AN ICON YOU SHOULD KNOW...

April Greiman

American designer and transmedia artist, born 1948

April Greiman is an American designer, born in 1948, and one of the first designers to use the computer as a design tool. She trained in Basel, Switzerland, then helped bring the New Wave style to California in the late 1970s. She prefers to call herself a transmedia artist. Read this page in about five minutes, then use the links at the end to look deeper.

FURTHER LOOKING

MoMA: *Does It Make Sense?* The collection page for *Design Quarterly* no. 133. moma.org

MoMA: *Snow White + the Seven Pixels*. The collection page for the 1986 poster. moma.org

MoMA: CalArts folder/mailer. The collection page for the 1978 mailer with Jayme Odgers. moma.org

Made In Space: Her studio's project pages. madeinspace.la

Video: April Greiman: Objects in Space

Reference: April Greiman on Wikipedia



April Greiman. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0. Full credit on page 3.

01 Fact Sheet

1948	Born March 22. She grows up in Wantagh, Long Island, and Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey.
1966 to 1970	Studies graphic design, photography and ceramics at the Kansas City Art Institute.
1970 to 1971	Studies in Basel, Switzerland, with Armin Hofmann and Wolfgang Weingart.
1976	Moves to Los Angeles and opens her studio, April Greiman, Inc.
1978	Designs a CalArts mailer with photographer Jayme Odgers, one of the best-known early pieces of California New Wave.
1982	Becomes director of the design department at CalArts.
1984	Gets the CalArts department renamed Visual Communications. The same year she sees the Macintosh demonstrated at the first TED conference and buys her first Mac.
1986	Turns *Design Quarterly* no. 133 into a fold-out poster made on the Mac.
1989	Designs the poster and billboard for the Walker Art Center exhibition *Graphic Design in America*.
1990	Begins designing the identity for Coop Himmelb(l)au, an architecture firm based in Vienna.
1998	Receives the AIGA Medal.
2007	Creates *Hand Holding a Bowl of Rice* for the Wilshire/Vermont Metro station.
2020	Joins the USC Roski School of Art and Design as a professor of design.

Life and career Milestones tied to the key works

FOUR KEY WORKS, PAGE 2

1986 *Does It Make Sense?*

1989 *Graphic Design in America*

1990 to present Coop Himmelb(l)au

2007 *Hand Holding a Bowl of Rice*

02 Four Key Works

Her 1978 CalArts mailer with Jayme Odgers and her 1986 poster *Snow White + the Seven Pixels* are in the Museum of Modern Art. Those images are not openly licensed, so they are linked under Further Looking instead of shown here. The photos below were shared by her studio, Made In Space, under an open license.

1986: *Does It Make Sense?*

A magazine as a poster

The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis asked Greiman to design issue 133 of its journal *Design Quarterly*. She used MacVision to bring video frames into her Mac and built the layout in MacDraw. Instead of the usual 32 pages, the issue unfolds into one double-sided print about 2 by 6 feet. It shows a life-size digital image of her body with symbols and text.

LOOK FOR A long print made of many screen images | Small icons and text across the body

See the MoMA collection record →



Does It Make Sense?, 1986. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

1989: *Graphic Design in America*

Pixels on the street

Greiman made the poster and billboard for *Graphic Design in America: A Visual Language History*, a 1989 exhibition at the Walker Art Center. Pieces of the American flag break into blocks of color, like a low-resolution screen image blown up to street size.

LOOK FOR Flag stars and stripes broken into blocks | The museum name in a black box at the left



Graphic Design in America, 1989. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

1990 to present: Coop Himmelb(l)au

An identity that goes to the building site

Greiman's studio has designed the identity and stationery system for Coop Himmelb(l)au since 1990. The firm is an architecture cooperative based in Vienna, Austria. The name is a play on words. Her studio explains that *himmelblau* means sky blue in German, while *himmelb(l)au* can be read as heavenly building. The photo shows a construction vest Greiman designed for the firm, so the identity is worn on the job site too.

LOOK FOR Large letters that read from across a site | The (l) from the firm's name set beside the H

See the identity at Made In Space →



Coop Himmelb(l)au, 1990 to present. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

2007: *Hand Holding a Bowl of Rice*

Design at the scale of a building

Greiman created this public artwork for the Wilshire/Vermont Metro station in Koreatown, Los Angeles. It covers 8,200 square feet on two walls at the station. The image began as a video still from footage Greiman shot in the neighborhood. Her layered, digital way of working moves from paper to architecture.

LOOK FOR Bright color across the full height of a wall | The artwork seen from the street at dusk

Read about the commission at Made In Space →



Hand Holding a Bowl of Rice, 2007. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

TRY THIS

Try her method of layering. Scan or photograph your own objects, then stack type, color and images so they seem to float at different depths.

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REFLECT
Think About It

Greiman bought a Mac in 1984 when many designers distrusted computers. Which new tool would you try first, and what would you risk by waiting?

03 Sources

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