The first, ‘Die neue Typographie’, showed mainly Swiss and German work. *Das Werk* took note of the exhibition by reproducing eight cinema posters on a single page. Seven were by Tschichold. The remaining odd poster was by Cyliax, in a style that in no way suggested film, being merely a strangely Cubistic Art-Deco background on which smaller typographic handbills would be pasted.

The larger Basel exhibition in 1930, ‘Neue Werbegraphik’ (New Advertising Design), organized by Tschichold, was arranged in three parts. The first section consisted of members of Schwitters’s International Ring neuer Werbegestalter; the second was ‘The New Poster’ and the third, French posters. The everyday use of graphic design was the focus of two further Basel exhibitions. In 1934 the Werkbund helped to organize ‘Planvolles Werben’ (Advertising with a Purpose), with the subtitle ‘From Letterhead to Advertising Film’. Four years later, ‘Amtliche Drucksachen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart’ (Official Printed Matter Yesterday and Today) showed the long history of notices and decrees, forms, legal documents, passports, certificates, tickets, visiting cards, invitations, letterheads and envelopes. Alongside earlier examples was work by contemporary typography, among them Theo Ballmer, Hermann Eidenbenz and, of course, Tschichold, who had standardized and refined the letterheads, forms, certificates and catalogues for the School and the Museum of Applied Arts in Basel.

Such shows of small-scale typography presented the layman with a less exciting aspect of graphic design than the exhibition of Basel Poster Art held in 1933, the same year as an International Poster Exhibition in Zurich. Both were advertised with posters in the style of the New Typography; one by Hermann Eidenbenz (BA-PLA-KU, see p. 45), the other by Walter Käch (see p. 63).

Commercial fairs were usually, as they have remained, specific to individual trades and industries. The first and second occasions of the ‘Graphische Fachausstellung’ (Printing Trades Exhibition) – ‘Grafä’ – were in Zurich in 1934 and 1935. At the first, the public, when asked to vote for their favourite poster, chose the famous GABA throat lozenge poster by Niklaus Stoecklin.

The third Grafä took place in 1936 in the building of the Basel Trade Fair, organized with the help of the Werkbund. As well as work by Swiss designers, foreign work was included, arranged by Tschichold. Political considerations must have weighed with Tschichold, now an émigré: no Russian work was on display, and none by designers such as Schwitters, whose painting had been denounced by the Nazis as ‘degenerate’.
Poster design for the second "Graphische Fachausstellung" (Printing Trades Exhibition) — Grafa — by Gérard Miedinger, 1934. Miedinger's reused design followed the example of Walter Käfi's 1933 design for the International Poster Exhibition.

Gérard Miedinger 1912-1985
Studied with Ernst Keller, 1932-34, then in Paris, 1934-35. Employed at the Zurich printer-publishers Uren Frey & Co and in an advertising agency before becoming freelance in 1938. Developed progressive 1930s style in one of the most successful design practices in Zürich. Responsible for large part of Swiss pavilions at World Exhibitions in Brussels, 1958, and Montreal, 1967. President of the Verband Schweizerischer Grafiker (VSG); Association of Swiss Graphic Designers, 1968-72.

The black-and-white poster used for the second Grafa exhibition, designed by Alex Diggelmann, 1934.

Miedinger has suggested the three-dimensional space of the exhibition by using perspective, a graphic device generally avoided by adherents to the Modern Typography since it broke the surface plane of the paper, which they were keen to emphasise. Miedinger has resolved this by the large areas of colour which create tension: they remain flat yet they help in the illusion of space.
Cover of the special Grafa issue of *Typographische Monatsblätter*. (Typographic Monthly), May 1936, designed by Hermann Eidenbenz. The photograph shows printer’s ink being mixed by hand. The words of the subtitles which appeared on the cover of every issue, ‘typo, foto, graphik, druck’ (typography, photography, graphics, printing) are distinguished by their letterforms — bold grotesque, Bodoni bold condensed, script (hand-drawn by Eidenbenz), and Bodoni extra bold.
13.-29. Juni 1936
Basel, im Mustermessgebäude
Geöffnet von 10 Uhr morgens bis 17 Uhr abends
Eintritt Fr. 1.10, Tageskarten Fr. 1.66
Graphische Fachausstellung

The single repeated figure, increasing in size, suggests events taking place in time and space. The circular silhouettes illustrate a rotary press and the process of printing. The cut-out photographs of the newspaper boy make the link to the final outcome of the process - the newspaper or magazine on the street.

The variety of effect with only a two-colour litho printing is typical of Swiss design before the widespread use of colour nearly three decades later.

Hermann Eidenbenz 1902-1993
Graphic designer, lettering artist, type designer and art director.

Herbert Matter used the same photograph of the paper seller in a booklet promoting newspapers as an advertising medium, 1936. The image is printed red, the type black.
"Light in Home, Office, Workshop," poster for an exhibition at the Zurich Kunstgewerbemuseum, designed by Alfred Willmann, 1932.

Entrance to the exhibition with lettering and signs designed by Max Bill.

The poster for the Basel version of the exhibition, by Theo Ballmer. The limitation of letterpress determined the crudely geometrized lettering (cut from lead). The black printing is on two sheets, white for the top half, yellow for the bottom — perhaps to suggest daylight and artificial light. The result, a much weaker graphic expression of the exhibition theme, emphasizes the imagination and craftsmanship of Willmann's design.

Alfred Willmann 1900-1957
Poster for the ‘Exhibition of the Fourth International Radiologists’ Congress’, at the Zurich Kunstgewerbemuseum, designed by Walter Käch, 1934.

Ausstellung des IV. Internationalen Radiologenkongresses in Zürich
24. bis 29. Juli 1934
Ausstellungshalle: Kunstgewerbemuseum

In 1925 Moholy-Nagy’s comment on the examples of X-ray photographs in his book Malerei, Photographie, Film was: ‘Penetration of the body with light is one of the greatest visual experiences.’ It was in the spirit of the time that the Kunstgewerbemuseum should take the opportunity to demonstrate the aesthetic interest of scientific images as part of a new vision of the world.

Käch has made a literal illustration of the process of radiation: the rays pass through the flesh to show the position of the bones (which have absorbed the rays) within a negative silhouette of the hand.
The disparities of style and attitude among Swiss designers showed as clearly in typography as they did in posters. The argument between symmetry and asymmetry, between justified text and text ranged left, between the merits of serif and grotesque, was never one that could have a conclusion. Only in part was it a dispute between two generations. Tschichold was not alone among the earlier progressive designers in withdrawing to the 'classical' position. As to the Modernists, Max Bill was now more concerned with his work as an artist and with plans for the new design school at Ulm, and so less active as a typographer.1 But the growing impact of Modernist attitudes was evident in the annual selection of 'Best Swiss Posters' and 'Best Produced Books'.

For many years after the Bill–Tschichold dispute the trade magazines treated Modernism with caution. In 1952 Schweizer Graphische Mitteilungen (SGM) fused with Revue Suisse de l'Imprimerie and Typographische Monatsblätter into a single monthly publication known by the initials TM. The chief figures in the new magazine were Rudolf Hostettler, who was co-editor of SGM, Emil Ruder, and the typographer Robert Büchler. Ruder was a key force in typographical thinking. He had been teaching at the Allgemeine Gewerbeschule in Basel since 1942 and shared a design practice with his fellow teacher Armin Hofmann. Ruder had an instinctive as well as informed understanding of Modernism. In a series of critical reviews in SGM, under the rubric 'Aus der Werkstatt unserer Zeit' (From Today's Workshop), he promoted not only work designed in Basel, such as that done for Geigy, but also that of his colleagues in Zurich, such as Lohse, and he reviewed new architecture and industrial design. Three articles, in February 1952, established Ruder as a supporter of radical change. The first examined Bauhaus typography – then little known. The second, 'Tea-Drinking, Typography, Symmetry and Asymmetry', took a relaxed view at odds with Tschichold: 'I would like us to love the old things more, and copy them less.' The third article was an illustrated history of Modernism.2

These contributions were among many false dawns of a new, revised Modernism, SGM and TM often backsliding into 'contemporary' stylistic mannerism. In January 1952, the first issue of the combined magazines retained Times as the text typeface; for the February issue that included his Bauhaus article, Ruder introduced Monotype

---

1 Max Bill was one of the founders of the Hochschule für Gestaltung at Ulm, in Germany, in 1951. He designed the buildings and was Director of the school and head of the Architecture and Product Design departments until 1956.

2 'Kleine Stillethe der Moderne' (Little Lesson in Modern Style), TM, March 1954, pp. 127-28.
- "The Newspaper", exhibition poster designed by Emil Ruder, 1958
  This was a technical tour de force, as the intentionally coarse half-tone screen was cut by hand in lino.
  The letters of 'Die Zeitung' are the usual wood poster type, set without spacing.
 grotesque and attempted to standardize the display advertisements. In March, TM reverted to a text set in Times. Not until 1953, when it was designed by Robert Büchler, did the magazine look 'Swiss'. Büchler, quick to follow Neuburg's lead in the design of industrial catalogues and technical literature, had developed a sober Modernism. He set all TM's text in Monotype grotesque, despite protests from French subscribers who found the typeface difficult to read. There were three columns, with space left at the top and bottom of the page for headings and captions. The smaller advertisements, previously typeset to a more or less standardized layout in Baskerville and later in Times, now combined asymmetry with the new typeface. The change seemed to demonstrate a positively progressive attitude and when Ruder's history of Modernism appeared, the following year, in 1954, the magazine had been re-shaped again by Büchler, this time in Gill Sans. Given their geometrical interests, Swiss designers might have been expected to adopt the geometrical sanserif typefaces of the 1920s, Futura and Erbar.

When Tschichold, a few months after his clash with Max Bill, wrote a long article on 'The Use of Printing Types in Advertising', he went out of his way, in a survey of all available types, to avoid the mention of Akzidenz Grotesk.2 Grotesques and slab-serif Egyptian typefaces he scornfully described as only 'survivals from the nineteenth century which have recently enjoyed a short-lived popularity'. But the Swiss attitude was pragmatic, not theoretical. They were committed to the old grotesque, arguing that it had essential, but almost indefinable, subtleties. The Berthold typefoundry in Berlin, advertising in TM in February 1956, was able to make this claim for its Akzidenz Grotesk:

Through continuous perseverance (with Akzidenz) and in its widespread use, Swiss typographers have created a style whose consummate achievement is now generally recognized as a standard to be aimed for in other countries.

Indeed, for Berthold, Akzidenz type, marketed as 'Standard' – a name that described its role in Swiss typography – soon became an important export.

Now that the Akzidenz design was sixty years old, attention focused on smoothing out some of its irregularities. At the Haas foundry near Basel, Max Miedinger reworked the Haas version of Akzidenz. This design appeared as Neue Haas Grotesk in 1957:

\footnote{3. Publicité, Geneva 1947, p 74. }
- 'New Forms in Italy', poster designed by Carlo Vivarelli, 1954
The vertical arrangement of the large type emphasizes its formal qualities.
Akzidenz Grotesk and flat colour soon became the most widely imitated elements of Swiss graphic design.
Printed linocut and letterpress.
the curved strokes of lowercase 'e', 'c', and 's' and the capital 'C' and 'S' terminate horizontally, parallel with the text line, and the capital 'R' has been given a curved tail. Soon Neue Haas became known as Helvetica, which was also available for Linotype machine composition.

A quite different sanserif preceded Helvetica on the market. This was Univers, produced by the Deberny & Peignot foundry in Paris for its Lumitype filmsetting machine, but which soon became available on the metal typesetting systems. The designer of Univers was Adrian Frutiger. As a former student of Alfred Willmann and Walter Käch in Zurich, Frutiger allowed calligraphic traditions to influence his typeface. The result was a more open line of type, less mechanical than Helvetica. The most surprising innovation of Univers, planned at the start, was its number of weights and widths—twenty-one in all, from light extra-condensed to extra bold extended.

Univers was successful internationally, but it lacked the impersonal neutrality which the Modernists aimed at. Their choice remained Akzidenz Grotesk for larger sizes—in posters and the headings in books—and text set in Monotype grotesque (series 215), since this could be set by machine. Some typographers ordered Monotype’s alternative characters, such as the capital ‘G’, to conform more closely to Akzidenz, which was not available for mechanical composition until 1959 on Linotype and 1960 on Intertype. In general, Zurich typographers chose to remain with Modernist tradition—Akzidenz and Monotype grotesques and Helvetica; those in Basel welcomed Univers.

Lettering was still important in the training of typographers, designers and trade apprentices. Tschichold had produced Gute Schriftformen (Good Letterforms) for the Basel education authority in 1941: a portfolio of six 16-page A4 pamphlets of printed type, lettering and calligraphy, largely historical, with notes and instructions. Akzidenz Grotesk is again excluded. The sanserif example is a design made by Tschichold himself at the time of his emigration to Switzerland. In 1954 the Swiss tradition of type design and lettering inherited by such as Frutiger was displayed in the first of a series of books. With the title Lettera, they reproduced both historical and contemporary alphabets and type designs, many of them fanciful. Of them, the condensed grotesque, a standby for magazine headlines in the 1960s, became a further element of the Swiss style to be welcomed abroad.
From 1946 Emil Ruder slowly emerged in *Typographische Monatsblätter* as an exponent of Modernism. Between 1957 and 1959 he contributed a series of four articles with the title ‘Wesentliches’ (Fundamentals): ‘The Plane’, ‘The Line’, ‘The Word’ and ‘Rhythm’. They formed the basis of his thinking, summed up in 1967 in the book *Typography.* ‘Integral Typography’, a special issue of *TM* in 1959, examined the developments of Modernism. Ruder challengingly took the title of his contribution – ‘Contemporary Typography’ – from an earlier article by Tschichold, who claimed the graphic designer to be primarily visual: a person who knows how to handle colour and form; more a painter and draughtsman than a thinker, who uses the medium for graphic fireworks so as to show off what he can do.¹

Ruder took exception to this view. He maintained that a good designer with four years’ professional training was a valuable partner of the typesetter. But his main disagreement with Tschichold was on the question of asymmetry. Tschichold now repeatedly claimed that typography was essentially symmetrical and that centring a line of type was technically simple. Ruder’s view was the opposite. ‘Asymmetry’, he wrote,

is technically the easiest and most logical. The line, with a fixed starting point, establishes the width which the letters and spaces take up. . . . Centring a line is less rational. In both hand and machine composition it takes more work.²

Ruder followed this with more technical argument, saying that although Linotype could centre a line automatically, half the Monotype machines in Switzerland could not, and that even with the latest models centring was more complicated than ranging type left.

Ruder was supported by his Basel teaching colleague Robert Büchler, who maintained that centred type had survived as a convention because the printer’s main occupation until the nineteenth century was producing books. The printer’s craft was now an industry, where new types of work posed problems which could not be solved with symmetry. Büchler was theoretical and aphoristic:

Form is the outcome of function: in typography, function means to make ideas visible. Typography is exclusively in the service of communication. So its language calls for simplicity and clarity. Function here means satisfying the first demand, which we call legibility. Form is the visual expression of the thought.³

---

¹ *TM*, special issue, June/July 1959, p. 363.
When Büchler added, 'A form without function is merely formalism', he was implying a criticism of the excessive rigidity of some Constructive graphics.

The antidote to formalism was suggested by Karl Gerstner. His contribution, a long illustrated essay, had also provided the special issue with its title. 'Integral Typography', reprinted in his book Programme entwerfen (Designing Programmes), 1964, became a key text of typographic history. Gerstner reviewed the theories of previous decades – the 'new' and 'elemental' typography of the 1920s and the 'functional' typography of the early 1940s – and he reminded readers of Moholy-Nagy’s dictum, 'Legibility and communication should never suffer from a previously held aesthetic.'

Today typographers use both sanserif and roman type, set books both symmetrically and asymmetrically, use both flush left, ragged right and flush left, flush right. Today everything is stylistically allowable, allowable from the point of view of up-to-dateness.

Gerstner then arrives at his concept of 'integral'.

The designer's freedom lies not at the margin of a task but at its very centre. Only then is the typographer free to perform as an artist when he understands and considers all the parts of the job in hand. And every solution he finds on this basis will be an integral one, will achieve a unity between language and type, between content and form.

What integral means is 'shaped into a whole', and typography is 'the art of making a whole out of predetermined parts'. To analyse the parts – the letters, their combinations into words and their arrangement – Gerstner takes illustrations from very disparate sources, from Schwitters's 1932 'word-sonata' (in typography by Tschichold), from Piet Zwart, a page of Mallarmé, a Concrete poem, a front page of the New York Daily News, a Max Bill poster and an American direct mail sheet.

The result of integral typography is 'a new unity'... Unity is reached in different phases, each successor including its predecessor:

- in the integration of different signs, different letters into the word
- in the integration of different words into the sentence
- in the integration of different sentences into the 'reading-time' dimension
- in the integration of independent problems and functions.4

---

4. Ibid., p. 349.
5. Ibid., p. 349.