Best Graphic Design & Branding Projects of 2017

It’s been a bold year in the world of graphic design and branding. We’ve explored the sector through project stories, in-depth features and interviews such as with design agencies Templo and The Working Assembly. We also spoke to graphic designer Timothy Goodman on his Creatives of Colour online directory, art directors at The Folio Society on how it creates beautifully-designed books and a 14-year-old making waves online as the future of graphic design.

Here we take a look at the best graphic design and branding projects, covering everything from best album art to how graphic design saves lives. We’ve also included Pantone’s colour for 2018 – Ultra-Violet – and continuation of our 2016 feature of amazing British craft beer label designs.

For more, check out our best design books of 2017.

Take an inspiring look at what’s been achieved over the past year, beginning with our roundup of all the biggest logo designs from 2017.

Biggest Logo Redesigns

2017 logo redesigns continue to follow the current preference of simplistic icons that work on small digital screens; usually vector shaped, with bold colours and a legible typeface that can be used across all digital and print platforms. Brands are continuing to produce a fresh logo that pay homage to its history, legacy and core philosophy.

So far this year a brand’s new identity has been usually paired with a refreshed, more holistic digital interface and UX design as demand for an easier online experience increases.

This can be seen with Audi’s new logo and completely new UX and UI design, YouTube in similar form, and more recently online dating forum eHarmony. This year has also seen luxury brands Calvin Klein and Converse move to an even more simplified logo, attributing back to the long-established history and iconography of both brands.

Take a look at some of the biggest logo redesigns of 2017.

Nominees for the Best Art Vinyl Awards



Gorillaz’s *Humanz* album artwork by Jamie Hewlett

We’re usually blown away by the range in style and aesthetically pleasing sleeve covers for the Best Art Vinyl competition, but this year the talent is exceptional, and we’re sharing with you some of our favourite 2017 nominees.

Every year Art Vinyl launches the Best Art Vinyl competition which searches for and celebrates the most creative, diverse and well-designed record sleeves over the past year to join the 12 previous winners.

Take a look at our favourite album art covers.

British Craft Beer Label Designs



We began this feature in 2016, but British craft labels keep springing up left, right and centre, so we’ve added a few more brilliant designs to the list – including Truman’s Brewery, Yeastie Boys and Broken Bridge Brewery.

Modern craft beer often takes pride in unique but bold artistic design – simplistic, bright and brave labelling is the new face.

Here we look over the wonderful work of designers, illustrators and agencies at the forefront of British craft beer label design.

Take a look at the craft beer label designs.

Pantone Colour for 2018: Ultra-Violet

Pantone has announced its colour of the year for 2018, which it calls ‘Ultra Violet’.

Not Ultraviolet – as unless you’re a cat, dog, reindeer or hedgehog, you can’t actually see this. No, this is a shade of purple that most people would associate with Prince, a rich purple that’s more on the blue side. Pantone’s description of Ultra Violet as communicating “originality, ingenuity, and visionary thinking that points us towards the future” could more easily be used to describe the artist than a simple colour shade.

Pantone says that purple will be widely used by brands next year to convey a desire to look to the future – to present a rosier picture of the future that’s better than today’s world of Brexit and Trump. It will also be used to mark brands as non-conformist and offering an alternative to the status quo – though ironically it’s those that were pushing for a change to the status quo that got us in this mess in the first place.

Find out more here.

New Dropbox Identity

File storage tool and workspace collaboration platform Dropbox

unveiled its controversial redesign last night much to the support, but mostly fuming distaste, of the design community.

The bold new identity aims to illustrate Dropbox's new collaboration tools as a deliberate move away from acting purely as a file storage facilitator.

Dropbox published a blog post stating the new brand design was inspired by the creative work of its customers – everyone from musicians to medical researchers.

See more of the visual identity here.

How Graphic Design Saves Lives



An anti-smoking poster by Indian designer and educator Biman Mullick

Graphic design and healthcare have long worked together as a way to educate and persuade the public to take care of its health (and in the best way possible).

We've all seen graphic design for healthcare perhaps without even realising, such as the horrific cigarette anti-smoking packaging and 'Don't Drink and Drive' billboards.

Visual explanation of disease and pharmaceutical products cuts through what can sometimes be a scientific fog that separates doctors from the public.

In a new exhibition in London's Wellcome Collection, persuasive strategies used in these public health campaigns and advertisements over decades were explored. Over 200 posters, signs, teaching aids and more showcased how graphic design can empower and inform for recent outbreaks such as Ebola and Zika, to education about safe sex.

See posters from the exhibition here.

Design Museum’s Designs of the Year

This year marks the tenth anniversary for the Beazley Designs of the Year competition – exhibited in The Design Museum in London – and there are a lot of amazing designs to be celebrated.

This year’s nominees reflect the political turmoil of 2016 and rising social protest and symbolism over issues of migration, sexism and racism. But there are also symbols of harmony and togetherness.

Check out our favourites here – including Pokemon Go, Kanye West clothing and the Olympic Refugee Flag (seen above).

New BBC typeface Reith

You probably haven’t noticed the slight change to the look of BBC Sport – but the BBC started using the platform to roll out its new typeface called Reith, designed in-house, this year.

Reith, named after the broadcaster’s first director general, will replace the use of Gill Sans (created by designer Eric Gill in 1928), Arial and Neue Helvetica currently used across the BBC’s programmes and websites, with the intention that the new typeface is easier to read on smaller screens and mobile devices.

Take a look at the differences here.

The Natural History Museum’s New

App



The Natural History Museum is moving its giant blue whale skeleton to the central space, replacing the iconic ‘Dippy’ skeleton replica of the Diplodocus dinosaur.

To coincide with the museum’s new display, web design and development company Potato created a whole new digital experience allowing visitors to explore the significance of the blue whale.

Check it out here.

The “Digital first” Audi Rebrand



For Audi’s new brand refresh, German agencies Strichpunkt and KMS Team replaced its usual classical corporate design with an extensive new identity based around new UX and UI designs.

Strichpunkt designed and developed – and open sourced – an entirely new interface to be used across all Audi digital platforms: from inside your car to the app on your mobile or smartwatch. The identity includes a refreshed – and flattened – logo, a new typeface, specific colour palette and an icon library.

See our interview with Strichpunkt from Typo 2017 in Berlin.

Typographic Postcards



Nei Valente moved to São Paulo and Kate Cullinane stayed in New York. They spent the summer sending self-made postcards to each other – which became this beautiful collection.

You’re a New Zealand designer living in New York. You meet another designer from Brazil. You have four magical months together, and then he has to leave to Brazil for a year. What do you do?

This is the story of Kate Cullinane and Nei Valente. Instead of ending all hopes of a relationship because of distance, the couple decided to stay connected and embark on a year long project that allowed them to continue their passion for typography.

Take a look at the postcards here.

Best Button Badge Designs

London graphic art label Stereohype announced the winners of its 13th annual Button Badge Design competition, with cheeky characters, colourful cacti, an avocado wearing glasses and black cats among the winning designs.

Agathe Jacquillat and Tomi Vollauschek from design studio – who are behind Stereohype – celebrate the art of designing a button badge, or a series of designs, with its Button Badge Design Competition every year. After 622 accepted entries from 173 different badge designers in 2017, winners have been chosen for both single badge designs and sets of four.

A group of judges – including Digital Arts editor Neil Bennett among other design press – decided on a shortlist of 60 designs, which has been whittled down to 30 runners-up and 30 winners, some of which we showcase here. Six winning sets of four have been chosen, and six single badge winners.

See the winners here.

https://www.digitalartsonline.co.uk/features/graphic-design/be

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