

Paul Rand: Modernist Design (Issues in Cultural Theory)



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We know Paul Rand through the stunning advertising, editorial, publishing, institutional, identity, corporate and intellectual legacy he left behind. A major figure at the epicenter of twentieth-century design, his impact on modern communication practice and theory was unparalleled. For him, Modernism was a way of life and a form of belief, not a style. Like his European colleagues, he understood Modernism's tenets as a something that could be employed to better human experience in the modern world. Whether he was designing for the American Broadcasting Company, IBM Corporation or United Parcel Service, or teaching at Cooper Union or Pratt Institute, Rand gave life to his art, definition to graphic design and a reputation for quality to a discipline that needed it. His was an early voice in proposing the essence of Modernist theories in visual communication, and he was both ruthlessly pragmatic and startlingly visionary. His passion for his subject and his understanding of the theories and realities of perception and communication were immense, and he was often able to illuminate for the layperson the complexities and accomplishments of his triumphant art. Rand's contemporaries, students and friends knew him as a man even more extraordinarily cultivated and diverse in his talents and interests. Here their diversity of voices combine to give a vivid, personal and uniquely informative introduction to Rand and his achievements. A compendium of essays, interviews, photographic reproductions, a contextual timeline and an extensive bibliography, Paul Rand: Modernist Design adds to the growing literature on Rand, helping to place him in the proper context within a century of innovative art, design, architecture and technology.

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Susan Spiegel:

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