

Saville- Style or Substance?

Saville - Style of Substance?

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National College of Art & Design
Faculty of Design
Department of Visual Communication

Peter Saville- Style or Substance?

an examination of the work of Peter Saville (1978-1990)

by Declan Stone



Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art & Design
and Complimentary Studies
in Candidacy for the Degree of BDes Visual Communication 1992

1955-1956

1957-1958

1959-1960

1961-1962

1963-1964

SSS

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to suggest is to create...to describe is to destroy



Robert Doisneau (born 1912)

103347103

Preface

This thesis is an examination of a selection of Peter Saville's album covers and corporate identities, which I feel are truly representative of his approach to design. It aims to address points raised in magazine articles, as he has not yet been critically assessed.

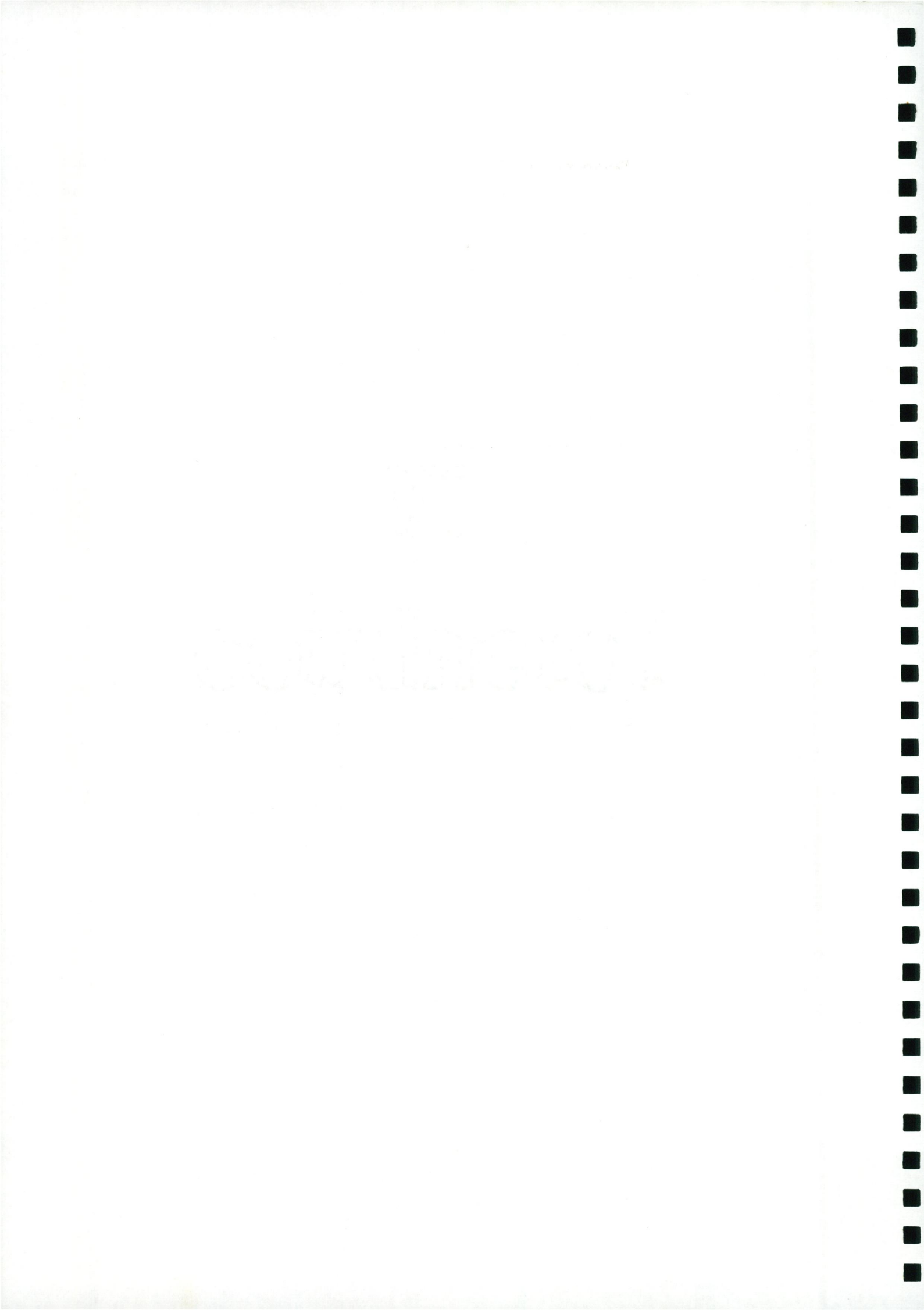
Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been possible without the assistance and support of Gerry Walker, my tutor, Ms. Helen Peterson at Pentagram Design Ltd., the library staff and the Apple 'mac'.

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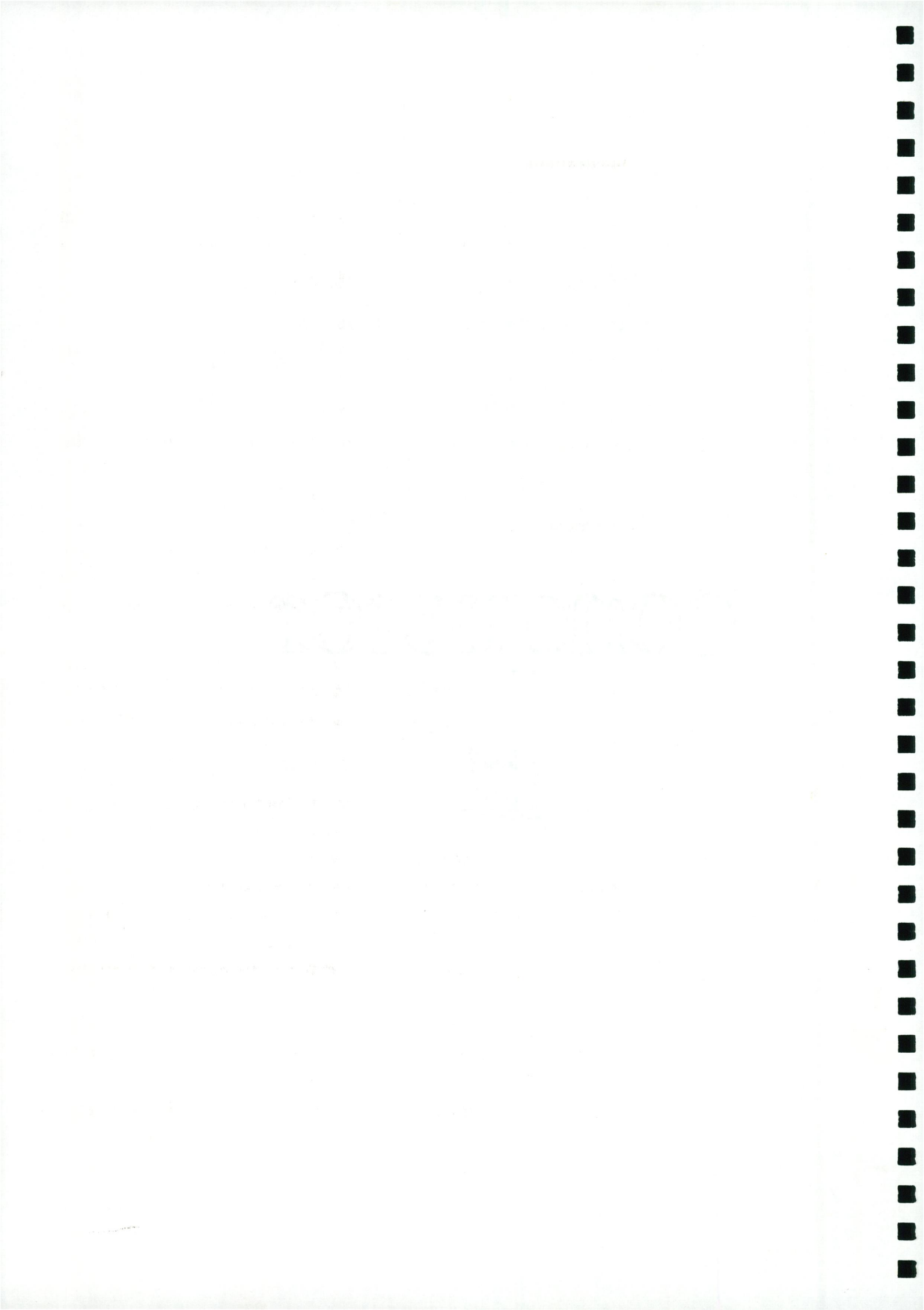


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Chapter 1 Introduction

Who is Peter Saville, what got him started and what is he about? What kind of eighties atmosphere encouraged him to work as he did? Here I shall set about my proposal for this examination into his work.

Background

Peter Saville (born in Manchester in 1955) joined Manchester Polytechnic in 1974. Here he was introduced to his first passion airbrushing. This was the beginning of his clean and clear hallmark.

Being a fine art based college, Saville didn't get much encouragement from his tutors. His airbrushing died a death after first year and he was left lost until a former school-friend Malcolm Garrett (who will be discussed later), rejoined him. Saville seems to have been a bit of a misfit at college, a bit misguided maybe, nobody wanted to be his tutor, he was certainly not the star pupil.

His end of year show consisted of some jobs he had done for friends, a singles sleeve he had done for some obscure local band, 'The Smirks' and the interior design for a clothes shop. He surprised everyone when he graduated with a first.

Around this time (1978), he submitted two posters to a Tony Wilson, a Granada TV producer who was setting up a venue for bands at the Russell Club, Manchester that october. It was to be called 'The Factory', (fig.1). These posters as you can imagine contained all those frustrated college ideas. They used his poster containing a noise warning sign from a workshop, this later became the Factory logo. By December of '79 Factory had a record release, 'A Factory Sample'. Factory was now a partnership of Wilson, (the music) and Saville, (the visual).

Saville had to package the Factory label and establish it as a label for music of quality and distinction. Each Factory product from its conception to its final packing was to be treated as a product in its own right.

Saville was lucky, in that Factory was different than other record labels,

Malcolm Garrett in schooldays used to comment that Saville used his paint straight from the tube, (Blueprint, nov. '90, p.30).

Taylor, Steve, Feb. '81, London, The Face, p. 51.

This independent record label 'Factory Records', was named in honour of Andy Warhol, and applied the same principle of the same look for all the company's goods. The name also drew upon the Northern industrial resonance of its location.

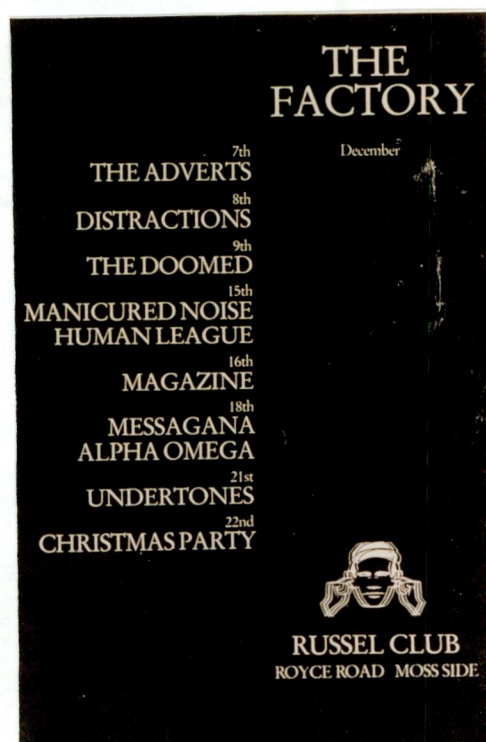


fig. 1, 'The Factory' club poster' (1978).

Saville used a noise warning logo which he found on a door at Manchester Polytechnic.

Faint, illegible text on a small rectangular label in the upper left corner.

Faint, illegible text on a larger rectangular label in the lower left corner.

COPIED



he was allowed to dispense with the standard format (of group shots and clear details of track listing), and indulge himself in more or less pure design. He was given enormous freedom, his only restraint being the 12" format. There was two reasons for this as 1) the album sleeve is produced quickly, it doesn't get the research and development that some times kills that spontaneous ideas, and 2) the commercial risk is also much smaller than say that of a new magazine.

Album design enabled Saville to let his college hibernation of experiments go mainstream. This was to establish him in the eighties.

Style / Substance - definition

Style and substance must now be distinguished. *Style* suggests a rather shallow approach for the designer, it is "surface manifestation or the 'look' of graphic design". Like a tie with a suit it is rather superfluous and doesn't actually serve a practical purpose. Style should not be dismissed, however, as unnecessary, because as it grows within popular culture it becomes a document of our age, a look for a time.

"it suggests a dominant visual aesthetic of a particular time and place".

The one true trait of *design* is if it can step out of the confines of an age, almost to transcend time. A good design solution is one which is answered in the simplistic most direct way. It should establish an identity, enlighten or disturb, educate or just simply question us.

Design in the eighties was seen as the saviour of Britain's economy. It seemed to be the easy solution to Thatcher's plans for company expansion and private enterprise. It became a commodity, a new way for selling the same products. (All the major building societies and banks became 'friendlier' and more colourful but were still the same services). Design was applied to almost everything, from stubble to water. Even Thatcher herself was styled by Saatchi and Saatchi. Design got over-used while being misused, it was basically seen in the eighties as surface glamour with little content.

'Design is everything and everything is design'

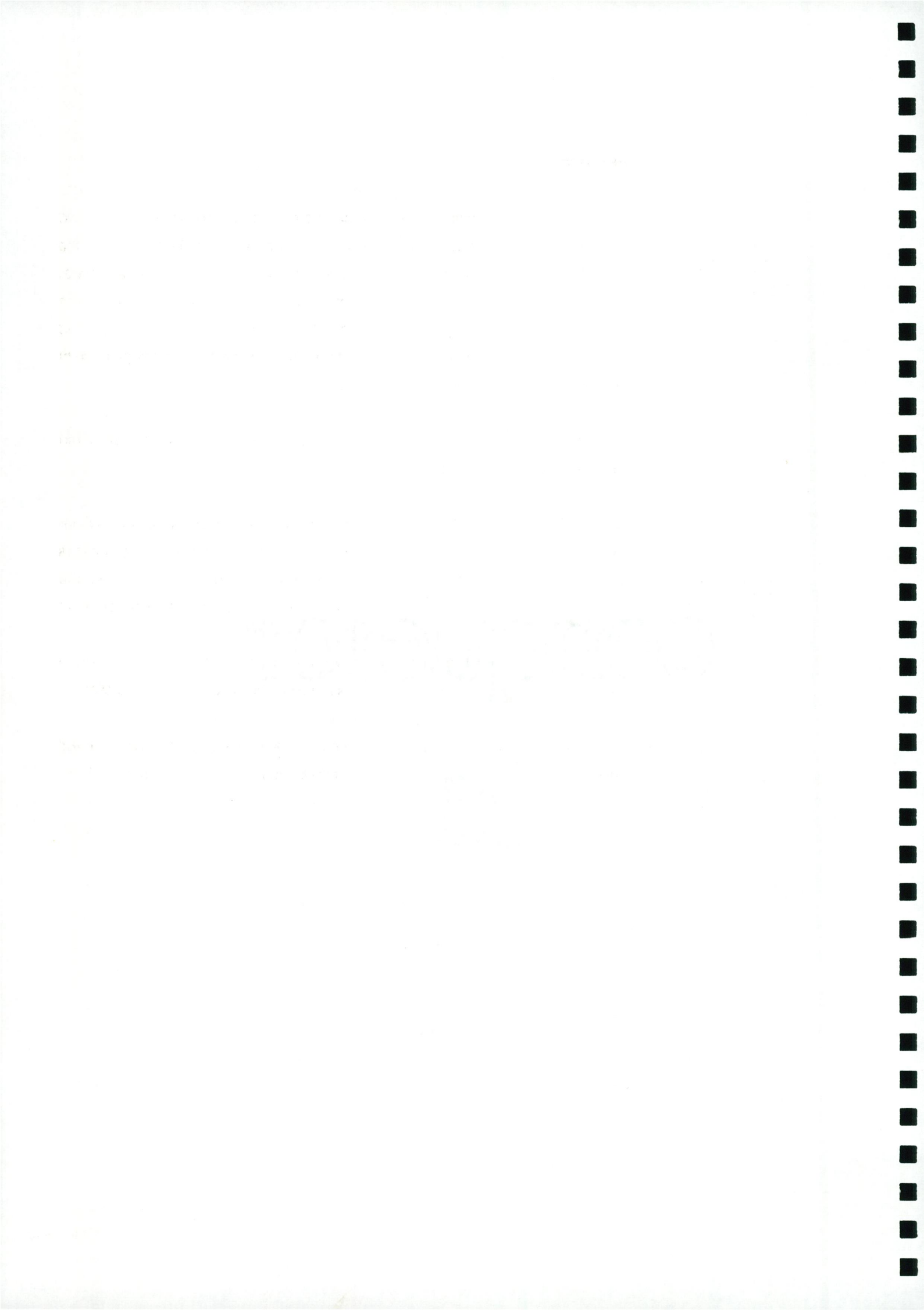
No one cared to scratch into the surface for fear of revealing a nothingness.

Heller, Steven,
1988, London,
Graphic Styles, p.9.

Heller, Steven,
1988, London,
Graphic Styles, p.9.

Margaret Thatcher appointed a
Minister of Design in 1983. This
recognised that Design had
become big business with
several big consultancies
going on the stock market.

Logan, Nick,
Sept. '88, London,
The Face, p.154.



Proposal

Poynor, Rick,
Nov.'90, London,
Blueprint, p. 30.

Amongst Pentagrams clients
have been British Rail, ICI, The
new Guardian Newspaper and
London's Stanstead Airport.

Peter Saville was to emerge from this decade as the '*Prince of Stylists*', yet in 1989 Pentagram, an '*ideas based consultancy*' employed him. This at face value seems a contradiction of terms, a pro-stylist going to pro-substance. Surprisingly he seems both a culprit and hero at the same time. This is the argument for my thesis. In the context of what was happening at the time, and most importantly what had happened before, I shall examine his work in the light of 'style over substance'.

This shall require an examination of his influences, the Bauhaus, the Futurists and Commercial art in the light of 'appropriating' or plagiarism. What did they and their movements believe with regard to style and design?

By then looking at, three of the most successful designers from the 'eighties, Neville Brody, Malcolm Garrett and Vaughan Oliver, the foundation for examining Saville will be established. The four of them working within the confines of popular culture must have cross-pollinated. Did the three of them take the same approach with styling? What kind of eighties atmosphere encouraged them to work as they did?

The confines of Popular
Culture has provided the single
most important influence on
new directions in contemporary
graphic & typographic design

Finally by breaking his work into two categories, album and corporate identity. I shall examine the diversity of his approaches with respect to his client.

This thesis will attempt to establish Saville's approach to his 'high profiled' work, (not yet critically accessed). Was his approach decorative or functional?

1. The first part of the report...

2. The second part of the report...

3. The third part of the report...

4. The fourth part of the report...

5. The fifth part of the report...

6. The sixth part of the report...

7. The seventh part of the report...

8. The eighth part of the report...

9. The ninth part of the report...

10. The tenth part of the report...

11. The eleventh part of the report...

12. The twelfth part of the report...

13. The thirteenth part of the report...

14. The fourteenth part of the report...

15. The fifteenth part of the report...

16. The sixteenth part of the report...

17. The seventeenth part of the report...

18. The eighteenth part of the report...

19. The nineteenth part of the report...

20. The twentieth part of the report...

21. The twenty-first part of the report...

22. The twenty-second part of the report...

23. The twenty-third part of the report...

24. The twenty-fourth part of the report...

25. The twenty-fifth part of the report...

26. The twenty-sixth part of the report...

27. The twenty-seventh part of the report...

28. The twenty-eighth part of the report...

29. The twenty-ninth part of the report...

30. The thirtieth part of the report...

Chapter 2 Saville's Influences

Introduction

The early 20th century saw numerous political movements emerge as a reaction to the new spirit of the world, one that embraced the new technologies. The new pace of life and dreams of a utopian metropolis saw Dadaism, Futurism and the Bauhaus. Modernism the umbrella term for all of this was the new aesthetic.

To understand present day design, we must know the rules and principles that were established. Half a century or so later what importance did these advances in design and typography hold for Peter Saville someone who acknowledges the past:

"if you don't understand 20th century art then you don't actually understand design"

In this chapter I shall examine Jan Tschichold, the father of modern typography, he established the ground rules. Next I shall examine Paul Rand, as he has all the modernist traits blended with commercialism. Saville himself acknowledges both of these as influences. Finally I shall examine the Futurist influence. The fourth section, examines the accusation thrown at Saville by The Face magazine (Jan. '83) of plagiarism. Two of his works were featured as being lifted from a Futurist, Fortunato Depero. What exactly was Saville's connection with him?

From the lessons of modernism how did Saville 'appropriate', or as the Face magazine put it "*plunder*" the past? What value did this work hold for him?

Saville as quoted
by Beard, Steve,
Sept. '90, London,
i-D, p.42.

Saville as quoted
by Jones, Mike,
Jan. '91, London,
Design, p. 20.

'The Age of Plunder',
Savage, Jon,
Jan. '91, London,
The Face, p.'s 44- 49.

Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is arranged in several paragraphs and appears to be a formal document or report. Some words are difficult to discern but seem to include terms like "The following information", "is being provided", and "for your information".



The Bauhaus / Tschichold (1902-1974)

Although not directly involved with the Bauhaus school Jan Tschichold realised their avant-garde approach in concrete form. Son of a sign painter, Tschichold a master typographer could arrange type on the page so it would most effectively perform the function for which it was intended.

Tschichold's 'Die neue Typographie' (fig. 2), published in 1928, showed a radical new attitude to typography in printing. The title page looks similar to any title page today, but remember this was revolutionary at the time, no one else had done this before. Up until then the William Morris school of decoration was still practiced. Tschichold wiped the slate clean and found a new typography that would express the spirit of the its day. It represents what is good about 'functionalism' the theory that an objects use of materials and means of production should dictate its form, and 'expressionism' the theory of intuition and personal taste.

Tschichold's strength was in his ability to grab us by the minimum of means. He said there could be so much in so little.

"It rejected decoration, it had to be strictly functional, it was an expression of the new age of the machine, it was simple and pure, it was universal."

Saville learned from Tschichold in that typography could be simple without you being conscious that the hand of the graphic designer has touched it. The graphic designer should not get in the way of the reader and the message. If we suspect any planning or manipulation the typographer has failed in his task. He can of course catch the attention of the reader and make the piece easier to read.

"Typography is a servant to author and reader, not a master"

'Le Valium Roche' (1965, fig. 3), demonstrates Tschichold's confidence with negative space, the essential information centred on black. He is confident enough to leave out decoration and the only imagery is the publishers seal. This philosophy is evident in Saville's early work, his minimalist 'Joy Division sleeves' (fig. 4), placed their emphasis on type. These demonstrated a simple pragmatic layout made up of neoclassical type. His achievement was in the restraint, he told us no more about the album and the group than was needed to.

Saville adopts the Bauhaus trait of griding on these sleeves. Like them he gives careful attention to the content, its' headings and sub-headings. Nothing

William Morris, architect and designer founded the Arts and Crafts Movement in the 1850's which protested against the machine aesthetic.

Mc Lean, Ruari,
1975, London,
Tschichold: Typographer, p.13.

Mc Lean, Ruari,
1975, London,
Tschichold: Typographer, p.15.

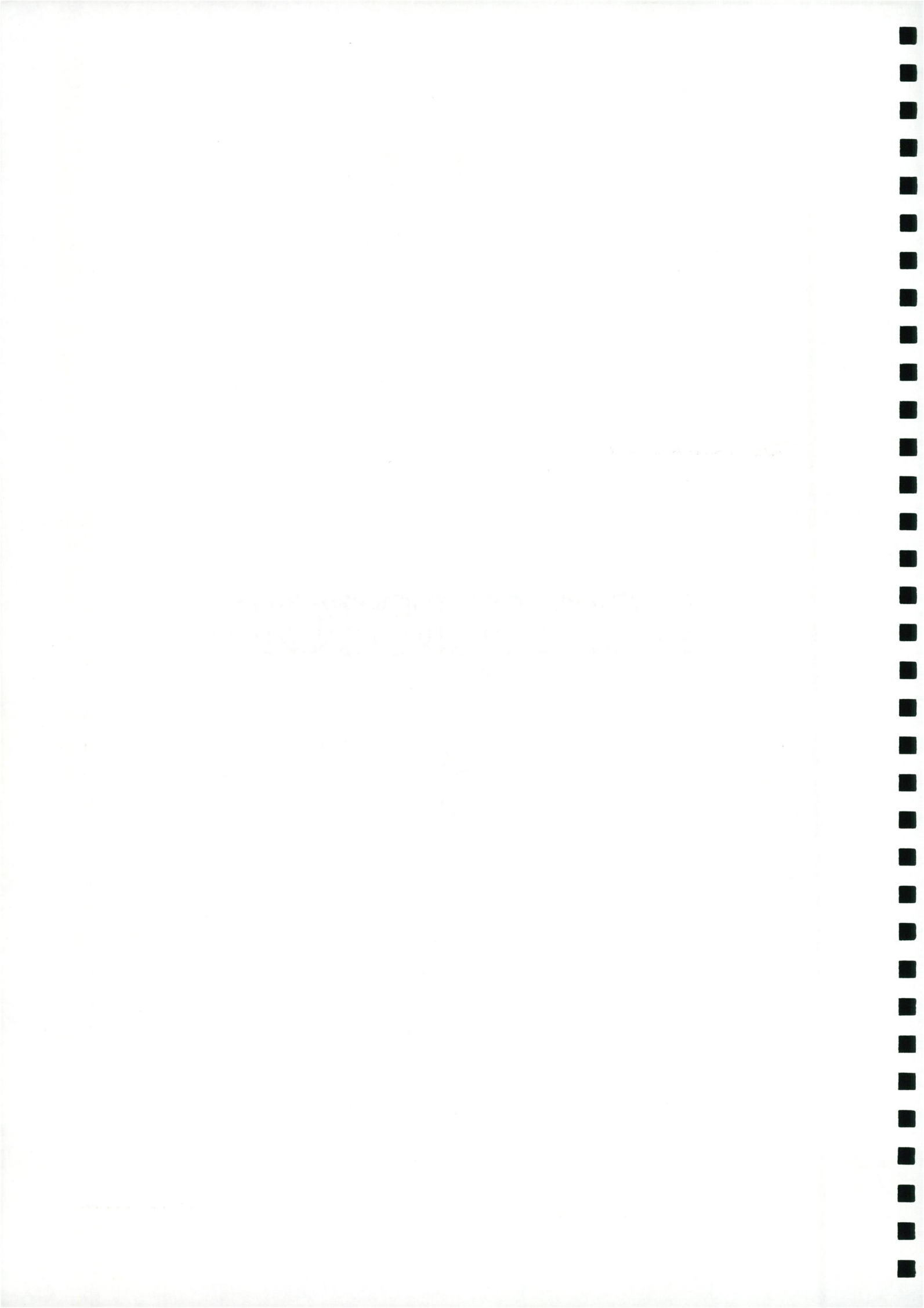


Fig. 2, 'Die neue Typographie', 1928.

Showed a radical new attitude to typography.

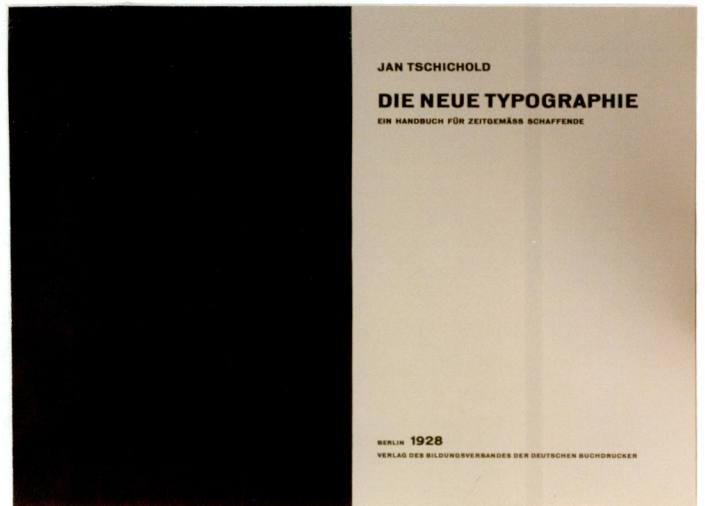
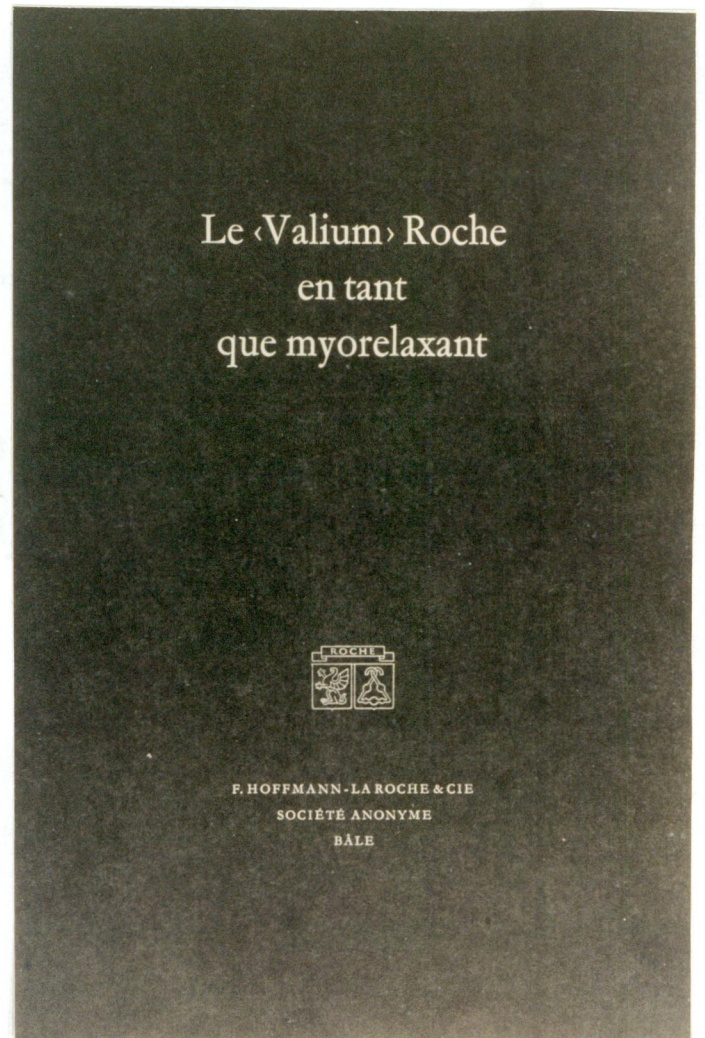


fig. 3, 'Le Valium Roche', 1965.

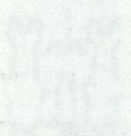
This set the ground-rules for Saville.



Handwritten text on a yellowed rectangular piece of paper, likely a page from an old manuscript or book. The text is written in a cursive script and is mostly illegible due to fading and the age of the document.

Handwritten text on a second yellowed rectangular piece of paper, similar to the one above. The script is consistent with the first piece, but the text is even more faded and difficult to decipher. The paper shows signs of significant age and wear.

COMPTON



superfluous is used. There is a meticulous use of space, nothing is cluttered. Type most importantly is clear and legible. The layout has got to assimilate the text to the reader without any hitches.

Like Tschichold, Saville acknowledged that asymmetry and symmetry can go hand in hand, when they fit the design solution. And as we know there are two families of type, serif and sans-serif. Tschichold was prepared to calligraph and use serif until he saw sans serif type in an exhibit by the Bauhaus in August 1923. Sans serif was an acknowledgement of a new modern age, that of the machine. Tschichold was learned enough to adapt differently to a task, to its particular needs.

Saville himself also restricted himself to serif at an early stage of his career until, he changed to 'Neuzeit', a sans-serif in 1985 for New Orders 'Low Life', (fig. 4). The jump across to the other family of typeface's was a greater/fresher challenge of expression, as it is more impersonal. Using the four sides available to him, front, back, inner sleeve front and back he presented photographs of the four members of the band, and paradoxically helped to preserve their distance. Saville had succeeded in bringing off a powerful visual effect with the minimum of means, Tschichold's point.

Tschichold's patient ability to work within formulated guides was realised to its potential, with the famous black and orange Penguin book covers from the fifties and sixties. These were pure design, operating both on a functional and aesthetic level. Saville reveals this same trait, demonstrated by his refinement for the 'Chrysalis logo', (1988, fig. 5). If he was a *stylist*, one would have used the latest fonts and contemporary colours but, Saville works with what he has, blending the butterfly to the type. He almost understates the suggestion of the butterfly with the 'y'.

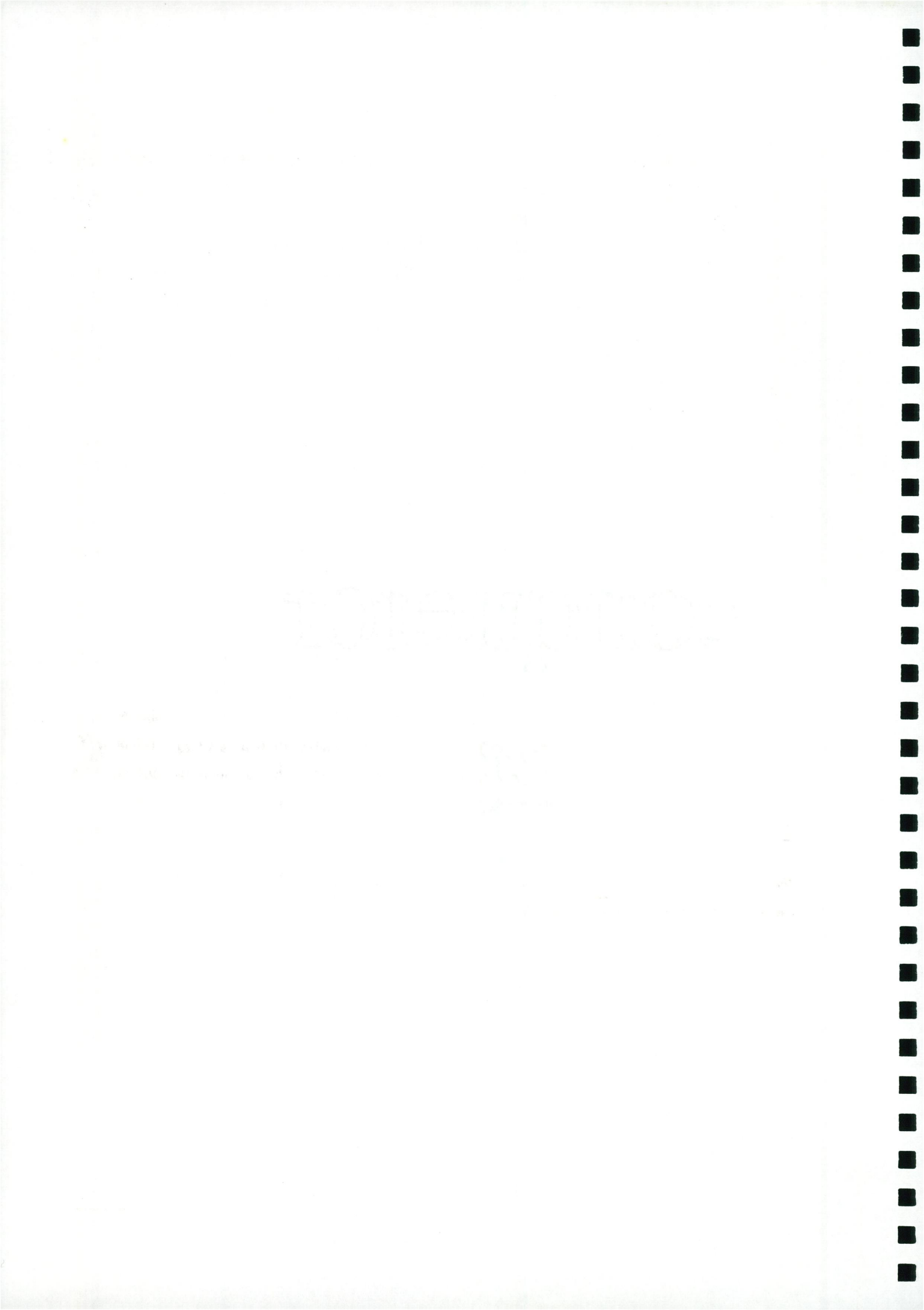
"This editorial rigor is his greatest gift as a designer and art director".

Tschichold is evidently the one clear influence on Saville.

In some ways the impersonality is symbolic of his work.

The group New Order refrain from interviews, hardly ever tour and are quiet adamant in keeping their low profile.

Rick, Poyner,
Nov. '90, London,
Blueprint p. 30.



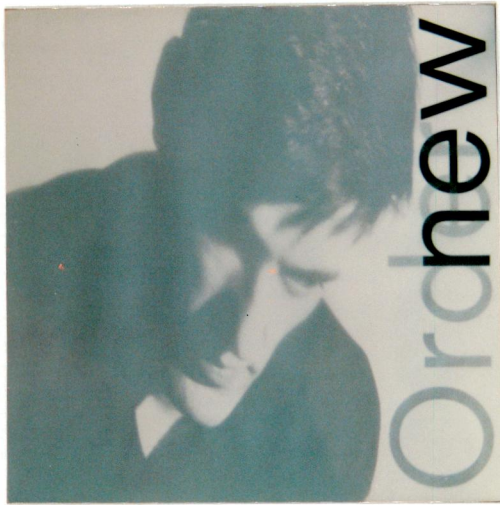
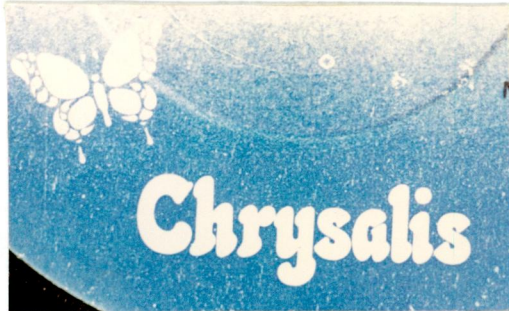


fig. 4, 'Low-Life', front and back, 1985.

A powerful visual effect by minimum of means.



Chrysalis

fig. 5, Chrysalis logo, old and new, 1988.

Saville just suggests the butterfly with his solution.

Handwritten text in the top-left rectangular area, appearing as a list or set of notes.

Handwritten text in the top-right rectangular area, appearing as a list or set of notes.

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Handwritten text in the bottom-left rectangular area, appearing as a list or set of notes.

Handwritten text in the bottom-right rectangular area, appearing as a list or set of notes.



Commercial Art / Rand (1914-)

After Tschichold, Rand is the most direct influence on Saville. From the cold impersonality of grids and the discipline of modernism he has succeeded in revealing the identity of the client. With IBM a faceless monolithic corporation he gave it colour and a freshness not then associated with computer companies, (before 'user friendly' Apple came along), through advertising and packaging.

Heller, Steven,
1988, London,
Graphic Styles, p. 193.

"he embraced a functional systematic, yet extraordinary expressive approach".

Through his projection of the client he has achieved a link between art and advertising. Art shouldn't be elitist and advertising shouldn't accommodate the lowest common denominator, he has found the right combination of the two. Saville with his record covers also strives to break down the cultural barriers (see page 16).

Language for Rand becomes forms and shapes, he symbolises and abstracts. This is exemplified by the newspaper 'advertisement', (1954, fig. 6). The pattern of dots and dashed is visually arresting and yet it is the morse code known to the audience it is targeted at, (management of the Radio Corporation of America). Its cleverness lies in the fact that it only reveals itself as we read the text.

This ability to transcend the surface impression is a worthy style that Saville has taken. He has portrayed too a clever 'deceit' through use of colour coding on the Blue Monday, and Power, Corruption and Lies sleeves, (fig. 7, discussed on page 21). Both designers do not underestimate the intelligence of the consumer, which is more welcome than design appealing to the most at the lowest common denominator.

Rand, Paul,
1985, N. Haven,
A Designers Art, p.143.

Saville takes the same approach to his work as Rand does. Both strive for ideas based design or at least design without the decoration. Once you have this *"the only problem to be solved is the way space is to be interpreted"*. The placement on the page is crucial, Saville epitomises everything clean and precise about Rand.

Because Rand has scant regard for superfluties his work transcends fashion. 'Topics', (1981, fig. 8), is thus contemporary, the use of the italic sans-serif highlighting op is suggestive of Saville's 'New Order', (fig. 9). Through the minimum of means a lively contrast is created within the same point size. Both

DESCRIPTION

[Faint rectangular stamp or box]



fig. 6, Newspaper Advertisement, 1954.

A visually arresting code.

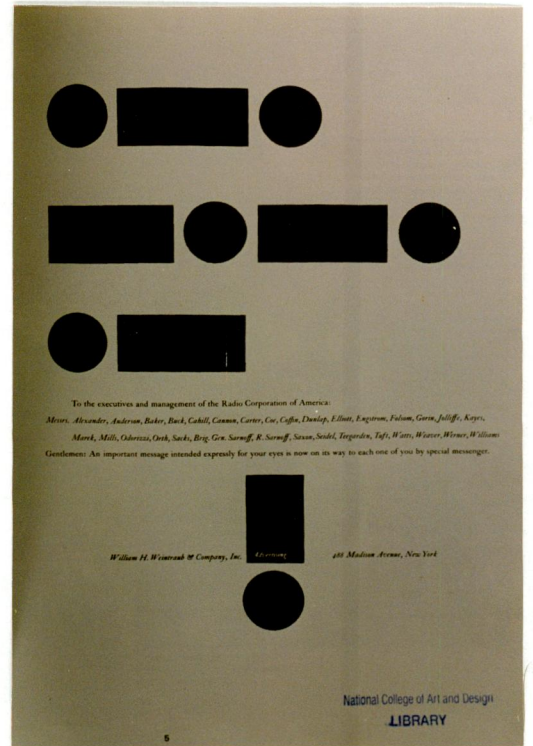


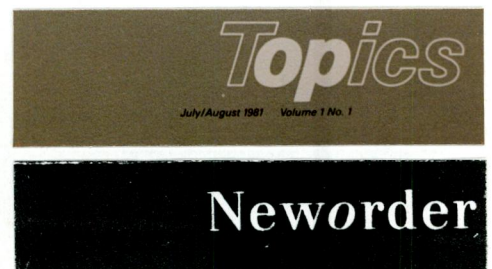
fig. 7, 'Power Corruption and Lies', back, 1985.

Savilles' codified language.



**fig. 8, 'Topics', 1981.
fig. 9, 'New Order', 1988.**

Energy created amongst same point size.



1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee. The names are listed in alphabetical order, and the addresses are given in full. The list includes the names of the members of the committee, the names of the members of the sub-committee, and the names of the members of the advisory committee. The addresses are given in full, including the street, city, and state.

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names and addresses of the members of the committee. The names are listed in alphabetical order, and the addresses are given in full. The list includes the names of the members of the committee, the names of the members of the sub-committee, and the names of the members of the advisory committee. The addresses are given in full, including the street, city, and state.

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examples are dynamic demonstrating the Futurist influence.

The most obvious difference between them is that Saville lacks the human qualities of wit and pun that Rand has. Saville's commissions have not required it whereas Rand's advertising rely on the quick impact, hard sell. Saville's work is not so easily anticipated, not as instantly appealing. His work the more subliminal.

The Futurists / Depero (1892-1960)

The Futurist movement acknowledged 20th century technology. Art would be integrated into society, advertising would be respected. This philosophy gave them impetus to experiment, in graphic design their achievements were most notable in typography.

Marinetti's masterpiece 'ZTT', (1914, fig. 10), realised the potential playfulness of type. It demonstrated that typography could create moods, sound and speed by use of different typeface's, sizes, forms in different graphic arrangements.

"the form of typography should intensify the content".

Saville conveys these Futurist ideals with 'Sledgehammer', (1986, fig. 11). The word is split in two leaving 'hammer' in italic, the two 'm's' creating a pulsating rhythm, creating contrast with the upright 'sledge'. This reflects beautifully the motion of the hammer. And even though Saville had at his disposal a much richer means of technology available to him than the Futurists, he hasn't over stated the idea.

"with masterly economy he extracts the maximum impact with the minimum of means".

He has filtered down the aggression of the Futurists to his own restraint. Like the Futurists, Saville sees type as a means of conveying ideas and information and not as a kind of decorative art. They put their message across in the most direct and powerful way.

"they rejected any notion of merely playing with form or indulging in typographic innovation for its own sake".

Fortunato Depero, painter, poet, and actor wanted to experience the growing metropolis that was New York of the 1930's. During his stay here he was

Spencer, Herbert,
1968, London,
Pioneers. of Modern,
Typography, p. 15.

Poynor, Rick,
April '88, London,
Blueprint, p. 43.

Spencer, Herbert,
1968, London,
Pioneers. of Modern,
Typography, p. 15.

T. MARINETTI FUTURISTA
**ZANG
TUMB TUMB**

ADRIANOPOLI OTTOBRE 1912

TUUUMB IN LIBERTÀ
TUUUMB TUUUMB TUUUMB TUUUMB
PAROLE
EDIZIONI FUTURISTE
DI "POESIA"
Come Venezia di - MILANO
1914

fig. 10, 'ZTT', 1914.

The Futurists realised the energy of type.

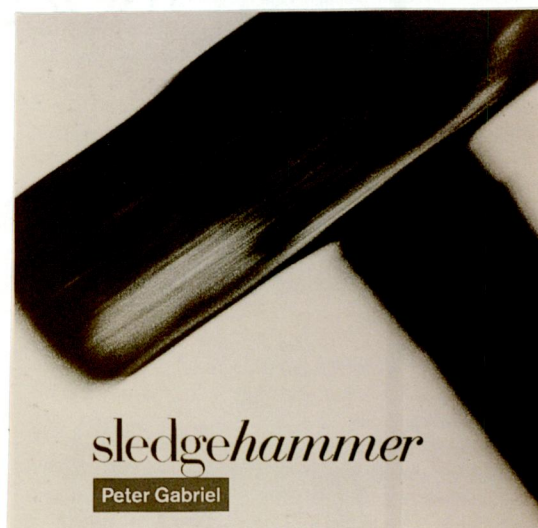


fig. 11, 'Sledgehammer', 1986.

Type reflecting the motion of the hammer.

01/10/2010 10:00 AM

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COMPTON



to 'recycle' ideas he had tested on the Italian market. Taken completely out of context from their original intent he was to apply numerous old works to other means. His advertisement for 'Unica Biscuits' from Italy has been adapted to to advertise the 'New Yorker', likewise his motif conceived for the 'New Yorker' has been adapted to the Italian, 'Campari', (fig.12). Because of the distance in communication at that time between New York and Italy he got away with it, (Fortunato means 'lucky' in Italian). Saville probably gained this interest in recycling work from Depero, but this was to prove controversial for him.

Influence or Plagiarism

Since his first commercial poster, 'Factory' (1978), using a lifted noise levels logo and then using it for the Factory logo, Saville has found it difficult to avoid a dip into other work.

"In the art world its called appropriation"

For 1981's 'Movement', he took from Depero's almanac poster, (fig.13) of 1932, announcing the visit of Marinetti to Trentino. He credited the album to 'Peter Saville and Grafica Industria' but had lifted the layout and typeface. Nevertheless it was altered slightly, the bottom vertical bar was moved left and he used a line less of type. Although the result is not as cluttered as the original, it is still unashamedly a lift. Would Depero have justified his poster as an album cover?

"I wanted to credit the artist, but they (New Order) refused, so I just added the Graffica Industria moniker as a token gesture towards the Italian Futurists"

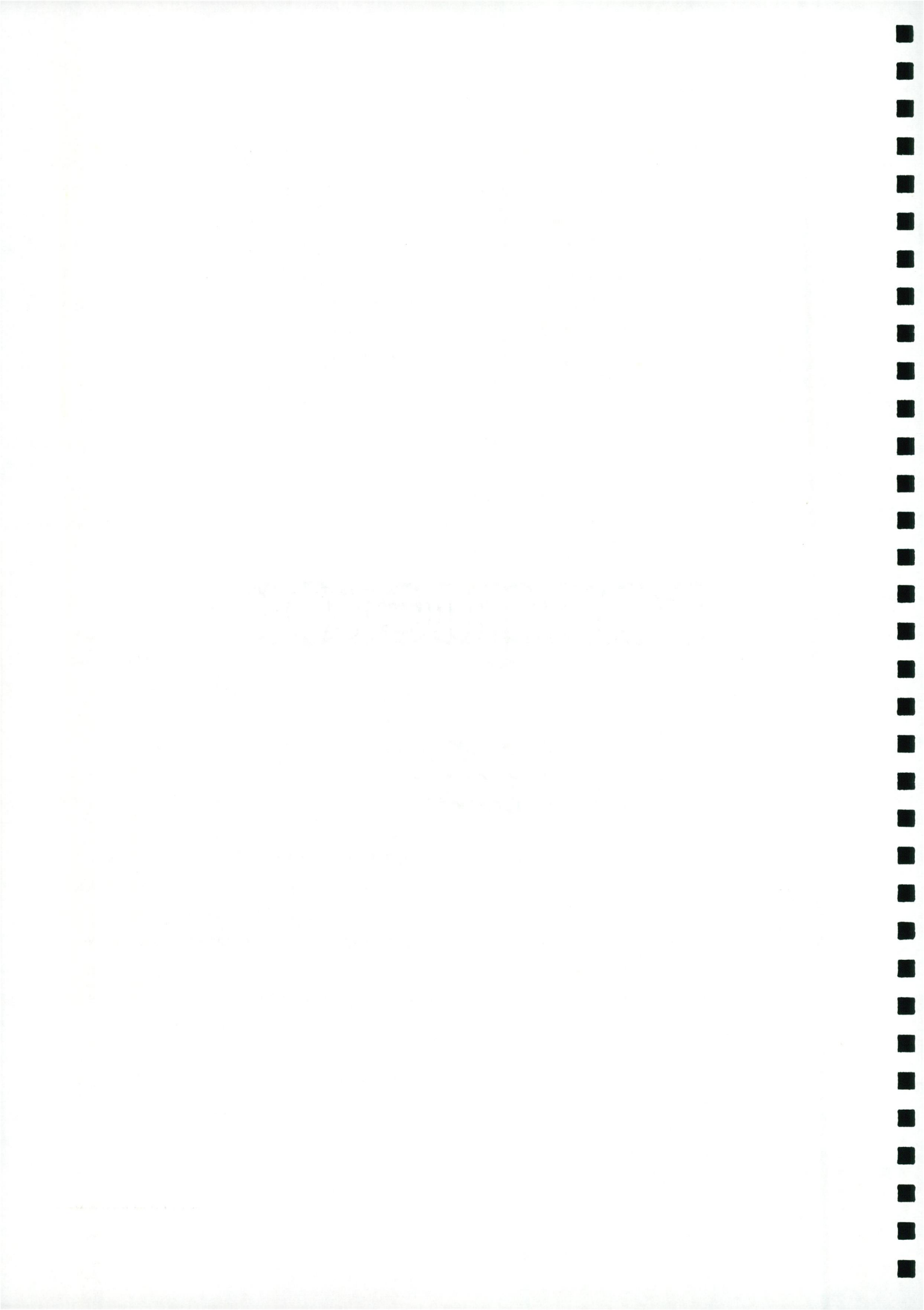
With 'Everything's gone green' (1981), Saville adopted again from Depero, this time a cover for 'Dynamo Futurista', (fig. 14) a Futurist publication from 1933. An oblong format changes with ease to a square one. The arrows shoot off the page instead of stopping at the corners and he has dropped the type for lines, not relevant to the album cover. It is a dynamic design, quite appropriate in illustrating everything turning to green, but why didn't he try to do his own design? Is the chopping and changing of someone else's design, justified?

Saville said he was trying to create a historical mood. At the time, there was the republication of Herbert Spencer's 'The Pioneer's of Modern Typography'

Saville as quoted
by Taylor, Steve,
July '87, London,
Arena, p. 124.

Almanac- a yearly calendar
giving statistical information.

Saville as quoted
by Nice, James,
Nov. '84, London,
Magazine, p.15.



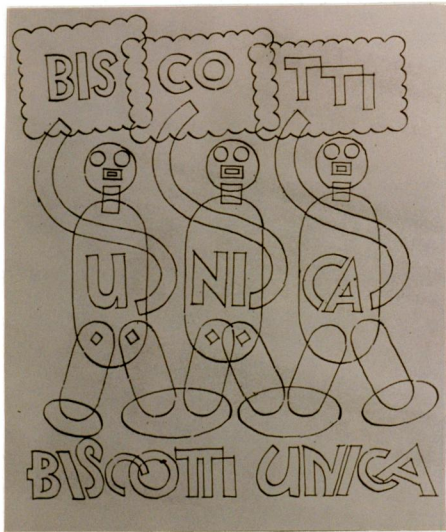
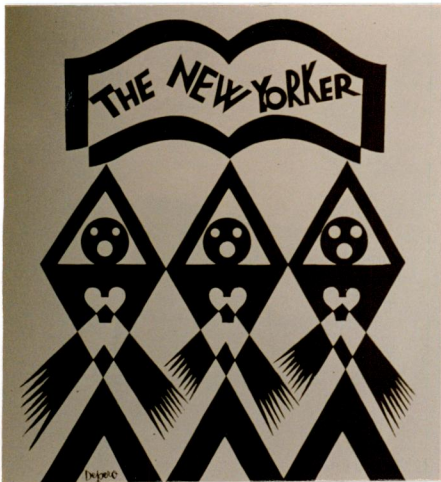


fig. 13, 'Unica Biscuits' advertisement, 1913,
has been converted to advertise
'The New Yorker', 1928.



'New Yorker' motif, 1929
recycled for 'Campari' motif, 1931.



CONDUCITOR

1871

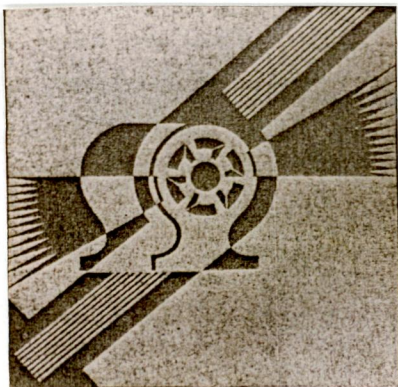




fig. 13, 'Movement', 1981.
Depero's Futurist 'poster', 1932.



Plagiarism?



'Everything's gone green', 1981.
'Futurist publication', 1933.

Saville took again from Depero.



Handwritten notes on a rectangular piece of paper in the top-left corner.

Handwritten notes on a rectangular piece of paper in the top-right corner.

COMPUTER

Handwritten notes on a rectangular piece of paper in the bottom-left corner.

Handwritten notes on a rectangular piece of paper in the bottom-right corner.



Walker, John,
1989, London,
Design History & The
History of Design, p. 153.

and exhibitions of Modernism reviving past triumphs in graphics. The style he took represented "a visual ideology". The bands name 'New Order' had the fascist connotation, representing the Furher's term for what he wanted to impose on the world, and the album itself was self-titled 'Movement'. He was trying to reconstruct the challenge of Depero and the Futurists, determined to reach as wide an audience as possible. This again was Saville's own interpretation.

He was still nevertheless associating himself with history. By being Futurist he was stepping into their clothes. Was this a mask, for his own inconfidence?

Saville had respect for the original work, he altered not destroyed the original. But are we then just gift wrapping, where's the talent in that? The Dadaist philosophy was 'who's' private art was this anyway, the whole world is there to be plundered'. For example Duchamp took someone else's piece, Leonardo's 'Mona Lisa', and defaced it with moustache, beard and an inscription, 'L.H.O.O.Q' (1919). The recent explosion from the punks and the chaos created, meant we needed to go back to some order, a 'new order'. Why not learn from the past by using the past, as Saville did.

He did not intend to to take credit for someone else's work, thus the '*token gesture*'. Not long out of college he was just learning the rules in public, obviously not aware of the fuss he created. It was for him:

"An academic development, I'd buggered around at college, so I thought I'd better start learning now".

Saville as quoted
by Taylor, Steve,
Feb '81, London,
The Face, p. 53.

With 1982's 'Power, Corruption and Lies', (fig. 15) Saville took a French Realist painting, 'Roses' (1742) by Henri Fantin-Latour and stuck it proudly on the front cover, giving the artist full credit. By adding colour bars to the top right of the cover and a colour wheel on the back, Saville was saying that the painting was just really an arrangement of the printers' colours. He wasn't lifting but was as Warhol said 'recreating a version of it'. He was also acknowledging with this flood of colour the new electronic sound of the group New Order. This time he had cleverly used a lift 'as' a means not 'for' a means for expression. This wasn't plagiarism.

fig. 15, 'Power, Corruption and Lies, 1985.

The colour code reads FACT 95, the catalogue number.



Handwritten notes on a yellow sticky note, including the word "Computer" and some illegible text.

Computer



Summary

Saville has been greatly influenced by Tschichold, Rand and Depero, their work was his text book to learn from after he left college. Unquestionably Saville has been aware of past achievements in design. Standards then are just as important now. He had to go back to basic principles and re-establish them. It became so influential on him that he resorted to plagiarism. The early lifts were style, they had nothing at all to do with the music except trying to contrive a connection. They were Saville's own personal preoccupation, (the band had no ideas). As a means to an end they became an end in themselves.

They sparked controversy, that itself is a success, they were questioning. The album sleeve could again make a statement, it wasn't so trivial. His achievement has been to:

"interest design students in the discipline of typography and design history. It's given them a real need to go back to source".

If his work came across as shallow it was due to trying to revive forgotten standards. In a sense, Saville 'normalised' typography for the eighties the way Tschichold had done for his day. It was a search for the substance that led to a style.

Saville as quoted by
Mc Dermott, Catherine,
April '87, London,
Typographic, p. 14.

The following information was obtained from the records of the
 Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, regarding
 the acquisition of certain lands in the State of California.
 The lands in question were acquired by the United States
 Government under the provisions of the Act of March 3, 1879,
 which authorized the purchase of certain lands in California
 for the purpose of establishing a national forest.
 The lands were purchased from the State of California
 for the sum of \$100,000.00. The purchase was made
 in accordance with the provisions of the Act of March 3,
 1879, and the Act of August 9, 1898, which authorized
 the purchase of certain lands in California for the
 purpose of establishing a national forest.
 The lands were purchased from the State of California
 for the sum of \$100,000.00. The purchase was made
 in accordance with the provisions of the Act of March 3,
 1879, and the Act of August 9, 1898, which authorized
 the purchase of certain lands in California for the
 purpose of establishing a national forest.
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 in accordance with the provisions of the Act of March 3,
 1879, and the Act of August 9, 1898, which authorized
 the purchase of certain lands in California for the
 purpose of establishing a national forest.

Chapter 3 His Contemporaries

Introduction

Having discussed the historical impact on Saville I shall now look at his contemporaries. He could not have worked in a vacuum during these influential years. Firstly I shall establish the background to which they came to prominence.

In 1976 rising unemployment, housing shortages and the oil crisis led to a reaction from the youth in England. Self-titled 'Punk' it threw down all accepted notions, wanted change and protested in the form of marches, music and graphics. The Sex Pistols a band that couldn't play their music but made a lot of noise epitomised Punk. Jamie Reid (born 1947), dressed their sleeves in 'typical' Punk nature of ransom note lettering and found imagery. It was very much a 'do it yourself' process, stemming from a limited budget, eg. 'God Save The Queen', (1977, fig. 16), was an official Cecil Beaton portrait ripped across the eyes and mouth of the queen to look like a criminal. It was the most potent visible manifestation of disquiet during the '77 Royal Jubilee celebrations.

Like Dadaism and Pop Art, Punk, it questioned the design process. It said that there are an infinite amount of typeface's, even of handwriting and it questioned the positioning of imagery. There should not be any established notions. It said that you could take risks with the chance of getting away with it. From these years, emerged a fresh climate encouraging the individual to experiment and 'break the rules'.

Saville, Brody and Garrett, (the "*triumvirate*") and Oliver were to emerge as the new 'disciples' of this new British Graphic design. I want to establish what exactly they achieved and how they influenced Saville. How did they regard style, with regard to substance?

Poyner, Rick,
Nov.'90, London,
Blueprint, p.26.



fig, 15, 'God Save The Queen', 1977.

Reid's execution in typical Punk nature.

Faint, illegible text on a light-colored rectangular background, possibly a scan of a document page.

COMPTON



Brody (born 1957)

Wozencroft, Jon,
1988, London,
The Graphic Language of
Neville Brody, back cover.

Termed "*the most influential designer of the eighties*", Neville Brody established a personal language within 'The Face', where he served as art director from 1982- 1986. From this capacity he was able to test the magazine as a mode of expression. he was given unlimited freedom to explore and experiment. Headlines served not to lead us into articles, but to illustrate and make references to previous ones. He also designed new typeface's and broke up existing ones until they just symbolised or suggested, eg;

He challenged something as informative / important as the 'Contents page', (1984, fig.17), in The Face. Over a number of weeks, Brody deconstructed the word 'contents' until it became just abstracted symbols, suggestive of the word. This breakdown was due to a questioning of the role of the magazine and:

"more widely, visual coding as it applied to written language"

Wozencroft, Jon,
1988, London,
The Graphic Language of
Neville Brody, p. 32.

The '80's witnessed a
'Prontaprint' open up on every
high street and saw software
'design' packages launched by
the dozen. Anyone it seemed
could design stationary and
corporate identities.

The retrospective of his work at the V&A in 1988 hasn't helped Brody. This at a early stage in his career, hyped up what little he had done. His work has thus dated a lot because of over-exposure. Unfortunately for Brody the media and the advent of desktop publishing (an open license for the untrained professional to design), misleadingly took his 'avant-garde' style out of context, with no respect for his original intent. There was:

"no self-questioning attitude of surface values of body and look".

Wozencroft, Jon,
1988, London,
The Graphic Language of
Neville Brody, p. 6.

What applied to a Madonna spread from The Face did not apply to a shop front. Brody applies himself to an article in The Face firstly as content, then he examines its potential and then styles it. But somehow, unforgivably he uses the same palette and dips when taking on other tasks, which involve different, more serious factors. The Face was a style magazine serving as Brody's personal medium of self expression, yet he applied this same look to the New Socialist magazine which has different ideals. Brody found he could not apply his successful language to other tasks.

Brody is conscious of the need to educate. Like Saville he too was just out of college, and was influenced by Herbert Spencer's book and the Modernist exhibitions in London at the time. His use of symbols, geometric forms and dynamic cropping reveal a great understanding of Construtivist and Bauhaus principles. It was his way of paying homage to their forefathers by realising their ideals.



fig. 16, The Face 'Contents Page', 1984.

Brody's de-construction of the word 'contents'.

Handwritten text on a yellow sticky note, mostly illegible due to blurring and low contrast. The text appears to be organized into several lines, possibly representing a list or a set of instructions. Some faint words like "List" and "1." are visible at the beginning of the lines.

COMING

1998



This 'New Alphabet', (1967) is worked out according to the principle of reproduction of the cathode line, on which the television picture is formed.

Brody's greatest influence on Saville has been to create a profile for the graphic designer, which enabled others to turn to the innovations and developments that were going on in popular culture. Brody challenged type, his questioning of type enabled Saville and others to push it to extreme or just simply consider it. Brody's playfulness probably influenced Saville with 'Atmosphere' (1988, fig. 18). Using Wim Crowwels' experimental alphabet there is just enough of the forms to enable us to decipher its meaning. The reader is provoked into deciphering the message. Such a challenge is similar to Brody's 'contents' logo, where a recognition of the qualities of the letterforms is evident.

Generally Saville consciously worked in a restraint as a reaction to Brody's superfluities. Brody pushed type to its extreme whereas Saville could be simplistic, looking for an order rather than chaos. There wasn't a need for someone else to be creating noise. Saville's rendering of 'Whitechapel', (see p. 22) was reactionary. The basic difference in approach is that Brody sees type as a visual, (typographic illustration) taking preference to its content, Saville sees type as information (typographic design).

Brody's work is very much style instead of substance. But then again, was that his point? The underlying surface was The Face magazine promoted style. Brody left The Face in 1986 to work on 'Arena' magazine, dropping his familiar language to work exclusively with Helvetica. All his stylistic traits were now dropped in search of a new expression. This drastic turnaround readily acknowledged the importance that should be paid to content.

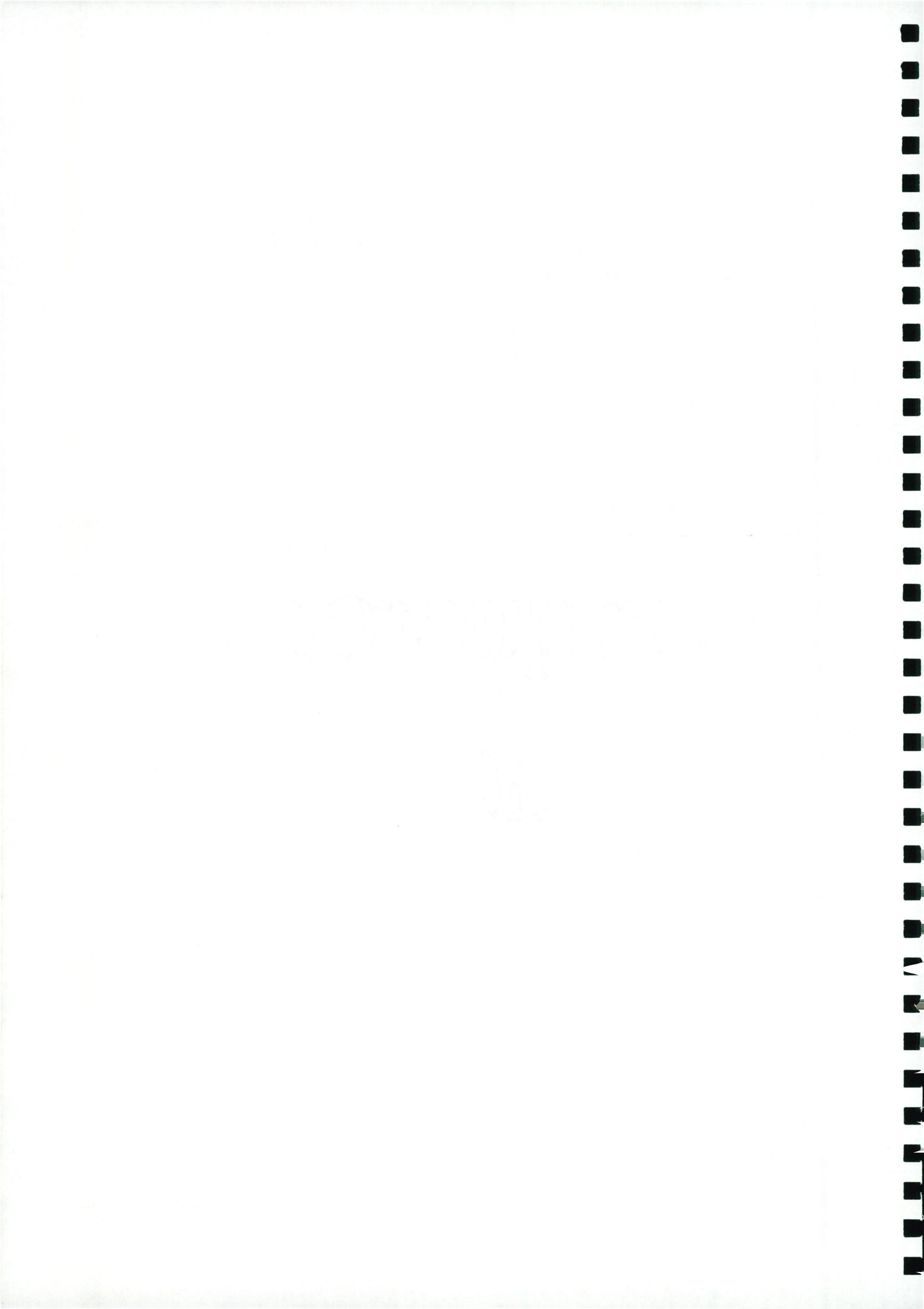


fig. 18, Atmosphere, 1988.

The reader is provoked into deciphering the message.



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Garrett (born 1956)

Malcolm Garrett studied both in school and Manchester Polytechnic (after spending his foundation course studying the history of typography at Reading University) with his friend Saville. He was the most productive and adventurous of all the students. He now works under the guise of his company 'assorted iMaGes'.

The music industry gave Garrett the platform to experiment and express himself. He saw it as a training ground, "*we were thinking beyond what we were asked to do and taking the opportunity to experiment*". Applying himself to the pop group as if it were part of a corporate identity strategy he treated 'Duran Duran' as if they were an airline company, giving them a cold, corporate, clinical look while 'Culture Club' were treated like a bag of all-sorts, a friendly, one-world approach. The group got the total 'concept' treatment, the idea that the 12" was just the springboard to tee-shirts, posters, badges and the carrier bag to put them in.

Garrett as quoted by
Poyner, Rick,
April '90, London,
Blueprint, p.43.

The aftermath of Punk meant there needed to be some kind of consolidation. Garrett took it upon himself to revive the glorious past, using his fresh college knowledge of Dadaism, Futurism and the Bauhaus.

Simple Minds album 'New Gold Dream'(1982, fig. 19), with its calligraphed type in gold and 'royal purple' on marbled paper is trying to revive an age, and at the same time is trying to contrive an association of the band with it. The member's in greased back hair and pouted lips are photographed behind bars, ironically representing the false trappings they had got themselves behind. Luscious and glossy like a chocolate box, it is also as disposable. This represents the extreme Garrett went in the search for sophistication. It was all rather too much.

Garrett's consistent trait has been his use of hard edged colours, (blue with yellow, black with white) with bold typography and logotype's. Immediately appealing they reveal themselves instantly with a charm and intrigue. Work didn't have to look 'home made', as punk proclaimed, it could be clean and clinical. It was after-all technically more difficult to get a high finish. You can see this connection with Saville's work.

Saville shares the same application of hard colours and historical references but his intent is to disturb and play on the sublime. His work is the more delayed than Garrett's. Saville's work is a lot more isolated in that he tries to

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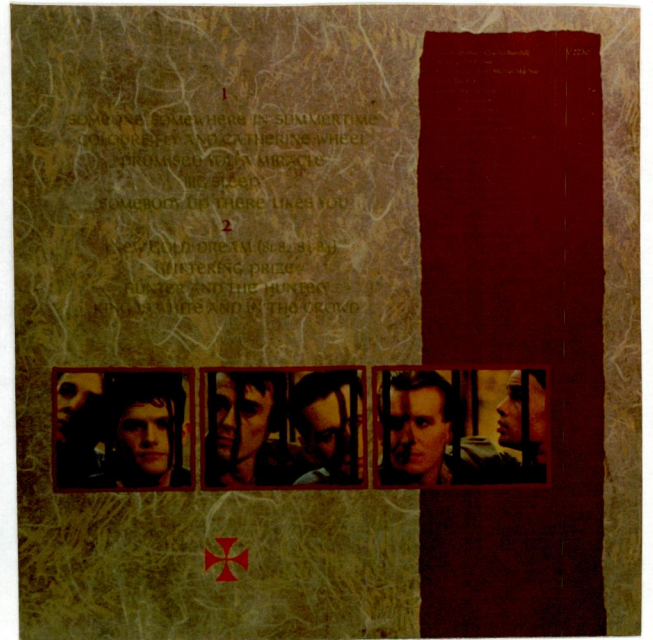
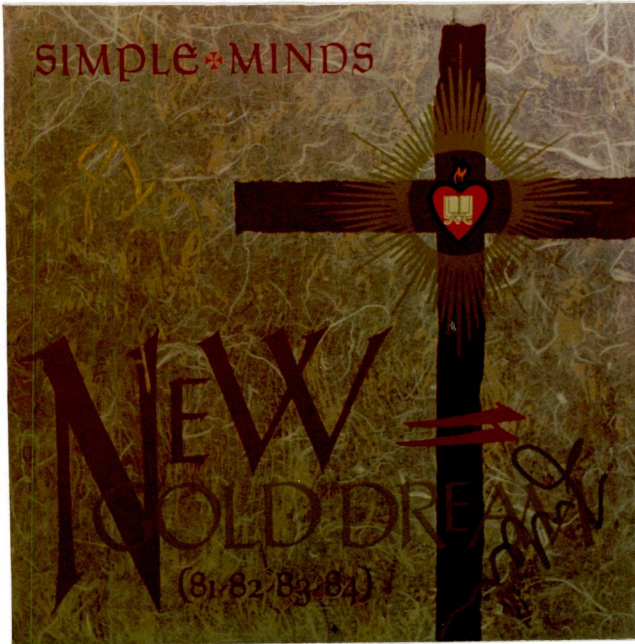


fig. 19, 'New Gold Dream', 1982.

Garrett contrives an association of a past time with the band.

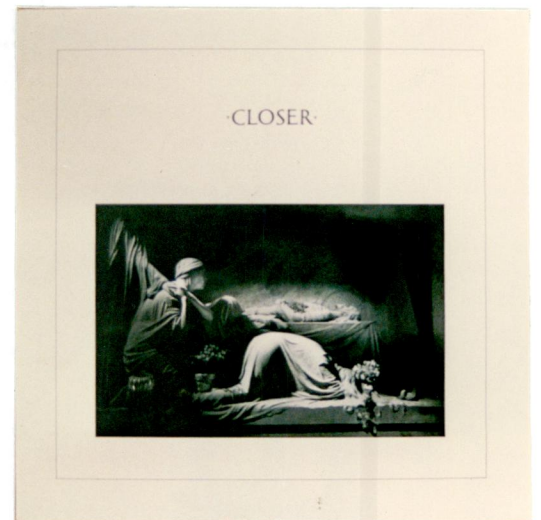


fig. 20, 'Closers', 1980.

only suggests another time

Handwritten text on the top left sticky note, including a date and several lines of notes.

Handwritten text on the top right sticky note, including a date and several lines of notes.

Handwritten text on the bottom left sticky note, including a date and several lines of notes.

COACHING



make the album something else rather than something else an album, eg., 'Closer' (fig. 20). This suggests another time but because it doesn't look like record sleeve is easier to assimilate. It is not as forced as Garretts. More respect is paid, there is no concrete association with the present (the band). Malcolm has nevertheless inspired Saville.

Oliver (born 1957)

Vaughan Oliver works under the guise of v23, as part of his record company 4AD. Working from a fine art based approach he tries to apply feeling from the music to his visual, the 12" canvas. He is a believer in the discovered image (Yet there is that constant theme of knives, hair and scissors running through his work.) He reveals great textural photos with photographer Nigel Grierson through the misuse of the PMT camera and from throwaway printing mistakes. This represents a reaction against the inhumanity of modernism.

PMT-
photo mechanical transfer

The 'Clan of Xymox' (1986, fig. 21), sleeve is classic of Vaughan's approach to design. Not obviously a record sleeve it reveals a disturbingly bleak but still very human approach. Old wooden black type reveals the name while the accidents of the PMT camera expose the texture. It has a softness at odds with the precision of typical record sleeves and commercialism.

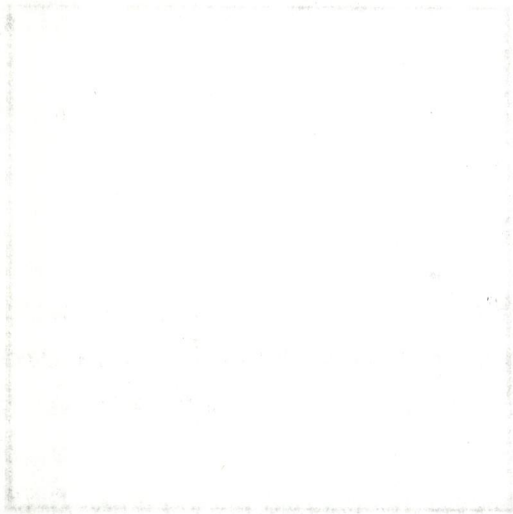
"the whole was an attempt to represent the textures and atmospheres of the music"

Oliver as quoted
by Poyner, Rick,
June '91, London,
Blueprint, p.26.

Saville himself turns from the clinical associations to reveal textures himself as exemplified by 'Brotherhood', (1986, fig. 22). A kind of metallic textural, he turns the coldness of metal into a pleasing sleeve. It just has the dispatch number of the album on it.

Oliver has made great ground in bringing a 'fine art' to the masses. He was awarded the deserved recognition by an exhibition in Paris last year. This show highlighted the fact that the record shop serves as the modern day art gallery, in that sleeve design is the platform where all the advances in art and design are taking place. More people are likely to visit HMV, Grafton St. rather than the National Gallery, Merrion Square. Unlike the fine artist, he regards his work on aesthetics alone, he does not try and fabricate some theory behind his work.

The V&A London in the summer of '91 hosted an exhibition, 'The Art of Selling Songs- Graphics for the music business'. Saville, Garrett & Oliver of course were featured.



Faint, illegible text or markings, possibly a date or reference number, located in the upper right quadrant of the page.

RECEIVED

1952



fig. 21, 'Clan of Xymox', 1985.

A visual interpretation of an aural creation.

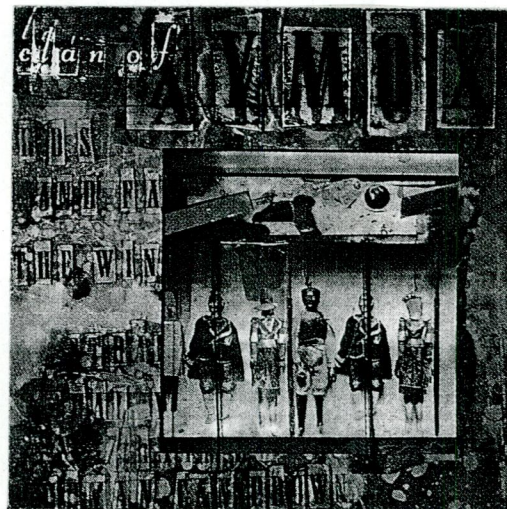


fig. 22, 'Brotherhood', 1986.

A metallic textural.



1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. This is essential for ensuring the integrity of the financial statements and for providing a clear audit trail. The records should be kept up-to-date and should be easily accessible to all relevant parties.

COORDINATOR

2. The second part of the document outlines the responsibilities of the Coordinator. This includes ensuring that all transactions are properly recorded and that the records are maintained in a secure and accessible manner. The Coordinator should also be responsible for providing regular reports to the management on the status of the records and for ensuring that any discrepancies are promptly identified and resolved.



Oliver has influenced peoples perceptions of the sleeve. Like Saville, he sees the album as a desirable object, more permanent than the disposability and trivialities of punk. They see it not only as something to enhance the music, (the cover actually influences peoples perceptions of the music), but think beyond it as something to cherish and to invite a tactile experience.

Both of them enjoy their platform of expression, indulging in designing the sleeve usually with the most expensive printing in mind

"the importance of quality was never in doubt. From the outset, cover boards were heavier than standard, fifth colours and metallic inks almost routine".

Saville himself has found it difficult to keep within the budget of 40p a sleeve. 'Low-Life' had sliver type printed on a grease-proof paper overlay, while 'Power, Corruption and Lies' was dye-cut into the shape of a floppy disc. He was too expensive for most groups. When you push the boundaries of the 12" format, you go dye-cutting and embossing. Going for the most lavish of materials and techniques, both of them see a knowledge of the technical basics of primary importance. They;

"strove to give the customer something different, with no concern for expense or selling the music on the strength of it".

The nice folds and delicate wrappings do not respect the sleeves 'function' as protection to the vinyl. They are not wholly necessary and are a superficial style. Oliver however, isn't the most direct influence on Saville as his work is human and sensual, the complete opposite of Saville's almost inhuman precision and clinical finishing.

Conclusion

The eighties climate established three clear influences over Saville in relation to substance: 1) All have been challenging, requiring more than the passive observer and have made the triviality of pop culture more serious and introspective. 2) All acknowledge and maintain the importance of history on their work, all in a sense exploring their roots. 3) They treat the client in a modern corporate approach, acknowledging the importance of branding.

But then they also influenced a style that wasn't so necessary: 1) They

Oliver as quoted
by Poyner, Rick,
June '91, London,
Blueprint, p.26.

With today's clever 'boot-
legging' it makes sense to
package an album as
extravagantly as possible.

Saville as quoted
by Beard, Steve,
Sept. '90, London,
i-D, p. 46.

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sought an importance in attention to the lavishness of the printing and the best card, often hiding the lack of idea. 2) In a sense they have made they have made themselves more important than the client, style more important than the substance.

All expressed themselves individually, they pushed it, the importance of personal styles evolved, creating a climate in which Saville could express himself.

Saville as quoted
by Thrift, Julia,
June '89, London,
Direction, p.?

"There was an obvious-to-see way in which things were going to go. It was very plain to see what the new imagery of life was going to be."

They most obviously influenced Saville, typographically (Brody), historically (Garrett), and on standard of finish (Garrett/ Oliver).

Hill, Dave,
1986, Blandford, Designer
Boy's and Material Girl's, p. 8.

"Everything would be planned, programmed, pragmatic and perfectly played out"

Dave Hill in talking about popular culture after Punk could have been referring to Saville and his contemporaries. Their approach was the same as Reid's and Punk, they challenged established notions, did what they wanted to do and were revolutionary.

SECRET

1. The purpose of this document is to provide information regarding the activities of the [redacted] in the [redacted] area. This information is being provided to you for your information only and is not to be disseminated outside your organization.

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SECRET



Chapter4 Stylistic Traits

Introduction

The post-punk climate enabled the record companies to take note of the young design graduates, and Saville soon found himself with Virgin, Chrysalis and Factory. By 1984 he had set up his own consultancy Peter Saville Associates to deal with his this increased workload. From this capacity he served as art-director, typographer, and designer at the same time.

Close partners have been Brett Wickens, Martyn Atkins and photographer Trevor Key.

The assimilation of different influences into his work makes it difficult to pin-point a style of his own. As his work is extremely diverse I shall split his work into two easily defined sections, that of the album and that of the corporate identity.

Poynor, Rick,
Nov. '90, London,
Blueprint, p. 26.

He was termed "*the Prince of Stylists*" a rather disposable term evolved from the eighties. Was this truly representative of his achievements? I hope to illustrate that there was more to his work than pure style.

1950

1951

1952

1953

1954

1955

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1963

1964

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1966

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1968

1969

1970

Album - Style reflecting content

Joy Division played serious sombre music, their monotonous trance like rhythms were accompanied by the deathly monotone of Ian Curtis' vocals. This was a summation of the country's decline, the recession. A reaction to the end of the industrial north-west boom in England.

Their first album, 'Unknown Pleasures' (1980, fig. 23) is a disturbing piece. It welcomes us with just simplistic white lines of pulses or wavelengths on black textured paper. The flip side only gives a slight indication of what the band and album are about. Already we feel detached, we are un-informed but still curious nevertheless.

When the sleeve is pulled out, it reveals a black and white photograph of a hand on an open door. Only the minimum of text on the other side supply the song titles and credits. The diagram is repeated on the vinyls disc with 'outside 33 and a third' and the images negative on the flip with 'inside 33 and a third'. Even the standard copyright rule around the disc is missing.

The type, diagram and photograph are all within this centred format. Even before we play the music we are forced into a mood. Everything is revealed but isn't, its claustrophobic. The whole package indicates to us what we can expect from the music, it is evident that Saville worked on it closely with the band.

Together they have successfully created an abrupt escape. They have played on our emotions. This was part of his *"coffee table subversion"*. It never looked like an album, it disturbed us. There was enough to seduce us but not so much as to reveal the whole story. The design is potently evocative of the music to attract initial interest but be open or universal in its themes so as to bear repeated visits.

"I was actually changing the way people perceived packaging but in a sort of seductive way"

Saville dressed up the sleeves with his distinctive typographic style, (centred symmetry with classical serif type faces) for the next Joy Division sleeve. His type on these sleeves has a distinctive calligraphic style. He used Roman 'lapidary letters' from the 1st century on 'Closer' (1980, fig. 24). 'Closer's' photograph is set in a cemetery, revealing a corpse in the background draped in linen, (resembling Christ.). The type evokes a gravestone inscription, it is

The increasing popularity of the CD and cassette will see the demise of the 12" format. Will this smaller format restrict the statement and its attraction?

Saville as quoted by Beard, Steve, Sept.'90, London, i-D, p. 43.

Saville as quoted by Beard, Steve, Sept.'90, London, i-D, p. 43.

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fig. 23, 'Unknown Pleasures', 1980, cover and inlay.

Disturbing.

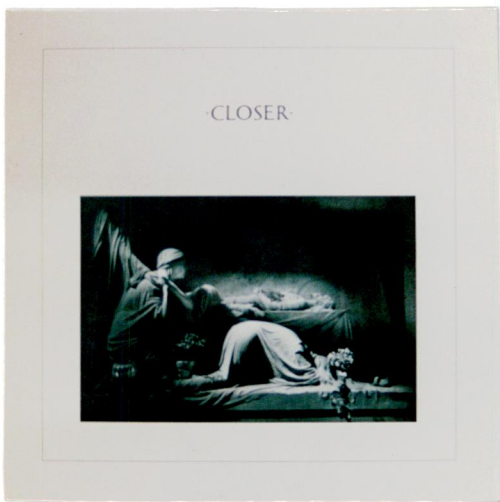
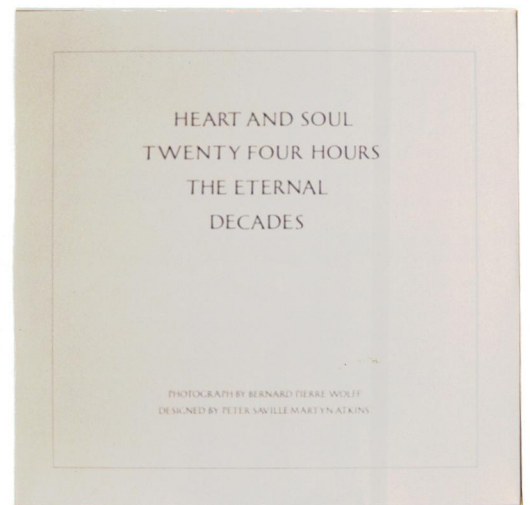


fig. 24, 'Closer', 1980.

Seductive.



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extremely quiet. The total package resembles the music, 'isolation', 'atrocities' titles of the songs alone acquire a mood. It proposed a new way but in a very classic and almost seductive format.

What seems like a quiet elegance of neo-classicism, a sentimental retro is really a monumental epitaph for the singer Ian Curtis. (He had committed suicide just before this album was released.) Saville wasn't reviving he was just being sensitive. Nevertheless the surface idea had assimilated into the mainstream as a style by the mid-eighties, becoming misinterpreted.

Jones, Mike,
Jan. '91, London,
Design, p. 20.

"This work from 1980 graphically anticipated major neo-classical and post-modern trends".

Album as expression

As Saville progressed with the band New Order he became more confident and his work became more minimal typified by the discussed earlier, 'Power, Corruption and Lies' (1982, fig. 25). This had no type on it whatsoever except on the vinyl disc inside.

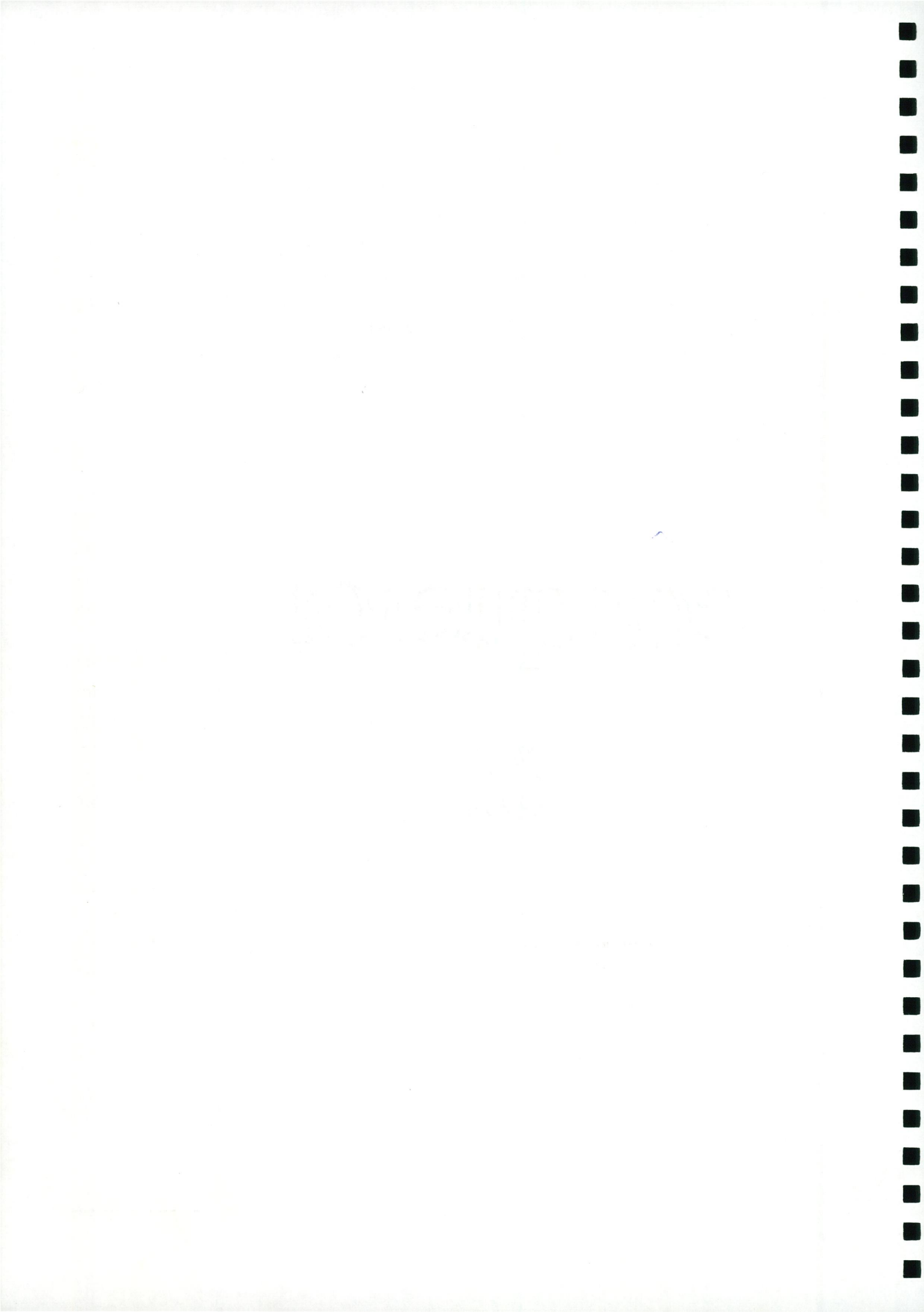
The suicide death of Ian Curtis saw Joy Division form into New Order. This saw them welcome a new electronic sound, however they still maintained a personal profile so low as to be almost invisible.

The colour wheel was not just a comment on the printer and colour registration, it was also a key to a colour coding, a code he had used on the floppy disc 'Blue Monday', a 12" single, (1982, fig. 26). Dye-cut into the shape of a floppy disc it represented the new technology of New Orders sound. The outer colours on the disc representing the alphabet. (Green at the top is 'A', yellow is 'B', purple is 'C' and so on round to pink & yellow which represent 'Z'. The first nine colours also represent the numbers 1 to 9).

His restraint with the group was a conscious decision not to present them as dummies on a shopfront, they were not wholly available, even though they had grown up in public from Joy Division to New Order. His approach could easily have followed the modern trend instigated by Brody, applying loud colours and bold type, as these would have jumped off the shelf. They were not calculated to appeal to an existing market. He never patronised the consumer. Joy Division and New Order were still a product of a 'Factory', but they were presented differently, (Joy Division as a classical outfit, New Order as an almost anonymous outfit) that was the irony. But:

Mc. Lean, Ruari,
1975, London,
J. Tschichold, p. 29.

"communication must be made in the shortest, simplest, most definite





**fig. 25, 'Power, Corruption & Lies', 1985,
front and back.**

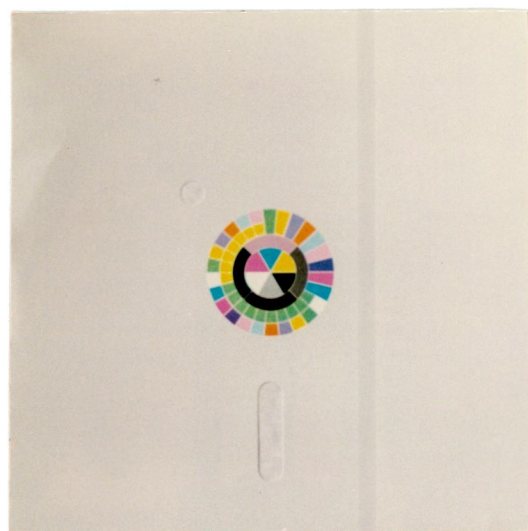
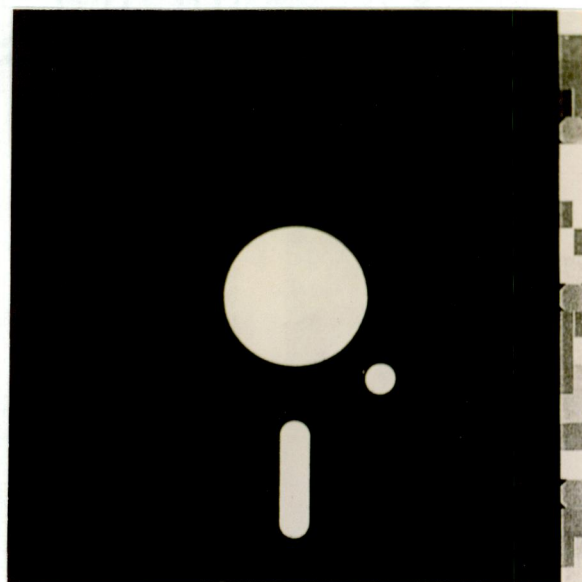


fig. 26, 'Bluemonday', 1985.

The colour coding on Power, Corruption & Lies was the key to deciphering 'Bluemonday', (it read FAC 73, BLUEMONDAY THE BEACH NEW ORDER)



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way."

Although intriguing, it seemed unnecessarily clever. Saville was saying nothing about the music or group. He was just appealing to the New Order fan. He was just been selective about his audience and was thus being elitist. It was a complete turnaround from his anti fine-art stance in college. It is totally uninformative to the consumer of the records contents. He had pushed it just too far, losing the essence of visual communication. It is most definitely a style.

Saville's intent to question the necessity of type on the album sleeve. The public if they heard the music could make their own minds up, ('Blue Monday' is the best selling 12" of all time, if his package helped to sell the record is another question).

Neville Brody probably influenced this pursuit of the obscure as demonstrated by the 'Contents page'. Respect is still applied to the record, it is just the level of respect which is worrying. Again this was just a downside from being avant-garde. Because you were being challenging, your language had not sublimed to the mainstream you were only going to appeal to a chosen few anyway.

Saville seen the album as an item of possession. Like a status symbol, the filofax, swatch watch, it was saying something about how we live. By buying a record you could buy yourself into a social group, be it carried away in a Freebird record bag or a Comet record one. Saville's records were about sophistication and elitism. Naturally he had to be selective.

Saville, the person is a victim of the status symbol, as he has a BMW, a gold Rolex and socialises with Bryan Ferry!

Corporate Identity

By 1985 Saville as a record sleeve designer had not really been challenged by a proper brief. The ambiguity of illustrating music and its relatively short life span, involved few serious factors. His first real challenge came from the Whitechapel Art Gallery.

At this time the mid eighties was witnessing a design boom, Brody with The Face was leading the way, encouraging designers to be one step ahead, 'to be clever for clever's sake'. Most design simply lifted Brody's work with no respect to his original intent, so 'Brodyesque' (oblong typeface's) seemed to be

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The Science Museums recent new logo (by Peter Leonard Associates) is more suited to retail rather than a museum.

Mc. Lean, Ruari,
1975, London,
J. Tschichold: Typographer,
p. 127.

'the look' to have. This 'look' went on everything from auctioneer's signs to the wings of airplanes. Graphic design became a noise. The high street was witnessing changes every 2/3 years. Design became fashion.

The Whitechapel Art Gallery was a public gallery, not a record shop so it had to have that aura about it. Gallery's should represent art which transcend fashion, transcend time. In its search for private funding and promotion of its collections it needed a strong visual identity. Richard Hollis modernist sans-serif face 'Block identity', (fig. 27) had dated, its black letter forms looking clumsy in an 'eighties of sophistication. Saville's solution 'Whitechapel' (1985, fig. 28) was simply just a hand rendered serif-face. He dropped the 'art gallery' bit, Whitechapel on its own said enough, wasn't such a mouthful. The word on its own was elegant enough. Although not particularly exciting it was different because as I said earlier people had lost control of design at the time.

"There is no excuse for clothing every theme in modern dress".

The result, white and expensive is almost an understatement. It seems as if we have seen it before. It looks as if the typeface was made specifically for the word as the serifs help to reduce the harshness.

Yet it was more than just a logotype it was a whole scheme, that was to be applied to stationary and catalogues. Up until then the Whitechapel gallery had no recognised identity. Now it had a look to distinguish itself from the many other other London galleries. The result was to prove a turning point for Saville, it got him the profile he needed.

Recognition from a country which has been at the forefront of most of the major art movements is quite an honour. On seeing Whitechapel Saville won a commission for the 'Magiciens de la Terre' exhibition (1988, fig. 29), a contemporary exhibition of world art, at the Pompidou Centre, Paris. Saville used for this identity a 'spiritual' drawing by a shaman from a forest tribe in India.

This primitive image is revamped by colouring and texture. Like the gloss of an album cover it captures a modern feel, appealing to a wide audience and at the same time representing a heritage, the colours symbolic of dyes from the 'earth'. This identity was different than Whitechapel in that the exhibition wasn't permanent, he was able to be temporary and thus more stylistic.

Even within the confines of the gallery and music world Saville had

1914-1915

1916



Whitechapel Gallery : London

WHITECHAPEL

fig.27, Hollis's 'Whitechapel', 1967.

fig.28, Saville's 'Whitechapel', 1985.



fig. 29, 'La Magaciens de la Terre', 1988.

Primitive image revamped by colouring.

[Redacted]

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CONFIDENTIAL

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proven he could adapt.

Traits

Three traits have emerged from his work:

1) *Simplicity*- It was a deceptive *simplicity* in that he knew what was needed and applied it well.

"The crucial thing about graphic design is that you have to impart a message, information, and if that means simply putting a name on a piece of paper in the right type at the right size, then that's all you do."

He pulls just back enough, the correct amount, nothing is superfluous. Yet his work is so understated, not so boring as to be interesting. He doesn't exhaust the eye. What he leaves out or more precisely what he doesn't put in raises questions. If you feel deceived about simplicity, the graphic designer has succeeded.

2) *Detachment*- Because of the simplicity things seem missing and we are left stranded, there are more questions than answers about his work. His approach has always been a questioning, even from his very first work. He invites the passive observer to be an active participant in the design process:

"it didn't look like a rock club advert, so it made people look twice."

Saville does more than dress a product in new clothes, he actually questions the make-up and fitting of them as well. The Blue Monday sleeve invited the consumer to decipher the meaning of its coding. His latent intent is aesthetic both of balance and arrangement, but the manifest intention is a questioning of the communicative possibilities of the record sleeve. The invitation to experience the sleeve makes the participant feel more important than the designer, it is this that makes them uncomfortable or feel conned.

3) *Technical Achievement*- His work is so clean and precise and he has an eye for the near perfect placement of type. In his finish he tends to hide the creativity.

"Art is harmony and harmony is the due observance of proportions, it seems reasonable to assume that these proportions are fixed"

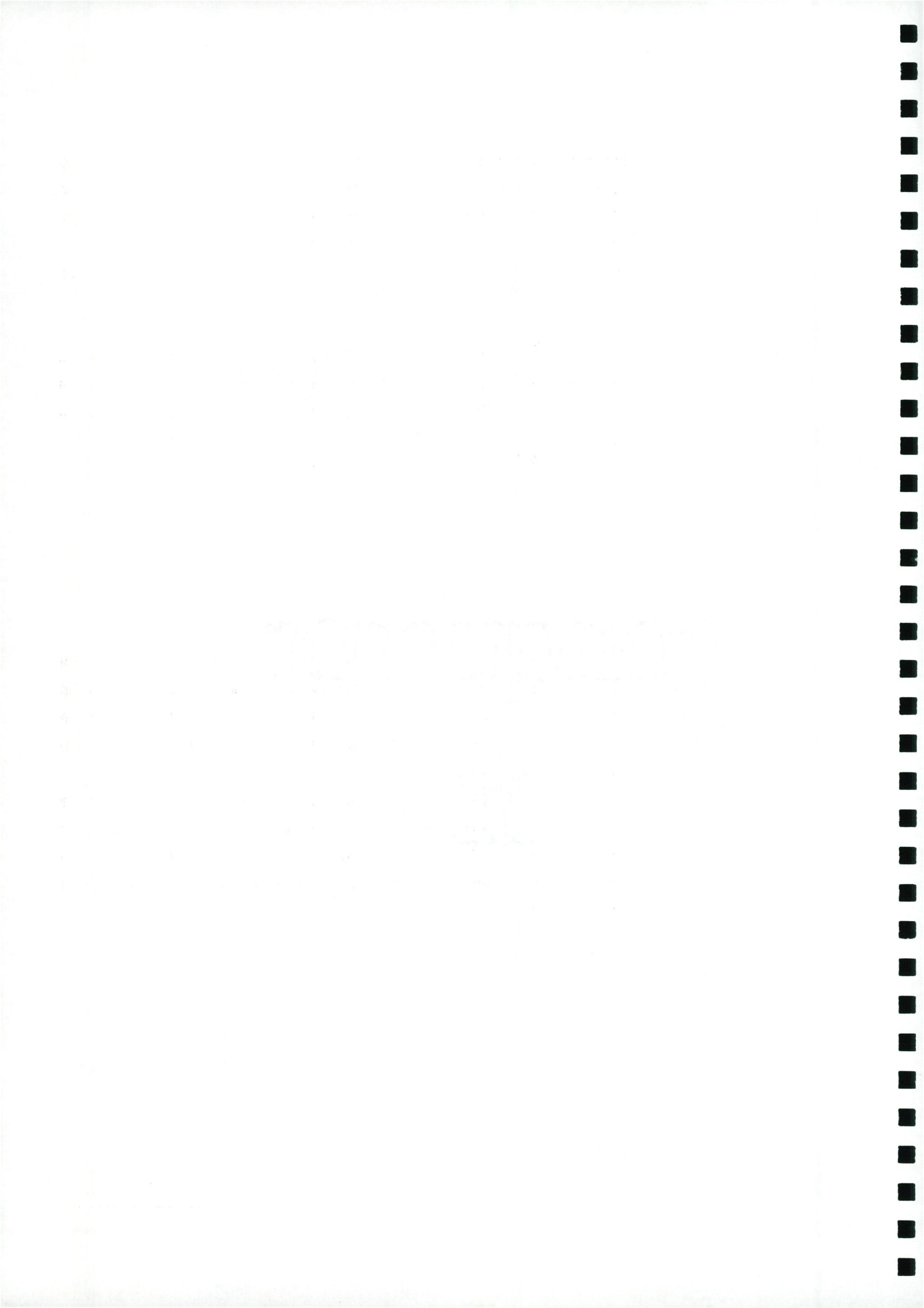
In 'Technique' (1988, fig. 30), credited to both Saville and photographer Trevor Key a certain silence is captured in vibrant colour contrast of blue and

Saville as quoted
by Taylor, Steve,
Feb '81, London,
The Face, p. 52.

Saville as quoted
by Taylor, Steve,
Feb '81, London,
The Face, p. 52.

One staff member spoke of
three day marathons spent
deciding how to space a block
of type and still having to put
all the pencils back in the
drawers before they could go
home at two in the morning.
(Blueprint, Nov. '90, p.33)

Read, Herbert,
1968, London, The
Meaning of Art, p. 25.



Saville as quoted
by Poyner, Rick,
Nov. '90, London,
Blueprint, p. 32.

magenta, psychedelic reflecting the 'acid' nature of the music. This strong composition is breathtakingly pure in colour. He changes our normal perception of a cherub. Something usual is seen unusually. Saville calls it "*photographic silk-screening*". It has been so intensified by technology that it says technique, technology. His work is unquestionably aesthetically compelling, but is this just a facade to the shallowness of it all?

'Substance' (1987, fig 31) and 'Technique', titles alone merit discussing, graphics after-all is information both of word's and images. Technique, the album is just 'technique', Saville even reinforces this fact by duplicating it in different colours. 'Substance' the other extreme of the pursuit of the graphic designer is really quiet bland except for it's colour enhanced prints, but it admits this with it's title. Saville brings the struggle out into the open. What exactly is the solution? This is the 'intelligence' to his style.

Summary

Saville, as quoted
by, Poyner, Rick,
Nov. '90, London,
Blueprint, p.33.

The album was always more than surface decoration. Saville did not approach it as the normal trivial cover, he always thought beyond, "*he was selling concepts*", inviting a response from the consumer. When he came to corporate identities he just applied this traits I have established of simplicity, detachment and of technical achievement.

His pursuit of substance is different to each task, but it has always been a restraint of knowing exactly what to do. You could not condone him certainly for putting too much in. Colour, a gloss and intrigue emerge from his work but it is more than a bland surface. This stylistic trait is Saville, but, it seems only part of what he is about.

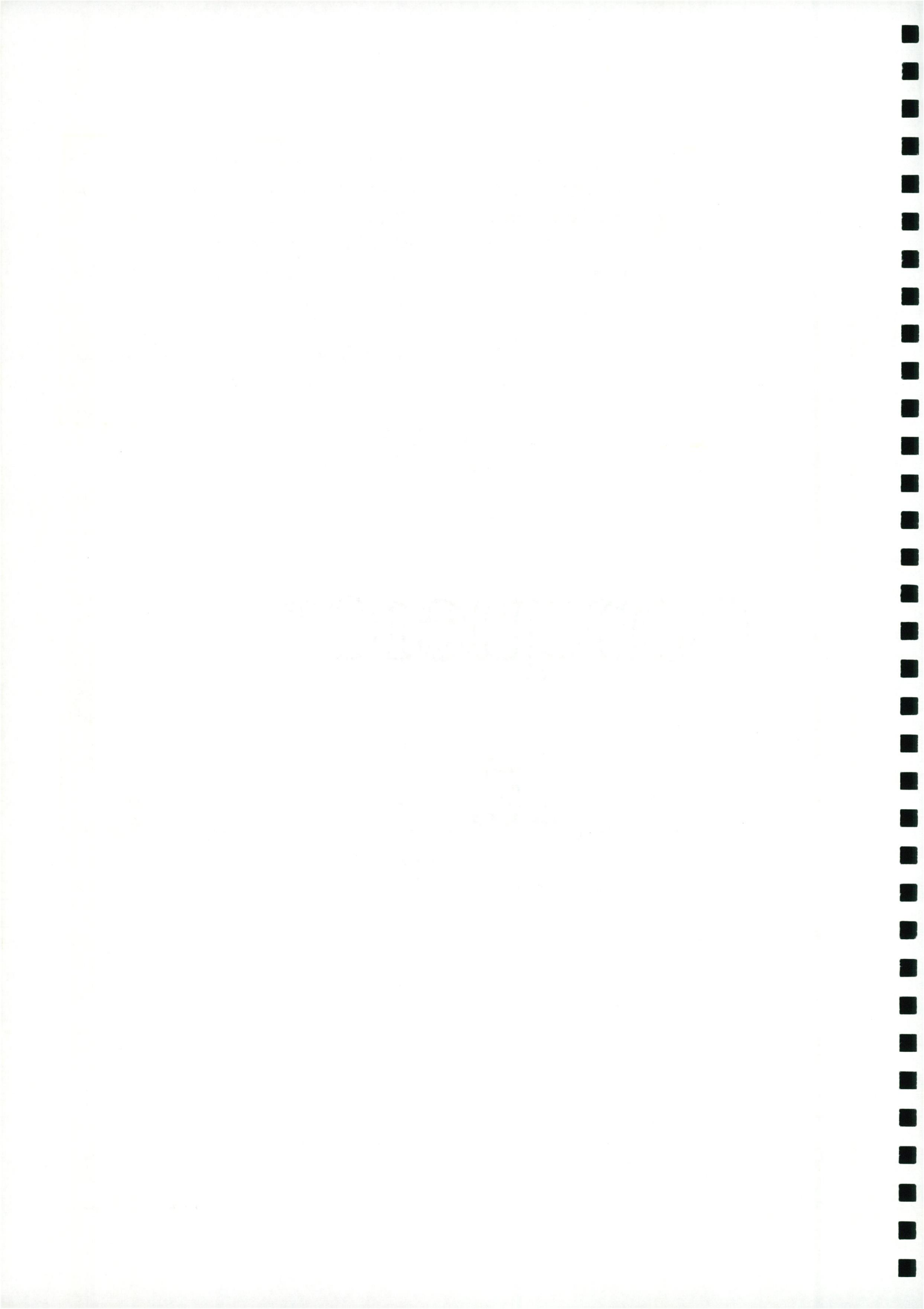




fig. 30, 'Technique', 1988.

Just technique.

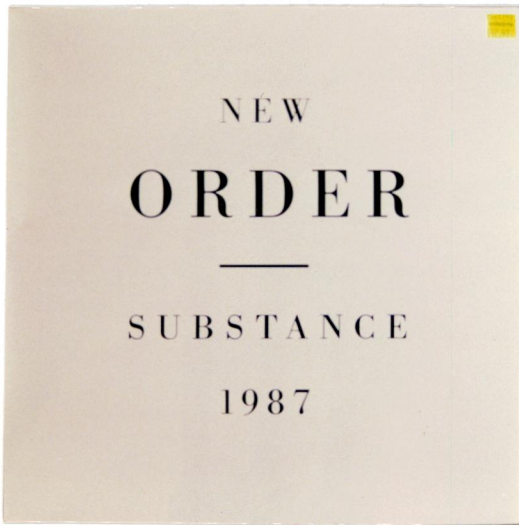
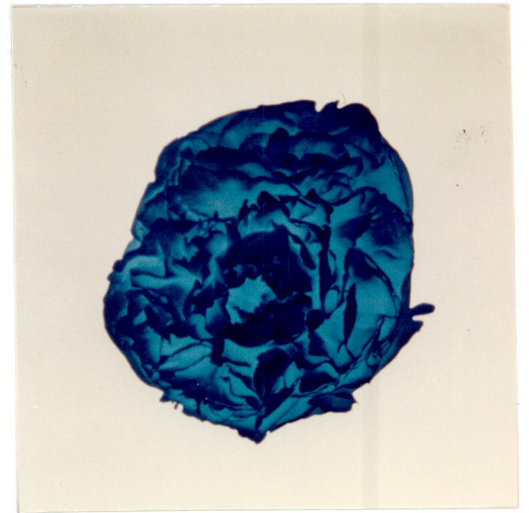


fig. 31, 'Substance', 1987.

Substantial.



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Chapter 5 Evaluation

Only on knowing someone's intent can we make our minds up to what they meant. Now we ask was his work style over substance?

Introduction

Saville, as quoted
by, Rick, Poyner,
Nov. '90, London,
Blueprint, p. 30.

"We are trying to understand ideas now because styling doesn't mean anything anymore. You used to be able to say a lot with the way you styled something, it would position it culturally. That doesn't work now."

Saville said this in the november of 1990, times it seems have changed for him. Why the about-turn?

The stockmarket crash, Blackmonday and the still vacant London Docklands are just two examples of the 'eighties dream coming to an end. The facade of style fell down because there wasn't a proper foundation, a substance. There is not the disposable income there once was, now people buy only when necessary, (there isn't any plastic money) and they search for qualities of reliability. Style most definitely doesn't have the same values it once had in the eighties.

Summary

Straight from college and having the freedom of expression that the album sleeve allowed, Saville soon found his work was being tied to a historicism. Tschichold, Rand and the Futurists (Depero in particular) were an obvious influence. Trying to redefine the past, he was learning the rules in public. Soon he had directly lifted work but this was just a part of his search for the ideal. The modernist standards were lost at the time. By 1985 he was learned enough, to completely drop the references and search for a new personal expression. This new phase, a new confidence saw him keep the restraint.

Emerging with Saville from the post-punk climate were Brody, Garrett, and Oliver. Encouraging self-expression they all had to be one step ahead. They

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too saw a need to revive forgotten ideals, they created an awareness of typographic principles, this has been their greatest achievements:

But this style only works on a surface level. The gloss is only part of what he's about, acting only as the visual cue to a concept, e.g:

'Closer' works as a classical piece a testament to the glorious days of symmetrical typography but on another level, it is a respectful epitaph to the dead singer Curtis. 'Blue Monday' acts as a gimmicky floppy disc welcoming the new electronic sound, but Saville really questions the communicative potential of the record.

Saville thought beyond the 12" protective sleeve of the album, it was always going to be more than decoration. He understands not only its physical but its psychological potential as well. Projecting more than the music, he has exploited it to play on our emotions, disturb, enlighten, confuse us. His trademark has been the restraint. This stems from knowing what not to put in, rather than knowing what to put in. The constant struggle between revealing and hiding is what makes his work so challenging. We are either left short of the facts of there are none at all. Relying more than the passive observer, the sleeves seek a participation.

His work is timeless, he did not confine himself to 'Brodyesque', he did not embroil his subjects in fashions. He did not cater for the popular trend but succeeded in producing what was relevant before, to be relevant now as it should be tomorrow.

Conclusion

The guy is intelligent regularly participating in debates on design, yet his best work stems from an aesthetic intuition. As he has gained a profile he feels he has to answer his work to critics with some logic or rational thought. For Technique he said "*I was interested in shopping for antiques*"? One didn't need reasons or meanings for work.

"How can you explain work that involves only an emotional response"

We shouldn't have to intellectualise his work. He now tries to justify his 'lifts' but I see it as trying to again theorise. Now amongst his fame he feels he has to have been consistent in his work. Should not impact he created not be enough.

Saville as quoted
by Music Week,
1990, Manchester,
by Edge, Kevin,
The Art of Selling
Songs, p.136.

Brody as quoted by
Wozencroft, Jan,
1988, London,
The Graphic Language of
Neville Brody, p. 61.

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Should you have to read things into his work. Intuition has told him to play on aesthetics alone, there is nothing wrong with that.

Saville is a "*designer pragmatist*", that is a reason why some may not find a charm in his work. He said do not have to be 'clever', to be clever. He is sensible, he is correct, this implies a conservatism. But he has been challenging because he has re-established forgotten standards. He was brave enough to step outside everything that was bad about the 80's style over content decade, eg., 'Whitechapel'. He sought something substantial, a substance.

His work is style and it is content. In Saville's case style was never just surface ornament it was the key to the content. Be it a revival of design philosophies ('Movement'), disturbing ('Unknown Pleasures') or just simply a question of design values ('Substance').

"Styles have meanings that evoke connotations and associations, suggests that there is always content as well as form or that form itself is a signifying agent"

Yes he is a stylist undeniably, but there was always more than pure style. He said surface design could be more than just superficial, it was never the solution.....To seek content was always his style.

Walker, John,
1989, London,
Design History & The
History of Design, p. 56.

1937-1938

1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
College Freelance for Factory, Virgin and Chrysalis record companies													
Factory Club poster	Unknown Pleasures	Movement	Blue Monday	Power, Corruption, and Lies	Everything's gone green	Low-Life	Whitechapel	Sledgehammer	Substance	Atmosphere	Technique	La Magiciens de la Terre	Chrysalis
A Factory Sample	Closer	Everything's gone green	Power, Corruption, and Lies	Power, Corruption, and Lies	Everything's gone green	Whitechapel	Whitechapel	Sledgehammer	Substance	Atmosphere	Technique	La Magiciens de la Terre	Chrysalis
historicism													
post-modernist													
personal style													
H. Spencer's Pioneers of Typography' reprinted													
Constructivist and Bauhaus exhibitions in London.													
Desktop publishing													
Vaughan / Oliver v23													
Malcolm Garrett / assorted iMacGees													
Neville Brody - The Face													
Arena													
Blackmonday													
Brody retrospective at V&A													
Pentagram													

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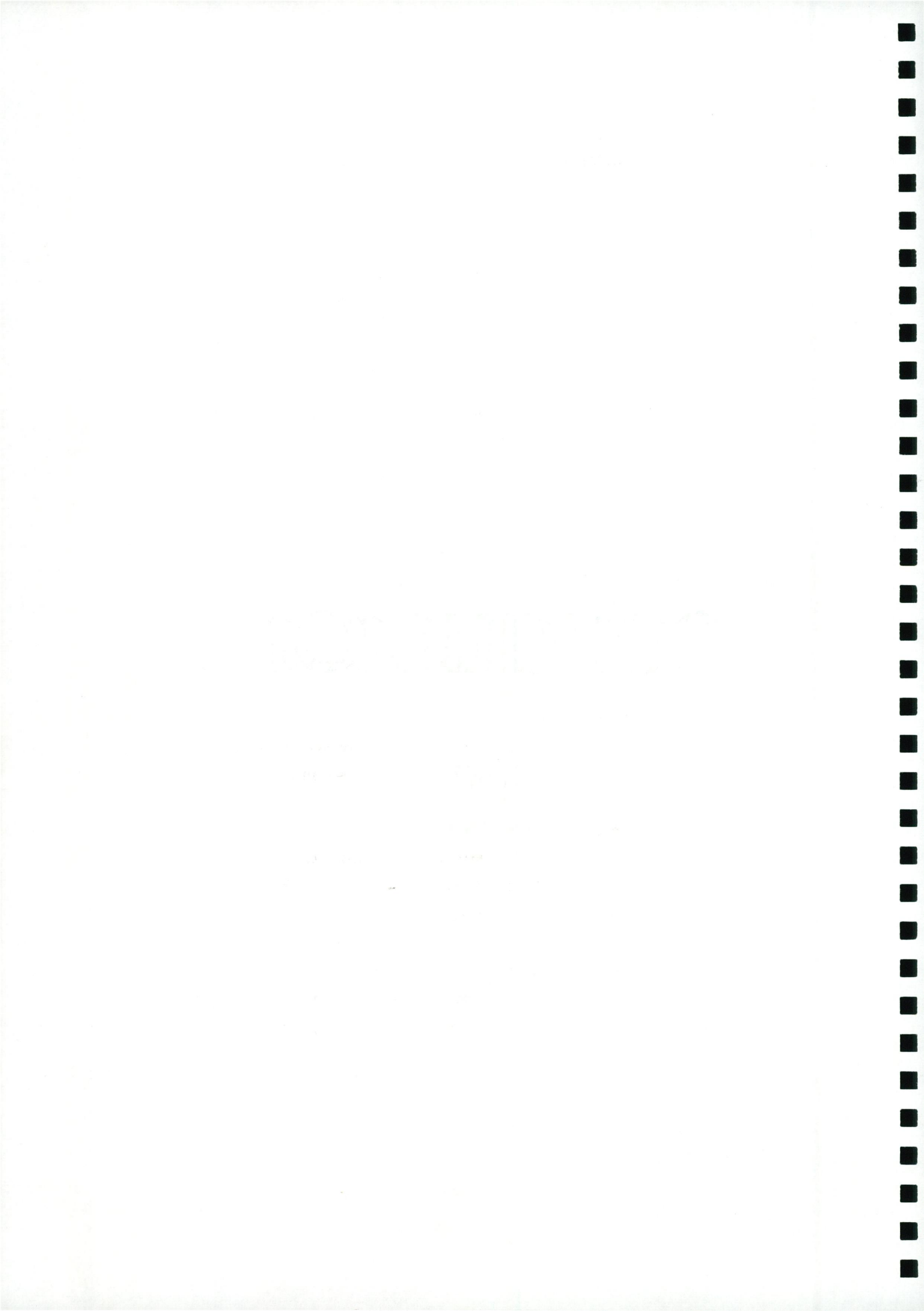


MEMORANDUM

TO :

FROM :

SUBJECT :



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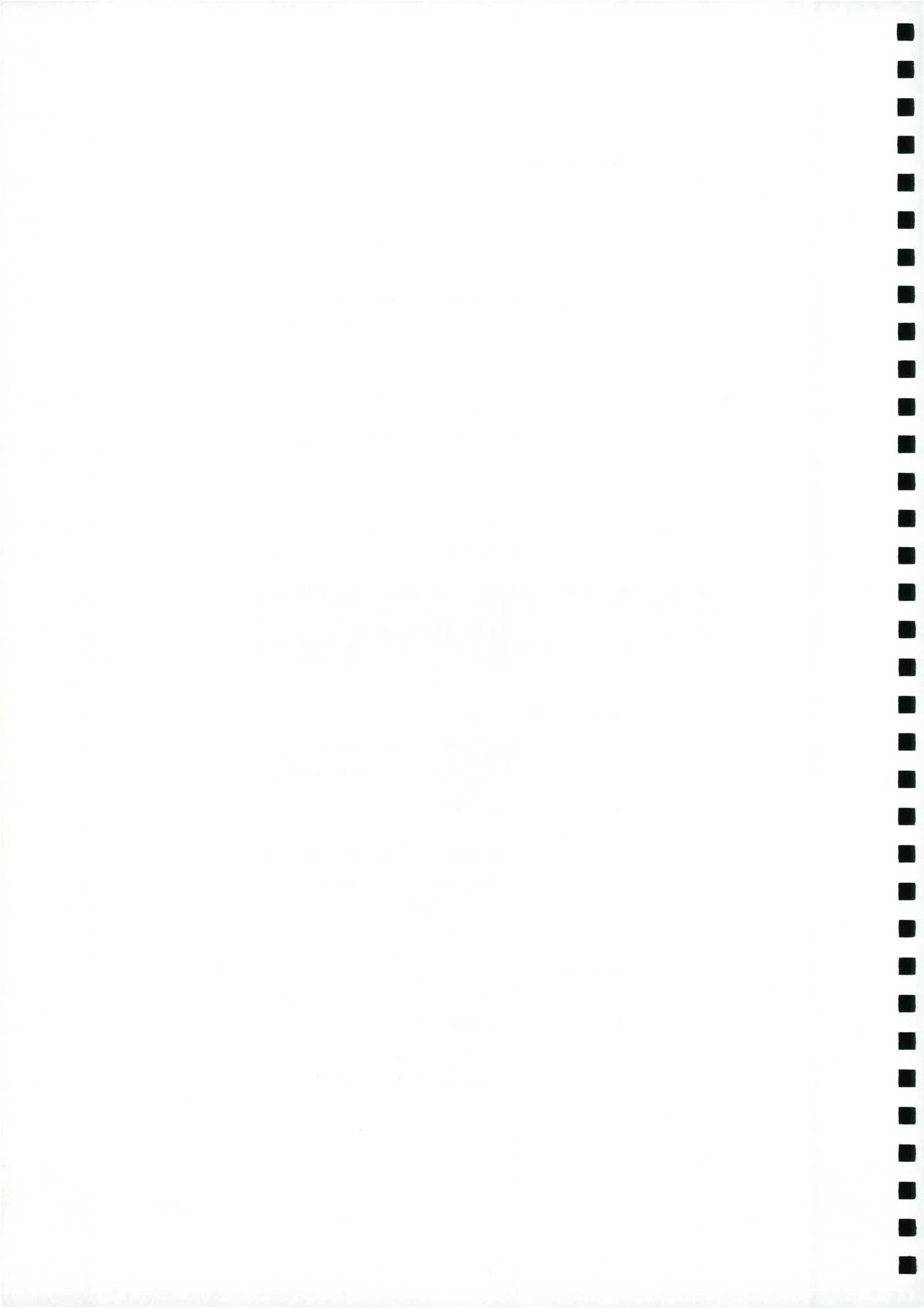
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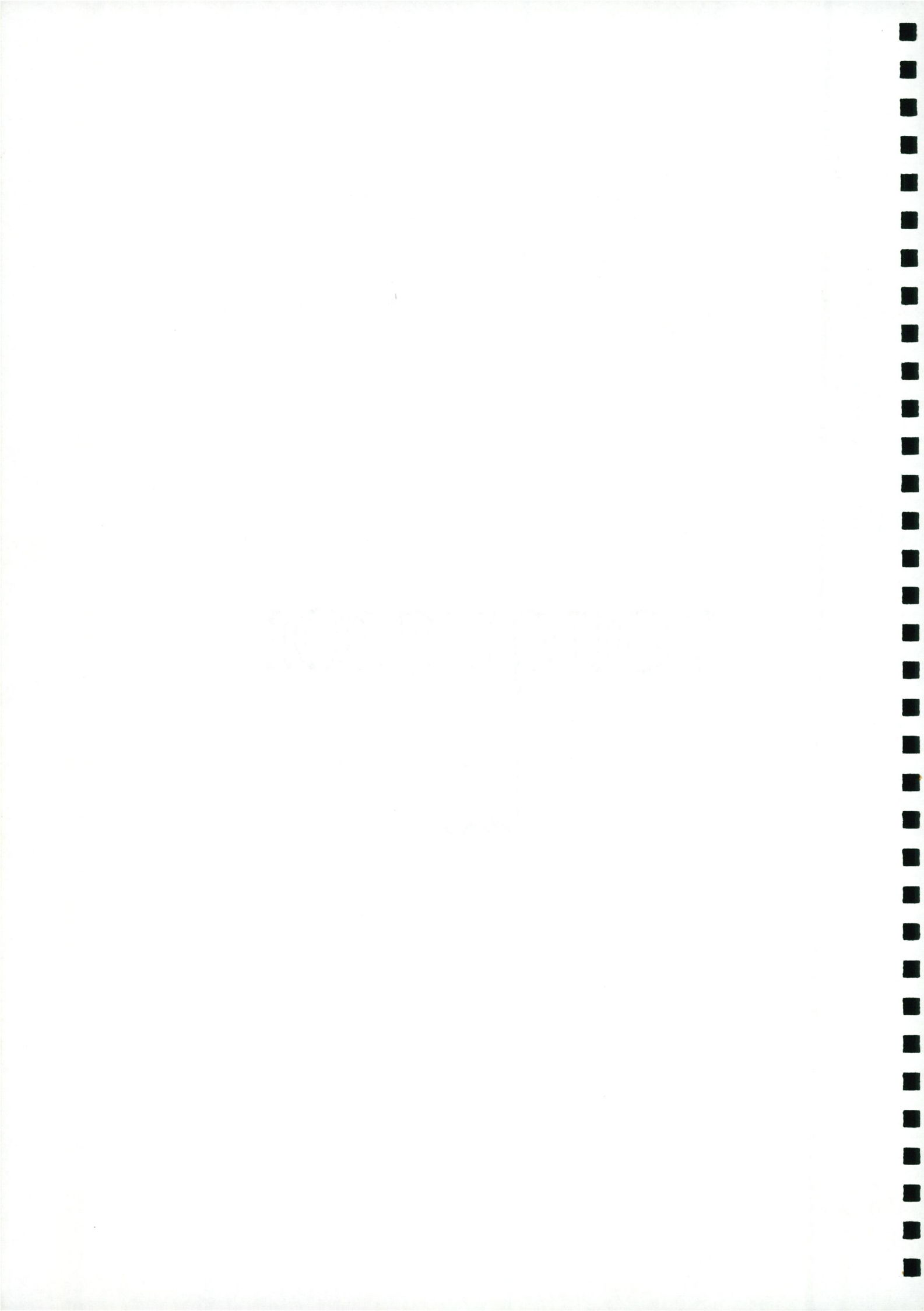
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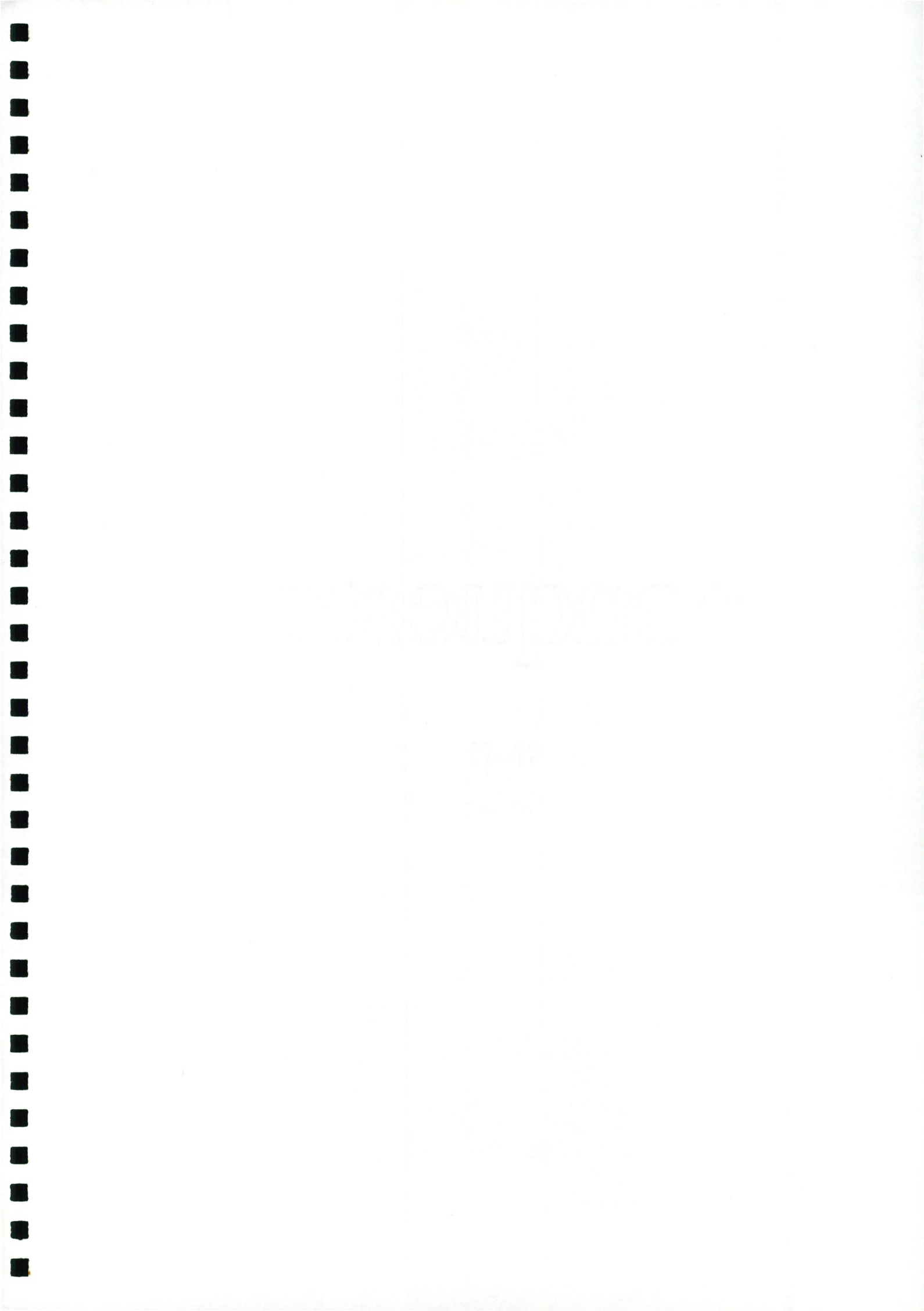
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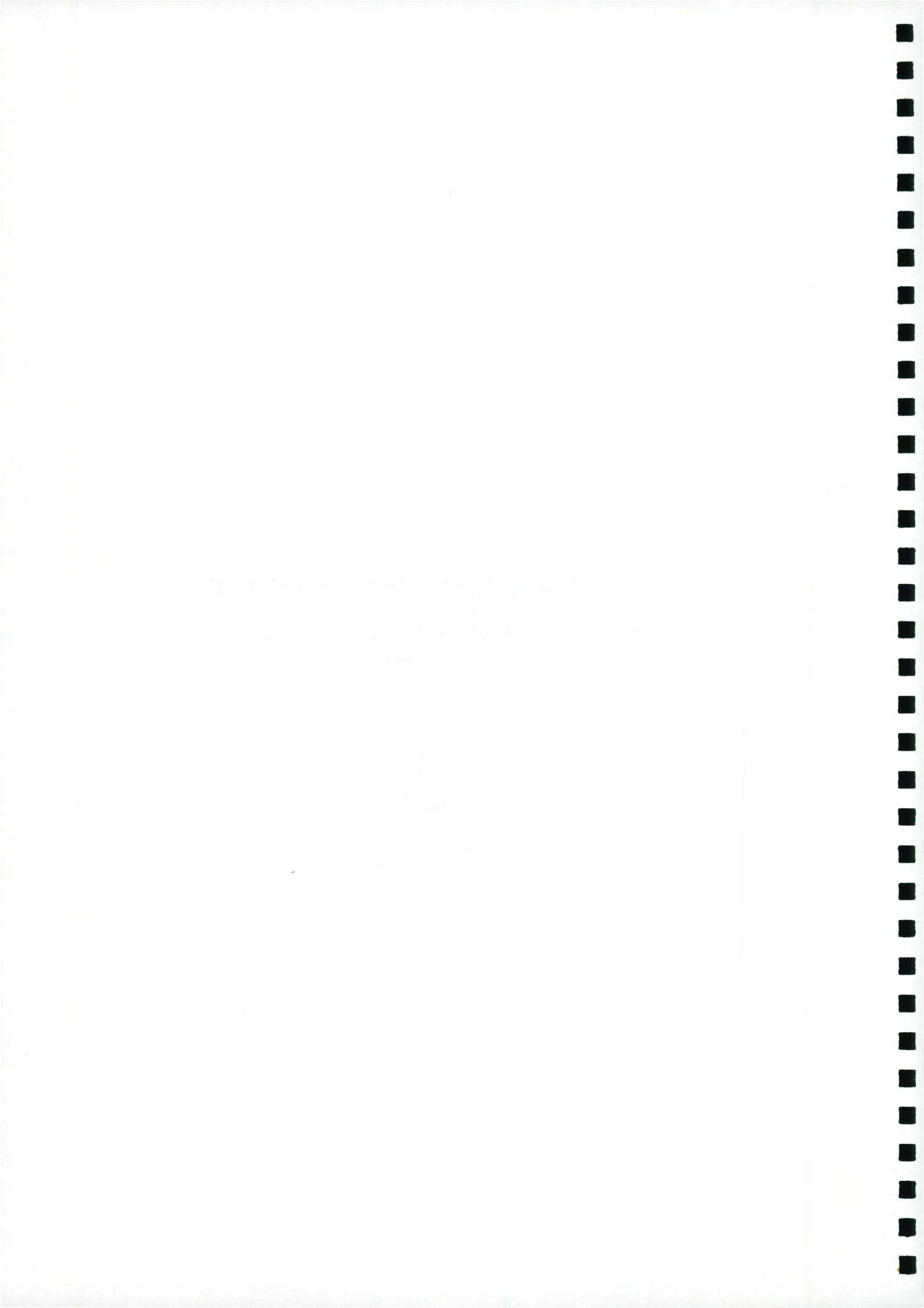
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Declan Stone - March 6th 1992 - The National College of Art and Design







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