

## Sample the Work of Alex Steinweiss, Inventor of Album Cover Art

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You don't really think of anyone "inventing" the idea of putting graphics on an album cover, but Alex Steinweiss did just that in 1940. Before he figured out that Columbia Records' releases would benefit from some bright graphic design, most discs were packaged

in brown paper sleeves. And did he ever design: Drawing on Surrealism and clean modernist poster design, he gave Columbia's sleeves, and later several other labels', a completely distinctive look from the forties through the sixties. You can see an abundance of them in *Alex Steinweiss: The Inventor of the Modern Album Cover*, an LP-size retrospective just published by Taschen, with appreciations by album designer Kevin Reagan (*Madonna's Ray of Light*) and famed graphic designer Steven Heller. (Steinweiss himself died on July 17, at the age of 94.) In this slideshow, we've asked Heller to offer commentary on some of Steinweiss's most memorable work.

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