



SHIGEO FUKUDA

DESIGNER'S FULL NAME: Shigeo Fukuda

DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME: None

GENDER: male

YEAR BORN: 1932

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN: Japan

YEAR DIED: 2009

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER DIED: Japan

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.

Though unknown if he was an advocate of a particular political group, he supported anti-war ideals and environmental advocacy. His stance seemed to align closely with pacifism. Growing up in Japan, he was exposed to the horrors of World War II, which contributed to his passion of creating posters for social change, environmental awareness and the tragedy of war.

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

He worked in the field of sculpture, often creating illusion pieces.

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.

One well known work by Fukuda is his 1982 Happy Earth Day poster.

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

Due to the public celebration of Earth Day by many individuals and the nature of a poster's intention is to reach the masses, it is easy to see why his work would be well known outside of design circles. Though many of the people viewing may not acknowledge the designer, they definitely acknowledged his designs. His fame surpassed national boundaries and was not confined simply to Japan but America also.

DOES THIS WORK EXEMPLIFY ASPECTS EXPLAINED IN PREVIOUS QUESTIONS?

This 1982 Happy Earth Day poster is a good example of his interest in social and environmental issues.

FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

Shigeo Fukuda was most famous for his unique somewhat minimalist style. He was able to convey complex ideas into simple designs. He was able to visually communicate through his designs that transcended language barriers. Fukuda used his talent to express ideas he believed would better the world. He was also known for using optical illusions in his sculptures. An example of this is his sculpture "Lunch With a Helmet On" which is composed of eating utensils, that would cast a shadow of a motorcycle when light would shine on it.

IS THERE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT THIS DESIGNER? EXPLAIN.

His designs were over controversial topics, such as war. He made a clear stance against the wars that had occurred and future conflicts that may arise. War had been prevalent throughout his life, becoming a major influence on his work. These posters touched on a subject that had affected so many lives. The experience of an individual would affect how Fukuda's design was received. Either way his work, although fairly simple, was able to stir complex emotions. Some supported the wars and others did not.

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

Shigeo Fukuda used several materials in his work. For his graphic design work, he used lithography, ink, paper, and in later works computer. For his sculptures, he used a range of household items and industrial materials.

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

Fukuda grew up in a family of toy makers, which gave him an environment that encouraged creativity. He became interested in in the Swiss Style and Minimalist movement. This pushed him to go to the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, from which he graduated in 1956.

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

Shigeo Fukuda seemed to promote minimalism and illusions. Throughout his work you can see him using elements to trick the eye but in their simplest forms. He uses flat colors, and forms generally stripped down to silhouette, or close to it. The figures in his images would often have white space that would create other forms. This can be seen in his sculptures also, by their transformative nature depending on how they are viewed. He focused on the ability to play with perception.

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

Shigeo Fukuda is iconic in graphic design because of his distinct style that is easily distinguishable as his own. He pioneered minimalism and the art of illusions. He used his talents to visually communicate important statements about social issues in a way anyone could understand. His ability to play with perception is impressive and hard to achieve for many artists.

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

He incorporated his views of illusion into is everyday life. An interesting example of this is his own home. When he had a visitor, they would approach a door, but it would look very far away. The door was not as far as it seemed, but rather only four feet tall giving the illusion of distance. The actual functioning door was hidden due to it blending into the rest of the house, being painted the exact same color as the siding.

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.

I personally enjoy Shigeo Fukuda's work. His work impresses me because of it has a simple means of portraying intricate ideas. Fukuda's strategic use of white space is an impressive concept that I have yet to master in my own work. Viewing his style and composition choices have inspired me with new ideas on how to achieve a similar look in my own designs. His ability to use simple outlines and flat colors while still giving the viewer an illusion of layer and depth is one of his impressive style achievements.

I have been exposed to several of Fukuda's designs, but never knew who the creator was. Throughout researching Shigeo Fukuda, I am inspired to play with size and strategic placement to create illusion of more "space" in my designs. His influence and the influence of others who pushed minimalist Swiss Style can be seen throughout design today. My exposure to this has inspired my work to focus on portraying things in a simple form. Fukuda's design helps me focus on subtracting any part of a design that is not absolutely essential to give an object meaning. Fukuda and other designers of the same mentality leave the objects in their composition devoid of texture or ornate detail stripping it to its simplest form. This aspect of Shigeo Fukuda's designs contributed to the clarity of his visual communication. Being able to affectively communicate a message while still catching the audience's eye and keeping the viewer's interest is one of the main focuses of a graphic designer. Instead of focusing on the details, Fukuda has influenced me to use silhouette and solid color.

His passion for his work is also an inspiration to many designers, including myself. Many projects I have created personally or at the university have had my moral and social views incorporated into them. Fukuda's unwavering dedication to his convictions in his designs is an influence on designers to give their designs meaning. He used his talent and voice to promote messages that would help the masses. Artists like Fukuda started a movement to promote social change and this effect can be seen today from individual's homemade posters used in the Women's March, to the professional graphics on the March For Our Lives t-shirts sold and worn in protest. I hope to use my education and talents to promote change in the world. Shigeo Fukuda had a way of giving his designs an extra element of irony. His use of irony can be seen in one of his most famous posters "Victory 1945" in which an artillery shell is aimed at the opening of the cannon that shot it. This piece gave an almost comedic, relatable, quality to the idea of war being ridiculous and senseless. Shigeo Fukuda's influence on design was not only on the technical styles of design but also on the thought process of its use and ability to promote change.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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