

Richard Hollis

Graphic Design

A Concise History

Revised and expanded edition

With over 800 illustrations, 29 in color

 Thames & Hudson world of art

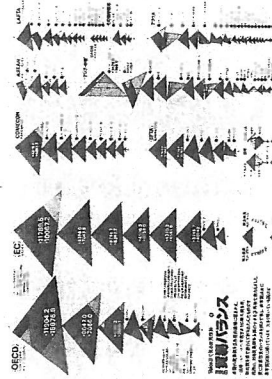
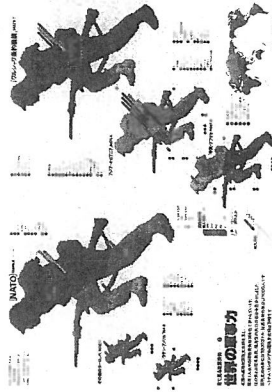
Japan

Japan, with its own strong national graphic traditions, was nevertheless the country most open to foreign influences. Two Japanese magazines had an international outlook and distribution – *Idea*, a bi-monthly founded in 1953 by the designer Hiroshi Ohchi, and *Graphic Design*, first published in 1959, which closed with its hundredth issue in 1986. *Graphic Design*'s editor, Masaru Katsumie, had supervised the design of the symbols for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. These invented the vocabulary of pictograms for which Aicher devised the grammar at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Katsumie used the magazine not only to reproduce historical and contemporary examples of graphic design but also as a forum for discussion. His concern for the social importance of graphic design expressed itself in his reports on the steps towards an international standardization for signing. As well as Aicher's Frankfurt airport signs in 1976, for example, he recorded the graphic analysis of the world produced in coloured charts by an ex-Ulm student, Nobuo Nakagaki.

Olympic Games symbols 1964
[art director Masaru Katsumie]



Voice
Size of armed forces
World trade balance 1980
[Nobuo Nakagaki]



The tradition of Japanese graphics that interested Western designers was the two-dimensional space and flat colour of woodblock prints. Japanese designers inherited a formal inventiveness and a graphic precision from their calligraphy and the geometrical symbols, the *mon*, of family heraldry. Lithography displaced woodblock printing and introduced European perspective and chiaroscuro. Between the wars Japan developed a commercial art very similar to Western advertising. By the 1950s, following New York, the Tokyo Art Directors Club was

basketware shop
symbol on shop curtain
c.1975

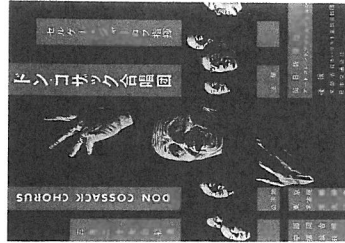
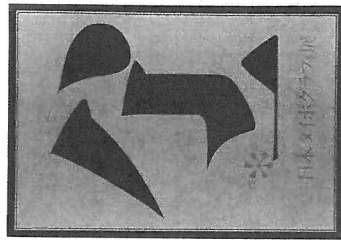
International Print Biennale
poster 1960
[Yuzichi Yamashiro]



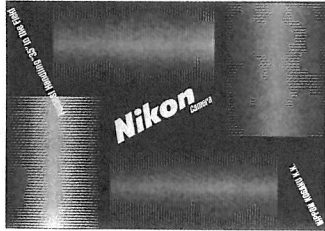
publishing its own Annual and the Japanese Advertising Artists Club (JAAC), the chief professional body, held yearly exhibitions until it was replaced by the Japanese Graphic Designers Association in 1978. Japanese inventiveness was advertised across the world by the camera firms Canon, Nikon and Olympus and motor companies Honda, Kawasaki and Mitsubishi.



To the traditional perfection of drawing and graphic craftsmanship, the first professional Japanese designers in the 1960s added geometrical images (Yusaku Kamekura, Kazumasa Nagai, Kohei Sugiura, Ikko Tanaka). Successive generations took advantage of the new photographic and electronic equipment which was developed in Japan to originate, manipulate and reproduce printed images (Makoto Saito); they used visual tricks and optical illusions (Shigeo Fukuda), stroboscopic photography (Gan Hosoya), and electronic montages. In Western eyes an added exoticism was provided by the alternatives of horizontal or vertical directions of text reading – and an uninhibited freedom with the Roman alphabet.



Nikon poster for cameras 1955 (Yusaku Kamekura)



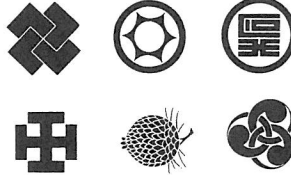
Tokyo Rayon advertisement c. 1950 (Ikko Tanaka)

Japan Advertising Artists Club symbol 1952 (Ayao Yamana)



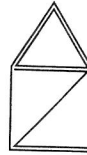
Japan Graphic Designers Association symbol 1977 (Kazuo Kashimoto)

Traditional Japanese family crests

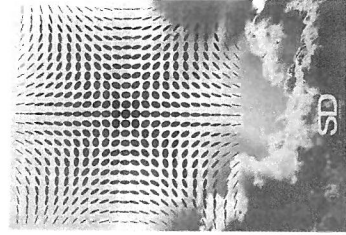


Japanese Typography exhibition poster 1959 (Hiromu Hara)

The Russian Don Cossack Chorus concert poster 1952 (Hirosshi Onchi)

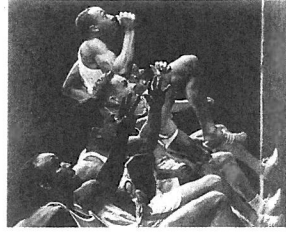


Nippon Design Center symbol 1960 (Kazumasa Nagai)



Kashima-Shuppankai publisher's poster 1967 (Kazumasa Nagai)

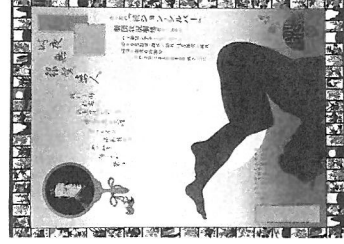
Olympic Games poster 1964 (Yusaku Kamekura)



consortium of large companies that also provided graduate training for newly qualified designers. One of its three founder members was Kamekura, designer of the symbol and a series of photographic posters for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The most popular and best known of these showed a wedge of athletes frozen into a still life as they surge from the starting blocks above the symmetrically placed symbol of the Games. The black background abstracts the figures from three dimensions, exactly the device used by Cappiello (see p.13).

Both Kamekura and Kazumie were involved in 1965 with an exhibition to promote younger Japanese designers of whom more than a thousand graduated from art schools each year. This 'Persona' exhibition's choice of four foreign designers showed a more eclectic interest than 'WoDeCo': Swiss design was represented by Gerstner, Polish posters by Lenica, American modern by Dorfsman of CBS. 'Persona' helped redirect the career of one of the many designers who passed through Nippon Design Center, Tadanori Yokoo, who summed up his generation's impatience: 'Modernist design, linked as it has become to modern industry, has made a contribution to our materialistic civilization. But, conversely, it is now trying to rid us of our souls.'

Yokoo became a rebel and a celebrity, using his graphic work to pay homage to other celebrities, alive and dead, from the sublime to the banal.



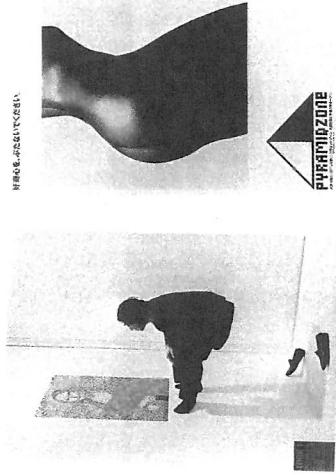
John Silver Parrot Two theatre poster 1967 (Tadanori Yokoo)

Suntory Brandy poster 1979 (Tadanori Yokoo)

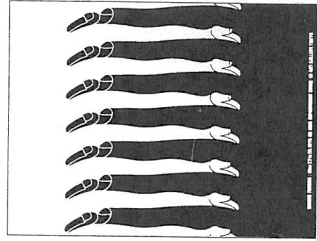


Tokyo had been host to the World Design Conference (WoDeCo) in 1959. It invited designers from abroad who represented the central Modernist or Constructivist tendency – Saul Bass and Bayer came from the United States, Maldonado and Aicher from Ulm, and Müller-Brockmann, Huber and Munari from Switzerland and Italy. Also in 1959 Nippon Design Center was founded, a design group established with a

In his prodigious output of posters in the 1960s and 1970s, for cultural events and alcoholic drinks, he assembled images from Western art, engravings and tracings of photographs, traditional Japanese as well as Islamic decoration, and psychodelic effects on backgrounds of graduated hues which recalled earlier woodblock printing. Yokoo became increasingly reliant on printers and new reproduction equipment in order to repeat motifs in gradually diminishing scales to give an effect of infinite depth.



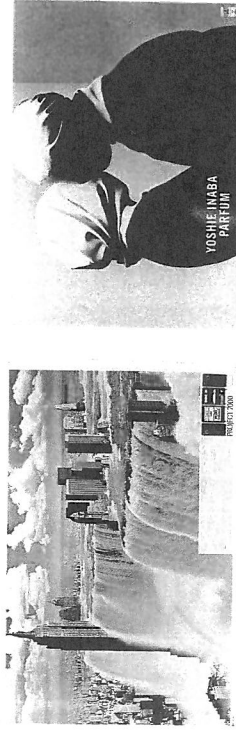
exhibition poster 1975
[Shigeo Fukuda]



far left
'Look, I'm
far left'
exhibition poster 1984
[Shigeo Fukuda]

'Pyramid Zone'
department store poster 1985
[Takayuki Sueda]

Much Japanese graphic work, particularly posters, used images whose relationship to the product being advertised was often distant. Like Western posters at the turn of the century (see Chapter 1), it was the graphic idea alone that drew attention to the name of the advertiser. In this way, department stores like Parco and Seibu and the drinks firm Suntory were sponsors of the most individualistic and advanced design.

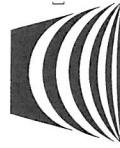


far left
Project 7000 –
'A Flood of Sound'
Pioneer Electronics
advertisement 1979
[Gan Hosoya]

left
'Yoshie Inaba
Parfum'
poster 1985
[Kaoru Watanabe]



Taiyo Machine
Industry Company
symbol 1984
[Yusaku Kamekuro]



Suruga Bank
symbol 1965
[Kazumasa Nagai]

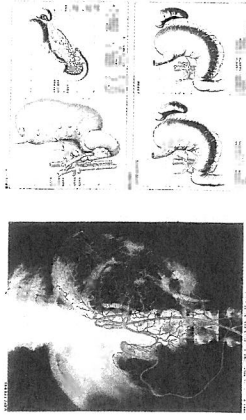
WALTE

'Walter'
building logotype,
Tokorozawa 1986
[Shin Matsunaga]

International marketing design companies, no less than multinational corporations, were often preferred to local designers. Landor was commissioned by Japan Airlines for its identity; the newly privatized Japan Railway was given a bland Western-style corporate logo designed by Nippon Design Center in 1987.

Japanese graphic invention appeared over the whole field of printed design: in advertising, in fashion magazines and specialist journals and particularly in countless trademarks, at first following the traditional black-and-white simplicity of the *mon*, later manipulating and taking advantage of computer imagery.

Encyclopaedia of Medical Science
double page 1982–83
[Kodansha Ltd]



Japan Railways
symbol 1987
[Nippon Design Center]

music company symbol 1980
[Ikko Tanaka]



Quaker Oats
symbol 1970
[Saul Bass]

The United States

While America was exporting mainstream modern design to service the international corporations, it was still importing design ideas, particularly from the European avant-garde. In some ways, there was a convergence of the techniques of East and West. Among the Modernist designers working for large corporations from the 1970s (who were also heroes of the Japanese) were Saul Bass, Paul Rand, and the New York consultancy of Chermayeff & Geismar. Bass's trademarks for Quaker Oats and Girl Scouts, as abstractions, have the positive/negative relationships of the *mon*, and in 1984 he employed the same photographic techniques as the Japanese in his poster for the Los Angeles Olympics.



Olympic Games
poster, Los Angeles 1984
[Saul Bass]

