

Book Reviews

Emil Ruder. *Typography: A Manual of Design*. New York: Hastings House, Publishers, Inc., 1967. \$19.50.

On the dust jacket we read: "The author is concerned in this book with the problems of form which confront the typographer in the practice of his craft." Considering this aim, *Typography: A Manual of Design* is a very sophisticated book conceived in the best Swiss typographic tradition. But it is, again, a work which evaluates typography—its effects and significance—with concepts more appropriate to the era of Gutenberg than to the new conditions imposed upon us by the era of automation.

"The New Typography," magic words some thirty years ago, are not new any more. The revolution, however, produced its academies, and this book is an anthology of one of them. It is a recollection of the author's teaching methods of a craft which (as such) is about to expire. The printer was his own graphic designer for most of the last 400 years. The traditions and conventions of his craft are, by no means, without meaning today, but the craft which had the sole task of producing beautiful pieces of print cannot sustain the immense and complex demands of an era of mass communication.

The profound change has created for the professional an environment with new conditions—both practical and ideological. His task is not just arranging an appealing piece of typography; he must consider over-all design programs and graphic systems in which typography is only a part.

The beaux arts, source of reference for artist-typographers, is as ever a private expression. The graphic designer of today, in order to be able to communicate efficiently (and not his private message), has much more to absorb from information theory and sister disciplines. Good graphic or industrial design certainly gives aesthetic satisfaction, but, above all, it must work; it must communicate not on a personal, but a public, level.

This quite widely acknowledged fact doesn't seem to convince Mr. Ruder, who draws a line between graphic design and typography. On page 14, we read, "More than graphic design, typography is an expression of technology, precision, and good order." One wonders then how legibility can be defined in such untechnological terms: "... in which the effects of line and surface are nicely matched" (p. 68). Many such misunderstandings are undoubtedly due to the careless translation. I am sure that Mr. Ruder's "gebrauchsgraphik" is better expressed in terms of graphic art or applied art instead of "graphic design."

There is a vast and ornate literature about typography and the education of typographers. It is unfortunate that this book is another one of the collection. It fails to point out the real problems—which are not only those

of form—of today's typographic design and design education. It is only logical that the book's best information is formal; it is its layout.

Tomás Gonda

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Leonard Uhr, ed. *Pattern Recognition: Theory, Experiment, Computer Simulations, and Dynamic Models of Form Perception and Discovery*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966. 393 pp. \$8.95 (cloth). \$5.95 (paper).

This book is a collection of papers from the fields of psychology, neurophysiology, and computer model building which relate to pattern recognition problems. It was intended to bring materials from different fields together in a coherent form. There are five parts: (1) conceptual framework, (2) empirical background, (3) theoretical developments, (4) experimental results from neurophysiology and psychology, and (5) computer simulations of complex models.

Readers who may not be familiar with these fields, will gain a much broader knowledge of the subject matter and how research people in other fields have been tackling the problems. However, it is felt that the sampling of papers is lacking in broadness; the lists of references cover only a few areas. More papers concerning the adaptive threshold network and its application to pattern-recognition problems should have been included. There is also too much of an emphasis on character recognition, a sub-problem in pattern recognition which also covers speech recognition, medical diagnosis, electrocardiogram recognition, etc. Otherwise, the book is well organized and most selected papers are clearly presented.

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