

10 graphic designers you should be able to name-drop

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We all know that as graphic designers we have to study those who came before us and advanced the field of design. Here at 99designs, we love focusing in on the work of some of the biggies. We've covered giants like [Paul Rand](#), [Milton Glaser](#), [Saul Bass](#) and more on this blog.

But there are a lot of famous graphic designers, hundreds in fact, who have made hugely significant contributions to graphic design at large who you also need to know, and as stated in the title of this post — need to be able to name-drop in a conversation. Know them, their name, their work, and their influence! It'll make you a more complete designer and able to hold up your own in a conversation about the field (in no specific order).

1. Otl Aicher



Munich 1972 Olympics poster: Otl Aicher (via [Phaidon](#))

“Good art inspires; Good design motivates.”

Nationality: German

Studied at: Academy of Fine Arts Munich

Era active: 1940s through 1980s

Specialties: Identity, typography

Known for: Lufthansa branding, 1972 Munich Olympics, Ulm School of Design

Find out more: otlaicher.com

2. Michael Beirut



Mohawk paper identity: Michael Beirut (via [Designboom](#))

“Only good work leads to doing more good work.”

Nationality: American

Studied at: University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning

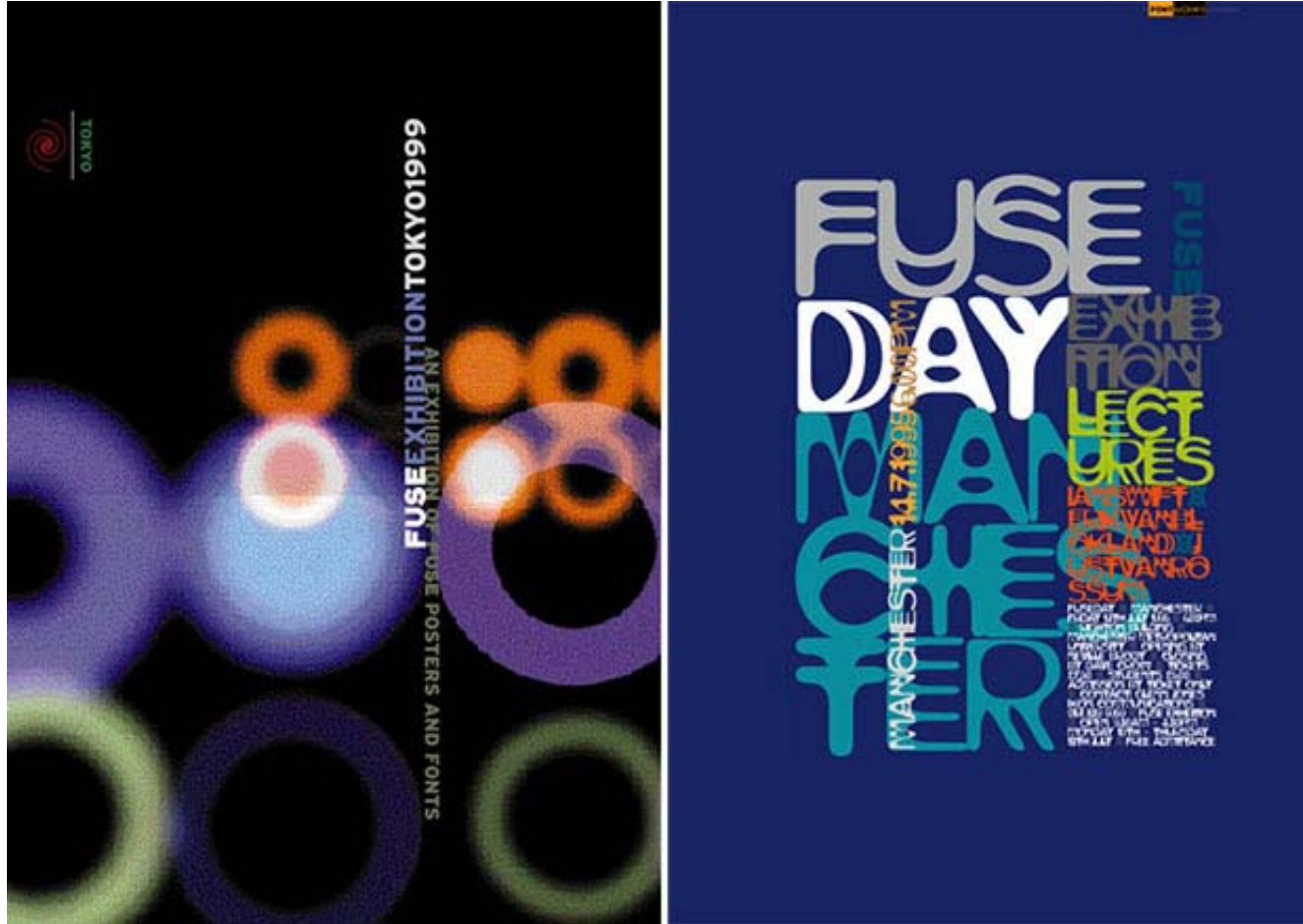
Era active: 1980s through present

Specialties: Identity and print work, design writing and criticism

Known for: [Redesign of The Atlantic](#), [graphics for the New York Times building](#)

Find out more: [Pentagram.com](#)

3. Neville Brody



Fusion Exhibition: Neville Brody (via [Research Studios](#))

“Design is more than just a few tricks to the eye. It’s a few tricks to the brain.”

Nationality: British

Studied at: London College of Printing

Era active: 1970s through present

Specialties: Typography, art direction

Known for: *The Face Magazine*, *Arena Magazine*, record cover art

Find out more: [Interview with Eye Magazine](#)

4. David Carson



Book covers: *David Carson*

“Graphic design will save the world right after rock and roll does.”

Nationality: American

Studied at: Oregon College of Commercial Art

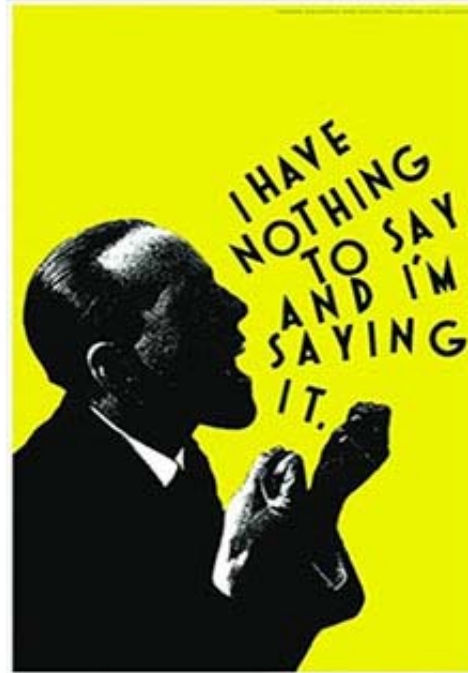
Era active: 1980s through present

Specialties: Magazine design, art direction

Known for: *Ray Gun Magazine*

Find out more: davidcarsondesign.com

5. Alan Fletcher



V&A identity; "I Have Nothing to Say And I'm Saying It" poster: [Alan Fletcher](#)

"I like to reduce everything to its absolute essence because that is a way to avoid getting trapped in a style."

Nationality: British

Studied at: Hammersmith School of Art, Central School of Art, Royal College of Art, Yale School of Architecture

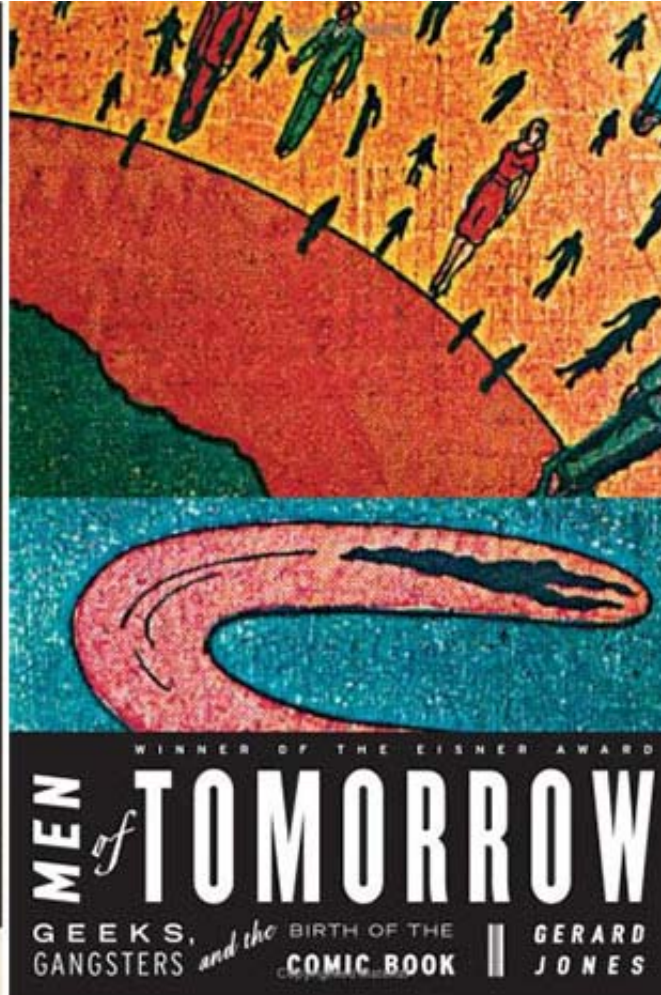
Era active: 1960s – 1990s

Specialties: Identity design, book design

Known for: Founding Partner of [Pentagram](#), [The Art of Looking Sideways](#)

Find out more: alanfletcherarchive.com

6. Chip Kidd



Book covers: [Chip Kidd](#)

"Never fall in love with an idea. They're whores: if the one you're with isn't doing the job, there's always, always, always another."

Nationality: American

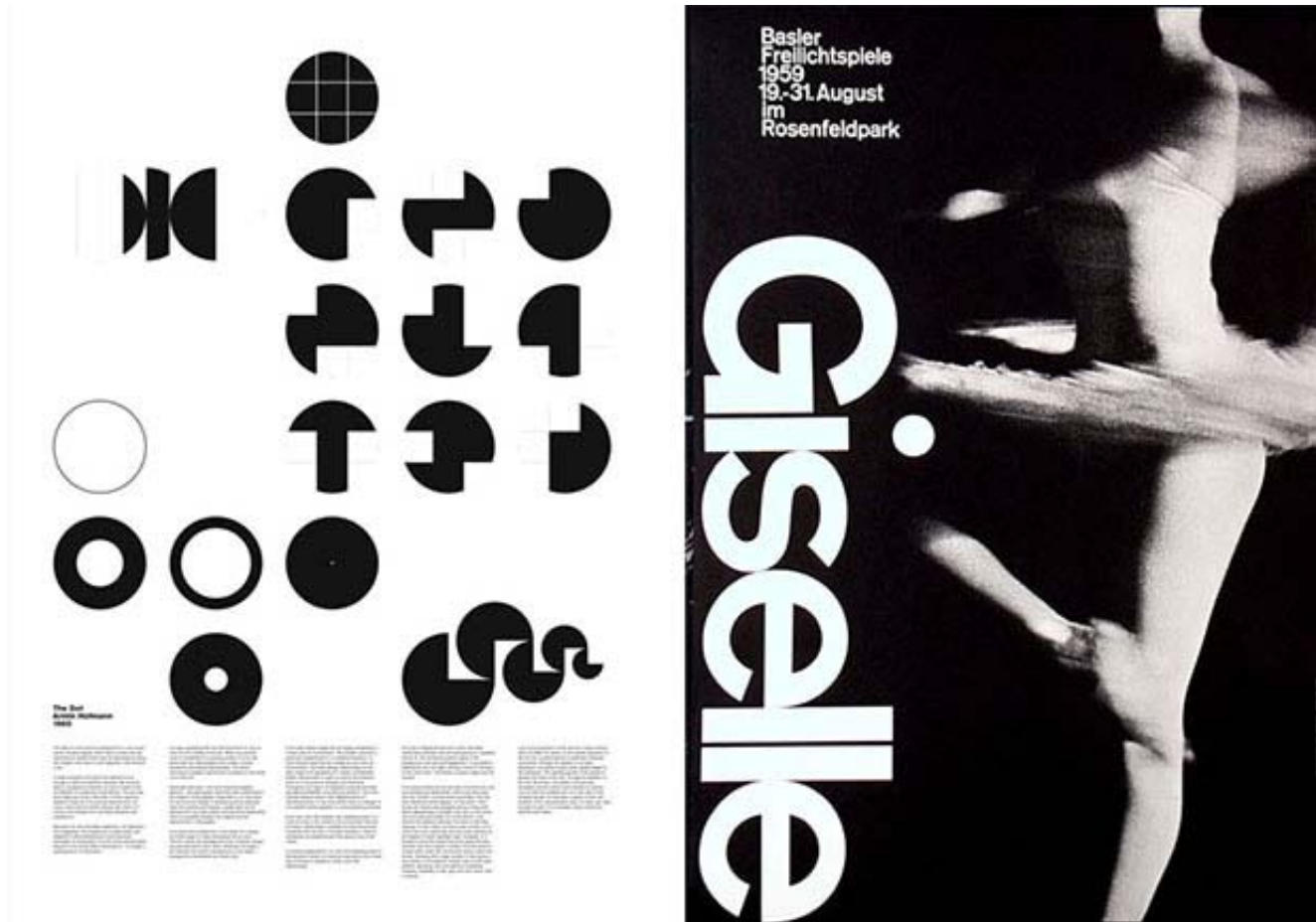
Studied at: Pennsylvania State University

Era active: 1980s through present

Specialties: Book cover design

Known for: [So many awesome book covers](#) and his work with graphic novels

7. Armin Hofmann



Posters: Armin Hoffman (via [Design is History](#))

“There should be no separation between spontaneous work with an emotional tone and work directed by the intellect. Both are supplementary to each other and must be regarded as intimately connected. Discipline and freedom are thus to be seen as elements of equal weight, each partaking of the other.”

Nationality: Swiss

Studied at: Apprenticed in lithography

Era active: 1940s through 1980s

Specialties: Poster design

Known for: His teachings as head of [Schule für Gestaltung Basel](#), poster for Giselle

Find out more: [Thinking form: Armin Hofmann](#)

8. Herb Lubalin

Avant Garde Gothic: Herb Lubalin (via [M a round](#))

“You can do a good ad without good typography, but you can’t do a great ad without good typography.”

Nationality: American

Studied at: Cooper Union

Era active: 1940s through 1980s

Specialties: Typography, art direction

Known for: ITC *Avant Garde* font, work on *Eros* and *Avant Garde* magazines

Find out more: [The Herb Lubalin Study Center of Design and Typography](#)

9. Stefan Sagmeister



Lou Reed poster: Stefan Sagmeister

“It is very important to embrace failure and to do a lot of stuff — as much stuff as possible — with as little fear as possible. It’s much, much better to wind up with a lot of crap having tried it than to overthink in the beginning and not do it.

Nationality: Austrian

Studied at: University of Applied Arts Vienna, Pratt Institute

Era active: 1990s through present

Specialties: Album covers, typography

Known for: [Lou Reed Poster](#), book [Things I have learned in my life so far](#)

Find out more: sagmeisterwalsh.com

10. Paula Scher



Posters: Paula Scher (via [Pentagram](#))

“You never can do what the kids do. What you do is look at yourself and find your own way to address the fact that the times have changed and that you have to pay attention. You can’t be a designer and say, ‘Oh, this is timeless.’ Nothing is timeless!”

Nationality: American

Studied at: Tyler School of Art

Era active: 1970s through present

Specialties: Branding and identity, album covers, illustration

Known for: Her [poster work](#), and being the first female principal at [Pentagram](#)

What other famous graphic designers should we be talking about? Let us know in the comments!

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Last updated February 13, 2015



Kaitlyn is part of the Community Team at 99designs.com. She grew up in Boulder, CO and went to school at Northwestern University in Chicago. When she's not blogging, she spends her time having adventures and being generally creative. She's all about having new experiences as often as possible!

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nofeminism · 9 months ago

there is PROBABLY 'only' one female designer because the (female) author felt that the 10 they picked were the best 10...

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