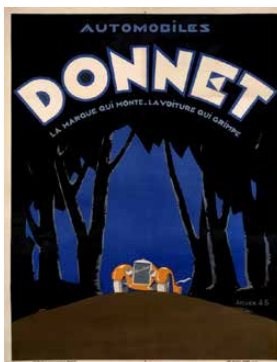


Alexey Brodovitch — The First Art Director



From revolutionary Russia, to the theatre of new perspectives that was 1920s Paris, and finally to New York and the world of high fashion, Alexey Brodovitch's creative energy was both absorbed and cultivated by unlimited opportunities. As a designer and photographer, he displayed a Renaissance-like mastery of the graphic arts, but it was one that was never codified into a consistent visual theory. Rather, he approached each new project with the attitude "If you know yourself, you are doomed". It was as Art Director of Harper's Bazaar and teacher in his famed Design Laboratory, that Brodovitch translated the avant-garde ideas of European modernism into the vernacular tropes of American commercial culture. With photographers and designers who entered his sphere of influence, he continually pushed them to excite and provoke, never to simply satisfy. The photographer who absorbed most completely the lessons Brodovitch imparted was Richard Avedon. Over a period of 15 years, Avedon and Brodovitch worked together at Harper's Bazaar and produced the iconic photobook Observations (1959). A relationship that encapsulated the 20th century journey of radical design and photography from Europe to America and back again.

2021 Museum für Gestaltung Zürich

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