



SAUL BASS

DESIGNER'S FULL NAME: Saul Bass

DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME: None

GENDER: Male

YEAR BORN: 1920

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN: United States

YEAR DIED: 1996

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER DIED: United States

RACE | ETHNICITY | RELIGION | POLITICAL ALIGNMENT

White, Russian-Jewish, Jewish, N/A

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE AFFECTED EITHER THE ARTIST'S LIFE EXPERIENCE OR WORK BECAUSE IT/THEY PROVIDED A CHALLENGE AT THE TIME, PLEASE EXPLAIN.

He grew up in the Depression, which put a strain on his academics. He left school young to work in an advertising agency, doing things such as creating posters. He continued to pursue school at night.

DID THIS DESIGNER DO NOTABLE WORK IN FIELDS OTHER THAN WHAT WOULD TODAY BE CONSIDERED GRAPHIC DESIGN? EXPLAIN.

The opening sequence and shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

Bass is especially well-known for his movie sequences, which don't fall under the general "graphic design" category of today's standards.

IS THERE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT THIS DESIGNER? EXPLAIN.

There is nothing notably controversial about this designer.

EXPLAIN THIS DESIGNER'S EDUCATION/TRAINING, INCLUDING ACADEMIC, APPRENTICESHIPS, AND /OR MENTORSHIPS.

Saul Bass came under mentorship of Gyorgy Kepes, a follower of the Bauhaus. After some mentorship, Bass joined an advertising company that held clients such as TWA and Paramount.

DID THIS DESIGNER PROMOTE A SPECIFIC IDEOLOGY IN HIS/HER WORK? EXPLAIN.

Bass kept his designs simple and pleasing to the eye.

WHY IS THIS DESIGNER VIEWED AS ICONIC IN THE HISTORY OF GRAPHIC DESIGN?

Bass was the father of animation graphics used in opening sequences, as well as the pioneer of a style that is still replicated today in shows like *Archer*.

IS THERE ANY OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KNOW ABOUT THIS DESIGNER?

He made an effortless transition from posters to animation graphics. Bass viewed it as simply another step in his life.

YOUR NAME: Amanda Davis

STATE YOUR EDUCATED OPINION OF THIS PERSON AND THE QUALITY/IMPORTANCE OF HIS/HER WORK. EXPLAIN WHAT INFLUENCE - OR LACK OF INFLUENCE - THIS WORK HAS HAD ON YOUR OWN.

Saul Bass can be considered the father of motion graphics in film titling. It is hard to go far without seeing his work, either in film or in the numerous logos for which he is responsible. In terms of popularity alone, Saul Bass's work is important. It pioneered a new era of thinking about how we present information in movies, and with what materials we are allowed to do so. His sequences remain fan favorites today, attesting to their outstanding importance. With the creation of the opening title for *Psycho*, Bass changed the entire game, so to speak. His use of kinetic typography was revolutionary at the time, and virtually unseen before. His creation of the motion title for *The Man with the Golden Arm* is what sent him skyrocketing to fame. The sequence itself remains firmly lodged in its audience's minds today, nearly sixty-five years after its initial debut. Such visceral reactions to a simple opening credit are what bestow Saul Bass his metaphorical pedestal in the Hall of the Important Graphic Designers.

In terms of quality of work, Saul Bass put substantial effort into all of his creations. The thought processes alone behind them are impressive, as they can be traced directly back to the Bauhaus. However, as every great artist does, Bass takes these ideas and expands upon them. He uses the concepts of the Bauhaus as a springboard for what eventually becomes his own style. In his work, he made sure to keep everything simple and legible, which displays intricate knowledge of the audience of the medium. Opening credits have to be clear to all, while still maintaining a cohesive quality throughout. Bass not only manages to capture this in openings as famous as *The Man with the Golden Arm*, he does so in a way that forever revolutionizes opening credits. In his logos, they still contain his style of simplicity and legibility. This consistency across works displays total knowledge of not only his craft, but himself and his ideas, as well. Overall, the sheer amount of effort put into Bass's work means it is of high quality.

Though I do not believe it to be purposeful, Saul Bass has indeed inspired some works of mine. It is less of a direct inspiration, and more of a chain. So many have themselves been inspired by Bass, and I by them in turn. The most pressing work I can compare of my own would be my children's book, *In a Week*. In it, I use flat construction paper builds to create scenes. As the material itself often encompasses what the art will look like, my work had many exact shapes and flat colors. There was nothing amorphous about it, which mirrors Saul Bass's distinct style. There were also no unnecessary details. This mirrors the style of the Bauhaus, with its simplicity and minimalistic ways. After studying Bass, I do believe I will make more of an effort to apply his elements to my own work. I find his style compelling and visually intriguing, and I find myself drawn to it. There is something beautiful about the lack of ornamentation that he uses.

Overall, Saul Bass's work is both important and of high quality, and I intend to study this artist and his style more.

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