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Heller believes that contemporary design is influenced by what he calls “the underground” vs the mainstream. One can consider the idea of the mainstream as the largest form of popular art can receive since it can be found all over the place. However, the underground is the opposite, it involves art that spawned out of an era that has either passed or forgotten. According to Heller, some of the most common examples of underground design are the psychedelic patterns of the sixties and even pornography. No one uses the groovy colors of the sixties in contemporary design, and pornography is still not something that you are able to legally see all over. Heller proposes a major problem with these two types of design merging into one in the form of commercialism and marketing.

The problem, pertains to the idea that companies are reviving relics particular to the time they were conceived like that of the sixties. Companies will try to make new versions of the art from that era and use it to make profit of the theming behind it. Heller specifically refers to the process of selling sixties records as companies will make a half-baked design barely representing the art of the era to capitalize on the profit that the record will sell. This becomes an issue as the idea of resurrecting design from another time for money does not make others appreciate the design as much as other art. When something becomes mainstream, it loses the ability to stand out from the crowd in a sense since you can find these designs in tons of places. So if a company markets a design from the past and just slaps it on a record or shirt, that meaning the original designs had are missing and under appreciated.

The designer I studied, Paul Rand, would be very much against this blurring of the mainstream and the underground. In his article on “Integrity and Intervention”, he writes “The businessman will never respect the professional who does not believe in what he does. The businessman under these circumstances can only ‘use’ the artist for his own ends.” Here we can see that he thinks that corporate will only use the artist’s design for their own needs if the artist is unsure of themselves. In his article titled “Confusion and Chaos: The Seduction of Contemporary Graphic Design”, Rand writes “[...] manufacturers, who produce beautiful papers, but then spoil them with ‘the latest’ graphics, and who, undoubtedly, see themselves as the avant-garde - and are comforted by the illusion that this must be progress. Unhappily, this is infecting some of the graphics of the corporate world[...]”. Overall, it seems like Rand is in agreement that big business should not be using underground art in the name of progress in our society.

## Work Cited

Rand, Paul.

“<https://Paulrand.design/Writing/Articles/1992-Confusion-and-Chaos-the-Seduction-of-Contemporary-Graphic-Design.html>.” *AIGA Journal*, vol. 10, 1 Nov. 1992.

Rand, Paul. “Integrity and Invention.” *Graphis Annual*, 1971.