

In general, I am a sucker for any well turned out page, and often marvel that the work involved could be accomplished at all. There are, of course, special moments of sheer joy. Herbert Matter's ad for Knoll (showing a wrapped Saarinen pedestal chair); the jacket of the recently published *Stones of Florence*—both show no trace of effort, and while the Matter ad was in reality a highly personal expression, neither it nor the *Stones of Florence* jacket makes one actively aware of the personality behind the work.

This cannot be said of much of the graphic art we see. The personality of the designer too often stands as a barrier between the intended message and the viewer. While many a completely boring pitch may have been made less painful by such a personality

A PREDICTION:

less
self-expression
for the
designer
by

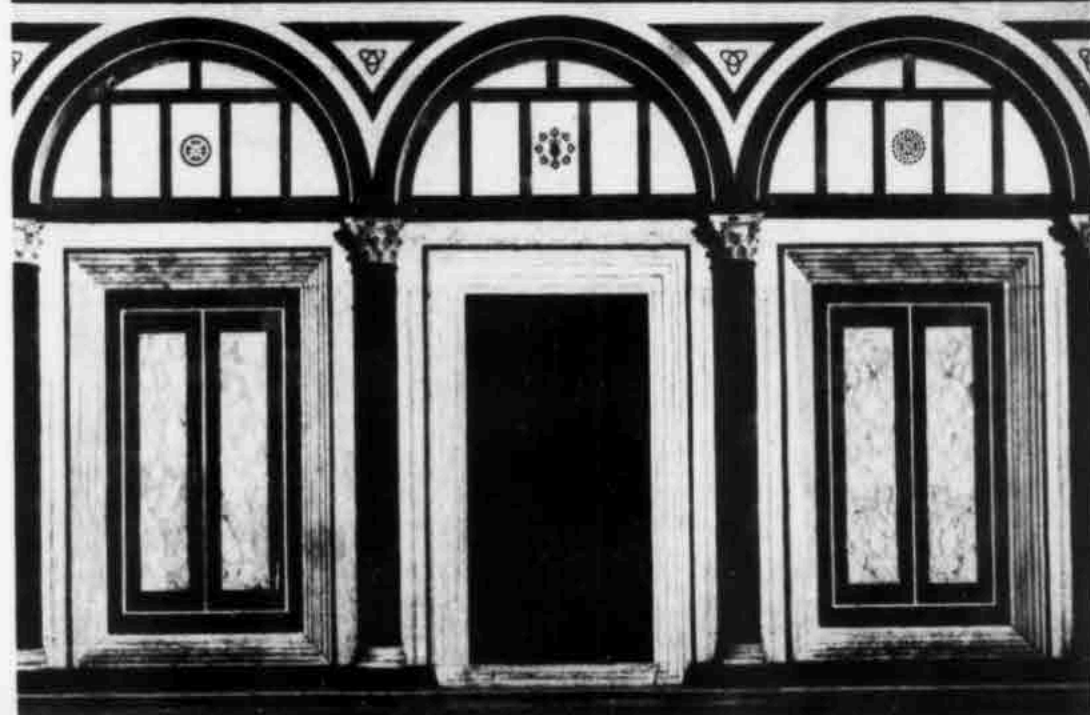
CHARLES EAMES

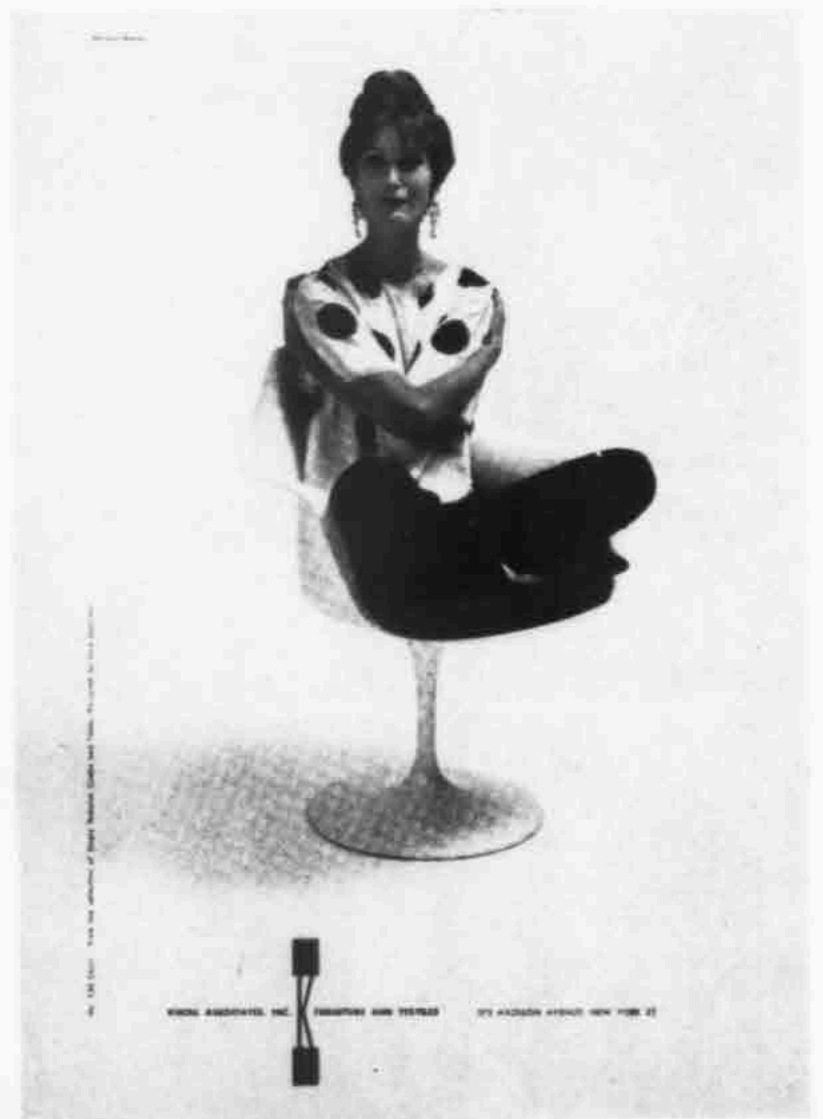
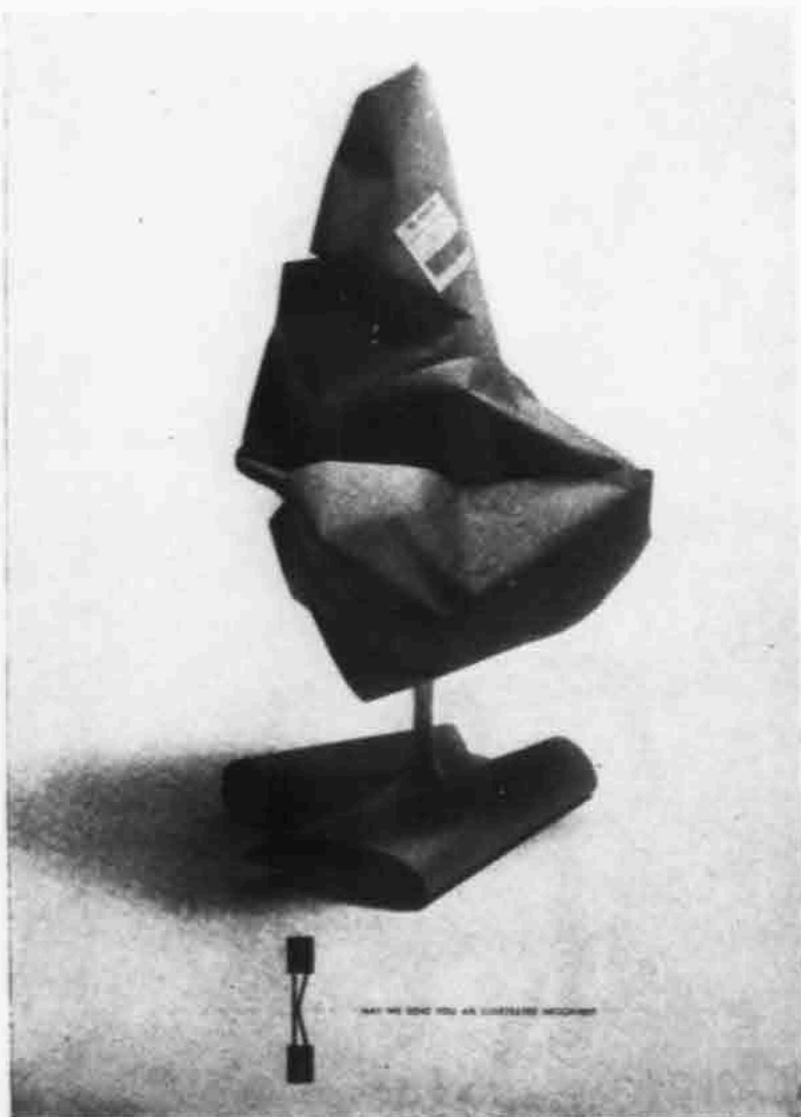
haze, our real objection arises when such an intrusion of personality logs subjects of interest and importance. The damage to the message can be accomplished equally well through a self-conscious concern for artistic respectability, or a desperate drive for originality. In either case, the effort and the personality is apt to show.

The accompanying illustration is from the notebook of a designer who is not apt to be considered weak in character—yet certainly here no evil of personality hangs between the information and the viewer. Da Vinci was completely involved in any subject he attacked. In such a climate of involvement and concern, any drive toward self-conscious originality would quickly disappear. Enthusiasm for the subject is contagious, and information fairly leaps from the page.

THE STONES OF

BY MARY McCARTHY





A quick broad look at the graphics scene leads one to conclude that we might soon expect a return to more anonymous solutions of design problems in general. When this occurs, one wonders what will happen to those students whose training has been mainly in the direction of developing self-expression, whose study of typography consist mostly of turning type inside out, upside down, printing it through burlap, and whose arrangements seem solely for the sake of the arrangement.

It is reasonable to assume that schools will lay more stress on the disciplines of the art of communication, and the problem of the problem itself. It is a real problem to design a series of problems that will lead to experiences and discoveries upon which the student can continue to build. Here are three general principles which we have used and offer with apologies, realizing that no great teacher is apt to need rules or check lists.

I. That The Objective Be Limited and Specific:

The danger in many problems is that limits are so

broad that it is impossible for the student to isolate the prime objective and work toward it. This is often responsible for the student seeking originality for its own sake.

II. That The Problem Be Within The Scope of the Student's Understanding:

When technological, sociological or other aspects of a problem become so complex that they must be ignored, they can create in the beginning student a pattern of irresponsible thinking, a habit of faking. If the conditions can be grasped completely, the student can then bring to bear on that problem the *whole* of his past experience.

III. That There Be Some Practical Basis for Evaluating Results:

To design a problem so that the solution will either stand or fall on some measurable quality is very difficult, but not at all impossible. The great reward is that this approach injects a discipline which prevents evaluations from disintegrating on the level of "I like it—you don't—so what?"

END

