

COMD1112

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Designer Research Paper Outline

## **THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM**

SAUL BASS



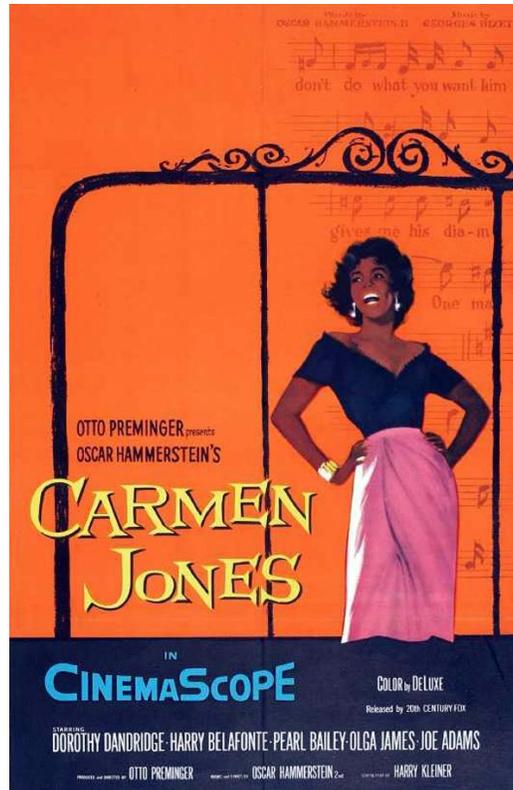
Saul Bass, the innovative and revolutionary graphic designer of years past, was born 05-08-1920, Bronx, New York, and died, 04-25-1996, in Los Angeles, California. The first time I ever heard of Saul Bass was a few months ago in 03-2022, and then again in 04-2022. Both times at the New York City College of Technology, from both of my professors, in the Communication Design Department Willy Hartland, and Thelma Bauer. Immediately I was interested. Instinctively I knew I would benefit from knowing his biography and works.

Saul Bass parents were immigrants from the Eastern European Jewish community. His parents respected his creativity, from childhood, and support their son's advancement as a designer. In 1939, at

the very young age of 16, Saul Bass graduated from the James Monroe High School in the Bronx. That same year, he also received a fellowship to study at the Art Students League in Manhattan, ([famousgraphicdesigners.org](http://famousgraphicdesigners.org)). This fellowship allowed for Saul Bass to come in close contact with the notable Hungarian Immigrant painter, designer, photographer, and educator, Gyorgy Kepes. In fact, Gyorgy Kepes, the design influencer and founder of the Center for Advance Visual Studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) was Saul Bass's instructor when he attended the Art Students League, ([Britannica.com](http://Britannica.com)).

While benefiting from his fellowship, Saul Bass also studied at Brooklyn College. He completed his fellowship program with Art Student League, yet it does not appear that he earned a degree from Brooklyn College. He moved on to briefly freelanced in Advertising in New York City. This included work done for Warner Bros. Studios. The same Warner Bros. Studios that is in Burbank, California. Saul Bass was not much older than 20, when he decided to move to Los Angeles, California, to pursue a career in commercial art, ([famousgraphicdesigners.org](http://famousgraphicdesigners.org))

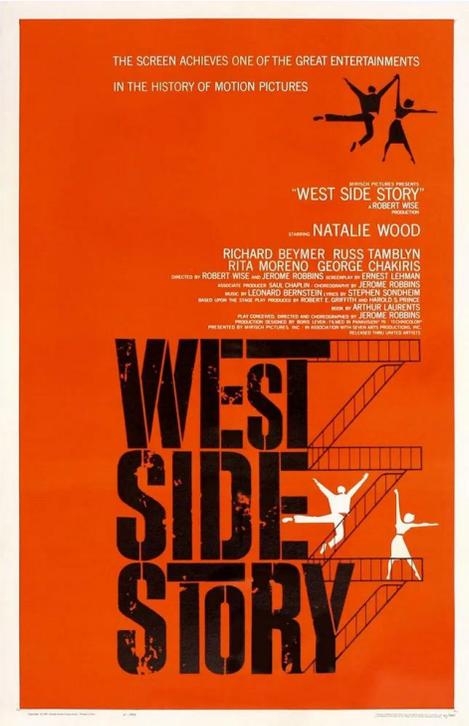
In Los Angeles, Saul Bass worked on promotional projects for Hollywood. When he turned 32, Saul Bass started his own practice. Very soon afterwards, in 1952, Saul Bass put together a team and established his private firm, Saul Bass & Associates. In 1954, Saul Bass was offered a job by the filmmaker Otto Preminger to design a poster for his film *Carmen Jones*. Otto Preminger was an Austria-Hungary (Now Ukraine) Immigrant who became a Hollywood director, ([Britannica.com](http://Britannica.com)). This offer and the actual design produced by Saul Bass opened doors for him in Hollywood, as a graphic designer and animator. Saul Bass designs, at that time, were new to look at. His title sequences were designed to be an imaginative experience for the movie going audience. Yet, it wasn't until he designed, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, 1955, poster, that Saul Bass did gain the reputation that he sought after as a designer.



In 1961, Saul Bass married Elaine Bass, the daughter of Hungarian Immigrants. She was also born in New York City. Elaine Bass was a graphic designer as well, and together for 40 years she worked along side her husband, Saul Bass developing many projects with him. During their marriage Saul Bass also became a director of short films and documentaries. Elaine Bass contributed to elevation of Saul Bass short films and title sequences. They became an art form. It was Elaine Bass who designed the title sequence for *West Side Story*, and it was she who co-directed the documentary *Why Man Creates*. Saul Bass won an Academy Award for *Why Man Creates*, in the best short-subject documentary category in 1968. Elaine Bass was not given any credit for her creative partnership with her husband Saul Bass, until 1989, (en.wikipedia.org).

Saul Bass, along with his wife Elaine Bass had impeccable work ethics. The Italian American, New York City native Director, Martin Scorsese, who is the most significant and influential director ever in Hollywood, made the following statement about his collaboration with Saul Bass and his wife Elaine Bass work ethics. According to him, when given a title sequence to work on, Saul and Elaine Bass "would study the film. Take a few months, and

then send us back a test that exceeded my wildest expectations...These title sequences didn't just complement my picture, they gave them another layer, embodying the themes and the emotions in a way that led viewers into the mystery of the film without giving it all away". (en.wikipedia.org)



Saul Bass ability to create high contrast designs with limited color and clean lines, lead to many opportunities for him. Later in his career, he used the same minimalistic methods to design impressive company logos. Some of the companies Saul Bass created logos for were Quacker, Kleenex, United Airlines, Warner Communication, Continental Airlines, Avery International, and Dixie. He also did the logo for Bell, the American Telecommunications Company, and AT&T est. 1885.



Saul Bass ability to design is undeniable. From my research it became apparent to me that he always had a network of support surrounding him. This support allowed Saul Bass to express his ideas creatively and freely without restraint. In many of Saul Bass earlier posters, the diagonal line is prominent. A diagonal represents movement and speed. Saul Bass uses a limited pallet in most of his posters. It seems his favorite colors, were black, red, and white. My personal reaction to Saul Bass works is to look and learn and know there is more to what meets the eye.

### QUOTES BY SAUL BASS

*“Where do ideas come from? From looking at one thing and seeing another. From feeling around, from playing with possibilities, from speculating, from changing, pushing, pulling, transforming, and if you’re lucky, you come up with something worth saving, using, and building on. That’s where the game stop and the work begin.”*

*-Saul Bass, Short Story Film: Why Man Creates*

*“I want to make beautiful things, even if nobody cares.”*

*-Saul Bass*



## Work Cited

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