

Timeline

Pre-History and the Origins of Writing

75,000 BCE–500 BCE

c. 75,000 BCE

Crosshatch patterns are engraved on silcrete flake stones at Blombos Cave in South Africa



c. 15,000–10,000 BCE

Cave paintings are made at Lascaux in France



c. 3500 BCE

The Sumerians settle in Mesopotamia

c. 3100 BCE

Early Sumerian pictographs are pressed into clay tablets



c. 3100 BCE

Hieroglyphics are used in Egypt

c. 2600 BCE

The pyramids at Giza, in Egypt, are completed



c. 2500 BCE

Egyptians begin to make papyrus

c. 2500 BCE

Cuneiform tablets are used for accounting



c. 2000 BCE

Early Cretan pictographs and alphabet-like forms are inscribed on the Phaistos Disk



c. 1800–1400 BCE

Stonehenge is constructed in England



c. 1792–1750 BCE

Law Code of Hammurabi is written

c. 1500 BCE

The Phoenician alphabet with 22 characters is developed



c. 1500 BCE

Hinduism is brought to India by nomads

c. 1400-1100 BCE

Chinese "bone and script" writing is developed



1447 BCE

The exodus of the Jews from Egypt begins

c. 1420 BCE

The Papyrus of Ani includes hieroglyphic writing



c. 1000 BCE

Mayan culture begins in Mesoamerica

c. 850 BCE

Aramaic script is developed



776 BCE

The first Olympic Games are held

551 BCE

Confucius is born in China

540 BCE

The first public library is established in Athens, Greece

c. 528 BCE

Siddhartha Gautama becomes the Buddha



Writing, Paper, and Printing

500 BCE-1450

447-432 BCE

The Parthenon is built in Athens, Greece

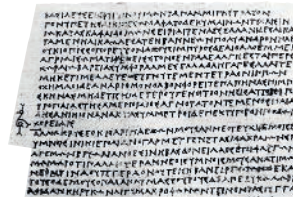


c. 400-200 BCE

Mayan writing appears in mural paintings in San Bartolo, Guatemala

c. 400-300 BCE

Greek manuscript writing develops

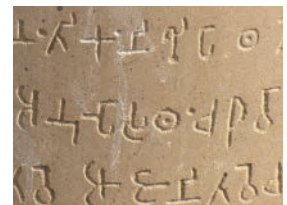


300 BCE

Euclid establishes the foundations of geometry in his treatise, *Elements*

c. 200 BCE

Brahmi, a syllabic writing system, is developed in India



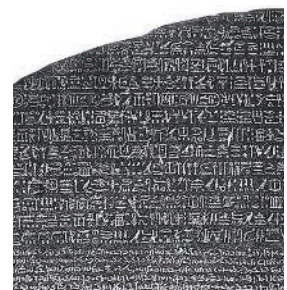
c. 221 BCE

Construction of the Great Wall of China begins



c. 197 BCE

The Rosetta Stone includes hieroglyphics and Demotic and Greek scripts



c. 160 BCE

Parchment, made from animal skins, is used for manuscripts in Greece

51 BCE

Cleopatra becomes queen of Egypt

c. 79 CE

Brushes are used for mural writing in Pompeii, Italy



105

Paper is invented in China

c. 200-500

Roman square capitals and rustic capitals are in use



c. 300

In China, chops are used as identifying seals

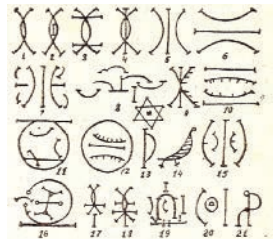


325

Emperor Constantine moves the Roman capital to Constantinople

400

Nsibidi, an African pictogram-based writing system, is developed



c. 425

The Vatican Vergil, the earliest illuminated Christian manuscript is created

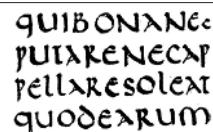


c. 500

Early Arabic script is in use

c. 500

Uncials, a modification stemming from Old Roman Cursive, are rounded



570

Muhammad is born

c. 751

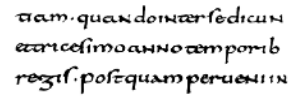
Arabs learn papermaking from Chinese prisoners

800

Charlemagne is crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire

800-1100

Caroline miniscules are used throughout Europe



c. 800

The Book of Kells is created in a Celtic monastery



868

The Diamond Sutra, the earliest woodblock manuscript, is printed in China



c. 1000

Naskhi becomes the dominant Arabic script



c. 1040

Movable type is invented in China

1095

The First Crusade begins

1163

Construction of Notre-Dame Cathedral begins in Paris, France



1202

Fibonacci introduces Arabic numerals to the West

1215

The Magna Carta grants constitutional liberties in England

c. 1265

Marco Polo travels to China

1276

A paper mill is established in Fabriano, Italy

c. 1325

Tenochtitlan, capital of the Aztec empire, is founded in modern Mexico City (illustration by Diego Rivera)



1377

Jikji, a Korean Buddhist document, is printed with movable metal type

c. 1387

Geoffrey Chaucer begins writing *The Canterbury Tales*

c. 1400

Block printed playing cards are the first printed matter that is accessible to the working class



1400-1500s

Khipu, or "talking knots," are used by the Inca in Peru for recordkeeping and sending messages



c. 1413-16

Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, an illuminated manuscript with ornate visual organization, is created in France



1431

Joan of Arc is made a martyr

1446

Hangul, the Korean alphabet, is developed



c. 1450

Johannes Gutenberg prints with movable type in Germany



Renaissance Design and Modern Typography

1450-1800

1465

Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz introduce the printing press to Italy

1470

Nicolas Jenson creates a legible roman typeface



1484

Sandro Botticelli paints *The Birth of Venus*



1493

Anton Koberger publishes the *Nuremberg Chronicles*, a history of the world with complex woodcut illustrations

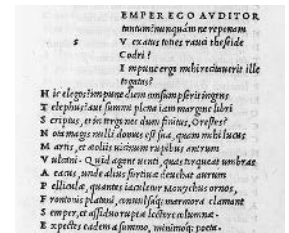


1494

Aldus Manutius establishes the Aldine Press in Venice, Italy to publish works by Greek and Roman thinkers

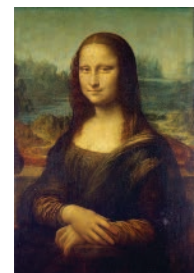
1501

Francisco Griffo designs and cuts the first italic typeface



1503

Leonardo da Vinci paints the *Mona Lisa*



1517

Martin Luther launches the Reformation

1520

The Spanish colonize the Aztecs

1529

Geoffroy Tory publishes *Champ Fleury*, with instructions for constructing letters of the Latin alphabet



c. 1530

The first Qur'an is printed in Venice, Italy

c. 1535

Claude Garamond establishes an independent type foundry (Typeface: Grecs du roi)

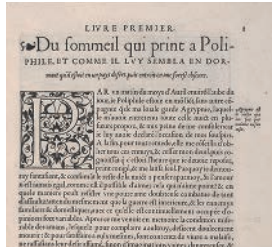


1543

Nicolaus Copernicus publishes the theory of the heliocentric solar system

1546

Jacques Kerver's edition of *Poliphili* uses three sizes of type, italic, and capitals, bringing variety to page design



1538

The first printing press is established in Mexico

1558

Elizabeth I is crowned in England

1565

The graphite pencil is invented

1594

Shakespeare writes *Romeo and Juliet*

1608

Virgin of Guadalupe cards are printed in Mexico



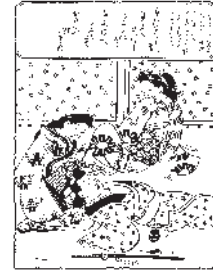
1648

The Taj Mahal Palace in India is completed



1682

Ukiyo-e artists embrace woodblock prints in Japan



1689

Peter the Great becomes czar of Russia

1690

The first paper mill in America is established near Philadelphia

1692

Louis XIV commissions the Romain du Roi, a new typeface designed by scientific principles



1700

The Selling of Joseph, the first antislavery pamphlet is published in North America



1721

Johann Sebastian Bach composes the *Brandenburg Concertos*

1734

William Caslon designs Old Style typefaces which are used throughout Europe

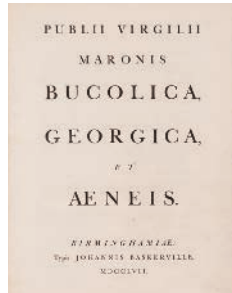


1737

Pierre-Simon Fournier le Jeune standardizes type sizes

1750s

John Baskerville creates
Transitional typefaces



1769

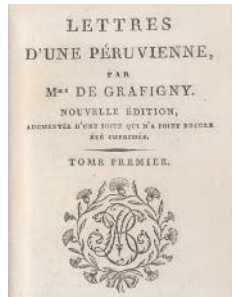
James Watt patents the
steam engine

1776

The American Declaration
of Independence is signed

1784

Francois Didot creates a
true Modern style typeface



1789

George Washington becomes
the first U.S. president

1789

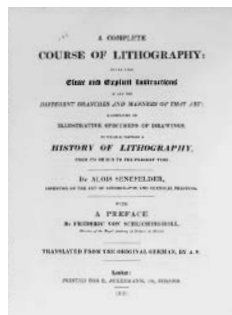
The French Revolution
begins

1792

Mary Wollstonecraft
publishes *A Vindication of
the Rights of Women*

1796

Aloys Senefelder invents
lithography



The Industrial Revolution

1800-1899

1800

The Library of Congress
is established in
Washington, D.C.



1803

Robert Thorne designs the
first fat-face type

**MINT
main.**

Quosque tandem abutere,
Lullium, publica nostra?
quandiu moriamur facere
te fas eludet? quem after
CONSTANTINOPLE
4128 4507890

1804

Napoleon is crowned emperor

1808

Ludwig van Beethoven writes
his "*Fifth Symphony*"

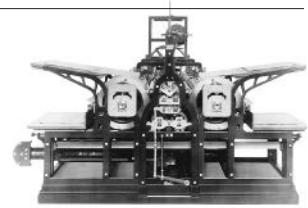
1809

Sequoyah begins work on
a Cherokee syllabary in
North America



1814

The first steam-powered
press is used in London



1816

The first sans-serif
typeface is shown in a
specimen book produced by
William Caslon IV

W CASLON JUNR LETTERFOUNDER

1818

Manuale Tipografico,
the work of Giambattista
Bodoni, is published

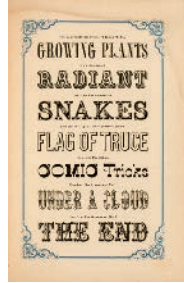


1818

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley is published

1820s

New manufacturing processes allow typefounders to create numerous decorative fonts



1821

Jean-François Champollion deciphers Egyptian hieroglyphics using the Rosetta Stone

1826

Joseph Niépce makes the first photograph of nature



1827

Wood type is developed as an alternative to heavy metal type

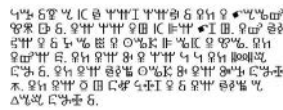


1829

Louis Braille invents a writing system for the blind

1830s

Momolu Duwalu Bukéle creates the Vai syllabary



1839

Louis Daguerre invents the first publicly available photographic process



1839

The first electric printing press is invented

1840

Chromolithography is introduced

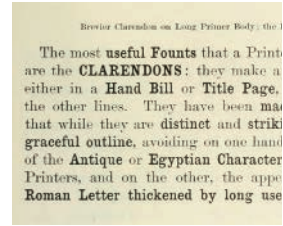


1844

Samuel Morse invents the telegraph

1845

Robert Besley develops the first Clarendon style



1848

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels publish The Communist Manifesto

1852

Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin is published

1851

The Great Exhibition is held at the Crystal Palace in London, England



1856

Owen Jones's The Grammar of Ornament is published



1859

Charles Darwin writes Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection

1861

The U.S. Civil War begins

1861

William Morris opens his art-decorating firm and assembles a team of craftspeople



1863

Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation

1869

N.W. Ayer establishes the first advertising agency in Philadelphia

1874

Louis Prang begins selling Christmas cards in America



1876

Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone

1877

Thomas Edison invents the phonograph

1880s

Advertisements use engraved illustrations with lettering printed by chromolithography

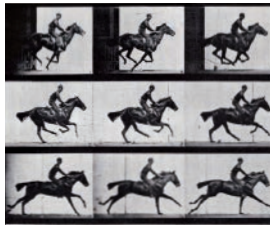


1882

The Century Guild of artists is formed in England

1883

Eadweard Muybridge's sequence photography shows the possibility of moving images



1884

Mark Twain writes *Huckleberry Finn*

1884

The Art Workers' Guild is formed

1886

Kate Greenaway's picture books innovate page layout to entertain children



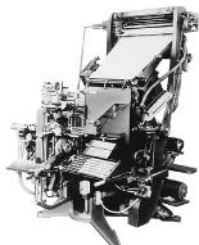
1886

The Statue of Liberty is dedicated in New York City



1886

Ottmar Mergenthaler invents the Linotype, the first keyboard typesetting machine



1888

Eastman Kodak makes photography universally available



1889

The Eiffel Tower is completed

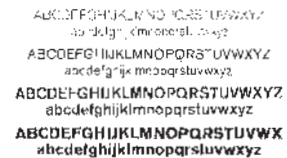


1889

Vincent van Gogh paints *The Starry Night*

1889

H. Berthold AG Foundry creates, Akzidenz Grotesk, a unified family of fonts



1890

The London Underground opens

1891-1898

William Morris's Kelmscott Press launches a revival of printing and typography



1891

Henri Toulouse-Lautrec designs the Moulin Rouge poster



1894

The Beggarstaffs start an agency in Britain



1894

Nicolas II becomes the Russian czar

1895

The Lumière brothers give the first motion picture presentation

1896

Jugend, the Art Nouveau publication, is launched in Germany



1897

General Electric establishes a corporate identity department



1898

The first Vienna Secession exhibition is held

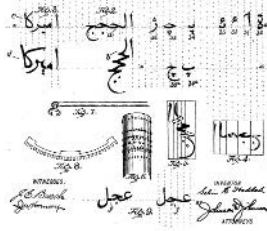


1898

Marie Curie discovers radium

1899

Selim Shibli Haddad patents the first Arabic keyboard

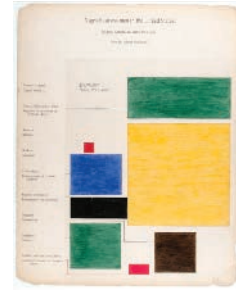


Graphic Design in the Modern Era

1900-1950

1900

Sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois exhibits photographs and infographics for "The American Negro" at the Paris Exposition



1903

The Vienna Workshops are established

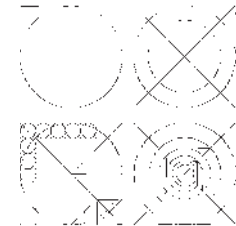


1903

The Wright brothers take the first powered airplane flight

1904

J.L. Mathieu Lauweriks teaches geometric grid composition in Germany

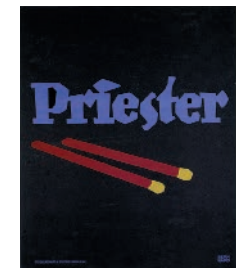


1905

Albert Einstein's theory of relativity is published

1905

Lucian Bernhard creates the influential Priester matches poster in the Plakatstil style



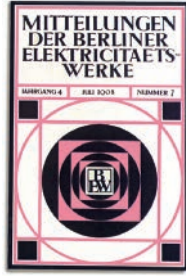
1907

Angel DeCora designs lettering for chapter heads representing Native American tribes in *The Indians Book*



1907

Peter Behrens is appointed artistic director of AEG and develops a unified visual identity for the company



1908

The Model T Ford automobile begins production



1909

Filippo Marinetti founds Futurism, experiments with typography and syntax



1909

The NAACP is formed

1910

Architect Frank Lloyd Wright completes the Robie House in the "prairie style"



1911

The Chinese revolution begins

1913

The New York Armory Show introduces modernism to America

1914

World War I begins

1917- 1922

The Dada movement protests the war and conventional art (Fountain by Marcel DuChamp)



1917

Five million copies of J.M. Flagg's Uncle Sam poster are printed



1917

The Russian revolution begins

1917

The De Stijl movement and journal begins



1918

Guillaume Apollinaire publishes Calligrammes with expressive typographic poems

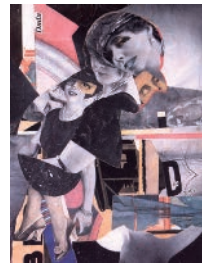


1918

World War I ends

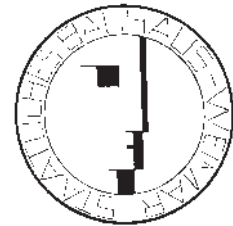
1919

Hannah Höch creates her Da-dandy collage



1919

The Bauhaus is founded in Weimar Germany by Walter Gropius (seal by Oscar Schlemmer)



1920

U.S. women gain the vote in all elections

1922

W. A. Dwiggins coins the term "Graphic Designer"

1924

The first typeset Qur'an is printed in Cairo, Egypt

1924

El Lissitzky designs the book, The Isms of Art with a complex typographic structure



1924

Alexander Rodchenko creates a series of Jim Dollar "Miss Mend" book covers



1924

Gerrit Rietveld completes the Schröder house in the Netherlands



1924

Erté designs Harper's Bazaar covers in the Art Deco style



1924

André Breton publishes his Surrealist manifesto

1925

The Bauhaus moves to Dessau, Germany and Herbert Bayer creates a universal alphabet

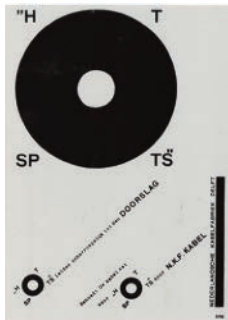


1925

F. Scott Fitzgerald writes The Great Gatsby

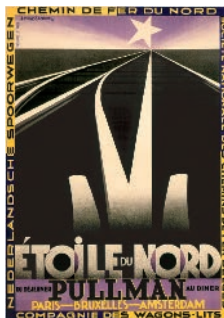
1926

Piet Zwart uses collage to create ads for the Dutch cable company, NFK



1927

A. M. Cassandre uses strong geometric forms in the Étoile du Nord poster



1927

Paul Renner creates the typeface, Futura



1927

Charles Lindbergh makes the first solo flight across the Atlantic

1928

Jan Tschichold writes Die Neue Typographie (The New Typography)



1928

Warner Brothers releases the first motion picture with sound

1929

The Great Depression begins

1930

Mahatma Gandhi leads protests in India

1930

Gustav Klutis uses photomontage for propaganda posters in Soviet Russia



1931

The Empire State Building, with 102 stories, is completed



1931

Eric Gill's Essay on Typography is published

1932

Stanley Morison creates the typeface, Times New Roman



1933

Nazis close the Bauhaus

1933

Black Mountain College is founded in North Carolina

1933

Henry Beck creates a simplified London Underground map



1934

Alexey Brodovitch is hired as the art director for Harper's Bazaar (illustration by A.M. Cassandre)



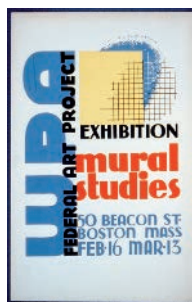
1935

Herbert Matter creates Swiss tourism posters using photomontage



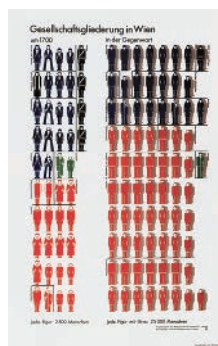
1935

The Federal Art Project hires artists and designers for public projects in the U.S.



1936

Otto Neurath and Gerd Arntz create the Isotype picture language



1937

The Museum of Modern Art in New York exhibits Lester Beall's Rural Electrification Administration posters



1937

The New Bauhaus is founded in Chicago

1939

The New York World's Fair opens (poster by Joseph Binder)



1939

World War II begins

1940

Print magazine publishes its first issue

1941

The U.S. develops propaganda posters to promote production (poster by Jean Carlu)



1942

Johnson Publishing Company, known for publishing Ebony and Jet magazines is founded in Chicago

1943

Max Bill applies mathematically-based composition concepts to poster design



1944

Graphis magazine is launched

1945

World War II ends

1945

The United Nations is formed

1946

Paul Rand creates a playful *Jazzways* cover using collage with simple forms



1946

Herbert Matter begins working with the Knoll furniture company as a graphic designer and photography consultant



1947

The Polaroid camera is developed



1949

Alvin Lustig creates a book cover for *Lorca* using symbols to capture the content (published by New Directions)



The Rise of Design Culture and Media

1950-2000

1950

The Korean War begins

1950

The Container Corporation of America's "Great Ideas" ad campaign begins (ad by Herbert Bayer)



1950

The first Xerox machine is produced

1951

William Golden designs the CBS symbol



1951

UNIVAC I, the first mass produced computer, is developed



1954

The Univers type family is designed by Adrian Frutiger



1954

Push Pin Studios forms in New York City



1955

Disneyland opens in California



1955

Jacqueline Casey joins MIT's Design Services Office



1957

Max Miedinger designs Haas Grotesque (later named Helvetica by Stempel foundry)

Helvetica
Helvetica Italic
Helvetica Medium
Helvetica Bold
Helvetica Bold Condensed

1957

Soviet satellite Sputnik launches the space age

1958

Pinyin is adopted as the official system for writing Mandarin Chinese using the Latin alphabet

1958

Westvaco Inspirations magazine thrives under Bradbury Thompson



1959

The *Neue Grafik Design* journal begins publication, spreading Swiss design

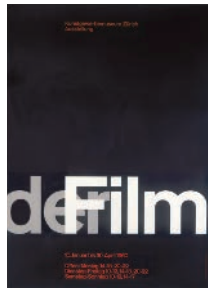


1959

Communication Arts magazine publishes its first issue

1960

Josef Müller-Brockmann creates his *Der Film* poster, striving for absolute and universal form



1961

Mathematica, a fully immersive and interactive exhibit designed by The Eames Office, opens at the California Museum of Science and Industry



1962

Andy Warhol paints Campbell's soup cans

1963

Georg Olden designs a stamp for the Emancipation Proclamation centennial



1963

At the March on Washington, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech



1964

The *First Things First Manifesto* calls for a return to humanist design

1964

Chermayeff & Geismar Associates design the Mobil identity



1964

Yusaku Kamekura designs the Tokyo Olympics posters



1965

R.D.E. Oxenaar and J.J. Kruit design new Dutch currency that communicates a sense of national identity



1966

Barbara Stauffacher Solomon brings architecture to life with supergraphics for Sea Ranch



1966

The Cultural Revolution in China begins

1967

The first issue of the Black Panther Party newsletter is designed by Emory Douglas



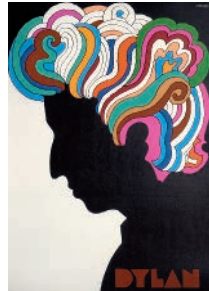
1967

Emil Ruder writes *Typography: A Manual of Design*, a treatise on the International Typographic Style



1967

Milton Glaser designs the Art Nouveau-inspired Bob Dylan poster



1967

Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore publish *The Medium is the Message*

1968

Emmett McBain creates the "Black is Beautiful" ad for Vince Cullers Advertising, Inc.



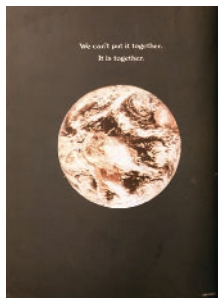
1968

Lance Wyman designs the Mexico City Olympics logotype and identity system



1968

The first *Whole Earth Catalog* is published

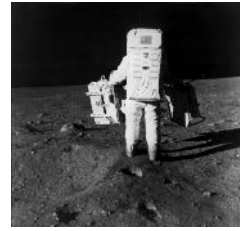


1969

CompuServe becomes the first commercial online service

1969

Apollo 11 lands on the moon



1970

The International Typeface Corporation releases Avant Garde, a typeface designed by Herb Lubalin



1970

The computer floppy disk is introduced

1972

Learning from Las Vegas by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour is published

1972

Otl Aicher and staff design the Munich Olympics identity system



1973

The Sydney Opera House, designed by Jorn Utzon, opens



1974

Roger Cook and Dan Shanosky create a standard symbol system for the U.S. Department of Transportation



1975

Microsoft is founded

c. 1975

Takenobu Igarashi begins using axonometric drawings to explore dimensional typography



1976

The Apple computer is introduced

1977

The U.S. National Parks Unigrid system standardizes brochures for over 350 parks



1979

Tibor Kalman forms M&Co in New York City

1979

Wolfgang Weingart experiments with grid and collage techniques



1980

The Solidarity logo is designed by Jerzy Janiszewski



1980

Post-it Notes are introduced by 3M

1980

Pac-Man, the video game, is introduced in the United States



1981

The Memphis Group, an Italian design collective founded by Ettore Sottsass, debuts a collection of products with bold colors and patterns



1981

The MTV logo is designed with variable elements by Pat Gorman and Frank Olinsky of Manhattan Design



1981

Bitstream, the first independent digital-type foundry, is founded

1981

The first IBM personal computer becomes available

1983

Philip B. Meggs publishes the first edition of *A History of Graphic Design*

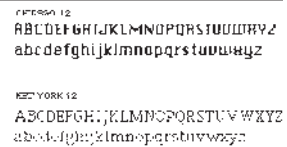
1984

The Los Angeles Olympics identity is designed by Deborah Sussman and Debra Valencia



1984

Susan Kare designs the first screen fonts for the Macintosh computer



1984

Rudy VanderLans starts publishing *Emigré* magazine



1985

Adobe introduces Postscript, which launches desktop publishing

1985

Paula Scher parodies Herbert Matter in a Swatch watch advertisement



1987

Print Magazine publishes "Black Designers: Missing in Action" by Cheryl Holmes-Miller

1987

April Greiman designs a bitmapped self-portrait for *Design Quarterly*



1989

The Guerilla Girls mount a billboard campaign in New York City to draw attention to racism and sexism in the art world

1989

Studio Dumbar develops a visual identity for the Dutch PTT



1989

Charles S. Anderson Design Co. explores vernacular, nostalgic images as a basis of design



1990

HTML and hypertext browsers are developed

1990

Eye magazine is founded by Rick Poynor

1990

The Hubble Telescope is launched into space



1990

Adobe Photoshop is released



1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act is signed into law, protecting people with disabilities in public life

1991

The first issue of *Colors*, a quarterly magazine about "the rest of the world," is published (design by Tibor Kalman)



1992

David Carson designs *Ray Gun* magazine



1992

Adobe releases its first multiple-master typefaces



1993

The first web browser, Mosaic, is developed

1994

33% of U.S. households have computers

1994

Wired magazine publishes its first issue



1994

Digital cameras become available to consumers

1995

JavaScript is created, allowing for more interactive web experiences

1995

eBay is founded

1996

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) is released, enabling more complex and flexible website designs

1996

Zusana Licko designs the typeface, Mrs. Eaves

Mrs. Eaves
Mrs. Eaves
MRS. EAVES

1996

Irma Boom designs books with a high sense of craft



1997

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone is published

1998

Google is founded

1999

The number of Internet users worldwide reaches 150 million

1999

The First Things First 2000 manifesto is published in *Adbusters*



Digital Design Comes of Age

2000–Present

2000

Naomi Klein publishes *No Logo*

2000

Sylvia Harris rebrands the U.S. Census to encourage previously underrepresented citizens to participate



2001

Wikipedia is launched

2001

Apple releases the iPod MP3 music player



2001

Toyota introduces the Prius, the first hybrid car mass marketed to consumers

2001

Ben Fry and Casey Reas develop Processing, a free graphics library that inspires designers to code

2000

Jonathan Hoefler and Tobias Frere-Jones design Gotham, a widely used typeface

Gotham Light
Gotham Light Italic
Gotham Book
Gotham Book Italic
Gotham Medium
Gotham Medium Italic
Gotham Bold

2003

Nadine Chahine designs Koufiya, the first dual-script font family with both Latin and Arabic parts



2003

My Space is launched

2004

Ellen Lupton publishes the first edition of *Thinking With Type*

2004

FontForge, an open-source font editor, is released among many applications that make font design more and accessible and affordable

2004

Facebook and YouTube are launched

2005

There are more than 800 million Internet users globally, 200 million in the United States

2006

Twitter is launched

2007

Apple introduces the iPhone, allowing users to add apps

2007

Helvetica, a documentary by Gary Huswit, is released (poster by Experimental Jetset)



2008

Pictograms for the Beijing Olympics are designed by Wan Min and team



2010

Apple introduces the iPad

2010

Instagram launches, changing how designers share and promote their work

2010

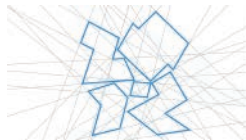
The Museum of Modern Art in New York "acquires" the @ symbol into its collection

2011

The Occupy movement protests capitalism

2012

The London Olympics logo is created by Wolff Olins

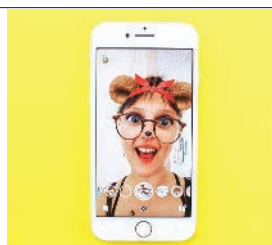


2012

Flat design emerges to make digital apps clean and accessible

2015

Snapchat introduces selfie lenses and filters, making augmented reality (AR) accessible to the general public



2015

The American artificial intelligence research organization, Open AI, is launched

2016

The National Museum of African American History and Culture opens in Washington, D.C.



2016

TikTok is launched

2016

More people use mobile devices than desktop computers

2020

The Covid-19 pandemic paralyzes the world

2020

The Black Lives Matter movement emerges



2020

The People's Archive of Graphic Design is launched

