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An Exploration of the
Messy History of Women's
Place in Graphic Design



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JESSICA PFANNER | MAY 2021



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Circa 1927: Bauhaus students. Image source: Bauhaus Dessau Archives (pending confirmation).

INTRODUCTION

I remember the first. Left in the shadows, the story of a type designer whose story had yet to enter the canon of design history. It was my second year of grad school and I was enrolled in a motion graphics design course, creating an interactive e-book on eighteenth-century English printer and typographer, John Baskerville. While researching Baskerville's type designs and uncovering more about his life story, I learned of his housekeeper whom he later married, Sarah Eaves. More notably, she assisted Baskerville in his pursuit of typographic perfection. She continued his work in the studio after he passed in 1775 and dedicated the rest of her life to fulfilling the success of Baskerville's innovative type designs and printing techniques.

Needless to say, I was captivated by Eaves' story. It sparked a curiosity, which sparked questions, which, in turn, demanded answers. Why was this inspiring woman's story left vastly untold? What other details of her life are left uncovered, and are her contributions to the field diminished with a title of a mere *assistant*? How many other women have been forgotten? Will my own accomplishments, too, be left by the wayside?

These questions lingered in my mind for the many semesters that followed. A year or so later, I found myself thumbing through a stack of design history books and everything fell into place. The history of graphic design is overwhelmingly a man's tale. I knew there was more to the story that'd been left untold. And I, as I came to discover, was not alone nor the first in my search for *her* side of the story.

IT'S A
MESSY HISTORY

Graphic design's history was written to categorically exclude women from the profession. This isn't particularly shocking, though. Common parlance in our field is rife with language waxing poetic about the 'fathers' of graphic design. We quickly learn the industry-defining work of greats like Milton Glaser, Saul Bass, Massimo Vignelli and other well-established contemporary successes such as Michael Bierut and Stefan Sagmeister. But, even for the

design laymen, a quick Google search for “famous graphic designers” or “most influential graphic designers” yields nearly all men in its results. Of the first 22 visible names, only five are those of women. That’s less than a quarter of the results—and that’s if you’re really digging through the weeds of the metadata.

See Appendix A for Google results.

History books on graphic design didn’t exist before the 1980s. The short stack of literature before that time consisted of well-respected industry leaders like Paul Rand (1951), Victor Papanek (1971), and George Nelson (1979).¹ In 1983, Phillip Meggs published his groundbreaking *Meggs’ History of Graphic Design*—still one of the most widely read texts by design students to this day. But despite its widespread acceptance, only thirty-one women are mentioned among hundreds of men.² It further proves history wasn’t written equally (hence the ‘his’). And although it’s tempting to rationalize these facts as ‘products of the time’ it leaves the brilliance of women graphic designers grossly under examined and underappreciated,³ therein “perpetuating the myth that the profession was entirely men before the twentieth century.”¹

Design historian Martha Scotford identifies why women have been outcast from historical canon in her 1994 article, “Messy History vs. Neat History: Toward an Expanded View of Women in Graphic Design.” Her text is centered on the failure to include a larger narrative that’s left untold in design history as it pertains to women’s experiences and roles. This expanded view she defines as “messy history” is a paradigm that “seeks to discover, study and include the variety of alternative approaches and activities that are often part of women designers’ professional lives.”² Scotford is not alone in her criticism of the patriarchal rule over design history. In a 2015 interview, designers Nancy Stock-Allen and Katherine McCoy discussed the skewed relationship between women as designers and women as they’re reflected in design writing. McCoy points to the New Western History Movement and its authors such as Patricia Limerick, as inspiration for rejecting the “established histories as the total truth and [to] investigate the contributions of under-recognized communities.”¹ Scotford, Stock-Allen, and McCoy lead the way challenging preconceived notions of the written history of graphic design, and urged us to embrace a new movement.

WHERE ARE THE WOMEN DESIGNERS?

Prior to Scotford's findings, art scholar Linda Nochlin and design historian Cheryl Buckley were among the first authors to explore why women had been excluded from the canon of both art and design during the second-wave feminist movement. Buckley argues that gender-based biases against women were to blame, and that historians examining women's role in design must acknowledge their place within the context of the patriarchy.⁴ Further, women's abilities and *place* within the design field were historically assigned, not by their own choice or skill-level, but by what was perceived as innately female. Crafts and decorative arts such as textile design, illustration, knitting, pottery, and dressmaking have been historically reserved for women. Of course, there are exceptions to this—some of which are outlined within this research—but rarely do we learn of these, nor the patriarchal origin of design that women were *allowed* to be (or not be) participants of.

Now, fast-forward to the twenty-first century and explore emerging scholarships that describe untold stories of women designers throughout history. In 2000, Pat Kirkham and her colleagues curated an exhibition and published an extensive catalog through the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture. They dubbed the work: *Women Designers in the USA, 1900–2000: Diversity and Difference*.

Though Kirkham's extensive collection was significant and highlighted the work of dozens of American women designers cast in the shadows, it lacked historical context and minimizes the fact that what we now traditionally define as graphic design excludes women categorically due to the lack of educational and professional resources made available in the past. Without this, Kirkham's project—though admirable and groundbreaking in its own right—does little to educate and enlighten readers on the historical realities of women designers.

Type designer and professor, Sibylle Haggmann, articulates “gendered design” even further in her 2005 article, “Non-Existent Design: Women and the Creation of Type.” She describes how women have been largely excluded from the industry, while white Western men have

traditionally dominated the field. As the printing industry expanded and advanced in the nineteenth century, new educational and professional opportunities were presented for women—but not without limitations.⁵ While men sought the more masculine skills like printing, metalsmithing, and typesetting—handiwork that was “not about decorating”—women were encouraged to pursue the “feminine skills” widely categorized as crafts.⁵ Hagmann argues that this long-standing patriarchal structure of men belonging to the technological-based skills and women belonging to craftwork is responsible for the centuries-long bias that women designers are less significant than men. It also further asserts value to what we generally classify as masculine and feminine roles, forging a deeper imbalance among women and men in design and its related fields.

Though this conversation and other thoughtful criticisms have been brought to light, no real correction of design’s written history has been made. With politically charged events in recent years, such as the 2017 Women’s March combatting threats to women’s health rights and the Me Too movement, 2021 has ushered in an empowering wave of female activism in general. *Time* magazine’s ongoing series, *Unsung Women*, highlights forgotten women throughout history. The Wing—a women-centered co-working space founded in 2016—launched *No Man’s Land* in 2018, a podcast centered on “women who were too bad for your textbooks.” In the design community alone, there are platforms like AIGA’s *Women’s Lead Initiative*, Jessica Walsh’s *Ladies Wine and Design*, and a UK-based mentoring program, *Kerning the Gap*, whose purpose is to celebrate women designers and uplift them into leadership roles within a male-dominated industry. Dive into social media and you’ll find a slew of platforms dedicated to uplifting women in design, like @femmotype, @halloffemmes, and @designbywomen_ to name a few. But when it comes to graphic design history, there has been little to fill its missing pages. As Julia Meer writes in *Women in Graphic Design 1890–2012*:

““ The ‘insertion’ of female designers in the historical record is necessary because it is also important to assess their work in the context of ‘other,’ non-gender-specific history, rather than just examining it for its special qualities.”⁶

FIRST-WAVE FEMINISM

& EARLY GRAPHIC DESIGN

American feminist and suffragist leader, Matilda Joslyn Gage (1826–1898), is arguably one of the most notable figures of the nineteenth-century feminist movement to publicly speak out against the sociological oppressions of women. Alongside Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Gage was a co-editor of *History of the Women's Suffrage* (1881–1886), a historical record and compilation of first-hand accounts of the American women's suffrage campaign. Gage was a vocal and visible advocate for women and Native Americans, a self-proclaimed abolitionist, and a critic of the Christian church, finding the faith's teachings to be particularly “downgrading to women.”⁷

Aside from her feminist criticism of the Christian faith, Gage took a special interest in advocating for women in the history of technology and science. In 1870, she published *Woman as an Inventor*, a defense of women innovators throughout history who were “grossly neglected” even though “some of the most important inventions of the world are due to her.”⁸ The activist theorized that the correlation between recognition and patented work stemmed from a country's freedom and educational opportunities, stating: “Woman does not possess the same amount of freedom as man. Restricted in education, industrial opportunities, and political power, this is one of the many instances where her degradation reacts injuriously upon the race.”⁸

The observations that Gage declared serves as a fit description of, not only women inventors, but women designers as well—both creators and engineers of new ideas. Design historians also neglected to adequately attribute women for their work—if at all. On the heels of the Industrial Revolution, the nineteenth-century American printing industry was booming⁹ as it adapted to the social and economic demands of mass-produced printed ephemera such as books, advertisements, and posters. Though largely denied membership to printing unions, women found their way into press shops across the United States, typically through their relation to a male printer.¹⁰ Some even managed to work their way to a partnership or ownership, though this largely goes unnoticed as women are historically “relegated to a minor role” as their living legacies fade.¹¹

CHALLENGING THE CANON

Gage's declarations are but one example of marginalized women excluded from a discipline. Whereas Gage led the way in recognizing forgotten women in the sciences, there is a growing number of scholars and practicing designers in recent years that seek to do the same in their own field. However, this hasn't always been the case. As a male-dominated and relatively young discipline, the written history of graphic design has neglected its female participants as canon since the beginning.

Long before Gage's nineteenth-century America, Jeanne de Montbaston ran a bookmaking atelier in Paris with her husband, Richard de Montbaston, circa 1325–1353. Jeanne de Montbaston was one of two persons—and the only known woman—given the title *illuminatrix libri jurata* (sworn illuminator of books).¹²

In fifteenth-century Florence, sisters of the Convent of San Jacopo di Ripoli became the first known women printers as early as 1476.¹⁰ These nuns skillfully typeset dozens of incunabula that were meticulously designed with hand-colored accents.¹³ Less than a decade later in Germany, Anna Rügerin became the first known woman to own a printing business (circa 1484)¹⁰ and recorded her name in several colophons after taking ownership of her husband's print shop upon his death.

In eighteenth-century colonial America, Mary Katharine Goddard presided over the Baltimore print shop owned by her frivolous brother who was serving time in jail for his indebtedness. By 1774, she was in control of the *Maryland Journal*. A quiet leader in the revolution, Goddard was commissioned by Congress to print the first signed copies of the Declaration of Independence.¹⁴

By the turn of the twentieth century in the United States, illustrators such as Elizabeth Shippen Green, Violet Oakley, and Jessie Willcox Smith gained due recognition for their masterful illustration in magazines and advertisements and were considered to be notable participants of the Golden Age of Illustration.

In post-first world war Russia, Varvara Stepanova co-founded and greatly impacted the era-defining Constructivist movement. Yet, her husband and creative partner, Alexander Rodchenko, often gains more recognition in history and is viewed as the genius, while Stepanova, is simply viewed as the organizer of their creative partnership.¹⁵

This pattern continues throughout history. Despite many odds and often accepted as the 'exception to the rule,' women designers still earned rightful respect in their lifetime, "yet few of them entered the canon of design history."¹⁶

See Appendix B for examples of these works.

Though outnumbered by men in the history books, a handful of women have come to be duly recognized for their work, and are undoubtedly considered amongst the greats in the industry. Some of these trailblazing designers include Muriel Cooper, April Greiman, Paula Scher, Irma Boom, Cipe Pineles, Katherine McCoy, and Annie Albers. Many paved their own path to success as designers, but more gained lesser or belated recognition as a "mere footnote" to their male counterpart.¹ Others were ignored completely, their credit misdirected to their husbands, fathers, brothers, or male partners.

Now in the twenty-first century, we are still left to wonder: why is graphic design still dominated by men, even with a growing percentage of female designers entering the field? Through a rather generalized lens, a study reported in 2015 by PayScale, an online salary database, found that the wage gap for women in "arts, design, entertainment sports, and media" was 1.7 percent.¹⁷ In a narrower view, however, an annual focus group led by *Glamour* magazine revealed a much more drastic result. Their twenty-year annual review explored the gender pay gap across several fields. In February 2017, the magazine compared the salaries of two graphic designers—one male, one female—with similar jobs, but at different companies. The study found that the male designer earned \$62,500 annually, while the female designer raked in just \$41,000.¹⁸

Not only are women designers often paid less—actually, there is "no industry where women earn equal to or more than men overall"¹⁷—they are given less opportunities for career

advancement. Thus, it comes as a surprise that there are actually more women in many professional design organizations such as AIGA and more female students at most design schools. For example, at Rhode Island School of Design, one of the leading design schools in the United States, 68 percent of the student body are women.¹⁹ This mirrors my own experience at UB, where the vast majority of my peers identify as women.

Even though there are more women entering the design field than men, there are very few women in director roles and other high-level positions. Lydia Dishman at *Fast Company* reported a statistic in a 2013 article that found only three percent of creative directors are women.²⁰ Understanding today's gender disparities in the design field—the pay gap, less women in director positions, and a lack of representation at industry events—all began with the exclusion of women from graphic design history.³

In 1986, Buckley was among the first to explore this phenomenon in her article, “Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design.” In search of answering why women designers are categorically ignored from history, she argues that there is a traditional methodology among design historians, involving:

“ The selection, classification, and prioritization of types of design, categories of designers, distinct styles and movements, and different modes of production, [which] are inherently biased against women, and in effect, serve to exclude them from history.”⁴

Further, she asserts that women who have managed to get due recognition are either exclusively defined by their gender or are mentioned second only to their male counterpart—be it their husband, father, or brother. Prior to the mid-twentieth century, women interested in working or studying art and design were encouraged to focus on the decorative arts—a woman's “naturally suited” focus area—including weaving, textile painting, pottery, illustration, and calligraphy.⁵ A clear contrast to the male-dominated, more technological, and industrialized design fields seen in printing. In a patriarchal ideology, men's work is valued more highly than the work of women.⁴ The long-standing patriarchal

structure of men belonging to technology and women belonging to craftwork is responsible for the centuries-long bias that women in the field.

Not long after Buckley's insight into the exclusion of women from graphic design history, Margaret Rossiter followed a similar path in 1993 with a focus on women in science. Here reenters Matilda Gage. In "The Matthew Matilda Effect in Science," Rossiter describes a similar phenomenon of forgotten or undervalued women in the sciences as *The Matilda Effect*—a term named after the suffragist leader who fought for women's visibility in the sciences during the nineteenth century. Rossiter argues that the suppression of women goes beyond just individual cases. It's a systemic repression in the scientific field that fails to credit women throughout history. Rossiter points to a directory published in 1906, *American Men of Science*, which "deliberately minimized" women by excluding them from the text and title itself.⁷ This mirrors the lack of historical recognition and celebration of women in graphic design.

A WOMAN'S 'PLACE'

Though more women were gaining professional opportunities as designers in the twentieth century, social pressures for women to prioritize family and domestic life dominated. For those who sought to achieve both a professional career and motherhood—or resisted their assumed 'place'—there were other societal pressures to juggle. For one, as Astrid Stavro states, "artistic productivity during the twentieth century was associated with being predominately male."²¹ Women who were allowed to, or who worked to be the exception,

“ saw their names fade into the background, or be entirely forgotten... systematically, women's work was undervalued.”²¹

If there had been more visible women designers to serve as inspiration to the younger generation over the years, would that have changed the accepted narrative?

Even in the twenty-first century, a narrow view of women as designers has prevailed—one that is rooted in defining women by their gender and their presumptive maternal obligation. Evidence of this is shown by one of the most celebrated American graphic designers, Milton Glaser. During a 2006 design conference, a panel comprised solely of men were asked: “Why do you suppose there are so few female graphic designers—or at least so few female ‘superstar’ graphic designers?” To which Glaser responded: “... women get pregnant, have children, go home and take care of their children. And those essential years that men are building their careers and becoming visible are basically denied to women who choose to be at home. Unless something very dramatic happens to the nature of the human experience then it’s never going to change.”²²

Glaser’s comments sparked a heated debate. Not only were his words, “shocking only in their obviousness,”²¹ but they perpetuated the assumption that women are still largely viewed as inferior to men in the field of design. He also unearthed a deep-rooted truth that women often lose professional opportunities because of their ‘choice’ (read: obligation) to be mothers and keepers of the house. This ideology assumes that women are unable to achieve professional success as substantial as men. This is due, in part, to social pressures imposed on women that have existed for centuries, and consequentially questions “women’s capacity for creative ‘genius.’”⁶

Clearly, women have been underrepresented and often ignored as designers. But the fact that more women exist in the field than ever is somewhat encouraging, albeit long overdue. That said, if we are to ever truly overcome gender biases within the field, we have to understand why and how it has taken us this long to recognize such disparities. British designer and design historian, Ruth Sykes, best articulates the long-standing issue with graphic design history and states:

“ If graphic design history were revised to include more of the accomplishments of female graphic designers, it would be one part of the process of achieving equal industry status for female graphic designers. Knowing that the reason female graphic designers rarely appear in our history books is due to the way that history is made,

rather than a lack of actual contribution, could help the industry realize its goal of gender equality.”

Only by reevaluating how we shape our history will we reach a point where we can avoid what Stavro calls “the ‘woman designer’ syndrome”—the exception to the male-dominated rule. ‘Women designers’ doesn’t have to be a necessary classification—creative and innovative ideas should ultimately be recognized and recorded, commended, and celebrated regardless of gender.

INSPIRATION

Today there exists a growing movement to rediscovering untold stories of women in history. In the world of graphic design, there are a handful of publications devoted entirely to women designers that finally bring to light their contributions to the industry. Many of these publications have profoundly and appropriately increased the visibility of these women, yet they still “distort graphic design history”²³ by their general lack of comprehensive contextual detail. These works don’t articulate the realities of the social, political, and economic disparities that women designers faced in the past. This omission categorically separates them from what’s considered to be the standard written history of design and leads to a complex web of gender disparities in the practicing design field of today.

This project required significant archival research and a thorough critical analysis of the written texts of design history. I also further analyzed texts and platforms devoted solely to women designers. Those that have served as inspiration include: Kirkham’s *Women Designers in the USA 1900–2000: Diversity and Difference* (2000), *Women of Design* (2008) by Bryony Gomez-Palacio and Armin Vit, *Women in Graphic Design 1890–2012* (2012) edited by Gerda Breuer and Julia Meer, The Women’s Design + Research Unit, and Ruth Skyes’ research and exhibition titled *A+: 100 years of graphic communication by women at Central Saint Martins*. Though not published yet, I look forward to reading and gaining further inspiration from *Extra Bold: A Feminist, Inclusive, Anti-racist, Nonbinary Field Guide for Graphic Designers* by Ellen Lupton, Farah Kafei, Jennifer Tobias, Josh A. Halstead, Kaleena Sales, Leslie Xia, and Valentina Vergara. This is due to release in May 2021.

One source I have directly modeled inspiration from is Hall of Femmes, a European-based collection that highlights the works of women in design. The project began in 2009, founded by Samira Bouabana and Angela Tillman Sperandio, in an effort to find contemporary women role models in graphic design. Their exploration grew into a series of small paperback books, and have since expanded into hosting events, interviews, and a podcast.

Drawing inspiration from this collection has been incredibly exciting. It also encourages me to keep asking myself important questions about my own research and project development. Is this addressing a void in design history? Does the need for this platform continue to be valid? Absolutely.

RESEARCH

STATEMENT

My goal is to go beyond a typical written history and create an engaging, interactive website that explores the messy history of women and her rightful place in graphic design history. In its current state, my project serves as a framework to build upon for years to come, with the intent of growing a more comprehensive collection of women in design. This is a *herstory*, largely untold, and serves as a foundation for an honest re-examination of women's place in graphic design history.

This list is far from exhaustive. Ultimately, heridea.design will grow to be a space that brings myriad voices and untold stories of design together, providing an essential resource for awareness, inclusivity, and—finally—truth in the world of graphic design.

discovery



*Circa 1901: Elizabeth Shippen Green, Violet Oakley, Jessie Willcox Smith, and Henrietta Cozens.
Image source: Violet Oakley papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.*

METHODOLOGY GOALS & REALITIES

The scope of this project has been massive and overwhelming since the beginning. How does one attempt to convey an in-depth and thorough analysis of graphic design history, gather and research untold stories of forgotten women, challenge the norms of historiography, flip it on its head, and somehow add a unique and compelling paradigm to the canon? What about other marginalized groups that have been excluded from the narrative? How can I capture their stories? Am I doing enough? I often asked myself these questions (and more) throughout the process. Nevertheless, I persisted.

Early plans (or dreams, rather) for this project centered on creating an exhibition featuring the works of forgotten women in design throughout the years, interwoven with my own original artifacts inspired by the work of these women. Quickly learning that the time and resources needed to build this reality were far beyond my reach, I pivoted.

I focused my efforts on taking the project to the digital realm. I found excitement in creating an interactive website that could extend beyond the walls of a gallery space and grow to be a more in-depth and lasting experience.

In this process, I had the opportunity to pursue new and exciting research opportunities that would help guide my project and bring forth fresh insight and inspiration.

After writing my proposal, I was selected for a teaching assistant position at UB under Professor Jeanne Fountain's guidance, assisting with an introductory course on graphic design history for undergraduates in the fall 2017 semester. I attended the class weekly to observe lectures, assist Fountain, and organize a class lecture (future mini-Ted Talk, maybe?) covering my evergrowing research.

Introducing the class to a slew of untold stories and works by women in design was exciting. The direction and acceptance of my project left me feeling validated. Leading up to this, I spent the semester following along with the class's weekly readings assigned in *Meggs'*

History of Graphic Design. This was the first time I'd read Meggs' history and having just spent the summer reading about its problematic nature in theory, the experience allowed me to explore the book cover to cover with a critical lens in search of every missed opportunity to highlight women in design.

In the following semester of March 2018, I was deeply inspired by a two-day trip to New York City to attend a student-led panel and exhibition titled, *Against All Odds/Led by Example and Missing Pages*, respectively, at the Pratt Institute. Graduating design students, Farah Kafei and Valentina Vergara organized the evening as part of their thesis capstone. The panel was comprised of four renowned designers and design educators, while the evening's conversation was centered on gender disparity in graphic design education and its effects. The discussion, led by Natasha Jen, Ellen Lupton, Tracy Ma, and Carly Ayres, offered invaluable insight and conversation centered on the subject of my growing research. As an unexpected but exciting bonus experience, Lupton and I ended up sharing an Uber together back to Manhattan from Pratt's Brooklyn campus. During that 20-minute ride across the East river, Lupton enthusiastically inquired about my project and shared some really kind and thoughtful insight on how to frame my research. She encouraged me to not make an attempt at rewriting history, but rather to find a unique and compelling way to add to it.

See Appendix C for photos and details of this trip.

Shortly after, I applied for UB's Turner Research Award and was granted funds to travel and attend *It Wasn't Written*, an international symposium on "designer-ly ways of historiography" at the Museum of Modern Art. In September 2018, I heard from experts in the field such as Julia Meer, Johanna Drucker, Teal Triggs, and others who led conversations on alternative methodologies of designing history. I didn't know what to expect going into this event and once I was there, admittedly, I found it quite intimidating to be in a room full of authors whose writings I'd been feverishly reading since the advent of my research. In hindsight, I wish that I'd found a way to prepare questions or talking points in anticipation of facing these incredible scholars. While the event itself was incredibly thought-provoking and inspiring, much of the content of the day-long symposium expanded past the scope of what I needed to focus in on for my project.

While In New York, I made arrangements for on-site research at Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum. The weeks leading up to my travels, I reached out to contacts in Cooper Hewitt's archival collections with hopes of viewing and documenting any work by women graphic designers first-hand that were housed in their archives. In response, I received an email that stated, "I oversee Cooper Hewitt's design archives, which are stored off-site, and regrettably do not include any female graphic designers." I was shocked. How could the country's leading design museum not have any work in their collections by women designers? Unfortunately, by the time I was put in contact with the correct source, an appointment wasn't 'feasible.' I never received a sure answer as to whether or not work by women designers exists in Cooper Hewitt's archives for public viewing. Presumably, it was an innocent misunderstanding, but it's disappointing that there wasn't a clearer path to explore these works. Still, this detour opened the door for me to spend the day digging through the National Design Library at the Cooper Hewitt where I was able to view many out-of-print books and writings on design history and uncover unfamiliar stories of women in design.

See Appendix D for photos, details, and email correspondence pertaining to this trip.

The following year, I returned to Cooper Hewitt in New York on a whim for a unique opportunity to attend *A Colorful Conversation*, an evening with Louise Sandhaus and Gere Kavanaugh. They were promoting a new book on the designer's life and prolific career, *A Colorful Life: Gere Kavanaugh, Designer* by Sandhaus and Kat Catmur. Instantly, I found Kavanaugh's spirit captivating as I learned of her decades-long west coast career full of life and addictive energy. Following the conversation, I was the first in line for an autograph and to introduce myself to both Kavanaugh and Sandhaus. Time was limited and the crowd was moving quickly. Unfortunately, this did not create an ideal environment to speak much of my project and ask for an opportunity to follow up in a personal exchange. But I found the intimate evening wonderfully engaging and filled with valuable details I wouldn't have come across otherwise.

I got to a point in my process—on more than one occasion—where the task at hand seemed never ending. I was reminded by many along the way that the research and effort to develop

connections could (and probably will) continue on forever. I had to pick a starting point and begin to apply these unique experiences and collected research in order to get this project off the ground so that it could indeed continue to grow, evolve, and adapt over time.

FINDINGS

As I began to narrow my focus, one of my early goals for myself was to build as large as a database of women designers as I could possibly manage. This task alone was a huge undertaking, and arguably never truly complete. I've come to accept that this itself will be an ongoing task to upkeep and maintain over time but a necessary and useful one.

See Appendix E for snapshot of ongoing research to build this timeline.

From this, I started to narrow my focus on highlighting a group of women designers from history and finding a common thread to unify their work. Since some of my earliest research, I gravitated towards and drew inspiration from the avant-garde Russian Constructivist group of the early twentieth century. Even before learning of the work of designers like Stepanova, Valentina Kulagina, and Liubov Popova, I found the visual style, techniques, and founding principles from this group forward-thinking and still largely influential among today's contemporary design. This was a logical place to begin to narrow my focus for my website.

I chose Readymag as my platform to build my website for its seemingly easy-to-use "blank canvas" that allowed for a seamless integration of interactivity and full control of design. In a lot of ways, this proved to be true. But it wasn't without its limitations and fallbacks. One of which was optimizing my site for mobile; another, easily integrating a global navigation. These two factors are vital for the success and general accessibility of heridea.design. While I was able to build navigation into my site, it is limited in its expansion through Readymag. Having learned these two things along the way, I realized that Readymag is a great tool for simple websites. What I envision for heridea.design in the long term, however, extends beyond the current capabilities that Readymag offers. With that in mind, the current state of my project exists more so as a high-def, functional prototype.

As I began to build the framework of my website, I knew that I wanted to keep this resource highly visual as to keep the attention focused on the designers' work. This meant that I would need to obtain image use rights to any images that fell outside of the public domain. Fortunately, I was awarded more funding from the Turner Research Award Committee in the 2021 spring semester to apply towards obtaining these image use rights through Art Resource, the Tate, Ne boltai! Collection, and Alamy Stock Photos.

In a larger sense, I learned along the way that there's more than one way to add to the story, and more importantly, there is more than one voice to make room for at the table. I've come to believe that history is never complete. There's a multitude of stories that were never recorded and thus will not be known. What I can do, and what I've accomplished with this project, is shed light on the overshadowed and continue to ask the provocative questions that Scotford, Buckley, Breuer, Meer and others have raised so that we have a richer history illuminating our past, informing a more inclusive present and future.

AUDIENCE

Primary

My audience is not defined by age or gender but includes individuals who are active members of the creative field. This includes practicing designers, design students, and educators to name a few. They may not know a lot about design history but are intrigued by its elusiveness and interested in learning more about its past. They are regularly in tune with the latest cultural trends and are technologically engaged on a daily basis. They are involved in active conversation surrounding today's social issues and passionately support inclusivity and gender equity.

Secondary

My secondary audience is of a broader degree, comprised of individuals who take great interest in the arts and other creative realms, but are not trained or highly skilled designers *per se*. They do greatly value, however, feminism in theory and in practice, and embrace positive progressive change.

design



*1924: Anton Lavinsky, Olga Rodchenko, Alexander Vesnin, Liubov Popova, Nikolai Sobolev, and Varvara Stepanova.
Image source: Art Resource, New York.*

MOOD BOARD

Early in my development, I started building a mood board as a helpful tool to inform the look and feel of the foundation of heridea.design. I focused on gathering bright, energetic colors and styles, paired with interesting and provocative imagery and cheeky phrases that would establish a playful identity. This was used throughout my process as a useful guide in designing heridea.design as its own entity and finding her voice, keeping in mind that some aspects will intentionally deviate from this established style as new groups of designers are added to the collection.

See Appendix F for mood board and poster design.

STYLE GUIDE

Fonts

As a founding brand for heridea.design, I selected three fonts, all designed by women:

Blenny. Truly individualistic and unique in style, *Blenny* is a fat face display typeface designed by Spike Spondike in 2014. Its instantaneous personality suits the cheeky tone and individuality of heridea.design. I use this font specifically for content headings and it is set in bright red for continuity throughout the main page.

Catalpa. This font family was designed in 2019 by Veronika Burian and José Scaglione. It's described as "not made to be normal; it was made to overwhelm, to stand out, to bellow." This intent alone belongs perfectly on heridea.design, boldly reclaiming a forgotten history. Using only its light weights for body copy and subheadings, this geometric sans-serif provides a delicate balance and reliable legibility throughout the main page. It's also used for designer name tags throughout the site, set in a smaller size and in all caps, showcasing its versatility.

Mrs. Eaves. The first designs for this typeface were completed in 1996 by Zuzana Licko of Emigre Fonts. The typeface is styled after the transitional serif typeface, *Baskerville*, and is

named in honor of Sarah Eaves. Its defining low x-height and unique blend of tradition and modernity perfectly frame captions and headline eyebrows sprinkled in throughout the main page of heridea.design in all petite caps. More poetically, it seemed like fateful happenstance that *Mrs. Eaves* should find her place on heridea.design. As mentioned in my introduction, Eaves was one of the earliest sparks of inspiration for this project and having the option to include the eponymous typeface in my project was a no brainer. As an added bonus, this paper is set in *Mrs. Eaves XL*, Licko's second addition to the *Mrs. Eaves* family.

For the Constructivists pages, it was important I customize the typography that echoed the spirit of the style. For these pages, I chose:

Roc Grotesk. A robust family of 45 fonts, *Roc Grotesk* was designed by Nikola Kostic. The range of widths and weights prove to capture the spirit of Constructivism but with a modern spin. The bold compressed font perfectly emulates the bold, graphic headlines found on propaganda posters of the early twentieth-century style. A mix of regular, medium, wide, and light condensed fonts from this family add style, variety, and a juxtaposed lightness to the heavier headlines.

All of these fonts are web safe and sourced through Adobe Fonts, which was a critical component of sourcing typography for my website.

Colors

In my exploration for a color palette for heridea.design, I was inspired by bold and playful colors that complimented the witty voice of the brand and perfectly framed the black and white photographic elements of the homepage. I also drew inspiration directly from the fluorescent shades of layered post-its and highlighter markings throughout the pages of found texts in my research process; a similar process for members of my audience studying their design history books. This seemed like another appropriate yet subtle way to layer in the margins of design history where women's stories remain. Bright shades of yellow, green, pink, and red intermingle with softer shades of blue, purple, and gray to evoke the playful spirit of heridea.design.

For the Constructivists pages, I kept it simple as to stick to their loud and iconic style with a bright red, black, white, and a light shade of gray.

The same red, light gray, and black are used across all pages on the site, serving as a common thread throughout all the existing webpages.

Imagery & Image Style

Images for the main page are primarily black and white being that the origin of these photos are historical in nature and pre-date color photography techniques. Also, keeping these photos primarily in their true form allows for the color palette and the site's spirit to boldly shine through. Stylistically, these photos are roughly cut to evoke a 'cut-and-paste' aesthetic that speaks to the overarching nature of this project and the photomontage technique of the Constructivists.

Other images throughout the main page and Constructivists pages are untouched color photographs of the designers' work as to not detract from their designs.

See Appendix G for style guide.

MEDIUM

As previously outlined, selecting a medium for this project was not a simple process. Ultimately, though, I chose to frame my research as an interactive web experience. It was important I maintain an exploratory format to allow for users to guide their experience through this expanded history, similar to that of a live exhibition space. At first, I struggled with the realization that what I ultimately envisioned for heridea.design was beyond my own coding skills. But I felt it was necessary to prioritize the big picture, mindful of the four pillars I had established as a guiding principle, and focused on building a live, high-def prototype as a compromise.

I considered multiple resources as a platform for heridea.design but in my discovery, I knew I wasn't interested in adapting my content to fit into a ready-made template. Ultimately, I

selected Readymag for its seamless integration of interactivity and full control of design. While I spent some time doing some early tests of Readymag and exploring how to maximize its collections of widgets used to build the site, I learned that this platform is not without its flaws. Still though, I was confident in its ability to serve as a hearty proof of concept knowing that in the future, I will pursue funding and resources to custom build this website, so it fully aligns with the long-term goals and overarching vision in mind.

Using a very simple information architecture, I began by building a few basic wireframe templates intended to serve as page templates for my primary, secondary, and tertiary web pages. Building the wireframes helped guide the page hierarchy and flow of information first and not get hung up on the branding components.

When navigating to the site, users are first faced with a bold question of, “where are all the women designers?” There is a slight 0.3–0.5 second delay before the names and images of a handful of women designers are revealed, ‘answering’ the question. A contemporary spin on the silhouette, these images directly link to profiles on these women’s lives and work as designers. On the far right, a playful hint points to and directs the user further down the page.

With basic UI and UX best practices in mind, I integrated a simple global navigation, found in the top right corner throughout the site. A small but visible “heridea.design” is linked back to the homepage directly below the hamburger menu icon as a clear indicator to navigate back to the landing page as a restarting point. There are multiple avenues that take users throughout the pages of the site, maintaining the exploratory aspect.

Unfortunately, the site is not currently optimized for mobile due to unforeseen complications with Readymag. This is an important and necessary next step for heridea.design and is outlined in more detail under *Expansion*.

See Appendix H for more on the website design.

EXPENSES

Outside of the planned costs of design software and website hosting I knew I would need to complete this project, I had many other expenses that arose throughout this process. The largest hurdle being the image use rights I'd need to acquire in order to publish this site and fulfill the goal of making this a highly visual, immersive experience.

Thankfully, I was awarded funds through the Turner Research Award at UB both in fall 2018 and spring 2021. The first award covered \$1,500 in expenses to travel to New York City in September 2018 to attend *It Wasn't Written*, an international symposium on “designer-ly ways of historiography” at the Museum of Modern Art. In this same trip, I was able to coordinate time at the National Design Library at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum for a day of on-site research in their stacks. Then, in spring 2021, I was awarded up to an additional \$1,500 to cover the expenses required to source and purchase image use rights for over 40 photos to add to my website. I am immensely grateful for this funding. The project would not have developed to this stage without it.

Travel expenses: \$2,221 (transportation, lodging, museum entrance fees, and meals)

Partially funded through UB's Turner Research Award

Design software: \$360 a year with student discount

Pre-owned

Web Domain: \$50 a year

Hosting Services: \$156 a year

Partially pre-owned

Readymag Creator Plan: \$10 a month with student discount

Image Use Rights: \$1,052

Funded through UB's Turner Research Award

expansion



1924: Charlotte Billwiller, Mathilde Flögl, Susi Singer, Marianne Lesching, and Maria Likarz.
Image source: Museum of Applied Arts.



EXPANSION
& DELIVERY

I identified four grounding pillars for heridea.design:

1. Awareness
2. Community
3. Literature
4. Design Education

For the sake of this project, my focus was on building and establishing *Awareness* as a framework. I intend to use these anchoring objectives to continue to develop the website by building out additional profiles on women in design history, paired with appropriate context and founding research, first by expanding on the Constructivists to include other notable designers like Natalia Pinus, Maria Bri-Bein, and Aleksandra Ekster.

I also intend to open heridea.design up for submissions so that the collective restructuring of design history has a wider, more diverse authorship. Additionally, heridea.design ideally would have a networking component so that the industry is more widely accessible to its expanding audience. Third, this project would support a database of sorts to collect writings, articles, and more that expand on a more inclusive history. And lastly—and perhaps as the next step—I intend to take this research and development to put towards writing an academic course on forgotten women in design history.

Outside of these pillars, I'd also like to pursue the opportunity to translate this project into other formats outside of this website or future classroom. For example, how would this translate as a book or series of zines? How might that be different from other printed historical texts in design? Or how might the experience of information differ if designed in an exhibition space?

Before expanding past the website, I intend to work with a developer who can help customize the code for heridea.design and better manage the backend. Also, another critical

next step is to optimize the site for mobile view so that it is fully and readily accessible to all audiences. As more designers are added to the collection, it will be essential to acquire additional funding to support ongoing maintenance and image rights costs.

As another addition, I plan to build a social media presence of @heridea.design to maintain awareness and relevance for my audience(s) and beyond.

See Appendix I for founding pillars and near-future plans of an Instagram feed/campaign.

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Thank you to my classmates-turned-friends at UB who've challenged and encouraged me along this journey: Maureen, Aseloka, Heather, Katie, Nicole, Emily, and so many others. I admire and am continuously inspired by each of you. Thank you to my teachers and mentors at UB who've helped shape me into the creative I am today.

Thank you to the Turner Research Award Committee at UB for affording me valuable resources to expand on my research and bring this project to fruition.

Thank you to my friends and family who've cheered me on from afar all these years, often not really fully knowing what they're rooting for. Your support has meant so much, particularly in this last pandemic year full of many unknowns.

Finally, I'd be remiss to not thank the generations of women designers, scholars, writers, educators, artists, and creatives whose work has served as continued inspiration and the driving force for this project. Her ideas deserve to be celebrated yesterday, today, and in the years ahead.

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appendix



2017: me and my thesis proposal poster.



APPENDIX A

Google results for “famous graphic designers” as of April 2021. Only five out of the first 22 names are women, highlighted below in yellow for reference.

Google

famous graphic designers

All Images Videos Books News More Settings Tools

Graphic Designers

Milton Glaser
1929–2020

Saul Bass
1920–1996

Paul Rand
1914–1996

Paula Scher

Stefan Sagmeister

David Carson

Massimo Vignelli
1931–2014

Chip Kidd

<https://www.creativebloq.com/graphic-design/names...>

25 names every graphic designer should know | Creative Bloq

Oct 16, 2018 — Chip Kidd, Rob Janoff, Michael Bierut, Jonathan Barnbrook, **Kate Moross**, George Lois, **Morag Myerscough**, Lindon Leader.

People also ask

Who is the most famous graphic designer?

Who is the highest paid graphic designer?

Who is the graphic designer for Nike?

Who is a good graphic designer?

Feedback

<https://www.canva.com/learn/design-inspiration/>

The most famous graphic designers of all time | Canva

With that, let's have a look at 40 of the world's most famous graphic designers and the lessons they learned along the way. David Carson: Break the Rules. Stefan Sagmeister: Blend inspiring qualities. **Paula Scher**: Treat Type as a Visual Image. Michael Bierut: Make complex content accessible. Massimo Vignelli: Convey ...

You've visited this page 2 times. Last visit: 4/16/21

<https://99designs.com/blog/tips/famous-graphic-d...>

10 famous graphic designers you should be able to name-drop

10 graphic designers you should be able to name-drop · 1. Ott Aicher · 2. Michael Beirut · 3. Neville Brody · 4. David Carson · 5. Alan Fletcher · 6. Chip Kidd · 7. Armin ...

<https://www.vectormator.io/blog/famous-graphic-des...>

9 Famous Graphic Designers In 2021 | Vectormator Blog

May 19, 2020 — Our first famous graphic designer: Stefan Sagmeister · Contemporary Graphic Design: **Jessica Walsh** · Famous Typography Designer Neil ...

<https://www.designwizard.com/blog/famous-graphic...>

The World's Most Famous Graphic Designers in 2021 - Design ...

Mar 3, 2021 — Saul Bass · **Cine Pineles** · Massimo Vignelli · Paul Rand · Milton Glaser · Alan

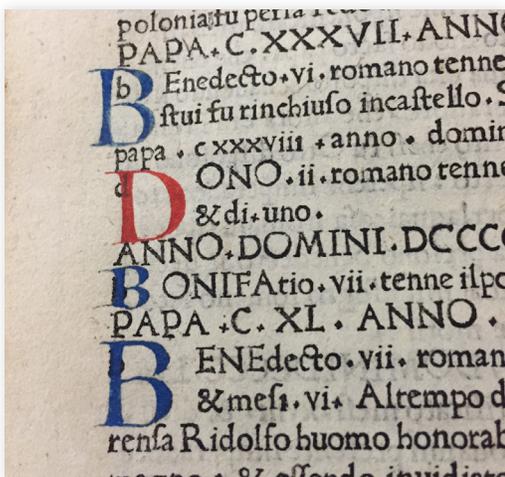
*Repeated twice, counted once.

APPENDIX B

A small sampling of work by women designers, circa 1325–1925.



c. 1325–1353: Paris, France. Believed to be wife and husband master illuminators, Jeanne and Richard de Montbaston.²⁴ Image source: Bibliothèque nationale de France.



1478: Florence, Italy. Page detail of *Incominciano Le vite de Pontefici et imperadori Romani* (Lives of the Popes and Roman Emperors) that shows handset type and hand-colored initials known as rubrication. Published by the press at the Convent of San Jacopo Di Ripoli.¹³ Image source: Lisa Unger Baskin collection, Duke Universities Libraries.

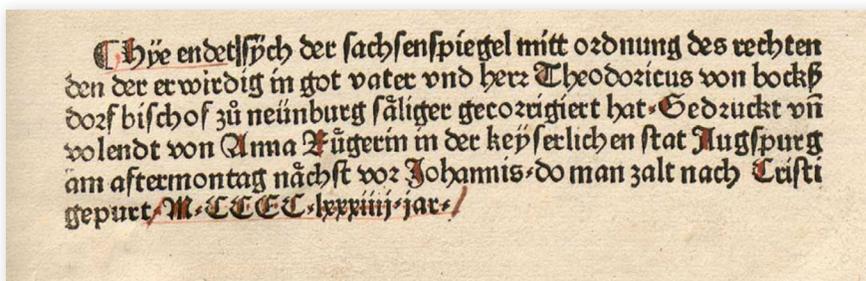


1453: Italy. Liturgical manuscript by Maria Ormani, a nun and skilled scribe.²⁵ Image source: Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Austrian National Library) MS 1923.

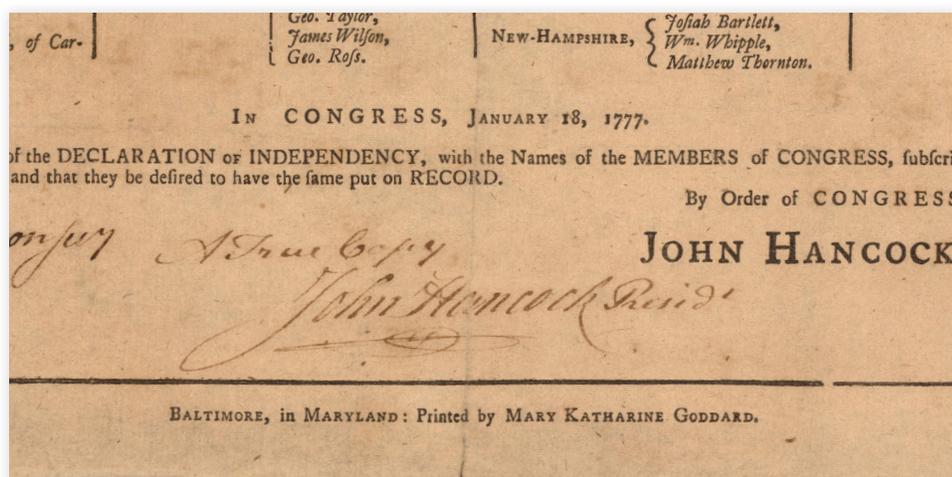
APPENDIX B

CONTINUED

A small sampling of work by women designers, circa 1325–1925.



1484: Augsburg, Germany. The colophon from *Sachsenspiegel: Landrecht*, printed by Anna Rügen. Image source: Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (The German Research Foundation).

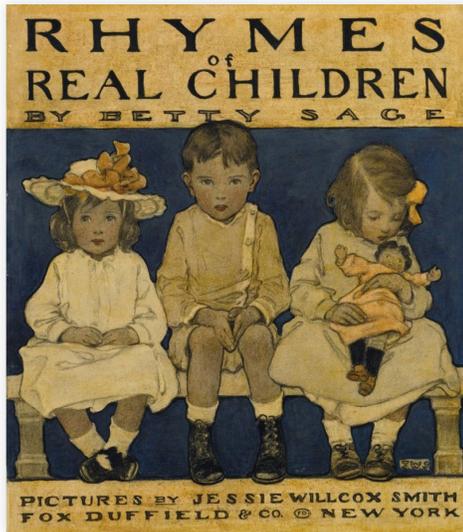


1777: Baltimore, Maryland. Detail of a copy of the Declaration of Independence printed by Mary Katharine Goddard. Typically, she credited her work with just her initials (M.K. Goddard) but seized an opportunity in a historical moment by printing her full name here.¹⁴ Image source: Library of Congress.

APPENDIX B

CONTINUED

A small sampling of work by women designers, circa 1325–1925.



1903: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Rhymes of Real Children illustrated by Jessie Willcox Smith. Published by Fox, Duffield. Image source: Sotheby's.



1910: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A Puritan's Wife poster design by Violet Oakley. Published by Dodd, Mead & Co. Image source: Library of Congress.



1911: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Madam Joly in no wise resembled the Madonna Botticelli in the Louvre: poor little one! She murmured, resting her cheek on the brown hair by Elizabeth Shippen Green. Published in Harper's magazine. Image source: Library of Congress.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Smith, Green, and Oakley were considered to be among the most influential artists of American domestic life.²⁶

They met while studying at Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and were later known as The Red Rose Girls. As illustrators and designers, they were widely celebrated and often explored womanhood and motherhood as themes in their work.

APPENDIX B

CONTINUED

A small sampling of work by women designers, circa 1925–1925.



1925: Moscow, Russia. Poster for Giz Soviet publishing house by Varvara Stepanova. Image source: AF Fotografie/Alamy Stock Photo.



1925: Moscow, Russia. Poster for Gosizdat (State Publishing House) *The Literature Will Improve the Farm Economy! Teach Your Children with Gosizdat Textbooks!* (Text by Vladimir Mayakovsky, 1893–1930) by Varvara Stepanova. Image source: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.



1924: Moscow, Russia. Stepanova was among the first to bring the bold constructivist aesthetic to textiles. Her clothing designs were idealized for the function in which the piece was intended for. Image sources: Art Resource, NY and Alamy Stock Photo.

APPENDIX C

New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.



SUMMARY: AGAINST ALL ODDS/ LED BY EXAMPLE + MISSING PAGES

March 28–29, 2018: I visited the Pratt Institute (Brooklyn campus) to attend a panel discussion on gender disparity in graphic design education and its effects, and its accompanying installation, *Missing Pages*. Also visited the *Albers, Lustig Cohen, and Tissi: 1958–2018* exhibition at the Pratt Manhattan Gallery.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

The panel consisted of reputable designers and design educators:

Natasha Jen—partner at Pentagram,

Ellen Lupton—curator at Cooper Hewitt, author, and director of graphic design program at MICA,

Tracy Ma—visual editor at *New York Times* Styles, and

Carly Ayres—partner at interactive studio, HAWRAF.

Against All Odds/Led by Example and *Missing Pages* were organized by graduating Pratt students, Farah Kafei and Valentina Vergara. The panel discussion took place in Memorial Hall on Thursday, March 29 at 7:00 pm. Moderated by Kafei, the following questions guided the discussion among Jen, Lupton, Ma, and Ayres. Notable remarks are noted and credited with their initials following the questions.

1. Introduce yourself and what does gender disparity at work look like for you?

APPENDIX C

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New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.

2. Mentorships—have they been helpful to you? Are they generally helpful [to young designers]?
3. Elaborate on your educational background.
4. Education for women designers—how important is this?
5. We surveyed 50 women design students and over half shared that they have experienced sexist/misogynistic ways in school. Ellen, any advice for school on addressing this?
6. How can our male counterparts help create these leading roles for women?
7. Design history—women have been left out. What are your thoughts?
8. Martha Scotford's "messy history" article elaborates on the fact that it's harder to pin point when/where credit is due. Elaborate on this.
9. Have you seen a difference in biased experiences in education versus the workplace?
10. What advice do you have for young designers that want to become educators?
11. In one word: what advice do you have for young women designers?

- EL: pretty female-dominant at Cooper Hewitt.
- NJ: There are only four female partners out of 22 at Pentagram. Staff-wise, it's pretty balanced. (Also discusses how Paula Scher served as sort of a mentor; first female partner at Pentagram)
- CA: 1/4 of partners are female (me) at HAWRAF
- Do women "take credit" for mentors the same way as men do? Since they don't have the same leadership roles?
- According to AIGA/Google poll 94% of professional graphic designers have formal education.
- We still have to change what design leaders look like.
- TM: Teaching now so I can pass on my own experiences on to younger designers.
- NJ: Expect more of yourself—you are more than a man. There is no better time than now to be a woman. We are a patriarchal society, historically and today.
- Women have to initiate transparency on salary negotiations (men do not; it's assumed).
- It's about hiring women—women of color, trans women, etc.—amplifying their voice and then step aside!
- TM: women tend to share credit more so than me. i.e. men say, "yeah I was Creative Director for this." Whereas, women tend to say, "yeah we worked on this."
- EL: men are at the top but obviously women are doing the work to get them there. I've never regretted sharing credit where it's due.
- EL: [when teaching design history/at MICA] look beyond Meggs' book—pull from many sources to give a richer perspective of design history.
- NJ: education/history is only half the story—our society/government is responsible as well. [elaborates more on experiencing discrimination as an

APPENDIX C

CONTINUED

New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.

immigrant rather than just being a woman.]

- NJ: this isn't going away. Humans are flawed. We have to focus on [our] work and what makes [us] happy.
- TM: there are degrees of response. Self-care approach is important, too but we must speak up.
- CA: you have to do your job, pick your battles, network—but know when to call people out.
- NJ: why would you want to teach design instead of practice design?
- (One word): bright (NJ), alpha (EL), better (TM), best (CA).
- EL: everyone should be the alpha bitch!

The panel was thought-provoking and inspiring and often led to discussion that didn't necessarily lead to an easy, straight-forward answer, but instead left the audience of 200+ to draw their own conclusions. For me, that was:

I'm really interested in our history as an industry. We are fairly young, yet not young enough to have to be controlled, written by white male intellectuals. Is there a way to challenge what's accepted as history? Do you feel this can be an avenue to help propel us collectively into a more equally-represented industry? Correcting the past to improve the present and future? Can we present alternative ways of design history? What does that look like?

MISSING PAGES

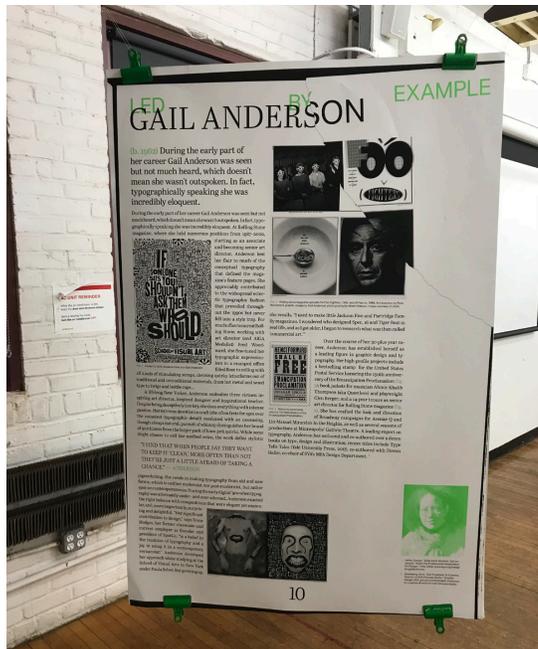
The panel ended with a Q&A and closing reception in the exhibition space in Steuben room 417. The installation highlighted ten women designers considered to be underrepresented in design history textbooks. The featured women were Corita Kent, Tomoko Miho, Sheila Levrant de Brettvile, Gail Anderson, April Greiman, Lorraine Wild, Katherine McCoy, Rebecca Méndez, Cipe Pineles, and Muriel Cooper. The installation states:

Missing Pages is an installation that discovers, collects, and compiles the work and contribution of women who have shaped graphic design but are not credited or represented nearly enough. The information presented on these pages has been sourced from a variety of articles and books, and then carefully pieced together to create a reconciled history textbook page. Learning and knowing about these women is not only a small step in rectifying history, it is also incredibly empowering. The installation highlights ten female designers, although as we have slowly learned, there are so many others. Some of the women included here are immigrants, some are nuns, some are mothers, some are educators—all deserve acknowledgment and appreciation for the immense role they have played in graphic design. Missing Pages is a step towards an understanding of design history that's inclusive; of design history that paints a better, more comprehensive picture; of design history that questions and challenges the widely white, male-dominated story which continues being

APPENDIX C

CONTINUED

New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.



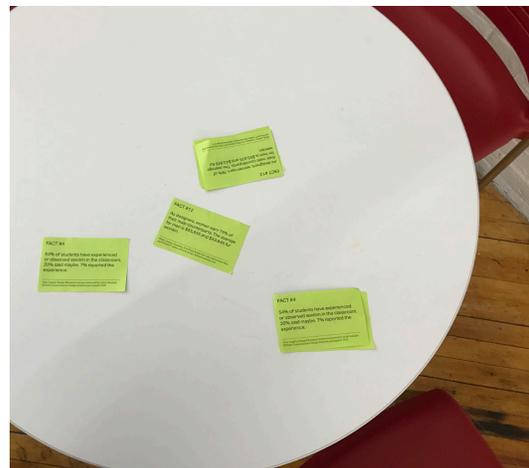
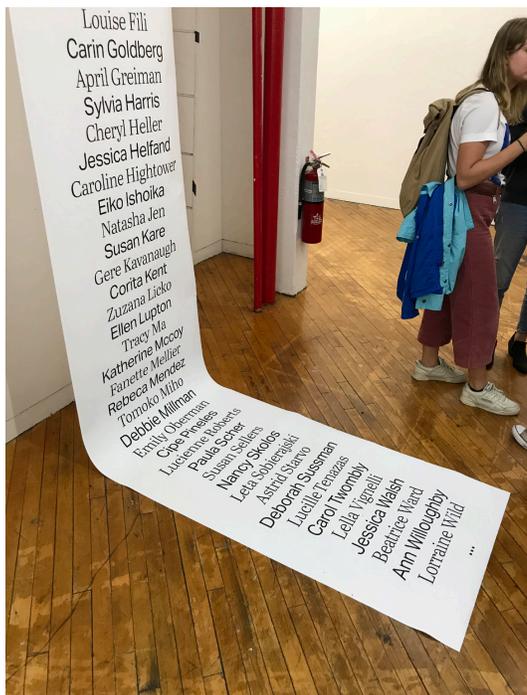
APPENDIX C
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New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.



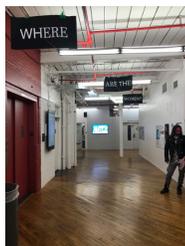
APPENDIX C
CONTINUED

New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.



APPENDIX C

CONTINUED

New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.

learned. We hope that after this, you will be yearning for much, much more. *LED BY EXAMPLE* is a (graphic design focused) campaign that rallies for (1) more women at the head of classrooms and (2) more women included in history education. It was initiated by (Farah Kafei and Valentina Vergara) at Pratt Institute. Special thanks to Jessica Wexler, Cynthia Pratomo and Duncan Hamilton for providing us with invaluable support, resources and knowledge.

Before entering the installation space, there hung three posters overhead printed in black and white and lime green, displaying "Where are the women?" A larger-than-life printed list of various women designers hung from the top of the ceiling and spilled out on to the floor; insinuating that women's contributions to design were too vast to simply have a beginning and ending. Inside room 41, each woman's page featured an overview of their lives and careers, pieced together by multiple sources. They were strung from the ceiling in juxtaposed positions, guiding viewers from one to the next, held together by lime green clips. Each oversized page measured at roughly 24 inches wide by 36 inches tall. At the front of the room, there was looped video projected on a screen that highlighted interviews and mini-docs of women designers. In the back corner, a pair of sofas and a table welcomed visitors to sit, read, write, and collect handouts of articles (such as Martha Scotford's "Messy History vs. Neat History") to take from the space; encouraging viewers to take this 'forgotten' material out into the world with them.

Kafei (fskafei@gmail.com) shared that Sheila Levrant de Brettville was overwhelmingly responsive and supportive of the project. Unfortunately, de Brettville was not able to participate in the panel, but sent a list of contacts to get in touch with who might be resourceful in the students' research. Kafei also shared that the installation was intentionally not set up in an exhibition space, but in their program's common area that is a high traffic area. Their intent was to "throw these women in people's faces" to say, "Hey! You should know about these women, too!" She mentioned that a really helpful resource for her and Vergara was a collection of scholarly readings on design found at readings.design.

ÜBER ELLEN TIME

I (re)introduced myself to Ellen Lupton as I was leaving the event. I briefly told her about my own thesis project and ongoing research on the same topic. We ended up sharing an über together back to Manhattan. During this time, Lupton shared some really valuable feedback and advice for my own benefit as I shared some thoughts on the status of my own thesis work. An overview of our conversation is listed below.

- Think about what you want to do and create that.
- Think about the audience at this event and what they would want—there is such a hunger for this. Empower and inspire them.

APPENDIX C

CONTINUED

New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.

- Maybe it's a fun book that compiles these women and their stories and experiences.
- Don't think about rewriting history. But instead, maybe adding to it (like addendum?)
- You can spend all your time digging and digging and reading and researching and taking notes. But you have to decide ultimately what you're going to do and want to create then choose the story you want to tell.
- What was so great about this project was they picked 10 women and pieced their sources together (very feminist approach) to tell the story. They didn't rewrite anything.
- Follow up email!

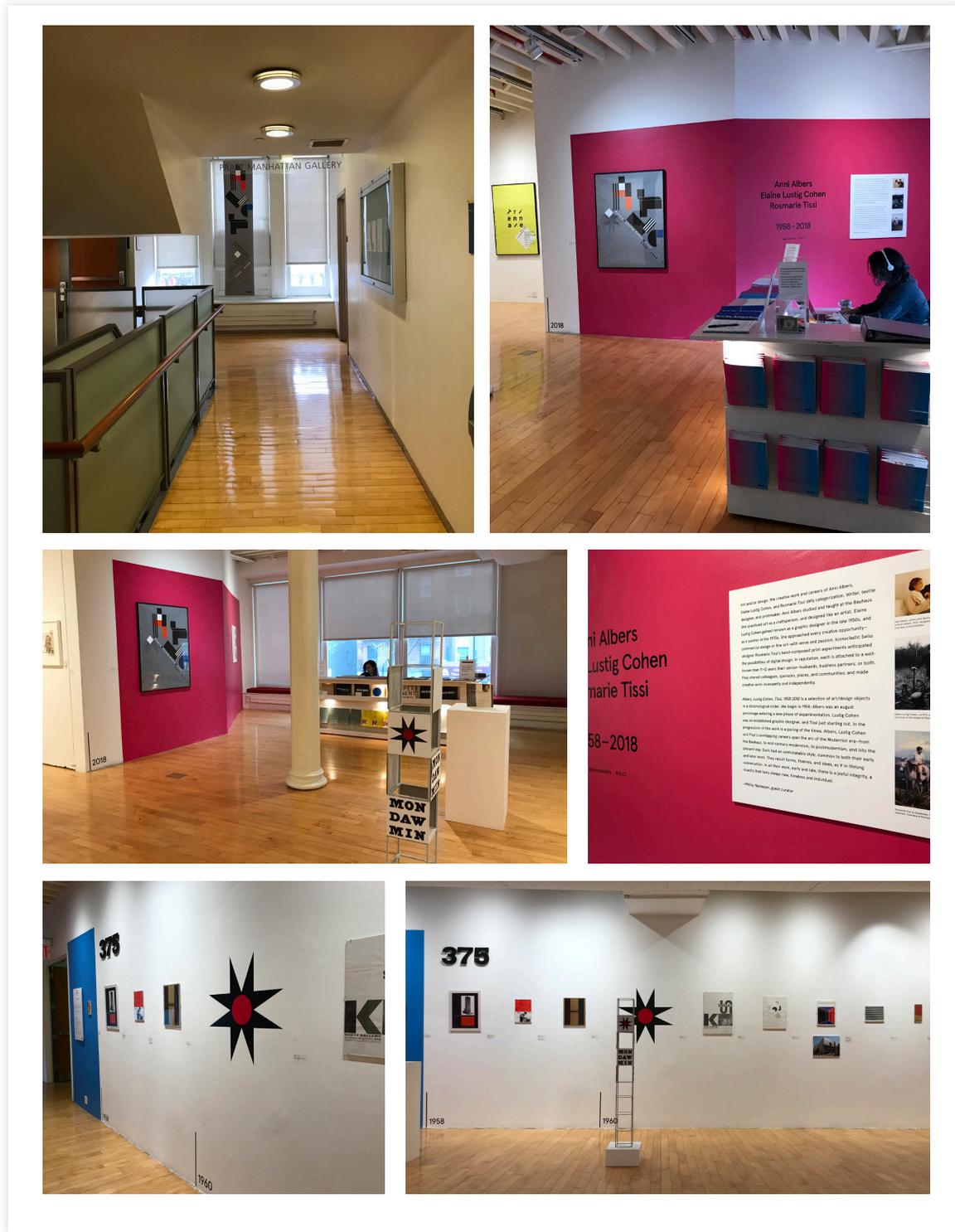
ALBERS, LUSTIG COHEN, TISSI, 1958-2018

At Pratt's Manhattan gallery, I visited a nearly two-month-long exhibition featuring the work of Anni Albers, Elaine Lustig Cohen, and Rosmarie Tissi. The show was curated by Philip Niemeyer. The second floor gallery space chronologically displayed their monumental work in typography, print design, sculpture, book design, paintings, textiles, and mixed media; industry-defining careers that spanned six decades.

The exhibition was bright, bold, and inviting. It was interesting to experience the work of these three women intertwined with one another. Though there were distinctions in each of the individual designers' work, they also complimented one another so nicely. What I found to be most compelling about the exhibition is not just the overlap in these three designers' careers, but their direct tie to a male counterpart. The work of these three women have often been overshadowed by the work of their husbands (Albers, married to Josef Albers and Lustig Cohen, married to Alvin Lustig) and professional male partners (Tissi, partner with Siegfried Odermatt). It encouraged me to continue to pursue this angle for my own research and to explore new and unexpected relationships among women designers.

APPENDIX C
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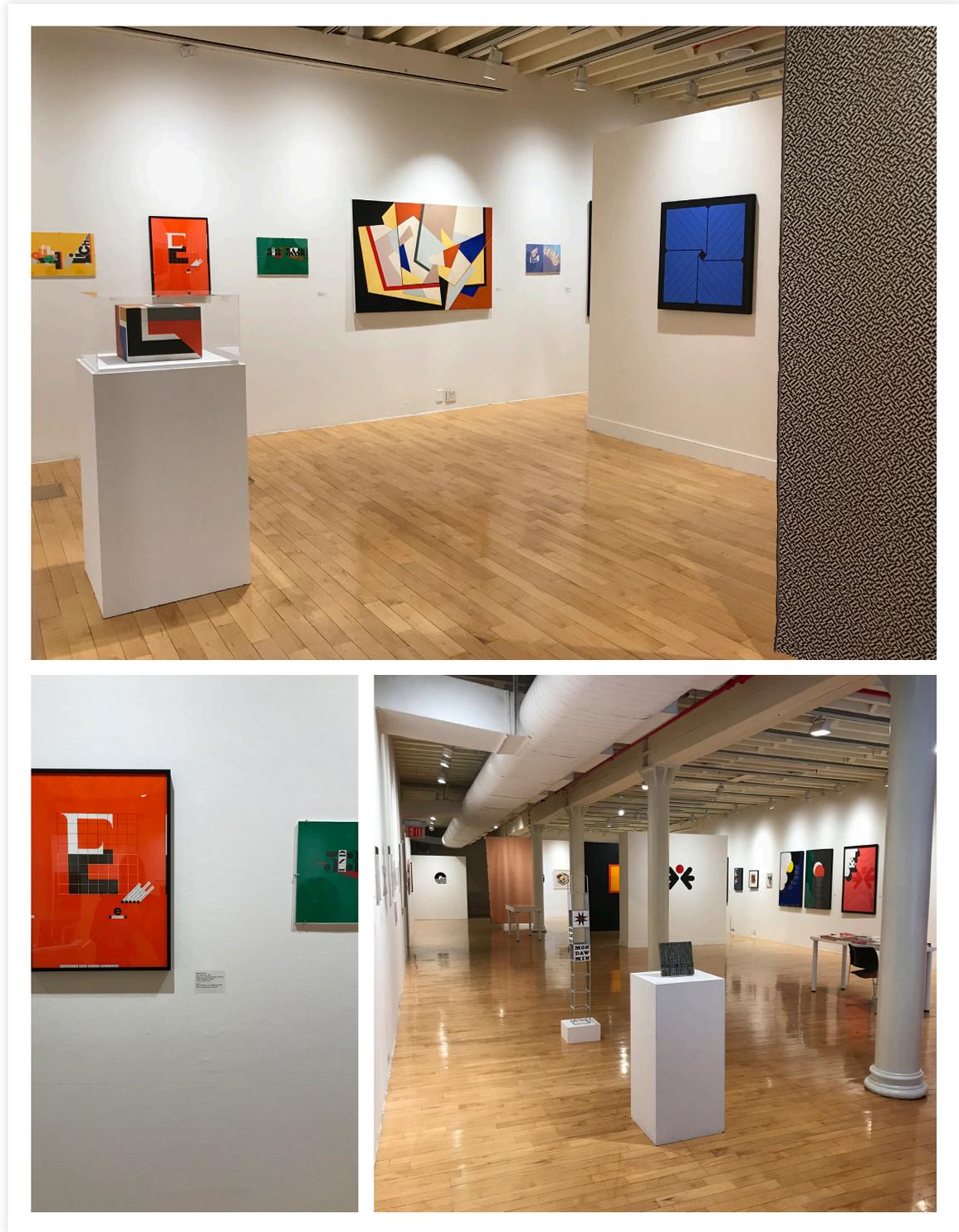
New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.



APPENDIX C

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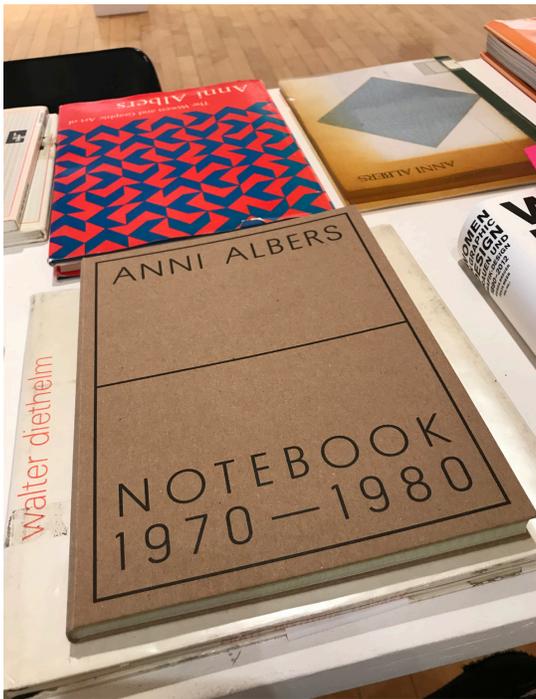
New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.



APPENDIX C

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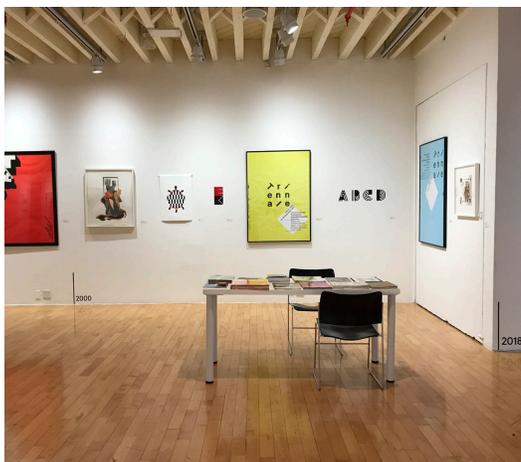
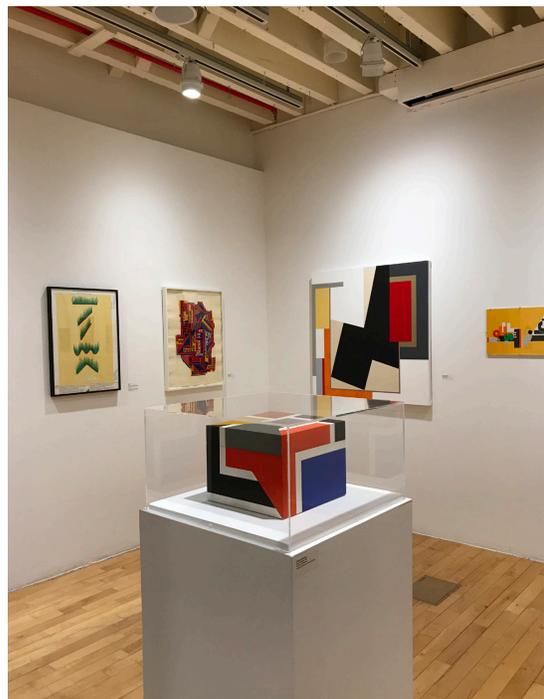
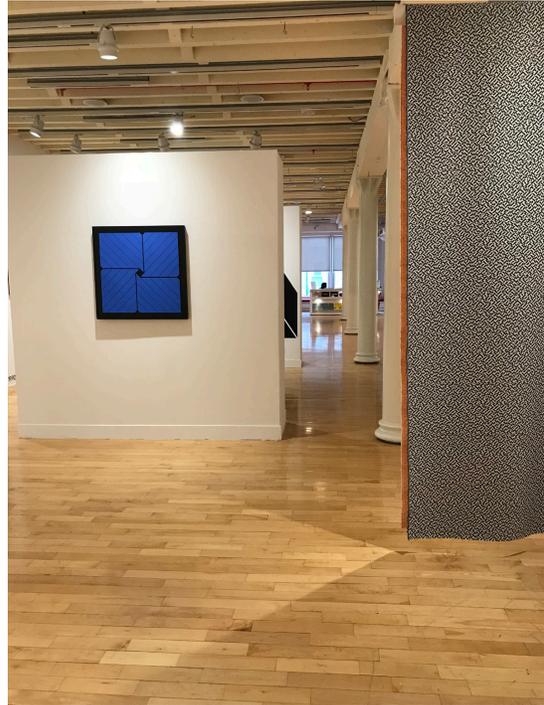
New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.



APPENDIX C

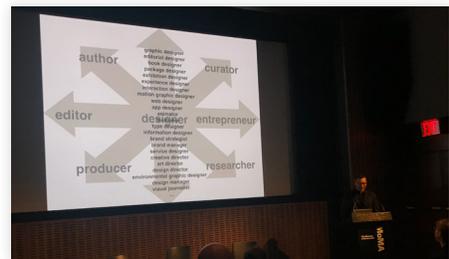
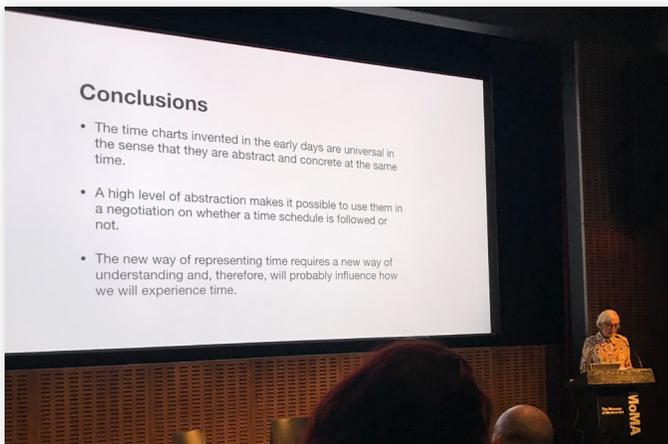
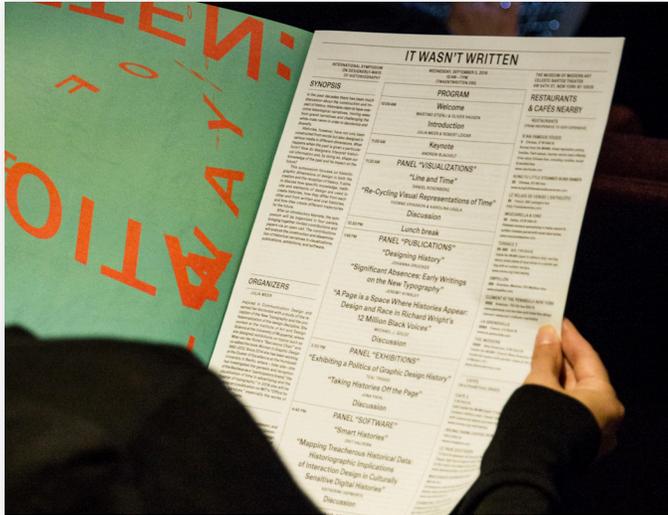
CONTINUED

New York, March 2018: Pratt Institute panel and exhibitions.



APPENDIX D

New York, September 2018: Symposium at MoMA & Cooper Hewitt Library.



APPENDIX D

CONTINUED

New York, September 2018: Symposium at MoMA & Cooper Hewitt Library.

 Gmail Jessica Pfanner <jpfanner@gmail.com>

Appointment Request

Jessica Pfanner <jpfanner@gmail.com> Tue, Sep 4, 2018 at 2:43 PM
 To: OrrEm@si.edu

Good afternoon,

I am looking to schedule an appointment for archival research at the Cooper-Hewitt this Thursday (9/6) or Friday 9/7 depending on your availability. I am a current MFA student at the University of Baltimore in the Integrated Design program and am pursuing my thesis studies in women in graphic design—more specifically, exploring the exclusion of women from graphic design history.

I am en route to New York for the week; I am attending an all-day symposium on Wednesday but have some flexibility Thursday and Friday. I would love the opportunity to explore the Graphics Collection in the Museum Archives while in the city.

Please let me know if you have the availability for me to do so and if there's any further direction I need to secure a time. I am also working to secure an appointment to visit the Cooper-Hewitt Design Library as well.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to working with you!

Best,
 Jessica Pfanner

—
 Jessica Pfanner
 M.F.A. Candidate | Integrated Design
 University of Baltimore

 Gmail Jessica Pfanner <jpfanner@gmail.com>

Appointment Request

Orr, Emily M. <OrrEM@si.edu> Wed, Sep 5, 2018 at 6:11 AM
 To: Jessica Pfanner <jpfanner@gmail.com>
 Cc: "Condell, Caitlin" <CondellC@si.edu>, Mir Finkelman <mirfinkelman@gmail.com>, "Siemon, Julia" <SiemonJ@si.edu>

Dear Jessica,

Thank you for your interest in Cooper Hewitt's collections.

I oversee Cooper Hewitt's design archives, which are stored off-site, and regrettably do not include any female graphic designers.

I am connecting you here with my colleagues in the Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design department who can better speak to their holdings and work with you to schedule an appointment. However, with such short notice this will likely not be possible for this week.

Best,
 Emily

From: Jessica Pfanner <jpfanner@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 4, 2018 2:43:03 PM
To: Orr, Emily M.
Subject: Appointment Request

[Quoted text hidden]

 Gmail

Appointment Request

Finkelman, Miriam <FinkelmanM@si.edu>
 To: "Condell, Caitlin" <CondellC@si.edu>, "Siemon, Julia" <SiemonJ@si.edu>
 Cc: CooperHewittStudyCenters <CooperHewittStudyCenters@si.edu>

Dear Jessica,

Emily Orr forwarded me your request to schedule an appointment. As she indicated, it is unfortunately not currently possible to accommodate this request on such short notice. If you return to New York in the course of your studies and are still interested in material from our collections, please do reach out again. The Study Center takes appointments on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and often fill several weeks in advance, so it's best for us to set up appointments least two weeks in advance to prepare any necessary materials or requests.

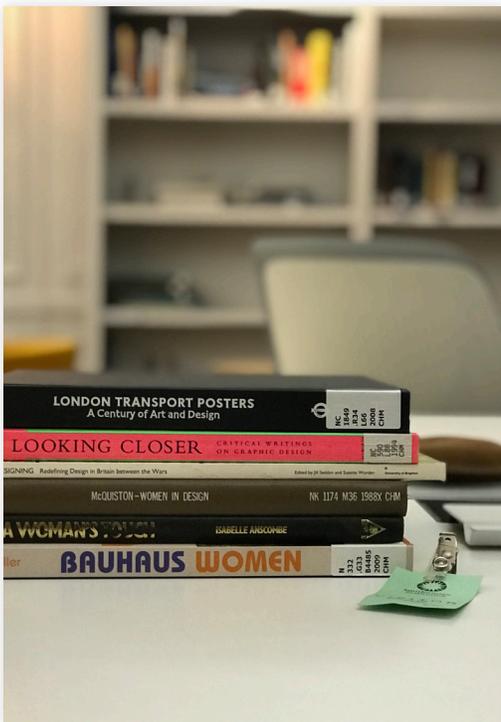
Since we are not able to accommodate your study center request, I would be happy to leave a complimentary ticket for you, if you'd like to visit our galleries. If you're interested, please confirm which date you would like the ticket for.

Very best, and wishing you success in your studies,
 Mir Finkelman

Collections Assistant
 Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design

APPENDIX D
CONTINUED

New York, September 2018: Symposium at MoMA & Cooper Hewitt Library.



APPENDIX E

Sample of ongoing gathered research to build a timeline of women designers.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Designer	Notes/Thoughts	Resources	Artifact Possibility	Practicing Era
2	Laini Abernathy	Black graphic designer in the 1960s, jazz albums			
3	Annie Albers	Married to Josef Albers (mentioned in Meggs); Bauhaus ideals, weaver, designer		A threaded bound 4-pager (see Mohawk example for inspo) on her.	
4	Anne Allen	married & collaborated with Jean-Baptiste Pillemet	Cooper Hewitt archives		1775-
5	Nancy Stock Allen				
6	Gail Anderson*				
7	Ruth Ansel	Co-art director at Harper's Bazaar (w/Bea Feitler), Art Director New York Times Mag, House & Gardne, Vanity Fair, Vogue. First woman to hold these positions.			1960s-80s
8	Artists' Suffrage League	Group of artists in Britain, designed posters and paraphenila for the Women's Suffrage movement. Artists include: Mary Lowndes, Emily Ford, Barbara Forbes, May H Barker, Clara Billing, Dora Meeson Coates, Violet Garrard, Bertha Newcombe, C Hedley Charlton, Emily J Harding.			1907-1918, Britain
9	Mabel Lucie Attwell				
10	Carly Ayres				21st century
11	Marian Bantjes				
12	Lillian Bassman				
13	Dora M. Batty	London Underground Posters			
14	Isolde Baumgart				
15	Ella Bergmann-Michel	artist? designer?			
16	Vera Bock	WPA poster design, illustrator	https://www.farnsworthmuseum.org/about/fam-blog/artist-trivia-vera-bock/		1905-1973
17	Yolande Bonhomme	c. 1490-1557 French printer			
18	Irma Boom*				
19	Maria Bri-Bein	Brother Work Protect Your Sister from Prostitution'			early 20th (Russian r
20	Margaret Calvert	british; design roadway signs (information design)			
21	Jacqueline Casey	Most known for poster design for MIT. Heavily influenced by Swiss designers	Cooper Hewitt archives, Eye magazine		1950s-80s
22	Elaine Lustig Cohen	Married to Alvin Lustig (mentioned in Meggs);			1950s-60s
23	Elizabeth Colwell	designer & typographer	https://www.alphabettes.org/part-3-what-does-a-feminist-graphic-design-history-in-the-united-states-look-like/		
24	Muriel Cooper*	MIT, pioneer digital designer			1950s-90s
25	Carolyn Davidson	Designed Nike Swoosh logo	NPR interview		1970s-?
26	Justine Davis				

APPENDIX F

Mood board and early inspiration.



APPENDIX F
CONTINUED

Poster design: early design development.

THE MESSY HISTORY OF WOMEN'S PLACE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

A THESIS PROJECT BY JESSICA PFANNER

Design history textbooks today are built from a literature by historians before the mid-twentieth century that categorically exclude women from the profession—

"perpetuating the myth that the profession was entirely men before the twentieth century."¹

THE FORGOTTEN WOMEN

Among the many that have yet to enter the canon of design history.

AMONG THE 'GREATS'

Some are duly recognized for their work.
"Though often exclusively defined by their gender."

Why have women been excluded from graphic design history?

Because of the failure to include the untold larger narrative of women's experiences in design roles compared to men's. This expanded view is defined by Martha Scotford as:

messy history a path that "seeks to discover, study and include the variety of alternative approaches and activities that are often part of women designers' professional lives."²

Also articulated by Nancy Stock-Allen and Katherine McCoy—a skewed relationship between women as designers and women as they're reflected in design writing calls for a rejection of "the established histories as the total truth and [to] investigate the contributions of under-recognized communities."³

Cheryl Buckley argues that gender-based biases against women are to blame and that "design historians that examine women's role in design must acknowledge that women in the past and women today are placed within the context of patriarchy."⁴ Adding that women as designers are historically restricted to opportunities seen as 'female.'

THE END GOAL: A VISUAL MANIFESTO

Individually crafted artifacts that reflect significant works by women designers omitted from its history, organized as a digital non-linear narrative.

THE MATILDAS

ESTHER PISSARO
STEPHEN HEIL
LOUISE FILI
CHARLES EAMES
RAY EAMES
ABBOTT MILNER
ELLEN LUPTON
SCOTT MAKIN
LAURIE HAYCOCK
LELLA VIGNELLI
ALVIN LUSTIG
ELAINE LUSTIG COHEN
SAUL BASS
ELAINE BASS
NOREEN MORIOKA
MICHAEL MCCOY
KATHERINE MCCOY
JESSICA HELFAND
TIBOR KALMAN
MAIRA KALMAN
NANCY SKOLOS
THOMAS WILSON
ELIZABETH GLOVER
MICHAELE
NANCY GREEN
TOMOKO MIHO
SEYMOUR
PAULA SCHER

¹Book-Mon, Nancy, "Feminist Thought in Design History," *Design Studies*, 18 April 2015, designstudies.com/designstudies.com.

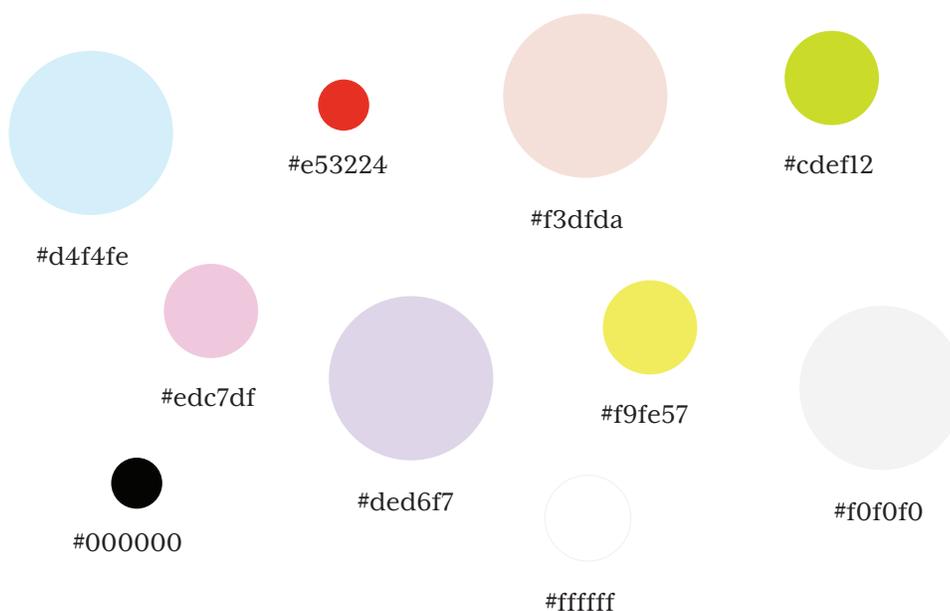
²Martha Scotford, "Messy History: Towards a Gendered History of Design," *Design Studies*, 2014, designstudies.com/2014/04/201404-scotford/.

³Buckley, Cheryl, "Media of Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design," *Design Studies* 17(4), pp. 374.

APPENDIX G

Style guide for heridea.design: color and typography.

Color palette



Typography

MRS. EAVES PETITE CAPS IS FOR EYEBROWS & CAPTIONS

**Cheeky headlines
are set in blenny**

Introductory text set in Catalpa is a bit large, but maintains balance in its thin weight.

Catalpa light is a couple of weights heavier than the intro copy and reads well for longer lengths of copy and labels and designer names set in all caps.

LABELS
& NAMES

APPENDIX G
CONTINUED

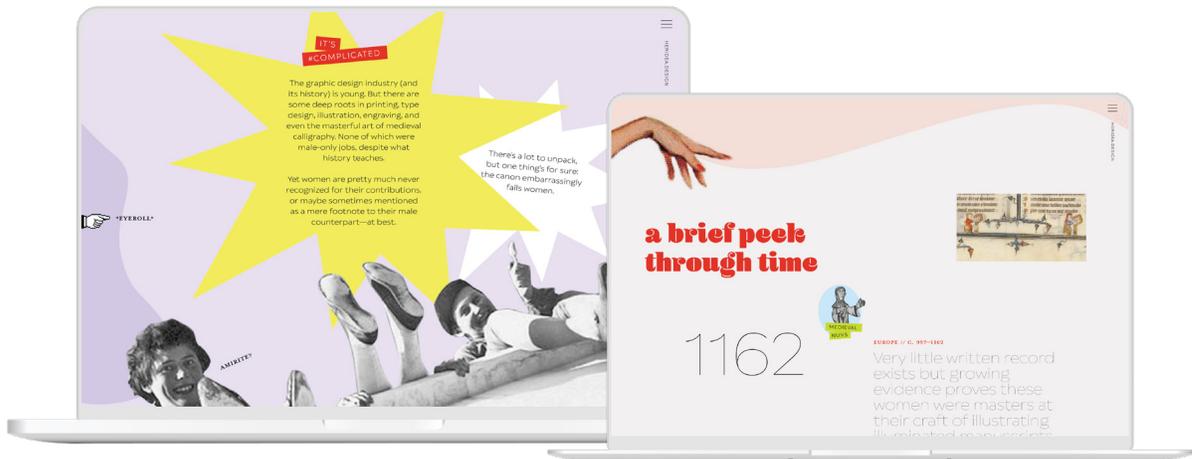
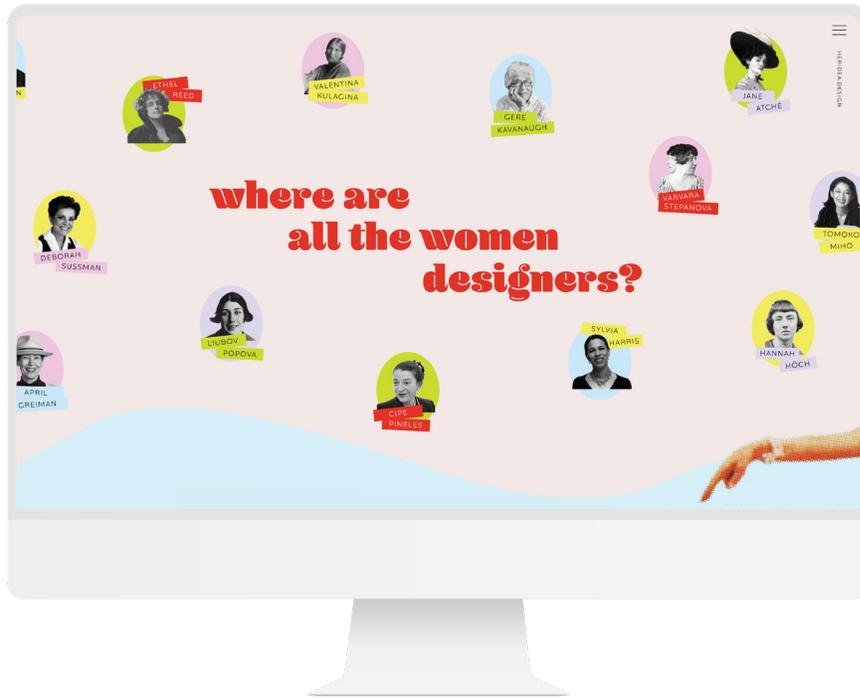
Style guide for heridea.design: imagery and graphic elements.

Imagery & graphic elements



APPENDIX H

Homepage as currently built in Readymag (for desktop).



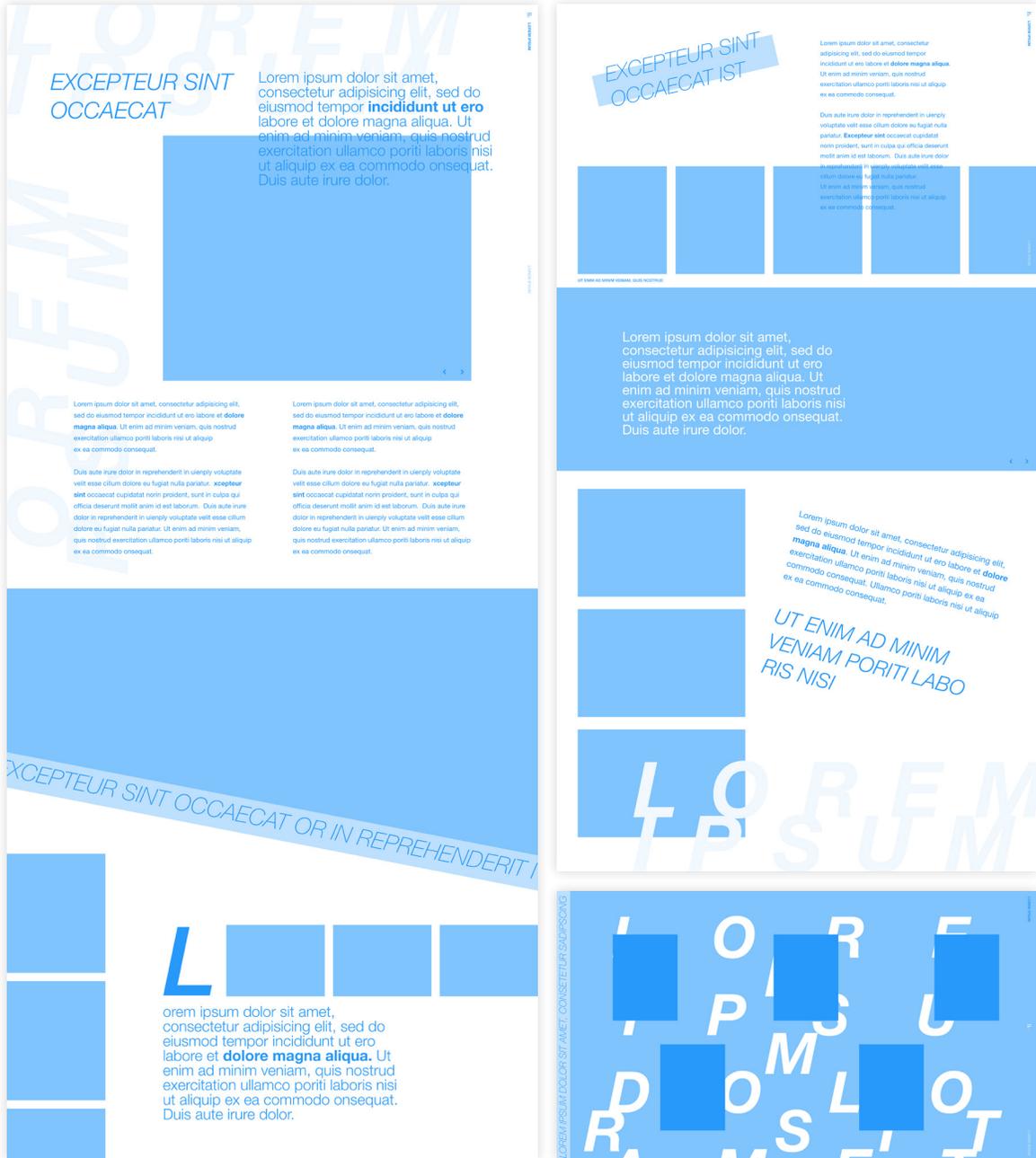
APPENDIX H
CONTINUED

Constructivists pages as currently built in Readymag (for desktop).



APPENDIX H
CONTINUED

Early website wireframe exploration.



APPENDIX I

Four founding pillars of heridea.design.

one

Awareness

profiles on
women in design
history

two

Community

network
+ representation

three

Literature

essays, articles
+ writings

four

Design Ed.

course
development

