Design History Outline

Realize that everything ever created can be pillaged for your graphic design needs. The list you'll be working from contains some broad outlines of design styles and artists to examine to start your education into the visual arts. This list is very Euro-centric because there is a lot of research easily available to you. (That does not mean that you as a designer can't use work from other cultures — the main idea is to find something new and interesting. So researching the design of other cultures can help you create exciting new styles. When Admiral Perry sailed into Tokyo harbor in 1853 and brought home treasure, Japanese art became the rage in Europe because it was new. See *Arts & Crafts Movement*.)

Some elements of style to pay attention to when looking at work from these time periods:

Images — What do they find important to draw?

Shapes — organic vs. geometric, abstract vs. realistic?

Colors — Is the pallet bright? Dark? Pastel? Are there specific colors they're using, such as black and red? Copper and green? Purple and gold? Day-glow colors?

Type — Are the fonts serif? Sans serif? Slab serif? Geometric? Organic? Simple? Ornate? How are they using them? Is there a way they are using them that can be used in your design?

Materials & techniques — Are they using wood block? Etching? Lithography? Photography? Silkscreen? Are they printing on fabric or paper, or displaying on computer screens? Do these have an effect or are part of the colors they are using (color pallet)?

HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Egyptian (2920 BC–30 BC)
"Papyrus" font, hieroglyphic symbols, pyramids, mummies.

Greek (750 BC–146 BC)
Doric, Ionic & Corinthian columns, Parthenon, Golden Mean, red figure pottery, life-like free-standing human sculptures, battle helms.

Roman (509 BC–476 AD)
Corinthian columns, Pantheon, Colosseum, aqueducts, arches & domes, "Trajan" font based on carvings on Trajan's Column in Rome. Mostly known for their buildings and their imitations of Greek sculptures. Chariots. Watch "Ben-Hur." (Be aware that we view historical sculptures and architecture as using a color pallet of browns and whites and greys, when in fact they were often brightly painted, but those colors have worn away over thousands of years.)

Medieval (476 AD–1400s)
Catholic church and guilds possess and guard information. "Black Death" in the mid-1300s killed 30% to 60% of European population; rising cost of scribes encouraged the creation of printing press in 1450s. "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" movie (1975) is a fairly accurate if humorous representation of the harsh reality of life. Illuminated manuscripts, church alters, early logos (for guilds, beer), uncial fonts, decorative initial caps, "blackletter" script.

Renaissance (1400s–1600s)
Guttenberg's creation of the printing press (Blackletter font). Fonts initially follow style of handwriting in place of origin. Widely-disseminated information revolutionized the world. Creation of Janson, Garamond and Didot fonts and rise of metal engravings. Michaelangelo, DaVinci and Albert Dürer. Shakespeare (1564-1616), early printed books

Discovery, Invention, Revolution (1600's–1800)
Printed maps make navigation easier. Newspapers and handbills. Colonial period to neo-classicism (Washington DC — U.S. Capitol spans both neo-classicism and Victorian)

- Baskerville and Bodoni fonts.
- Tavern signs
- Books
- Pamphlets
- Maps

Victorian (1837–1901)
Rise of industrialization; highly ornate, often uses decoration to fill every available space (horror vaccu) because steam-driven machinery made it possible to do. Etching allows for illustration/photo-like images/highly ornate typography. Also re-discovery of Japan in 1853 creates a craze for all things Japanese, including simple, stylized graphic wood block prints. (FYI, the Victorian era is a "Baroque" movement.) Many artists are uncredited.

- Industrialization
- Steam power
- Joseph Paxton — Crystal Palace
- Currier & Ives
- Japonaise
- Romanticism

Arts & Crafts Movement (1880–1910)
First design period of modern era; reaction to Victorian over-decoration; return to simple, beautiful, hand-crafted work. Influenced by Japanese design (Japan had only opened its doors to the West in 1853). Restraint and economy of means; simple forms and natural materials; texture and light. "In the old western style furniture was seen as ornament that displayed the wealth of its owner and the value of the piece was established according to the length of time spent creating it. In the Japanese arts

furniture and design focused on the quality of the space, which was meant to evoke a calming and organic feeling to the interior." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Rennie_Mackintosh)

- William Morris — architecture, furniture, textiles, books & posters
- Charles Rennie Macintosh — architecture, furniture, textiles, watercolor paintings
- Edward Johnston — typographer
- Eric Gill — typographer
- Frederick Goudy — typographer

Modernism (1880s–1980s)
A breaking away from strict representation and embracing industrialization. Started with painters in late 1800s (Monet, Van Gogh, etc.) and worked it's way through all areas of life.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901)
An excellent draftsman and painter, created highly-effective large-scale posters for acts for the Follies Bergere, may have been the first to create the modern "star" through his promotions. Considered a modernist, because that was who he hung out with and because of his use of unusual color schemes, his work was more in line with Honoré Daumier (1808–1879), the French printmaker, caricaturist, painter and sculptor.

Art Nouveau (1890–1914)
Organic, especially floral and other plant-inspired motifs, as well as highly stylized, flowing curvilinear forms.

- Alphonse Mucha — posters
- Rene Lalique — jewelry
- Antoni Gaudí — architecture
- Louis Majorelle — furniture
- Teaching Art Nouveau, National Gallery of Art: http://www.nga.gov/education/tchan_1.shtm

Dada (1916–1922)
Anti-war, anti-art, anti-design movement resulting from the horrors of the First World War and a feeling that rationality and progress were an illusion. Poetry, manifestos, theater (the beginnings of performance art), painting and graphic design.

- Hannah Höch — photomontage
- George Grosz — painting
- Marcel Duchamp — art

Russian Constructivism (1919–1934)
A style directed at creating art to further social purposes, specifically the Russian communist revolution. Style is largely denoted by skewed type, the use of red and black, and photo-montage techniques. The style was eventually subverted by cries from fellow Russians that it was too abstract and theoretical, and was replaces by "social realism," which tended to be representational and heroic.

- Aleksandr Rodchenco — poster artist
- El Lissitzky — posters, architecture, "Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge"
- Sergei Eisenstein — cinematographer, "Battleship Potemkin"
- Dziga Vertov — cinematographer: "Man With a Movie Camera"
- The Stenberg Brothers — movie posters

Bauhaus (1919–1923)
An art and industrial design school in Germany. Essentially a revival of the Arts & Crafts Movement, but with an emphasis on machine production instead of hand-production. Clarity and simplicity. Many of the Bauhaus instructors moved to America and became the driving force for American Modern in the 1950s and 1960s. (FYI, this is a "classical" movement)

- Herbert Bayer — posters, advertisements, furnishings
- Marcel Breuer — furnishings
- Walter Gropius — architecture
- Ludwig Mies van der Rohe — architecture, "less is more" and "God is in the details"
- Josef Albers — color theory

Art Deco (1920–1940)
Inspired by a love of the machine, streamlining, geometry and rich materials (ivory, ebony, gold, silver, zebra and leopard skin). Often reduces complex organic shapes into simple geometric shapes.

- Adolphe Mouron Cassandre — posters
- Ramond Loewy — industrial designer (designed classic Coke bottle) — "Streamline Moderne"
- Tamara de Lempicka — painter
- Rockwell Kent — artist and sculptor
- Chrysler Building, NY

German Expressionism (1920s–1930s)
Filmmaking that used symbolism, lighting and camera angles to create mood and depth. Many German filmmakers moved to America to escape the Nazis, and made horror films and film noire detective films from the 1930s–1950s.

- Egon Schiele — artist
- Käthe Kollwitz — artist
- Robert Wiene — cinematographer, "Cabinet of Dr. Caligari"
- Fritz Lang, cinematographer, "Metropolis" and "M"

Surrealism (1920s–1950s)
Art based on dreams (based on the work of psychiatrist Sigmund Freud) and the elements of both juxtaposition of unlike things and surprise. While the look and feel of surrealism seems either horrific or dated, the idea of juxtaposition is important to the best advertising and graphic design.

- Salvador Dali — artist, filmmaker, etc.
- Max Ernst — artist
- Man Ray — artist
- Marcel Duchamp — artist
- Juan Miró — artist
- Alfred Hitchcock — cinematographer, "Vertigo"

Works Progress Administration (1935–1943)
A relief measure by the Roosevelt administration to deal with the effects of the Great Depression; it created work for the unemployed, including artists, architects, photographers and graphic designers. Much of the work included book illustration, silkscreened posters and murals and sculptures for buildings. The work often had a solid, heroic feeling. (See horse sculptures outside Dept of Labor in downtown DC.)

• Rockwell Kent — artist and illustrator
• Ben Shahn — poster artist and photographer
• Berenice Abbott — photographer
• Dorothea Lange — photographer
• Walker Evans — photographer
• George Stanley — sculptor (http://www.publicartinla.com/sculptures/muse1.html)

American Modern / Post-War Modern (1950s–1960s)
Teachers from the Bauhaus emigrated from Germany before and after WWII and began teaching at Yale and the Art Institute of Chicago, bringing their design theories to with them. Companies that wanted to be on the cutting-edge hired them.

• Massimo Vignelli — Designer
• Paul Rand — Designer
• Phillip Johnson — architect, early period
• Richard Neutra — architect (residential Los Angeles modern)
• Irving Penn — photographer
• Container Corporation of America — Corporation

Historicism/Eclecticism (1954–present)
The use of both modern and historical styles in a mash-up; researching historical styles for graphic effect. Began with founding of Push Pin Studios in New York in 1954.

• Milton Glaser — graphic designer
• Seymour Chwast — graphic designer
• Pula Scher — graphic designer
• Herb Lubalin — graphic designer/typographer
• ITC Corporation — type foundry

Pop Art (1950s–1970s)
Art denoted by it's use of low-art references (reuse of commercial objects, such as Campbell Soup cans, Brillo boxes, comic book art, collage art)

• Andy Warhol — painter
• Roy Lichtenstein — painter

Op Art (1960s)
Art that uses geometrical optical illusions

• Victor Vasarely — artist

Punk (1974–1976) / New Wave (1976–1985)
Anti-establishment movement, largely fashion-oriented but included graphic design. Reactionary; started in Britain among poor youths who could not get jobs (leaving college to go "on the dole"), denoted by torn clothing, black jeans and safety pins. Taken up by affluent white youths in America who paid large sums for destroyed clothing. Posters for music events were DIY hand-made, generally by photocopying pre-existing artwork, tearing it apart, pasting it back together and re-photocopying.

• Ramones — music group
• Sex Pistols — music group (see also album covers)
• http://www.slideshare.net/cmoorehead/punk-postpunk-amp-the-british-design-identity
• Jamie Reid — graphic designer

Post-modernism (1980s–present)
"...(P)ostmodernism is highly skeptical of explanations which claim to be valid for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person. In the postmodern understanding, interpretation is everything; reality only comes into being through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually." — PBS

• Phillip Johnson — architect, late period
• Tibor Kalman — designer, designed for Talking Heads and Interview magazine for Andy Warhol
• Stefan Sagmeister — graphic design
• Talking Heads — New Wave music group, started in this category and then evolved to postmodernism. Laurie Anderson — performance artist

Memphis-Milano Movement (1981–87)
Italian design and architecture group of the 1980s, featuring geometry, bright colors and playfulness. The style of the graphics for the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Art Deco gone crazy. Note also that its geometric basis lends itself to creation on the computers of the time (Macintosh was first sold in 1984).

• http://www.flickr.com/photos/memphis-milano/

Computer Design/Emigre magazine (1984–)
Led by Zuzana Licko and *Emigre* magazine, April Greiman at Art Center in LA, and Katherine and Michael McCoy, Cranbrook Academy of Art in Detroit, design takes a definite turn towards collage and other complex techniques that were extremely difficult and expensive prior to the Macintosh and the Linotype imagesetter.

   Much of the design work after this time is inspired as much by changes in software as by changes in "style," such as the emergence of drop shadows, the use of 3-dimensional software, false-3D created in After Effects, image processing in Photoshop, photo-collage, the emergence of web sites, and movement on those websites with the creation of Flash, movies and Javascript.

• David Carson — magazine designer

DIY (2000s–)
There is a more general "Do It Yourself" movement, but what we are looking for here specifically is graphic designers becoming manufacturers. Movement is very similar to Arts & Crafts movement of the 1880s. Examples:

• House Industries—fonts, textiles, furniture
• HZDG—dormify.com
• Tibor Kalman—M&Co
• Whitney Sherman — http://whitneysherman.com/index.php?/play/pdHearSayWare/
• Etsy — Look for objects with competent type design