



Romain de Tirtoff

DESIGNER'S FULL NAME: Romain de Tirtoff

DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME: Erté and R.T.

GENDER: Male

YEAR BORN: November 23, 1892

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN: Saint Petersburg, Russia

YEAR DIED: April 21, 1990

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER DIED: Paris, France

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.

Erté was pushed toward being a designer and artist his whole life.

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

Besides being a designer, he also was a stage craft, but even this line of work had quite a bit of design involved. In Russia, Modernism was on the rise and later moved to France where the La Belle Epoque was in full swing! Art literally lined the streets making them look like art galleries. He could walk down a different street and be endlessly inspired.¹

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.

In 1979 Erté created "Blossom Umbrella."

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

His work would have been appreciated both in the fashion world and those pertaining to concept art.

DOES THIS WORK EXEMPLIFY ASPECTS EXPLAINED IN PREVIOUS QUESTIONS?

This piece exemplifies Erté's fashion background. His work is sharp and has geometric lines and flat imagery, a grand example of the Art Deco style. His figures are reminiscent of Greek figures and Edo-period woodblock prints. Besides being looked at from fine artists, he was appreciated in fashion and theatre circles.¹

FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

Erté is most noted for being one of the creators of the Art Deco movement. He believed strongly in the relationship between art and design. This is incredibly apparent in his work as he mostly illustrates fashion and designs set. Both of which require planning and artistic talent to execute.¹

Erté's interest in design can be said to have started with his father. His father owned a collection of small figurines from Paris which he kept in his library. It is thought these colorful figures inspired his work and continued to shape his style as he grew up.³

IS THERE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT THIS DESIGNER? EXPLAIN.

From the research I have done, it does not appear Erté did anything scandalous. There are some sources who claim he was homosexual, but there is not any official proof he was.⁴ Though this is not controversial in modern times by any means, it would be less accepted in the early 1900s.

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

Erté created lithographs, serigraphs, sheet-metal sculptures, and sets for theater.¹

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

Erté's main influence and teacher was Paul Poiret, a Parisian couturier. This taught him how to sketch fashion designs and have a sense of style for his work.²

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

Erté was considered a Modernist. He believed art and design belonged side by side. He also loved geometric, linear, clear designs.¹

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

Besides having an elaborate and productive career, Erté is namely known for his success with *Harper's Bazaar*.³ He created more than 240 covers and was published in several other magazines. He also published two books titled *Designs by Erté* and *Things I Remember*.^{1,2}

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

When Erté turned seventy-five, he stopped drawing and creating sets, and turned to recreating his earlier designs in bronze and serigraphy. Due to his success, he has been placed in a number of museums.³

YOUR NAME: Calley Dunnihoo

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.

Born Romain de Tiroff, Erté took the design world by storm with his fashion inspired prints and illustrations. He was a modernist designer who used clean lines, bold shapes, and flat color inspired by Edo-period prints and Greek pottery figures. He made several covers for "Harper's Bazaar," the fashion authority at the time, and wrote several books, as well as created several costumes and sets for theatre. He was fortunate to move to Paris where he was surrounded by plenty of talent and inspiration. Erté made it a point to submerge himself in the modernist style from the beginning.¹

Erté loved to surround himself with beauty and grace, evident from his prominence in theater and ballet design and the serene figures of women he would create. Fortunately, when he moved to Paris, he got the opportunity to work under Paul Poiret.¹ This internship began his career and interest in fashion.

Erté was passionate about his work and made himself prominent with the current style—it was a perfect fit. He was able to create what he loved and the masses adored him. Do I think Erté was influential, I do, but in some indirect ways. He teaches artists to embrace what they love from an early age and apply it to the current style to be relevant. He created very simple, clean, illustrations, embodying the modern style.¹ Modern style is still popular today as people turn to more minimalist homes and lifestyles. The cleanness and simple use of color is easy to pair.

Fashion designers sketch in a style very reminiscent of Erté. The figures are elongated, simple, and clean. This allows the elaborate clothing to be the focal point. Though his figures dressed in their fancy frocks do not match the tone of the era, they somehow depict it with their confidence and spectacle. Clothing can speak louder than words in this regard.

Personally, I did not see how Erté inspired me at first. However, upon looking further into his work, the parallels between his work and my own is noticeable. Fashion figures are often the center of the page and are simple. I tend to draw figures in simple scenes, facing forward, because I love to focus on the clothing and general personality of a character. I also enjoy flat color and clean lines as my style is very cartoon-like.

Regardless of how little or not I have been inspired by Erté's work, he inspired someone who then inspired someone else. Through time, styles have changed and evolved, coming in and out of style, creating the different, bizarre styles and movements known today. He embodied an era and even served as an influencer for Art Deco. However, Erté eventually stopped illustrating and switched to other media to branch out when he was 75. This shows an artist is never too old to try new things and go a different path. He went on to have his bronze and serigraphy in a number of museums.³ Through hard work and passion, Erté created a large body of impressive work which continues to be studied today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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4. Knight, Matt. "Visual & Decorative Arts Blog." Gay Pride and Designer Erté | Art of Fine Gifts. Accessed April 04, 2018. <http://blog.flametreepublishing.com/art-of-fine-gifts/bid/78241/Gay-Pride-and-Designer-Ert-Art-of-Fine-Gifts>.

