

Sample Writing Project

Influential Women Designers in a Man's World

For this project, I have decided to research and write about two powerful women designers: Ruth Ansel and Tina Roth Eisenberg. Although these designers' style and mediums differ, they both influence me and other upcoming designers with their work and accomplishments. Both designers live and work in New York, having put out a lot of well-done, original designs along with creative movements.

To start, Ruth Ansel is a graphic design artist born in the Bronx in 1938, and has gotten extremely lucky with all she's accomplished throughout her life. She became a co-art director of *Harper's Bazaar* in the 1960's and was the art director of the *New York Times Magazine* in the 70's. Her work was mainly seen in magazines, highlighting her best work in my opinion, "Harper's Bazaar Interior Spread" displayed in April 1965. A central theme in all of her work, is her use of eye catching design tactics and colors. All of her spreads seem to be simple, but intriguing to look at. Along with these accomplishments, she has done the covers for *House & Garden*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Vogue*. Her craftsmanship is immaculate and her style is clean and simple.

In a particular work from *Harper's Bazaar*, she displays a woman as an astronaut, floating in a "comic book style" space background. The background in particular is decorative and geometric. This is my favorite piece because not only does it seem that it took a lot of work, but it looks like it is mimicking an old superhero comic. Her message was for women in power, which I think is displayed perfectly in this specific work. In an interview with James Gaddy, Ansel said, "magazines give you an idea of what it was like to be alive at a certain time" (AIGA). Not only do I agree with this, but it inspires me to look more into creating magazine or zine layouts. I never really read magazines, but am always fascinated by the design of covers or photography that is displayed throughout. I am currently interested in creating zines and after seeing more of Ansel's work, it is apparent to me that this may be something I might pursue in the future.

In a London interview, Ansel explained her experience as a woman in graphic design and what her advice is to upcoming artists, which I thought was important. She explains, "You are always trying to create a magazine that is as much about style and substance as it is about unexpected juxtapositions" (Ansel). This quote made sense because another common theme in her work is unexpected juxtapositions. Everything seems to be out of place or put randomly, but somehow works together. A piece of advice she gave in the same interview was, "I believe in simple design that appears effortless but takes a lot of work. Trust your instincts, take risks, embrace accidents..." (Ansel). I have always been intrigued with designs that look simple but are beautifully done. I struggle a lot trying to figure out my own style and my next step as a designer, but I believe if I take risks, try new things, I should be able to be satisfied with my own work and be able to share it with the public. As she goes further about her experience as a woman and how her work is recognized, she also stresses the problem with women not receiving top positions. As she has accomplished many things, she has not received much publicity or job offers since the 1980's.

With that being said, it is important to highlight other women designers who have combatted this issue and made a name for themselves in a man's world. Tina Roth Eisenberg is one of those women who have created various companies to both promote her work, and others work to be recognized throughout the world. Originally born in Switzerland, she has moved to Brooklyn to continue her career and developed the nickname "Swissmiss." Her designs are significant because they don't have a central theme or subject matter and generate huge movements. Her skills with art, designing, and marketing has led her to owning multiple organizations, such as Tattly, a talk show called Creative Mornings, Teuxdeux, and Friends Work Here.

My favorite work from her is her Tattly business: a website that has tons of different temporary tattoos, which are designed by various artists throughout the world. I am not only impressed by this idea, but a little angry that I haven't thought of it myself. I have seen a lot of temporary tattoo companies, but this one stands out to me the most because it is allowing artists to upload their own work and have it be displayed on someone's skin. The designs feature various colors, lines, patterns, textures, and even calligraphy. Overall, the website is very appealing to look at and is easy to work around, which I am guessing Eisenberg had a huge say in designing it.

In addition, a central theme that I would say about Eisenberg as a person, is that all her brands or "movements" seem to reflect other people's work. She currently does not do commission pieces anymore and is more focused on Tattly, Creative Mornings, and Friends Work Here. All these organizations are all based around the outside creators. Eisenberg seems to highlight other designers work and accomplishments, and allows these individuals to get noticed and to get paid for their art. What I am most inspired by is her focus and determination. It is amazing how Eisenberg runs many different brands and movements, allowing various designers to express their own work and design ethic. I have always dreamed of owning a business someday and allowing others to benefit with me creatively, as well.

Tying this altogether, I believe Ruth Ansel started a voice for women in design, and her world-renowned accomplishments allowed her to show women that they too can have a voice in the art and design world. Tina Roth Eisenberg transformed her creative vision into multiple companies, allowing other artists to showcase their talents. Both inspired many women to keep working for their dreams, and to always lift up those finding their way. I hope to create and inspire other young women, like they have inspired me, when I pursue my career.

Works Cited

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