

MARTIN'S

IDEAS

BOOK TWO

● PRICE ONE DOLLAR

Copyrighted
† 1936 †
H. C. MARTIN
ORLANDO, FLA.
PRINTED IN U. S. A.
BY
THE BREWTON CO
ORLANDO, FLA.

MARTIN'S IDEAS

THIS little book represents the kind of guidance I desperately needed when I began my career, is the outcome of that need. Could I myself have had such a book as this years ago, how much easier my way would have been, how much faster my progress! Ernest Thompson Seton in a two-line preface to one of his nature books thus aptly expresses my purpose: "Because I have known the torment of thirst I would dig a well where others may drink." I can say with quiet certainty that you will find much of value, of absorbing interest in these pages.

Do not think that I am so presumptuous as to lay claim outright to all the erudition displayed herein: a debt to other craftsmen is acknowledged for numerous ideas that have become popular coin, as it were, and pass from hand to hand. These have been melted together in my crucible, stamped with my image, sent out again as my own. This I am frank to admit.

It is especially recommended to all display card men who have trouble with layout. One would need to have a veritable encyclopedical head to carry therein all the hour-gaining—nay minute-gaining—layouts here analyzed and presented. The attempt has been to present always a new IDEA, or the better handling of an old one; not an exhibit of grand, abstractly beautiful creations, but definite, concrete examples. The planning and work has all been done for you: you have here a sort of "stockpot" of cut and dried layouts that can be lifted right out and put to work on your accounts.

The theory itself should be carefully, diligently studied. It has been written out honestly and plainly, not

over the head of the beginner, not fabricated with literary embroidery, nor "four-dollar words." A bit wooden in spots, perhaps, for little time has been spent on copy craftsmanship; but at least free from flapdoodle, and from twaddie and froth. The phraseology abrupt, not polished, but the aim has been to have something in it—meat that you can pick out; it is earnest, it is sincere; it is plain and clear true-talk, a book of inspiration, of stimulation. Every word written from practical, hard, even sometimes bitter experience; for I am a worker at the bench myself, I think as a lettering man, I speak the lettering man's language; therefore for him it should be a lucid, highly readable treatise. Sprinkled through the pages are many interesting comments and personal observations which will help to keep the book from being heavy, academic reading. To get the best benefit from it, it should not be hastily scanned over in a fitful, forgetful manner, but read thoughtfully and deliberately with concentrated study.

These pages will reveal a mine of examples, suggestions and methods that any shopman, large or small, can apply to his business, to his work with a degree of success limited only by his own initiative and effort. It is meant that this inspirational, yet withal *practical*, volume should be a direct incentive to get up and get busy and get somewhere. It is hoped that you may shut the book a richer man, that it may prove to you to be a golden egg source of profit. With this book, any lettering man is completely equipped. He can set up shop at once.

THE AUTHOR

• • •

martin's ideas

DISPLAY advertising is one of the greatest commercial forces of today; and the display card, formerly popularly known as "show card," is one of its most commonly used forms. The primary purpose of this colorful factor in advertising art is to help sell goods or ideas, whether they be viands or violins, varnishes or vacations; to reach that much-sought-after person, the man in the street. The display card is in itself a salesman, who talks to every customer before he comes into the store, and gives him the favorable impression which he brings in with him.

Practically every merchant these days is mindful of the money making value of good, colorful display cards; of their importance as silent salesmen in persuading, in prompting the urge to buy, in tempting the hesitant to act, often even better than the attentive salesman behind the counter; for it is a psychological fact that people like to feel that they have decided and bought without being induced to do so.

Good display cards executed with the selling idea in mind, by a workman who fully realizes his responsibilities and opportunities in a sales making way, may save the merchant many times what he has to pay the lettering man. A medium sized card in a furniture store on a side street sold twenty-six sets of Bavarian China dinnerware; another card, smaller yet, a half a dozen Victrolas in a couple of days; a mere paper sign with a pictorial of a young lady in a remodeled fur coat with suitable selling copy, displayed from a third floor window so as to be seen from the "Elevated," was the means

of bringing in hundreds of dollars of such work. These are incidents from my own experience. Well dressed, well made salesman display cards then, are an investment, not an expense; but poorly made, tramp-sort-of-fellow cards will lose business for the merchant, and become the most expensive sort of advertising.

Display cards are not a ready made, or kept-in-stock product, but must be made as required by the artist workman. In his brushes and paint lie unlimited possibilities. It remains for him only to mix gray matter with them and to give them concrete form. No two jobs are identical—colors are numerous and card stocks vary—types of letter legion. Now, to make of the blank card a "picture," so to speak, expressing that imagination, that artistic craftsmanship, that capacity for visualizing the message in lettering into some sort of lettering design.

When planned with sound strategy display cards may be used merely to create a sub-conscious impression, as when it is desired to sell "exclusive, expensive goods in a rarified atmosphere," for creme de la creme, super de luxe merchandising; or they may be real talking salesmen in the window, impressing the shoppers favorably by their freshness and sparkle, arousing the mood for buying—in either case, salesmen who persuade the passerby to become a passer-in.

• • •

If you haven't Book One—get it. It may have just what you're hunting for!



Plate 36—Collection of modern layouts.

martin's ideas

IN THE finer-type cards grouped on this plate the modern store may speak in a quiet, restrained manner in the spirit of today, thus really carry more conviction than the layout with hysteric display, generally too loud and unconvincing.

A card may shout—*should* shout—*must* shout, I care not where nor what it is, these days; but contrast the "Hey, You!" type of layout and the explosive exclamation point occasionally with the sober-talk conservative style, lest the reader's buying impulses become too calloused.

With the congested, old-style layout where the card was confused and packed tightly with small stuff, scrolls and involved effects, an efficient mental appeal was almost impossible. With this newer modern idea there is no unnecessary detail anywhere. The message is put into the shopper's brain without confusion. Realize that good taste, good sense will give just as much freshness of expression—more so, than the mad excesses and eccentricities of the past few years with their topsy-turvy layouts and athletic lettering.

This group suggests a use for modern ruling that may be satisfactorily adapted on certain occasions. The bands of rule create an effect which fairly sparkles with life and interest. This sort of card may be used for a variety, and be repeated with varying changes, from time to time. "Change the stitch" occasionally, to intrigue the passerby.

This type of layout is particularly suitable for use with the display card printing machine. Coupled with modernistic airbrush effects it is doubly effective.

These machines are of various types. One, the Embrosograf, which may be described, is a special form of embossing press. It has type, dies and decorative material for producing display cards in variety in lots of one to 5000 in as many as five colors at one operation. The machine is so simple to operate that unskilled labor may be utilized. However, the operative who arranges the layout must have more than ever an orderly sense of proper design.

Specially designed metal card holders are also sold which if not too much divided into sections are fairly good. To the free hand letterer cards made on these machines may seem stiff in effect. It is perhaps difficult to make a strong sale type of card with them—an outstanding smash effect.

THE mode of operating is somewhat as follows: first the type or dies that form the desired layout are set up and placed face upward on the bed of the press; next strips of colored paper are laid on the various words or lines which are to appear in those colors; last, the cardboard is placed face down on the type and the lever pulled down, applying the pressure. On release, the card is lifted out, loose bits of paper brushed away, and the operation repeated for the next card. The embossed effect of the letters gives a clean-cut, raised effect that is very attractive.

•••
Have you a copy of "1000 Show Card Layouts"? Get the book; study it—it's fundamental; it's well worth while; you never have to unlearn anything it tells you.



Plate 37—Conservative—with modern ruling Ideas.

martin's ideas

WE'VE often seen a card made on "doggy" novelty stock, that even with this advantage, and the best of colors, somehow didn't "look right." You could feel it, but couldn't exactly tell what was wrong. If you could put that card in front of you to take apart, so to speak, and examine with some care, or if you got to digging around below the surface, you would likely find its proportions off, too fat and squatty, almost square, or other similar trouble. In an effort to overcome such fault, you might push too far in the other direction and the card becomes too slim! It was, then, a matter of proportion.

Good proportion has been defined simply as "a pleasing, harmonious relationship between length and breadth, between height and width." This element or principle is often overlooked when we get enthusiastic over some new type of letter, or some metallic or fancy background.

The oblong is more pleasing than the square—that even a schoolgirl can tell you. But why—I can't say, any more than perhaps she can explain it—except that certain ratios between the length of a rectangle and its width are pleasing. It's a scientific fact of some sort, too deep for my small brain, I presume. I had a couple of expensive books on this dynamic symmetry, yet still it is dark and murky to me. The Greeks used this secret in planning and building their beautiful temples; they called it the "Golden Section."

If the card is fat and squatty, and must fit in a certain space or in a frame, you can make it more graceful by a band on one side, narrowing the main panel, or other scheme. The death knell of the full sheet (22x28) is about sounded, except as

a "sign card." My practice has long been to sneak a strip off the side when it is used as an upright panel, and other dodges to trick the eye and make it seem narrower.

It seems to be in tune with modernistic display art principles that cards should be tall. Long lines, odd shapes and plenty of white space are usually indicated. These long narrow upright shapes offer the display man a chance to be "different"; where space is valuable and stocky trims prevent and preclude standard half sheet and other cards they are most advantageously used. In such windows often the card is converted into a hanging panel sign, up above the merchandise; in this case a neat light stock should be played against a dark background, or vice versa; or, the same long proportioned card may serve as a narrow horizontal panel down close to the plate glass on the floor of the window, and so not obscure the merchandise.

(The various principles used in display card design—simplicity, movement, balance, emphasis, spacing, proportion, silhouette, tone, color, contrast—will be treated in future issues, as space permits.)

Get away from the o'd hackneyed colors. Forget, if you can, the words red, blue, green, yellow; they are commonized and have lost their "kick". Imagine instead the green of jade; the blue of sapphires; the red of rubies; the brown of mustard. For modern freshness touch up your red with vio'et, your blue with green, or lighten it several notches with the addition of white; touch up your yellow with brown; purplish-reds, red-violets, bluish violets, bluish greens, greenish yellow—you have an opportunity to use these with telling effect on special-coated wallboards.



Plate 38—The extremely tall, narrow type of cards.

martin's ideas

A**IRBRUSH:** In fairness to the student, likewise the many in small towns or small stores who are not fortunate in having this valuable shop adjunct, I have evaded examples requiring airbrush, as such readers would be unable to get the full value of the arrangement ideas. In some sections the liquid carbonic gas drum necessitates a \$20 down deposit on the drum alone, in addition to cost of contents; this added to cost of gauge, tubing, colors, and the airbrush itself, make a rather expensive tool for its somewhat limited use.

Again, I have been hesitant about recommending the airbrush too strongly, because of the danger that the fledgling turned loose with it before he had fully mastered his lettering, would be apt to succumb to the temptation to use it as a smoke screen to camouflage his poor or mediocre workmanship, so spend the rest of his days over in a corner of the shop with a halo of airbrush vapor about his head. This is little overdrawn. Many an example have I seen which had the appearance of having been treated by holding over an old fashioned coal oil lamp flame and smoked, so illy was it executed.

Many studio men never use it—in fact are violently opposed to it; that is a narrow viewpoint. But—one must know just how to employ it. Wrongly used it may be pretty raw and gosh-awful; rightly used it adds charm or punch to many an otherwise mediocre card or display. As, for instance, such effects as the deepening of a dark background for better setting off light clean-cut, contrasting lettering. There are two ways of lettering on this airbrush mist: letter once, airbrush this heavily with color (that with shellac base), then go over the lettering again; or sketch the lettering in

place with a white pencil, airbrush till almost obliterated, then letter. Heavily mottled stock, or some patterned metallic papers—much used—are often too distracting to make good backgrounds for lettering, but with this mist treatment they will be very successful.

A few delicate touches of airbrushing on pale card stocks will relieve flatness. A buff card has all plain black lettering; on the display or price a vermilion highlight. The background (card surface) may be treated with soft blended effects of green, blue, red, yellow and brown airbrush vapor; thus very beautiful as a fall effect.

The airbrush is much used in modernistic effects. Several are shown in the accompanying plate.

On paper sale streamers where extremely large lettering and large price figures are used, these in blue, dark green or vermilion, a bit of airbrushing rightly applied on the letter—never off—produces a pleasingly softened, rounded or modeled effect, hiding any streakiness or daubiness of paint. This, coupled with a very fine line drop shadow, cleanly done and well away from the letter on the lower and left hand sides, is still better. Only occasionally should a letter or price figure be sprayed on the lower and left hand sides with the spray blending off into the background; this was quite generally the old practice, but befores the legibility of the letter, and cheapens the job, to my notion, unless expertly done.

Cutting special stencils is apt to prove impractical except for large quantities of cards. It is too slow. We are in this business to make money. Sometimes it may be feasible, as for instance, the airbrushing, after lettering, of holly leaves on cards or paper streamers.



Plate 39—Modernistic airbrush treatments.

martin's ideas

IT SEEMS almost unnecessary to explain the working of the airbrush. Popular priced "air painting" outfits are advertised to the housewife in current periodicals, designed to be attached to the vacuum cleaner in some cases, for bronzing radiators, for refinishing wicker furniture; or to the householder himself for spray-painting the chicken house, greasing his car, or inflating his automobile tires! The principle of these, as well as the higher type we are discussing, simplified, is that of a "glorified" fixatif sprayer—a sort of syphon suction action.

The airbrush is held in position in the hand in a manner very similar to a common pencil, and the amount of air pressure—likewise the spraying liquid, which is carried in a small cup or bottle—is regulated by a little lever, or in some types a plunger, at the top. With a little practice one becomes quite expert. It may be regulated to form the finest line up to a broad vapor-like spray; it may even be adjusted for spatter work.

The liquid carbonic gas tank used in soda fountains is very practical, with this it will be necessary to have a gauge to regulate the pressure, which should be kept at about 30 lbs. I have used the portable hand pump outfits that operate with a bicycle-like pump, the old beer pumps, and different new types of automatic electric air compressors, and personally prefer the gas drum as best for average use, always ready, safe, foolproof, cheap, clean.

If shellac mixed colors are used, there is necessity for keeping the airbrush instrument absolutely clean. Blow it out with alcohol—"wet its whistle"—before commencing work, again after using. If this is neglected, it will gum up, get in deplorable shape and take ten to

thirty minutes to "thaw out." The shop gets in a turmoil; one suggests "boiling it out" with live steam on the radiator cock; another hustles down to the janitor in the basement for a bit of fine wire; meanwhile the job waits. This always seems to happen when the shop is in a rush, and the airbrush sorely needed.

Water-soluble colors (the vegetable candy dyes in powder form or the liquid cake colors are good for this) must be put on only *after* the card is completely lettered, as otherwise they will rub up and off. The ready mixed liquid colors using shellac as a base, do not give this trouble. Other powder airbrush colors, not waterproof, put up in one ounce metal cans—one ounce making one gallon of color when mixed with water or alcohol—are sold by the supply houses. It is advisable to soften or neutralize some of the colors to tone down the rawness of the aniline dye; as, the green, the red. Some even use slipper dye, claiming it much superior; it comes in multitudinous colors.

When the airbrush is needed—granted, that it may not be often—it is needed very badly; nothing will take its place. You know the ancient saying that—"For want of a nail the horse shoe was lost, etc." The application is plain.

You have a St. Patrick's Day poster to make; shamrocks may be airbrushed in all directions over the background and thus save you a lot of detailed brushwork. On in-between stocks as olive green, dull navy blue, or other characterless colors, or on fancy patterned or mottled backgrounds, as mottled dark greens, apt to be "jumpy"—darkening the background right where lettering goes, gives a splendid contrast. Let the airbrush help you make money.

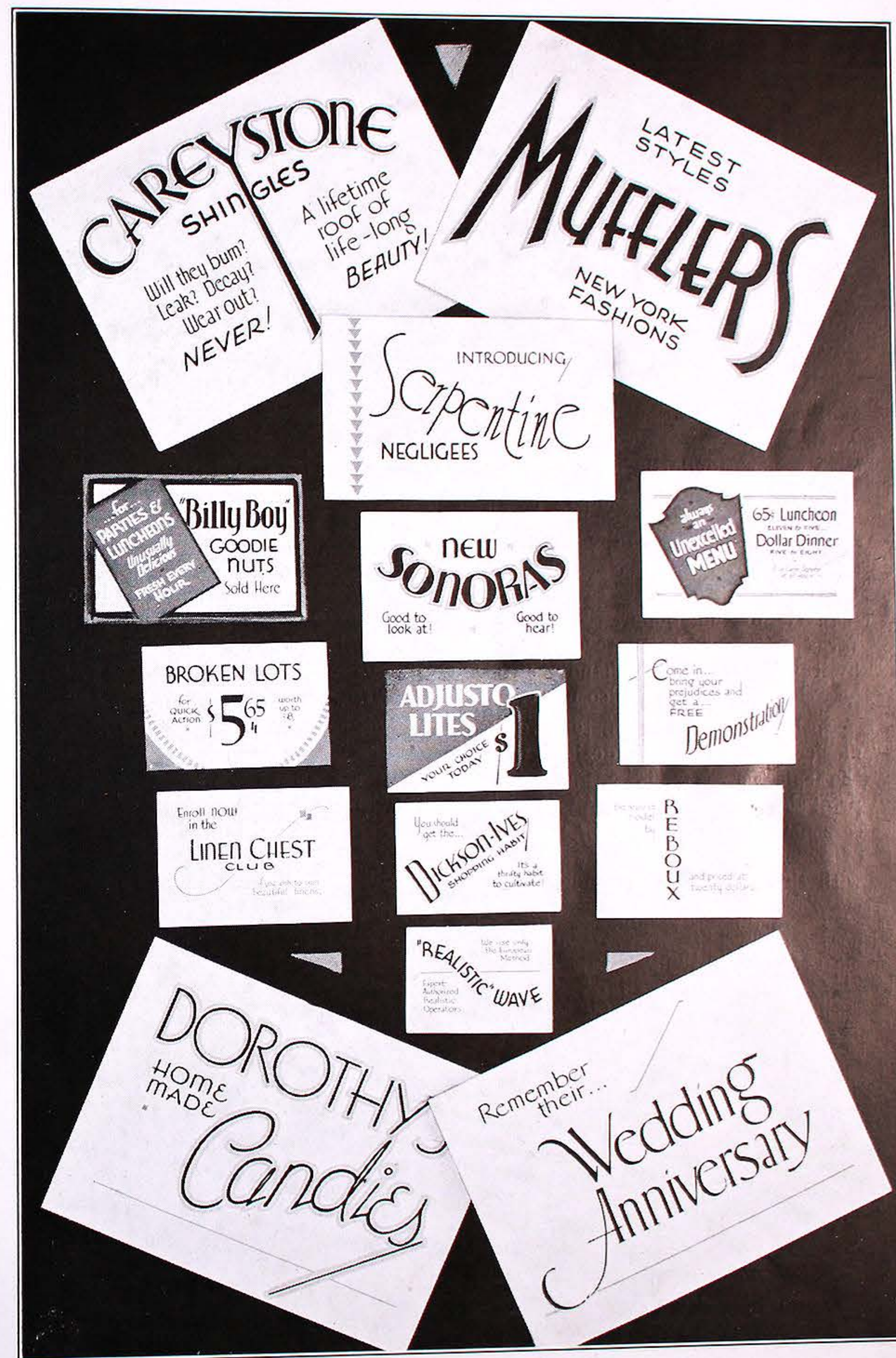


Plate 40—A group of modern "landscape" cards.

Martin's Ideas

There are men, intellectually creative and artistic and full of ambition, but emotionally perhaps absolutely unfit for the competition, the contest, the necessity for combat in business—to whom lettering and design because of the broad nature of the work and the artistic character of it, appeal more than anything else. For such, display card work will be found a good vent for their talents. The possibilities are great as an occupation to the young man who will apply himself diligently. Good men with clever Ideas are always at a premium.

Time was, when a fair letterer who could arrange his lettering into any mediocre layout rated as a Grade A cardman; today a man to grade such a rating must be well grounded in advertising principles, color psychology, and many other angles. That old fashioned idea that we still often see today, that any card lettered in colors clapped into a window constitutes a display card,—is "out." Our once humble trade is changing, forging ahead, very rapidly. The "game" is getting stiffer, and the requirements now necessary are going to cause quite a mortality in the ranks in the next several years. Only those who keep keenly and mentally alert will survive and "arrive." One leader in our field even proposes an examination for fitness—that the applicant should measure up to a certain standard before he be allowed to engage in the work professionally.

No branch of the graphic arts has so few real experts or masters of the craft as display card work—this I claim, in spite of the thousands who are in it; yet so many think themselves to be experts. They may be good at layout design, but are poor at lettering; may be good at lettering but wretched in color and layout.

The saying is, that display card men are generally disappointed artists. Is this true? Of the thousands a very great majority of them are capable letterers, no doubt; any number of them are competent to work out an idea in color if the layout be suggested to them, ready to their hand; but how few really seem to apply the basic principles of all design, how few really show brains sparkling with new, fresh Ideas.

The cardman is slowly, but surely, coming to a place in the sun; he deserves it, for he is a specialist, in his way. But he must keep up with the best in advertising practice; he must continually get new fresh IDEAS.

It will be seen then, that here is a field of labor that offers great opportunities to the young aspirant. The work will be found intensely interesting, a congenial employment for those who care to make it so; nothing about it need be humdrum. True, there is no royal path to big money in it; in fact, to some it may oftentimes seem rough and stony; but if one enjoys it, this work may be made a source of steady income even to the plodder.

When this trade began to break off from its parent—sign painting—and to become more specialized, there were a few pioneers, the foremost lettering men of experience of the day, men who had been obliged to get their own training from pillar to post, leaders in the work, who blazed a few trails as they traveled on, made some mistakes perhaps; but they kept on till now the path has become more beaten, so much so that the merest novice may walk confidently up it, a bit laboriously at first, it may be, but still sanguine and sure of success in the end if he but perseveres.



Plate 42—Peppy ideas for "music" cards.

martin's ideas

TOO OFTEN the over-confident beginner, possessing a hatful of mere tricks, would fain dodge the labor of long study, hang out a shingle and produce forthwith. Such a one, however, must realize that there are fundamental principles to be mastered first; principles which underlie all phases of the work, principles often hard to define, to reduce to rule; some, in fact, which a man has to sense for himself.

It may look easy to the novice the way the old-timer dashes off a perfect creation apparently without effort; but doubtless the expert has gone through a long period of training, and is now really following these principles and rules whether he realizes it or not.

MICHEL JACOBS in his "Art of Composition" (an application of dynamic symmetry) expresses this, perhaps better than I could:

"One often hears of artists who refuse to be guided by any law or rule of science and who consider that they are a law in themselves. . . . They are absorbing from others, I might even say copying, perhaps subconsciously, but they themselves would be the first to deny this accusation.

" . . . Others often make a great success in their youth through their inherent talent, but in later life fall back in the march of progress on account of their lack of early training and absorbed knowledge.

"Painting and drawing have been taught since the days of Ancient Greece by what is known as 'feeling.' This is all very well, provided that a sound knowledge of construction, of color, of perspective, and of composition, all based on nature's law, has been learned and absorbed before 'feeling' is permitted to be expressed. Above all, this knowledge,

this foundation, must be a part of the artists' subconscious self, so that he does not have to think of rules or methods when he is painting. If he has not assimilated this knowledge, his work will become stilted, mannered, lacking in charm, spontaneity, and 'feeling'."

The indefatigable worker who has trained himself to think in terms of advertising, may be able in time, seemingly without rules, yet without monotony—from somewhere back in his head, like sleight o'hand,—to dig out his manifold ideas and put them onto cardboard with color. His brain has been likened to "the magician's top hat, into which he has put all manner of things only to take out a store of altogether surprising things altogether transformed." But one can't get something out of his head "unless he has first put something there." (Italics here are indispensable.)

For the one craftsman who really knows his stuff, there are, alas! only too many who are undeniably incompetent; for the expert workman who really turns out honest-to-goodness advertising, there are many who are just fiddlers in the work, who got into the "game," because they always "kinda liked to paint letters." These are the fellows who put gray hairs in the merchant's head. (Is it a "game," a business, or an art? Not a game, that's sure. A business and art, yes.)

"1000 Showcard Layouts"—the most practical book published, by the most practical man in the trade. The principles and theory of making show cards, advertising hints for your business, color ideas of all sorts, examples by the thousand—all in one compact volume. Well worth \$25 to any card writer or sign man.



Plate 44—Uncommon effects for your accounts.

martin's ideas

DISPLAY card lettering at first, seems so simple, so easy to learn; and indeed it is—to him who has the determination to patiently and methodically study and constantly strive! There is no magic formula for converting suddenly and certainly a fledgling into a topnotcher. But there are sound principles and some few tricks that mastered, will help any conscientious student who seeks to improve his work to turn out better *selling* display cards. These we shall endeavor to search out and learn.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, the famous artist and portrait painter, said of his own art that it was perhaps "no more mysterious or difficult to learn than soap boiling." What then about display cards! If we would cease to regard it as such a mysterious "art", and apply ourselves to it with diligence, I believe it would lose its seeming difficulty. To illustrate the ease with which we might master it if we would only resolve to do so; there is a case of a certain old man of more than sixty years of age, who learns a new trade *each year*, and becomes skillful at it. Another man calmly set out to study law, was admitted to the bar, and made money in his new profession, after he was seventy years old!

Sir Edwin Arnold once desired to send a correspondent to represent his newspaper in the Russo-Turkish war of 1876; the young man demurred, saying he had no knowledge of the Turkish language. Arnold assured him that this difficulty could easily be overcome, as he himself would teach him in the two weeks before he was to leave. The would-be correspondent expressed surprise that Arnold knew Turkish.

"I do not", said Arnold, "but I will in *three days' time*; return to me then."

Thereupon Arnold immediately purchased all the books that could be found on that subject, dull and musty though they were, and written many years before, read through their contents that night, and the *next morning* wrote "Arnold's Turkish Grammar." He rushed this book through the press (It soon became the standard work on that subject) and with its help the correspondent learned the Turkish language.

WHAT can be more striking or simple than the silhouette, used on a display card? Pictured possibly against a vividly colored or mottled background, which helps to tone down the deadness of the masses? This sharply defined treatment executed in solid color never fails to attract the eye. The silhouette seems easy, but really calls for careful drawing and some ingenuity—in a figure, at least, to show any expression. Of course details are to be avoided—only a touch or so of white to lighten up the figure being allowed. As suggested, sometimes the mottled or other finish background is successful as a change from the severely plain board; as, "Spanish Room", a mottled, "cloud", or "shadow-leaf" pink card stock with cut-out panel of white, the figures and edge to panel in maroon. The "Service" card may have black or midnight blue silhouette with "Martin" in brightest light green, "Orchestra Silhouette" is light bright blue, upper part white. Light blue, bright green, vermilion silhouette—anything but black! The piano silhouette of course, cut out; and so on.



Plate 45—Silhouette treatment in cardwork.

martin's ideas

In Wm. Hugh Gordon's "Lettering for Commercial Purposes" is a paragraph or two that may be revamped or shortened—not to destroy the thought, however—and it is suggested that this be lettered on an attractive card, and framed or passepartouted neatly to hang in the office of the studio:

"In no sense is sign painting allied with show card writing. The basic principles are totally unlike. A copper or steel plate engraver may not do the work of a lithographer or printer; nor a locomotive engineer that of a marine engineer. Just so is a show card writer *not* a sign painter. Their methods are entirely different, otherwise than that both trades make use of brushes and the same alphabet."

Make no attempt to work like a sign painter—try for individuality as a display card artist. Take for instance, the question of paper signs. I make the statement that practically *any* effect that may be produced on cardboard may be duplicated (though not always economically) on paper. Many seem to think that "Egyptian" lettering, in black, blue, red, on white paper, are all that are permissible. Not so. Never attempt the sign painters' technique. Rather, avoid it. Your whole conception of paper work may be changed if you seriously realize and practice this.

Again, from a source now forgotten and hence which cannot here be acknowledged (was it an old "Signs of the Times"?), was this thought, worthy also to be framed:

"Imagine a man hurrying to catch a train. You want his help. You must get his attention, stop him, hold him until you get your message out, and persuade him to help you,

all in the shortest space of time. You would indulge in no fancy [fiddle-faddle] under those conditions."

Or yet another, shorter, slogan. "Dare to be Different!"

It is very doubtful if we will ever lean very heavily on pictorial work, even in the modern studio, much expert opinion to the contrary. Time consuming effort spent in drawing pictures and such effects, knocks the profits cold. However, with a concern engaged in cutout display or background work, pictorial jobs are unavoidable; oftentimes every other order will call for something of this nature. Especially does each season of the year call for suitable decoration or design to provide the proper atmosphere. The display firm may be unable to pay the salary of a high grade pictorial artist. How to handle such order?

Unless the cardman has an acquired or native dexterity of hand for pictorial work, it is best to use the "magic black box" of a projector; or even the pantograph instrument, or the old method—the squared-line way of enlarging. Of these, of course the projector is best. These will all be discussed in future issues and fully explained.

(Several words about the plate: If the tie card is large enough, the actual tie is run through as shown; "back" of the girl graduate's head the panel is cutout and left open; the "Costume Jewelry" card has holes punched and the actual necklace clasped into place. These are all newspaper illustrations, incidentally.)

Color? Consult your "1000 Show Card Layouts" (by that fellow Martin). There they're all indexed even—for quick reference.



Plate 46—The use of simple illustrations.

martin's ideas

REGARDING the use of comic or semi-comic illustrations as exemplified in this plate, let me quote from an article in "Display World," Feb. '29. This was spoken of utility displays—particularly those as used by gas companies, but it is equally applicable here and has a direct bearing on our thought: "By implanting a thought of convenient service in a person's mind in a very amusing manner, the gas displayman goes a long way toward ultimately making another consumer for his company."

Those words "a very amusing manner" are very doubtful advice, is my personal opinion. Most advertising experts agree that humor in advertising is dangerous. A lighter treatment of a heavy subject usually burdened with overmuch technical dry-as-dustness, a subtle touch of wit—possibly. But what is humor anyway? Laughing at someone or something else, generally, isn't it? Be careful not to smash corns. Pleasantry—smiling faces—yes; but don't let this tend toward ridicule, or the ridiculous itself.

It is the easiest of matters to attract attention in a "very amusing manner," but—will it help to sell the goods—the service? If not, away with it. Your store's class of trade it is desired to reach, must be considered. Some neighborhoods might react very favorably to a touch of this. But—let it be repeated—be very careful of humor lest it descend into buffoonery. Consult, not your own inclination—but your trade.

Too much of what one has termed "damned dignity" is suffocating. George Ade said "Nothing is more

dignified than a corpse!" No need to put on a clown suit, however, and turn "cartwheels",—No!

To the displayman who can handle it rightly, these cut-out figures on the next page hold a suggestion to develop new, regular business. Such a figure may be cut out in very large size, and a slotted panel space left for a removable card, which is to be changed at frequent intervals. When the display gets stale, produce a new figure. Route these around from one neighborhood to another, renting out for a stated sum weekly. The panel card, which is to be slipped into place, or thumbtacked on merely—may call for an additional charge. Use such ideas as those shown here, or figures resembling Mutt and Jeff; or a Katzenjammer Kid with arm upraised or extended to display a gigantic wrist watch; a bathing beauty; a fat man perspiring; a very small negro on an extremely long-legged, long-eared mule; etc., making sure always that your figure has some tie-up with the merchant's message.

I repeat—"snappy comic stuff" is dangerous; it must be well tied-up with the merchandise, using shrewdly prepared copy, or it is wasteful. If well handled by one adept at its execution, a sales proposition of a weekly pictured card or picture banner service may go over.

•••

The writer of these lines is not an artist—never pretended to be—hates pictorial jobs; yet makes the statement that any brush pusher, any lettering man, should with projector or other scheme, be able to fake such effects as here, not one on these several pages being an original drawing.



Plate 47—Cartoon figures with cutout cards.

martin's ideas

THIS series of books would not be complete without some consideration of posters, which the display card man is frequently called upon to design and produce, yet the subject is so extensive that space will allow me to give little more than a summary of the more important principles.

No other medium known can give the maximum, instantaneous publicity that may be accomplished by posters. They are understandable by the toddler or the aged, the illiterate or the scholar, by every person in a community, by every race under the sun whether they be able to read or not. The poster need not have a single word on it; it will be understood. It is one of the most powerful of modern advertising forces.

It is doubtful whether the hostility to outdoor publicity, evidenced by drastic legislation in many quarters, will ever succeed to any great degree, once the people see their "art gallery"—the really clean, cheerful advertising—being banished. As for the indoor type of poster, there has been agitation before and since; I recall an instance long ago in New York City, the drive being directed specifically against street car cards or posters; it ended in hot air and smoke. Again, in Paris the authorities even went to the trouble and expense to cover the billboards with reproductions of a painting of some saint to down the "sordid commercialism" of the posters; result—the intense merriment of all Paris at the efforts, and a return to the colorful advertising.

In the scheme of modern merchandising pictorially aided propaganda in the form of window posters is coming to the front, is being more

and more required as the various potential users of this medium begin to realize its value. The quiet, subordinate "soft pedal" announcement card does not speak with strong or persuasive enough voice in these hurrying times.

The furniture store posters agreeably bidding us "Beautify Your Home;" the department store type with "March Sale of Silks"; "Bargain Thursday"; or other message; the travel poster with its suggestive means of locomotion or places to be visited; and many other posters of like nature, may be tremendously effective if designed with simplicity and strong color contrasts; may be attractive color spots in the window that will help to fix in the memory the message to be conveyed.

In publicity of this nature the less lettering used, the better. Where it is imperative that much be used it may be so arranged as to eliminate any crowded effect; sometimes for example, concentrating and yet emphasizing the copy by placing it on a panel of dark or light as the background dictates. The lettering is the sales argument and a "neutral zone" should be left about it as much as can be to set it off, hence often a need of such device as a panel.

It is predicted by those in a position to know, that the next few years or decade will show tremendous strides in this form of "new" publicity. Poster work is still in its infancy; a great opportunity in this field awaits the artist with ambition. I envy the young man who has an aptitude for, and has chosen this field. There is no limit to what he may do.



Every Display Studio should be prepared for... **Simple Poster Work**

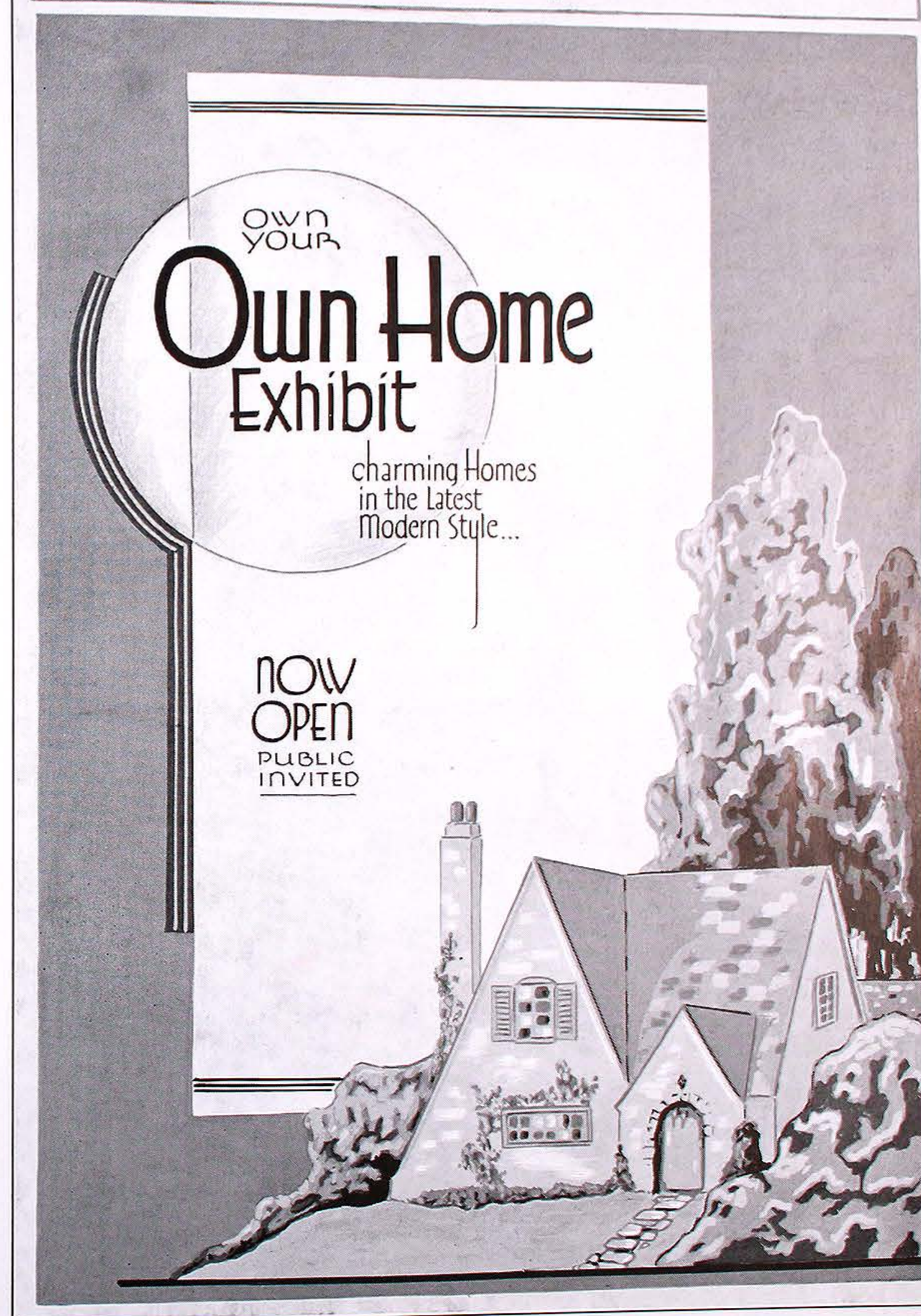


Plate 48—A simple poster shown in detail.

martin's ideas

THE POSTER is an aggressive publicity, going right to the people, as it were, while other advertising mediums, as the printed page, must generally be purchased and carried away for quieter, detailed perusal or inspection. The poster beholder is in motion—generally fast motion these days; the periodical reader is at rest. Hence the poster must work fast; be capable of being seen in a flash; must shout, and agreeably; be simple.

Men are moved through emotions and mind, through hearts and thought and instincts; through hunger, affection of various sorts, ambition, bodily comfort, cleanliness, curiosity, play or sport, humor, hospitality, domesticity, love of ornamentation, and many other stimuli.

There are posters for books, medicines, slippers, hats, clothing, food; for autos, radios, machinery, office appliances; posters for department stores, benevolences, travel, hotels; for jewelry, cigars, for industrial plants, for art exhibitions, for banks. To simplify, they may be divided into two broad general groups: Commercial, which aim to secure sales and profits, and to influence the public to this end; and Non-commercial, which aim to secure public mass action, as in giving to charity, to secure reforms, and what not. Beyond these sketchy classifications is not room to go further here and elaborate.

OTHER forms of advertising closely akin to posters are car cards, book wrappers, poster stamps, even booklet covers. Take for example book wrappers; the modern book jacket generally may be considered as poster design; although it may be made

primarily to protect the cover from dust and handling by prospective buyers, nevertheless color and poster design have made it equally effective as a selling medium to snare the purchaser. Poster stamps also are in reality miniature posters; to be clever eye-catchers the leading facts or details must be easily discernible without straining. Car cards may stand more detail, sometimes even statistics; but it should be kept in mind even here that these designs are to be seen often at extreme side angles, and therefore should be held to rather broad poster treatment.

The student should familiarize himself with every phase of the poster field, from poster stamps to outdoor bulletins. For occasionally the display card letterer will be called on to design miniature poster bulletins to scale; he must then know the standard sizes for these; likewise such points as just how the sheets for lithograph posters are cut. For example, if these latter are for outside use and to be composed of sections, he must be very careful to keep lettering or faces or such details from coming where junctures of sheets occur, for printers vary the hue accidentally on the different sections and the effect desired may be nullified. There are things which seem to be outside the scope of poster study, but are, however, necessary to know.

(The poster illustrations shown are "cribbed" from various sources; the town-crier from the German, the two figures in evening dress from an English poster, as I remember; etc. thank you!)



Plate 49—Posters such as card studios must design.

martin's ideas

FIRST, foremost, primarily, and all the time, the poster is a piece of salesmanship; it must sell goods. Never lose sight of that. The statement is strongly emphasized that the good and successful commercial poster will invariably—*must* contain sound basic advertising principles.

To illustrate the importance of a study of advertising, of psychology even, may be cited the case recently detailed in a current periodical of a son destined to follow in his father's footsteps as a manager of men in a great industrial organization, who chose to go through years of surgery study and practice in order that he might gain a closer knowledge of men, of how they were put together, of how their minds functioned, and so be able to apply that knowledge to his father's enterprise. So also should the poster student go into the underlying principles that make for good and sound salesmanship, that he may most effectively apply these with his draughtsmanship and artistic ability. Only on such a basis may lasting success be built.

Many artists seem to act on the theory that the public are more or less feeble minded and all that is necessary is to show a huge head in the theatrical lobby, or a broad grin on a man's face, and they will push and crowd in to the play, or rush off to buy that particular plaster. They give no reason why, no suggestion as to why the advertiser's goods should be bought.

Mere pictures of bottles or packages on the poster will not convince; endeavor to suggest the difference in flavor, in health-giving virtue or whatever it may be. The man on the street or the highway is not interested the slightest particle in that

bottle or package, but in what it will do for *him*—ah, there's the point! The man on the street, in the auto, is intent on his own pursuits and doesn't care two cents about the advertiser's warehouses full of goods; he must be subtly persuaded that he has a want that only that thing advertised can fulfill.

The advertiser should give you the idea he wishes to express; now with your knowledge of design you are to transmit his idea on to cardboard, by means of color and drawing, by line and mass, to create an impression that will move the minds of men or loosen up their pocket books, according to the purpose intended. So as a necessary preliminary, first have a clear notion in your mind as to the eventual purpose—understand, grasp the selling idea your client has, before you commence and work these ideas into good design.

By accidental chance the veriest tyro occasionally evolves a good composition, but the professional with sound basic knowledge produces acceptable commercial work almost as everyday routine. Often the merchant who demands the most expert aid in processes relating to his business, who discreetly refrains from interfering with these trained experts in their work, in the studio demands that his own amateur notions be literally carried out, then is dissatisfied because his poster does not sell goods. Again, the shoe is on the other foot: the advertiser who will not dream of letting an amateur plumber tinker with his expensive bathroom fixtures, wastefully and dangerously allows any Tom, Dick or Harry amateur artist, the lowest bidder perhaps, to tinker with his advertising.

• • •



Plate 50—Valentine, Easter, Thanksgiving.

MARTIN'S IDEAS

THE first step in making a poster, before the mind or imagination of the man on the street can be appealed to, is to attract by means of a pleasing or striking design. This imagination of his will not be stirred by photographs, and such realistic mediums, as strongly (if at all) as by suggestive design. This seems about the best reason our new modernism has for being.

The imitative realistic poster of a short decade ago (it still persists to some degree) is out of date and antiquated in this fast-moving, fast-changing age; the modern poster is, in the main, good; but many of the extreme "modernistic" creations are absolutely absurd. The untrained eye of the public cannot see as the artist sees, hence he must restrain his enthusiasm and keep to practicality—not necessarily realistic however.

Literalistic, realistic, materialistic versus symbolistic, modernistic, suggestive; that's the question. Inefficient realistic method would give a pictorial representation of rows of the product, correctly labeled in detail, on the dealer's shelf. Better, to select from the many emotions possible, some healthful property or pleasurable effect to be derived by using the product and depict that in more symbolic fashion so as to induce quicker emotional reaction, or desire to buy.

FUNDAMENTAL factors must underlie the construction of all posters. Chief among these may be the principles of what is to be expressed—the emotional angle of the problem; how to express this through design, and lastly the way of doing this—the actual technical methods of production and their effect on the first two principles. These three things

are rather interdependent on each other. For instance, the technique may be governed by the medium on which the poster design is to be reproduced, or the method of reproduction—if already decided upon. The thought to be expressed may also govern this to a large degree. These must all be decided upon—what treatment is to be followed out—before work on the design is begun: whether straight flat poster style, water color blending, pastel treatment or airbrush, pen and ink, charcoal, silhouette aplikay or transparencies, velour background, oil paint, process work, flitters used, or what not. These must all be considered.

Often a small scale dummy sketch in monotone or monochrome may furnish the key to effective translation into the proper color and medium. This dummy sketch must be in the same proportion as the finished poster is to be. If the client requires to see this for his okeh before proceeding further, and there are likelihood of changes to be made, work it out completely in pencil, then put a tissue overlay over this with a portion only in color on this overlay; while as for the lettering, it may be left completely off—as radical changes are more apt to be made in this part of the poster—or it may be put on this tracing paper that hangs in place over the design.

It's a good plan to hang around the lobby after hours in the evening and listen to the comments of these "shopping" for a good show—see how they react to your display. You may learn more in one evening, than "back-patting yourself" in your smug studio on what a "wow" you are, and how "such and such a poster ought to knock 'em cold." You may find that they are not looking at your oh-so-carefully worked out big heads at all, but at the "stills" only.

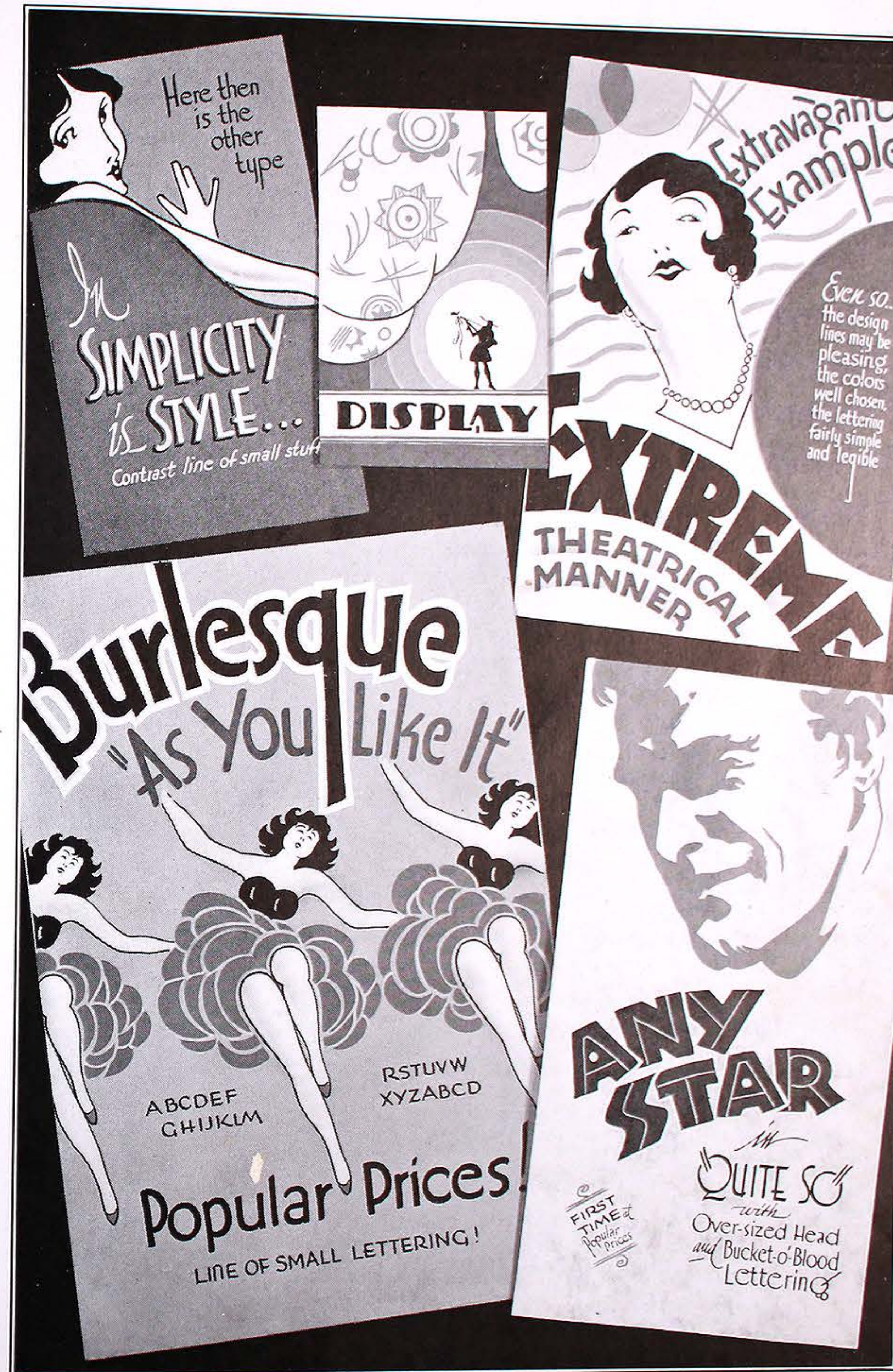


Plate 51—Five typical theatrical posters.

martin's ideas

THE would-be poster artist should beware of superficial training; he should get back to fundamentals and secure a thorough grounding in basic art principles. He should study figure drawing—if possible, from life, at least from photos; he should study drapery. He should make detail drawings of the various parts of the head, from the bones, muscles, and from separate portions, clear out to the finished picture in color.

When he gets to rendering his poster designs in color, he must know the planes of the face, how the nose is higher than the forehead, the forehead higher than the cheek; he must remember from his fundamental skull study construction the dished-out place on the cheek that the proper shadow may be put there; that on the nose should be the highest light, on its shadow side, the deepest shadow; that he should determine the darkest and lightest colors at the start and work all values between these, so keeping all in perfect harmony; the "cools" on one side of the face, the "hots" on the other. Nothing short of fundamental study will serve and save the student when he gets in a rush on the job.

Areference file or "morgue" of clippings of others' work may be kept, and utilized when one is stuck; for the artist on the 'steenth floor of a skyscraper can hardly be expected to draw offhand, with exact fidelity, a tractor, and again—within the next twenty minutes—a hippopotamus. But it is best not to get into the habit of copying too literally; rather, use such aids as pegs on which to hang your own ideas, or with which to start a train of thought and so stimulate your own creative originality.

Digressing a bit, another matter should be touched on: the artist with his keen eye and color perception may view the finished poster in the well lighted studio and be satisfied; whereas the effect of it when it is placed outside, may be decidedly different, due to location, atmospheric conditions, or other influences. For a poster is often illy placed; an example of this is frequently seen at a crossing, where the motorists' attention is taken up with road problems, and the posters are grouped confusingly, all fighting with those adjacent for recognition. Such conditions may determine a change of some colors. Place the poster—as a test—deliberately in poor light; *under* the bench is suggested. It may look screamingly raw in the studio, and be just right when posted outside, or when toned down by several days of the sun's softening rays.

The poster head shown is by Louis M. Jones, Nashville, Tenn. Color for this: Background black, but all other black parts are purple. Highlights of hair are shades of lavender. Collar white, coat ultramarine blue (shadows black), tie shades of emerald green. Face: 1st dark shade, deep magenta, with 2nd lighter; 3rd shade orange, then yellow, light yellow; highlights in white. Pupil of eye—dark parts purple, lighter shades in tones of lavender.

Anyone should be able to sit down and study out seventy-five different simple two and three-color treatments for a head like the one on this and the preceding plate. It would be great practice to do this. Then take twenty-five of them and render into neat miniature 3x5 inch size. File these away for quick reference.



Plate 52—See color notes on opposite page.

martin's ideas

In poster making, the basic design principles should be diligently studied and followed. The rules that hold in display card composition are here equally applicable. Let us touch on several high spots of these. Balance: mass groups well balanced; pictorial and letter balance; tonal balance—meaning the dark to light, or vice versa, of the whole composition. Proportion: another of the most important elements in designing posters (elsewhere spoken of). Movement: a vital factor also; action and life are needed for outdoor posters and for *people who are in action*; a definite line of movement should be created.

Emphasis: this means dominance of one idea, avoidance of complexity; posters are "to be seen and not read," some one facetiously remarks. To enlarge on this further: Emphasize by a *line* of lettering or vision looking toward a point in the object or landscape, or emphasize with a pointer of some kind, or by causing two divergent lines to meet; emphasize by out of ordinary, uncommon color—though caution is given that this color may be so powerful as to defeat its own purpose; emphasize by *over-size*—the product large, or some lettering large; emphasize by outlining, by contrast in tones, by placement of color (as, a bright background behind), by unusual angles.

Simplicity: the powerful poster with one dominant appeal sells, for the advertiser, faster than the inefficient design overcrowded with detail. Keep to one focal point, when possible; confusing details must be eliminated; leave out lettering of little value. Simplicity of design gives the poster more power to fight outside distracting influences and make itself heard. Sometimes broad silhouette masses, if the poster is to

be seen at a distance, are the best treatment; though closer view or inspection may disclose more detail; greatly subordinated. This silhouette poster treatment is a powerful, dramatic method; but should none the less be very carefully studied out, the outline edges cleanly drawn.

Avoid unpleasant, negative depictions—this almost goes without saying; the individual with the box of pills should be shown beaming with health, the result of having taken the magic restorer. But humor is dangerous; for example, in portraying very fat or very lean persons, the poster may antagonize that class. Showing an excessively fat man streaming with perspiration might cause such a person to hesitate about walking into a store and partaking of the cooling drink advertised.

LETTERING: Two distinct types of poster will often be noticed: in one, the letter space is the most dominant; in the other, the picture space. There is also the all-lettered poster (shown here). The lettering should be kept simple in character, with a suitability to the subject. The lettering position should be dictated by the artist, as an integral part of the poster design, and its character suggested, even though he himself does not execute it but another in the studio. Concentrate it, as far as is feasible, in one spot; be sure it is legible and not a "puzzle style," or over-fat, modernistic.

• • •

Have you the catalogs offered by dealers in the back pages of this book? They are veritable instruction and information books in themselves. Send for them—they're free.

• • •



Plate 53—All-lettered posters with picture-quality.

martin's ideas

COLOR notes for plate 53-A

10. Card cream or white—lines at top in light emerald green—right hand corner figure magenta—lettering orange, outlined in black—any small lettering black.
11. Deep brown card—half circle in orange—word "Sale" light yellow—other lettering light tan—outline "Sale" in a medium brown.
12. Black or midnite blue card—pure white bold letters—magenta flash.
13. White card—orange decoration—"Rugs" bright blue—other lettering maroon—outline "Rugs" in bold pale blue.
14. Black card—decoration top and bottom—magenta, light blue, light yellow,—bold copy in white, price orange—outlined in white,—other copy light emerald green.
15. Light blue card—cream semi-circle—red price—base decorations, vertical lines medium blue—bold copy at top deep maroon, small copy white.
16. Light tan card—upper half lined as illustrated in medium brown—all small lettering in a light, bright cream—bold copy black outlined with orange.
17. Dark green card—decorations in emerald green—small copy orange—bold copy white outlined with black bold.
18. Yellow card—orange stripe—black diamond—bold lettering in white—small lettering in olive green—shades of green under diamond, any small lines, stripes, etc. in white.
19. Red card—"Sale" yellow with black outline—price white with maroon outline—all small copy light yellow green, pin stripes or other decorations deep orange.

THE power and sales value of color.

The appeal of color is well known to every one of us whether we be old or young, rich or poor, or whatever our status in the social scale may be. Color is a sensation and causes definite reactions—this has been conclusively proven—and these reactions should be reckoned with when we plan our display card.

In the animal world, for instance, laboratory tests have been made to prove the effect of color vibrations. The warm color of red will draw a turtle out of his shell, while placing a cold shade of blue in front of it will make it draw back in again. If color reacts this way on turtles, what may it not do to prospective customers? Instances might be multiplied, but merely this one will illustrate the influence and power of color.



Plate No. 53-A—Simple layouts which can be used by the beginner as well as the more seasoned artist.

martin's ideas

TIE these colors up with the layouts on Plate 53-B.

20. White card—pin lines in background pale emerald green—bold lettering black with pin stripe of orange through center—pennant in center red—white lettering.
21. Midnite blue card—word "Value" light blue—small lettering magenta—price white outlined in blue.
22. Cream card—bold letter black—price dark orange with pin stripe through center, of red—small lettering in bright green—other decorations on card, lines etc, light blue.
23. Maroon card—large circle solid medium blue—price white outlined with magenta—other bold copy light lemon yellow—small copy medium blue—smaller circles outlined only in pastel shades.
24. Buff colored card—bold lettering dark blue with bold white outline with black pin stripes through center—smaller lettering black—modernistic decorations, pin lines, etc. orange.
25. Red card—"IF" in white—other bold copy in light orange—panel black—small lettering in light emerald green.
26. White card—bold copy in medium blue—pin stripe through center in black—price red outlined boldly in light magenta—small copy black. Pin stripes, etc. light magenta.
27. Light green card—decorations in black and magenta—small copy black—large copy, light lemon yellow, outlined in dark green.
28. Light yellow card—orange radiations on each side—black panels—light blue lettering on panels—"Sparton" in red with white outline—other bold copy midnite blue with pale orange outline.
29. Bright blue card—large capital in bright orange—small lettering white—superfluous lettering light blue—decorations top and bottom in pale blues.

• • •

PLATES 53-A and 53-B are Ideas by H. C. Martin, Colors by Harry Chandler and Execution by Earle Roberts, all of Orlando.



Plate No. 53-B—Simple layouts that can be used by the beginner as well as the more seasoned artist.

Martin's Ideas

As experiment, this Book Two of "IDEAS" is made up practically without color suggestions for examples shown. In Book One only outstanding layouts were described, as space permitted. So often as given, they would prove inappropriate for the use desired. If the reader possesses the companion volume "1000 Show Card Layouts", he has multitudinous color ideas tabulated and classified for instant reference. And these color schemes are, of course, easily interchangeable.

In the book just mentioned, the writer claims, in all modesty, to have hit upon, what seems to be, the best system for grouping cards, yet devised by any one. It clarifies and simplifies the whole field for the beginners. For various reasons this has not been carried out here as in the former work, so rigidly grouped by class, but only in a broad way. The separation will be found practical for most purposes.

Airbrush work, and mottled, patterned, or fancy beveled stocks have been avoided. Years ago the writer purchased a book on display cards, now out of print it is believed, that displayed examples on pebbled and mottled stocks, "oatmeal" board, and such sort, with fancified letter styles, and many illustrations; being so vexed that effects shown could not be duplicated with his facilities, later when the opportunity came to pass on suggestions to others, resolve was made to avoid this error. The aim, as in the first large book on layout, has been that positively every card in this series of books be capable of being reproduced by any student or small cardman anywhere, with white, black or gray cardboard, with pens or brushes, and white and black paint alone.

A large reading glass is advised for the student for use in conjunc-

tion with the layout study to assist in enlarging smaller examples for better examination.

As to lettering: the writer has ever urged an in-between policy of moderation, maintaining that lettering of sincerity and lasting worth is better than vagaries of the moment. The lettering has been chosen not for freakish modernness but for qualities that "wear well". Simplicity—I cannot stress this point too strongly. Simplicity of letter styles—as well as of layout. Over-fancy theatrical-type lettering—what Robert Foster calls "over-stylized and tricky" stuff. So much "clever crocheting"! Violently, arty layouts? The public reads as it runs!

Avoid that urge to make lettering perform unique tricks, staggering across the card, waltzing around the half arc or circle, hurtling and leaping about in midair as cutout creations, again sometimes coldly, severely repressed and confined in between parallel "street car track" rules of color.

Pick out three or possibly four conservative styles or alphabets and perfect yourself in these first, till action becomes semi-automatic, rather than to jump about—grasshopper-like from fad to fad.

Nay, I go even further, and counsel that we should be absolute master of only *one* form first, before even passing on to a second or third. That first letter may best, in the light of the present trend, be a clean cut, vigorous, sans serif, single stroke "gothic"; or else, if your locality and trade seem to require a heavier type, one of the good built-up "postery" styles. (This in conjunction with a speed small letter for body-text on the cards.) Something suitable for everyday use.

• • •



Plate 54—Shapes of mounted areas of vari-toned stock.

martin's ideas

THE writer of these informal discussions has served years at the bench, struggled most intensely as a green man, strained and sweat bullets over the same problems that trouble you, and has been up against the same perplexing problems many a time.

He has hoped that these talks might be as windows through which many would be enabled to look more clearly out over the whole field of display card lettering. Though they may sound often a bit didactic and blatantly authoritative, there is really no intention of being dogmatic; but they are, rather, simply the expression born of experience.

What any other authority has to say he doesn't care "tuppence"! for he speaks not so much for popularity as right out of his heart what he thinks. His constant desire to make these talks alive with the enthusiasm which he himself feels—that's what you should catch! None the less has the aim been to fill them with practical counsel and advice, not his own entirely, but that also reflected from others' experience; with ideas and examples that may fit just your purpose, and that may be utilized and swapped for cash to jingle in your pockets.

If sometimes the remarks seem to lack plan or system, be it explained that by the midnight lamp, in the other fellow's shop, on the street, these thoughts have come to him. Often he has turned from his bench and written the notes you are now reading. In the words of that quaint book "Trader Horn": "In such chancey ways has this work grown."

It is tremendously easy to fall into a rut in this work. Duplication of ideas is a bad habit that

can grow on us; for example, witness the letterer who finds it impossible to make a card without a word or two of script always aslant across the upper left corner. We should beware of sameness; be constantly gathering *new* ideas to put into practical use; snap up anything in the way of an *idea* bone that seems to have a bit of meat on it.

The great Edison once said: "The only way to keep abreast of the procession is to keep experimenting. If you don't the other fellow will. Where there is no experimenting, there's no progress. Stop experimenting and you go backward." What is that other saying—only live fish swim up stream; dead ones float down.

We are all too hidebound or tied down by precedent. Ground yourself thoroughly in the fundamental principles, know where you want to go; then break loose; shelve your rules, and strike out. Don't be tied to the post of precedent, trying to run! We might do well to modernize the old saying "hitch your wagon to a star" into "hitch your car to a skyscraper and then jolt yourself out of the ruts of precedent."

If we forget the traditional rules and think only with new fresh Ideas, new forms, a *modern* presentation, the "silent salesman" display card can be developed beyond the wildest dreams of many of us.

Do you do your own thinking—or do you merely use others' thinking? Uniformity kills personality. Have a style of your own—a real one. True uniform style means speed and economy. But I say—come out of the kindergarten and be versatile. Here in your hand is a book of guidance—you have blank cardboard and brushes. Now do something!

•••

Cutout "PRICE" Shapes,



Plate 56—Hanging cut-out "price" shapes.

Martin's Ideas

MANY (beginners) are unfamiliar as to the proper method of coating special wallboard cutout shapes and lettering panels. The studio often has a call for these, perhaps larger than the regular 28x44 inch stock cardboard. Again, a special odd color may be wanted. A sharp mat knife or the cutting machine (cutawl) and the job is ready in a trice for lettering, at little extra cost, but looking as if worth much more than the same thing in cardboard.

With special-coats, modern, devil may-care colors may be chosen; may be "watermarked", stippled, air-brushed, transition effect; strange shades of red—Bolshevik red, fireman's red, bucket-of-blood red, old-fashioned bandana Turkey red; or odd blue-greens or green-blues, or that peculiar "sprouting, juicy" green; claret; plum; peacock blue. Or two colors in a split-color background: cherry red with hunter's green, pink and blue together, violet and water green harmonies; coral and turquoise combined, magenta and gold, silver and gold, red and black.

If colors for coating are needed in such quantity as to prohibit the use of regular card bench colors, stock up with an assortment of dry colors, keeping them conveniently in empty quart color jars (or larger). If you are far from a good base of supplies, it is doubly imperative to have these dry colors ever handy; for often one may be caught short at the bench, or need to coat some large wallboard panels in a hurry, and can manage with these home mixed colors till an order can get through.

The absolutely necessary dry colors will consist of French zinc white; ivory black; chrome yellow, light medium and dark; light, medium and

dark chrome green; American vermilion; orange mineral; permanent red; magenta; turkey burnt umber; ultramarine blue; Italian blue (turquoise).

Mixing is very simple. Suppose you wish a pale blue; take your dry white, put into a large glazed kitchen bowl and add good gum arabic muscilage (either a good "office muscilage" or some you have prepared yourself), a little at a time, stirring constantly with a paddle till you have a stiff paste free from lumps and air bubbles. Continue this till it becomes smooth and cream-like, then add water. Too much water and your color will not stick (make art gum tests for adhering qualities as you go); too much gum arabic and the lettering put on it may "check" or crack. You will probably need to add some glycerine to this to prevent chalkiness.

In coating, load your brush so that it is almost dripping, work with the wallboard laid flat. "Feather stroke" immediately afterwards, first all in one direction, then "cross-ways" or at right angle; if the color has not "set". Caution, never touch a spot after it has started to set, as it will show when dry. If the job turns out streaky, a delicate all-over stipple with a sponge, in a slightly darker "self" color (or a lighter) will hide, and save the trouble of re-coating.

There is a powdered white gum arabic that with the simple addition of hot water (or even cold) is ready for use. Another convenience is a large druggist's pestle (it can be ordered through your local druggist) for grinding out lumps and grit, in hand mixing.

(In last "IDEAS" the cutawl was discussed, and use of fitters; in forthcoming issues many similar shop processes and back shop hints will be treated.)

Cutout "ALL-LETTER" Shapes,



Plate 57—All-letter cut-outs for suspending in window.

martin's ideas

WHY take correspondence courses and expensive "residence" courses, ranging perhaps from \$85 up to \$125 and more? It sounds simple to take your spare collar and ambitions to Chicago, New York or other city—but think of actual living expenses alone there! Get your own few tools and several jars of colors needed, or drawing board, an empty chair, Martin's "1000 Show Card Layouts" and the several "Martin's IDEAS" books, and get to work. You can thus stay on the job, and in your own home, spare hours, prepare yourself for a well paying side line or a real full-time profession.

Perhaps you have been already—or are studying cardwriting, monotonously making alphabets. Then what? You go out to get orders for work. What happens? Untrained, untried, no previous experience to go by—the result is inevitable. You will be lucky if you make the barest living. With the aid of these reference books containing real miniature card layouts, multitudinous *Ideas*, proven color schemes, advice on advertising, trade tricks—success is sure!

THE little handbook you now hold—a bench manual of new IDEAS. Every page filled with ideas, methods, processes, short cuts—helpful suggestions to think over at your leisure. What a selection to choose from. No matter what your work—display cards or signs, lettering or art student, there is much of value for you.

Spend two or more evenings a week in a careful study of the fundamentals of your work—and greatly improve or perfect yourself in layout.

In these times, now as never before, it is essential to have a thor-

ough knowledge and quickly available help to overcome keen competition. There is no surer or easier way to keep in touch with ideas new and modern. Keeping these books on ready file assures you of a stock of modern Ideas instantly at your hand. Use them as a gold mine of suggestions.

WITH this small group of modern panel ideas, and those that will follow in later issues, there are many variations that will suggest themselves to the practical artist.

Many are the uses to which such panels may be put. As a single instance: A restaurant wishes two large menu cards to hang on the wall, and a number of smaller ones with suggestive hints and "propaganda" on them. We may select a suitable panel shape, cut the two larger ones by this pattern from say 30x48 inch wallboard, beveling the edges and coating midnight blue; the feature lines and secondary display and small copy in snappy, contrasting colors. Now for the smaller shapes—there are fifteen of these—repeat or "echo" the larger panels in color and in shape, but cut them from matboard on the cutting machine. Either the beveled edges or an inset line may be run around both the larger and small shapes to give finish, of lightened ultramarine blue.

Thus we produce a striking display, unified, not a scrambled omelet mess of unrelated sizes and colors.

I always strive to write informally—the language of the shop; I want every one of my readers to feel as if, were we to meet, they would just be meeting an old friend; we could merely shake hands, sit down and continue the chat.



Plate 58—A page of modern panel Ideas.

martin's ideas

THE dull, stodgy monotony of the average Main Street paper sign—need I comment on it? So many sign men seem unable to snap out of their lethargy and recognize the change that has come in display methods, or to adjust themselves to the new conditions.

With paper work, the typical sign man's practice is to letter the largest display in red (any old red), the secondary display in blue or black, and let it go at that; if outlining seems required, or is requested, it may be done grumblingly; the idea is to "slap it out". The thoughtful card man whose aim is effective advertising and the better type of paper work, tries to create advertising that gets away from the monotonous sameness that detracts, instead of attracts the attention of passersby. He often employs cutout work, oddity in shape at times, colored poster papers, contrasts in letter, peppier colors, original layouts, the transparent—or even japan—colors in bullseyes, panels, etc.

Not smarty-smarty, I don't mean that—complex, messy little designs in green, blue, yellow, red lettering, all helter-skelter together; they give one a pain! Now and then a fellow will even get all "hopped up" by this Martin's dope and preachifying, and under its influence will dash out and throw a modernistic creation on an ice wagon (literal fact). It fairly brings tears to the eyes.

Cards appeal to the man or woman on the sidewalk who may be window shopping, but paper signs are generally designed to catch the auto traffic, or street-car traffic, or even the woman across the street. We need more boldness of treatment—that's true. But paper signs should *not* be rank modernistic; modern—yes! We seek a freshness, a clean and sparkling originality.

There are endless possibilities in these new ideas presented here, and in the former issue of "IDEAS", and in those to come. Each issue will have them (two pages if possible). They may be endlessly diversified. Cutout wallboard shapes have been shown, will be shown, that are equally adaptable to paper work, just as most paper sign ideas are usable as wallboard cutouts, if desired. The card layouts also, offer to the discerning man, many ideas that may be used.

To beginners I will explain that colored (tinted) poster papers in canary yellow, pink, light blue, light green, goldenrod, 36 inches wide, in rolls of 25 yards, or 50 yards, may be bought, if not from your local dealer, at least from the supply houses. The white, the yellow and goldenrod will likely be most used, so if possible buy these in 60 lb. rolls. If your own dealer or paper house does not carry these nine-inch-width rolls, they can order for you *if you insist*.

There are also sold dull finish (plated) poster papers in most brilliant colors, same as our card stocks. Some are very fine, others—the darker, as dark blue, dark red, black, not practical for the average shop. Some studio men, however, who know their stuff, create very striking effects with them.

As a single example possible, using plated papers: suppose you have on your paper sign a very large yellow or orange bullseye. You may coat this with thin japan color; it will look fine by day, but by night illumination streaky and muddy. With the brilliant poster papers and ingenuity, a bullseye may be cut out and spliced into place, then lettered in black (and perhaps outlined with white or cream thinned water color) that will be a knockout!



Plate 59—Paper signs are business builders.

martin's ideas

JAPAN colors as used in card studios, were treated in the first issue of "IDEAS". Many workman still use the old type water colors for paper sign work, with resultant wrinkling (due to the adhesive) when dry. They look wretched—cheap; much of the advertising value is lost. No really progressive man will do it.

On rare occasions for a bit of trim, as white outlining for instance, water color with alcohol (or camphor) and glycerine—small amounts—added, may be permissible if the window is not subject to frost and sweating between the sign and the glass.

For small paper signs and for high grade paper work of various nature, the transparent theatrical colors are something different again. The makers of these colors are most concerned with their use on cloth by the theatrical trade; I merely happened to stumble on their adaptability to paper signs. Likewise they are successful on white or the paler mat-board stocks. Display words or prices are sketched faintly in pencil, painted in with the lighter brighter colors and outlined with black. In outlining, there will be noticed none of the disadvantages that go with the use of opaque colors, for they dry with a perfectly smooth, velvety finish, and their transparent nature gives them a luminosity. Use for modernistic "rays of light", and bands of color for lettering over, for outlining.

Practically no one uses these colors for this purpose, or for paper work; why not, I do not know. Too lazy, methinks. Perhaps price prohibits, in their opinion. It should not. A better grade of paper sign made or trimmed with this medium should bring a better price, if really different. Pass the expense on to

the merchant. Try it, say you? I have; personal experience fully corroborates this statement. When a trade has been worked up from "10c a square foot" to as high as 30 and 35c a square foot (though averaging 22½c), isn't that proof conclusive? Catalog prices on these colors do seem high, but remember they are liquid and thin, and possess great *surface covering capacity*.

By day they are wonderfully snappy, while by night when crowds are window shopping, intending to return next day possibly as buyers, they are even more vivid and outstanding. Twelve colors are generally used, but some 24 colors are listed by the makers; and they may be even further mixed, if desired.

Thinned with water only, they are non-spreading, do not run, and very little streaking will be noticeable if quickly brushed out and double-stroked with broad suitable width brushes. Not injurious to red sables if proper rinsing is looked to; there need be no worry if brushes show a trifle of stiffness in drying, as plain water plentifully used will clean all this out. One maker assures me that the effect of this color on brushes should be less harmful than water color, as it contains none of the commonly used adhesives which render red sable hair brittle in time if not properly rinsed.

Note particularly: heavier papers may be found best, but even on thin stuff it does not "draw" or pucker on drying as do regular show card colors. What little waviness is left after drying—due to water content—may be nearly removed by smoothing out with hand.

Several of the colors, as may be expected—magenta, purple, perhaps turquoise and very light green—are a bit "fugitive", but are okeh for a short time. If sprayed lightly with clear, thin lacquer, they will certainly hold.



Plate 60—Interesting possibilities in paper cut-outs.

martin's ideas

If lettering display cards is worth devoting most of your life to, surely then it is worth knowing more about—is worth systematic study.

To outrival others is easy: Simply learn twice as much as they know, both of mistakes and success! Do double work—get double experience. Simple, isn't it? Success is yours if you really want it. There is no copyright on its principles.

So in addition to one's daily duties may be added the habit of regular evening practice—of conscientiously devoting several hours for two or three evenings a week, to study. This if persisted in, month in, month out—yes, even year in, year out, if necessary—*must* raise you above the crowd, must increase your earning capacity manifold. The majority of the "mechanically" minded are inclined to smile when any attempt is made to talk beyond cardboard and prices and such tangible matters. Let your shopmates smile superiorly at you, if they wish, for buckling down in the evening to a second work-spell: time will tell.

As to the matter of study time, the assertion is made that more can be accomplished in one early morning hour than in two at night. Science, I believe, will bear me out in this. While fully recognizing the difficulty for many of early rising, it is certain that the effort is well worth its cost, that the quietness conducive to resultful concentration, the absence of radio and other distracting noises, will more than counterbalance the social activities that one may forego by retiring earlier.

My readers are commended to an earnest perusal of that little treatise by Arnold Bennett, an English writer, "How to Live on 24 Hours a Day;" he shows therein very clear-

ly how to plan your work and then how to work out your plan.

After being married for twenty years I had the desire to take up a certain night course of study, but hesitated when it was figured what tuition cost would be—not to speak of extras like locker space, \$10 to \$20 materials cost, etc.—and how much time would be spent going to and from the school, as against the probable number of minutes the instructor would get to spend with the individual student each evening (not more than *five!*)

The real advantage, it was reasoned, must be that such a schedule pinned one down; that he felt a certain obligation to get his money's worth out of the course. For instance, if Martin's "Show Card Layouts" were shoddily printed and sold you for only thirty cents you would probably just as lightly value it, merely skim through it and cast it aside. If it cost you thirty dollars, you'd certainly appraise its contents higher, read it carefully and take the best care of it. But suppose it were chopped up into trick "lessons" and sold to you through high-pressure methods as a correspondence course at three hundred dollars—how you would study it, would concentrate, would buckle down to it, in order to get back what you paid for it! And you'd get it, too.

• • •
For years it has been my dream to get out such a series of handy, popularly priced work-bench manuals, with a scrap-book assortment of layouts and shapes suitable for every problem one might have, a few pages of theory-talk for the student, some salesmanship suggestions, etc; many honest to goodness new and up-to-date Ideas—*live matter*—and to put these out in compact small book form in inexpensive bindings.



Plate 61—A page chock-full of Christmas Ideas.

martin's ideas

To continue my illustration (from a preceding page): why not then study at home? If Friend Wife were paid just one half or one third of the sum required for night school, she would willingly cooperate. Set aside three evenings a week from now on, and resolve on coming home from your daily work, to shut yourself off, to settle down and study or practice—no matter what seductive pleasure may beckon.

In your studies — concentrate! Not just a few wrinkles on your forehead—but concentration inside your skull! Get horse blinders if necessary, shut off the loud speaker, stuff your ears with cotton; then mull over the details you wish to remember. The subconscious mind will later bring them back to you when needed. (Our brains may be likened to phonograph records; we start the needle and it goes over the track till it strikes just the bar of melody wanted.)

A wonderful lot of study may be accomplished in half an hour or even in only fifteen minutes a day of concentration, if persisted in. The writer realizes so keenly the value of time that he may rarely be seen away from home without a small brief case containing among other things some handy little volume for spare minute reading. For even spare minutes commonly wasted can be made to pay well. A young fellow workman was preparing a considerable number of poster head treatments to use as samples, doing just a little each evening on them at home. He progressed slowly, so slowly that he hardly noticed the time spent—yet surely. Before he realized it, the task was accomplished.

The story is told of a couple of

gentlemen who hired a taxi to drive them between two points in Michigan, a distance of about sixty or more miles. As soon as started, they, being in the back seat together, promptly opened brief cases and began to go over music scores together. In the two hours ride the two men, Fritz Kreisler, the famous violinist and his accompanist, completely memorized almost sixty pages of music! This incident illustrates how highly successful people value time, and how such wise use of time is probably responsible for much of their success.

Every one of my readers, I take it, is a thinker, otherwise he would be reading fiction or the snappy-paragraph type of literature which requires no thinking. The mentally lazy do not actively seek self improvement, as you are now doing, so it must be in your heart and mind to wish success.

But discouragements will come, and doubts creep in, in spite of your efforts. Crush them! say to yourself, "What any other man has done I can do!" and immediately set about making yourself into that sort of workman, fashioning for yourself the career you desire. This motto, seen in a bank window, is only too true: "The man who thinks he can't is usually about right."

We give the next fellow our secret admiration for his cleverness and dexterity; what we see may be really the end-result of years of patient practice, of years of observation, and of experience. Planning and practice and plodding will creep up on and overtake individual "smartness" and brilliance; eventually our own action will become automatic; all of which is only another way of saying "practice makes perfect."



Plate 62—Santa Claus used in various ways.

MARTIN'S IDEAS

There has been much argument pro and con regarding the use, in window display, of price tickets. Who is right, I do not know. It seems generally more advisable to use them. Women like to know the prices of goods. Shoppers may be teased or intrigued into coming into a store, but many experts in window display agree that no matter how exclusive and beautiful the goods may be, they are better if priced. Even men prefer prices, as in buying shoes or hats, if all be numbered and priced, with one card or two as foci points and clinchers, with a hanging panel up above the merchandise, they will come in "sold" and the sales clerk is simply needed to fit. However, it is not wise to litter such a window (as for shoes) with big bargain type tickets like huge snowflakes in a snow storm.

In the frankly sales window (as opposed to the style appeal type), where everything is subordinated to the bargain message, with its large cards and over-size prices—tickets are without doubt necessary. But this large, cheap, sale price ticket for cheap or bargain merchandise, as on "Bargain Friday" or "Economy Day", should be sharply differentiated from those used for \$150 overcoats, or for the jeweler's requirements—tickets so tiny, oftentimes, that one's clumsy fingers find trouble executing them.

The class of merchants who cater to the cheapest trade will ask for tickets the size of a slice of ham. Some stores like credit dress shops insist on these large price cards. I'd call them; one is tempted to inquire whether the object is not to lean the dress up against the ticket! The tickets shown here are many of the sale type with large numerals; smaller, neater, pen-made tickets are ad-

mitedly better for the higher grade, or daintily decorated display. (Consult "1000 Show Card Layouts" for other tickets of slightly different character.)

Tickets neatly and tastefully executed—beveled, for instance—with a line or two of copy in addition to the price, run into money to make; are time eaters. But rare indeed is the merchant who can see it so; they almost invariably squawk. To such customers say frankly, that you'd rather not make tickets at all. Suggest their getting them printed. Many card studios do this on small hand or larger power job presses.

Other studios hold rigidly to a rule that all tickets be stock sizes, thus utilizing every smidgen of scrap about the shop. The boy or handy man is kept busy odd minutes cutting these neatly on the cutter—a small photo print trimmer—and stacking by size and color in a uniform set of cigar or other boxes.

With odd shapes—sometimes purposely so designed to take care of a sale name, firm name or slogan word or two—*several* mat board thicknesses are tacked together, many minutes saved by cutting them all at the same time on the cutting machine (cut-awl). With the shapes shown here no expensive machine cutter is required. Almost without exception they may be cut solely with sharp shears, if thin or medium stock be used. In awkward angles or curves, finish the job with the mat knife.

(In a forthcoming issue of "IDEAS" this subject of tickets will be again discussed.)

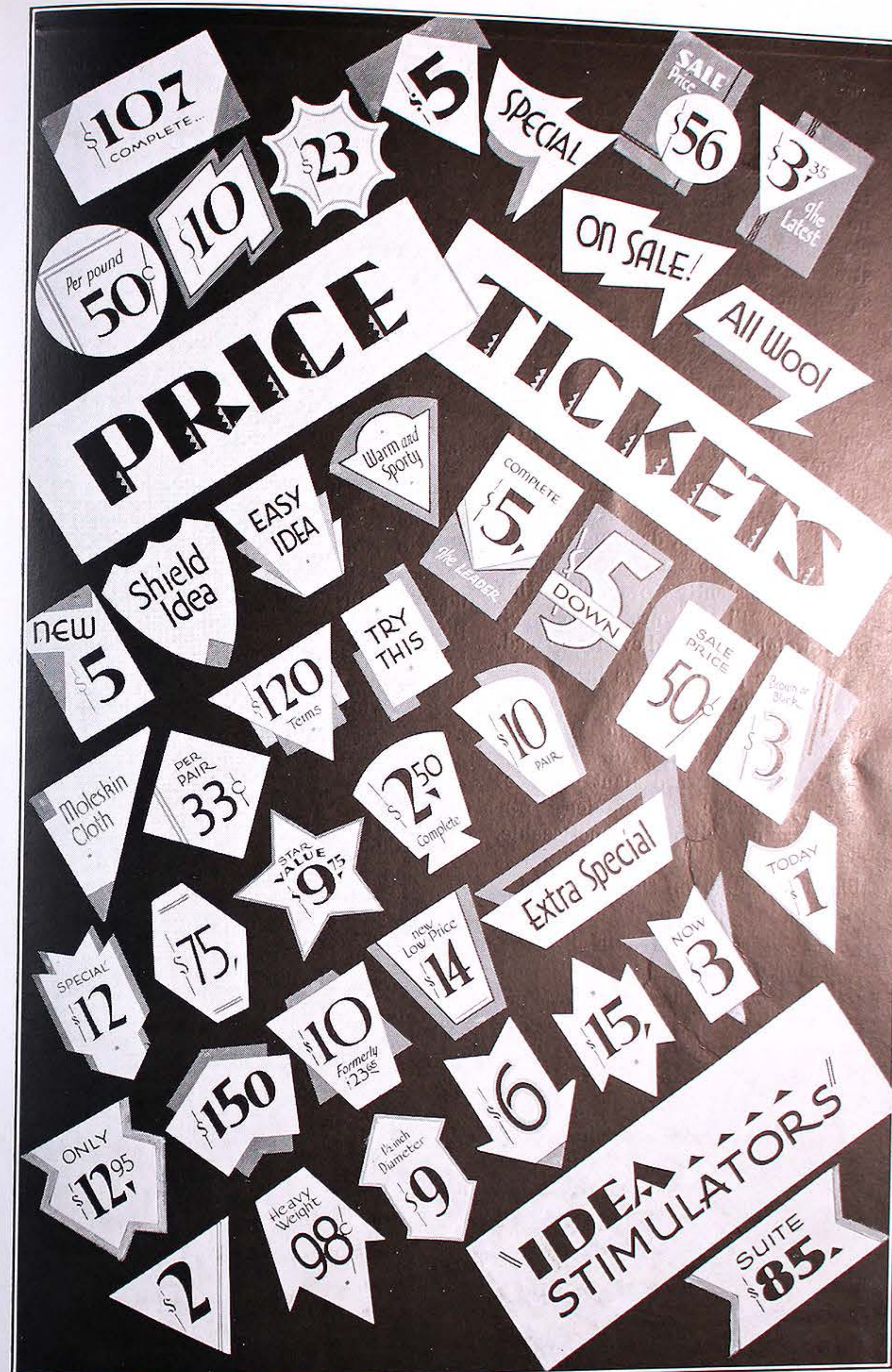


Plate 63—A variety of price ticket Ideas.

Martin's Ideas

THE student should have proper tools at hand—drawing board (place it across the back of two dining room chairs if you have no better facilities), thin sheets of cheap white cardboard or of paper stretched tightly; adequate light; T square and pencil.

Let us now take up our pens:

Before commencing the practice of the alphabet, some time should be spent in preliminary work to gain control of the tool. In these preliminary exercises confine yourself to strokes of the pen in different directions—vertical first. Make a series of vertical lines, drawing the pen down with a sort of finger movement, persistently practicing this one stroke till the lines are vertical, equal weight, well and evenly spaced.

Hold the pen easily as in writing, and draw the strokes with a steady, even motion, and slight uniform pressure on the cardboard. A slight, very slight backward slant may not be objectionable, but the least forward leaning will be very noticeable. Obvious and elementary? But it is this identical sort of thing every display card "speedking" had to learn when he first started in the business.

When this stroke is mastered, move on to the next—the oblique, leaning toward the left or right; then the horizontal strokes—a large number of each. And last, the round elements are to be practiced.

After these first drills in strokes—many pages of them—you will have become familiar with, and accustomed to, the tool and ready to make large and small alphabets, "upper" and "lower case," afterward grouping these into words, so on into layouts.

As to the alphabet, take the elementary basic skeleton form, memorize it till its image is stamped in-

delibly on the mind, then lay out guide lines and reproduce it. Be very patient and painstaking and thorough in this rudimentary work; over and over and over until it becomes almost automatic. The student in his early training should not allow himself to be hurried. Thoroughly understand each operation; master it before you move on to the next one.

In all this freehand lettering the snap and swing of professional work comes from keeping the strokes uniform and the letters themselves full-bodied and close together—ample space, but not too much space between words. You are not exactly drawing, but more *writing* letters—yet avoid personal idiosyncrasies of flourish just now. You'll have plenty of time to try out all these personal ideas later. Stick to the conventional straight-and-narrow rules for a while first. As you practice, swing along evenly to a mental count of one, two; one, two; one, two, three.

After the drilling in strokes, and after the basic skeleton upright letter is mastered, then go on another step to the italic letter. This is simply the upright upper and lower case inclined to a certain degree; the order and direction of strokes are otherwise practically the same as in the upright form. There must be a care for uniformity of shape, and constant vigilance to keep the strokes parallel. As before, try for rhythm of movement—one, two, three; one two, three—as the number of strokes in the letter chosen requires. After the swing of the letter is mastered, it can be written very fast. When thoroughly drilled in these skeleton forms, take up the letter with footing or spur for further practice.

• • •

Pen Lettering for Beginners



The Position of the Hand
 ABCD JKLMN
 EFGH OPQRS

TUVWXYZ &

123456789

abcdefghijklmnop
 opqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHI

Ball Point
 Letters
 or Italics

Music
 Pen
 Italics

...then the
 Soennecken
 Pen

Plate 64—Instructions for pen lettering, and alphabet.

martin's ideas

THE foregoing directions are particularly for the simplest pen—so-called "ball" pen (with flat-shoe turned-up nib). For soennecken—square or slant-cut broad pen—or cut-end music pen, the pen is held in relation to line at angle of 54 degrees so that perpendicular and horizontal down strokes are even breadth and symmetrical axes of the curves lie aslant. The rule is—downstrokes, thick; upstrokes, thin. To make finished end strokes—spurs or *serifs*—position of the pen must be changed a bit. These hints coupled with careful study of plate will make plain the procedure of handling these tools. Thorough mastery of this type of pen—soennecken—helps wonderfully later when brush work is taken up, in forming of Roman or thick-and-thin-element type of letters.

With broad pens, unless provided with the efficient ink-guard or reservoirs, the board must be in such slanting position, that as you write, pen holder is almost horizontal, otherwise ink will "flood", i.e. flow-down too quickly.

Now—brush practice. Principles of action—procedure of going at it by strokes—is practically same as in former drilling, except that the brush seems decidedly "tricky", at first. You must learn almost to *feel* through its end—to make it behave as *you* want it. This is not a mere figure of speech, or witty saying, but literal fact.

In relation to cardboard surface, do not attempt to hold brush at 45 degree angle, but the straighter, the better—in fact, nearly vertical. The simplest, to-the-point way of describing the proper brush position is:

Hold it by extreme tip end of handle with thumb and forefinger of left hand, letting it hang suspended perfectly perpendicular, just clearing the cardboard. Then grasp ferrule with thumb and forefinger of right hand as close to hair as possible. That's all!

As you work, straighten up handle occasionally, till you overcome inclination to let it gradually slant back toward the crotch of hand. Use colors in shallow containers, not so deep as to necessitate changing position of fingers in dipping for color. Hold brush firmly but lightly—last three fingers acting as sliding base. At all times freedom of action, absence of cramped gripping of handle. If hand is cramped or rigid, the slight roll between the fingers necessary when executing a curve is prevented. In vertical strokes nearly a finger movement is used; for horizontal, turn hand a little to the right and draw stroke sideways. In flat circular strokes, brush must be rolled slightly; in swell strokes as in Roman O, use a gradual pressure in center of stroke, lightening pressure as curve is finished.

AFTER the preliminary stroke practice, the simplest single flat stroke alphabet is taken up. In practicing lower case of either pen or brush alphabets three horizontal guide lines should be drawn, the top, bottom and waist lines, and letters pencilled in very lightly in skeleton form only. As in penwork, a swing of a sort, or speed of stroke is needed. Some workers, for example, who struggle along in a timid way would do better to *load* the brush with color which is in just the right consistency, and—strike out freely!



Brush Lettering for Students



III // \ \ ≡ (C) (O) SSS UGR
 abcdefghijkl
 opqrstuvwxyz &

GOTHIC-ABDEJKLMST
 1234567890



I / C C S V U D / *Strokes for Brush or Soennecken Pen*
 ABCSJOEV

ROMAN *Italics*
 abcdefghijklmopqrst
 uvwxyz & 123456789

Plate 65—Instructions for brush, and two alphabets.

Martin's Ideas

RANDOM NOTES: (On Plate 64—"Instructions for pen lettering") The beginner should first conscientiously practice, with flat nib pen ("Drawlet", and others), the making of these skeleton forms in groups of letters, in sentences, in small dummy cards which have been cut in proportion to larger stock sizes (as eighth sheets, quarter sheets, etc.), using several sizes of pens—keeping faithfully at this until construction, spacing, and a sense of layout become more automatic. Then he may go on to substitute built-up styles in display lines, if he wishes.

Another thought: The modern tendency has run to spurless or sans serif forms of letters. The question has been raised that everything that stands up has feet; lettering stands up—why not then give it feet? Should it be made to look like a clothes horse? The "lower case" standard pen alphabet shown in the practice plate, has been included to meet the demand of such critics.

(On Plate 65—"Instructions for brush") Newspaper stock, thumb-tacked down snugly, is very fine for this brush practice work, the classified ad pages particularly. Turn the page so that the type lines run vertically and thus aid in keeping the strokes upright. The newspaper stock has just the right "tooth" or pull, owing to its absorbant quality, for the beginner's practice work. As mentioned elsewhere, a cheap drawing board laid across the top of two dining chairs—just right for standing up to—will serve our home student very efficiently.

The gothic alphabet—in the upper portion of this same plate—is letter design reduced to its most elementary or skeleton form; it is a letter of impersonal character, highly advocated by the proponents of the modern style, who have interpreted it with almost geometric simplicity—

too geometric for beauty. What has been termed the "dull obesity or unending bluntness" of the old "Egyptian" letter, made famous by journeymen sign painters in years long past, was undoubtedly uninteresting and monotonous; a little variation or irregularity—to be governed by the artistic idiosyncrasy of the workman—will make it easier to read; this should not be carried too far and become bizarre, nor be used in too many different sizes thrown together in juxtaposition so that the eye needs to be constantly adjusting itself to a different focus.

(The lower position of this brush instruction plate, offers a "lower case" Roman; capitals for this will be given in a future issue.)

(On Plate 66—"Flood-stroke" alphabet) This letter can be made with the flat-nib pen, but its real grace and freedom are best brought out with brush. Small sized brushes, a bit worn, so as to be blunt-ended, at least when loaded almost dripping with color, and rolled on the palette—hence its popular name "flood-stroke"—are superior.

For mass copy—as body-text on cards—it is fine, superior to too much or too extreme slant italic; its full round ovals, its narrow m's and n's very pleasing. In mass copy an irregularity of alignment and occasional variations of letter will add interest.

The three lines in larger caps shown in lower portion of plate, while different in form are yet the same in spirit. The m's and e's are so formed not from a desire for freakishness, but more as an aid to easier reading, better legibility. The spirit of modern lettering is freedom—apparent carelessness it may almost seem at times—born of speed of execution.

This is a bread-and-butter style of letter—a money-maker.

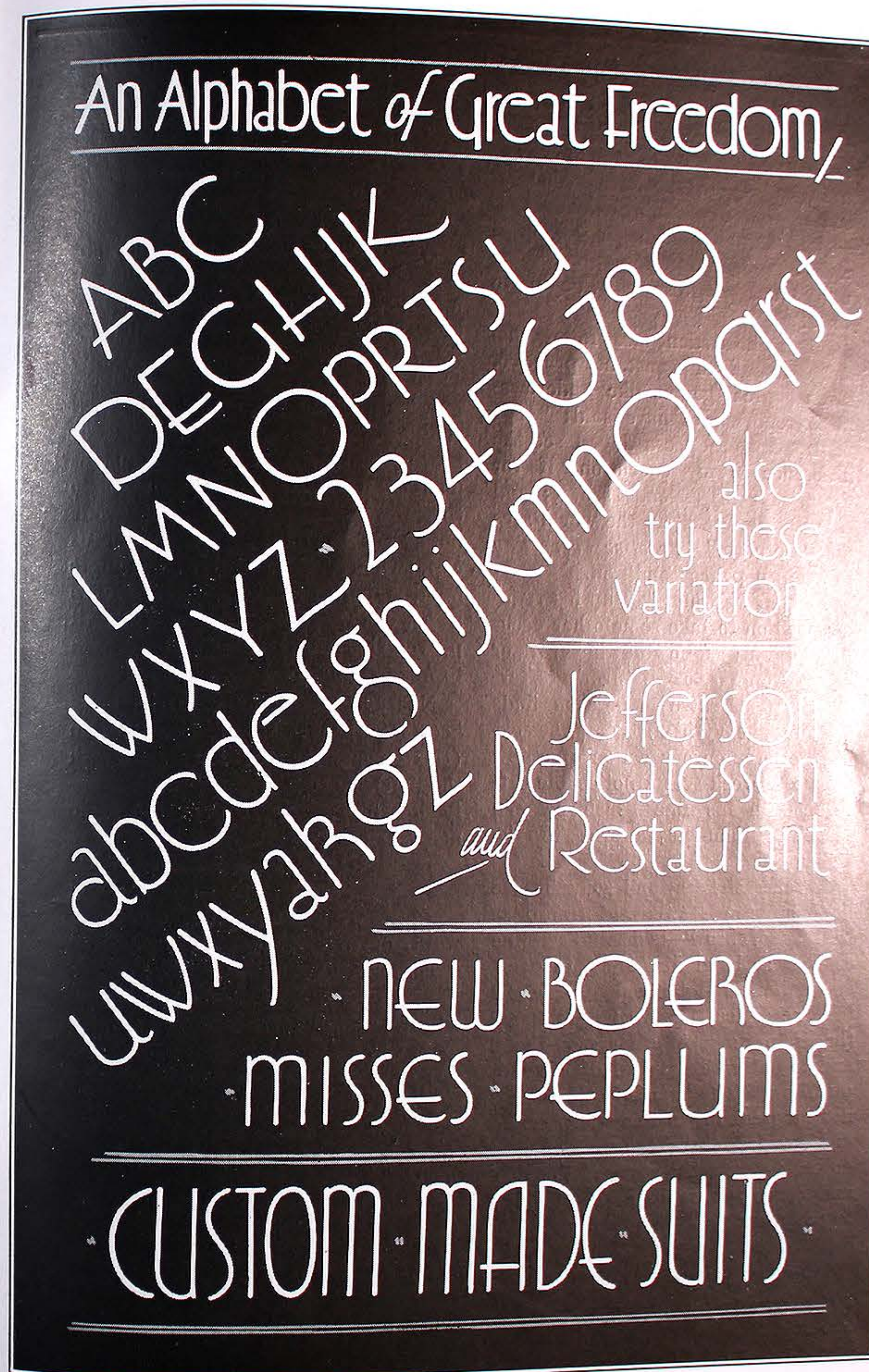


Plate 66—A sans-serif, so-called "Flood-stroke" alphabet.

martin's ideas

LET me reiterate: there must be persistent, unflagging, assiduous practice—practice! Don't skip a day of regular practice. The essential part of learning cardwork is—practice. By means of your own right hand, and determination, eventually real progress will begin to show.

The piano student must follow this same course of constant practice. Even a great genius like Paderewski is reported to have said: "If I neglect my practice a day, I see the difference in my execution: if for three days my friends see it; and if for three weeks, all the world sees the difference." *Practice every day* to keep in prime condition.

The barber who gives up his regular position to take some other occupation, only following his former work evenings or Saturday afternoons as an extra man, soon finds himself "heavy-handed." The expert letterer on a vacation of a few days or a week sees a noticeable difference in his fine brush or pen "touch", when he returns to the bench.

It takes striving and sometimes a little sweating—sweat of brain, as well as of brow—mental discipline as well as hand discipline, to overcome that fatal tendency to follow the line of least resistance, allowing the brains to grow a moss on them, and to shirk this period of seeming plodding. The mentally lazy will not progress far in this work. Stop and—you're lost! You may have to go back yet to the stool of the lime and cement warehouse, if you fail to persevere.

No excuses then! "Too hot to practice?" Baloney! Take Edison, for example. It was dreadfully hot one summer and most executives were out knocking a golf ball about

or streaking it across country in a high-powered streamlined car. Edison instead stuck around the laboratory and invented the phonograph and a few other what-nots. (Hold on! d'd they have cars then? Well, it doesn't matter—you get my idea.)

Again: when a business man, absolutely ignorant of music, can—on a friendly wager—during his spare moments in his crowded life, by *work* and *application*, in thirty days, after only several lessons in fingering, master and play well classical compositions on the cello (one of the most difficult of stringed instruments)—when he can learn to do this proficiently. I say, as a side hobby, it proves that any one of us can, when setting out with single mind and with aim and time, to learn a little thing like brush work—it proves that we can do it if we *wish* to *hard* enough.

Not every Tom, Dick, or Harry becomes proficient brush men (though all may do fairly well with the pen) because Tom or Dick simply doesn't *want* to put forth the necessary effort.

KeeP at it, doing conscientious work, never allowing yourself to do a careless line, a frowsy job, and I'll make a definite statement right here, Mr. Student, that may encourage you: I predict that one of these fine days soon, when you're on that studio job, you'll be able to stroll in in the morning, sling your hat onto a hook, merely pick up the brush with no preliminary steaming up or working over the brushes necessary, and start easily right in on the line you left off the evening before—so natural and automatic will your action have become.

•••

Two Contrasting Italics



Plate 67—A bold effect; and a graceful, with sugar and cream.

martin's ideas

THE idea has been that in this field of work—this game of brag, we may almost call it—that handlettering should be as different as possible from type faces. Still others hold to the theory that it should follow as closely as is practicable with the brush, the standard accepted type faces. I disagree decidedly with this latter view, advocating that freehand lettering should look free hand, individual, original. Not too unusual or bizarre, always legible.

The abstractionist with monitorial, dogmatic, nay—professorial viewpoint, should beware of becoming too hidebound in his opinions, too bigoted. Such an idealist, laying down rigid rules,—thus and so must it be,—makes himself ridiculous. We are in this business to make money; ignore such counsel; go your own way, and keep to your own letter style. If our lettering should look so like type, all bespurred to death, all feeling crushed out of it, why not go to the printer and have our cards stamped out in lead?

I encourage a man to be original, encourage him to be daring, to be courageous in new paths, if he knows fundamentals, has a feeling for good form, and avoids rank inconsistencies.

There should be no criticism of the conscientious craftsman's style who is sincerely striving to express individuality—not mere conceits and idiosyncracies. Lettering should be as individual as handwriting; should be alive and vital and personal.

A certain workman in a mid-west city has an individual, self taught style, severely criticised by so-called experts, but is one of the finest cardmen I have ever known; he is as full of ideas "as an egg is full of meat."

In the same city are others mechanically letter perfect, their work bespurred and clean-cut but utterly lacking in eye-attraction.

There is a middle of the road. Know first your advertising principles, and layout, and the letter will generally take care of itself, for letter construction logically follows thought interpretation. If you wish to make a lot of noise there are letters for that—great big, husky fellows, rugged, yet good-natured; others of the aristocrat or courtier type; letters that are crisp, sharp, lively; some that are rough and ready men-of-all-work; still others soft, modulated, pleasant to see. The thought will unconsciously mould and influence the style with a different "personality", as it were.

Master one style of letter; but don't let it master you, so that it too indelibly tinges all that you do. Keep versatile. Don't get alphabet-crazy, but be able to switch styles at will.

The poster-style letter in this plate has a strong, virile character, especially suitable for masculine subjects, bold sale cards, and theatrical work, but is not generally so appropriate for feminine appeal which needs a delicate, smart-looking letter; it possesses the vigor and punch required for strong display.

Theatrical artists have made it over-bold, over-fat, certainly decreasing its legibility by so doing, and making it often positively coarse. The cardman should exercise greater care and strive more for the "flavor" of this style of letter, relying on size of letter instead of on weight. In bold, poster-type treatment it may vibrate when contrasted with suitable light type.

•••

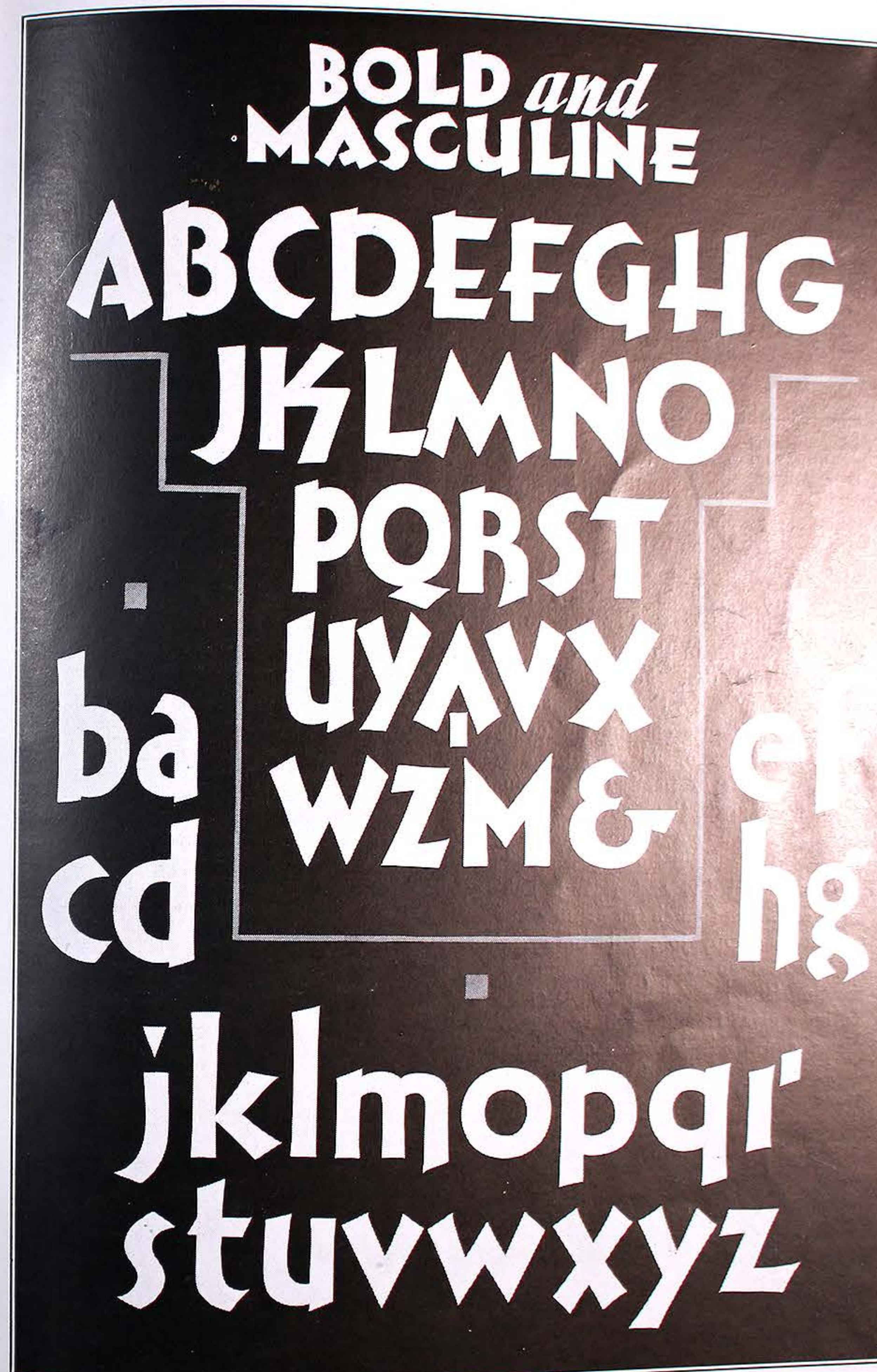


Plate 68—A masculine, modern poster alphabet

Martin's Ideas

A most necessary means of advertising presentation is that of your printing in its various forms; announcement, business cards, letterheads, billheads, blotters, stickers. For these are your salesmen, good or bad, as you choose to make them.

Good printing may generally be obtained, at least in smaller cities and towns, very reasonably (not cheaply—that word has a bad odor.) In addition to business cards, billheads, letterheads, it is most possible and practicable, and certainly profitable, to get out some announcement of your ability and desire to serve, exact location, and such points, in blotter form. This latter is discussed and illustrated more fully and in detail on another page.

It is said that the shoemaker's child is generally the worst shod; so does it often seem that lettering men, producers of advertising, are, in this matter of printed salesmanship, themselves the poorest advertisers. The finest of fine printing is advised; beautiful printing is without doubt dividend-paying. Taking your work to a cheap printer and getting a sloppy job, kills the effect and wastes your money. I am not writing this just to fill up space or to hear myself talk. I have bought the cheap kind—business cards, for instance, so cheap that after they were printed and delivered to me, I was actually ashamed to use them; again, the small, neat, unobtrusive engraved-type of card with simply this on it: "Publicity in Evening Clothes," and in the left hand corner the phone number—nothing else whatever; then the bolder two-color card on ripple finished stock, each one mounted on contrasting stock; and lastly, and best—the attractive three-color job with hand lettered cut used. The three-color cut alone on this last card, exclusive of the

drawing or lettering cut which I did myself, cost \$25—then came the printing cost!

And I believe, yes, strongly believe in beautiful printing; the more it costs the better it pays. With only shoe-string capital—say twenty-five dollars—my advice would be to invest it thus: three brushes, five small jars of color, two sheets of cardboard, and the remainder laid out in the finest of printing, wisely selected,—business cards and a few billheads.

ONE of the most effective treatments of the rather plain mediocre business card is that of mounting it on another stock, some snappy color, leaving about one eighth inch exposed all around. The printer will show you samples of cover paper or highly colored, thin, glazed stock suitable for this, and will cut it accurately to your required size. If your card has one or two-color printing, this border should repeat or echo one of those colors. Try this in a small way by cutting a dozen cards by hand, and mounting as described. Note the added attention value it gives, and how your cards are received. Mount your card on pebbled gold stock, or on a very bright light blue, or a light orange "railroad board"; instead of an all-around margin, let it project on left and top only. The "Smitty" card is to be upright as shown; the "Different" card is not so different, except in its wording, the phone and address very small at lower right.

"Brushpusher" letterhead—brilliant red-orange initial block, rules of bright light blue. "JB" example has clear bright yellow green block, with bright magenta rule. "Martin" letterhead: "Martin" is blackedged closely with heavy medium turquoise, inside the silhouette cut is orange, with miniature card left in white.



Plate 69—Simple business cards and letterheads.

Martin's Ideas

I would impress on you that the big blotter with sprawling hodgepodge of unrelated, display stuff about "Quality and Service" may often be a waste of money; likewise the miniature trick-size blotters bearing reproductions of paintings of Hiawatha and the like and your name and address in dark gray too small to be readable—are also a mistake. Such weak sugar-and-water stuff will convince no one that you should do this window advertising.

Your blotters should always *startle*—almost astonish. Make your layouts so disturbing and irritating that they force the reader into action. Blotters—ink-thirsty blotters—not the glazed or enamelled kind—are one of the best all-around forms of advertising, if done right! For our line of business a billboard technique may almost be employed; use the silk screen process if you have it in your shop, or some simple cut-out form—no die-cut will be necessary for this but the cutting machine, or the delivery boy may work on them along in spare time. (See "Triangle Studio" in extreme left corner of plate.)

Consider your blotter, when you design it, with the eye of a cardman. Attention must first be secured here, as with display cards, through an attractive layout. There must be snap and style for the setting of your sales message. Forget precedent; forget the traditional practice. Plan a dynamic layout in keeping with the tempo of present-day business; almost a "young billboard" technique—I repeat—if necessary, at least with a sort of picture-quality to it; a unique balance; using saucy reds, vivid green, the most livid vermilion obtainable (beware of jarring notes or a mixture of optical disorders.) Make of the blotter almost a small lettering poster. Clothe it

in modern garb, to demonstrate to the recipient that you can do better creative work for *him*.

In your copy for this, be business-like; stick to specific facts, not glittering generalities. Stick to facts; statements right to the point. Tell him once—if he throws it in the waste-basket, come back and tell him again, and again.

A series is good if you can plan far enough ahead, each to tie up some way with the rest, in trademark, or in name set always the same way, or with the same hand-lettered logotype each time. Thus you may cash in on repetition value. A series of *color* blotters, a la new water color printing developed in recent years, or, if that prove too expensive, regular color process will be effective.

The illustrative examples in the plate have been designed for the large 4x9 blotters. Modern book-keeping systems of typed loose-leaf sheets and cards, and typewritten letters with only the sender's signature to be blotted, have rendered these rather large for convenience. The new size—now most popular—is about 3x6 inches. The larger blotter if the kind I advise—"thirsty" stock—may be saved, but is quite apt to be cut in half, thereby injuring the message. By simplifying the design and cutting down on the copy the ideas here are equally usable for the smaller size.

This reminder type of blotter advertising if well planned, and designed so that it wins a place on the desk top of a customer or prospect will bring you definite, traceable returns, and do a good sales job for you.

•••

Blotter Advertising

JONES DISPLAY CARDS
YOUR window needs better Display Cards....
Cards should sell goods. And do... And will, if you come here for them...
A. B. JONES
250 S. Main
Lare U.S.

MARTIN Display Cards
Ask These Merchants About My Work.
Mr. Busy Man, grab that Phone today!

Dependable!

SMITTY
DISPLAY CARDS & POSTERS
ADV. CUTOUTS
PAPER SIGNS
"Everybody knows SMITTY"
1250 W. DEARBORN
Phone 6234

SUPERIOR STUDIO
TRY US!
Superior Display Cards...
Good lettering...
We know our job...
See us for really superior work.
733 Superior St.
Just over Johnson's
IT IS SUPERIOR

A New Service for Smithtown!
A service specially designed for...
in larger cities... a real essential...
window display cards, advertising cards, stationery...
paper and streamers, cutouts from the window...
also! Not printed in black and white...
cards with colored illustrations! Superior lettering!
JONES Display Cards
250 S. Main
Lare U.S.

TRIANGLE STUDIO
"The Mark of Good Work!"
not mere cardboard and paint, but advertising ideas executed in COLOR. Display work that is peppy and different—that makes sales for you!

Plate 70—Ideas for blotter advertising.

martin's ideas

JUST a few words in closing. The writer of these pages confesses that he is no artist in words; with such confession perhaps he may be forgiven much—much groping for phrases, “happy” phrases to express his meaning. I admit (there I go again!) I can't write literature; but let me stand in front of the card bench and I feel right at home.

This book has cost me great toil. While the work was under way I would sometimes not even retire, as decent citizens should, but stretch my length on the floor for a couple or three hours, niggardly begrudging sleep the time it required. Now, in turn, if you have passed up your dinner, or sat up till long past midnight to read it, before closing its pages—I feel sincerely repaid.

The reader may differ with Martin in some of his minor conclusions, but no cardman can deny that in the main the treatise is hard sense, not mere theory. It's facts—ice-cold “refrigerating” facts. Theories are very nice—but facts talk right out plainly. I have had my share of struggle and aspiration, of blunders and success; if this book gives deserving fellows a running start on “the road to Making-Good”; if it can help them to dodge the difficulties, its mission will be fulfilled.

A man can hope, in years, to gather such a little of the knowledge available about his business; it is therefore permissible to take advantage of other's efforts. I earnestly hope it shall then, help others to get their thinking machinery organized, and in a high degree, excite in them a self-activity of thought, opening up entirely new avenues of

thought wherein they may go to any distance desired. It is designed as a recipe book of suggestions; a bonanza of IDEAS, a wealth of inspiration; a flip of the page and the idea is yours!

You experienced men don't need to be told all these things herein, but you do need to be urgently reminded of them. I have tried to irritate you, jar you into right channels, into right methods of system, and so forth. I have done you a service if I did that. To reiterate a thought given in my foreword: I have said only what I believe to be true, and that not merely for the sake of being a “crab”. I have the real interest of the trade at heart. Some day, if I live long enough, I hope to see it on a much better basis and higher plane than it now is. Then, and only then, will I feel content to lay aside my T square and brushes and retire to the chimney corner.

To repeat: my desire has been to help others. May I not flatter myself that I have succeeded? So, reader—break with the past, after your study, training and drudgery are over—throw precedent out of the window, bury the layout book under the pile of old Vogue magazines, and give your own creative thought and ideas free rein!

“H.C.”



A show card writer turning away from his bench, putting together and printing out a book imagine that!

That's



Not a brilliant guy lettering “not so hot”but he's full of practical IDEAS, suggestions and stunts of all sorts!

That's



He sits right down with you . . . talks things over shows you how to handle every problem you may have come up!

That's



Don't bother him with personal letters, but send your dollar in for IDEA-Books One, Two, Three and Four.

H. C. MARTIN, ORLANDO, FLA.

IDEAS *The Only Work of Its Kind Ever Published!*

for **CARDWRITERS**
and other
Lettering Craftsmen

240 Pages
94 Full Page Plates
81 Chapters

We are all continually thinking ideas of our own and swapping them for different ideas of others. If we do not get new thoughts from others, we will get stale and into the rut.

With this Martin Red Book in your possession you will not find it necessary to wander around in darkness for ideas, in case your supply is rather low. You merely open our copy of SHOW CARD LAYOUTS and have the largest collection of modern show card material, layouts, color schemes, shop hints, etc., ever compiled between the covers of one book . . . 1000 layouts . . . all for your use.



\$5 POST PAID

A single idea may pay the entire cost of this book . . . and you'll still have 999 IDEAS left.

ORDER DIRECT FROM

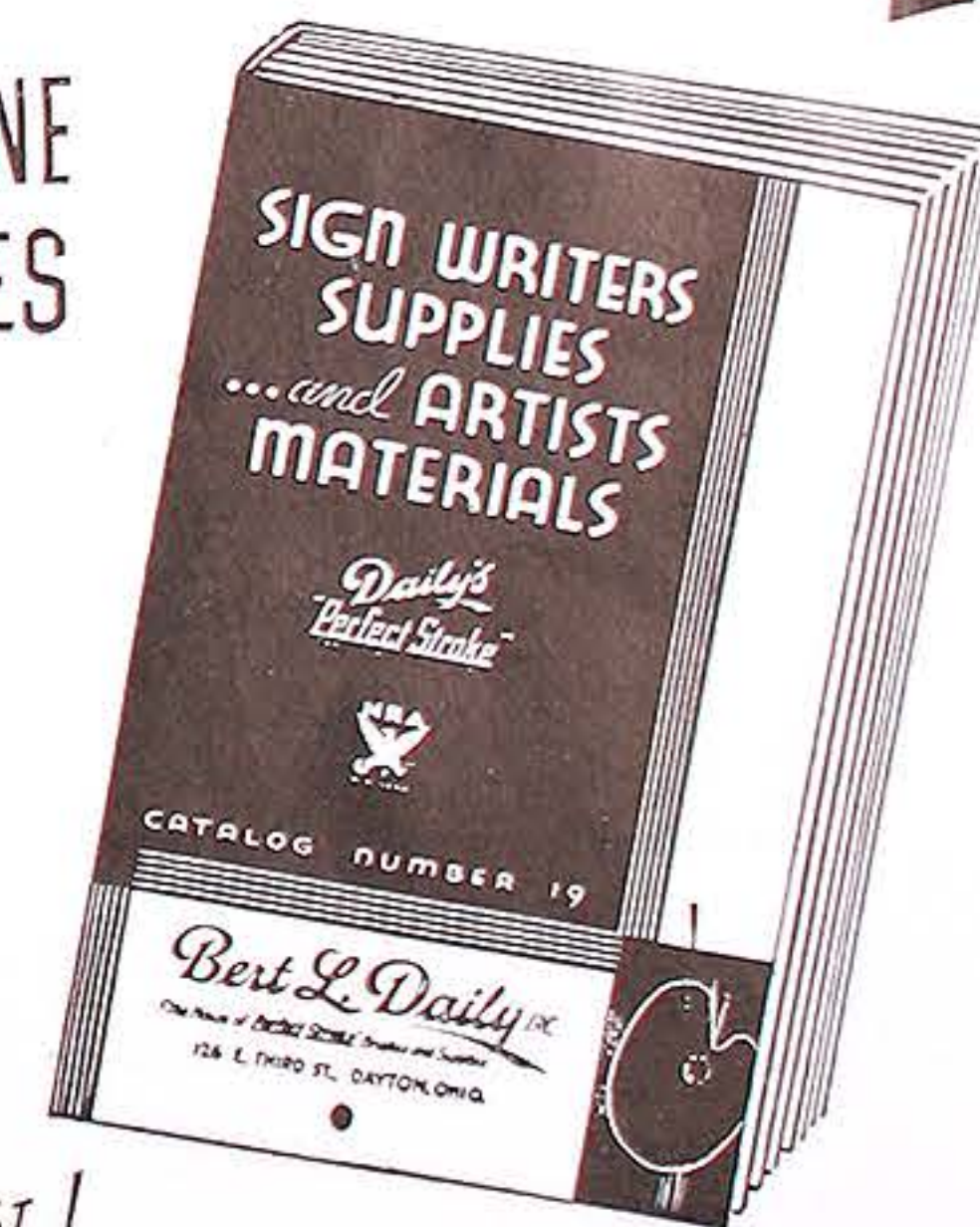
**H. C.
MARTIN**
Orlando, Fla.

another
great book
and it's
FREE!

SUPPLIES
for the
ARTIST

The **BERT L. DAILY**
CATALOG

a 160 page GOLD MINE
of IDEAS and SUPPLIES



Largest Catalog in the
World. . . Thousands of
Items . . . Typical Mail
Order Prices on Best
Known Materials and
Supplies . . .

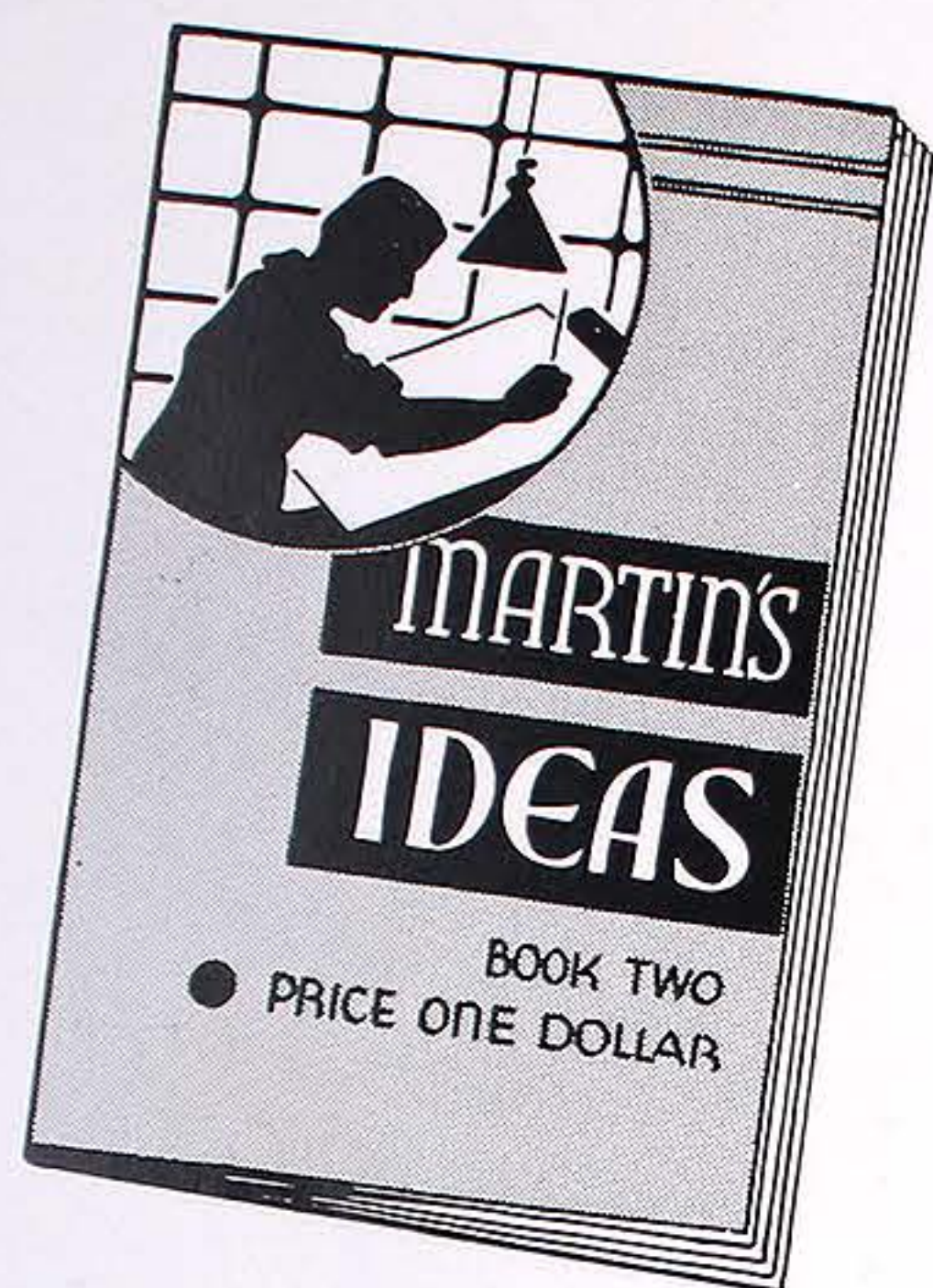
SUPPLIES
for the
CARD WRITER

SUPPLIES
for the
SIGN PAINTER

Write for your copy!

Bert L. Daily INC

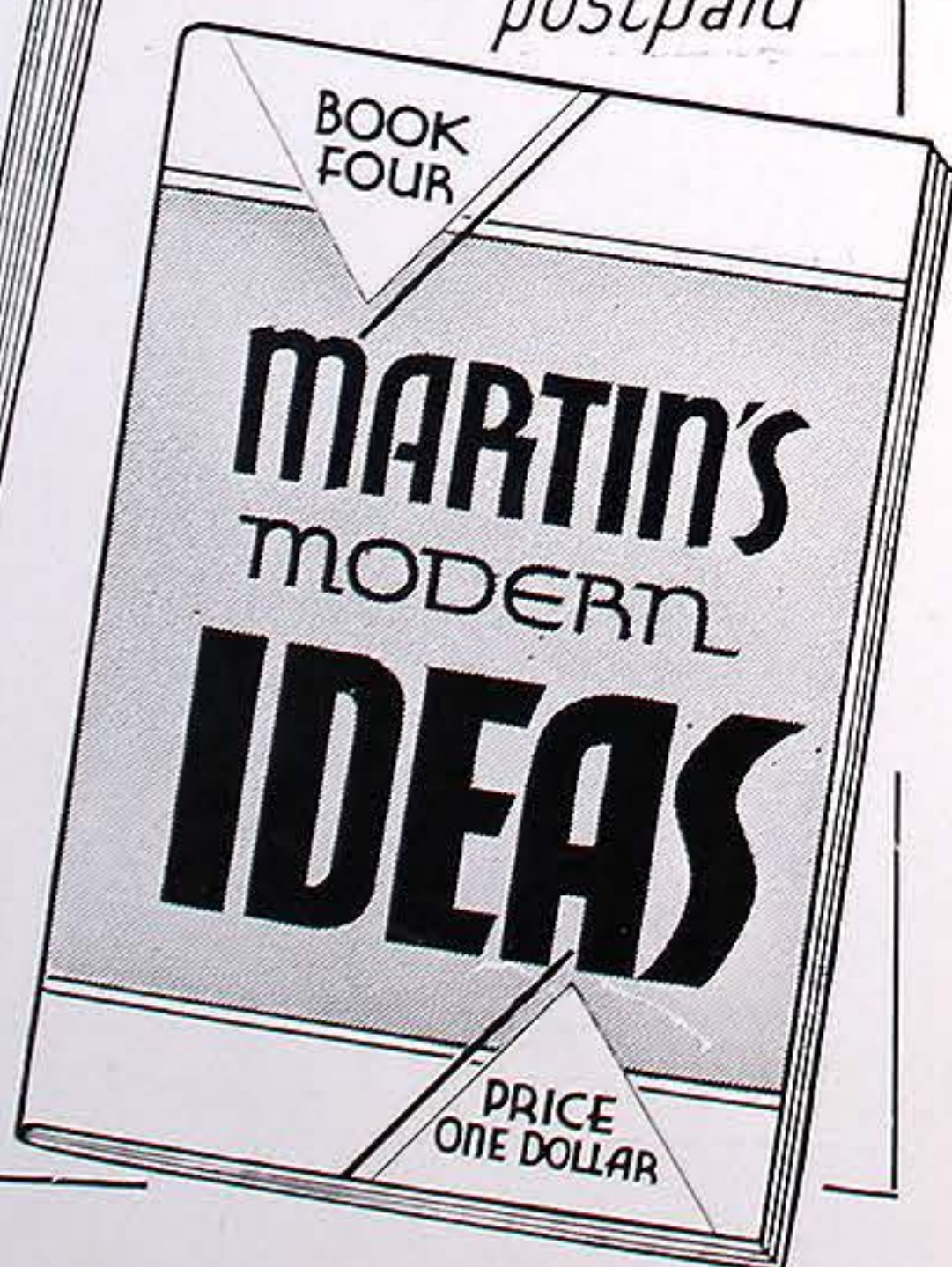
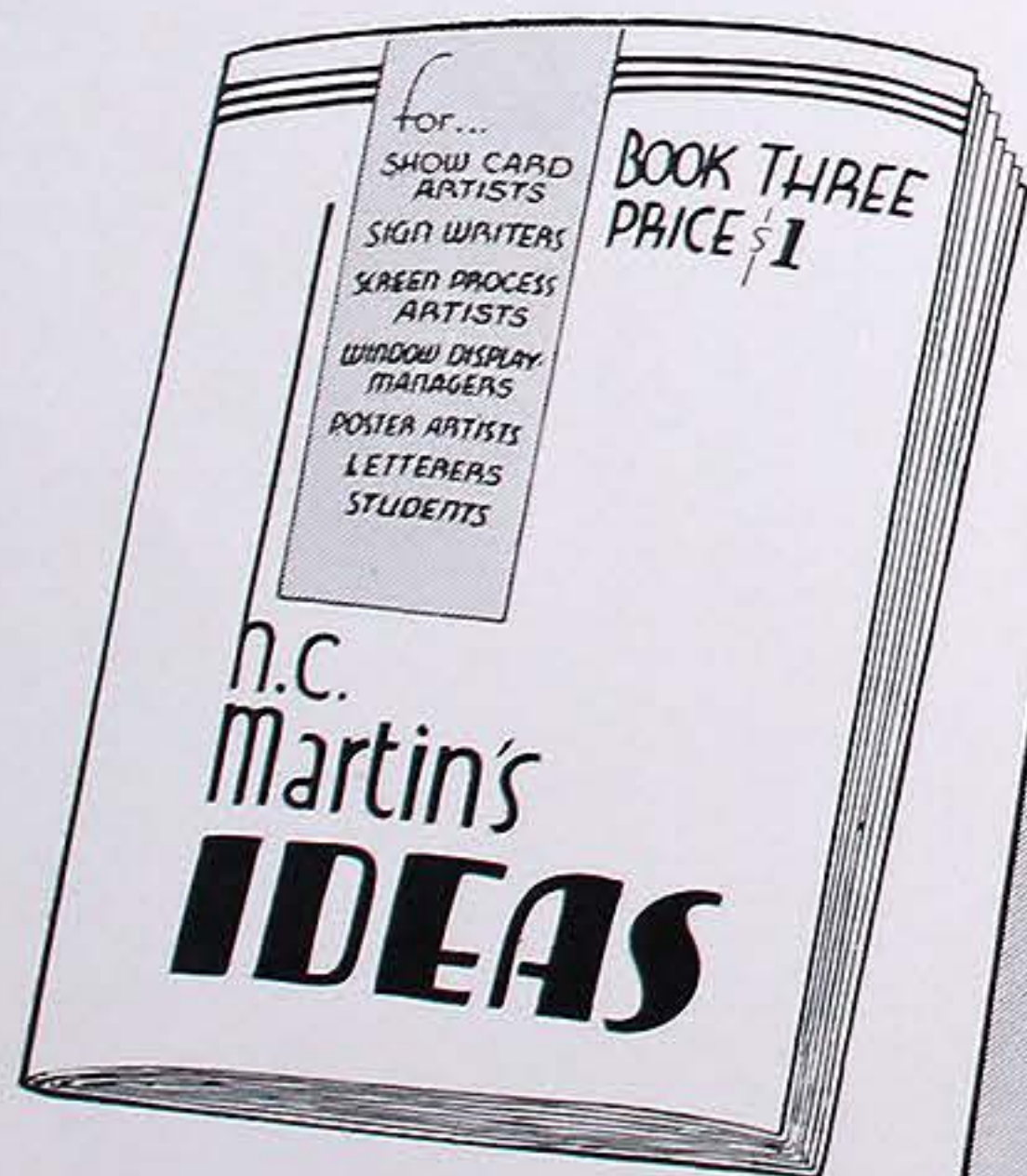
The House of "Perfect Stroke" Brushes and Supplies
126 TO 130 E. THIRD ST. DAYTON, OHIO.



THE FAMOUS
MARTIN 'IDEA-BOOKS'

for...
show card
artists..
and sign
writers,
screen
process
artists,
window
display
managers,
poster art-
ists and
lettering
students

are selling literally by the thousands,
all over the world, at the very
low popular price
of only
**ONE..
DOLLAR**
postpaid



H.C. MARTIN
Orlando, Florida

1880
Dance



PIN