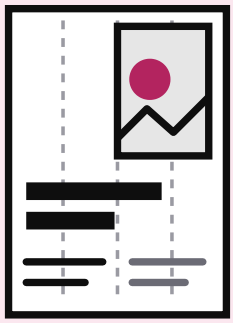
Concept

International Typographic Style

A graphic design movement, also known as Swiss style, that orders the page with a grid, sans-serif type, asymmetric layout and photography, without ornament.



In Spanish

Estilo tipográfico internacional

Origin

Basel and Zurich schools, 1950s; forerunner: Tschichold (1928)

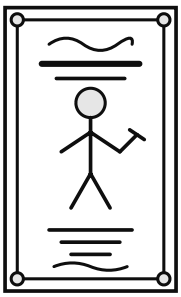
What problem it addresses

It sought a clear way to communicate that would work for any message and in several languages. It left design the grid, typographic hierarchy and the idea that form serves the content.

An example

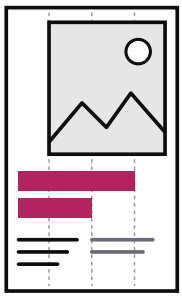
An illustrative example: a concert poster, laid out in two ways.

With ornament



Centered text, a decorative frame and a drawing. **Everything asks for attention at once.**

In Swiss style



A grid, flush-left text in a sans-serif typeface and a photo. **What matters is seen first.**

Both posters give the same information. The second one orders it with a structure instead of decorating it.

Why it happens

1 

A grid divides the page into columns;

2 

text and photos line up with it, with no frames or ornaments;

3 

the hierarchy is read through size, weight and position.

Applications in design

Use it like this

Use it when there is a lot of information to order or a system that must look the same across many pieces: signage, reports, interfaces.

Avoid

Copying its look (sans-serif type, lots of white space) without the structure that holds it up.

Don't fall for it

Clear is not the same as neutral: this style also conveys a tone, and it can feel cold or impersonal.

18 issues



What the research says

Between 1958 and 1965, the magazine Neue Grafik, edited in Zurich by Lohse, Müller-Brockmann, Neuburg and Vivarelli, published 18 issues in German, English and French that carried the style beyond Switzerland (Müller, 2014).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** It is a historical count, not a measurement. From 1968 on, it was criticized for a cold, formal and dogmatic aesthetic, and in Basel Wolfgang Weingart led the opposition that gave way to the postmodern poster (Swiss National Library, n.d.).

Connections

Used in

- Poster design
- Graphic design
- Typography

Related to

- Form follows function
- Grid system

Authors and works

1928	**Jan Tschichold**	In Die neue Typographie he argued for a modern typography, free of the ornaments of historical styles. It was the direct forerunner.
	Armin Hofmann	Headed the school of arts and crafts in Basel, shaped the Basel School and brought the style to the Yale art school.
1967	**Emil Ruder**	A teacher in Basel, he gathered his method of composition in Typographie, in German, English and French.
1981	**Josef Müller-Brockmann**	Co-edited Neue Grafik in Zurich and years later explained in Grid systems how to build and use the grid.
2012	**Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis**	Give it a chapter of its own in their history of graphic design, in the part on the age of information.

Sources

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