



National College of Art & Design

Department of Visual Communications

'Kaleidoscope Eyes'

A discussion of psychedelia and album cover design of the late sixties.

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Introduction

There has been something of a small sixties revival within the last few years. Previously unrecorded music from the Beatles has been released followed by a six hour documentary about the band. Flares and platform shoes are finding their way back onto cat-walks around the world, and there have been many books published on the subject. Current sixties nostalgia centres around fashion and music, however, my research has shown that there are very few articles published about the graphic design of the decade.

I have decided to concentrate on the last three years of the decade which became identified with a drug-related movement called psychedelia. I believe most of the best graphic design of the decade was produced in the latter half of the sixties. Psychedelia began to take place in 1966 and reached its full height during 1967 with the release of the Beatles' most famous album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. By 1969 the style was dying out, however, the amount of design, particularly album cover design, produced during these short years was amazing.

Psychedelia was the first drug-orientated art scene; it was also the first time ever that music and art came together. That is why I intend to concentrate on album cover design. Designers had complete freedom over the colour, typography and ideas of their designs, ideas that were often inspired by L.S.D. trips. The effects of this drug which was so freely taken during the late sixties had an amazing influence over music and design of the time. Although it is widely accepted that many young people were using both L.S.D. and marijuana at the time, there is not much written on the influence these drugs had on design, art or music.

In Chapter 1, 'Turn on, Tune in, Drop out' I intend to look at the background of psychedelia, the factors which led to its birth and how they were all linked together by L.S.D. I intend also to discuss the origins of L.S.D. and its effects on the user. I feel it is important to discuss the effects of L.S.D. (or 'tripping' as it became known) on the user as so many album covers of the time were inspired by the psychedelic effects the drug had, such as the day-glo rainbow colours and swirling shapes. The chapter ends with the discussion of the dropouts and hippies that moved to the West coast of America at the time.

This leads into Chapter 2, which I have named 'Summer of Love' as it deals with the year 1967, which has been given that name. Psychedelia reached its height during this year. In this Chapter I will discuss three different psychedelic album covers and discuss each of them in relation to colour, layout, illustration and typography in an effort to determine what elements make them 'psychedelic'.

Many designers revive ideas and styles from the past and sixties designers were no exception. Chapter 3, 'Organic and Floral Abstractions' discusses how they looked to the past style of Art Nouveau for much of their inspiration. Many designers were influenced by Aubrey Beardsley and I compare and contrast a poster of his from 1894 with a poster by Milton Glaser from 1967. Some of the less original designers of the sixties blatantly copied Art Nouveau designs and I discuss a few of these. The chapter closes my observations about the many album covers with the image of an eye on them. I take a look at some of these covers and give my opinion as to the significance of this motif.

The following chapter, Chapter 4, is entitled 'A splendid time is guaranteed for all', as it relates to the Beatles' transition from mop-top lads to psychedelic hippies. The title is taken from a song off the *Magical Mystery Tour* album. I briefly discuss their albums *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver* which were the first Beatles albums to show traces of psychedelia. I then go ahead to discuss *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* in greater detail, both musically and graphically. I believe it to be the best album ever recorded, and its cover is one of the most famous, if not the most famous ever. The album epitomised its age and the year of 1967 when it was released. I end the chapter by discussing briefly how the Beatles continued their psychedelic theme with *Magical Mystery Tour* and *Yellow Submarine*. And so to the final chapter.

Chapter 5, entitled 'Where have all the flowers gone?', details the decline of psychedelia after 1967. I discuss the many rock festivals which in 1969, particularly Woodstock, by which time psychedelia had practically vanished. I go forward then to discuss the tremendous effects the psychedelic period had on design and music throughout its short life-span.

The sixties was a wonderful decade by all accounts but it particularly excelled itself in music. Album covers were never to be the same again. It provided the youth-culture with hope and happiness and still does today through the wonderful music and design it produced. It is unmatched in mood and spirit by anything since. I don't believe it ever will be matched.

Chapter 1.

‘Turn on, Tune in, Drop out’

Throughout this chapter I discuss the background to psychedelia and the various different events which led to its enormous popularity.

I also discuss the introduction of L.S.D. to the United States by Timothy Leary and Ken Kersey and the effects this drug had on the user, and in turn on the design and music of the period.

I continue to examine the emergence of the hippies, anti-war protests and concerts, and the psychedelic highly coloured style that was emerging in the latter half of the sixties decade.

It was one of the shortest art movements in history, barely lasting two years. Never before in the history of art and design had a movement been so influenced by drugs. The style of course was psychedelia which occurred in the latter part of the 'sixties. It was really a youth orientated movement based on drugs and rock 'n'roll. However to understand the widespread effect psychedelia had one must look back to the earlier years of the 'sixties decade.

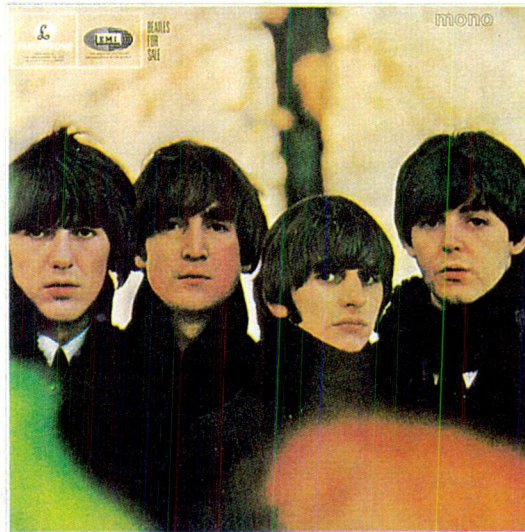
It is generally accepted that there were four main reasons for the psychedelic revolution. In England the group phenomenon had begun. It was lead by Gerry and the Pacemakers, The Searchers and what was to become the biggest group in the world, The Beatles. The music they produced became known as the Mersey sound. This whole period in popular music became known as the Beat Generation. According to Storm Thorgerson (*Thorgerson, 1989, p 8.*) the Beats possessed laconic humour, political consciousness, drug habits, admiration for jazz music, laid back appearance and a firm stand against the establishment. The Beat Generation comprised of a mixture of different individuals with different interests. There were jazz freaks, poets, artists and students, all dressed in patched jeans and casual clothing. Their drug habits at the time consisted mainly of marijuana and alcohol.

The music scene was very exciting at this time however from a graphic design point of view the excitement failed to transfer onto the various different groups album covers. In actual fact pre- 1965 album covers show a distinct lack of imagination, excitement or flair. They all looked pretty similar. The groups at the time did not have much power or input in their album cover designs. The marketing departments of the various record companies were usually in charge of the public images of the groups. Practically all of the album covers of the time consisted of the four

or five lads in the group sitting or standing in line smiling eagerly. Almost always they were dressed in suits which were usually brown, yellow or sometimes blue, however there was not much distinction from one group photograph to another.

A perfect example of the suit-clad group image is seen in the early album covers of the Beatles. The attitude of the record companies was to play safe and dress the band in suits. They did not break out of this tradition until after 1965 when the groups had a huge say in their dress and the design of their album covers. The cover for the *Beatles For Sale* album (1964), (Fig. 1), is a prime example of an unimaginative photograph of the fab four. All of the photographs for their early covers were taken in the same format. It was really the introduction of *Rubber Soul* (Fig. 2) in 1966 that saw a distinctive shift in the style of the time. Although the four are still photographed it was the angle that it was taken at and the typography that makes it distinctly different. Its typography consists of pop-style rubbery red lettering that anticipated psychedelia. The typography on this album is now considered revolutionary. Enormous changes were soon to come about in both music and album covers. Album cover design was to explode into life and would never be the same again.

Another important event that brought about the psychedelic revolution was the Vietnam war. It was a hugely unpopular war which dragged on until 1975. In the early 'sixties the country was heavily divided between the anti-communist lobby and the liberals. Feelings against the war were very strong especially amongst the liberal young. Military draft and fighting in Vietnam was a very real and scary threat for many young American men. A lot of people were trying to escape from the draft.



Beatles for sale, Album cover,
Designed by Robert Freeman, 1964.
(Fig.1)



Rubber Soul, Album cover,
Designed by Robert Freeman, 1966.
(Fig.2)

A combination of folk music and rock protest songs came together in the many youth and student protests that were held at the time. However, these protests were rarely violent. According to Stanley Moose (*Thorgerson, 1989, p 181*) it was a choice of either being in Vietnam getting mutilated or being on the run in San Francisco having a good time.

The Hippies emerged in the latter half of the 'sixties as part of the anti- Vietnam movement. More and more young people became concerned with peace and love which they saw as an alternative to war. Many showed their dislike of society by dropping out altogether and living in self-sufficient hippie communes. Others expressed their anti-war views through flower power. This form of protest included putting flowers in the guns of soldiers being sent to war as well as organising pop concerts and events. One of the most publicised events was the John Lennon and Yoko Ono lie-in, during which they both stayed in bed for a week of their honeymoon to get the peace and love message across!

The message of peace and love now began to take on some real meaning. The psychedelic revolution was beginning. More young people began to flock to the West coast of America. It was the West coast climate that contributed greatly to the psychedelic movement also. The warm weather allowed the 'drop outs' the ability to live cheaply, wear little or light clothing and to sleep rough at night. These activities were very important in the rejection of the establishment. The fine weather was also very important for open-air concerts, meetings and love-ins, all necessary for the psychedelic revolution.

However, although all of these factors contributed greatly to the emergence of

psychedelia, the most important factor in my opinion was the introduction of L.S.D. (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide) which was a mind expanding drug. Before one can fully appreciate or understand psychedelic design, it is necessary to know the effects this hallucinogenic drug had on the young people who took it.

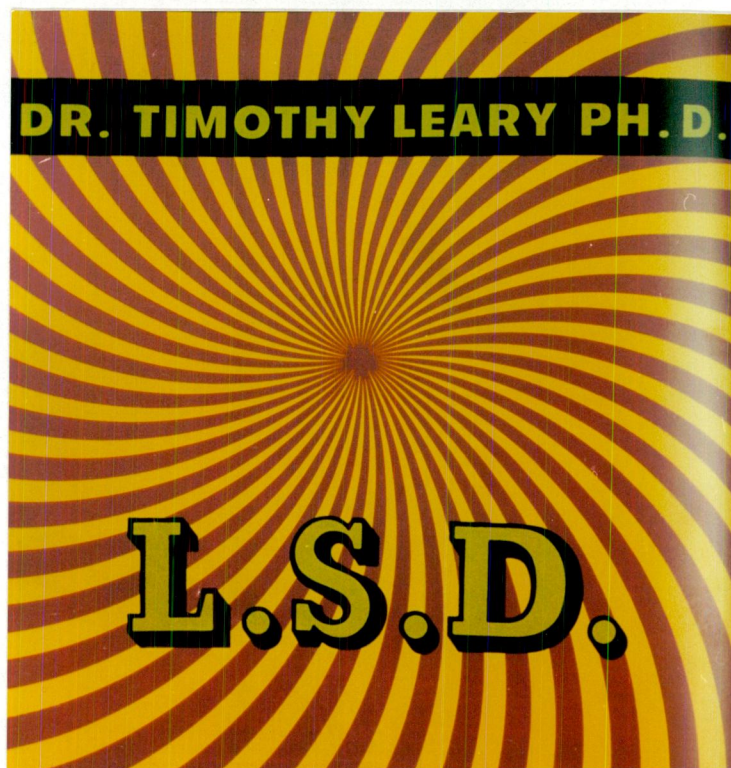
What I find incredible is the widespread effect L.S.D. had on design and the youth culture during the psychedelic movement. It was the visual effects of this drug that inspired designers at the time. These designs which were all drug induced appeared on everything from album covers to buildings (Fig. 3) and fabrics. Taking L.S.D. or 'tripping', as it was known, became the order of the day. So why was it that this drug had so much influence on visual thinking and design in the latter part of the 'sixties? One must look back to its origin and the effects it had on the user.

Dr. Timothy Leary PH.D

L.S.D. was introduced into America in the late 1950s by the Harvard psychologists Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert. They conducted clinical research experiments with it upon colleagues and prisoners. In the early 'sixties Leary began to hold psychedelic lessons for his students in a psychodrama room outfitted with mattresses on the floor, candles, Buddha posters and Hindu ragas on the stereo. Not surprisingly he was fired from Harvard in 1962. He then began to travel across the States publically encouraging the taking of L.S.D. with his famous epithet, 'Turn on, Tune in, Drop out'. He even started his own religion! Leary appeared on the West coast of America along with a contingent of authors from the Beat generation. At various interviews, meetings and informal gatherings they all encouraged



Psychedelic design on Carnaby St
Artist unknown.
(Fig.3)



Timothy Leary, Poster,
Designer unknown, Date unknown.
(Fig. 4)



the use of mind-expanding drugs (Fig 4).

On the West coast Ken Kersey (author of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*) took his first L.S.D. trip as a volunteer in a hospital drug experiment in 1960. By 1965 he was holding 'Acid Tests' in San Francisco. These were huge parties where L.S.D. was freely available. Coffee, Pepsi, cake and Kool-Aid orange drink were all laced with L.S.D. Kersey and his 'merry pranksters' which his followers became known organised light and sound shows, played endless loud music and handed out endless supplies of L.S.D. to young people at anti-war rallies, private and public parties and campus gatherings. In January 1966 Kersey held an acid-test party in the Longshoreman's Hall in San Francisco. The Grateful Dead provided the music with a level of amplified rock and roll which was never heard before. Hundreds of young people turned up and got very stoned on the thousands of doses of acid that Kersey and his followers had snuck into the refreshments that were provided. The psychedelic revolution was happening !

Although there was a combination of events that contributed to the psychedelic movement it was the introduction of L.S.D. that brought them all together. It was the startling visuals from the drug that influenced the music and the design of the day. Hallucinogenic and mind-expanding experiences were the order of the day. According to Thorgeron (*Thorgeron, 1989, p 94*) people that took L.S.D. had an experience of continuous and extreme intensity, particularly sensory intensity, with sufficient energy to sustain it for several hours. The experience was called a "trip", which was an experience induced by psychedelic drugs. However, from a design point of view, this drug also became important and influential.

Design of the latter sixties was influenced totally by the visual process L.S.D. had on the user. Acid had stupefying effects on the eyes. The world suddenly became more decorative and bright. Objects and textures appeared to slip into each other in liquid, swirling patterns. Under the influence of L.S.D. feelings and mental processes were experienced to an extreme degree. Everything became more vivid, feelings grew more intense and mental processes became quicker.

However, the most important effect of L.S.D. from a design point of view was the intensity of colour it provided. Every colour became more colourful and more vibrant. They became alive and abnormally powerful. Everyday events and commonplace objects were enhanced and magnified all out of proportion. The whole world appeared to be fresh and extradinarily vivid. L.S.D. was having these types of effects on thousands of young people and indeed young artists and designers in the mid-‘sixties. Psychedelia was the first drug-orientated art scene, and L.S.D. provided the visual and mental stimulus behind it. The psychedelic movement brought with it a dramatic change in fashion, popular music and consequently an equally dramatic development in posters and album cover design.

There is a lot of material written about the ‘sixties decade. The music and fashion of the time remain legendary. There is also a lot written about the drugs that were used which mainly comprised of marijuana and L.S.D. It is generally accepted that psychedelia was born as an art movement from the mental and visual effects of L.S.D. However, it was not until I was researching this topic that I realised the true widespread effects L.S.D. had on the youth culture of the late ‘sixties. Its influence appears everywhere from lyrics in a Beatles’ song to swirling shapes on clothes. It seems everyone was taking it.

There were obvious signs of the psychedelic style in 1966 but it really came into its own in 1967 with the emergence of the Beatles' best album (some would place it as the best album ever), *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band* (Fig.5). This year which became known as the 'Summer of Love', produced some of the best music and design of the psychedelic movement. By 1968 there were already complaints of an overdose of the psychedelic style. In 1969 after the Woodstock music festival, psychedelia had come to an end. The closing of the decade saw the disappearance of the swirling colours and patterns of the psychedelic movement.

It was one of the shortest art movements ever. Love it or hate it, it cannot be denied that the output of music and design during these three short years was phenomenal. I intend to look at some designs at the height of the psychedelic movement. However I feel to understand a piece of design such as an album cover or poster or a verse of psychedelic lyrics they must be placed in the context of the time. Design and music of the psychedelic movement must be placed within the youth culture which surrounded it. All of the pieces of design which I am going to discuss have a definite common theme running through them which is, of course, the drug that made it all possible, L.S.D.

The dictionary defines psychedelic as 'relating to, or denoting a new or altered perception or sensory experience, as through the use of hallucinogenic drugs'. The word psychedelic is derived from the greek word 'psyche' meaning soul or inner spirit and 'delos' meaning visible. Psychedelic refers to the manner in which things were seen or apprehended. The challenge to get the effects of an L.S.D. trip or experience down onto a 2D surface was quite daunting explains Storm Thorgerson (*Thorgerson, 1989, p94*).



Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Album cover
Designed by Peter Blake, 1967.
(Fig.5)

The most noticeable visual signs of the psychedelic style were swirling shapes and luminous colours. It was a mind-blowing style which according to Polly Powell (*Powell, 1988, p122*) at its height pervaded the more conscious areas of human existence- clothes, music and particularly graphic design. For the first time ever music, album cover design and fashion all came together. Album covers and clothes became bright and full of swirling colours.

Hippie Hippie Shake !

Psychedelia was largely a product of California's hippy movement. According to Thorgeron (Thorgeron, 1989, p97) the first notice of the hippies' birth was in the San Francisco Examiner on September 6th, 1965, in an article about the Haight Ashbury district of San Francisco. 'A new paradise for Beatniks' was the headline. Reporter Michael Fallon described the 'new hip hangout' - a coffee house called The Unicorn. The Unicorn was the headquarters for what one contemporary account called 'bearded philosophers, would-be-artists, intellectual negros, peace workers, and anyone alien to square society'. (*Stern, 1990, p63*)

Hundreds of young people began to drop out of society and made their way over to the West coast. More and more of them began to arrive in San Francisco every week from around the nation. They slept in doorways, on the beach or on the sidewalks. They sat together playing guitars and sold beads, marijuana joints and acid tabs. The visible characteristics of the hippie movement was based on their clothes and physical appearance. Suits, narrow trousers, polo-necks and sombre V-necked sweaters which were popular in the early sixties went out of fashion and were replaced by bright psychedelic colours, kaftans, T-shirts, velvet trousers and flares.

All types of clothing became acceptable whether long or short, new or second-hand, patterned or plain as long as the materials were natural. A distinct style emerged. Men and women started wearing their hair long and unkempt. Women began to adorn their hair and person with beads, bells and flowers. They customised their clothes with patches, embroidery and tie-dyed T-shirts. They borrowed styles from many sources including military uniforms and ethnic sources. The psychedelic imagery obtained from the use of hallucinogenic drugs also played a huge part in clothes design. This can be seen clearly in the exaggerated patterns and colours that appeared at the time.

The hippie or psychedelic phenomenon began to emerge in the rest of America and in London. One of the hippies' main characteristics was that they appeared to be so happy. They sang and danced, got high and loved everybody! They wore flowers in their hair and painted their bodies. Hippies felt at one with nature. They claimed to feel a sympathy for the natural rhythms of night and day, growth and decay. They were also interested in Eastern religions and mythology. Buddhist and Hindu philosophies became very common in the late sixties. They strived for a better world where everybody was mellow and practiced the message of peace and love.

Psychedelic designs offered great excitement and diversity. Many bands and designers were keen to change and moved effortlessly into the highly coloured swirling style which was happening at the time.

Chapter 2.

Summer of Love

The year 1967 became known as the Summer of Love. Throughout this chapter I discuss some events which took place in 1967 and also some of the most memorable designs of psychedelia which occurred during that year. I examine in detail three totally different album covers which are linked together as each one pocesses psychedelic qualities, such as bright rainbow colours, hand-drawn typography and swirling shapes, to name but a few.

1967 became known as the 'summer of love', and the 'year of the guru', psychedelia reached its ultimate height during this year. The majority of the best design of the psychedelic movement was produced during '67. A number of memorable events occurred throughout the year. 1967 saw the campaign to legalise cannabis, the opening of the Beatles' Apple boutique in Baker street and the emergence of two new youth-orientated magazines.

In Britain the underground magazine 'Oz' began publication in February. *Oz* magazine ran a brother company called 'The Big O Poster Company' and designers worked on both the magazine and the posters. The most notable of these designers was Martin Sharp. He was also responsible for the design of one of the best psychedelic album covers during the period, it being *Disraeli Gears* by Cream.

Oz magazine was renowned for its psychedelic graphics and imagery. The photographs in it were often out of focus or super-imposed and the typography was laid diagonally or sometimes even upside down. However *Oz* magazine did not last very long after the psychedelic movement ended. In America *Rolling Stone* became the first national consumer ^{magazine} music, which was published in November. *Rolling Stone* covered the lifestyle of a generation. It lasted longer than the British music papers and is still going strong today.

In August a relatively obscure holy man named Maharishi Mahesh yogi arrived in London to deliver what he declared would be his last lecture before he retired into a life of silence back in India. The Beatles of 1967 had obtained maximum hippie signification. They were among the Maharishi's listeners, and even went to Bangor in Wales for a weekend of meditation with him. This type of meditation be-

came so popular that *Life* magazine described it as 'The Year of the Guru'! After their weekend for the 'spiritually regenerated' they declared that 'drugs were passe and meditation was where it was at'. This seemed to be a bit of a contradiction considering that the year 1967 saw the emergence of the Beatles' most drug related psychedelic album, *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

1967 was the year that more L.S.D. was made and consumed than in the twenty-four years since the first acid trip. In an attempt to reproduce the effects of acid, musicians began to experiment with more longer rambling pieces. They started to use electrical devices including feedback, distortions and altered sounds as well as new instruments such as sitars and wind chimes. They began to change the tempo of the record, use mixed voices and reproduce chants or spoken passages.

1967 was also the year when records became for the first time ever a billion-dollar industry. During the year, for every one 45-rpm single, six big expensive albums were sold. These new albums were designed with total effect in mind. For the first time in the history of music making graphic design was becoming as important as the music itself. Many young people would sit for hours gazing at various album covers trying to read different things into them.

The psychedelic style which consists of day-glo swirling organic patterns can be seen to its full advantage in Martin Sharp's design for Cream's album *Disraeli Gears* (Fig.6). Martin Sharp became renowned for his drug influenced Californian graphic design style. The album cover which was designed in 1967 is a combination of collage and swirling organic forms. What struck me when I first saw the



Disraeli Gears, Album cover
Designed by Martin Sharp, 1967.
(Fig.6)



album cover was of course the brightness of the colours used. Sharp uses pinks and oranges, typical psychedelic colours which had never up until now been placed together. The use of synthetic dyes enabled bright day-glo colours to be used for printing. Incompatible colours were placed side by side in an attempt to recreate the shimmering quality of a psychedelic vision.

The album cover is a dense collage of day-glo coloured images. The photograph of the band is placed inbetween psychedelic patterns and organic illustrations. Collages using photographs became very popular during the latter sixties as did the use of organic floral images which were borrowed from the Art Nouveau style. These images appear again and again in album covers and posters of the psychedelic period. The typography on *Disraeli Gears* is placed directly in the centre and is hand-drawn in the psychedelic 'bubbly' style which was the norm at the time. The typography actually becomes part of the overall design. Typography on previous album covers was just layed out very simply to state the name of the band and the album, it was never really considered actually part of the design, and was never before given so much importance as it was on psychedelic album covers.

The album cover really became a piece of art for the first time. Great attention was paid to the colours and the images used in the designs. Martin Sharp uses many L.S.D. influenced imagery in both his album cover designs and his designs for *Oz* magazine. These are very evident in his design for issue No. 3 of *Oz* in 1967. However I feel that this album cover comprises of most (if not all) of the psychedelic design traits. It is a perfect example of the swirling, organic startlingly bright coloured designs, which have become so instantly recognisable.

Another interesting album cover is *Confusion* (Fig.7), a very appropriate name for an album that contained the work of several bands. It was designed in 1968 by Ernie Joseph who himself was a frequent L.S.D. user along with most of the leading designers at the time. although it pocesses the psychedelic swirling shapes and organic floral designs, its use of typography makes it very visually stimulating and exciting. It has become part of the overall design, and draws the observer in to have a closer look. The type blends in with the border and also makes up part of the central figure. It becomes illegible in places, however I feel that this interests the viewer more as they really have to look in places in order to read it.

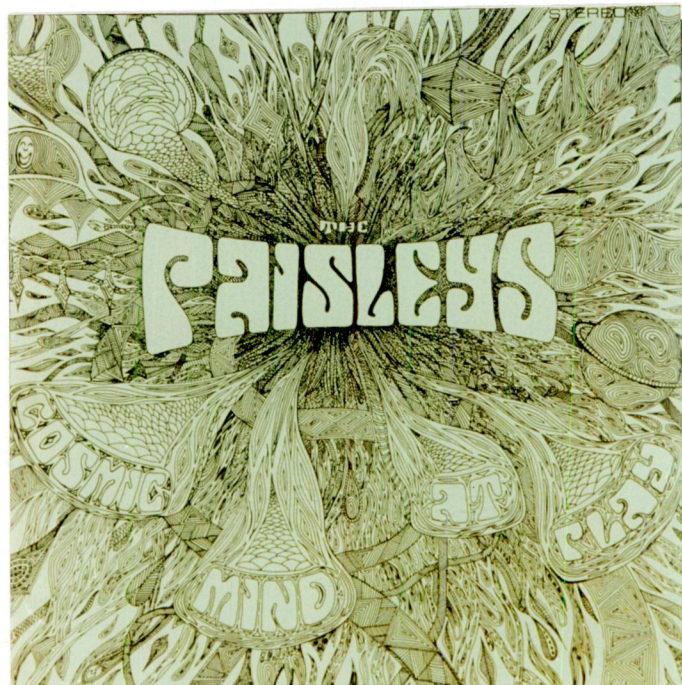
Personally I particularly like the use of typography on the album sleeve. It spells out Led Zeppelin; however at first glance it just looks like a fold in the drapey. This is a perfect example of how design during this time took first priority, the communication through words and legibility of the typography became secondary. Although all of the bands are featured in hand-drawn type one has to really look to see what is featured on the album. Ernie Joseph has captured many of the late sixties philosophies in his illustrations which adorn the figure beautifully.

His piece of illustration to the left of Big Brother on the bottom left - hand side says a lot about the culture of the day. He has illustrated flowers which relate to the flower power ideas among the young people of the time, also he has illustrated mushrooms, most likely magic ones, which pocessed hallucinogenic properties similar to L.S.D. He has also drawn a cross which represents peace. He has summed up the whole attitude of a nation in this little piece of illustration.

The message of peace is very evident throughout the album cover. To the left of



Confusion, Album cover
Designed by Ernie Joseph, 1967.
(Fig7)



Cosmic Mind at Play, Album cover
Designer unknown, 1970
(Fig.8)



this piece of design he has drawn a dove holding an olive branch in its beak surrounded by flowers. The figure also wears a peace sign as a necklace and the Ying-Yang sign which is a symbol for peaceful balance is placed in the centre of its forehead. A spiral of smoke rises from the left-hand palm of the figure. It contains the symbols for male and female and also the symbols for the signs of the zodiac. Fortune-telling and palm reading was a very popular past-time among the hippies.

It is not evident what sex the central figure is. Although it has long flowing hair and is adorned with jewellery it is not necessarily female. The hippies from 1967 onwards all had their hair long and wore unisex clothing. Although it is more important the messages the figure is getting across rather than whether it is male or female. I personally find this album cover fascinating. The designer has included his name twice on the cover. Once on the bottom right-hand side and the other on the actual illustration of the figure. He has drawn in hand rendered typography 'Ernie Joseph loves you'. The O of the word love has an anti-war symbol in it. He portrays the message of peace and love over and over again. By doing this he comments on the ideas of the bands featured on the album and also at the audience at which the album is being marketed at.

Although there is an absence of bright day-glo colours that were so much a part of psychedelia, the black and white cover works very well. Due to the intricate, detailed illustration I believe it may not work quite as well if it was in colour, the symbolic drawings would not have been so clear and recognisable. In my opinion I feel that this album cover is an excellent example of the confusing nearly illegible typography that was such a part of psychedelia. It is a good example of how typography was used to create an overall design during this period and wasn't just added

to the image as was done previously. This intricate illustrative style was also used on album covers as late as 1970. This is evident in The Paisley's album cover *Cosmic Mind at Play* (Fig.8).

The album cover for the *Savage Resurrection* (Fig.9) features different characteristics of psychedelia including collage, day-glo colours and nostalgic imagery. It was designed in 1968, however, the identity of the designer is unknown. This album cover originally attracted my attention by the celtic imagery in the design. The colours of the intricate celtic strap-work couldn't be further removed from the day-glo colours of psychedelia. The designer has looked to the past for inspiration and has found it in celtic design, which he then added to the present day 'sixties designs and ended up with something completely different. During psychedelia there was a tendency to look to past styles for ideas and imagery, and then to simply add them to the bright new images and colours of the day. I find it very interesting that such different imagery would be used together to create an album cover design.

The overall design has a very typical psychedelic swirling image. One can almost feel it moving on the cover ! Again as with the previous album covers but not to the same extent; the typography on the word *savage* is used to create a design. The rest of the typography is rendered by hand. The word *the* is rendered in an almost liquid, bubbly style whereas the word *resurrection* is rendered in a straighter way. The photographs of the band members are set in a collage amid rainbow, psychedelic swirling colours. The organic, floral theme is also present.

The use of an ancient celtic artifact just under the swirling rainbow collage is



The Savage Resurrection, Album cover
Designer unknown, 1968.
(Fig.9)

very unusual, as are the four saintly type figures on the bottom of the cover. Never before had this type of imagery been placed together and incorporated into the overall design of the cover. It was a typical psychedelic solution to borrow something from the past; add some swirling, organic patterns, perhaps incorporating typography into them, and then add a great deal of vivid rainbow colours to complete the design.

As a result of the psychedelic phenomenon, album cover design exploded in numerous different directions. Designers now had the freedom to experiment with the layout, colour imagery and typography for the first time ever. Classic psychedelic designs appear again and again in album covers. However, in each one there is something different to observe. Revived designs were mixed together with designs of psychedelia and in turn produced something entirely different.

Chapter 3.

Organic and Floral Abstractions

Throughout this chapter I intend to look at the similarities between the Art Nouveau movement and the psychedelic movement. Many designers during the sixties borrowed designs from Art Nouveau and added psychedelic colours to create a new style.

I will compare and contrast a poster by Aubrey Beardsley dating from 1894 and a poster by Milton Glaser from 1967, in order to establish whether similarities exist between the two.

Many sixties designs were blatantly copied from Art Nouveau and I am going to discuss a few of these. I close the chapter by discussing the many images of eyes which appear again and again in sixties designs, and will attempt to show what is significant about them.

Revivalism of Art Nouveau's decorative style was exploited by many designers, particularly graphic designers, during the latter sixties. The reason for this dates back to two important exhibitions, one in 1963 and the other in 1966. The first exhibition was of the work of Alphonse Mucha's work and the second one of Aubrey Beardsley's work. Both were held in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Aubrey Beardsley became a particular source of inspiration due to his strong graphic style. Designers adopted Art Nouveau designs and styles into the designs of the day. The graphic designers of the '60s stole many ideas and designs from the Art Nouveau movement and absorbed them into a style of their own.

Art Nouveau gave an amazing ornamental value to line. It produced a rich, linear style with vigorous curves and rhythmic patterns. The lines were swirling and flatly patterned. One of the characteristics of Art Nouveau is the sinuosity of its line, a characteristic which was copied again and again by designers in the second half of the sixties. Many of the designs from the earlier period were based on organic and floral abstractions, a theme which was also widely revived. Both the Art Nouveau and the Psychedelic styles at their height found themselves on everything from clothes and furniture to posters. The psychedelic style was the first manifestation of the 'Nostalgia' craze which later became known as 'retro'. Designers revived Art Nouveau designs and flooded them in day-glo colours which gave really weird effects in artificial light.

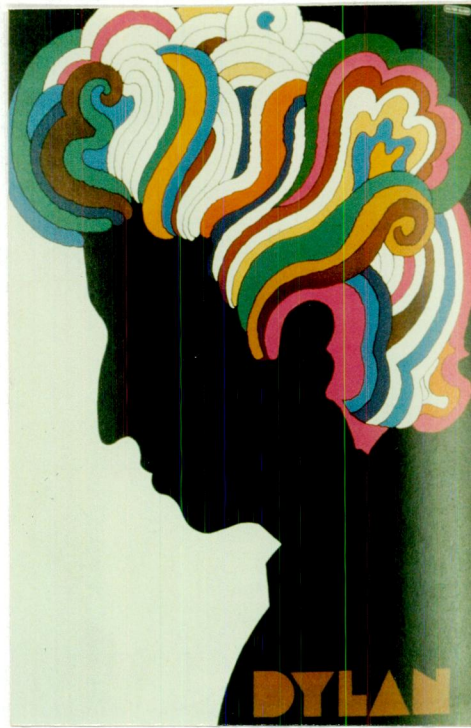
One of the most influential design studios to appear during this period was the American firm Push-Pin. Milton Glaser, one of its founders is today one of the

United States' most eminent designers. However, he is probably best remembered for his 1967 poster of Bob Dylan (Fig.10), which became one of the great graphic icons of the era. The Art Nouveau style is obviously reworked in Glaser's poster. However to see the similarities more clearly I have decided also to compare it with a piece of design by Aubrey Beardsley.

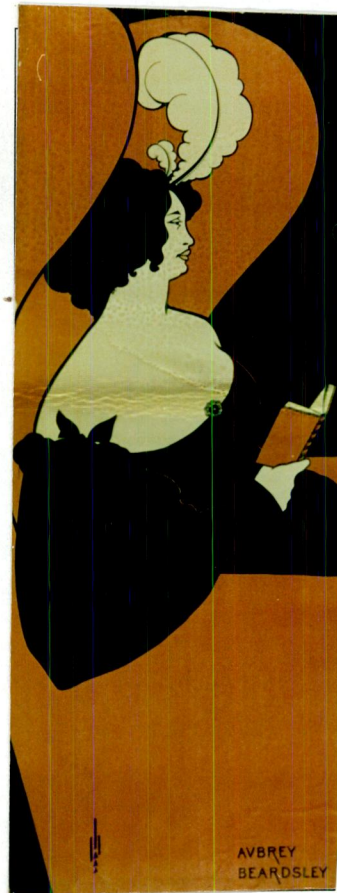
Beardsley's poster from 1894 (Fig.11) was intended to advertise children's books. Glaser's poster, however, was not intended to advertise Dylan but was meant to be an enclosure for one of his albums. Both posters are boldly simple and make good use of negative space. The negative space in Beardsley's poster is used to define the outline of the figure and also of the chair. Glaser uses the negative space in his poster to produce a silhouette of the side profile of Bob Dylan. Both posters use side profiles of the figures, although they each face opposite directions.

Both posters use a lot of black; however, the rest of the colours used are vastly different. The colours in Beardsley's poster are typical of the Art Nouveau period, while Glaser's colours are vibrant and psychedelic, typical of the late sixties decade. There are strong black outlines in both posters which is typical of the Art Nouveau style. The lines are simple in both; but in Glaser's design they become more 'squiggly' in the treatment of the hair. However the shapes observable in Dylan's hair also echo the feather in the hair of the figure in Beardsley's poster.

There is very little use of typography in the two images. Both designers sign their names and the only addition Glaser makes is that of Dylan's name. Although the colours of both pieces differ dramatically, it is still obvious that Glaser looked to the past and made full use of the Art Nouveau style for his inspiration. Psyche-



Bob Dylan, Album insert
Designed by Milton Glaser, 1967.
(Fig.10)



Poster advertising children's books,
Designed by Aubrey Beardsley, 1894.
(Fig.11)

delic designs are brighter and slicker than the Art Nouveau designs. A dazzling effect is produced in psychedelic designs by the use of complementary colours and allowing one pattern to run into another.

This is evident in Martin Sharp's front cover design for issue No. 3 of *Oz* (Fig.12) magazine in 1967. The image is quite confusing and the eye is drawn over many different patterns and shapes. The name of the magazine is almost lost in graphic decoration. The curved and swirling lines are similar to the linear qualities of Art Nouveau designs. For this design Sharp looks to the past. He takes an image of the Mona Lisa and adds psychedelic colours along with other additions. The typography, however, is defiantly the bubbly hand-drawn type which was typical of the psychedelic period. The alternative lifestyle of the sixties required an 'alternative typeface'. The psychedelically coloured hand-drawn curvilinear lettering was popular as it fitted into the swirling shapes and patterns of the time.

Although many designs and themes were taken from the Art Nouveau period by sixties graphic designers, most of them just adopted ideas and then transformed them into an undeniable 'sixties style complete with psychedelic colouring and typography. However there were some who just blatantly copied Art Nouveau designs, sometimes adding photographs and, in my opinion, ended up with very bad album covers. One such design is that for *The Collectors* (Fig.13) album cover, designed in 1968 by Bob Masse. Masse uses an Alphonse Mucha illustration without changing it whatsoever, his only addition to the image is a photograph of the band, which I feel is totally out of place. The image, the typography and the colour are all in the Art Nouveau style. The photograph of the five band members is just not in keeping with the beautiful illustration and border which surround it.



Issue No.3 for *OZ* magazine,
Designed by Martin Sharp, 1967.
(Fig.12)



The Collectors, Album cover,
Designed by Bob Masse, 1968.
(Fig.13)



13th Floor Elevators, Album cover,
Designed by John Cleaveland, 1966.
(Fig.14)



The 5000 Spirits, Album cover,
Designed by Simon Marijke, 1967.
(Fig.15)



There is no innovative design or thought behind this cover. It seems to me that the designer just took a convenient image from the past and stuck the photograph on top. Even the typography has not changed from the Art Nouveau style. There is nothing about this cover that tells us about the period in which it was produced. No attempt has been made to bring the design and ideas into the psychedelic style, which was very unusual for album cover designers of the psychedelic period.

Although the roots of the psychedelic period lay in the Art Nouveau movement, it was L.S.D. that brought the ideas back to life and created something totally different with them. Designers were trying to evoke the same experience as an L.S.D. trip in their designs through the intensified colour and swirling shapes. Everything became more vibrant and visual.

I have noticed that many of the album covers produced during psychedelia feature either photographs or illustrations of eyes. This is particularly evident in the album cover for the *13th Floor Elevators* (Fig.14) by John Cleaveland in 1966, in which the whole design is constructed around the illustration of a large eye in which another eye is drawn. Even the typography echoes the shape of the eye. Another album cover for The Incredible String Band entitled *The 5000 Spirits* (Fig.15) by Simon Marijke in 1967 features an illustration of an eye in bright rainbow colours. It is placed directly in the centre of the cover, as is the photograph of an eye on the cover of Harvey Mandel's album *Cristo Redentor* (Fig.16) which was produced during the same period.

However why did so many album cover designers include illustrations and pho-



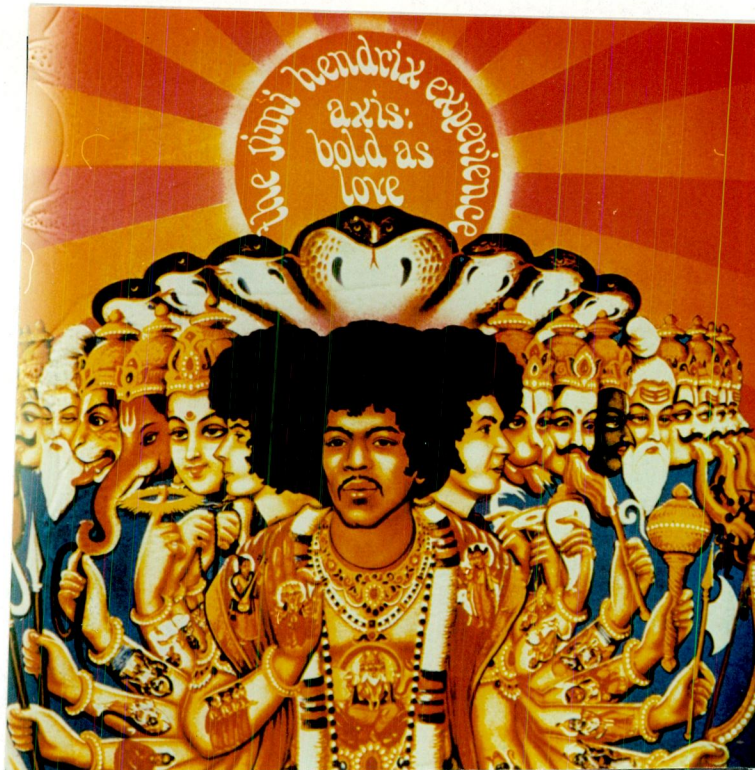
Cristo Redentor ,Album cover,
Designer unknown, Date, late sixties.
(Fig.16)



tographs of eyes on their designs? My theory is that it all related back to L.S.D. and its effects on the user. According to Storm Thorgerson (*Thorgerson, p 94, 1989*), acid had stupefying effects on the eyes. It seemed as if the world was a completely different place. The rods and cones in the eyes did not always seem to hold the edges of things; so objects and textures would appear to 'slip into each other as if the world was composed of liquid things'. Somehow acid hypersensitized the colour reception in the eyeball, so that every colour appeared more colourful and more vibrant.

I believe that by including these images of eyes in their designs the designers were commenting on the visual effects that hallucinogenic drugs such as L.S.D. had on them. The eye is a symbol of knowledge and insight, an insight that perhaps could only be gained through the use of L.S.D.? Or perhaps they were inviting the observer to look more carefully at the cover and to read more into it. Either way, the use of the eye theme was very popular in album cover design from about 1966 to 1969, whether it was used to create an actual cover as in the case of the *13th Floor Elevators* (who incidentally were the first group to describe their music as psychedelic) or whether it was included in parts of an overall illustration.

Swirling patterns, day-glo colours, organic themes and Eastern mystic images are all very common throughout graphic design during psychedelia. Eastern paintings are quite similar to psychedelic designs. They both use bright colours, particularly oranges and reds and also the same type of repative patterns. There was a tremendous surge of interest in Eastern religions and customs in the late sixties. The Eastern mystic theme which originated in India is very obvious in album covers such as *Axis* by the Jimi Hendrix Experience (Fig.17), which was designed in



Axis, Album cover,
Designed by David King & Roger Law, 1967.
(Fig.17)



Anthem of the Sun, Album cover,
Designed by Bill Walker, 1968.
(Fig.18)



1967 by David King and Roger Law, in the Grateful Dead's album *Anthem of the Sun* (Fig.18) designed in 1968 by Bill Walker, and also in David Axelrod's album *Song of Innocence*, (Fig.19) designed also in 1968 by Lockart.

Few bands during the 'sixties managed to combine all of these themes into their album cover design. However one band who did manage to achieve this is of course 'The Beatles'. They were concerned with their album cover design from an early stage. Their transition from Beat Generation mop-tops to psychedelic hippies is evident in their various different album covers.



Song of Innocence, Album cover,
Designed by Lockart, 1968.
(Fig.19)

Chapter 4.

A Splendid Time Is Guaranteed For All !

In this chapter I discuss the Beatles' transition from mop-tops singing 'Yeah, Yeah, Yeah' to hippies promoting the use of drugs in their music. Briefly, I intend to discuss their albums Rubber Soul and Revolver which preceded (from a psychedelic and graphic design point of view) the greatest album of all time; Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.

I will examine both the lyrics on this album and to the design of the cover, and believe that music and graphic design during psychedelia reached its peak with the release of this album in 1967. Sgt. Pepper epitomised its age, which was a time of love, peace, acid and hope for a better future.

After Sgt. Pepper, I will discuss briefly how the Beatles continued their psychedelic theme with Magical Mystery Tour and Yellow Submarine. This chapter closes with a discussion of the release shortly afterwards of their most unpsychedelic album ever, The White Album.

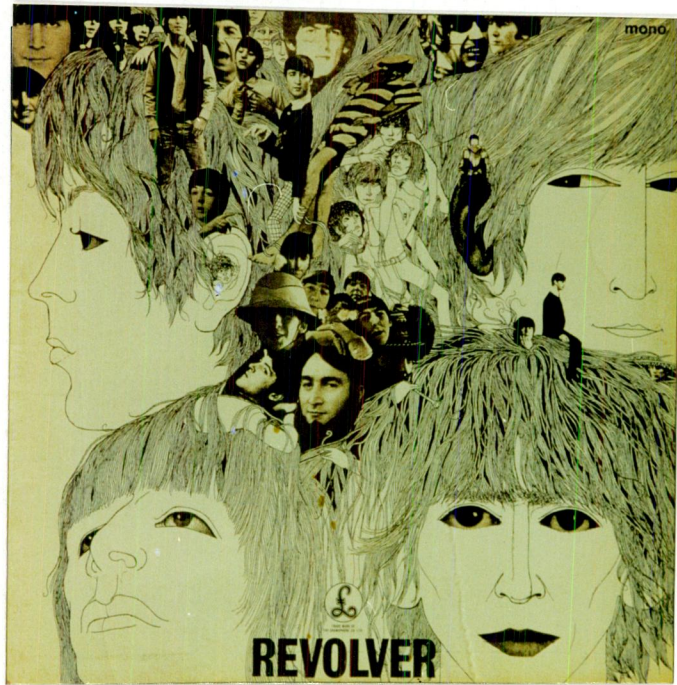


Rubber Soul, Album cover,
1966.
(Fig.20)

When John Lennon declared in 1966 that the Beatles were 'more popular than Jesus' he wasn't too far off the mark. They had just released their album *Rubber Soul* which is regarded as their first psychedelic album cover. The photography on the cover is so completely different from any of their earlier covers. The Beatles are unsmiling and serious and are supposed to be viewed as if they are reflected in water. In fact according to Mike Evans (*Evans, p 60, 1984*), members of the Beatles Fan club wrote complaining about the sleeve of *Rubber Soul* (Fig.20), saying that it made their idols look like corpses. The bright red typography was the first psychedelic style of type to appear on any of their albums. The Beatles' music and visual appearance was changing dramatically.

Next came *Revolver* (Fig.21), their first 'concept album'. With its release they also announced that they would never again play live. One such designer influenced by the black and white line drawings of Aubrey Beardsley was Klaus Voorman who designed the cover for *Revolver*. Voorman also includes photomontage, a style that became really popular in album covers of the late sixties. The name The Beatles isn't included on the cover; he just includes the title of the album in simple san-serif upper-case typography.

This album ended with John Lennon chanting 'Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream' throughout the *Tomorrow Never Knows* track, a spiritual incantation which, according to Jane Stern (*Stern, p45, 1990*), he had borrowed from Timothy Leary. The Beatles like many influential artists and writers had begun experimenting with L.S.D. Its use promoted a more visual approach among lyricists



Revolver, Album cover,
Designed by Klaus Voorman, 1967.
(Fig.21)



Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Album cover,
Designed by Peter Blake, 1967.
(Fig.22)



and writers. The album was full of hidden footnotes, drug visions and veiled parables. The Beatles had certainly come a long way from mop-topped lads singing 'yeah,yeah,yeah'! They had left it far behind and were becoming psychedelic mind-voyagers.

By the summer of 1967 Timothy Leary had declared the Beatles to be 'the wisest, holiest, most effective orators the human race has ever produced' (*Stern*,p162, 1990). The Beatles had already gained considerable hippie signification by the time John Lennon unveiled his Rolls-Royce in May which he had painted in bright psychedelic patterns! Both musically and visually the Beatles' influence shaped the late sixties profoundly. However, the height of their creativity was yet to come. This arrived in 1967 with the release of perhaps the most famous album of all time, *Sgt.Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (Fig.22).

Sgt.Pepper finally shattered the image of the Beatles as the loveable fab four-some; they had now become 'important artists'. Its cover has become the most famous album cover of all time. However, their music had also reached a new height of creativity . The album was packed full of new ideas and experiments. For the first time ever in a pop album, the tracks were lined up together so that there were no gaps of silence between the songs. Each track followed into the next. The Beatles paid great attention to even small points of detail.

The album took five months to record, starting in December 1966 and finishing in May the following year. According to George Martin (producer of *Sgt. Pepper*), it took 700 hours to make. The album encompassed a wide variety of different sounds. 'The Beatles insisted that everything on Sgt.Pepper had to be different',

says Geoff Emerick (recording engineer), 'so everything was either distorted, limited, heavily compressed or treated with excessive equalisation'. Microphones were placed right inside the brass instruments and headphones were turned into microphones and attached to violins. Pieces of tapes were chopped to pieces and stuck together upside down and the wrong way around to achieve the various different sounds.(*Inside sleeve of the Sgt. Pepper album, 1967*).

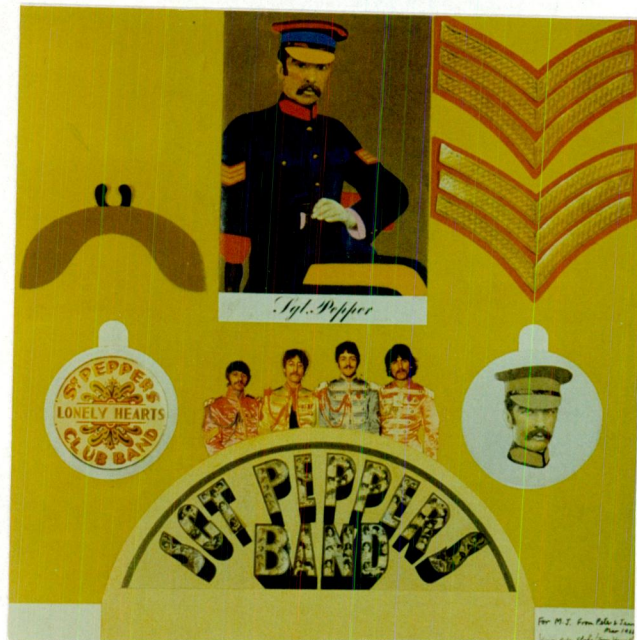
The Beatles music was becoming increasingly visual. The lyrics were more abstract, descriptive and poetic. This may be due to the increasing amounts of L.S.D. that the four were taking at the time. *Sgt. Pepper* is full of drug-related lyrics throughout, for example, the two most famous tracks on it, *Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds* and *A Day In The Life*. The Beatles suggested their hallucinogenic experiences in *Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds*. Every word was meant to invoke a dynamite L.S.D. trip. However, at the time John Lennon tried to convince the press that his son Julian had thought up the name *Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds* for a picture he had drawn at school, and it was purely accidental when John adopted the title to a song that the initials spelt out L.S.D. Later on Paul Mc Cartney admitted that all four of the Beatles were 'dropping acid' the entire time that *Sgt. Pepper* was being recorded.

A Day In The Life was banned by the BBC and by many radio stations in the U.S.A. as it might encourage a permissive attitude to drug-taking. At the time Paul Mc Cartney denied that there was any link between the song and drugs. Although there is an nostalgic theme running through *Sgt. Pepper* as in the case of *Mr.Kite* and *When I'm Sixty-four*, the drug- related lyrics are predominant throughout. The orchestra's crescendo at the end of the album was to every acid-softened mind that

heard it, the musical equivalent of the greatest drug rush imaginable. (*Stern*, p26,1990).At the end of *A Day In The Life* track, John Lennon requested that a couple of seconds of a fifteen kilocycle whistle that is barely audible to humans be added - just to annoy your dog ! A couple of moments later one hears a few seconds of nonsense, Beatles chatter, taped, cut into several pieces and stuck back together at random, so at this stage the listener is wondering what on earth is going on! It is effects such as these that make *Sgt.Pepper* so different from its predecessors. While the music was revolutionary in its recording and engineering; the album cover was revolutionary in both its packaging and design.

Peter Blake was the designer responsible for creating the album cover. The Beatles' idea for the cover was that they were just another band performing a concert, perhaps in a park. They wanted to include on the cover their various heroes and cultural mentors, hence the collage idea. Each of the four made lists of the people they'd most like to have at this imaginary concert. John's list included Jesus, Gandhi and Hitler while George's list was all gurus. However those particular three on John's list were never included on the final cover.

The setting for the cover was an ornamental garden, including a row of marijuana plants and in the foreground 'The Beatles' spelt out in flowers. The Beatles themselves are pictured in the centre in psychedelically coloured military- style uniforms. To their left are wax-works of themselves, borrowed from Madame Tussourds in London. They are surrounded by sixty life-size photographs as well as other pieces of memorabilia including an Indian goddess, a Rolling Stones doll, a portable television and a garden gnome, to name but a few. The cover included film stars such as Marilyn Monroe and May West, and artists and writers that used



Cut-outs from inside sleeve of Sgt. Pepper
Designed by Peter Blake, 1967.
(Fig.23)



hallucinogenics in pursuit of their art including Aubrey Beardsley , Lewis Carroll and Edgar Allen Poe.

It also incorporated cut-outs that represented stars of the English variety stage such as Max Miller, while philosophy was represented by Marx. The only musicians present were pop singer Dion, Bob Dylan, Stuart Sutcliffe and the Beatles themselves. The centrepiece of the assemblage was the *Sgt. Pepper* drumskin which became in itself a part of the Beatles iconography. The Edwardian style lettering was painted by a genuine fairground artist. It was to become the worlds' most famous drumskin. The nostalgic theme is very evident throughout the whole cover from the uniforms the Beatles are wearing to the typography on the drum.

The packaging of the album was also very special. Continuing the fun-nostalgia theme of *Sgt. Pepper*, an insert was included in the sleeve featuring cut-outs of Sgt. Pepper's moustache, regimental stripes, badges and picture cards. However, most *Sgt. Pepper* owners actually never cut them out (Fig.23). The album cover also included printed lyrics to the songs which was unknown on pop albums until then.

Sgt. Pepper was more than just another successful Beatles record. It epitomised the values of youth during the late sixties. According to Demitri Coryton (*Coryton p 98, 1990*) the Beatles poured everything into this album, and it seemed to drain them. They were never to perform as effectively again. The three remaining Beatles recently revealed in the *Beatles Anthology* series on television that the process of disintegration among the band began very soon after *Sgt. Pepper* was completed. However, it cannot be denied that *Sgt. Pepper*, rock music and the art that increasingly accompanied it would never be the same again.



Magical Mystery Tour, Album cover,
1968.
(Fig.24)



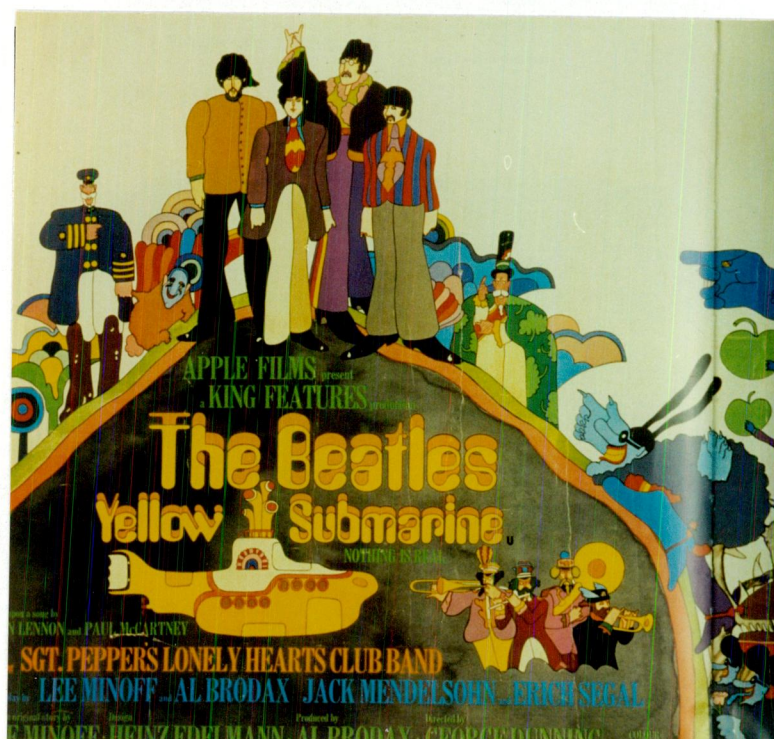
John Lennon, Poster,
Designed by Richard Avedon, 1967.
(Fig.25)

The Beatles continued their psychedelic theme through to 1968 with the release of the film and soundtrack of *Magical Mystery Tour* (Fig.24). It was based on the fantasy world of the Beatles and featured ideas and images from the Victorian surrealism of Lewis Carroll. The album cover features the typical psychedelic style complete with the rainbow hand-drawn doughnut style lettering that was seen earlier on Martin Sharp's cover for *Cream*.

Richard Avedon, an American photographer, produced psychedelic posters of the four which became classics of the genre. John is pictured in typical reds and oranges with 'trippy' glasses (Fig.25) while Ringo was pictured with the dove of peace. According to Mike Evans (*Evans, p76, 1984*) 'such images were made totally accessible by the mood of the times, to the extent that the posters were marketed in Britain through a special offer in the Daily Express!'.

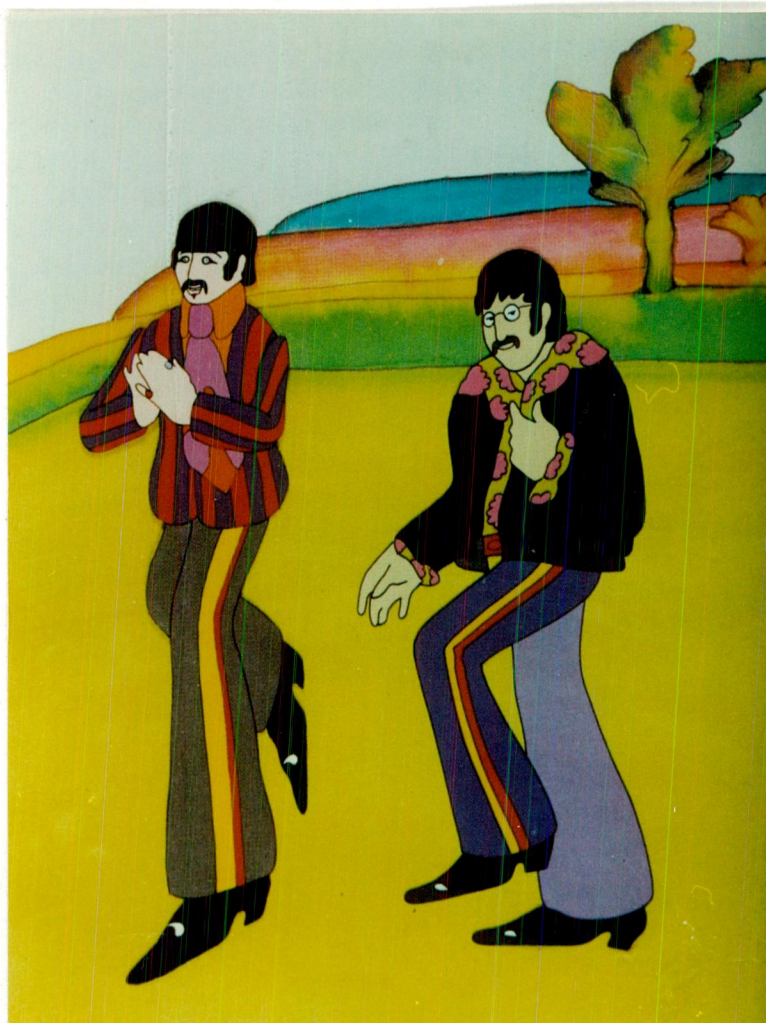
By 1968 the Beatles were beginning to move away from their overtly hippy style. They released a feature length animated cartoon *Yellow Submarine* (Fig.26), centred on the theme of the Beatles as the *Sgt. Pepper* band. The whole film reflected most of the visual styles fashionable in 1968 (Fig.27). 'A mixture of Art Nouveau and psychedelia, op and pop, dada and surrealist, Hieronymous Bosch and just plain Bosch' was how one American review described it. (*Evans, p84, 1984*). *Yellow Submarine* was a huge commercial success. It also saw the end of the Beatles psychedelic, L.S.D. inspired albums and covers. After *Yellow Submarine* they began to drift apart and go their separate ways.

They released their *White Album* (Fig. 28) towards the end of 1968 which was



Yellow Submarine, Album cover,
1968.
(Fig.26)

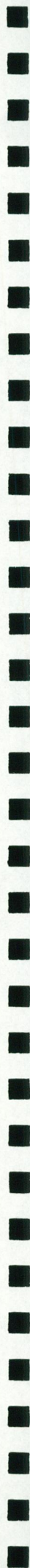
more of a collection of solo efforts rather than a group effort, although all members of the group did contribute something to most of the tracks. The cover of this album, which was to become their biggest selling LP ever, had the most unpsychedelic cover ever. It consisted of a plain white cover with the Beatles embossed in white on the bottom right-hand corner. There were no photographs and no illustrations. According to Storm Thorgerson (*Thorgerson, p182, 1989*), 'The biggest group in the world were being as minimal and unpsychedelic as you could imagine'. It was so far removed from the extravagant *Sgt. Pepper* cover of just a year earlier.



*Ringo & John in Yellow Submarine; Scene from the film of
the same title. 1968
(Fig.27)*



*White Album, Album cover,
Designed by Richard Hamilton 1968.
(Fig.28)*



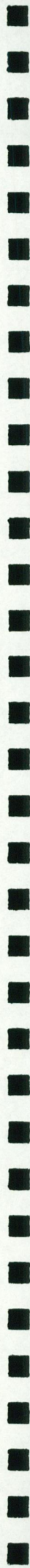
Chapter 5.

Where Have All The Flowers Gone

Throughout this chapter I will discuss the decline of psychedelia after 1967 and how the overall mood was changing by 1968. This change was seen in many album covers during that year. Although rock festivals blossomed in 1969, it was also the year that psychedelia began to vanish rapidly. I am going to examine the tremendous effects psychedelia had on music and design throughout its very short lifespan.



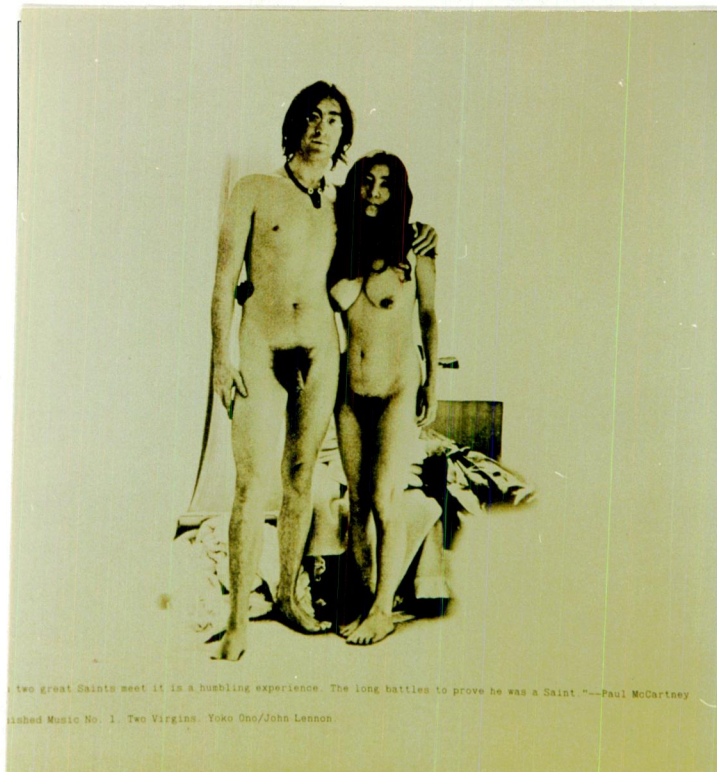
Strange Days, Album cover,
Designed by William S. Harvey, 1968.
(Fig.29)



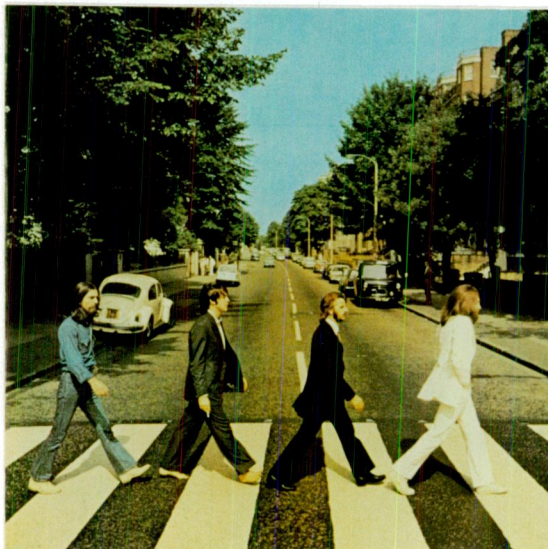
Psychedelia was a very strong style. Its swirling patterns and brightly coloured spirals appeared on everything from walls on shops in Carnaby street, London to album covers and clothes. It was a very distinctive graphic style however it did not remain for any great length of time. The same ideas and styles were being copied again and again and the style itself was beginning to run out of ideas. Therefore it is not really surprising that psychedelia began to disappear as rapidly as it had emerged.

The overall mood in 1968 was definitely changing by the time The Door's album *Strange Days* (Fig.29) was released. This album cover has moved away completely from psychedelic colours and patterns. It is a single photograph which is preconceived and unaltered. The photograph consists of a group of people who appear to be in a circus or street performance. The band's name and title of the album are placed in simple typography in the form of a poster which appears on a wall behind the weight-lifting man to the right. Neither the image, the typography nor the colours are psychedelic but it is weird and freaky, which are psychedelic attributes.

John Lennon and Yoko Ono also released an album in 1968 entitled *Two Virgins* (Fig.30) in which they both appear naked on the cover. The Beatles were beginning to split and go their different directions, particularly John Lennon. In 1969 they released their last album together, *Abbey Road* (Fig.31). By the time *Abbey Road* was released there were many rumours about the Beatles, including one that Paul was dead !On the cover John is dressed completely in white; he is supposed to represent



Two Virgins, Album cover,
Designer unknown, 1968.
(Fig.30)



Abbey Road, Album cover,
Designed by Iain MacMillan, 1969.
(Fig.31)

the priest, Ringo is dressed in black, representing the undertaker ,next comes Paul, who is the only one in his bare feet and out of step with the others and following him is George who is supposed to be the grave-digger. It was this album cover that fuelled the rumours about Paul's 'death' !

1969 was the year that rock festivals blossomed, particularly in the United States. Drugs, free sex and rock and roll appeared to be more closely linked than ever before. Drug busts, nudity both at festivals and on album covers all added to the image. The Blind Faith's album cover entitled *Blind Faith* (Fig.32) caused outrage in '69. It was designed and photographed by Bob Seidemann and features a naked pubescent young girl holding a model airplane. There were growing concerns about the effects of rock festivals and album covers such as this on the morality of the young.

In Washington state the Catholic Church called for criminal prosecutions against 'rock festivals and their drug-sex-rock-squalor culture'. (Croyton,,p87, 1990). Despite these attitudes 1969 brought with it one of the biggest, most popular rock festivals ever. Over 400,000 people came to the three day Woodstock music and art fair in Bethat, New York in August. Many leading rock acts performed, including The Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane, Janice Joplin and The Who. Despite the three deaths and two births during the festival, it remained trouble free. The image of peace, love and rock 'n' roll seemed to epitomise what American rock thought it was all about. While rock fans viewed Woodstock as a cultural high, many other Americans did not like what they saw. The 'swinging' decade was drawing to a close.



Blind Faith, Album cover,
Designed by Bob Seidemann, 1969.
(Fig.32)

Psychedelia had pretty much come to an end by 1969. Its extravagant colours and patterns were rapidly vanishing. The style was so strong and unsympathetic to other styles that inevitably it did not last into the next decade. Many diverse album covers appeared in '69. Many of them lack the psychedelic swirling shapes and colours however they would have not appeared before psychedelia as they are infused with psychedelic notions. Album cover design and the actual music itself exploded in numerous different directions as a result of the psychedelic phenomenon. The designers at the time had more freedom than ever before to experiment with colour, images and typography.

I agree with Storm Thorgerson (*Thorgerson, p183, 1989*) when he states that it was acid that bestowed freedom on the psyche and the imagination. 'Acid expanded perception, blew away previous preconceptions and broke down frontiers previously embedded', Thorgerson writes. The influence of the drug culture, most notably L.S.D., is nowhere more apparent than in record packaging with classic psychedelic designs and layouts appearing again and again. From a graphic design point of view the psychedelic period brought with it some brilliant pieces of design, particularly album cover designs. They were never to be the same again.

Summary and Conclusion

The first signs of psychedelia were noted in 1966. By 1967 it had reached the height of its style with many of the best graphic designs of the period appearing during this year. However by 1968 the colours were beginning to fade and the patterns were vanishing rapidly, so much so that by 1969 the style had come to an end. It was an extremely short design period but it was packed full of innovation and imagination. The youth culture of the latter sixties had a need for surprise, imagination, variety, colour and fun. L.S.D. seemed to provide these things at the time, as did the music and designs that were influenced by it. However, by the end of the decade the psychedelic craze was over and the time had passed as the seventies rapidly approached.

The Beatles had become disillusioned and were on the verge of splitting up. Meanwhile the hippies and the drop-outs who had moved to the West coast of America some three years earlier were running out of cash and returning back to where they had originally appeared from. The drug culture of the latter sixties had expanded many minds but it had also reduced the lifespans of many people, including pop idols Brian Jones, Jimi Hendrix and Janice Joplin. The most extravagant, swinging and optimistic decade the world has ever seen faded out and died before the decade came to a close.

The seventies brought disenchantment, negative feelings and the destructive anarchy of punk. 'Where have all the flowers gone?', sang Marlene Dietrich.

Graphic design was dominated by the visual effects the drugs of the time had on the user. Designers of that period were mostly young people involved in the youth and drug culture and this was seen clearly in their designs, some of which are still classics today.

‘Nothing happened in the sixties except that we all dressed up’, according to John Lennon (*Irish Independent, October 21st, 1995*). This is one of the rare occasions in which I must disagree with him! Over a generation later we are still reaping the benefits of the endeavours of small minority’s during the decade. The seeds of feminism and environmentalist issues were sown, as was new tolerance on issues such as divorce, homosexuality and censorship. It was one of the best decades yet as regards music and after the decade had ended graphic design was never to be the same again.

Designers and musicians worked together for the first time ever, thus producing great music with equally great album covers. Never before had designers and musicians so much freedom in the imagery and design of their album covers. Up until now album covers had never been so diverse and exciting.

I decided to concentrate on the latter half of the sixties, the heyday of the psychedelic style, as I believe some of the best designs of the decade were produced during the last couple of years of the decade. I also find fascinating and rather amusing, the extent to which designs were inspired by L.S.D. The Beatles, who only a couple of years earlier had been the clean cut fab four dressed in suits, released some of the most psychedelic drug related lyrics ever in 1967 with their *Sgt.*

Pepper album.

As psychedelia was the first drug-related art scene I decided to examine events around 1965/66 to determine how it all began. There were many factors which contributed to the psychedelic revolution, however while researching various pieces of design from 1966 onwards I discovered that really it was the introduction of L.S.D. which was the most influential. After examining many album covers of the period, I narrowed it down to discuss ones that were the most psychedelic in design.

I was amazed at how many designers of the time tried to recreate onto album covers when taking L.S.D. The same swirling shapes and bright covers appear again and again as does the images of eyes, which I found very interesting.

While psychedelia was a definite style of its own, many designers borrowed from the Art Nouveau style which I discussed by comparing a poster from 1894 with one from 1967. I found many striking similarities between the two.

I was also very interested in how the Beatles were influenced by L.S.D., from the clothes they wore to the lyrics in their songs.

Psychedelia was a very strong style which was unsympathetic to most other art styles. So far there has not been a revival of the style, although the music of the period is enjoying new found success in the nineties, I doubt if psychedelic day-glo graphic designs will ever be revived. Even if they were, it would not be the same. The graphics, the music, the fashion and the overall mood went hand and hand together. Psychedelic rainbow swirling shapes made their way onto album covers and clothes, as well as advertisements and posters. They belonged together back in

the latter half of the decade, when youth wore flares, flowers in their hair and patchouli, oil and when their greatest concerns and causes were for peace and love. It is my biggest regret that I was not part of this. I envy anybody who was, as I doubt the world will ever see or experience anything like it again.

Anything was possible, anything could happen, and did !

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