



JAN TSCHICOLD

DESIGNER'S FULL NAME: Johannes Tschicold

DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME: Ivan/Jan Tschichold

GENDER: Male

YEAR BORN: 1902

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN: Germany

YEAR DIED: 1974

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER DIED: Switzerland

CAUCASIAN | GERMAN | UNKNOWN | ASSOCIATED–BUT NOT TECHNICALLY ALIGNED WITH–COMMUNISM

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.

In 1933, Tschichold and his wife were accused of “bolshevism” which is essentially accusing them of promoting non-German ideals due to his typography. This is what prompted his move to Switzerland. There he moved away from modern typography and back towards classicism to dissociate from the perceived bolshevism that was New Typography.

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

Most of his work outside of typeface design and ideology was lithography work. What was once simply printmaking is book cover, poster, and print design today. He also worked with photography. These are all facets of graphic design as it is known today.

FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

Tschichold is most notable for *Die neue Typographie* and *Elementare Typographie*, which translates to “The New Typography” and “Elementary Typography.” These books reflect his views on how important typography was in modern design. *Elementary Typographie* talked of formatting, the use of modern type and photography. *The New Typography* expanded on those ideas, providing principles and uses of modern typography for those concerned.

IS THERE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT THIS DESIGNER? EXPLAIN.

I could not find anything I would consider controversial about him with enough basis.

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

Jan Tschichold's father was a sign painter and trained calligrapher. His interests grew from there and he studied at the Leipzig Academy. He visited the Bauhaus and became very influenced but its functional design and drew inspiration from Constructivists like László Moholy-Nagy and El Lissitzky. He was a freelancer after that.

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

While he was not a directly political person, his early use of modern type and any type that was not blackletter was essentially a political statement. To go against a norm that is associated with the government is seen to be against it. After he was imprisoned however, he believed strongly in revisiting the classical styles of book design and typography. He also believed that design should be concise and to the point, as it was most effective this way. He followed this and began to condemn modernism, mostly to stave off trouble.

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

Jan Tschichold is viewed as iconic due to his contributions to typography and his personal philosophies regarding it. His writings and typography research put him at the forefront of the modern type movement even though he reverted to classicism. He is credited with setting the standards for modern type design.

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

Paul Renner was friends with Tschichold.

His books served as the typographic manual for future designers.

YOUR NAME: Autumn Harris

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.

Jan Tschichold was a man that greatly impacted graphic design as we know it today. He first wrote “Elementary Typography,” which was a short insert for a magazine called Typographic News. In this, he first outlined principles for printers to easily understand and make their work better. The text said to employ sparse functionalism, sans-serif—which is a characteristic typeface for modernists—and the use of white space. Also, asymmetry was preferred in a layout rather than atypical symmetry. With this text, the use of photography in a design rather than illustrations was made important. He later wrote a book called “The New Typography,” and in this came the ideals that supported modernist typography and layout. This text also provided a guide for designers and printers to use for reference from then forward. László Moholy-Nagy coined the term, “typo-photo,” but it was Jan Tschichold that further elaborated and broke it down into understanding. Sans-serif type is the best complement to a photograph and typo-photo is a combination of the photo, type, and the grayscale of the photograph. Tschichold utilized the grid in a new way, turning things to an angle and making space more active—order within chaos. He said that a message should be given in the most concise way, as this was the most efficient and practical. The “beauty” of old typography, such as the grand ornamentation, was no longer important and simplicity was favored. Tschichold also had standardized paper sizes used for all print, and how different weights of paper and material could help convey a message quickly and easily. Another important contribution is his creation of the typeface Sabon, which is a serif typeface. When he worked for the Penguin Books publishing house, he redesigned the book templates and implemented a specific typeface for the title and author as well as each having their own respective space and position which led to Penguin setting standard grids and composition rules, which shows his influence professionally.

Tschichold’s work has influenced how I design in ways that I did not realize. He led the way for a more minimal design that gets the point across. He explained hierarchy, and how that benefits both the design and the viewer. I use “white-space” as an element of design rather than treating it as the blank area of a page; it is now intentional. I have utilized rules and bars in certain designs to offer a variety and make my work asymmetrical. I would say while his work has been influential it was more of his ideology that sparked inspiration in

others. His designs served as a reference to what he wrote. Tschichold practiced what he preached, without counting his own backslide into classical typography after being accused of bolshevism. His rules on how to mix typefaces are still employed and Penguin Books still uses the specific templates he created. These are all elements that might not have been thought of the way they are if he and his work were not the precedents.

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