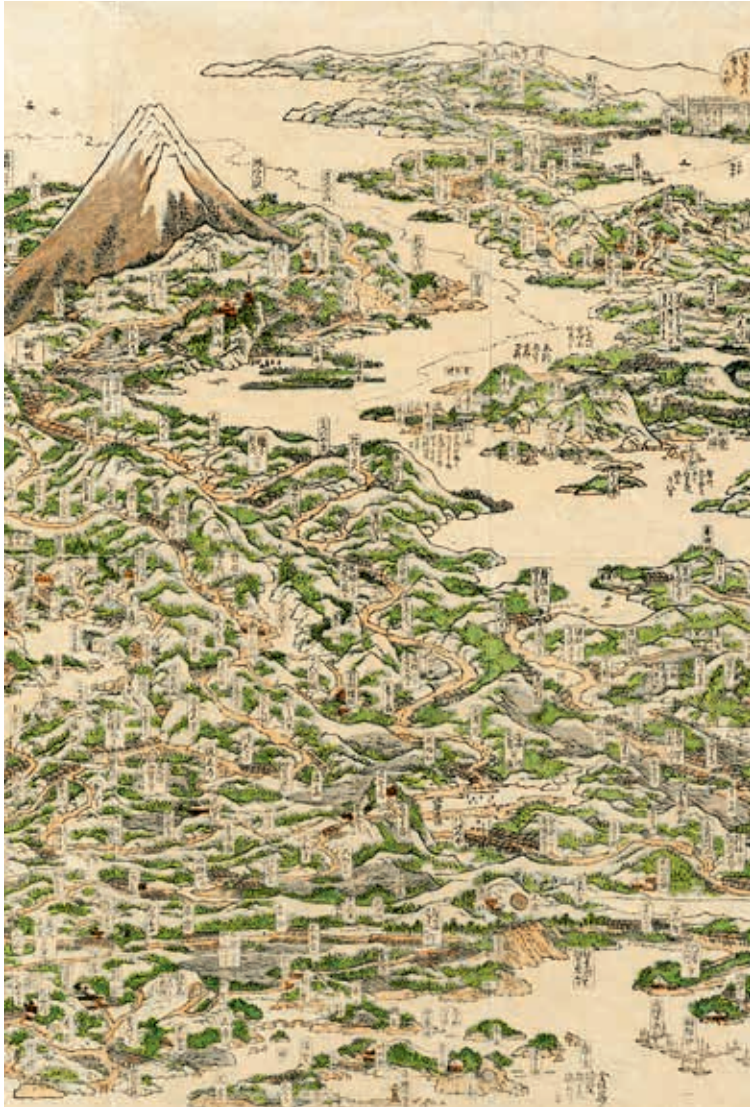
a function, everything is happening indoors. In Islam, there is a partially open space of the mosque, and it is believed that God descends from heaven to earth. This space seems to flow and the walls unnoticeably lead us inside; it is continuous – the walls, if present, are virtual partitions. Mentally, there is no difference between the indoor and the outdoor space. The walls are covered in mosaics transmitting the vibration of nature from the outside. There are also fabrics and carpets with floral motifs, which introduce garden to the inside. It is all very interesting.

This composition of closed, open and half-open spaces of the specific, deliberate module, with rich decoration on the walls and floors, and the windows in the form of marble openwork – leaves a very strong impression. In this palace, I felt differently than in any other interior. Could it have been the effect of Pythagorean harmonious systems applied by the Arabic architects? This sensation has stayed with me.

I would like to talk about color. When did you become aware of the use of color, also in communication – how should it be applied to convey the intended message?

My awareness of color comes from... the black-and-white typography. To me, typography constitutes a record on the one to one hundred scale, where one stands for the complete white, and one hundred – the complete black. Texts are laid out on the white background, and sometimes on the black, which makes a considerable difference, because our eye perceives the black plane as space and white texts seem non-material. All the intermediate grays affect the reception, which changes depending on their relationships. The same relates to the intensity of colors. Let us recall the black-and-white movies. Didn't they seem colorful to you?

Adding color, you set it in the spatial and meaning agreement with the rest of your composition, usually for emphasis. Color has to stay put – as we used to say. I had never taken any classes in color as such; I learned how to use it out of necessity while designing typography and diagrams – experimenting with color, I determined its proper application.



The Hokusai woodcut print (fragment) featuring the imperial road between Kyoto and Edo (today Tokyo)

In your early graphic works, did you use color only for distinctions?

I used color when I needed it.

How and when did you realize that color evokes emotions? Is the color you apply connected with the anticipated emotional reception of the design?

For practical reasons, I learned to use the libraries of color charts. When I need to select six colors, I want them to differ significantly, but I usually choose those from the center of the scale to ensure a similar level of saturation. I know more or less what color scheme I need to create the intended mood and I stick to it. That was what I used to do designing covers and posters and what I do now with my other projects.

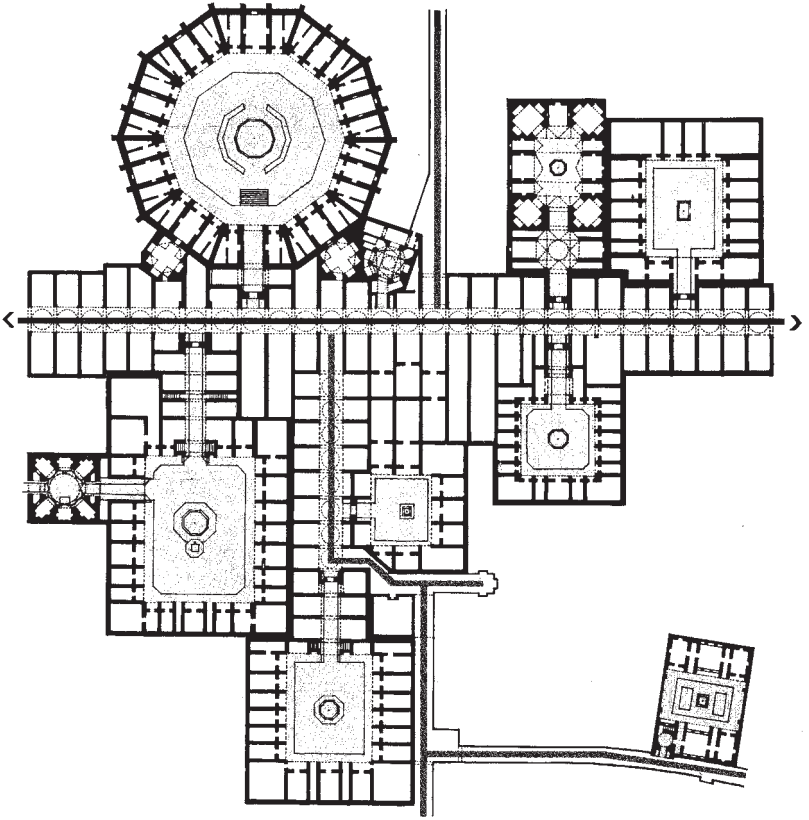
Coming to America, I did have experience but my grasp of theory was insufficient, because nobody had taught me that. I had to learn more about perception. I went to books. There are several books on this subject – a dozen maybe. They defined color as an element of form. I also found interesting publications about various theories of color. Goethe wrote about it, and so did Josef Albers (in Bauhaus) – he had come up with a very interesting proposition¹⁴⁰, which served as a basis for an application¹⁴¹ designed by the students at Yale. There are several schools of psychology of color – this element of the designer's education should be included in the program of studies.

We should not forget that color perception is a function of a given culture. It is also connected with emotional reception. For example, the color of mourning: for us it is black, and for other nations – white. Particular colors can be in fashion or specific to given social groups as well. A designer should be aware of that.

Let us think back to the advertising campaign in Paris, when you were given two colors: blue and red. You came up with

140. See Joseph Albers, *Interaction of Color*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.

141. *Interaction of Color*, Joseph Albers, Yale University Press, 2013, <http://yupnet.org/interactionofcolor/> (Access: January 2018).



A plan of a complicated layout of a bazaar with access roads and planned ventilation and air humidification. The important element of this structure were the internal squares with fountains and their own microclimate, surrounded by a network of modular stores. The macro- and micro-structure had been carefully meshed together.

Hussar-matches. In your opinion, what do we remember and recognize better: color or shape?

I think both. You cannot treat the two separately, they must be considered together and in context. This example, however, is not the best one. The two colors involved – Hussar Blue and Pepper Red – had been defined two years prior by the International Colour Association (AIC) as the leading colors for the 1969/1970 fall-winter season and were introduced worldwide.

There is Coca-Cola red or Marlboro red, ups brown, T-Mobile pink. Colors become associated with companies.

This is the answer to another question: what are the mechanisms of corporate identity and branding? The selected color should be visible and distinct as well as match the other elements to make a unique, memorable combination.

Out of the DD portfolio, I can show you three examples of identity colors: one in greens, reds and whites, the other – reds only, and the third one built in oranges and blues. It is not possible, however, to consider them as individual components; they are integrated with the concept and must work well with the other elements. Psychology of perception defines the fundamental principles of color effect. We know that red is active and warning at the same time through its association with fire. We know that green is balsamic, soothing, harmonious. We know that orange-yellow stands for optimism. These are the stereotypes in the Western culture; they can be different elsewhere. (In the Muslim countries, for instance, green is a saint color, reserved for Mohamed). As designers we must be aware of these conventions and use them consciously; we shouldn't design against them, unless we have sufficient reasons to do that.

When did you realize that the color you use organizes the space?

When I started to design diagrams. On a white sheet of paper, two or three figures of various colors seem to be at different distances – closer or further away from the person looking. Obviously, this perception is not right, but that is how color works. A graphic designer can make use of that.



Krzysztof Lenk – covers for the State Agricultural and Forestry Publishing House (PWRiL), the first half of the nineteen-seventies

Typography, color, space – these elements need to be harmonized to play as a trio rather than individual instruments. In reference to music, we say that somebody has a sensitive ear, in this case – a sensitive eye. Both the eye and the ear require practice. Otherwise, you will develop neither visual sensitivity nor hearing.

One of the negative results of us doing everything on the screen – without any layout or drawing – is that we lose the sensitive eye. Slowly, we become unable to notice nuances.

Professor Rudziński used to say that our eye must stay sensitive, it must be practiced – lettering is a matter of aware perception. It is enough to draw one letter a day to maintain this ability. Also, it is best to draw “s”, because it is the most difficult letterform.

It seems that in any conversation about color we are in fact talking about sensitivity and knowledge of the subject. As designers, we have to apply colors in a conscious, most functional and useful way. We have to know whether a design is dedicated to screen or print and what technology it will use. Working on

a computer, we need to decide when to use CMYK and when to use RGB – this is basic. I’m not sure how it is now, but there used to be two hundred sixteen fixed colors for the RGB communication on the screen – whatever is on the screen, comes out of black (the screen is black by default) and is pulled towards white by adding red, blue and green. Knowledge about the systems of colors and the essential reading on the theory of reception should be included in the education program. Students need to know that colors have an assigned psychological activity and learn various professional tricks in order to use color efficiently – something like your auntie’s good advice. Practical stuff. Whoever wants to learn more, they should read Karl Gerstner¹⁴².

Herman Melville made an interesting observation in *Moby Dick*: “... whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color; and at the same time the concrete of all colors (...)”¹⁴³

What you have said is very interesting – let us talk about these emotions, about what’s personal and what’s objective in relation to color.

I’ll respond to that by telling you a story of a project our DD studio did for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.. It had been designed so that the visitors took a lift to the top, fifth floor and then climbed down the spiral stairs. On the ground floor there was the department of education with computers – a few stations with five chairs and headsets each. All you could watch were documentaries – black-and-gray – about the Holocaust. Then, the internet and hypertext appeared. The museum had gathered a lot of interesting material and established a collaboration with the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris and the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Using the internet connections, they wanted to go from the closed formula to the open one, which would allow the wide use of search engines. This, in turn,

142. See e.g. Karl Gerstner, *The Spirit of Colors: The Art of Karl Gerstner*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981; idem, *The Forms of Color*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990.

143. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick or The Whale*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1851, p. 368



Société Nouvelle d'Information et Publicité (SNIP). A model of an advertising stand is an element of a set promoting the seasonal colors: Hussar Blue and Pepper Red.

was tricky, because there were as many things they wanted us to know as those they preferred to keep from us.

We were working with curators and historians, discussing various possibilities of database organization: theme overview, topical search, timeline, menu, printing, as well as access to information about artifacts, chronology, movies, identification cards, interviews, maps, music, photographs. We were looking for mechanisms to make the system work on screen. Every section had its color to make moving between collections noticeable – you would leave one room and enter another.

When we presented our proposition, the curators exclaimed: “But there is color! No color! It must be black-and-white.” Asked why, they said that the project had to be approved by the Museum Board – its founders, very affluent Jews from Eastern Europe. According to our curators, those conservative graybeards would never accept any color, because the project referred to the great tragedy. The historians with whom we were working saw our point,

but they also believed that it would not hold up. I insisted a bit – they insisted. We made a working prototype on screen: twenty-five minutes of transitions between sections, a kind of demo featuring all the colors. I told their boss that we would accept all the risk, and in case of disapproval, he would not have to pay for the remake of the project. He said yes. They presented our animation to the Board. The curators were anxious about their reaction as well, because it was a big project. Later, the boss called me and he sounded happy. I asked about color. “What color? Nobody saw any color!” I took it as a great complement, because the color was there, but it went unnoticed.

The color you used corresponded with the recipient’s emotional needs.

Obviously, I would not use orange or pink, it had to remain in the gray-green-blue scheme, very moderate – that is what conscious color application is all about. A professional designer knows that for a folk festival you need a lot of orange, red and green, and when the occasion is sad, you use gray – blue or green grays.

In such situations, we presented all the necessary, matter-of-fact arguments and they were usually received as expected. In this case, no drama. I have already spoken of logic, dialectic, visual rhetoric – these are the elements of visual rhetoric. We managed to create a reality which the recipients accepted both intellectually and sensually. Therefore our business cards read: *Consultants in Visual Logic.*

**Color, shape, composition, we have also used the term ‘form’.
What is this – form?**

It concerns the phenomena connected with perception – that is the psychology of reception. Every artistic or design activity leads to creating a form. Today it is more common to use the German notion of ‘Gestalt’, which means such an assortment of elements in the two- and three-dimensional space that the result is something special, something more than the sum of individual elements. You can say that the result is a special form.

Such operations should be practiced at school. You need to see and understand, for instance, how the visual signal changes depending on the location of a given shape in space. On the page, you will see how different a reception could be when a square is placed with its sides parallel to the edges, and the same square turned by forty-five degrees. The latter appears much stronger, doesn't it? [see p. 342]

It is so, because – according to our left-to-right reading culture – we see the left side of the figure as almost twice as big as in the first case. Importantly, the figure seems more dramatic: it is supported on a single point, in unstable equilibrium, and not resting on one of its sides, as in the first case.

Another example: a black square situated at the top of white plane will have the optical tendency to fall, and the one at the bottom edge – will be really heavy and static. Such dependencies should be noticed while still at school and embedded in the graphic designers' awareness as elements of their tool set. I was introduced to these issues with several assignments in Professor Oskar Hansen's studio, and then I continued the search for information on my own, reading wise books. It doesn't hurt to look into Kandinsky's *Point and line to plane*¹⁴⁴ or the books by Rudolf Arnheim¹⁴⁵ and Paul Rand. The permanent acquisition of a visual form, however, can only happen through a visual experience, a sort of illumination, which is achieved by training of the eye.

I would like to ask you something completely different now. Can you admire somebody's work like you appreciate a work of art?

Yes, I have already described my reaction to Tomaszewski's poster *Moore*. I have frequently admired somebody's works. I think: "Wow, how did they do that?" Knowing a bit about various diagrammatic languages and non-emotional communication, I notice some

144. See Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and line to plane. Contribution to the analysis of the pictorial elements*, New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation for the Museum of Non-Objective Painting, 1947

145. See e.g. Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*, California University Press, first pub. 1954

well-done designs – not necessarily posters – and appreciate them a lot, I look at them in awe – they are Art.

On my computer, I start my day with the “New York Times” – this newspaper is phenomenal at using information graphics, often in the form of diagrams with animated elements. It discusses important events: when, how, why. For instance, distribution of votes in the elections divided into States and age groups, or a report from the recent Olympics. It is fascinating how you can build a publication in real time: things can be moved, changed, reviewed from top to bottom. I am an active viewer, who knows the value of these operations – in spite of appearances, they are very time-consuming, and still get published a day or two after the event. I wonder how it is possible to do it so fast: how efficient the workshop, how well-organized the editorial team must be. I’m looking at that delightedly. I find dynamic communication fascinating in general.

On my travels, I visit museums. I look at the originals of renowned artworks, also the contemporary ones. The older I get, the more I like returning to the works of older epochs, which are falsely perceived as primitive. Recently, I have presented my friends with a little book entitled *Portraits from Museums*, consisting of a collection of compelling faces from the portraits I have seen in various museums worldwide.

Today, Ewa and I live driving back and forth between Providence and Alexandria in New Hampshire. We prefer being here, in the mountains, surrounded by nature. We are close with our kids. Honorata has a daughter and a son, and Jacek, two sons. They live not far from each other, on the outskirts of Providence. My main activity is unscrambling my quite vast archive and writing about various aspects of design.

In Poland, you have been honored with esteemed distinctions. Again, congratulations!

Yes, in 2011 my *alma mater* – Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice¹⁴⁶ – awarded me with the Doctor Honoris Causa degree. The same year, I received “The Silver Cane – Red Rose” distinction from the

146. Then a branch of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków

Friends of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw presented to retiring academic teachers for outstanding pedagogical achievements. Along with the official institutions, my old time graduates and friends had also organized a benefit and handed me a cane of their own design.

How did you start writing?

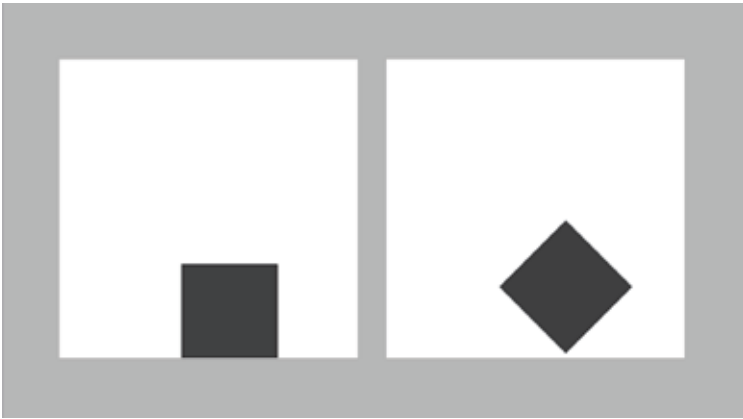
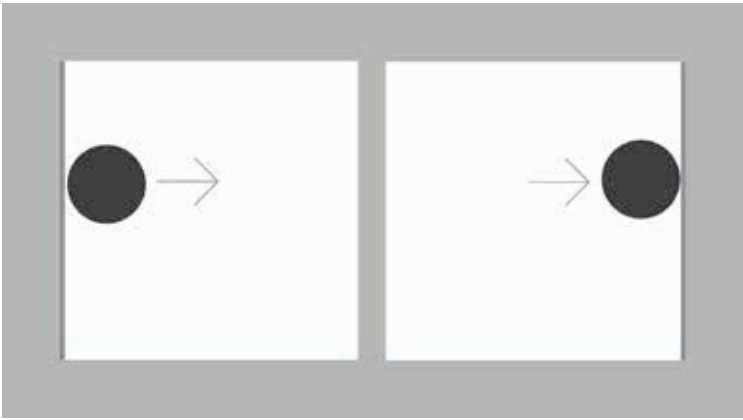
I was inspired by Jacek Mrowczyk, who asked me to write some texts for the “2+3D” design quarterly. Organizing my archives, I discovered layers of interesting materials, deserving of presentation. This gave rise to two books published by the Gdańsk publisher Słowo/obraz terytoria: the Polish-English *Projekty i bazgroły* *Projects and Doodles*¹⁴⁷ – describing my work as a designer – and the collection of essays *Short texts on the art of design* (only in Polish). Then, for my family and friends I published the low budget *Signs From My Travels, Characters and Portraits from Museums*.¹⁴⁸

How do you find the relationships between what you describe visually and what you write as a text?

I started writing a long time ago, because I was sending letters from France to Ewa. Thinking about them now, I see that they were both visual and textual; on some unconventional paper, with diverse letter sizes, depending on the content etc. On other occasions, I wasn't the one to give a visual form to what I was writing. In Łódź I had to write the teaching programs; having come to America, I started to write syllabuses, which I had never done before; I had to write opinions, letters of recommendation – from some point on also in English, which truly improved my Polish

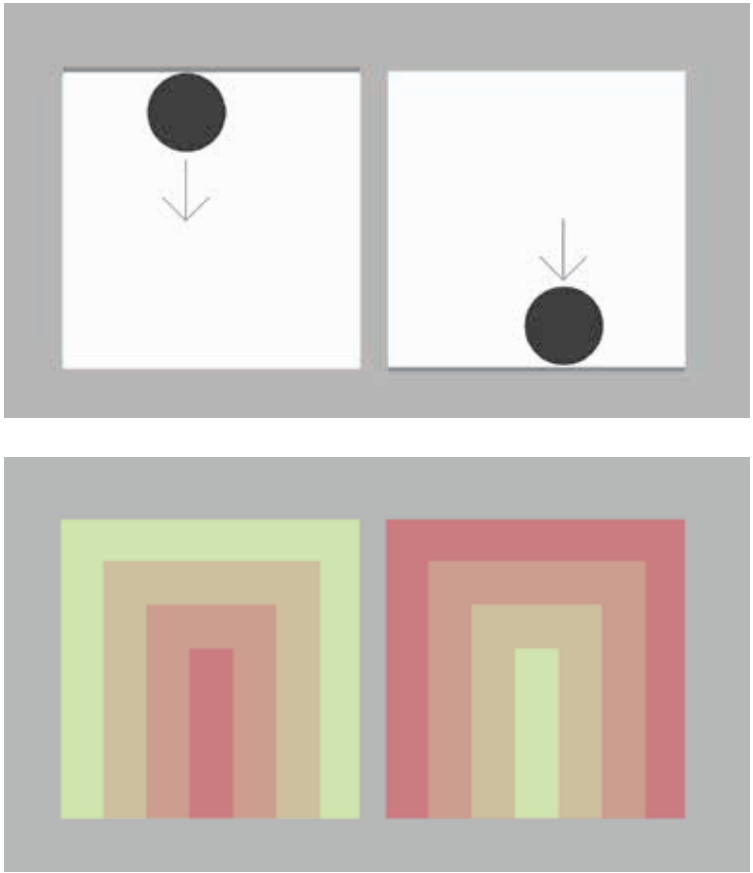
147. See Krzysztof Lenk, *Projekty i bazgroły* *Projects and Doodles*, Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2009.

148. *Signs From My Travels* (Pol. *Znaki z podróży*) is a collection of signs, adds, coat of arms and road signs I photographed in various places and different cultures; *Characters* (Pol. *Litery*) is a collection of so-called “meeting doodles,” which usually evolved around some letter of the alphabet; *Portraits from Museums* (Pol. *Portrety z muzeum*) – collection of photographs of painted or sculptured faces – distinctive characters from different cultures and different epochs – I took in various museums. These books have no text except for my forewords written English and Polish.



Gestalt figures. In order to comprehend these examples, we often add what we already know to what we see. Examples of simple visual presentations resulting in suggested reception: before – after; static figure – figure with dynamic potential

writing, because the discipline of the English language had a retrograding effect on my Polish syntax. All had to be kept short and to the point. Then, I communicated with my friends via fax – it was a great method, because the messages arrived fast and they still had the form of a letter. I liked correspondence and with several of my friends I wrote on regular basis. I had not written essays yet. My first text on commission was a foreword for a catalog of a Jan Kubasiewicz painting exhibition in Pennsylvania in



Gestalt figures cont. Figures with yet another suggested reception: could fall – has fallen. Reversed colors: illustrate the convex and the concave

1986¹⁴⁹. Later, Colin Naylor, the editor of *Contemporary Designers*¹⁵⁰ (which featured me as well), published in London in the eighties,

149. Idem, *Cienie od Jana / Shadows from Jan*, “The Pulaski Foundation Center for Polish-American Arts and Culture News” 1986, Journal 4, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

150. *Contemporary Designers (Contemporary Arts Series)*, eds. Ann Lee Morgan, Colin Naylor, London: Macmillan, 1984.

asked me to write a text about Tomaszewski's poster *Moore* for *Contemporary Masterworks*. I did it and the text was appreciated.

Soon after, Naylor asked me to write three more essays, but I said no, because the topics he suggested were beyond my area of expertise. Later, however, other opportunities for writing arose, such as the articles for "2+3D" I mentioned before. Eventually, all that made up a book: *Short texts*.

It has a pretty good text about Frutiger – it was a laudation commissioned by the Warsaw Academy; they wanted to award Frutiger with the Doctor Honoris Causa degree. Three weeks prior to the event, the Dean of the Graphic Department sent Frutiger a fax with the invitation. Frutiger refused, claiming that he didn't travel by planes. I was left with this text.

Another – a very short one, a poem in fact, used the analogy to music of present typography as a state of consciousness; I like it a lot.

Is there anything else we should mention?

I don't think it is possible to avoid the question about professional ethics. As a designer, you stand with a razor in your hand. You assume responsibility. The decisions you make will affect the reception of a message. Your activities – in relation to the sender for whom you work, the recipient for whom you design and the society to which you belong – should follow ethical principles.

What should a teacher give to a student?

We, teachers, should be decent, experienced people, good for the job and sympathetic towards the young, for whose education we are responsible. There are, however, so many specific situations we must face. How much are we actually able to give to these young people?

In America, I once conducted lectures and workshops at Illinois University in Urbana-Champaign for the brilliant students of the final year. It was a good school, the students read a lot; while discussing an assignment, one of them showed me a quote of Galileo: "You cannot teach a person anything; you can only help him find it within himself" I don't think it refers to every



A photograph of our family taken in 2015. From the left: Jack with his son Lukasz, me and Ewa, Jason Markham, Honorata's husband, Honorata and Bethany, Jack's wife. Sitting at the front: Abigail and Nicholas, Honorata's children, and Leif, Jacek's son.

area of human activity, but speaking of design or art, it seems applicable. All we can do is help our students develop what they have within them.

What we teach is only partially teachable, the other part is what a student already has which must be awakened and cultivated. Good professors do their best to achieve that – but they don't always succeed. Out of the hundred percent of what we teach, one student will be able to take thirty, the other seventy, and yet another ninety percent. It is like that with our own kids. A teacher, like a parent, reveals, inspires, encourages, shows, provides constructive criticism – and this should be done honestly, with competence and devotion. In reality, however, it is students (or kids) who decide what to actually take and keep for themselves. There is only so much we can do.



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