

SEYMOUR CHWAST

DESIGNER'S FULL NAME: Seymour Chwast

DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME: N/A

GENDER: Male.

YEAR BORN: 1931.

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN: United States of America.

YEAR DIED: ---

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER DIED: ---



HUNGARIAN | JEWISH | LIBERAL 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.

Seymour Chwast is against war and outwardly talks against it, as shown in At War with War.

Unsure of specific political alignments such as Democrat or Republican. He seems to lean left. Seymour Chwast was born in 1931 so he was a young boy when World War II happened. He also lived through the Korean War and the Vietnam War, which he explicitly mentions in his Chronology Archive. This led to his hatred of war and helped fuel his future political poster designs.

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

Seymour Chwast went through a period of "Heavy Metal" creating works of art out of sheet metal and painting them with acrylics. His "Heavy Metal" period would not be considered graphic design like his posters, illustrations, and typography.

FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

Chwast is most known for forming Push Pin Studios with his college friends Edward Sorel and Milton Glaser. They all attended Cooper Union Art School.

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.

Seymour Chwast was inspired by his high school art teacher who introduced him to graphic design, from there he joined elite art squad at his high school. The elite art squad was a distinguished art club in his school that helped to shape him as a young artist. He then attended college at the Cooper Union Art Institute which was created to form a new kind of art and design student. This new type of teaching would no longer take on the traditional, it then introduced the postmodernist style to Seymour that he is known for today.

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

Chwast repeatedly speaks out against war. In his book *At War with War*, he says that we have learned nothing after 5,000 years of killing. He shows this in his political posters and paintings of military objects.

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

Seymour Chwast was a pioneer for Postmodernism because of his rise to fame and his use of the past to create new artworks.

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

Seymour Chwast and Paula Scher are married and both famous designers. They met when Paula went to interview for Push Pin Studios.

Haley John

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.

Many designers can agree that the idea of studio design was changed when Seymour Chwast helped to create Push Pin Studios. Chwast helped to construct Postmodernism by combining past styles, like Art Nouveau and Art Deco, with his illustrations. Seymour Chwast is an American graphic designer born in 1931, he was raised in the Bronx, New York with a Hungarian and Jewish background.¹ He attended the Cooper Union Institute in Manhattan to hone his craft. Cooper Union was created to promote a new age of artists by changing the way the students were trained. When this institution decided to step away from the idea of master and apprenticeship, Chwast gained his love of the new age from his time at this school. Chwast helped form Push Pin Studios in 1954 with his college friends Edward Sorel and Milton Glaser. Push Pin Studios created a sizable amount of work, ranging in styles from Jugendstil to Bauhaus.² Similar to his studio, Chwast created an immense amount of work and created designs for huge clients like Vanity Fair and the New York Times. Chwast is a contemporary icon whose graphic work continues to influence designers to this day. His work has unknowingly influenced me by creating a distinctive style of illustration that I see so much of today.

Together Chwast, Glaser, and Sorel created a new standard for contemporary graphic design with their simple and complex ideas.³ From the studio, the Push Pin Approach spread across the world. It is not a set style, but an idea of visual communication that was started with these three friends.⁴ Seymour's talents, with expressive illustrations and unique sense of typography and layout, set his work apart from the Swiss style that was present at the time. Chwast used acrylic paint, screen printing, and relief printmaking in his work.

Seymour Chwast grew up with a hatred of war and violence, this motivated him and his political artworks grew from this.⁵ His

1 *Chronology*, <http://seymourchwastarchive.com/chronology/>.

2 *About Push Pin*, <http://www.pushpininc.com/about/pushpin/>.

3 *About Seymour*, <http://seymourchwastarchive.com/about/seymour/>.

4 Phillip B Meggs, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, (NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2012) 444.

5 *Chronology*, <http://seymourchwastarchive.com/chronology/>.

hatred of war grew from the climate that he was born into. This was a period coming out of the Great Depression and entering World War II. Multiple works of design came from this including *War is Good Business* (1968) and *End Bad Breath* (1968). In 1983 Chwast was inducted into the Art Directors Hall of Fame because of his success as a designer.⁶ Paula Scher, graphic designer and wife to Seymour, credits Chwast as being an inspiration to her.⁷

Chwast's illustrations have a childlike nature with flat colors that have influenced me without me knowing. During Seymour Chwast's rise in graphic design, a time for the old style of illustrations with increased detail and ornamentation was coming to an end.⁸ Over his many years of design work, he created works with a progressive style that incorporated the latest typefaces and styles of illustration. The impact that his work has had on me and other graphic designers has portrayed the idea of simple designs that look like art without it being overcrowded. This postmodernist way of designing can be seen in modern-day advertisements, book covers, and poster designs today.

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6 *Chronology*, <http://seymourchwastarchive.com/chronology/>.

7 Meggs, *History of*, 475.

8 Meggs, *History of*, 442-443.