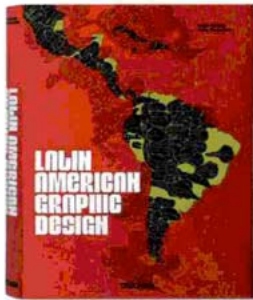


book  
reviews



## Latin American Graphic Design

Edited by Felipe Taborda and Julius Wiedemann  
544 pages, softcover, \$39.99  
Published by Taschen  
[www.taschen.com](http://www.taschen.com)

The vibrant color and energy in design from Latin America is as remarkable as the turbulent history of each region and its struggle for creative freedom.

As a communication medium, the design profession was a dangerous pursuit in nearly all of the twenty countries that endured repression, political dictatorship and social chaos. After decades of censorship, design has survived, gradual independence of different countries has been won and Latin America has produced generations of designers creating work that is exciting in content and style on a global level.

Brazilian designers Felipe Taborda and Julius Wiedemann have collected work from nearly 200 designers and, as Xavier Bermúdez, director of the International Poster Biennial in Mexico, says in his introduction, "Like the fruit of Latin America, it is color that makes our designs stand out." Whether from Anima, a design group

from Ecuador with their film poster of a red, blue and yellow mousetrap, *Ratas ratones rateros*, Argentina's In Jaus studio and the fantasy collage for HTV or Brazilian designers Fernando Pimenta and Rico Lins's erotically charged images of fruit, the collection's freshness and intensity is often found in its relationships with bold colors.

Taborda places design in an historical context in his essay identifying the



designers and seminal events in each region. The 1968 Olympics, for example, brought Mexican graphic design to an international audience; in Argentina, designers Ronald Shakespear and Guillermo González Ruiz created the urban sign system for Buenos Aires in 1971 that expanded to every city in the country and still stands today. Taborda also showcases classic examples of early work, such as Eladio Rivadulla's black, white and red portrait celebrating Fidel Castro's victory that was distributed the day Castro took power in 1959.

For two centuries, printing was banned in Latin America countries, except in Mexico, Peru and Bolivia, while the church and the monarchy controlled publications and the spread of ideas. But graphic arts steadily developed, first with newspapers, government offices and ultimately to university programs, such as Brazil's first design course offered in 1963. In the late 1980s, digital media in Latin America expanded all the borders of art and design, including illustration, video and fashion.

Translated in English, German and French, this anthology presents the designers alphabetically along with brief résumés and several examples of their styles. What's missing are personal quotes that would have provided more insight into their thought processes. It would be remarkable if readers outside Latin America could not only be inspired by these examples of great design, but also, as Taborda believes is possible, identify the root and origin of each work. —Ruth Hagopian