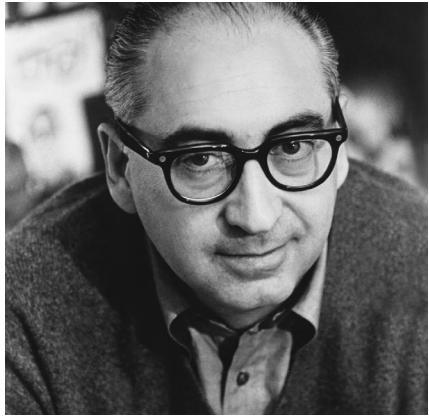


SAUL BASS



Saul Bass portrait.

Saul Bass was born in New York City on May 8th, 1920. Bass grew up in the Bronx, graduated from high school at 15, studied at Brooklyn College, began an apprenticeship with Manhattan Design Firms, and in 1946, founded Saul Bass Associates. Fifteen years later, he married his first employee, Elaine Makatura, with whom he produced dozens of movie titles. They had two sons, two daughters, and one granddaughter together.

First Works

In 1954 Bass was hired to create a graphic for the advertisement, trailer, and title for Otto Preminger's *Carmen Jones*. His design of a rose on fire evoked a strong feeling that defined the movie without any Hollywood excess. His minimalist, powerful design allowed Bass to start building his strong reputation. It wasn't until a year later, when he designed the title sequence for *The Man With the Golden Arm*, when his powerful graphic started an entire genre and made Saul Bass a name in the film industry:



"Carmen Jones" film poster, 1954.

“The man who invented the opening credit sequence as a free-standing movie-before-a-movie and elevated it into an art.”

The New York Times

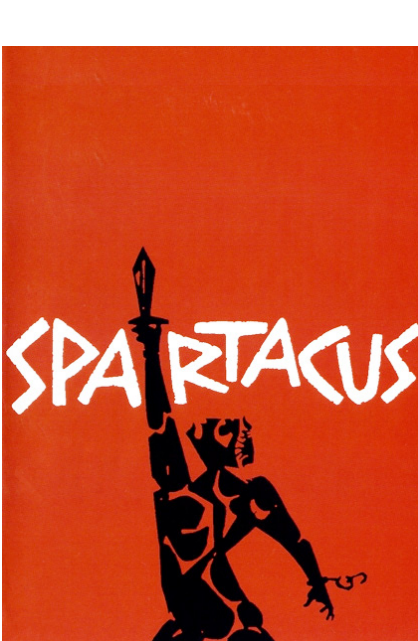
Bass' work propagated through the industry, inspiring many to follow in his footsteps, creating a slurry of creative title sequences

Collaboration

After gaining popularity through *The Man with the Golden Arm*, Bass began working with the superstars of directors. He mainly established strong connections with both Alfred Hitchcock and Stanley Kubrick, designing titles for *Vertigo*, *Psycho*, *The Shining*, *Spartacus*, and more. These works displayed how cohesive a film could be, carrying out their aesthetic visions from start to finish.

Logos

In the 1980's, Bass began veering away from movie titles, and started designing company logos. Here, his style became more clean cut and 'perfect,' with less funky, hand-drawn symbols and characters. His ability to create meaningful, strong, and simplistic symbols, perfectly aided his work in this new medium.



"Spartacus" advertisement, 1960.



"The Shining" film poster, 1960.



United Airlines logo, 1974.



AT&T logo, 1969.



Quaker Oats logo, 1972.



Girl Scout logo, 1978.



Warner Communications logo, 1972.

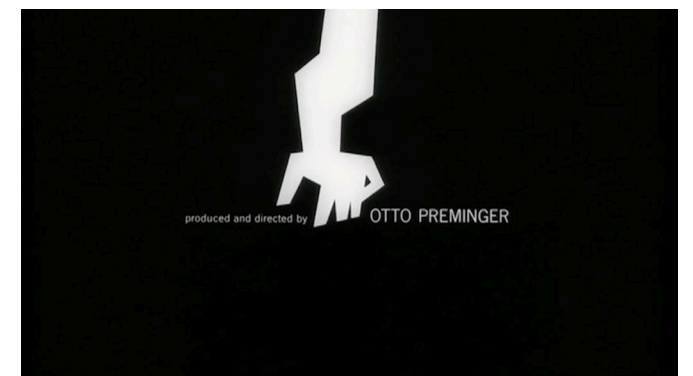
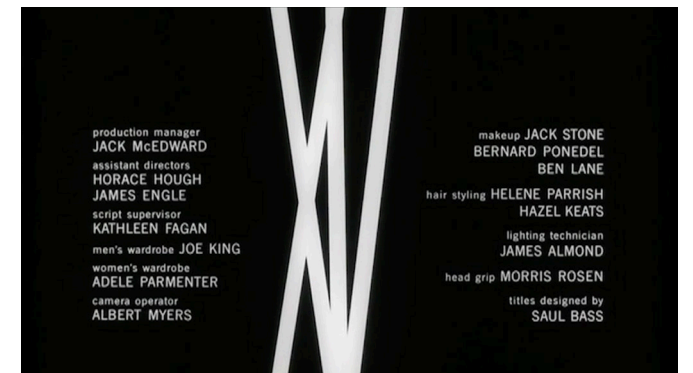
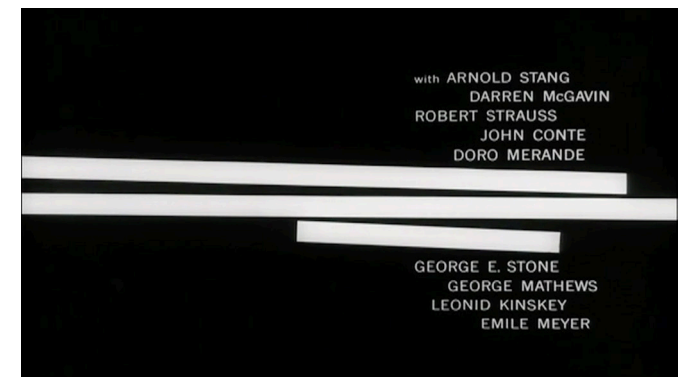
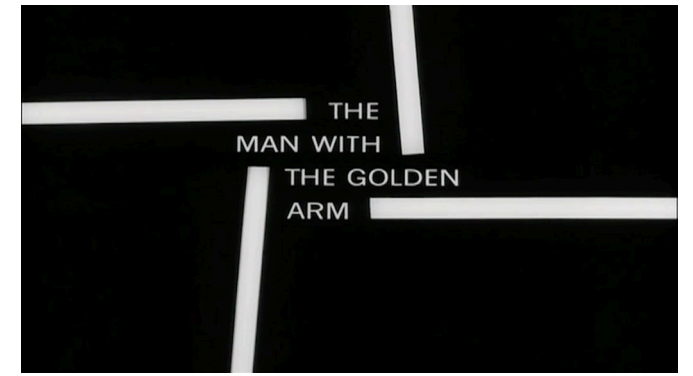
The Man with the Golden Arm

Otto Preminger - 1955

The Man with the Golden Arm, Written and directed by Otto Preminger, displays a drug addict beating addiction while behind bars. Once released, he continues to struggle with drug abuse.

Bass' title sequence was a breakthrough in title design. It is one of the first displays of creative titles, with dynamic movement, and bold symbolism. His sequence utilized thick, white lines on a black background that moved in and out to frame the text. The lines give you a clear path to follow, guiding you right to the text. This sequence created a cohesive look to the movie, connecting its graphic advertisement to the film it self.

To connect poster to movie, Bass created a jagged, hand cut graphic of an arm. This arm became the symbol of this movie, allowing it to stand out and be instantly recognizable. This use of intense symbolism struck well with both audiences and fellow filmmakers, and became a norm for many movies to come.



"The Man with the Golden Arm" opening title sequence, 1955.

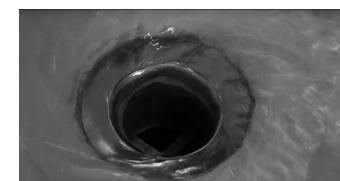
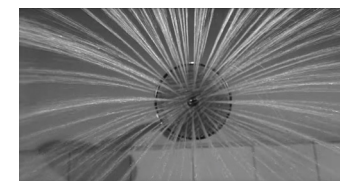
Psycho

Alfred Hitchcock - 1960

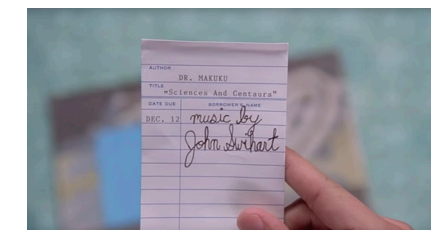
Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho depicts an assistant who steals money from a wealthy client, and runs away to a sketchy motel. This motel becomes the focus point for a horror movie centered around the hotel owner and his psychotic mother.

For this title sequence, Bass used moving horizontal and vertical lines with fragmented characters, creating distorted type. This distortion with perfectly flat lines creates an image of chaos and danger in an organized environment, a theme prevalent in the film

In addition to creating the title sequence, Bass helped create the famous "shower scene." The scene displays connections between the circle of the shower head, the circle of the drain, and the circle of the victims eye and mouth. This creates an interesting graphic display of symbolism in live footage.



"Psycho" film excerpt, 1960.



"Napoleon Dynamite" opening title sequence Aaron Ruel, 2004.

Bass' Impact

Saul Bass' work became widely popular, inspiring many other designers to follow in his footsteps. While some designs are clearly inspired by his style, many more artists simply expanded on Bass' idea of creating an opening sequence as its own art form. Bass started a movement that trasformed how movies were created and viewed. He put a responsibility on the filmmaker to create a meaningful experience from start to finish.