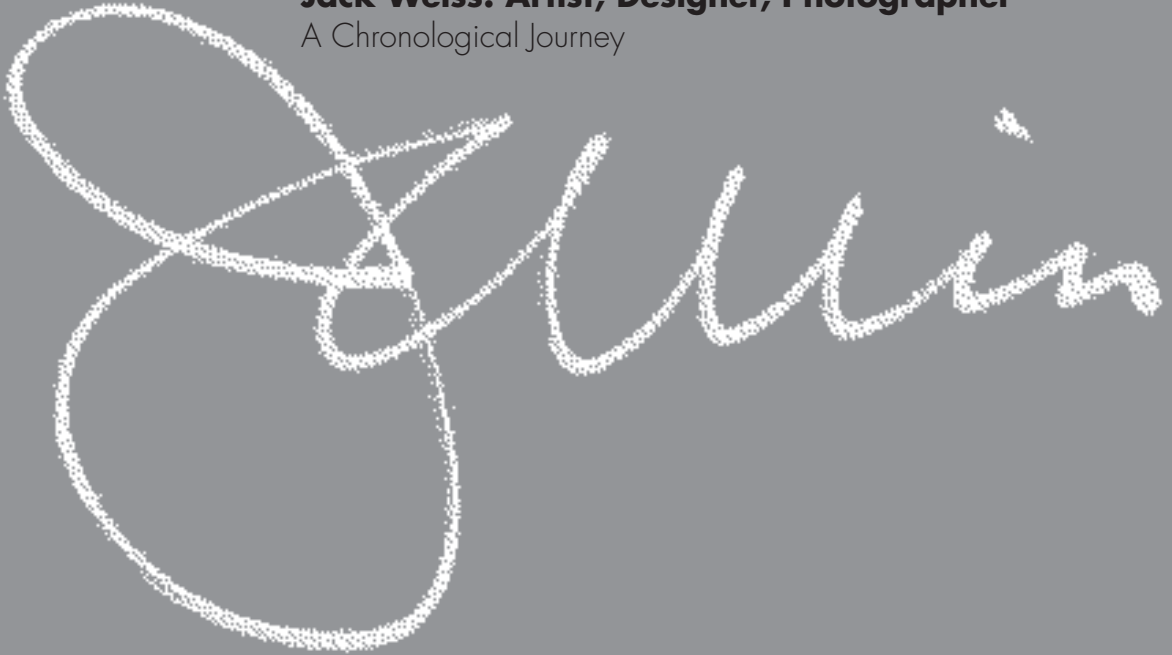


Jack Weiss: Artist, Designer, Photographer

A Chronological Journey



Jack Weiss

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A Chronological Journey

For my family, friends and professional colleagues, this
is my gift to you. With sincere thanks to John and Lara.

—*Jack*

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About this Book

2

If you want to have a successful career as an independent designer, you have to be aggressive and tenacious—words I often use when encouraging others to pursue their dreams. I am tenacious!

In the Fall of 2019, I gave nearly 25 boxes and flat files of my collected work to UIC Special Collections, after having carefully documented each item within the boxes and files. This was not the first time I had donated my work to UIC. They had a sizable collection of my work from previous years.

My objective with this book is simply to share what I've documented for myself. I wanted the format to be unpretentious and found the model in one of my prized possessions: Walker Evans' *Message from the Interior*, a large, square hardbound book with generous margins, minimal text, and featuring only twelve of his photographs.

The organization of this book is, intentionally, a collage—with media, place and subject matter all merged into this one document. Chronology is the one controlling element.

Credit must go to Lara Allison for her encouragement to do this book. Lara and I had co-curated the 27 Chicago Designers exhibition in 2017 and grew to respect each other's talents, interests and skills. I asked Lara to look at the work contained in all those boxes and portfolios before I shipped them off to UIC. She thought that a visual summary of my work was too important to let go into the darkness of time.

A handwritten signature in a cursive, flowing script. The name appears to be 'Allison', with a large, stylized initial 'A' that loops around the first few letters.

October 2020

Preface

4

John Dylong, BS, IIT Institute of Design; MA, University of Chicago

Jack Weiss: A Chronological Journey is a deeply personal review of one man's creative evolution which parallels a fifty-year history in graphic design. Jack's early work foreshadows his life's journey. His elaborate drawing of a very complex object, a spacecraft, was not a child's doodle. Even then we can see line variation, detail and continuity of thought. At fifteen, we see Jack's cut-away of the family's lake cottage. Jack's maturing talent provides insight into his love of order and architecture.

In the telling of Jack's journey, we see selected highlights of a full professional life. When Jack attended Chicago's Institute of Design, he found a creative home and a family of kindred spirits. His teachers were Aaron Siskind, photographer, Eugene Dana, educator, and Chad Taylor, Chicago design pioneer. Jack went on to Yale University for graduate school where he studied with renowned photographer Walker Evans, and design great, Paul Rand among others.

After Yale, he started his teaching career at the Institute of Design. In Chicago, Jack's design career took root. Raised during the mid-century modern period and educated in the modernist aesthetic, Jack's design treatments are consistently simple and straightforward, a timeless aesthetic.

Ultimately Jack became a teacher, mentor, colleague and friend to many. Perhaps his greatest contribution to Chicago's design community is the establishment of the Chicago Design Archive. It serves as living testimony to the contributions of so many talented area designers while being a digital museum for generations to come. As you review Jack's work, remember the epitaph of Sir Christopher Wren, architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, "If you seek his monument—look around you." For Jack's creative gifts and for sharing them, we remain grateful.

Note: John was a student in one of my first classes when I taught at the Institute of Design. Other than family, ex's, or friends, John has known me for over 50 years. I'm happy that he agreed to provide his perspective here.

Introduction

6

Lara Allison, Ph.D., School of the Art Institute of Chicago

I first met Jack Weiss during my research on the 27 Chicago Designers group for the book *Chicago Art Deco: Designing Modern America*. The 27 Chicago Designers was a rotating affiliation of (mostly) independent (not corporate) designers, established in 1936 and dissolved in 1991. Jack was a member of the organization between the years of 1977 and 1991, designing one of the most striking covers for the 27's annual catalogue in which he plays subtly on the repetition of elements, casting profile silhouettes of the members at that time across a monochromatic black ground (1982).

The 27's annual publication serves as a rich archive of Chicago design during the over six-decade run of the group, featuring the design work—graphic, industrial, commercial, experimental, architectural—of all of its members. I was grateful that Jack had collected the entire set of annual catalogues since most archives and collections in Chicago only had one or two random copies. He generously shared his set with me and, in 2016-17, on the occasion of the group's 80th anniversary since its founding, we collaborated on an exhibition at the University of Illinois-Chicago, *Selling Design: 27 Chicago Designers, 1936-1991*. I later organized a smaller version of the exhibition at the Ryerson and Burnham Library at the Art Institute of Chicago. Jack donated his 27 Chicago Designer's catalogue collection to the University of Illinois—

Chicago campus, along with, later, the collection of his own work—some of which is reproduced in this publication.

Jack, I came to realize, beyond having a successful career as a designer, was an archivist—collecting, preserving, and promoting the work and historical place of Chicago designers. He, also, I learned, applied the same archivists' care to his own work, from his youthful drawings to his studies at the Institute of Design in Chicago (1961-65) and Yale University (1965-67), to his professional work, as an associate and partner to Hayward Blake (1967-1977) and in his own firm (1977-present).

Some of the work that he saved is documented here and shows the evolution of a designer influenced by artists such as Jackson Pollock, Paul Klee, László Moholy-Nagy, Joseph Cornell, and by some of his teachers in both Chicago and New Haven: Ray Pearson, Cosmo Campoli, Aaron Siskind, Gene Dana, Misch Kohn, Richard Koppe, Norman Ives, Walker Evans, Paul Rand, Alvin Eisenman, and Herbert Matter, amongst others. While perhaps influence is the right word in some cases, Jack's early work in which one can see elements of collage, an interest in typography and pattern play, the tight quality of his compositions and his abstract sculptures and communications-oriented work, suggests that he found the right instructors and mentors to further explore and fulfill these early artistic and design impulses. For example, Jack's letterform study

from 1961 in which he plays with the letter “E” in warm and gentle blues, browns, and yellows with thin white lines demarcating the letterforms and geometric shapes, anticipate his later typographic pattern studies that he produced at Yale, especially in Norman Ives’s courses (see K Pattern Study, Numbers Pattern Study, Line Study, and K Fragment Study).

The early collages—found in many designer’s work during this time with the influx of Bauhaus educators into American institutions—is revived in some of Jack’s signage projects. For example, in one of the most successful examples of his signage work for Optima Horizons at 800 Elgin Road, in Evanston, Illinois, a residential building complex, he takes one of the building’s awnings, rotates it 90 degrees and places it on a triangular site at the intersection of two pathways towards the entrance of the building. By way of this design, he rethinks the collage aesthetic and transforms an architectural fragment into a symbol and icon for this particular building.

A remarkable feature of Jack’s student and professional work is its breadth. He has worked in photography, drawing, exhibition design, product design, packaging, typography and graphics, collage, sculpture, and even architecture. This broad approach to educating the designer grew out of the institutionalization of Bauhaus pedagogy in the United States following the Second World War. The exhibition model that Jack produced at ID, in Robert and William Kaulfuss’ course indicates

the extent to which avant-garde and Bauhaus ideas about exhibition design and display infiltrated American educational and corporate programs.

The Kaulfuss brothers, who taught at ID, in fact also worked for Container Corporation, where former Bauhaus student and instructor, Herbert Bayer, was Chairman of the Department of Design. Exhibition design was growing into an important field for corporate display, trade show conventions, government pavilions, and advertising. Jack's model, in which images are suspended on vertical pillars on a curving structure, brings to mind some of Bayer's exhibition design concepts relating to the expansion of the visible. The images on Jack's model can be viewed from different angles, rotated, possibly even moved along the vertical axis to accommodate various viewing angles and heights.

Jack's interests as a burgeoning designer are inscribed in his documentary photographs of Chicago and New Haven streets that show type and graphic symbols on buildings, signage, and on storefronts. His photograph "New Haven" of 1967 is particularly intriguing for its wealth of printed words and variety of typefaces—on the buildings, on signs, the pedestrian signal, and signage on the truck. Against the gray and muted background, it is the signs and messages—layered, intersecting, and competing—that stand out in the image.

At Yale, Jack cultivated a deeper understanding of the language of graphic design: value (Line Study), pattern (Nine Squares), tension (K Fragment Study), and so on. The mastery of this visual language was expressed professionally in various projects that Jack produced while at Blake & Weiss, including the book covers for Harper and Row, branding projects for Walden housing development, the logo for Design Evanston, and others.

Jack joined the 27 Chicago Designers after forming his own design practice, Jack Weiss Associates. For the annual catalogue of the 27 Chicago Designers, Jack contributed a poster that he designed to celebrate Chicago's sesquicentennial. Superimposed over a map of the city's Lake Shore Drive and the lake is a photograph of it, with the shoreline and marina on either side—playing with the variety of visual forms that communicate meaning of place (maps and photos). Layered over this is a polaroid image of a couple on a sunfish, and an etched image of a fish. The layering of images situates the work within the broader history of graphic design during this period with its interest in pastiche, but as a poster that communicates one of the most important natural features of Chicago, it is a successful design.

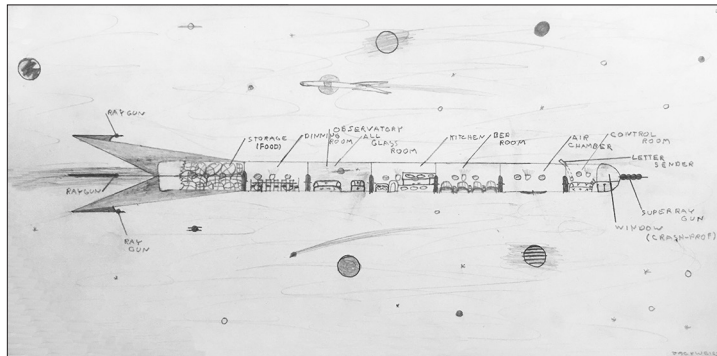
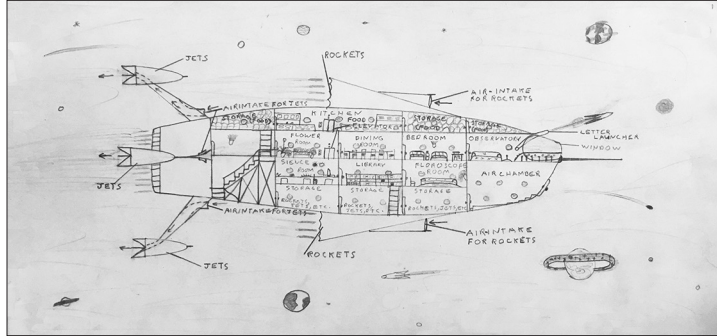
As a resident of Evanston and a professional designer in Chicagoland, Jack has brought personality to buildings, documented histories, archived stories, added interest to public spaces through his signage and murals. Evanston has been fortunate—as have the designers and historians with an interest in Chicago—to claim Jack as one of its own.

Note: When I needed someone who understood the importance of the role the 27 Chicago Designers plays in Chicago's graphic design history, Lara became my ally. She worked tirelessly with me to help celebrate the 80th anniversary of the founding of the "27".

Okemos, Michigan 1951-1957

12

In elementary school, I was fascinated with stars, planets and UFOs. Inspired by a large poster of a WWII aircraft carrier from my uncle Chuck that illustrated the entire ship in cross section, I created a series of drawings of imaginary space ships.



"Space Ships", book, pencil on paper, 6"x12", 1951 (UIC)

13

Before and during high school I entered arts and crafts projects into the Youth Talent Exhibit in Lansing MI. I created this scale model of our family's cottage on Portage Lake, near Ann Arbor MI. I spent many sleepless hours working on the details. It won a First Place ribbon.



Scale Model, balsa wood and paper, 1/2"=1'-0", 1955 (UIC)

14

This high school art class project also received a First Place ribbon in Lansing's Youth Talent Exhibit. I was Art Club president at the time, but also a 3-year Varsity football fullback and Student Council president.



Sculpture, brown sandstone, 13.5"h, 1957 (JW)

15

I gained an appreciation for detail, color and composition by working on Paint by Number projects during high school.

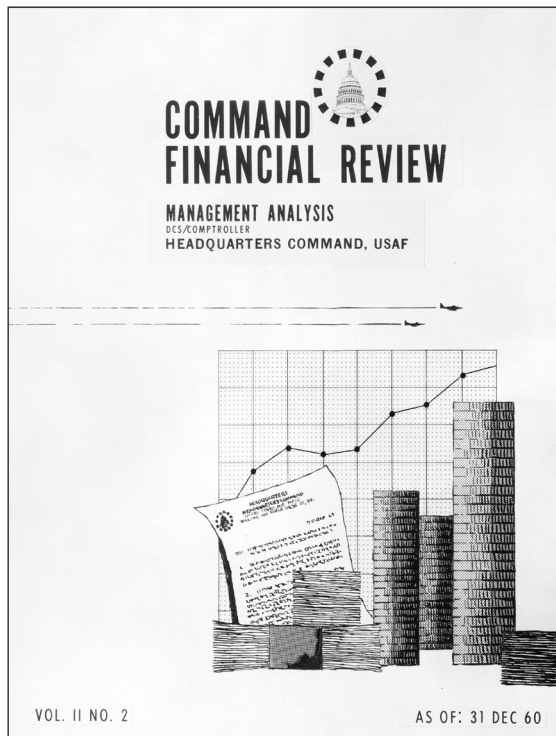


Paint by Numbers, oil on canvas, 15"x20", c1957 (Lucky Platter, Evanston)

United States Air Force 1957-1961

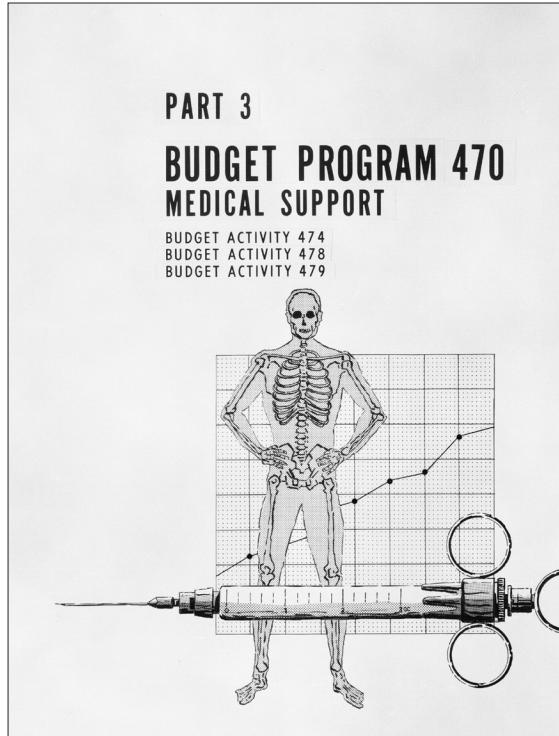
16

In 1957, when I was in USAF Basic Training, I learned that you could take "Bypass Specialist" tests for specific skills. I passed the "Illustrator Technician" test with ease and was assigned to a job at USAF headquarters in Washington DC for a 4-year assignment.



17

Over the four years at Bolling AFB, I produced report covers, organization and flow charts, brochures and flyers for college classes offered on the base. I'm amazed today how my hand lettering and drawing skills were so well-developed.



U.S. Air Force report, 8.5"x11", 1960 (UIC)

18

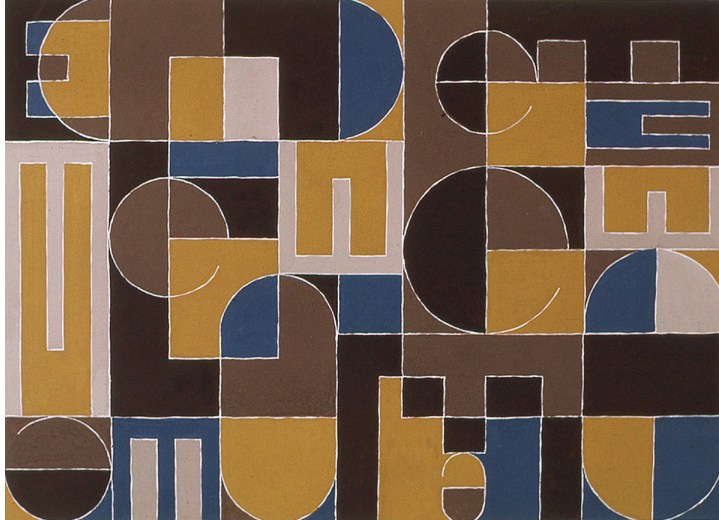
While stationed in Washington DC,
I visited all the major art museums.
The Corcoran Gallery and Phillips
Collection were among my favorites.
There I discovered Paul Klee and
Jackson Pollock.



"Autumn's Approach", housepaint on burlap, 24"x36", independent project, 1960 (JW)

19

During three of my four years at Bolling AFB I attended evening classes at the Corcoran School of Art and Department of Agriculture Graduate School. I earned 26 credit hours in commercial art and design classes at Corcoran.



Letterform Study, gouache, 15"x20", Corcoran, 1961 (UIC)

20

I took many drawing classes at the USDA Graduate School with James Cupoli who, I learned later, had an interesting personal life. I roamed all around DC and captured a lot of the architecture in Georgetown and on the C&O Canal.



"Streetscape", pen & ink w/wash, 11"x14", USDA, 1961 (UIC)

21

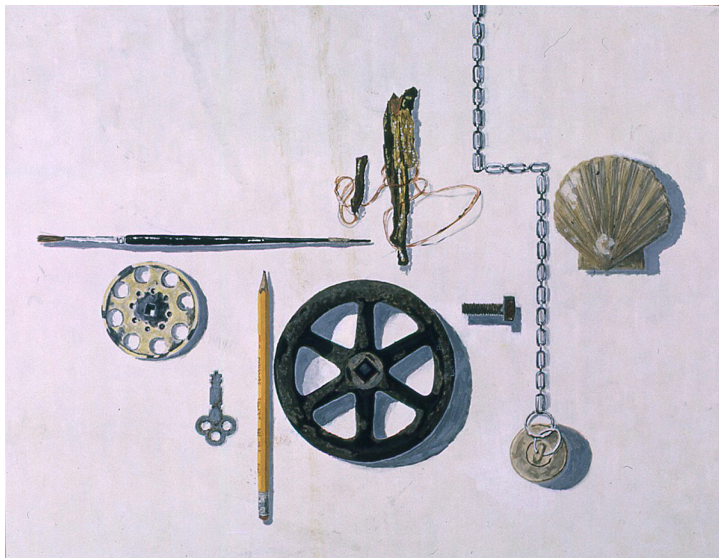
When I wasn't taking classes I spent a lot of nights doing paintings in my office on Bolling Air Force Base. I used my barracks room as a small gallery. I sold some of my drawings and paintings at art shows held during summers on The Elipse.



"Red Cube", ink & gouache, 9"x18", independent project, 1961 (Lost)

22

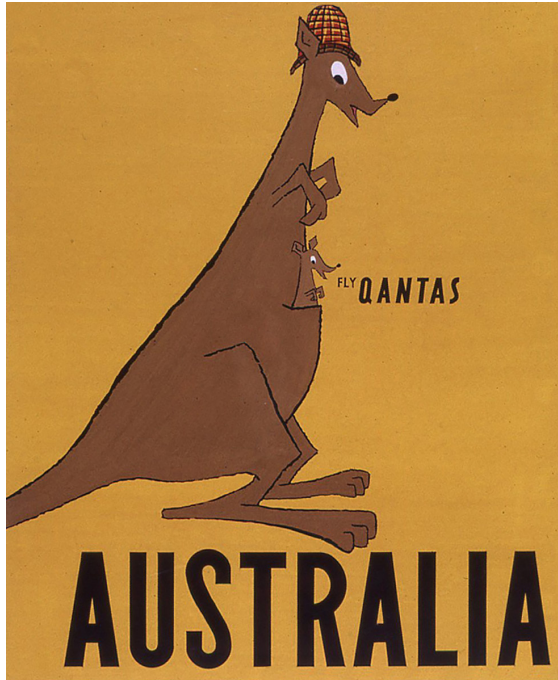
While most classes at Corcoran were focused on commercial art, some addressed drawing and painting skills. I learned the value of "seeing" through exercises like this one that carried me well into the future.



Realistic Still Life, gouache, 15"x20", Corcoran, 1961 (UIC)

23

This was one piece from my commercial art classes at Corcoran that made it into my portfolio when I applied to the Institute of Design. My design instructor introduced me to the New Bauhaus in Chicago and encouraged me to apply.



Poster, ink & gouache, 15"x20", Corcoran, 1961 (UIC)

24

Another artist who caught my eye when visiting the DC galleries was Joseph Cornell. I collected "stuff" during my travels to the Maryland and Delaware shores and Blue Ridge Mountains.



"Industry", construction, 13"x26", independent project, 1961 (Lost)

25

This was the largest construction I created. It was big and heavy. I wonder now how I brought all of these (and the drawings and paintings) home in my Austin Healy Sprite when I was discharged from active duty in the USAF in 1961.



"Marine", construction, 26"x36", independent project, 1961 (Lost)

26

Not all of these projects were three dimensional constructions. This collage was obviously inspired by Dada, Russian Constructivist and Bauhaus concepts. By this point I had read Moholy's classic *Vision in Motion* and was looking forward to starting at the Institute of Design.



"Picnic", collage, 16"x31", independent project, 1961 (Lost)

27

After I left DC, but before starting undergraduate school at ID, I went on a Kerouac-inspired journey that bridged the changes. I travelled in my Austin Healy Sprite from my brother's house in LaGrange to the west coast and back covering 4,800 miles in about 30 days. (See "On The Road, Too", 2007).



"Redevelopment", construction 18"x36", independent project, 1961 (Lost)

Institute of Design 1961-1965

28

In my first year at the Institute of Design I commuted to the campus from my brother's house. The train station in LaGrange became the subject of one of my first drawings, still strongly influenced by my studies with James Cupoli in DC.



"Stone Avenue Station", feltpoint pen, 9"x13", ID, 1961 (JW)

29

Eugene Dana was my Foundation Year instructor at ID. On my way to school on the CTA I worked on one of his exercises, a continuous line drawing of a passenger seated across the aisle.



Portrait, pen & ink, 9"x10", ID, 1961 (UIC)

30

Foundation Year at ID in 1961 still strongly reflected Bauhaus pedagogy. In this project for Ray Pearson in workshop or Cosmo Campoli in sculpture I created this figure out of found and constructed wood.



"Goddess", found & constructed wood, 24"h, ID, 1961 (JW)

31

I had several photography teachers at ID. Aaron Siskind was head of the department but Joe Jachna was teaching in Foundation in 1961. In December I made holiday greeting cards using this image.



"Evanston", photograph, 7"x14", ID, 1961 (UIC)

32

By 1962 I had moved from LaGrange to Bridgeport, close to the campus. I created this watercolor of the view from my upstairs window. The drawing technique was still influenced by experiences in DC.



"31st & Princeton", pen & ink, watercolor, 14"x19", ID, 1962 (JW)

33

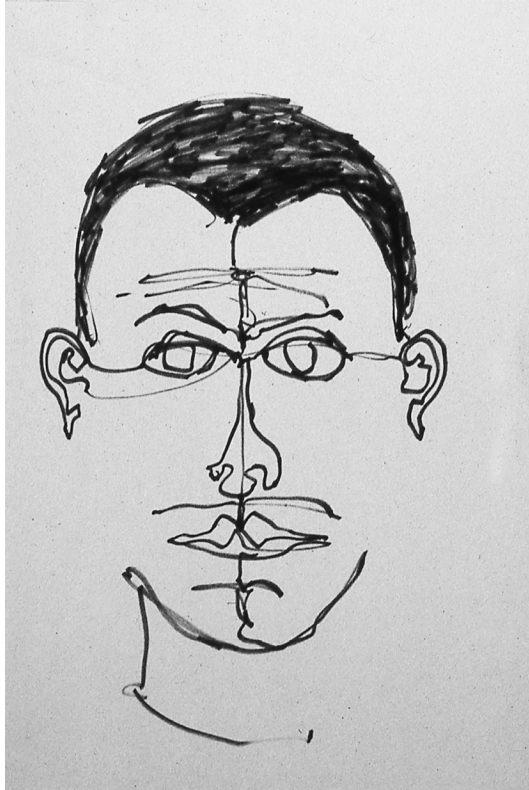
It was Easter Sunday and I was on the lookout for good photographic opportunities. By now I had been exposed to the work of Aaron Siskind and marvelled at his photographs of signs on walls.



"Loading Zone", photograph, 9.5"x9.5", ID, 1962 (JW)

34

We explored various drawing materials with Gene Dana but this time I reverted to my felt point pen



Self Portrait, felt point pen, 18"x24" approx, ID, 1962 (UIC)

35

Sometime late in my Foundation Year I moved to Hyde Park. The Hyde Park Hotel was being demolished and my curiosity for "stuff" drew me into the demolition site. I found the innards of a time punch clock. Sometime later I created the base using more found materials.



"Time Punch", found & constructed materials, 26"x10", ID, 1962 (JW)

36

Cosmo Campoli taught sculpture in my second year at ID. This piece reflected a Bauhaus approach to the use of contrasting materials.



"Love", sculpture, wood on concrete base, 19"h, ID, 1962 (EW)

37

Roy Pearson taught workshop at ID. This piece is an assembly of individual table saw exercises.



Table Saw Explorations, cut wood, 16"x38", ID, 1962 (JW)

38

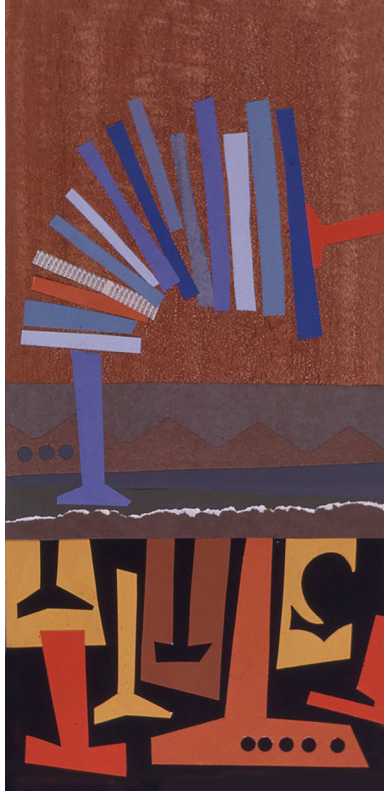
On a trip to my family's cottage at Portage Lake, Michigan, I captured this early morning image.



"Portage Lake", photograph, 12"x9", ID, 1962 (UIC)

39

In a Gene Dana exercise on how to express movement, I created this collage from scrap materials.



Motion Study, cut paper and wood veneer, 12.5"x6", ID, 1962 (JW)

40

Portraiture was not a big feature in the photography program at ID. I used my wife's experiences as a kindergarten teacher to do several projects in her classrooms.



Photograph, 11"x14" approx., ID, 1962 (UIC)

41

Misch Kohn was the printmaking instructor at ID. While some of my exercises in etching or screenprinting were abstract, many involved letterforms.



Screenprint, 18"x9" approx, ID, 1963 (IIT)

42

In my second year at ID, drawing and painting classes were taught by Richard Koppe. I chose rubber cement as my drawing medium then finished it with a black ink wash.



Figure Drawing, rubber cement & wash, 12"x23", ID, 1963 (UIC)

43

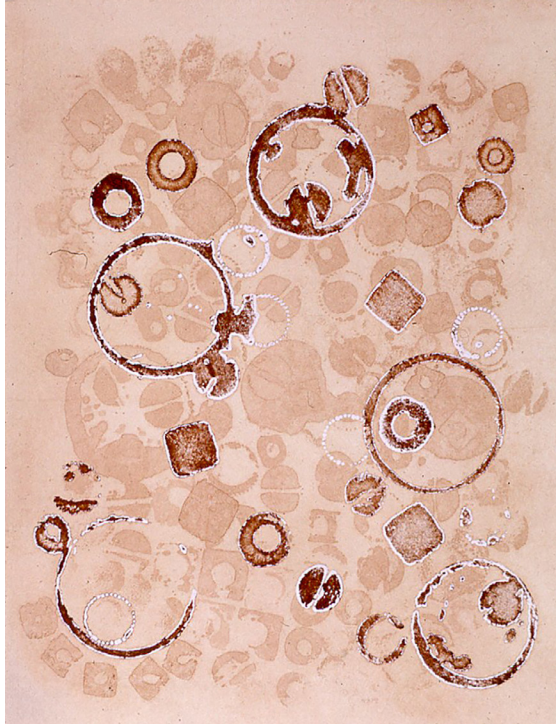
Koppe offered many life drawing sessions. In this one in particular I focused on portraiture.



Portrait, ink & wash, 28"x41", ID, 1963 (UIC)

44

Misch Kohn had used found materials to create some of his etchings. On this etching, which was part of the portfolio I submitted for application to Yale, I used nuts, bolts and screws to make the image.



Etching, 12"x8" approx, ID, 1963 (IIT)

45

In my third year at ID Rob and Will Kaulfuss, twin brothers who worked primarily for Container Corporation, taught exhibition design. A variety of exhibition types was explored, all in model form.



Exhibition Model, balsa and paper, size unknown, ID, 1964 (JW)

46

One final exhibition project for the Kaulfuss brothers involved movement. This fairly large piece was conceptual in nature and had no practical application. In June 1965 I graduated with honors and a BS in Visual Communication.



Exhibition Model, aluminum & colored tissue, size unknown, ID, 1964 (JW)

47

During three years at ID, I worked with Hayward Blake at his office, Hayward Blake Design, or at Low's Incorporated, where he was VP of Design. This was one of my first design projects as a "professional".



Community Bakeries, fruitcake packaging, Hayward Blake Design, 1964 (CDA)

48

Far away from the darkrooms at ID, I had great fun exploring 35mm color slides. On some projects I burned or in other ways mutilated the film. On some, like this, I overlaid two pieces of film.



"Signs/Chicago", photograph, 8"x10", independent project, 1965 (UIC)

49

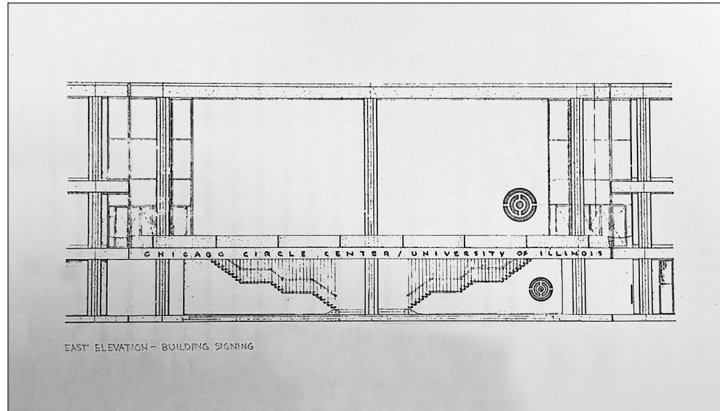
Eager to explore diverse design projects I was given an opportunity by Jay Doblin, who was Director of ID. A client wanted an outdoor piece of furniture that could provide protection from the sun and comfort for patients with intellectual challenges.



Canopy Bench, Nicholas J. Pritzker Center, 72"h x 26.5"d, independent project, 1965 (UIC)

50

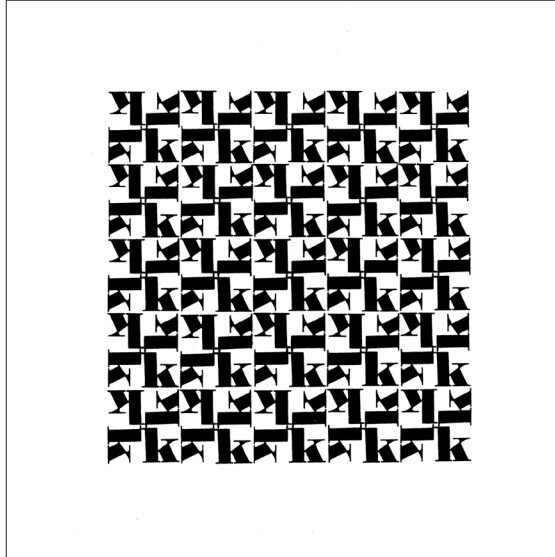
Before I left for New Haven, while with Hayward Blake at Low's Inc., I worked with C.F. Murphy on a signage project for the new UIC student center. C.F. Murphy had been Hayward's client on the O'Hare Airport signage project. I used my credentials on this project to apply successfully for a part-time job at Roche Dinkeloo in New Haven.



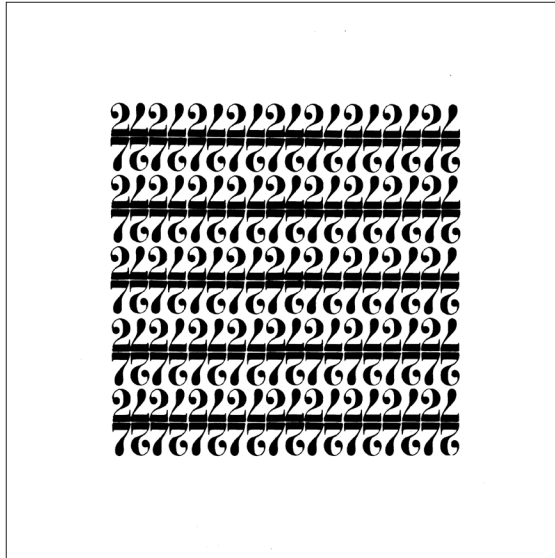
Yale University 1965-1967

51

Jay Doblin had recommended that I go to Yale for graduate work. He wrote the first letter of recommendation. When I was rejected, he wrote a second. Thanks to Jay's persistence, I became number 13 in a class of 12. Projects for Norman Ives captured my imagination.



Although Paul Rand might have been the big star among Yale faculty, it was Norman Ives who excited me with his experimental typography projects. His work would influence my professional work, my teaching and my personal projects for decades to follow.



53

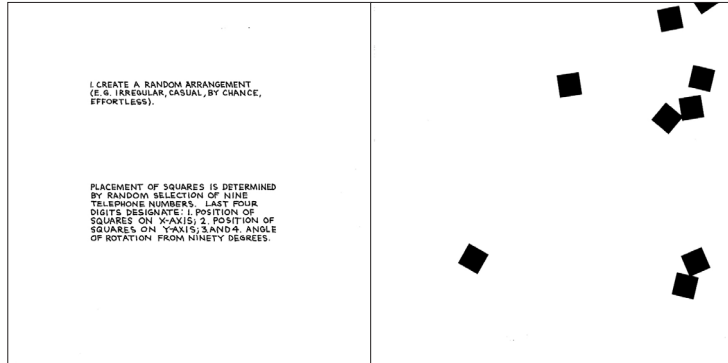
Walker Evans had an equally important influence on me and my photographic work. Most of the examples I show here reflect the unique point of view he brought to me in the Yale program. John Hill taught classes heavily influenced by Evans' work.



"New Haven II (Frank's)", photograph, 11"x14", Yale, 1965 (UIC)

54

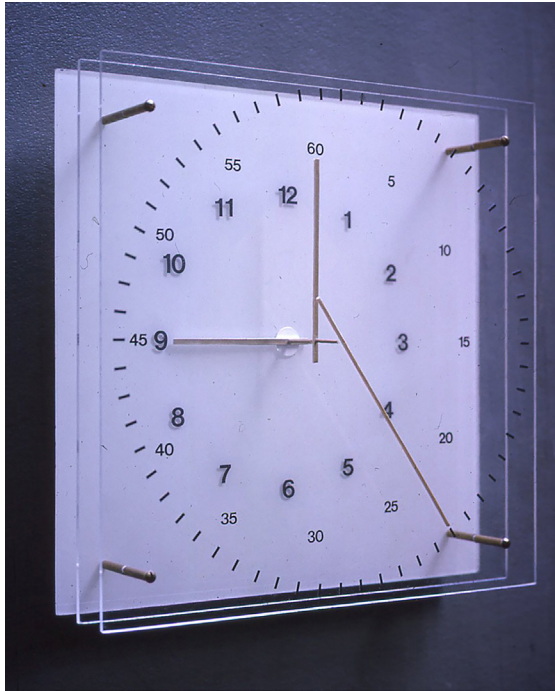
Paul Rand offered a variety of graphic design projects at Yale. Some, like this one, were theoretical and others very practical.



Nine Squares, book, hand lettered & collage, 8"x8", Yale, 1965 (UIC)

55

While nearly all of Rand's projects were two dimensional, Rand assigned this project to design a clock, present it in three dimensional form and document it photographically.



Clock, prototype, acrylic and brass, 11"x11", Yale, 1966 (UIC)

56

Alvin Eisenman, Director of Graphic Design Studies at Yale, often assigned printing-related projects. He was on the staff of the Yale University Press. Three-dimensional projects were not the norm.



Printing Exhibition, model, size unknown, Yale, 1966 (UIC)

57

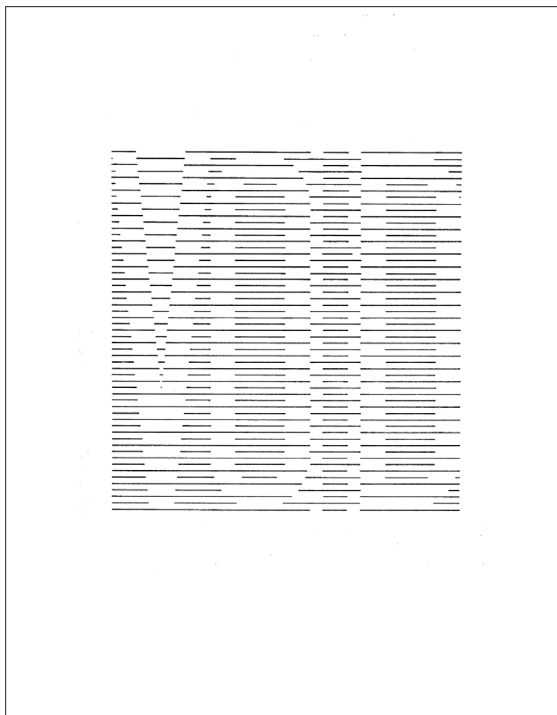
Another photography project assigned by John Hill involved doing a series documenting State Street in New Haven.



"New Haven", photograph, 11"x14", Yale, 1966 (UIC)

58

Herbert Matter's design projects were usually commercial ones like magazine covers or photo essays. This one required a series of line drawings expressing the word "void".



Line Study (No. 2 of 4), pen & ink on paper, 11"x14", Yale, 1966 (UIC)

59

This Paul Rand project called for the re-design of the famous Parcheesi game, a three-dimensional model, then documented photographically in actual use.



Parcheesi Game, full size prototype, Yale, 1966 (UIC)

60

This Norman Ives assignment for a poster was to be "essentially typographic" but could include an illustration. My solution involved two lines of type and a multiple exposure photo.



Poster, photograph, 18"x24", Yale, 1967 (UIC)

61

Most of the Walker Evans or John Hill photographic assignments involved images of the streets of New Haven. Many of mine bear a very strong resemblance to Evans' work. This will be apparent in my later work as well.



“New Haven”, photograph, 8"x14", Yale, 1967 (UIC)

62

How many times can you say "New Haven" and capture a different image? I found this Evans/Hill project especially fun.



"New Haven", photograph, 8"x14", Yale, 1967 (UIC)

63

Norman Ives' typography projects were usually executed in black and white. This one, in color, explores what I call "the architecture of letterforms" and demonstrates how a single letterform can be incredibly interesting.



K Fragment Study (No. 8 of 11), cut paper on paper, 11"x11", Yale, 1967 (UIC)

64

My master's thesis at Yale was a photographic documentation of Gothic ornamentation on the Yale campus. Walker Evans was my advisor. While the minimum thesis requirement required only four weeks, I chose to photograph through fall, winter and spring to take advantage of seasonal changes. The fifty prints were contained in a handcrafted case along with a hardbound catalog. I graduated in June 1967 with BFA and MFA degrees.



No. 19, photograph, (series of 50), 4"x6", Yale, 1967 (UIC)

65

Some time after returning to Chicago from Yale and before starting work with Hayward Blake, I found time to create one final construction using a found crate and miscellaneous clock parts and other found "stuff".



"Time Will Tell", construction, 12"x18", independent project, 1967 (JW)

Hayward Blake Design 1967–1969

66

Although I interviewed in New York with, among others, Lou Dorfsman at CBS and Chermayeff and Geisner, it was my former colleague, Hayward Blake, who invited me to come back to Chicago. I've never regretted that move!



WAIT Radio Signage, Hayward Blake Design, 1967 (CDA)

Blake & Weiss 1969-1977

67

In 1969, two years after re-joining Hayward in Chicago, we became partners and the firm name was changed to Blake & Weiss. I had fun with these brochures for Notre Dame using "experimental" color combinations and photographic treatments. Jay Doblin hired me to join the adjunct faculty at ID where I taught until 1977.



Notre Dame, event brochure series, Blake & Weiss, 1968 (CDA)

68

It's hard to believe today but the art for these covers in 1969 was executed in cut colored paper collages.



Harper & Row, book cover series, Blake & Weiss, 1969 (CDA)

69

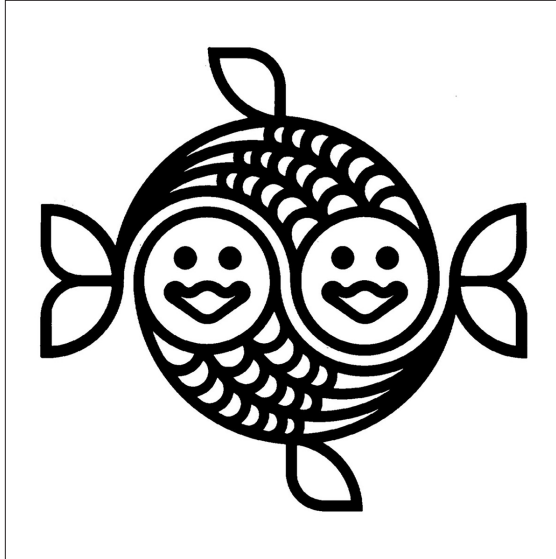
One of the most exciting projects we worked on as a team was the Walden mixed-use housing development in Schaumburg. I developed the name and chose all the street names. In addition, I designed all the signage and the sales center.



Walden, planned development, branding & exhibition, Blake & Weiss, 1970 (JW)

70

A small secondary piece of the Walden project involved designing the brand for a restaurant on the site and its application to serving pieces and signage.



Contented Sole, restaurant branding, Blake & Weiss, 1972 (CDA)

71

The Morton Arboretum gave me an opportunity to design my first major signage project. I created the signage and wayfinding system for 1,700 acres of roads and trails. The components were a new idea: expansion cast brown plastic modular panels with die cut vinyl lettering and Corten steel supports. Both materials were durable and maintenance free.



The Morton Arboretum, signage and wayfinding, Blake & Weiss, 1975 (CDA)

72

Just before I decided to leave Hayward and form Jack Weiss Associates in 1977, I had begun working with Terry Nakagawa, a marketing client then at Wurlitzer. Terry would continue to bring work to me for a decade as he moved to new companies: Norlin Music, Swift & Company, Lowrey Music and Hollister, Inc.



Wurlitzer, marketing brochure, Blake & Weiss, 1976 (JW)

Jack Weiss Associates 1977-

73

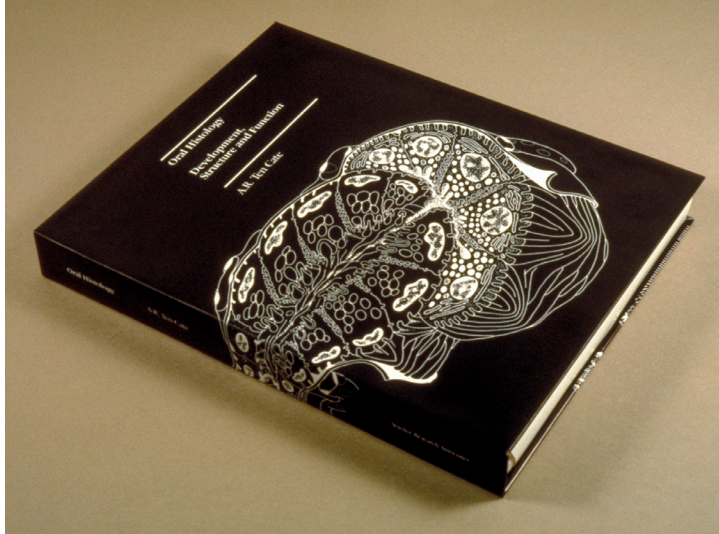
We had moved our offices to Evanston in 1972 and formed a collaborative, The Design Partnership. I decided to separate from Hayward, stay in the Partnership, and start my own practice. In 1980, one of the TDP partners, Bud Mabrey, had moved and asked me to take over a signage project for the new Oakton Community College campus in Des Plaines. This iconic landmark helped visitors find the campus which was not visible from the entry.



Oakton Community College, signage & wayfinding, JWA, 1980 (CDA)

74

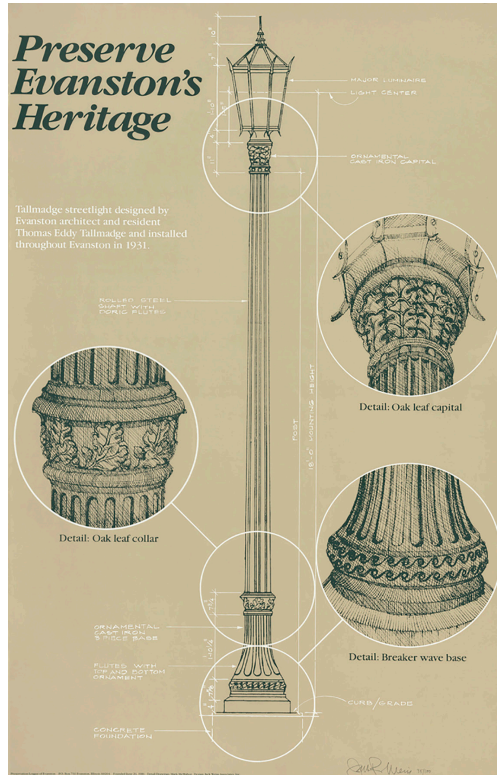
By 1980 we had moved our offices to 820 Davis Street and I had a staff of three. Diana Lifton, one of my senior designers, worked on this lengthy and heavily illustrated textbook. Sadly she died during a flu outbreak in December 1980. I established an STA student scholarship fund in her name.



Science Research Associates, "Oral Histology" textbook, JWA, 1980 (CDA)

75

When the iconic Evanston Tallmadge streetlights were threatened with removal, the Preservation League of Evanston was formed to stop the effort. My poster, a collaboration with an architect and an artist, was widely distributed and won the day for the Preservation League.



Preservation League of Evanston, poster, 24"x36", JWA, 1982 (CDA)

76

One task of the Chairman of the 27 Chicago Designers was to design the cover of the book, front and end matter and divider pages. The more challenging job was to herd the 26 other members into providing their 4-page inserts in time to meet the deadline.



77

This was the first of many hospital signage and wayfinding projects I designed for clients in the Chicago area, but also in Tampa FL and the US Virgin Islands. After the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act in 1990, I became an expert in addressing ADA signage compliance issues and worked on many more.



Gottlieb Hospital, signage & wayfinding, JWA, 1985 (JW)

78

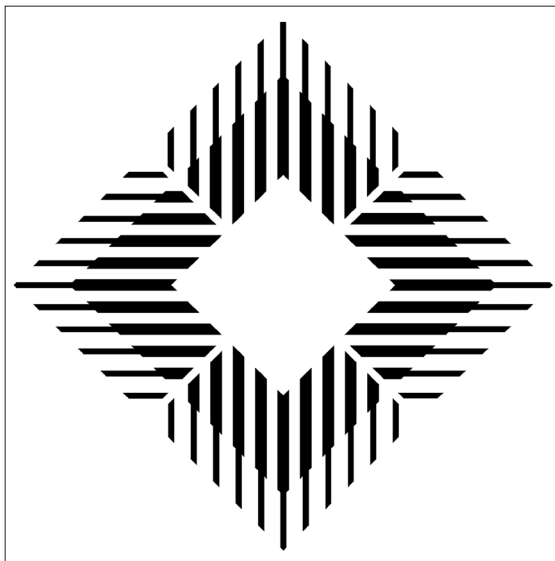
My senior designer, Randi Robin, helped design the branding for Hollister, Inc. in 1979. We then developed a brand for a subsidiary and an extensive line of product packaging for both companies by the mid-80s.



Hollister, branding & packaging, JWA, 1986 (JW)

79

Hayward had designed a mark for the Evanston Art Center in the 70s but they came to me for a redesign with applications to their newsletter, signage and donor wall.



80

All of the partners in The Design Partnership were members of the 27 Chicago Designers. When I started JWA in 1977, I was invited to join the 27. Approximately every year they produced a book featuring their work. In 1987, on the occasion of Chicago's sesquicentennial, we produced a series of Chicago-themed posters.



27 Chicago Designers, Poster, 24"x36", JWA, 1987 (CDA)

81

I had designed signage for Evanston's dual lakefront pathway system in 1989 but in 1990 this was my first major project for the city. Thirty years later, these signs are still guarding the city's major gateways.



City of Evanston, gateway signs, JWA, 1990 (JW)

The collegial relationship between partners at The Design Partnership gave Bruce Beck an opportunity to share one of his clients with me—S.C. Johnson in Racine. Bruce designed all of their packaging. Johnson also owned Biltmore Investor's Bank. I created their brand, and designed marketing materials and signage. (The client never knew that the photograph I used here was of my great grandparent's family in Ann Arbor, MI.)



Biltmore Investors Bank, corporate brochure, JWA, 1990 (JWA)

83

Some of my best photographs never made it into exhibitions. Some appear in my "Mini Portfolio" collections. Others will only be found in Kodak Carousel slide trays. This image from a gold mine railyard in Randfontein, South Africa surpasses even the best photos of wildlife taken there.



"No. 990, Randfontein, SA, 3.91", independent project, 1991 (JW)

The Evanston Public Library was brand new in 1994. I designed their annual report that year making use of some of the architectural drawings, public art and the custom typeface that had been designed by John Greiner through his contact with the architects.



85

I worked on nearly all of David Hovey's Optima projects that he developed in Evanston. Most involved branding, marketing materials and signage. And there were others in Highland Park, Glenview, Northfield, Winnetka and Wilmette.



86

I convinced the City of Evanston to use art David Csicsko had created for the central business district on this comprehensive signage and wayfinding project for the city. In addition to the colorful welcome signs, the project included wayfinding signs at every major street intersection in the city. Shortly after this project was installed, I designed signage identifying the city's four historic districts.



City of Evanston, signage & wayfinding, JWA, 1997 (CDA)

87

I learned early in my career to try to piggyback on the experience of projects to gain new ones. Arlington Heights needed to find a better way to identify their central business district parking facilities. This project involved branding the CBD and designing signage for three parking structures and several surface parking lots.



Village of Arlington Heights, CBD branding, JWA, 1999 (JWA)

88

With no apology, I admit, this photograph has been retouched. The client added a black decorative border to all the primary identification signs for the parking garages. The simplicity and clarity of the original design was badly compromised.



Village of Arlington Heights, signage & wayfinding, JWA, 1999 (JWA)

89

By 1999, ADA signage guidelines had been in place for nearly a decade. Two major hospital projects—this for Holy Family in DesPlaines—and a second for Holy Cross on the South Side consumed about five years of planning, design and installation supervision.



Holy Family Hospital, signage & wayfinding, JWA, 1999 (JWA)

90

This piece for Optima Towers typifies the kind of work I did for a majority of their projects: branding and marketing materials. I found the rendering for Optima Towers to be one of the most inspirational that they had ever commissioned.



91

I always tried to relate the signage I designed for projects to details found in the architecture. This gateway feature provided a great opportunity to do something very creative.



Optima, Optima Towers signage, JWA, 2000 (JW)

92

There was a wonderful opportunity with the city's project for signage at the Levy Center to design the donor wall. I used leaves from trees common to Evanston's streets to define gift levels and used colors found in the walls' aggregate blocks for context.



City of Evanston, Levy Senior Center signage & donor wall, JWA, 2001 (JWA)

93

As I later described to my Beginning
Typography students at Columbia
College Chicago, "I am an
unapologetic Modernist", what you
see is what you get: the number and
the name.



94

My daughter, Rachel, who had spent previous years in Madurai, Tamil Nadu as a graduate student then as advisor to undergraduates studying there, married her fiencé Abu. During my first trip there for their wedding, I captured this "Walker Evans" image.



"Ration Store, Tamil Nadu, 12.6.02", digital print, 5"x7", independent project, 2002 (JW)

95

Remembering my project for C.F. Murphy at UIC, I reconnected with MurphyJahn to design signage for State Street Village at IIT. That same year, after having organized the Society of Typographic Arts' 75th anniversary celebration, I was elected president.



Murphy/Jahn, IIT State Street Village signage, JWA, 2003 (JW)

96

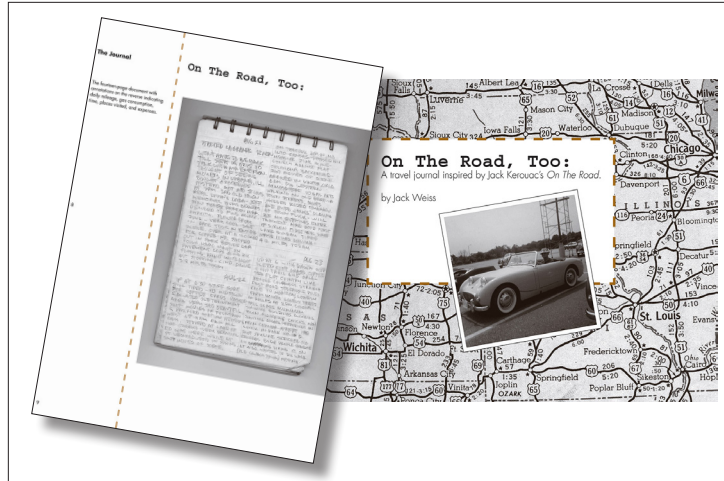
Optima Horizons was the last project I worked on for Optima. Branding and marketing went to a firm that also did website design and I was out. But my concept for an identification sign for the site was/is innovative. The structure is simply the building's awning canopy at street level turned 90° and set into the ground.



Optima, Optima Horizons signage, JWA, 2004 (JW)

97

After leaving the USAF in 1961 and before beginning studies at the Institute of Design I took a Kerouac-inspired road trip to the west coast and back. Years later I transcribed the handwritten journal, scanned 35mm slides and created a 63-page accordion-fold book that memorialized the trip.



"On The Road, Too", book, 5.5"x8.5", independent project, JWA, 2007 (UIC)

98

In a second trip to Tamil Nadu in February 2008 we travelled across the mountains to the west coast, down to the southern tip of India and back to Madurai. This photograph was taken from my hotel at the southern tip of India. Frame Warehouse hosted an exhibition of about 20 photographs from that trip.



“Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, 2.3.08”, digital print, 16"x20", independent project, 2008 (JW)

99

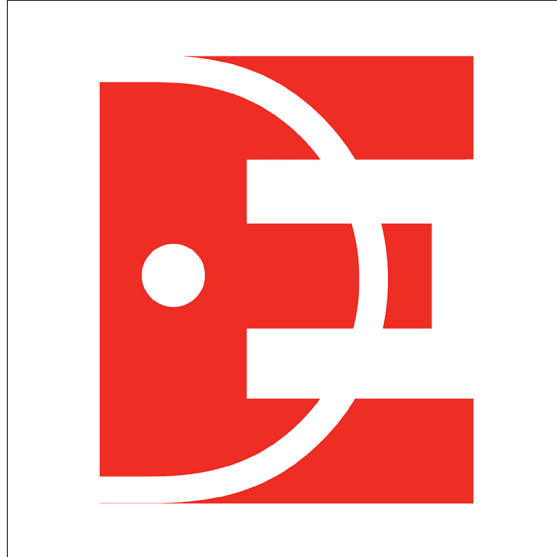
I consider this project to be the apex of my career. Stanley Tigerman, the project architect, hired me to design the signage and wayfinding for the museum. He, like me, had Yale credentials. Jay Pritzker, a major funder, got involved later because Stanley's entrance was far from where visitors needed to enter the building. A second wayfinding project led them to the correct entrance.



Illinois Holocaust Museum, signage and wayfinding, JWA, 2008 (CDA)

100

I was a founding member of Design Evanston in 1980. Hayward had designed the original branding. Years later, after I had become president, I saw the need to upgrade the DE brand. The new logo incorporated my ideas of light/bold from my Beginning Type classes at Columbia College Chicago.



101

Twenty-eight years after helping launch the Preservation League with my "Preserve Evanston's Heritage" poster I was asked to create their new brand. Sadly it was never fully implemented and has since disappeared.



102

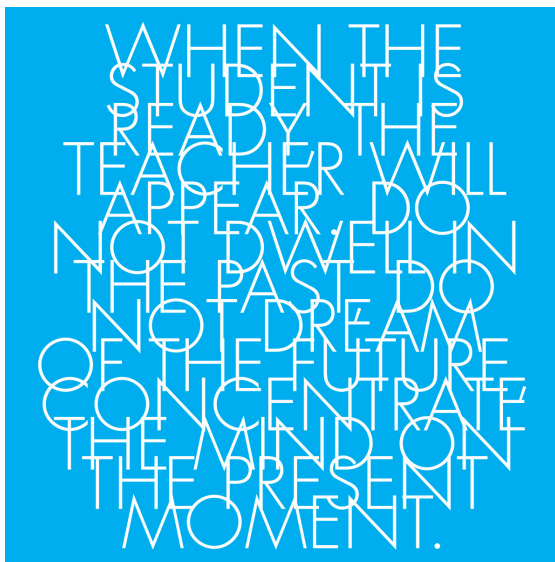
The Evanston Arts Council sponsored an exhibition, "Art Behind Glass", where juried work was featured in storefront windows in downtown Evanston. I created a series of eight photographs on the theme, "Reflections." In my artist's statement I said, "I learned, long ago, to "see" and not just "look". If we slow down to enjoy each moment, new discoveries emerge."



"Summers3", digital print, 16"x20", independent project, 2010 (JW)

103

I taught Beginning Typography at Columbia College Chicago from 2006 to 2014. Most of my assignments were inspired by Norman Ives' work. Over time I created a series of "Visual Meditations" exploring the interactions of words and letterforms.



"When the Student is Ready", digital print, 8"x8", independent project, 2011 (JW)

104

A second exhibition at the Frame Warehouse featured about 20 photographs from my third trip to India in 2011. I chose the palate knife Photoshop filter to soften the harshness of some of the images and create a kind of mystery. This photograph, "Hawkers", wouldn't have been as dramatic had this been a traditional photograph.

**Jack Weiss:
South India Photographs**

May 4-16, 2012

Reception 7pm-9pm
Friday, May 4, 2012

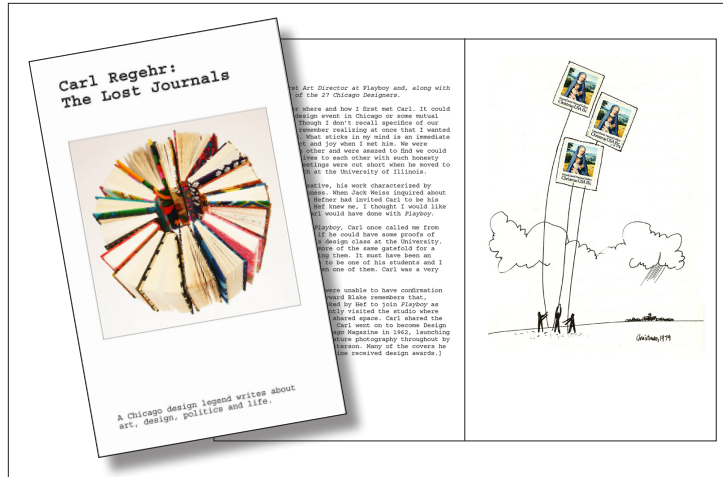


Hawkers, Madurai 7:14:11

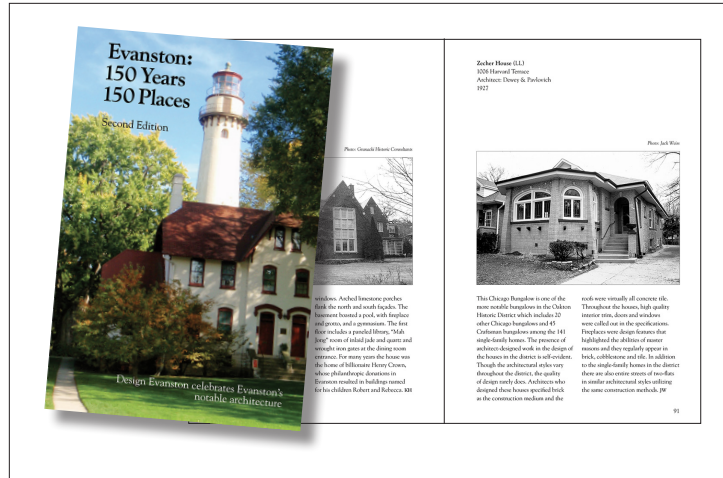
Frame Warehouse
606 Dempster Street
Evanston IL

Poster, digital print, 16"x20", independent project, 2012 (JW)

This was one of the last projects I worked on for the STA. My energies had shifted to the Chicago Design Archive, an outgrowth of the STA launched in 2003. Carl's daughter had found dozens of beautifully written and illustrated journals in a box in a garage. We agreed that they were too important to let go. I scanned hundreds of pages and we printed them full size along with tributes by colleagues, former students and friends.



Design Evanston published the "Evanston: 150" book to honor Evanston's Sesquicentennial. Five authors were involved. I was project manager, book designer, author of 36 essays and in charge of marketing and fulfilling orders for the book.



107

After a trip to the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta in 2013 I tried to find a way of curating the best images. This led to the creation of "Mini Portfolios"—eight to date—of various trips I've taken over recent years. The concept involved jurying a large number of photographs down to only twelve. I've applied this discipline to photographs from Dubai, Havana, Tucson, South India, Detroit and Las Vegas to name a few.



"Balloon Fiesta", accordion-fold digital print, 5.5"x25.5", independent project, 2015 (JW)

108

I found great interest in the North Shore Line when riding my bike on the Green Bay Trail and seeing its surviving artifacts. I discovered that the 100th anniversary of the NSL would take place in 2016 and wanted to do something to celebrate it. The concept was also a tribute to my Yale teacher, Norman Ives. I used the NSL logo and turned it into 24 panels of fragmented letterforms.



"North Shore Line", public art mural, 5'x12', independent project, 2016 (JW)

109

This is another example of how my Beginning Type lessons affected my own work. I chose two contrasting typefaces designed by two members of the "27" and created the brand for the exhibition that celebrated the organization's founding. The Chicago Design Archive published a book and catalog of the exhibition. Although I had been chairman of the CDA since its inception in 2003, I became president in 2016 when I reorganized it as a not for profit corporation.



110

In 2011, I began creating "Artful Monograms", compositions of letterforms, most based on Futura because of its geometric architecture. The first print was given to a former student. Others followed for friends and family members. Framed prints evolved into gift and greeting cards reflecting the same concept.



"Eva 3.9.16", digital print, 11"x14", independent project, 2016 (EE)

111

In recent years I developed a renewed love for Futura. It is used in many experimental and professional projects like the "Visual Meditations" and "Artful Monograms" and this poster for a motorcycle rally. (If you didn't notice by now, it's the typeface I chose for this book!)

FIRST ANNUAL
EVANSTON
MOTORCYCLE
CLASSIC

**A GATHERING
OF VINTAGE
& CLASSIC
MOTORCYCLES**



SUNDAY OCTOBER 15, 2017
10:00AM-2:00PM

**ORRINGTON AVENUE BETWEEN
DAVIS & CHURCH STREETS
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS**

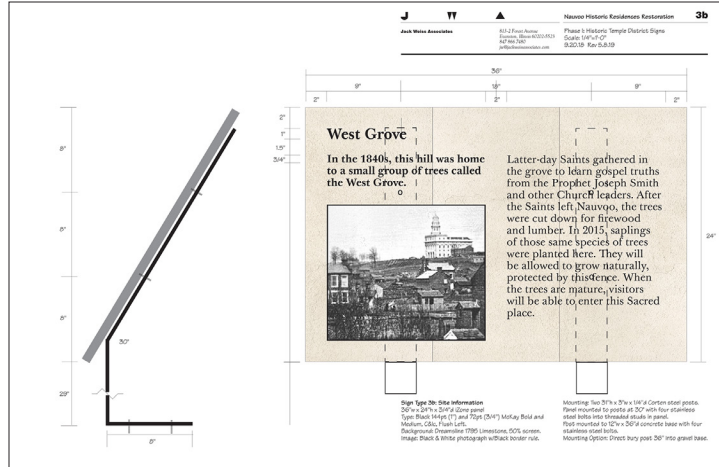
WWW.EVANSTONMOTORCYCLECLASSIC.COM



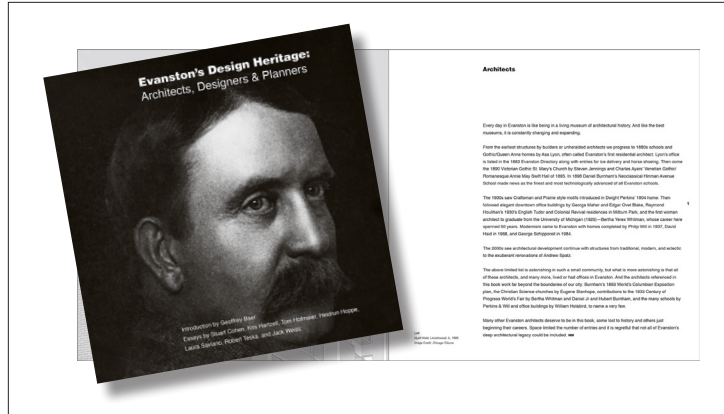
Evanston Motorcycle Classic, poster, 12"x18", JWA, 2017 (CDA)

112

In a déjà vu moment I see a powerful connection with this project and the canopy bench I designed in 1965. This signage project uses Corten steel "ribbons" as support structure and iZone high pressure laminate panels to carry the messages



Another 2-year project for Design Evanston followed the 2013 book "Evanston: 150"—this time with seven authors. I was project manager, book designer, author of the twenty six designer essays and in charge of marketing and fulfilling orders.



Timeline

114

March 1939	Born Lansing, Michigan
June 1944	Move to Okemos, Michigan
June 1957	Graduate from Okemos High School
August 1957	Join US Air Force
September 1961	Begin undergraduate studies at ID
June 1965	Graduate with honors from ID
September 1965	Begin graduate studies at Yale
June 1967	Graduate from Yale
July 1967	Join Hayward Blake Design
August 1967	Move to Evanston, Illinois
July 1969	Become partner at Blake & Weiss
September 1969	Begin teaching at Institute of Design
September 1972	Move B&W offices to Evanston
August 1975	Help organize Icograda Congress in Evanston
June 1976	Elected to the 27 Chicago Designers
May 1977	Start Jack Weiss Associates
September 1980	Founding member of Design Evanston
December 2001	Pass \$5 million in billings at JWA
October 2002	Help organize STA 75th anniversary
January 2003	Elected president of the STA
December 2003	Co-found Chicago Design Archive
September 2006	Begin teaching at Columbia College Chicago
August 2009	Elected president of Design Evanston
October 2010	Join Evanston Preservation Commission
October 2014	Evanston Mayor's Award for the Arts
January 2016	Elected president of the CDA
October 2016	Organize 27 Chicago Designers Exhibition
July 2019	Help organize CDA Milestones Exhibition

Notes

115

As you've seen, there are two kinds of "captions" in this book. In the first-level captions I've tried to tell my story in a paragraph or two. In this format, I hope I've succeeded in defining the related threads through my career.

Second-level captions are more formal and end with initials enclosed in parentheses that indicate where the actual or virtual example may be found.

(CDA) Chicago Design Archive collection website:
chicagodesignarchive.org

(EE) Eva Eisenstein, personal collection, Evanston, IL

(EW) Esther Weiss, personal collection, Madison, WI

(IIT) Illinois Institute of Technology Archives

(JW) Jack Weiss, personal collection, Evanston, IL

(JWA) Jack Weiss Associates collection or website:
jackweissassociates.com

Nearly everything you see in this book can be found at (UIC) University of Illinois at Chicago Special Collections. I'm indebted to Peggy Glowacki for her encouragement to submit my work to them.

Jack Weiss: Artist, Designer, Photographer

A Chronological Journey



Jack Weiss: A Chronological Journey is a deeply personal review of one man's creative evolution which parallels a fifty-year history in graphic design.—*John Dylong*

Jack, I came to realize, beyond having a successful career as a designer, was an archivist—collecting, preserving, and promoting the work and historical place of Chicago designers.—*Lara Allison*