BOB GILL
Graphic Designer, Illustrator, Art Director, Author

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TITe

Collect information for making video/animated film on the following topic.

AIM

Provide information to the upcoming graphic designers and illustrators.

OBJECTIVE

The objective was to do a thorough research on Bob Gill and provide the users with an insight of his work and profession.

METHODS OF COLLECTING INFORMATION

BOOKS

Bob Gill, so far.
Graphic Design as a Second Language

INTERNET

bobgillete.com
adcglobal.org
eyemagazine.com
designobserver.com

OBSERVATION

illustration
logo
posters
INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHIC DESIGN / ILLUSTRATION

Graphic design or illustration is a broad discipline that encompasses many different aspects and elements. Graphic design takes ideas, concepts, texts, and images and presents them in a visually engaging form through print, electronic or other media. It may include art direction, typography, page layout, information technology and other creative aspects.

The variety means that there is a fragmented landscape for design practice within which designers may specialise and focus.

The field is considered a subset of visual communication and communication design, but sometimes the term “graphic design” is used interchangeably with these due to overlapping skills involved.

Graphic designers use various methods to create and combine words, symbols and images to create a visual representation of ideas and messages. A graphic designer may use a combination of typography, visual arts and page layout techniques to produce a final result. Graphic design often refers to both the process by which the communication is created and the products which are generated.

THE EVOLUTION OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

Graphic design developed from the printing and publishing industry. At that time there was a clear demarcation within the different stages of the print production process. The stages involved printers, scanners, photographic reproduction, graphic design and production managers.

As the power of colourful visual communication became widely appreciated, graphic design grew from the need to provide visual communication to the consumer world and spread throughout different sectors of the economy.

Technological development, particularly in the digital age has revolutionised and rationalised the process of print production. This has placed designers at the heart of the creative process.
FAMOUS GRAPHIC DESIGNERS/ ILLUSTRATORS

Alan Fletcher, Colin Forbes, Bob Gill

In the early sixties, England, ablaze with creative activities, saw the formation of the design firm Fletcher/Forbes/Gill in 1962, the founders of which, later gave rise to the iconic multi-disciplinary design studio, Pentagram. Alan Fletcher, Colin Forbes, and Bob Gill were three exemplary graphic designers of the late 20th century who set a milestone for the graphic design industry, continuing to influence designers till date.

ALAN FLETCHER

Alan Fletcher, born in Nairobi, Kenya, was the founder of Fletcher/Forbes/Gill in 1962. He invested in the fusion of cerebral European tradition with the emerging pop culture of North America, which made him a pioneer of independent graphic design, being described by The Daily Telegraph as "the most highly regarded graphic designer of his generation, and probably one of the most prolific". He helped to establish a model of combining commercial partnership with creative independence.

Art Style

- Prevalent use of vibrant expressive typography, conveying various ideas.
- Use of pop art and bright colours.
- Simple words and phrases composed lucidly to express ideas.
COLIN FORBES

Colin Forbes was born in London, 1928. Notable as a former head of the graphic design program at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London, and as one of the founders of the Pentagram design studio, he had skills to compliment the artworks of Fletcher and Gills, and coordinated the firm alongside designing. "Colin Forbes is unique as a designer of things that are not normally thought of as being designed." - President David Brown of the Art Centre College of Design.

Art Style

- Use of minimalist, expressive typography
- Limited palette; mostly monochromatic
- Works comprises of logos and posters
MILTON GLASER

One of the most notable graphic designers of America, Milton Glaser, born 1929, is the designer of the most iconic logos and posters, including the ‘I <3 NY’ logo, the DC bullet logo used by DC comics from 1977 to 2005, his Bob Dylan poster etc. Glaser, the co-founder of the New York Magazine and Push Pin Studios, won the National Design Award Lifetime Achievement Award from the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. In 2009, President Barrack Obama honoured him with the National Medal of Arts.

Art Style

- Highly commercial designs that catch the attention of the viewers.
- Bright, compact, powerful art that is easily interpreted by the public
- Use of a colourful palette, often balanced by large areas of black
David Carson, born 1954, is an American graphic designer and art director, best known for his innovation in magazine design, and his widely imitated style, the so-called grunge typography. Carson was the art director for the magazine Ray Gun till he formed his own studio, David Carson studio in New York, which attracted major clients in the United States. He has won over 230 awards for his contribution to the field of graphic design, photography, advertising, and branding.

**Art Style**

- Extensive use of typography to convey the feel of the subject over illustrations.
- Varied font size, and overlapping words to shift emphasis.
- Overlapping, tightly packed illustrations and photos to support the typography.
MIND MAP

BOB GILL

Work

Why Bob Gill?

Inspiration

Methodology

Achievements

Film

Books

Illustrations

Realistic approach

No Rules for Design
WHY BOB GILL?

- Bob Gill was more of a **realist**, he believed in pointing out and bringing out things and ideas which other people chose to ignore.

- He never made ads or illustration or posters for the sole purpose of earning money but to add experiences to his book and change the entire concept of design and how people looked at it.

- One of the statements that he made which makes him even more interesting is ‘I’ve never had a problem with a dumb client. There's no such thing as a bad client. Part of our job is to do good work and get the client to accept it.

- One of the main reasons for choosing Bob Gill was that he saw **the revolution of graphic design** from the most basic stages in the 1950’s till date which we can clearly in his illustration and work over the period

- Winning the prestigious awards and holding the kind of ideology for **graphic design** makes him one of the best graphic designers that our generation has ever come across.
WHO IS BOB GILL?

Graphic Designer  Illustrator  Art Director  Writer  Teacher

- Bob Gill was born in New York. His mother was a piano teacher. Gill, at five, was her first pupil. He began illustrating at about the same time.

- He left home at 17, at the Philadelphia Museum School of Art he studied design and drawing. After two years there, and six months at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Gill returned to New York.

- He began freelancing from his small apartment. Gill’s first job was a cover for Interiors magazine.

- His illustrations began appearing in Esquire, The Nation, Seventeen, Fortune, Glamour, etc. In 1955 he was asked to design a title card for the CBS sitcom called “Private Secretary.”.

- In 1956, he started teaching at the School of Visual Arts one night a week.

- He also wrote and illustrated his first children’s book, 1956

- He did his first film title by 1960, although he was well represented in all of the New York design shows and in many international design publications.

- He took a job as the creative director of an agency. He had a regular column in the trendiest magazine, one-man shows of his serigraphs in London and New York, did some children’s books, and, together

- With the two brightest young designers in England, started Fletcher/Forbes/Gill, a design office, on April Fool's Day, 1962.
MILESTONES IN HIS CAREER

- Freelancing
- Cover of Interior magazine
- Illustrations published in Esquire, Glamour
- Title card of Private Secretary
- Teaching at visual art school
- London Ad Agency
- Fletcher/Forbes/Gill
WORKS

Bob Gill, a prominent graphic designer of the 20th century till date, has accomplished and created a lot of designs and graphics both for commercial and personal purposes.

His work carries an obvious undertone to it, especially since it's related to the reality we all are exposed to, it's not hard to guess what his works are trying to say. This, in fact, is a good thing as his designs are so self-explanatory that they don't need text explanations or verbal communication to get the point across. After all, we often miss the gems that are hidden right under our nose.

Another style of his is to use sarcastic remarks and witty humor in a form of a design solution. He brings out contradictions of human reality, while putting forth our hypocrisies and underlining them in a non-offensive fashion.

Bob Gill uses a lot of paradoxical phrases to his sketchy artwork. Usually, his art does not follow the rules of perspective or extremely well-constructed proportions; however it is evident in some of his works that he does know the rules of designs, but chooses to bend or not follow them according to his design requirements. For example, a pencil shaver full of colorful shavings Gill made for a magazine.

Bob Gill has also written many books, many of which sold really well. His book Graphic Design: Visual Comparisons (1962) sold over 100,000 copies. Other notable books of his include Graphic Design as a Second Language, Unspecial Effects for Graphic Designers, What Color is your World?, LogoMania, Words Into Pictures and a compilation of almost all his works, Bob Gill, so far.
WORKING STYLE

Bob Gill, a reputed graphic designer, began all of his works with a simple idea or statement. According to him, every graphic is rooted to an idea and then it is expanded upon in realistic terms. He very clearly stated a place where people usually get confused, which is between a fact and an idea. While it seems not understandable at first, it is well explained by the example he stated in his book ‘Graphic Design as a Second Language’.

He states that, when a person goes into a classroom, if they make an observation saying “There are twenty-six chairs in this classroom”, they’re stating a fact. A fact can be stated by anyone who knows how to count, however saying something along the lines of “As the chairs are lined up so perfectly, I bet the atmosphere in this room must be very rigid” speaks of an idea. It shows something the person has added on to the already known or evident facts, something that depicts their way of thinking.

Traversing along this path, Bob Gill firmly believes that the starting point of a graphic is an interesting statement or idea. If the root itself is boring, the final product will also be boring. Which is why he believes in some of the design basics, which he prefers not to label as ‘principles’ since he’s not a believer of rules. These design basics he states are as follows:

1. Unnaturalness

While there is no such word in existence, he believes there should be. To try something deviant from the existing norms of the graphic design community is what according to him makes a design more noticeable. It’s experimenting outside of the boundaries that designers often limit themselves into. Because of commercialization and wide-spread mass media, people get used to thinking in a similar line as what they’re exposed to. It’s really important to realize those boundaries and experiment beyond them.

2. Separation

Eyes have a tendency to group elements in a graphic and consider them a part of each other or related to one other. This goes with the Gestalt Principle of Similarity, which makes the eyes prone to relate elements which are similar in size, shape, color etc. However, Bob Gill says that sometimes separation is not the key in a visual.
3. **Internal logic**

A very key point is to not force one's own design and aesthetic prejudices on the client, who obviously has a better idea of the concept and how they would like it to be. In doing so, not only does one step outside their own biases but also is able to deliver a design solution which has a much higher likeliness to satisfy the client. Not to mention, while going down a different path, there is also the possibility of one discovering new favorite design templates, layouts, colors etc.

4. **The Grid**

While almost all architects and many famous graphic designers have relied on symmetrical balance and mathematical tools to give their design a well measured standpoint, Bob Gill states it’s completely dependent on the person if they want to use a grid or not. It’s also important to know that the usage of grid is again different from person to person. He also said “Of course, if you prefer to relate the spaces mathematically, go for it. Otherwise, listen to the pigeons.”

5. **Be Consistent and Varied**

Many times a design requires a variation while posing as consistent when we look at it. As in, it should be only varied enough to add a design rhythm to it and not in a way that the elements don't feel like they belong in a family.

6. **Typography**

Typography is a great tool to accompany any design. While it can also be used as solely a tool towards a design solution, a lot of designers prefer only using Typography to assist the main graphic. And of course, adding variety in that same typography adds to the ‘interesting’ part of it, however, too much variation is as bad as no variation at all. Redundancy is a key word used to describe “too many typographic variations at once.” Since typography is a vital part of any design and also builds up a communication bridge between the design and the user, it has three subcategories, which are as follows:
• **Redundancy: Word + Image**

Almost every design consists of an idea and words. "Ideally, it should never be necessary for the words to tell us what we’re looking at." A design, according to him, should be conveying the message by itself; however, text can act as an accompaniment to it, to add to the ‘interesting’ part of the design solution.

• **Redundancy: Space**

The shapes made by the typographic text should never be too prominent. The meaning of the statement can be well described with this image:

![Image showing redundancy in space](image)

• **Redundancy: Scale**

According to Bob Gill, the elements in a layout are either complementary or redundant. For example, in these first two figures, the image and the text are competing for the attention by almost taking the same size of area, which he terms as *redundancy*.

![Image showing redundancy in scale](image)

But as for when the scale of the image and text is varied, the layouts of next two images come off as *complementary*.
PENTAGRAM

- Pentagram is a design studio that was founded in 1972 by Alan Fletcher, Theo Crosby, Colin Forbes, Kenneth Grange, Bob Gill, and Mervyn Kurlansky in Needham Road, West London, UK.

- Pentagram was founded on the premise of collaborative interdisciplinary designers working together in an independently owned firm of equals.

- Pentagram does work in graphic design, identity, architecture, interiors and products. They have designed packaging and products for many well-known companies, such as Tesco, Boots, 3Com, Swatch, Tiffany & Co, Dell, Netgear, Nike and Timex. They have also developed identities for Citibank, United Airlines.

- Pentagram is the world's largest independent design consultancy. The firm is owned and run by 19 partners, a group of friends who are all leaders in their individual creative fields.

- Winning a silver award from the Design Business Association for creating identity for The Corporate bank in UK
INSPIRATION

Bob Gill, a prominent graphic designer of the 20th century till date, has accomplished and created a lot of designs and graphics both for commercial and personal purposes. His very well-known quote which goes:

“There is no such thing as a bad client. Part of our job is to do good work and get the client to accept it.”

It’s vital to understand what the above means as it states that a designer should always work their best to get their ideas to suit the needs of the customer, no matter how hard or obscure. They must fully understand the client and produce a work by not letting their internal prejudices hinder the growth and possibilities of the expected design.

Also to note, Bob Gill is quite a positive person as another one of his quotes go:

“No matter how many times you’re amazing, absolutely brilliant work is rejected by the client, for whatever dopey, arbitrary reason, there is often another amazing, absolutely brilliant solution possible. Sometimes it’s even better.”

With such quotes in mind, Bob Gill is a motivated, optimist who mostly takes his inspiration from reality. While there are many artists who choose to ignore reality and build a new world from their own dreams and imaginations, Bob Gill believed in seeing the same reality as everyone, just in a different way. By twisting the reality or ‘seeing what people normally couldn’t’, he has been able to incorporate great sense of humor and paradoxes in his design solutions.

Considering how he always has a faint idea or a statement in his mind to start his working process with, it helps him get a better view of what he wants to do and when proceeds with it, it comes off as ‘something interesting’ as he plans it to be.

A major source of Bob Gill’s inspiration lies in observing, as does it for most artists. However, the way he observed things around him was unique. He observed the culture and influence of big companies around him and fleshed out original thinking from these little interpretations.
PRESENT WORK

The renowned graphic designer of the 20th century continues to devote himself to the design industry in the 21st century. Gill contributes to Pentagram by guiding upcoming designers, following on his teaching background.

He has published various books

- Illustration, Victoria: Images Publishing Group, 2004,
- LogoMania, Gloucester: Rockport Publishers, 2006,
- Words Into Pictures, Victoria: Images Publishing Group, 2009, and his latest,

He attends seminars and interacts with designers, as in the London Pentagram, sharing the latest additions to his portfolio which include RentaNooYawka logo, his illustration to make pipe smoking look sauve, the AGM identity and the party invitation for his friend John Cole that blackmailed guests to bring a bottle.

Gill designed the February, 2013, cover for the Print magazine, using illustrations by Michaelangelo and himself.

Bob Gill continues to add to the design industry as one of the most revolutionary figures, who still likes to reminisce about the old days when he started his career, about his friend Charlie Watts of The Rolling Stones performing gigs with his band at the Barclay's Center.
CONCLUSION

The main aim of the task was to collect information about an illustrator for a video/documentary but in the process we have managed to create an inspiration for the upcoming graphic designers and illustrators.

This task about Bob Gill tells us how design is not about rules but expressive imagination and a strong belief in your own talent.

Through his films books and illustrations he has managed to bring out things which other people ignored.

He chose reality over imagination and that is exactly what made him stand out in this creative field.

We ourselves have learnt a lot from his work through this task and hope others do as well.
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