Paul Rand

In the graphic designing it is a complex job but some may say it is an easy job. It comes in many different forms such as posters, brochures, clothing, packaging of products, album covers, labels, billboards, magazine covers, newspaper layout and logos. That is just some of the everyday things we see and know that utilizes graphic design. A combination of text and images or sometimes just text or just images to communicate an idea or opinion is the main description of graphic design or visual communication. Graphic design is constructed of many opinions such as your personal opinion, the client’s and the viewer’s, so as we design we have to take all these opinions into consideration to clearly communicate the message intended by the designer providing understandable visual communication. The person that influences me in graphic design is no other than the modernist Paul Rand. I chose him because his designs are simple, playful, colorful and most of all creative. Paul Rand the most influential designer that change graphic design in today’s world.

Paul Rand (born Peretz Rosenbaum), a well-known American graphic designer, best known for his corporate logo design for major firms including IBM, ABC, NeXT Computer, Yale University and Enron. Peretz Rosenbaum was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1914 where Jewish law forbids the creation of graven images that can be worshiped as idols. At a very young age Rand started to collect pictures of the models shown on advertising displays in his father’s grocery store but Rand’s father did not believe art could provide his son with a sufficient livelihood. Nevertheless, his father did not stop him from doing what he loves, so Paul was enroll in night classes at the Pratt Institute while attending Manhattan’s Harren High School. Despite studying at both schools Paul felt neither of these schools offered him any stimulation. Paul Rand was bigger than that; he developed as a self-taught designer, learning about the works of Cassandre and Moholy-Nagy.

After studying in New York City, Rand started with a part time job at Syndicate where he created stock images that supplied newspaper and magazines. After working at Syndicate, his
work grew rapidly which earned him the designer with the most influential works. Shortly after, Rand was offered a job as an art director for Esquire magazine after his exceptional work with Apparel Arts magazines. Being the art director for a huge magazine company Rand knew it was an important step to develop himself more, so “Rand assimilated the philosophy and visual vocabulary of European art and design, in particular that of the Bauhaus, Constructivism, Cubism, De Stijl, and Futurism. Rand believed that lines, shapes, and colors could become message-conveying signs and symbols in visual communications while simultaneously functioning as elements in an artistic composition. For example, in a 1947 poster promoting the New York Subways Advertising Company, Rand’s arrangement of dots and concentric circles in vibrant colors becomes both an illustrative image and a dynamic composition” (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica).

Paul Rand’s successful and compelling contributions to advertising design came through the crucial years of designing an impressive array of covers for magazines and in 1938 his work was a regular feature of the exhibitions of the Art Directors Club. In 1941 Rand worked as art director at the William H. Weintraub advertising agency, where he collaborated with copywriter Bill Bernbach for which he appreciated his talent. Rand and Bill shared a good working relationship for which they “advocated advertisements in which text and images were integrated into a codependent whole, with words and pictures working together to create an effective and engaging message. His advertisements, especially for Orbach’s department store, pointed toward a new stripped-down approach to advertising copy and design. During the 1950s and ’60s, as American corporations were turning to graphic designers to create contemporary trademarks and consistent graphic standards, Rand became a prominent proponent of such visual-identity systems. Now ubiquitous trademarks designed by Rand include the logos of Westinghouse (1960), ABC (1962), UPS (1962) and IBM (1972). His designs for corporate annual reports were also broadly influential” (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica). Rand’s corporate design can be seen in the figure reference page below.

Rand’s graphic design career spanned seven decades, he joined the faculty of Yale University in 1956 and his ideas broadly influenced several generations of American designers. Upon teaching at Yale, Rand was interested in producing books of theory to illuminate his philosophies. His major writings include Thoughts on Design (1947), A Designer’s Art (1985), Design, Form, and Chaos (1993), and from Lascaux to Brooklyn (1996).
In today’s world of graphic, Rand made graphic design and advertising simpler looking and in turn more eye-catching that the typical design ads. Rand brought ideas and intelligence to graphic design/advertising, but kept in mind that whatever he was doing should communicate, so the guy in the street knew what they were trying to sell. For every product he defined the problem and customized a solution. His success in logo design influenced him to make corporate design the key aspect of his career. He was called a modernist because he uses allot of typography and combined shapes, colors and objects rather than traditional design lies in the way an image is placed on a sheet of paper. As we have seen in our communication design major, we are being taught to use the same principles as Paul Rand did. Therefore, it is safe to say that he was a pioneer in the graphic design industry where he revolutionizes how we look at graphic design and influenced designers to think more freely and outside of the box because in today’s society we are using his methods to create our work whether for class or professionally. Rand’s method influence me allot because his work is not a complicated design and entails your imagination where you work with shapes and color and also what can you sell to your audience. In my opinion, this is the reason why so many graphic designers take inspiration from Paul Rand’s work and his accomplishments over the years of his career.

In conclusion, Paul Rand revolutionizes or I would say re-invented the graphic design world. He was most famous for his corporate identity work in the 50’s and 60’s for major companies such as IBM, ABC, Westinghouse and UPS. Rand’s logos epitomized the ideal of minimalism and simplicity because Rand loved the use of objects and minimal typography. He continued to develop long-lasting corporate identities and other works until his death in 1996.
Figure Reference

Figure 1


Figure 2


Works Cited

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