



NAME OF ARTIST HERE

DESIGNER'S FULL NAME: Seymour Chwast

DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME: None

GENDER: Male

YEAR BORN: 1931

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN: United States

YEAR DIED: ---

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER DIED: ---

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.

Chwast was born in 1931 and lived through the Civil Rights Movement and other politically charged movements. This environment has been reflected in some of his works which utilize juxtaposition of real world and illustrated elements to portray America's problems in a thought provoking manner.

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

The nature of Chwast's process leads him to explore many techniques outside of graphic design. For Push Pin Monthly Graphic No. 24, he used wooden type to print the cover that was old enough to be considered a museum piece. He is also well known for his painting which is often featured in children's books.

FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

Seymour Chwast is most noted for blending his characteristic wit and humor with whatever style he feels like employing that day, and taking all of that and creating thought provoking pieces. He makes posters, magazine features, and even children's book illustrations. His design approach is personal, and he is not afraid to utilize old, seemingly obsolete methods to achieve a certain appearance to his work.

IS THERE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT THIS DESIGNER? EXPLAIN.

The closest thing to controversy would be the title of his co-founded organization Push Pin Studio's publication: The Push Pin Monthly Graphic. This is just because it was not a monthly publication, but rather a periodically released trade publication featuring whatever design choices they decided to experiment with at the time. It was later renamed Push Pin Graphic.

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

Chwast studied at the Cooper Union in New York, NY with Milton Glaser, Reynolds Ruffins, and Edward Sorel. Glaser went to study etching in Italy after graduation, and on return co-founded Push Pin Studio in 1951 with Chwast, Ruffins, and Sorel. Chwast and Glaser maintained this partnership for two decades.

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

Looking at his work, the ideology Chwast promotes is one of exploration. Explore different mediums and find unique answers to problems. Chwast tries to stay well versed in the latest “trends,” but he is also not afraid to go against standard design aesthetics to give his pieces the voice he feels like they should have. “At a point, I find it useful to let my mind wander and land on something, an unconventional solution.” -Chwast (Millman, 158)

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

Push Pin Studio was one of the most influential firms at the forefront of Postmodernism. What started as the Push Pin Monthly Graphic and became the Push Pin Graphic featured thought provoking subject matter juxtaposed with unconventional or antiquated techniques and aesthetics. This was all pulled together with Chwast’s signature humor to create a diverse spread of work that moved against convention and helped to usher in a new age of art.

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

Seymour Chwast is married to Paula Scher, another influential designer.

YOUR NAME: Joseph Erwin

GIVE 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.

Seymour Chwast’s main contributions to the artistic world are his personal approach to art and design and his ability to take outdated and unconventional artistic practices and techniques and employ them in such a way as to revitalize them and create striking works. Chwast, along with Reynold Ruffins, Edward Sorel, and Milton Glaser founded the Push Pin Studio in the 1950s, which provided an unconventional approach to design that was open to new techniques and ways of portraying ideas. This freedom of thought and design was refreshing and full of life when compared to the cold aesthetics of Modernism, and helped to usher in the later movement known as Postmodernism.

Part of the charm of Chwast’s work is that he takes many different forms of graphic design and meshes them together to portray a new idea in a way that no one else could. A purpose of the Push Pin Graphic was to give him and other artists a space to experiment with different forms of illustration. A large number of his works also include a sense of humor that makes his creations more personal. This humor is partially due to the unusual and unconventional ways in which he portrays his subject matter. Chwast enjoys exploring a wide variety of media and techniques, and he gathers whatever design elements he deems fit for any given project and combines them to create something new and visually interesting.

This use of a multitude of techniques applied over many areas of art for many years has cast a blanket of influence over the artistic community. One topic of design that Chwast influenced was political issues being addressed in graphic design. In the Push Pin Monthly Graphic No. 54 he employed a photograph of the African American Emmitt Till who was murdered in an act of white racial violence, juxtaposed with an illustration of an idealized American south. While political statements had occurred before in

design, such as with Herbert Bayer and the design of his typeface “Universal,” which made a statement against German tradition by removing capital letters, political activism was not at the time popular and became popular partially through the actions of Chwast.

The blanket of influence mentioned earlier is also partially due to his work with children’s book illustrations. Just like with his other works, he employs a large degree of variation from project to project, using different techniques, mediums, and styles to tailor the final visual product to the subject matter of the book. It is important to note, however, that he favors painting both with his book illustrations and with his leisure time.

In my opinion, Seymour Chwast has proven himself to be very influential throughout his design career. Not only did he help usher in Postmodernism, but he showed the world that there is no one answer to the question of design. He tailors his creative process to what he thinks the final product should be, and he is not afraid to produce something new with something old. He draws inspiration from many places and puts his own personal touch on these elements to create a product that is intimate and refreshing. He has created a large and diverse body of work that has its fingers outstretched into many areas of the design community, and I think that his efforts from the start of his career to now have done a great deal to shape how the world inside and outside of the design community sees art.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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