

POSTERS FROM PAST AND PRESENT

A Report of a Senior Study

by

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ABSTRACT

From the Paleolithic cave paintings at Lascaux to Super Bowl commercials today, the human race clearly knows the value of visual communication. Since the beginning of time, humans have related thoughts and ideas by visual means to inform or educate the public, and among the most universally successful methods of achieving this communication is the printed poster. Though its roots can be traced back to stone carvings on tablets, the form of the poster that is familiar today originated in the early 1800s due to the invention of new woodblock printing techniques. This study follows the poster from around 1820 through contemporary design. Specifically, it focuses on eight stylistic design movements: the wood type poster, Art Nouveau, the Glasgow School, Sach Plakat, Art Deco, International Style, the Psychedelic Poster, and Contemporary design. In exploring these styles, I have created a poster for a current Maryville College event using the representative techniques and methods from each. For each poster, a brief description of the time period is given in addition to a discussion about the poster and the design decisions based on the particular style of reference. The study evaluates elements and principles of design, techniques, materials, typefaces, and color selections used by designers from each period. Furthermore, the discussion of the social context of the movement allows the study to address the question of why certain styles have been historically associated with particular events and what has caused this to happen.

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CHAPTER I

PROPOSAL

The poster is a staple of printed graphic design. Throughout history, various art movements and styles have influenced the development and changes that this type of printed media has undergone. In addition to being a crucial part of the history of graphic design, posters are instrumental in communicating events, shows, political messages, and anything that can be advertised in the public eye. They are extremely influential to the work I do as a designer. Thus far in my personal design work, I have most often had requests for event posters, t-shirts, and logo designs; these are most often related in that a company or organization's logo will appear on its event poster or event shirt. Of these designs, the poster allows for the most artistic expression and experimentation as the design is unlimited in terms of the size and simplicity of a logo design or the measurements and ink selections of t-shirts. The passion and talent of the artist and the style is vividly represented, which leads me to study poster design—its history and the creation process—more closely for my senior thesis and project. Through knowledge I have gained in art history and visual communication courses as well as further in-depth, focused study of various books and archives, I propose to study the development of poster design from the early 19th century to the Post-modern period focusing on several

particular styles and movements that resonate the most with my work and style as a designer.

The styles and/or periods of art and design that I plan to incorporate consist of the following: the 19th century wood type poster, Art Nouveau, the Glasgow School, Sach Plakat, Art Deco, International Style, the Psychedelic poster, and Contemporary design. Through my study of these influential periods of design, I will identify connections and contrasts among the different styles, as well as what social circumstances affected the development of design as a whole, specifically poster art.

Following my research, I will visually represent each of these styles by creating posters for actual events at Maryville College that will be advertised on campus and in the surrounding community. In order to better explore the relationship between artistic expression and functionality as a printed medium of communication, I will employ each of the above listed movements in an original poster design in its representative style. By purposefully pairing events with styles that suit them—which will be aided by research and the process of creating thumbnails and rough designs to see which styles work the best—I will create pieces that are both artistically expressive and useable as advertisement.

All of the posters will be created using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop software. The size and paper selection will vary from piece to piece depending on what is more appropriate and effective for a particular style, as well as what options are available to the organization for printing. Though I will incorporate reference material, photographs, and purchased or downloaded typefaces in the design of the posters, I will create the majority of the elements in personal illustrative form using the design programs. Color selection

and design techniques will also depend on the different styles of the posters as they would not be as effective if I tried to completely tie all of my pieces together; my goal is to explore different styles and incorporate each into a design. Therefore, I will have a variety of sizes, colors, techniques, and events as a part of my gallery showing to clearly demonstrate the wide range of visual communication used throughout history and that these styles and methods are still effective today.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND BACKGROUND

1. What elements and principles of design are incorporated or prevalent from movement to movement, and what influenced designers to choose these?
2. How is typography used in poster design?
3. What effect do social movements have on poster design?
4. Are certain styles aligned with certain events due to a preconceived idea about a style or movement, and how will this influence my designs?

Humanity has and always will find a way to visually communicate ideas, events, initiatives, breaking news, political causes, celebrations, and any other information that needs to reach the masses. As far back as the cave paintings of the Paleolithic period, over 30,000 years ago, we have visual records of man's effort to communicate through the use of images, symbols, and characters. Throughout history, these primitive scribbles have turned into wall carvings, steles, codices, books, fliers, and finally posters. Since it began being mass-produced and used in the early nineteenth century, the poster has played a key role in the development of graphic design and communication. In the past one hundred years, the poster has been rivaled by other means of advertisement and

communication such as radio, television, and the Internet. However, in the realm of printed communication, the poster is by far the most utilized and effective method of disseminating information into the public.

The Wood Type Poster

Posters as we know them now did not commence mass production until the 1820's. These posters looked similar to what we consider the "Western" or "Wanted Poster" style, due to the use of various large, bold, heavy typefaces in order to catch the eye of passing pedestrians. I began my reproduction and implementation of historical poster design with these early posters. Woodblock printing had been around for centuries, mainly used for detailed illustrations such as the work of Albrecht Dürer. However, the invention of the lateral router in 1827 by American Darius Wells changed the poster printing industry immensely as it allowed for economical, mass production of wood types. As metal tended to get expensive and especially hard to work with in large formats, the lightweight, inexpensive, yet durable woodcuts easily became the new favorite (Eskilson, 2007). Demand for advertisement of new products, exotic cruises, clothing, railroad lines, etc. had been on the rise since the Industrial Revolution (both in Europe and the United States); thus, the need for printed communication was met by this speedy process of creating woodblock letterforms so that they could be set and posters could be created. In 1834, William Leavenworth combined this router with the pantograph, which is a copying instrument, so that clients could send in drawings and flourishes to create unique and customized letterforms for their posters (Meggs & Purvis, 2006).

Though useful and effective in conveying a message, according to *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*, "Design decisions were pragmatic. Long words or copy dictated condensed type, and short words or copy were set in expanded fonts" (Meggs & Purvis, 2006, p. 139). Often, designers would combine many different typefaces and treatments, paying no attention to stretching and skewing letterforms. Serifs, sans, slabs, bold, and condensed fonts all appear on woodcut posters. Due to the perception of this style of poster, its roughness, and its association with the western look, I recreated it in my poster design for *Howee Hoedown*, Maryville College's Homecoming dance for 2009. With the hoedown theme, it was not challenging to incorporate elements of this style—bold fonts, large lettering, multiple typefaces, distorted sections of type—to communicate the nature of the event. I also added small images, like guns and pointing fingers, from a collection of Victorian woodcuts in order to connect with the era a bit more and draw interest and attention to certain parts of the poster.

The Art Nouveau Poster

Contrary to my *Howee Hoedown* poster, my next project along the timeline of design history involves much less emphasis on words and type as subject matter and much more emphasis on illustration and imagery. Printing and reproduction of ornate drawings and images was made possible by the invention of lithography in 1796, followed by the invention of chromolithography in 1837 (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). Victorian advertisers took full advantage of new printing capabilities, using the most elaborate images possible, consistent with the style and fashion of the time. However, these posters were not well thought out, unorganized, and chaotic in terms of design. The true profession of graphic design developed late in the century when "the aesthetic

dimension of the mass media was separated from its production” (Eskilson, 2007, p. 24). Rooted in the Arts and Crafts movement, led by revolutionary designers such as William Morris, Art Nouveau attempted some of the same goals. While the works of Art Nouveau tended to be less ornate and detailed than those of the Arts and Crafts, the idea of all over art or *gesamptkunstwerk* still influenced this style. Everything was a work of art—chairs, wallpaper, plates, books—including posters of the time. Artists Jules Chéret and Eugène Grasset spearheaded the movement in the 1860s and 1870s, but this style hit its peak from 1890-1910, seeing works from Alphonse Mucha, Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). The main characteristics of this style of poster include bold, black outlined forms, use of saturated color and illustration, organic line and imagery, patterning, and use of composition that was yet unseen in poster art. As Eskilson puts it, this art “celebrated the vibrant pulse of urban life” (Eskilson, 2007, p. 35). Paris’s nightlife and café culture played a major role in Lautrec’s work, as referenced in his poster *La Goulue au Moulin Rouge*, whereas society’s infatuation with music and theater inspired many of Mucha’s works, like his advertisement posters for actress Sarah Bernhardt.

In examining works of Mucha such as his *Gismonda* poster and *Job Cigarette Paper* poster, I discovered that his use color schemes and flowing organic shapes would be effective for the Maryville College Concert Choir’s *Fall Choral Concert* poster. Using shape and form much in the same way Mucha depicted his models’ hair, I referenced the weaving green vines of a pumpkin. I also adapted an illustrative technique and used typefaces that were similar to some used by Mucha and other artists. The overall look of the poster is a little less busy than those of the Art Nouveau masters in order to aid in

readability, but the feeling is similar. Nature is presented in unison with geometric frames and patterning, while the whole design is brought together with the ornately illustrated pumpkin and vines. The color scheme is a simple fall palette of orange and green, with some variations to show depth and draw interest. I also tried to make a connection with Art Nouveau as this is a musical performance, something that would have been praised during the expression-driven *belle époque* in France.

The Glasgow School Poster

Art Nouveau quickly spread from Paris to other parts of Europe, but the movement was not necessarily the same as in its native city. One of the most influential adaptations of the ideas of Art Nouveau occurred in Scotland, specifically at the Glasgow School of Art. Within the context of a city that had “undergone startling urban growth during the Industrial Revolution,” the Glasgow School attempted to use art as an escape from the difficulties of the industrial age and the stereotype of the injustices of urban life (Eskilson, 2007, p. 72). The art celebrated the Glasgow bourgeoisie, who took great interest in art and the spirit of the Arts and Crafts movement. Though not professional graphic designers, Margaret Macdonald, Frances Macdonald, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and Herbert MacNair, known collectively as “The Four,” produced the most influential and successful works and perpetuated this movement. Like French Art Nouveau, the art of Glasgow became a nationalist movement, embracing the Celtic tradition. Subject matter revolves around magic and the supernatural, and the color palette features the traditional Scottish colors of green, purple, and indigo. Though these works employ natural and organic elements, such as plant or human forms, the composition is much more geometric and symmetrical. The Four combine “flowing

curves with rectangular structure that are hallmarks of their mature work” (Meggs & Purvis, 2006, p. 222). Similar to the posters as a whole, letterforms are typically rectilinear, but they have strong asymmetrical elements.

Influenced by works of The Four, such as posters for the Glasgow School or the Scottish Musical Review, I once again worked with the Maryville College Concert Choir to create publicity for the Spring 2010 Choir Tour, *Make Our Garden Grow*. The choir borrowed the name from their last song, a piece from the opera, *Candide*. Choir officers and members collaborated to choose the colors garnet, crème, and brown for their poster in order to pair nicely with the newly constructed Clayton Center for the Arts as well as tie in with our school colors. A “growing” or “alive” concept was at first challenging with these colors, but after looking at some of the Glasgow works, which regularly use dark indigo, maroon, violet, and black offset with white or pastels, I was able to combine the hues in a way that makes visual sense. I also used a typeface that strongly references this period of design and manipulated it to work within the poster, though, like the Glasgow works, the type is not completely integrated with the design so much as simply working in union with it. I researched works of The Four to come up with thumbnail drawings of flowers, plants, and leaves, finally deciding on two simple bloom designs that were a collaboration of my imagination and nature itself. Like my selection of Art Nouveau for the *Fall Choral Concert* poster, this movement relates to the subject matter in that it is a representation of culture through music and art, which was very much a part of the Glasgow School’s mission.

The Object Poster

For my next historical inspiration, I moved from Scotland back into continental Europe at the turn of the century. Designers, specifically working in advertisement, realized that to effectively communicate meaning in an increasingly international world, they needed to maintain a pictorial reference (Meggs & Purvis, 2006). The Beggarstaffs, two brothers-in-law who started a poster business in 1894, influenced this trend with their cut paper style of representing subject matter. In Germany, this idea was embraced in the Plakatstil, or poster style, design school. One of the most important designers involved with this style was Lucian Bernhard. His designs broke away even further from the traditional posters, like those of Jules Chéret. Known as Sach Plakat, or object poster, Bernhard pioneered a style known for reductive, flat-color representations of objects and ideas. Instead of creating a poster with a girl wearing a shoe, he represented only the shoe in his *Stiller shoes* poster. Though simply and straightforward, “this new approach required an absolute mastery of drawing, of stylization, and of composition” (Weill, 1985, p. 100). Use of color in these designs echoes Japanese woodblock prints and the work of Lautrec, with flat colors confined to certain areas and little depth. Typography is typically bold with thick serif treatments and is as crucial as the object represented in the poster. Written content is limited, though. Typically only the brand name is seen on these posters. Bernhard continued this technique and designed posters for Priester matches, Manoli cigarettes, and Steinway pianos, among other names. His work influenced artists such as Hans Rudi Erdt and Julius Klinger, famous poster artists that came out of this movement in the early 20th century.

Due to the time period, as well as the simplicity and reductive nature of these designs, I drew reference from this style for the Maryville College Theatre production of *Our Town*. The setting for the play is a small town in New Hampshire in 1901, and the stage set-up includes very limited props and furniture, specifically involving ladders that represent being upstairs in a house and looking out the window. The moon is represented in the poster because the action between the main characters of the play, two young lovers, happens in their conversations out their windows at night. In order to clearly communicate nighttime as well as keep some commonalities with the Plakatstil and Sachplakat movement, I chose a bold, saturated teal for the background of the poster and a dark navy blue hue for the ladder, reminiscent of a silhouette in the moonlight. Juxtaposed within this dark setting, the moon and the title of the play stand out to draw interest to those parts of the poster. Like the advertisement of the Sachplakat posters, I wanted to use the least amount of imagery and content along with the bold name to effectively communicate the event.

The Art Deco Poster

Poster art had clearly begun to change at the turn of the century from an illustrative, mystical representation of ideas to pictorial modernism. This change took off after World War I (WWI). During peacetime, war machinery was put to more useful employment as mass production boomed and “a decade of unprecedented prosperity dawned for the victorious allies” (Meggs & Purvis, 2006, p. 278). With all demand for products came a demand to advertise these products, which is where the poster came in. As a result, industrial forms dominate the graphic design style known as *art deco*. This style shows direct influence from cubism, constructivism, surrealism, the Bauhaus, and

the Vienna Secession and spans from WWI into the 1930's. Designers utilized cinematic angles, geometric shapes, and airbrush techniques to capture the industry-driven, urban feel of the time. In London, designers Edward McKnight Kauffer and Austin Cooper employed these principles in their posters for the London Underground, creating some of the most successful art deco posters of the time. Four important designers kicked off the movement in France: Paul Colin, Jean Carlu, Charles Loupot, and A. M. Cassandre. Of the four, Cassandre no doubt became the most well-known and influential to design development. He saw the designer as being an intermediary between a company and the public saying his job is to "make a clear, powerful, precise communication" (Weill, 1985, p. 198). Cassandre's railway and steamship posters demonstrate the influence of cubism as well as his passion for the use of lettering in poster design. In fact, art deco design saw the first complete integration with word and image, which became a major treatment in all 20th century design.

Directly influenced by artists such as Cassandre, I designed a poster for the Keepers of the Covenant at Maryville College that embodies some of the concepts related to Art Deco print design. Like the images of that time, my *Maryville College Covenant* awareness poster uses flat color but also incorporates fading elements and gradients to keep a geometric feel but slightly imply depth and space. In addition, the diagonal movement and layout of the poster echoes that of Cassandre's series of advertisements for the *Nord Express*. The type selections show this influence as well. I have used layering techniques with bold, sans-serif fonts in unison with lightweight sans-serifs, both of which employ a strong reference to geometry with rectangular and circular elements.

The International Style Poster

Due to a growing global economy and pursuit of international relations in the generation after the war, the International Typographic Style developed in the 1950s out of Germany and Switzerland. Rather than just typography, this movement encompassed all of design—print, architecture, furniture, etc. The style’s defining characteristics include unity, asymmetrical organization, use of mathematical grid structure, sans-serif type with a flush-left margin, and all-over cleanliness. Furthermore, the photographs and copy are objective rather than full of subliminal messages or propaganda as in wartime design. The influencers of this movement, including Ernst Keller, Théo Ballmer, and Max Bill, believed that clarity and ease of communication were much more important elements of design than personal expression. Similar to Cassandre’s view, they saw the designers role as “objective conduits for spreading important information between components of society” (Meggs & Purvis, 2006, p. 356). Some important designers and teachers in the schools of Basel and Zurich where the style flourished were Emil Ruder, Armin Hoffman, Carlo L. Vivarelli, Josef Müller-Brockmann, and Hans Neuburg. As the style progressed, these designers also experimented with scale of type and cropping of certain sections so that information and imagery extends off the page in some cases, as referenced in Müller-Brockmann’s *Der Film*.

The Maryville College Dance Ensemble’s fall performance, *Fleeting Moments*, lent itself to a design in the International Style. After asking the group for some photographs of the dancers so that I could brainstorm some design ideas, I noticed their common use of black leotards or black pants, the repetition of line in their poses, and the simple background that dominates most dance studios. These elements directly relate to

several defining characteristics of International Style—simplicity, clean lines, and use of spot colors or black and white. I researched posters within this movement, specifically focusing on printed pieces advertising cultural events such as dance and music. Armin Hoffman’s famous *Giselle* poster was one of my main references, especially for the treatment of the type. In my poster, however, I used a light background and darker type for the information, the opposite of his treatment. I also incorporated repetition in a couple places to better communicate the theme of their performance, as the International Style was very concerned with communication of meaning beyond what words could say.

The Psychedelic Poster

Throughout the world, the 1960s was a decade of revolt. In the United States, the seeds of this rebellion were planted by the 1950s Beat Generation of the West Coast (Weill, 1985). Young people in American society began questioning traditional values in every area of culture, including art and music. This counterculture radiated outward from the San Francisco Bay area of California, bringing people to the city for concerts at the Avalon Ballroom, drugs of every variety, and up-and-coming psychedelic poster designers with no shortage of work. Rick Griffin, Wes Wilson, Stanley Mouse, Alton Kelly, and Victor Moscoso were known as the five greats of psychedelic painting and design.

While the Bauhaus and International Style embraced simplicity and ease of communication, these posters embraced exactly the opposite approach, filling the entire space with images, colors, and distorted type, often making posters challenging to read. For example, Wilson’s poster for *Van Morrison and the Daily Flash* at the Avalon uses a saturated red/orange hue in combination with a bright green, which creates the illusion of

vibration within the poster. With the intention of simulating a high or “trippy” experience like that of drugs or listening to rock music, these posters also made use of unique typefaces with distorted letter forms that often worked as the subject matter themselves, as in Moscoso’s poster for *Youngbloods* in 1967 (Eskilson, 2007). The nature of the design and elements use within these posters stems directly from the 1960s culture of drugs, rock music, and revolt from all things traditional.

Perhaps the easiest of my design pairing decisions, I chose to create a poster in the psychedelic style for the *Lean on MC* concert at Maryville College. A fundraiser for Invisible Children, the concert features three semi-local rock bands. My goal with this poster was to embrace the same treatments of Moscoso and Wilson by using bright colors, my own custom typefaces, and a flowing, organic movement throughout the design. I chose a microphone for my centerpiece, with the initial information included in that form. Surrounding the microphone, I listed bands and prices, so the whole poster is consumed with the design, just like the psychedelic ones in the 1960s. I could not be quite as expressive and ambiguous in representing the lettering as I would have liked because this poster needed to be easily understood by the college and community as well as on the Internet. Therefore, some of my type treatments are less morphed and my colors are not quite so complimentary as to cause a great deal of vibration.

The Contemporary Poster

Postmodernism may not have an ending point because we will forever be “after the Modern” movement, but for this last poster, I will use the term *contemporary*. A much harder style to categorize, the contemporary movement has a niche for everyone (Eskilson, 2007). Though trends, such as “grunge,” eclecticism, and historicism, do exist

within Postmodern and contemporary design, the artists of the last twenty years or so are not easily placed into neat little boxes according to style. From the creative typography designs of Neville Brody to the digital revolution and works of David Carson, contemporary design takes reference from previous movements, combines any number of those styles, and results in an ever-changing variety of design never before seen in one “style” of art. Stefan Sagmeister, for example, has pioneered extreme techniques such as having type carved into his body and then being photographed to create a poster for his lecture at the Detroit chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA). The nature of Postmodernism is that there is *no* set style or rule to follow. Being a culmination of the past, this movement relies on the artist and the viewer and the interpretations of each.

For my last design, I incorporated this all-encompassing style of contemporary design by means of a combination of photography and graphic elements. Most of my reference comes from my study of Stefan Sagmeister’s and Paula Scher’s works. Both of these graphic artists combine the use of photography and graphic elements, predominantly type, to convey meaning and information. *Blister in the Sun*, an annual event hosted by the Student Programming Board (SPB) at Maryville College, has a carnival feel with music, inflatable attractions, and outdoor activities on the lawn. I chose a beach ball for my subject matter in the poster because I wanted to convey a summer feeling, like this is a celebration of classes ending soon and getting out of school for a few weeks. With this in mind, I also wanted an outdoor setting on a nice day to convey the venue and setting of the event. After approaching the SPB, I found that they wanted to use bright, primary colors for this year’s Blister shirt, so my proposed theme worked

well with their initial ideas, as well. Similar to Sagmeister's poster for his lecture at AIGA Detroit, I wanted to physically write the information on the beach ball. My tool, however, was a permanent marker, so my design method was not quite as destructive as his while it was still permanent. After experimenting with the spherical nature of the ball, I decided to include the event name and some type on the ball itself, but I added the rest in digitally in order to be more easily understood.

CHAPTER III

ARTIST STATEMENT

I first realized my passion and talent for art in the spring of 1997. Though the details of the competition are a blur to me now, I remember winning a prize for the best drawing in my third grade class. The work portrayed a spring scene involving a stream, a fencerow, and some trees against the backdrop of rolling hills and mountains—a pretty common East Tennessee vista. I was happy enough with the drawing, but I think what made me come to this realization was that *other* people thought it was good.

From an even earlier age, drawing, coloring and anything involving visual creativity have been pastimes of mine. I was, of course, always encouraged by my parents, but who isn't? Until this insignificant class competition I had made art for myself, for class projects, or for my family at holidays. I would use any tool imaginable to create my little works of art whether it was magenta juice from the berries on the bushes in my back yard, my 126-count package of Crayola crayons, multi-colored play dough, or my grandpa's beat up box of assorted permanent markers (that I always got all over my hands and clothes). Long story short, I have loved art for as long as I can remember loving, but when my name was called in front of class that day, I thought, "Wow, I might actually be good at this."

My love for artistic expression grew throughout middle school and the early high school years but remained a hobby. I was always the one who drew the homecoming banner and designed the class shirts, but between focusing on my GPA and going to softball, soccer, and tennis practice, it was hard to make a lot of time outside of art class for my true love in life. I took the standard art classes offered in my rural Knox County high school—one intro course and a couple semesters of “Advanced Art,” a class that was different every time so that you could take it repeatedly to try different types of art. Through experimentation in these classes with all sorts of media, I found that I had somewhat of a knack for drawing, especially simple renderings of everyday objects. A cheap Bic mechanical pencil was my tool for most of these drawings, despite the art sets my family bought for me every year for Christmas. As the end of my senior year approached, I began to think seriously about my future and what my passions in life were. When I could not get art out of my mind (and I could not really think of anything else I would or could do for the rest of my life), I decided to give art a chance in college. When I started freshman year, I was set on a studio art degree with a concentration in drawing. I even remember being dismayed when I found out I had to take a class called Visual Communication, which was completely computer-based. While in this class that I dreaded, however, something clicked. I decided another class may be fun, then another, and eventually I declared a new concentration in graphic design. This decision is probably the best one I have made during my college career because I cannot think of any other major that would have afforded me so much creative license and opportunity to build real life experience in my field.

Through the years here at Maryville College, I have come to a couple realizations about my style and influences as an artist. One is that it is extremely difficult to lump all of the work I have done into one category. Like any designer, I try my best to cater to what a client (or assignment) asks of me. On the other hand, like any artist, I get creative with that task and allow a bit of myself to shine through in my designs. There are certain elements and principles of design that are recurring in my work, despite the variety of projects I complete and approaches I take. Organic forms and lines are common in my work, though I also make use of the cleanliness of geometric divisions and imply those shapes through layout and organization in the work I create. I also go back and forth between asymmetrical and symmetrical balance depending on the project. This is evident in my informational handout/poster for *Barack Obama*, which is divided evenly with a series of rectangles on the informative side but displays asymmetrical balance on the poster side.

In almost all of my designs, typography is a major component. I strive to use or create typefaces and treatments that function as a working component of the design and have a connection with the purpose of the work. For example, in my design work for the *Maryville College Concert Choir's Scotland Tour*, I chose a Celtic style font that references both the location of the tour and Maryville's connection to Scottish heritage. Rather than just using typefaces to convey information, I often manipulate them to become subject matter as evident in my *World Environment Day* poster. Another commonality in most of my work is that I pick one idea or image to represent a group or event, and I include this somehow in the design, often in a simplified way. For example, the Homecoming shirt for 2009 displays Maryville's logo flag that is carried across the

football field every time the team scores. This is a simple connection to Maryville College, the fall season, and homecoming itself. Therefore, I tend to use photography very rarely or for reference material only, due to this tendency to use simplified images and illustration representations of ideas.

I am influenced by a wide variety of artists and art movements throughout history, which have clearly shaped my artistic identity. No *one* style determines everything I do, but I have several favorites, which tend to influence me the most. Art nouveau has affected my work substantially as seen in my use of organic line and bold color. Certain artists from whom I draw reference are Henri de Toulouse Lautrec, Jules Cheret, and Alphonse Mucha. The Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, specifically Pierre August Renoir and Vincent van Gogh, are particularly significant in my list of influences as well. Their innovations in painting and methods of capturing a scene were unprecedented in their time, and I always find myself thinking of new and interesting ways I can convey an idea through visual communication. Furthermore, I have always been intrigued by their use of complimentary colors and strokes of varying hues to create the illusion of a shape or form, rather than rendering it precisely like the artists of the Renaissance. Specifically in the history of design, I am most drawn to works of the *sach plakat*, art deco architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright, the Bauhaus, and the propaganda posters of World War II. All of these styles are much different than the work of Art Nouveau artists and the Impressionists, but they influence my use of simplification of objects and cleanliness in my work, as well as my use of typography as design. Of more current artists and designers, I am influenced by Paula Scher's use of type and composition as seen specifically in her work for the Public Theater and some of her environmental design

such as the exterior of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. Stefan Sagmeister and his design firm's innovative methods of communicating—using filled coffee cups to create an image, ironing papers for a fashion show, spelling out a message with cactus leaves—also inspire my work. As far as logo designs and identity systems, Paul Rand's simple style as referenced in his work for IBM, ABC, and Yale University Press, influences my use of simplification in order to communicate a memorable representation of a company or organization.

As of now, I would like to steer my skills in the direction of working at a design firm or possibly even in the design department of a larger organization or corporation. I am specifically drawn to non-profits, and I currently work for one of these organizations over holidays and breaks from school. I would like to continue working for non-profit organizations in the future but concentrate more specifically in graphic design or communications for these groups. In addition to poster design, which I am exploring in my senior thesis, my most successful and engaging projects are logos and identity systems. I enjoy the challenge of creating a simple image or icon that represents a larger idea, person, or company and can exhibit the essence of that entity through visual form alone. I am also interested in packaging design—going hand-in-hand with the identity of a company or product—and would like to research sustainability in printing. With the experience I have gained through working for organizations like Good Neighbors of Blount County, Clinch-Powell RC&D Council, and Maryville College itself, I have learned what skills are my strongest and attained a better grasp on how to convey meanings and concepts visually. I hope to eventually further my education after a little experience in the field and possibly bring my experience and skill into the classroom.

CHAPTER IV

TIMELINE

September (2009)

- Meet with advisor
- Brainstorm and plan
- Draft proposal, timeline, bibliography, artist statement, and research questions
- Begin initial research on history of poster design
- Advertise to campus organizations
- Design Homecoming poster

October

- Continue research on poster and develop bibliography
- Finalize events and meet with organizations
- Revise proposal, timeline, and artist statement
- Design Fall Choir Concert poster
- Critique of Homecoming poster and Choir Concert poster by advisor

November

- Design Dance Ensemble poster
- Finalize proposal, artist statement, bibliography, and timeline

- Draft background and research section

December

- Book show venue (CCA)
- Create thumbnails for Lean on MC poster, Covenant poster, and *Our Town* poster
- Revise/continue research and background

January (2010)

- Design Lean on MC poster
- Critique completed posters
- Continue research section

February

- Design MC Choir Tour poster
- Design Covenant poster
- Design theater production poster (*Our Town*)
- Finalize show details (gallery, time, date, refreshments, co-hosts)
- Write abstract
- Review and revise written thesis documents

March

- Design Blister poster
- Critique completed posters
- Send invitations to family for show
- Submit thesis documents to advisor

April

- Finalize all poster designs and reprint if necessary

- Advertise show
- Gather materials—printed pieces, show/artist statement, refreshments—for show
- Recruit volunteers to assist with refreshments for opening night
- Prep, label, and hang pieces for show
- Finalize and submit all thesis documents to editor

May

- Set-up show
- Host show in Clayton Center for the Arts

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In the past one hundred years, the poster has been rivaled by other means of advertisement and communication such as radio, television, and the Internet. Nature is presented in unison with geometric frames and patterning, while the whole design is brought together with the ornately illustrated pumpkin and vines. The color scheme is a simple fall palette of orange and green, with some variations to show depth and draw interest. I also tried to make a connection with Art Nouveau as this is a musical performance, something that would have been praised during the expression-driven belle Époque in France. Buy past and present posters designed by millions of artists and iconic brands from all over the world. All past and present posters are produced on-demand using archival inks, ship within 48 hours, and include a 30-day money-back guarantee. Customize your past and present poster with hundreds of different frame options, and get the exact look that you want for your wall!