

MORTON GOLDSHOLL & ASSOCIATES

by Rhodes Patterson



420 Frontage Road, Northfield, Illinois, is a spare purposeful building where much can be learned—where much is being learned by the philosophically oriented practitioners who work there.

A visitor who is sensitive to such things can learn, for example, why an establishment that should be a *show place* is resolutely “not a show place;” why what appears to be a *grand plan largely realized* is not a “grand plan.”

The quotations denote the attitude of principals (and principles) involved. The clarification of this contradiction that is not a contradiction is an illuminating side effect of an afternoon with Morton and Millie Goldsholl on their working base, Goldsholl & Associates.

Knowing only the Goldsholl wide-ranging design accomplishments, the tendency to anticipate a show place would be logical enough. But knowing Morton Goldsholl, one would expect to find the new center completely directed toward the work to be done.

Millie Goldsholl puts it simply, “I am surprised at the idea that the studio should be impressive to clients.”

Training in architecture at the Institute of Design equipped Millie for the technical aspects of planning the new design center. Her own creative attributes and participation in the group provided the rest. The primary motivation was to create a complete design area, with optimum efficiency for all of the interrelated activities.

“But most of all,” she says with evident reverence, “we wanted a place to go all the way in film.”

This attitude toward film is shared by Mort. “Film is such a potent force,” Goldsholl says, “that unless one does good things with it, film shouldn’t be used.”

For the first time, the Goldsholls are equipped to use the film medium with full efficiency. Their film facilities cover the whole range—from shooting to recording and editing—and these operations occupy some two-thirds of the available space. The imbalance works no hardship on the center’s other activities, however. Goldsholl has always made much use of photography as an adjunct to his work and pleasure. His involvement in the medium goes back to his ID days, and has been growing ever since. Free circulation between graphic and film departments, therefore, was a basic requisite of the plan for the center.

It was no surprise that both Mort and Millie prefer discussing ideas to demonstrating facilities, however ample and well-coordinated. Casual conversation at the Goldsholls’ is reminiscent of the International Design Conference sessions. (Mort was IDCA Program Chairman in 1959.) Goldsholl lamented the inclination of so many designers to leave the ideas generated or re-dedicated at Aspen—in Aspen. His conviction is that these ideals should be put into daily practice and not restricted to a sort of revival meeting, one-week-a-year observance. His belief, in short, is that there should be no real separation of practice and philosophy.

Millie expressed much the same dismay at the tendency of people—not just designers—to leave idealized situations and permit their refurbished objectives to evaporate on returning to work. Both deplore the educational emphasis on technique at the expense of ideas, averring that without ideas techniques are meaningless.

The discussion of education and training led to the question of what special attributes a designer can bring to bear on the problems of his clients. Goldsholl believes that the designer’s ability to predict end results—to see beyond the immediate problem to the outcome of the total structure—is his most valuable asset. And it is not enough that he have the ability to see; the designer must be able to *communicate* to his clients the eventual effects of what is being discussed and planned. To accomplish this, Mort believes, the designer must be able to organize the interrelationship of every phase of the design.



Goldsholl's relationship as design consultant to the Martin-Senour Company dates back to 1951, a continuing program that has included trademarks, color planning, packaging, billboards, binders, point-of-sale, stationery, exhibits, mailing pieces and motion pictures. It even has included the invention of the "Colorobot," a device for mixing and dispensing paint of exactly the color specified by the customer. Shown here are the "Color" line of can, color guides, etc.; a table-top display; a convention display "hall of mirrors" achieved in a 6-foot space using opposing mirrors; the "Automotive" line; automotive refinishing guide.





Wayne Boyer John Siena Tom Freese Fred Ota David Blumenthal Tom Miller
 Morton Goldsholl Millie Goldsholl John Weber Susan Keig James Logan William Langdon

Goldsholl stressed the critical importance of this ability to visualize the finished result in the creation of films. He recalled a recent experience with an advertising agency in the production of a TV commercial. A unique solution to the problem having occurred to him, Mort decided to proceed directly to the filming of the idea.

"Story boards serve only as general guides at best," Mort explained, "especially when the technique and approach are out of the conventional mold."

The agency people were enthusiastic over the results so graphically expressed in the film presentation. After the screening, however, Mort was approached by the account supervisor who requested that a story board be made of the film just projected.

"What on earth for?" Mort was incredulous.

The account supervisor was equally surprised by Mort's reaction. "That's the way the agency always presents TV ideas to our clients."

"It's a sad little story," Mort concluded. "But while it is symptomatic of the designer's problem generally, it isn't really typical of my own experience with agencies. I've had many rewarding associations in which my efforts were coordinated directly with those of the client and the agency to form one strategic attack on the problem at hand. This approach minimizes the confusion and duplication that so often plagues large projects."

While Mort absented himself for a conference session, Millie ramified a bit on the special strengths of Goldsholl as a designer.

"Mort always devoured literature on every subject, and his interests have continued to grow. As a consequence, he brings a great breadth of interest and knowledge to design problems in every area.

She discussed Mort's flair for invention, based on "a fantastic mechanical aptitude." Talents in this area have resulted in numerous patents. A notable example is an ingenious machine for mixing paint, developed by Mort

and his associate, Jim Logan, for Martin-Senour. (It should be noted here that Goldsholl has just been honored with a special industry award for his long and fruitful relationship with Martin-Senour.)

Back on the scene, Mort discoursed on the value of what he calls "the fluid approach"—implemented by the integration of many techniques and materials; some new and some borrowed from other specialties. This approach permits, among many other advantages, the flexibility of thumbnails all the way to full-scale design size and effect.

"No design is ever buttoned down," Mort said, "until it is thoroughly checked out in every particular of aspect and application."

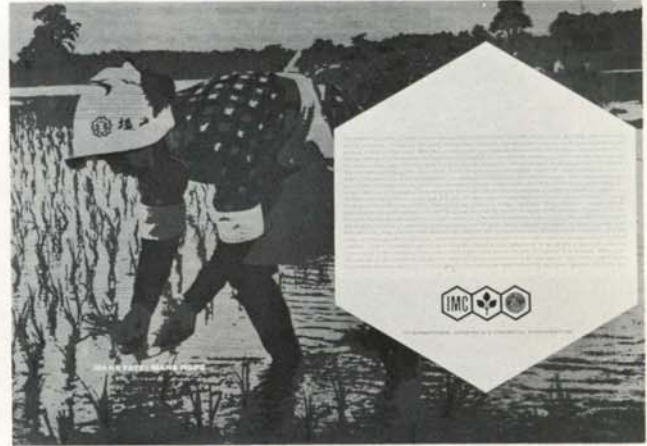
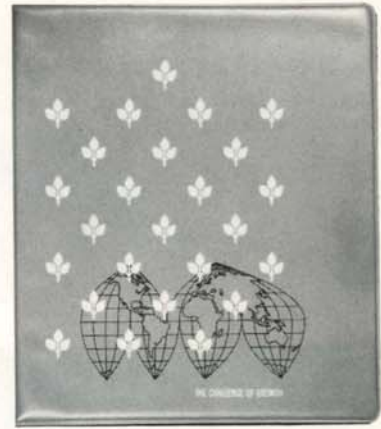
Goldsholl stressed again the importance of search and inventiveness, the courage not to run with the crowd.

"Many designers are reluctant to take any chance at all for fear of failure. Their obsession to stay on top leads them to settle for the safe course, to continue doing what is being done."

Both Millie and Mort feel a great concern for communication today. They know the urgency of speaking meaningfully in a world where ideas, clearly understood and properly implemented, can make the difference. It is this concern for the larger aspects of their time, perhaps, that precludes any special feeling of accomplishment.

"I'm not sure we are successful," is the way Mort puts it. "I have no sense of gratification, though I do feel that we are equipped to work more efficiently than ever before. It's certainly no grand plan. We have simply reached today's phase in what we hope is a coherent, organic development. Perhaps from this, a grand plan will evolve—in retrospect."

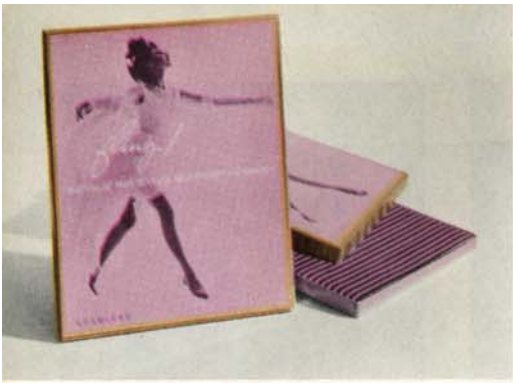
As you leave 420 Frontage Road, Northfield, Illinois, you are struck by the incongruity of its location—only a few yards from an eternally busy freeway; yet miles away in concept and in practice, from the conforming influences of a freeway which is anything but free.



The International Minerals & Chemical Corporation mark is based on a symbolic "tree of life" in an open phosphate crystal. This was carried through all of the company's graphic images. Shown here is the administration building signing, a training binder, one of a series of national ads and a proposed ad format.

Goldsholl designed the Motorola trademark, packaging and Merchandise Mart showroom in 1955.





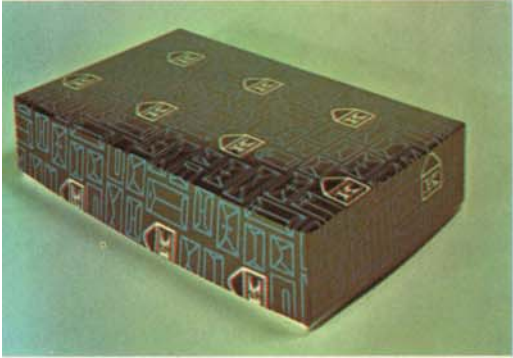
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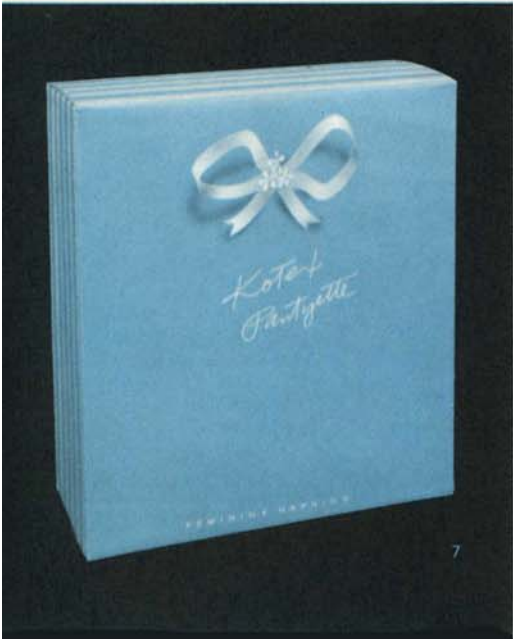
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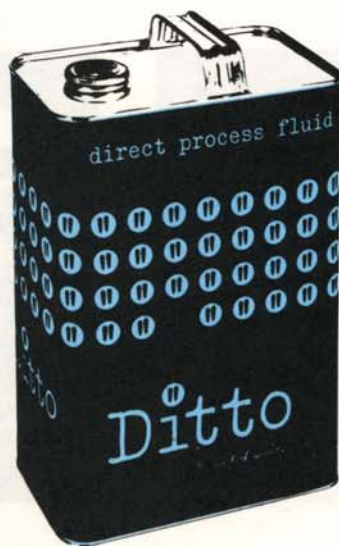
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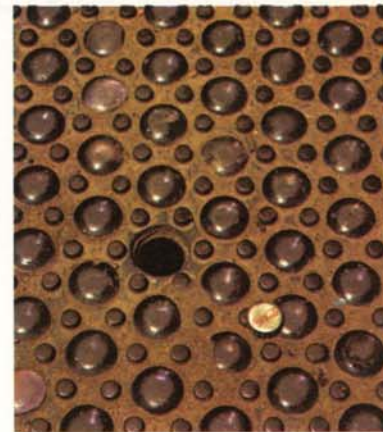
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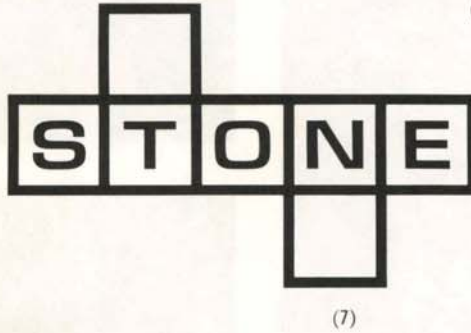
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Package designs for:

- (1) Bauer & Black Fling Hosiery
- (2) Ovaltine Division, Wander Co.
- (3) Chicago Carton, stock ice cream packages for imprint
- (4) Karolton Envelope Division, Kimberly-Clark Corp.
- (5) Stop & Shop, bakery goods
- (6) Bauer & Black, elastic goods
- (7) Kimberly-Clark Corp., (proposed package design)
- (8) Ditto, Inc.
- (9) Vail Manufacturing Company, Monarch brand trademark, packages

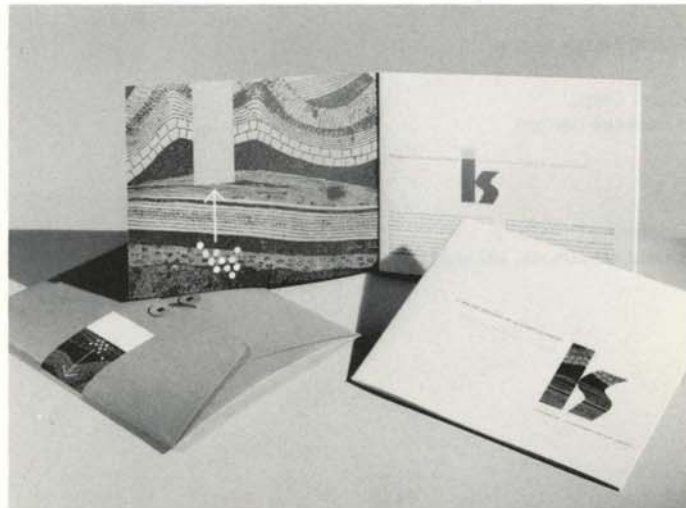
Experimental photography



Trademark designs for:

- (1) Peace Corps
- (2) Karolton Envelope Division, Kimberly-Clark Corporation
- (3) Additive-A (brand mark) for Industrial Division, Kimberly-Clark Corporation
- (4) Karpen Furniture Company
- (5) Storkline Corporation
- (6) Curly Tie Ribbon (brand mark)
- (7) Stone Container Corporation

Below: one of a proposed series of trade ads for A. B. Dick Co. Presentation folder and brochure for King-Stevenson Gas & Oil Company.





TV commercial for
Boushelle Rug Cleaners;
Caruso, Malis and
Worn, agency

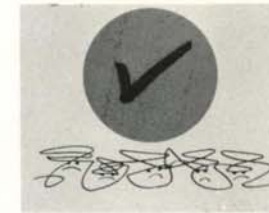
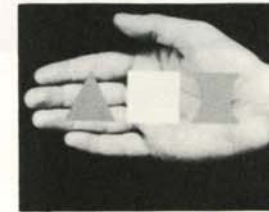
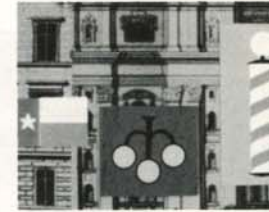


Commercial for Lanvin;
North Advertising, agency

Commercial for Coronet;
Gourfain, Loeff and
Adler, agency



Commercial for Chicago
Currency Exchange Assn.;
Gourfain-Loeff, agency



Institutional film
"Faces and Fortunes,"
for Kimberly-Clark

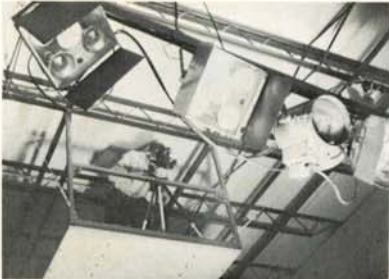
MORTON GOLDSHOLL:



For my "In the beginning," there were pictures. I love to draw and began as a painter. That dream dissolved in the nightmare of a depression and factory work for too many years. Faced with a desperate situation, an orderly mind needs to *plan*. My plan led to design.

I found it possible to leave the factory for the life of a commercial artist. But I lost some dreams too. The Matisse, Renoir, Picasso world was soon forgotten for safe advertising art—for retouching, mat books, layouts, typesetting, engraving and printing.

Of course, after a few years of safe and solid earnings, I found myself unhappy again; especially after accidentally finding a new world in Moholy-Nagy's books and school, a brief period with Gyorgy Kepes, and a discovery that I could somehow combine art and commerce.



After rejecting an offer to become an agency art director, I established a free-lance office. (Free-lance means eat when you work.) I was curious about the new freedom that seemed at hand, to be able to express my own opinion on any subject. I was amazed to find that these ideas had value and were recognized. Egbert Jacobson at Container was one of the first to entertain them and I soon found others.

Freedom is a goofy word. Determination to remain free requires a discipline; but it does not inhibit freedom, it enlarges it.



My burgeoning efforts soon sprouted into designing books, objects, packages, structures, machines, signs, exhibits, everything. The School of Design sharpened my appetite for cameras, photograms and motion picture films. This soon became quite a bit more than a 14-hour day could manage and I asked others to join me in setting up a design office.

To this day, I cannot explain how it all happened. It did. I never knew what I wanted to do, just that I wanted to do something and to try to do it well.

I enjoy my work immensely, but seldom the results. The playtime in design is the most joyful experience—the wasted moments in scribbles, dribbles and scratches that formulate vague thoughts into ideas and dreams into action. I don't know how or why this is so.

The problem is to get the final design to match the fleeting idea. The big dream about the great work of art can too easily be dissipated in the practicalities of solutions, clients, markets, statistics, sales, function and committee decisions.

I wonder about the words *communication, creative, values, etc.*, just as everyone does. I also love, hate, spit, smoke, curse, laugh and cry with every man. In Aspen they call it "remaining in the mainstream of life," so you don't have to ask for research on how people feel.

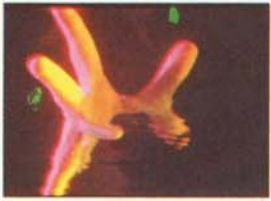
How does one keep himself free enough to "feel" anything today? Faced with the chaos, the polyglot of things and words, it takes a super effort to weed out the meaningful things from the trash.

I have always tried to do what I have done for others to enjoy. It has been easier to satisfy others than to satisfy myself.

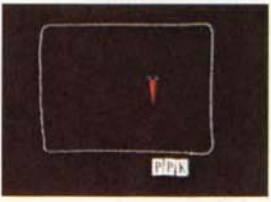
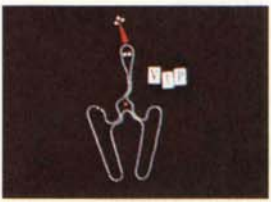
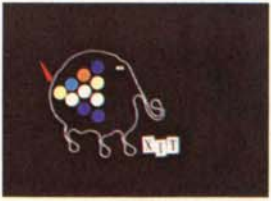
I have reached the point in my life that now demands that *I enjoy it most*.

Jose Ramon Jiminez, Spanish poet, wrote, "When they give you ruled paper—write the other way," which I seem to have adopted as a personal slogan. This could also be modified to read, "make your own ruled paper—but write."

Write, draw, paint, design, film, compose, play. Do it your own way. Do it for others and for yourself. But do it.



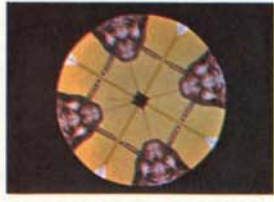
Water play



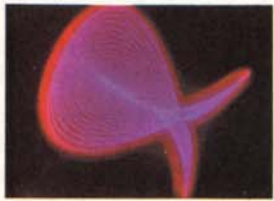
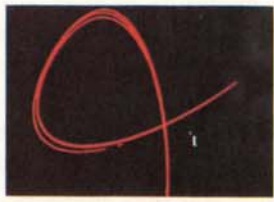
Galactic zoo



Night driving



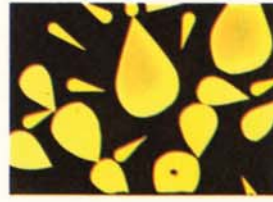
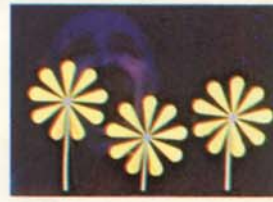
Times four



Harmonogram



Blowing bubbles



Ah choo: Kleenex

Frames from experimental films

MILLIE GOLDSHOLL:



It is better to be Utopic than myopic—even if you're not a designer—and especially if you are. It's not so much a matter of thinking big as thinking deep.

It takes a supreme optimism and a touch of fanaticism, I suspect, to stick to a sense of purpose when a substantial part of our milieu is operatively shrinking you down to its cataractous sight or segmenting you into accepted patterns of specialization.

Our studio in Northfield may resemble the beehive bustle; but that's where the resemblance stops. The flow of activity encompassing graphic arts, film, product design, packaging and display defies bee-style specialization.

Each area of work is advantaged by the others. The graphic artists are available for film animation art as well as print. The workshop, where product design and display models are constructed, is available for building film sets and props. The photographers relate themselves to graphics, slide films, and animation film, and so on.

We have avoided staffing our studio to the point where volume becomes too important, though we are large enough to cope with a variety of assignments. Emphasis on quantity may work very well to bring down the price of cars—but in design it can only bring down the quality. We have all seen enough designers turn into promoters, plagiarists, hustlers, sensation peddlers, charlatans and real estate operators, symbolically speaking of course, to know that a driving for gold or glory can make a pretty sick situation.

Our film activity is growing. We've no doubt that film is the most powerful communication form. We have a conditional respect for this power. The condition is the message. A film with a worthy objective is a terrific spur.

We'd rather make films that have guts than gimmicks—and we don't equate gimmicks with honest experimentation and unorthodox techniques. Serendipity is something we are committed to. But, when we use our discoveries on a project, it has to "belong" there. Part of every film budget goes into experimentation during the work process.

We are involved, here, in every step of the film process, from idea to imagery—and we find this maintains the integrity of the concept.

Phonics can be manipulated with the same freedom as image. The auditory is mobilized to create mood. Images may be heard, and sound seen.

It is not so much in the components of the film structure that its art resides; but rather in relationships, interaction and transitions that it assumes its significance.

The pulse or rhythm of a film can produce tension, excitement and release. In editing, the film maker gives wings to the parts . . . cleaving them from their place in time and space . . . releasing them into a designer's stratosphere—there to be juggled, taken, rejected, extended, clipped, superimposed and recomposed. A new "relativity" is shaped, evolving out of the theme of the film. The editor determines the order of perception.

Making films is a great responsibility proportionate to the size of the audiences they reach and the influences they wield. On the other hand, film making is largely uncharted ground. In a circumscribed world, it is wonderful to find oneself an explorer.