

How to

[...]



On design
education

XVI Premio
Nazionale delle Arti

How to [...]
On design education



Corraini Edizioni

	Introduction	Jonathan Pierini	p. 6
Talks	Design for learning	with Danah Abdulla Mahmoud Keshavarz Jonathan Pierini	16
	Spaces and tools for design education + (PARA)SCHOOLS	with Matthias Görlich by Lena Mahr Markus Miessen	32 47
	Design education, research and profession	with Marco Ferrari Joseph Grima Vera Sacchetti	54
	Innovative and inclusive educational models	with Lisa Baumgarten Nicola Chemotti Nina Paim Silvia Sfligiotti	76
	Design education and contexts	with Patrick Lacey Alessandro Petti Marco Tortoioli Ricci	108
	Design history and design education	with Davide Fornari Ellen Lupton Leonardo Sonnoli	136
Photographs	From the event		161
Exhibitions	AA.VV.		202
	Rumore		224
	XVI Premio Nazionale delle arti		248

	Introduction		Jonathan Pierini
Talks	Design for learning	with	Danah Abdulla Mahmoud Keshavarz Jonathan Pierini
	Spaces and tools for design education + (PARA)SCHOOLS	with	Matthias Görlich by Lena Mahr Markus Miessen
	Design education, research and profession	with	Marco Ferrari Joseph Grima Vera Sacchetti
	Innovative and inclusive educational models	with	Lisa Baumgarten Nicola Chemotti Nina Paim Silvia Sfligiotti
	Design education and contexts	with	Patrick Lacey Alessandro Petti Marco Tortoioli Ricci

06 **Design history
and design education** with **Davide Fornari
Ellen Lupton
Leonardo Sonnoli**

Photographs From the event

Exhibitions A.A.VV.

Rumore

XVI Premio Nazionale delle arti

DF

Davide Fornari

is a full professor at ECAL / University of Art and Design Lausanne (HES-SO), where he has led the Research and Development sector since 2016. He is a member of the Federal Design Commission, which delivers the Swiss Design Awards. Among his publications: *Bianca e Blu. Monica Bolzoni*, with Régis Tosetti (Rizzoli International, New York 2019), *Swiss Graphic Design Histories* (Scheidegger & Spiess, Zurich 2021) and *Olivetti Identities. Spaces and Languages 1933-1983*, with Davide Turrini (Triest Verlag, Zurich 2022).

EL

Ellen Lupton

is a writer, curator, educator, and designer. Lupton is the Betty Cooke and William O. Steinmetz Design Chair at MICA (Maryland Institute College of Art) in Baltimore, where she has authored numerous books on design processes. She serves as a senior curator at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City. She received the AIGA Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement in 2007. She was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 2019.

LS

Leonardo Sonnoli

is an internationally renowned graphic designer,

01.10.22

12:00 am

01:02:29

founder - in 2017 - of Studio Leonardo Sonnoli. In 2011 and 2018 he was awarded the Compasso d'Oro (as well as two Special Mentions in the years 2001 and 2014). He has taught at RISD - Rhode Island School of Design (USA) and at the IUAV University of Venice; he currently teaches at the ISIA of Urbino. Member of the Alliance Graphique Internationale since 2001. He lives and works in Rimini, Italy.



Davide Fornari

DF Hi. We now start with the last panel of the last day. I am very grateful to Jonathan Pierini from ISIA Urbino for inviting us: myself, Davide Fornari, and two people I admire for different reasons, Ellen Lupton and Leonardo Sonnoli. Ellen is in the US: she woke up at an impossible hour, so I would like to give her the privilege of starting this panel.

Ellen is a designer, educator, writer, and curator. She's a curator at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Museum of Design in New York City, and an educator at the Maryland Institute College of Art. She was awarded an AIGA medal for her lifelong contributions to design discourse and for her publications. I only cite the one I know best, *Graphic Design. The New Basics*, which is now in its second edition. I would like to give her the floor and start with her contribution on how to expand the canon in the history of design.

Ellen Lupton

EL 00:01:25 Thank you. I prepared a video to show a few stories about how to expand the Canon history.

[video] Buongiorno, I'm Ellen Lupton. I've been teaching and writing about design history for over thirty years. More recently, I've been trying to expand the Canon. Historians are exploring established topics such as the Bauhaus and the history of printing from overlooked perspectives. Today I will share a few stories that stretch the Canon. These stories are from my two recent books, *Bauhaus Typography at 100* and *Extra Bold*. Thank you, Quinto Quarto for the beautiful Italian edition. The book is a collaboration with seven amazing co-authors. Part textbook and part comic book, manifesto, survival guide and self-help manual, *Extra Bold* is filled with voices and stories that don't appear in other books.

Part of the book is about history. Let's go to sixteenth-century Paris, the centre of the Global Printing Industry. This was a high-tech industry. Print required capital employees, a network for distributing books, knowledge of legal issues, and content knowledge. Women published over a thousand book titles in Paris in the sixteenth century. In London, women published only eighty-five books. Now, just what was it about French women that got them into the publishing industry? What was their secret to success? Here's how you could become a woman publisher in Paris.

1. You had to be the daughter of a printer.
2. You had to marry a printer.
3. You had to have babies
and
4. Your husband had to be dead.

Bambini. Why *Bambini*? A woman could only inherit her husband's business if she had children to support. Women without children were on their own. Yolande Bonhomme distributed books across Western Europe. She employed twenty-five workers and contracted work to other printers in Paris. We know this because her name is on her title-pages.

Now let's take a trip to the American colonies in the 1700s where widows with children could also inherit their husband's business. This story starts with Benjamin Franklin, a famous American politician and inventor. Ben learned to print from his brother James. James married Anne Smith. Anne and James had babies. And James died and thus Anne Smith became a printer known as the Widow Franklin.

She printed legal documents, novels, her own newspaper, and local gossip, which was very popular. This drawing shows Anne Franklin with her daughters who were typesetters. And her son who helped run the business. It is known that Anne Franklin owned a slave who worked in the print shop alongside her family.

Enslaved people in urban areas were often hired out to printing companies. William Wells Brown was born into slavery in Kentucky and hired out as a teenager to work for a newspaper publisher in St. Louis, working at the press. Brown learned to read and write through the process of sorting and setting type.

He also learned about the business of publishing. Brown later became a free man and a prominent novelist. A playwright and historian, like many Abolitionists, Brown was an active public speaker on the lecture circuit in the US and Europe. He carried printing plates in his luggage, which he used to publish his book in different locales. Abolitionists used photography and print for political communication and economic survival.

Let's take our final trip to the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus was not just a school, it was a myth and an idea. Let's open up the Bauhaus story. Many women and immigrants attended the Bauhaus where they struggled against bias.

Friedl Dicker-Brandeis went to the Bauhaus in 1919. She helped teach the basic course with Kandinsky and Klee. Dicker designed a series of letterpress print for the Utopia project, collaborating with Johannes Itten between 1943 and 1944. Dicker taught art to children in Theresienstadt's (Terezin) concentration camp ghetto. She was murdered in Auschwitz, Poland in 1944. Some of her students survived and founded the fields of art therapy and child psychology. Dicker saved thousands of her students' drawings. The drawings are preserved today in the Jewish Museum in Prague, Czech Republic.

Marcel Breuer was a Hungarian immigrant at the Bauhaus where he created the African chair with Gunsta Stölzl in 1921.

European museums collected African art. Scholar Denise Murrell shows how artists in the 1920s used African design elements to represent "quote, the anxiety dislocation and utopian fantasies of interwar German society".

There is no Bauhaus without African art. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy was a Hungarian immigrant. He brought Constructivism to the Bauhaus. Moholy-Nagy belonged to the Hungarian avant-garde group MA (Today). Moholy-Nagy collaborated with Lucia Moholy. He and other Bauhaus men underplayed her role. Lucia co-authored this famous book with her husband, but was never credited. Women followed a difficult path at the Bauhaus. *Extra Bold* includes this interactive story about Anni Albers, a Bauhaus designer. Anni Albers chose modern art over a bourgeois life. Women had to pay more tuition at the Bauhaus than men, but she decided to attend anyway. These choices require courage and compromise. Storytelling is my tool for expanding the canon. Let's all find more stories to tell. *Grazie*.

0 0 : 1 0 : 2 5

DF Thanks, Ellen. Thank you so much. I can only dream of being able to teach like this, I think. Have you seen the movie *Triangle of Sadness* that's out now? There's a hilarious scene where fashion models are taught to do the Balenciaga gaze or the H&M's gaze. So, everybody had the H&M's gaze while you were speaking, everybody was happy, while my students generally give me the Balenciaga gaze, meaning not very happy.

So, I would like to give the floor to Leonardo Sonnoli, who is a graphic designer teaching, of course, at ISIA Urbino. He previously taught at the Rhode Island School of Design as well as at IUAV University in Venice. He is an AGI member, and I think you all know him.

Leonardo Sonnoli

LS 00:11:50 The basic thesis we are discussing is how important history is for designing, for design itself. And then, there is this thing, and I must apologize again, also because this brief overview is very personal and autobiographical, but it's the only way, being a designer as well as a teacher, to narrate and explain how important history is. Three themes that could be discussed are interconnected, linked to history. Historically, Italian schools like ISIA, but all schools, let's say secondary schools, are bound to this idea of doing rather than thinking. This emerges powerfully in an essay written by Anty Pansera, specifically on the history of design education in Italy, which is very interesting, and this is something we have carried with us for a century.

One thing concerning history is the issue of the history of university-standard schools in Italy, which has produced too many schools, lacking a level of professionalism on a par with the number of schools created. This has led to a large quantity that doesn't always mean the same as quality; that is, the quality of teaching in Italy is lower compared to other countries precisely because it matches the quality of professionalism.

And one last thing, closely related to the first point, is that to change things a little bit, a knowledge of history is certainly important at this moment when there is a kind of 'dictatorship of the algorithm' rather than, precisely, the knowledge of important texts. I have always been passionate about history ever since I started school, in the school where I studied. There is this silly representation of me sitting on Mayakovsky's real chair which represents a bit — it really is Mayakovsky's chair, the one in Rodchenko's house — represents a little bit the fact of going to look for things directly, of actually going to the archives, to Rodchenko's house, trying to speak with his grandson, and so on and so forth.

And this was indeed a passion that served me a lot. And as a student, I immediately began to be interested in these things, and even though I remember very well, probably Marco ^[Tortoioli Ricci], who was in class with me, will remember the lessons of Professor Gavinelli who made us read Liotard, the Postmodern, etc., in a context that was absolutely not even modern, so we absolutely couldn't even understand what Postmodernism was. Instead, as a student at that time (it was the first half of the 1980s), the things I looked at and that excited me were some graphic designers that I prefer to define as ultramodern rather than Postmodern.

Among these, just to mention a few, but some who publicly denounced the fact that their references lay in the European avant-gardes of the twentieth century, were Neville Brody and Paula Scher. The latter, obviously, being American, and therefore having a different background, went from Russian Constructivism to Pop Art, as we can see in some works dating from the same period, the early 1980s, rather than using irony, such the famous advert which reused Matter's historical posters from Switzerland to advertise Swatch watches. Interpreting history lightly, or even resorting to plagiarism. Peter Saville takes things from Depero and reproduces them without citing Depero. Among other things, in the first editions of the New Order records, Depero isn't cited; he is cited later in the colophon in subsequent editions.

And based on all of this, as you seen, they are all Anglo-centric examples — as Ellen Lupton's intervention shows us — the bibliography and history are Anglo-centric, dictated by the English and by Americans for obvious editorial reasons, and on which we are very dependent. At the time, certainly, credit is due to Herbert

Spencer, who influenced with his publications generations passing through the Royal College especially, but then also crossing the ocean, and they showed who the pioneers of the avant-gardes were, how they worked especially with typography. I was fortunate, while studying in Urbino, to meet, to have as a mentor, not here in Urbino, but actually in Trieste, where I was like a slave of typography, the graphic studio of Pierpaolo Vetta. Pierpaolo was one of the best Italian graphic designers of the generation born in the 1950s, and has been somewhat forgotten, also because he died too young. Pierpaolo taught me not only how to use history, and he used it very well, but also the fact that history was right around the corner. It wasn't necessary to go see the Russians rather than De Stijl, or others. But we had roots, I'm talking not only about Italian roots, but about local roots, being from Trieste like Pierpaolo, we had things to look up to, because there were people, like Depero, in this case, who had truly invented an aesthetic language that had not existed until then.

Trieste, so just around the corner, Trieste was the city where great graphic designers from other places had passed through, like Xanti Schawinsky, because there was Illy coffee, rather than Carmelich, who was one of only three Italians to have attended the Bauhaus, which, by the way, has nothing to do with African art. There was August Cernigoi, Slovenian, among other things, and therefore with very, very different roots. Below, there are proto-Futurists like Carmelich, and the photography of Wanda Wulz, a very young photographer who was linked to the Futurism of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia and generally to the Futurist movement. There are some works by Pierpaolo, they're from the 1980s, late 1970s, early 1980s, where Depero's influence is evident, but rendered in an extremely contemporary way. There's already the idea of redesigning the characters, and we're talking about the late 1970s, so the same period as Brody or Paula Scher; all things done with tempera and a ruler, and so on.

This encounter with Pierpaolo and the fact of working in Trieste, led me to write my thesis here at ISIA on an unpublished poster designer from Trieste, named Urbano Corva, who was certainly influenced by Art Deco, by Dudovic among others, but who had then been greatly influenced by Futurism as well. There are two series of postcards, one of Rome, one of Trieste, with extremely synthetic illustrations, where echoes of Futurism can be seen in the shapes and colours. He also designed a series that was never published about Venice, of which I managed to find the tempera sketches.

And here on Venice, there are things like reflections in the water, such as this reflected bridge, the distorted buildings near Rialto, etc., which are clearly influenced by Depero.

At the time — the thesis is from the early 1990s, with the first

edition of *Photographer* that was released, I designed a dreadful typeface which I called *Corva*.

This was a way of trying to come to terms with the past. And this thing, fast forward — I don't want to say how many years later, precisely, the school experience, arriving to the present day — is what I find myself still doing now: engaging in a conversation with the past.

An exhibition was held at the MAXXI Museum in Rome on the occasion of the reopening of Casa Balla to visitors. A house whose interiors were completely designed by Balla, completely decorated, and a small exhibition held at MAXXI with works by Balla, where eight designers and artists were asked to enter into dialogue with his work.

Balla, who is best known for his attempt to reproduce light beyond movement and, above all, this post-Divisionist part of his, or still with Divisionist echoes. He, as everyone knows, enters the Futurist movement very old. I want to mention two paintings in particular: *Dinamismo di un cane al guinzaglio* and *Lampada ad arco*; I focus mainly on the second one, which is owned by the MoMA, because when in the post-war period—and this is also a link with history, with the reproduction of history, what to do with our past—when in Italy, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Balla is considered a fascist, like all those who in some way had participated in the Futurist movement, even if then it was difficult to discern, the MoMA would buy these works because it understood their importance that have nothing to do with the political period in which they were produced.

Balla's house. The entrance is into a neighbourhood that was actually a very popular neighbourhood. A very normal block of flats. Now the house is tidied up a bit. All decorated. The floors and walls continue the design of the oils on canvas that are above. An idea, as the Balla manifesto says, of a futuristic reconstruction of the universe. I became interested in Balla when the MAXXI reached out to me. I went back to see all of his works, to re-read the things related to his use of words and typography.

And also particularly interesting is his approach to poetry. All the Futurists, even those farthest from literature, like Balla, far-removed from the idea of making poetry, but actually a painter, also dabbled in poetry, because poetry was an integral part of the Futurist movement and a part of the way of doing Futurism to some extent. It's interesting to see his poems because Balla didn't use typography, he used calligraphy to compose the words, and this completely set him apart from all the other Futurists, like Depero, fascinated by the machine, mechanical reproduction, etc. There is one which is the story of someone climbing stairs, half drunk, in the dark looking for the keyhole to put in the key, unable

to insert it, etc. It's all told in this graphic way, with onomatopoeia. Because in fact, he was as interested in light in painting as he was in sound in poetry.

And so what did he do? He painted sounds. In fact, it's a sound painting, and you can even hear it.

[audio reproduction] So when the tone changes, the sign changes. He truly paints sounds.

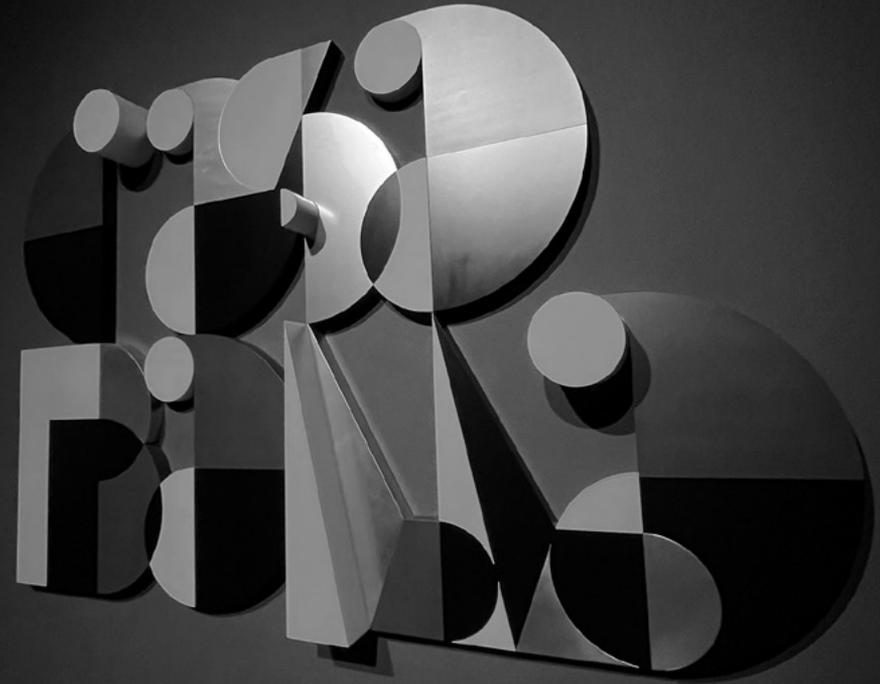
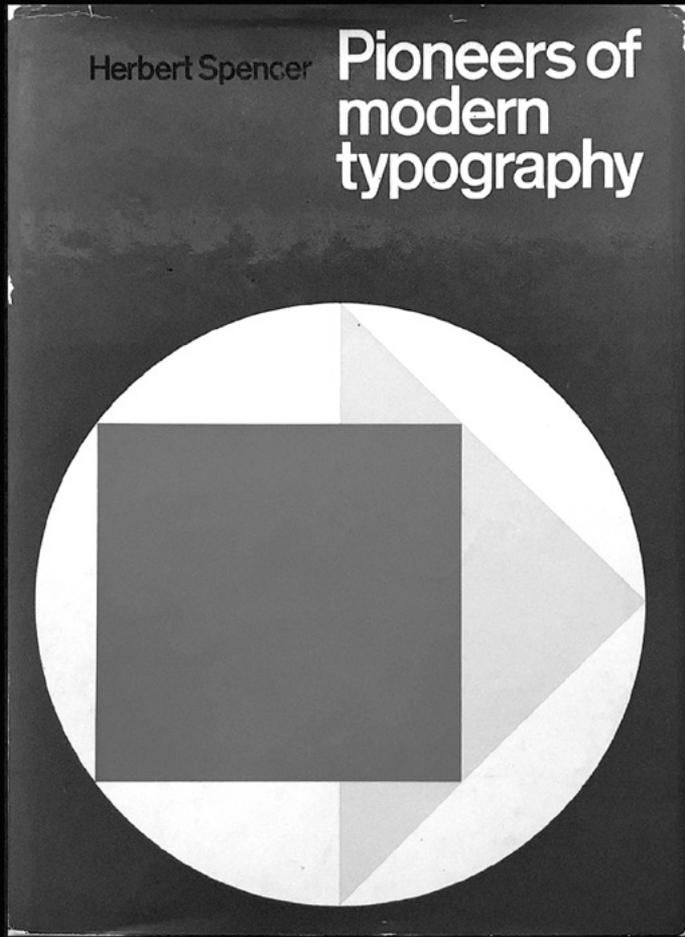
I found a manifesto for one of his exhibitions that I want to present to my students this year, to show that when he designs logos, as in this case for a magazine, it's often painterly as well, rarely like the one that is sort of typographic.

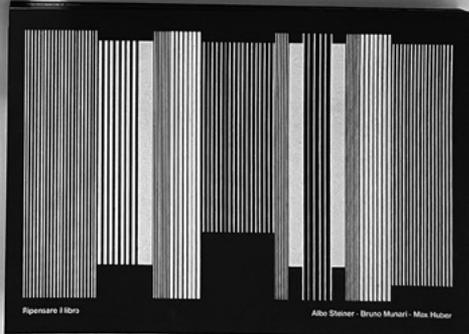
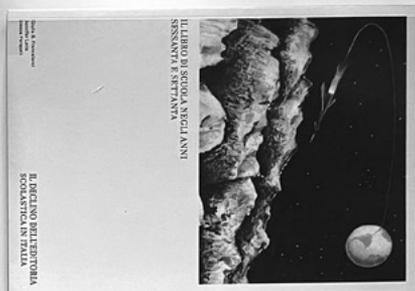
And when he sketches for *Baltictac*, this sort of nightclub that opened in Rome, he makes dancing letters. I found a sketch in an envelope inside the house, with this drawing of the toilet sign for *Baltictac* which is absolutely illegible. It's not very functional for indicating a toilet. But what interests him is really taking letters, words, and creating shapes. And one of Balla's masterpieces, by a Balla that we hardly know, in my opinion, it's called *Motif with the word don't say it* (*Motivo con la parola non dirlo*).

And this is truly ingenious. Why? Because you can't say it. Here it says don't say it, but you can't say it because you can't read it. And so, there's this idea of playing with the possibility of subverting the linguistic code. There is another painting called *The spell is broken* (*Si è rotto l'incanto*), in which the word 'spell' is in fact broken. Once again, wordplays that become paintings.

As Giovanni Lista wrote and can say better than me, Balla deepens the structural dynamics and communicative processes. He tries to understand how the process of verbal communication works and tries to subvert it, to transgress it by making words illegible, and causing the communication process to fail. Words detach themselves from the object. They no longer define the object, becoming material to be shaped. This is why he works with numbers: because numbers have no meaning compared to words.

MAXXI designed the exhibition this way: on the walls and in the middle, some objects on the walls from Balla's drawings; then there was this table designed by Patricia Urquiola, one of the eight guests invited to converse with Balla through their work. I had placed a typographic sculpture at the entrance, made by breaking down the letters "Balla's house" (*casa Balla*), and a series of small animations that were projected onto the wall, in a single video installation. They were all based on movement and light, playing with that light and those colours that Balla worked with in his paintings. The words chosen for the installations were "tic-tac", which refers to *Baltictac*, "don't say it," "modifying" (*modificante*), "universe" (*universo*)—all words that he used. "Modifying" were objects that he attached to clothes, modifying the clothes...





In addition to the video installations, I made five posters. They were related to Balla's works, specifically conceived to be taken, thus ideally giving movement to these words that were taken away. A former student of mine sent me a photo saying "I went to see the exhibition, then I went to a pizzeria and found the poster hanging there", probably to cover up some hole, some damp patch: this too is a very Futurist type of gesture. From this intervention, carpets were then created, made together with a craftsman from Sardinia, with the idea of a futuristic reconstruction design of the universe, a work as an environment. A few weeks after the exhibition, I found one poster in Fano, with the words "nice story" (bella storia) that recalls the work I've done for the exhibition at MAXXI, but totally out of context. It seems very interesting to me, you can do as I do, go study the history, etc., but you can also do it like this. To conclude, a quick mention of the course I teach here at ISIA. It's a course in publishing design, so we design books, but these books always have contents related to art history, graphic history, because it should be an incentive for students to design something related to what they have to study. The goal is to study the contents and try to understand how to transform what they learn into the contemporary. These are just some examples. Thank you.

- Images
- p. 146
Herbert Spencer, *Pioneers of modern typography*, Londra: Lund Humphries, 1969. prima edizione.
 - p. 147
Leonardo Sonnoli, "Casa Balla", Plexiglas verniciato, Installazione al Maxxi di Roma, 16 giugno 2021
 - p. 148
Alcuni volumi progettati nel corso di "Progettazione per l'editoria" all'ISIA di Urbino tenuto da Leonardo Sonnoli e Irene Bacchi

DF 0 0 : 3 2 : 3 3
Grazie Leonardo. I didn't introduce myself: I work at ECAL University of Art Design in Lausanne, where I lead the Applied Research and Development sector, which means I work on research projects, with a cross-disciplinary approach to all disciplines imparted at the school, including cinema, visual arts, type design, photography, visual communication, product design. I also have the privilege of teaching a course at Design Academy Eindhoven, called "Design Stories" within the Invisible Studio held by Mario Minale. At ECAL I have been working on projects on product design and

graphic design history that were trying to expand the canon away from a rather long-lasting tradition of Swiss German-speaking male designers living between Zurich and Basel, who had become successful between the 1950s and the 1970s and had written histories of graphic design where their work was seen as the clear destination of graphic design. And this, of course, was quite problematic because it tended to overlook everybody else except them, and it tended to overlook the other half of the sky, as Sarah Owens described women graphic designers, during the AGI Open Conference in Basel, where she was invited to talk about women in graphic design and why they had been overlooked.

Of course, there's still a lot of work to do in this sense. The project I worked on is called *Swiss Graphic Design and Typography Revisited*. Why does it need to be revisited? Because the canon has probably been quite narrow-minded so far. It has completely overlooked so-called minor scenes, as far as they are not a part of the majority of the Swiss German-speaking areas. In terms of surface or population, Switzerland is as big as the Chicago metropolitan area or as Lombardy. Yet it has been having quite an impact worldwide, for reasons you might or might not agree with.

I would've wanted to start this conversation by talking about a very mysterious poster, because Leonardo and I both wrote about it, but we decided to skip that plan, out of respect for the shock that Italian people might have had last Monday ^[after the elections]. We are talking about the poster for the fascist plebiscite of 1934, which was designed by Xanti Schawinsky. Why is it mysterious? Because the designer is Swiss-Polish, of Jewish descent, and had previously been summoned by the Nazi police in 1933 as Adolf Hitler rose to power, and he decided to flee Germany for Italy.

Schawinsky found himself working for high profile clients, including Illy in Trieste or Olivetti, but also for a magazine that was the expression of the fascist party, such as *La rivista illustrata del popolo d'Italia* for which he designed the poster, but we're not going to talk about it, yet it's an interesting case because it's not an overlooked artefact. It's been published in many catalogues, it's part of the canon, but at the same time, the history behind it is really unwritten. It's just that in most cases, as Leonardo said, in Italy there is, let's say not a complete lack, but somehow a lack of publications that are critical about the history of graphic design.

So, generally when people present visual artifacts — and that might resonate for some of the members of the audience — when they talk about these kinds of posters, they describe them as “una composizione molto forte”, a very strong composition. Once I asked Giovanni Anceschi why they always say “it's a strong composition”, and he told me: “Because it has to hit you in the face like a fist”. Okay, so basically these posters have only been judged for

their visual effects, and without understanding why that poster had been designed in that way.

For the 1934 poster by Schawinsky, I had to travel to Berlin to read his diaries, which are unpublished as of today. I had to read the exchanges of letters between Schawinsky and other graphic designers after World War II. I had to interview people who told me that somebody had told them that Xanti was a fascist. So, we went on for four years working on that poster and on a wider understanding of those three years (1933-1936), in which Schawinsky worked in Italy, which are seen as crucial, also because the literature tends to describe the Italian context as a nation that was waiting for foreign people to tell them how to design. This has been the line behind many histories of graphic design. And I often read it in papers that I have to review. It mostly sounds like Italy was an isolated country, where foreigners had brought some modern graphic design. Well, let's see, let's make a comparative history of other countries and see whether or not they were also isolated.

But anyway, my question to the audience is as follows: there are many ways to use history and you could also question if you have to learn or teach history in a school of design. In Swiss schools, it's quite a recent issue. In 2015 a design journalist surveyed the status of design history within design schools. She had been reviewing all the design schools in Switzerland asking “somebody is teaching history of design in your schools, and what for?”. And some schools just plainly didn't have a course of history of design. I used to teach at the University of Applied Arts in Southern Switzerland, which was in Lugano back then, and after I left in 2017, substantially the course was discontinued. So now they are trying to bring it back as an optional and not a mandatory course because it was apparently a shock to have to read Steinberg's *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, which I had already highlighted, so the students had very little to do besides reading.

But so why and how much history of graphic design do you need? Because in the end, today we've been discussing who makes the school? Who owns the school? Personally, I was trained as an architect, just like Marco Ferrari, and I share the experience that he had: in that kind of school, you had to somehow be selfless. You were one of 600, you had to get to the end. There were mandatory courses on the history of architecture, and you could choose among several teachers. The first course covered the period from the caves to the skyscrapers. The second was a monographic course on modern architecture, from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth century; and then the third one was on contemporary architecture, the twentieth century.

And in architecture, it's really mandatory to study the history of the discipline. I also spent one year in Barcelona at the Polytechnic,

where most of the optional courses dealt with the history of arts, of graphic design, of design or architecture. So how much do you want to know about graphic design history? Because you can, on the one hand, as Leonardo said, scroll through tags on Instagram or on Google images, if you need references. You don't really have to read the diary of a person who died forty-three years ago to understand why he worked for a client that should instead have been his worst enemy. So how much do you want to know? Because on the other hand, you have a tendency towards academization, which means that, and I most likely would prefer to avoid that, you write very exhaustive papers on anything that probably 1.5 persons will read by the time that paper is available. So, what is your experience with design history? How much do you need it? Do you need it more? What do you need it for?

0 0 : 4 2 : 2 8
 Q1 Hi. I was thinking about what you said about the tags and the references. You can have them, like the visual reference, but most of the time I find that designers make statements and maybe we need to know what's behind these statements, the process behind them, so that we don't repeat them like in a void way.

0 0 : 4 3 : 1 5
 DF Manfredo Tafuri, who was a prominent architectural historian with a clear Marxist background, said that in the end, history is understanding if the words we use today had the same meaning when they were used in the past. So, what does being a nomadic practitioner mean today, and what did it mean in the 1930s? What is propaganda today and what was in the thirties? What did it mean to be a refugee designer? Like how would a graphic designer call himself or herself in the 1930s? And how would you call yourself today? Would you be a designer of advertisements which translates 'Werbegestalter' in German, a word that defined the epitome of the avant-garde? Would you be an advertisement designer today? No, of course not. So, somehow you need history to relate to the past and to understand it better, beyond the strength of the composition, which has to hit you in the face.

0 0 : 4 4 : 1 0
 Q1 One more thing. I think that a lot of my classmates, we didn't study anything about design in secondary school or in the previous courses we had. And so it's very interesting every time we can discuss it because we didn't do anything here in Italy, we focused on art history and that's all. So, I think we need it.

0 0 : 4 4 : 3 9
 DF In other countries, it's a clear no. And then you have practitioners who at 50 y.o. write a book on Josef Müller-Brockmann, because they've just discovered his work — it's a real story. Other experiences from other schools?

0 0 : 4 5 : 0 5
 Q2 From my experience, I had the opportunity to really approach design and graphic design history as very self-made. Closer to study it and to really investigate what I was really interested in because I think in a way we are very often driven to develop a personal style or to learn to domesticate some codes and I think now as everything goes a lot with trends and everything and the forms, the visual forms are not linked to the process of printing, silk-screen printing or anything anymore. I think it's really important to understand deeply which image you are manipulating, because if you don't, you're not really conscious about what you're saying, what you're visually saying, and I think it's super important to really question the main graphic design standards nowadays, because I think that most of society is questioning a lot of norms, and you don't see that yet in the design education field, like we're still sticking to very standard Switzerland- or just Europe-based graphic design.
 And I think it doesn't really reflect the changes that are actually happening in our society.
 You have to really consider that all these shapes are linked to power, to a way to design, which is really, for me, close to standards, close to power in a way. And I think you really realize it by studying.

0 0 : 4 6 : 5 9
 DF Questions for Ellen, or Ellen: would you like to jump in?

0 0 : 4 7 : 0 2
 EL Yeah, I think the point about power is really beautiful because understanding why graphic design is made, who makes it, who's allowed to make it, is a really important part of the history of our profession. And if today we are going to open up the field and question these norms, as is happening across society, then we have to understand why it was so limited before.

0 0 : 4 8 : 2 8
 DF True: good question. In a way, curricula have been set up, and I think for a very long time schools have been replicating successful curricula, or curricula that were deemed successful. I think of the Basel School

of Design, which in a way was taken as an example for schools in the US, or previously the Bauhaus. While listening to the conversations earlier today, I was thinking about this: let's look into a case study from the past, let's look at Ulm and how the school collapsed when the political power decided to stop backing it financially. And we were talking about the precariousness of vocational schools or schools of design. We were talking about how it's urgent to change them, but at the same time, there is a set legal framework. We were talking about schools of design as if they were separate planets that don't have to respond to a legal framework, that don't have to be backed up by the political power. For example, I think of Jonathan ^[Pierini] who probably has to provide for or find a budget, somehow talk to the Ministry of Education and its representatives. So, all these things which seem totally normal in business, because we don't see the back office of schools, might sometimes collapse, which is what happened when the state of Baden-Württemberg decided to stop financing the HfG Ulm, and the school had to terminate its activities. And we often don't think about these aspects. We see the urge for the change, but we don't see how to enact this change. Of course, we have the clear case of the Bauhaus, but I'm just hoping this will never happen again: that a political power simply shuts down the school for ideological reasons. Yet, looking at history should rather provide a way to compare your reality to the past as well, beyond understanding the profession.

LS

0 0 : 5 0 : 4 8

By the way, the Ulm School collapsed not just for economic reasons, that's what we know, but probably because an experience ended, and we know that the students of the Ulm school very rarely became very-high-level designers and artists. There are a few of them, like the Bauhaus for example.

I am careful not to involve this political issue in the way design is taught, they are completely different things. Of course it depend one by another one, but for example, in Italy we have a lot of private schools that have a completely different problem. And this is about the school.

Maybe I'm not so original, but I'm more interested in how to teach. And the answer to this question is: I figure out that my students in a couple of years will become, what? Will become professionals? And for this reason, I change my teaching. And I'm very critical about these kinds of courses that are very far from professional things. Because we have to work on the average level of the students, probably among the students that we have. Only a few of them will also become artists. There are a few of my former students here at the ISIA; one, for example, my student is now at the Venice Biennale, in the main exhibition of the Venice Biennale.

But this rarely happens. We have to work on the average level of the students thinking that these students will become normal professionals, normal graphic designers. There's nothing bad about that. You can be a very good graphic designer or medium level graphic designer. I don't know.

And I think that to do this, I think that the knowledge of history is a very strong tool for them to develop their skills also when they finish school, because the problem of the school is that here they are focused too much on Instagram, form, and not the contents.

So, after the school, what remains for them? I think that to have a very deep culture not only in design, the history of design, but also in art history because everything is connected, the history of architecture and so on. To become a very scholarly person, it's very useful to continue to work, because we know, something I must tell you and the students — the life of a graphic designer is very short. I am at the age — and you are too ^[referring to Marco Tortoioli Ricci] — when we are completely finished, we have nothing to say. It's twenty years more or less. So, it can be between twenty-five and forty-five, so you can produce something really interesting. I mentioned Neville Brody before, for example. Neville Brody is really a masterpiece, a master in graphic design history.

It's something that you really have to know. After that experience in the 1980s, Neville Brody disappeared, because he didn't produce something new, something as strong as the things he did in the 1980s.

Paula Scher, for example, is completely different, because she was working for the music industry. Now she continues to produce interesting things. So, we change a lot, but for sure graphic design is connected with the things we experience every day. We usually produce a book or a poster in a few days or a few months.

And we are compared to architects, we have a very short life. We die in a very short time. There are many famous architects who are in their eighties. It isn't the same for graphic designers. And I think that, as Massimo Vignelli says — he is another example of a very long-lasting designer — that it's very important to design something to be able to last.

And you can only do it with a very good knowledge of history. I know very well that there are many very good graphic designers that know nothing about the history of design, and are still true masters, in my opinion. But they are very talented.

You, as a student, you don't know now whether you're talented and whether you should study the history of graphic design better. Go deep into things as Davide said, but don't forget that the poster by Schawinsky is a very high piece of design.

0 0 : 5 8 : 2 9
EL But you know, I think we could debate that and that some people might say that the poster by Schawinsky shouldn't be shown because of its politics.

0 0 : 5 8 : 3 9
LS It's forbidden now in Italy.

0 0 : 5 8 : 4 3
EL I know. I'm sorry about that.

0 0 : 5 8 : 4 3
DF It's a bit of a sensitive issue right now. And it would need further contextual information.

0 0 : 5 8 : 5 0
LS But the, what, what Davide said, it's very interesting because, for example, when I show the few things that I found during my research of the thesis, all these kinds of things that belong to the 1930s, I found them in little shops, in Trieste, specialized in fascism.

And I was considered a fascist because I was interested in those kinds of things. For example, a very high design piece that I found in this kind of shop was the catalogue of the exhibition for the tenth anniversary of the fascist revolution exhibition. I don't care, I come from — my mother was a *Staffetta Partigiana* — I come from a very left-wing family, but this is not a problem. When we judge history we have to judge people as well. And when we find ourselves before a masterpiece, we mustn't care whether it is fascist.

0 1 : 0 0 : 1 1
DF We have to study.

0 1 : 0 0 : 1 9
EL So, you don't think that's part of the work, the politics of it. I mean, I have students who say, why do we study futurism when it was anti-feminist and pro-violent and pro-fascism? And I think that's a question that has to be discussed.

0 1 : 0 0 : 3 7
DF We would need an entire conference on this matter! I don't know if you had the chance to visit the exhibition *Post Zang Tumb Tuuum. Art Life Politics, Italy 1918-1943*, which was curated by Germano Celant at Fondazione Prada in Milan, and designed by 2x4. It raised a large debate because in a way it took original pictures of

artworks in the context of exhibitions where they were shown for the first time, they enlarged the images up to real scale and they hung the real paintings on them.

So, one had the chance to see paintings by artists that after World War II were included in the canon of Italian art history, and to see them in the context of exhibitions held during fascism. And of course, this triggered a great deal of debate: some newspapers and magazines refused to review the exhibition based on the fact that it seemed to suggest an apology of fascism. This is an ongoing debate in Italy.

I wanted to thank Ellen Lupton for being with us today from afar, and Leonardo as well: thank you.

How to [...] On design education
XVI Premio Nazionale delle Arti

A cura di / Curated by Jonathan Pierini
con / with Giuseppe-Roberto Biagetti
and Marco Tortoioli Ricci

Promosso da / promoted by: Direzione
Generale degli ordinamenti, della formazione
superiore e del diritto allo studio del Ministero
dell'Università e della ricerca, coordinato
e attuato per l'edizione 2022 da ISIA Istituto
Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche di Urbino

Con il patrocinio di / under the patronage of:
Regione Marche, Provincia di Pesaro e Urbino,
Comune di Urbino, Comunità Montana Alto
e Medio Metauro, AIAP Associazione Italiana
Design della Comunicazione Visiva,
AGI Alliance Graphique Internationale

Book design
Team comunicazione 22/23
Tutor: Silvia Benvenuti, Francesco Bellagamba
Sudenti / Students: Matteo Beda, Roberta
Antinolfi, Silvia Cannella, Carlo Schlatter,
Lorenzo Urgesi
Supervision: Jonathan Pierini

© 2024 Maurizio Corraini s.r.l.
Tutti i diritti riservati alla Maurizio Corraini s.r.l.
All rights reserved by Maurizio Corraini s.r.l.

Nessuna parte di questo libro può essere
riprodotta o trasmessa in nessuna forma e con
nessun mezzo (elettronico o meccanico, inclusi
la fotocopia, la registrazione od ogni altro mezzo
di ripresa delle informazioni) senza il permesso
scritto dell'editore.

No part of this book may be reproduced or
transmitted in any form or by any means
(electronic or mechanical, including
photocopying, recording or any information
retrieval system) without permission in writing
from the publisher.

Testi di / Texts by: Danah Abdulla,
Lisa Baumgarten, Nicola Chemotti, Marco
Ferrari, Davide Fornari, Matthias Görlich,
Joseph Grima, Mahmoud Keshavarz,
Patrick Lacey, Ellen Lupton, Lena Mahr,
Markus Miessen, Nina Paim, Silvia Sfligiotti,
Alessandro Petti, Jonathan Pierini,
Marco Tortoioli Ricci, Vera Sacchetti,
Leonardo Sonnoli

Traduzioni di / Translations by: Sylvia Notini

Fotografie di / Photographs by:
Luca Padovani (pp. 161-171, 174-198)
Marco Gennari (pp. 172-173)

L'editore è a disposizione degli eventuali aventi
diritto per le fonti non individuate.
The publisher will be at complete disposal to
whom might be related to the unidentified
sources printed in this book.

Illustrazioni di / Illustrations by:
Chiara Di Luca (pp. 256, 272, 336)
Elio Ferrario (pp. 314, 316, 360, 362)
Paolo Gentili (pp. 292, 296, 304, 324)

Typeface: Omega by Antonio D'Elisiis

Stampato in Italia da Printed in Italy by
, Mantova
febbraio February 2023

Maurizio Corraini s.r.l.
Via Ippolito Nievo, 7/A
46100 Mantova
Tel. 0039 0376 322753
Fax 0039 0376 365566
e-mail: info@corraini.com
www.corraini.com

Discover more on:



ISIA U

Danah Abdulla
Mahmoud Keshavarz
Jonathan Pierini



Matthias Görlich
Lena Mahr
Markus Miessen



Marco Ferrari
Joseph Grima
Vera Sacchetti

Lisa Baumgarten
Nicola Chemotti
Nina Paim
Silvia Sfligiotti



Patrick Lacey
Alessandro Petti
Marco Tortoioli Ricci



Davide Fornari
Ellen Lupton
Leonardo Sonnoli



€ 25.00



9 791254 931059