

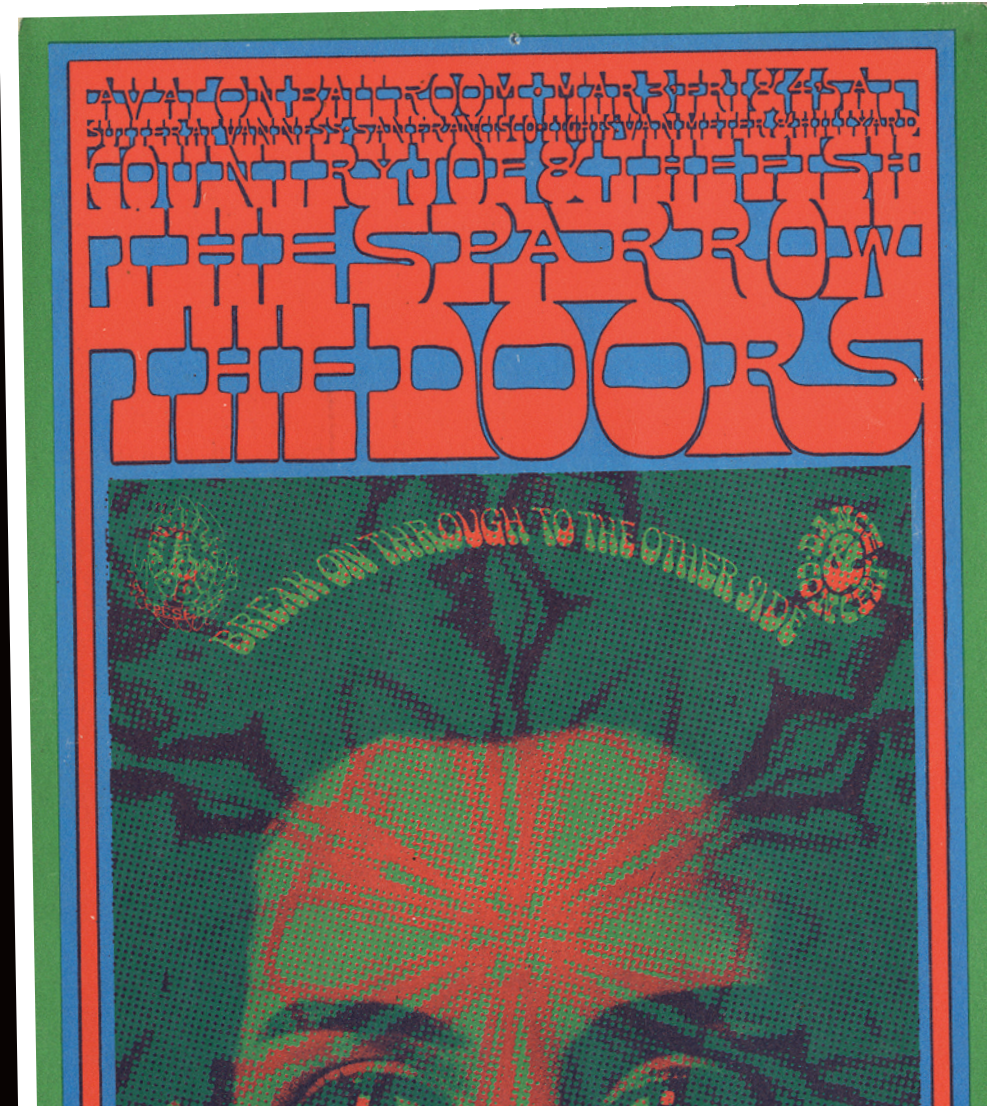
Left
Front of an original flyer
by Victor Moscoso

Right (in back)
Back of an original flyer
by Victor Moscoso

01
Victor Moscoso, Satanic
Santa, poster, offset litho,
1966 © Family Dog

02
Victor Moscoso, Man With
Spiral Eyes, poster, offset litho,
1966 © Family Dog

Images courtesy of
Fantagraphics
www.fantagraphics.com



Victor Moscoso by Steven Heller

www.hellerbooks.com

In 1967 San Francisco was the counterculture. Hippies prevailed, hallucinogenic drugs were plentiful, and rock and roll rocked and rolled. Brooklyn-raised, Spanish-born, Victor Moscoso stumbled into the psychedelic scene and soon became a major force in the distinctly American rock poster genre. Illegible typefaces, vibrating colours and antique illustrations comprised a rebellious visual language that communicated to those stoned enough to see through the purple haze. Destroying modernism was not a goal but an offshoot of this curiously indigenous new art. Moscoso created some of the most emblematic images of the Sixties, and most of the over sixty posters he designed were done during a frenetic mere eight months.

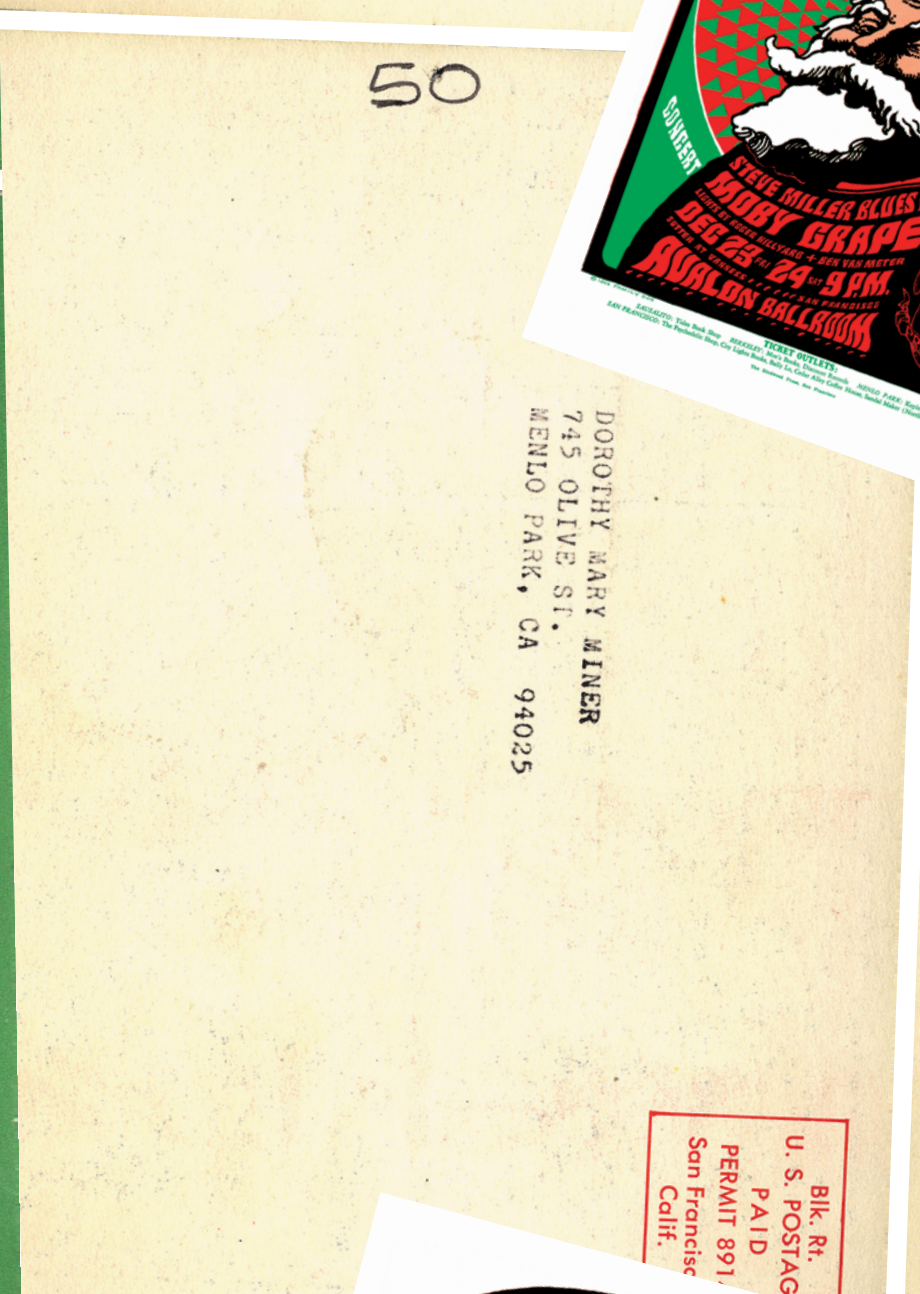
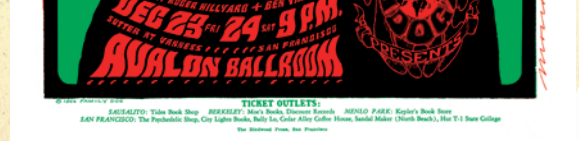
As rule-busting as chromatic vibration was, Moscoso learned graphic design from the strictest of all modernists. He went to school at Cooper Union and Yale University before migrating to the West Coast. He credits his Yale professor, former Bauhaus master Joseph Albers, with being the catalyst of psychedelic design. Moscoso says that Albers' storied colour theory drove him crazy, but ultimately it proved invaluable. "Albers' impact really didn't show until the psychedelic poster, when I found myself in a situation where all I had to do was reach back to my dusty shelf, so to speak, and pull out what I had learned," he explains, and adds: "I had seven years of college—I could have been a doctor."

Realising that none of the other self-taught psychedelic poster artists were encumbered by the rules of good design, Moscoso reversed everything he had learned in school. The rule that a poster should transmit a message simply and quickly became: how long can you engage the viewer in reading the poster? Five, ten, twenty minutes. The dictum against using vibrating colours became: use them whenever you can and irritate the eyes as much as you can. Lettering should always be legible was changed to: disguise the lettering as much as possible and make it as difficult as possible to read. Moscoso called this "a world turned upside down". But pursuing these ideas, and breaking the rules, he created a body of work that altered the language of a generation.

Within a year, however, psychedelic art was co-opted by entrepreneurs who fleeced it for its originality, and turned it into a commercial style that appealed to a large market of youthful consumers.

Moscoso's posters did for graphic design what bands like the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and Big Brother and the Holding Company did for rock music: they turned up the volume... and broke the rules.

www.victormoscoso.com



Blk. Rt.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 8914
San Francisco
Calif.



Blk. Rt.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 8914
FAMILY DOG PRODUCTIONS
639 GOUGH ST.
San Francisco, Calif. 94102