



## GIAMBATTISTA BODONI

DESIGNER'S FULL NAME: Giambattista Bodoni

DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME: None

GENDER: Male

YEAR BORN: 1740

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN: Italy

YEAR DIED: 1813

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER DIED: Italy (under control of the French Empire at that time)

### RACE | ETHNICITY | RELIGION | POLITICAL ALIGNMENT

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.

Bodoni was of Roman Catholic faith. He was an apprentice for the Press of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and would later be honored for his work by the Pope himself. He was in good standing with the nobles of the time and supported the monarchy, along with the Roman Catholic church. The beginning of his career started in a Catholic press. Later most of his work was commissioned and supported by the Duke of Parma.

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

Giambattista Bodoni's work remained in the field of design. He created type faces and designed layouts for the pieces he would be printing. Perhaps one might say being a compositor or printer is not being a designer, but at that time he was not only creating designs but also actualizing them.

LIST AT LEAST ONE OTHER WORK THAT IS NOT NAMED IN THIS TIMELINE FOR WHICH THIS DESIGNER IS WELL KNOWN. IF WORK CO-CREATED, LIST THE OTHERS INVOLVED.

Giambattista Bodoni printed the "Iliad" by Homer. He also printed the Lord's Prayer in 155 different languages.

EXPLAIN IF THIS FAME IS ONLY WITHIN DESIGN CIRCLES OR ANY OTHER SUBSET OF THE POPULATION.

Both of these printings exemplify Bodoni's ability to reach people who were not only in his region. The "Iliad" was a well-known book that would be sought after by many. His printing of the Lord's prayer in varying languages, expanded the range of individuals who were exposed to his work. Bodoni's fame was substantial enough to catch the attention of the Spanish ambassador to Rome, who tried to hire Bodoni away from The Duke of Parma.

DOES THIS WORK EXEMPLIFY ASPECTS EXPLAINED IN PREVIOUS QUESTIONS?

His printing of the Lord's prayer exemplified his strong religious roots.

FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

Giambattista Bodoni was known for his typeface designing. He created serif type that had stark contrast between the thin and thick strokes, geometric build, vertical axis, and straight serifs. He pioneered these qualities and created his own style which is considered a shift to "modern" typefaces. His most famous typeface, that is still used today, is entitled "Bodoni". He was also

renowned for his ability to produce a wide range of type sizes while still giving them a smooth high quality around the edges. This wide range made it possible for him to create strategic hierarchy and accurate spacing.

IS THERE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT THIS DESIGNER? EXPLAIN.

There is nothing notably controversial about this designer.

WHAT MATERIALS WERE MOST OFTEN USED BY THIS DESIGNER IN THE CREATION AND PRODUCTION OF WORK?

Giambattista used ink, paper, and movable type in a printing press.

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

Giambattista Bodoni began his design journey by assisting his father who was a printer. He left home and became an apprentice at The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in Rome under the mentorship of Giuseppe Spinelli and Costantino Ruggieri. He also studied at Sapienza University of Rome to learn Arabic and Hebrew.

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

Bodoni seemed to pioneer the modern typeface movement and promoted simplicity, hierarchy, borders, and generous margin space in his designs. His mathematical precision in creating his typefaces was an expression of the machine age. He also held religious ideologies which can be seen throughout his work because of its subject matter.

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

Giambattista Bodoni was viewed as an icon because of his pioneering the modern typeface designs that pushed typography into the next phase of style. He was renowned for his beautiful, precise, and organized page design layouts. His vast amount of typeface designs (about three hundred) were recorded and put in a book published by his widow entitled *Manual of Type*. Bodoni reached a milestone in typography that pushed graphic design into the direction it is today.

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

No.

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YOUR NAME: Laney Gilliam

GIVE YOUR EDUCATED OPINION OF THIS DESIGNER AND HIS/HER WORK. ALSO EXPLAIN WHAT INFLUENCE, IF ANY, THIS WORK HAS HAD ON YOUR OWN. A LACK OF INFLUENCE MUST BE EXPLAINED.

Giambattista Bodoni created beautiful, legible typefaces. His page layouts were organized and had a clear visual flow due to the hierarchy of type size and style. Bodoni's work showed the principle that the printed portion and the whitespace were of equal importance in creating a cohesive composition. His mathematical precision in the creation of his typefaces give them a clean, exact

look. Bodoni's center aligned, symmetrical compositions are appealing to the eyes. Giambattista Bodoni's intense dedication and knowledge seen through his printed works and his typefaces amassed in the *Manual of Type* can serve as a motivation to designers.

I have used his famous font "Bodoni" in my own work. His influence on my work has been a less obvious one than that of other designers. Before I started taking graphic design courses at the university, my acknowledgement of type designers was non-existent. Bodoni's fonts have existed my entire life; therefore, I unintentionally took them and their creation process for granted. I focused on the style of fonts, but I never took time to research their creators.

I now know that the characteristics seen in modern type that are commonplace today were once ground-breaking. Giambattista Bodoni's page compositions helped progress graphic design into a simpler style with generous margins, and strategic white space. This was a stark contrast to the pages with heavy ornamentation, lacking much white space that preceded his work. Much of the book design I have been exposed to favors more closely the style of Bodoni.

In my own work I have started to appreciate the importance of spacing, symmetry, and bordering. The value white space has on a composition that Bodoni promoted throughout his work influences me to utilize white space in my own designs. When first designing, I was somewhat heavy handed with ornamentation and felt the need to fill every inch of the piece. After researching designers such as Bodoni, I am more confident utilizing the white space.

Bodoni's influence on me has been an indirect one for the most part. His principles and designs have affected designers before me and designers to which I've been exposed. I unknowingly absorbed the path he paved in graphic design. Now that I understand the impact his work has had on graphic design, I am appreciative of the designers who pioneered the fields of typography and layout. The fonts I use every day were created with immense thought and dedication by men like Giambattista Bodoni.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Meggs, Phillip B. and Alston W. Purvis. *Meggs' History of Graphic Design, 5th Edition*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

