

Wim Crouwel

Graphic designer and typographer, renowned for his constructional and systematic approach on design.



Crouwel op het kantoor Total Design, 1973 (The Design, Amsterdam)

Here 45 elegant years of age.

Crouwel always worked structurally, using grids, clear typography and a minimum of formal elements.

He was inspired by the Swiss functionalists (Joseph Müller-Brockmann and Karl Gerstner being the most famous graphic designers of this movement) and aimed for objectivity and efficiency within design.



Meeting in early 1963. Dick Schwarz, Friso Kramer, Benno Wissing, Ben Bos, Paul Schwarz, Wim Crouwel. Photography: Jan Versnel

Together with these young men Crouwel founded Holland's first multi-disciplinary large-scale design studio.



They called themselves Total Design.



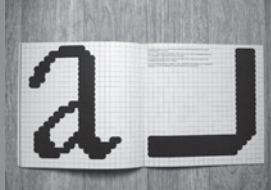
stedelijk museum amsterdam april t/m 29 juni 1968



Wim
Crouwel

Probably the most well-known of his posters for

Total Design established the use of systematic corporate identity for major companies. They developed a method to create modular systems that were applicable in all fields (architecture, industrial design and graphic products) which made it possible to take on very large projects involving many disciplines.



It contained an experimental typeface, created in relation to the new digital methods of typesetting which could not do justice to the traditional letterforms. Crouwel emphasized that this new typeface only was a theoretical exercise and not intended to be readable.

In 1967 Crouwel published a booklet called "Proposal for a New Alphabet".



As a reaction to Crouwel's dehumanized alphabet, the designer Anthon Beeke created his Nude Alphabet, consisting of naked women.



At this time, a debate started to grow about the proper approach to visual communication. The discussions went about objectivity versus subjectivity as a leading principle in the design process.

Tweekamp Crouwel/v. Toorn brengt hartstochten boven



Crouwel, who spoke for an objective, functional and systematic approach to graphic design, meant that the designer only should be the transmittal of the client's message. His main opponent came to be graphic designer Jan van Toorn. He upheld the need of personal involvement from the designer's side and emphasized the social role of the profession; the designer's viewpoint should be a part of the final product.



A wall calendar designed by Jan van Toorn who in his designs wants to stimulate the reader. His work requires the viewer to have the ability and willingness to make an interpretation of it.



Wim Crouwel finalized his career as the director for the Boymans van Beuningen museum in Rotterdam.

