

Module 3

Advertising and graphics

In this module you will learn to talk about:

- graphic artists



Graphic Artists



Fonts or typefaces are very often closely linked with the person who designed them. Here you can read about four typeface designers.

Complete the table with information from the notes.

Typeface designers.

| | Margaret Calvert | Eric Gill | Thomas Cobden-Sanderson | Cyrus Highsmith | Erik Spiekermann |
|-----------------------|--|-----------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Nationality | South African / British | | | | |
| Century | 20th | | | | |
| Influences | Research, and her South African childhood | | | | |
| Typeface or lettering | Traffic signal pictograms, road sign lettering | | | | |

Margaret Calvert (1936 -)

Margaret Calvert is a typographer and graphic designer who, along with colleague Jock Kinneir, designed many of the road signs used throughout Great Britain. Together in the 1960s they found through research that at *speed* we are better able to read place names and directions in a mixture of *upper-* and *lower case*, rather than signs in all-capitals favoured previously, and designed the typeface called 'Transport' still in use today on British motor-



ways and streets. Calvert also helped to design the signs for Gatwick Airport, where a black on yellow scheme for signs was found to be the most effective combination. Calvert also designed many triangular roadside pictograms, including the two children holding hands near schools, the older child based on how she used to look herself in her native South Africa. Today, she lives among her signs in north London.

Cyrus Highsmith (1973 -)

Cyrus Highsmith is a senior designer at Boston's Font Bureau and designer of fonts such as Amira, Novia and Antenna. He learnt to *draw* from his mother, who taught him to look at the shapes between what he was trying to *draw*. With his contemporary body of work, he has established himself as one of the truly original new voices in American type design. A few years ago, he tried to spend a day without the font Helvetica. As soon as he got out of bed he found that most of his clothes had washing instructions in Helvetica, and the project was impossible to carry out. Highsmith couldn't use his computer, and at lunchtime he couldn't even eat in Chinatown as his favourite Chinese restaurant used Helvetica on the menu.

Eric Gill (1882 –1940)

Eric Gill was a controversial figure because of his religious views and private life. He is famous for his *engravings* in wood and stone, his devotion to English *craftsmanship*, and his typefaces, especially Perpetua and Gill Sans, one of the 20th century's earliest and classic sans serif fonts. He was associated with The Arts and Crafts Movement inspired by William Morris (1834–1896) which was a reaction against the impoverished state of the decorative arts. It was in favour of truth to materials and traditional *craftsmanship* using simple forms and often medieval, romantic or folk styles of decoration.

Thomas Cobden-Sanderson (1840 –1922)

Thomas Cobden-Sanderson was involved with the Arts and Crafts Movement and during a dinner party, William Morris and his wife persuaded him to take up *book-binding*. In 1900 with a partner he founded the Doves *Press*, which produced books for William Morris, including the famous Doves Bible which used the beautiful Doves type. But Cobden-Sanderson didn't want the font type to be used by his partner after his death, and when the *press* closed in 1916, he began taking the type on his bicycle and throwing it into the River Thames under Hammersmith Bridge at night. He made more than 100 separate trips, which was hard work for a man of 76. And most of the letters remain in the water today.

Erik Spiekermann (1947 -)

Spiekermann is a German typographer and designer. He is responsible for the look of much of the new Berlin, and his fonts are on the Berlin transit network, the Deutsche Bahn national railway and the home of the Berlin Philharmonic. He once said that while some men like to look at women's bottoms, he prefers type. In the 1970s he worked as a freelance graphic designer in London before returning to Berlin and founding MetaDesign with two partners. MetaDesign combined clean, teutonic-looking information design and complex corporate design systems for clients like Düsseldorf Airport, Audi, and Volkswagen. In 1989 he and his wife, Joan Spiekermann, started FontShop, the first mail-order distributor for digital fonts. FSI FontShop International followed and now publishes the FontFont range of typefaces.

Read the biographies again and classify the fonts or typefaces mentioned according to the text about font families.

| | |
|------------|--|
| serif | |
| sans-serif | |
| cursive | |
| fantasy | |
| monospace | |

2

Vocabulary

Match the words from the texts, shown in *italics*, with the definitions.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>speed</i> | traditional skill |
| <i>upper-case</i> | small letters |
| <i>lower-case</i> | capital letters |
| <i>draw</i> | picture produced by a metal plate |
| <i>engraving</i> | fast movement |
| <i>craftsmanship</i> | create a picture by making lines with a pen or pencil |
| <i>book-binding</i> | a business that publishes books |
| <i>press</i> | physical assembling of a book |

3

Introduction

Abram Games - The design of a poster or advertisement, or a typeface and graphic illustrations, convey the atmosphere of a time.

What period do you think these posters come from?



4

Reading

Now read about the graphic artist Abram Games who designed them, and answer the questions at the end.

Abram Games

Abram Games, whose real name was Abraham Gamse, was born in Whitechapel, London, in 1914. His father, Joseph Gamse, a Latvian photographer, changed the family name to Games. For a while Games attended St Martins School of Art in London but, disillusioned by the style of teaching and discouraged by the high tuition fees, he soon left the art school. From 1932 until 1936, Games worked as a "studio boy" at the London commercial design firm Askew-Young and was a photographer's assistant to his father.



Abram Games

In 1935 Abram Games entered a poster of his own design to a poster competition held by the London City Council, and won. From 1936 Games freelanced as a graphic designer, creating posters for London Transport and Shell.

Through contact with the design director at Shell, Abram Games became official poster artist to the British War Office during the Second World War. Games designed about a hundred propaganda posters for the War Office. Working on those posters was what made Abram Games develop his distinctive style with which he succeeded in making a maximum statement with a minimum of

tools, or "maximum meaning, minimum means". The best known Abram Games wartime posters are those he did for the Auxiliary Territorial Service, which appealed to women to join the war effort on the home front. After the war, Abram Games again freelanced as a graphic artist, designing posters, advertisements, and logos for "The Financial Times", the BBC, the United Nations, El Al airline and other organizations.

Abram Games also designed book covers for Penguin Books and, in 1951, the Festival of Britain emblem. Abram Games was one of the last designers of lithograph posters before this craft was replaced by the offset process.

Glossary

Lithograph - reproduction process where a flat surface is treated to absorb or repel ink in the desired pattern

Offset - a plate makes an inked impression on a rubber-blanketed cylinder, which in turn transfers it to the paper

Say whether the information below is true, not true or not given in the text.

1. There was artistic talent in Games' family.
2. The Games family was fairly poor.
3. His first success was winning a prize for a design.
4. He fought overseas during the Second World War.
5. He married in the 1950s.
6. He became famous for his complex designs.
7. One of his commissions after the war was for a newspaper.
8. He worked for non-British organizations too.

This text gives the main facts about Games' life as an artist.

Cover it and try to remember the sentences containing the following verbs.

E.g. was born . *Games was born in London in 1914*

attended

he left

he worked

he won

he freelanced

he designed

Now use these verbs and the table below to write a short paragraph about Italian artist and designer Bruno Munari (1907– 1998).

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Date of birth | 1907, Milan |
| School | Badia Polesine near Rovigo |
| Employment | 1925, with his uncle, an engineer 1939 to 1945 press graphic designer for the publisher Mondadori |
| Prize | "Compasso d'Oro" 1954, 1955 and 1979 |
| Other work | graphics and literature, poetry, children's books, at first for his son Alberto |

