

# Alvin Lustig, American Modernist 1915–1955

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Curators

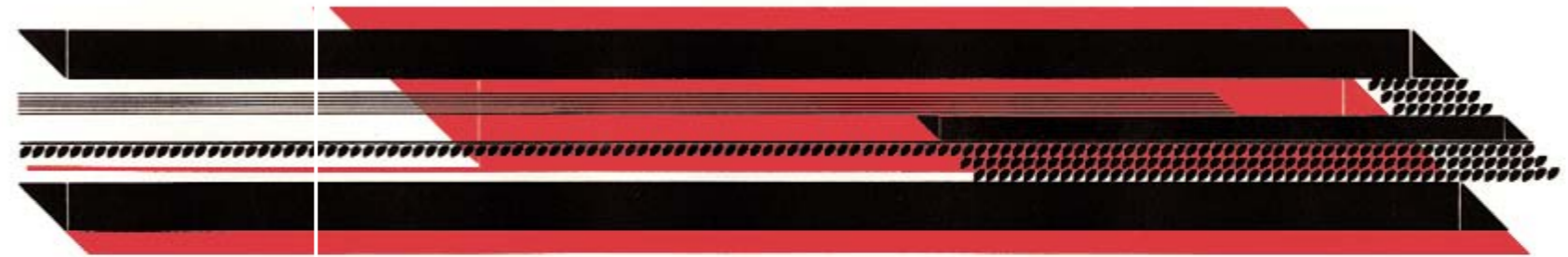
Loan Exhibition at The International Art + Design Fair 2007

An accomplished designer of books, furniture, and interiors, Alvin Lustig was one of the first American graphic designers to enrich his work with the attitudes and experiments of modern art. Influenced by European modernism through friends and teachers such as Richard Neutra, Galka Scheyer, and Kem Weber, Lustig began his professional life designing books and magazines in a modern idiom.<sup>1</sup> He did not limit himself to graphic design for long, however, as his ideological ambitions and intellectual restlessness led him to try his hand at designing everything from textiles to a helicopter. He earned widespread attention and respect for his confident expression of contemporary artistic and intellectual concerns.

Lustig was deliberate about his strategy of mining painting and sculpture for form and meaning, and he was very clear about the relationship he wanted to establish between art and design. As he wrote in a letter in 1948 to his longtime friend and client, the book publisher James Laughlin: "I think that it is in this effort to break down the barrier between art and life that the most challenging problem lies, and in which I feel my contribution might be made. To continue to 'invent' in the sense that the artist has done in the last fifty years is not as interesting to me as the problem of synthesizing and projecting these formal discoveries into a conscious reality shared on a broad level."<sup>2</sup> In Lustig's ideology, designers were not themselves artists, but rather intermediaries between private expression in the arts and public life.

Lustig created work of a potency that remains undiminished. His book jackets, in particular, are landmarks in the field for their aesthetic appeal, intellectual rigor, and complex variety of approaches and techniques. He also contributed to American graphic design as a discipline through his teaching activities and curriculum planning at Black Mountain College, Art Center College, University of Georgia, and Yale University.

T H E G H O S T I N T H E U N D E R B L O W S



BY ALFRED YOUNG FISHER  
EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
LAWRENCE CLARK POWELL • DESIGNED BY  
ALVIN LUSTIG AND PRINTED BY THE  
WARD RITCHIE PRESS AT LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA • NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY

During his lifetime, Lustig's designs for interiors, textiles, furniture, and architecture received as much attention as his graphic design, if not more so. From an early age, Lustig was sensitive to his physical environment and its possibilities for transformation, beginning with the bedroom he repainted, when he was a teenager, in tones of black, tan, and rust, much to the curiosity of his neighbors.<sup>3</sup> Sadly, most of his interiors have been dismantled and his furniture is now rare. This exhibition of photographs and surviving objects enables us to examine the range of Lustig's three-dimensional work and, in combination with examples of his graphic design, to explore the full extent of his modern vision.

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Lustig spent his youth on the West Coast and maintained a fondness for the possibilities inherent in Californian culture. Born in Denver in 1915, he was five when his family moved to Los Angeles, where his father became a film distributor for Warner Brothers. He was directed by his parents toward the visual arts from an early age, and he attended art classes on Saturdays, although he was more interested in performing puppet shows and magic acts.<sup>4</sup> Later, as a student at Los Angeles High School, he created elaborate magic shows that were performed in several schools in the area.<sup>5</sup> He designed posters to advertise the events, and these attracted the attention of an art teacher who was interested in the avant-garde. The teacher showed him posters by

Figure 1. Title spread, *The Ghost in the Underblows*, The Ward Ritchie Press, 1940. Eleven black and red designs made of metal letterpress ornaments mark the title pages and chapter openers of this well-known book.

A.M. Cassandre and E. McKnight Kauffer and gave him a copy of Le Corbusier's *La Ville Radieuse*, a seminal publication on modern architecture and urbanism.<sup>6</sup> Lustig felt an immediate sympathy with such work, declaring later that he was a member of the generation that was "born modern."<sup>7</sup> In 1933 Lustig graduated from high school and managed to talk his way into the position of art director for *Westways* magazine.<sup>8</sup> That fall he entered Los Angeles Junior College to study printing and art history,<sup>9</sup> and a year later, he enrolled in the Art Center School in Pasadena.

When he was twenty, after hearing a great deal about Frank Lloyd Wright at the Art Center, Lustig applied for a fellowship to study at Taliesin East in Wisconsin. He was accepted and moved to Taliesin in 1935, but he soon felt guilty about putting a financial strain on his family and he chafed under Wright's overwhelming presence.<sup>10</sup> The letter he wrote to Wright upon leaving Taliesin after only three months reflects his independent spirit and self-reliance: "There are other Man-forming influences besides physical labor and my share of them is much larger than you probably realize. It is these past experiences that have taught me to understand the true meaning of reality and make it difficult to accept this idyll as life."<sup>11</sup>

Lustig briefly freelanced as a designer in New York, but he returned to Los Angeles to set up his own business in 1936 at the age of twenty-one.<sup>12</sup> He worked out of various rented and borrowed spaces until 1939, when he designed a small office for himself in Brentwood. In 1943 this office, called the "Duration Apartment," was featured in the magazine *California Arts + Architecture* as an economical yet stylish design. This recognition was the first appearance of Lustig's work in a national magazine.<sup>13</sup>

His graphic design at this early stage of his career involved the use of hand presses and metal type, antique technologies barely changed since the fifteenth century, which he manipulated to express his modernist sympathies. Lustig used geometric ornaments available to letterpress printers — squares, circles, and triangles — to create complex illustrations for small commissions, such as invitations, programs, and flyers. He also used them to design and illustrate three books for Ward Ritchie, a publisher of finely printed limited editions. One of the books, *The Ghost in the Underblows* by Alfred Young Fisher (1940), contained stunning red and black chapter dividers and would become one of Lustig's best known designs. [Fig. 1] Although the letterpress work was not directly inspired by contemporary art, his use of typesetters' ornaments allowed him to create unique work inexpensively in a modern idiom. His appropriation of traditional materials for unconventional results and the boldness of his designs attracted attention from other designers as they offered a dramatic contrast to the traditions of the time.

In 1939 James Laughlin, founder of the experimental fiction and poetry publishing company New Directions Publishing, visited Lustig in his office. Impressed with his innovative work, Laughlin commissioned Lustig to design two book covers for New Directions, a poetry anthology and Henry Miller's *The Wisdom of the Heart*, inaugurating a life-long collaboration. These first two designs were composed from geometric letterpress ornaments.

Lustig did not limit himself, however, to the world of small publishers, bibliophiles, and letterpress printing. He also produced work using offset lithography and photography. For instance, his design for the book *Cities Are for People* by Mel Scott (1941) employed gradations, silhouettes, and photographs cropped at dynamic angles, all strategies derived from European modernism but broadly applied within the scope of commercial graphic design. He also maintained and expanded his professional circle, which included Richard Neutra, Charles Eames, and John Entenza, publisher of *Arts & Architecture* magazine (originally *California Arts + Architecture*), for which Lustig briefly served as art director, redesigning the format and masthead.<sup>14</sup>

Lustig's vision for his work extended beyond efficiency and formal issues toward what he envisioned as a greater goal, that of making a profound impact on modern life. He was highly ambitious and dared to imagine



Figure 2. Lustig moved to New York City and designed the offices of *Look* magazine in 1944. Seen here is a wall panel with applied pictograms of an eye and hand, advertising mockups propped against the wall, and art objects such as a wiry sculpture and glass bottle. Photograph by Maya Deren. Courtesy Elaine Lustig Cohen.



how his work might have a lasting effect on the world around him. Comparing himself to fellow graphic designers E. McKnight Kauffer and Paul Rand, Lustig wrote: "my aims are wider, and I hope, deeper." He felt called upon to design not only what he termed public symbols, but also "the things they are supposed to signify."<sup>15</sup> Throughout his life, Lustig was absorbed in religious and social questions, and he was determined to use modern design to apply what he considered the psychological power of the arts to what he felt were concrete solutions for social

problems. Interestingly, Ward Ritchie, who rented office space to Lustig in Los Angeles, remembered him as being intensely interested in Christianity during this period.<sup>16</sup>

In 1943, Lustig was working in the same building as the California offices of *Look* magazine. Friendly with their staff, Lustig was hired to oversee the design of a new, small-format companion to *Look* magazine. This position, Visual Research Director, required Lustig to move to the magazine's New York City offices. He had free rein to design not only the magazine itself but also ads, stationery, the in-house newsletter *Staff*, and even the office interiors.<sup>17</sup> [Fig. 2] Lustig's elegant redesign of the offices was photographed by a friend, the experimental filmmaker Maya Deren, and published in *Interiors* magazine. The offices combined the luxurious elements of rich paint colors and reflective glass surfaces with the organic forms of woven baskets and Aztec terra-cotta figures. A painted wall panel displaying pictograms of a hand, eye, arrow, and scribbles was undoubtedly inspired by African, Oceanic, and Native American arts, which were revered by the avant-garde during the 1930s and 1940s. Elsewhere in the office, Lustig displayed a large photograph of a hand and gestural scribble by Hungarian-born émigré artist and designer Gyorgy Kepes. The motifs in Lustig's and Kepes' imagery echoed each other and were suggestive of Surrealism through their disembodied hands and use of line as a trace of the unconscious. Lustig was already incorporating ideas from fine art movements into his interior spaces.

In 1945 Lustig designed the Reporter Publications offices located in the Empire State Building for the publisher George Segal. The corporate offices were published in *Interiors* and *Architectural Forum* magazines and celebrated for their efficient use of space. Lustig designed the lighting and much of the furniture, and he inserted dashes of bright colors into otherwise austere rooms. Lustig's relationship with Segal eventually led to other commissions over the years, such as magazine covers for *Men's Reporter*, *Gentry*, and *American Fabrics*, and the design of Segal's own apartment in 1952, and the interior of Segal's country house in New Jersey. The furniture and lighting that Lustig designed for Segal's New York City apartment, pieces that are still in use today, were simple and elegant. Lustig embellished selected cabinet doors and bookshelves with geometric shapes: a grid of black circles on a white ground; a single, large gold-leaf circle; and a pair of human-scale diamonds in the foyer. The dining room table was formed from a cantilevered piece of marble lit by a unique lighting fixture

Figure 3. Apartment for William Segal, Park Avenue, New York, 1952. Lustig designed rectilinear built-in cabinets and desks and decorated them with painted geometric motifs, such as the gold-leaf circle on the desk front seen here. The chairs, sofa, and marble-covered coffee table are also by Lustig, as well as the built-in light trough on the ceiling. Photograph by Ezra Stoller. Courtesy Elaine Lustig Cohen.



made of a horizontal tube with crossbars illuminated at the tips. [Fig. 3]

In 1946 Lustig moved back to California, which he loved for its informal lifestyle, its freedom, and its weather, and he set up an office as a general designer on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. He collaborated with the architect Sam Reisbord to design the Beverly Carlton Hotel (now the Avalon Hotel), a sixteen-unit apartment building named the Beverly Landau, and a school and community center for the Labor Zionist Movement. [Fig. 4] In 1948 he married the artist Elaine Furstenberg, who became a partner not only in his life but also in his work. This was a very busy time for Lustig; he designed book jackets, buildings, and interiors for clients in both Los Angeles and New York, and at the same time he increased his knowledge of contemporary painting and sculpture. He visited the home of Walter Arensberg in Los Angeles to view the famous collector's Surrealist and

Figure 4. Beverly Landau Apartment building, designed with the architect Sam Reisbord, Los Angeles, 1947–48. Lustig expanded his career into architecture during the late 1940s, successfully gaining the trust of clients, such as the owners of the Beverly Landau who allowed him to design elements of the interior as well as the exterior, including a fountain, murals, and furniture. His ambitions remained great, however, as he wrote to Laughlin after the completion of the building, "It is going to take me about another year at least to gain enough facility in architecture to do the kind of creative work I am seeking."<sup>32</sup> Photograph by Jay Conner. Courtesy Elaine Lustig Cohen.



Pre-Columbian art, and he became a friend of Galka Scheyer, the collector and promoter of the work of the Blue Four (Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Alexei von Jawlensky, and Lyonel Feininger). Lustig also designed invitations for the Stendhal Gallery, important dealers in Pre-Columbian art; and he kept up with the latest art publications. During this period, his work moved away from the stylistic influences of his youth and became more personal, reflecting the self-confidence he had gained through experience and study. Paul Klee, Joan Miró, and Alexander Calder, among others, had a profound effect on his design strategies and imagery, as did the Abstract Expressionists, including Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, and Adolph Gottlieb. Lustig's drawings evoked the playful linearity of the former group and the bold forms and dense textures of the latter.

Thin lines of every variety appeared in Lustig's work during the 1940s, from the tangled scrawls that appeared on the New Directions edition of Franz Kafka's *Amerika* in 1946 to walls covered in slim wooden slats, one of his favorite interior treatments. Thin lines were characteristic of much design work of the 1940s and 1950s, but Lustig's use of them was particularly sensitive, perhaps because he was aware of their sources in

fine art. Some of Lustig's book jackets of this period used thin lines, such as the cover of Muriel Rukeyser's *Selected Poems* (1951), which evoked Klee's work through a spare yet celebratory arrangement of crossed, white lines on a blue ground. His use of line could evoke prehistoric art, expressionism, or science, and sometimes all three at once, as was the case with his design for the textile "Incantation" produced by Laverne Originals in 1948–ca. 1951. The pattern playfully anthropomorphized the scientific notation used in physics and mathematics. [Fig. 5] In 1947 Lustig designed the logos, stationery, packaging, and interiors for two stores in Beverly Hills: Sheela's, a boutique for women's fashion, and Monte Factor, a men's clothing store. The wall leading to Sheela's entrance was lined with colorful wooden slats, echoed in the store's letterhead with a background of thin yellow stripes. [Fig. 6] Lustig's line drawing of a cavalier in the Monte Factor logo was featured in the interior of the showroom as an oversized figure on the wall.

The organic and biomorphic forms popular in American design in the 1940s and 1950s, such as ellipses,

Figure 5. Alvin Lustig at the entrance to his Sunset Boulevard office, Los Angeles, 1949. A curtain fabricated from "Incantation," one of his textile designs for Laverne Originals, is visible in the background. Courtesy Elaine Lustig Cohen.



blobs, and boomerangs, also appeared in Lustig's work. These forms can be traced to the work of Alexander Calder, Jean Arp, Isamu Noguchi, and Joan Miró, one of Lustig's favorite artists. Lustig's book jacket for Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell* (1945) combines thin linear type with amorphous shapes similar to forms in Miró's dream-inspired paintings. The fuselage of a one-man helicopter designed by Lustig, which was never mass

Figure 6. Entrance to Sheela's Women's Store, Beverly Hills, 1947. Lustig's designs for the fashionable Sheela's featured cantilevered, geometric display cases, and walls of painted wooden slats. Photograph by Richard Fish. Courtesy Elaine Lustig Cohen.

produced, was a smooth, bulbous shape with a rounded triangular tailfin perched on three spindly wheel struts and suspended below two sets of thin rotors. Lustig's design for a chair manufactured in a limited series by the Paramount Furniture Company was made of upholstered plywood molded into two softly-curving shapes set on thin metal legs. Included in the Good Design exhibitions at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1950, Lustig's chair was classified as "experimental" for its rethinking of a wing chair form in a light-weight, modern guise. His helicopter and chair testify to his ability to successfully conceive organic forms not just on paper, but also in three dimensions.

Despite all of Lustig's accomplishments in Los Angeles, in 1949 his architectural commissions diminished, and he became disenchanted with Californian culture. Writing to Laughlin in 1949 he confessed: "Must admit that my paradise looks more and more tarnished ... building has become very quiet the last few months and I find myself doing mostly graphic design. If I'm only doing graphic work I certainly belong back in NY."<sup>18</sup> At this time Josef Albers recommended Lustig for a job consulting with the University of Georgia in Athens on the creation of a design education program at the school. Lustig accepted the job and he and his wife left what he called the "cultural desert" of California for Georgia.<sup>19</sup>

Lustig's work in Georgia was not his first involvement with design education, nor would it be his last. His approach to design education was experimental; "I don't really believe in art education, that's the reason I'm willing to try it out in various ways."<sup>20</sup> Lustig himself experienced the power of a thoughtful, sympathetic teacher when his high school art instructor introduced him to modern art and architecture, and he hoped he could create similar opportunities for students to experience what he termed "a sudden opening of the eye."<sup>21</sup> He believed a design program that was integrated with painting, sculpture, architecture and technology departments was the most likely to nurture excellence. In 1945 he had taught at the summer art institute at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where he had met Albers, along with the painters Robert Motherwell and Lyonel Feininger.<sup>22</sup> Later, in 1948, Lustig worked as an instructor at the Art Center College, where two of his students were Louis Danziger and John Fallis, who later became prominent designers in Los Angeles. Danziger recalled being unhappy at the Art Center until he overheard Lustig speaking to a class about the connections between design, society, and religion. The chance encounter prompted him to attend all of Lustig's classes. Danziger later joined the Design Group, an association composed of like-minded former students of Lustig's who were "opposed to mindless, sentimental, nostalgic, commercial design."<sup>23</sup>

In addition to arranging for Lustig to consult on the design program at the University of Georgia, Albers also asked him to help establish the recently formed graphic design program at Yale University. At both Georgia and Yale, Lustig developed a curriculum that integrated courses in design with contemporary art, noting that the best design schools, such as the Bauhaus, had fostered interaction between art and design. Lustig formulated an educational philosophy based on the idea that art should inform design practice and discourse, although he



believed that the work of designers as public communicators made them no less important than artists.<sup>24</sup>

After leaving Georgia, the Lustigs rented a modular Lustron home in Croton-on-Hudson, a town near New York City. Elaine Lustig Cohen recalled choosing the house because it was affordable.<sup>25</sup> A hoped-for answer to a post-World-War-II housing shortage, the U.S. government subsidized the production of approximately 2,500 prefabricated homes from the Lustron Corporation between 1949 and 1950. Because they were dissatisfied with the house's interior design, the Lustigs added a panel to cover unsightly bookshelves and curtains to hide walls, transforming their home into a relatively modernist interior. [Fig. 7] One day a week Lustig commuted from

Figure 7. Lustron house, Croton-on-Hudson, New York, 1949. The Lustigs redesigned their prefabricated home by adding Lustig's own Paramount Furniture chairs (in the far corner and left), a panel in low-relief to hide standardized bookshelves, and a floor-length curtain to obscure a wall. Courtesy Elaine Lustig Cohen.

Croton-on-Hudson to New Haven to teach at Yale, and the rest of the week the couple traveled into New York City to work in a small office they had rented on Fortieth Street.

Lustig's first solo exhibition opened in November 1949 at the AD Gallery in New York City. The AD Gallery was famous for its exhibitions of contemporary graphic designers, including Paul Rand, Ladislav Sutnar, and Will Burtin in 1947 and 1948. Lustig designed the installation structure for his own show, which consisted of light-weight rectangular stands that fitted neatly within one another for compact shipping. The show traveled across the United States from 1950 to 1952, stopping at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Frank Perls Gallery in Beverly Hills, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Washington D.C., Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, and Yale University's School of Graphic Design. The exhibition's extensive tour gave Lustig opportunities to share his ideas about the power of design in contemporary life through lectures and panel discussions that were well publicized in the local press.

In 1952, after two years in Croton-on-Hudson, the Lustigs moved into New York City and Lustig decided to focus full time on his design work.<sup>26</sup> During the early 1950s, Lustig designed several interiors in New York, including his new office on Fifty-eighth Street and his new apartment on Park Avenue, the Segal apartment mentioned above, a Lightolier showroom, and an apartment for Herta and Paul Wilhelm. Photographs of these interiors reveal consistent design strategies: stripes and bold geometric shapes were constructed or applied to walls and furniture; folk and natural objects were carefully placed to contrast with broad planes; inventive lighting fixtures and schemes were designed; and floors were patterned with linoleum strips. Not only did Lustig design sculptural lighting, but he also created sculptures for his interiors, including a tall bronze form dramatically positioned under a spotlight in the Wilhelm apartment. For their own apartment, the Lustigs designed a coffee table with a glass top underlaid with black-and-white photographs of contrasting forms, such as a propeller and a hand-drawn sun.

Lustig began to incorporate photography into his book jacket designs for the New Directions Modern Reader series, demonstrating his admiration for Surrealist photography and sculpture. He described his approach in a letter to Laughlin: "Using all kinds of methods, solarization, photograms, reticulation, negative melting, debossing, montage I would create a set of vital images and symbols for each book. . . . Nothing very good has been done in this field yet and this seems like a remarkable opportunity."<sup>27</sup> He commissioned photographs from the experimental photographer Edward Quigley, and he also collaborated with photographers George Barrows, Thomas Yee, and Jay Connors. Sometimes he and his wife shot the images; he even modeled for the jacket photo on Italo Svevo's *Confessions of Zeno*. These photographic jackets reflected the Surrealist potential of Lustig's new designs, which suggestively combine violence and beauty. His design for Tennessee Williams's *Rose Tattoo* reproduced a photograph of a rose close-up and in negative, which makes the flower appear both strange and sinister. In a Magritte-like juxtaposition of grace and malevolence, the Lustigs' photograph for *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* by Tennessee Williams features a fragile magnolia blossom nailed to a rough wooden plank. On other photographic covers, he arranged symbolic images in discrete containers, reminiscent of the sculpture of Marcel Duchamp and Joseph Cornell, as well as paintings by Adolph Gottlieb that divided canvases into grids holding mysterious icons. [Fig. 8]

During the early 1950s, the Lustig office continued to gain major commissions, and the Lustigs collaborated on the designs. One of their important clients, Lightolier, made use of all of the Lustigs' talents; they designed Lightolier's price lists and New Year's cards along with their New York showroom and custom lighting fixtures. Lustig was particularly interested in lighting and left many sketches for fixtures, none of which were ever mass-produced. A few were custom made for the interiors they designed, including thin, tubular wall-mounted lights; an elegant, built-in ceiling trough in the Segal apartment; and a dramatic pinwheel-shaped wall light for

the Wilheims. Two of his most striking lights—energetic and complex linear tangles of metal and bulbs—were created for the Lustigs' design office.

In 1953–54 Lustig combined his architectural and graphic experience to create a logo and signage for Northland Center, a very early shopping mall in Southfield, Michigan, designed by Victor Gruen. Lustig came to the project through his friend Edgardo Contini, with whom he had taught at the Art Center College. Lustig's logo was a classic stick-and-ball construction, similar to wall clocks that had been produced by the Howard Miller Company in Michigan. He designed signage for the parking lot, the main road sign for the mall, and a very large logo applied to the mall's water tower. This work led to his involvement in the 1954 exhibition *Signs in the Street*, about signage in the environment, curated by Mildred Constantine at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.<sup>28</sup>

By the mid-1950s, Lustig began to suffer seriously from the diabetes he had developed in childhood. His sight slowly dimmed, and by the end of 1954 he became blind, first in one eye and then in both.<sup>29</sup> At first he hid the affliction from his clients, although those who knew of it continued to support him. In spite of his blindness, Lustig directed projects, such as the design of the Wilhelm apartment, through Elaine and his staff. He tried to plan ahead for the time when he could no longer work, and at one point he contemplated retiring to Mexico.<sup>30</sup> But he continued to work right up until his death, and on November 17, 1955, he wrote to his doctor: "We are working on such long range accounts as signs for the General Motors Technical Center of Eero Saarinen, architectural lettering and promotional consultant for the new Seagram building by Mies van der Rohe, and graphic and architectural lettering consultant for the new Mondawmin shopping center in Baltimore designed by [Pietro] Belluschi."<sup>31</sup> In October 1955, the Museum of Modern Art in New York opened an exhibition of Lustig's work paired with that of the Italian designer Bruno Munari. Shortly after the show closed in November, Alvin Lustig died at home on December 4, at the age of forty.

In the decades following his death, public awareness of Lustig's work faded, except among his former students and a handful of graphic design historians and collectors. With the emergence of graphic design history studies beginning in the 1980s, interest in Lustig's career grew. In 1989 Roger Remington included him in the book *Nine Pioneers of American Graphic Design*, and in 1993 the American Institute of Graphic Arts awarded him a posthumous AIGA Medal. Deeper investigation has revealed the range of his capabilities across graphic design, architecture, interior, and industrial design and the philosophy and passion that bound his efforts together in a seamless body of work. The appeal of Lustig's design transcends nostalgia for the aesthetics of the

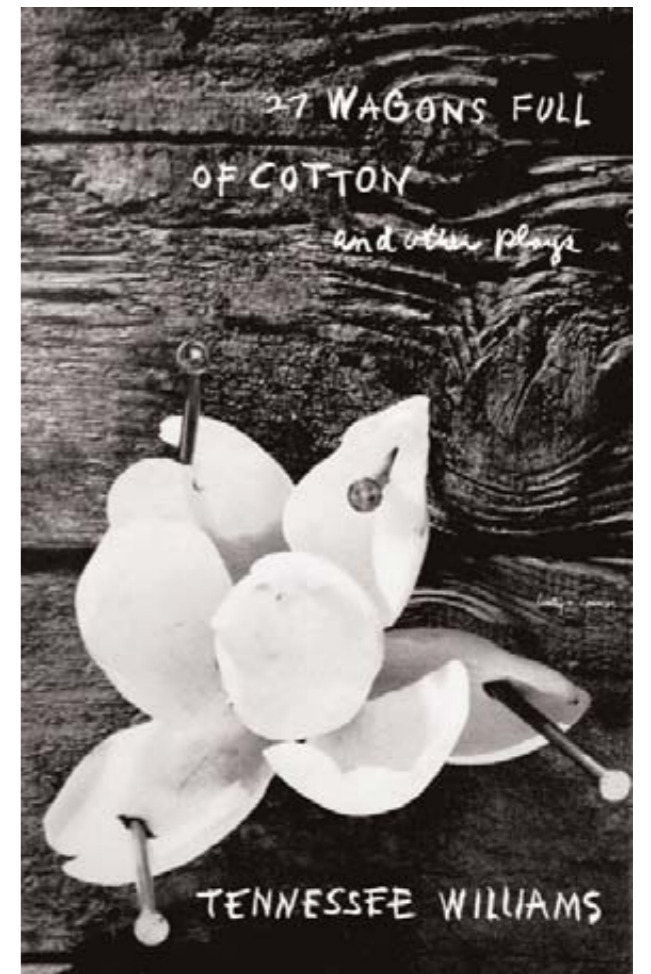


Figure 8. *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* by Tennessee Williams, New Directions, 1949. The Lustigs' photograph succinctly expressed the play's Southern gothic sexuality and violence. Courtesy New Directions.

American post-war boom. He combined a unique talent with a personal search for meaning, a search that led him to apply the experiments of modern art to the creation of enduring design.

### Acknowledgments

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### Endnotes

- 1 The Austrian-born architect Richard Neutra (1892–1970) designed key modernist homes in California. Galka Scheyer was a German expatriate art dealer who specialized in the work of the Blue Four (Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Alexei von Jawlensky, and Lyonel Feininger). The German émigré Kem Weber taught Lustig industrial design during his tenure at Art Center College in Pasadena.
- 2 Lustig to James Laughlin, Los Angeles, January 9, 1948. Lustig, Alvin, 1915–1955, Correspondence, 1943–1955 and undated, The Houghton Library, Harvard University.
- 3 David W. Davies, “The Graphic Art of Alvin Lustig,” Alvin Lustig, Graphic Design Archives, Wallace Library, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York, (photocopy), 4.
- 4 Ibid., 2.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Adolphe Jean-Marie Mouron Cassandre (1901–1968), active in France, designed some of the best-known posters of the twentieth century. Edward McKnight Kauffer (1890–1954) was an American-born painter and designer of many historically significant posters for clients such as the London Underground and Shell Oil. Davies, 3. “About the career of a young man with an inquiring mind / Alvin Lustig, Designer,” *Interiors* (September 1946): 71.
- 7 Lustig, “Personal Notes on Design,” *The Collected Writings of Alvin Lustig* (Holland R. Melson, Jr., New Haven, 1958): 40.
- 8 Davies, 3–4.
- 9 Ibid., 4.
- 10 Lustig to Frank Lloyd Wright, Spring Green, Wisconsin, 1935. Alvin Lustig correspondence, Elaine Lustig Cohen collection, New York City.
- 11 Lustig to Frank Lloyd Wright, Los Angeles, 1935. Correspondence, Elaine Lustig Cohen collection.
- 12 Davies, 6.
- 13 “Duration Apartment,” *California Arts + Architecture* vol. 60, no. 10 (December, 1943): 26.
- 14 Lustig to Laughlin, Los Angeles, 1941. Correspondence, Harvard University.
- 15 Lustig to Laughlin, Los Angeles, August 1, 1948. Correspondence, Harvard University.
- 16 Davies, 8. Ward Ritchie, *Fine Printing: The Los Angeles Tradition* (Library of Congress, Washington D.C., 1987): 63.
- 17 Davies, 11a–14a.
- 18 Lustig to Laughlin, Los Angeles, May 5, 1949. Correspondence, Harvard University.
- 19 Lustig to Laughlin, Los Angeles, September 17, 1949. Correspondence, Harvard University.
- 20 Lustig, “Design Program for the University of Georgia,” *The Collected Writings of Alvin Lustig* (New Haven, CT: Holland R. Melson, 1958): 17.
- 21 Lustig, “Designing a Process of Teaching,” *The Collected Writings of Alvin Lustig* (New Haven, CT: Holland R. Melson, 1958): 15.
- 22 Davies, 13. Lustig to Laughlin, Black Mountain College, undated (ca. 1945). Correspondence, Harvard University.
- 23 Steven Heller, “Work, Think, Feel.” American Institute of Graphic Arts, 1999. <http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/medalist-louisdanziger>.
- 24 Lustig, “Designing a Process of Teaching:” 19.
- 25 Elaine Lustig Cohen in conversation with authors, May 11, 2007.
- 26 Davies, 24.
- 27 Lustig to Laughlin, Beverly Hills, undated. Correspondence, Harvard University.
- 28 Elaine Lustig Cohen in conversation with authors, May 11, 2007.
- 29 Letter from Lustig to Mr. W. De Mayo, New York City, November 18, 1954. Correspondence, Harvard University.
- 30 Lustig to Frank Malina, New York City, June 1, 1955. Correspondence, Harvard University.
- 31 Lustig to Dr. D. Rothrook of Rohm and Hass, New York City, November 17, 1955. Correspondence, Harvard University.
- 32 Lustig to Laughlin, Los Angeles, August 1, 1948. Correspondence, Harvard University.