

April Greiman
Dimensions of Design



There have been many well known graphic designers throughout time, but to become known as a great designer you have to produce something that gets recognition and is very successful in its purpose. Sometimes designers are known for their one hit wonder pieces and others are known because throughout their whole career they produced wonderful art. Being the first to try something or figure something out is also another way that a designer gains recognition in the graphic design world. There are also many different design eras that have very different characteristics from one another giving an unequal advantage for some designers to gain their prestige. With this said it is not always easy to place an artist in just one design category. An artist may have produced their work during a certain decade, that has a specific design era associated with it, but they personally may have a different sense of style to their art. It is hard to pin point just one style to any artist, but looking at their different work throughout their career or at least their work during the peak of their career can help to teach us why the designer did what they did and how novel their ideas really were for their time. An example of a known designer that did something novel for her time period is **April Greiman**. She is a designer that you will not be able to get through a design history class without hearing about.

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A lifetime of design

April Greiman was born in 1948 during the baby boom. She grew up in New York City, but ended up moving to Los Angeles, California in 1976. She was a freelance designer in New York City before moving to California. Her schooling began when she applied to the Rhode Island School of Design, but after seeing her portfolio they recommended that she apply to the graphic design program at the Kansas City Art Institute. In the early 1970's she went abroad for graduate school. She attended Basel School of Design in Switzerland where many of her professors at Kansas City Art Institute had attended. There she was taught by designers such as Armin Hoffman and Wolfgang Weingart, this is when she was introduced to the New Wave style of design.

After graduating Greiman went right to work. She started designing and collaborating with different designers. According to Ronald Labuz's book, *The Computer in Graphic Design: from technology to style*, "Greiman's vocabulary of multiple dimensions, diagonal perspectives, wide letterspacing, overlapping visuals, and floating geometric shapes was widely copied." Her tactics to this style of art was very novel for this time and this helped in her success. Cal Arts invited her to direct their graphic design program in 1982, where she continued to work with her exploration of video and digitizing equipment.

Her major recognition came later in 1984 when Macintosh was trying to become part of the design world. Greiman rode the bull by the horns and became known for embracing the use of the Macintosh computer as a tool of design. As quoted from Greiman's book *Hybrid Imagery: the fusion of technology and graphic design*, Greiman explains, "It [the introduction of Macintosh] has since become an integral part of every project at many levels: brainstorming, camera-ready art, typesetting, electronic page composition, and on and on in ever-expanding applications."

Greiman has become very successful in her career and has established her own design practice called Made In Space that she is still the head of today. Some honors she has received include: the Hall Chair Fellowship, Hallmark Corporation; local, state, and national design awards, American Institute of Architects; Medal of the AIGA; Chrysler Award for Innovation, Chrysler Corporation; Member, and Alliance Graphique Internationale. Greiman has had a lot of success through her lifetime because she took a risk and started playing with a new design tool/concept that the Macintosh computer brought to the design world.



The last piece of work I am going to analyze is Greiman's Snow White and the Seven Pixels. This is a poster announcing a talk at the Maryland Institute College of Art. This poster like the rest of her work I have talked about has a lot going on. There is a digitized photo of her on the poster, but there is white scribbling all over her face. Then there are two columns of blue vertical lines in the background that have different size dots on them. Beyond that in the background are a green design and a yellow one. Then the title text is playing within all of the layers with the different color choices. Greiman shows lots of different layers and then combines them while separating them at the same time. Everything is different patterns and different colors, but yet the poster is still legible. It is very interesting how she takes all of these different elements and brings them together as one piece of art.

Designer-in-Residence Program

An evening with April Greiman presented as part of *The Art Lingo*

The complete

Visual Presentation
8:00 pm
Thursday, November 6
1986
Maryland Institute
College of Art

Mount Royal Station Auditorium
Mount Royal Avenue + Cathedral Street

Reception following the lecture
in the Decker Gallery

Seating is unreserved

Snow White and the Seven Pixels, 1986

In conclusion April Greiman's work is one of a kind. She uses layering and chaotic designs and lays them out to have all the elements work together. She takes chances that other designers hesitate to try and she makes it her own. She is best described through her own quote from Kunur Patel's article, The Z Thing; SVA honors designer April Greiman for taking design beyond the XY plane, Greiman states, "I'd like to think I've been somebody who is always willing to leap into the void. As soon as I leapt into the technology void and left print, I went into the third dimension—buildings and space—and then the fourth dimension—video and movement. That for me is what I'd like to be known for—[working] back and forth and in and out of media. We're not just the X and Y axes, we're also the Z now, and have been since the early '80s. And so that's what I hope I'd be known for: the Z thing."

"...And so that's what I hope I'd be known for: the Z thing."

April Greiman
one of a kind



fonts: baskerville old face, ocr a std, ashley script mt std, banco std, briem akademi std, friz quadrata std, memphis lt std, montana

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