RESEARCH ON LATE MODERNISM

Consider what we have discussed regarding Late Modernism in the USA and The Swiss International Style. Do additional research on the Swiss International Style - it may be a good idea to study some of the known designers of this style and period. As a guide, visit designishistory.com, which gives a brief outline of specific designers and styles - take note that here the Swiss International Style is listed under 1940, which is not incorrect as the style was developed in the late 40s, but flourished in the 50s. Also use additional reference sources of your own and do a write-up of the following:

Research on the Swiss International Style
After you have done research on the style, give a description of your own. How would you define the style? Do a write-up of about 350 words and discuss the characteristics of the style, the typefaces that were prominent and the philosophy behind it.

Influences on Swiss International Style
Do a write-up of about 350 words on what you think the main influences were on the Swiss International Style. In other words, what motivated designers to create and follow this style? It may be useful to study specific designers, such as Josef Müller-Brockmann and Armin Hofmann, pay attention to what they themselves (or other designers amongst their peers) have said about the philosophy of the style.

Analysis of the Swiss International Style
Read up on the different schools within the Swiss International Style: The Zurich School of Arts and Krafts and The Basel School of Design and do a write-up of the similarities between them and the differences in their approaches. This write-up should be your own conclusions, based on examples of work and stated facts and should be approximately 350 words long.

RESEARCH OF
THE SWISS INTERNATIONAL STYLE

The Swiss International Style, also known as the International Typographic Style/International Style, is a style of design that arose in Switzerland in the 1940s, although the style didn't really develop and fully emerge until the 1950s. Some of the most prominent designers that helped develop and progress the Swiss International Style into it's distinct, clean, simple, highly legible, and objective style of design, is the designers Josef Müller-Brockmann (Zurich School of Arts and Krafts), and Armin Hofmann (Basel School of Design). The use of sans-serif typography, grids and asymmetrical layouts (which is one of many contributions made by the two schools), as well as high focus on combination of typography and photography as a means of visual communication, are some of the key attributes of the style and reflects the core characteristics of the very recognizable style.

Clean and classic sans-serif typefaces are one of the most prominent characteristics of the Swiss International Style. Simple typefaces like Akzidenz-Grotesk, Univers, and Helvetica are some of the typefaces that really represents the style by reflecting its key principles as they conform with one of the main ideas behind (and motives of) the style; design should focus on the content and not decorative extras. Embellishments were seen as excessive and removed, eliminating distractions. This minimalistic attitude towards decorative elements allowed for information-heavy design to be read and studied, rather than merely

A road safety poster designed by Josef Müller-Brockmann for the Swiss Automobile Club (1955).

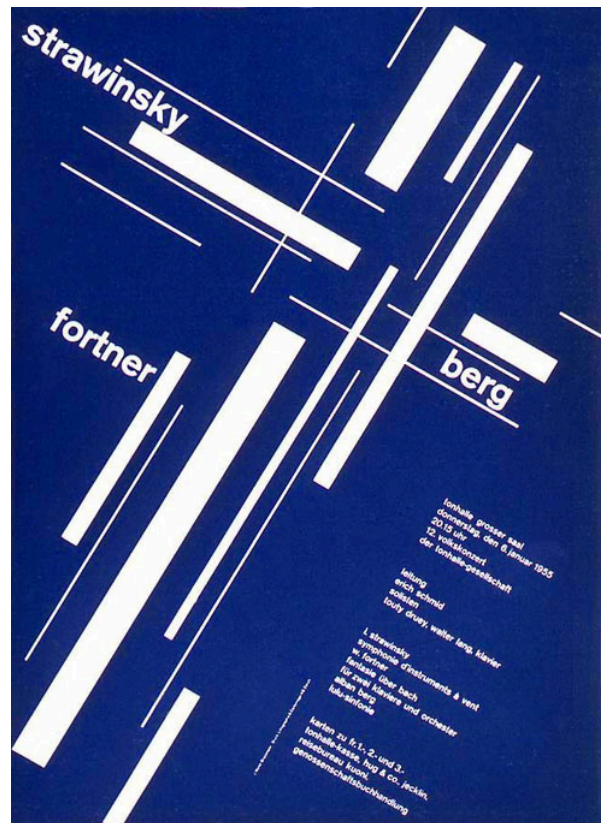http://www.designishistory.com/files/gimgs/49_swiss04.jpg

Max Hubers graphic poster for UNESCO (1950).

http://wwwcdn.howdesign.com/wp-content/uploads/Screen-Shot-2014-11-05-at-9.27.26-AM.png

seen and admired, and the use of clean, simple and straightforward sans-serif typefaces was a key element in achieving this. Objectivity and readability were key in the Swiss International Style.

The designs of the style have a very distinct and dependable use of a mathematical grid, which is considered to be to «most legible and harmonious means for structuring information» (P.B Meggs' History of Graphic Design). Because grids are flexible, consistent, and easy to follow, it is only natural that it became one of the fundamental characteristics of the Swiss International Style. The designs were intended to provide clarity and objectivity in a highly legible, clear-cut manner, and a persistent use of mathematical grids helped make this possible. A very graphic, geometric aestethic is typical for the style.

By combining elements from other artistic trends, periods and styles, the delicate and elementary Swiss International Style were formed. This can be seen in how the works from some of the pioneers of the style have adopted elements from Bauhaus, De Stijl, and The New Typography.

Josef Müller-Brockmann, Zurich Town Hall poster (1955).

http://www.designishistory.com/files/gimgs/49_swiss02.jpg

Josef Müller-Brockmann (1957)

https://www.moma.org/media/W1siZilsljQzM-TUiXSxblnAiLCJjb252ZX-J0liwiLXJlc2l6ZSA1MT-J4NTEyXHUwMDNlIl1d.jpg?sha=d0540eb-83f3eef60

Josef Müller-Brockmann, Zurich Town Hall poster (1955).

http://www.designishistory.com/images/brockmann/beethoven.jpg

INFLUENCES ON
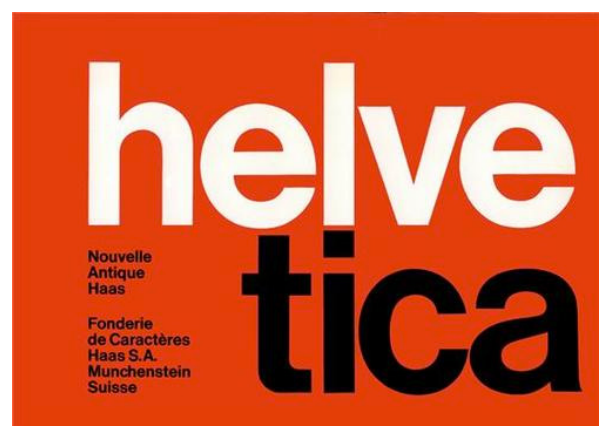## THE SWISS INTERNATIONAL STYLE

The Swiss International Style is a style that was developed with a clear and un-adorned approach to the presentation of content, where the main focus was to make designs with content was easy to read and perceived. These designs would often be information-heavy, where a clear, grid-based layout with the well-structured, consistent and objective arrangement of restricted elements (as done in the Swiss International Style), was essential to make the designs as legible, functional and efficient as possible.

Josef Müller-Brockmann is one of the most prominent and well-known de-signers that helped form the Swiss International Style and was a leading practitioner and theorist of the style. He was, like many other designers in the period, influenced by the ideas of several different design and art movements including Constructivism, De Stijl, Suprematism and the Bauhaus. He established his own Zurich studio specializing in graphics, exhibition design, and photography. He introduced the Swiss International Style to America, and was concerned with functional and objective design. He believed that by restricting design elements in the confine of a typographic grid, would make the design focus on and display its core message in a clean and sharp geometrical aesthetic and the Swiss International Style clearly reflects this approach.

The idea behind the use of grids is to define the constant dimensions of the

Eugene and Maz Lenz, Sports Poster (1958).
http://www.designishistory.com/files/gimgs/49_swiss03.jpg

The typeface Helvetica fits well with the grid-based system of the Swiss International Style.
https://78.media.tumblr.com/1c46227109df4467d-93b6e3146722ec7/tumblr_inline_n54z77l3Fs1rle1xk.jpg

design space, and elements can then be inserted precisely into it so that all parts of a page can be integrated coherently according to the aesthetic order. Müller-Brockmann always aspired to a distinct arrangement of typographic and pictorial elements, and the objective was an effective and efficient visual communication where the information presented was assumed not only read more quickly and easily but is also more easily understood and retained in memory.

Emil Rudner was another key designer in the development of the Swiss International Style. After attending the Zurich School of Arts and Krafts (where the principles of Bauhaus and Tschichold's New Typography were taught) he later on started teaching as a typography instructor at the Basel School of Design. He developed a program structured on principles of objectivity in design, along with another great designer with a big influence on the Swiss International Style called Armin Hofmann. Together they helped form the Basel School of Design and establish the Swiss International Style. Rudner broke away from the subjective, style-driven typography of the past and encouraged his students to be more concerned with precision, proportions and above all, the role of legibility and communication with type. He taught his students that typography's purpose is, above all, to communicate ideas through writing. By using sans-serif typefaces, placing a high importance on the counters of characters and the negative space of compositions in asymmetrical compositions, his work is clear and concise, especially his typography.

An issue of Neue Grafik, published by Josef Müller-Brockmann (1963).
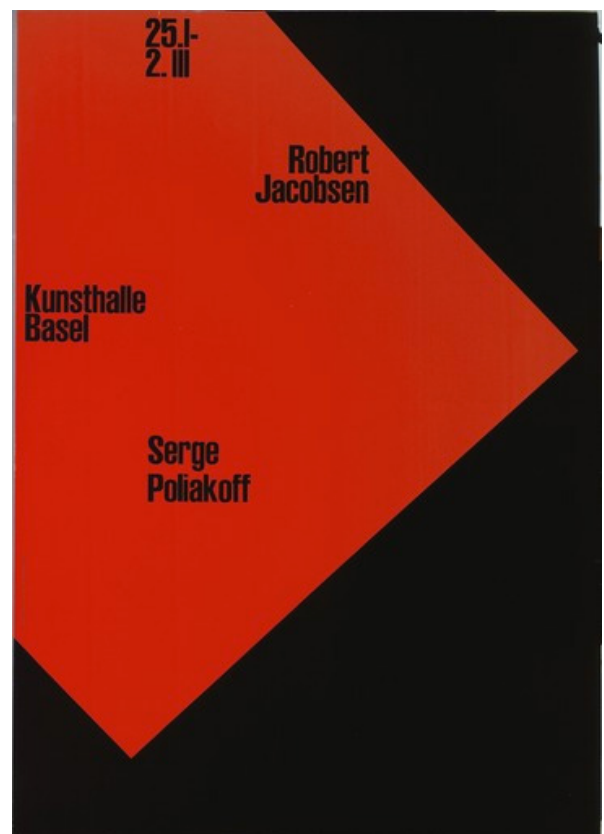
Design by Armin Hofmann, for Robert Jacobsen, Serge Poliakoff, Knusthalle Basel (1959).

ANALYSIS OF
THE SWISS INTERNATIONAL STYLE

I found it a bit challenging to find exact philosophies and teaching approaches of the two Swiss schools, so I have decided to focus on the designers of the schools and their approaches/philosophies, and compare them to each other.

Müller-Brockmann with the Zurich School of Arts and Krafts used a mathematical grid to determine the arrangement of typography and images, and he used this grid system to make the messages in his designs easier to read and understood. His work was graphic, rather than illustrative. He is recognized for his simple designs, and his clean use of typography (notably Akzidenz-Grotesk), shapes and colors. He stood for an objective, radically minimalist geometric design, and aspired to a distinct arrangement of typographic and pictorial elements, the clear identification of priorities.

Hofmann and Rudner with the Basel School of Design had a similar approach, but with distinct differences. They emphasized the importance of typography and how it is used in a design. Ruder called upon his students to strike the correct balance between form and function, where legibility and readability were dominant concerns. He advocated a systematic overall design and the use of a grid structure to bring all elements (typography, photography, illustrations, diagrams, charts etc.) into harmony with each other while allowing for design variety. His methodology of typographic design and education was presented in
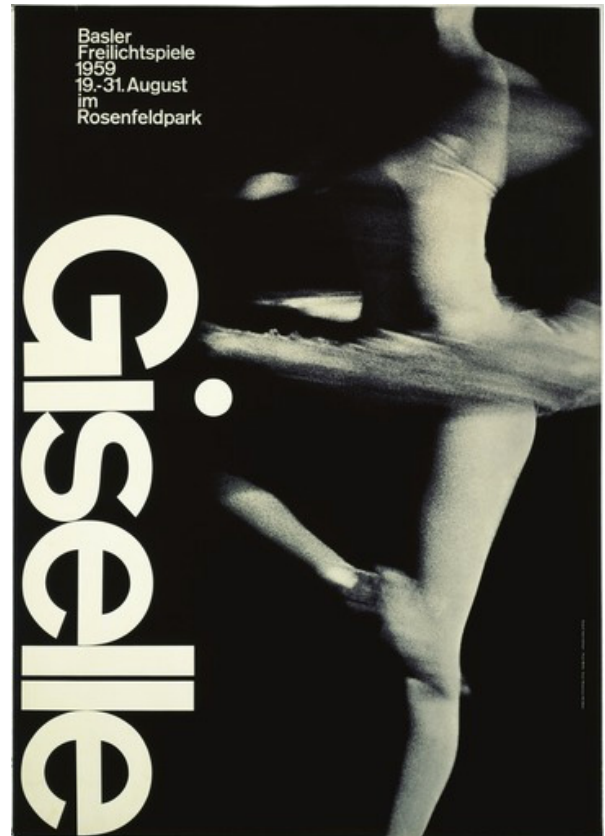
Armin Hofmann, Poster for Giselle, Basler Freilichtspiele (1959).

https://www.moma.org/collection/works/6775?artist_id=2697&locale=en&page=1&sov_referrer=artist

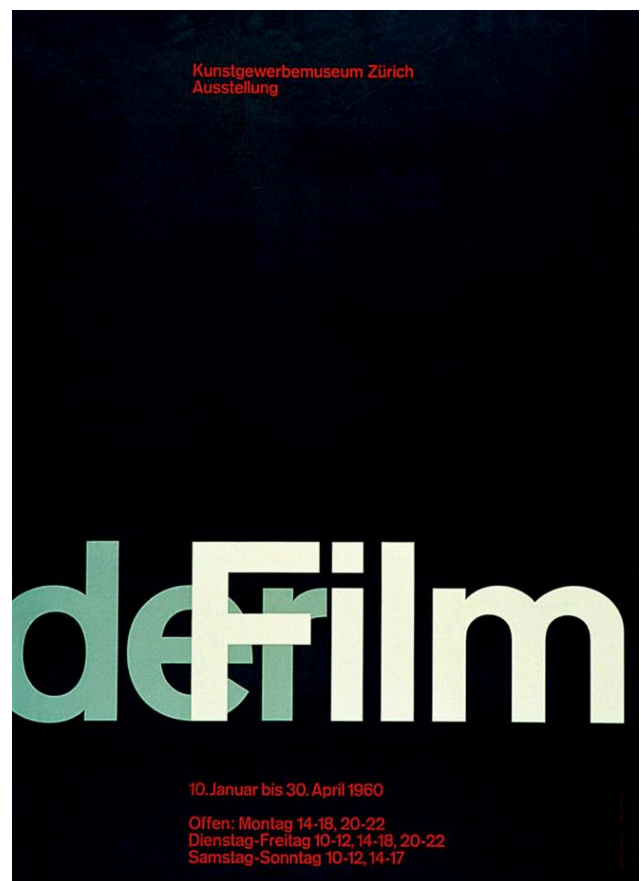Akzidenz Grotesk - A typeface often used by Josef Müller-Brockmann.

https://99designs-blog.imgix.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/pjimage.jpg?auto=format&q=60&fit=max&w=930

his 1967 book Typography: A Manual of Design, which had a worldwide influence. Hofman applied deep aesthetic values and an understanding of form to both teaching and designing, and he evolved a design philosophy based on the elemental graphic-form language of point, line, and plane, replacing traditional pictorial ideas with a modernist aesthetic. He sought a dynamic harmony in his work and teaching, where all the parts of a design are unified and the relationship of contrasting elements as the means of invigorating visual design. Contrasting elements could include light to dark, curved lines to straight lines, soft to hard, dynamic to static and so on, with resolution achieved when the designer brings the total into an absolute harmony.

If I take the approaches of the three designers I have studied for this learning activity, and have those reflect the two schools approach and philosophy, I would say that the two schools have a lot of the same approaches and share the same ideas and philosophies in many ways, but there are also some noticeable differences in how each school both value and make use of the various approaches. The Basel School of Design had a lot of focus on typography, readability, and legibility in a systematic overall design, and most importantly creating harmony between all the elements of the design.

The Zurich School of Arts and Krafts had more focus on the use of a mathematical grid to organize and arrange elements in designs, a restrictive use of only the most fundamental, relevant elements, and a clean use of typography, color and shapes, resulting in simple, designs reduced to its bare essentials. Both schools focused on an objective approach, and with the use of contrasts, simple and critical use of typography, grid-systems and systematic arrangement of elements, and they helped develop a style where there is a focus on the content/message of the design itself. It is presented in a legible and objective way where the designs are stripped for any trace of the designers' subjectivity. Both schools favored an asymmetrical layout, use of grid-systems, sans-serif typefaces, and a simple, clean, geometric aesthetic.

Josef Müller-Brockmann, Poster for a Theater Production (1960).

https://www.vanseodesign.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/der-film.jpg