Post Modernism
The Problem Child
Ellie House
1970-1980's
Postmodernism
1970-1980s

“Postmodern design, on the other hand, is often subjective and even eccentric,”
-Philip B. Meggs’

Attributes associated with postmodernism:
- fragmented
- uncohesive
- dramatic
- lacking depth
- controversial
Break from Modernism

Earlier designers based their work around simplicity, precision, and adherence to authority.

Instead postmodernism would be the complete opposite of previous design
- attempted to dissolve the boundaries that existed between high culture and pop culture
- a reaction to the rigid and strict rules of modernism

Influential Designers:
Paula Scher    Michael Vanderbyl
Terry Jones    Jamie Reid
Edward Fella   April Greiman
Tibor Kalman   Neville Brody
Wolfgang Weingart

“Kunstkredit”

1977
Made of pieces of film layered to a film base, then transferred to a litho printing plate.

Weingart is highly acclaimed for his use of typography and his experimental works. His technique in the darkroom and the process of which he composed many other posters play on the viewer’s emotions.

Source: http://www.aiga.org/medalist-wolf-gang-weingart/
The use of manual and electric typewriters, photocopying, stencils, rubber stamps, and computer lettering were all techniques that Jones experimented with. Jones used various techniques to achieve what he called ‘instant design’. This was how he described his fast paced, restless way of creating such great visuals.

Source: Nick Knight, featuring Lizzy Tear. Museum no. NAL.PP.22.J. Photograph © V&A Museum
April Greiman

WET Magazine Cover
1979
Collage and mixed media

Greiman is thought to be one of the more famous graphic designers at the start of the digital age. In this cover she takes inspiration from Surrealism, and incorporates it into the diverse collage format.

Source: Encyclopedia Britannica
Jamie Reid

God Save the Queen by the Sex Pistols
Virginia Records, UK, 1977
Mixed media, cut up strips of paper

Reid was a dominant figure in the movement of punk rock graphic design. He attempted to achieve what he called 'anti-design'. Many practicing graphic designers at the time viewed his work as distasteful & aesthetically unpleasing.

Source: http://www.jamiereid.org/archive/sex_pistols/god_save_the_queen.html
David Sterling & Jane Kosstrin

Fetish Magazine cover
1981

Computer based, Large format publication

These two designers were former students of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and cofounded the company DoubleSpace. The two Cranbrook alumni signified a shift in how text itself was being handled. The issues featured many controversial layouts such as slanted type, zebra patterns, and uncommon text blocking. Fetish, was seen to as a postmodern product aside from the graphics, because of the unconventionality and playfulness of it.

Source: http://designarchives.aiga.org
Michael Vanderbyl

“TEK3”
Vanderbyl Design, 1988
Poster for technotronic music project

Michael Vanderbyl was an influential member of a group of new wave designers located in California. He believed that postmodernism could grow without disrupting the existing conventions of design, as long as there was room for it to grow.

Source: http://designarchives.aiga.org
Initially this poster was created with the intent to represent one of the most well-known postmodern architects, Michael Graves. In its deviation from the classical Swiss style, Longhauser transformed his own work into a famous postmodern work. The overall handling of the typeface is playful and energetic, and his use of color communicates well.
Edward Fella

Exhibition poster, Detroit Focus Gallery 1987

Fella was enrolled as a student of the Cranbrook Academy of Art like designers mentioned in the past, but he would later deem the title of a 'self-titled, exit-level designer' (Gomez-Palacio 185). As a designer, Fella disregarded modernism's dreamland visions. Rather he would focus to go against rigid norms, and create with the intention of irregularity.

Source: http://edfella.com/images/resume/history/fella_history.pdf
Neville Brody

Album Cover for The Bongos “Zebra Club”
1982
Multiple mediums: painting, and printed cut outs

Brody was a well noticed designer in the 1980s who was said to help develop the ‘style culture’ at the time. (Poynor 151). His goal was to enhance the viewer’s thought process when looking at content. This is one of the few album covers that he would produce. This example showcased his individual approach to the new punk rock culture.

Source: http://heim.etherweave.com
Paula Scher

“The Diva is Dismissed” Public Theatre
1994
Printed on silkscreen

Though some academics say that postmodernism was over by the 1990s, this poster can still be included in the movement. Her design which is obviously heavily influenced, if not directly taken from postmodernist construction. The opposing colors used & the slanted type are key characters of earlier works shown. This poster in particular is in the permanent collection at the MOMA in New York.

Source: http://www.fine-art.com/art-132291/paula-scher/public-theater-series


Outhouse, Michael E. “The Influence of the Postmodern Graphic Design genre on contemporary graphic design as analyzed in the context of generic participation.” Iowa State University, 2013. Journal.


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KomOqYU4Mw