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COMD 1112

Woody Pirtle: Graphic Designer

The design world is based on perspective. Depending on your specialty, art is viewed in many forms, and different ideas are expressed. Now how do you take your own perspective to reach an audience? How do you communicate through design? What are the key factors that make a design?

“Less is more.’ I’ve always strived to do work that clearly communicates and reflects the vision of my clients in the most creative, unexpected, and of course appropriate way. When I do it well, I think the work makes the optimum connection with the intended demographic.”

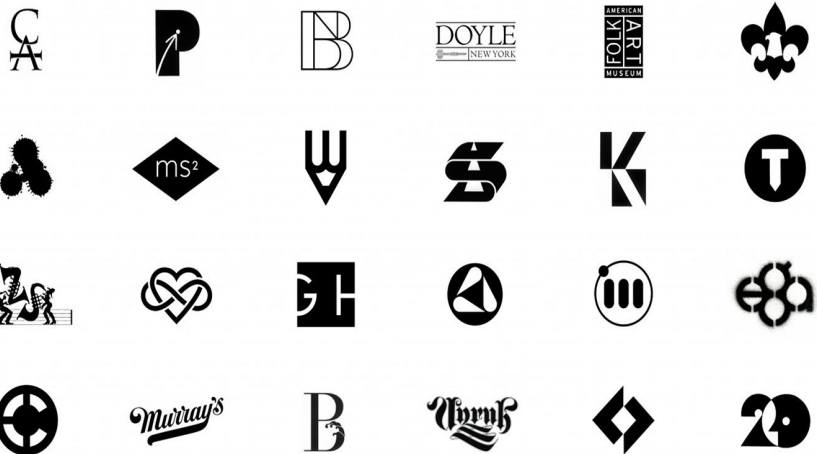
- Woody Pirtle

Born in Corsicana, Texas in 1944 and moved to Shreveport, Louisiana, at the age of three. Pirtle grew up in a small town where doors were left unlocked and people were not worried about a thing. After different starts in his professional life he decided to focus his energy into graphic design. In his university he was doing copper plate etching, stone lithographs, drawing, painting, all in studio arts. Pirtle was always interested in drawing and his skill has served him well in his illustrations, finishing college in 1967. “I had straight A’s in art, but I didn’t do so well in the other courses. I knew I wanted to become an artist, but it wasn’t really until almost the end of university that I knew I would become a graphic designer. When I started to go to the library, looking at books and such on the subject, I learned about Push Pin Studios and that

was my first exposure to graphic design”. He graduated in fine arts from the University of Arkansas and went to work for a small advertising agency in Shreveport.

In 1971 he joined Stan Richards and Associates honing his design skills and developing a keen insight into the graphic design business. By 1978 Pirtle decided to launch his own business, Pirtle Design, which was as successful as any design firm in the southwest. In 1988 Pirtle merged Pirtle Design with Pentagram, an international design consultancy founded in London in 1972, being a partner at their New York offices for 18 years working with some of the firm’s most prestigious clients, such as Brown-Forman, Bacardi Global Brands, IBM, Champion International Corporation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Knoll International, Princeton University, Brooklyn Law School, Amnesty International, and

many others.



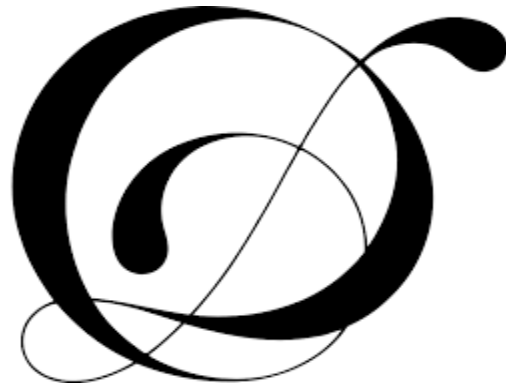
By 1986 Pirtle was awarded “The Golden Egg” by the Dallas Society of Visual Communications for his career contribution to the design field. During the first

ten years in Pirtle Design, the logos that were produced were the most celebrated graphic design work of the time. The logo included identities and marketing material for Baylor University Medical Center, The Dallas Museum of Art, TGI Friday’s, Dallas Opera, Diamond Shamrock Corporation, Centex Homes, and Simpson Paper Company.

“Being a designer isn’t a job, but a way of life. Everything a passionate designer does is guided by design. My life is tied together by design. The commercial work, the socially focused work, my home and surroundings, my paintings, collages, and assemblages all come from my love for design and my aesthetic sensibility. Passion is the key. If you don’t love what you do, and do it with passion, you probably won’t do it very well.”

- Woody Pirtle

This brings me back to my point that art is perspective and influential. Pirtle’s creative process and influences upon their work is minimalistic as he would state that “less is more” although it sounds like a cliché.



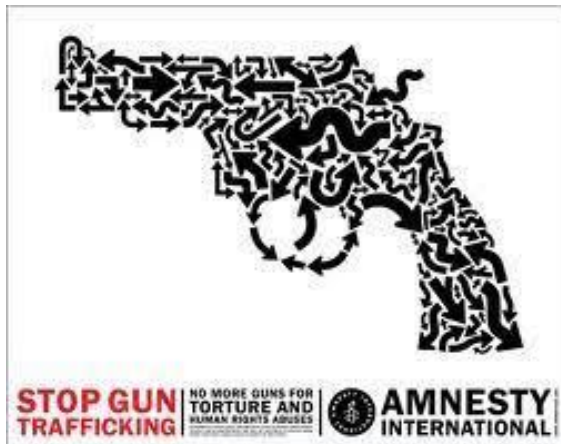
Intending to communicate his and his clients' vision. Avoiding trends to fabricate a timeless composition, such as The Dallas Opera symbol.

Pirtle’s work has been exhibited worldwide and is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the Zurich Poster Museum, and others.



In 2003, Pirtle was recognized with the highest award that a graphic designer can

receive: The AIGA Medal, honoring his significant contribution to the graphic design profession. Then he left Pentagram in 2005 so he could re-establish Pirtle Design.



There are some other designers that do influence and inspire Pirtle. Most of them are European. There is Armin Hofmann,



Rafal Oblinski, Rosmarie Tisii, and that's only a few that were named. However that is also what the graphic community is about, bouncing off ideas and perspectives. The Pentagram created a poster for Amnesty International "Gun Trafficking" and it was assigned to Woody Pirtle, with a clear and visual poster.



His logo for The Good Diner is both literal and symbolic. By placing the halo over the coffee cup he illustrates the company's name exactly through very simple, and direct design. Pirtle also offers perspective of his work the space to have your own ideas while still being able to recognize the brand.

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Ps! "Top Picks by Woody Pirtle - Public Sale: Auction House." *Public Sale | Auction House*, Public Sale | Auction House, 11 Feb. 2021, <https://publicsale.com/stories/top-picks-by-issac-nichols-public-sale-auction-9a8ge>.

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