

THE TAKEOVER: THE NEWCOMERS' APPRO- PRIATION OF DESIGN PROMOTION 1999–2020

5.1.1 A mutual recuperation

The newcomers' professional shift led them to reject their predecessors' models. They positioned themselves as outsiders and invested their subcultural capital to gain commissions in the cultural sector. However, outsiders do not keep their peripheral positions forever. In fact, as Bourdieu argued, those fighting the established order in a given field often end up becoming its very nomothetes (i.e. its legislators).¹ This was also true of the designers of the new school, who subsequently became the insiders of the design promotion scene. This happened through a process of mutual recuperation: the SDA associated themselves with the new generation, while the latter increasingly gained control over the Awards. Such processes have been well explored in subcultural theory, which first described incorporation as a process of "assimilation" in which outsiders become part of the structure of mainstream life.² Though the first wave of subcultural theory was initially concerned with deviance and delinquency, the second wave applied this notion to culture. One of the most well-known examples can be found in Dick Hebdige's work, in which he describes how punk culture was recuperated by the mainstream.³ Second-wave subcultural theory often depicted this evolution as a "rise-and-fall" narrative whereby a subculture went from resistance against the mainstream to inevitable incorporation (and commodification) by the dominant culture, which would essentially render it inauthentic.⁴ However, the third wave of subcultural theory that emerged in the 2000s – dubbed post-subcultural theory – warned against a linear interpretation of this "cycle of incorporation", which it argued was only a schematic narrative.⁵ Moreover, as I noted previously, Thornton and McRobbie demonstrated that subcultures were not as distant from the market as earlier scholarship had argued.⁶ My use of the term recuperation is informed by these notions. I suggest that the new school of graphic designers was not simply incorporated by the existing culture, neither did their subcultural capital dwindle when they associated themselves with the SDA. Instead, a mutual recuperation

1 Bourdieu 2016 (1992), n.p. (part 1, section 1, chapter 4).
2 Gelder 2007, 40–43; Jensen 2018, 406.

3 Hebdige 2002 (1979).

4 Gelder 2007, 45–46; Hall & Jefferson 2006 (1993), XXXII.

5 Marchart 2003, 87. For an overview of post-subcultural theory, see Bennett 2011; Muggleton & Weinzierl 2003, 3–23.

6 McRobbie 2016, n.p. (chapter 2, section 4); Thornton 2003 (1995) (chapter 4, section 2).

From the late 1990s onwards, the established design culture represented by the FCAA signalled that it was responding favourably to the new school. Gavillet (*1973) won the SDA for the first time in 1999. He argued that this year was a moment of “generational shift” whereby design promotion began focusing on the newcomers.⁷ In the first round of the competition, the shortlist included designers who were between five and ten years older than him, such as André Baldinger (*1963) and Müller+Hess (Beat Müller *1965 and Wendelin Hess *1968), who had established practices. However, those who made it to the final stage of the competition were all less established; several of the winners had actually just graduated. While it was not the first time that designers were awarded early in their professional career, Gavillet argued that in 1999 the FCAA took a conscious decision to promote the newcomers over accomplished practitioners.

7

Berthod 2018a; Gavillet 2018.

One hypothesis could be that the FCAA was reacting to the criticism voiced by *Hochparterre* and was giving precedence to younger designers rather than to those who were established and were presenting mid-career projects. However, the minutes of the commission’s meetings do not suggest a change of direction, but rather continuity in its intentions. In 1998, it had already reiterated that its role was primarily to support young designers.⁸ Nevertheless, it is telling that 20 years later, Gavillet still pinpointed 1999 as a distinct moment of change.⁹ Since memory is a process of creation of meaning, his reminiscences could perhaps be explained as a construction as much a recollection.¹⁰ After all, he had only graduated in 1998, and so it would be tempting to dismiss his story as another example of a new generation attempting to

establish itself in competition with the previous one. However, two facts support the idea that the SDA were indeed recuperating the newcomers.

163

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Crivelli 1998a.
Gavillet 2018.
Sandino 2006, 275; Thomson 2011, n.p.

First, the type of work awarded changed. As I discussed in my third chapter here, the SDA recognised commercial graphic design until 1997. This included examples such as a shoe shop's corporate identity, branding material for a watch or a television ident. This type of work was no longer awarded thereafter. Instead of going to accomplished practitioners with a commercial portfolio, the prizes went exclusively to "niche design" – projects that were either experimental, self-initiated or located in the cultural sector. For example, the group Silex submitted a series of independent, underground zines featuring their angst illustrations (Fig. 5.1), while Rust presented a "type-face" made of vector drawings representing keyboard keys (Fig. 5.2). Both examples stemmed from the new professional attitudes developed by the younger generation whom I addressed in the previous chapter. The jury welcomed these and turned away from commercial projects, despite a desire on the part of certain members of the FCAA, including Rappo, to award both cultural and commercial design.¹¹ This trend affected all federal design promotion. As I discussed in chapter three, the other competitions co-organised by the FOC underwent similar changes at around the same time. A prime example was the Jan Tschichold Prize, which the MBSB competition began conferring in 1997 in order to recognise outstanding achievements in book design. The first award did not go to a commercial studio, but to the new school designer *par excellence*, Cornel Windlin (*1964).

11

Crivelli 2000a; 2000e; Rappo 2021.

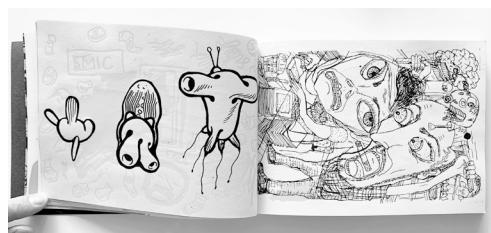


Fig. 5.1

A page from *Silex* 14 (1999), a collaborative issue between Silex and French illustrators Caroline Sury and Pakito Bolino.

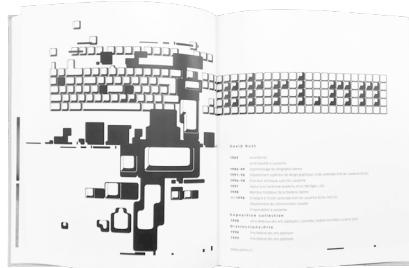


Fig. 5.2

David Rust's illustration in the 1999 SDA catalogue.

The average age of the graphic design winners also dropped, which corroborated the idea that the SDA were recuperating the newcomers. Although a yearly variation was normal, their age had constantly remained above 30 in the decade leading up to 1999. That year, the average dropped to 28.6 years; in 2001, it even went down to 27. This reflected how many more young designers were being awarded, such as the Silex member Aude Lehmann (*1976) who was just 23 in 1999 (Fig. 5.3). The evolution in the type of work awarded and the average age of the winners demonstrated how the SDA recuperated the new school by featuring younger designers. The increased presence of experimental work showed that the jury had taken a new approach in its definition of “good design”, one that aligned with the approach of the newcomers. In fact, many of the designers who won prizes in 1999 would be featured in *Benzin* in 2000, a book which was unanimously well-received by the new school.¹² By associating themselves with the newcomers, the SDA secured their place on the left-field scene of graphic design.

12

Bruggisser & Fries 2000; NORM 2017; Zumstein & Barandun 2017.

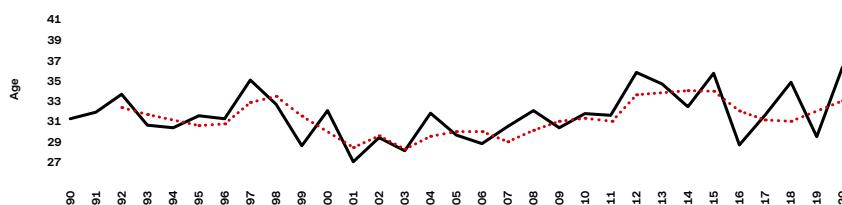


Fig. 5.3

Average age of winners in the graphic design category between 1990 and 2020. Groups of winners are averaged as one entry. The black line shows the year's age average, the red dotted line a three-year average. See Table 7.2.

5.1.2 “Recuperating” design promotion

165

If the SDA successfully recuperated the newcomers, the latter also “recuperated” design promotion from the early 2000s onwards. I put the term in quotation marks, because I am not referring to the sociological definition of the term this time, but rather to its everyday meaning. The newcomers – and those from a different generation who shared similar ideas – gained increasing power in design promotion, up to the point at which they were able to take over. Many secured a seat on the jury, which may have been a strategy by the SDA to consolidate their position on the scene. As English has reminded us, an award’s prestige is reciprocally dependent on how well-perceived its judges are.¹³ By inviting the newcomers onto the jury, the SDA were co-opting the esteem in which they were held. This process of mutual recuperation is evident in a compilation of the key actors of graphic design promotion from 1990 to 2020, which collates the most influential winners and jury members (Table 5.1). These people were the true insiders of design promotion. I determined their degree of influence by adding the number of awards they won (including the SDA, the Jan Tschichold Prize and the Grand Prix Design) and the years they served on a jury (as member or expert for the FCAA and the MBSB) between 1990 and 2020. I did not include the number of times designers won the MBSB for two reasons: they do not award a money prize, and designers can win with multiple books each year, which would have created an unbalanced representation.¹⁴ The table below displays the 38 insiders who obtained a minimum score of three points for these years. Furthermore, it indicates when designers were commissioned by the FOC to design their catalogues.

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English 2005, 122.

The MBSB competition deserves further analysis, which could cover the links between members of the MBSB jury and the designers whose books were awarded that year.

Table 5.1

The most influential insiders of the SDA for graphic design between 1990–2020. These insiders had a minimum score of 3, meaning that they either won prizes and/or were jury members at least three times in that period.

Group	Name	Birth	Jan Tschichold Prize	Swiss Design Awards	Federal Design Commission	Grand Prix Design	MBSB Jury	SDA Catalogue	MBSB Catalogue
Flag	Aubry Bastien	1974	1999, 2003, 2007						
The Remingtons ⁴	Baillard Ludovic	1973	2003, 2011, 2012	2016					
	Banner Laurent	1975	2001, 2004, 2010		2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019			2004, 2005, 2006	
Bonbon	Bonin Valeria	1978	2003, 2010	2017				2007, 2008, 2009	
	Bontognali Diego	1977	2003, 2010	2017				2003 ⁵ , 2007, 2008, 2009	
	Born Julia	1975	2003, 2007, 2018	2011	2021			2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007	20024
	Bovier Lionel	1970							
	Eugster Marietta	1985	2014, 2018					2020	
	Frey Patrick	1949		2014				2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007	
Gavillet & Rust ⁶ ; Gavillet & Cie	Gavillet Gilles	1973	1999, 2002, 2007	2006	2012			2004 (S), 2005 (S), 2016 (P), 2017 (P), 2018 (P), 2019 (P), 2020 (P)	1998, 1999, 2000
	Rust David	1969	1998, 1999, 2007	2006	2012			2000 (E), 2001 (E), 2014 (E)	2000, 2001, 2002
Elektrosmog ⁷	Hindermann Valentin	1986	2001, 2003, 2007	2005					2002, 2003, 2004
	Jeker Werner	1944	1968 ⁸						
	Keller Pierre	1945	1968 ⁸						
	Knöpfel Pascal	1961	1990, 1994, 1997						

	Koch Rafael	1976	2001, 2005, 2011					
	Lehmann Aude	1976	1999, 2001, 2008	2008		2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020		2010, 2011, 2012
	Lehni Jürg	1978	2001, 2003, 2006					
	Lehni Urs	1974	2001, 2005, 2010	2015		2018, 2019, 2020	2005, 2006	
	Lusa Marie	1976	2009, 2013					
Maximage	Keshavjee David	1985	2009, 2011, 2014	2020				2013
	Taveli Julien	1984	2009, 2014, 2013	2020				2013
Maximage ²	Meldem Guy	1980	2006, 2007, 2009					
	Müller Lars	1985		2002		2009, 2010, 2011		
	Müller Stephan	1985	1997, 2005, 2013	1989				
NORM	Bruni Dimitri	1970	1999, 2000, 2002	2003	2011			2001, 2002, 2003
	Krebs Manuel	1970	1999, 2000, 2002	2003	2011		2012 (P), 2013 (P), 2014 (P), 2015 (P)	2001, 2002, 2003
Phil Vieceli	Phill Tania	1969	2007, 2008, 2014	2007			2016, 2017	
	Viecelli Alberto	1965	2007, 2008, 2014	2007				
	Rappo François	1955		2013				
	Sack Aurèle	1977	2006, 2010, 2014			2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007	1997, 1998, 1999, 2002 (P), 2003 (P), 2004 (P), 2005 (P), 2006 (P), 2007 (P)	
	Scasascia Radovan	1975				2018 (E), 2019 (E), 2020 (E)		
	Schraivogel Ralph	1980	1995, 1997, 2000		2016	1998 (E), 1999 (E)		1990
	Trib Lex	1971	2004, 2008				2012, 2013	2004 ⁴
The Remingtons ⁵	Vegegi Jones	1979	2003, 2009	2019				
Elektrosmog ⁶	Walser Marco	1973	2001, 2003, 2007	2005				
	Windlin Cornel	1984	1993, 1995, 1998	1987	2007	2008, 2009, 2010, 2011	2008 (P), 2009 (P), 2010 (P), 2011 (P)	1998, 1999, 2000
Hf ⁷	Zumstein Megi	1973	2002				2004 (S), 2005 (S)	

³ partially missing data

⁴ no longer collaborating
⁵ irregular collaboration

⁶ with Elektrosmog

E: Expert

P: President of the

commission

S: Special jury.
Years refer to sitting sessions
rather than series awarded
(2001 means the jury awarded
the prize in 2000).

The years during which these designers and publishers won prizes or served on the jury give a clear indication of whether they were part of the old school or the new. Those who played a role after 1999 were all part of the latter. The symbolic moment when the new school began its process of reconciliation with design promotion was when Gavillet's collaborator and friend David Rust (1969–2014) replaced Ralph Schraivogel (*1960) as an expert in graphic design on the FCAA in 2000. Rust was also appointed as a jury member for the MBSB 1999 competition, a position he held for three years.¹⁵ Schraivogel had been the expert in 1998 and 1999 and was well established, as his long CV in the 2000 SDA catalogue attested.¹⁶ He withdrew from his role in 1999 order to be able to submit his work to the SDA one last time, which he did successfully in 2000.¹⁷ Schraivogel's years of activity clearly placed him in the generation of designers that was recognised pre-1999. Before him, an even more established graphic designer, Werner Jeker (*1944), had held the position between 1989 and 1997. Not only did Jeker represent the previous generation, but he also held a considerably more powerful position on the design scene. In Gavillet's words, "Jeker [had] a monopoly on local institutions" in Lausanne where his studio was based. As a consequence, French-speaking Switzerland was "completely locked", which prevented the newcomers from getting any commissions from cultural institutions.¹⁸ The contrast between Jeker and Rust's ideas, interests and goals could not have been greater. Rust aligned himself with a younger generation of designers whose practice resembled his. His appointment not only indicated the FCAA's desire to make space for the newcomers, but also signalled the beginning of their takeover of design promotion.

15

In order to include all the books published in any given year, the MBSB jury always meets early in the following year. This means that although Rust was a member of the jury for the 1999 vintage, the judging session took place in early 2000.

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FOC 2000.

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Crivelli 1999c.

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Gavillet 2018.

Shortly thereafter, the new generation gained an ally on the FCAA. In 2000, Rappo (*1955) became a member of the Commission, a position he held for two four-year terms. His influence extended to the MBSB as well, where

he had been a jury member for the years 1996 to 1998 (thus including the year Windlin had been awarded the Jan Tschichold Prize) before becoming its chair in 2001–2006. While Rappo was not one of the newcomers, his network closely overlapped with theirs, as I demonstrate below. Between 2000 and 2010, many newcomers secured seats on the jury, including Born, Gavillet, Rust and Windlin. Windlin's nomination in 2008 was a culminating point of the new generation's recuperation of design promotion. Replacing Rappo in both positions, Windlin was appointed to the FDC and was made the chair of the MBSB jury. He held these two positions for four years. While his awards mostly predated 1999, his role on the juries all took place after 2007. Windlin had thus progressed from *enfant terrible* to a full member of the design establishment, and in the process converted from being an ostensible outsider to a real insider. His early awards supported the idea that the SDA were increasingly recognising new practices, while his later role on the jury demonstrates the long-term influence exerted by the newcomers on design promotion. Their leverage continued in the following decade, thanks to the seats held by Gavillet, Benner and Lehmann on the MBSB jury and the FDC between 2010 and 2020. Besides securing seats on the jury, the newcomers also began to acquire the commissions surrounding the awards. The catalogues for both the MBSB and the SDA, which were often commissioned in three-year cycles, were all designed by insiders featured in Table 5.1.¹⁹ These commissions allowed the insiders to determine the visual discourse of design promotion, and also created a new category of work that could be described as subsidised design. Indeed, these projects often allowed experimental or conceptual approaches yet came with significant budgets – a situation that almost never occurred with classical commissions.

19

The MBSB catalogues were designed by Gavillet and Windlin (1998–2000), NORM (2001–2003), Benner and Jonathan Hares (MBSB 2004–2006), Laurenz Brunner (2007–2009) and Lehmann (2010–2012), while the SDA catalogues were designed by Elektrosmog (SDA 2002–2004), Claudia Roethlisberger and Marie Lusa (2005–2006), Bonbon/Diego Bontognali and Valeria Bonin (2007–2009) and again Hares (2010–2012), who collaborated with Radovan Scasascia on the SDA website which was launched in 2010 and replaced the catalogues from 2012.

The mutual recuperation benefitted both the awards and the newcomers. On the one hand, the awards attracted members of the new school who lent some of their

cultural capital to them. With the relaunch of 2002, the FOC had finished internalising the professional shift, and the newcomers' practices had become part of the institution. This ensured the SDA's relevance on the design scene and thus their continuation. It also meant that the newcomers became nomothetes of design promotion. Their evolution from anti-establishment to normative figures played a further role in defining the profession. Thanks to their representation on the juries, design promotion aligned with the interests of this new generation. Since it was increasingly controlled by tight communities of practices, a further consequence of the newcomers' recuperation was thus the transformation of design promotion into a closed circuit.

170

5.2 Closed circuits of promotion

5.2.1 Design promotion as a network

Thanks to the mutual recuperation between the awards and the newcomers, a series of influential designers evolved from outsiders to insiders of design promotion. The awards and the FOC's commissions, which allowed for experiments, were fundamental in helping them launch their careers as independent and critically recognised designers in the cultural sector. By winning repeatedly, serving on juries and getting commissioned by the FOC, they progressively became the face of design promotion and took control of it. Those who were part of the network of promotion were in a position to define the parameters of "good" design. I believe that the insiders created closed circuits of promotion which led the SDA to become an echo chamber of specific practitioners and their design languages. This did not mean that the jury was biased or that the winning projects were unworthy. More pragmatically, the SDA awarded practitioners whose work aligned with the jury's ideals. As English explained, this neither made the jury cynical, nor did it mean they were free of self-interest, both of these being "merely obverse and inverse" of the relationship between the jury's habitus and the field.²⁰ However, these closed circuits were so powerful that they excluded entire scenes and types of practice and created an imbalanced representation of

The role of networks in the production of contemporary art, cinema, dance and theatre has been explored recently in sociology.²¹ Although their role in design has not been analysed to the same extent, the theoretical and methodological frameworks used in the former can be applied to the latter. The two key concepts underlying network analysis in the arts are Bourdieu's artistic fields and Becker's art worlds, which social network theory attempts to bridge.²² Bourdieu emphasised structural relations (being permanent and deriving from positions in the social space) over empirical relations (actualised by a particular exchange).²³ Conversely, Becker focused primarily on concrete ties but failed to address the structures governing these networks.²⁴ In their analysis of the role of networks in the careers of young artists, the cultural economists Nathalie Moureau and Benoît Zenou relied on both Bourdieusian and Beckerian notions. They concluded that the artists' social capital was directly related to the size of their networks, but that they could not rely on that capital alone and had to learn the norms and conventions of the institutions ruling the art market to launch their careers.²⁵ The notion of convention, which is prevalent in Becker's art worlds, was particularly relevant in the networks of promotion that I analyse. Similarly to Moureau and Zenou, I propose that the designers who won the SDA repeatedly from the early 2000s onwards had access to social capital and shared the same conventions that were anchored in their new definition of their profession.

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Alexandre & Lamberbourg 2016; Moureau & Zenou 2016. For a historical overview of social network analysis in the arts, see Azam & de Federico 2016.

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Bottero & Crossley 2011.

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Crossley 2011, 24.

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Bottero & Crossley 2011, 100.

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Moureau & Zenou 2016, 123, 128.

Although compiling the insiders' reappearances in Table 5.1 was useful for identifying the most influential actors in design promotion, it gives no indication as to whether they were connected amongst themselves, nor, if so, how these networks influenced design promotion.

each other and mapped them as an interactive visualisation.²⁶ To uncover their networks, I relied on oral history and artefact analysis. Oral history allowed me to find connections that had so far been unclear, and to describe the networks in both their broader and their smaller details.²⁷ I focused specifically on "weak ties"—in my case professional connections based on awards, commissions, collaborations, schools and group memberships—because these played a more important role in professional settings than strong ties (friends, family etc.).²⁸ Furthermore, seeing that Switzerland's relatively small scenes and a degree of mobility across them meant that most designers knew each other anyway, these would have provided little analytical value.²⁹ Once mapped as a network visualisation, the connections between the insiders of design promotion all appear tightly interwoven. In the following pages, I shall analyse the social clusters that ruled design promotion and illustrate them with representations. I use these visualisations primarily as research tools, and they should not be considered as an end in themselves.³⁰ The intricacy of the networks is such that they defy interpretation if depicted in full (Fig. 7.1). However, once schematised, two main clusters emerged (Fig. 5.4).³¹

26

Available at <http://bit.ly/swissdesignnetworks> (accessed 18 April 2021). This interactive visualisation offers the most intuitive means of entry into these complex social networks.

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Berthod 2018; Sandino 2006.

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Moureau & Zenou 2016, 113. The notion of weak ties was developed by the sociologist Mark Granovetter (1973).

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Macháček 2004; Heller 2002, 172.

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Grandjean 2015, 111.

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The term refers to groups of nodes that are well-connected between each other, but less connected to other nodes in the network.

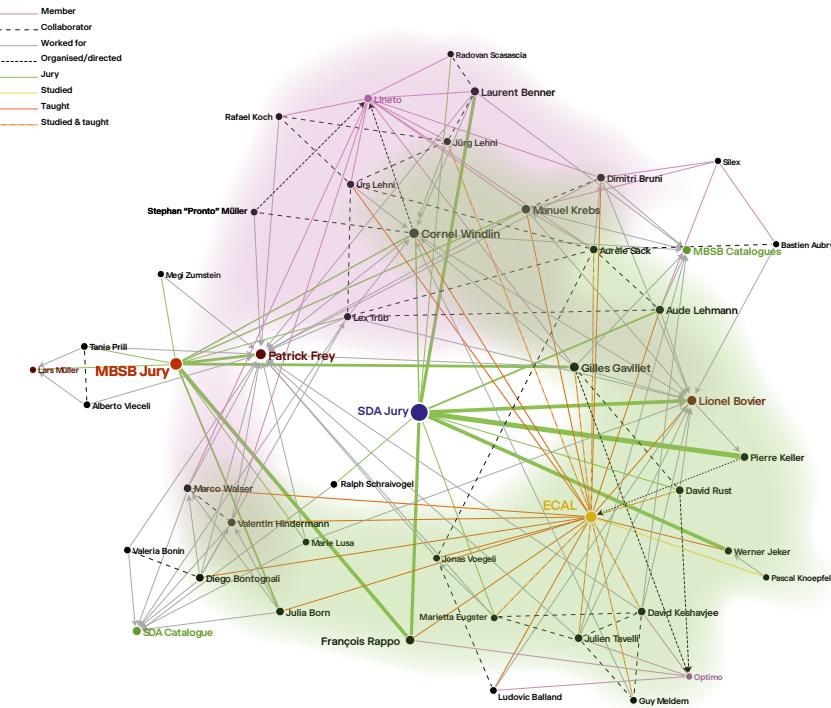


Fig. 5.4

The networks of promotion's two clusters: Lineto/Windlin in pink, and ECAL in green. To a certain extent, these also reflect two geographical regions.

5.2.2 Intricate connections

The two most important clusters of design promotion, which partially overlapped, were organised around Windlin/Lineto and ECAL. I consider Lineto and Windlin's networks as one, because although the foundry was a community of practice of its own, it was steered by Windlin, its members all belonged to his personal contacts, and he retained the oversight of its activities.³² Windlin's influence was due to his roles of designer, co-founder of Lineto, winner of all the FOC's design awards and member of all its juries. These roles allowed him to become one of the most influential actors in the networks of design promotion (Fig. 7.2 shows a detail of these connections). Lineto brought together numerous designers of the new school. Its members – most of whom were based in Zurich – included Benner, Elektrosmog, the Lehni brothers, NORM, Aurèle Sack and Scasascia. Many served on the FDC (which awards both the SDA and the Grand Prix Design) and on the MBSB juries

(which also awards the Jan Tschichold Prize). Non-Lineto designers alleged that the role of the foundry members as both jury members and awards candidates created conflicts of interest.³³ They notably argued that Lineto typefaces went on to be given prizes in the SDA more often than those from outside the cluster – a claim to which I shall return to in the next section. There were sometimes connections between the type designers and the jury, which may have been coincidences but happened regularly enough to be intriguing. In 2010, Sack presented Brown, which was awarded when Windlin sat on the FDC. In 2014, Sack's Grey “easily [won] the award” – in Windlin's words – when fellow Lineto member Benner was on the jury.³⁴ The same year, soon-to-be Lineto member Robert Huber won with several typefaces. In 2015, Mauro Paolozzi's Prismaset was awarded (with Benner on the jury); in 2017, Huber's Moderne won, still under Benner.³⁵

³² Berthod 2019a. Windlin's oversight was such that the Lineto designers I approached for interviews pertaining to the platform all asked for his permission before replying to me.

³³ Party 2021. The SDA do not require jury members to recuse themselves if they know the project or its designers. The jury is independent and free to award the projects which are in its view the most commendable.

³⁴ Lineto n.d.

³⁵ These typefaces are retailed by Lineto.

Lineto members were often commissioned by the FOC to design the catalogues or the visual identity of its competitions. Between 1998 and 2009, all the MBSB catalogues were designed by designers who were linked to the network. They mostly chose to use Lineto typefaces, often the designers' own (Fig. 5.5).³⁶ Picking a typeface may sound like a strict design decision. However, an outsider to the Lineto network argued that designers working in the cultural sector had become extremely attentive to the framework of reference created by the repeated use of typefaces:

[The scene] is extremely attentive to [...] the idea of using only certain fonts. Maybe even the one you produce yourself. In fact, your whole way of referencing yourself, even in relation to the ingredients you put into your work, gives you

credibility and anchors you even more in that scene. [There were] people for whom it was clear that you had to claim to be from a foundry or a certain axis and not to deviate from that.³⁷

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"[La scène] est extrêmement attentive à [...] cette idée d'utiliser uniquement certaines polices de caractères. Peut-être même celle que tu produis toi-même et qu'en fait, toute ta manière de te référencer, même par rapport aux ingrédients que tu mets dans ton travail, te crédibilise, t'ancre encore plus dans cette scène-là. [Il y avait] des gens pour qui c'était clair que tu devais revendiquer d'une fonderie ou d'un certain axe et ne pas faire d'écart par rapport à ça."

Designer C 2021.

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Windlin used his Gravur in the design of the 1998 and 1999 catalogues, Gavillet his Hermes (2000), NORM their Simple (2001, 2002) and SimpleKoelnBonn (2003), Jonathan Hares his Superstudio (2005), Benner and Hares used Müller's Unica (2006), and finally – concluding more than a decade of Lineto designers – Brunner used his Circular (2007–2009).

According to the same designer, using specific design codes afforded credibility on the scene and a sense of “belonging” visually. It was something designers had to adhere to if they wanted to win the SDA. In other words, Lineto created conventions in the design world.



Fig. 5.5

The cover of the MBSB 2009 catalogue featuring Brunner's typeface Circular. This issue concluded a decade of catalogues designed by Lineto members, often using their typefaces. Design: Laurenz Brunner.

Lineto's presence was not limited to the visual realm. Its members also repeatedly benefitted from the financial support of the FDC. 2004 was a particularly fruitful year during which Rafael Koch, Benner, Jürg and Urs Lehni all successfully applied for funding on distinct projects.³⁸ Benner's proposal was a catalogue featuring, amongst others, Lineto members Reala (Jonas Williamson and Samuel Nyholm), Scasascia and Windlin. That same year, Windlin also secured funding for a project called “Select & Arrange” that was described as a type specimen, featuring NORM, Reala, The Remingtons,³⁹ Elektrosmog, Jürg Lehni and Paul Elliman. Arguing that Lineto had only been financed by Windlin and Müller's own funds so

far, they requested federal support and received CHF 20,000 to develop their project.⁴⁰ Just a year later, the 2005 MBSB competition's "book of the jury" – unanimously awarded – had a suspiciously similar title. Windlin's *Vitra: Select, Arrange* (2005) was a sales and product catalogue commissioned by the furniture company Vitra AG, which doubled as a picture book (Fig. 5.6). While it did feature many of the designers mentioned in Lineto's application for funding, the book was a far cry from an experimental type specimen. This raised questions such as whether the FDC had been misled and who really benefitted from public funds.

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Crivelli 2004b.
The Remingtons was Ludovic Balland and Jonas Voegeli's studio between 2002 and 2006.
Crivelli 2004b.

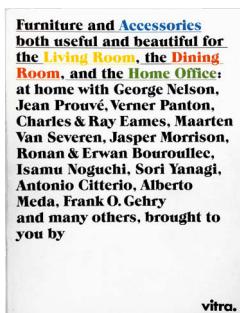


Fig. 5.6

The Vitra catalogue *Select/Arrange* (2005). Design: Cornel Windlin.

Many of Lineto's connections overlapped with the ECAL network in Lausanne, which provided mutual benefits for each of them (Fig. 5.7). A central actor in this network was Pierre Keller, who served as ECAL director from 1995 to 2011 and as a member of the FCAA from 1988 to 1999. Rappo was also influential within this network. He was a professor at ECAL between 1994 and 2019 and was put forward by Keller to succeed him on the soon-to-be-renamed FCAA/FDC, on which he served from 2000 to 2007.⁴¹ Some outsiders alleged that ECAL used its influence within the SDA to promote its students.⁴² While I could not confirm this allegation, Keller and Rappo certainly hired SDA winners to teach at the school. In a bid to transform ECAL from a peripheral art school into an internationally recognised institution, Keller introduced a system of visiting lecturers shortly after his arrival. Amongst the new visiting lecturers,

he hired Windlin in 1996. Keller had become acquainted with the designer's work thanks to the SDA.⁴³ As a member of the FCAA, he had been party to giving awards to Windlin three times (1993, 1995 and 1998). Windlin taught at ECAL for two semesters.⁴⁴ One of his students was Gavillet, who began working for him shortly after he graduated.⁴⁵ Windlin and Gavillet worked on many projects that were subsequently given prizes. These included the design of the 2000 programme of the Schauspielhaus Zurich, which was successful in the MBSB competition. That same year, Gavillet and Windlin were in charge of the MBSB catalogue, which Gavillet subsequently submitted to the 2002 SDA. The photograph illustrating Gavillet and Windlin's win in the 2000 MBSB thus provided an appropriate *mise en abîme* of the designers' entanglement in design promotion (Fig. 5.8).

41 Crivelli 1999b.
 42 Conrad 2021.
 43 Rappo 2021.
 44 Lineto n.d.
 45 Gavillet 2017.

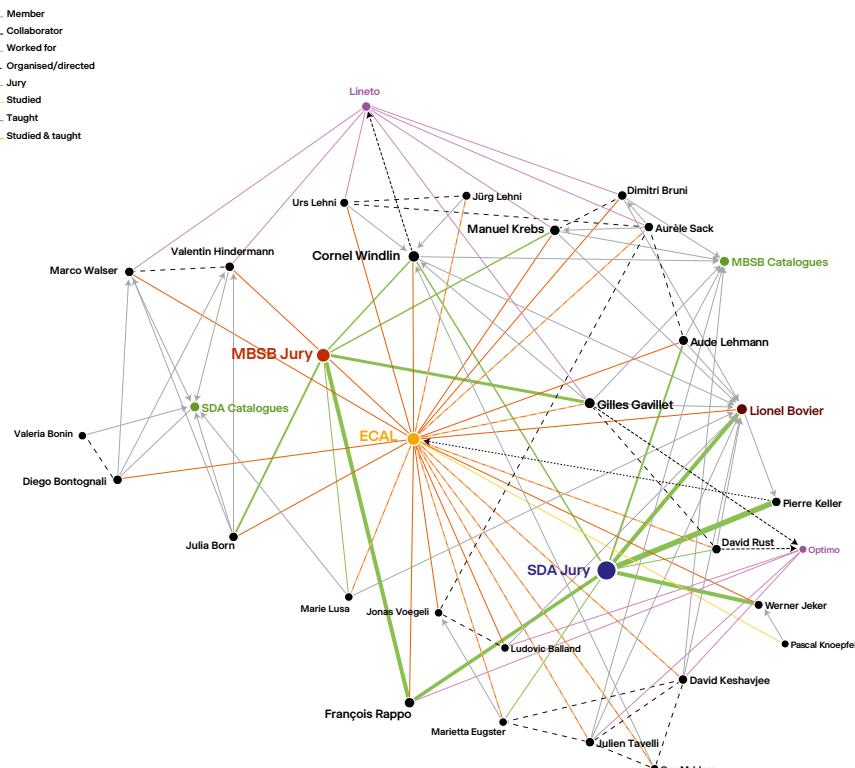


Fig. 5.7

ECAL's place within the networks of promotion.



Fig. 5.8

A page from the MBSB catalogue 2000 (design: Gilles Gavillet and Cornel Windlin) showing the Schauspielhaus director Christopher Marthaler photographed by Melanie Hofmann. Marthaler is holding the Schauspielhaus programme (2000, designed by Gavillet and Windlin) open on a spread showing portraits of Gavillet and Windlin photographed by Isabel Truniger. This was a tongue-in-cheek mise en scène: Gavillet and Windlin's portraits do not appear sequentially in the original.

Rappo also played a significant role in this network. He was a longstanding member of the FCAA/FDC and the MBSB juries, whose winners often entered the ECAL network.⁴⁶ For example, Born, Lehmann and NORM were invited as visiting lecturers in the early 2000s on Rappo's suggestion. The latter would go on to invite many lecturers who became insiders in later years, such as Bonbon (Valeria Bonin and Diego Bontognali) and The Remingtons.⁴⁷ Though Rappo was not a newcomer, he taught many of its members and helped them to formulate their new languages. Gavillet and NORM both credited Rappo as a major influence on their type design practices.⁴⁸ He introduced Gavillet and Rust to the new possibilities of type design at ECAL and would go on to publish many of his typefaces on Gavillet and Rust's type foundry Optimo.⁴⁹ The designers taught by Rappo and the lecturers he hired helped to disseminate the new vision of the profession. Several went on to serve as jury members, thus entangling the networks of design promotion even further.

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He was on the jury when Windlin was awarded the Jan Tschichold Prize (1997) and the Grand Prix Design (2007). He was a member of the FDC for two of Born's SDAs (2003, 2007), one of Lehmann's (2001) and two of NORM's (2000, 2002). He was also a member of the MBSB jury when NORM were awarded the Jan Tschichold Prize in 2003.

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Rappo 2021.

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NORM 2017.

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Gavillet 2017; Rappo 2021.

Even before Keller and Rappo's time, the ECAL network was already important to members of the "old school", albeit to a lesser extent. Jeker taught at ECAL, where he was head of the graphic design department from 1974

to 1986. One of his students was Pascal Knoepfel, who went on to work for Jeker in 1986. Knoepfel won the SDA three times (1990, 1994, 1997). Jeker was an expert for the FCAA for these three awards. However, neither Jeker nor Knoepfel played a role in promotion after the “takeover” by the new school.⁵⁰ Knoepfel’s reduced role in the network may have been due to his relocation to Réunion in 1990. Moreover, the projects for which he was awarded were also often for commercial rather than cultural clients (Fig. 5.9). Jeker and Knoepfel’s disappearance was just one of the many absences within the networks of promotion.

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Jeker went on teach at *Hochschule der Künste Bern* (HKB, Bern University of the Arts), but this institution does not appear in the networks of promotion. This supports the idea that members of the old school were unable to sustain their presence in the networks once the new school took over.



Fig. 5.9

Pascal Knoepfel’s prize-winning work in the 1990 SDA catalogue. He presented the corporate identity he developed for the Lausanne shoe shop Walpurgis. Top: three-colour poster; bottom from left to right: matchbox, paper bag and shoe boxes. Catalogue design: Ralph Schraivogel.

5.2.3 Secondary networks

The two largest clusters of promotion overlapped with many smaller subnetworks focused on designers and publishers. For example, Gavillet and Rust’s roles became increasingly important. Not only were they members of the FCAA/FDC and the MBSB juries for many years, but their foundry Optimo also created its own subnetwork (Fig. 7.3).⁵¹ Another example was the sustained influence of Silex members, most of whom went on to play defining roles long after the group had stopped collaborating. While this was not unexpected, one of the missing narratives uncovered by network visualisation is the role of the publishers Lionel Bovier and Patrick Frey (Fig. 5.10). Their commissions, which often gave the newcomers plenty of creative leeway, contributed to the designers’ careers and

their success at awards. Bovier was hired by Keller to read art history at ECAL, where he introduced Gavillet to a network of contemporary artists.⁵² After co-founding JRP Editions in Geneva in 1997, a publishing house focusing on artists' books, Bovier went on to give regular commissions to Gavillet, who subsequently won the SDA in 2002 with a series of books designed for JRP (Fig. 3.43 and Fig. 3.44). Bovier developed a particularly close working relationship with Gavillet and Rust. He hired them as the art directors of JRP|Ringier, his joint venture with the media group Ringier in 2004. In 2007, the designers won the SDA with many of the publications they had created for JRP|Ringier. They were also awarded the Grand Prix Design in 2012, when Bovier was on the FDC. But Bovier was also connected with many other insiders including Ludovic Balland, NORM, Marie Lusa and Maximage, whose work was recognised several times in the MBSB competition.

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See Chapter 4.3 for a discussion of Optimo.
Berthod 2021c; Gavillet 2017.

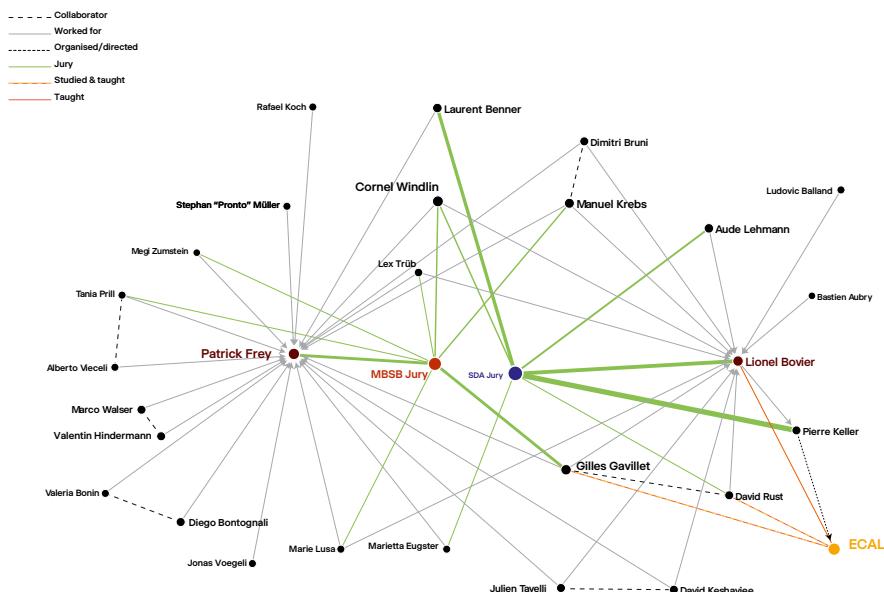


Fig. 5.10

Lionel Bovier and Patrick Frey were closely connected with the newcomers.

Frey also specialised in artists' books, often collaborated with newcomers, and was a design promotion insider. Countless books he commissioned were awarded prizes in the MBSB competition, which in turn helped to promote the newcomers. For instance, when Elektrosmog

won the Jan Tschichold Prize in 2005, the jury praised Frey's *Argovian Sun* (2002) as one of the key books in the designers' career.⁵³ From 2011 onwards, Maximage and Marietta Eugster designed Frey's visual identity and catalogues. These often-experimental publications were awarded a prize in the SDA in 2014 (Fig. 5.11). In turn, Frey's openness and the creative leeway he afforded the newcomers was a key criterion in his winning the Jan Tschichold Prize in 2014, a year in which NORM's Krebs was chair of the MBSB jury.⁵⁴

53 Guggenheimer 2005. Other examples included NORM's *That Would Have Been Wonderful* (2005), Prill & Viecelli's *Hot Love* (2006) and Zumstein and Barandun's *The Great Unreal* (2009) and *Continental Drift* (2017), which were awarded prizes in the MBSB competition.
FOC 2014.



Fig. 5.11 Some of the Patrick Frey catalogues that won in the SDA 2014. On top, the 2012 catalogue. Design: Marietta Eugster and Maximage. Photograph: Maximage.

In the 2002 SDA catalogue, which aimed to position the Awards as a node in the design network, Heller wrote an essay attempting to “[find] the part of the network that works”.⁵⁵ If we revisit his article in light of our knowledge of the circuit of design promotion, it acquires another meaning. In his text, Heller argued that “designers [were] not highly networked beyond themselves”.⁵⁶ While he was referring to their lack of contact with clients or industrial partners, his statement also applied to the clusters that governed design promotion. They “live[d] alongside each other” and “regulate[d] any staking-out of claims more or less in mutual agreement”.⁵⁷ His statements perfectly described the intricate networks created by the symbiosis between the insiders and the awards. The insiders were often at both ends of design promotion, which thus functioned as a closed circuit.

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Heller 2002.
Heller 2002, 172.
Ibid.

from up-and-coming designer to multiple awardee and then jury member was not only well-deserved, but also perfectly reasonable. After all, these designers were recognised by their peers as the best of their field; this was why they were hired at institutions such as ECAL and shared a group of progressive clients. Furthermore, Switzerland had a small enough pool of designers to justify multiple wins. However, these arguments do not hold up when placed under closer investigation. There is no doubt that the winners produced high-quality design, were talented and deserving of their success, but the degree of entanglement shown by the networks of promotion demonstrated that the insiders tended to give awards repeatedly to those who were closely connected to them. These closed circuits of promotion reflected an alignment of clients, practices, schools of thought and design scenes that was largely restricted to design promotion insiders. Their networks meant that design promotion became restricted to a narrow selection of actors on the Swiss design scene. In other words, some designers paid the price for the success of a select few. This had two immediate consequences for design promotion. It created a self-fulfilling prophecy and resulted in blind spots.

5.3 **Blind Spots**

5.3.1 **Exclusions**

In the 2002 SDA catalogue, Martin Heller had warned that “self-reference and self-limitation constitute[d] Switzerland’s design scene.”⁵⁸ His comments could not have been more appropriate. The insiders now became normative figures who defined design promotion according to their own image. Their networks were self-referential. Most of these insiders were male, active in higher education, and working in the cultural sphere. The type of design that was given awards by those who sat on juries matched these same identities. But this inevitably created blind spots, helping to ensure that some designers remained outsiders to design promotion, operating in zones that were excluded from mainstream promotion. For instance, the gender imbalance

in Table 5.1 not only reflected an industry-wide bias, but also helped to sustain it.⁵⁹ Design promotion was a gendered affair: there were only seven women among 38 insiders.⁶⁰ The jury of the SDA (the experts and the FCAA/FDC) was also predominantly male (Fig. 5.12). The 2002 relaunch marked the first time that gender parity was attained, though a male majority soon re-established itself. This trend only changed for good as of 2016. The gender ratio of jury members specialising in graphic design was even more imbalanced. Between 1990 and 2020, 48 graphic design jury positions were filled by men, whereas only 8 were filled by women (Table 5.2).

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Heller 2002, 172.
Barbieri 2021c; Fornari *et al.* 2021b.
To my knowledge, there was no jury member outside of the gender binary.

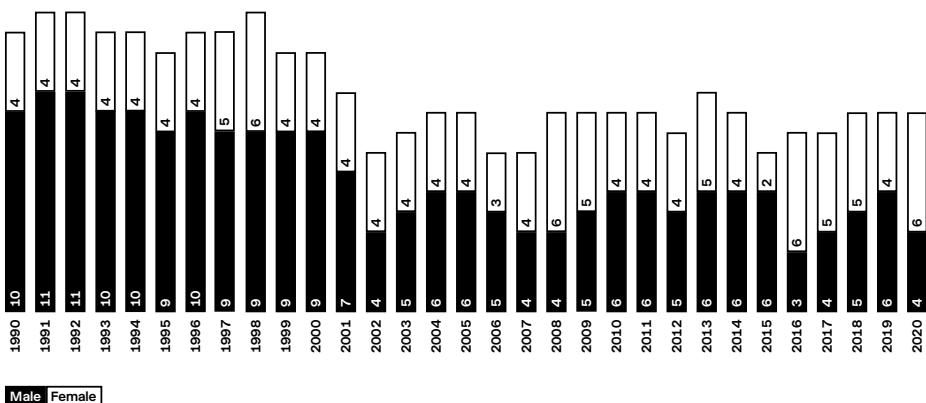


Fig. 5.12

The number of male and female SDA jury members between 1990 and 2020. See Table 7.3.

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
M	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1		
F																															

Table 5.2

The number of male (M) and female (F) SDA jury members specialising in graphic design between 1990 and 2020. See Table 7.3.

Whether by causality or correlation, the jury's gender disparity also reflected the selection of awardees.⁶¹ Between 1990 and 2020, 25 editions of the SDA selected an often significantly greater ratio of male winners in the graphic design category, including four years without any female winners (Fig. 5.13). This was despite the gender ratio of applicants, which was often split equally.⁶² The Jan Tschichold Prize and the Swiss Grand Award provide similar statistics.⁶³ This imbalance did not go

unnoticed by nominees and awardees, whose discontent grew in recent years.⁶⁴ Their grievances were aggravated by the fact that gender and diversity imbalances in graphic design had been problematised regularly since the 1980s.⁶⁵ The SDA reiterated a wider structural gender inequality for which they were not responsible. They nevertheless failed to recognise their role within these mechanisms until they began to address the issue from 2019 onwards, notably by featuring critical events within the exhibition programme in that year.⁶⁶ The FDC has not taken position on the issue.

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For the list of awardees and nominees, see Table 7.2.

Crivelli 2017.

common-interest & depatriarchise design 2019b.

common-interest & depatriarchise design 2019b; Futuress 2020; Futuress & depatriarchise design 2020.

Baum, Scheer & Sieverts 2019; Breuer & Meer 2012; Buckley 1986; Clegg & Mayfield 1999; Gorman 2001; Mareis & Paim 2021; Scottord 1991; 2008; Thomson 1994.

common-interest & depatriarchise design 2019a; Crivelli 2017.

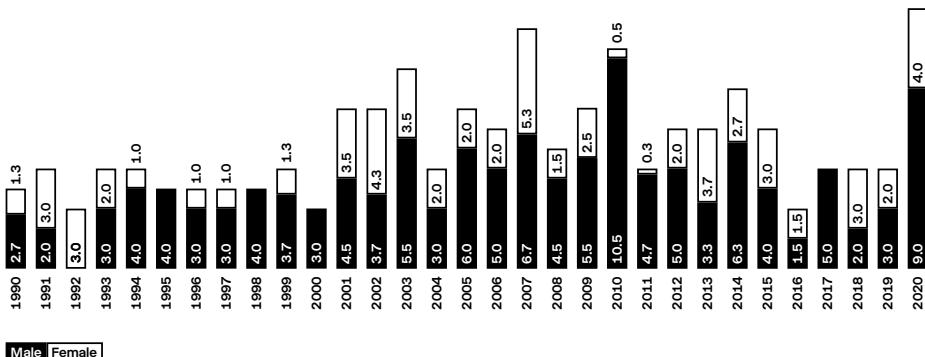


Fig. 5.13

The number of male and female winners of the SDA in the category graphic design between 1990 and 2020. Designers in a group were counted pro rata (if a group was composed of one male and one female designer, each was counted 0.5 times). See Table 7.4 for a percentage ratio of male to female winners.

Besides gender, there were also professional blind spots. The insiders' tight networks and exclusive definitions of design omitted designers who were not part of their circle. These omissions did not just affect those of the "old school", but also designers belonging to the newcomers' generation who were organised in separate networks and scenes with little or no connection to the insiders. These "outsiders" were rarely recognised by federal awards such as the SDA, the Jan Tschichold Prize or the Grand Prix Design, nor did they serve on their juries. Nevertheless, they repeatedly won other awards nationally or internationally and were often members of the more exclusive professional organisations.

The graphic designer and AGI member Erich Brechbühl (*1977), who is based in Lucerne, is one of the “outsiders” who enjoyed a successful career. He often worked for clients in the cultural sector, such as the Museum für Gestaltung Zurich, the cultural centre Neubad in Lucerne, the concert venue Salzhaus in Winterthur, and the theatre in Sempach (Fig. 5.14). His work was regularly given awards in numerous respected competitions, including the *100 Beste Plakate*, the Swiss Poster Awards, the Red Dot Award, the Tokyo Type Directors Club Annual Awards and the Art Directors Club New York awards. It was shown in biennales such as *Chaumont Design Graphique*, the Biennial of Graphic Design Brno and the Korea International Poster Biennale. Brechbühl also played an important role on the scene and was recognised amongst his peers as one of the most important contemporary Swiss designers.⁶⁷ He co-founded the association Posters Lucerne, which has been organising the yearly Weltformat graphic design festival in the same city since 2009, and he co-instigated the book and travelling exhibition Poster Town (2017).⁶⁸ In other words, his network and his career bear all the usual markers of success and influence. The large amount of work he produced for the cultural sector also made him a perfect candidate for the awards. And yet not one of his eight submissions to the SDA between 2004 and 2010 – the maximum number of submissions allowed – was given an award. In fact, only on one occasion did a submission of his make it to the first round of the competition.⁶⁹ Was the design language practised in Lucerne too far removed from what was respected in Zurich and Lausanne? Was it because he openly worked for corporate clients along with those from the cultural sector? Or was he simply not part of the networks that dominated the SDA?

⁶⁷ Conrad 2021; Party 2021; Studio X 2021.

⁶⁸ Brechbühl et al. 2017.

⁶⁹ Erich Brechbühl, e-mail correspondence with the present writer, February 2021.



Fig. 5.14

Between Me and Tomorrow, Jugendtheater Sempach (2012). The poster was given four awards, including in the *100 Beste Plakate*, the Tokyo TDC Annual Awards and the Golden Bee award in Moscow. It also appears on the cover of the second volume of Müller's history of graphic design (Müller 2021). Design: Erich Brechbühl.

5.3.2 The true outsiders of promotion

The lack of transparency around the SDA jury's discussions makes it difficult to answer these questions not only in Brechbühl's case, but also in the case of many other such omissions. While it was not difficult to determine who were the insiders of design promotion, identifying these blind spots required a different approach: I interviewed designers who I knew had submitted work to the SDA but had not won. These outsiders often pointed me to other colleagues whom they suspected had also been unsuccessful applicants, though they could not be certain of it: this highlights how taboo the subject is.⁷⁰ In other words, the outsiders also suffered from a self-inflicted lack of transparency around their absence from the SDA. Some interviewees requested anonymity, others were careful in their statements, or even asked to be kept off the record; but all had strong opinions on the topic. Over time, I began hearing from designers who contacted me without prompting:

I know you interviewed [this designer], that's why I'm [contacting] you. [...] I think everyone is thinking "should I come out of the closet or not?", "If I say something, I'll be banned from all these awards".⁷¹

These interactions are telling of the award system, which is perceived by some actors as shrouded in mystery and governed by arcane rules. According to designers, inveighing against the insiders might not be without unwanted professional consequences.⁷² Whether imagined or real, these complex power balances not only contributed to keeping the blind spots invisible but also demonstrated the epistemological challenge at hand, leaving me to witness the nativity of narrativity and deal with the award-as-mythopoeia.⁷³ The conversations I held with these designers were often emotionally charged because many felt excluded from what seemed like an impenetrable circuit of promotion, describing it as a club to which they had no access.⁷⁴ Their anger, disappointment and disillusionment were due not only to missing out on the prize money, but even more to the lack of acknowledgement they had received from design promotion on a federal level. This highlighted the importance they placed on being recognised symbolically in a field that is rarely associated with financial success.

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One of my interviewees joked that I should request witness protection against the “design mafia” before publishing the results of my analysis.

White 1980.

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Erich Brechbühl, e-mail correspondence with the present writer, February 2021; Designer A 2021; Party 2021.

Unsurprisingly, the outsiders also came up with coping mechanisms – or strategies of condescension – to relativise not winning the SDA.⁷⁵ For example, a designer called the Awards a “circle jerk”, another dismissed the importance of the Awards, and a third argued that they had effectively won many times through their students’ work.⁷⁶ Other designers also explained that they simply did not consider the SDA as important at all, though some of them did submit work to many other awards.⁷⁷ Yet the more dismissive these designers appeared, the more their behaviour predicated the Awards’ symbolic efficacy.⁷⁸ This was also true of their criticism of the SDA. The stronger their criticism and the higher the profile of those engaged in it, the more they confirmed the importance of the Awards. As fundamental components of the awards system, criticism and scandal confirmed their relevance.⁷⁹ The lack of open discussion around the SDA’s absentees inevitably led to rumours. The outsiders all had explanations for their exclusion

from design promotion. More often than not, these attempts at rationalisation conflated facts or created teleological tales. As scholars of oral history have argued, such accounts tell us less about the facts than about their meaning.⁸⁰ Their value lies in providing entry points to lesser-known narratives.⁸¹ Still, I was able to verify some of the outsiders' allegations.

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75 Bourdieu 1991, 68.

76 Blancpain 2021; Designer A 2021; Party 2021.

77 Notter 2021; Supero 2021.

78 English 2005, 212; English 2014, 134.

79 English 2005, 187–196; Giampietro 2006.

80 Portelli 2016 (1979), 52.

81 Barbieri *et al.* 2021b; Sandino 2006, 275.

The outsiders' first explanation for not winning was linked to the networks of promotion. Many echoed the sentiment that having the right connections was fundamental to winning.⁸² One of them argued that the reason why certain well-accomplished Swiss designers never won, despite entering multiple times, was that awards were

part of the [...] "high end" Swiss design community. Juries and winners are often connected in a way where it's clear that if you're part of that clique, you have a much better chance at winning. If you're not on good terms with these people, the quality of your work doesn't matter much.⁸³

82 Designer C 2021; Supero 2021; Studio X 2021.
83 Designer A 2021.

The graphic designer Demian Conrad (*1974), an AGI member who was unsuccessful in getting to the nomination stage with his two submissions to the SDA, elaborated on the ECAL network.⁸⁴ He argued that Keller had turned the SDA into a promotion system for the institution thanks to the long-lasting influence he exerted on the Awards, either personally, or by proxy thanks to Rappo's appointment to the FCAA/FDC. Conrad was so convinced that the system had been hijacked that he stopped submitting work to the Awards as a waste of time.

84

Conrad 2021.

The second most often-evoked explanation was the prominence given to the universities of applied arts⁸⁵ over institutions of vocational education and training (VET).⁸⁶ The importance of belonging to the right educational networks was mentioned by the type designer Yassin Baggar (*1985) of the foundry Fatype, who was nominated in 2015 but never submitted his work again. Baggar followed the VET route in La Chaux-de-Fonds before completing a Master's degree at KABK The Hague. While he recognised that there were plausible explanations for his not winning the Award, such as the quality of his presentation and a degree of subjectivity, he also wondered whether his position outside the “influential” Swiss scene, by which he meant Swiss higher education institutions, had played a determining role.⁸⁷ Another designer argued that the *Zürcher Hochschule der Künste* (Zurich University of the Arts, ZHdK) and ECAL in particular were overrepresented, pointing notably to the relatively low number of winning graduates from the applied art universities of Lucerne, Basel, Bern and Ticino.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, some of the newcomers – such as NORM and Lehmann – had followed the VET route, which suggests that this type of training was indeed recognised by the SDA. The outsiders believed that higher education institutions had taken over design promotion in the mid-2000s, when the Bologna process reinforced their position.⁸⁹ This led to the subsequent absence of designers from VET courses amongst the winners. This prompted one outsider to jokingly rebrand the SDA the “Swiss Diploma Awards” as they felt it only awarded designers who held a Bachelor.⁹⁰ They argued that the submission form itself contributed to discrimination against VET graduates, because it required candidates to name the institution where they had studied. However, the majority of the designers I interviewed who had followed the VET route also remarked that they had not submitted any work to the Awards more than once or twice, if at all.⁹¹ They attributed this either to a lack of awareness concerning the Awards at VET level, or to a feeling that they had no chance of winning anyway. Needless to say, as the popular idiom goes, “you've got to be in it to win it”. While these factors can help to explain the absence of VET graduates in the SDA, that

85 I am referring specifically to Switzerland's German-speaking *Fachhochschulen* and the French-speaking *Hautes Ecoles Spécialisées*. The Italian-speaking *Scuola Universitaria Professionale's* recent graduates were rarely awarded.
86 Designer C 2021; Notter 2021; Studio X 2021.
87 Yassin Baggar, e-mail correspondence with the present writer, February 2021.
88 Designer C 2021.
89 Yassin Baggar, e-mail correspondence with the present writer, February 2021; Studio X 2021.
90 Studio X 2021. Unlike in English, the word "diplôme" in French can be used to denote an under-
91 graduate university degree.
Conrad 2021; Notter 2021; Studio X 2021; Supero 2021; Yassin Baggar, e-mail correspond-
ence with the present writer, February 2021.

The third explanation for not winning was specific to type design, and pertained to competition between foundries. The type designer Ian Party (*1977) won the SDA in 2005 with his ECAL graduation project.⁹² He then taught at ECAL until 2016. Corroborating the importance of belonging to the right networks, he attributed his win not only to the quality of his submission, but also to the fact that his lecturer Rappo was on the jury.⁹³ At first sight, Party was thus a member of an insider network. All the same, his submission to the SDA in 2010 was met with failure. That year, he entered an extensive selection of typefaces including Romain, Suisse, Sang Bleu and bespoke type made for Esquire, L'Officiel and Vogue. However, the type designer and Lineto member Sack won with his typeface Brown. For Party, a feud between type designers had resulted in nepotism.

92 Ian Party founded B+PType Foundry with Maxime Buechi in 2005. In 2013, the foundry evolved into SwissTypefaces, which Party ran with Emmanuel Rey. In 2020, Party left SwissTypefaces and went on to set up the foundry Newglyp with Dennis Moya Razafimandimbay and Daniela Retana. Party 2021. Party was not alone in arguing that jury members often gave the prizes to their students' work (Studio X 2021).

Party alleged that his chances were damaged by a dispute initiated by his then business partner Maxime Buechi, who had complained after a series of unsuccessful submissions to the SDA. I was unable to find out more about these allegations beyond hearsay, but it is telling that Party perceived the networks of promotion as a highly personal affair.⁹⁴ For him, it was not by chance that his competitor Sack won in 2010. The latter's winning typeface was distributed by Lineto, and Windlin was on the jury that year. Naturally, this may be a coincidence, and the jury is free to choose whichever project seems to them the best of the selection. Their discussions were not recorded, thus preventing me from investigating Party's hypothesis any further.

Nevertheless, as I mentioned in the previous section, typefaces by Lineto members were often given prizes at the SDA. Furthermore, the list of graphic design winners in 2010 shows that Windlin's networks were prominent. Six of the eleven graphic design awardees had direct or indirect connections with him. Benner, Urs Lehni and Sack were part of Lineto; Bruno Margreth had worked with Windlin; finally, Lukas Zimmermann and Bontognali had collaborated with Elektrosmog, themselves part of Lineto.

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Designer B 2021. I had off-the-record conversations with insiders from the promotion scene, who confirmed Party's side of the story.

This particular case of type design submissions supported Party's suspicions to some extent. Lineto and Optimo typefaces were often given prizes, especially when members of their networks were on the jury. Besides these two foundries' typefaces, the other type design submissions that won were predominantly the unreleased degree projects of recent graduates that did not offer any commercial competition to Optimo or Lineto.⁹⁵ By contrast, the type foundries that were competing on the same markets as Lineto or Optimo, such as Fatype, Grilli Type and Swiss Typefaces, were rarely nominated, despite the widespread recognition and international success enjoyed by some of these foundries.⁹⁶ The most significant exception was Dinamo, which won in 2017. However, it was hardly an outsider. Its two founders had close connections with the Lineto network: Johannes Breyer had interned for NORM, while Fabian Harb had worked for Brunner.

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Besides Party (ECAL, 2005), the graduates who won included Remo Caminada and Ludovic Varone (HGKZ, 2007), David Keshavjee and Julien Tavelli (ECAL, 2009), Valentin Brustaux (University of Reading, 2010), Michael Kryenbühl and Ivan Weiss (HGKZ, 2010), Jan Abellan (ECAL, 2012), Ondřej Báchor (ECAL, 2018) and Sylvain Lanz (ECAL, 2018). There were some exceptions, such as Sibylle Hagmann, who won in 2006. However, she was based in the United States and thus did not compete in the same markets as Optimo and Lineto.

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Blancpain 2021; Designer C 2021; Party 2021; Yassin Baggar, e-mail correspondence with the present writer, February 2021.

The newcomers' takeover of design promotion had a series of consequences. First, they evolved from professional outsiders to true insiders of the scene. Their practices were recognised, and their professional models were promoted. They increasingly won the SDA and were progressively appointed to its jury. This contributed to repositioning the SDA at the centre of the design scene,

but came with side effects. Women were effectively excluded from the networks of promotion. Commercial design disappeared from the SDA, which became synonymous with commissions for the cultural sector or self-initiated work. Designers who had followed the VET route were underrepresented, which in turn led them to stop submitting work to the Awards. The newcomers leveraged design promotion, and their social and ideological connections helped to create a closed circuit of promotion. Practitioners who evolved in networks located outside the two main clusters of promotion were underrepresented. This takeover tended to supplant other geographical and institutional scenes that preferred different design languages, and it also denied access to promotion to those who competed on the same market as the insiders. This act of manoeuvring into a new definition of design promotion thus came at a price.

