

Aloisio Magalhães and the North American experience: design in practice and theory

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Abstract: This article seeks to present the North American scenario found by Aloisio Magalhães at the end of the 1950s, when he began a process of turning off painting for entry into the field of design. In the pragmatic action of American artists and immigrants welcomed in the country, Aloisio recognizes the possibility of a design built in the practical exercise but also in teaching and critical theory, seeing in that system the mode of production compatible with contemporaneity.

Keywords: Aloisio Magalhães. United States. Design.

Aloisio Magalhães e a experiência norte-americana: design na prática e na teoria

Este artigo apresenta o cenário norte-americano encontrado por Aloisio Magalhães no final da década de 1950, quando o pernambucano inicia um processo de desprendimento da pintura para entrar no campo do design. Na ação pragmática de artistas americanos e imigrantes acolhidos no país, Aloisio reconhece a possibilidade de um design que se constrói no exercício prático, mas também no ensino e na teoria crítica, encontrando nesse sistema um modo de produção compatível com a contemporaneidade.

Palavras-chave: Aloisio Magalhães. Estados Unidos. Design.

1. Printing as an art: Aloisio, Feldman and *The Falcon Press*

Before his first trip to the United States in 1956, Aloisio's work consisted mainly of individual paintings – with exhibitions in Recife, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador – and illustrations for the publications created at O Gráfico Amador, founded by him and other artists from Pernambuco with the intention of publishing their own writings. At times, Aloisio also dealt with the texts printed in typography, which, it could be argued, was his first contact with the industrial production that he would seek in the near future. In any case, before the trip to North America, Aloisio's involvement in O Gráfico Amador was much more geared towards the visual arts.

At 29, Aloisio Magalhães is given a scholarship from the Education Exchange Bureau of the US Department of State's International Exchange Program, and in November of that same year he inaugurates his first exhibition in the country at the Pan-American Union, in Washington D.C. With 27 selected thematic paintings about his homeland, widely praised by American critics, Aloisio stands out in that foreign land as “[...] one of the most interesting personalities of modern art in Northeastern Brazil.” (MAURICIO, 1956)¹. In 1957, he organizes his second exhibition in the country and one of his works, the watercolor “Agreste”, becomes part of the permanent collection at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

But what about the American experience was so special that it ended up leading Aloisio to this new undertaking? Why is it only there, in another hemisphere, another culture and language, that the choice of the projective activity of design seems to become obvious to him?

Before settling for two months as a teacher at the Philadelphia Museum of Art due to an invitation by the director Emanuel Mervin Benson (1904-1971), the Brazilian artist visits some important art centers such as the Harvard and Chicago schools. According to Leite, in this passage, the notion of design made by individuals who exercise their freedom of personal expression, in an environment of particular discourses that coexist and complement each other, becomes evident to Aloisio (LEITE, 2006, p. 172).

It's with Philadelphia that Aloisio Magalhães will establish his greatest bond. During his stay at the museum's school, he finds an exhibition of

1 The writings by art critic Jayme Mauricio in the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* between the 1950s and 1970s offer important elements for understanding Aloisio Magalhães' transition process from the visual arts to design. Through the events cited in his reports, we can see that Aloisio starts to detach himself from his paintings in the early 1960s and takes an important role in the consolidation of industrial design in Brazil. His “painter” title is then, in this decade, replaced by “graphic artist and teacher”.

works by the American artist Eugene Feldman (1921-1975), director of the typography department at the *Philadelphia Print Club*. That's when a great and productive partnership begins between the two of them. The venue for the meeting is Feldman's laboratory, *The Falcon Press*.

Born in New Jersey in 1921, Feldman starts his career as a pressman even before finishing high school and throughout his career as a graphic artist he was able to develop a surprising knowledge of materials and printing equipment. Pushing the boundaries between graphic printing, collage and photography, Feldman was known for his boldness and innovation as he constantly sought to circumvent the precision of the mechanical process, indifferent to the large number of reproductions resulting from his tests. Thus, the innumerable experiments, the improvisations, the unexpected, were made possible.

Man can make art with a machine; offset press and hand press alike can be his brushes. I try to use my machines as a painter does his brushes. My inks are my paints and the paper my canvas. In graphics, as in any other craft or art, respect for the materials is necessary. I think this respect leads to a desire to explore, to learn what the juxtaposition of type, line, color, space and photograph can create.

I'm not sure just where this desire to experiment comes from or why I do it. The pleasure of trying to discover, I suppose, though that doesn't seem an adequate explanation. But I do know that I have a compulsion to probe into the relationship of the elements of printing to each other, to change these relationships and to rearrange them to experiment with the process.

Machines, the offset press as much as the hand press, are the extensions of man's hands and talents. Certainly twenty years from now our techniques will be different. Printing might well be done electronically, but its design and composition will continue to offer aesthetic challenges. The materials, whether they be lead type or an electronic tube will be equally worthy of respect. (FELDMAN, 1964)

According to the coordinator of the Department of Graphic Arts at the *National Gallery of Art* in Washington, Ruth Fine, despite his desire for free experimentation, Feldman was highly committed to his commercial work. The paints and papers used in his personal experiments were remnants of projects that were being developed at *The Falcon Press* or that had been rejected by the client. The techniques that he explored and developed as an artist resulted from processes used in his daily activity as a commercial pressman (FINE, 1981).

Feldman considered teaching to be the third aspect of his work, as fundamental as his personal experimentation and commercial production:

Teaching gives me the opportunity to get out of my shell, to break from actual production and see what others are doing. It fosters the critical spirit, challenges me to look at my own experimental work with machines with detachment. (...) I am a teacher, but I know that I cannot teach the art of printing. I do not try. What I want is to give the student the skills he will need to know about graphics if he is going to be a commercial or fine artist. I want to teach my students how machines work: the way to use a hand press, a power press, an offset press and how to make a plate. I want to teach them what I have learned in my shop—that a commercial job must be done with precision and that the printer must have regard for, and understanding of, his equipment and its capacities.

When I was asked to set up a printing department at the Graduate School of Fine Arts of the University of Pennsylvania, I looked at it as an opportunity to create a more open and united program. There I could demonstrate to the students through practice the connective threads that bind technique to design, that is, how design can influence technique and how technique can spur the creation of design. Most art schools are overspecialized. The typography teacher is supposed to stick to arranging the letters on the page, Design is to be left to the design department. But the student must become fluent in both. I would be out of business if I had just stuck to putting letters on paper. (FELDMAN, 1966)

Thus, attracted by one of Eugene Feldman's posters exposed in the *Print Club* and interested in the new printing techniques that went beyond plastic reproductions explored until then, Aloisio Magalhães goes looking for the artist. The first project resulting from the partnership between the two, *Doorway to Portuguese*, came in 1957. Bringing different printing experiments with each page, both of them focused more on the offset process and its possibilities than on the publication's actual content. The success of the book eventually brought them three gold medals from the *Art Director Club of Philadelphia*. These are Orlando da Costa Ferreira's comments about it in *Para Todos* magazine in January of 1958:

This highly modern book demonstrates how Aloisio Magalhães' graphic experience cycle has been closed, a cycle that he initiated in Stanley William Hayter's "Atelier 17" in Paris, to which he would add typography at O Gráfico Amador, in Recife, and which was completed at The Falcon Press with Eugene Feldman. We say that this cycle was closed because that experience included the three printing procedures: engraving in Paris, relief in Recife and flat in Philadelphia. (FERREIRA, 1958, author's translation)



IMAGES 1 e 2. Doorway To Portuguese, experimental book by Aloisio e Feldman (1957)

According to Leite, this experience was a continuation of the previous one, in *O Gráfico Amador*, where “with every intervention of his in the publications (...) a different technique was experimented.” At *The Falcon Press*, however, offset printing technology required “greater preparation, more complex organization of tasks, planning, aspects that pertain to and are part of the design process”. (2006, p. 165, author’s translation) Thus, in the work with Feldman, despite the free experimentation, the specific discipline of projective activity in that industrial environment was already showing itself, a discipline that seems to have made Aloisio, as he says himself in an interview to the Brazilian newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, “accept the boundaries all around” (Magalhães 1974, author’s translation).

At that moment, the artist in his personal process, who dominated and controlled the composition of a canvas from beginning to end is replaced by another, participant of a collective work – in that case, a four-way one – whose execution is given to the machine. At *The Falcon Press* the project begins to take shape with the perception of what can be mechanically developed

– of what is and isn't supported in that process. Thus, even if free graphic experimentation was the main leading force there, Feldman and Aloisio dealt with the limit imposed by industrial technology.



IMAGES 3 e 4. Aloisio and Feldman at The Falcon Press

His immersion in the world of graphic experimentation would guide the artist's production in a fundamental way, especially the editorial aspect of it. After two months at the *Philadelphia Museum School of Art*, Aloisio returns to Brazil, bringing several worksheets of the work developed in *The Falcon Press* with him to Recife, which would be used in the future publications of *O Gráfico Amador* (LESSA, 2003, 102).



IMAGE 5. Graphic experiment developed by Aloisio Magalhães at The Falcon Press used as cover of *Rumeur & Vision* (1957), one of the books of *O Gráfico Amador*

In 1959, there is another trip to the United States and the return of the partnership with Eugene Feldman. Invited to teach the discipline of Artistic Creation at the same *Museum School of Art* in Philadelphia, Aloisio also inaugurates an exhibition of paintings and lithographic works at *Print Club* and another one with twenty works at the *Roland de Aenlle Gallery* in New York (MAURICIO, 1959).

Having matured in his intention as an artist since his first stay in the United States, Aloisio suggests a new graphic undertaking to Feldman: the duo's second book, *Doorway to Brasilia*, is developed on the occasion of the construction of the new Brazilian capital, when Feldman produces innumerable photographs that form the basis of the book's experiments.



IMAGES 6 e 7. *Doorway to Brasilia*, experimental book by Aloisio e Feldman (1959)

However, if we analyze the North-American scenario of the 1950s, we can assume that the graphic experiments encouraged by Eugene Feldman were not the only influences exerted on Aloisio Magalhães in that period, even if they were the most obvious. Although there is no record of a partnership between the artist from Pernambuco and other designers, it is noted that Aloisio was attentive to the production, and, above all, to the articulations of these professionals in the country's educational institutions, as we will see below.

2. The consolidation of modern design in the United States

With the rise of Nazism and the closing of Bauhaus in 1933, the American scene was the safest and most receptive to those progressive ideas. Thus, a new group of European artists arrives in the United States in that decade, shaping the country's second generation of designers². According to the *Walker Art Center* curator Mildred Friedman,

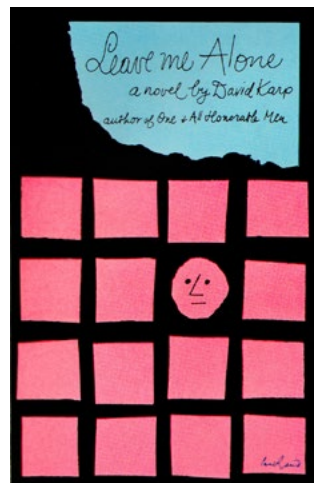
Steeped in Cubism, De Stijl, the Bauhaus, Dada, and the political movements that arose between the world wars, those immigrants looked to this country for the political and artistic freedom they had lost. (FRIEDMAN, 1989, 12)

The bauhausians not only found in that environment an ample space to exercise their profession, they were also fundamental in the strengthening of a specifically American design. When the German school was closed by the Nazi regime, in addition to its founder Walter Gropius (1883-1969), two important figures of modern graphic design left for North America: Hungarian László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946), greatly influenced by Russian Constructivism and eminent experimenter of the fusion between technology and art, and Austrian Herbert Bayer (1900-1985), obstinate defender of the rationalist current, exalter of geometric purity and former teacher of the Typography and Graphic Design workshop at the Bauhaus in Dessau. Others also took shelter in the United States in the late 1930s: German Will Burtin (1908-1972), Frenchman Jean Carlu (1900-1997), Czech Ladislav Sutnar (1897-1976), Italian George Giusti (1908 – 1990), Swiss Herbert Matter (1907-1984), Austrian Joseph Binder (1898-1972) and Dutch Leo Lionni (1910-1999). The Russians, Erté (1892-1990), Alexander Liberman

- 2 Many artists had already left Europe towards America in the late 1910s – as a way to get rid of the depression caused by the First World War (1914-1918) or the political crises of their homelands – thus bringing the modern European style and forming the first generation of industrial designers of the United States.

(1912-1999), Alexey Brodovitch (1898-1971) and Mehemed Fehmy Agha (1896-1978), professionals who were already committed to the editorial design of important European fashion magazines, also ended up in America. Assistant to Agha at Vogue, the Austrian Cipe Pineles (1910-1991) would be the first woman to join the society of the New York Art Directors Club, disrupting the male dominance of design associations and institutions.

Along with them, some important American designers – New-York born and others, from different cities – emerged in this period, breaking the numerous barriers that hindered the acceptance of modern design by a society that remained, in its essence, fixed on the foundations of traditional formal ideas (Remington 2003, 53). Considerably influenced by the modern European movement, American graphic artists – among them Paul Rand (1914-1996), Gene Federico (1918-1999), Alvin Lustig (1915-1955), Bradbury Thompson (1911-1995), Lester Beall 1903-1969), Saul Bass (1920-1996), William Golden (1911-1959) and Alex Steinweiss (1917-2011) – tried to adapt the new language to the American context.

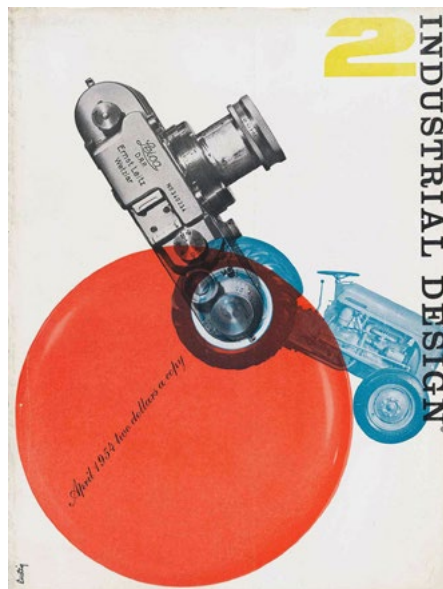
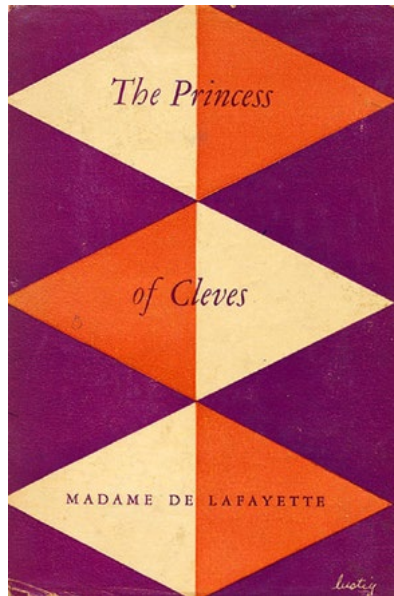




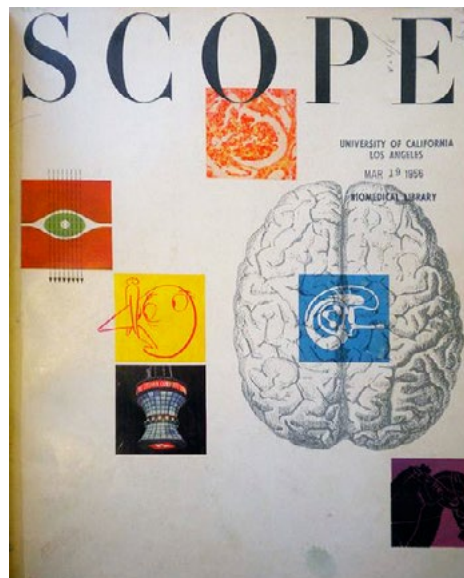
IMAGES 8,9 e 10. Rand' s graphic works: sketch for the advertisements of El Prodotto (from 1953 to 1957); cover of the book Leave me alone (1957); advertisement for Olivetti (1953)



IMAGES 11 e 12. Pages by Thompson for the newspaper *Westwaco Inspirations for Printers* (1953 and 1958)



IMAGES 13 e 14. Alvin Lustig: cover of the book *The Princess of Cleves*, by Madame de Lafayette (1951); second edition's cover of the newspaper *Industrial Design* (1954)



IMAGES 14 e 15. Lester Beall: second serie of posters for the *Rural Eletrification Administration* (1939); cover of the newspaper *Scope Design* (1955)

Involved mainly in the development of posters, advertisements, magazines and books, immigrants and Americans also concentrated their efforts in teaching the discipline in the country. Some of these designers were leading figures in the founding of American educational institutions. In 1930, Alexey Brodovitch founded the Advertising Departament of the *Philadelphia Museum School of Art* – the same school that would host Aloisio Magalhães two decades later – and in 1941 the Design Laboratory of the *New School for Social Research* in New York. In 1937, Moholy-Nagy arrives in Chicago to inaugurate the *New Bauhaus*.



IMAGE 16. Moholy-Nagy and Walter Gropius with students in 1945 at Design Institute (initially founded under the name of New Bauhaus)

Friedman states that as they became more self-confident and new technologies of printing and photography were incorporated, the formal and expressive means of these designers became less dependent on outside influences (Friedman 1989, 13). Although European immigrants challenged the traditional notions of artistic and cultural production, American Modernism's aesthetic and conceptual basis is significantly altered when it finally manages to be fully integrated with the common practice of design.

The concept of art in contemporary society was exemplified in the work of American designers: a production that was linked to the business and industry scene, to the great entrepreneurs, but was still able to guarantee its freedom of expression (REMINGTON, 2003, 104).

Anticipating the demands of that society, attentive to habits, desires and demands, connected with other fields of expression, such as theater, photography and literature, these artists believed in the potential of *good design* for a true social, ethical and economic transformation. Therefore, they were not disconnected from the management of the companies by which they were hired, since by placing themselves as part of their gear they guaranteed the most adequate result. This relationship was clearly visible in the design and architecture meetings of the *International Design Conference at Aspen*, founded in 1951 by Walter Paepcke, president of *Container Corporation of Design* (CCA), the largest producer of cardboard packaging. Committed to the institutionalization of his vision about the convergence between trade and culture, Paepcke began to yearly welcome business leaders, renowned artists and people generally involved with culture, thus formalizing the *Aspen*

Institute as the meeting place where they discussed capitalist values from a humanistic point of view, as well as the role of design in the business world.

The artist and the businessman should cultivate every opportunity to teach and supplement one another, to cooperate with one another, just as the nations of the world must do. Only in such a fusion of talents, abilities, and philosophies can be even a modest hope for the future, a partial alleviation of the chaos and misunderstandings of today, and first small step toward a Golden Age of Tomorrow. (PAEPCKE; REMINGTON, 2003, p. 69)

It's because he was among so many professionals that we consider the possibility of other influences – besides the one exerted by Eugene Feldman – that could have brought Aloisio to the field of design. In addition to knowing about the conferences in Aspen, for which he had already been invited in 1966, the situation in the United States is addressed in one of his analyzes of art teaching and the industrial process in 1968:

If, on the one hand, schools like Ulm, in Germany, radicalize in a rigid and austere position, denying any artistic expression that is not linked to the industrial process, in other institutions, such as the Royal College of Art, in England, a more critical stance is adopted and more flexible reference points are sought in an attempt to balance the various forms of artistic expression. In the United States, in the best schools – almost all of them founded by former Bauhaus teachers – the problem is the same. The premature death of Alvin Lustig prevented the fuller realization of his ideas. The presence of Joseph Albers for about 20 years at Yale has given that institution an outstanding leadership position. Individually also, the work of Gyorgy Kepes at MIT represents an exceptional contribution in the revision of the concept of art in contemporary society (MAGALHÃES, 1968, author's translation)

3. Aloisio and the North American design: practice, teaching and critical theory

As seen, while they were linked to the big companies, hired as editors, art directors or consultants, the American designers were also involved in the teaching of their discipline in the country. In this way, through both practical and theoretical approaches, Paul Rand, Alvin Lustig, Bradbury Thompson, Lester Beall, and others were building the activity in the country.

In the post-war period, universities and art schools received a large contingent of students due to the G.I. Bill, a federal government initiative for study

funding³, but graduate design programs were still rare. In 1937, Moholy-Nagy had implemented the *Design Institute* in Chicago, which, unlike traditional fine-art schools, focused more on the formal values of design – line, shape, texture – than on representational drawing itself (Remington 2003, 132). At the *Black Mountain College* in North Carolina, bauhausian Josef Albers brought together great designers and other figures in seasonal courses, among them Lustig and composer John Cage, encouraging the creation of the first program of higher education in graphic design at Yale University, in New Haven.

Developed with Lustig's help in 1951, Yale's curriculum evidenced a formal conception coupled with practical experience in the real world; to Lustig, education should lead to industry, not follow it (Remington 2003, 132). In a testimony about his years of training at Yale, the designer and teacher Rob Roy Kelly talks about classes given by great masters of graphic design like Lustig, Matter, Lionni, Brodovitch and Beall.

The term Graphic Design had never drawn my attention until Yale. The curriculum was based on typography, printing, photography and engraving processes, and graphic design was thought of in a radically different way from other schools. The students were enthusiastic, they worked hard and there was a great deal of interaction at all levels. The professors were excellent role models for students – both for their work and for their professional stature. Graphic Design was a new field, the first real alternative to Marketing, and students were excited about the prospects after graduation” (KELLY, 2001)

Others also visited the school, such as Rand, Thompson, and Ivan Chermayeff, and they were all involved in assisting their students with communication issues and problem solving. The program transformed graphic design, elevating its status as a profession.

The following table presents a survey of the practices of professionals who were active at the time when Aloisio Magalhães was in the United States, separated into three categories: teaching, critical theory and research.

- 3 According to Rob Roy Kelly, before the large contingent of newcomers to the war, the G.I. Bill encouraged the choice of study rather than immediate entry into the labor market until the national industry was adjusted. Each participant had books, materials and expenses related to education paid for and received \$ 65 per month for housing. In 1952, with the end of the involvement of these students, several schools of art had to close their doors.

Table 1 – Activity of graphic designers working in the United States in the 1950s

Designer / Nationality	Teaching	Critical Theory	Practice
Alexey Brodovitch (1898-1971)	Philadelphia Museum School / New School for Social Research / Yale University	Published articles	Illustration / Editorial design
Alexander Liberman (1912-1999)	-	-	Painting / Sculpture / Photography / Editorial design / Cinema
Alvin Lustig (1915-1955)	Black Mountain College / Yale University	Published article	Illustration / Editorial design / Marketing / Product design / Sign design / Architecture
Bradbury Thompson (1911-1995)	Washburn College / Yale University	Book "The Art of Graphic Design"	Editorial design / Marketing
Brownjohn, Chermayeff & Geismar	-	-	Editorial design / Marketing
Cipe Pineles (1910-1991)	Parsons School of Art and Design	-	Editorial design / Corporate Identity
Erté (1892-1990)	-	-	Illustration / Editorial design / Scenography / Fashion
George Giusti (1908-1990)	Cooper Union	Published articles / Book "Drawing Figures"	Illustration / Editorial design / Marketing / Corporate Identity / Packaging / Architecture / Sculpture
Gyorgy Kepes (1906-2001)	New Bauhaus (or Design Institute) / Brooklyn College / MIT	Published articles / Book "Language of Vision"	Painting / Cinema / Editorial design / Marketing
Herbert Bayer (1900-1985)	Aspen Institute / American Advertising Guild	Published articles	Painting / Illustration / Typography / Editorial design / Exhibition design / Corporate Identity
Herbert Matter (1907-1984)	Yale University	-	Photography / Marketing Editorial design / Corporate Identity / Cinema
Jean Carlu (1900-1997)	-	-	Marketing
Joseph Binder (1897-1976)	Chicago Art Institute / Minneapolis School of Art	-	Painting / Editorial design / Marketing

Ladislav Sutnar (1897-1976)	-	Published articles / Books "Catalog Design", "Design for Point of Sale", "Package Design: the Force of Visual Selling", "Visual Design in Action"	Editorial design / Marketing / Exhibition design / Product design
Lázló Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946)	New Bauhaus (or Design Institute)	Published articles / Books "The New Vision", "Painting, Photography and Film", "Vision in Motion"	Painting / Sculpture / Photography / Typography / Cinema / Theater / Marketing / Editorial design
Leo Lionni (1910-1999)	Yale University	Published articles / Children's books	Painting / Illustration / Marketing / Editorial design
Lester Beall (1903-1969)	Yale University	-	Photography / Marketing Editorial design
M. Fehmy Agha (1896-1978)	-	Published articles	Painting / Illustration / Photography / Typography / Marketing / Editorial design
Paul Rand (1914-1996)	American Advertising Guild / Laboratory School of Industrial Design / Yale University	Published articles / Books "This... Is the Stafford Station", "Thoughts on Design", "Trademark Design"	Painting / Illustration / Marketing / Editorial design / Product design / Corporate identity / Packaging
Saul Bass (1919-1996)	-	-	Illustration / Marketing / Editorial design / Corporate identity / Packaging / Cinema
Will Burtin (1908-1972)	Pratt Institute / Parsons School of Art and Design	Published articles	Information design / Exhibition design / Editorial design / Corporate identity

OBS: The table's data refers to the academic, literary and commercial production of these designers only during the 1950s.

We can then observe that the acceptance of modern graphic design in the United States was also made possible due to the presence of the most important graphic designers in the country's design schools and universities. In addition to Yale, some of them attended other institutions: Alexey Brodovitch at the *School of Industrial Design* in Philadelphia and the *New School* in New York; Herbert Bayer at the *American Advertising Guild* in New York; Paul Rand in the same institution as Bayer, besides the *Laboratory School of Industrial Design*, also in New York; Bradbury Thompson at *Washburn College* in Topeka; and Will Burtin at the *Pratt Institute* in New York.

We notice that, to American designers, contributing to the teaching of the activity was also a second way of exercising it. Modern thoughts were being presented and disseminated among the new generations. It is no wonder that, in this same logic of perpetuation and theorization of their ideas, many concentrated their efforts in the publication of books and articles as well.

4. Aloisio Magalhães and his choice of design

In view of this setting, one might ask: is it a mere coincidence that Aloisio's first move towards the projective activity of design happened in the United States, at a time when the field sought its space through the combination of practical and theoretical exercise, strengthening itself both in consumer products and in the discussions of academic environments, and taking shape in the dialogue with industry and technology? His temporary withdrawal from visual arts during his stay in North America and his approximation to a new practical activity carried out in parallel with his direct action in the country's educational institutions would act significantly, changing the artist's path. Thus,

In 1957, moving from the place of painter, from the intimate and somewhat lonely relationship between him and the canvas, in seeking to work together with the other, in this case many others, in The Falcon Press – Eugene Feldman's printing studio in Philadelphia – Aloisio was gradually defining a kind of detachment that gave him a new approach to the object of his artistic creation – an approximation through a projective activity. Although on this occasion his adherence to the formal language is delimited as an international style, it is in this context that Aloisio is more in touch with a concept of design in the Anglo-Saxon sense, which will permanently impact his professional conduct and even his future experience in other paths. After Aloisio is invited to teach at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where Feldman was the director of the Typographic Design Department, design reveals itself to him as the integration of the artist's possibilities to the contemporary scene. (LEITE, 2003, 83, author's translation)

Aloisio considered Gene to be the great teacher, but he had also been able to participate in the pedagogical environment of the Philadelphia school as an instructor and member of the teaching staff. In addition to this, he had wandered around the North-American educational institutions led by Bauhaus members, "the first and most important attempt to renew plastic education" (Magalhães 1958, author's translation). Thus, besides becoming closer to those concepts, in the United States the idea of design reveals itself as intrinsically linked to education.

The North-American experience seems to work as a watershed as it prepares the terrain for the new venture: in addition to what the introduction of the offset machine and large circulation printings comes to mean, the coherent adaptation of the bauhausian spirit to the American industrial reality and the articulation of these designers simultaneously on two fronts – in the market practice and the teaching of the discipline –, are mirrored in Aloisio's action and thinking from 1960 on, when he truly becomes a designer.

At this moment, the single object no longer makes sense. Betting on the dialogue between art and industrial technology and on the project as the methodology of his production, Aloisio integrates himself in his own time. As a designer, he becomes a truly contemporary artist, using, in his words, "technological and scientific resources to cause visual receptivity on the mass" (Magalhães 1966, author's translation). He is now interested in the collective.

It should be noted that the new path is highly conditioned by the direction of Aloisio's thinking about the arts – the loss of meaning of the individual work, creator of a single object – but also by the situation of the national scene: the construction of Brasília, finally meaning the implementation of a modern project in Brazil, the settling of state-owned and multinational companies opening doors to the creation of visual identities for corporations, and the debate around the structuring of design gaining strength also in Rio de Janeiro.

His involvement with the teaching of design in Brazil happens quickly, shortly after his return, in a process that would begin at MAM, be fecundated in Esdi, and that would make him dare to fly higher, focusing on his country's cultural issues. In his office practice, Aloisio's performance is mainly built in the field of corporate identity, giving shape to Brazilian graphic design.

Carrying on the experience of American modernism, Aloisio presents a new discourse, revealing his concern for the artist's role in the turbulence of the Brazilian industrialization process. Distancing itself from the visual arts, the project becomes part of his creation; and the technology of this industrial world guides his new practice.

In an interview with Zuenir Ventura in 1981, Aloisio talks about his encounter with design in the United States. In the transition from one activity to another, his direction is guided not by market issues, but by the search for greater social participation and by the application of the creative language "in a process of more significative collective interest".

And I used to live off of painting, I lived well, I sent paintings to the Venice biennial, I sold everything, I was already well professionally... But with a

great dissatisfaction on the side of the single object thing, the need for social participation, a collective thing. And on the trip to the United States – I had done, of course, *O Gráfico Amador* in Recife, I made books, didn't I? The invention of the book, the multiple objects, right? – was when I came across the design phenomenon, which was exactly that, the thing was to apply an entire set of instruments and a language coming from the forms of visual creativity, in a more significative process of collective interest. It was like a fish in the water, I did not hesitate ...
(...) they said that design was a commercial activity, marketing, that I had abandoned art for the business of making more money, what a lie! I made a lot more money... but it was such a thing, I did not hesitate.
(MAGALHÃES, 1981, author's translation)

In this sense, during the lecture given in 1958, Aloisio reveals the importance of his experience in Philadelphia, when the observation of another context, so different from his native land, brings some relevant observations:

I returned to Philadelphia to complete the arrangement and during the two months that I spent there, in direct contact with the school, I was able to observe at length the methods and principles that guide the teaching of visual arts. [...] What I said here in the course of this conversation is the result of what I thought during that observation. My thoughts constantly flew all the way here and I compared and drew parallels between what I saw and what could be done in Brazil. (MAGALHÃES, 1958a, author's translation)

An article by José Castello in the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* in 1974 gives clues about the transformation experienced by the artist in the late 1950s. No more painting: through design, he encountered objectivity, discipline and the acceptance of limitations.

A trip to France, two to the United States and only in 1959, to Rio. Aloisio says that in that period he began to feel the need to market his work 'to make [him] feel like a professional'. And quite a radical change occurred in the man who, years prior, headed a group of university students from Pernambuco who created a printing studio on their own and began to print their own books. *O Gráfico Amador* – denomination of the group – disappeared due to 'an interest in signs, syntheses, small forms and intense expression'. Since then, he spent twelve years doing only design, working at *Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial*.

– When it comes to design, we deal with a problem for which one has to find only the most adequate solution and not the one that better adapts itself to the taste of the person doing it. There is a task to be developed

and one faces problems with a different, more objective, complexity than the one faced in painting. Design is directly linked to the industrial formation of nations, it does not exist without it. It has disciplined me. It has forced me to accept the limitations all around.

[...]

His established and fully developed work with industrial design was an achievement in the acceptance of the perimeters of reality (industrial, it is good to point out). (author's translation)

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