Pictorial Modernism

14

The European poster during the first half of the twentieth century was a continuation of the 1890s poster, but in the second decade of the century its course was strongly affected by modern-art movements and altered by the communication needs of world war. Although influenced by cubism and constructivism, poster designers were cognizant of the need to maintain a pictorial reference if their posters were to communicate persuasively with the general public; they walked a tightrope between the creation of expressive and symbolic images on the one hand and concern for the total visual organization of the picture plane on the other. This dialogue between communicative imagery and design form generates the excitement and energy of pictorial graphics influenced by modern art.

One of the most remarkable moments in the history of graphic design is the brief career of the Beggarstaffs. James Pryde (1866–1941) and William Nicholson (1872–1949) were brothers-in-law who had been close friends since art school. Respected academic painters, they decided to open an advertising design studio in 1894 and felt it necessary to adopt pseudonyms to protect their reputations as artists. One of them found a sack of corn in a stable labeled The Beggarstaff Brothers, and they adopted the name, dropping the “Brothers.” During their brief collaboration they developed a new technique, later named collage. Cut pieces of paper were moved around, changed, and pasted into position on board. The resulting style of absolutely flat planes of color had sensitive edges “drawn” with scissors (Fig. 14–1). Often, an incomplete image challenged the viewer to participate and decipher the subject (Fig. 14–2). The Beggarstaffs ignored the prevalent trend toward floral art nouveau as they forged this new working method into posters of powerful colored shapes and silhouettes.

14–1. The Beggarstaffs, poster for Kassama Corn Flour, 1894. Their straightforward style was firmly established in one of their earlier posters.

Unfortunately, their work was an artistic success but a financial disaster. They attracted few clients, and only a dozen of their designs were printed. One of their most famous posters, for Sir Henry Irving's production of *Don Quixote* at the Lyceum Theater (Fig. 14–3), was never printed, because Irving decided it was a bad likeness. They billed him for only fifty pounds; he paid them twice that. Later, the poster was published in a limited edition, in reduced size, for collectors.

When it became economically advisable for Nicholson and Pryde to terminate the partnership, each returned to painting and received some measure of recognition. Nicholson also developed a woodcut style of illustration that maintained some of the graphic economy of Beggarstaff posters (Fig. 14–4).

Like Nicholson and Pryde, British painter and illustrator Dudley Hardy (1866–1922) also turned to poster and advertising design. He was instrumental in introducing the graphic pictorial qualities of the French poster to London billboards during the 1890s. Hardy developed an effective formula for theatrical poster work: lettering and figures appear against simple flat backgrounds. His poster for the play *The Gaiety Girl* (Fig. 14–5) provided Londoners with a media icon (the Gaiety Girl) akin to Parisians' Chérette.

Plakatstil

The reductive, flat-color design school that emerged in Germany early in the twentieth century is called *Plakatstil* (poster style). In 1898, fifteen-year-old Lucian Bernhard (1883–1972) attended the Munich Flaspalast Exhibition of Interior Decoration and was overwhelmed by what he saw. Returning home "just drunk with color" from this avant-garde design show, Bernhard began to repaint the proper nineteenth-century decor of his family's home while his father was away on a three-day business trip. Walls, ceilings, and even furniture traded drabness for a wonderland of brilliant color. Upon his return home, the elder Bernhard was not amused. Lucian was called a potential criminal and severely rebuked. He ran away from home that very day and never returned.

In Berlin, Bernhard was trying unsuccessfully to support himself as a poet when he saw an advertisement for a poster contest sponsored by Priester matches. The prize was two hundred marks (about fifty dollars at the time), so Bernhard, who had excelled at art in school, decided to enter. His first design showed a round table with a checked tablecloth, an ashtray holding a lighted cigar, and a box of matches. Feeling that the image was too bare, Bernhard painted scantily clad dancing girls in the background.

Later that day, he decided that the image was too complex and painted the girls out. When a friend dropped by and asked if it was a poster for a cigar, Bernhard painted out the cigar. Then, deciding that the tablecloth and ashtray stood out too prominently, Bernhard painted them out as well, leaving a pair of matches on a bare table. Because the entries had to be postmarked by midnight on that date, Bernhard hastily painted the word Priester above the matches in blue, wrapped the poster, and sent it off.

Later Bernhard learned that the jury's immediate reaction to his poster was total rejection. But a tardy juror, Ernst Growald of the Hollerbaum and Schmidt lithography firm, rescued it from the trashcan. Stepping back to study the image, Growald proclaimed, "This is my first prize. Here is a genius." Growald convinced the rest of the jury, and Bernhard's first poster was the now-famous Priester matches poster (Fig. 14–6), which reduced communication to one word and two matches.

This self-taught young artist probably did not realize it at the time, but he had moved graphic communications one step further in the simplification and reduction of naturalism into a visual language of shape and sign. Toulouse-Lautrec had started the process and the Beggarstaffs had continued it, but Bernhard established the approach to the poster of using flat color shapes, the product name, and product image (Fig. 14–7). He repeated this approach over and over during the next two decades. In addition, he designed over three hundred packages for sixty-six products, using similar elementary graphics.

The outstanding Berlin lithography firm of Hollerbaum and Schmidt recognized that an important direction for German poster art was developing in the hands of Bernhard and other young artists. It signed exclusive contracts with six of them, including Bernhard, Hans Rudi Erdt (1883–1918), Julius Gipkens (1883–1968), and Julius Klinger (1876–1950). This farsighted business decision effectively forced anyone wishing to commission designs from these artists to work with the Hollerbaum and Schmidt printing firm. Comparison of the Stiller shoes poster by Bernhard and Erdt's "Never Fail" and Opel motorcar posters (Figs. 14–8 and 14–9) demonstrate how well Erdt was able to apply the Bernhard formula: flat background color; large, simple image; and product name. Gipkens, like Bernhard, was a self-taught graphic designer who developed a large clientele in Berlin. His fluid, linear drawing gave a nervous wiggle to both his lettering and images and became a trademark in his work (Fig. 14–10).

Born and educated in Vienna, Julius Klinger had been associated with the Vienna Secession artists. He eventually moved to Berlin, where his style veered from floral art nouveau toward decorative shapes of bright, clear color and concise, simple lettering (see Fig. 14–19). His designs were less reductive than works by Bernhard and Erdt.

14–2. The Beggarstaffs, poster for Harper's Magazine, 1895. The viewer brings closure by combining fragments into a symbolic image.

14–3. The Beggarstaffs, poster for Don Quixote, 1896. Cut paper shapes produce a graphic image whose simplicity and technique were ahead of their time.

14–4. William Nicholson, illustration from An Alphabet, 1897. The reductive simplicity of Beggarstaff posters is maintained.

14–5. Dudley Hardy, theatrical poster for The Gaiety Girl, 1898. The actor and play title stand out dramatically against the red background.

14–6 Lucien Bernhard, poster for Priester matches, c. 1905. Color became the means of projecting a powerful message with minimal information.

14–7. Lucian Bernhard, poster for Stiller shoes, 1912. Against the brown background, dark letterforms, and black shoe, the inside of the shoe is intense red and the front of the heel is bright orange.

During the early years of Bernhard's poster design career, he developed a sans-serif lettering style painted in broad brushstrokes. At first he did not employ any particular concept, but over time dense alphabets of unique character gradually developed. This lettering impressed a staff member from the Berthold Type Foundry in Berlin, and a typeface design was based on it (Fig. 14–11). When the typeface was released in 1910, Bernhard was quite surprised to see his personal lettering style cast in metal for the entire world to use. His sense of simplicity was also applied to trademark design. For Hommel Micrometers, in 1912, Bernhard constructed a little mechanical man holding one of the client's sensitive measuring devices (Fig. 14–12). For Manoli cigarettes, in 1911, Bernhard reduced the firm's trademark to an elemental letter within a geometric form printed in a second color (Figs. 14–13 and 14–14).

Bernhard was a pivotal designer. His work might be considered the logical conclusion of the turn-of-the-century poster movement. At the same time, his emphasis on reduction, minimalist form, and simplification anticipated the constructivist movement. As time went on, Bernhard tackled interior design, then studied carpentry to learn furniture design and construction. This led to a study of architecture; during the 1910s Bernhard designed furniture, rugs, wallpapers, and lighting fixtures as well as office buildings, factories, and houses.

A visit to America in 1923 excited Bernhard, and he returned to live in New York. His work was far too modern to gain acceptance in America; it took him five years to establish himself as a graphic designer. During that time he worked as an interior designer. In 1928 Bernhard contracted with American Type Founders to design new typefaces, producing a steady stream of new fonts that captured the sensibilities of the era.

Switzerland and the *Sach plakat*

In Switzerland, a land with three principle languages, poster design was affected by German, French, and Italian cultures. Like the Netherlands, Switzerland is a small country amidst large neighbors, and many outside influences are also apparent there. The country has long been a popular vacation spot, and travel posters filled a natural need. With his 1908 poster of
Zermatt (Fig. 14–15), Emil Cardinaux (1877–1936) created the f

14–8. Hans Rudi Erdt, poster for Never Fail safes, 1911. The military bearing of the security guard reflects the reliability of the company.

14–9. Hans Rudi Erdt, poster for Opel automobiles, 1911. Pose, expression, and clothing signify the affluent customer for this automobile.

14–10. Julius Gipkens, poster for Heinemann's wicker furniture, undated. The dog and checkered cushion suggest hearth and home.

14–11. Berthold Type Foundry, Block Type, 1910. Early twentieth-century German sans-serif typefaces were based on Bernhard's poster lettering.

14–12. Lucian Bernhard, trademark for Hommel Micrometers, 1912. Every shape and form comprising this figure is derived from Hommel's products.

14–13. Lucian Bernhard, trademark for Manoli cigarettes, 1910. A simple M in a circle suggests the minimalism of future trademarks.

14–14. Lucian Bernhard, poster for Manoli, 1910. Bernhard designed a number of posters for Manoli cigarettes. The name Manoli was derived from the name of the company owner's wife, Ilona Mandelbaum, in reverse.

14–15. Emil Cardinaux, Zermatt poster, 1908. The Matterhorn emerges in all its splendor above the landscape and simple lettering below.

14–16. Niklaus Stoecklin, BiORO poster, 1941. Combined with a pair of sunglasses, the tube of sunscreen lotion becomes a nose.

14–17. Herbert Leupin, poster for Die Weltwoche, 1949. A globe and a rolled up newspaper together form an exclamation point.

14–18. Otto Baumberger, poster for the department store
PKZ, 1923.

14–19. Julius Klinger, poster for Germany's eighth bond drive, 1917. Eight arrows piercing a dragon remind citizens that their contributions have helped wound the enemy.

14–20. Lucian Bernhard, poster for a war-loan campaign, 1915. A sharp militaristic feeling is amplified by the Gothic inscription, "This is the way to peace—the enemy wills it so! Thus
subscribe to the war loan!"

14–21. Lucian Bernhard, “Frauen!” (Women!), poster, 1918.
The women’s liberation movement had already been active in Germany , but the war increased its momentum. This poster announced the first elections in Germany open to women.

irst modern Swiss poster, sharing many characteristics with the Plakatstil in Germany. Even after modern production procedures such as offset printing began to be used in most poster production, traditional lithographic crafts were retained in what was known as Basel realism. This style was promoted by Niklaus Stoecklin (1896–1982) (Fig. 14–16), Otto Baumberger (1889–1961), and later Herbert Leupin (1914–99) (Fig. 14–17), whose *Sachplakate* (object posters) were characterized by a simple, laconic, and sometimes hyper-realistic approach. Baumberger’s 1923 poster for the PKZ department store consists of a life-size drawing of a coat showing the actual hairs of the fabric with the text restricted to “PKZ” (Fig. 14–18).

The poster goes to war

The poster reached the zenith of its importance as a communications medium during World War 1 (1914–18). Printing technologies had advanced rapidly, while radio and other electronic means of public communication were not yet in widespread use. In this global conflict, governments turned to the poster as a significant medium of propaganda and visual persuasion. Armies had to be recruited and public morale had to be boosted to maintain popular support for the war effort. In this first conflict fought with the armaments of technology—airplanes, zeppelins, heavy artillery, and tanks—fund-raising drives were used to collect vast amounts of money to finance the war. As resources were diverted to the war effort, public support for conservation and home gardening was required to lessen the risk of acute shortages. Finally, the enemy had to be assailed for its barbarism and threat to civilization.

The posters produced by the Central Powers (led by Germany and Austria-Hungary) were radically different from those made by the Allies (led by France, Russia, and Great Britain, joined by the United States in 1917). In Austria-Hungary and Germany, war posters continued the traditions of the Vienna Secession and the simplicity of the Plakatstil pioneered by Bernhard. Words and images were integrated, and the essence of the communication was conveyed by simplifying images into powerful shapes and patterns. In expressing this design philosophy, Julius Klinger observed that the United States flag was the best poster America had. Klinger’s war posters expressed complex ideas with simple pictographic symbols (Fig. 14–19). Curiously, Bernhard adopted a medieval approach in several war posters, such as the hand-drawn red-and-black lithographic Seventh War Loan poster (Fig. 14–20). In an almost primeval expression of the ancient Germanic spirit, Bernhard depicted
a clenched fist in medieval armor thrusting from the top right corner of the space. His 1918 poster “Frauen” was designed for the first elections in German open to women (Fig. 14–21).

Gipkens (Fig. 14–22) often contrasted stark graphic shapes boldly against the white ground. When it became evident after 1916 that submarine warfare was the only possible way Germany could break the English blockade, Erdt (Fig. 14–23) celebrated underwater heroes and rallied the public behind them. Showing the destruction of enemy symbols or flags was a frequent propaganda device. A most effective example is Cologne designer Otto Lehmann’s (b. 1865) poster depicting industrial workers and farmers holding on their shoulders a soldier taking down a torn British flag (Fig. 14–24).

The Allies’ approach to graphic propaganda was more illustrative, using literal rather than symbolic imagery to address propaganda objectives. British posters stressed the need to protect traditional values, the home, and the family. Perhaps the most effective British poster of the war years is the widely imitated 1915 military recruiting poster by Alfred Leete (1882–
1933) showing the popular Lord Horatio Kitchener, British Secretary of War, pointing directly at the

viewer (Fig. 14–25). This image originally appeared as the 5 September 1914 cover of *London Opinion* magazine above the headline “Your Country Needs You.” Some posters appealed directly to sentimentality, such as Saville Lumley’s (d. 1950) 1914 image, “Daddy, What Did YOU do During the Great War?” (Fig. 14–26).

Public patriotism ran high when the United States entered the war to “make the world safe for democracy” in “the war to end all wars.” Illustrator Charles Dana Gibson offered his services as art director to the Division of Pictorial Publicity, a federal agency that produced over seven hundred posters and other propaganda materials for fifty other governmental agencies. Working without charge, leading magazine illustrators turned to poster design and grappled with the change in scale from magazine page to poster. Persuasive propaganda replaced narrative design, and suddenly the illustrators had to integrate lettering with images. James Montgomery Flagg (1877–1960), whose sketchy painting style was widely known, produced forty-six war posters during the year and a half of American involvement in the war, including his American version of the Kitchener poster, a self-portrait of Flagg himself (Fig. 14–27).

Joseph C. Leyendecker (1874–1951) was America’s most popular illustrator between the World War I era and the early 1940s. Leyendecker followed Gibson by creating a canon of idealized physical beauty in the mass media. His career received a boost from his popular posters. Asked to honor the role of Boy Scouts in the Third Liberty Loan Campaign (Fig. 14–28), Leyendecker combined common visual symbols—Liberty clad in the flag, holding an imposing shield, and taking a “Be Prepared” sword from a scout—that promoted patriotism within all levels of American society. His ability to convey the iconic essence of a subject was emerging. This skill held Leyendecker in good stead after the war, for his 322 covers for the *Saturday Evening Post* and countless advertising illustrations, notably for Arrow Shirts and Collars during the 1920s, effectively captured the American experience and attitudes during the two decades between the world wars.

Honoring soldiers and creating a cult around national leaders or symbolic figures were two important functions of the poster; ridiculing or disparaging the leaders of the enemy forces was another. In Paul Verrees’s attempt at humor (Fig. 14–29), a strategy seldom seen in propaganda posters, the Kaiser is “canned.”

Many posters emphasized the public’s contribution to the war effort by appealing to patriotic emotions. In a poster for the American Red Cross (Fig. 14–30) by Jesse Willcox Smith (1863–1935), the viewer is asked if he or she has a service flag, which signifies that the household has supported the Red Cross effort. Smith shared a studio with Elizabeth Shippen Green (1871–1954) and Violet Oakley (1874–1961), both of whom she met while studying with Howard Pyle. The three were very active as illustrators specializing in magazine and children’s book illustrations portraying children, motherhood, and the everyday life of the times.

14–22. Julius Gipkens, poster for an exhibition of captured airplanes, 1917. A symbolic German eagle sits triumphantly upon the indicia of a captured allied aircraft.

14–23. Hans Rudi Erdt, poster heralding German submarines,
c. 1916. A powerful structural joining of type and image proclaimed, “U-Boats Out!”

14–24. Otto Lehmann, poster for a war-loan campaign, undated. The lettering translates, “Support our men in field gray. Crush England’s might. Subscribe to the war loan.”

14–25. Alfred Leete, poster for military recruiting, c. 1915. This printed sheet confronts the spectator with a direct gaze.

14–26. Saville Lumley, “Daddy, What Did YOU Do in the Great War?,” poster, 1914

14–27. James Montgomery Flagg, poster for military recruiting, 1917. Five million copies of Flagg's poster were printed, making it one of the most widely reproduced posters in history.

14–28. Joseph C. Leyendecker, poster celebrating a successful bond drive, 1917. Leyendecker's painting technique of slablike brush strokes makes this poster distinctive.

14–29. J. Paul Verrees, poster promoting victory gardens, 1918. Public action—the raising of one's own food—is tied directly to the defeat of the enemy.

14–30. Jesse Willcox Smith, poster for the American Red Cross, 1918. Public display of graphic symbols showing support for the war effort were encouraged.

The maverick from Munich

A leading Plakatstil designer, Ludwig Hohlwein (1874–1949) of Munich began his career as a graphic illustrator with work commissioned by *Jugend* magazine as early as 1904. During the first half of the century, Hohlwein's graphic art evolved with changing social conditions. The Beggarstaffs were his initial inspiration, and in the years before World War I Hohlwein took great delight in reducing his images to flat shapes. Unlike the Beggarstaffs and his Berlin rival Bernhard, however, Hohlwein applied a rich range of texture and decorative pattern to his images (Fig. 14–31). Many of his early posters were for clothing manufacturers and retail stores, and it seemed that Hohlwein never repeated himself. In the posters that he designed during World War I, Hohlwein began to combine his simple, powerful shapes with more naturalistic imagery (Fig. 14–32).

As evidenced in a poster (Fig. 14–33) for a Red Cross collection to benefit the recovering war wounded, Hohlwein's work straddles the line between the symbolic posters of other Central Powers graphic designers and the Allies' pictorial posters. After the war Hohlwein received numerous advertising poster commissions. His work became more fluid and painterly, with figures frequently arranged on a flat white or color ground and surrounded by colorful lettering.

After an unsuccessful attempt to seize power in the Munich Putsch of 1923, Adolf Hitler was sent to prison, where he spent his time writing *Mein Kampf*, which set forth his political philosophy and political ambitions for Germany. He wrote that propaganda "should be popular and should adapt its intellectual level to the receptive ability of the least intellectual" citizens. Hitler was convinced that the more artistically designed posters used in Germany and Austria during World War I were "wrongheaded" and the slogans and popular illustrations of the Allies more effective.

Hitler had an almost uncanny knack for visual propaganda. When he rose on the German political scene, the swastika was adopted as the symbol for the Nazi party. Uniforms consisting of brown shirts with red armbands bearing a black swastika in a white circle began to appear throughout Germany as the Nazi party grew in strength and numbers. In retrospect, it seems almost inevitable that the Nazi party would commission posters from Hohlwein, for the evolution of his work coincided closely with Hitler's concept of effective propaganda. As Hitler delivered passionate radio addresses to the nation about the German "master race" and the triumphant superiority of German athletes and culture, Hohlwein posters conveyed these images all across the nation (Figs. 14–34 and 14–35). As the Nazi dictatorship consolidated its power and World War II approached, Hohlwein moved toward a bold imperial and militaristic style of tight, heavy forms and strong tonal contrasts (Fig. 14–36). Hohlwein's oeuvre evolved with changing political and social currents, and his reputation as a designer was seriously tarnished by his collaboration with the Nazis.

Postcubist pictorial modernism

After World War I, the nations of Europe and North America sought a return to normalcy. The war machinery was turned toward peacetime needs, and a decade of unprecedented prosperity dawned for the victorious Allies. Faith in the machine and technology was at an all-time high. This ethic gained expression through art and design. Léger's celebration of mechanical, machine-made, and industrial forms became an important design resource, and cubist ideas about spatial organization and synthetic imagery inspired an important new direction in pictorial images. Among the graphic designers who incorporated cubism directly into their work, an American working in London, Edward McKnight Kauffer (1890–1954), and a Ukrainian immigrant to Paris, A. M. Cassandre (born Adolphe Jean-Marie Mouron, 1901–68), played major roles in defining this new approach.

The term *art deco* is used to identify popular geometric works of the 1920s and 1930s. To some extent an extension of art nouveau, it signifies a major aesthetic sensibility in graphics, architecture, and product design during the decades between the two world wars. The influences of cubism, the Bauhaus (see chapter 16), and the Vienna Secession commingled with De Stijl and suprematism (discussed in chapter 15), as well as a mania for Egyptian, Aztec, and Assyrian motifs. Streamlining, zigzag, moderne, and decorative geometry—these attributes were used to express the modern era of the machine while still satisfying a passion for decoration. (The term *art deco*, coined by British art historian Bevis Hillier in the 1960s, derives from the title of the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, a major design exhibition held in Paris in 1925. It was not used for the title of this chapter because graphic designs not encompassed by the term, such as Plakatstil and the wartime propaganda posters, are also discussed here.)

14–31. Ludwig Hohlwein, poster for men's ready-made clothing, 1908. The interplay between organic/geometric form and figurative/abstract images fascinated Hohlwein.

14–32. Ludwig Hohlwein, Starnbergersee poster, 1910.

14–33. Ludwig Hohlwein, fund-raising poster, 1914. A graphic symbol (the red cross) combines with a pictorial symbol (a wounded soldier) in an appeal with emotional power and strong visual impact.

14–34. Ludwig Hohlwein, poster for the Deutsche Lufthansa, 1936. A mythological winged being symbolizes the airline, German victory in the Berlin Olympics, and the triumph of the Nazi movement.

14–35. Ludwig Hohlwein, concert poster, 1938. A Teutonic she-warrior looms upward, thanks to a low viewpoint and a light source striking her from below.

14–36. Ludwig Hohlwein, recruiting poster, early 1940s. In one of Hohlwein's last Nazi posters, a stern and somber soldier appears above a simple question, "And you?"

Kauffer was born in Great Falls, Montana. His formal education was limited to eight years of grammar school because his itinerant fiddler father abandoned the family when Kauffer was three. At age twelve Kauffer began to work at odd jobs to supplement the family income. At age sixteen he traveled to San Francisco and worked in a bookstore while taking night-school art classes and painting on weekends. On his way to New York late in 1912, he stopped in Chicago for several months to study at the Art Institute. There he saw the famous Armory Show, which traveled to Chicago from New York in 1913. This first American exposure to modern art caused an uproar. The 16 March 1913 *New York Times* headline proclaimed "Cubists and Futurists Make Insanity Pay."

Twenty-two-year-old Kauffer responded intuitively to the strength of the work, decided his Chicago teachers were not on top of recent developments in art, and moved to Europe. After living in Munich and Paris, he journeyed to London in 1914 when war broke out. Kauffer's famous 1918 *Daily Herald* poster

(Fig. 14–37), although flawed somewhat by the type choice and placement, showed how the formal idiom of cubism and futurism could be used with strong communications impact in graphic design. Winston Churchill even suggested that Kauffer design an emblem for the Royal Flying Corps. For the next quarter of a century, a steady stream of posters and other graphic design assignments enabled him to apply the invigorating principles of modern art, particularly cubism, to the problems of visual communication. He designed 141 posters for the London Underground Transport (Figs. 14–38 and 14–39). Many of these promoted weekend pleasure travel to rural areas at the end the lines. Kauffer achieved visual impact with landscape subjects on posters by reductive design, editing complex environments into interlocking shapes. Later his posters tended to display art deco attributes (Fig. 14–40).

In a March 1937 *PM* magazine article, Aldous Huxley observed that in contrast to the predominant use of money and sex in advertising for everything from scents to sanitary plumbing, Kauffer "prefers the more difficult task of advertising products in terms of forms that are symbolical only to those particular products. . . . He reveals his affinity with all artists who have ever aimed at expressiveness through simplification, distortion, and transposition, and especially the Cubists," producing "not a copy, but a simplified, formalized and more expressive symbol." When World War II began, Kauffer returned to his native America, where he worked until his death in 1954.

At age fourteen A. M. Cassandre immigrated to Paris from Ukraine, where he had been born to a Russian mother and French father. He studied at the École des Beaux Arts and Académie Julian. His graphic design career began at age twenty-two fulfilling poster commissions (Fig. 14–41) from the Hachard & Cie printing firm to earn money for art study and living expenses. From 1923 until 1936 he revitalized French advertising art through a stunning series of posters. Cassandre's bold, simple designs emphasize two-dimensionality and are composed of broad, simplified planes of color. By reducing his subjects to iconographic symbols, he moved very close to synthetic cubism. His love of letterforms is evidenced by an exceptional ability to integrate words and images into a total composition. Cassandre achieved concise statements by combining telegraphic copy, powerful geometric forms, and symbolic imagery created by simplifying natural forms into almost pictographic silhouettes. A poster for the Paris newspaper *L'Intransigeant* (Fig. 14–42) is a masterful composition. Cassandre cropped the paper's name as it thrust from the upper right-hand corner, leaving the often-used shortened version.

Many of Cassandre's finest works were for railways (Figs. 14–43 and 14–44) and steamship lines. In his poster for the ocean liner *L'Atlantique* (Fig. 14–45), Cassandre exaggerated the scale difference between the ship and the tugboat to achieve a monolithic quality signifying safety and strength. The severe geometry is softened by the smoke and fading reflection. The iconography of his cinematic sequence of word and image was used to advertise the liqueur Dubonnet (Fig. 14–46) for over two decades. Consumption of the beverage transforms the line drawing into a full-color painting. The figure became a popular trademark used in formats ranging from notepads to press advertisements and billboards. In the 1964 book *Language of Vision* the designer and design historian Gyorgy Kepes described Cassandre's method: "One unifying device employed by Cassandre was the use of a contour line common to various spatial units. The double outline takes on a double meaning, similar to a visual pun. It refers to inside and outside space simultaneously, . . . [and] the spectator is therefore forced into intensive participation as he seeks to resolve the apparent contradiction. But the equivocal contour l

14–37. E. McKnight Kauffer, poster for the Daily Herald, 1918. This bellwether poster was based on the designer's earlier futurist- and cubist-inspired print of flying birds.

14–38. E. McKnight Kauffer, London Underground poster,
1930. Lyrical muted colors capture the idyllic quality of the rural location.

14–39. E. McKnight Kauffer, poster for the London Underground, 1924. The essence of the subject is distilled into dynamic colored planes.

14–40. E. McKnight Kauffer, poster for the London Underground. Art deco is dominant in this poster suggesting the power of the London Underground.

14–41. A. M. Cassandre, poster for the furniture store Au Bucheron, 1923. Cassandre's first poster used a repetition of orange and yellow geometric planes.

14–42. A. M. Cassandre, poster for the Paris newspaper L'Intransigeant, 1925. A pictographic image of Marianne, the symbolic voice of France, urgently shouts news received over telegraph wires.

14–43. A. M. Cassandre, poster for the North Star Paris-to- Amsterdam night train, 1927. A magnificent abstract design conveys an intangible aspect of travel: distant destinations offer new experiences and hope for the future.Amsterdam hosted the Olympic Games in 1928, and this poster advocated rail travel for that event.

14–44. A. M. Cassandre, Express Nord poster, 1927. The spirit of art deco is clearly expressed by the image of the locomotive.

ine does more than unify different spatial data. It acts like a warp, weaving the threads of color planes into one rhythmical unity. The rhythmical flow of the line injects the picture surface with a sensual intensity."

14–45. A. M. Cassandre, poster for the ocean liner L'Atlantique, 1931. The ship is constructed on a rectangle, echoing the poster's rectangular edges.

14–46. A. M. Cassandre, poster for Dubonnet, 1932. DUBO (doubt): the man eyes his glass uncertainly; DU BON (of some good): the beverage is tasted; and DUBONNET: the product is identified as the glass is refilled.

14–47. A. M. Cassandre, Bifur typeface, 1929. Strokes from each letter are omitted; a linear shaded area restores the basic silhouette.

14–48. A. M. Cassandre, Acier Noir typeface, 1936. In this unique design, each letter is half solid and half outlined.

14–49. A. M. Cassandre, Peignot typeface, 1937. This thick-and-thin sans serif replaces lowercase with small capitals having ascenders and descenders.

14–50. Jean Carlu, Vanity Fair cover, 1930. Stylized geometric heads evoke neon lights and cubism as they glow against a night sky.

For the Deberny and Peignot type foundry, Cassandre designed typefaces with daring innovations. In the quintessential art deco display type Bifur (Fig. 14–47), the eye is able to fill in the missing parts and read the characters. Acier Noir (Fig. 14–48) contrasts outline and solid black portions of the letters, while Peignot (Fig. 14–49) represents the attempt to revolutionize the alphabet by reviving an earlier roman form. All lowercase letters are small capitals, except the *b, d,* and *f*. The small *H, K,* and *L* have ascending strokes.

During the late 1930s Cassandre worked in the United States for such clients as *Harper's Bazaar*, Container Corporation of America, and N. W. Ayer. After returning to Paris in 1939, he turned to painting and design for the ballet and theater, which were his major areas of involvement over the next three decades.

In addition to Kauffer and Cassandre, many other graphic designers and illustrators incorporated concepts and images from cubism in their work. Jean Carlu (1900–89), a promising eighteen-year-old French architectural student, fell under the wheels of a Paris trolley car; his right arm was severed from his

body. His survival was miraculous, and during long days of recovery he thought intensely about the world and his future. World War I had turned northern France into a vast burial ground, and the country struggled for economic recovery in the face of devastation. Having to abandon his dream of architecture, young Carlu vowed to become an artist and apply his talents to the needs of his country, and with commitment and concentration, he taught himself to draw with his left hand.

Carlu understood the modern movements and applied this knowledge to visual communication (Fig. 14–50). Realizing the need for concise statements, he made a dispassionate, objective analysis of the emotional value of visual elements. Then he assembled them with almost scientific exactness. Tension and alertness were expressed by angles and lines; feelings of ease, relaxation, and comfort were transmitted by curves. Carlu sought to convey the essence of the message by avoiding the use of "two lines where one would do" or expressing "two ideas where one will deliver the message more forcefully." To study the effectiveness of communications in the urban environment, he conducted experiments with posters moving past spectators at varying speeds so that message legibility and impact could be assessed and documented.

In 1940 Carlu was in America completing an exhibition entitled "France at War" for the French Information Service display at the New York World's Fair. On 14 June 1940 German troops marched into Paris, and Carlu was stunned to learn that his country was capitulating to Hitler. He decided to remain in America for the duration of the war; this sojourn extended to thirteen years. Some of his best work was created during this period, notably his posters designed for the American and Allied war efforts (see Fig. 17–24). In his finest designs, word and image are interlocked in terse messages of great power.

Paul Colin (1892–1989) started his career as a graphic designer in 1925, when an acquaintance from the trenches of World War I asked the thirty-three-year-old painter if he would like to become the graphics and set designer for the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris. In program covers and posters, Colin often placed a figure or object centrally before a colored background and type or lettering above and/or below it. These strong, central images are animated by a variety of techniques: creating a double image, often with different drawing techniques and scale changes; using the transparency of overlapping images as a means to make two things into one; adding color shapes or bands behind or to the side of the central figure to counteract its static placement. Vibrant color, informal compositions, and energetic linear drawings expressed joy in life (Fig. 14–51).

Colin's simple, sketchy design tendencies enabled him to produce a substantial oeuvre. Estimates of the number of posters he created range from one to two thousand, and some sources credit him with as many as eight hundred set designs. Whatever the exact numbers, Colin was the most prolific and enduring French designer of his generation. He produced propaganda posters during World War II until the fall of France, and new Colin posters were still being commissioned, printed, and posted throughout Paris during the early 1970s.

A direct application of cubism to graphic design was made by Austin Cooper (1890–1964) in England. In a series of three collage-inspired posters, he attempted to spark memories of the viewer's earlier Continental visits by presenting fragments and glimpses of landmarks (Fig. 14–52). Lively movement is achieved by shifting planes, sharp angles, and the superimposition of lettering and images. In 1924 Cooper made an interesting foray into the use of pure geometric shape and color to solve a communications problem for the London Underground (Figs. 14–53 and 14–54). Geometric forms rising from the bottom to the top of each poster change in a color spectrum from warm to cool to symbolize the temperature changes as one leaves the cold street in winter—or the hot street in summer—for the greater comfort of the underground railway.

In Vienna, Joseph Binder (1898–1972) studied at the Vienna School of Applied Art, which was under the direction of Alfred Roller, from 1922 until 1926. While still a student, Binder combined various influences, including Koloman Moser and cubism, into a pictorial graphic design style with strong

communicative power. The hallmarks of his work were natural images reduced to basic forms and shapes, like the cube, sphere, and cone, and two flat color shapes used side by side to represent the light and shadow sides of a figure or object. His award-winning poster for the Vienna Music and Theater Festival (Fig. 14–55) is an early manifestation of the uniquely Viennese approach to art deco. Binder traveled widely, settling in New York City in 1935. As with so many immigrants to America, his work evolved in his changed environment (see Figs. 17–17 and 17–18). He developed a highly refined and stylized naturalism in posters and billboards advertising throat lozenges, beer, travel, and public services.

Between the world wars, Germany became a cultural hub as advanced ideas in all the arts flowed across its borders from other European countries. Geometric pictorial images inspired by cubism and French advertising art—along with lettering, typography, and spatial organization from the Russian constructivist and Dutch De Stijl movements (discussed in chapter 15)—combined with vigorous Teutonic forms in a unique national approach. Superb printing technology and rigorous art training institutes enabled German graphic designers to achieve a high level of excellence. Schulz-Neudamm, staff designer for motion picture publicity at Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft, is prominent among the many German designers who created memorable graphics during this period (Fig. 14–56).

In England, Abram Games (1914–96) extended the philosophy and spatial ideas of postcubist pictorial modernism through World War II and well into the second half of the twentieth century. He began his career on the eve of World War II and produced educational, instructional, and propaganda graphics during the war. About his philosophy, Games wrote, “the message must be given quickly and vividly so that interest is subconsciously retained. The discipline of reason conditions the expression of design. The designer constructs, winds the spring. The viewer’s eye is caught, the spring released.” Games’s poster for the Emergency Blood Transfusion Service (Fig. 14–57) asks the viewer, “If he should fall, is your blood there to save him?” Ordinary images of a hand, a bottle, and a foot soldier are combined in a compelling statement that provokes an emotional response from the observer.

14–51. Paul Colin, travel poster for Paris, 1935. Informal color shapes move in counterpoint to simple contour illustrations in an open composition.

14–52. Austin Cooper, poster for the Southern Railway, undated. Cubist rhetoric operates symbolically for mass communications, with fragments and glimpses of a Paris trip.

14–53. Austin Cooper, poster for the London Underground, 1924. Color conveys the comfort of warmer temperatures in the underground railway during winter.

14–54. Austin Cooper, poster for the London Underground, 1924. Color conveys the comfort of cooler temperatures in the underground railway during the summers.

14–55. Joseph Binder, poster for the Vienna Music and Theater Festival, 1924. Figures are reduced to flat, geometric shapes, but the proportions and light-and-shadow planes retain a sense of naturalism.14–56. Schulz-Neudamm, cinema poster for

Metropolis, 1926. The art deco idiom often conveyed unbridled optimism for machines and human progress, but here it turns darkly toward a future where robots replace people.

14–57. Abram Games, poster to recruit blood donors, c. 1942. Placing the soldier inside the diagram of the blood bottle cements the connection between the donor's blood and the soldier's survival.

Modernist pictorial graphics in Europe focused on the total integration of word and image, which became one of the most enduring currents of twentieth-century graphic design. The approach began with Bernhard's 1905 Priester matches poster, responded to the communications needs of World War I and the formal innovations of cubism and other early modern-art movements, and emerged after the war to play a major role in defining the visual sensibilities of the 1920s and 1930s. It retained sufficient momentum to provide graphic solutions to communications problems during World War II and beyond.