



## ARMIN HOFMANN

DESIGNER'S FULL NAME: Armin Hofmann

DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME: None

GENDER: Male

YEAR BORN: June 29, 1920

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN: Winterthur, Switzerland

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.

He was all about high morals, as well as environmental and social justice. He was a member of Supervisory Board, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. He describes his work as thoughtful constraint, counteracting the color seen everywhere (advertisements) in this time. He believed in the restraint of the verbal message, so that society was not affected in a negative way. He foresaw that his beliefs of a utopian theory would turn into a style, and he did not want any part of that. Students under Hofmann claim that he is a man of spirit, with charisma and energy, but balanced with patience. Hofmann's work is personal and has soul. His work contained a universal language of symbols, and showed his ideology of purity of form.

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

No

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.

Möbel unserer Zeit, 1962. Hofmann's posters were his most well-known. This piece is exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art. The piece is a lithograph that was printed by Wassermann A.G., Basel.

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

This fame seems to be only within design circles.

DOES THIS WORK EXEMPLIFY ASPECTS EXPLAINED IN PREVIOUS QUESTIONS?

It shows the unorthodox use of flat and limited color, sans-serif, and shapes combined into an emotional piece that could be interpreted universally.

FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

Hofmann is known for his great influence in the development of the Swiss Style, even though that is not necessarily what he desired. He is also known for creating the book *Graphic Design Manual*, which is a reference book for graphic designers still today.

### IS THERE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT THIS DESIGNER? EXPLAIN.

The only thing that might be considered controversial about Armin Hofmann is his transition into a new style and concept. However, I do not think that is necessarily controversial.

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

Lithography and Offset Lithography: limestone, oil acid and gum arabic, water, paper

Photo-typesetting: stroboscope, photo-sensitive paper

Photomontage: fragments of photographs, paper

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

He attended the School of Arts and Crafts in Zurich.

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

Hofmann's ideology is purity of form. This translates that a superior aesthetic would be to strip things down to only what is necessary, but still have the feeling in the work. This is seen in all of his works by using very minimal designs: non-illustrative, photographic, geometric, flat color, sans-serif.

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

Armin Hofmann is iconic because he is the forerunner for design qualities of the Swiss Style. His posters and textbook are still studied today.

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

Another interesting detail about Hofmann is that he met Emil Ruder, another famous designer, on a train and was asked to come teach art at the Basel School of Arts and Crafts. Many other famous designers and his students speak very highly of him as well.

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YOUR NAME: McKenzie Barley

### 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 think that Armin Hofmann is an intelligent individual that used his beliefs to create a new way of looking at and interpreting art, and that in itself should be commemorated. We would be stuck in the past and unable to move forward if we didn't have people like Hofmann to question the ordinary way of looking at life, and specifically art. He is a visionary who took his own style and ran with it. His works have a common theme of interesting layouts and typographic treatment. Also in his works are out-of-the-box geometric

and organic shapes and photomontage. All of these things are characteristic of the Swiss style.

In general, I tend to become tired of looking at tons and tons of Swiss style work. However, Hofmann's use of limited color, groundbreaking layout, and eye-catching typography continues to be intriguing to me. I think that there is much to be learned about Hofmann's work.

For me and my personal artwork, the most influential aspect of Armin Hofmann's work is the great use of unusual yet extraordinary layouts and composition. I feel that implementing similar layouts in my own work would definitely make it stronger, even if it is not in the same sort of style.

Another great part of his designs is all of his typography choices. The layouts and typefaces both are interesting. I have actually made a typographic design that looks similar to Hofmann's Gute Form 1954. In both my work called Frugal, and Hofmann's Gute Form 1954, we use san-serif typefaces (which are already considered the simplest form of typefaces), and go further into stripping it down by eliminating everything on each letter that is not absolutely necessary. I feel like his layout is far more interesting than mine because he also organized the letters in an even more geometric and chopped up way. The work I created is one single word in a straight line. That is something to remember if I continue to create typography in this style.

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