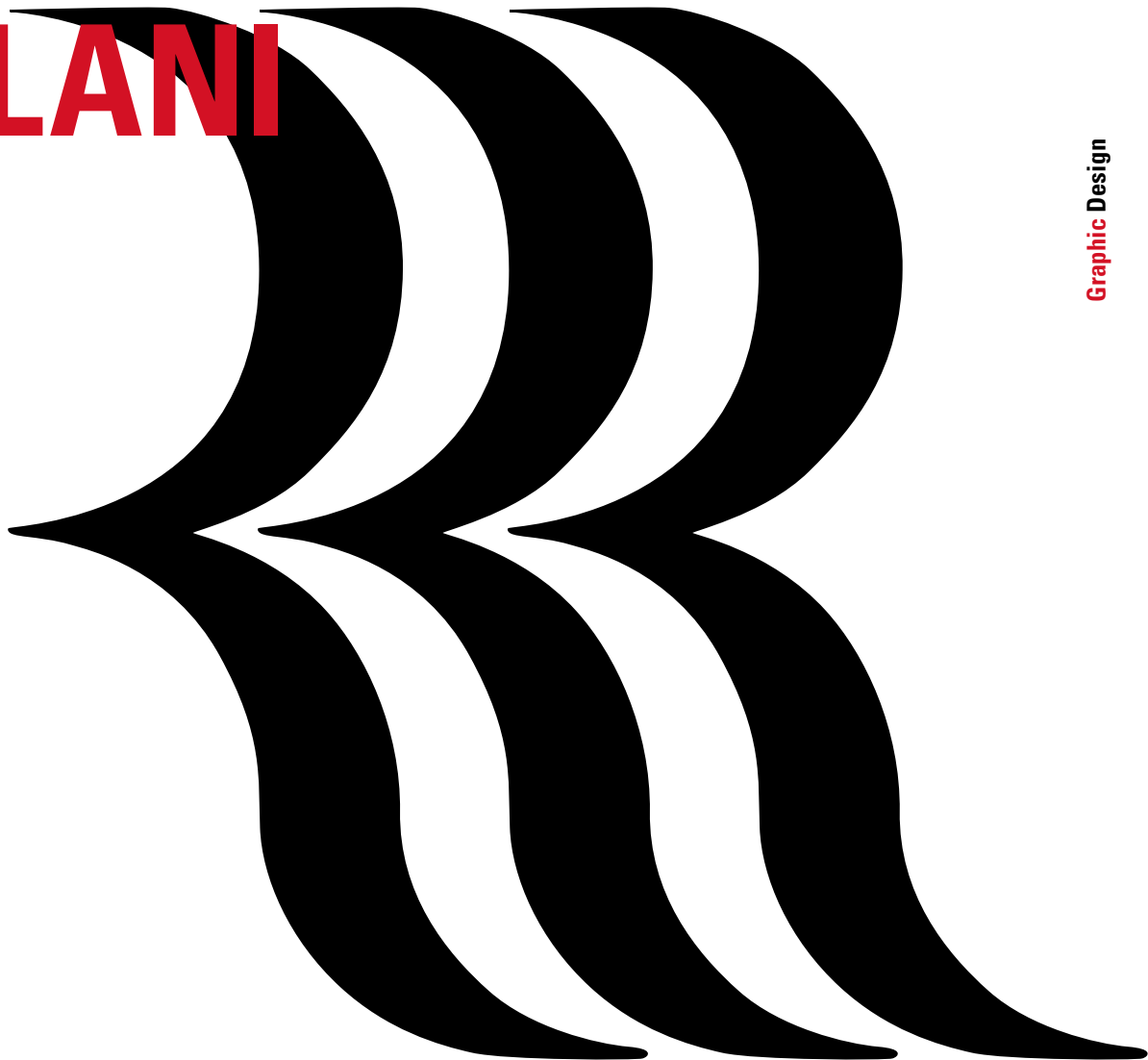


ARMANDO MILANI



**“ANYTHING CAN BE AN INSPIRATION,
WALKING DOWN THE STREET, FLIPPING
THROUGH A MAGAZINE. THAT’S HOW YOU
GET IDEAS. YOU HAVE TO LOOK FOR
DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS.
BUT IT’S ALWAYS A RESULT OF PAYING
ATTENTION, PASSION AND APPLICATION.”**

ARMANDO MILANI

DESIGN FRIENDS



Cover:

Hotel Chain (proposal)

Regent Hotels New York (1982)

Transforming hate into love

United Nations Geneva (2000)

ARMANDO MILANI

ARMANDO MILANI'S PASSION FOR DESIGNING IS 50 DECADES STRONG AND IS NOT ABOUT TO FADE. IN THE LATE 1960S HE OPENED A SUCCESSFUL STUDIO IN MILAN BEFORE EMBARKING ON A CAREER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC, WHERE HIS LIST OF NOTABLE CLIENTS JUST KEPT GROWING.

WHILE LOGOS AND CORPORATE IDENTITY HAVE BEEN THE BREAD AND BUTTER OF HIS CAREER, HE WAXES LYRICAL ABOUT HIS POSTER ART. A BODY OF WORK THAT HAS BECOME AN EMBLEM FOR THE WOES FACING HUMANITY, RECOGNIZED BY EVEN THE MOST SHELTERED OBSERVER.

Thought on democracy:
each one has his own identity
The Wolfsonian Museum Miami (2005)



Manifesto per la Pace,
Albe Steiner (1956)

Graphic design is not something you just stumbled into; it was a conscious choice you made as a young man. I imagine that it was a rather unconventional path at the time (1959-1963). Do you remember what triggered your interest?

I saw a beautiful poster designed by Albe Steiner, one of the most important designers in Italy in the 1960s, who also later became one of my professors. The poster depicted a rose growing out of a helmet. It was such a beautiful idea and I thought I have to do work like that. This image really touched me, both for its beauty and for its capacity to communicate a concept.

So already then you had an affinity for a sense of irony in symbolism.

Yes, precisely. As a matter of fact I have designed a book titled "No word posters: One image is enough." I collected about 200 posters that have no words where the symbolism speaks for itself.

At the time, was your family supportive of your choice or did they need convincing?

Oh, they loved it because they understood that it was my mission. They sent me to school. I worked and studied in the evening. It took a lot of sacrifice but then I started working for the best designer in Milan. That was my beginning. Then when I was 36 I went to New York and started working for Massimo Vignelli.

As a designer there are many avenues you can choose as a means of self-expression. You largely focused on poster and logo design, why is that?

I like designing logos because they last for many years. It's not like designing a brochure where after one month it is no longer relevant. Now, even after 30 years I can still see one of my logos in a bookshop or in a magazine and that gives me a sense of satisfaction.

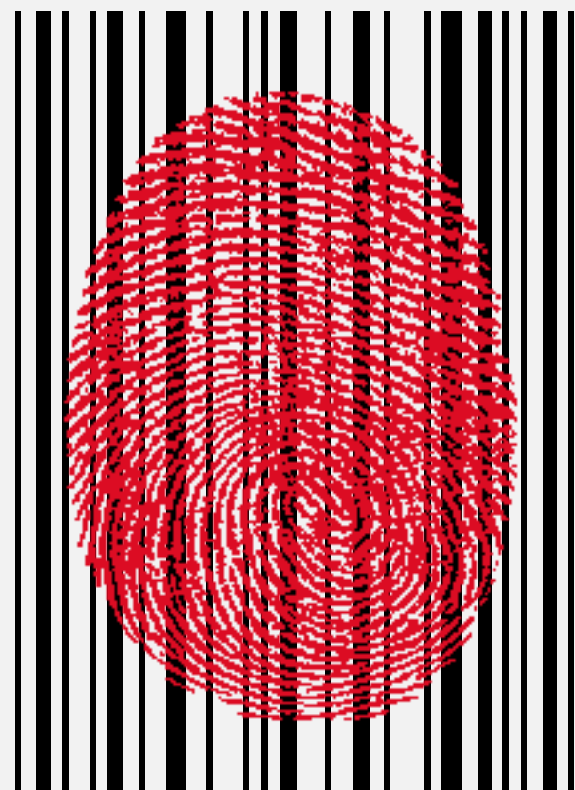
Does this sense of satisfaction come from having created work that is timeless or is it because you are interested in leaving behind some kind of a heritage?

Both really, and also the clients appreciate your work, and if you meet them again they will remember you and that's rewarding.

When it comes to posters, it's different. By designing a poster with a social context I am trying to communicate an ethical message. I like to hit the eye, to shock it, and through it touch the emotions of the viewer, make the viewer reflect on the problems facing the world.

How did this social component gain in importance for you over the years?

It's because I think that as a designer I have an ethical responsibility to denounce the crimes of humanity. Of course a designer should work in logos, corporate identity, signage, etc. but the biggest responsibility today is this one.



I AM NOT A NUMBER

Did you always feel that way, or has this urge grown over the years?

Well, for one, the situation of the world is getting worse and worse.

But I guess going back to your first love, Albe Steiner's poster that had a social message behind it.

Yes, exactly and I hope to have the same influence on young designers, as that work had on me. Right now I am teaching at the university here in Milano and the first thing I show is my dove of peace poster.

Did the positive response you got after you designed that poster for the UN, trigger an increased interest in using design as a form of activism?

Yes, definitely. After I designed that poster in 2002, I saw that everybody loved it around the whole world. This encouraged me to design other ideas involving themes of social and humanistic problems.

What are your thoughts on graffiti art as activism?

I think graffiti should be divided into two: the one done by intelligent people and then the other kind. Banksy, I love. I think what he does is fantastic and he is one of the best artists around the world.

Does that imply that you consider design to be closer to an art form rather than something that has a functional purpose in satisfying your client's needs?

If I am designing a logo, or corporate identity then I consider my work more as a profession. If I do a poster, I follow my emotions and so I feel more like an artist I guess.

What is the true role of a graphic designer in your eyes? You talked about the social component, but I guess not every graphic designer feels a social calling.

The role of design in general is to improve the quality of our life and of society, which doesn't mean only by doing socially or politically resonant posters. It also means designing a good signage system for an airport, or packaging for a pharmaceutical product. There are so many things that if done with professionalism, can improve people's lives.

You have mentioned that you think it's important that young designers know the history of graphic design.

It's very important. Starting with all the forms of artistic expression of man during this century, because if you would like to know where to go you need to understand where you came from. You need to study the rules of the design world, good typography,



Message of peace
United Nations New York (2003)

the colours, the shapes, the grids, etc. Once you know all these laws of design you can break them. But to be able to break the rules you have to know them first. It's also important to have ethics in the work that you deliver and to immediately think about how to communicate an idea. Like I said I am fond of symbolism because it allows you to communicate an idea in just a few seconds. Having a sense of humour is also important.

The other thing I tell my students is not to think that the computer will solve all of their problems. The product will always come from your brain, your intelligence.

I always start with a pencil and then after I work out an idea, I move to the computer.

When you look at the work of new generations of graphic designers, do you often feel like it is a repetition of the past, variations of ideas on the work of the old guard, or do you find some of the works particularly striking?

I see really good work out there. Especially interpreting ideas through the use of technology. I can see more three-dimensional solutions, instead of just two-dimensional and that's very interesting. I think there are many designers who are doing really interesting things and have good taste.

I would like to reference a quote of yours that I recently read:

“WHEN I WAS AT SCHOOL AND WE DREW BY HAND A BODONI CAPITAL ‘S’ WE PRACTICED TO DEVELOP A SENSIBILITY, A SENSE OF PROPORTION, THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE BY PRESSING A KEY ON THE BOARD AND CHOOSING AMONG THOUSANDS OF FONTS OF WHICH 99% ARE HORRIBLE AND NOT USEFUL. CONSIDERING THIS, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CURRENT APPROACH TO DESIGN IS MOSTLY BASED ON INTUITION RATHER THAN REFLECTION, THUS IMPLYING EPHEMERAL RESULTS. GOOD DESIGN DOES NOT FOLLOW ANY TREND, BUT IT IS BASED ON INTELLIGENCE. GOOD DESIGN IS TIMELESS.”

I am interested in this concept of timelessness. As someone who is not a designer it is hard for me to understand what is “in fashion”, in design, ...because maybe a designer will use a “fashionable” type, one that is a marker for a specific time but nonetheless be able to convey a timeless message through the work as a whole. Going back to what we were talking about before, you need to find solutions that are ethical which means that they need to be serious and responsible but of course they need to be nice as well, and communicative. A design usually reflects the moment when it is created, the historic moment. But if you create a work that is timeless, you can look at it 50 years on and it will still be valid.

We are surrounded by work that just uses a lot of colour and a lot of text but doesn't have any content. That's just fashion. In one or two years nobody will look at it anymore, they will think it is dated, because it lacks a real concept.

The best solution finds the right composition between form and content.

The fact that ideas naturally emanate from the efforts that you put into just creating the smallest of elements that go into an image, like the drawing of a Bodoni S, is a reflection of the creative journey. It made me think of UOMO MODA, and the fact that the end result was based on playing around with the different elements you had in front of you. At first glance it may seem like a simple solution, but in fact it's not.

If I design a logo, I speak with the client to understand what he needs, and then I sit down in my office and draw 40 or 50 solutions, playing around with myriad different possibilities. Then I bring it down to ten and then maybe three. It's only at that point that I sit down at the computer to work out the idea.

Again with posters it's completely different because I listen to my emotions.

With the dove, nobody asked me to do it. I was part of the jury that was supposed to judge 500 posters for peace from all over the world, we had already selected the first, second and third place. While I was travelling back on the plane, I started thinking about how I would have done it, so I thought about this dove flying towards peace, that was the first iteration. Later I realized that war had a letter “a” too, and it's only then that I drew the dove flying with the letter “a” towards peace. But nobody asked me to do this. It's the

same with the Africa poster. Nobody asked me to do it. It came about because I was reading in a newspaper how millions of children die because of AIDS and starvation, and it really moved me. I felt like I really wanted to do something about that. Only later did I give it to a foundation for Africa and it happened to become one of my most famous works.

Going back to the creation of a logo, you were saying that you start with 40 or so possibilities. What criteria make you come up with your final choices?

The ones that are most sharp, that communicate the business of the client and satisfy his needs. You have to like it yourself as a designer, but it has to work for your client and for all of your client's clients. It has to be easy to reproduce also, because it can be applied in a countless ways: in wood, marble, newspaper, cardboard, etc. So it can't be an elaborate illustration for example.

What do you consider to be bad taste?

First of all it's ignorance, then vulgarity and banality. We are surrounded by images where the message gets lost and it's just a bunch of words on top of each other.

Is there a logo that you are particularly proud of?

UOMO MODA is very simple but very captivating because at the beginning

Uomo Moda (Men Fashion)
ICE New York (1990)



you don't understand what it is. It looks simple but it took me a lot of time to arrive at this solution. When I showed my work to Paul Rand, he told me that this was one of my best works.

A student of mine once said “Ah you were very lucky with it” because of the letters, but I said to him that luck is something that you have to look for. It's not something that you just pick up. The same thing can be said for “War and Peace”, it's luck, but I looked for this luck. It's about always looking around.

Anything can be an inspiration, walking down the street, flipping through a magazine. That's how you get ideas. You have to look for different combinations. But it's always a result of paying attention, passion and application.

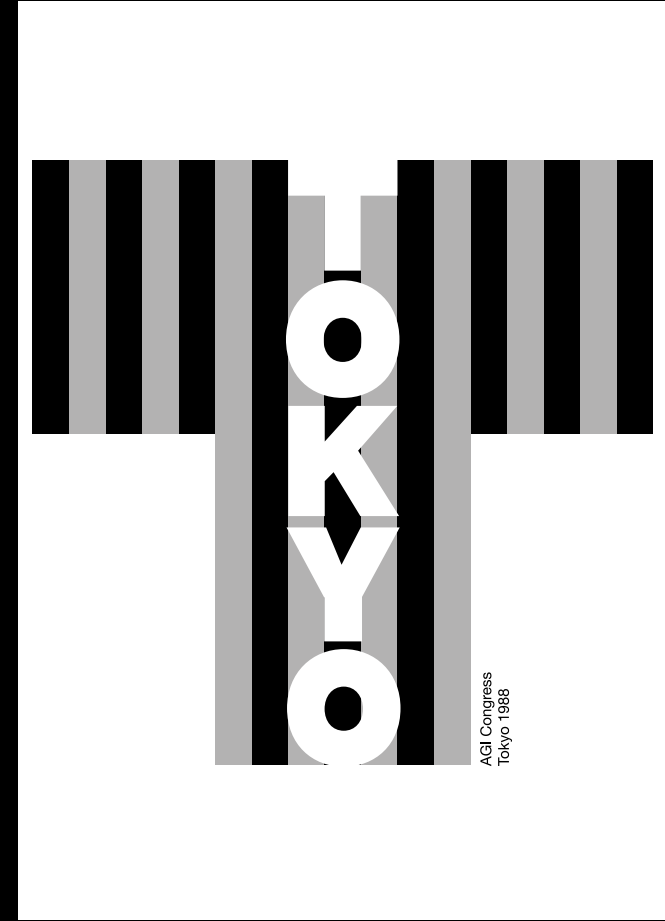
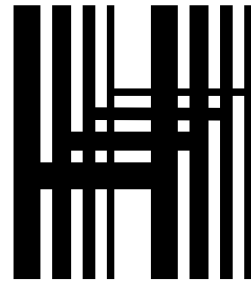
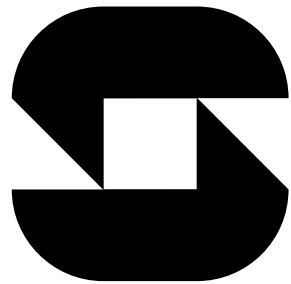
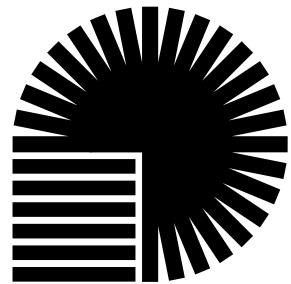
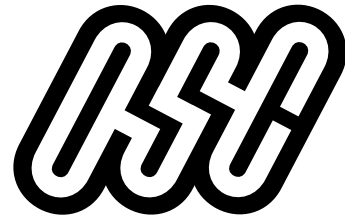
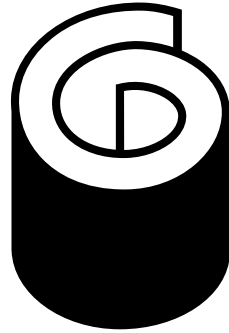
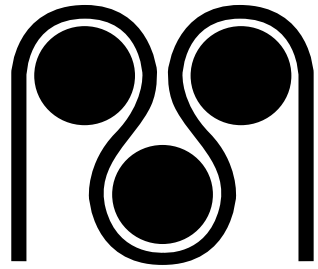
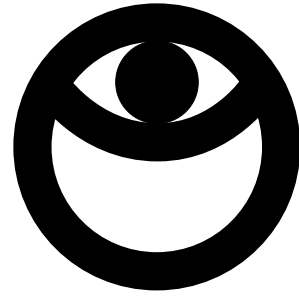
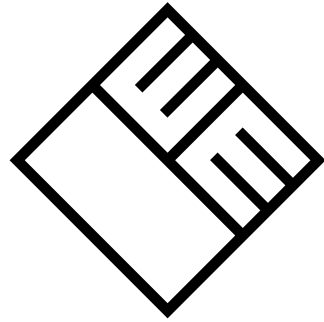
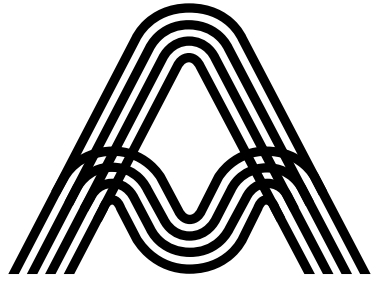
...and having an open mind.

Of course, from morning 'til evening your mind has to be open to new things.

What I like is that now I have more time, after 50 years of working in corporate.

Let's go back to your career. What made you make the leap from Milano to New York City?

I was 36 years old and was starting to get bored in Milan. I was pretty successful and one day I met Massimo



Vignelli and he said “What are you doing here? Come to New York!”

So I decided to move. My younger brother, Massimo, who is a very good designer was working with me and he stayed in charge in Milan and the deal was to come back every couple of months. I had planned to only go for a year or two, but then I got married and stayed in New York for 20 years.

How did the New York experience influence your work? Did it add a different dimension to the way you approached it?

The New York experience was fantastic. I loved it. I met some of the best designers in the world, like Paul Rand, and Milton Glaser. I got to work with Massimo Vignelli and we became very good friends.

I was always going to exhibitions for design and art. New York is a beautiful city. I miss New York.

I become more pragmatic, particularly on the design of corporate identity. Applying logos within the context of corporate identity and the use of the right kind of typography. I learnt a lot from Vignelli. He had more of an engineering approach to it. He was also a great product designer and designed everything inside one of the nicest churches in New York, Saint Peter’s Church.

A series of lectures on American history held at the New York University New York University (1982)



Series of social protest movies Cineclub Brera Milano (1975)



Would you say that there are things that define Italian design versus American design, whether it is in form, content or delivery? Or is it a generalization that does not apply?

I think at one time you could have said that, because there was a period in the 60s and 70s where Italian designers, some of my masters, had a kind of movement, which you could qualify as very Italian. In America, design was born through the efforts of the Bauhaus teacher László Moholy-Nagy, who founded a New Bauhaus school in Chicago. It gave way to a new kind of design, a melting pot, a fusion, between Bauhaus teachings and advertising, which brought about a different style. A beautiful style that had more of a sense of humour and was less rigid compared to Swiss or German design. That was then. Now I am not sure you can make that distinction between countries with the advent of computers, Internet, etc.

Not only have you created iconic works that most people will remember, but you have also studied under and worked in collaboration with some of the most iconic designers including Albe Steiner, Giulio Confalonieri, Antonio Boggeri, and Massimo Vignelli. What, in your mind sets them apart?

The thing that sets them most apart is that back then the technology we have now did not exist. So they all worked, like I still do now, starting with a pencil

on paper. But what really set them apart was that they were all really exceptional people, with great intelligence, fantasy, and passion for design.

Poetry strikes me as important to you; in fact some of your poster work is really poetic.

I am unconsciously creating poetry through my work, because it’s mostly people who tell me that they see poetry in my poster work, but I am pleased with that because poetry is a way to touch people’s hearts and express the realities of the world.

Can you talk about the creative process for your “Hate Love” and the “Filter” poster, which is one of your most recent creations?

When I created the “Hate Love” poster, I was playing around with the two words and I discovered that there are four letters in both words and by transforming the letters I found the right solution. Slowly transforming Hate into Love.

The “Filter” poster I created because I was reading about the media being dishonest and I started thinking that in our life we have to defend ourselves with filters for everything. We get bombarded with so many negative things.

Let’s talk about the UBUNTU logo.

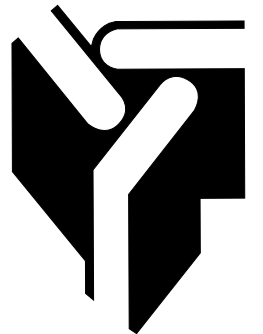
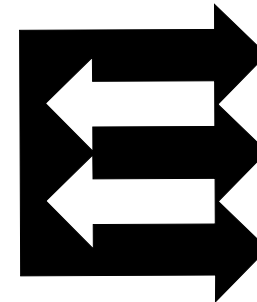
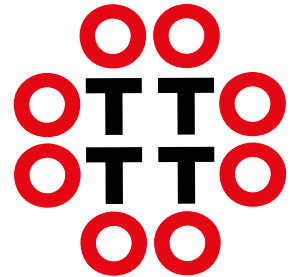
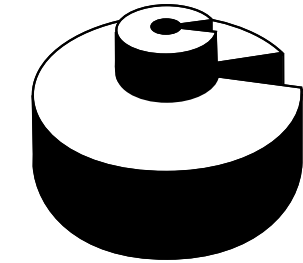
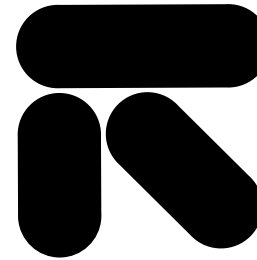
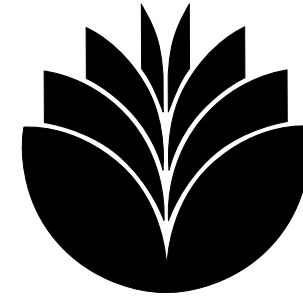
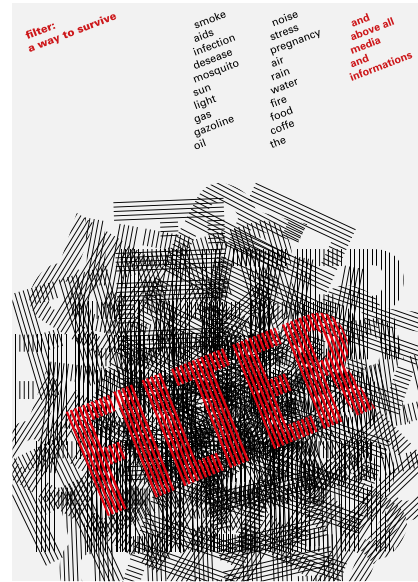
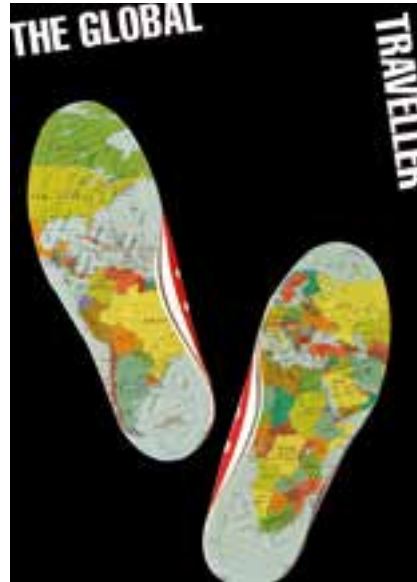
I love this word. It comes from the South African people and it means

humanity, understanding, dialogue, helping each other. Basically, the opposite of everything that is going on today, like war and conflict, etc. I think this word is beautiful, so I designed this logo, two hearts which make a butterfly. The butterfly being a symbol for transformation, lightness and future.

I travel a lot around the world to teach. I want to give this logo to my students and ask them to design a poster around their interpretation of this word, and then create a collection that will showcase all these interpretations from around the world. This is my new adventure.

I have the impression that you will never retire...

No, never, never. I also have an exhibition in Rome and afterwards I am going to Mexico City where the Anahuac University is giving me a medal for my poster work, past recipients have included Gorbachev and Clinton. So I am very happy.



The values of the man
Luzzati Foundation Genova (2016)

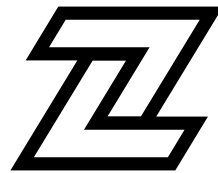
The global traveller of two worlds, Ferlinghetti/ Milani Gam Publisher Chiari/Brescia (2010)

A way to survive
Base Milan (2017)

Smoking is poison
Policlinico Hospital Milan (2004)

Rush for freedom
Freedom Manifesto Rome (2017)

We keep watching over you day and night (proposal)
Arma dei Carabinieri Rome (2016)



Auditorium
Midy Pharmaceutical
Milan (1972)



Pharmaceutical Company
Istituto Euchimico Milanese
Milan (1973)



Hotel chain
Costa dei Ciclopi
Sardinia (1976)



Continuous printing
Man Milan (1970)



Carpets Company
Glow Carpets
Los Angeles (1987)



Stationary's Company
OSC Milan (1975)



Carpets Company
Pavites Milan (1975)



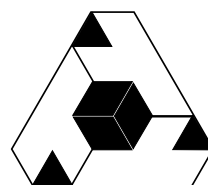
Pharmaceutical Company
Seva Geneva (1978)



Architects Group
H&H Denver (1992)



Humanitarian Foundation
Twogether Paris (2005)



Publisher
Dialogos Milano (2002)



Continuous printing
Antonio Mantegazza Arti
grafiche Milan (1970)



Engineering Group
Redesco Milan (1977)



Cultural Center
Città delle Culture
Milan (2007)



Bar chain (proposal)
Otto Milan (2015)



Import Export Company
Euromar Milan (1970)



I love my pet
Robin Hubbard
New York (2000)



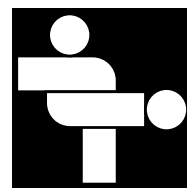
Book store
Bookshop New York (1993)



Wine importer from Italy
Prestige Wine
New York (1990)



Electric appliance
Zerovatt Bergamo (1985)



Hotels Resort
Pelican Los Angeles (1988)



Shoes Company
Morado Milan (1976)



Oil Company
Policarbo Milan (1974)



Restaurant chain (proposal)
OK Cape Town (2003)



100 years celebration
Friends of Frank Sinatra
Los Angeles (2015)



Art Gallery
Trilogy Milano (2005)



**Italian Championship
Soccer Under 14**
Orpas Milan (2017)



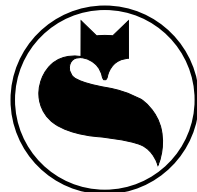
3 Architects Group
3B Milan (1978)



Green Foundation Go Go
Green New York (2003)



Engineering Group
Reflex Milan (1977)



Gas distributions
Gas Company London (1982)



Hotels chain
Silver Fox New York (1989)



Art and ski
Art Gallery Denver (1998)



Children shoes (proposal)
Yello Shoes Milan (1999)

Africa:

† †
he †
forgo en
con inen
† †.

Africa: The forgotten continent
The Sense of Art Milano (2007)

Don't ask me to lead; I am not a leader.



Don't ask me to follow; I am not a follower.



Just be beside me and I will be your friend forever.



Albert Camus

Tought of Albert Camus
Bibliotheca Alexandrina (2016)



PUBLICATIONS

01	CHRISTOPH NIEMANN	Illustration Design	2009
02	MICHEL MALLARD	Creative Direction	2009
03	FUN FACTORY	Product Design	2009
04	ANDREAS UEBELE	Signage Design	2010
05	HARRI PECCINOTTI	Photography	2010
06	KUSTAA SAKSI	Illustration Design	2010
07	5.5 DESIGNERS	Product Design	2011
08	NIKLAUS TROXLER	Graphic Design	2011
09	JOACHIM SAUTER	Media Design	2011
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11	ELVIS POMPILIO	Fashion Design	2011
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15	SAM HECHT	Industrial Design	2012
16	SONJA STUMMERER & MARTIN HABLESREITER	Food Design	2012
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29	ALEXANDRA MURRAY-LESLIE	High Techne Fashion Design	2015
30	PLEIX	Video & Installation Design	2016
31	LA FILLE D'O	Fashion Design	2016
32	RUEDI BAUR	Graphic Design	2016
33	ROMAIN URHAUSEN	Product Design	2016
34	MR BINGO	Illustration Design	2016
35	KIKI VAN EIJK	Product Design	2016
36	JEAN-PAUL LESPAGNARD	Fashion Design	2017
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38	TIM JOHN & MARTIN SCHMITZ	Scenography Design	2017
39	BROSMIND	Illustration Design	2017

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HATE

HÀTÈ

HÀÏÈ

LOVE

LOVE