

Rochester Institute of Technology

**RIT Digital Institutional Repository**

---

Theses

---

2006

## **The Work of Fred Troller: An Evaluative Study of a Graphic Designer**

Tara Markert

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.rit.edu/theses>

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Markert, Tara, "The Work of Fred Troller: An Evaluative Study of a Graphic Designer" (2006). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the RIT Libraries. For more information, please contact [repository@rit.edu](mailto:repository@rit.edu).

---

# **The Work of Fred Troller**

**An Evaluative Study of a Graphic Designer**

A thesis submitted to the Faculty  
of the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences  
in candidacy for the Master of Fine Arts Degree

Tara Markert  
Graduate Graphic Design MFA Program  
School of Design  
College of Imaging Arts and Sciences  
Rochester Institute of Technology

23 May 2006

---

**Approvals**

Chief Advisor  
Bruce Ian Meader

Bruce Ian Meader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Associate Advisor  
David Pankow

David Pankow

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Associate Advisor  
R. Roger Remington

R Roger Remington

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

School of Design Chairperson  
Patti J. Lachance

Patti J Lachance

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Author  
Tara Markert

Tara Markert

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I hereby grant permission to the RIT Wallace Memorial Library to reproduce my thesis in whole or part. Any reproduction will not be for commercial use or profit.

Tara Markert  
23 May 2006

---

## Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to each of my committee members. Roger Remington, David Pankow and Bruce Meader, your wisdom and guidance throughout the year were indispensable. I would like thank Kari Horowicz for including me on the fateful trip to Fred Troller's studio which provided the foundation for my thesis. A special thanks to my family, immediate and extended, for your patience and encouragement. Justin, I am grateful for your light and your humor.

---

## Contents

<b>1</b>	Thesis Project Definition
<b>2</b>	Precedents
<b>5</b>	Research
<b>13</b>	Synthesis
<b>18</b>	Ideation
<b>25</b>	Implementation
<b>32</b>	Dissemination
<b>38</b>	Retrospective Evaluation
<b>40</b>	Conclusion
<b>41</b>	Glossary
<b>42</b>	Bibliography
<b>44</b>	Appendices
	A Steff Geissbuhler Interview
	B Fred Troller Lecture at RIT
	C Intermediate Evaluation

## Introduction

This thesis will provide a process to help graphic design scholars and historians conduct an evaluation of a designer whose work has been rarely documented within a specific design style. Through implementation of this model of research and evaluation, graphic design scholars will not only be able to identify that designer's philosophy and personal style, they will also recognize the value of studying within a specific style of graphic design. This evaluation process includes placing the work of the rarely documented designer beside the work of pioneers in this stylistic idiom in order to highlight similarities of thought, process, form and implementation.

The opportunity to do this recently arose with the donation of Swiss designer Fred Troller's personal collection for inclusion in the Graphic Design Archive at Rochester Institute of Technology. Fred Troller's work has remained largely undocumented. His work enables this thesis to determine a model by which the work of any rarely documented designer can be placed within an historical context. RIT holds sufficient comparable work within the Graphic Design Archive so that Troller's work can be substantiated as an integral component of Swiss design, which was known for its strict use of mathematical grids, objectivity, and asymmetrical sans serif typography (flush left, ragged right).

The evaluation process this thesis provides will enable the design scholar or historian to better understand an established design idiom. As a consequence, this knowledge can be appropriately applied to a design solution, rather than merely mimicking certain visual elements.

For the purpose of this thesis, a Swiss 'tool kit' is a metaphor for the design characteristics that must be learned before the designer can explore the characteristics to capture the style of a certain movement. Within this figurative tool kit, a lexicon of Swiss design characteristics can be found. After gaining a better understanding of each syntactical term in the tool kit, the characteristics may be used to enrich the possibilities for solving current graphic design problems.

### Josef Müller-Brockmann

Swiss graphic designer Josef Müller-Brockmann was born in 1914. He began practicing graphic design in the 1930s. After nearly 20 years of practice with illustrative and sometimes humorous design work, he became convinced that graphic design must be objective and informative. (Müller, p 26)

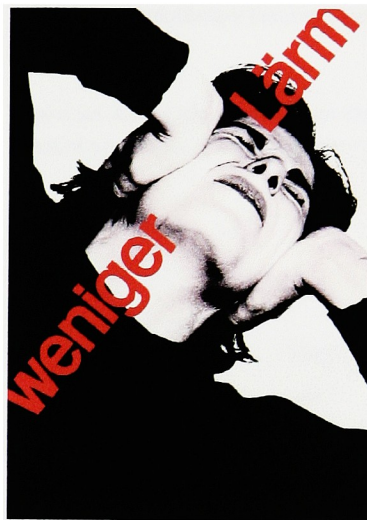
In 1957, he was appointed graphic design professor at the Zurich School of Design, where he influenced Fred Troller, among others. Müller-Brockmann also taught at the Ulm Hochschule für Gestaltung in 1963.

Josef Müller-Brockmann is a key figure in the Swiss design movement.

The book *Josef Müller-Brockmann: A Pioneer of Swiss Graphic Design* by Lars Müller-Brockmann and Paul Rand sheds light on his lengthy and soul-searching education, during which his philosophy of graphic design as a medium of objective communication was formed. For the purpose of this thesis, Müller-Brockmann serves as the principal advocate of the Swiss design movement as we understand it today. His work is symbolic of the efforts toward bringing the standards of objective design to fruition.

The posters below are among Müller-Brockmann's most renowned works.

Each one exemplified his social awareness, as well as his use of imagery to relate a message with clarity. His use of bold photography gives the viewer an almost immediate understanding of the feeling of the message. Minimal use of bold colors is another characteristic of his work.



Swiss Committee to Combat Noise  
*Weniger Lärm*  
Campaign Poster  
1960



Swiss Automobile Club  
*Watch that Child!*  
Campaign Poster  
1953

Images from  
*Josef Müller-Brockmann:  
A Pioneer of Swiss Graphic Design*

### Katherine McCoy Essays

McCoy received an education in industrial design before co-chairing the Graphic Design department at Cranbrook Academy of Art. McCoy was well-versed in Modernist design; however, the design program at Cranbrook was considered post-modern or deconstructive.

Rob Roy Kelly was a graphic design educator who was heavily influenced by Swiss graphic design teaching methods. He was the chair of the graphic design department at the Kansas City Art Institute from 1964 – 1974.

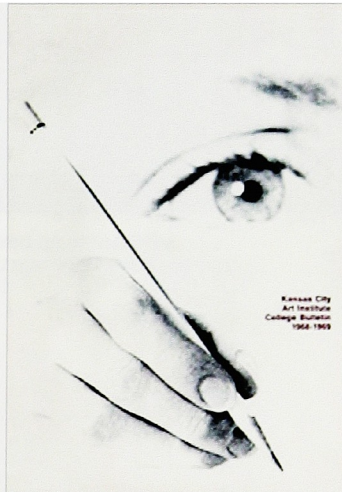
Graphic design history has been documented mostly in fragments. Among the most comprehensive of these are the writings of Katherine McCoy. Since the 1990s, her interest in the history of graphic design and design education led her to write extensively on the subject of Swiss design and its journey to America, focusing largely upon its blossoming in the academic field. The symposium *Another 60s Revolution* took place recently at the Kansas City Art Institute in Missouri, accompanied by an overview of Swiss design written by McCoy. The document's lexicon of crucial design elements and a list of the design movement's prominent contributors serve as a launchpad from which we are able to further study the influence Swiss that design has had upon American designers.

Another article of value to this thesis is "Bits and Pieces of Basel," an article by McCoy from *Print* magazine, which chronicles the Swiss design teachings of Hans Allemann and Inge Druckrey for the Kansas City Art Institute in the 60s. This was a revolutionary teaching system invited into the United States by Rob Roy Kelly.

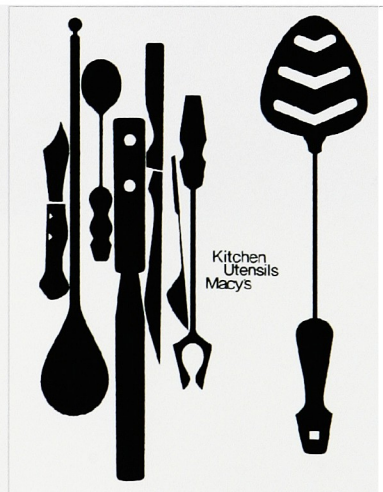
Below are examples of work from Druckrey and Allemann, and one example of student work from one of Allemann's classes.



Inge H. Druckrey  
Orra poster  
1965



Hans Allemann  
KCAI poster  
1968



Student work  
Hans Allemann, Professor  
Kansas City Art Institute  
1967



**Fred Troller's Studio**

In addition to being a graphic designer, Fred Troller was a sculptor, a painter, and a draftsman. As many graphic designers of his time did, Troller drew inspiration from these various mediums of expression.

The inception of this thesis began with a trip to Rye, New York, in August 2006, where Fred Troller's graphic design collection was housed at the time. There, time was spent in his studio examining his design, sculptures, drawings and paintings. It was a benefit to this thesis to see his studio and imagine his work habits and design process. Many designers today do not maintain a multi-disciplined practice that involves fine art. Practice in fine art helps the designer gain a perspective that would otherwise be unavailable.



Image from  
*RIT Graphic Design Archive*

Photograph of Fred Troller  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
1993

## Swiss Culture

Switzerland was literally surrounded by warfare during WWII. Although the country maintained a policy of neutrality, it still had to endure the tension caused by a war in the surrounding countries. This included arbitrary bombings, refugees seeking asylum, and constant pressure to ally itself or participate in the war. ([www.geschichte-schweiz.ch](http://www.geschichte-schweiz.ch)) Although Switzerland did not dispatch an army to fight, it still played a vital role in the war by providing much needed humanitarian services. Following the symbolism of the Red Cross as a “permanent, neutral institution to take care of military and civilians wounded or imprisoned in war” ([icrc.org](http://icrc.org)), Switzerland’s well-developed health care system still thrives today.

The country’s neutrality during the Second World War, while on some levels ambiguous, is on another level symbolic of the need for objectivity in graphic design as a means to a better future. Switzerland’s democratic values figured significantly in its design ethics, the development of which reflected the need for clarity in communication; a message should not be portrayed from a skewed perspective. If a message was portrayed with ambiguity or bias, the miscommunication would lead to confusion and conflict. (Müller-Brockmann, 83)

The Bauhaus of Germany was a widely influential school of architecture and design founded by Walter Gropius in 1919. The school appointed many well-known artists, designers and architects as faculty. The Bauhaus is a cornerstone of Modernism.

It seems as though such a design movement could not have survived in any other climate. For example, the Bauhaus in Germany suffered under damaging political pressure when the Nazis forced the school to close in 1933. Of course, the ideals of the Bauhaus design lived on to affect other philosophies in a positive way, but the core education of the Bauhaus was brought to an abrupt end, concluding a movement that might have continued to expand its profound influence.

After the war, globalization brought about the restructuring of solutions for language problems. For example, the Red Cross emblems (below) rely on the universal language of symbols to convey their message. This use of a semiotic vocabulary helps us understand the idiom of Swiss design through its symbolic representation of an objective message and its function of catering to the wide linguistic range of an international audience.



International Committee of the Red Cross  
cross, crescent, and crystal  
universal emblems  
1863

Images from [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)  
03 March 2006

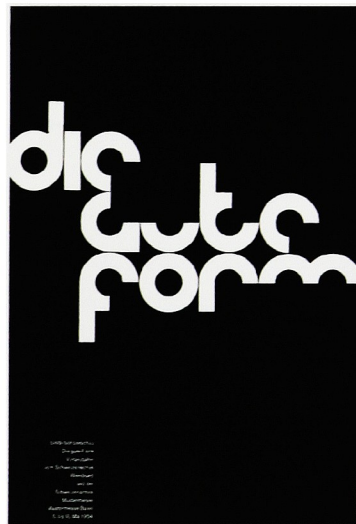
## The difference between Swiss Design and the International Typographic Style

Jan Tschichold was an influential Modernist typographer who formulated detailed rules of typographic placement, weight, visual hierarchy and other such typographic variables.

The International Typographic Style differs from Swiss design in one crucial way: the former refers to a movement that is more indicative of cultivation in both Switzerland *and* Germany, as opposed to the Swiss schools of design, found particularly in Basel and Zurich. A highlight of the International Typographic style is asymmetrical, sans serif typography that takes hierarchic precedence over imagery as a message-conveyor. A large part of this idiom came from the Bauhaus as well as Jan Tschichold's book, *Die Neue Typographische*, 1928. English typographer Anthony Froshaug is another key figure in the International Typographic Style. He worked to further develop Tschichold's extensive work in typography. Froshaug taught at the Ulm Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, Germany from 1957–1961.

While Swiss design includes the same characteristics as the International Typographic Style, it also tends to focus more on the entire message than on the typographic means. Josef Müller-Brockmann defined objectivity as the central motive of Swiss design, using photomontages to make "an unambiguous and forceful pictorial statement." (Müller, p. 32) On the other hand, Armin Hofmann touted the formal values of imagery. His compositions were often stark black and white, with the occasional minimal inclusion of one more color. Hofmann would alter and join letterforms to create an image out of text. He would also explore the shape of a form until it visually depicted the essence of an object.

The functional goal of Swiss graphic design is effective communication. Books on the subject cover the basics of Swiss design: concise, straightforward, bold, and without decoration. Photographs and carefully constructed forms are used to add emotion to a design solution using expression or indications of movement to develop a mood that matches the content of the message.



Die Gute Form poster  
Armin Hofmann  
1954

Basler Freilichtspiele  
beim Letzturm im St. Albantal  
15.-31. VIII 1963



Wilhelm Tell poster  
Armin Hofmann  
1963

Images from  
Poster Collection: Armin Hofmann

The difference between Swiss Design and the International Typographic Style

At first, the two images below may seem like they come from the same movement. However, they do not. This thesis makes the distinction between the two through the reasoning and the education behind each style. The International Style does not use emotional expression through photographs of people, nor does it allow for a slightly freer expression through the use of color and placement or typographic alignment. Both styles maintain clear thinking toward the structure and placement of elements; however, Swiss design maintains a more organic feel. It is experimental with imagery and type forms, and the International Style uses geometric forms and a more readily apparent grid structure.

The very fact that “typographic” is part of the latter style’s title speaks to its roots in German/Tschicholdian values. Both styles heavily influence one another.



Fig 1 International Typographic Style  
Ulm Hochschule für Gestaltung  
Cover for a quarterly bulletin  
Anthony Froshaug  
1958



Fig 2 Swiss Design  
Stadt Theater Poster  
Armin Hofmann  
1967

Fig 1 image from  
*Meggs' History of Graphic Design*  
Fig 2 image taken from  
*Poster Collection: Armin Hofmann.*

## Swiss Design

### History

In 1945, Swiss design began to emerge from the commingling of several design movements of the preceding decades: De Stijl, avant-garde, and the Bauhaus. Aspects of these ideals were combined to bring us the movement in its full form.

The avant-garde movement surfaced in Russia in the early 1900s. Avant-garde design drew inspiration from Suprematism, which sought to convey political messages through abstract works. (Fig 1) Among these works were the sharp, geometric styles of Cubism and Futurism. El Lissitzky, also known for his later work at the Bauhaus, was a pioneer in this movement.

De Stijl (Fig 2), a movement known for its use of geometric shapes and primary colors in a minimalist composition, was a contributing factor to the appearance of Bauhaus design. The Bauhaus in Germany came quickly on the heels of the avant-garde movement. Founded in 1919, this new school gave impetus to the importance of function in design. Function, in the eyes of the leaders at Bauhaus, led to the necessary raising of standards for the quality of human life.

Swiss posters were an extremely popular form of design over a range of years, beginning in the early 20th century. Such posters were designed with the above movements in mind, and their influences finally coalesced in the 1940s and '50s to form a decided, definitive idiom of design for Switzerland. Avant-garde and De Stijl inspired the geometric shapes and color decisions of Swiss design, while the meticulous attention to function that characterized the Bauhaus informed its message clarity. With each of these influences fully integrated, educators and pioneers set out to promote the wider study and practice of this design idiom to a particular end: a better future through social awareness with clearer lines of communication.



Fig 1 Russian Avant-garde  
Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge  
El Lissitzky  
1919

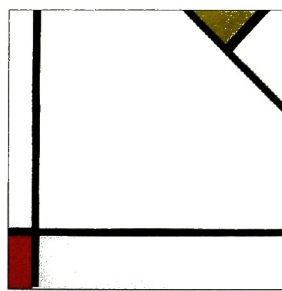


Fig 2 De Stijl  
Simultaneous Counter-Composition  
Theo Van Doesburg  
1929



Fig 3 Swiss Design  
Container Corporation of America Poster  
Josef Müller-Brockmann  
1956

Fig 1 from *Avant-Garde Graphics 1918–1934*  
Fig 2 from [www.art-file.com](http://www.art-file.com) on 06 April 2006  
Fig 3 from *Josef Müller-Brockmann: A Pioneer of Swiss Graphic Design*

## Swiss Design

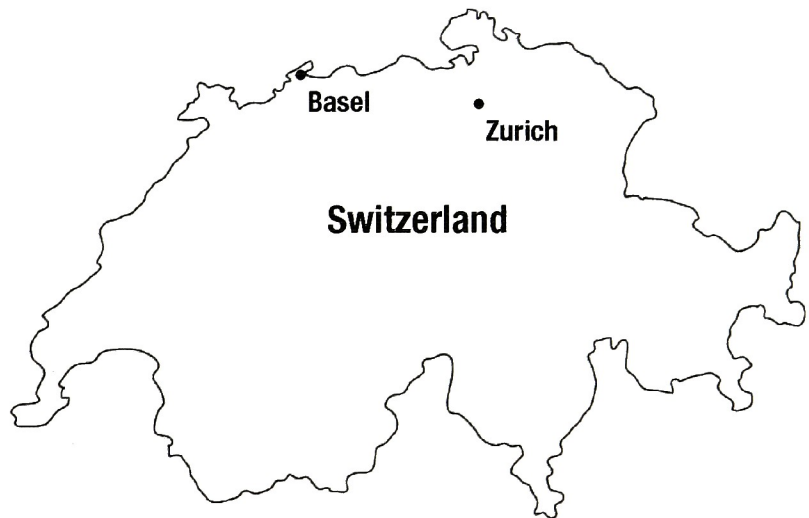
### Academic Programs

There were two well-known Swiss schools with intensive graphic design programs; the Zurich Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Applied Art) and the Allgemeine Gewerbeschule (Basel School of Design). It is at these schools that we find the trailblazers of this design movement after WWII. Beginning in 1947, both schools hired revolutionaries to head their design programs. Armin Hofmann and Emil Ruder contributed their ideas and rigorous curricula to the Basel School of Design. Ruder's presence was influential to many in terms of testing the boundaries of typographic solutions. Josef Müller-Brockmann provided the Zurich School of Applied Art with his conclusive method of study born of years of exploration and experimentation within the fields of graphic design and illustration.

### Pioneers

For the most part, the pioneers of this design movement are the educators mentioned above. Hofmann and Ruder provided the basis of Swiss design in Basel, while Josef Müller-Brockmann's work is an elemental standard of Swiss design in Zurich. Fred Troller studied under Müller-Brockmann, as did many other well-known designers.

The impact the original professors of this movement had on their students has spread far and wide. Steff Geissbuhler, Inge Druckrey, and Hans Allemann hailed from the Basel School of Design, and each became an educator in turn, demonstrating the structured and deliberate Swiss teaching philosophies of their mentors and professors. Troller, who studied under Müller-Brockmann in Zurich, went on to teach and serve as chair in the Graphic Design department at Alfred University in Alfred, New York from 1988–2000.



Map of Zurich and Basel, Switzerland

## Swiss Influence on America

### Education

Rob Roy Kelly was instrumental in bringing Swiss designers to America in the 1960s. He contacted Armin Hofmann, requesting that a few of his former design students be sent to fill teaching positions at the Kansas City Art Institute (KCAI), where Kelly resided as the Graphic Design program director. As a result, Hans Allemann and Inge Druckrey came to teach graphic design in America.

Yale University and the Philadelphia College of Art (now *University of the Arts*) were also influential programs that embraced Swiss thinking in their curriculum, and hired Swiss educators. Following their time at KCAI, Hans Allemann and Inge Druckrey moved to the Philadelphia College of Art. Druckrey has also held positions at the Rhode Island School of Design and Yale. Kenneth Hiebert, an American who received his design education in Basel, taught at Philadelphia College of Art/University of the Arts from 1966–1999. He was chair of the Graphic Design Department for 14 years, and his dedication to teaching Swiss design earned national recognition for the school.

### Commerce

Geigy, IBM, and other large corporations began to implement Swiss design within their corporate design systems. These businesses set the standard for other large corporations in the United States. Among the artifacts designed for these companies, some inspired examples of Swiss Design can be found in the form of posters, annual reports, and inter-office journals. Annual reports for IBM and Geigy in Fred Troller's collection show a well-balanced blend of meticulous information design (including charts, diagrams and maps that explain financial details) and expressive conceptual design (such as a depiction of a bee hive on a journal cover that relates to worker "bees" and their production).

James Fogleman, who studied at Yale University after World War II, is responsible for the development of the corporate design program at the American Ciba-Geigy Corporation in 1952. (Kelly, p. 3) Fogleman set the pace for future designers at Geigy, among them, art director Fred Troller. This is one of the first instances of the merging of American and Swiss design.

**Fred Troller**

The Fred Troller collection includes four boxes of Troller's own writing and research. In one of these boxes, notes were found for a lecture Troller had given at RIT. The speech had no title, but the first paragraph clearly stated Mr. Troller's views on product design:

"... I thought it would be interesting to talk about our visual environment, and I [would] like to focus on a place where excellence of design is rare or nonexistent, a place where we can clearly measure the state-of-the art of design. I am thinking of our supermarkets, where every man, woman, and child is exposed to constant visual lethal radiation." (RIT lecture)

Clearly, Troller shared views with designers who maintained the standards of Swiss design. His body of work shows the integration of applied concepts and careful message-making.

Fred Troller was prolific in the professional practice of graphic design in both Switzerland and America. His collection includes work for IBM and Geigy. Troller served as art director from 1964–1968 at Geigy. Troller's conceptual design work for the covers of Geigy *Catalyst* and IBM *Viewpoint* offer many prominent examples of his own personal style.

After Troller left Geigy, he continued his design practice at his studio located in his home in Rye, New York. For twenty years Troller worked as a contractor, designing for many clients including American Airlines, Cross-Siclare, and Doubleday. In 1988 he was invited to serve as chair of the Graphic Design Department at Alfred University in Alfred, New York, where he remained until his retirement in 2000.



**Fred Troller**

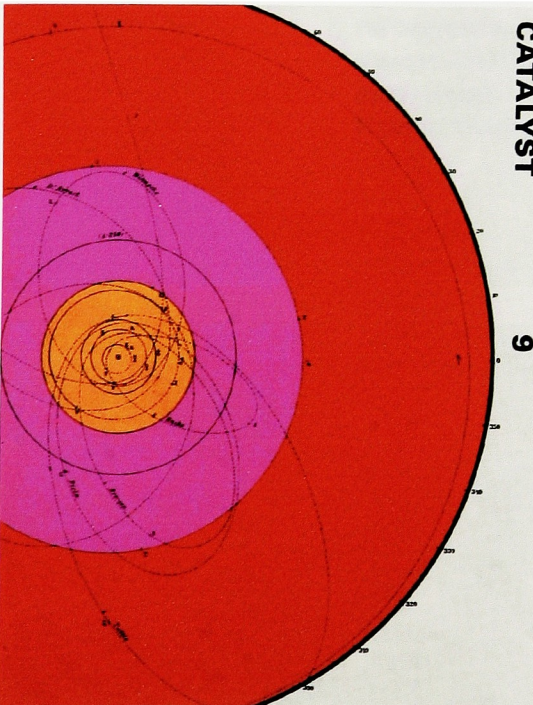
The following images are examples of Troller's work for Geigy Chemical Corporation, including promotional material (top 2 images) and Geigy *Catalyst* journal covers (bottom 2 images).



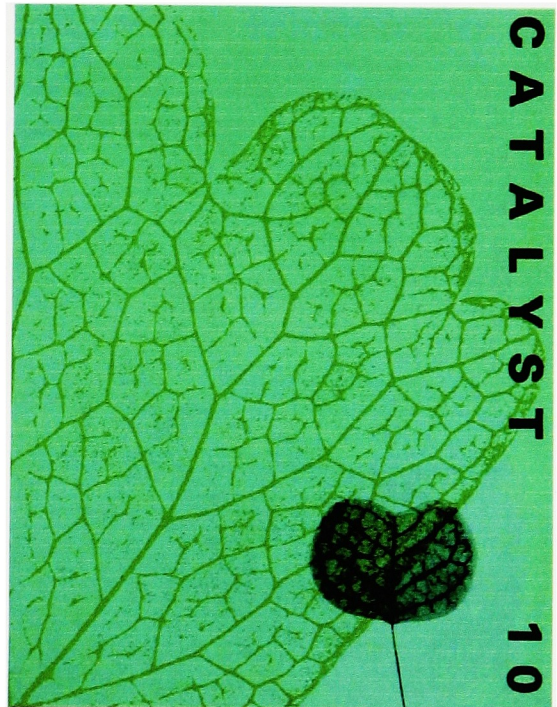
Geigy Pastelltone  
 Fred Troller  
 c 1959



Geigy "H"  
 Fred Troller  
 c 1962



Geigy *Catalyst* 9 Journal Cover  
 Fred Troller  
 1959



Geigy *Catalyst* 10 Journal Cover  
 Fred Troller  
 1960

images taken from  
 RIT Graphic Design Archive

**Scenario**

This scenario was included in a thesis presentation given to first year graduate graphic design students to explain the purpose, goals and benefits of this thesis.

**Scenario**

You come across a collection of work by a graphic designer you've never heard of before. There is currently little or no documentation on this designer.

**Problem**

For academic purposes, you need a process by which you can develop an understanding of this designer's place in graphic design history.

**Solution**

To place the 'found' designer within his/her context, you must follow a model that allows you to logically set this designer within a place and time, against a background of a well-established design style which will help define the body of work.

**Case in Point**

The work of typographer Anthony Froshaug became better known in larger circles of design history and practice when Robin Kinross processed and evaluated Froshaug's life and work in *Anthony Froshaug: Typography and Texts / Documents of a Life*. These two volumes were the product of intensive research of Froshaug's design collection. In the end, Kinross compiled a comprehensive representation of Froshaug's work throughout the years he was in practice. The progression of Froshaug's meticulous typographic methods and philosophy is documented, giving the reader a sense of his investigative approach to a design problem. Kinross's volumes allow their readers to understand the context in which Froshaug studied, practiced, and taught.

**Definitions  
for Evaluation Process****Design Movement**

any graphic design style or movement, past or present, that relates to the subject's training, practice, and/or influence

**Researcher**

the person who uses the evaluation process (p 17) to place an obscure designer in the context of a specified design style

**Subject**

the designer that the researcher seeks to place within a context

**Evaluation Process**

the process by which the researcher to a full understanding of the implications of the design movement, its effect, and the importance of the subject within the movement.

**Evaluation Process**

*The four steps of the evaluation process are as follows:*

- 1 Study the background and influence of a specific design movement, including its determining influences, pioneers, and practitioners. In this research, it is important to unearth the philosophy of the movement. Knowing the underlying motives will lead to a better understanding of the choices made within a particular design movement.
- 2 Evaluate a range of work from the subject's collection.
- 3 Develop a lexicon of syntactical design terms integral to:
  - a) the design movement
  - b) the subject
- 4 Choose specific works that embody the principles of the design movement from both the obscure designer's collection of work and a collection of work from the design movement. Place the images/artifacts within a comparative matrix, using terms from the design lexicon. The matrix allows the researcher to determine likenesses and contrasts between the work of the subject and the designers and pioneers of the design movement. A study of the matrix reveals characteristics of the subject's work that may or may not align with the chosen design movement.

**Determining Characteristics**

**Swiss Design**

In Swiss design, the grid structure for a design is often mathematically derived. Proportions are carefully calculated using a grid until there is no space left in the composition that has not been used. This includes active negative space.

Swiss typography is asymmetrical (flush left, ragged right) and often makes use of sans serif typefaces. In books that were presented in three languages, a standard three-column grid was used to accommodate each language. The textual element of a message was considered the most important. Imagery was included to lend expression, but the text remained the most communicative part of the message. All characteristics of the type revolved around the goal for a design to be clear and objective.

Imagery in this style is expressive yet objective. Juxtaposition of imagery becomes symbolic, as in Müller-Brockmann's *Viva Musica* poster below. A small number of bold colors are used in this design style. Colors sometimes overlap and are systematically placed to lend further meaning to the message. Early Swiss Design often used red or rust colored text for contrast with black, as well as formally refined elements against a white background. It also used silhouetted photographs, showing an object separated from its original context.



Nelly Rudin  
Saffa Poster  
1958



Josef Müller-Brockmann  
Musica Viva Poster  
1971



Peter Olpe  
Gewerbemuseum exhibit poster  
1968

Left and right images from  
*Poster Collection: Armin Hofmann*  
Center image from  
*Pioneer of Swiss Graphic Design*



**Swiss Tool Kit**

The phrase “tool kit” is a metaphor for the necessary design principles that must be learned before the designer may apply them in the style of a certain design movement. Within the Swiss tool kit, characteristics of Fred Troller’s Swiss design are attached to each of the operative variables listed below. This distillation enables the visualization of the elements as they might be applied in a modern design composition. The research conducted to determine these characteristics serves to enhance the researcher’s understanding of the Swiss design philosophy.

It should be kept in mind that the intended benefit of using the evaluation process this thesis provides is for the researcher to be able to apply the characteristics of design as understood and practiced by the designer they are seeking to place in context.

**Terms**

From the characteristics mentioned on the previous pages, variables of Swiss design syntax have been determined, that is, a list of terms describing elements of design that, when placed together within a composition, capture the essence of Swiss design.

**Operative Variables**

The application of this thesis will implement the treatment of the following four components as they are used in Fred Troller’s Swiss design style:

- Imagery
- Typography
- Color
- Structure

**Tool Kit Contents**

The characteristics of Fred Troller’s work as found in the tool kit are as follows. Each of the four operative variables have been defined with a subset of terms that are specific to Troller’s style. Each of these four “tools” will be used to design a series of three posters.

- 1 **Imagery** black and white photography treated as duotone, cropped photograph or form, repetition, montage, form or silhouette, scientific theme
- 2 **Typography** repetition, 45° angle, sans serif, large focal point, bold, hierarchic signalling, strict adherence to grid
- 3 **Color** bright, bold primaries or highly saturated colors, overlapping, transparencies, bands, geometric shapes
- 4 **Structure** mathematical grid, significant amount of negative space, angled orientation

**Selection of Application Form**

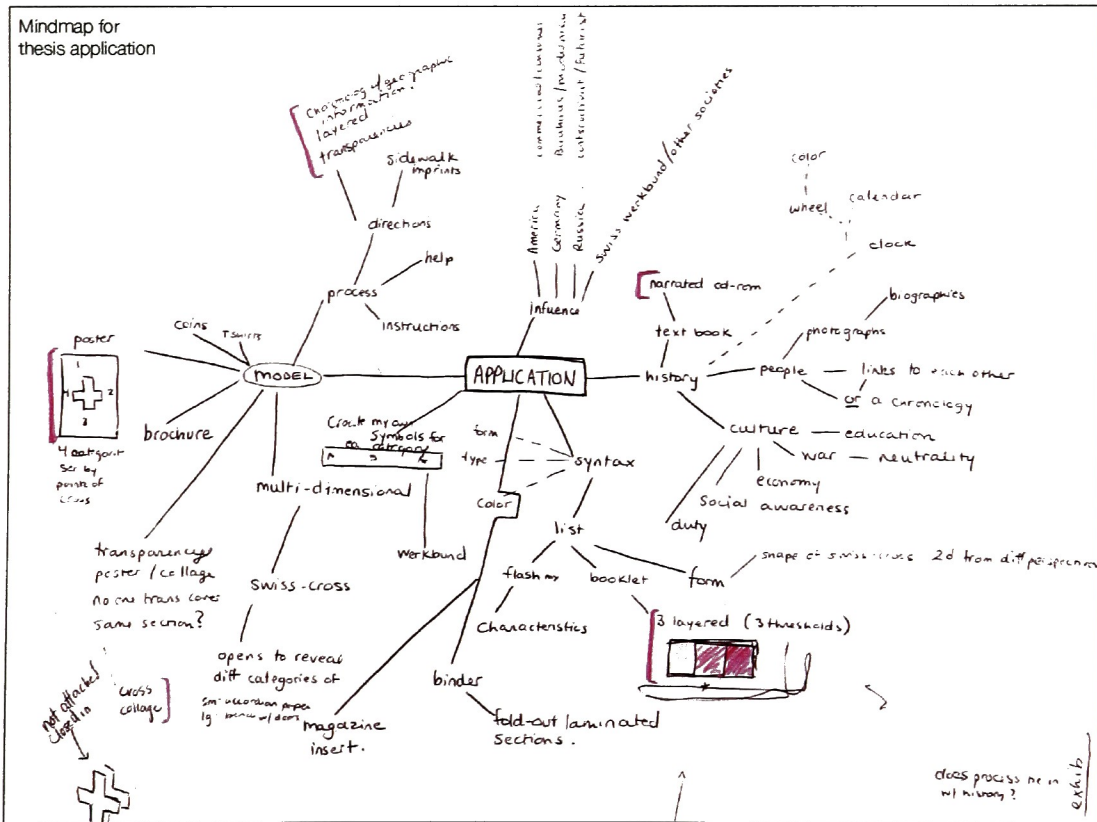
Initially, the application focus was the evaluative process by which any person can research and contextualize the work of a rarely documented designer. However, the thesis committee suggested a shift toward an application that was more of a design artifact in itself with an 'outside' subject matter that did not pertain to the thesis content. This was deemed preferable to an information design piece that would have showcased the main points of the thesis in the form of a poster.

It was decided that a series of three posters would allow for the implementation of Swiss design principles through the newly formed understanding of the design movement.

Four principles of design from the Troller Tool Kit will be applied to the posters:

- 1 imagery
- 2 typography
- 3 color
- 4 grid/structure

Each poster will focus on one of the first three principles listed above. All three posters will incorporate the fourth principle: a grid. The purpose of the thesis application is to use the knowledge of this design idiom and channel it into a cohesive design solution that separately highlights each of the chosen principles as influenced by Swiss Design and Fred Troller's work.

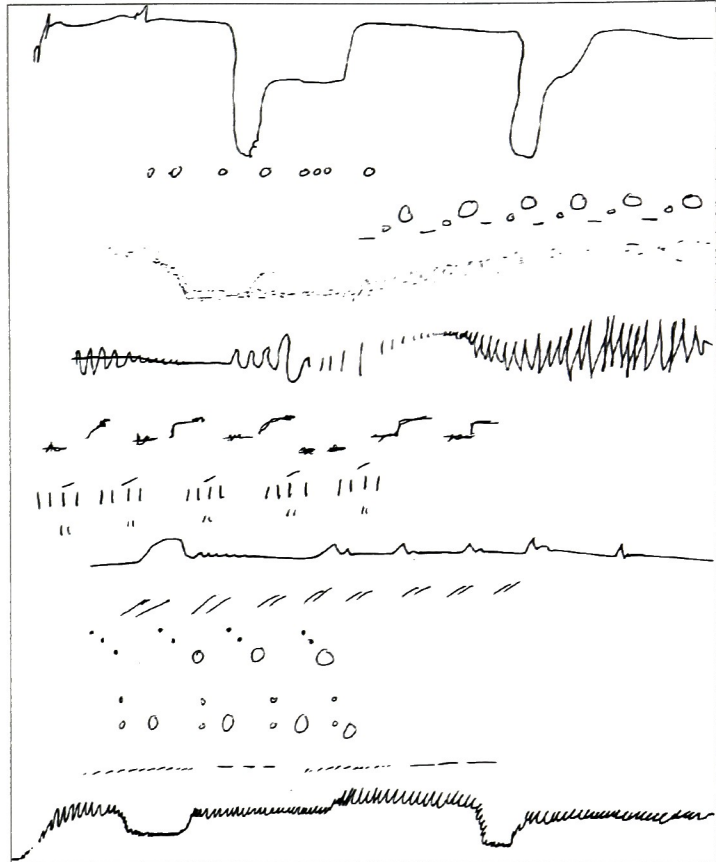


**Poster Subject  
Matter Ideation**

Music is a neutral subject area which allows for expression through movement and direction. Below are some sketches of the pulse of the music, which is a distinct part of the composition.

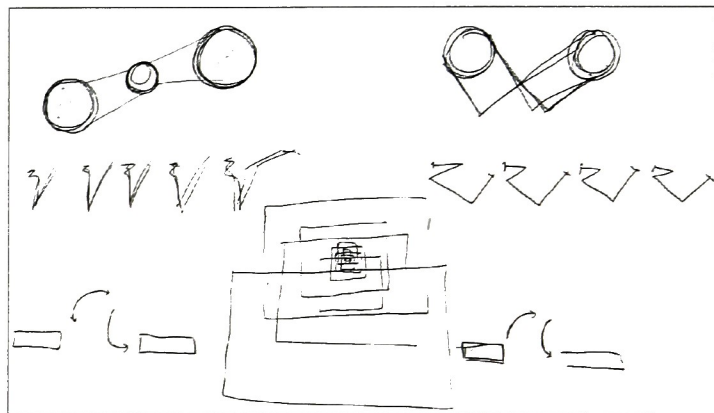
**Linear**

A series of rhythms were captured using line or repetitive elements to represent the texture of the song, *Ur Tchun Tan Tse Qi*. Each sketched line represents unique sonic elements that are prevalent and vary only slightly throughout the length of the song.



**Non-Linear**

Textures from the song were captured using non-linear drawings to represent the song. The drawings do not follow the entire song from start to finish. Instead, it focuses on one section of the song.





## Electronic Music

A song titled *Ur Tchun Tan Tse Qi* by the band Matmos was chosen as the subject matter for the series of music posters. Since 1996, Matmos has been making electronic music with unusual sounds including amplified crayfish nerve tissue, slowed down whistles and kisses, and rock salt crunching underfoot. ([www.brainwashed.com](http://www.brainwashed.com)) In addition to their discography, Matmos is credited with an installation in the Whitney Museum of American Art's BitStreams Exhibition in 2001.

This style of music was chosen because it is contemporary. It is essential to bring Swiss design principles to current graphic design to demonstrate how it can contribute to *today's* design. The purpose of this thesis is not to provide researchers with a way to mimic a design style, but the ability to incorporate its thinking and methodology into modern day design. A traditional or classical music composition therefore would have seemed like the obvious choice for a designer who wishes to mimic the design style without the full understanding of why selected elements are used in particular ways within a composition.

The concept behind Matmos' music parallels the concept of graphic design to make the invisible visible. For Matmos, the music is about making the inaudible audible. The music in *Ur Tchun Tan Tse Qi* revolves around the amplified sound of electrical currents that move through the skin at acupuncture points.

To create the posters, a series of images, both photography and simplified forms will be used, including the simplified forms of acupuncture needles and photographs of parts of the human body.

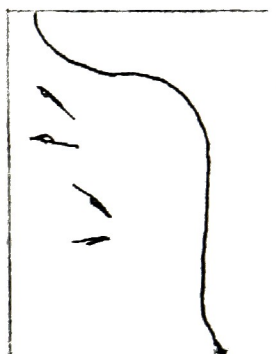
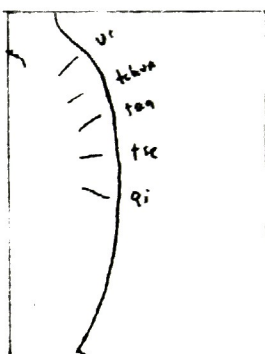
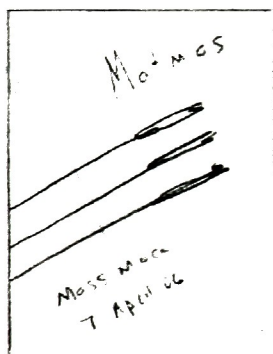
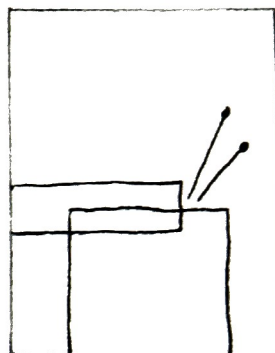
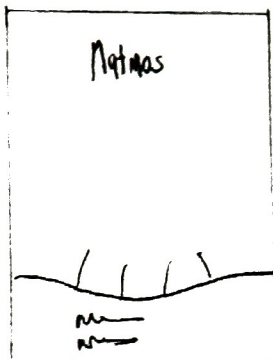
## About the Song

M.C. Schmidt of Matmos explained his song through email correspondence with the author. He stated the following about the meaning of the title of the song, *Ur Tchun Tan Tse Qi*:

As far as I know from my Chinese Acupuncturist friend it means, 'Acupuncture Point Detector'... I know the word 'Qi,' also written 'Chi,' is the sort of 'life energy' electricity 'stuff' that runs around our bodies and is the prime material that is being cared for/manipulated with acupuncture... though it's all a bit vague for me, having never studied it... the machine (from which the sounds are recorded) is really like a simple lie detector, it measures very slight fluctuations in the electrical conductivity of the skin, it is at these more conductive points that acupuncture is done.

Preliminary Sketches

The following sketches show the seedlings of ideas for layout and composition.



**Constraints**

The music in *Ur Tchun Tan Tse Qi* uses the sound of the electrical current through human skin using acupuncture points.

**Image**

The image will consist of either of the following: the form of a human ear, and/or the form of an acupuncture needle.

**Typography**

The ITC Avant Garde typeface is used for each poster. Each poster will use no more than two different fonts within this typeface, in two–three different sizes.

**Color**

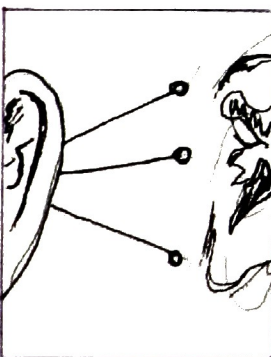
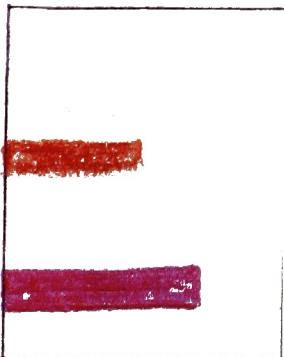
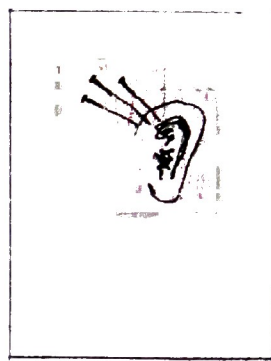
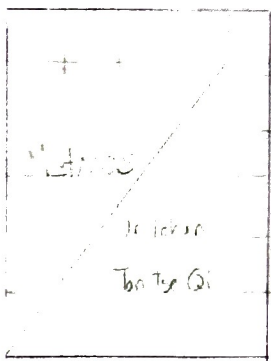
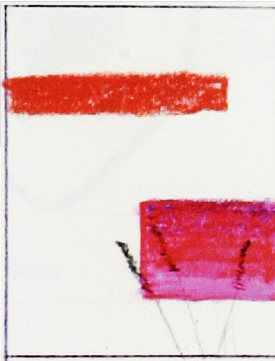
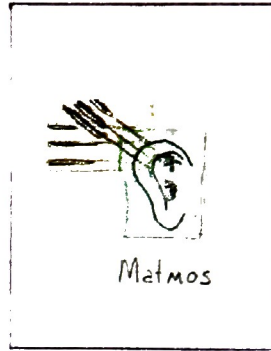
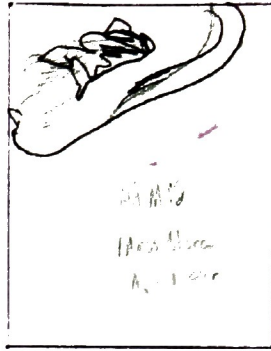
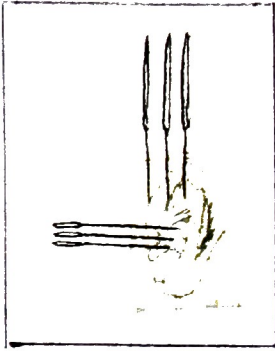
For this reason, the color scheme will consist of a mauve color to represent flesh and orange for heat. These colors may overlap and create a third color using transparency.

**Grid**

The grid consists of five columns in each composition. Type and image placement and orientation will be deduced using the grid.

**Color Sketches**

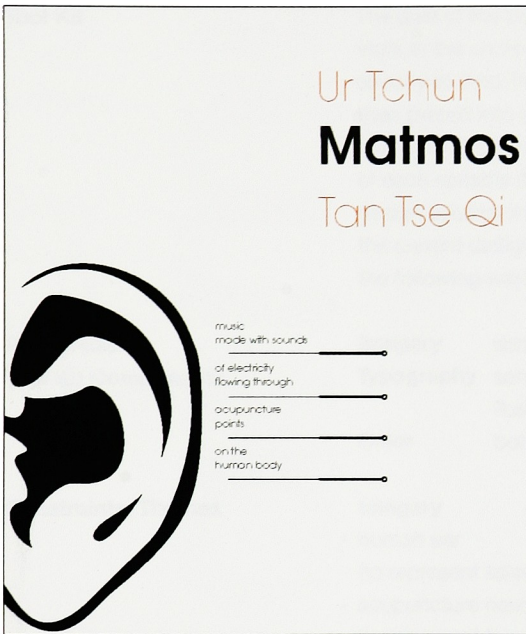
To capture the idea of acupuncture, music, listening, audio, health care, electricity, humming, beats, harmony, and time-based sound, the following layouts were sketched. Each sketch could eventually come to be categorized under any of the three compositions (typography, image, color).



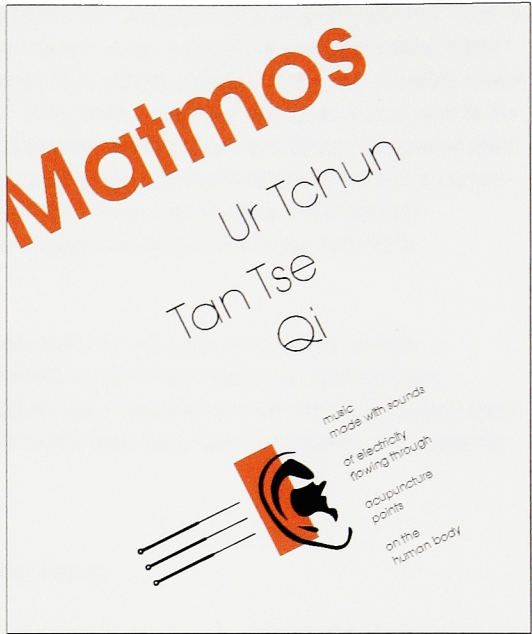
Sketches

The computer-generated sketches below correspond to one of the variables from the Swiss design tool kit: image, typography, and color. Each poster is limited to similar elements: human body part, needles, Avant Garde fonts, and a 5 column grid. These preliminary sketches laid the foundation for the final designs.

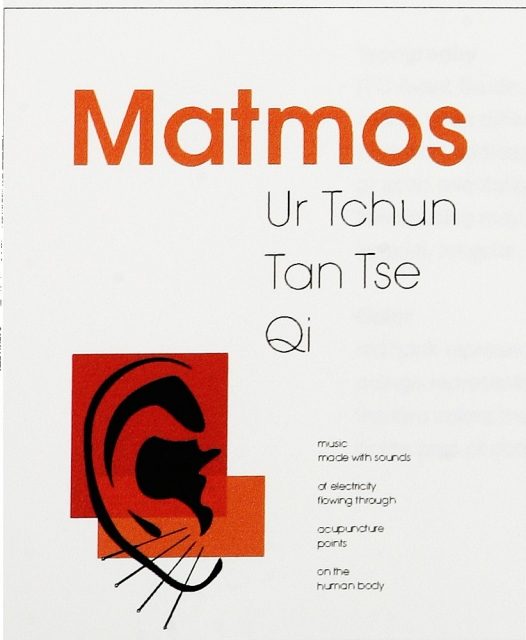
Image



Type



Color



Color



**Poster Content**

The final application posters work with the theme of music. The music, in this case, is the art of a band named Matmos. Their song, *Ur Tchun Tan Tse Qi*, is an instrumental song that combines the sound of traditional instruments with the sound of electricity and its conductivity through human skin with the use of an acupuncture point detector. The Chinese title *Ur Tchun Tan Tse Qi* roughly translates as 'acupuncture point detector.'

**Tool Kit**

The goal of the posters is to show the designer's understanding of Fred Troller's work in the context of Swiss design. A list of design characteristics that relate directly to Fred Troller's design style was formulated. These characteristics were then placed into a 'tool kit.' The tool kit consists of very specific sub-lists of the following design variables: **Imagery**, **Typography**, and **Color**. The specification of each variable allows the designer to apply these characteristics to a current design solution in the style of Fred Troller. The Matmos music poster—the current design solution—makes use of the Fred Troller Tool Kit in the following ways:

**Fred Troller****Tool Kit Components**

**Imagery** simplified form, black or one color, crop, bleed, overlay  
**Typography** sans serif, orientation other than horizontal, one typeface, flush left, ragged right, more than one left vertical alignment point  
**Color** bold, bright or highly saturated hues, overlapping, transparency

**Constraints/Themes****Imagery**

- human ear  
(to represent listening, music, sound)
- acupuncture needles  
(to represent tempo, point of electricity detection, conductivity, staff lines)
- the juxtaposition of the two images creates a double entendre  
(audio–music entering ear/touch–needles entering skin)

**Typography**

- ITC Avant Garde, using only two different fonts in each composition, two or three different sizes
- type may address a vertical alignment point, be flush left/ragged right, or at an orientation other than horizontal, or any combination thereof
- line spacing may be used to create tempo using intervals  
(regular, irregular, progressive)

**Color**

- red/pink represents flesh or blood
- orange represents heat, body/electricity
- the two colors may overlap to indicate the act of listening to music, or the area of conductivity for electricity through the skin









## 1 Thesis Presentation

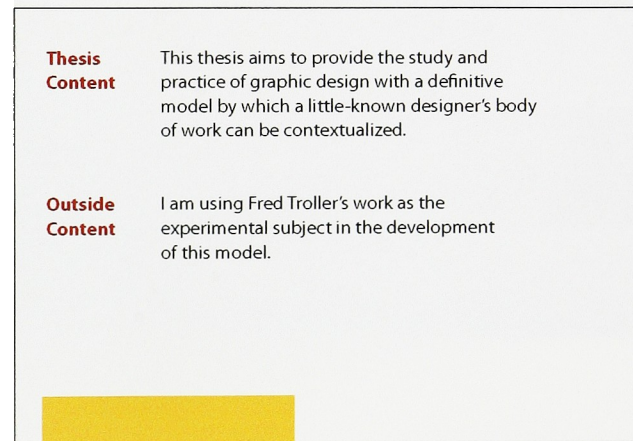
A presentation was developed to explain the purpose of this thesis to an audience of graduate students in RIT's Graphic Design MFA program. The statement of the thesis problem captured the audience's interest with a simple beginning: a scenario in which the application of this thesis would serve the graphic designer in an academic setting. (see page 13 for scenario)



**Definitive Design**

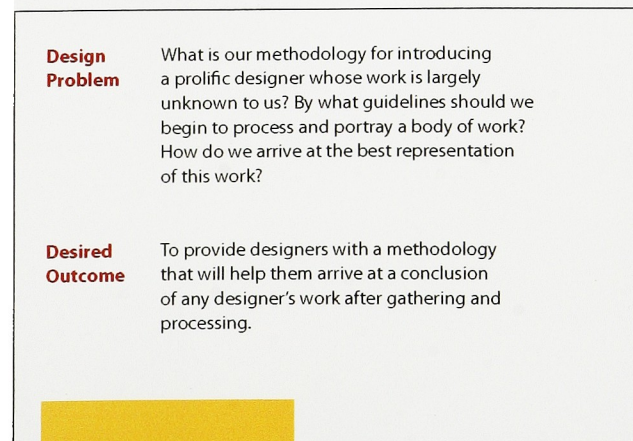
Thesis Presentation

Tara Markert  
13 February 2006



**Thesis Content** This thesis aims to provide the study and practice of graphic design with a definitive model by which a little-known designer's body of work can be contextualized.

**Outside Content** I am using Fred Troller's work as the experimental subject in the development of this model.



**Design Problem** What is our methodology for introducing a prolific designer whose work is largely unknown to us? By what guidelines should we begin to process and portray a body of work? How do we arrive at the best representation of this work?

**Desired Outcome** To provide designers with a methodology that will help them arrive at a conclusion of any designer's work after gathering and processing.

## 2 Thesis Exhibit

The comparative matrix was displayed in the Bevier Gallery at RIT from 13–29 March 2006. The matrix allowed the audience to see the similarities and contrasts between Swiss Design and Fred Troller's work. The exhibit helped audience members understand the benefit of evaluating an obscure designer's work. In this case, Fred Troller is given a context. If his works were on display without any other Swiss Design examples, the audience might fail to make the connection between Swiss Design, the styles that heavily influenced Swiss Design and Fred Troller.

Following this page are three 11" x 17" fold-out thesis exhibit panels.



Thesis exhibit panels  
Bevier Gallery, RIT  
13–29 March 2006







### 3 Future Plans

#### **Academic Use**

The final application posters would benefit an academic audience, therefore it is proposed that the posters be temporarily installed in a school's Graphic Design department. Each poster would be accompanied by a small panel that explains the reasoning behind the choices made in that solution. A small introductory panel would outline the evaluative process and syntactical characteristics that were used to reach a finished application.

Perhaps these posters could be hung during a time in the school year in which students were required to study and evaluate a rarely documented designer. A curriculum could be formed around this task. For a historian or researcher, the posters could be ordered through an educational resource or bookstore.

## Evaluation Findings

The retrospective evaluation was completed by two individuals who, after reading a brief overview of the tool kit components, studied the three posters and completed an evaluation sheet for each.

The posters were evaluated in this order:

- 1 imagery
- 2 typography
- 3 color

For the retrospective evaluation, the following questions were rated on a scale of 1 (poor)–5 (effective). The average ratings for each poster were combined from both evaluators beneath each question.

How would you rate the clarity of the subject matter?

Poster 1 **4**                      Poster 2 **4.5**                      Poster 3 **4.75**

How would you rate the visual composition of the poster?

Poster 1 **4.25**                      Poster 2 **5**                      Poster 3 **4.25**

How would you rate the use of **the** secondary elements in this composition?

Poster 1 **3.75**                      Poster 2 **4.25**                      Poster 3 **4.75**

How well do the visual characteristics of the poster match those in the tool kit?

Poster 1 **5**                      Poster 2 **4.75**                      Poster 3 **4.75**

How well does the poster meet its goal of relating to Troller's design style?

Poster 1 **4.5**                      Poster 2 **5**                      Poster 3 **4.5**

The main concerns with the posters according to the evaluations were the lack of a focused color system in poster 1 as well as the thin weight of the type used for the phrase *Ur Tchun Tan Tse Qi* in posters 1 and 2. A viewer would have difficulty reading the phrase from a distance due to the lack of contrast against a background.

Both evaluators rated the 3rd poster as the most effective. This indicates that the use of color is one of the stronger elements that is capable of conveying a message.



**Evaluation Findings**

The last thesis meeting was held on May 23. During this meeting, committee members made the following comments:

**Image**

The form of the ear needed work: Professor Remington suggested that the ear could be used more consistently in terms of composition.

The outer line of the ear was heavy and its shape was not as refined or elegant as it could have been. The relationship between geometric and organic shapes was explored. It was found that a more refined line for the outer part of the ear formed a better relationship with the inner parts of the ear.

**Typography**

Professor David Pankow mentioned that the typography in the posters was floating. He suggested strengthening the series by anchoring the text, using more contrast and considering the placement of the type within the composition. The Avant Garde typeface was questioned because it was developed in the 1970s and it was not congruent with the use of Helvetica and other more traditional fonts that were used in the original Swiss design style. Futura was suggested for its roots in a more traditional sans serif base. Avant Garde remained a part of the composition, however, because the subtlety of its use did not interfere with the minimalist compositions in this case.

**Color**

The red that was being used in the posters was a cool red. A suggestion was made to change the color to a warm red to better represent flesh.

**System**

One weakness in all three posters was that they didn't relate as a strong system. In a sound system, each poster strengthens its concept through its relationship to the others. Professor Remington suggested more consistent use of diagonal elements across the series. The original series only used diagonal type for the second poster and small diagonal acupuncture needles in the color poster. Both elements were at different angles and contrast, so they failed to relate. The decision to incorporate diagonal acupuncture needles, to include the image of the ear, and to use the same two colors in all 3 posters helped to create a stronger system.

## Final Assessment

The goal of this thesis is to prove the effectiveness of the evaluation process and the knowledge it provides. The contribution of this thesis to the field of graphic design is important in that it provides a structure for design researchers to explore an area that focuses specifically on two issues: a graphic designer's body of work, and the design movement in which the aforementioned designer worked. This study focuses on both these narrow and broad subjects, allowing the researcher a viewpoint with depth; a viewpoint that is decisive in forming a solid understanding of a design style. This viewpoint is obtained only after the rigorous research and synthesis of the subject matter. With this new set of information, one should then be able to exercise the ability to implement the visual variables that are characteristic of the chosen design movement. Through this implementation, a design philosophy should become evident.

The minimalist philosophy of Swiss design is captured by the series of three posters. One property that needs alteration is color. Color was determined to be one of the most prominent operative variables of Swiss design; however, the typography focus seems to dominate the application, while the color themes miss the opportunity to strengthen the message.

There was some confusion about the subject matter of the posters: particularly, the band name and song title. While it is understood that this confusion may impede those who are unfamiliar with the band from understanding the message, this issue has been addressed with the inclusion of a small blurb of text that briefly describes the genesis of the music. A possible change would be further differentiation between the band name and the song title, using the typographic variables of size, weight, or orientation.

## Summary

Overall, the evaluation process that places a graphic designer within the context of his or her design movement seems to be successful. The author performed the process loyally and used the gathered knowledge from the process to derive the most prominent characteristics of Fred Troller's Swiss style, which were then incorporated into three different layouts. The written part of this thesis was allowed sufficient incubation time. It was tremendously important to execute the application section of the thesis as a part of the learning process. It is proven that the intense study of a graphic design movement through the eyes of one of its constituents is reinforced through the actual process to evolve a design solution in this style.

---

<i>Active negative space</i>	Space that is not occupied by any element of design, i.e., type or image, but still serves a purpose by providing space (for the eye to move around), flow, direction, legibility, and/or balance in a composition.
<i>Hierarchy</i>	A visual ranking of elements within a composition, achieved through any of the following: size, weight, interval, color, contrast.
<i>Idiom</i>	A graphic design movement or style embodies the design values of a certain time, place, group of advocates, or any combination thereof.
<i>Illustrative design</i>	Graphic design involving imagery that has been hand-drawn or has a rudimentary shape or line.
<i>International Typographic Style</i>	A style of design that is much like Swiss design (see <i>Swiss Design</i> definition, below), but is representative of influences from several locations, including Germany, Russia, and Switzerland.
<i>Die Neue Typographische</i>	A book by Jan Tschichold (1902–1974) that promoted asymmetrical sans serif typography and message clarity through different type sizes and weights.
<i>Objective Design</i>	Graphic design with the most important function being the avoidance of ambiguity in the pursuit of message clarity.
<i>Semiotic</i>	Using signs and symbols as language.
<i>Swiss Design</i>	A style of design that originated in Switzerland in the early 1900s. Swiss Design is very structured and minimal, allowing the viewer to understand the message without interference from extraneous decorative elements. Sans serif typefaces are preferred, along with varying type sizes and the effective framing of negative space.
<i>Syntax</i>	A system of language. In this case, a list of characteristics that combine to form a system of Swiss Design principles.

## Books

- Bangerter, Walter & Armin Tschanen. *Official Graphic Art in Switzerland*.  
Zurich: ABC Verlag, 1964.
- Becker, Lutz & Hollis R. *Avant-Garde Graphics 1918–1934*.  
London: Hayward Gallery, 2004.
- Grignani, Franco et al. *Graphic Designers in Europe / 4*.  
New York: Universe Books, 1973.
- Helfand, Jessica. *Paul Rand: American Modernist*.  
New York: William Drenttel, 1998.
- Heller, Steven & Anne Fink. *Less is More: The New Simplicity  
in Graphic Design*. Ohio: North Light Books, 1999.
- Heller, Steven. *Poster Collection: Armin Hofmann*. essay.  
Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2003.
- Hofmann, Armin. *His Work, Quest and Philosophy*.  
Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1989.
- Kinross, R. *Anthony Froshaug: Typography and Texts | Documents of a Life*.  
London: Hyphen Press, 2000.
- Meggs, Philip, & A. W. Purvis. "The International Typographic Style."  
*Meggs' History of Graphic Design*. 4th ed., 356-373. Wiley, 2005.
- Müller-Brockmann, Josef. *Pioneer of Swiss Graphic Design*.  
Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 1995.
- Müller-Brockmann, Josef. *Grid Systems in Graphic Design*.  
Niederteufen: Arthur Niggli Ltd., Publishers, 1981.
- Ruder, Emil. *Typography: A Manual of Design*.  
New York: Hastings House, 1967.
- Tschanen, Armin & Walter Bangerter. *Graphic Art of a Swiss Town*.  
Zurich: ABC Druckerei + Verlags AG, 1963.

**Lectures**

Troller, Fred. (c. 1980). Written lecture for visit to RIT.

**Printed Articles**

(1965). "Geigy Chemical Corporation."  
*Communication Arts*. May/June.

McCoy, Katherine. (1990). "American Graphic Design Expression:  
The Evolution of American Typography." *Design Quarterly*, 149.  
The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, pp. 3-22.

McCoy, Katherine. (2005). "Bits and Pieces of Basel."  
*Print*. Mar/Apr.

**Web Articles**

*About Matmos*. [www.brainwashed.com/matmos/about.html](http://www.brainwashed.com/matmos/about.html)  
retrieved on 29 March 2006.

*A Brief Overview*. retrieved from [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org) on 7 April 2006.

Heller, Steven. (2003). "Fred Troller, 71, Champion of Bold Graphic Style."  
*New York Times Obituaries*.

McCoy, Katherine. (2005). "Schools of Thoughts 2: Poised Toward  
the Future of Graphic Design Education."

Owens, Mark. (2004). "Soft Modernist: Discovering the Book Covers of  
Fred Troller." *dot-dot-dot*, Issue 6. c. 2004.  
[http://www.dot-dot-dot.nl/issue6/issue6\\_sample.html](http://www.dot-dot-dot.nl/issue6/issue6_sample.html)  
retrieved on 17 September 2005.

*Switzerland's History*.  
[www.geschichte-schweiz.ch/](http://www.geschichte-schweiz.ch/) retrieved on 14 March 2006.

Kelly, Rob Roy. (1989). "The Yale Years."  
[http://www.rit.edu/~rkelly/html/01\\_ori/ori\\_yal1.html](http://www.rit.edu/~rkelly/html/01_ori/ori_yal1.html)  
retrieved on 17 March 2006.

**Videos**

Interview: Josef Müller-Brockmann with R. Roger Remington. October 1993.

**Interview with  
Steff Geissbuhler**

Steff Geissbuhler graduated from the Basel School of Design in 1964. He studied under Emil Ruder and Armin Hofmann. Geissbuhler's first job was with Geigy Chemical Corporation in Switzerland. He calls himself "an illustrator at heart." He taught at Philadelphia College of Art from '73-'75. In '75 he came to work at Chermayeff & Geismar in New York City.

Steff Geissbuhler of C & G Partners @ Union Square  
18 January 2006, 4:30 p.m.

*My thesis involves the work of the late Fred Troller. Were you acquainted with him?*

Yes, we were good friends. We lived very close to each other. I lived in Flushing and he lived in Rye. I did not know him until we had both been living here, but I knew of him when I was working for Geigy in Switzerland.

*I have read that you worked for Geigy in Switzerland. When did you work there and for how long? Who did you work with?*

As soon as I graduated. Max Schmid. George Giusti. (went to school with?) he was just a consultant for Geigy. illustrator, freelance. own style. USA and Basel

*How did you come to the US?*

Ken Hiebert asked me to teach at his school. Allemann taught in PA as well. Christina Zelinsky too. This was all in the late 60s. Kansas City was before this. HEP Theo Welti

*What differences, if any, have you perceived between your education at Basel and other Swiss designer's educations in Zurich?*

There was not too much difference. I can tell you about Basel. The work was very formalist. Armin and Emil taught us to work on a form until it expressed what you wanted to say: type, illustration. Very focused on strong form expression. The graphic translation of things. Birch trees: experience birch trees down to the point where you only see the breaks in the bark, but not the whole tree. Or to capture the idea of the zipper until you can actually hear it. Translate the sound and the movement: up and down.

Müller-Brockmann at Zurich may have been more colorful and experimental. At Basel, we were minimalist. Black and White. shapes and forms. Müller-Brockmann taught more with photography than Basel.

**Lecture by Fred Troller**

Thank you Roger for inviting me. I am happy to be here. When you asked me to speak about design I thought it would be interesting to talk about our visual environment and I like to focus on a place where excellence of design is rare or nonexistent, a place where we can clearly measure the state-of-the art of design and I am thinking of our supermarkets where every man woman and child is exposed to constant visual lethal radiation. Let's consider the following scenario; let's assume you get that dream assignment of your career. The client asks you to design not just an effective package but the most exciting, unique and beautiful package for pretzels your talent inspires you to create. Now, what comes to your mind first. Do you think first of the kind of environmental friendly material you will use for the package? Do you first think of the size? The colors? The shape Or do you consider first the consumer who will buy the pretzels. Or the display setting for the package? Or what the other pretzel manufacturers are doing? Perhaps, none of this crosses your mind at this point. Maybe, your immediate reaction was negative. There is too much freedom here: a client must guide a designer more. He must identify his market and tell me what makes a pretzel eater buy one kind and not the other. Or he must show me how his competition is racking up those great sales. On the other hand, perhaps you won't give the assignment a second thought until you have seen the most successful pretzel package in the market so you can simply design a better one. Or—are such considerations merely guarantees of mediocrity, barriers to fresh good design, intuitive and creative design? Is this question a very real one to any designer here in our audience tonight? Obviously, this is not a happening I've invited you to... but neither is it a "put-on." Rather, let's call it a "think-in". I like to pose the previous question and a few more provocative ones to exercise your minds and knowing how expressive designers are perhaps to stimulate an exchange of ideas of attitudes and of conflict.

For instance, here is another question which might be of interest to you: Who is really responsible for the awful monotony, the blaring ugliness and the utter dreariness of the supermarket shelves? Is it the designer who plays it safe? The manufacturer or the client with no respect for graphic design, or again the one, who won't take a chance on the new and different package? The customer who doesn't really see the design and accepts the mediocre and so encourages the design banalities on the market shelf? Or maybe all three?

**Lecture by Fred Troller**  
*continued*

Here is another question to think about: How many times has this been said to you: you might not like the look of that package, but it sells successfully. My question is; in your opinion, do sales actually increase as the quality of design is improved? Will good design really sell a product more effectively, than the currently accepted design found on the store shelves? Is good design only in the eye of the beholder—the average consumer who picks the pretzels off the shelf? Is the package he or she passes up, therefore bad design? In the retail supermarket as well as in the super, super market of direct mail, is not the designer actually taking the place of the salesman who on-the-spot tries to sell his product over all the competition? Where then in the designer's mind should he stop looking for new design solutions—when he thinks his design might move the customer's eye to the next package? How does a designer determine when his design has reached the point of no further sales return and has moved into design for design's sake? Which comes first? The chicken or the egg? Must bad design set the scene for good design to come later? Or should good design get there first- to educate and inform the public and to develop their taste for good design which in turn will further inspire and challenge the designer to better and more exciting design solutions. Which should come first to the designer's mind when he creates a new package—his conception of good design or the public's acceptance of the mediocre and the poor?

To be or not to be commercial! Is that really the question? But, perhaps, now I'm drowning you in a sea of questions and you want to come up for airing of opinions. I agree. But please note, I said opinions, not answers. For in the realm of design, in the very real world of commerce, there are many questions for me and few answers. But ask for my opinion, I have some of them. What do I think of the buying public? When a designer leaves school and faces the harsh realities of life in the commercial world, his fresh ideas have to do an about face before they can come to life in print. He is told, that it is above the heads of the public and he is guided quickly to the safe road of mediocre conformity. He will soon be confused, very uncomfortable and disillusioned with his profession.

Clearly we are confronted with a serious dilemma. But I am firmly convinced, that the consumer will buy the detergent, the shampoo, "you name it" wrapped up in clean, crisp and good design if he is given the chance. Hasn't Black & Decker proved this point with it's well designed products and packaging. Hasn't "Ohrbachs" of the forties and fifties, a New York department store which catered to a public used to buying off pushcarts and in bargain basements lured in the more sophisticated shoppers from Fifth Avenue with fresh and intelligent advertising and merchandising? Despite the fact that many companies make big profits with lousy design,



**Lecture by Fred Troller**  
*continued*

there are enough examples of good design creating good sales to convince me that one does not have to talk down to public with routine, stereotyped design. I think there is another involvement here for the designer and his client, I like to call it responsibility. The company who uses good design to sell his products helps shape our visual environment. Advertising in all its ramifications has a tremendous influence on people, their ways of life, their opinions and their beliefs. This influence generates power and if one possesses such power, one must perform with a relative sense of responsibility.

The responsibility should not end with the creation of better products for better living but should extend to better graphic design. After all, why should not the consumer be as much stimulated and excited by design around him as he walks down the supermarket aisle as he is by flowers and trees he sees on a beautiful day in spring. Too many advertising people and designers believe, that only mediocre design sells. As a result the visual ugliness continues to pollute our environment and sadly enough we have accepted it as the unchangeable reality of our time. How can we clean up the mess? First, together we must air out much of the old musty thinking, kill off some of the old myths and prejudices, forget some of the theories which sold "Borden's Milk" "Wheaties" and "Chef Boyardee" in the past and search out new ways and finally, ignore the dogmas that say "the color Blue keeps you cool and clean. Red makes you hot and furious and sans-serif is not cosy and is hard to read. But wait. Let's get over to the drugstore and pass around those aspirins we all probably need at this point and while we are there, let's take a close up of those shelves. Doesn't it look as if every package was designed by the same person, tested by the same marketing group on the same consumers. Why? Shouldn't each package outsmart the others? Too bad they missed the chance!

## Intermediate Evaluation

Interview with Angela Gallo,  
Graphic Designer  
Monday, May 1, 2006

*Did the scenario slide of the presentation help set the scene for what the thesis is about? If not, what questions remained unanswered before you moved on?*

I was unclear about the who Anthony Froshaug was, and then who Fred Troller was. You explained Fred Troller, but not Anthony Froshaug- you just said 'case in point.' That was confusing.

*Is it apparent that this thesis, when it is done, will benefit graphic design students and graphic design researchers in a significant way? How do you think it will benefit students? And researchers?*

I'm sure it will, but the outline was not very clear, as it seemed to jump around a little. I think the outlines don't give much info, and I got a little lost, and had to go back a few times to read it again. But the direction you seem to be going does seem like it will benefit researchers because knowing where to place a designer is very important.

*Do you think your graphic design practice could benefit from an extensive study and comparison of one person's work against the background of his/her native design style?*

As long as Fred Troller is an innovator, and I can learn things from him.

*What could be different about this presentation that would help you understand it more fully?*

Inclusion of images, a more specific explanation of the significance of Fred Troller, and perhaps a one on one interview with Fred Troller (if possible)

*What's your overall impression?*

So far so good. Like I said, the outline seems a little unclear.

*Any Comments?*

Just one more thing—consider, when you're writing the thesis, how other people (who know nothing about design) can benefit from it too. I think it should be easy to understand [for anyone]. I hope this helped.