



Photography

Alex Steinweiss: The Inventor of the Modern Album Cover

By Kevin Reagan
Taschen £44.99

Inspired by a school art teacher, New Yorker Alex Steinweiss was 22 years old when he "stumbled" into a job designing promotional displays for the Columbia Broadcasting System's new record company. A year later, and with a head full of the Modernist principle of *Gesamtkunstwerk* ("synthesis of the arts"), he had a bright idea: why not replace the brown wrapper that records come in with an eye-catching illustration? The rest was, until the advent of the CD, design history, lavishly explored in this testimony to Steinweiss's art (from his first cover, 1940, left; to a collage from 1961, above).