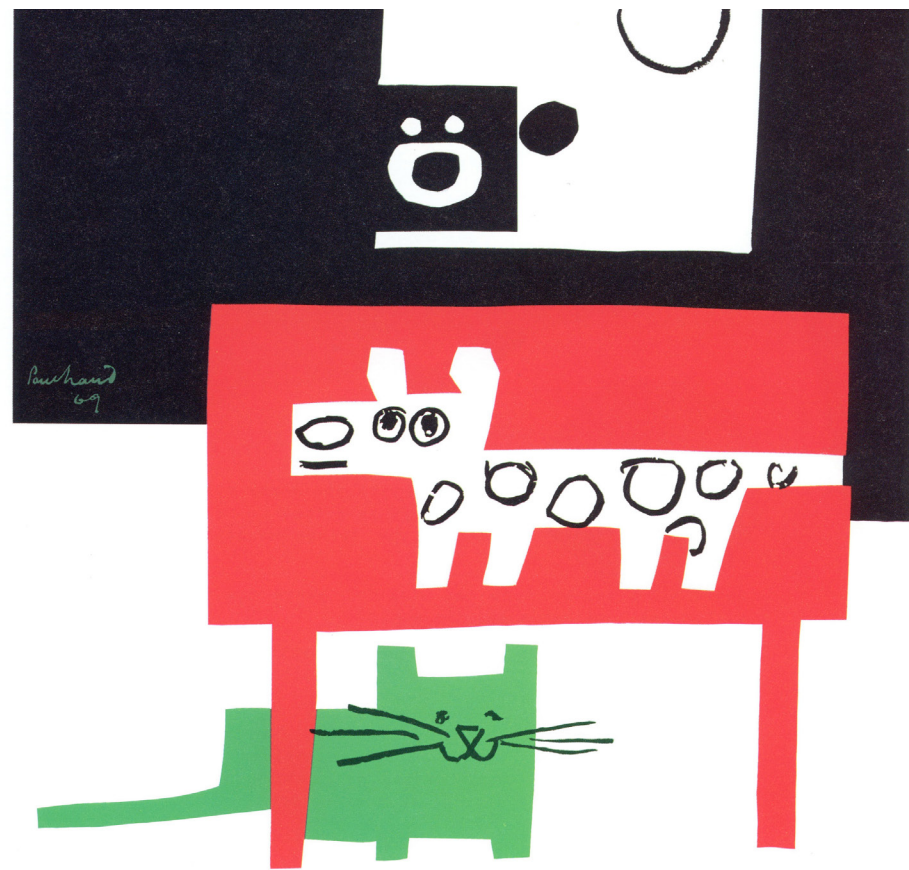# Paul Rand

Modernist Master

Paul Rand (born Peretz Rosenbaum, August 15, 1914-November 26, 1996) was a well-known American graphic designer, best known for his corporate logo designs. Rand's education included the Pratt Institute (1929-1932), the Parsons School of Design (1932-1933), and the Art Students League (1933-1934). He was one of the originators of the Swiss Style of graphic design. From 1956 to 1969 and beginning again in 1974, Rand taught design at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Rand was inducted into the New York Art Directors Club Hall of Fame in 1972. He designed many posters and corporate identities including the logos for IBM and ABC. Rand died of cancer in 1996.

In an interesting way the chronology of Paul Rand's design experience

has paralleled the development of the modern design movement. Paul Rand's first career in media promotion and cover design ran from 1937 to 1941, his second career in advertising design ran from 1941 to 1954, and his third career in corporate identification began in 1954. Paralleling these three careers there has been a consuming interest in design education and Paul Rand's fourth career as an educator started at Cooper Union in 1942. He taught at Pratt Institute in 1946 and in 1956 he accepted a post at Yale University's graduate school of design where he held the title of Professor of Graphic Design.

In 1937, Paul launched his first career at Esquire. Although he was only occasionally involved in the editorial layout of that magazine,

he designed material on its behalf and turned out a spectacular series of covers for Apparel Arts, a quarterly published in conjunction with Esquire. In spite of a schedule that paid no heed to regular working hours or minimum wage scales, he managed in these crucial years to find time to design an impressive array of covers for other magazines, particularly Directions. From 1938 on, his work was a regular feature of the exhibitions of the Art Directors Club.

Paul spent fourteen years in advertising where he demonstrated the importance of the art director in advertising and helped break the isolation that once surrounded the art department. The final thought of his Thoughts on Design is worth repeating: "Even if it is
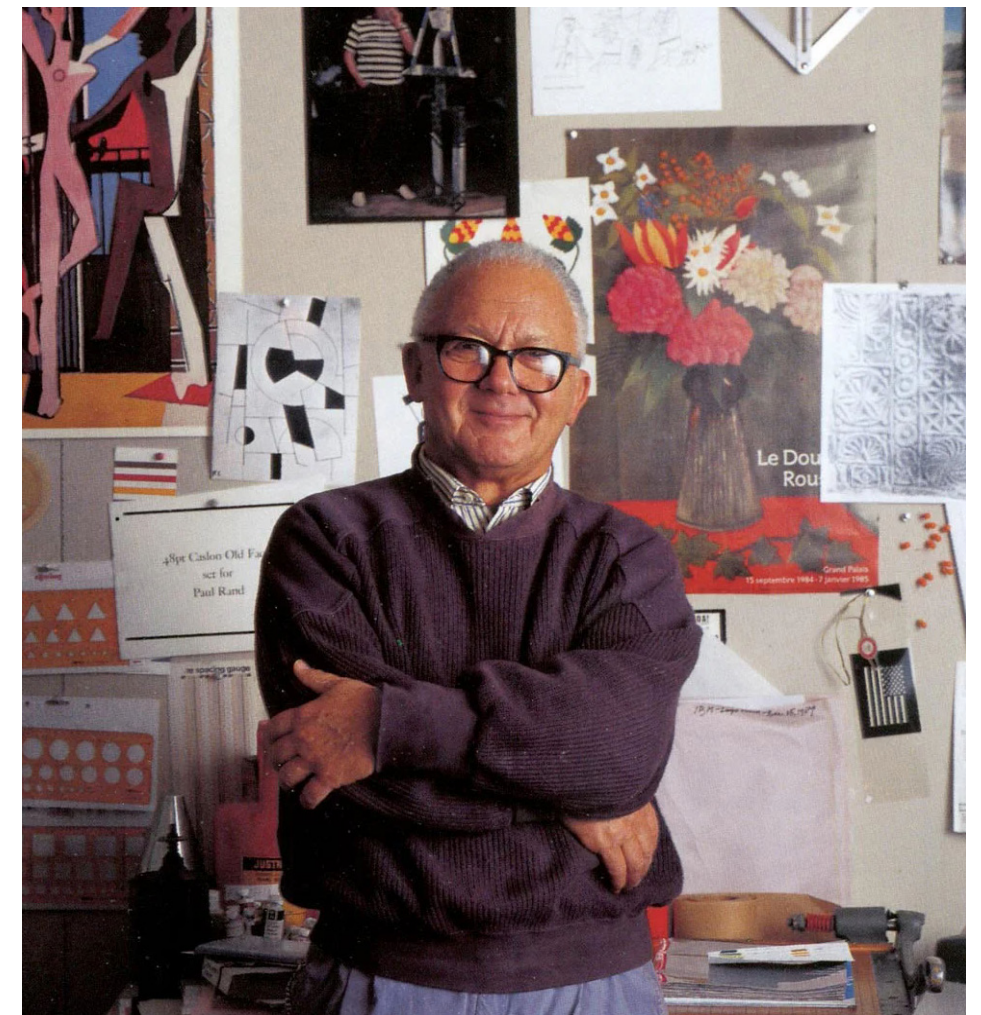
true that commonplace advertising and exhibitions of bad taste are indicative of the mental capacity of the man in the street, the opposing argument is equally valid. Bromidic advertising catering to that bad taste merely perpetuates that mediocrity and denies him one of the most easily accessible means of aesthetic development".

In 1954, when Paul Rand decided that for him Madison Avenue was no longer a two-way street and he resigned from the Weintraub agency, he was cited as one of the ten best art directors by the Museum of Modern Art. This was the same year in which he received the gold medal from the Art Directors Club for his Morse Code advertisement addressed to David Sarnoff of RCA.
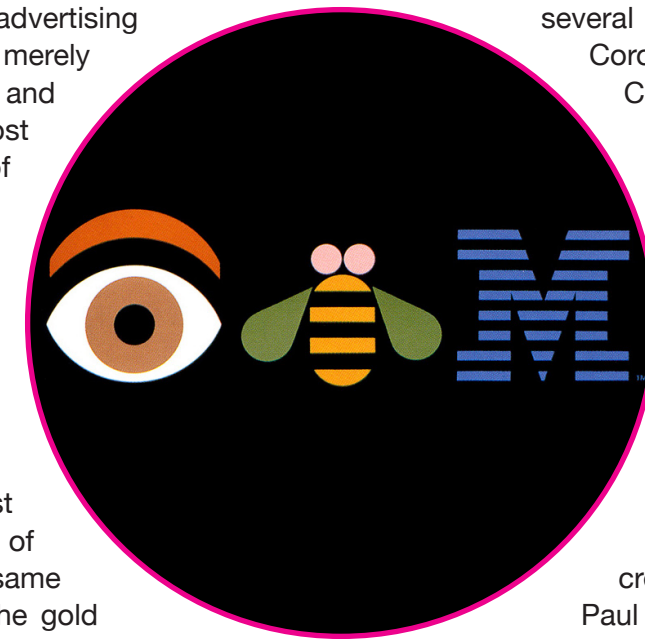
By the time that Paul started working out of his Weston studio he was well known as a designer of trademarks. He had completed designs for several companies including Esquire, Coronet Brandy, and Robeson Cutlery. By 1955, the fates that continued to play a fortuitous role in channeling the Rand talent toward critical areas of design began to set the stage for his third major design career – corporate identity. Thomas J. Watson, Jr., had come recently to the presidency of the International Business Machines Corporation, and his search for a graphic designer to create the corporate image led to Paul Rand. The rest is design history.