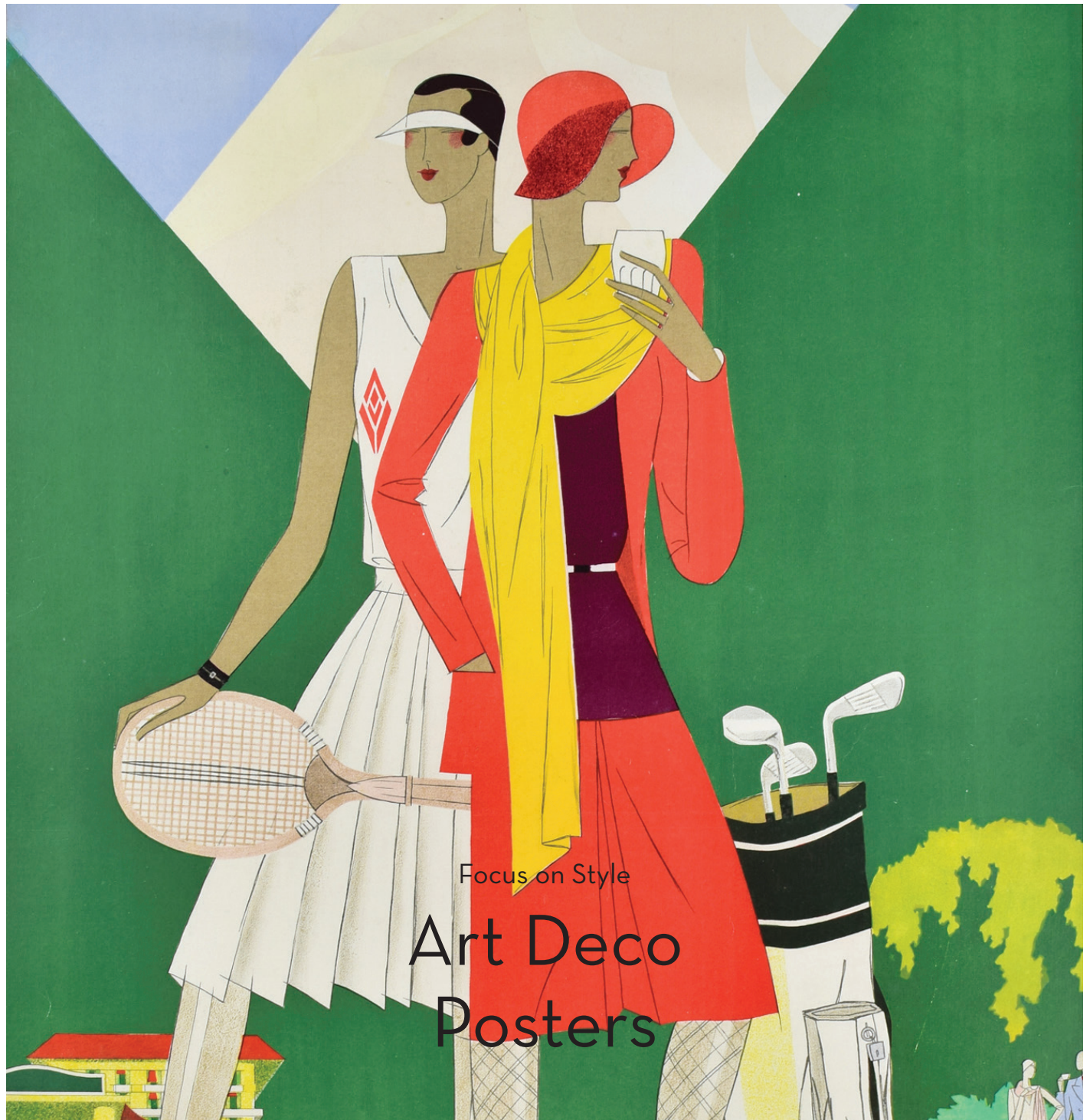


VINTAGE POSTER

Publication Of The International Vintage Poster Dealers Association

Issue 1 (2019)



Focus on Style

Art Deco
Posters

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Focus on designer

Leonetto Cappiello

by Jack Rennert

Leonetto Cappiello (1872-1942) occupies a unique niche in poster lore: he virtually invented the modern advertising poster, and worked prolifically throughout his life.

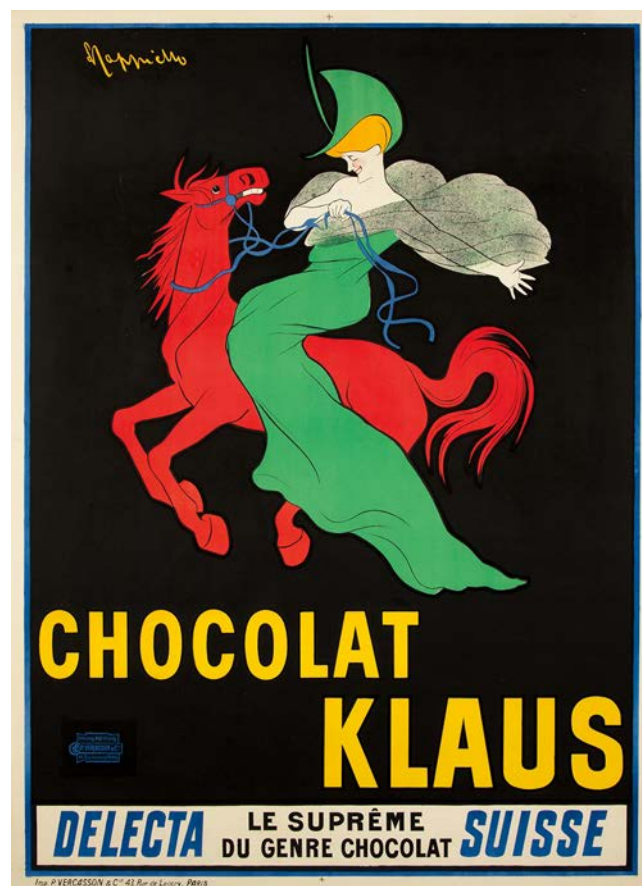
During his time, posters were ubiquitously employed as the most effective weapon in any promotional arsenal. However, only the best posters managed to do what Cappiello accomplished routinely: they capture attention immediately, and associate themselves in our minds with an advertised product or service—even though that image may have little or nothing to do with the advertised item.

Take, for instance, the 1903 *Chocolat Klaus* poster, which features a lady in all green riding a bright red horse—and absolutely no visual mention of chocolate, aside from the brand’s name. Our attention is arrested, our curiosity piqued, our questions left unanswered—which forces our brains to resolve the situation by attaching the image to the subject of the poster. This product identification is a vital tool in advertising: the red horse equals *Chocolat Klaus* instantly, and in fact, generations of young customers asked for “the green lady” chocolate.

Cappiello understood that the world at the start of the twentieth century was rapidly changing; the great strides in industry and technology created an explosion of consumer demand that had never before existed, and the marketplace was becoming fiercely competitive. Thus, the sales message that previously could be discreetly whispered now needed to be vigorously shouted—especially to those traveling quickly in moving vehicles. Synthesizing the two previous masters of the trade—Chéret and Toulouse-Lautrec—Cappiello presented a new result in his own humorous style, tinged with caricature, as a visual punch that arrested the viewer’s attention with an unexpected or incongruous image. But he always managed to keep the product central to his objective.

Most products he was asked to present seemed rather drab and mundane, so Cappiello strove to liberate them with brazen colors or outlandish forms, and to create a synthetic vision with a certain flair and rhythm. He sought an effect that would be shocking, novel, exhilarating—one that would detach itself from the surrounding posters on whatever wall the passerby saw and jump

into the intended viewer’s line of vision; and from there, presumably, lodge itself somewhere in a subconscious level of perception. His work began with strictly Art Nouveau designs, albeit with a Cappiello twist: stark, saturated, and high-contrast colors made his images stand



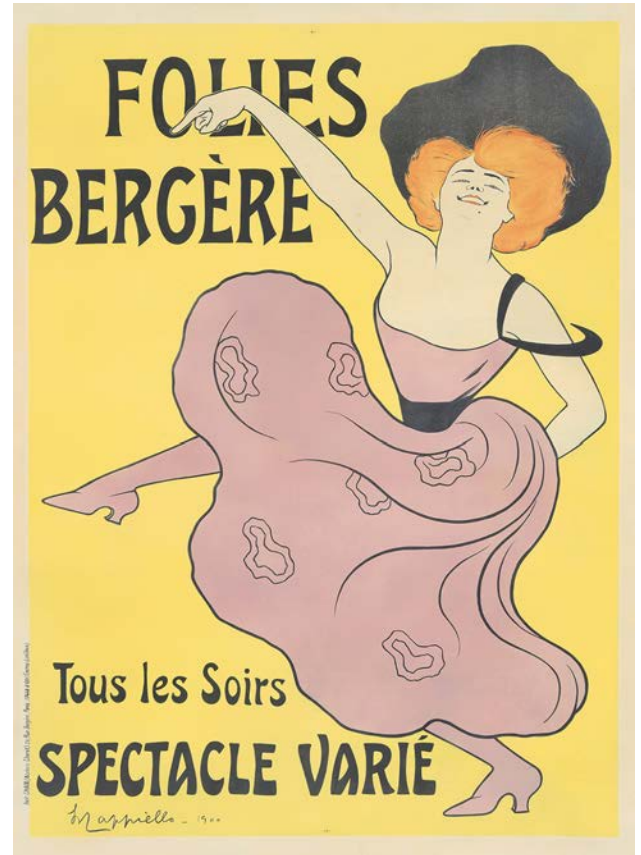
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Le Frou Frou, 1899

Cappiello's earliest poster is executed in his early magazine caricature style—which is only appropriate since it does advertise the humor periodical, *Le Frou Frou*—yet already his bold style shows: a flat-colored background spotlights the subject, and the pink pantaloons peeking from under the skirt create the perfect frivolous mood for the subject. “Frou-frou,” after all, means “rustle,” and we are meant to hear the whir of the billowing petticoat in this design.



Folies-Bergère / Spectacle Varié, 1900

The mission of this orange-haired dancer was to attract visitors at the 1900 Paris World's Fair to come to the Folies-Bergère. She—and Cappiello—succeeded admirably. Although all contemporary references make it clear that the Frou-Frou poster was Cappiello's first, a black-and-white flyer was issued which proclaimed this to be “The First Poster of Cappiello.” The text is full of praise, not only for this image but also for Cappiello's career, prophetically declaring that “With Cappiello, the poster has become an object of decorative art and the first step towards an art which will become, in the near future, the public's taste.”

out. His forward-thinking treatment allowed his work to transition seamlessly into the Art Deco period.

Today, Cappiello is in many ways the single most popular poster artist—his work is reproduced more often than even those by the more famous artists like Mucha and Toulouse-Lautrec, likely because he was a true posterist who never forgot that his purpose was to sell a product.

Though his output was prodigious, and his famous works are constantly more enthusiastically received at auction, collectors today seek out his rarer works and his maquettes, which reveal his train of thought and creative process. Throughout his work, there is always visual appeal—sometimes exaggerated to create a more potent effect—and a ubiquitous dedication to communicate directly and succinctly with the consumer.



La Caisse Simon / Huîtres Exquises, 1901

To advertise an oyster merchant, Cappiello chose a shellfish sampling seashore scene—an imaginative way to give the mundane product a bit more glamour. The company, founded in 1881, had its own store in Bordeaux but shipped its wares to many locations throughout Europe, hence the space at bottom to insert the local outlet's name.



Fleur des Neiges / Biscuits Pernot, 1905

Fleur des Neiges is one of the products of Biscuits Pernot; since it means “snow flowers,” Cappiello creates a verbal association by giving us two lovely ladies worthy of the name, their scarlet coats like blossoms in the vast whiteness. Their placement at the bottom of the vertical design with a snowy landscape allows the artist to create a brilliant impression reminiscent of classical Japanese prints of similar configuration.



Automobiles Charron Ltd. / Puteaux, ca. 1906

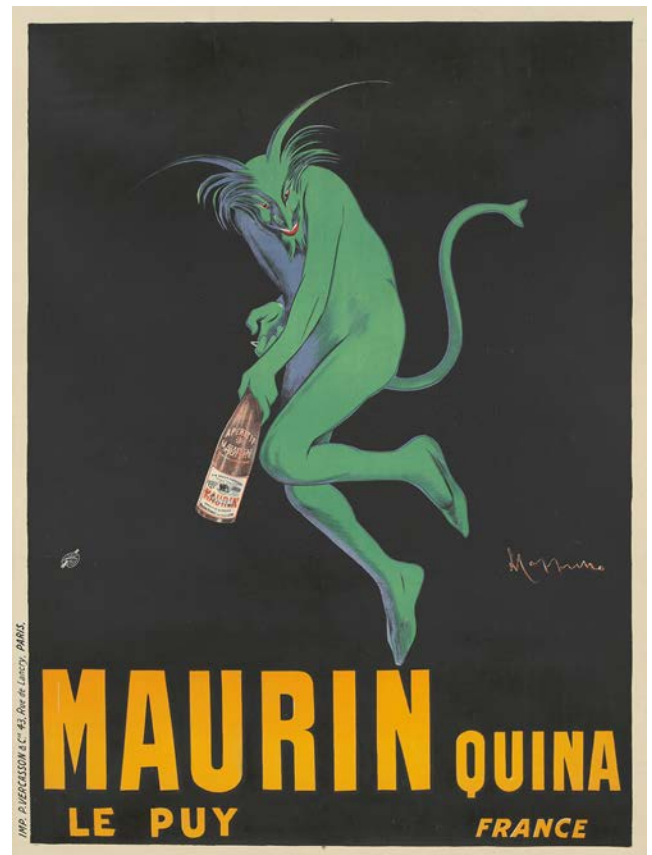
Fernand Charron, who won the first Gordon Bennett cup in a car of his own design in 1900, eventually took over the Automobiles Charron firm and manufactured large, comfortable—and expensive—sedans. The closed cab shown in the poster was the natural automotive evolution from a carriage design—it was very popular with the aristocracy as it exuded elegance and luxury. All of this is reinforced in Cappiello’s design, showing an elegant lady giving directions to her driver before entering the cab. The frame around the image, including the title plate, suggests that the Charron automobile is a masterpiece.

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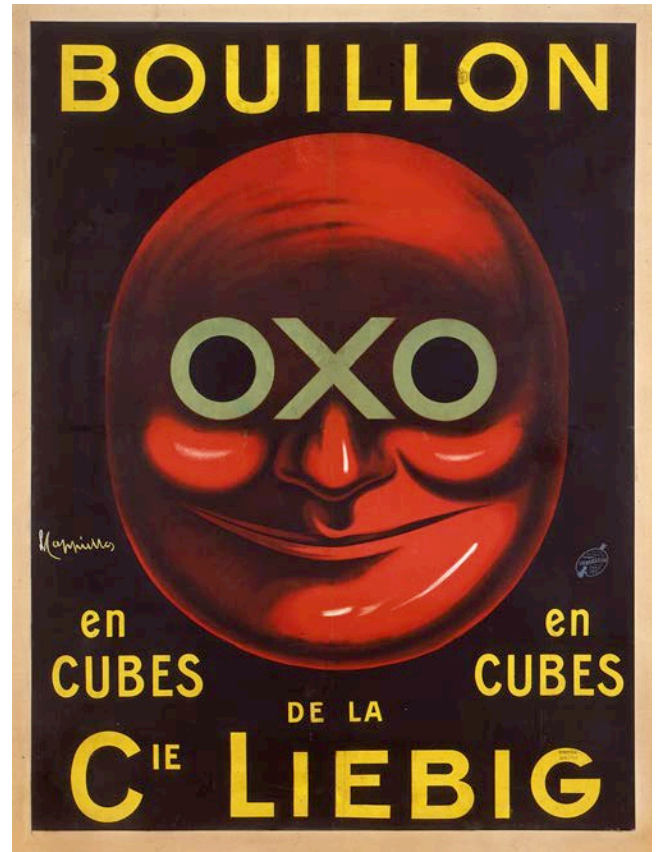
Maurin Quina, 1906

There's a little devilry in any alcoholic beverage, and Cappiello used infernal imagery in a number of liquor promotions. We here have one of the artist's classics: a most unusual green demon having a devilishly good time with the Maurin aperitif, made by Maurin-Brenas of Le Puy. What makes the devil stand out so forcefully is the almost Day-Glo quality of the colors, sparse but ever so effective.



Cinzano Vermouth, 1910

What the red horse did for Chocolat Klaus, the zebra did for Cinzano—and for Cappiello. With a highly respected, long-established firm from his native country endorsing his unorthodox approach to advertising, he was now universally honored as a pioneer of the new bold wave of product publicists. Jacques Vienot declared it a revolutionary poster and announced that 1910 “was not only an important date in the career of Cappiello, but an important year in the history of the art of the poster.” This image for Cinzano created an instant image/product association with the public; shrewd enough to recognize that, the progressive firm used his talents again and again, and even twenty years down the road, when they merged with Florio, they called on him and used the association to their advantage with a second zebra.



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Nothing but a sort of tomato-head wearing Oxo spectacles. This must have been an unsurpassed attention grabber for the bouillon brand. And never did Cappiello more thoroughly integrate lettering and art.



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Although the slogan reads “I only smoke Nil,” Nil isn’t actually a cigarette, but rather a brand of cigarette rolling paper. Nil claimed to be as “though as an elephant’s hide,” which is how the company’s spokes-pachyderm came to be. So this was an easy marriage between product and posterist, seeing as the elephant was a favorite Cappiello attention-getter. The Joseph Bardou company introduced Nil to the public in 1887.

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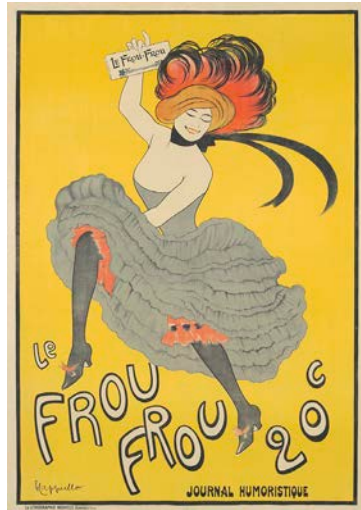


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This Kub poster hits the bull's eye in more ways than one. Even for an artist who makes a specialty of astonishing the public, this was a bold gamble, but it paid off in spades as it became one of the most spectacular and arresting posters of its day. A veritable milestone in graphic design. It's interesting to compare this with an earlier Cappiello poster for the same product. It demonstrates that fifteen years later, Cappiello's talents hadn't diminished, but in fact, became even more sophisticated and effective.

For the serious Cappiello collector, the artist's grandson, Pierre Cappiello, maintains an online database of the artist's posters and maquettes, which is available here: www.catalogue.cappiello.fr

My book, *The Posters of Leonetto Cappiello*, a catalogue raisonné of the artist, is available from Posters Please, New York.



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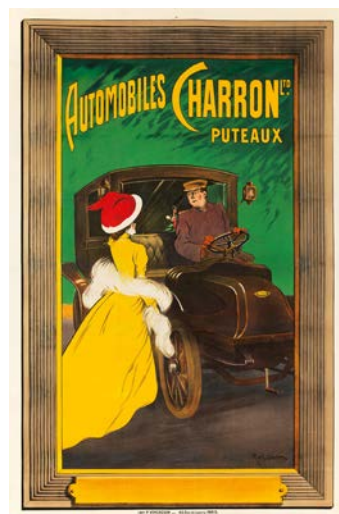
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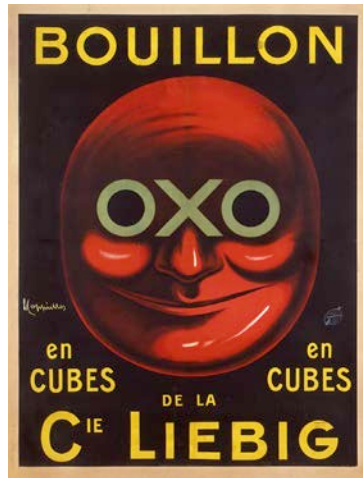
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Focus on style

Art Deco

by Angelina M. Lippert

Chief Curator

Poster House Museum in New York



Appearing just before World War I, Art Deco became the dominant artistic style of Europe and America up through the beginning of World War II. Devoted to the strong lines and geometric structures of the Machine Age, it was an aggressive departure from the sinuous, organic forms of its predecessor, Art Nouveau.

While Art Deco's influence touched everything from architecture to fashion, its appearance in posters is especially striking. Suddenly, products and destinations were being advertised through the rhythmic repetition of bold shapes, brilliant colors, and a kinetic sense of accelerated movement and power. If Art Nouveau can be described as feminine, then Art Deco is pure machismo.

The name itself derived from the famous Decorative Arts Exposition of Paris in 1925. A type of World's Fair, its seven-month run helped establish the "style moderne" as a truly international movement, bringing together the best ideas of the European avant-garde alongside more traditionally commercial manufacturers. The original goal was to give a platform for the decorative arts, which had often been treated like the redheaded stepchild within the fine art family of painting and sculpture. In reality, the decorative arts influence our lives on a more regular and intimate basis than the fine arts, so elevating them to a place of artistic respect seems not only logical but necessary. Over 16 million people visited the fair (that's 5 million more than the current population of Belgium), allowing the event's influence to have a truly global impact.

The hallmarks of Art Deco posters can best be described as sophisticated, streamlined, and sleek. Images like A.M. Cassandre's *Normandie* (1935) or Robert Mallet-Stevens's *St Jean de Luz* (1928) are almost overwhelming in their presentation of scale - we feel dominated by the impressive architectural presence of both the ship and the building, respectively. Posters promoting more fashionable items, like any of Jacint Bofarull's designs for Dunhill (1932) or Franco Barberis's *Candee* (1929) speak to wealth and glamour expressed through a lens of removed, cool elegance. The same holds true for all of Paul Colin's numerous posters for performances and parties, wherein he is selling more of an attitude than an event.



St Jean De Luz, Rob Mallet Stevens 1928
50 x 70 cm



St Jean De Luz, Rob Mallet Stevens 1928
50 x 70 cm

“... we feel dominated by the impressive architectural presence of both the ship and the building, respectively.”



St Jean De Luz, Rob Mallet Stevens 1928
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A.M. Cassandre, Nord Express, 1927, France /
106 x 80cm / Source: L'Affichiste, Canada



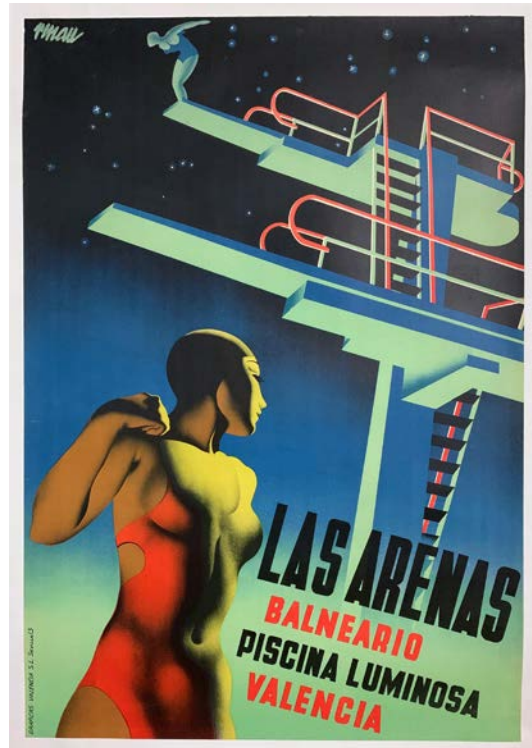
Joseph Binder, New York World's Fair, USA, 1939 / 77x51cm / Source: AntikBar, UK



Publivox Geneve, Hettinger Linoleum Teppiche, 1925, Switzerland / 127.5 x 88cm / Source: Artifice, Switzerland



Benigni, Brides Les Bains, France, 1929 / 99x63.5cm / Source: Chicago Center for The Print, USA



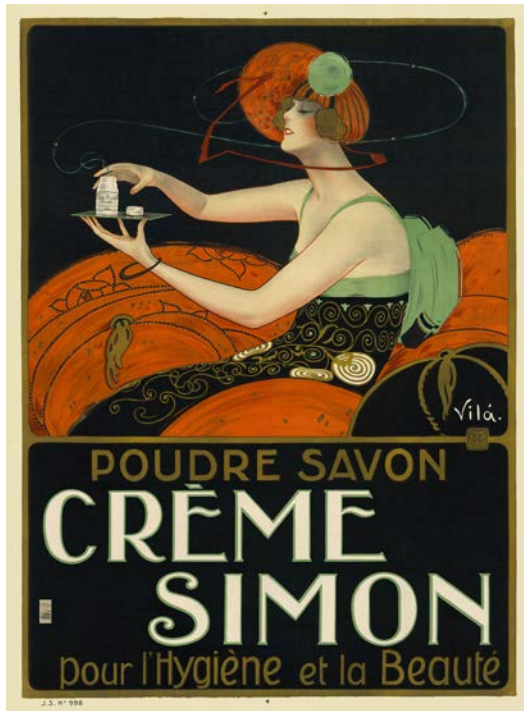
Josep Renau, Las Arenas, Spain, 1932 / 99x69cm / Source: Chisholm Larsson Gallery, USA



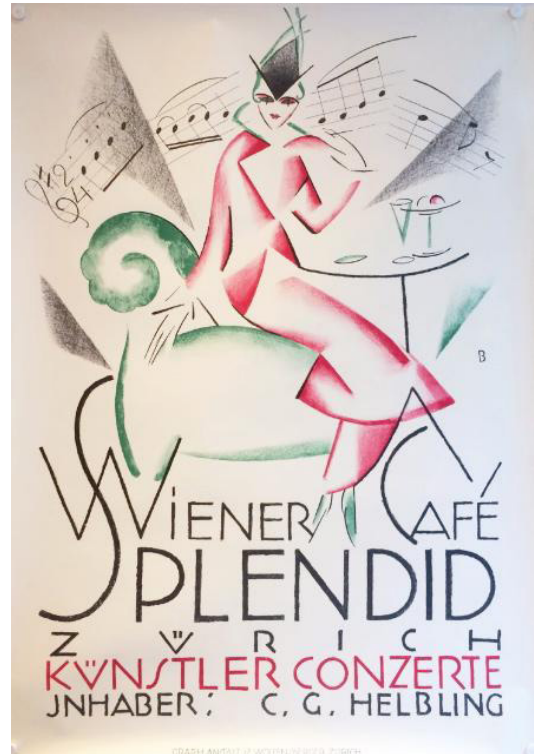
Monogram T, Andermatt - Gotthard - Schweiz, Switzerland, 1927 / 102x68 cm / Source: PLACART, Switzerland.



Arthur, Peugeot, France, 1930s / 128.2x90.2cm / Source: The Ross Art Group, USA



Emilio Vila, Poudre Savon Crème Simon, France, 1920s / 160x119.5cm / Source: The Vintage Poster, USA



Otto Baumberger, Splendid, 1915, Switzerland / 129x90cm / Source: Galerie Documents, France

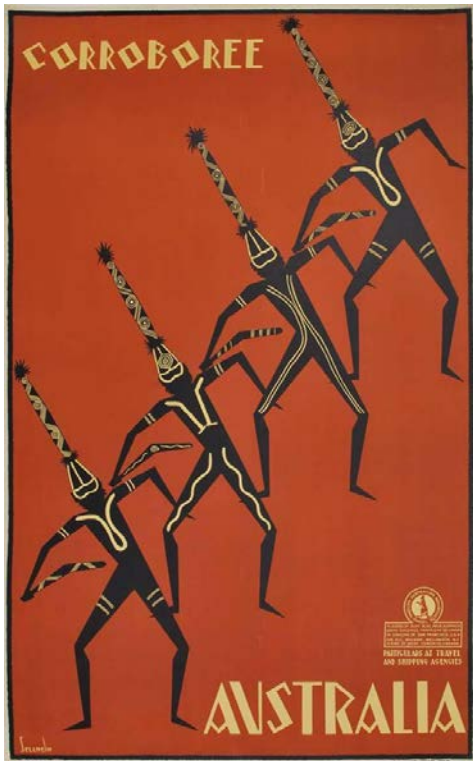


Even such banal consumer goods as light bulbs and newspapers are given a sense of extreme importance and dynamism through Art Deco design. For example, Pierre Andry-Farcy's *Le Petit Dauphinois* (ca. 1925) makes the daily paper appear akin to a revolutionary dictator, aggressively gripping information as it filters through the wire, while Nicolay Diulgheroff's *Watt Radio* (1933) is nothing short of a visual fire alarm, screaming into the passerby's eyes.

St Jean De Luz, Rob Mallet Stevens 1928
50 x 70 cm



St Jean De Luz, Rob Mallet Stevens 1928
50 x 70 cm



Gert Sellheim, Corroboree, Australia, 1935 / 100.4 x 62.4cm / Source: Josef Lebovic Gallery, Australia



Johannes Handschin, Grand Prix Montreux, Switzerland, 1934 / 128x 77.5cm / Source: Classic Posters, Switzerland



Austin Cooper, Paris for the Weekend, 1934, UK / 102 x 64cm / Source: Mark J. Weinbaum, USA



Roger Broders, Monte Carlo, France, 1930 / 100 x 62cm / Source: Poster Team, Norway

“Today, the Art Deco period is looked at as one of the finest moments in design history”.

Today, the Art Deco period is looked at as one of the finest moments in design history. The lasting appeal is potentially because the International Style and other forms of Modernism which followed Deco and incorporate many of its cool lines and elegant shapes, are still popular in today’s decorative art scene. While updated and influenced by Mid-Century furniture, our homes fit more readily with Deco’s crisp luxury than the overly ornamental frills of Art Nouveau. This aesthetic thread which ties us to the past makes posters by the likes of Cassandre, Colin, Loupot, Nizzoli, McKnight Kauffer, and countless other design masters still appear fresh, dynamic, and exciting over 80 years later.



Rene Vincent, Au Bon Marche, France, 1922 /
29x40.5cm / Source: I Desire Vintage Posters,
USA

General Dynamics was founded in 1952 through the merger of Electric Boat and Canadair Ltd, and was at the forefront of scientific research including nuclear energy, electricity, electronics, aerodynamics and space dynamics.

In 1953 the company's future was decided by President Eisenhower's historic "Atoms for Peace" speech at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in which he suggested the creation of an international atomic energy agency which, instead of using atomic energy exclusively for war, would also use it for peaceful means. General Dynamics asked its director of communications, Erik Nitsche, to produce a series of posters for the public to promote the numerous research branches related to peaceful nuclear technologies.

Erik Nitsche (1908-1998) studied in Lausanne, Switzerland and moved to the United States at the age of 26, where he had a successful career as graphic designer and art director at General Dynamics.

The first International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy took place at the seat of the United Nations in Geneva from 8-25 August 1955. The result of this conference was the creation in 1956 of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which was ratified by almost all states during the second conference in 1958.

The first poster of the series featured the flag pyramid symbolizing all the nations united under the atom. Three series of posters were printed between 1955 and 1960.

“... instead of using atomic energy exclusively for war, would also use it for peaceful means...”



1955 - 1956 Atoms for Peace

l'atome au service de la **paix**



hydrodynamics

ERIK NITSCHÉ

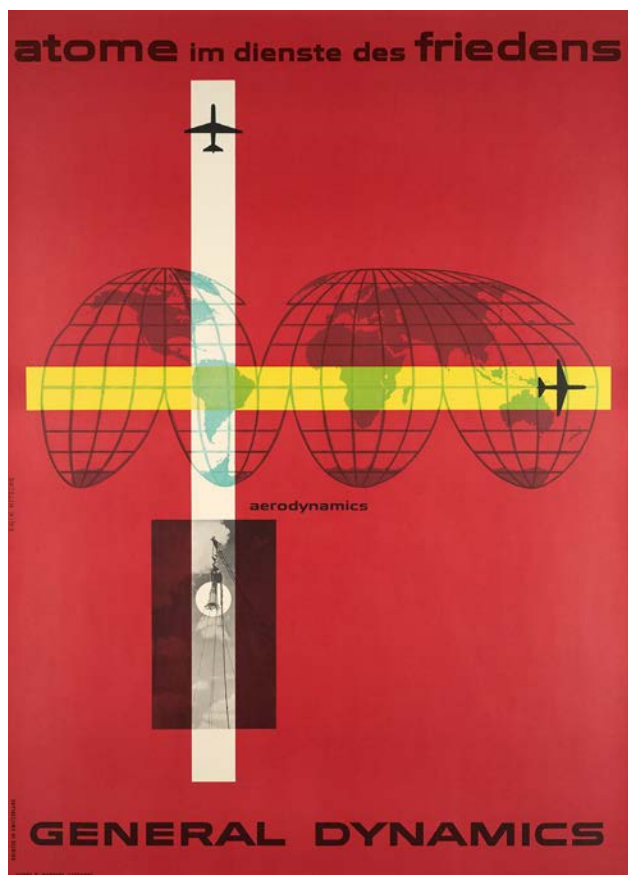
PRINTED IN SWITZERLAND

GENERAL DYNAMICS

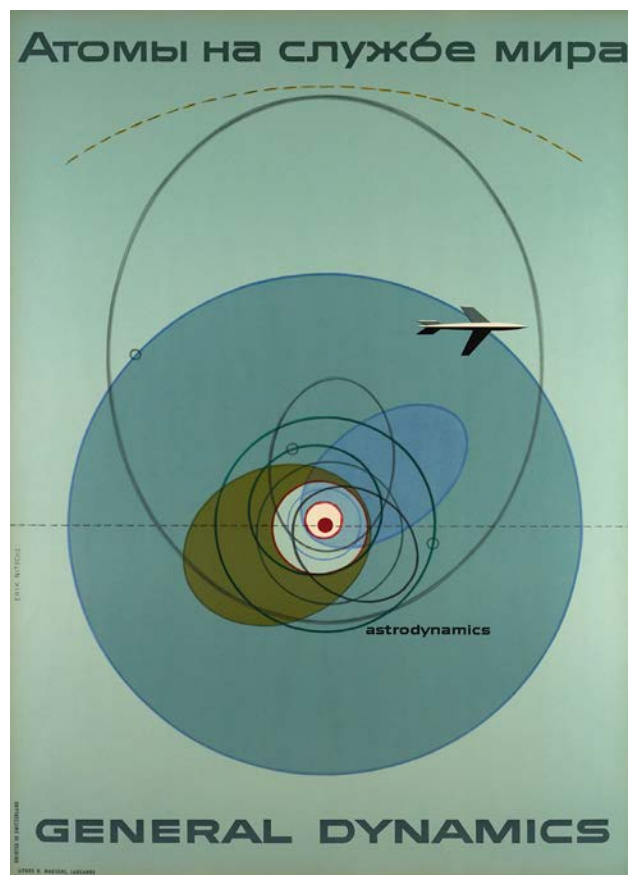
LITHOS R. MARSENS, LAUSANNE

The first series with the Atoms for Peace title consists of a first set of six posters printed in 1955 in six languages to promote the peaceful use of atomic energy on the occasion of the International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, and a second set of five posters in different languages printed in 1956.

The most celebrated of the General Dynamics posters is the "Hydrodynamics" poster that depicts a nautilus shell with a terrestrial globe at its centre and the USS Nautilus (the first nuclear propelled submarine that was launched in 1954) emerging from its spiral.



The "Astrodynamics" poster features Atoms for Peace in Russian and illustrates ballistic research and rockets being propelled into orbit.



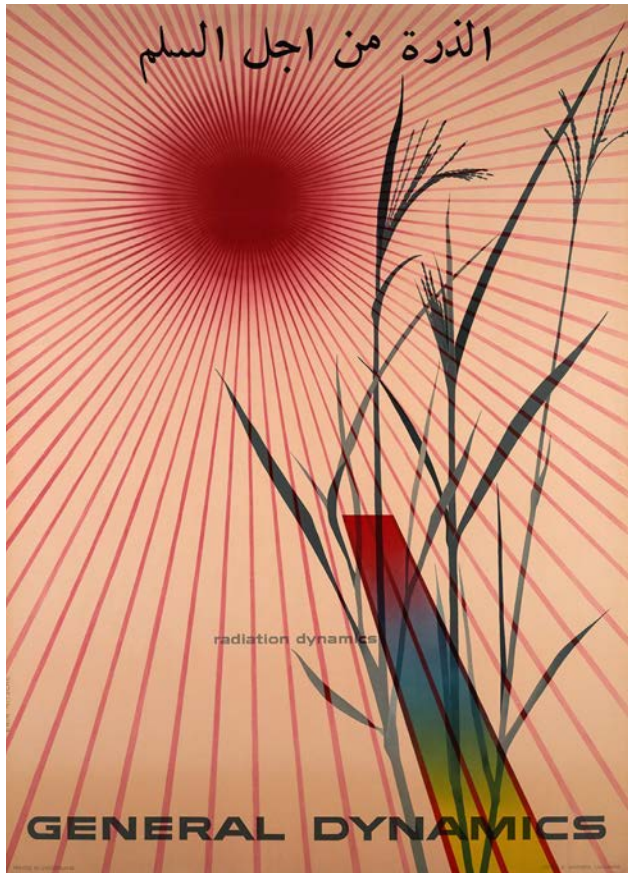
With its title in German, the silhouetted planes shown in the "Aerodynamics" poster are B-36s put into service in 1954. Tentative measures were made during the Cold War to fly these modified nuclear propelled planes, which were capable of staying airborne for a week.



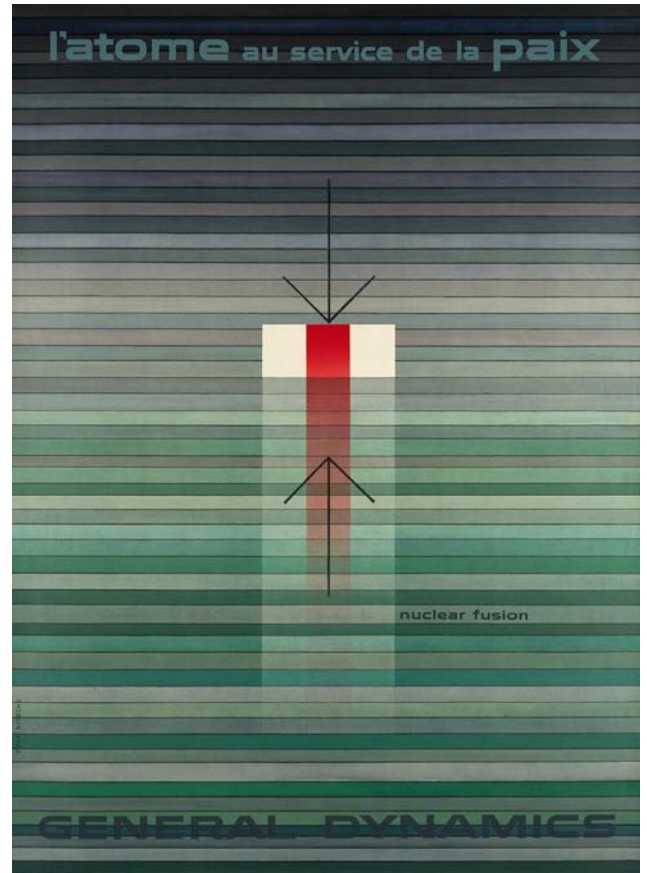
This “Electrodynamics” poster depicts nuclear electricity lighting up the world. At the centre of the light bulb is the symbol of the atom.



The mosaic of concentric circles in “Solar Dynamics” represents the scientific study of the sun and the associated research for energy production using solar panelled mirrors.



The "Radiation Dynamics" poster depicts the latest research into the mutation and radiation of vegetables (a premonition of the genetic manipulations of today), with Atoms for Peace written in Arabic.



The more abstract "Nuclear Fusion" poster in French has multiple layers of colour to suggest the compression of matter. This compression effect is reinforced by two opposing arrows that heat the plutonium bar red hot.

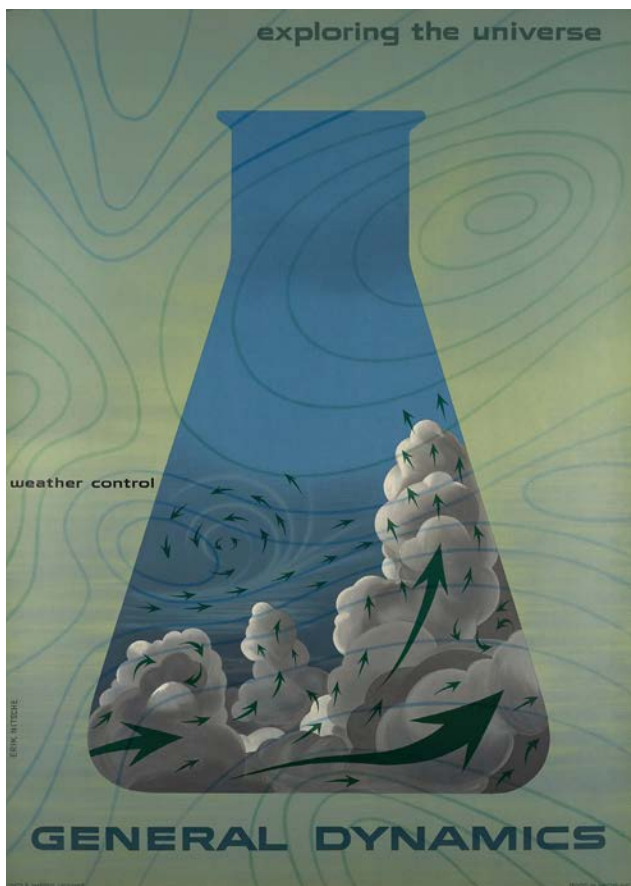
“... to promote the pacific use of atomic energy on the occasion of the International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy...”

1957 - 1958 Exploring the Universe



Exploring the Universe was the theme of the second series of posters designed between 1957 and 1958 to illustrate the research activities of the company for the second International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy in Geneva in 1958. On this occasion, the atomic reactor TRIGA was presented to the public.

“Exploring the Universe First Steps into Space” represents the wing of a plane in a wind tunnel with its graphic flux of air.

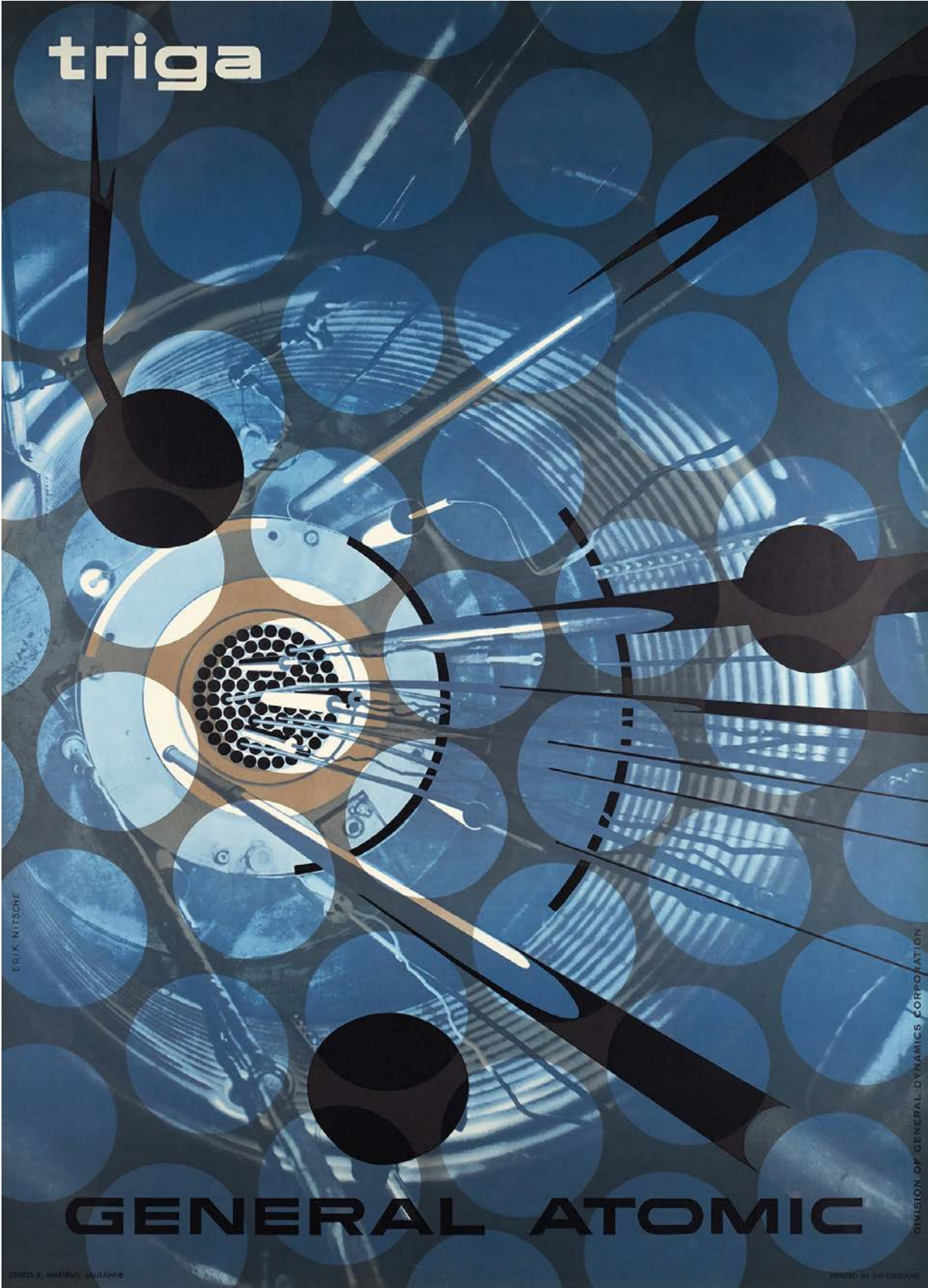


The text in “Exploring the Universe Weather Control” refers to the research undertaken to understand, control and modify the weather through chemical means, symbolized here by the beaker.



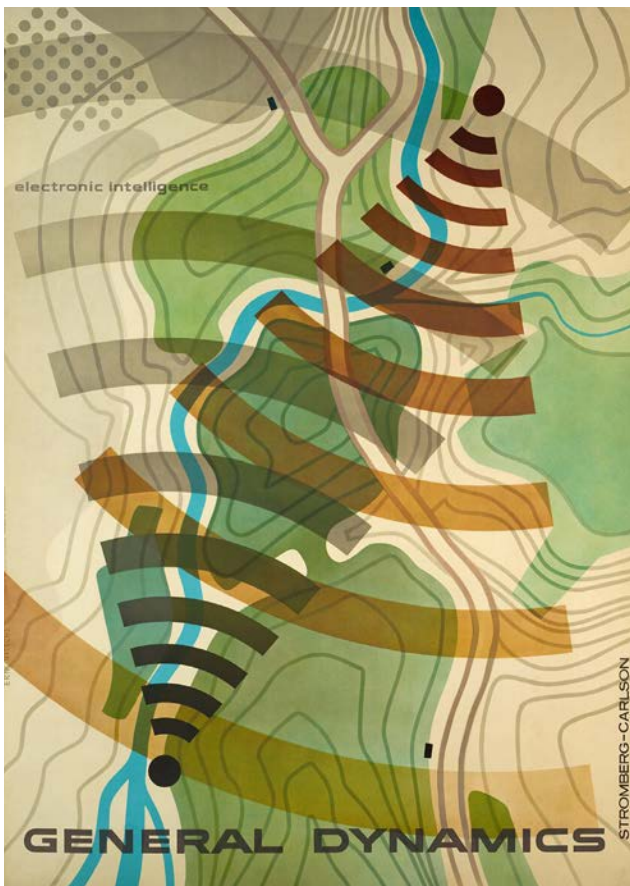
In “Exploring the Universe Worlds Without End” a small rocket is propelled into the enormity of galaxies and black holes.

1958 - 1960 The GD Divisions



A third series from 1958 to 1960 aimed to promote the different transportation, energy and industrial products divisions.

TRIGA is an acronym for Training Research Isotopes General Atomics and is also the name of a small nuclear reactor.



Erik Nitsche superimposed portions of concentric circles that represent radio signals or radar emissions over the contours of a map. With incredible vision, it seems he might have designed the wifi logo years before its birth.



In "Convair 880 the World's Fastest Jetliner," the earth's globe is lifted by the nations and their many colours that are crossed by the General Dynamics 880 plane.

1961 Exhibition at the Rockefeller Plaza

A final series of six posters was published for the large General Dynamics retrospective exhibition at the Rockefeller Plaza in 1961.

These are a unique series of posters that represent a time when the democratic nature of Modernist abstract art was diametrically opposed to the rigid Social Realism of the Soviet Union. Inside that political landscape, Nitsche's Swiss design bonded perfectly with America's economic power.

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