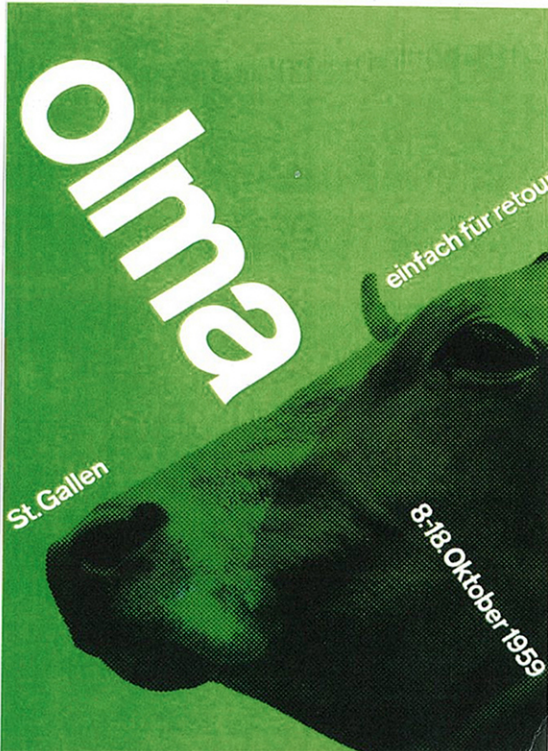# JOSEF MÜLLER-BROCKMANN

Considered one of the most influential Swiss artists of his era, Josef Müller Brockmann's work can be described as the epiphany of the International Typographic Style. Brockmann was appointed the European design consultant to IBM, and their corporate branding of that era stemmed majorly from the clean cut Swiss design. He was a teacher, designer and writer, and his style is notable for its application of Swiss Style- which emphasizes cleanliness and geometrical structure.

Like many other Swiss designers, he preferred photography over illustration, and with the photographical element, helped him to achieve various three dimensional and spatial components in his artwork. Brockmann was also notable for his typefaces- the most commonly used in his work is the font Akzidenz-Grotesk and other sans-serif fonts.

His style was mainly influenced by Constructivism, Bauhaus, De Stijl and Suprematism- all styles that stemmed from the pre-war period and had a particularly political influence. It could then be said that Brockmann utilized the contextual propaganda forms into commercial and corporate use.

'Olma' means spiritual 'being' in Trukish.
This is illustrated with cow symbolism. Cows are associated with hindu middle eastern religious spheres.
A half tone / screen tone is used for a montage illusionary effect. This creates a modern look.

(1) Christian 'X' shaped compositon with the diagonal words. Text is used at each point with a slight off-diagonal for the 8 – 18 October on the bottom right. But it is aligned to the top of the olma so there is a reason for the alignment. I don't think the x shape is really a religious symbol but rather a geometric structure to create a very stable image. BUT diagonals also provide dynamic movement

Very minimal approach – no additional texture – this gives it a very modern look. Even today it looks quite good considering it is over 50 years old. A minimal style is timeless whereas lots of unique stylistic features will date very quickly.
The heavy bottom filled with the cow head is balanced by the large olma at the top. The lightness of the olma is what first draws your eye. But the detail of the cow head gets your attention after that. The trick and skill of the design is this balancing of different kinds of elements - text/image

(2) Uses limited palette – green white black – shading is dependent on dot pattern. Green is associated with cows and grass – and also environmental issues like 'Clean Green New Zealand". Green also symbolises
• a new state of balance
• feel a need for change or growth
• freedom to pursue new ideas
• protection from fears and anxieties connected with the demands of others

(3) **(4)** *Key to this work is the rennaisance artist Bramante's idea of "A harmony and conchord of all the parts to such an extent that noting can be added or taken away" this means that every single part of the overall design is critical. The letters and words are used as visual elements to balnce the composition. While the idea is very old it has a modern spin with Mies Van Der Rhoe who simply said "Less is more". This differs from the higly elborate and decorative styles that came before. And it also differs from the very grungy styles of today as used by david carson.*

(5) *Swiss typogrpahy represents the hieght of modernism in desing and society. When we believed that techncology would solve all the world's problems. clean and sharp and universal was good. After the berlin wall fell, and oil started to run out, and global warming became a problem then society lost faith with technology and the corportae world. So the swiss minimalist universla style is slightly less popular. Now the hand made (honest) and indigenous (authentic) styles are becoming popular.*

COMPARISON OF THE ART OF GUSTAV KLUSTIS AND JOSEF MÜLLER-BROCKMANN

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

The most notable difference in historical context between two artists is that of their existing time periods, and therefore the political and economic pressures that framed and served as inspiration for their work.

This is notable in Gustav's art - though considerably experimental in his constructivist propaganda; we see the impact the socialist regimes had on his art. As the post Russian revolutionary years were progressively becoming a dictatorial agenda headed by Josef Stalin, the impacts of the totalitarianism found its way to Klustis' productions. Political constraints meant he had to be very subjective and selective about what he produced- this is seen as Klustis' later works were majorly pro-Stalinist, and had little other content aside from political advertising. The optimism seen in early constructivist art ebbed away, and constructivist artists like him, were pushed into providing for the cult of Stalin's personality.

Unlike Klustis, Josef Müller-Brockmann's era was of the more fortuitous post-war era, where war politics were not withstanding. The federal republic of Switzerland remained during both wars, neutral, and hence did not suffer the ramifications of the war that devastated the international community. At this time, the post-war economy was ripe for the country's taking, as the rest of the countries recuperated socially, and economically- Switzerland thus began to take their industry in stride. Exports and imports increased, with Swiss industry in engineering mechanics and pharmaceuticals growing, and hence developed a path for graphic design to follow and at its forefront was Müller-Brockmann. Without such political restraints as faced by Klustis, Brockmann was capable of creating and pioneering a minimal approach appropriate for corporate branding with the freedom of expression given.

SIMILARITIES

Despite the difference in the time frames, elements of each artist's style can been seen in each other's work. This is because many post-war art periods have been greatly impacted by the DADAist and constructivist art styles during and before the world wars, and thus can also be noted between Brockmann and Klustis' works.

COLOUR SCHEME
Very limited palette- usually containing up to 4 colours that provide adequate complement/highlight to a main colour.

⑥

PHOTOGRAPHY
Use of people/living creatures as focus points.

SYMBOLISM
Varied symbolism dependant on context, in this case the subject advertised.

LINE WORK
Strong use of lines for both division and aesthetic purpose. Appropriated into composition.

GEOMETRY
Strong use of minimal shape (with no ornamentation) for compositional purpose.

COMPOSITION
Poster style compositions, with weight balanced and distributed.

TYPOGRAPHY
Simplified text: typefaces that are minimal and easy to read.

DIFFERENCES

COLOUR SCHEME
Klustis: **Prominent use of reds in limited palette with strong black contrast.**
Brockmann: **More subtle colour choices, taking softer shades and complimentary colours.**

⑦

PHOTOGRAPHY
Klustis: Low contrast, black and white stills, sometimes with colour addition. No ornamentation.
Brockmann: Black and white, some texturization, i.e screentone/half tone dot textures.

SYMBOLISM
Klustis: Prevalent Stalinist/community symbolism with use of stars to do with political agenda.
Brockmann: Various, and dependant on advertisement context.

GEOMETRY
Klustis: Use of many 4 sided shapes and structure to provide depth/linear perspectives. As well as line work for compositional placements and division.
Brockmann: Use of circles and minimal use of dimensions and overlaps of shapes.

COMPOSITION
Klustis: General poster style composition with 2/3 layout, or central imagery.
Brockmann: Heavier bottom in composition, balanced out with negative spaces or symmetry in objects.

TYPOGRAPHY
Klustis: Elongated style text- still clean and easy to read but bold and statement like.
Brockmann: Sans-serif clean text and layouts. Flush left or right alignments.