

The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Graphic Design and Designers

Alan and Isabella Livingstone
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This book stands out from the majority of the books and resources normally reviewed in this section of the DATA Journal. As a professional reference book, its audience is naturally far wider than the education profession, though many preparing for GCSE or post-16 courses in Art or Graphics would find a great deal to interest them in its 230 pages. This is indeed nourishment for all who are fascinated with graphic design and I defy anybody who counts themselves one of such fraternity to pick this up in a bookshop and casually flick through it and not pause within a few seconds to explore some eye-catching detail.

Part of the World of Art series and packed with 504 illustrations, of which 58 are in colour, this new edition of the volume first published in 1992 can have no better formal introduction than that by the compilers themselves: 'The aim of the Dictionary of Graphic Design and Designers is to present a concise compendium of information on not only the leading figures in graphic design since 1840 but also on the artistic movements and technical advances of the period, thereby helping to show how the development of graphic design relates to the history of fine art and illustration. This broad contextual approach is intended to show how graphic design, far from being on the fringes, has been at the heart of artistic developments during the past 160 years'.

The book opens with an alphabetical subject index and closes with a chronological chart and bibliography. The chart is something of a little gem since it traces the evolution of graphic design and 'suggests the links between major artistic movements and the designers, companies and technical inventions of greatest significance in each period.' The bulk of the dictionary is packed between these two reference aids and boasts many treasures exploring the visual communication of ideas. Its international content is a key to its rich diversity and capable of delivering a powerful message in any curriculum. Every page has at least two black and white illustrations, which 'have been selected to provide as complete a visual record as possible of

the subjects discussed'. A special section of colour illustrations 'reveal the particular significance of colour in certain areas of graphic design'. The preface to this section is one of the most succinct I have read and with some interpretation by a teacher the language could be made accessible to many KS4 students, while those beyond GCSE may benefit more directly from the authors' own literary sophistication.

The visual context alone is enough to provide ample material for research dealing with other times and other cultures or as a starting point for a project, or serve to refresh a course a teacher thinks might be in danger of going stale. The book is compact and concise, inevitably selective given its sweep, but very high in value and support to the user, who would probably be a professional, or older student. It rightly has the feel of an authoritative work and yet is very easy to use, for dipping into or becoming engrossed in. It is no mean feat of publishing to pack such a wealth of information and illustration into such a small A5-size volume and at £8.95 represents, I believe, outstanding value for money. Moreover, it would fit neatly into a rucksack or holiday holdall for any teacher or student still with energy to explore and expand their subject knowledge during a vacation from the usual term commitments.

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Appropriate content	✓✓✓✓	Generic use	
Pupil/student use	✓	One of a series	←
Teacher resource	✓✓✓✓	Photocopiable	
Visuals	✓✓✓✓	Pupil/student activities N/A	
Overall style	✓✓✓✓	Cross-curricular	←

* Suitable for top KS3, most KS4 and some KS5

** Questions and activities at the end of each section. Examination questions at the end of the book.



REVIEWS