

The Early Years of Graphic Design at Yale University

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An expanded and revised version of the keynote address presented at the Graphic Design Education Association Conference, Chicago, Illinois, June 23, 1989.

Yale University was the first in this country to establish a degree program in graphic design.¹ The term “graphic design” had been used earlier by professionals including William Dwiggins, Alvin Lustig, Herbert Bayer, Ladislav Sutnar, Lester Beale, and William Golden. During the 1930s, there was a high school program in graphic design at Brooklyn taught by Leon Friend who also co-authored a book titled *Graphic Design*.²

Alvin Lustig taught a summer course at Black Mountain college called graphic design prior to coming to Yale. Institutions such as Cooper Union, Cranbrook, and the Institute of Design offered courses in graphic design, but not a degree. The Yale program was unique at the time, and its graduates were instrumental to establishing the profession of graphic design in the United States during the 1960s. The origins and early years of graphic design at Yale University are therefore of historic importance.

The defining years were between 1950 and 1955, when the program was established, took shape, and set a course. Between 1955 and 1965, it matured, and the majority of graduates moved into professional practice while others were recruited to teach in design programs around the country.

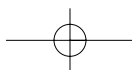
On July 15, 1950, the *New York Times* reported an announcement by Dr. Charles Sawyer, Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Director of the Division of the Arts, regarding a new Department of Design at Yale University with Josef Albers as chairman. Instruction in the new program was to begin during the 1950–51 academic year.

The explanation given today by Dr. Sawyer for a “Department of Design” was to disassociate the new program from the existing one in fine art, and to better identify it with architecture. Of no small consequence was the fact that it also permitted Albers to develop curriculum and hire new faculty without interference from tenured faculty members.

The program was described as a four-year course with a revised professional curriculum in painting, sculpture, and the graphic arts. The design program would culminate in a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. In a letter from Josef Albers to Alvin Lustig dated February 23, 1951, Albers explains, “...so far, all students are working together in only two rooms of which one is the printing shop.

¹ Yale did not invent graphic design. Its origins are European and date back to the turn of the century. Before the 1960s in America, graphic design perhaps was more of a label than a profession, but by the 1960s, graphic design was clearly a profession. No other institution has had the same impact on the profession and education as Yale University. This claim is based on graphic design at Yale as a sequential program in itself, and not as a course or courses within a broader program. Graphic design was a regionally accredited degree program, and it was Yale graduates who were directly responsible for establishing graphic design as a profession separate from advertising during the 1950s and 1960s. The Yale graphic design curriculum was the model for most educational institutions changing from advertising to graphic design educational programs during the 1960s. Yale graduates established and staffed many of these educational programs.

² Leon Friend and Joseph Heffer, *Graphic Design: A Library of Old and New Masters in the Graphic Arts* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936).





This may indicate again that we are very much at the beginning, though there are even a few who do “graduate” work.”³

Following its inception as a four year program, graphic arts soon changed from an undergraduate to a graduate program. For a short period of time, graduates from art schools with certificates were accepted into the program and required to complete one year for a BFA and an additional two years to receive the MFA degree. Those with an undergraduate degree completed the program in two.

The graphic arts program at Yale was introduced to the profession during 1951 at the initial Aspen Design Conference. Dean Sawyer and Egbert Jacobson were cochairmen of the conference, which was sponsored by Walter Paepke of Container Corporation of America. It was a landmark occasion for design as major professionals, industrialists, and educators came together for the first time in the United States. The conference served as an outstanding opportunity to introduce the new program in design at Yale University. Dean Sawyer and Alvin Eisenman spent two weeks in Aspen planning the introduction. Josef Albers and the architect Lou Kahn from Yale also were participants. Ero Saarinen, Charles Eames, Herbert Bayer, Leo Lionni, and Dino Olivetti were in attendance. Harley Earle of General Motors and Walter B. Ford of Ford Motors along with Frank Stanton, President of CBS, Hank Brennan of *Life* Magazine, Stanley Marcus of Nieman Marcus and Walter Howe of R. R. Donnelly were among the many prominent business leaders attending the conference. It is unfortunate that the proceedings did not have wider distribution or publication, because it was a lost opportunity for establishing Yale’s role in the United States as a leader within the design field.⁴

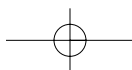
By the late 1940s, most teachers in the Division of the Arts at Yale University were older, tenured, and had not practiced in years. The Yale administration brought in Charles H. Sawyer as dean for the express purpose of effecting change. In the words of Dean Sawyer, “The faculty and administration knew pretty well what our objectives were; a rather moribund school needed a good shaking up, and we invited new students to participate in the process. We met stout resistance from several of the senior faculty and some from students. We “newcomers” were united in our belief as to the importance of breaking down the walls which had grown up between departments, and giving students an opportunity to learn from each other.”⁵

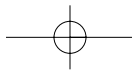
Dean Sawyer was influenced in his views to a great extent through his interaction with Bauhaus principals who had emigrated to the United States. First at Andover during the late 1930s, and later at Worcester, Massachusetts, he was in contact with Walter Gropius and Josef Albers, among others. He was well acquainted with Bauhaus pedagogy and was greatly impressed by the integration of several disciplines within design. Sawyer established the

3 Personal papers of Elaine Lustig Cohen.

4 Dr. Sawyer was bitterly disappointed that the Yale University Press refused to print the Aspen Design Conference proceedings on the grounds that they “were not sufficiently scholarly.”

5 Correspondence from Dr. Sawyer.





Department of Design with its own curriculum and faculty, which was separate from the existing program in fine arts. An educational policy was instituted based on making use of renowned practicing artists and designers as teachers and role models. At the graduate level, the art and design programs were directed toward professional practice, marking a significant shift from the beaux arts emphasis of the existing program and the liberal arts programs at most other universities.

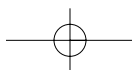
Before Sawyer's appointment, there were other activities and events which contributed to shaping the new program. During 1933, Carl P. Rollins, a book designer at the Yale University Press, Theodore Sizer, an art historian, and Dr. Keough, a Yale librarian, began offering a course in fine printing, typography, and book design called "The Art of the Book." Rollins was a devotee of the arts and crafts movement, and this undoubtedly was reflected in the content of the course. The rare book collections at Yale University afforded students a marvelous opportunity for examining original printings. The course was offered through the library, although it was under the auspices of Art History and it was attended mainly by students from Yale College. The course was made available to students on an irregular basis between 1933 and 1948.

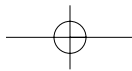
After World War II, a number of veterans attended the School of Fine Arts at Yale University under the G.I. Bill. Among these was James Fogleman. He later created the corporate design program at CIBA in 1952, and was a cofounder of Unimark in the 1960s. In 1972, he became corporate design director at Raychem. Fogleman remembers how he and several classmates agitated for a change of the Yale art program from its current focus. They advocated a curriculum which included applied arts. These veterans were older, and most of them had some practical experience with art before coming to Yale. They were excited about the newly emerging design fields.

Fogleman reminisced that students most interested in design concentrated in painting composition classes because classical composition was the closest thing to design at Yale in 1948. Professor Rudolph, an instructor in composition, arranged with a firm in New York City to sponsor a wallpaper design competition for his students. Fogleman won this competition, and when he told about the competition in later years, it is apparent that it gave him immense satisfaction at the time. To further broaden their design awareness, students enrolled in a variety of architectural studio and history courses.⁶

Student efforts for curriculum change were directed through Charles Sawyer, who was not only Dean of the School of Fine Arts & Architecture, but also Director of the Division of the Arts and Master of Timothy Dwight College. Fogleman remembers well the informal discussions between students and Sawyer in the Master's apartments regarding the role for applied arts within the Yale

6 Notes made from personal conversations with Jim Fogleman during the 1980s when he visited Arizona State University campus. We discussed his experiences as a student at Yale University during the period prior to the hiring of Albers and establishment of Graphic Arts.





program. Dean Sawyer was supportive of this broader interpretation of the arts. He also was aware of the course which had been taught by Rollins, Sizer, and Keough through the Yale library.

Dean Sawyer's recollection is that, initially, Chester Kerr, head of the Yale University Press, proposed that, if the Press hired another designer, it would be a joint-appointment with the Division of the Arts. Sawyer was to allocate funds for the appointment, and the person hired would initiate a program in graphic arts. This was shortly after the appointment of Josef Albers. The educational concept formulated by Sawyer and Kerr was that the program would be directed toward professional practice and identified as graphic arts. The program would reflect work done at the Yale University Press.

This accounts for the early curriculum's emphasis on typography, printing processes; and production, book, and periodical design.

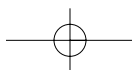
Dean Sawyer had known Albers for a number of years, having first met him at Andover around 1938. During 1948, Albers was invited to Yale as a Visiting Critic. Shortly afterwards, Dean Sawyer and George Howe, Chairman of Architecture at the time, met with Albers in New York City. Both men were aware that Charles Kuhn at Harvard University was interested in hiring Albers, although the faculty there was not particularly enthusiastic about such an appointment. This lent a certain urgency to the interview, and Dean Sawyer immediately began negotiations with Albers, whose appointment was publicly announced sometime around November of 1949.

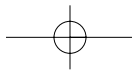
Sy Sillman, a student of Albers at Black Mountain College, came with him as his assistant. Sillman carried on the program in color and drawing after Albers retired from the university during 1958. Albers was a strong believer in interdisciplinary studies for all of the visual arts programs. During 1950, in a letter to Alvin Lustig, Albers describes the program as, "...most of the students are majoring in painting—I encourage the painters to learn lettering and typography—they are inclined to think first of etching, lithography, etc. Just recently, we were able to introduce class problems with emphasis on typographic problems."⁷

The entire department reflected the educational philosophies of Albers throughout his tenure at Yale University. It was the stature of Albers and his reputation that attracted so many outstanding critics to join the program at Yale.

Shortly after the appointment of Albers, Paul Nash at Dartmouth called Chester Kerr to recommend Alvin Eisenman as a replacement for Carl Rollins when he retired. Eisenman was hired as a joint appointment to work at Yale University Press, and he became the first Lecturer in Graphic Arts. Eisenman coordinated the various Visiting Lecturers and oversaw program affairs. His prim-

7 Personal papers of Elaine Lustig Cohen.





ary teaching responsibility was typography, which included the history of type.

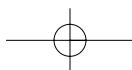
Alvin Lustig was invited to join the design program by Josef Albers. Elaine Lustig Cohen has kept the telegram, dated February 6, 1951, from Albers offering Alvin a position as Visiting Critic in the graphic arts program. As previously mentioned, Lustig had taught a course called graphic design in conjunction with Albers at Black Mountain College during the summer of 1946. Lustig began his role as Visiting Critic from March through June of 1951.

In the initial class, there were approximately fifteen students, some at an under-graduate level and others as graduate students. John McCrillis and Norman Ives were among these early graduate students. Both were to become teachers at a later date, with Norman Ives becoming a full-time faculty member following his graduation in 1952 and teaching at Yale until his death in 1978. Herbert Matter was recruited during 1951 for the faculty. Gabor Peterdi was appointed in 1953 as the instructor in printmaking. By 1955, Joseph Low, Leo Lionni, Robert Osborn, Lester Beall, and Alexey Brodovitch had participated as Visiting Lecturers.

There were a number of illustrious visitors, such as Buckminster Fuller, who came as critics or lecturers in Architecture but also visited the design program. I recollect Lou Kahn, Senior Critic in Architecture, coming into the graphic design studios at night and "holding court" with design students who were working late. These were very stimulating discussions.

The following generation of visiting instructors included Walker Evans, Bradbury Thompson, Paul Rand, and Armin Hofmann among others. John Hill became a faculty member and taught photography. Eisenman and Ives continued in their faculty roles.

Although the program was listed as "graphic arts" in the catalog, most students referred to it as "graphic design." Sometime during the late 1950s, Robin Darwin, Director of the Royal College of Art in London, and Richard Guyatt, a design teacher there, visited the Yale design program. Darwin chided Eisenman for calling the program "graphic arts" because that suggested printmaking. Darwin and Guyatt both recommended "graphic design" and soon thereafter, graphic arts was officially changed to graphic design. At the beginning, graphic arts occupied two basement rooms within Street Hall. When I arrived during the fall of 1953, graphic design had moved into the basement of the new Kahn building, with the Yale Museum and the architects on the upper floors. The graphic design studios were off a sunken court, so one wall was all glass, allowing considerable natural light. There was one large studio with sawhorse and hollow door tables. Vandercook proof-presses, type cabinets, and work tables were at the rear of the studio. A row of steel lockers defined the right edge of the work tables. The office and pinup boards were at the front. The door at the front opened into the hallway, supply closet, and the York Street exit and stairs, or



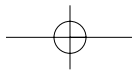
you could go straight through into the printmaking area. The rear door opened into a photographic shooting area with light stands, print dryer, darkrooms, and copy-camera room. All art classes were in old Street Hall.

Every graphic design student was required to take six-week courses in photography, printmaking, and typesetting. The course in photography was to instruct students in photographic processes so that they might better understand the language and problems of professional photographers (However, Jay Maisel and Bruce Davidson were graduates from the early program). Other than using their own cameras, students were introduced to a copy-camera and photo-mechanics. They could enlarge, reduce, copy, and make photostats. Richard Avedon's posterization of photographic images using high-contrast film was popular at that time, and students were quick to emulate many of his techniques. They also were heavily involved in using found images, in particular, nineteenth century wood engravings or other images drawn from historical sources. This direction is readily understood because of their newfound expertise with a copy-camera. Also, there were students in the program with little or no training in drawing or design. Photography, collage, or using found imagery permitted them to execute class projects. There was one 4 x 5 view camera, and students did some studio photographic work with lighting.

The course in printmaking required students to initially work with intaglio and relief processes. A few years later, Herb Fink taught lithography. These mediums were viewed as prototype education for the three basic printing processes of letterpress, offset, and gravure. Printmaking also was a natural outlet for fine art students in painting and drawing. At Yale, printmaking was common ground for fine artists and designers, since the lab was adjacent to the graphic design studios and workshops.

The principal focus of the program was typography, printing, printing production and book or periodical design. Typography was taught as a minimal art—you did not change typefaces or sizes if priorities could be established through leading or placement. There always was painstaking consideration for the choice and appropriateness of type as it related to content and function. The "color" or "texture" of text was an important consideration. There was equal concern for margins. The standard for styling was to use as few type changes as possible, and to rely more on visual tension, leading, and placement. Typesetting was taught in a letterpress shop using Vandercook proofing machines and foundry type or monotype.

Every student was required to purchase the two volumes of *Printing Types: Their History, Form and Use* by Daniel Updike. Most of us studied these books with great diligence. Students became adept at type identification. Typographic and printing histories were very important within the program. Most students became



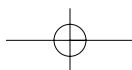
avid collectors of display types. These were recorded on 4 x 5 ortho film negatives and kept in files. In conjunction with type, there was extensive involvement with all aspects of printing production, which included lectures and field trips. Graphic design graduates were considerably more knowledgeable about printing production than their counterparts graduating from art schools.

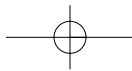
In 1953, Eisenman while on a trip to Europe, purchased some magnificent large wood types from Derberny and Peignot—an old and illustrious French type house. Students inked these types individually with small brayers and hand stamped them onto newsprint or rice paper. Many of these playful student exercises were to find their way into the later work of graduates, when they became professional designers.

At the same time that graphic design students were taking type, photography, printmaking, and printing production, they were required to take Albers's color class. A number of design students elected to enrolling drawing classes taught by Albers or Bernard Chaet. As I remember, art or architectural history were required and students chose other electives from the Yale College curriculum. Herbert Matter taught photography and, on occasion, design. Eisenman was responsible for typography and printing production; Ives concentrated in design. Peterdi instructed in printmaking, and the Visiting Lecturers gave students either short or extended practical problems. In their last year at Yale, graduate students were expected to find a manuscript (or write one), and then to design, print, and bind an edition of fifty books. By the time of the second generation of instructors—the late 1950s—book projects were no longer required.

Critiques and reviews were conducted by several teachers working together, which broadened the scope of criticism and discussion enormously. Teachers worked as a unit, so there was no pigeon-holing of classes in separate rooms with separate instructors. Students were expected to perform competently in all the areas of design, typography, printmaking, and photography. To fail in any one area was to fail the program. (I do not remember any student ever being failed, but we were told, and we believed, that to fail one course was to fail them all). Treating the program of study as a whole strengthened the interrelationships between the various areas and, combined with team-teaching of sorts, made graphic design at Yale different from design instruction at the majority of other schools during that period.

Grading was done at the end of each semester by review. Eisenman, Ives, and one or more of the Visiting Critics would occupy the front office. Students would come into the room one at a time with their portfolio. A timer from the photography lab was set for fifteen minutes. The reviews were conducted by Alvin Eisenman. They consisted of all faculty members present examining and discussing the student work along with some general counseling.





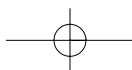
When the timer sounded, the review was over and you were out of there.

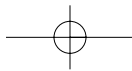
The new design program at Yale was unique in several other respects. The curriculum of design, typography, photography, and printmaking was exclusive to it. The faculty and the Visiting Lecturers constituted the most prestigious concentration of designers teaching at one school in the country. That failure in one course was to fail the entire program was a new concept. Team teaching was relatively different, and grading through review was an innovation not found at most other schools. Undergraduate and graduate design students were mixed together in the studios, so every student knew every other student. Concentration in the major and other visual art courses was considerably more than allowed at that time by art schools, and several times over what was permitted at other universities. I recall taking only three academic courses—art history with Theodore Sizer and John McCoubrey, and two semesters of anthropology with Ralph Linton.

There was a great deal of interaction between undergraduate and graduate students within the graphic art studio. Combining undergraduate with graduate students and holding critiques in the studio opened up all critiques and discussions to all students. Admission policies permitted individuals to be accepted into the program who previously had not taken art or design. The main criteria was that they were bright, motivated, and knowledgeable in their field. Albers's correspondence with Lustig during the first year suggests that at the time, most, if not all the students were from fine arts. I recall that my class for the fall of 1953 included four students who came from unaccredited art schools (three advertising design majors and one printmaker), one from a technical school (photography), one was a pre-med student at Amherst who took the Yale summer program and changed school and major, one had a journalism background with no art or design experience—the others I do not remember. According to Dean Sawyer, upper administration at Yale was never enthusiastic about his admissions policies for graduate students in the Division of the Arts. Administration continually questioned the "academic" credibility of students accepted into professional programs.

During the early years, Dean Sawyer accepted students directly into art programs on several occasions. While serving as an Examiner for the Honors College at Wesleyan in Middletown, Connecticut during 1949, Sawyer was so impressed with Norman Ives that he immediately invited him into the Yale program. Sawyer accepted me from the Minneapolis School of Art while on a lecture tour through the Midwest during 1953.

Dean Sawyer was a close friend of Dana Vaughn, dean, and Ray Dowdin, chairman of art at Cooper Union. The three men believed an alliance to be in their common interest, particularly since Cooper Union enrolled many talented students from the New





York High School of Music and the Arts. At a later date, Ray Dowdin was to direct the Yale Summer Program.

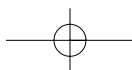
It was the mid-to-late 1960s before graduates from graphic design programs regularly applied at Yale. It is my impression that, as time went on, policies for acceptance into graphic design changed. More minority and foreign students were accepted and, almost without exception, each applicant had an undergraduate degree in graphic design. The earlier strategy for admissions into graphic arts at Yale had been to create an environment that would nurture graphic designers without predicting which students eventually would develop into designers. I think the policy of accepting talented students from a variety of disciplines was lost over a period of years, and in my opinion, it took something very vital away from the overall program.

As the reputation of the graphic arts program grew, so did the number of applicants. By the mid-'60s and afterwards, this number swelled to several hundred each year. It is a credit to the program and Yale University that, no matter how many applicants, the number of students accepted did not change, and the evaluation and interview of applicants remained scrupulous.

The prestige and resources of Yale University itself were powerful forces in shaping and enriching the design program. Yale University attracted the best teachers, critics, and students. The reputation of Yale added considerable luster to the credentials of graduates when they sought employment. The prestige of Yale University induced industry to provide corporate support and become involved with its graphic design program. The success of the program also reflects the strength of leadership and vision in the Dean's office at the time that art at Yale University was being redefined and new programs adopted. It is my impression that support for Dean Sawyer by higher administration cooled within the space of just a few years. Dean Sawyer soon was replaced by Boyd Smith from drama as Interim or Acting Dean. He remained in office until 1958, when Gibson Danes was hired as Dean. However, momentum from the first few years of the new programs conceived by Dean Sawyer continued for a decade and more.

The influence of Josef Albers on graphic design students was of greater import than many graduates realized then or now. Unfortunately, not every graphic design student recognized the value of his teaching, but those who did realized benefits that lasted throughout their careers. Only recently, Alvin Eisenman related to me an anecdote about Albers which is so typical of him. When anyone asked him to comment on matters pertaining to graphic design, he would defer them to Lustig or Eisenman by saying, "I am not a graphic designer but my nonsense is helpful to them."

Color and drawing courses were attended by students from painting, printmaking, sculpture, architecture, and graphic design as well as from Yale College. This mixture of students was unusual





in itself. Student interaction was spontaneous and unstructured, but highly effective. This was due, to a large extent, to the high degree of respect generated by Albers.

Albers was a tremendous influence on students, but there were others. Among the Visiting Lecturers, Lustig preached, “The solution to any design problem lies within an analysis of the problem.” Lustig also defined graphic design as communication, and believed that designers always should ask themselves, “What am I trying to communicate? Can I communicate more clearly?” A number of influential designers have always been willing to teach, but Lustig differed in that he was interested in educational planning and organization. He was more concerned with an overview of total programs than most professionals. He had never had an art school or university education himself, and this might have been a motivational factor in his concern for design education. According to Elaine Lustig Cohen, the greatest design influence on Alvin was a German émigré art instructor, a Professor Koplick⁸ who taught at a junior college in Los Angeles. Before coming to Yale, Lustig had drawn up design programs for the Universities of Georgia and North Carolina. His educational interests are clearly revealed in a small book published after his death by a graduate student at Yale, *The Collected Writings of Alvin Lustig*.⁹

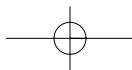
Lester Beall presented his projects through a written problem statement in which he included misleading information to challenge students to separate the relevant from the irrelevant—to analyze. Alexey Brodovitch emphasized experiments. He once gave a photo assignment to cover a hurricane which was headed for New Haven. The storm veered inland sixty miles south, and left students with only wind and rain. When students showed their photographs, his comments were that the photographs did not reflect a hurricane. When students protested the difficulty of photographing an event which did not take place, his reply was to send them into the dark-room and create a hurricane!

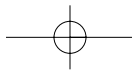
Eisenman and Thompson concentrated on printing history, type, and typographic styling. Eisenman taught students that type was “important” and, knowing this, most students treated type as being important. Perhaps of even greater significance, Eisenman introduced the concept of typographic and printing history, with historical research into the graphic design educational program. Until this time, design students had to be content with either art or architectural history. To this day, I am amazed at Eisenman’s grasp of the breadth and detail of printing and typographic history. It is entirely possible that the present inclusion of design history into graphic design programs evolved from the type and printing history first taught by Eisenman at Yale.

Bradbury Thompson focused on publication design and the history of type. His first design job had been with the Westvaco Paper Company in 1938, where he designed the “Inspirations” jour-

8 Elaine Lustig Cohen cannot be certain if this spelling is correct.

9 *The Collected Writings of Alvin Lustig* Holland R. Melson, Jr. ed., (New York: Thistle Press, 1958).

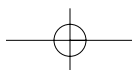


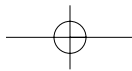


nal. Ives primarily was interested in formal values. His special magic was his ability to silk-screen two colors on a twenty-cent piece of paper in a manner that students carefully picked it up at the extreme edges with thumb and forefinger. Matter insisted that students carry their cameras at all times, and use them constantly in all places and situations. He would not permit us to go across the street for a cup of coffee without taking our cameras. This most gentle old man, with his hair going in all directions and the inevitable cigarette with the long ash could be deadly in critique. When confronted with pictures of babies, pets, or similarly saccharine subjects, he would say, "That's nice, that's always nice!"

Paul Rand insisted on quality, and especially that design solutions must be relevant to the content and objectives of the problem. Rand was most responsive to humor or playfulness in design and, as a teacher, he encouraged it. Rand, as did Lustig, had a keen interest in education. Armin Hofmann, an instructor from the Kunst Gewerbeschule at Basel, Switzerland, stressed formal values more strongly than anyone since Albers. Many of his American and European students from Basel were hired into American corporations, design studios and educational institutions, and several of them taught or lectured at Yale. Under his tutelage, students at Yale developed strong handskills and perceptual sensitivity. Hofmann, as did Albers, understood perceptual studies and was very successful in teaching students to recognize and use visual properties. Influences shaping graphic design students came more from contact with a variety of individuals than from any one "school" or "philosophical" approach. A common characteristics of the faculty was that many of them were European educated. Only Paul Rand had any strong connection with advertising. Most faculty members were well-schooled in art and design history, although several were educated in fields other than art or design. Eisenman, a Dartmouth graduate, studied typography with Paul Nash and had a book design and publishing background. Beall had been educated in art history. Lustig did not have a formal education in art or design. Lionni was educated as an economist in Italy and was a self-taught graphic designer. Matter studied painting at the Ecole des Beaux-arts in Geneva and the Academie Moderne in Paris under Leger and Ozenfant. Thompson was a graduate of Washburn College, a small liberal arts school in Kansas. He had been a cartographer during World War II. Paul Rand, largely self-taught, was influenced by European painters and designers. He attended night classes at Pratt Institute, took some courses at Parsons School of Design and studied with George Grosz at the Art Students League.

Albers and Hofmann understood visual theory and were effective teachers in this area. Lustig, Lionni, Beall, and Matter taught from professional experience, and they dealt with the practical. However, all of them were superb role models and contributed a great deal to the overall educational experience of students.





What took place in graphic design at Yale during the formative years not always was by plan or intention, and its uniqueness was seldom realized by faculty members. It was the students who recognized the value and distinction of the new program. This was especially true for those students who had attended another school before coming to Yale.

Students did not see themselves as preparing for careers in advertising or commercial art. They viewed graphic design as being focused on problem solving and communication, and something quite separate from advertising. Graphic design students saw design as being professional rather than service-oriented, and similar to architecture in status. Seldom has a single school or program had such an immediate and overwhelming impact on any profession as did graphic design at Yale University during the 1950s and 1960s. It had a similar impact on design education. By 1968, graphic design programs were beginning to surpass advertising programs at American art schools and universities.

The spectrum of student backgrounds and credentials in graphic design narrowed with time. Graphic design moved from the Kahn Building across the street to the new art building designed by Paul Rudolph. The Division of the Arts became the School of Art; and the graphic arts program became graphic design. Photography eventually became a separate program. No matter how much change took place during succeeding years, the integrity of the graphic design program remained consistent under the leadership of Alvin Eisenman, who retired in the Spring of 1991.

The author's own recollections have been greatly enriched through telephone conversations, correspondence and sharing of personal papers with the following individuals, and he is greatly indebted for their kind assistance: Dr. Charles Sawyer, Professor Emerti Alvin Eisenman, Elaine Lustig Cohen's sharing of correspondence between Josef Albers and her husband and the late James Fogelman.

