My Favorite Designer: Milton Glaser

Throughout the history of design there are graphic designers that will impact the way people look and comprehend the how things are design in the future. Not only will the graphic designer impact the viewers but also they will impact and influence the future faces of graphic design. Graphic designers will turn to one of these graphic designers for inspirations in their work and hope to one day achieve as much success as they did. The graphic designer that I will be focusing on is Milton Glaser because he has influenced the world of graphic design tremendously by breaking the design barriers in so many ways in creating logos, layouts, or advertisements.

Milton Glaser was recognized the most during the 1960s and 1970s. Many people consider Glaser’s work to be modern. But in actuality Glaser is apart of the postmodernism movement. Postmodernism is “Any of several artistic movements since about the 1960s that have challenged the philosophy and practices of modern arts or literature.”¹ The reason Milton Glaser is considered postmodernism is because he was trying move past the norm of modern art doing conceptual designs.

Milton Glaser has always had the passion of design even when he was just a young boy. When he was younger he became terribly ill and bedridden, so he was isolated from people. To cope with this hardship in his life he turned to

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drawing. When he was able to draw he let all his wildest imaginations come out on paper. His passion for art stayed with him when he attended the High School of Music and Arts in Manhattan. Glaser furthered his education by attending and graduating from Cooper Union in 1951 where he studied design. Glaser felt as though he needed more education so he went to school in Bologna, Italy at the Academy of Fine Arts, where he received a Fulbright Scholarship to study etching. In Italy, Glaser was fortunate enough to study under one of his inspirations, Giorgio Morandi.

After spending a year in Italy Glaser returned back to back to New York where he co-founded Push Pin Studios in 1954 along with Reynold Ruffins, Seymour Chwast, and Edward Sorel. Push Pin studios perfectly fit the type of artists that Milton Glaser was because they were not the typical graphic design studio. Push Pin Studios did not do the norm of graphic design by looking at different art movements in the past to inspire their designs. Also the work produced at Push Pin Studio focused on more on imagery and less on typography because all the designers there were amazing drawers and illustrators. By not following what was typical Push Pin Studios impacted the world of graphic design. Glaser directed the studio for twenty years along side with Seymour Chwast.

Glaser decided to take more risks in the design world by following what he was interested in. Glaser decided to with his gut by entering into publishing design. In 1968 Glaser partnered with Clay Felker where they founded New York
Magazine. When working at New York Magazine he was the president and design director. While working as the design director of the magazine, Glaser was able to work a food column in the New York Magazine called The Underground Gourmet, which was a guide for cheap dining in New York City. The column was in the magazine for about seven years,

Milton Glaser decided to further his career by living the successful Push Pin Studio in 1976 by moving toward other design work by opening up his own company, Milton Glaser Inc. With having his own company Glaser was able to experiment with different forms of designing. He was able to push his self as a designer by having his own studio by taking on work in different fields like exhibits, interior, product, supermarket, and restaurant design projects. Today Milton Glaser Inc. works with some popular companies that we know today like Target, Jet Blue, Julliard, Coach, and Trump just to name a few.

Furthering his interests in publication design, in 1983 Milton Glaser decided to partner up with Walter Bernard to form WBMG. WBMG is a publication design firm that is located in New York City. The firm works on redesigning solutions for different publications that already exists for example they helped redesigned The Washington Post. Also the firm designed more than 50 magazines, newspapers, and periodicals not just in the United States but also around the world.

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Milton Glaser decided to go back to his roots by teaching/lecturing at Copper Union and at the School of Visual Arts in New York to students that are passionate about the same field that he is. Glaser started teaching at the School of Visual Arts since 1961 and still is current professor there. Also at the School of Visual Arts he is an acting chairman. Milton Glaser is giving the same opportunity to design students that he received by giving students the opportunity to work under him like he worked under Morandi.

Milton Glaser is a designer that is so unique and influential on the field of graphic design because he started a new movement that was moving past modern era. When he designed he showed that it is okay to be inspired from other movements and artists from the past to create something that is new and refreshing. Milton Glaser did not just stick to one particular area of design but he experimented with logos, poster, magazine, and interior design. This showed that he was an artist that was confident in his work that did not mind taking risks because he was interested or had the passion for several different forms of design. With Milton Glaser work you can see his influences of the past by incorporating simplicity in his work, for example his “I Love New York” design that people are so familiar with. Viewers also see that Milton Glaser work may have simplicity but it is a creative step up by incorporating color and movement like in his design for Bob Dylan in 1966.

To achieve all the success that Milton Glaser has achieved he looked to other art movements, artists and life experiences. Two artists influence the way
Glaser designs/creates in particular for two completely different reasons, Pablo Picasso and Giorgio Morandi. Pablo Picasso is an influence of Glaser because he was an artist that was egocentric and narcissistic. 4 Pablo Picasso was confident in his work and he believed that he deserved all the fame, money, and women that came with being a successful artist. This would bring out the side of Glaser that should be confident in his work and to take as many chances when he is designing just like Picasso. Giorgio Morandi is an influence on Milton Glaser because he studied under him so he became a mentor. Glaser admired that Morandi was so modest as person and designer, unlike Picasso, Morandi did not want the fame, money, or the women he just wanted to do what he loved and just let his art speak for itself. What Glaser took away from Morandi was his “clarity of vision: the fact that everything is so rational and unencumbered by emotionalism, although you, as a viewer, have an emotional response to the work.”5

Along with different artists that influenced Milton Glaser to follow his passion, it was his life experiences that pushed him to keep pushing towards his dreams. When Glaser became very ill as a child he used that experience to influence his art and life. He was isolated from everyone when he was ill so it left him feeling like an outsider, which helped drive his self. 6 Glaser believes that the

5 Ibid, 5
best artist usually had a traumatic experience that forced them to internalize and become introspective.\textsuperscript{7} If Milton Glaser did not experience his illness he probably would not be the Milton Glaser that we know him as today.

There were multiple influences in Milton Glaser’s work that made him into the designer that other artists look to inspire and influence their work. The reason that Glaser is an icon that has shaped graphic design is because he brought new conceptual designs that people would have never thought of using. Glaser’s conceptual way of communicating through designing combined visual and intellectual concepts.\textsuperscript{8} How he created this new way of designing that influenced the world graphic design was by taking pieces from the past and incorporating them in his own designs that made them modern and new. This pushed him to move outside of the modern era because he was blending historical styles.

Milton Glaser will always be known in graphic design not just because he has over 100+ designs and worked in several different areas in the field but because he brought new methods to designing. Glaser has moved past the norm by breaking the rules when it comes to designing. The conceptual design method that many designers used was due to Milton Glaser because he decided to bring his influences from his life and the past artists and movements into his work. This is why Milton Glaser you will always be a great in the design world.

\textsuperscript{7} Moss, 2
\textsuperscript{8} Clifford, John. \textit{Graphic icons: visionaries who shaped modern graphic design}. New York : Pearson, 0.