



Saul Bass, whose animated movie title sequences defined a mid-century modern design genre, was one of only a few graphic designers in the 1950s to transition seamlessly from static to kinetic, or motion, design. Technology made it difficult for mere individuals to do so – optical companies were needed – and despite advances in animation, television and special movie effects, motion was then something of a novelty. But Bass pioneered the form and wowed moviegoers.

Turning still pictures into motion pictures continues to wow viewers on everything from massive LED billboards to tiny handheld phones and pads. Seeing things in motion stimulates the brain, so the more motion the better. Yet, believe it or not, those who are wowed most are the graphic designers who make motion happen. There is poetry and magic in their work.

I recall the first time my own design work was printed the old-fashioned way on paper. Like Johannes Gutenberg proudly embracing the first proof printed on his Mainz press, I couldn't stop ogling my first magazine. Though repeated thousands of times, I never lost an iota of the initial thrill of seeing the first printed piece. Then motion came into my life – kind of. I have a vivid recollection of when, for the first time, my typography was used on screen in a movie title sequence for the X-rated *It Happened in Hollywood*. Forget the tawdry content, there it was: my type, on the silver screen and larger than life for all to see. It was primitive and barely moved, but to me it was astonishing.

Whether watching pages trundle off a press or fly-by on the screen, the sense of accomplishment and power of making words and images materialise is an incredible tonic. Hail graphic design! Motion is that tonic amplified.

A new documentary, *New York in Motion: A Fascinating Look Behind the Scenes and Screens of our Virtual World* by director, producer and music video maker Graham Elliott, reveals the pure joy of motion design – abstract, techno, impressionist, grunge, realist – by

a slew of New York artists and designers. The same energy can be found in many other media cities, but New York has a large concentration. Less than two decades ago, the designer's forerunners could only imagine these "virtual worlds" but now the ability to make anything move on screens large and small is but a Pro Tool away. Motion is not merely an exclusive tool to be used only with big budgets, it is an essential component of today's overall design practice, changing the way designers and their audiences look at the real and virtual worlds. Incidentally, the production company for *New York in Motion* is called *Eyegasm.tv* – that says it all, doesn't it?

Graphic designers are increasingly responsible for more and more layers of content. The simple, traditional business card and letterhead, once the mother's milk of graphic design, may still be an ink

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on paper job, but in the very near future (or even tomorrow) electronic business cards and letterheads will have animated logos or narrative animations used to enhance presentation. The future has already been felt in magazine design. Online magazine and newspaper content is routinely augmented by motion experiences – either illustratively abstract or linearly narrative picture and text videos. Information graphics, for instance, are often aided by major or minor animations. Static entry-points (a headline, body copy and illustration) are no longer the only ways in. Contemporary graphic design can be as complex as making a short film. In fact, graphic designers must be short filmmakers.

At New York's School of Visual Arts MFA Design programme (aka *The Designer as Author + Entrepreneur*), students develop a thesis that includes actual products intended for market. In order to fulfil an aspect of their study requirements, they must make 30 to 60-second videos to either introduce or sell

the product. The products are increasingly digital properties (iPhone apps, websites, videos and combinations of all or some, and some with a physical component too) that by their nature include motion design elements.

One student created a website and app called "Seize Your Power Days", designed to enable women to help take control of the "time of the month" that has traditionally been known by negative stereotyping. As part of her package, the student created satirical before and after TV commercials to draw viewers to the website. The combination of video, website and phone app – all motion-based – makes this a compelling product. Another student created "3Way Street": an advocacy project aimed at civilising the New York streetscape, motion is indispensable to this campaign. For three days, the student videoed a typical intersection and revealed – using videogame metaphors – all the near-miss accidents between pedestrians, vehicles and bicycles. Without motion, the evidence would be lost.

This is not to imply that every graphic designer is a motion designer. Although younger designers are becoming more hard-wired when it comes to designing within the realms of time and space, it is not an innate talent for all. Just as many designers are not exceptional typographers, everyone has their own strengths and limitations. But if graphic design is going to be more than merely the laying-on of type, designers have to get in (and into) motion.

Making movement – and more important, telling moving stories – is required for any branding, identity, editorial and advertising property. Creating opportunities for users to expand their knowledge and experience through word and image, as well as narration and moving image, is where graphic design is going and where designers will flower.

Steven is co-chair of *The Designer as Author and Entrepreneur MFA* at New York's School of Visual Arts (hellerbooks.com)