



JAN TSCHICHOLD

Designer and Typographer



Jan Tschichold
Museum Installation | Detail
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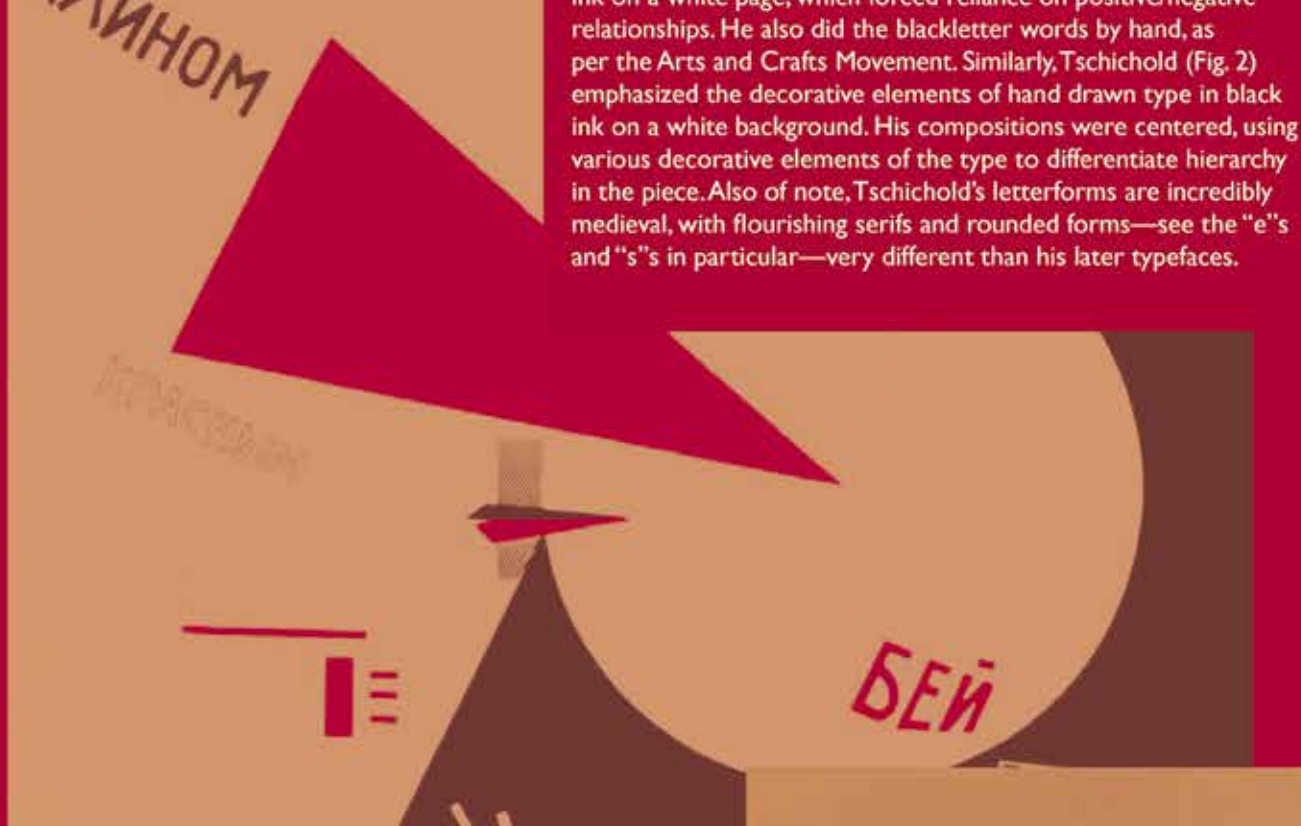


Fig. 6 Moholy-Nagy - A 19

Just as Mondrian (Fig. 3) used straight lines and rectangular blocks of color, Tschichold (Figs. 7-9) used rules to divide the page into segments and create a path to follow around the page. Again, one can see the repeated use of red, white, and black that marks much of the visual art and design from this period. Comparing Lissitzky's (Fig. 4) and Tschichold's (Figs. 7-9) work, two of the most obvious similarities are the sharp angles and sporadic type. While Lissitzky's type floats alongside geometric shapes made of bright colors, Tschichold's type is more arranged to fit the space assigned to it. Additionally, where Lissitzky's work seeks to portray pure emotion and, more often than not, aligns him with the Communist movement, Tschichold's work was predominately product advertisement, attempting to make viewers consumers rather than to change their ideology.

As a result of these influences, Tschichold ended up with a consistently geometric and asymmetrical style that used only sans-serif typefaces. He held a deep appreciation for the rational and functional, much like Mondrian, and wanted to encourage design to move from being hand-done to being created with machines, easy to reproduce and distribute (Britannica). Tschichold often pushed the functional aspects of his design until they were abstract, geometrical, and simplified. Frequently, he utilized only two colors, and he almost never left photographs as rectangles; they were trimmed into circles or deftly silhouetted. At times he designed without indents or spaces between paragraphs (Cinamon), forming even his text into a geometric building block of modernism.

Fig. 7 Tschichold - Die Hose

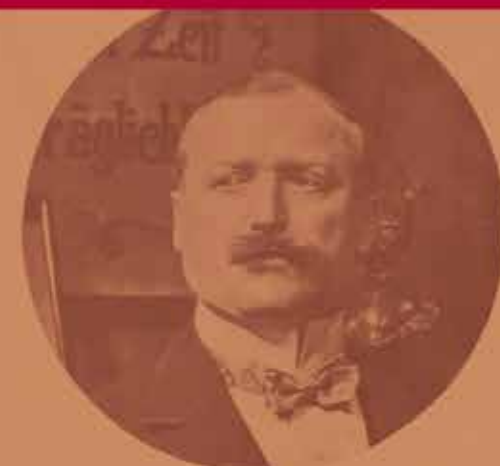


Fig. 5 Moholy-Nagy - Untitled Tire Advertisement



Similarly, Tschichold (Figs. 7-9) focused on using straight lines to guide the viewers' eyes around the asymmetrical composition. He uses lots of reds, blacks, and grays in geometrical shapes. The type, Tschichold's forte, is completely sans-serif and rarely on a horizontal rule, taking Moholy-Nagy's approach several steps further into abstraction. However, he always ensured

art (Eskilson 179). On the other end of the spectrum, El Lissitzky created art from pure feeling, seeking to separate his art from normal life through color symbolism and extreme designs (194). He also did much propaganda work with UNOVIS, a group of supremacist Bolshevik artists. Although seeking to portray emotion rather than impersonal order, Lissitzky's work was similar to Mondrian's in the simplified geometric shapes and few color tones.



PAUL CARL STERNHEIM
MIT WERNER KRAUSS
JONNY JÜGG

DIE HOSE

PHOEBUS
PALAST

Modernist Typography

However, everything changed in 1923. Tschichold visited the Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar, where he was introduced to the modernist movement (Cinamon). He left the exhibit with a sense of wonder at the asymmetry, bright colors, and sans-serif typefaces that would soon be prominent in his own work. In 1926, Paul Renner, the inventor of the Futura typeface, contacted Tschichold and asked him to come teach at the Meisterschule für Deutschlands Buchdrucker, the Academy of Graphic Arts, in Munich (Hollis). It was at this time that Tschichold aligned himself most clearly with the modernist movement, demonstrated in his famous series of movie posters for the Phoebe-Palast Cinema in Munich.

Among those he saw at the Bauhaus exhibition, Tschichold was heavily influenced by László Moholy-Nagy and the Constructionist movement (Hollis). A Hungarian painter and photographer, Moholy-Nagy's designs were rigidly rectilinear. He taught in the metals workshop and introductory courses at the Bauhaus (Eskilson 219), where he focused on design principles of rationality, requiring students to draw with compasses and straight edges rather than freehand (220). He was also the one to declare sans-serif the proper typographical family for the age— which Tschichold was quick to follow (121).

Moholy-Nagy's work (Figs. 5, 6) used straight edges, overlapping shapes, asymmetrical compositions, and leading lines to create a sense of depth on a two-dimensional surface. He predominantly used a few, flat, primary colors in his designs, along with black and white. Red and yellow appear most often. He used sans-serif type, often along vertical rules or placed along curves. Additionally, Moholy-Nagy was the first to coin the term "New Typography" (Eskilson 233). It was he that inspired Tschichold's insistence on using typefaces that were reproducible by machine (Burke 34).

