

What is Swiss Style graphic design?

Despite its popularization by artists in Switzerland, Swiss style graphic design actually originated in Russia, Germany, and the Netherlands in the 1920's. This cultural style became an international style in the 1950's and still to this day is known by the Swiss designers who made it so famous. Sharp attention to detail, a high standard of printing, and clear and inventive lettering are the foundation for this style.

At the most basic level the Swiss Style can be understood as the authentic pursuit for beauty and simplicity in design. Most of the art pieces based around this style are stamps, posters, street signs, or the like. It is based on minimalism as opposed to elaborate textures and eye-catching designs: it's bold, confident, sleek, and classy. It is because this style is so versatile and can be applied in to multitude of situations that it has been around for so long and remains incredibly popular.

Swiss Style is all about working with less. The objective is to remove, not to add. Think "less is more". There is also a very heavy influence of mathematics and geometrical shapes in many different pieces using this style. The idea is to create a well-structured, balanced design. Along with geometry there is also a strong influence from the elementarism, constructivism, and minimalism movements in the Swiss Style. It is centered around removing the unnecessary so the message emphasizes the necessary. Whoever is exposed to this art is left with an unmistakably clear message; Swiss style is about functionality, practicality, and the simplest use of elements (fundamentally clear-cut and geometrical) for the strict purpose of getting the artist's objective across. It is because of these principles that Swiss Style graphic designers pay such close attention to type.

One of the strongest (and most noticeable) characteristics of Swiss Style is the use of sans-serif fonts. Serif means there are tails at the end of letters, like for example the little curve at the end of an "a" or with the letter "t". Swiss Style typeface uses exclusively print with no tails, chopping even the font they use down to the bare minimum. It also uses different sizes of font to both maximize visual impact and display a visual hierarchy of the information that is presented. Photographs, while not the most important part of the Swiss Style, also play a pretty crucial role in the display of information and design, especially bright colours and geometric shapes.

To summarize, the Swiss Style has been used for nearly a century because it's good. It's simple, artistic, bold, catchy, and professional. It applies to different people from all walks of life and can be tweaked to fit anything from a black tie affair to an ad on a bus stop to a poster in a child's room. Because the style is based around loud shapes and geometric designs it immediately draws in one's eye and is great for conveying strong messages and for use in sales and advertising. Swiss Style is the epitome of "less is more" and if it wasn't such a brilliant approach to design you can be sure it wouldn't have been around this long.