Wolfgang Weingart's typographic landscape

Keith Tam

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He started it all. It was he who ignited the spark of 'typographic anarchy' that exploded on the verge of the nineteen nineties. It was he who fathered what was subsequently dubbed 'Swiss Punk', 'New Wave' or whatever you care to call it – perhaps even post-modernism. His name is Wolfgang Weingart. Weingart was born in the midst of the World War II in Germany. Most famous for his experimental, expressive work that broke the mould of classical Swiss typography, Weingart began his typographic career in the early sixties as an apprentice of hand composition at a typesetting firm. He then decided to further his studies at the Basel School of Design in Switzerland, the cradle of classical Swiss typography. Following his rather unsuccessful attempt at completing his course, Armin Hoffmann, who was then the head of the Basel School, invited him to teach there, by the sheer admiration of his work. He has been teaching there ever since and had made extraordinary impact on the contemporary typographic landscape.

What exactly is 'Swiss typography'? Swiss typography was founded upon the teachings of the Bauhaus in Germany soon after World War II and became a rational approach to typography. The use of grid systems was the key to the logical disposition of type and images on the page, along with sanserif typefaces for clear, functional communication. Figures such as Armin Hoffmann and Emil Ruder were the major proponents of Swiss typography, who were teachers at the Basel School of Design at the time. They believed that typography should be unobtrusive and transparent, in order to clearly communicate its textual content. By the beginning of the sixties, the language of Swiss typography had already gained reputation the world over. Swiss typography became synonymous with corporate design for multinationals, and subsequently referred to as the 'international typographic style'.

At this point, our dear Mr Weingart barges in, hurriedly corrects my one-sided viewpoint of Swiss typography: 'not only one conception of typography exists in Switzerland'. He would proudly acknowledge that his experimental typography is also Swiss, because it was a 'natural progression' from the classical Swiss typography as we know it. To call what he did and still does as 'deconstructive' would be too simplistic a comment. His typographic experiments were strongly grounded, and were based on an intimate understanding of the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic functions of typography. Whereas 'traditional' Swiss typography mainly focused on the syntactic function, Weingart was interested in how far the graphic qualities of typography can be pushed and still retain its meaning. This is when the semantic function of typography comes in: Weingart believes that certain graphic modifications of type can in fact intensify meaning. 'What's the use of being legible, when nothing inspires you to take notice of it?' How true.

Weingart's work is characterized by his painterly application of graphical and typographical elements. The emotionally-charged lines, the potent, image-like qualities of his type, the almost cinematic impact of his layouts, all speak of his great passion of creating with graphical forms. His typographic layouts are compelling yet lucid, free yet controlled. Some of his personal work is almost akin to landscape paintings, only that his paintbrush is replaced by type, rules and screens. He doesn't seem to perceive a divide between fine art and typography. His inspirations were mainly drawn from the processes of typesetting and reproduction, where he finds great pleasure in discovering their characteristics and pushing them to their limits.

Since the first day when he arrived at Basel as a student, it was clear that Weingart was a rebel. In a class he had with Armin Hoffmann, the students were asked to work on a line composition using ruling pens. Instead of drawing the lines as he was told, he went over to the type shop and made a contraption that he could use to print lines. Weingart's ingenuity is simply impressive: he took a plank of wood, screwed L-shaped hooks on it in a grid format, then turned them at 0, 45 and 90 degree angles to form compositions, inked it and printed it on a letterpress. He screwed the hooks into the wood at different levels so some received ink at type-high and some did not. Perhaps 'rebel' is too harsh of a description – he was simply inquisitive. There is no doubt that Weingart bent the rule of classical Swiss typography – both literally and figuratively. When he was an apprentice at a letterpress workshop, he was pondering about why the brass rules that were used to print tabular matter always had to be straight and at 90-degree angles to each other. He created highly abstract letterpress prints with rules shaped into elegant curves, almost resem-

bling rolling hills in a beautiful countryside.

Weingart works with a very limited palette of typefaces. He suggests that four typefaces are enough to address all typographic problems. One of these typefaces would certainly be Akzidenz Grotesk, an early sanserif of the grotesque genre designed by the Berthold Foundry in Germany at the close of the 19th century. 'I grew up with Akzidenz Grotesk and I love it. Akzidenz Grotesk has a certain ugliness to it, that's why it has character.' He feels that Univers, which is Emil Ruder's favorite, is too slick and cosmetic for his taste. The simplicity of his choice of typefaces speaks of his fondness of simple tools.

Weingart's fascination with everything mechanical started at an early age. When he was a young boy, he once completely disassembled his bicycle and put it back together again. In his typographic work, Weingart has been equally fascinated by the technology and mechanical reproduction processes. 'For me, typography is a triangular relationship between design idea, typographic elements, and printing technique,' writes Weingart. The possibilities that these technologies offer seem endless to him, and he finds it hugely satisfying to explore the materials: 'The thing that is so special for me… is the variability of the materials under the influence of idea and technique.'

Technological progression eventually led Weingart to experiment with photographic reproduction processes. Not satisfied with the rather limited range of sizes that metal type offered, Weingart began to explore the possibilities of the repro camera. He found that with the repro camera, a more fluid range of type sizes was possible. Working alongside Emil Ruder's class at Basel, Weingart was able to continue pursuing his letter 'M' series of typographic studies that he had begun when he was working part time at a typesetting firm. He printed a few letter Ms by letterpress, pasted them down on a cube, and photographed them from different perspectives. This unique process yielded dramatic black and white letterforms in perspective and formed the basis of many engaging abstract compositions.

In the midst of his emotionally satisfying work one will also occasionally encounter work in his repertoire that is undeniably Swiss in its original flavor – calm, rational and clear. 'That's my schizophrenic personality,' says Weingart. As much as he tries to be expressive with type, he feels that there are times when the clients' wishes and the users' needs are of a more urgent priority. Weingart simply knows when he has to put his

ego aside and emphasize on solving particular design problems. It is the tension between his desire to express and his consideration for communication that creates this interesting mix of work and his perpetually inquisitive working ethos.

How well was his progressive idea about typography received at that time? Weingart recalls, 'in my presentations in 1972, there was always a group of audience that hated it, one group that loved it, and the rest would all leave during the lecture.' The people who were against his experimentations dismissed it as something that could never be adopted commercially. It wasn't until the early eighties, when his American students like April Greiman and Dan Friedman brought back to the US a wealth of typographic arsenals from Basel and co-opted it into the mainstream of graphic design. From April Greiman's 'hybrid imagery' to David Carson's deconstructive page layouts, anarchy reigned supreme in the nineties. Those were the days for graphic design superstars, whose style many a graphic designer adored and imitated. While no one can give a definitive answer as to whether these American graphic designers took what Weingart did and brought it to new heights, they certainly managed to make it a huge commercial success. 'They were doing it as a style and it was never my idea to create fashion', denotes Weingart. The teaching at Basel for Weingart is not about trends but a 'stability' that they try to move away from, but never totally.

Weingart's typographic experimentations spanned across three different eras of typesetting technology: letterpress, phototypesetting and the computer. Yet, despite how readily he accepted and pushed the boundaries of the letterpress and phototypesetting processes, he is rather unenthusiastic about the computer technology. The computer, to him, is too illusive. He compares the computer to a digital watch: a traditional watch shows a 'landscape', it tells a story; a digital watch only shows a particular moment. That's why Weingart's students do not design on the computer – they are asked to first work out their ideas by hand. Weingart wants his students to experience design as a tactile, hands-on experience. It is surprising that he was probably also the first person to introduce the Macintosh computer into the type shop in Switzerland.

In 2000, Weingart published a substantial monologue simply titled *My way to typography*, a remarkable object of design in itself. If you haven't read it, I suggest that you do because it is just about as much as one can look into any design-

er's life, work and influences. The book doesn't just give you glimpses, but detailed accounts of his life and times, leaving no stones unturned. 'Every page of the book is a handmade cookie.' He had spent five years to put this book together, and it contains much of his personal exploratory work that had not seen the light of day until now. Flipping through the book is almost a voyeuristic experience – it is almost as if you were looking through one's personal sketchbook or diary. 'Sometimes I wish I was living in the Nineteenth Century,' writes Weingart in one of the pages. Why? 'I'm an old granny you know? I miss many things that I grew up with during and after the war that can never be found any more.' These provocative statements are sprinkled through-out the book, intended as foods for thought for students to contemplate what it is that they are doing. This book is perhaps a token for his passion about teaching. Or perhaps it is an antidote for his rather grim view on the future of graphic design: 'graphic design is in a big crisis. The education in our school is not the best any more. The value of living has changed. The computer and electronic tools in general are destroying our natural needs.' The natural needs, perhaps, is our need to create, to express.

Let me leave you with these wonderful words from Weingart: 'what still surprises and inspires me today: to turn blank paper into a printed page.' Nothing can be more reassuring than to read words like these from someone who has almost forty years of experience behind him. What more can you ask for in a career?

Epilogue

This article is the result of my personal encounter with Wolfgang Weingart at the Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design in March 2001, where I was a student at the time. We had an immensely enjoyable afternoon of discussions and an insightful lecture in the evening. His visit was certainly one of the main highlights of my days at design school. I also consulted several sources when writing this article, and corresponded with Weingart on a couple of occasions. I would like to extend my personal thanks to Mr Weingart here.

Q&A session with Wolfgang Weingart (full transcription)

Emily Carr Institute, 7 March 2001

Keith Tam: You said in an interview you had with *Communication Arts* magazine that you wished you were living in the 15th century. What made you say that, and how does that affect your work?
Wolfgang Weingart: That was only a sentence. I'm an old granny you know. I don't have a cell phone, I don't have email, I don't have a CD player, and my record player is fifty years old. I miss many things that I grew up with during and after the war that I can't find any more. The values are so different now. When I was young I had to respect even a piece of bread, not to throw it away. That's how I grew up. And you know what the world looks like today? It's very chaotic… So I came up with this rather provocative statement to make you think, 'is that guy nuts or what?'

But it seems like you are very well versed with new technology and so innovative with it. It's just interesting how you made that statement.
That's my schizophrenic personality.

This book that I made [*Typography*] was specifically made for you – younger students who grew up in a world that is different. The statement that you've just mentioned is something for you to think about. What does he really mean by that? It gives you perhaps a bridge to think, prompting you to do some research at the library, or contemplate what you read in history books. What was it like living in the 30s and 40s? What are the differences? It's totally normal that the world goes on. There's nothing bad about it. In the book there are little provocative sentences like that for you to think about. Another one would be: I need no more than four typefaces. What does it mean for you? It's a little thing for you to think about: 'Is this guy mental? With all those Emigre typefaces and everything that's around. Why does he need only a maximum of four typefaces?' So this book gives you some hints to think about the values in the environment that we are living in.

I see very distinct feelings between your more practical, informational-based work and your more experimental work. It seems that in your experimental work it's very emotional, very personal, while your informational work is very systemic, built on grids, and very Swiss. Is it possible to inject emotional elements in informational work? How do you feel about that?
We have different faces. I don't believe in a person who is constantly the same. The way I react to one person might be different from the way you react to the same person. You say this guy is

not nice, and another person might think he's a great guy. It's the same with work. When I get a job (that's when I get some work from a client), I think into this work and I'd say this work needs my personal push in it, the so-called ego. I'm a creative person, that means I don't think only in grid systems. That's the reason why I went away from Swiss typography. For example if it's a catalogue – say a book for an art fair that I designed. There was a very clear mission that I had to aim for. Anyone from a six-year-old girl to a ninety-year-old man had to be able to find information in this book as easily as possible. It was clear that I had to put my ego in the background. But if I had to make a poster where the client says, 'we'd like a poster that's exactly your style,' then I can do what I like, or so much I can do what I like but the communication to the receiver still works. You see that I'm not a dogmatic person. I can feel into the problems, and I can feel that this it right or this is wrong. That makes me very independent, free to solve every complicated problem; it's more interesting for me.

I work with very simple tools. Simple tools, that's very important. The Macintosh 128k was the first Macintosh computer that came on the market in January 1984. I still believe that the first program MacPaint that came with it has not yet been fully discovered. Coming back now to the classical type shop – the lead and points, lines, all those signs that you can print with, many thousands of pieces that you can combine – is a wonderful challenge to train your mind for creativity and to find solutions. I don't need complex machinery to say something. Whether direct or indirect, good or bad, it doesn't matter. I don't need it. This is the reason why I don't work with computers. I was the first person (almost) in Switzerland to introduce the Macintosh computer into the type shop. I bought four Macintosh Plus computers. I started to combine lead with the new technology of computers – it was wonderful. There's technology that is 500 years old (composing techniques that began in around 1445) that is still in use in our type shop, then came machinery like the Xerox machine, then came lithography. We are constantly finding new ways to express, but computers might not necessarily bring something new.

With the computers, we now have the 'elastic band' problem. You can expand or compress in whatever ways you like, make positive and negative letterspacing and leading. An example: Univers was made as a very open typeface, while

Helvetica was created to be very tight because of fashion. But you can now stretch the type, or compose it very narrow. But that wasn't Adrian Frutiger's original idea. That means it has consequences. Consequences in the basic teaching of typography. It's much more important now than before. And you need teachers who take care of this kind of things now. Typography is a very important discipline because 70–80% of what we do as graphic designers involve typography. It's important that students get very intense training in the basics of typography in their first year, in the first and second semesters. Not just typography but also colour, drawing, etc. but especially typography, because of the 'elastic band' situation I mentioned earlier.

So you're saying the rules are important... If you had lived in 500 years ago, that (letterpress) would have been a new technology, and you may not have liked it...

You see, it's a very interesting phenomenon. We have these twenty-six letters, and other signs like commas, hyphens, numbers too. We can say pretty much anything we'd like to say. Things like the distance between words hasn't changed in 500 years, otherwise you cannot read it. You can read German texts without having word spaces a little easier than English because capital letters are used more frequently in German, but not English. And we also need leading... These things help with readability. All those classical rules are very interesting.

I just picked up this brochure from the hotel. From this distance you cannot tell whether this was done with hand-composing or photo-composing or computer composing. You can't tell if it's letterpress, even engraving, offset, or a Xerox copy, or a printout from a laser printer – you can't see it. The end result is still the same. There's something wrong. We now have a monitor with a computer hooked up beside it. These two things have nothing to do with the hands any more. The monitor has nothing to do with paper any more. The biggest mistake is when people try to adapt a classical typeface like Bodoni to the computer screen. You probably need a new alphabet, or new ways of thinking about how we communicate with this medium. This is the same as those molded plastic chairs that imitate weaving. People like imitating old things but it's a new technique. Emigre typefaces are on the way to rectifying this problem. You can smell the presence of the computer in Emigre's typefaces.

To say it harshly, I think trying to make another nicer Bodoni on the computer that's exactly like the original is for me, nonsense.

My students don't design on the computer. When they're making, say, a book cover, they first compose the information and then they cut it out, lay them on the table and make models... Ten, twelve... You can't do that on the computer. On the computer you can show twelve sketches but they are very small. And you can't touch them or move them... well, with the mouse you can but you can't move the elements physically. When I have critiques with my students I see a landscape – like my watch, it's a landscape. I can see that the plane arrives at two o'clock, and how long it has taken me. I can see it – there's a story for me. But if it were a digital watch, all you see is 2:00. It only shows a moment, but not a landscape.

Use a computer when it is necessary. Don't use one when it's not. Just like cell phones. I don't have a cell phone. I think most of you here probably have one. Cell phones are great if my mother were to die in the next two weeks – I can talk to her on it every day. But I don't need a cell phone to ask someone if dinner's ready or if the potatoes are still being cooked. It's such nonsense that some people talk on cell phones so loud that they entertain the whole restaurant.

Do you think technology is being abused by students?

I would say it's not the students, but the teachers, the instructors. When I was young my mother told me to eat soup sitting up, not pressing against the table. Perhaps that was a German thing... If she didn't tell me that, I wouldn't have known eating soup pressing against the table looks funny. You have no rights to say whether something is good or bad. Try it out first, learn it first, then you can decide.

A lot of work is now being designed for the screen, where a lot of reading is now being done, like a printed page. For example programs like Flash, where type is being manipulated on screen. What do you think about the work that's being done in this regard? Is it counterproductive, or is it possible to establish a landscape for the screen?

I'd like to give you the address of the home page from the University of the Arts, formerly PCA, Philadelphia College of Art. It's the best web site that's I've ever seen in my life. It's incredibly well made. Coming back to your question. As I told you earlier, I'm not an expert in this, I know about 95% of what the computer can

do, what is possible. As far as web sites go, I am not 100% familiar, I only know one thing, and correct me if I'm wrong, it's a beginning. We're in around in Gutenburg's time in the evolution timeline. All this stuff with Flash, etc., all these new tools that we have to give time to develop, for both manufacturers and users. I would say this electronic world, this information age is only in its beginning. It will eventually solve all it's problems. I don't know if this totally answers your question.

I was just wondering if there is an opportunity for the screen to play a role as a reading tool, like the page. And also the possibility for introducing motion to type now.

Moving type is nothing new. Type moved even in the twenties. I try to stay with tradition but I also try to be good friend with new technologies. Every time when I go over to the MIT in Boston to see John Maeda, the work interests me even though I don't understand what they do. You see, I have contacts with all these people that have very different opinions. That's very important, and that's probably the reason why I don't have problems with young people. I'm 60 years old and maybe in five to eight hundred students I have problems with something like five. Maybe ten of them don't speak any more because they have problems. On one hand, we are all open for reasons, and on the other hand we are open for new things. That's very important. And the students feel it very quickly. In the lectures that I've had in the past year there have always been about 95% of young people. It's all young people. Very interesting. Why did they come? They're read something provocative perhaps. I'm not a rock star like David Carson. I don't show the students fashion, what's just in. I show them serious material and serious presentation that stand on their own two feet, with almost 35 years of experience. Exactly a year ago I gave a workshop to people who were in the practice. People from 25–40 worked for three full days over the weekend on a book cover project. I prepare typefaces that they could enlarge or reduce. That was the only variation that they could do. They were totally happy. They said they learned more in those three days than they had learn in four years of typography in their schools. So it's a proof that I think that's there's an incredible need for people to learn.

Why do you think tradition is important in typography?

I want to stress that all I'm saying is just an opinion or a person. An opinion that can be totally wrong. Don't take it as something that's absolute. Back to your question. I think you cannot start building a house with a roof. You can hire a helicopter and the gasoline will run out, the helicopter will fall down before you finish building it. It might be possible to hoist the roof up and start building the walls, theoretically, but in general, you don't start a house with the roof. So the foundation of the house is the future for the house if you will. I would say if the foundation is stable the whole structure will be stable. The fundamentals of design can open up many other possibilities and it can give you context for your work. There are many other problems that you can discuss and do with the students. This is the instructor's chance to communicate with the students and it should be as colourful and as inspiring as possible. From there you build up your things. You probably start with a pencil. This is not a fact I would say. We are still human beings. We are responsible for ourselves, for other people, for a group or perhaps even for the state. Responsible also means if you eat at McDonald's everyday you'll eventually weigh a ton and need two seats on the airplane. It's interesting how animals don't have those problems. I would say we are still human beings and we are trying our best not to be animals. That's the problem. The society is so ill. We are producing so much waste. Everything is disposable. It's crazy. But if we stop all this then thousands of people will be unemployed. It's a vicious circle.

Do you think we as designers contribute a lot to that system? Do you think we can change that?

Sure. We can make campaigns to change that. We can make ads and posters and televisions commercials. That surely can be a job of a visual communicator.

How do you think fashion and trends relate to typography and design? Like your earlier students April Griemen. She created this so-called 'new wave.' It became really fashionable after a while in America. And now we are on to something else. What role does fashion and trends play in typography and design?

April Greiman was one of my first students. I started this kind of typography which the Americans named it 'new wave,' 'Swiss Punk' or

'postmodern.' Who created this? Who knows? Not April. She came in at the right time when I let my students to explore typography in a totally different direction from the so-called 'Swiss Typography,' typified by the work of Emil Ruder, Müller Brockmen and so on. And she went with this new visual vocabulary to a country that was at the time very open to everything – crazy things, good things, wonderful things, bad things. She had this incredible possibility to adapt this experimental typography into commercial usage. In my presentations in 1972, there was always a group of audience that hated it, one group that loved it, and the rest would all leave during the lecture. People who were against it commented that you can never use this kind of typography commercially. But I believed that one day it would be accepted for commercial work. April Griemen was the first person who could transform this experimental research into practice. It was ironic that in the seventies in America it was being copied and re-copied by many designers. Then it came Cranbrook. It had started to make 'new wave.' They were doing it as a style, and that was not my original idea. My idea was to find an alternative to this stiff, unexpressive 'Swiss Typography,' or it is sometimes called 'international style' in America. My idea was never to create fashion. Our teaching at Basel never orient us into the priority of following trends. It is not about trends but a certain kind of stability that we try to swim away from, but not totally.

International style because almost result in design that looks the same all over the world. It is a part of globalization. There are many factors that resulted in this. One of them is the computer and the programs. You probably have the program Freehand. Or Illustrator, Photoshop, QuarkXpress, or Fontographer if you like making new typefaces. But these programs are all over the world. It is a disease. The disease is created once and multiplied all over the world. It's interesting.

You are traveling the world. Do you have a personal philosophy, a mission, or something that makes you go out into the world to talk about something specific?
That's a very nice question. I grew up with my parents living in another country. I began to develop a love for travel, especially to oriental countries. And then I found myself learning hot metal typesetting in Germany for three years. And then I found out that I could perhaps become a typog-

rapher or graphic designer later. Drawing, painting and photography also fascinate me. I also love ancient architecture. I then began to photograph themes with my Hasszleblad camera and further blending this kind of experiences into my professional work. I like juxtaposing photographs with typography. You know, if you a single child you are more likely to grow up a little eccentric. I had my own world as a child. I wanted to make things that were a little different from, or better than, someone who came from a big family. I like to discover, and when I do make a discovery I'd like to share it with someone. This is like printing too. When I was an apprentice in the print shop, after I had composed something, I would give it to the printer who would print hundreds of thousands of copies so I can give to many people. I like sharing my experiences with young people and I feel that I'd like to say things that are little different form other people. I have lectures in different countries, in America, Canada, or England I have a whole network of people that I always try to cultivate. And I feel that elementary problems are more important than ever, and specific elementary problems interest me very much. Because of the elastic band problem I mentioned earlier.

[Someone from the audience] I understand that your favourite typefaces to work with are Akzidentz Grotesk and Times. Do you exclusively work with these two fonts?
As I said before I like simple tools. For me they are toys too. For me it is not important whether it is an exclusive typeface or a complex typeface. It is a matter of choosing a simple, good, readable typeface to make typographic communication work. It is the typographic result that is the centre point. Not to find any more crazy typefaces in the FontShop or Adobe font catalogues and buy them. I met Roger Black at a typography conference and he said, for him a good typographer would use about one hundred typefaces a year. Your see this is an opinion. I think it is nuts, but if he thinks so, he thinks so. Look up Jan Tschihold and Hermann Zapf at the library. Look at their typographic results, not their typefaces. You will find tremendous differences between these two typographers: Zapf is a Canadian wood-carver, and Tschihold is an aristocrat with a nice castle. You see there can be a large variety of results and personalities. What we are doing at Basel is only one out of hundreds of different possibilities of handling typography. Back to the question. I grew up with Akzidentz Grotesk and I love it. Akzidenz

Grotesk has a certain kind of ugliness to it, that's why it has character. Whereas Univer is a very slick typeface. Adrian Frutiger's twenty-one typeface system is a wonderful idea but for me it is too cosmetic. You also mentioned Times. Times for me is perhaps the most neutral serif typeface there is. Bodoni has too much meaning. I understand perhaps why you asked about Times, because I set the text in my book in Times. I chose Times because in most of my work I've used Akzidentz Grotesk, and to give it more expression without competing with the Sans Serif typeface. It was for reading and to provide a contrast. But I disturbed all that with an underlining. That's my 'shocker.' With the lines the whole page becomes a unit; it holds together. And then the lines will probably make people think 'what's that? I can't read it.' The idea of using the underlining came one year before the book was actually published. I was a bit concern that because people might reject the book because they can't read the text with the underlining. But the publisher came along and thought it was a fantastic idea. But don't think it's easy to just make the lines. I've spent a good amount of time on experimentation. How thick? Should you be able to see the serifs or not? Should the line go on the top of the text or at the bottom? Every page of the book is a 'handmade cookie.' There are a lot of considerations being put in it.

(TRANSCRIBED BY KEITH TAM)

Illustrations for *Wolfgang Weingart's typographic landscape*
From *Weingart: my way to typography*

Hofmann while he was away, Kurt Hauert assigned us the second basic exercise: the Point. Not feeling under pressure, I tried to attend Hauert's weekly class regularly. Perhaps unfairly, I considered my independent work in the typeshop and designing posters for the student union to be more important than attending classes every day.

The next series of Line Pictures completed within the same year took yet another turn. The type material I was working with, the strips of metal that had a specific function in typesetting as leading or rules, presupposed that lines are straight and perpendicular, as is all hardware in letterpress printing. It occurred to me, why not bend the lead and copper lines into curved shapes or other contours? To ensure that these configurations would stand up and remain stationary in the bed of the letterpress without the aid of standard right-angled type furniture, I had to come up with various unconventional solutions. Within a frame I embedded the upright metal rules in liquid plaster, or secured them with blocks of lead either glued or taped to a platform in such a way that they remained fixed during printing. The next step in defying long-standing convention was inevitable: I felt limited by the standard sizes of metal and wood type.

die Linienbilder weiter zu entwickeln. Ich entdeckte da dass Linien nicht nur für angewandte Arbeiten einsetz waren: Warum nicht einmal Blei- oder Messinglinien zu schiedenartigen Umrissen biegen? Um die handgeboge Linien während des Druckens auf dem Druckfundamen befestigen, konnte ich verschiedene Hilfsmittel anwen Mit flüssigem Gips füllte ich die Leerräume oder umste die gebogenen Linien mit einzelnen aufgeklebten Bleik chen. Sie blieben im Druckfundament unverrückbar. N veränderbar waren die durch die Schriftgiessereien festge ten Schriftgrössen. Diese ausgefallenen Versuche haben d beigetragen, dass ich mich Ende der sechziger Jahre, für e unbestimmte Zeit, von der *Schweizer Typographie* getre habe.

Nach einem Jahr in Basel bestand ein zerstrittenes Verhä zur Schule. Auf Emil Ruders Drängen hin musste ich n für eine Jahresaufgabe entscheiden oder die Schule im F jahr 1965 verlassen. Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem B staben M war seit 1962 nicht abgeschlossen. Ein weit Versuch, eine Dunkelkammer in die Untersuchungen mit zubeziehen, wurde Wirklichkeit.
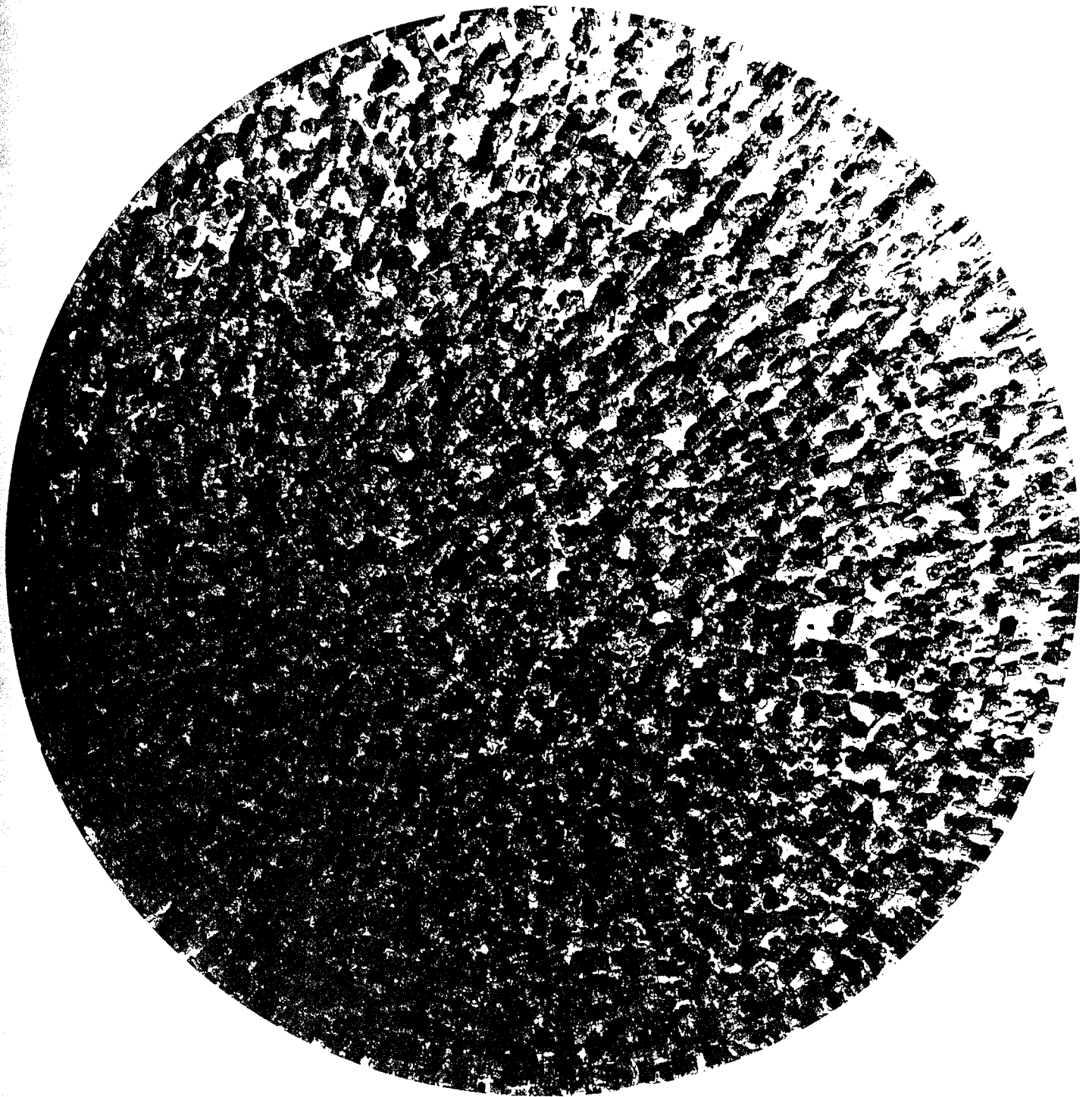
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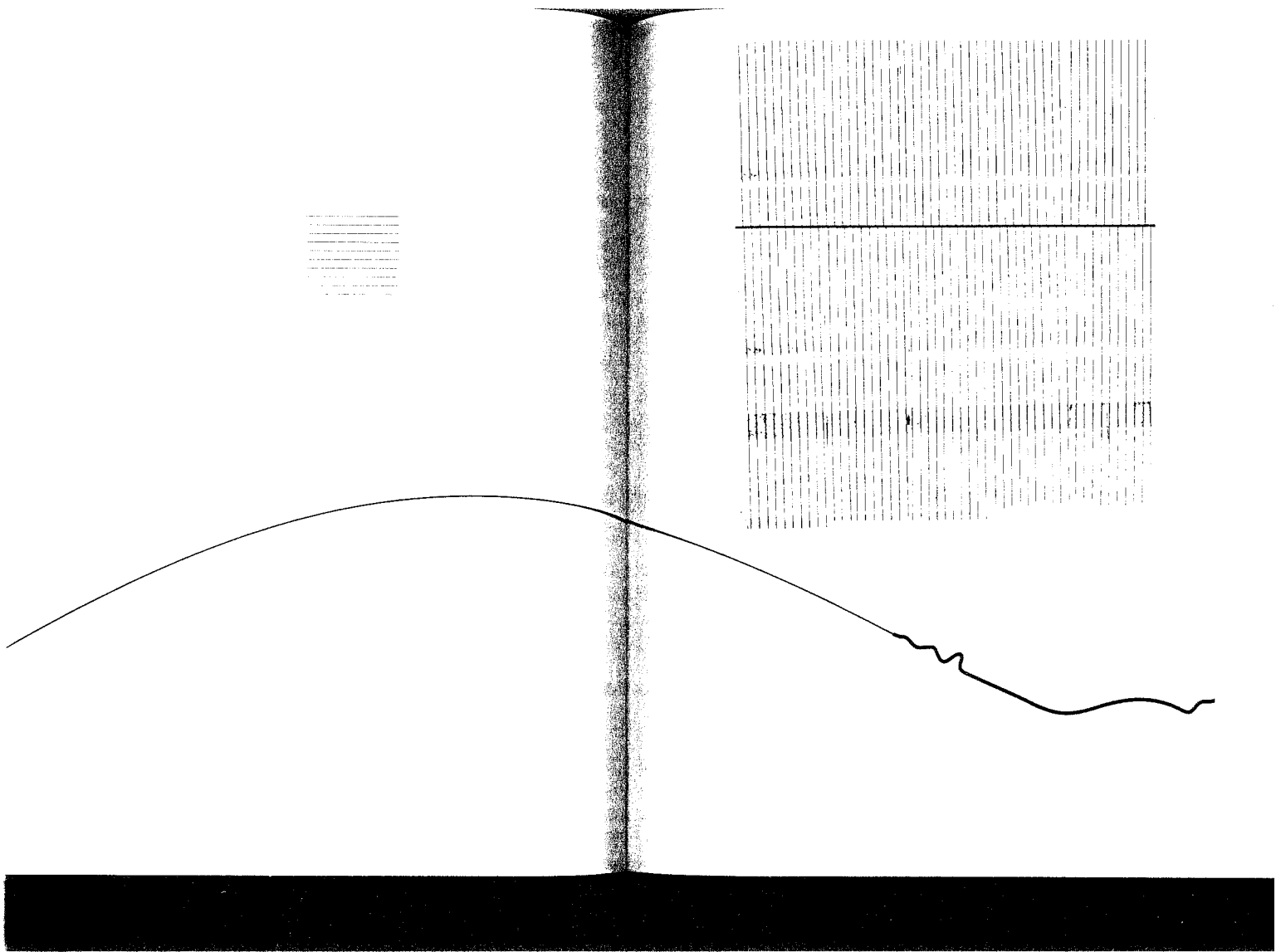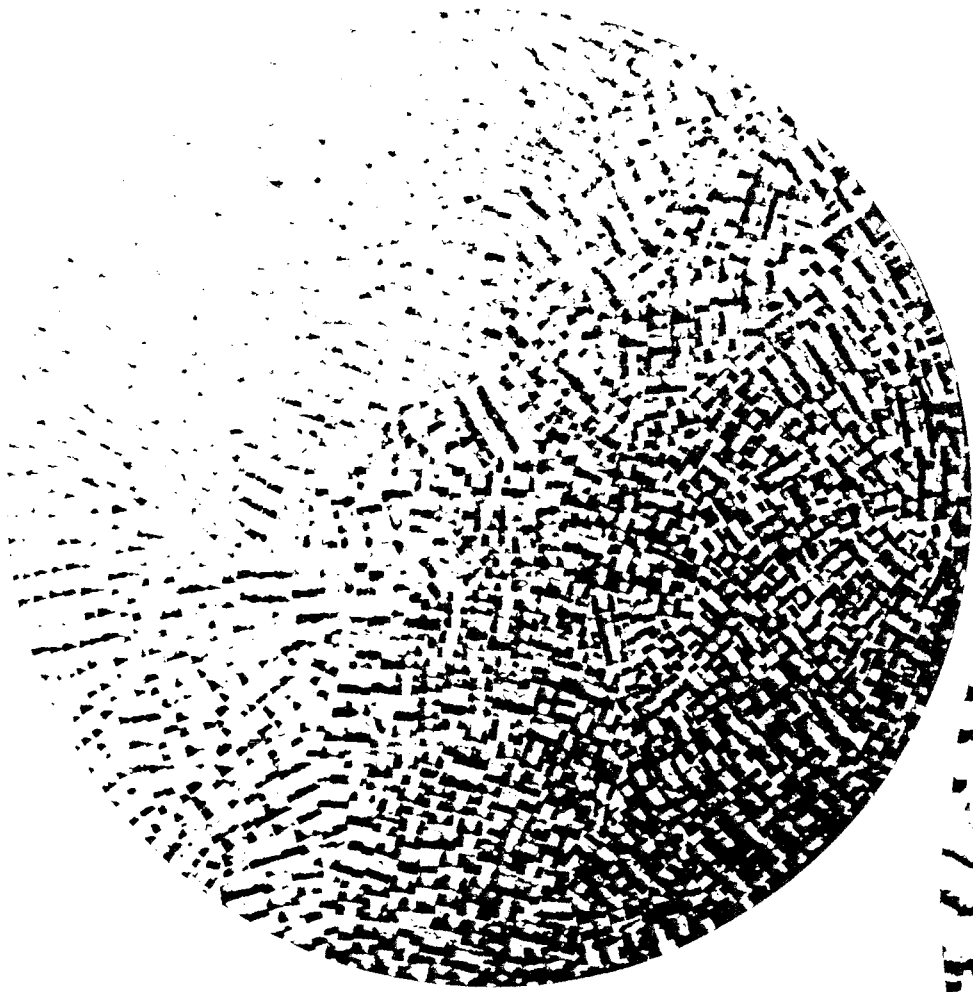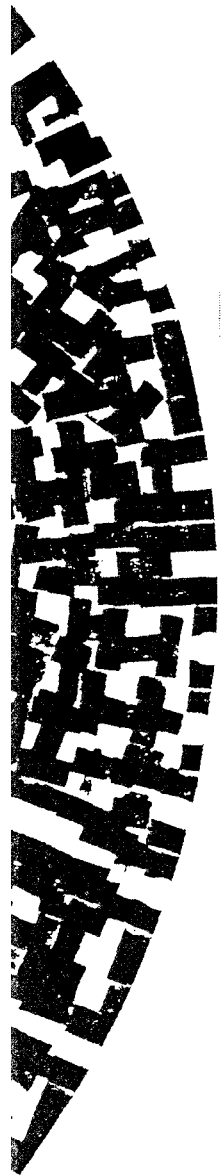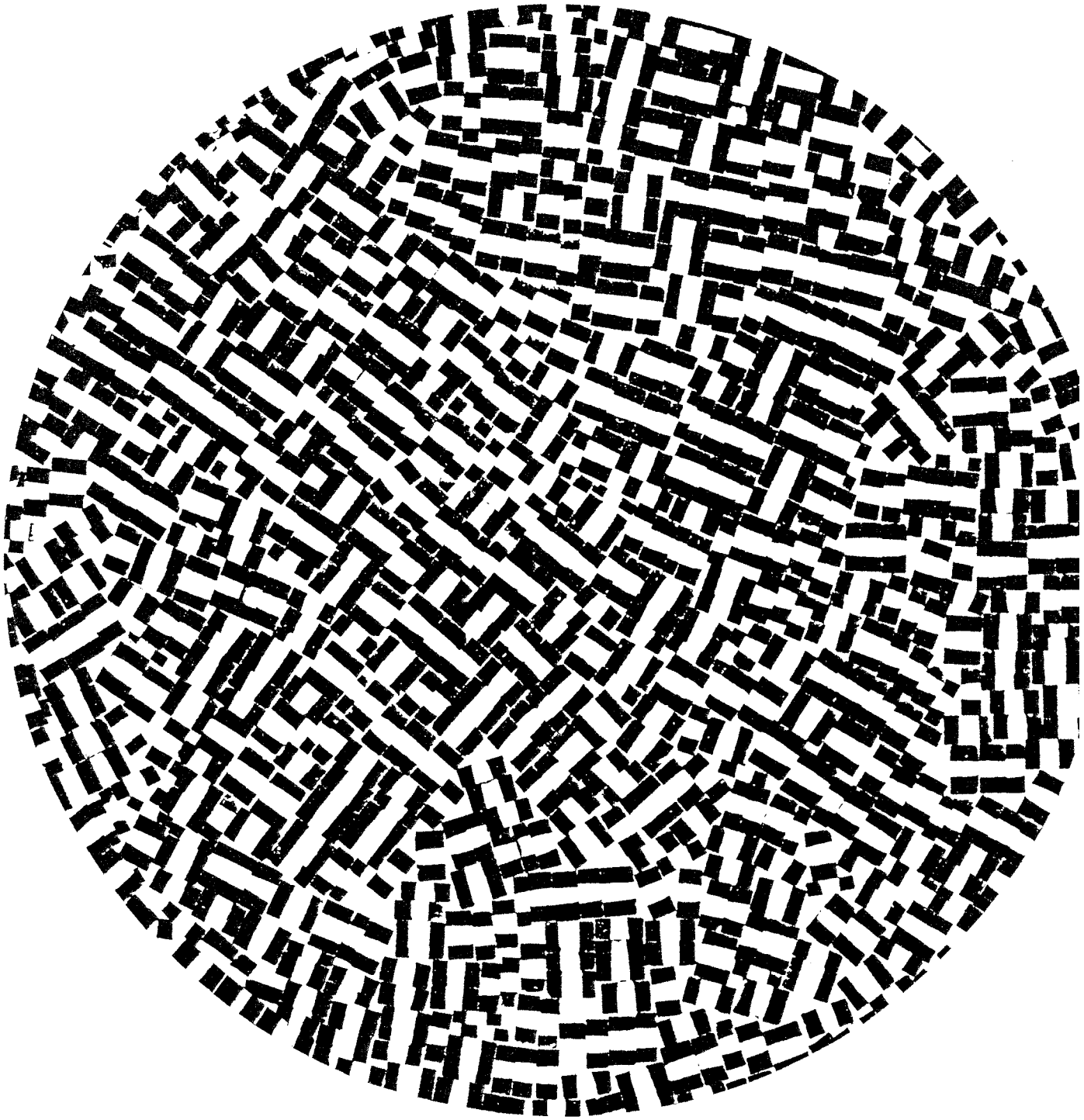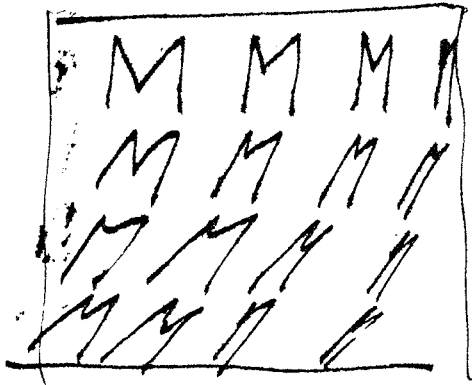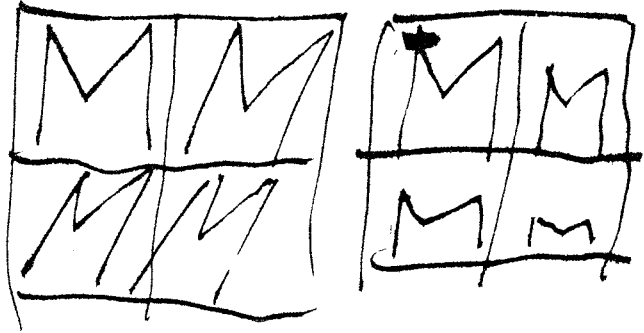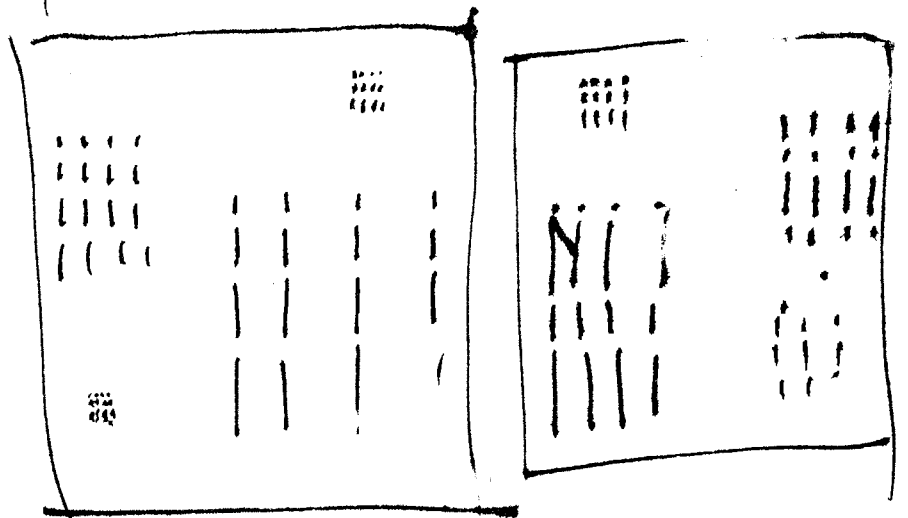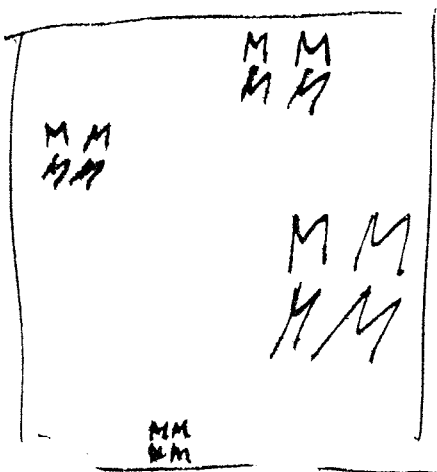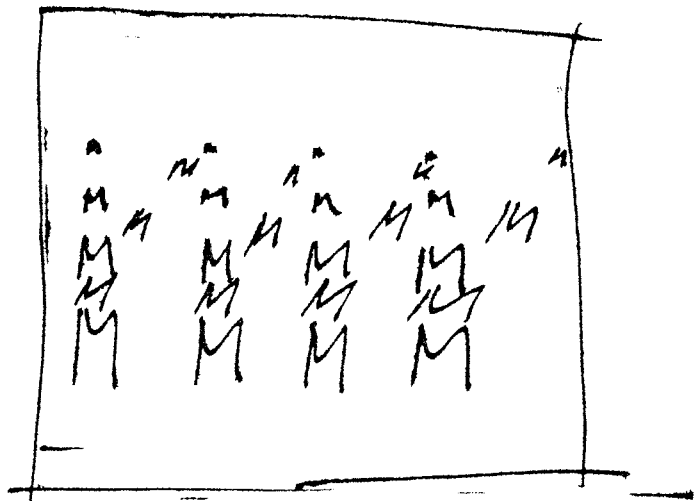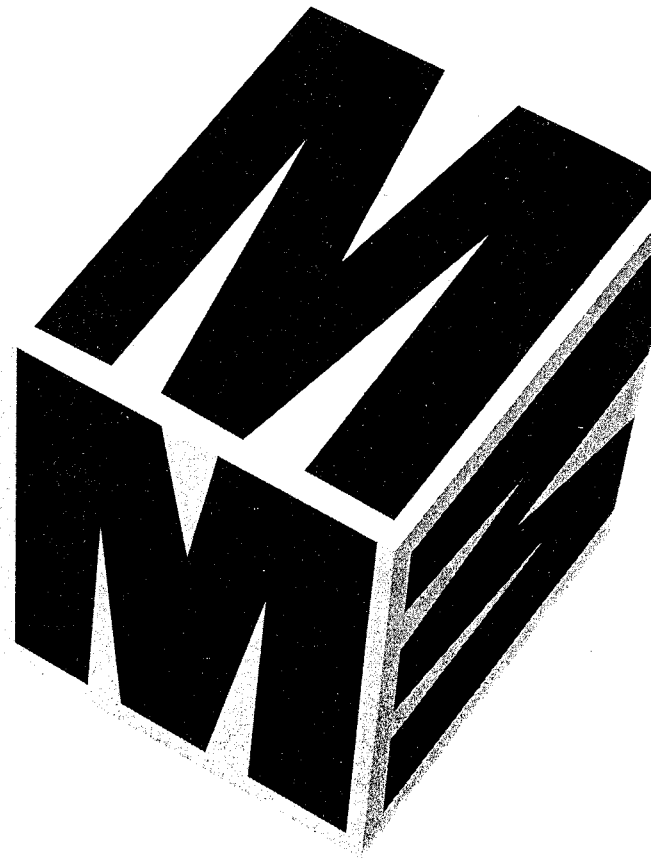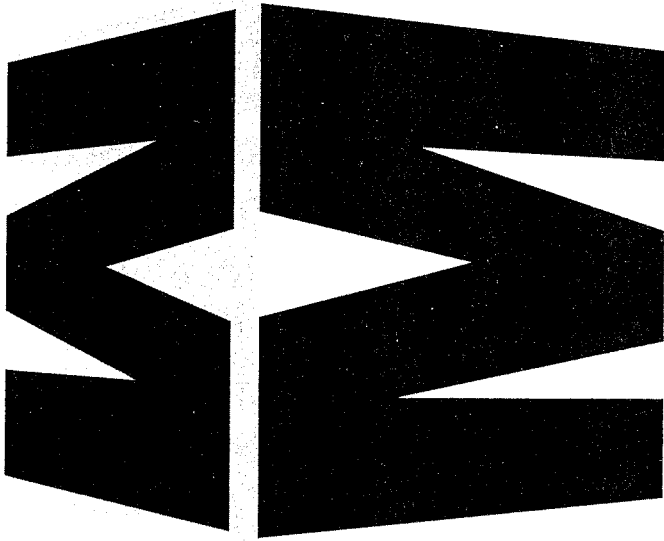
1962 begann ich mit dem Buchstaben M zu arbeiten.
Zunächst waren es in Holz geschnittene Umrisse in Verbindung
zu anderen Schriftzeichen. Es war die Neugier und Freude
am Entwerfen neuer Zeichen. Dazu kam das Erlebnis, aus dem
Holz grössere Buchstaben, die während der Lehre in unserer
Setzerei nicht vorhanden waren, selbst zu schneiden.
   Den Aufbau und das Aussehen unserer sechsundzwanzig
Buchstaben empfand ich sehr unterschiedlich: Im B sah ich eine
zerbrechliche Blume, im Z einen grell aufleuchtenden
Blitz und im Buchstaben L die beiden erkennbaren, ungleich
langen Uhrzeiger. Im M begeisterte mich die Ausstrahlungskraft
wegen seiner beiden links und rechts pfeilartig zusammen-
gehenden Winkel. Und im Buchstaben W erkannte
ich einen davonfliegenden Vogel.

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Sprachencharta   :1968
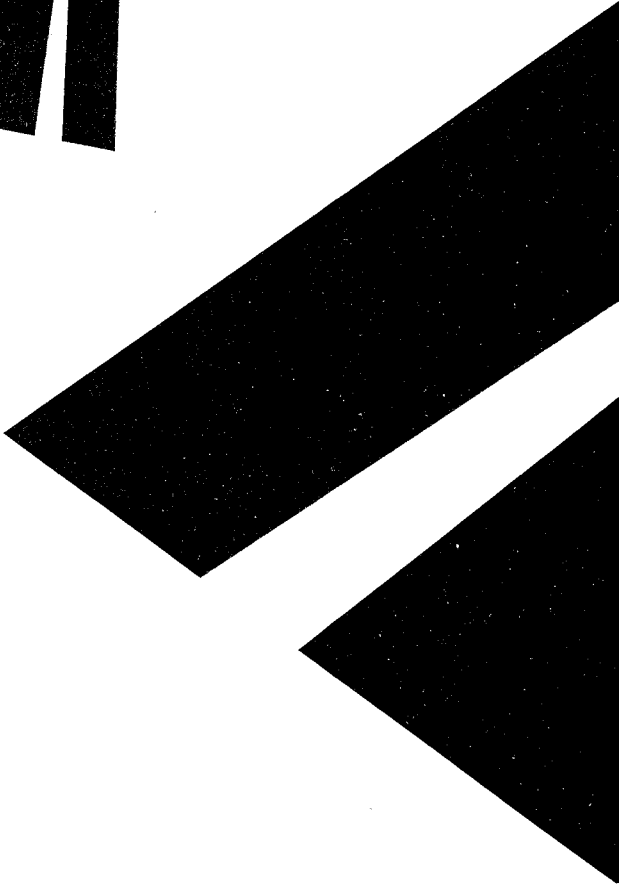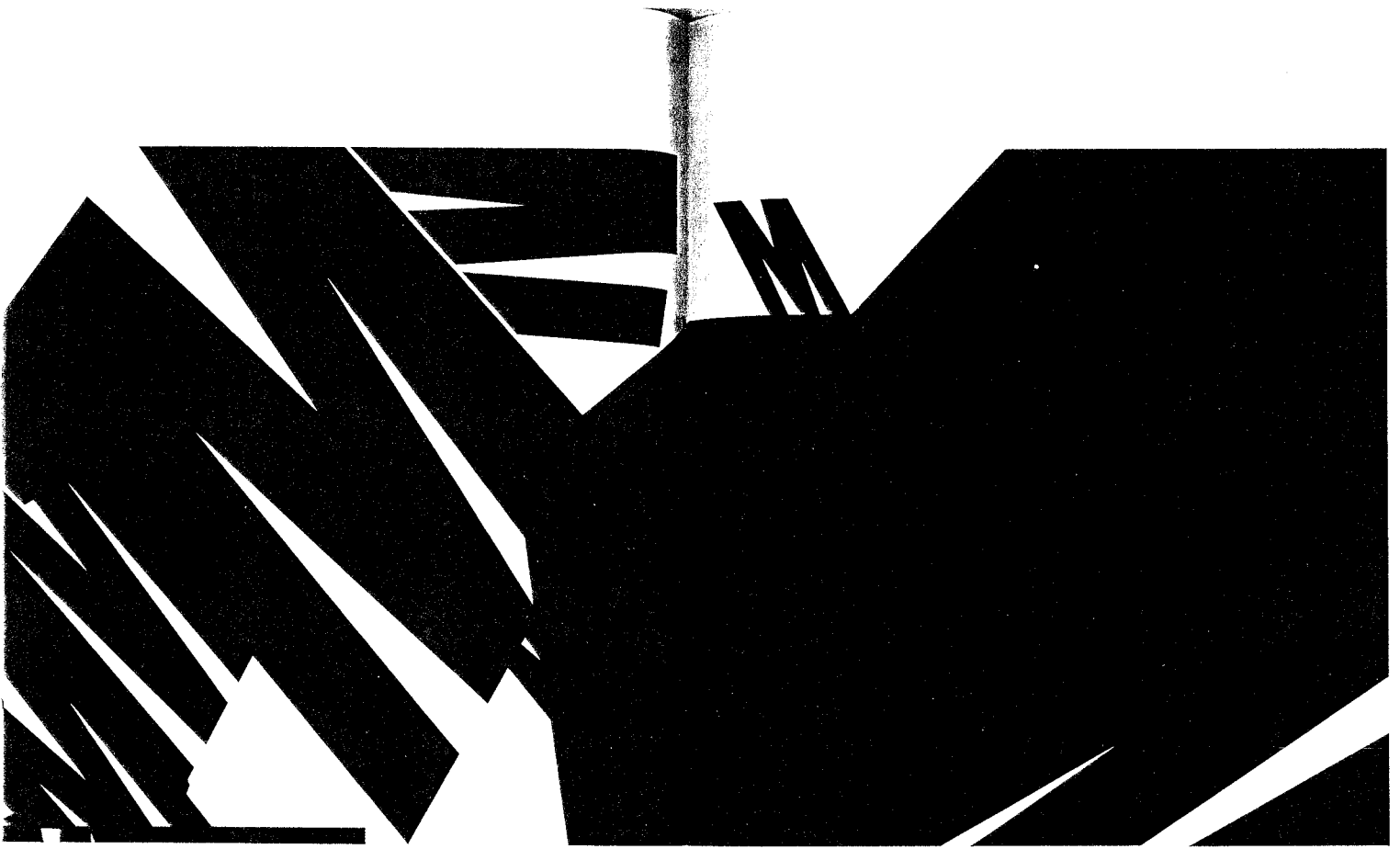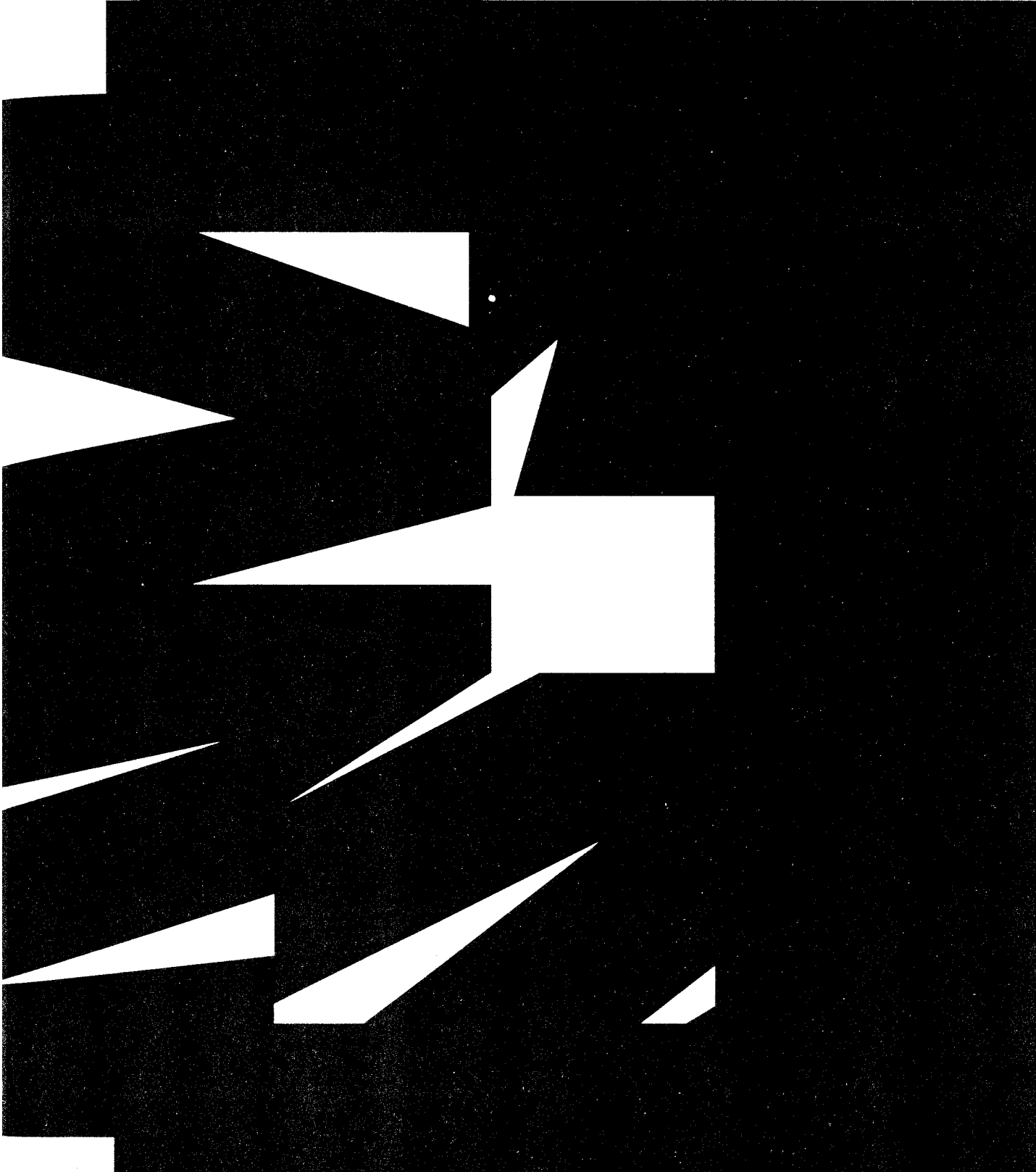
12

Sprechen:
Sprechen ist das dem Menschen
eigene Vermögen, Bewußtseins-
inhalte in Worte zu fassen und
mit der Stimme auszudrücken.

Sprache:
Sprache ist — allgemein gefaßt — ein Sy-
stem von Wörtern, Wort- und Satzfügungen.
Alle, die dieses System kennen und anwen-
den, werden damit befähigt, Bewußtseinsin-
halte mitzuteilen und einander zu verstehen.

Schrift:
Schrift ist konventionelle bildliche Darstellung der
Wörter einer Sprache. Damit können Aussagen in die-
ser Sprache festgehalten und weitergegeben werden.

Grammatik:
**Grammatik — im weitesten Sinne — faßt die Formen und Fügungen einer ge-
sprochenen oder geschriebenen Sprache auf jeder Stufe ihrer Entwicklung.**

Wert der Sprache:	Jede Sprache ist für die mensch-liche Gemeinschaft, die sich ihrer bedient, und damit für jeden, der zu dieser Gemeinschaft gebört.
1. sachlich:	Praktisches Werkzeug als Mittel der Aussage und der zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen.
2. geistig:	Intellektuelles und gemüthaftes Erbe von grundlegender geistiger und sitt-licher Bedeutung und als solches ein Bestandteil der Menschheitskultur.
3. künstlerisch:	Werkstoff, der literarische Kunstwerke möglich macht.

Un-ersetz-barkeit: Diese Merkmale sind allen Sprachen gemein, eignen aber jeder von ihnen auf eine besondere und unverwech-selbare Art.

Aus ‹Dokument Nr. 3› der Sprachencharta des Freiburger Instituts. Freiburg|Schweiz

CONCEPTION DESIGN WEINGART

4 o6

Exposition spéciale   Kreativer Schmuck   présentée sous le patronage de la Commission fédérale des Arts appliqués

Special Exhibition   Creative Jewelry   presented under the patronage of the Federal Commission for Applied Arts

Sonderschau   Kreativer Schmuck   durchgeführt unter dem Patronat der Eidgenössischen Kommission für angewand...

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Präsident der Eidg. Kommission für angewandte Kunst

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Leiter Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim   Fotomuseum   Gesamthochschule/Prof. Kunstakademie München   Kunstschmied

Dr. F. Walthard   Othmar Zschaler
Gemeindirektor Schweizer Mustermesse   Goldschmied

● Michel Morro
Präsident Schweizer Mustermesse

Teilnehmerverzeichnis   Liste des participants   List of parti...

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3	CÉSAR BALDACCINI	FRANKREICH	FRANCE	FRANCE	
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5	WILHELM BUCHERT	DEUTSCHLAND	ALLEMAGNE	GERMANY	
6	CLAUS BURY	DEUTSCHLAND	ALLEMAGNE	GERMANY	
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9	ANTON CEPKA	CSSR	CSSR	CSSR	
10	PIERRE DEGEN	ENGLAND	GRANDE-BRETAGNE	GREAT BRITAIN	
11	FLORICA FARCASU	RUMÄNIEN	ROUMANIE	ROUMANIA	
12	PETER FAUSER	SCHWEIZ	SUISSE	SWITZERLAND	
13	ARLINE M. FISCH	USA	ETATS-UNIS	USA	
14	ANA FONT	SPANIEN	ESPAGNE	SPAIN	
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16	YASUKI HIRAMATSU	JAPAN	JAPON	JAPAN	
17	ELISABETH KODRÉ & HELFRIED KODRÉ	OESTERREICH	AUTRICHE	AUSTRIA	
18	THERESE KÜNZLI	DEUTSCHLAND	ALLEMAGNE	GERMANY	
19	OTTO KÜNZLI	DEUTSCHLAND	ALLEMAGNE	GERMANY	
20	JENS-RÜDIGER LORENZEN	DEUTSCHLAND	ALLEMAGNE	GERMANY	
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22	BRUNO MARTINAZZI	ITALIEN	ITALIE	ITALY	
23	FRIEDRICH MÜLLER	SCHWEIZ	SUISSE	SWITZERLAND	
24	KARL-HEINZ REISTER	ITALIEN	ITALIE	ITALY	
25	GEORG SEIBERT	DEUTSCHLAND	ALLEMAGNE	GERMANY	
26	PETER SKUBIC	OESTERREICH	AUTRICHE	AUSTRIA	
27	JOSEF SYMON	OESTERREICH	AUTRICHE	AUSTRIA	
28	BERNHARD SCHOBINGER	SCHWEIZ	SUISSE	SWITZERLAND	
29	MARIE VANKOVA-KUCHYNKOVA	CSSR	CSSR	CSSR	
30	MARCI ZELMANOFF	USA	ETATS-UNIS	USA	

DEUTSCHLAND   ALLEMAGNE   GERMANY

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JENS-RÜDIGER LORENZEN   D 56 WUPPERTAL 2
ALTESTRASSE 17

Projekte.

Weingart:
Ergebnisse aus dem Typographie-Unterricht an der Kunstgewerbeschule Basel, Schweiz.

Projekt I	James Faris. Werkzeug, Arbeitsmethode: Eine ‹typographische› Bildkonfrontation in 26 Collagen.	Vorwort von Armin Hofmann
Projekt II	Gregory Vines. Das Tor in Bellinzona: Ideen, Skizzen, Entwürfe. Die 6 Umschläge für die ‹Typographischen Monatsblätter› 1978.	

Projects.

Weingart:
Typographic Research at the School of Design Basle, Switzerland.

Project I	James Faris. Tool, Process, Sensibility: Images of Typography in 26 Collages.	Introduction by Armin Hofmann
Project II	Gregory Vines. The Gate in Bellinzona: Ideas, Sketches and Designs. The 6 Covers for the ‹Typographische Monatsblaetter›, 1978.	

Verlag Arthur Niggli AG

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Das
Schweizer Plakat
1900–1980

Vernissage 11. März 1984   Gewerbemuseum Basel

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WortZeichen	SchriftFelder	BildRäume	:

Blick zurück auf eine sehr persönliche Typographie.
Führung und Diskussion mit Wolfgang Weingart
Sonntag 28. Oktober 1990
10 Uhr

Institut für Neue Technische Form
Mathildenhöhe
Eugen-Bracht-Weg 6
61 Darmstadt
(06151) 4 80 08

17. Oktober bis 19. November 1990
*Montags geschlossen
Dienstag bis Samstag 10-18 Uhr
Sonntag 10-13 Uhr

Ausnahme: 19. November*

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With the advent of phototypesetting we confront a new potential for cooperation among the professionally trained writers and designers. As the diversity of communication increases, so will the demand for faster type production. In future, typography will not only be empowered by a more exciting technology, but will be defined by it.

photographs from India, the Near East, southern France, the Iberian peninsula, Italy and Greece were my sketches for graphic pictures, and served as the basis for translating objects of architecture and landscape into type. In addition to using the typical letters and signs of a type as individual elements, I was searching for the means to emphasize the planar areas of a composition, in other words, consider text blocks as shapes. The ruins of Baalbek in Lebanon, in particular the stairs leading up to the grounds of a temple, were compelling. I noted similar stepped patterns in the surfaces of stone walls. Serrations of two and three dimensional structures were the basis of many typographic situations and a very significant one during a brief period.

Step Typography. In the far it is an example of how text blocks were used as shapes forming the building blocks of the composition.

My contention was that the concept of Swiss typography had a fresh impulse. Based as it was on a reductionist thought, even the indent of a paragraph for instance, was perceived and considered to be a noisy extravagance. An extravagantly long paragraph indent would have been regarded as decoration. The preferred solution was an additional line or two because it maintained a flush left hand margin.

In order to break down established concepts, it was helpful to have a practical knowledge of typesetting. This I had used as an apprentice, obediently and willingly entrusting self to the reliable guidance of the master typographer of a printing firm, Wilhelm Klaus.

During the working day a typesetter would set type properly: letterspacing was fixed by the individual pieces of type optically adjusted with tiny slivers of metal or paper. After years, however, a typesetter could have set a word according to fantasy, but not many trained in the craft had the interest, maybe they considered it inappropriate.

To me visual rules in typography were not inviolable. My challenge was to renew a fascination with basic design relationships through the medium of typography: slant, weight, size, the expression of various types, the limits of readability, and most interesting, the effects of letterspacing.

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als die materialbedingte handwerkliche Arbeit mit dem Blei. Viele Gestalter, die ihre Arbeiten veröffentlichen, nützen die Unwissenheit der Leser aus, um mit ihren noch ungewohnten Ergebnissen zu überraschen. Sie glauben, dass dieses Vorgehen der Selbstgefälligkeit mit Buchstabennegativ, Licht und Photopapier beispielhaft sei, um einen besseren Gestaltungsweg gehen zu können. Sie vergessen dabei, dass durch diese einseitige Auseinandersetzung mit anderen, noch neuen technischen Möglichkeiten das gestalterische Abseits vergrössert wird. Mit dem Photosatz stehen die Gestalter und die Setzer der Zukunft gegenüber. Schnellere und genauere Herstellung der verschiedenen Aufgabenbereiche, mit anderen Möglichkeiten, die von den neuen Grenzen technischer Voraussetzungen bestimmt werden.
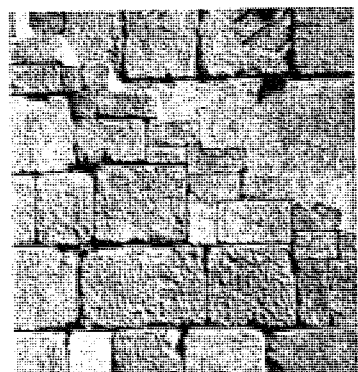
Zahlreiche Vorbilder fand ich auf den erwähnten Reisen, aber auch in Südfrankreich, auf der iberischen Halbinsel, Italien oder in Griechenland, die mich anregten und mir zu unterschiedlichen typographischen Entwürfen verhalfen.

Neben den einzelnen, verschiedenen Zeichen in einer herkömmlichen Schriftsetzerei suchte ich nach Möglichkeiten, die typographische Bildfläche mit einzubeziehen. Im libanesischen Baalbek beeindruckte mich 1966 eine Treppe zum Tempelbezirk. Ähnliche Stufen fand ich dort an einem anderen Mauerwerk. Die beiden Eindrücke wurden entscheidend für meine Gestaltung während eines kurzen Zeitabschnittes. Diese kamen erkennbar zum Ausdruck in einer Anzahl typographischer Arbeiten: Die Stufentypographie

Der rechte Entwurf war ein bezeichnendes Beispiel dafür, wie sich die unterschiedlichen Satzflächen in ein typographisches Bild verwandelten, als ich versuchte, die neuen Satzabschnitte verschiedenartig auszulegen.

Typographisches Bewußtsein ist engagiertes Experimentieren und kritische Distanz.

Oder:
Unter welchen Umständen diese Publikation zustande kam.

Beobachtungen	Feststellungen Forderungen	

Meine Unterrichts-Konzepte für die Typographie: 1. Versuch einer Definition