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## **Modern Elements in the Graphic Arts**

Carroll Arimond

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MODERN ELEMENTS IN THE GRAPHIC ARTS

by

Carroll Arimond

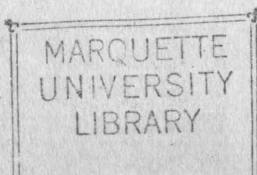
Approved by:

*Wm. D. Roberts*  
Major Professor

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty  
of the College of Journalism,  
Marquette University, in  
Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for  
the Degree of Bachelor  
of Arts in Journalism.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

May, 1931.





Introduction.  
Prologue.

Chapter I. Modernism Defined.

- a. How it has been outlined in the fine arts.
- b. Its entrance into the graphic arts.
- c. The key words of modernism.

Chapter II. Modernism in Layout.

- a. The asymmetrical, or off-center, layout.
- b. The enlarged white-space layout.

Approved by:

Chapter III. Modernism in Type.

- a. The modern type; and their characteristics.
- b. Typographical tricks.
- c. Special printing processes.
- d. The main effect of modernism on the industry.

*Maynard W. Brown*  
Major Professor

Chapter IV. Modernism in Illustration.

- a. Photography revived and affected mechanically.
- aa. The diffused photograph.
- ab. The wide angle plate.
- ac. The milk line photograph . . . . .
- ad. The silhouette photograph . . . . .
- ae. Direct color photography.

Dean

Date *April 7, 1931* . . . . .

- a. Modernism synonymous with impressionism.
- b. Contrast of old and modern types of advertisement.
- c. The permanence of modernism.
- d. Modernism as a good effect upon the graphic arts.

## Outline

Introduction.

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- b. The enlarged white-space layout.

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- b. Typographical tricks.
- c. Special printing processes.
- d. The main effects of modernism on the type industry.

Chapter IV. Modernism in Illustration.

- a. Photography revived and affected mechanically.
  - aa. The diffused photograph.
  - bb. The wide angle plate.
  - cc. The still life photograph.
  - dd. The silhouette photograph.
  - ee. Direct color photography.

Chapter V. Conclusion.

- a. Modernism synonymous with impressionism.
- b. Contrast of old and modern types of advertisement.
- c. The permanence of modernism.
- d. Modernism as a good effect upon the graphic arts.

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Tailoring the Photograph to Produce Unusual Results. Printers' Ink Monthly, July, 1928.

## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to define and illustrate what is meant by the word "modernism" as applied to art, and how it has evidenced itself in the graphic arts - namely, printing, lithography, and the other applied arts which appeal to the sense of sight. The samples of the graphic arts used in the compilation of this thesis are from the pages of America's leading magazines portraying to the reader the influence of the new school on the advertising industry. Hence the ultimate purpose will be to show how advertising has been revolutionized in its mechanics and to prophesy from this first premise what American advertising experts, editors, and publishers may expect to find in the future.

Personal interviews with Frank H. Sawicki of the Pontiac Engraving and Electrotype Company of Chicago, Ill., and Frank J. Vander Heiden of the Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, Wis.

## Method

The method undertaken in developing this treatise on "Modern Elements in the Graphic Arts" has been to select current articles from advertising magazines and books together with a close study of the advertisements appearing in our national magazines over a period of two years. In developing the subject the three essential parts of every advertisement are analysed and then discussed so as to show how they have been influenced by the entrance of a new school of graphic art. By way of introduction, before entering into the wider field of the applied graphic arts, the meaning of "Modernism" is defined and explained in its bearing on the fine arts. The section on color photography was written following personal interviews with Frank M. Mawicke of the Pontiac Engraving and Electrotype Company of Chicago, Ill., and Frank L. Vander Heiden of the Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, Wis.



## Prologue

Out of a hidden radio speaker reverberate soft, symphonic yet syncopated tones. A thousand miles distant a dance orchestra is playing to hundreds of people. An elevated railroad train screeches its way around a curve, headed for the heart of the city. One level below, high-powered automobiles are starting and stopping, with a squeaking of brakes and grinding of gears, each one of them able to annihilate its human master, but held in check and moved about the city by automatic lights, like puppets controlled by a single maestro. Another level below, crowds are jamming their ways into subway trains ready to convey them to varied destinations. Overhead spotlights are playing on tall skyscrapers while still can be heard the drumming of the riveters' hammers as they lay fast a beam on the ninety-eighth floor of a new skyscraper. Day and night it continues, bustling, hurrying, so that speed has become the criterion of ability. And what is it all about, this force which has invaded life? It is modernism; a reaction, a new renaissance, destined to outlive its predecessors in achievement and permanence. It has invaded life and art and stoops to conquer. The conquest is not yet complete, but the preliminary battles are won.

its own, and destined, it seems, to be set down in history together with Classicism, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, and Renaissance - words which conjure up memories of past

## Chapter I. of people. There has

## Modernism

Modernism is a title given to a school of thought which at present is encompassing life and all its accompanying circumstances, art, science, philosophy, education, politics and religion. The growth of this school has been somewhat sudden, though for years, artistically, it was hanging in the balance of uncertainty, under such headings as impressionism, futurism, cubism, and a host of other terms laid to it by sneering and disinterested critics.

Modernism seeks to combine the useful and the beautiful into a composite, containing the fine points of both. Victorian art and science sought only to be useful, judging, illogically, that being useful it would be good and being good nothing else mattered. The world has changed its dress many times since 1880. American homes no longer contain marble-topped fireplaces, which may have kept the rooms warm but drove artists and scholars to cold damp attics.

People have grown tired of seeing things which were meant solely to be useful and have reacted. That reaction has developed into modernism and today finds a modern touch bespeaking the spirit of the age into life with a life all its own, and destined, it seems, to be set down in history together with Classicism, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, and Renaissance - words which conjure up memories of past



reactions in the minds and lives of peoples. There has been a reaction. People are set on enjoying life not only by making things useful, but also by making all things useful and yet beautiful, a factor not impossible for it has been done before. The Athenian Parthenon was a useful building in its day, while even today, as in the past, it is not generally referred to as an eyesore.

### Modernism in the Fine Arts

The foregoing analysis of modernism is one drawn by this writer after a study of various critics on the subject, none of whom agree exactly with one another. Hence from a vast field of differing opinions a conclusion is drawn, one which is believed to be as accurate as available considering what the contemporaries on art and advertising have to say about the elusive topic of modernism.

One renowned British authority on the modern trend of art in advertising expresses his views as follows:<sup>1</sup>

"A great revolution is taking place. It is taking place in architecture, in furniture, in painting, in writing, in music, in habits, in thought, and in outlook. 'Humanity has struck its tents, and is once more on the march.' I believe this revolution is as yet only in its earliest beginnings. I believe that we have not even begun to visualize the transformation it will eventually bring about in every theatre of human activity. If you ask me the name of this revolution - I cannot tell you. It has none, I think - for 'modernism' is a word which seems to me to have lost what little meaning it ever had. In one sense even, it is not a revolution at all. For there is no

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1 Crawford, Sir William, K.B.E. "What Gives Our Dreams Their Daring Is That They Can be Realised." *Le Courbusier* - in *Modern Publicity* for 1930, pp. 17-18.

such thing, strictly speaking, in the world.<sup>1</sup>  
 'Things are not revolutionised, by making revolutions,' says Le Corbusier. 'The real revolution lies in the solution of existing problems.'

'Modernism,' which must use the old, uses it in a new and better way. It accepts no method merely because it has been used before. It criticises the categories and assumptions of the past. It takes the old material on the one hand and the problem on the other hand - and starts afresh. Where the muddled wanderings of the pack donkey traced the winding lines - imagination and intelligence now cut the straight line of the arterial road.

Imagination projects. Intelligence selects. And out of the sand and lime and water of the old earth, there stands against the sky the new building."

Concerning the prize advertisements of England which he selected for a commercial art annual for their beauty and practicability for their products, he explains:<sup>2</sup>

"Study the advertisements which I have chosen here for their 'modernness.' You will recognize in them the same simplicity, the same clearness of intention, the same dynamic virility, which you will see in the clean lines of the aeroplane, of the latest buildings, of the 1930 motor-car. They are the expressions of a new age, an age in which our eyes and ears are filled with sights and sounds to which humanity is as yet but little accustomed - an age in which young and adventurous and vigorous minds are challenging long accumulated traditions."

An American typographical expert and advertising art critic presents a new angle to the question of the "why of modernism in art?" and sets about to define the advent of this new phase of thought, by setting the date of its ar-

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1 Op. Cit.

2 Ibid.



rival, arbitrarily of course, and giving a little of the background of the beginnings of the movement in the fine arts. He reveals:<sup>1</sup>

"This movement may be said to date from the close of the world war, the restless and revolutionary spirit which then prevailed serving to unloose the fetters of tradition and allow free play to the imagination and creative impulse of a younger generation of artists. The impulse was to discard the old order, artistic as well as political, and seek a radically new and wider horizon."

Delving into the field of fine arts as a basis to its entry into the applied arts and graphic arts he asserts:<sup>2</sup>

"The movement which developed has been earlier foreshadowed in painting and sculpture by such men as Cezanne and Picasso. In the applied arts the first development was decoration in new and different motifs, a phase which might be designated as the 'nouveau art.' As the better thinkers, however, strove for a new ideal, they found it in a purer simplicity, a discard of all extraneous appendages, a minimization of decoration approaching the zero point. The principle was evolved that every object should perfectly conform to the purpose for which it was designed, that it should not hide its structural character and should not disguise the material from which it was constructed.

Thus came into being the now well known dictum of the true modernists that 'form follows function.' A corollary is, of course, that no element which does not contribute to function is tolerated.

In reducing the applied arts to their simplest possible terms there has come about a wide use of straight lines, planes, angles and geometric forms. These are of course the simplest of all forms and therefore most in consonance with the principles basic in modernism.

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1 McMurtrie, Douglas, in "Modern Typography" in "Some Modern Ludlow Type Faces."

2 Ibid.

### Modernism in the Graphic Arts

In defense of true "Modernism" in art another American advertising expert enters into the discussion with an explanation of the movement in the advertising field and defends its name in the face of severe critics whose attentions have been centered on what he believes to be misrepresentations of true modernism in art:<sup>1</sup>

"I would say the trouble with most of the stuff parading under the name of 'Modernism' is that in the majority everything is apparently sacrificed to gain attention regardless of whether or not anyone can read it or understand what it is all about. 'Get attention at any cost!' Scramble everything to do it. And the sorry part of it is that they don't even get attention when twenty or thirty other advertisements in the same publication are trying for it in the same manner. In vying with each other in freak pictures and layout, they all become worse than just ordinary. It's like swimming in the channel - after it is done once or twice, people just become bored to death with it.

Like everything else worth while, good advertising in the modernistic style requires the use of plenty of gray matter (and that's not paint). It doesn't just happen. And therein lies the secret of it all.

Another critic viewing the entries in advertising art in the 1929 National Academy exposition, takes a more pessimistic outlook toward the development of the movement in the future. He retaliates as does the above authority, however, by explaining the true elements of the modern school in art as distinguished from the more radical misrepresentations which masquerade under the caption of

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1 McKinney, J. R. Modern Art vs. Scrambled Art in Printers' Ink Monthly for March, 1928.



"Modernism." In reply to a query, "Is the vogue for modern art in advertising passing out?" he affirms:<sup>1</sup>

"What my friend, whose remark was quoted in the opening paragraph, meant by modern art was doubtless a matter of angles and distortion related somehow to cubism. It is true that modern art in that sense is on the wane. There are a few vestiges of cubism in the 1929 show and those that appear are amusing bits used intelligently as design and not as illustration.

Modern art has, however, made great strides since the public became aware of cubism; 'school' has succeeded 'school,' and it should not be a matter of surprise if advertising art, trailing the pioneers in painting at a distance of ten to twenty-five years, should not have absorbed some of the philosophy of these leaders.

Yet what fairly entitles this show to the appellation of 'modern' is not on the one hand superficial oddities in the use of the brush or crayon, or on the other hand a disposition to paint like one or another of the French innovators. It is first of all a manner of using abstract qualities such as color, line, rhythm, to create an effect, in addition to that conveyed by the subject matter. And secondly it is basic sincerity."

All the authorities quoted so far view the movement with a skeptical air. Few of them feel able to step up to the issue and lay their finger on it and give it a name. Yet that would be no small matter, for to date the subject is a touchy one for artists and advertising critics alike. It is difficult to point out just what sets out the new movement from its predecessors and what makes it art, while cubism and futurism, now laughed-at motifs of post-war days are sneered at by artists in the same fashion as

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1 Johnson, Pierce. Present Trends in Advertising Art in Printers' Ink Monthly for June, 1929.

elders comfortingly smile at the crayon drawing of kindergarten pupils.

As far as can be determined, this writer believes that the criterion of the modernistic is the impression of a thing rather than the same subject portrayed in all its concrete details. The authority quoted below delves into the source of this new artistic movement and concludes with somewhat of an impressionistic theory. He relates in a recent magazine article to advertising men:<sup>1</sup>

"The modernistic in advertising art is the offshoot of the newer schools in fine art which in turn are the result of a swerve from tradition on the part of Cezanne, Picasso, Matisse, et al. Cezanne tried to make his paintings express more than a realistic rendering could give no matter how photographic it might be. He tried to use the forms of his composition so that they became more significant than mere shapes.

The men who followed him have strived for much the same and with individual variations. They broke down the old tradition completely and tried to go back to the primitive and start from the beginning. Matisse delved into Persian sources; Picasso, the African; and Bracque, Gothic architecture.

Being a new development in advertising art, the modernistic is still fluid and has created no new dogmatic principles, although it has broken down the old ones. The theory of the modernistic is based on art principles that will hold through time and can be compared to poetry. By means of images expressed through metaphor and simile, the poet increases the vitality of the materials he is using, words. The modernistic artist adds to traditional art his imagery. He creates an impression without regard to the idealistic form of the subject he paints. The modernistic artist, through his imagery, adds to the variety and

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1 Musser, Byron. Is the Modernistic Appeal Dangerous? in Printers' Ink Monthly for October, 1928.



significance of the materials he uses; color,<sup>1</sup> line, and form. As in poetry he expresses a fourth dimension."

Departing from the field of the artist who works with brush and crayons this authority who "finds modern advertising art hard to define, because it is contemporary",<sup>2</sup> enters into the field of photography which has found a new impetus in the advertising field with the advent of the modernistic school. He explains how the camera is used to greater advantage for the advertising man looking for real live illustrations. Like the above author he works upon the fourth dimension theory as employed by the photographer:<sup>3</sup>

"This new viewpoint has brought the camera back from what at one time seemed extinction. The artist, as the photographer has for many years, moved his object and its subsidiary elements around to get what he considered an 'artistic' arrangement. He posed his subjects generally so that the observer's line of vision was at right angles to a straight up and down position of the object. The trend today is not to stage these objects so apparently, yet through careful staging, secure a naturalness that is striking. Take, for instance, the perspective of a person before you walking up a flight of stairs. This perspective is a common one to the human eye, yet until recently would have been considered bizarre and inartistic if so photographed or depicted on canvas. Catching the human form or everyday objects in the positions in which we see them continually day after day is not distorting them but merely showing them in true reality.

Another way in which the contemporary artist differs is in his elimination of detail in the illustration, detail that for many years was considered the test of an artist and necessary

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1 Op. Cit.

2 Campbell, Stuart. Modern vs. Modernistic Art, in Printers' Ink Monthly for December, 1928.

3 Ibid.

to the almost photographic reproduction of an<sup>1</sup> object. Taking his cue from the caricaturist without necessarily going the limit, the contemporary artist leaves out the non-essentials and subtly emphasizes a feature here and a line there, with the result that his work carries more power.

Again the contemporary artist, in keeping with the speed of the age, sometimes tries to get his message over more quickly. He simplifies the atmosphere. Instead of making a faithful reproduction of a background, he merely gives a hint, but presented in such a way that the hint leaves no doubt in the observer's mind as to the intention.

The idea of a hint instead of a whole and faithful reproduction makes for the sophistication of the contemporary artist. And sophistication, perhaps more than anything else, is the key-note of the day.

Commenting on advertising art in the United States for 1930 and prefacing a collection of prize advertisements of the nation for their outstanding appeal to the public and beauty and force in layout, copy and illustration, this authority includes in his article:<sup>2</sup>

"Modernism or what is conceived to be modernism, has profoundly influenced American advertising design in both the pictorial treatment and the typography. A good deal that is merely eccentric, the attempt to be different, is wrongly classed as modernism, but principally the movement is an effort to shake off the old realistic treatment which has reached such a dead level of excellence in still life painting as to render it difficult to give an advertisement by the old methods the distinction and individuality it should have. More and more art directors have strived to express not merely things but the ideas; not so much the picture of a motor car as motion, action, transportation; not so much a vanity product as lure, charm, fascination; not so much a breakfast food as gustatory delight, vigor, health vitamins,

1 Op. Cit.

2 Calkins, Earnest Elmo. Advertising Art in the United States, in Modern Publicity for 1930, p. 151.



sunlight. The movement taken in its entirety<sup>1</sup> is slowly transforming industrial America. It is the one hope we have of beauty in the machine age.

### The Key Words of Modernism

This series of excerpts gives one a quite thorough cross-section of the modern movement in the fine arts, being the consensus of opinion of some of the most outstanding leaders in the advertising field today. Although on a few of the minor details they do not wholly agree, in the main theses of their opinions, the views of most of them are much in harmony. Summing up therefore, from this symposium of critical ideas, the threads of the modern trend in the fine arts include such keywords as "impression," "sophistication," "action."

The modern idea is truly one of impressionism. Therein lies the seed of the reaction from the preceding types of art. In the past artists strove to present their object boldly on the canvas, standing out as the one idea in their minds to be reproduced. Nothing was left to the imagination. The artist's thoughts were on his canvas. The spectator had but to view and see the reproduction of the artist's model or the phantasm within his imagination.

Under the new system, however, the result is very much the opposite. The artist puts down, not in rough, bold lines the reproduction of his subject, but rather

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1 Op. Cit., p. 157.

tries as he is best able to place on the canvas his impression of what he saw through his sense of sight. He attempts to outline in mystical touches an eerie phantom of his subject and allows the spectator to fill in the missing lines and form his own conception of the idea. In a word, he merely gives the reader a hint.

The artist achieves a certain sophistication in his work by omitting the multitude of frills and fine details that formerly were considered a necessity in art circles to prove to the masses that the artist was a master of his technique. This prejudice has been removed and no longer is it necessary for him to detail in line and color an enormous background, under the opinion that his subject would not look correct without a highly decorated background. This is sophistication, a warranted emphasis on the major theme of the opus, the minor details to be filled in by the understanding eye of the intelligent spectator.

Action is the prime requisite of the modern work of art. Without it, it is dead, cold and inanimate. Action portrays use and use a certain beauty that makes the product drawn live. Perhaps the finest example of action portrayed simply in advertising was printed in the early part of 1930 in our national American magazines, by the Chrysler Motor company. The painting took but a small portion of the full page advertisement. Across the white



space of the sheet were drawn three curved lines of varied colors and at the lower termination of the lines was the radiator-cap of the Chrysler motor-car, a familiar symbol to motorists and pedestrians alike. Around the illustration were a few lines of type announcing the new models of the Chrysler car. The rest was white space. There was action, portrayed by a few lines, with no accompanying frills and backgrounds. Those lines denoted speed, in its strongest language, and the radiator cap meant "Chrysler." What more could be told in a single page ad with more force than that?

Thus concludes this chapter on the modern trend in the fine arts. As the discussion passes on to the applied arts in general and specifically the graphic arts, to which advertising solely owes its power, the reader finds all these elements which have evidenced themselves in painting, sculpture and architecture now accepted by national and world-renowned advertising men employed in placing before the public eye the products to satisfy the thousand and one needs of man in everyday life.

In the following pages the advertisement will be considered from the elements of layout, illustration and type, how they all have been affected by this world-wide movement of modernism, and how this demand has revolutionized the type-founding, engraving and printing industries.

## Chapter II.

### Modernism in Layout

In considering the invasion of the modern movement upon the advertising field of art it is only logical to begin with the layout, or general plan of the advertisement. It is necessarily true, since in America the merits of an advertisement are judged by the advertisement as a whole, the complete space it occupies, while in European circles critics place the illustration foremost, and consider the type, white space, and borders as auxiliary to the picture.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Asymmetrical Layout

The layout has been affected by modernism, in what is called the asymmetrical or dynamic form. In the past all advertisements were planned upon a symmetrical basis. That is, for every picture there was a balancing piece of copy. Everything was in line, margins were all identical, so that the advertisement at first glance presented a perfectly symmetrical plan, static in its description. However, the modern trend with its freedom brought a new plan. Advertisements and many forms of commercial printing needed more action and life in their design than was given through the symmetrical plan. The expert layout men pushed the masses around so that they could not be lined up on a single axis,

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1 Calkins, Earnest Elmo. Advertising Art in the United States, in Modern Publicity for 1930, p. 168.



and consequently they were decidedly off-center.<sup>1</sup> That is the foremost development in changing of layout from the stiff, quiet plan that characterized our advertisements of ten and twenty years ago.

This dynamic layout has a powerful force upon the general attractiveness of an advertisement. It rescues a dead, lifeless conglomeration of pictures, type and borders and injects into it action, above all an action that attracts and holds the attention. It is the modernist's un-  
 dlying cry for speed and action that has brought this re-  
 volting change about. The element that makes it appeal has been defined by one writer as "The unit of greatest emphasis in the advertisement placed in relation to that point in the layout where the most dynamic line of space division comes closest to the optical focus."<sup>2</sup> Thus by drawing the mass off-center, the layout man manages to place it at that point where the eye is caught and held.

This same author cleverly analyses and explains the real appeal in the dynamic layout:<sup>3</sup>

"A horse on all four legs is tame. On its hind legs it is fascinating; and so is anything else that is off balance and yet maintains a temporary equilibrium. When the layout is 'off balance' you have the dynamic equilibrium of a man walking or running or dancing or wrestling. And there can be no question as to which is the

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1 Gage, Harry L. *Layout and Design in Printing*, in *Lino-type News* for March, 1930.

2 Surrey, Richard. *Layout Technique in Advertising*, p. 37.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

more fascinating - a telegraph pole or a man balancing on top of a telegraph pole.

Beauty, it should be remembered, is not a<sup>1</sup> quality that resides principally in objects at rest. Most people, of course, admire still life studies, scenes of pastoral peace, and portraits of people in repose, but there is a beauty of the energetic, of the up-and-going and the struggling, which, though lacking 'charm,' has its own allure. It is this allure of the rugged, struggling, actively living and balancing thing, as contrasted with the thing at rest, that makes layouts more arresting and more akin to the strenuous, dynamic rhythm of life on this young continent."

Dynamism in the modern layout is undoubtedly the most outstanding and most noticeable feature of the present day advertisement. There are few variations able to be applied in the planning of the advertisement and in general all types of advertisements can be levelled down to the two forms, symmetrical and asymmetrical, balanced and dynamic equilibrated. Since the modern trend innovates the asymmetrical as a reaction against the symmetrical, this thesis is concerned only with the former.

The graphic arts owe most of their recent development to the innovations in layout made in the designing of layouts by advertising men, since through new designs and new forms, compositors and pressmen were offered the opportunity of plying their craft to the utmost of mechanical ability. There came, with the dynamic layout, the need for clever and ornate hand composition of type, careful manipulation in the placement of borders, arrangement of illus-

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1 Op. Cit., p. 43.



trations, that necessitated printers and pressmen alike to exert their ingenuity to new extremes with the result that today are found in periodicals artistically beautiful samples of the finest developments in the printing arts.

### The Enlarged White Space Plan

The second and last main development in the modern layout noticeable in modern advertising is the judicious use of white space together with type and illustration in the plan. This modern element has brought with it a dignity that heretofore was decidedly absent from the advertising sections of periodicals and newspapers.

Let the reader delve into the magazine or newspaper files of 1890, the period in which Victorianism in art and life was at its climax. He will find in the advertising, that every available inch of space was crammed with type. Borders and margins were almost extinct. The main object was to tell the story and tell it in as many words as possible and fill up the space which costs the advertiser money. Again the Utilitarian element in thought displayed itself. The advertisers thought, no doubt, that as long as the client was paying for five or six inches of space in a publication, that that space should be filled with type. "Usefulness, first, let beauty define itself in that usefulness" - that was the rule.

The advertising men, however, should not be blamed

for these apparent outrages solely, since his field at that time was far more limited than it is today. Photography, photo engraving, fine printing, classic type faces, ornaments and borders, were far from the well-developed stage in which they are now. His sole medium of attraction was type, and with type he had to appeal to his buyer. Consequently his purpose was served to the best of its extent.<sup>1</sup>

With the modern reaction came the recognition that the blank spaces about a piece of copy or illustration held an unusual eye-attracting power that fitted into the modern idea of simplicity most effectively. One modern advertising expert looks upon this new idea in the layout of an advertisement and comments upon it in this way:<sup>2</sup>

"The most important development in recent years, then, and one which is responsible for the far more artistic physical attribute of advertising, is a closer relationship between copy and illustration. They are not pulling in opposite directions. Copy men see with clearer vision that their message will look better and be more legible if surrounded by a sufficient amount of white space.

It was once a popular idea that white space margins were absolutely necessary only in displays which were surrounded by other competing advertisements, as on a newspaper page or larger magazine page made up of numerous small displays. Naturally the white paper held off the other fellow. The open areas were a protective measure, based on the laws of physical competition."

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- 1 Kleppner, Otto. Advertising Procedure, pp. 192-193. New York, 1928.
  2. Heath, W. R. Getting What You Pay For Out of White Space, in Printers' Ink Monthly for January, 1928.



The writer just quoted appears to have pointed out the evolution of the white space idea in modern advertisements as an outgrowth of first measures taken to separate ads in publications. The fact is that, today, advertisers and layout men have found a new beauty and attractiveness in the simplicity of the white page and have employed that find in designing artistic and sales-producing advertisements.

Printers have reached the stage of exasperation in trying to meet the crying needs of advertising experts, begging for new types, faces that will keep in step with the modern movement yet still be in good taste and form, complying with the dignity of the product being advertised.

Consider what stage the type-founder has reached when it was found necessary by one of America's leading matrix manufacturers to place the following advertisement in national advertising and printers' magazines:

"After an orgy of tangled type design, a weary printing industry is shaking its aching head and asking, 'Whither are we bound?'"

The descent was easy; from black to blacker, from fanciful to grotesque, from freaky to freakier, the depths have been plumbed; but the tastes of printer, customer, reader are all thoroughly debauched, when the ultimate in blackness, in illegibility, in riotous disorder has been achieved. . . . Then to seek the return to regions of calm, ordered sanity, to reconstitute our inn-earred, axe-jaded sense to a normal scale of values; this is labor - and this is

1. Typographic Sanity, an advertisement of the Sargentsaler Linotype Company, appearing in Printers' Ink Monthly for May, 1930.

## Chapter III.

## Modernism in Typography

No field of the graphic arts, no element of advertising has so felt the onslaught of the modernistic movement as the type industry. For the past five or even ten years, new type upon new type has been placed on the market only to be put aside for some newer face, something more modern, more attractive, more distinctive. Type-founders and printers have reached the stage of exasperation in trying to meet the crying needs of advertising experts, begging for new types, faces that will keep in step with the modern movement yet still be in good taste and form, complying with the dignity of the product being advertised.

Consider what stage the type-founder has reached when it was found necessary by one of America's leading matrix manufacturers to place the following advertisement in national advertising and printers' magazines:<sup>1</sup>

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1 Typographic Sanity, an advertisement of the Mergenthaler Linotype Company, appearing in Printers' Ink Monthly for May, 1930.

the path that lies just ahead of the users of<sup>1</sup> type.

The present wave of reaction against the excesses of the past few years has been inevitable. Throughout this mad era, the Linotype organization has pleaded for moderations; for the guiding hand of good taste and good sense in the laudable quest for freshness of expression. In the face of insistent demands from many of its customers for surrender to the vagaries of the moment, it has strived to maintain its policy of typographic sincerity and to issue only type faces of lasting worth.

It would have been a simple matter for the Company to design and cut matrices that would sell. It took far more vision to refuse to issue worthless types for mere profit, and instead to present only those faces which are fundamentally sound in design and character, and which will be a credit to the publisher who uses them."

In an attempt to analyze what was the cause for this rush for types of distinction under the modern revolt, this sudden view of type as a vitally important part of the advertisement, so great that the cut of its face made a difference, a prominent typographer examining advertising type faces over a period of twenty-five years came upon the conclusion that, whereas until a few years ago type was a spot left on the layout, today type is a part of the picture.<sup>2</sup>

Continuing in his discussion of his findings in typography of yesterday and today he says:<sup>3</sup>

"Advertisers are beginning to learn that the harmonious selection and intelligent application of

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1 Op. Cit.

2 Farrar, Gilbert P. Ancient, Medieval and Modern in Printers' Ink Monthly for September, 1929.

3 Ibid.



a type face does much to increase the interest<sup>1</sup> in the message that the type carries.

Advertising made great strides forward when real artists were enlisted to draw interesting pictures. Advertising is not being made more interesting by the use of really interesting and more appropriate type-faces, but the main reason is that these new type faces are being used in new and interesting ways.

The cleaner and more interesting advertisements appeared when advertisers began to use related type faces - a bold companion of the light face text for the headings.

### Modern Type Characteristics

Despite the fact that there are on the market today countless modern type faces all varying in shape and size in minor details, they fall according to their outstanding characteristics into two groups, from which they take their general outlines, Bodoni and Gothic. In the Bodoni group are those many faces characterized by an ultra-heavy heavy element and an ultra-light light element, Broadway, Nubian, Metropolis, Greco, Louvaine and the host of others that bear a semblance to the face cut by Bodoni, the first modern type-drawer. The Gothic class includes such popular faces as the German Kabel, Futura, Vogue, and the various "sans-serif" faces advertised by typefounders and typesetting machine manufacturers alike.

Commenting on the modern types as outshoots of Bodoni and Gothic, the typographer writes:<sup>2</sup>

1 Op. Cit.

2 Farrar, Gilbert P. What's Next in Type Favorites? in Printers' Ink Monthly for January, 1929.

"Many years ago the famous William Morris, who<sup>1</sup> was no mean judge of types, said: 'Jenson gives us the high-water mark of the Roman character; from his death onward typography declined until it reached its lowest depth in the ugliness of the Bodoni.'

Regardless of this comment I still believe the Bodoni family of type to be firmly established as a standard type face - as standard as Caslon in its group, or as standard as Garamond in its group.

But there are many advertisers and agencies who are so tightly sold on the modernistic movement that they will have nothing else. As the Bodoni family has been used for 99 44/100 per cent of these modernistic advertisements, naturally our modern friends are looking for something in type that will allow them to get some variations in type and still be modern.

Many of the types that have been used in these ultra modern conceptions are not nearly as readable as those of the Gothic group. We must remember that even Bodoni Bold must be deftly handled to be as readable as the Gothic types. The way that it is sometimes used makes for illegibility.

One of the big department stores in New York City has just adopted as standard type faces for all its advertisements - large and small - a light Gothic for body text and a bold Gothic for the heads. This particular Gothic is an imported face that travels as a 'serifless' letter.

Those Gothics we have on hand right now have sufficient merit to justify their use when you are looking for something different to key with some modernistic advertisement."

The expert quoted above has proven himself a trustworthy prophet of the future in type-faces, since, viewing the present demands in types for advertising, and considering that the above article was written two years prior to the time of this writing, today finds an ever-mounting appeal of printers for new Gothics and Bodoni copies.

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1 Op. Cit.



Another typographer writing on the new demands in typefaces, credits to the French the source of the modern type faces, stating that the movement toward so-called modern type faces was just beginning when Bodoni started to ply his craft. He adds:<sup>1</sup>

"This modernistic kind of art when it got itself into advertisements demanded a new deal as to type. The bold, sharp blacks and white of these illustrations just didn't hit off with the old school of type faces. But they were just made for Bodoni. Or shall we say, Bodoni was just made for them? For Giambattista Bodoni designed this type especially to meet a situation similar to this. . . a situation in which, as one of his biographers says 'a new tendency was arising in art and literature that seemed to require a new type form to represent it.' Just as this new tendency today seems to require something unusual to accompany it.

Bodoni type, with its sharply contrasting stems and its hair lines, was 'an attempt to break away entirely from the old tradition and to create a face of an altogether new and different sort, based on the then prevalent fashion of classic simplicity.' Bodoni designed his types to be used in very definite ways and our best guide to the most effective use of them is to look at the ways in which he used them."

Another typographical authority upholding the principles of modern applied arts to the wide use of straight lines, planes, angles and geometric forms works from the field of applied arts into the graphic arts and type design thus:<sup>2</sup>

"With the principles in mind we can define the characteristics of a type which is essentially

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- 1 Drayne, Vincent. Why All This Craze for Bodoni Type? in Printers' Ink Monthly for December, 1927.
  - 2 McMurtie, Douglas. Modern Typography, in Some Modern Ludlow Type Faces, 1929.



and truly modern. It may be light in color or<sup>1</sup> heavy, as suits the mode the typographer desires to express. But it must approach the ultimate in simplicity of design. It must be stripped of all unnecessary appendages, such as serifs, etc. which are not essential elements of the letter contour. Where straight lines can enter into the rendering of these forms, they are to be preferred to billowy curves. What curves there are should be geometric in their simplicity."

In contrasting the popular types of today with those used in advertisements of thirty or forty years ago, one finds that the turn toward simplicity in faces stands foremost as the outstanding reaction in the type-founding industry. The type face of today is even, clear-cut and often serif-less. In the Victorian era, type-makers sought beauty in type by highly-tooled characters, elongated and emphasized serifs, crude block letters in display work, resulting, as one might expect, in illegibility. Modern typographers, realized that beyond all artistic aims, the prime purpose of type is readability. Their revolt was one which lifted type out of a maze of fancy faces to the utmost in simplicity, with beauty attained through geometric qualities producing a soothing optical effect to the reader. The modern revolt in typography is without question a turn toward the better from the viewpoint of the printer, advertiser and reader.

#### Typographical Tricks

In addition to the modern effect produced by modern

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1 Op. Cit.

types themselves, there are other changes made in the layouts of advertisements that one might consider "typographical tricks." There is no definite basis of cause for them except perhaps the ingenuity of advertising and printing experts, to find new uses for old articles. By this is meant the use of compositing materials, such as rules, ornaments and borders to accomplish new purposes in the modern advertisement. A close perusal of any popular magazine will illustrate all these uses to a reader who is intent on making a study of the advertisements.

Foremost in these "typographical tricks" is the wide use of lower-case letters in violation of all rules of punctuation and capitalization. Headlines, names and even solid blocks of copy may appear in advertisements set completely in lower-case letters. This trend is either based on the aim of "simplicity" in modernism, or else the old theory of typographers that lower-case letters are more easily read by the eye than the capitals. Regardless of either of these hypothetical causes, the fact is that the use of lower-case letters in the modern advertisement is one of the most popular characteristics of the times.

Layout men have discovered that the ordinary type rule as formerly used in borders only has fitted into the modern trend as an attractive supplement to the modern advertisement. By the use of varying-sized rules, from pica

to hairline width, either in graduated or alternating combinations, an eye-catching addition to the dynamic advertisement is formed. Placed at angles to the copy and illustration or dividing the page, the single or grouped rule lends an attractive, beautifying effect to the layout.

One typographer, referring to the extremely heavy leading between lines of modern advertising copy and pointing out the popularization of circles and squares used to denote paragraphs in copy, reveals this message:<sup>1</sup>

"You don't always have to use an imported type face in order to do a modern type job, and extra space between lines is not by any means the only thing brought to life by modern typographers. As a matter of fact, wide space between lines in books is very old.

Typographers are now finding ways to give the effect of paragraphs while having only one paragraph - one solid block of copy that has no holes in it.

Large circles and triangles have been employed to indicate 'breaks' or 'stops' instead of having yawning chasms of light in the spot of text that comes from using the old fashioned - or bookish - idea of paragraphing.

Type foundries make innumerable small ornaments that can be used singly or in pairs for indicating 'stops' or 'breaks' in blocks of type.

Another "typographical trick" employed to a great extent in the advertisements of the Goodyear Rubber Company, during the past year, was the use of small drawings set right into the lines of type in place of words. The effectiveness of the attraction of a piece of copy dotted throughout by small figures in place of words is commented

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<sup>1</sup> Farrar, Gilbert P. Ancient, Medieval and Modern, in *Printers' Ink Monthly*, for September, 1929.



upon thus:<sup>1</sup>

"The prominent current tendency is a reversion to that type of basic rhetoric which the juvenile mind first observed in primers or early school readers. This fundamental form of expression, while long an integral part of elementary reading, has now for the first time, found its way definitely into adult appeal. You remember those books of early childhood. They usually started - 'I see the cat. The cat sees me. I see the dog. The dog sees the cat.' The word 'cat' was probably followed by an illustration of 'tabby.' 'Dog' was set to come in juxtaposition to the cut of a big shepherd dog. Today, our mediums of publicity show us a decided leaning toward that elemental form of expression so basic in principle as to have been always associated only with juvenile composition."

Another effective innovation that has come into popular usage with the present day styles in advertising is the use of "white type," or "printing in reverse." This is done by placing the background in relief and printing black, while the type, being intaglio, remains white. This effect is produced by means of reversed electrotype printing plates, in which the mold is set in actual type and reversed in the mechanical process of electrotyping. Many interesting and attractive effects have been produced by using black and colored backgrounds, as one writer explains:<sup>2</sup>

"'White type' has always had a charm for the average layman. When used sparingly in an advertisement it is decidedly uninteresting. On printed folders, booklets, etc., these blocks of

1 Kiss, Joseph A. Modern Advertising Takes a Tip from the Old-Fashioned Printer, in Printers' Ink Monthly for June, 1930.

2 Farrar, Gilbert P. Something New, Old, Strong and Bold in Printers' Ink Monthly for May, 1930.

background can be printed in color. Then the<sup>1</sup> 'white type' against a color, instead of against black, has almost 'sure fire' attention value.

Printing a solid band, panel or box in light or middle tone color over all and then printing the title or caption in black on this color is often done to get more 'color' into a job that doesn't seem right with only the headings in color.

In former days 'white type' effects were often their own worst enemy because we had few if any types that could be reversed.

When regulation type faces, with a balance of a light stroke and a heavy stroke, are printed in black on white paper the reader is not so conscious of the vagueness of the average light stroke.

There are, of course, countless other details that have been injected into the modern scheme in advertisements and there will be more as long as the genius of the advertising man, printer and reader continues along its path of development. There will be new tricks springing up in each new issue of the leading magazines, and consequently only the foremost as observed at this time are mentioned.

### Special Printing Processes

In addition to these typographical novelties which so enhance the modern advertisements, there are a few more new creations in advertising technique which have become popular recently. Although not allied to typography directly, they belong under this heading more than under the chapter on illustration, since they refer to printing processes, to which typography is most closely allied.

Several American automobile manufacturers have fostered a series of advertisements during the past six

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1 Op. Cit.

months, that perhaps were the most striking during that period. The reader is referred to those which pictured the automobiles surrounded by a background printed in metallic inks, gold, silver and bronze. The effect produced by the layout was most extraordinary, and although now quite common, these advertisements still maintain their primal dignity and attention-holding qualities.

Another special printing process that is coming to the fore with the trend for new things in modern advertising layout, is the use of the water-color process of printing, as first popularized by Jean Berte, in his special process of that name. By the use of specially formulated water-color inks, printers working with high-grade paper stock of antique characteristics have produced striking effects - almost lithographic from a first notice - in advertisements. The result of the water-color process is that the inks lay to the paper in off-set fashion and lend a dull unfinished tone to the completed work which is enhanced by the vibrant colors, in which the inks are manufactured. Both this process and the metallic process are very costly to the advertiser since each requires special print paper, and an extra bindery insertion when the publication is compiled.

#### The Effects of Modernism on the Type Industry

With new processes of printing and new type-faces and



ornaments constantly coming into vogue with the modern demand for new things in the graphic arts, the printing industry, with its magazine advertisements, the lithographic craft with its highly colored posters, and the intaglio process with its now greatly popularized rotogravure development, it is difficult to determine what America of the future may expect from the leaders in those trades. If the development continues, however, as it has in the past ten years, it is no vain boast to say that any popular magazine may soon contain samples of the graphic arts comparable to the collection of the fine arts in the Louvre. With the leading contemporary painters exercising their creative talent for use in engravings for advertising, with such men as Goudy, Kabel, and Bernhard delving into the depths of their work to secure new ideas in type faces, and with printers throughout the world working to secure the finest samples of their crafts, it does not seem at all impossible.

## Chapter IV.

## Modernism in Illustration

In discussing the modernistic trends in advertising illustration, the field of illustration will be treated in general. The countless techniques will be omitted since the technique is not revolutionized but merely the subject of the technique. Artists who master the oils, ply the brush in the same manner as did Michelangelo. It is the subject, not the means, that has been changed. Hence the only technique of illustration to be treated, that has not come under the heading of "Modern Art," is photography. This has found a new life under the modern impulse.

All forms of art are used in illustrating the modern advertising illustration: oil, water, pastel, pen, pencil and charcoal, not omitting such age-old techniques as wood-cutting and stencilling. The manner of treatment of the subjects for the illustration of a modern advertisement is fairly well outlined by one writer who says:<sup>1</sup>

"Because of this desire for sophistication the contemporary artist uses less and different collateral material to secure background or atmosphere. He assumes correctly that his observers are subtle-minded enough not to need so much explanatory material. Even the people portrayed appear differently. Their poses are less conventional. What they are doing in the picture is less standardized. They have the air of knowing exactly what it is all about and moreover are enjoying the proceedings albeit not too

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1 Campbell, Start. Modern vs. Modernistic Art, in Printers' Ink for December, 1928.

noticeably. Consider some of the motor-car advertisements which endeavor to impress luxury, wealth and atmosphere on the reader - also some of the drawings made by Erickson. In the latter there is no hackneyed background with the obvious high ceilings, ornate portieres, maid-in-waiting. Erickson, through his portrayal of a woman lying in bed and sipping her morning coffee, tells quickly and effectively that the woman is accustomed to luxuries and selects them with good taste.

His feelings for the presentation of these materials and colors makes his work dramatic and in keeping with today's trend in style which is dramatic and colorful.

In general, the flourish of modern illustrative art is due in great part to the rapid strides taken in the development of photo-engraving, especially the color processes and color-photography direct from the object. With the popularization of color for advertising came the influx of art work which added a new impetus to the growth of modern art, as discussed in Chapter I.

#### The Revival of Photography

When hand art work in color became too common in advertising the modernists seeking new fields struck upon photography, long placed in the background as too conservative and too ordinary to attract the attention as the hand art did. Advertisers felt that photography was too limited to its field, too bold, portraying the object directly, and not fitting in with the idea of impressionism, which could be accomplished so well with brush and pen.

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1 Op. Cit.



But with engravers crying for development, the photographers rushed to answer the call and the result was that cameracraft flourished under the stress of new art. At first, they too attempted to outdo themselves in designing new styles of photographing products and the result was that the same outlandish treatment of subject occurred, just as it did under the spell of futurism, cubism and the rest of "isms" when those schools of art first made their bows. One writer puts it:<sup>1</sup>

"Just as in advertising art, the photographic field has felt the inroads of the experimenter in modern art. His forte is a banal use of radical lines and zigzag planes - meaning nothing and looking worse. Every innovation has its resulting charlatans. There are always those who will exploit anything for their own gain when an eager and indulgent public wants to be shown. This public will watch and listen to the antics of these fellows just as long as they remain in ignorance, but when they feel that they know, it's all-day with the faker."

Photography, however, by this time has reached a high plane of development, in diffused-lens photos, short focus work, still-life, and direct-color. Each method has fitted into the modern plan very securely with the result that many of the leading modern advertisements are illustrated with photographic rather than hand art.

#### The Diffused Photograph

Exceptionally well did the diffused photo, that which does not contain sharp lines and present a clear focus of

1 Walsh, Thomas F. Giving the Still Life a Modern Touch, in Printers' Ink Monthly for December, 1928.

the subject, fit into the modern advertiser's idea of correct illustration. The diffused photo served to give just the impression of the product or the use of the product to the reader. It did not clearly outline it, but merely presented a hazy description and left the remainder to the reader's imagination. This particular type of negative became very adaptable for advertising such products as lingerie, hosiery, and the like, and magazines and newspaper rotogravure sections contain many fine examples.

### The Wide Angle Photograph

A second development in modern photography is the placing of the camera at an odd angle in photographing the subject, thus producing a fourth dimension as it were. Probably the first use of this nationally in advertisements was by the Pennsylvania and Milwaukee railroads in announcing the installation of a new type of Pullman car on their routes. Instead of the photographer placing his camera in the aisle of the coach and taking his picture under the old plan, he placed his lens on the ceiling of the coach and photographed a group of people from a 45 degree angle along the aisle. The result was spectacularly striking and since the appearance of that advertisement, the process has been used in countless ways. A commentator on advertising art says of it:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, Stuart. Modern vs. Modernistic Art, in Printers' Ink Monthly for December, 1928.

"This new viewpoint has brought the camera back<sup>1</sup> from what at one time seemed extinction. The artist, as the photographer has for many years, moved his object and its subsidiary elements around to get what he considered an 'artistic' arrangement. He posed his subjects generally so that the observer's line of vision was at right angles to a straight up and down position of the object. The trend today is not to stage these objects too apparently yet through careful staging secure a naturalness that is striking. Take, for instance, the perspective of a person before walking up a flight of stairs. This perspective is a common one to the human eye, yet until recently would have been considered bizarre and in-artistic if so depicted on canvas or photographed. Catching the human form or everyday objects in the positions in which we see them continuously day after day is not distorting them but merely showing them in true reality."

Another writer comments on the new use of the camera and refers to the popular advertisements of Walk-Over shoes and Berg hats, in which the shoes and hats were brought into the closest focus of the lens while the wearer remained much smaller and out of proportion. The effect in this case was very striking and he relates how the effect was accomplished:<sup>2</sup>

"There is a certain downward angle at which a camera may be placed and thereby three and sometimes four surface planes are brought into the picture, all of them adequately. Mention has been made of the trouble encountered in bringing out all of the decorative charm of upholstered furniture. A camera has done this for an advertiser with marked artistry. A type of perspective illustration was evolved which, outside of everything else, had novelty in its favor; an unaccustomed point of view.

Under a new order of things - by a strange

1 Op. Cit.

2 Iarned, W. Livingston. The Camera Gets a New Point of View, in Printers' Ink Monthly for January, 1927.



twist of perspective - the floor rises to the <sup>1</sup> dignity of the 'background' - the setting. The camera of course looked down on each arrangement from pleasing angles.

It will be seen that the greatest attribute of the perspective, lockdown camera study is its power to see with several sets of eyes, whereas more conventional poses and perspectives often permit not more than one plane at a time.

### The Still Life Photograph

The still-life photo has come out from extinction and gained a prominent position in advertising art under the new regime. By clever means of light and shadows the still photo has attained a new attractiveness and is featured in many of the finest advertisements of today. One striking example of the use of it is in the display advertising of Coty perfume. The sole subject is a bottle of some particular essence of Coty perfume. By means of spotlights playing upon it, the crystal reflections of the bottle and liquid present a most attractive illustration that can be made applicable to almost any advertisement of a luxury product.

### The Silhouette Photograph

The last use of the camera in making illustrations of products for modern advertisement, is the ultra-black and white half-tone in which the varying greys between white and black are eliminated by correct lighting effects and produce a semi-silhouette. This type of photo is also

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1 Op. Cit.

popular with the manufacturers of cosmetics for illustrating not too sharply the result of the use of their products.

### Direct Color Photography

Perhaps the most recent and most important development<sup>1</sup> in photography has been that of direct color, in which the objects by means of filters were impressed upon four negatives, one for each color and black, and printed by process plates in the same colors. This type of photography is employed in advertisements of food products for the most part, although it is becoming popular with automobile and clothing manufacturers.

By comparing a picture postcard with a direct color photograph, one can readily see the difference in the printing. Postcards are made originally on black and white halftone plates, and the color inserted by the lithographer. The result is that the colors are all there but appear in no way natural. The green in the grass is identical with that in the trees; sky blue is the same as water-blue. The result is that postcards present an artificial effect that immediately is noticed.

But in direct color work, the halftone screen filters out the colors to their proper proportions. There is no universal pink. A pink gown is colored with a red screen and the white dots of the paper, while flesh color con-

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<sup>1</sup> Obtained by personal interview.

tains a bit of the red, some yellow and the white of the paper, with the result that the reproduction is as natural as can be obtained.

The main difficulty in printing direct color plates is in the color filters. If it were possible to form a shade of red ink exactly similar to the red transparent filter, color photography would be faultless, but pigments and transparents cannot be matched.

Since it is impossible to match colors perfectly, the<sup>1</sup> printer is unable to put into the finished work by means of his ink the identical shade which was removed from the engraving plate by the color filter when the photograph was made. This fact reverts back to the principle that the colored pigment in the ink cannot be matched with the color used in dyeing the filter for the taking of the picture.

Regardless of the imperfections of direct color photography, it has become very popular and has fitted into the modern advertisement most readily. It probably is photography's most important contribution to modern illustrative art in advertising.

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<sup>1</sup> Op. Cit.



## Chapter V.

### Conclusion

The modern movement in advertising comprises something decidedly different from any previous movement in the graphic arts. It is a revolt that strikes at every phase, every element, that goes to make a good advertisement.

#### Modernism and Impressionism

In the elements, the main tendency is toward the utmost in simplicity, the elimination of all minor details that heretofore were considered necessary but found by the modernists to aid little in the formation of an attractive and attention-sustaining advertisement. In that simplicity advertisers have attempted to attain the impression of the object rather than the object itself. Hence modernism in a sense is synonymous with impressionism.

#### Advertisements, New and Old

Considering the advertisement in terms of itself, it is perhaps best to contrast the advertisement of today with one of thirty years ago. The layout of the old type of advertisement consisted mainly of an illustration, usually a crude woodcut or a very poor photo-engraving of the object on sale. Surrounding it the space was jammed with copy and headlines set in a type face that although considered fancy at the time was illegible. The product was

described and the reader was told of its many advantages and where it could be bought and by whom it was manufactured.

The modern advertisement reaches into a new field, by bringing the lifeless, cold advertisement out of the depths of printed matter, to the field of art. Studying the modern illustration, we find one of mastery worked out in black and white by means of drawings or photographs showing the product or its use in the simplest fashion possible. Or if the advertisement tends toward the more elaborate or expensive, it might be illustrated with color process engravings from works of the finest illustrative artists, or even direct color photographs of the object or users of the object.

The layout is not one which is perfectly balanced line for line, but rather attains a "dynamic equilibrium" that catches the eye because of its unusual placement of the elements in the positions in which they are most attractive to the eye.

The copy of the advertisement is not jammed crudely into all the available space about the picture, but rather is concise and to the point so that the whole sales story can be told in the least number of words, so as to allow the printer to space his lines and allow wide margins. The type is most readable, set either in the light Gothics, or

the heavy Bodoni offshoots. The headlines are not fanciful, tooled scripts and blockletters, but rather boldface sisters of the body type of the text. Thus does the modern advertisement compare with its forebear of thirty years ago.

### The Permanence of Modernism

Modernism, I believe, is here to stay, meaning, of course, that modernism which bespeaks the spirit of the age. As long as it remains within the realm of the esthetic, it will be permanent not only in advertising alone, but in the fine and applied arts. There is, however, a great opportunity for it to overstep its bounds, and as soon as it does there will be another reaction, a new "modernism."

One critic views the situation regarding the permanence of modernism in this manner:<sup>1</sup>

"Despite prevalent bad practices, the modernistic will not lose caste. It is a break from tradition and will have its say. Certainly its present development will proceed, possibly into a manner that our grandchildren will compare with present-day modernism and label us conservatives.

If we study the development of modernism in Germany we are led to the conclusion that inevitably this country will take hold of it as thoroughly as Germany has. Over there every bit of advertising, with the exception of that prepared by American agencies, employs the modern art manner. Some of it is good and a lot of it is bad. But the people are modernism conscious, having been educated to it over a period of years

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1 Musser, Byron. Is the Modern Appeal Dangerous? in Printers' Ink Monthly for October, 1928.



since and even before the war. The advertiser,<sup>1</sup> therefore, even in so prosaic a product as machinery, is using the modernistic style."

The evident fact that there is a good and a bad type of modernism and the inability of too many critics to separate the two, is the cause of too much condemnation of the new movement. If more critics had the frankness of the following author, there would be less sneers and more applause for the new movement. He says:<sup>2</sup>

"I do not pose as an authority on the subject of modern art and my opinions may not agree with yours. I can say, however, that I like the modern spirit expressed in the new fabric, design, furniture, architecture, painting and advertising. I believe it will go on regardless of the critics. Every pioneer in every line of endeavor since the beginning of time has been criticized and condemned, yet the world continues to progress because of these men.

I believe that 'Modernism' in advertising will progress, and will continue to have an increasingly important part to play not only in the sale of goods, but in the goods themselves, their design, color, packaging and so forth. Before anyone undertakes flatly to condemn modern advertising art, let him at least make an honest effort to separate the good from the bad."

If the development in the fine arts is any prediction of what will happen to the graphic arts of the future, the advertisement of tomorrow will be a most unreasonable bit of printing, according to America's severest critic who lends his view on the modern architecture in his inimitable satire:<sup>3</sup>

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1 Op. Cit.

2 McKinney, J. R. Modern Art vs. Scrambled Art, in Printers' Ink Monthly for March, 1928.

3 Mencken, Henry L. The New Architecture, in the American Mercury for February, 1931.

"The Eighteenth Century dwelling-house has count-<sup>1</sup>less rivals today, but it is as far superior to any of them as the music of Mozart is superior to Broadway jazz. No other house better meets the exigencies of housekeeping and none other absorbs modern conveniences more naturally and gracefully. Why should a man of today abandon it for a house of harsh masses, hideous outlines and bald metallic surfaces? And why should he abandon its noble and charming furniture for the ghastly imitations of the electric chair that the Modernists make of gas pipe?

When men really begin to build churches like the Bush terminal there will be no religion any more, but only Rotary. And when they begin to live in houses as coldly structural as step ladders they will cease to be men, and become mere rats in cages.

There is much truth in the above criticism and we may expect a serious reaction when the modern school goes to the extreme in art and life.

But it is today with which we are concerned, and in the modern view of Epicureanism, let the future reveal itself. We should rejoice that the modernists have brought into art, both fine and applied, the greatest flourish in decades. The new movement has popularized the masterpieces of art in the advertisements, has developed the printing industry to a fine art, has rescued photography from oblivion, and now the advertising art of today, surpassing all its predecessors, looks to the future to see its equal.

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1 Op. Cit.