Armin Hofmann

Swiss Style Graphic Designer

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"*The boundaries between work as practice and work merely aimed at a particular result must be removed. Every exercise or study which is properly done must show a result, and every valid result must have aspects which provide scope for exercise and experiment.*"

-AH

Armin Hofmann

29 June 1920 - 18 December 2020



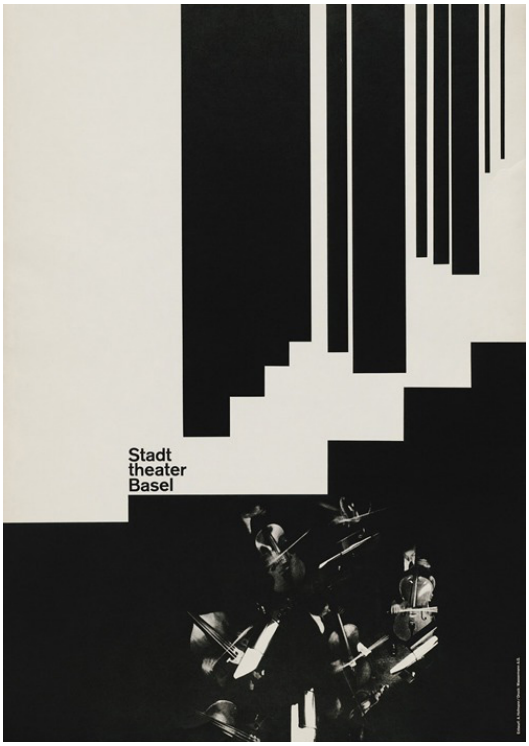
Armin Hofmann is a Swiss graphic designer and educator who was born on June 29, 1920, in Winterthur, Switzerland. He is considered one of the pioneers of Swiss graphic design and has made significant contributions to the field.

Hofmann began his design education at the Allgemeine Gewerbeschule Basel (Basel School of Design) in 1936, where he studied under Emil Ruder and other influential designers. After completing his studies, he worked as a graphic designer in Zurich and Basel.

Swiss Style Graphic Designer

Hofmann followed Emil Ruder as head of the graphic design department at the Schule für Gestaltung Basel (Basel School of Design) and was instrumental in developing the graphic design style known as the Swiss Style.

The Swiss Style emphasized clarity, simplicity, and objectivity in graphic design, often using grid systems, sans-serif typography, and visual hierarchy.









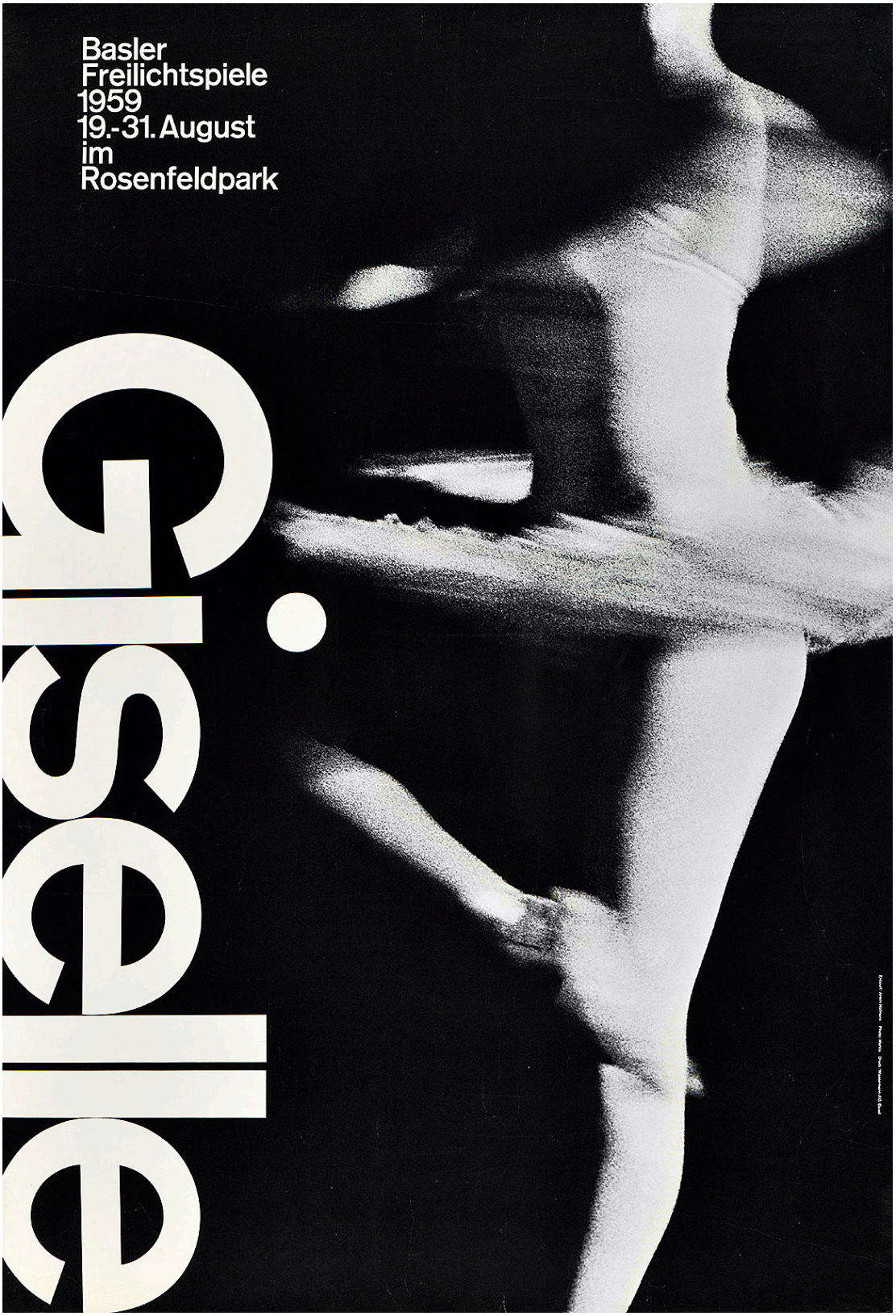




Hofmann's work is marked as being primarily based on the fundamental elements of graphic form; point, shape and line.

Hofmann's work exemplified these principles and contributed to the international recognition and influence of the Swiss Style.

Hofmann's work, especially his poster designs, always seemed to emphasize an economical and efficient use of colour and typefaces. This was in reaction to what Hofmann called the "trivialization of colour". His posters have been exhibited as works of art in major galleries all around the world, including the New York Museum of Modern Art.



Giselle, Basler
Freilichtspiele
1959



Stadttheater
Basel, Wahrend
der Saison
1960


Stadt
Theater
Basel

Stadt Theater Basel

1965
66

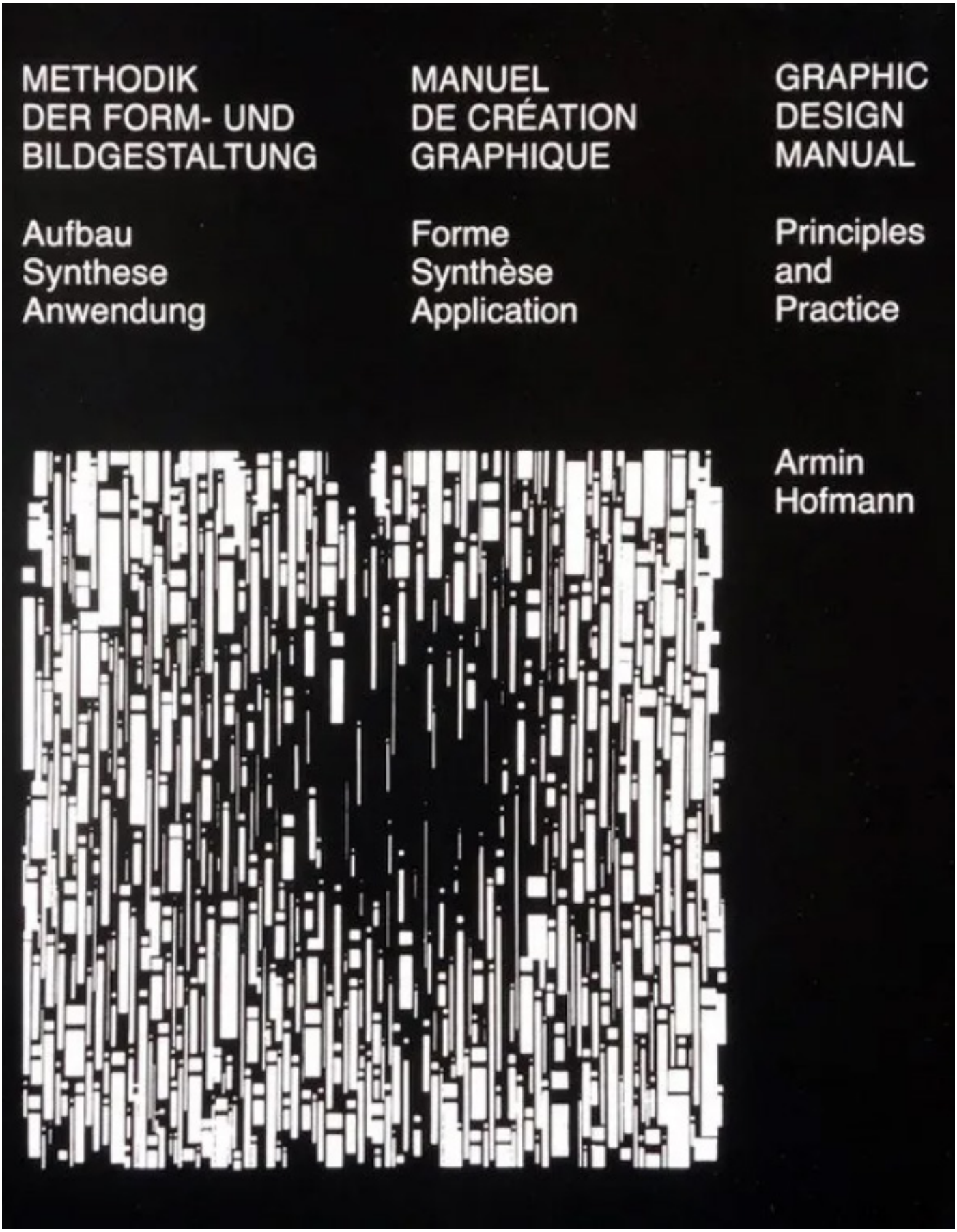




Herman Miller
Collection,
Möbel unserer
Zeit
1962



Plakate aus
der Sammlung
des Gewerbe
museums Basel
1964



Graphic Design Manual: Principles and Practice

Notable Works:

“Graphic Design Manual: Principles and Practice”: In 1965, Armin Hofmann published this influential book, which outlines his design principles and offers guidance on graphic design practice.

Exhibition Design: Hofmann designed numerous exhibitions, including the notable “Giselle” exhibition at the Basel Kunsthalle in 1967.

Armin Hofmann was awarded the AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) Medal for immeasurable influence in teaching the power and elegance of simplicity and clarity through a timeless aesthetic.

Hofmann was presented with the award in April 2012 at “Bright Lights: The AIGA Awards” in New York City.

Hofmann as an educator:

As a professor at the Basel School of Design, Armin Hofmann had a profound impact on graphic design education. He established the graphic design department and taught generations of designers. His teaching approach emphasized the importance of fundamental design principles, craftsmanship, and the exploration of visual language.

Retirement:

He was also an influential educator, retiring in 1987. Hofmann died in December 2020 at the age of 100 in Lucerne, where he lived with his wife Dorothea Hofmann-Schmid.

Although he lived to be 100 years old, Armin Hofmann's importance in design history was still being explored in 2020. In celebration of Armin's 100th birthday in June 2020, his son Matthias Hofmann, also a graphic designer, published the book Armin Hofmann. Reduction. Ethics. Didactics.

The German / English book showcases a comprehensive overview of Armin Hofmann's creative work, his professional convictions, and the didactic principles he developed.

Not only was he the subject of a new book released earlier that year, but he also was one of the stars of Poster House's exhibition *The Swiss Grid*.

“It would be wrong to conceive of the designer as anything but the service of giving messages, events, ideas and values of every kind a visible form.”

Book designed by Shivani Moger