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Art 461

**Critical Review #2:**  
Alexey Brodovitch & Samuel Antupit

I would like to compare the work of graphic designers Samuel Antupit and Alexey Brodovitch. Coincidentally, Brodovitch and Antupit both worked at *Harper's Bazaar* magazine, within decades of each other. What an innovative change these two designers made to their magazine spreads with their layouts. Although they used different techniques, the results were unusual and exciting to look at.

Alexey Brodovitch was born in Russia around 1900, but due to political issues and war, had to flee to Paris with his family. His design work flourished there as he won awards and was sought after. He came to the United States in 1930 and started teaching and training students the art of European design, as well as continuing with his own freelance work. Four years later, the new owner of *Harper's Bazaar* magazine recruited him to be the art director, and Brodovitch did that for the next 24 years. Afterwards, he continued to teach, but did less work with designing on his own.

In 1932, when Brodovitch was still a new art director, another great future designer was born in West Hartford, Connecticut. Samuel Antupit graduated from the Yale School of Design and Architecture, where he also studied with the masters of Modernist graphic design such as Paul Rand and Herbert Matter. Antupit also had a chance to actually study with Brodovitch at Yale in the 1950s. Then, in 1958, he finally came to work as an assistant to *Harper's Bazaar* magazine's art director Henry Wolf, who had replaced Brodovitch. Since then, Antupit became involved in book design and owned publishing companies. He also taught in the graduate department of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

The works of Brodovitch and Antupit are similar because they both design the layouts for a magazine cover and inside spread. Their main image on the cover always captures the attention at first glance because of its compelling image shown with simplicity and cleanliness. As for the inside spread, the elements complement each other very well. Both designers use the images and body copy to create a beautiful and

dynamic look full of energy and excitement. As for the colors chosen, maybe due to the era they were in, they remind the viewer of fine wine. Dark shades of orange and burgundy create a sophisticated and elegant look.

Despite the similarity of the way the images and body copy are laid out, it seems that Brodovitch is more liberal and willing to experiment with placements and a more energetic look. For example, on his *Bazaar* magazine covers, the image of the Statue of Liberty is cropped and shown from a very unique angle. Antupit's *Esquire* magazine cover, though it has a fun and playful image, is placed dead center. As for his inside spread of the kissing couple, Antupit placed the image at a more interesting angle. However, his body copy is still sitting there looking very static. Brodovitch, on the other hand, went one step ahead of Antupit again, by using the angle of the strip of images in his inside spread to align his body copy under it. The result is a design that really conveys movement similar to what the article was reporting.

The secret of Brodovitch's success in acquiring astonishing layouts may be due to the fact that *Harper's Bazaar* magazine had given him full reign on the design. "He was encouraged to apply new ideas from Europe and to use the magazine as a showcase for young art, design, and photographic talent." (Remington, 1989, p. 38). With influences of European design from his time in Paris, he was able to incorporate style and ideas new and foreign mixed with the old American styles to create masterpieces. In addition, he was very versatile when it comes to his group of artists. Unlike designers of his time, he hired mostly young people, including his own students.

His innovative use of photography and typography make him one of the great pioneers of design. Once again, for the magazine cover featuring the Statue of Liberty, his visual tool was the image cropping and unusual perspective for a more modern look than those in his time. "Fascinated with photography, he made it the backbone of modern magazine design, and he fostered the development of an expressionistic, almost primal style of picture-taking that became the dominant style of photographic practice in the 1950s." (Grundberg, 1988). Another effective tool that graphic designers have used to this day is the presence of white or negative space to guide the viewer's eye or to give a sense of balance and breathing room, but works together with the overall layout.

For his inside spread featuring the Paris Report, Brodovitch created an amazing and youthful layout using images of figures dancing and enjoying recreation time. The atmosphere of the piece brings lots of fun time memories for the viewer. However, that was not enough movement for Brodovitch, because he added another appealing style to the layout by changing the alignment of the body copy to enhance the whole concept.

Samuel Antupit, a former student of Brodovitch, also worked at *Harper's Bazaar* magazine. He also used arresting images, but the layout was different from Brodovitch's outrageous ones. Antupit seemed to lean towards a composition with less movement and more conservative alignment. "His more visually exuberant magazines, like *Esquire*, were conceived as interconnected streams of type and image, paced like cinematic storyboards, while his text-heavy publications, like *Harper's*, were more calmly composed. He never imposed a personal style on his magazines but gave each one a distinctive persona." (Heller, 2003).

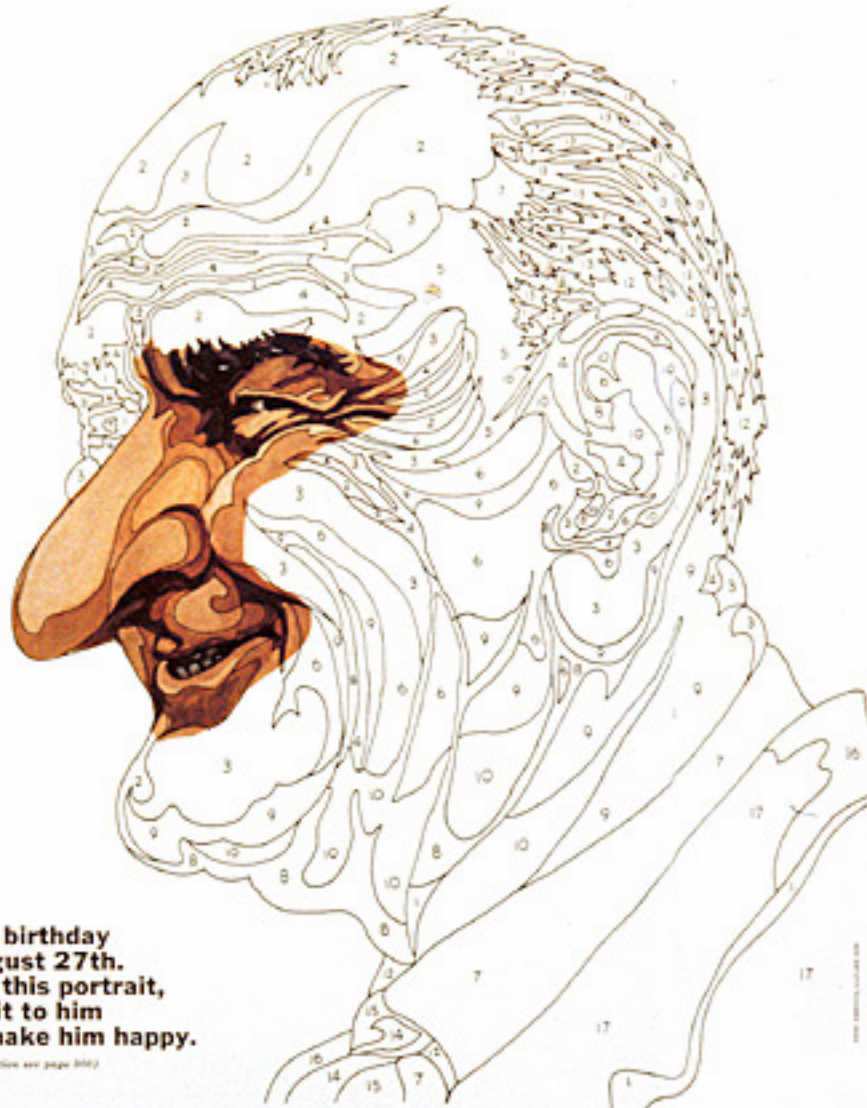
Nevertheless, the cover of the *Esquire* magazine is still visually stunning because it immediately grabs the viewer's attention. How provocative it must be to feature L.B. Johnson, the president of the United States at the time, with a child-like and cartoonish illustration. It should be mentioned that the simple and clean layout really helps guide the viewer right to the center of the page and stay there to just admire and perhaps later examine the real idea and concept behind the image used.

An even more appealing image and layout designed by Antupit is the inside spread of *Esquire*, showing some sort of a three-paneled artwork of a kissing couple. The placement of the panel from the left to the end of the body copy on the right creates a harmonious visual flow. Although the body copy is once again too static, the angle and display of the image make up a more elegant overall layout.

# Esquire

JUNE 1967  
PRICE 75c  
GREAT BRITAIN 4 6

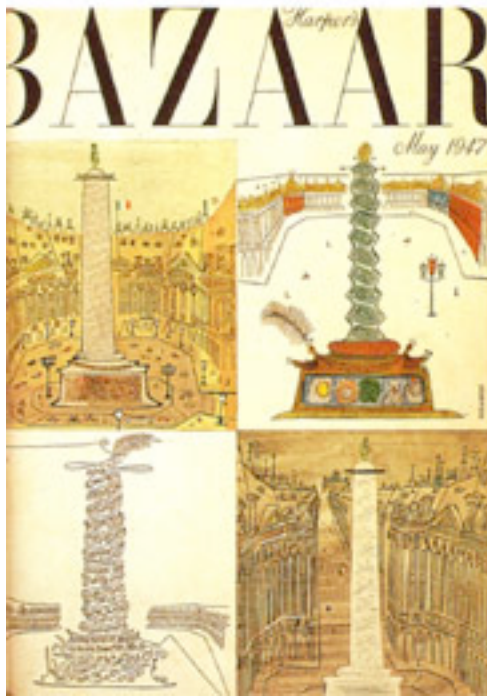
THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN



**LBJ's birthday  
is August 27th.  
Color this portrait,  
send it to him  
and make him happy.**

*(For inspiration see page 106)*

Samuel Antupit



Alexey Brodovitch



Samuel Antupit



## References

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