

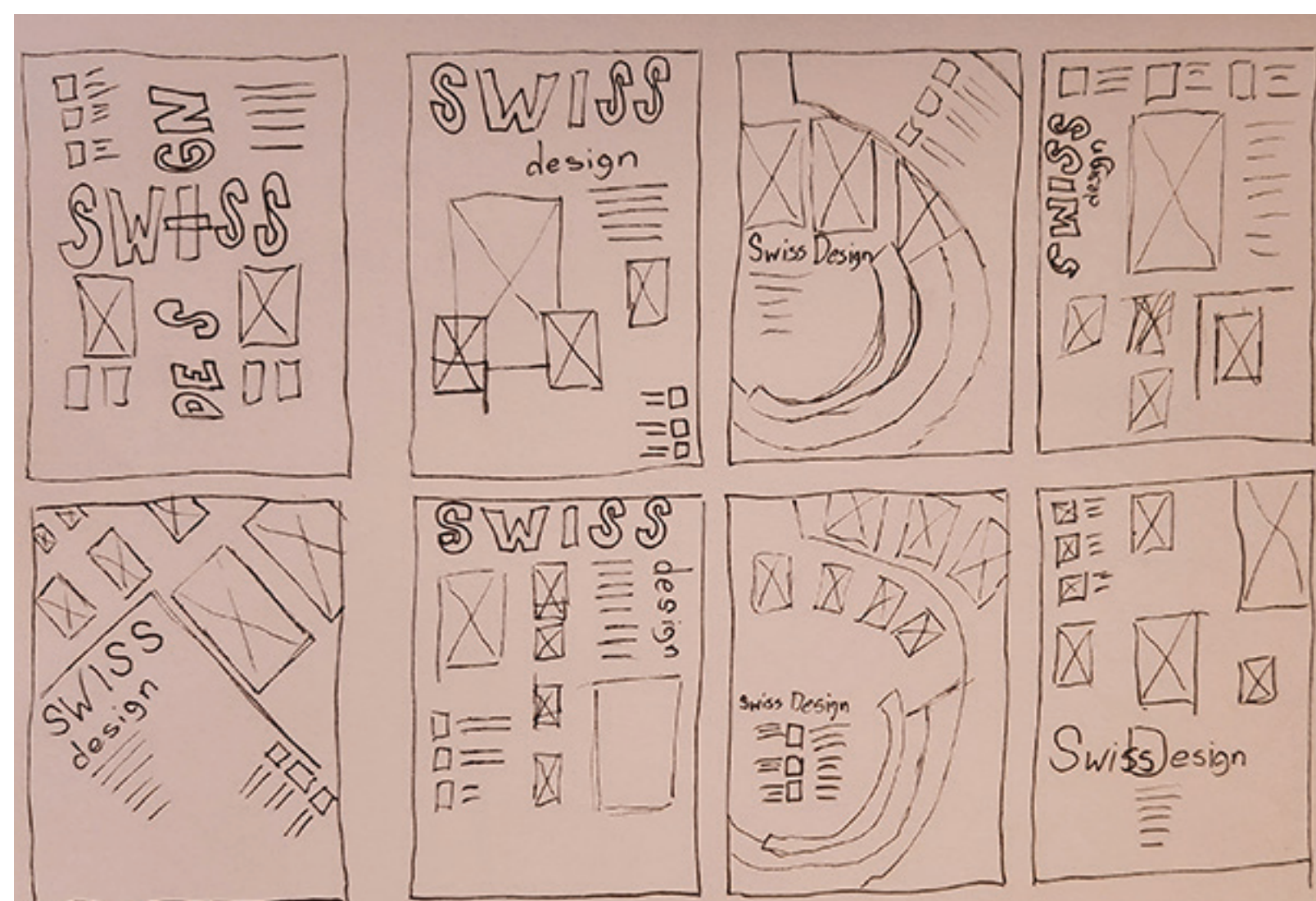
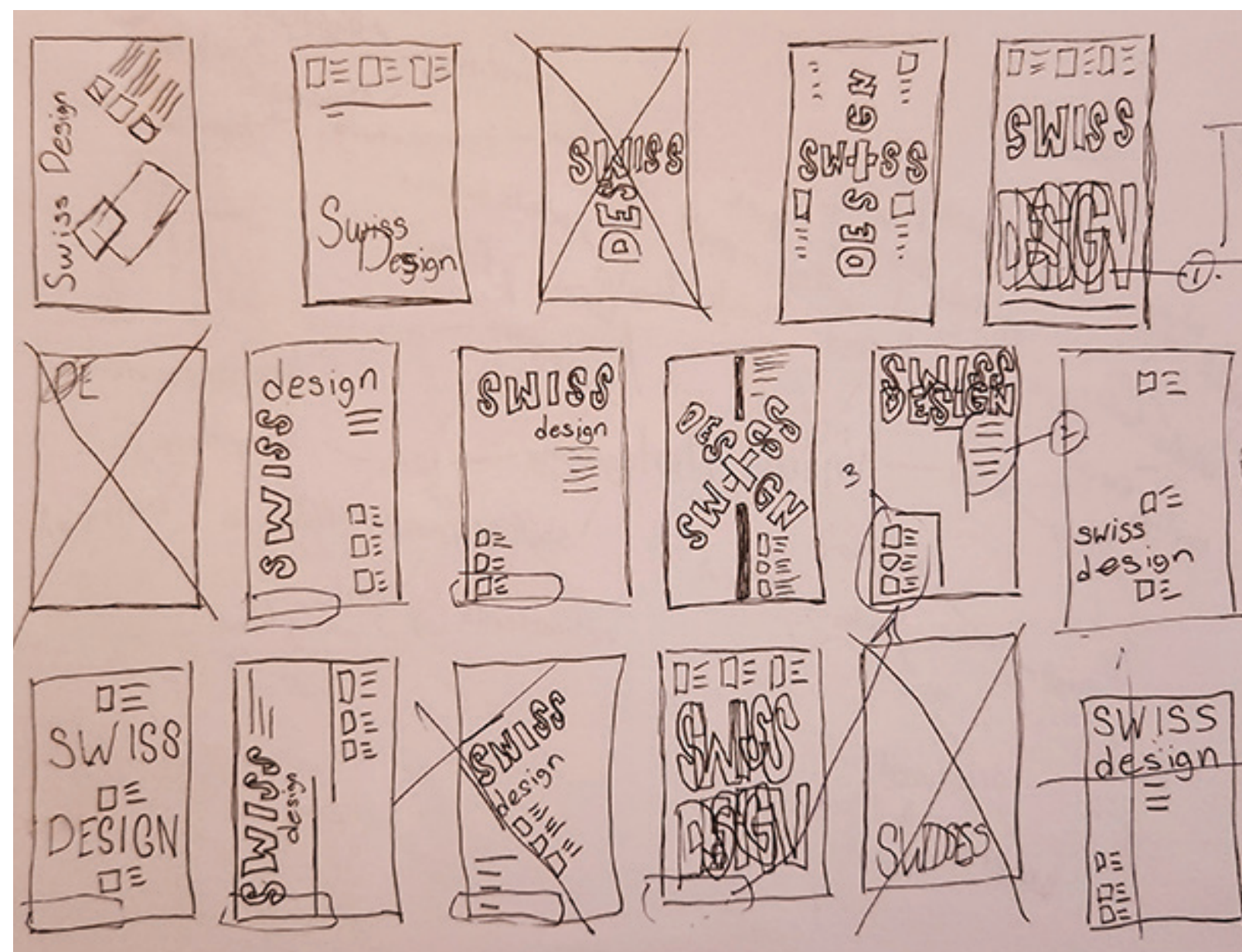
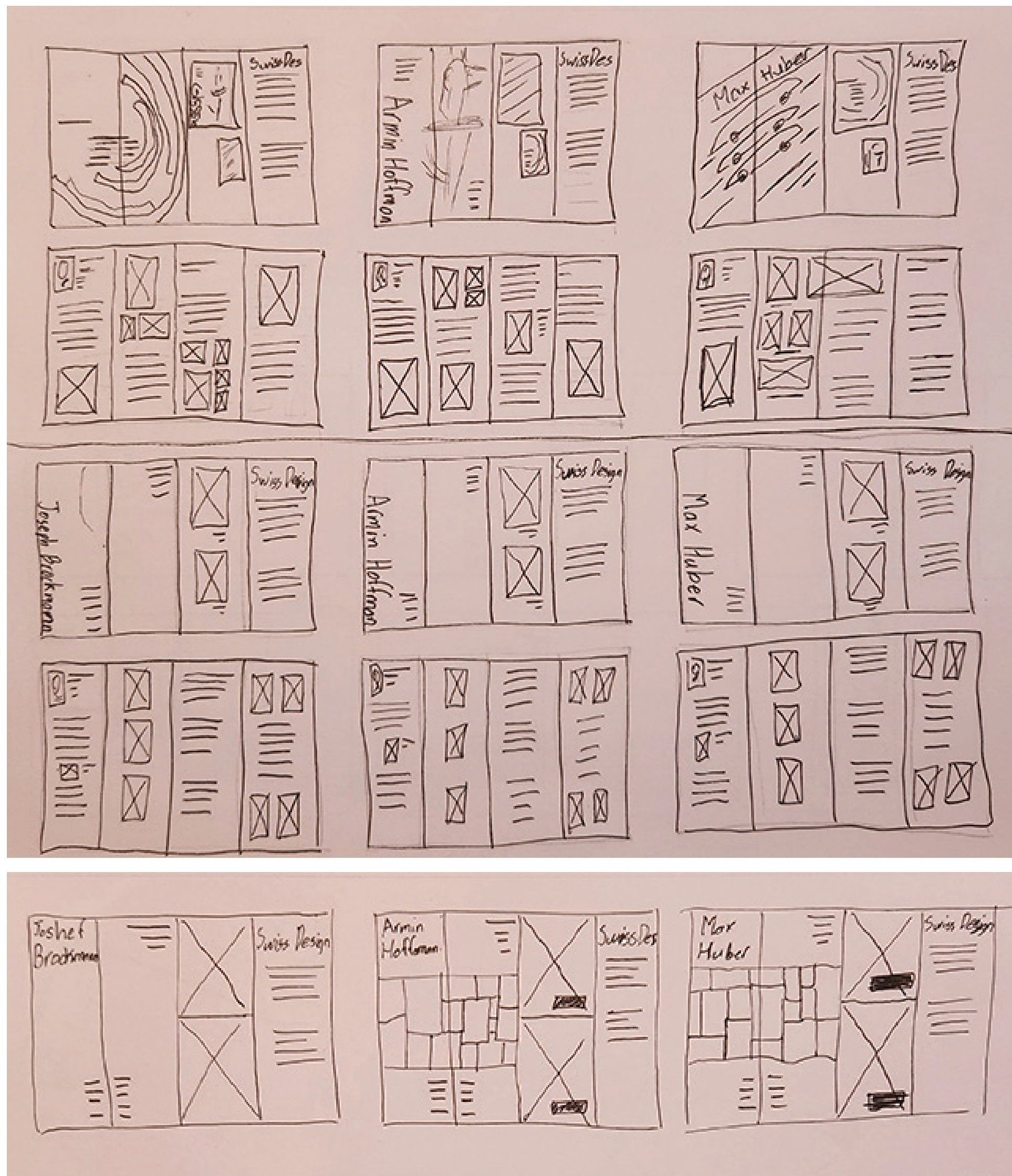
Swiss Design
An Exhibition of Master Works

This project's goal was to design a promotional campaign for a hypothetical museum exhibition at the High Museum in Atlanta, Georgia. Starting as a designed 3-page research paper focusing on the various graphic design movements around the world, we were to select one movement research the three most influential artists of that movement. Once the paper, an exhibition poster was designed in the style of the design movement & iterate that into three brochures displaying each of the three artists.

During my research process I decided to focus on Swiss design during the late 20th century. Josef Muller Brockman, Armin Hoffman, and Max Huber were the three designers I focused on. Once I had completed the research paper & had become familiar with the design themes found in Swiss Design; I knew I wanted to create a poster design that emphasized a grid. Using the letter "I" in Swiss & Design to create the Swiss cross, a tilted layout emerged that helped guide the viewers eyes throughout the poster. This design technique also iterated well to the promo brochures.

In addition to the initial designed material, it was decided to include a few environmental designs for the fictional exhibition. These environmental applications included a timeline, Kiosks, & large-scale signage. The goal of these applications was to build upon an existing project using the advanced design knowledge I had acquired since the project's creation.





Swiss Design

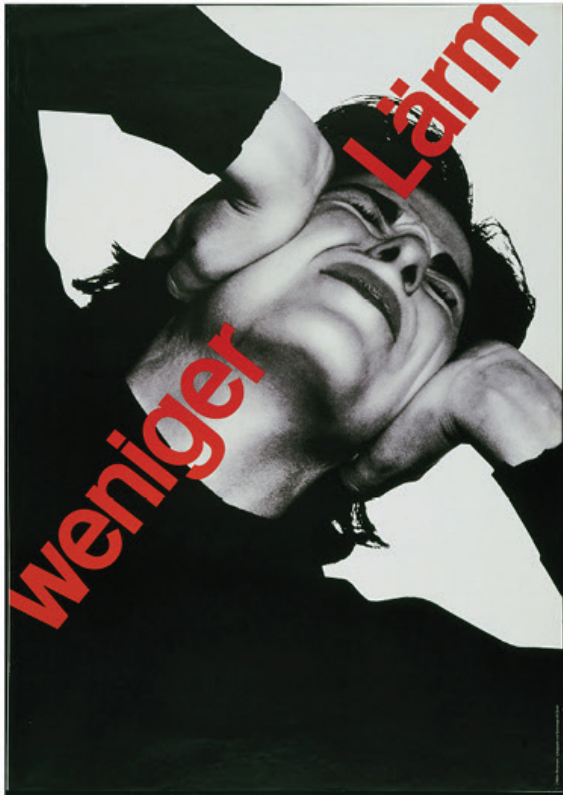
The Era of Concepts and Grids

In the world of graphic design, just about everyone knows the term “Swiss Design”. The revolution of modern design began after the first world war with movements such as Russian Constructivism, Dutch De Stijl, and the German Bauhaus. Symmetry, ornament and drawn illustration gave way to white space, plain letterforms, and photographs (Hollis 16). Influenced by these movements, the neutrality of Switzerland during World War II gave birth to a style of design not seen before as it became a haven for intellectuals all over Europe. Focusing on clear conceptual design over self-expression, Swiss designers used grids and precision to emphasize the content of what they were designing. Of all the graphic designers to come out of Switzerland, the most notable are Josef Müller Brockman, Armin Hofmann, and Max Huber.



Josef Müller Brockman, Weniger Lärm
This poster shows how Swiss Design use diagonal type to make design more interesting.

Max Huber, La Rinascente
This 1951 advertisement shows the interesting way Swiss Design uses type and illustration interchangeably.



Probably the most important aspect of the Swiss style is the use of the grid to organize content in a clear and concise manner. No longer did type need to be justified in one part of the design, designers had the ability to arranged type around the paper using asymmetry, diagonals, and sometimes vertical type. Using the grid also allowed a unique way of marrying type and illustration together, As seen in Max Huber's La Rinascente above and the asymmetry being used gives a sense of fluidity and activeness.

Another important aspect of Swiss Design is the use of photography. As photography became more accessible, graphic designers in Switzerland gravitated to this art form. As opposed to illustration, photography is a better way of showing content clearly, which is the corner stone of Swiss Design. As seen in Josef Müller Brockman's Weniger Lärm, a smartly planned photograph can also help the framing of text in an interesting way. Swiss design sought to remove ornamentation and unnecessary design; the use of photography is very effective in this front.

The third and most important part of Swiss design is the heavy emphasis on Sans Serif typeface, which give of a neutral feeling which keeps the Swiss ideology front and center. With typefaces like Univers, Akzidenz-Grotesk, and Helvetica, Swiss typographers removed the distractions of embellished serif type so that readers were able to view the information heavy designs in a clear way.

Josef Müller Brockman

Josef Müller Brockman is one of the most influential Swiss graphic designers in history. Spending most of his lifetime in Zurich, Switzerland, Brockman started his training in 1932 under Ernest Keller who taught design through the lens of the arts and crafts approach and Alfred Willmann who taught typography with an influence from the Bauhaus (Müller 11). Brockman over the years learned from many different styles of graphic design and became a popular illustrator in the 1940s. His unique graphic design came from his interest in 1920s type designers like El Lissitzky and Jan Tschichold and his concentration on objective Swiss design of the time (Müller 17).

Known as the figurehead of Swiss graphic design, Brockman was the pioneer of using the composition grid and geometry to order his designs. He believed strongly that the design should embody the feeling of the content, which is exemplified in his music poster. “The publisher Lars Müller described Beethoven's poster (1955) as the ultimate example of ‘musicality in design’” (Graphéine). Brockman was pushed by the goal of finding order in everything and that is why exemplifies the Swiss Style so well.



Josef Müller Brockman, Schützt das Kind! (Protect the Child!)
Poster, 1953

Josef Müller Brockman, Zurich Museum of Arts and Crafts
Exhibition Poster, 1960

Josef Müller Brockman, Beethoven
Poster, 1955

Josef Müller Brockman, Swiss Railways
Logo, 1982



Brockman's consistency can be seen in his most famous works. The logo he designed for the Swiss Railway, seen above, exemplifies his use for grids and geometry. Here he takes a logo that was originally a wheel with wings on it and simplifies it down to its most essential elements, while also adding a reference to Switzerland, utilizing the Swiss cross in the middle. His exhibition poster for the Zurich Museum of Arts and Crafts is an example of his unbeatable typography work. Brockman use of color and overlapped type gives a sense of movement with out taking away readability and his secondary content is aligned in a that connects it to the title.

Armin Hofmann

Armin Hofmann was a graphic designer most known for his teaching tenure, where he is described as the most inspirational design teacher by his students. Studying at the Zurich School of Arts and Crafts, Hofmann much like Josef Müller Brockman, started his career as a lithographer, he then began teaching at the Basel School of Arts and Crafts, where he taught for four decades. Later on in life, Hofmann moved to the United States where he taught at the Philadelphia College of Art and also Yale University. Hofmann designs emphasize the fundamental elements of graphic form including point, shape, and line.

Looking at the designs, Armin Hofmann mostly worked on poster that stressed communication over everything. Along with other Swiss designers he was an innovator in the use of photo-montage and photo-typesetting. A large amount of Hofmann's posters use color very sparingly as he focused more on composition than flashy color, which stayed with the concept of Swiss clarity. Armin Hofmanns teachings effected the rest of the world greatly as posters became more focused on photography and typography than illustration.



Armin Hofmann, Giselle
Poster, 1959

Armin Hofmann, Stadt Theater Basel
Poster, 1966

Max Huber, Max Huber: Drawings,
Paintings, 10 Graphic Works
Poster, 1987

Max Huber, 1000 km di Monza
Poster, 1968

By far Armin Hofmann’s most famous work his Giselle poster. In this design, Hofmann shows the intriguing potential for content with the absence of color. The white typography on the left is a strong juxtaposition to the image on the right. Another intriguing aspect of this piece is the fact that the dot of the I – which is usually square in most sans-serif typefaces – extrudes past the letterform, effectively marrying the type and image together.



Max Huber

Max Huber was a prominent Swiss graphic designer who is most known for his colorful designs. Studying at the same school as Brockman and Hofmann, Huber ended up moving to Italy in 1940. After World War II, Huber’s goal was to restore people’s faith in humanity and values through his designs. Huber used a broad range of mediums in his work including photography, painting, and illustration. Most of his work has a strong sense of movement the way he uses typography and color.

Since Huber spent most of his career in Italy, his designs were a lot more flashy than other famous Swiss designers, however he still had a similar goal of melding typography and photography together. As seen in his portfolio poster, Huber played with typography a lot, playing with overlap and color while staying legible. This poster also shows that Huber’s Swiss background kept his designs organized using the compositional grid. The race car poster is a great example of Huber strong ability to convey motion. Everything in the composition is at a slight angle which gives the viewer the sense that the cars are moving and the collage of colorful shapes give the images of the cars a blurry feeling like they are going really fast.

Conclusion

Although modern design did not officially start in Switzerland, graphic design would not be recognizable without the innovations of the country. The melting pot of ideas that took place in the first half of the 20th century allowed the development of some of the most iconic designers of all times and a style of design that change the world forever. The Swiss style pushed the world to make design more precise, more clear, and more dynamic.

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