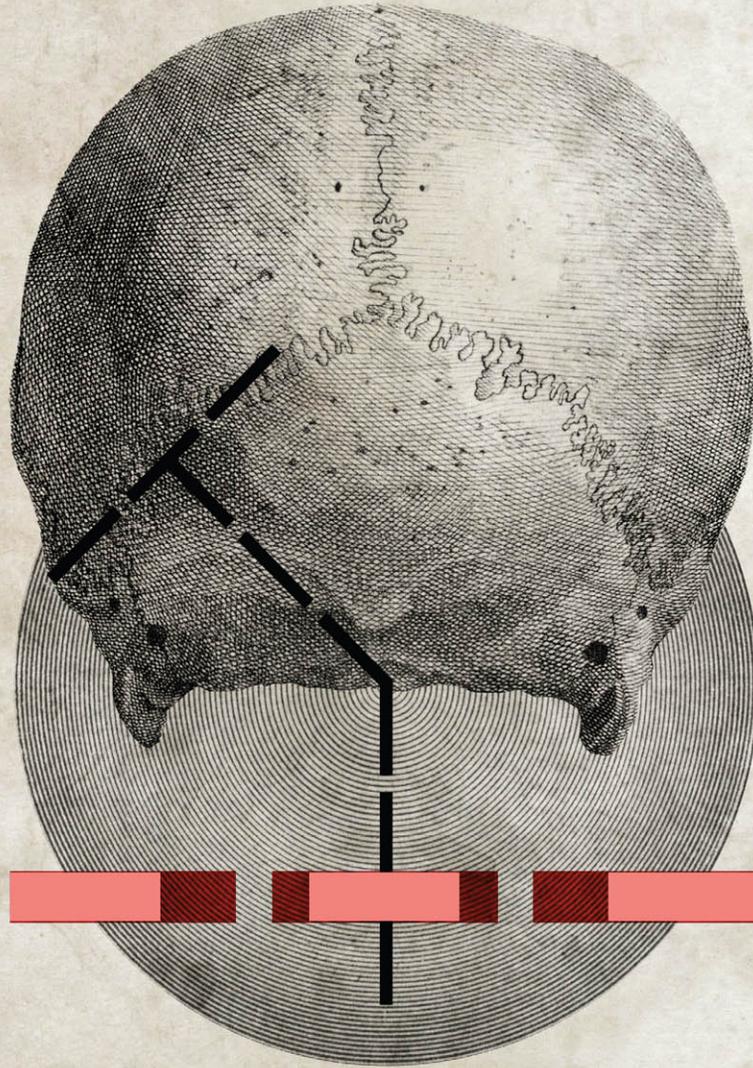


49

The SOCIETY
of PUBLICATION
DESIGNERS

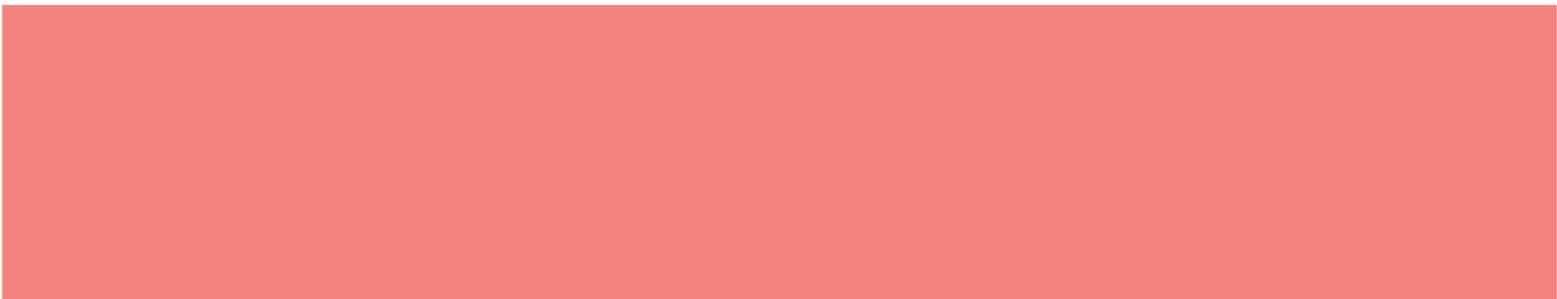
49TH DESIGN
ANNUAL



THIS VOLUME
CONTAINS THE
WORK OF THE
INDUSTRY'S
LEADING

DESIGNERS,
PHOTOGRAPHERS
& ILLUSTRATORS

PRINT & DIGITAL



SPD
49

The SOCIETY
of PUBLICATION
DESIGNERS

49TH DESIGN
ANNUAL

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*A Magic Number*

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ROBERT NEWMAN

49 IS A MAGIC NUMBER,  
A FIGURE RESONANT WITH GREAT MEANING.

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THE NUMBER 49 has been linked to traditions and historical events that represent enlightenment, achievement, fame and success, technology, creativity, community, and the road to nirvana. The book you now hold in your hands is a collection of work from the 49th annual SPD Publication Design competition.

*[The first sentence in this introduction has 49 characters. The second paragraph has 49 words. Unfortunately, I couldn't limit this introduction to 49 sentences. You'd probably be a lot more likely to read the whole thing if I had.]*



MANY YEARS AGO IN BODHI GAYA, INDIA, Siddartha Gautama sat under a pipal tree and meditated, vowing to stay seated there until he found truth. According to legend, after 49 days Gautama attained enlightenment, and from that time was known to his followers as the Buddha, or "Awakened One." Since that time the number 49 has had a prominent place in Buddhist rituals, and is also considered a significant number in Chinese and Taoist cultures. In China 49 is particularly prized because it's the sum of 7 squared, and as in many societies (including the U.S.), 7 is considered a very lucky number.

THIS PUBLICATION DESIGN 49 BOOK honors the best editorial design created in 2013. Book annuals were published erratically in SPD's early years. It took 10 years before the first competition book was created, in 1975. In the years immediately following, SPD design annuals were sporadic; sometimes several years were combined into a single book, and in other years no book was published at all. Since Publication Design 20 in 1985, SPD has published a design competition annual every year, and the book remains the definitive documentation of the art of magazine making.

THE SPD PUBLICATION DESIGN ANNUAL is a slice of graphic history, a snapshot in time that freeze frames forever the state of editorial design circa 2013. It's a collection built out of a sense of creativity, community, inspiration, highly-evolved technical skill, passion, and a great deal of love. Even in this day and age of social media, the instant promotion of covers, and the proliferation of multiple formats and platforms, the SPD annual is still the ultimate gallery of magazine creation, the object d'art that you want to take home and put under your pillow, and show to your mom when you try to explain "what exactly do you do at your job?"



IT WAS AT THE JUNCTION OF US ROUTE 49 and 61 in Clarksdale, Mississippi that legendary bluesman Robert Johnson sold his soul to the devil in return for fame and success. In later years Howlin' Wolf immortalized the road in the song "Highway 49," originally written by Big Joe Williams: "Long tall momma / She don't pay me no mind / All she wanna do / Walk the Highway 49."

THE YEAR DOCUMENTED IN PUBLICATION DESIGN 49 is a continuation of one of the great golden ages of magazine design. Based on the work in this book, it seems like there must have been a pilgrimage of art directors to that crossroads on Highway 49, because the result has been an explosion of brilliant design and imagery at magazines and publications of every size and shape. I'm a student of magazines of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, and I am constantly amazed and inspired by the work that was done at places like Ramparts, Avant Garde, Look, Esquire, Twen, Nova, Rolling Stone, Holiday, and many others. But when I look through Publication Design 49 I am in awe, and also very humbled, by the rich, sophisticated quality of the work happening right now, on every level. There has been a creative explosion in magazine design over the past few years that has been driven by talented people at every level and in every facet of magazine making.



And it's not just the usual suspects—the big, glossy magazines with big budgets—that are driving this wonderful design. It's happening at every level, across the United States and also in the U.K., Spain, Germany, The Netherlands, Brazil, Italy and countless other places.



THE ATOMIC NUMBER 49, also known as the 49th element in the periodic table, is Indium. It's an element that is used in the manufacture of touchscreens and liquid-crystal displays. LCDs as they're better known, are the technology used for screens in computers, among other devices.

THERE HAS BEEN AN AMAZING TECHNICAL EXPANSION among publication designers and creators. Art directors and photo editors are learning new skills and new computer programs every day. Where once their skill sets were very focused on singular tasks, today they have mastered a broad range of talents across multiple platforms and areas of expertise. Not only do art directors design pages, they create (and refine) imagery, conceive and execute information graphics, write headlines and stories, design typefaces, create motion graphics, and assign and art direct illustration and photographs in new and imaginative ways. Photo editors have become video directors and editors, full-range technical specialists, and also are much more engaged in the creation and execution of visual stories on every level. The average creative magazine person is a highly-engaged, proactive, smart and savvy visual storyteller in an age when visual storytelling and design is increasingly the defining essence of a brand.



PROBABLY THE MOST FAMOUS PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE to wear the number 49 on his uniform was Bobby Mitchell, the dazzling Hall of Fame pro football halfback who in the late 1950s teamed with Jim Brown on the Cleveland Browns to create one of the all-time great running back combinations. In 1962 Mitchell was traded to the Washington Redskins, and with several other players became the first African-Americans on the last segregated team in the NFL. It was only after pressure by the federal government, and to a lesser degree, the NFL and Washington-area media, that the deeply racist Redskins owner George Preston Marshall relented and agreed to sign the players. Mitchell, who said he faced verbal abuse and “a great deal of discrimination from the fans and the Washington community,” had an outstanding first game for the Redskins, scoring three touchdowns, including a 92-yard kickoff return.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST SHIFTS for art directors and other visual magazine makers has been the significant roles they now play in the creation of editorial products and content. This is most apparent in the fact that there are now a number of editors of large-scale consumer magazines who are former art directors or photo editors. And many art and creative directors have taken leading roles in developing products and platforms that extend their magazine brands way beyond the simple ink and paper of the printed pages. Increasingly, art directors are brand directors, partners with editors and publishers in creating and articulating visual voices and identities. The role of visual storyteller, once limited to page designs and the direction of imagery, has now expanded to multiple platforms and dimensions.



PSALM 49 FROM THE BOOK OF PSALMS IN THE BIBLE is often referred to as “The Money Psalm” or “The Folly of Trusting in Riches.” Its premise is that being rich is not an end to itself, and that it doesn't make one a superior person. “People who have wealth but lack understanding are like the beasts that perish.” The psalm urges its readers to focus less on making money, and more on developing a stronger spiritual life.

THERE'S A LOT OF MAGAZINE AND DESIGN LOVE in this SPD publication design annual. Looking through the pages one gets the sense that the people whose work is represented in the book love what they do, and have a relentless passion to strive for perfection, or as close to perfection as the many limitations of their craft (and art) allows. This is work filled with creativity, inspiration, art, craft, and a never-ending desire to communicate and tell stories and to engage with as many people as possible. This is work that is meant to be seen, to be interacted with, and that is created with the desire to influence and make an impact. And let's face it...if we were interested in making lots of money, we'd all have chosen different jobs.



IN TIBETAN BUDDHISM, THE BARDO IS THE 49-DAY PERIOD between death and rebirth. On the 49th day, the karma of the deceased takes a new form and continues its journey towards Nirvana.

IT WAS 149 YEARS AGO, ON APRIL 9, 1865 (4/9) when Robert E. Lee and his Confederate soldiers surrendered to U.S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia to bring an end to the American Civil War, effectively bringing freedom to four million slaves in the United States (out of a total population of 35 million). AND YET THE ISSUE OF RACE CONTINUES TO BE the dominating factor in the American experience, most notably in recent times with the rash of killings of young African American men (and boys) by police officers. The day I'm writing this, African Americans Akai Gurley, who was accidentally shot dead in a public housing stairwell