

Milton Glaser

& His Impact on the Industry of Graphic Design

Early Life

Milton Glaser was born in 1929 in The Bronx, New York to his Hungarian Jewish immigrant parents. From an early age, Milton was interested in the arts, taking drawing classes before even attending secondary school. He received his education from the High School of Music and Art in Manhattan, followed by Cooper Union in New York City. Located in the East Village, Cooper Union is a highly regarded college with many notable alumni. Moving forward, he had the opportunity to study in Bologna, Italy, on a full scholarship to the Academy of Fine Arts. Milton established himself as a talented designer in his 20's, co-founding his first company (Pushpin Studios), that launched his career. Milton passed in June of this year (2020) due to a stroke at age 91.

“We are all born with genius. It's like our fairy godmother. But what happens in life is that we stop listening to our inner voices, and we no longer have access to this extraordinary ability to create poetry.”

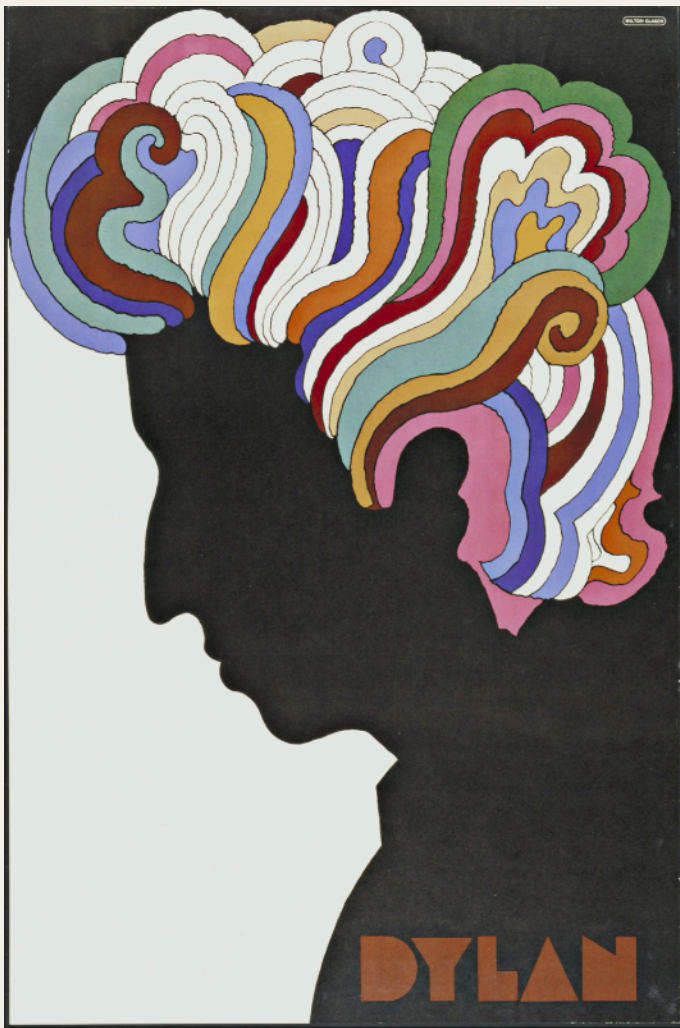
Milton Glaser



Milton Glaser, 2012

Pushpin Studios

In 1954, Milton Glaser and fellow students from the Cooper Union (Seymour Chwast, and Edward Sorel) founded Pushpin Studios, set out to redefine the graphic communications industry. Their first project was created with the intent of taking on clients to establish a brand. It was a monthly mailer entitled 'Push Pin Almanack', that found success fast. When Milton came back from Italy a couple of years later, the group refined their monthly catalogue into the 'Push Pin Graphic'. They took on more designers, distributing a wider array of work to their customers and friends. Milton left the company in 1975 to follow his own dreams and find independence, while Pushpin Studios continues to operate today, over 60 years later.



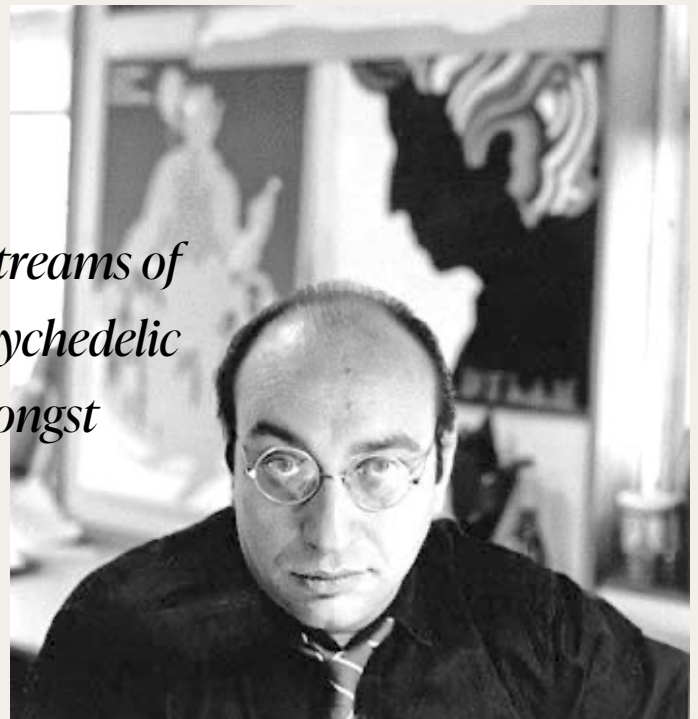
Dylan
Milton Glaser, 1966
Medium: Offset lithograph
Dimensions: 33 x 22" (83.8 x 55.8 cm)

“The energetic design with its swirling streams of colour evokes the visual effects of the psychedelic drugs that were gaining popularity amongst members of the counter culture.”

Museum of Modern Art, 2016

Dylan

In 1966, Milton Glaser was hired to create this poster for Bob Dylan, following Bob's accident that had placed him in critical care. Bob had a highly anticipated album scheduled to release soon (*Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits*), so CBS records needed good promotional material. Milton took "inspiration from a Marcel Duchamp self-portrait, Glaser depicted Dylan in profile, his abundant curly hair rendered in saturated colours that stood out in high contrast from the white ground." (Museum of Modern Art, 2016) This print was then folded & packaged within the album, becoming the one of the highest distributed posters of all time. 'Dylan', written in the lower right corner was an original typeface created by Milton for this project, and can be seen repeated in his later works.



Milton in his studio, 1969

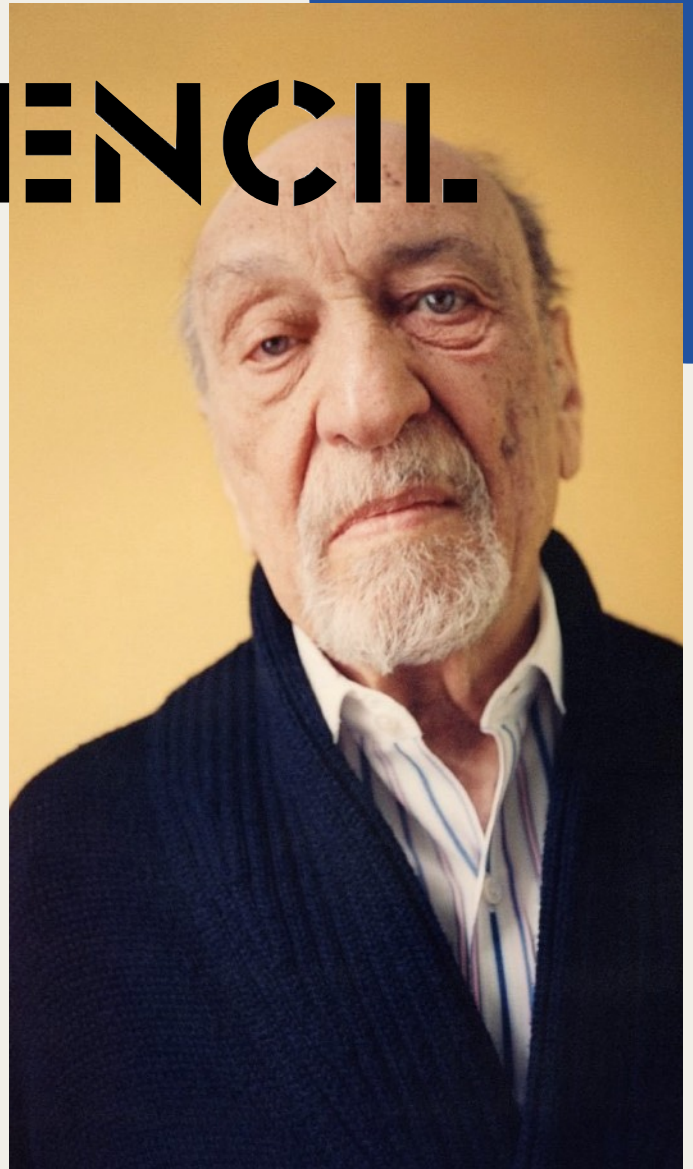
GLASER STENCIL.

The Typeface by Milton Glaser

In 1970, Milton Glaser created his own typeface called 'Glaser Stencil'. The design is influenced by classic letter stencils from the early '40's and '50's. These techniques were very much associated with designers during that time in the United States. Although originally available in a selection of weights, the lighter versions became obsolete as they were never properly edited for designers digitally. Much later, a third party company (F37), in partnership with Milton, was able to finally develop all of the weights he intended to produce. They are now available for purchase in four weights.

“A modern, digital revival of a typeface from one of the world’s most celebrated graphic designers.”

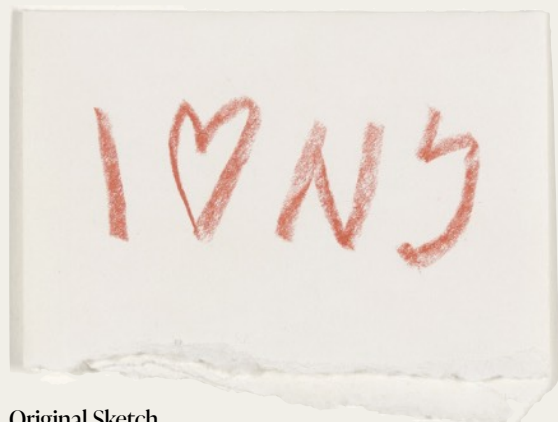
- F37



Milton Glaser, Photography by Andreas Laszlo Konrath

I ♥ New York

Now one of the world's most iconic (and copied) logos, 'I Love New York' is undoubtedly one of Milton's most famous creations. Designed in 1976, his signature simple and whimsical style is perfectly reflected in this design. This was one of the first designs in history to use a heart symbol for 'love'. NYC "had its dark times, and this logo was the first step in changing perceptions and aligning the state as a positive place to be." (Design Rush, 2018)

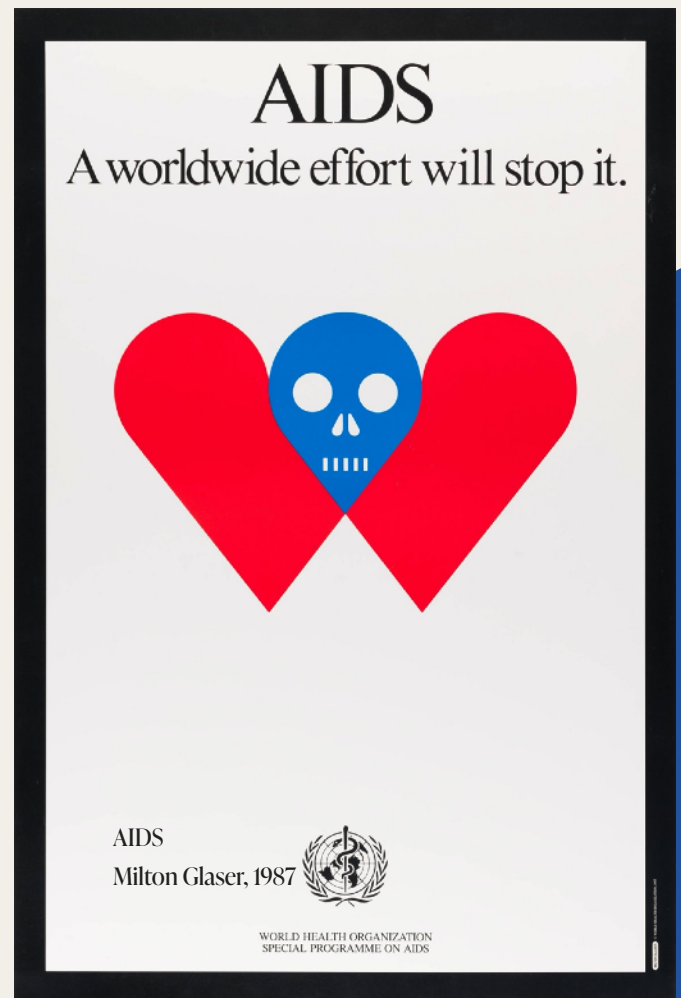


Original Sketch
Milton Glaser, 1976

Milton Glaser Inc.

Finally fulfilling his dreams of starting an independent design firm, Milton founded Milton Glaser Inc in Manhattan in 1974. It has a wide variety of media forms from print graphics to interior design. Some of Milton's best work was created within that office, including large scale architectural projects, such as play grounds and an observation deck. It is fascinating and rare how well Milton was able to use his design skills in so many different mediums. For 15 years, he even worked on designing a chain of grocery stores.

Another one of Milton's more famous creations was his AIDS poster for the World Health Organization in 1987. The AIDS pandemic was at an all-time high during this time period in terms of global attention. Although this design was replaced a few years later, it certainly drew attention to a serious pandemic facing the world.



AIDS Poster, 1987



Milton in his studio, 2015



Milton Glaser and Barack Obama, 2009

National Medal of Arts

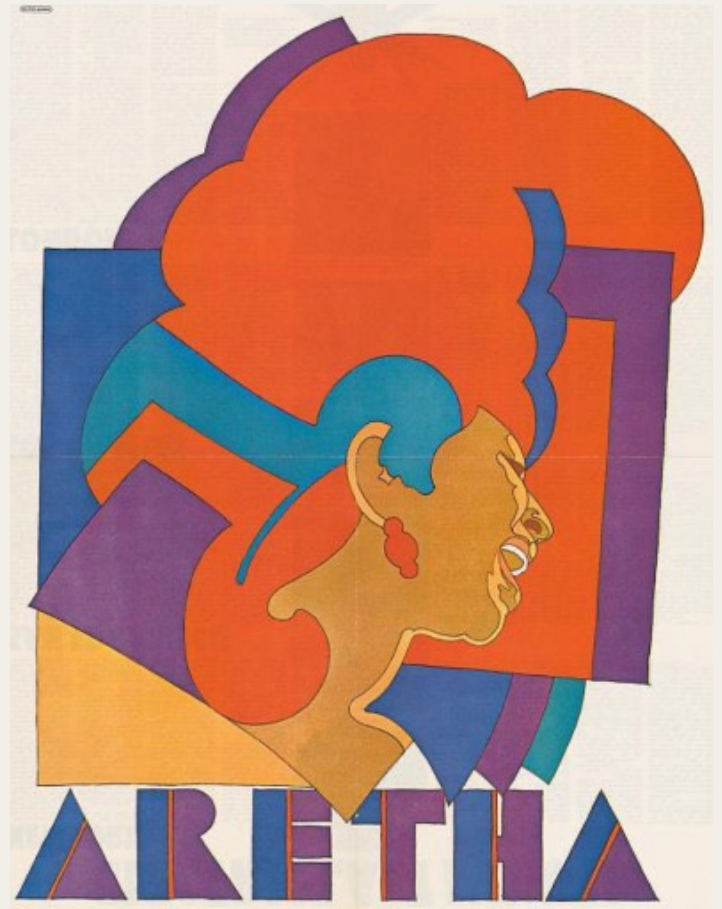
Barack and Michelle Obama presented Milton Glaser with the National Medal of Arts in 2009 at the White House. This was a pivotal moment for the graphic design industry as no graphic designer had ever been given this award before. This is the highest level an artist can be awarded in the United States. That year, 12 artists were honoured, including Bob Dylan, for their work and contribution to the field of arts. Although it would have been an incredible moment for Milton and Bob to receive this award together, Bob was absent. "These individuals and organizations show us how many ways art works every day. They represent the breadth and depth of American architecture, design, film, music, performance, theatre, and visual art," said the National Medal of Arts Chairman (Landesman, 2009). Milton was recognized throughout his career, but this was certainly at the top of the list.

*"I wish my mother was
alive to see this"*

Milton Glaser, 2009

“I go to work every morning with the possibility that I might learn something I don’t already know.... If you look at a problem as an opportunity to show what you already know, it’s useless. You should look at every problem and think, ‘what can I learn by doing this?’ And if you think you can learn nothing, forget about doing it.”

Milton Glaser



Aretha Franklin, 1968



Mad Men, 2014

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