

A. M. CASSANDRE. GRAPHIC DESIGNER.

Born-1901, Died –1968.

Nationality – Ukrainian.

Movement – Art Deco.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

A.M. Cassandre was one of the earliest and best known poster designers / commercial artists. From the late 1920's – 30's he produced a series of memorable advertisements and typefaces, which were highly popular, all done in his highly distinctive and modern style. He was born in the Ukraine and moved to Paris when W.W.I. broke out with his French parents. He studied art and design at L'Ecole Des Beaux Arts and the Academie Julian. From 1922 he worked as both an artist and graphic designer. He believed that, "The artist expresses himself, but the designer does not – **his job is to communicate messages.**" Cassandre was very successful, he worked for Harpers Bazaar, Yves St Laurent and Olivetti, he was a partner in an advertising firm, ran his own school of design and taught at the 'Ecole des Arts Decoratifs.' In addition to graphic design, he also designed stage sets. After serving in WW1, he married and divorced twice and eventually committed suicide on 1968.

SOCIETY / INFLUENCES.

The early part of the 20th Century saw many new developments in transport, in particular with the invention of the petrol engine. This meant - improved railway networks, underground trains, large ocean liners, cars for the masses and the invention of the engine powered aeroplane. New technology, increased mechanization and new materials such as aluminium and alloys made these vehicles lightweight and streamlined. These developments revolutionised travel, commerce and industry. The "**machine age**" inspired artists and designers to produce **dynamic, streamlined** designs. Also technological advances in printing revolutionized the world of advertising. Until the turn of the century, most posters and advertising had been created using only type/ words and used limited colour. The printing process called lithography meant that designers were free to include brightly coloured images as part of their designs, from this point poster design became more interesting and eye catching, Cassandre's designs in particular emphasised the dynamic lines and sleek shapes of the modern world.

In terms of the visual arts, Cassandre was influenced by the German design movement, called ' Bauhaus'. These designers strove for simplicity and functionality in their work and did not tolerate decoration. The elegance of the Bauhaus designs impressed Cassandre.

EXAMPLES OF DESIGNS.

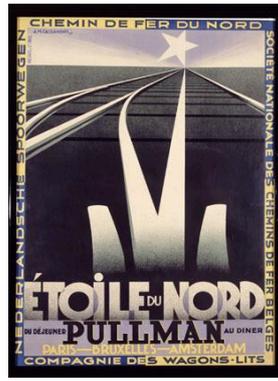
Cassandre produced a stream of stunning poster designs advertising the joys of travel and transport, e.g. the trains." **Etoile du Nord**" and the "**Nord Express**", and ocean liners –"the **Normandie**". The designs emphasized their **sleek, modern, geometric shapes** and the use of strong lines exaggerated the **feeling of movement and speed**. The designs are a monument to the power and dynamism of the modern world.

Cassandre also designed posters for the drink '**Dubonnet**' He used a quirky, amusing image of a man whose body gradually filled up with drink. The character became well known in France. He also designed advertisements for various cigarette companies, the Grand Prix, logos for Yves St Laurent, designs for Bugatti and typefaces including, 'Birfur' (1929), 'Acier'(1930) and 'Peignot'(1937).

‘Normandie’



‘Etoile du Nord’



‘Nord Express’



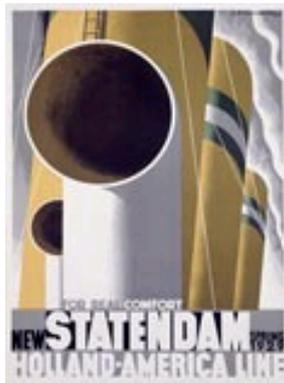
STYLE.

Cassandre was strongly influenced by the art of various modern and Avant–Garde movements, particularly Cubism: especially the work of the artists Picasso, Braque and Fernand Leger. These artists used strong simple, geometric shapes and this modern approach appealed to Cassandre. He based most of his designs on **bold , dynamic shapes, lines and forms** which successfully **combined attractive images with type**. Both the lettering and the image were of equal importance to Cassandre, in his view the type and the image should complement each other and work together to communicate a strong message. To emphasise this, he designed **new typefaces** which enhanced the modern, clean lines of his images. Usually he started with the layout and size of the text and the image followed on. He removed any fussy details and decorations and concentrated on simple shapes and bold colour. His layout /composition of clean, modern images with simple, sans serif text create a sophisticated and elegant style which is still popular with collectors today.

Cassandre believed that a graphic design has to contain the solution to three problems:

1. The Optical Problem – It must be designed to be seen and understood quickly.
2. The Graphic Problem – “You can never be too seductive”
3. The Poetic Problem – The image + the text must produce a mental association or trigger an emotion, holding the viewer in its grip.

‘Holland / America Line’



‘Dubonnet Poster’



ART DECO.

Cassandre was associated with the Art and Design Movement called ‘Art Deco’. Please read the attached information sheet on this movement.

