

München



1972

26.8.–10.9.



DESIGN TRENDWATCH 2022

# Celebrating the Iconic Design by Otl Aicher

*50 Years  
Olympic Summer  
Games Munich 1972*

08 WHITEPAPER

# OVERW8



**1972 - 2022 - 2072**

# *50 years - only just begun*

*If you build solid, you build for the future.*

Today, on the 26th of August 2022, marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Summer Games in Munich 1972. For me, this is not only a sports event jubilee but a design milestone - and a milestone for my personal life.

It is 50 years ago that I was born - as it happens, not only just on the very day before those historic games began, plus I happen to live in or at least pretty close to Munich.

The marks of this Olympic past surround me every day. On one of my running routes, one of the Olympia sailboats is lying just by the side of the way.



The public swimming pool I sometimes use was one of the many training facilities - of course, design-wise 100% "on brand". When I checked out who is the swimming coach there, it turned out that Mr. Pilz was one of the participants at the 1972 games. Sooo cool being able to take coaching sessions with him!

Wherever you look and open your eyes, you can - even outside of Munich City - still notice the Olympic Games lurking behind each corner.



All of this kind of came to me. My husband (and former competitive athlete) Tobias had the characteristic posters (including the one on the cover) framed in his flat when I met him, and in the meanwhile, they are greeting our visitors in our door hall.

I started getting hooked: After such a long time, the design and branding seemed to work so well - after all, the colors, symbols, and patterns were still all around and giving things a certain stylishness! Together with our then designer Gabriela we started digging deeper. First research showed quickly that we had only touched the tip of a highly interesting iceberg here.

**So here is a story of how design and branding can help us turn ideas and abstract concepts into an atmosphere, into reality, and how it can help shape the future.**

**I hope it will inspire as much as it did for the o8 team and me.** Come along and get inspired, too - maybe to create a brand with as much impact with us here at o8.

All the best - **Kristin**

*P.S.: This whitepaper and design trends special, in a way, is also a gift I am happy to give to my husband and myself, celebrating our 50th birthdays this August 2022. May it be, as Otl Aicher said, "the next 50 years to come will be exciting" - in a good way, please!*



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
**Kristin Reinbach**

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Kristin is the CEO of OVERW8 Digital Brand Agency. She and her team continue to help startups and scaleups to create strong brands that help create an effective sales and marketing system as well as an increasing company value. The company's name derives from the stock market term 'overweight' as a label for overperforming stocks based on their future value - this is the value the well-renowned agency is also thriving for.

Kristin has 20 years of marketing, sales, and branding under her belt, has written and published many newsletters, created a pretty well known platform, "The Club of Happy Lifepreneurs," as well as written the handbook to innovation which she and her clients and team still use today ("Magic Innovation Leadership"). She lives with her husband Tobias in Starnberg, close to the lake and mountains South of Munich. If she is not working for her clients, you might find her biking, running, swimming, or on the Golf course nerding away on tech details or walking on Cam' Smith's path.



*Tobias as a young athlete*



*The original posters from 1972, hurdles and fencing., on the cover the main Munich promotional poster*



# How I participated in the National Fencing College Championships & got to share bubbles in the ladies' 1972 Olympic Games shower facilities.

Another interesting vignette linked my life to Munich and the Olympics: During my studies at the University of Mannheim, we had the luxury of being offered an extremely varied sports program. We were encouraged to try out as much as possible and would happily make good use of it.

So, for one or two semesters, I got to learn some fencing - a highly fascinating sport with all the cables and electronic ado, the cool looks (!), the extremely quick feet, and the intense focus you need...

Then the National College Championships ("Hochschulmeisterschaften") were coming up, and they needed another person on the women's team to complete it.

Desperate for the one missing team member (can you already guess? ;) ) they asked ... me. Very well - I am not the one to miss an adventure if invited to it: After clearly doing an expectation setting check ("you are aware I will not be able to contribute anything useful but cheering on?" "All good, we're fine with that") they still were crazy enough to have me.

*So cool to share this memory with Antje!*

## It sounded like an adventure.

And it was: It involved two measly duels I had to participate in (in emotional management wise that had been easy - everyone, me included, simply knew I would lose, so no trauma there).

I recall the classic gym smell, we even slept there! (don't bother to ask - my first and last time! ;))

However, my fellow team members featured some female fencers who knew what they were doing, so we had reason to celebrate - and that we did.

*I recall drinking bubbles in the 1972 Olympics design showers - with - among some other cool girls Antje - the true fencing heroine.*



Antje Blöhm  
Head of Private Partnerships & Philanthropy at Uno-Flüchtlingshilfe



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There and then, I felt: **Hey, this is iconic - a true souvenir to store away. Lucky me!**

# TABLE OF CONTENT

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## CHAPTER 1

The Bigger Picture: 1936 6

## CHAPTER 2

The Olympic Games 1972 16

## CHAPTER 3

How to Establish A Legacy  
through Brand Design 25

## CHAPTER 4

Back to the Roofs 2022 33

## CHAPTER 5

Learnings and Triggers  
for Discussion 39

## CHAPTER 6

Resources & Credits 43



# **The Bigger Picture: 1936**

*A first try under worst circumstances.*

*Before we head right into 1972, we need to give you some bigger context, so you get the chance to grasp the story's true meaning. Most people will not be aware that the 1972 Summer Games in Munich have their roots in a disastrous past.*

***The 1972 games were intended to create a "phoenix from the ashes" moment, a reinvention of a better, more joyful Germany, maybe even creating a door for healing.***

*We will not dwell too much on this but just let the pictures speak for themselves; building on this, we will then be happy to reveal why this is so important for creating the 1972 games' look and feel.*

The 1972 games were only the second time that Germany was the host of the Olympic games. The first time was in 1936.

Taking place in 1936, this was pretty exactly three years before World War 2 broke out. And only two years before the "Reichskristallnacht" happened, that massive pogrom openly tried to destroy as many Jewish businesses as possible.

Obviously - and a tiny bit contrary to the current public narrative - the exclusion of Jews from public life had already occurred (see the Garmisch picture).

The roots of evil had already been sewn and flourishing, and strong symbolic and emotional manipulation was used to cover up the bad things already happening.

***All of this made creating the visual narrative of the 1972 games a special challenge.***

The U.S. did not buy into that and officially threatened to boycott the games should Jewish athletes not be allowed to participate. Nazi Germany rowed back a bit on that, allowing them officially to participate, which led to absurd and heartbreaking stories such as a female fencer who had already emigrated to come back participating for her home country, putting herself clearly at risk.

The visual narrative also there was an essential part of the experience. In this case, more shaped by the already existing standard tools and messaging of Nazi communication and propaganda (think torchlight processions). They were pros and thought 360 about shaping the narrative - so they hired Leni Riefenstahl to help with this.

The aesthetics of those 1936 games had been Leni Riefenstahl's. Very iconic and, in a way, brutally honest - celebrating the Arian race and its strength and uprightness. We see a visual narrative of strong, agile people, the oak trees given to the winners (future, strength, Celtic). This kind of narrative was part of a bigger nasty game.



1.



2.

1. What was more present - the Nazi swastika or the Olympic Games logo and spirit?
2. These oak trees were given to the athletes - per se a positive symbol of solid growth. The oak tree is very much a classic German symbol that through the usage in Nazi time is kind of spoiled.



3.

3. The German athlete Luz Long befriended famous Jesse Owens. The Nazis were not amused.



4.

4. This is a sign at the ski club entry in the famous Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The paper says "No access for Jews."

5. The cover / key visual for the movie Leni Riefenstahl created commissioned by the Nazi government. It features an impressive aesthetic that in itself is a benchmark - though with pretty complex side effects.

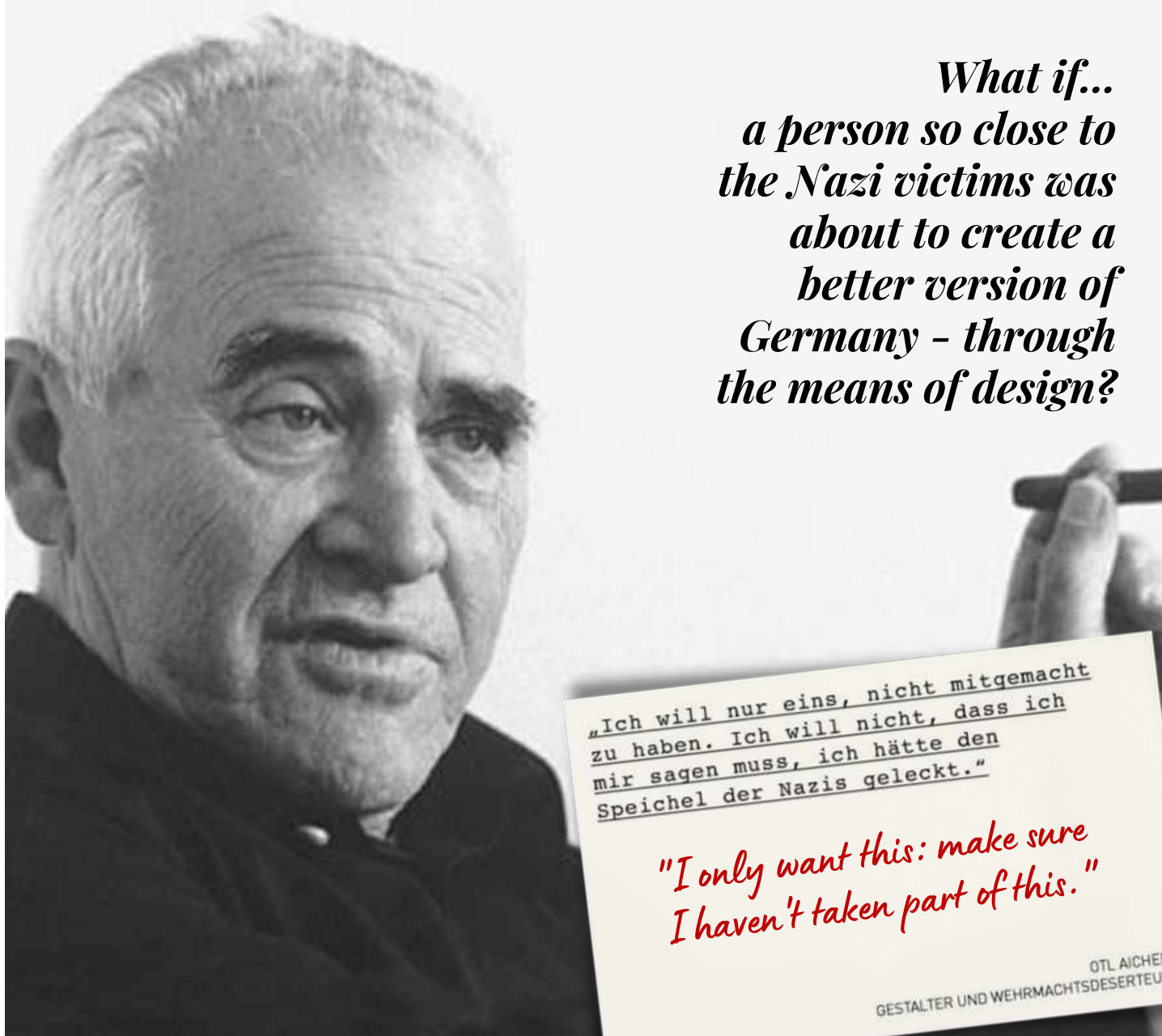


5.

6. This is Leni Riefenstahl at the 1972 Olympics where she was hired by British media to cover it - even though of course her involvement with the Nazi regime had given lots of reasons to raise more than a brow.



6.



*What if...  
a person so close to  
the Nazi victims was  
about to create a  
better version of  
Germany - through  
the means of design?*

„Ich will nur eins, nicht mitgemacht  
zu haben. Ich will nicht, dass ich  
mir sagen muss, ich hätte den  
Speichel der Nazis geleckt.“

*"I only want this: make sure  
I haven't taken part of this."*

OTL AICHER  
GESTALTER UND WEHRMACHTSDESERTEUR

## Otl Aicher: The man behind the 1972 games' aesthetics

Otto "Otl" Aicher was born in Ulm in 1922 and was to become one of Germany's leading graphic designers and typographers.

In his youth, he was a close friend with Werner Scholl, whose family was known for their involvement in the **White Rose (the Anti-Nazi resistance group)**. Two of Werner's siblings, Sophie and Hans Scholl, were executed in Munich in 1943 for being members of it.

Aicher himself refused to join the Hitler Youth and was arrested in 1937 (age 15), later forced to join the German army during the Second World War.

In 1945 he deserted the army and the Scholls let him hide at their residence.

After the war ended, in 1946 Aicher joined the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich to study sculpture and the next year he launched his own studio in Ulm.

He married the eldest Scholl sister, Inge Scholl and co-founded the Ulm School of Design, which became a successful art institute till its closure in 1968.

08 WHITEPAPER



2.

**The Ulm School of Design /  
“Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm”**

*A College to inspire future change*

# The “Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm”



After the Bauhaus, the "HfG" is considered the most influential German design school. It was formerly a community college founded by Inge Scholl, Otl Aicher, and Max Bill in 1946 and evolved into an industrial design school.

Max Bill was also responsible for the architecture of the school building. He was a former Bauhaus student and applied the Bauhaus philosophy to his design for the

buildings: functionally sober with a workshop atmosphere, removing any sign of opulence.

What's important to mention is that due to the social and political circumstances and the personal background of its founders (see before), in this post-war period, the school's foundation was based on a set of principles of:



being socially responsible



making a contribution to a “new democratic education”



the reconstruction of German social life.



*The vision for the Ulm School was to train a class of socially-minded designers who used modernist principles to build a new worldview — one that wasn't necessarily tied to commerce, but to democracy.*

QUOTED FROM: [HTTPS://WWW.ARTSY.NET/ARTICLE/ARTSY-EDITORIAL-BAUHAUS-LESSER-KNOWN-ULM-SCHOOL-SEISMIC-IMPACT-DESIGN](https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-bauhaus-lesser-known-ulm-school-seismic-impact-design)



*Though this might sound contrary to the traditional idea of designing for consumer brands but by 1958 the students were working directly with corporations like Herman Miller, Lufthansa, IBM, and Braun.*

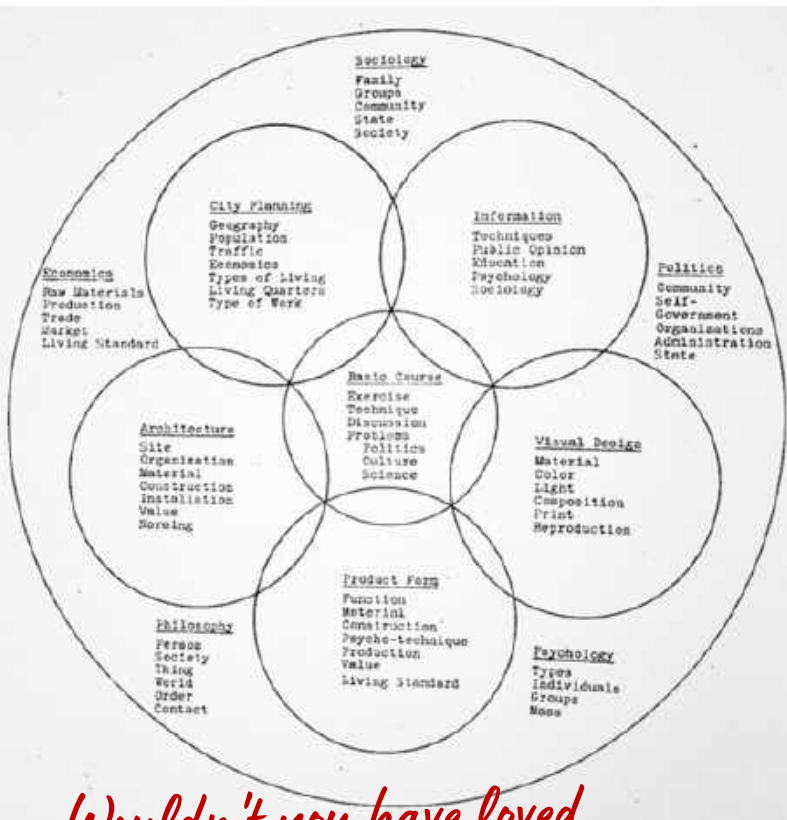


The school's main job was to solve the design problems of the modern industrial society in the fields of industrial production and communication.

The Argentinian designer and Ulm School rector Tomás Maldonado contributed to the "Ulm Model". He oriented design education towards system design thinking, mixing science and design.

This is the same philosophy behind the IKEA products, it was the view into the future of the mass industry for designed products.

Early 1060's, the school introduced the Ulm Model: "a novel form of design pedagogy that combined formal, theoretical and practical instruction with work in so-called 'Development Groups' for industrial clients under the direction of lecturers."



**BECOME AN INSIDER**

The artist-designer couldn't stay outside of the production process because of the new and complex requirements: "You had to be absolutely within the process, and there had to be a team of disciplinary specialists — not only of material but circulation and consumption, which was also partly sociological. It was a different way of thinking about form and its relation to product." – Peter Kapos

*A diagramme from 1951 illustrates the school's universal approach (Scholl 1951).*

This synopsis shows the main "interdisciplinary" subjects that were planned for the school's curriculum: Politics, journalism, broadcasting, photography, advertising, industrial design, and city planning.

*Wouldn't you have loved to attend that college?*



*The result is the Ulm Model:  
a model of design supported by technology and science.  
The designer is no longer a lofty artist  
but an equal partner in the decision-making  
process of industrial production.*

**OTL AICHER**



The school clearly had a strong Bauhaus influence, and its faculty included former Bauhaus instructors such as Josef Albers, Johannes Itten, Walter Peterhans, and Helene Nonné-Schmidt (a Bauhaus graduate).

The school went through a series of problems in its leadership, and even though its main goal was to make the "world rational and complete", "industrially-based and free,"

**It lost state funding in 1968 and it was closed.**



*Works by Bauhaus instructors Albers, Itten and Peterhans.*

**Its legacy, however,  
had already put down roots  
and was about to bloom soon.**

## Women at the HfG

The inclusivity in the HfG could be seen in the diversity of its students, the training curriculum attracted pupils from 38 countries, and more than 40% of the students were foreign. 98 out of 642 students were women and came from 19 different countries - this is a very small number compared to other Fine Arts institutions at that time: they were centers that attracted women, and the female student rate was almost 43%.

The HfG was committed to democratic education and provided the same equal opportunities for both genders. The only real reason for this extremely low rate would be the teaching contents, which differed from the ones commonly offered in Fine Arts Colleges.

It was more focused on its commitment to an emerging society.

Still, of 216 lecturers of the college, only six were female. One of the female lecturers that stand out is Helene Nonné-Schmidt; she graduated from the Bauhaus and is the author of "Woman's Place at the Bauhaus."

Before working at the HfG, her studio was destroyed during a bombing. Helene worked for a short time for the magazine "Heute" in Munich in 1949. In 1953, Max Bill brought her to the newly founded "Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm", where she taught "Elementary Theory of Colors and Form" and "Systematic of Color Theory".

She was married to another Bauhaus icon, Joost Schmidt.



### *These are the 6 female lecturers at the HfG:*



**Helene Nonné-Schmidt**

graduated at Bauhaus,  
(Foundation course)



**Dr. Elisabeth Walther**

Philosopher/Mathematician,  
(Information course)



**Dr. Käte Hamburger**

Dr. of Literature,  
(Information course)



**Dr. Gisela Krammer**

Dr. of cultural Studies,  
(History of Culture)



**Monica Wilde**

Cutter, (Film)

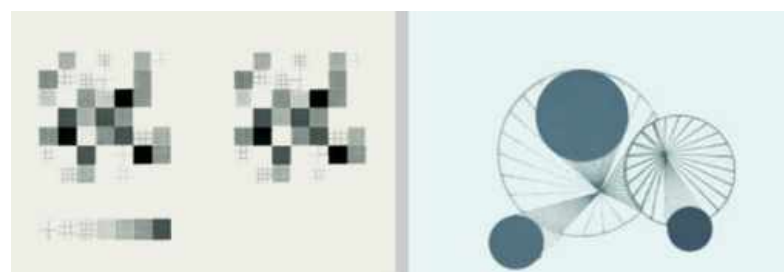
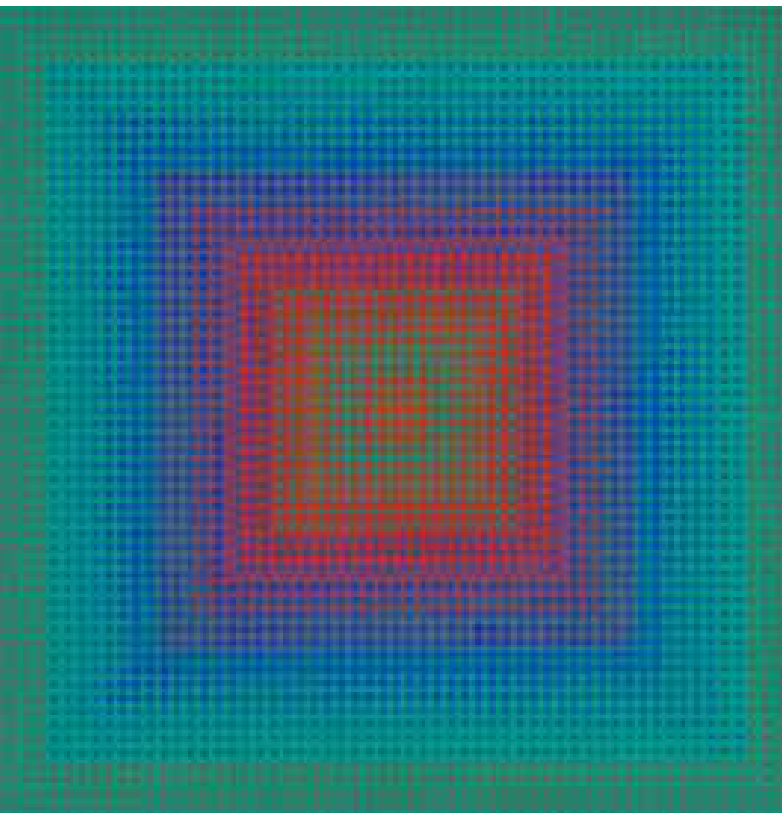
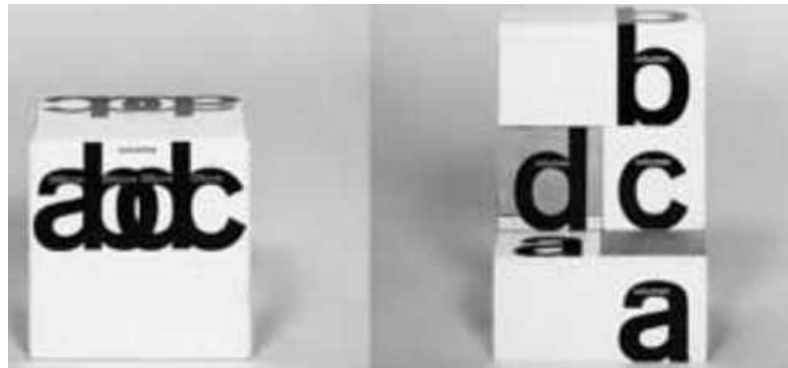


**Beate  
Mainka-Jellinghaus,**

Cutter, (Film)

**film dok**

das filmdokument hochschule für gestaltung 20 uhr  
 winter/frühjahr 1962  
 12. januar cornelius: die feurige isabelle  
 26. januar murnau: der letzte mann  
 9. februar pabst: kameradschaft  
 23. februar staudte: der untertan  
 16. märz wolf: lissy  
 23. märz chaplin-retrospektive



*Work by female students during their time at the HfG: Margarete Kögler, Ursula Wenzel, Ingeborg Schwarz, Anne Preiss, Eva Maria Koch*



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# The Olympic Games 1972

*The Vision of a New Germany  
translated into a visual language*

“

Good art inspires;  
good design  
*motivates.*

OTL AICHER

# Aicher: Pre-Olympic Work

When Aicher visited Japan in 1960, he experienced first-hand the limitations of non-written language in communicating with foreigners. He realized the need for a comprehensible pictorial language to work across cultures.

During the 1950s, the term "corporate identity" was applied to the set of visual standards and style guides for companies to follow.

Aicher's strongest interest was in corporate branding; he and his team developed 1962 one of the most exceptional corporate identity designs for Lufthansa.

Aicher recommended the "melon yellow" as the main signature color.

In 1971, he designed a gridded sign system for the **Frankfurt airport** with simple geometric forms and a figure with a dot for a head and a rounded rectangle body. The form has just enough to be recognizable as a human figure.

**When the Summer Games 1972 were around the corner, Otl was more than well-prepped for the task at hand.**



**1\_**"The company employed the designer Otl Aicher and his Gruppe E5 student group at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm to develop a new visual identity for Lufthansa. Largely implemented beginning in 1963, today it ranks as one of the most groundbreaking corporate design solutions of the twentieth century."

**2\_**Otl Aicher, sign system for Frankfurt Airport, 1971.

# *I am not a fan of nations.*

- Otl Aicher



Otl Aicher's most legendary work is the graphic design commissioned for the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich.

Aicher consulted first with Masaru Katsumie, who had designed the previous 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Aicher approached the task of the Olympic Games project as he did with corporate clients. The company was the Federal Republic of Germany. The idea behind the brand became:

*Purification.*

*Liberalism.*

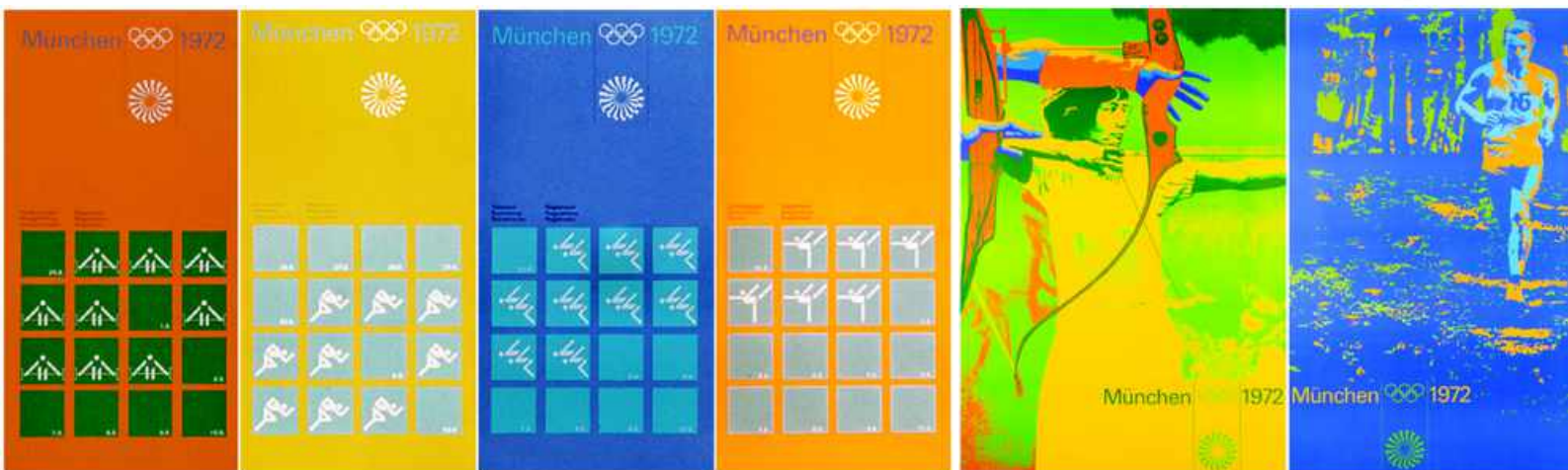
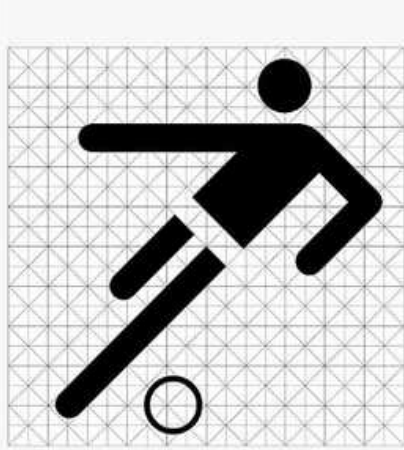
*Post-Nationalism.*

**"They were to be cheerful, modern and democratic, without pathos and gigantism, in complete contrast to the 1936 Olympics of the National Socialists in Berlin."**

# *The next 50 years will be exciting.*

- Otl Aicher

Die nächsten 50 Jahre werden spannend.

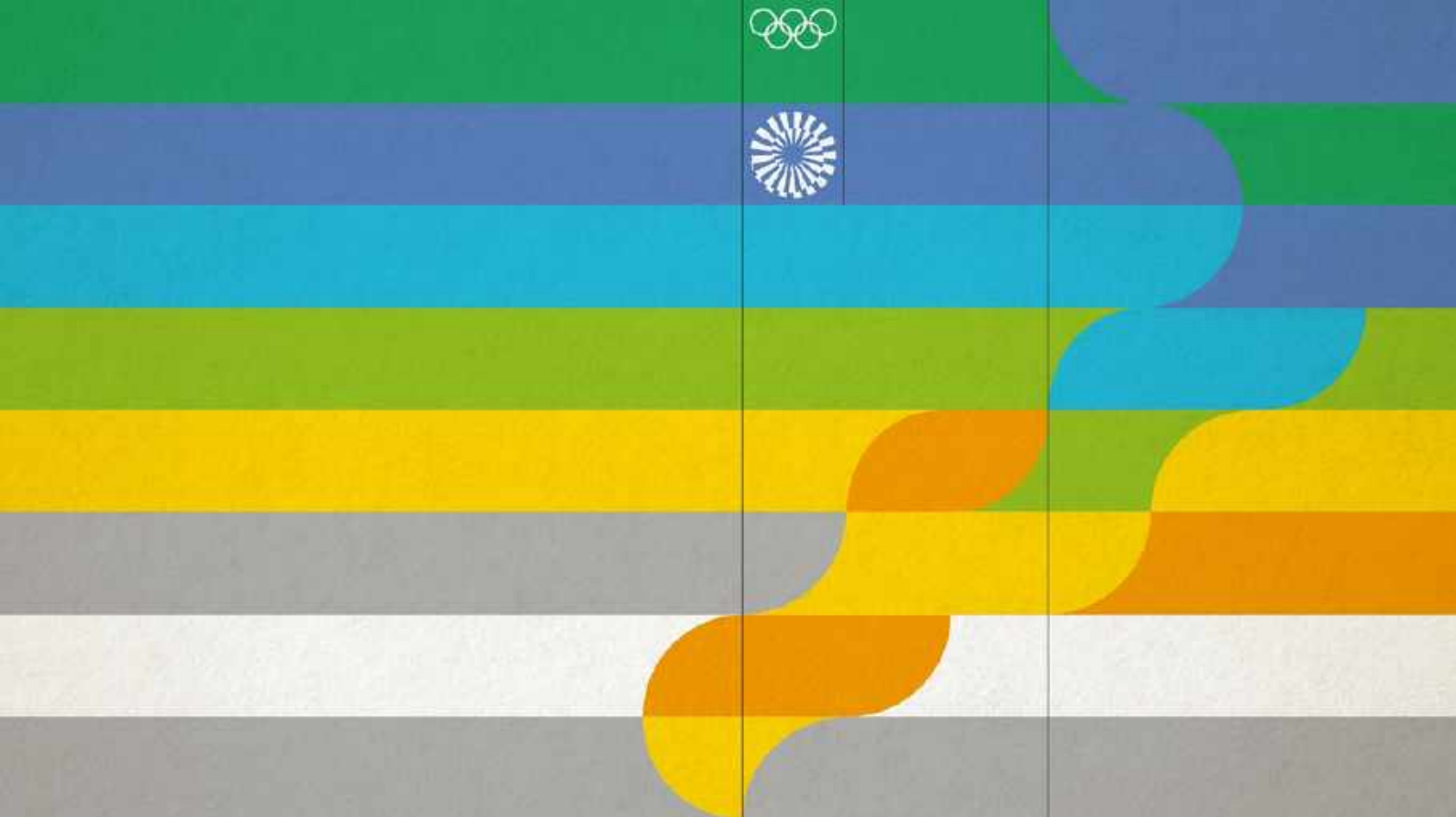


The whole project presented the new era of Germany on a global scale using Modernism as a style. Everything had to display the same design unity: the logo, the flyers, posters, uniforms... even the trash cans had to be 'on brand'.

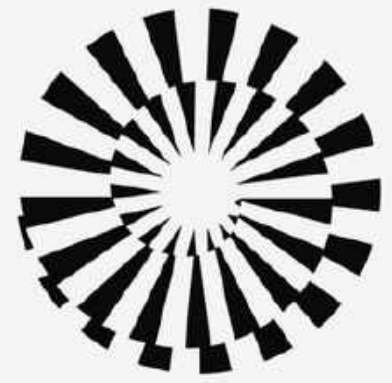
The color scheme was meant to be "light-hearted" and focused on the Regional Bavarian color palette of silver and blue, combined with a "rainbow palette," a statement of diversity.

The pictograms\* that the team created were made up of the simplest shapes using a design grid; they had so much dynamism and were so universally understood.

His futuristic and timeless vision with his iconic design has made it possible to still use the symbols (after almost 50 years) as a standardized visual language.



Aicher is also credited for leading the design of the Munich Olympics logo and the first official Olympic Mascot, the dachshund "Waldi". Indeed, of course, lots of it was excellent teamwork. In this case, Elena Winschermann, a graphic designer from Munich, took over the design area around the souvenirs.



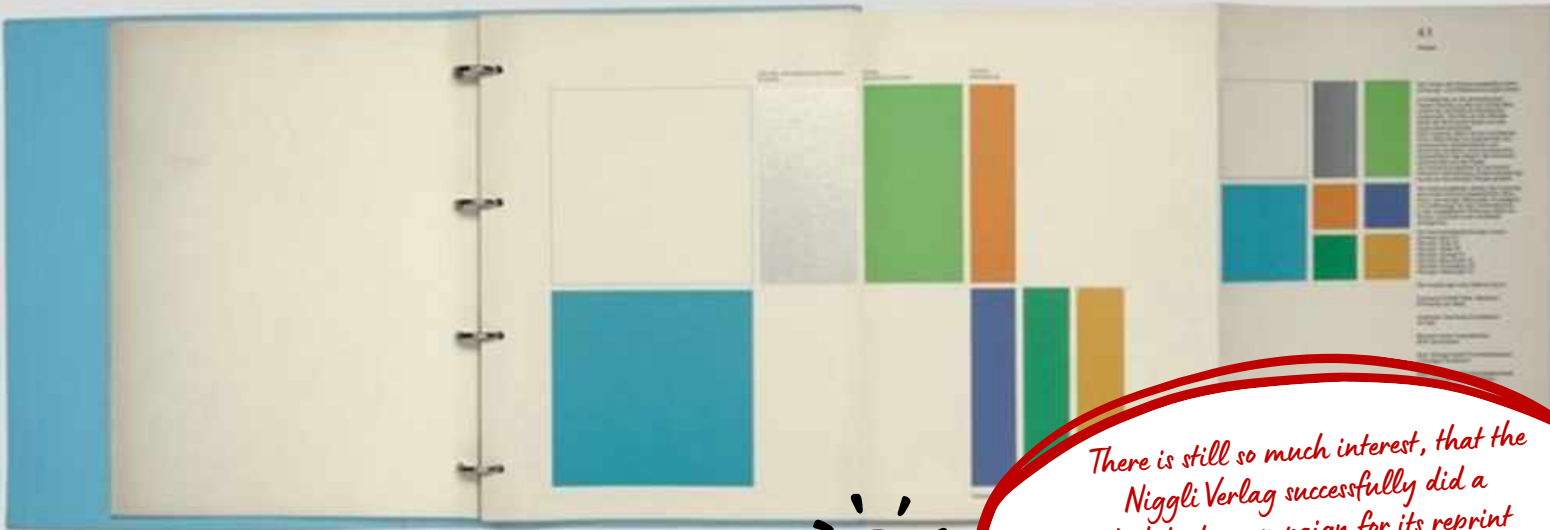
München 1972



She further developed the "Olympia-Waldi" concept designed by Aicher from the plush animal version to other souvenir adaptations, making it a design object that was in line with the overall design of the Games.



# The Olympics Brand Manual



There is still so much interest, that the Niggli Verlag successfully did a kickstarter campaign for its reprint that quickly sold out.



*It is so simple,  
so well-structured,  
clearly understandable  
and educational as basically  
everything that Aicher created.*

- MICHAEL KLAR, DESIGNER AND FRIEND OF OTL AICHER



“

The details are  
not the details.  
They make the  
*design.*

CHARLES EAMES



HOW TO

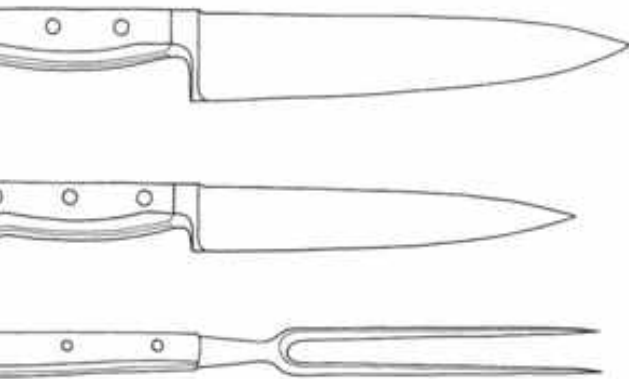
# Establish A Legacy through Brand Design

*Trust*

“Trust  
cannot be  
gained through  
words, but instead  
only through  
visual proof.”

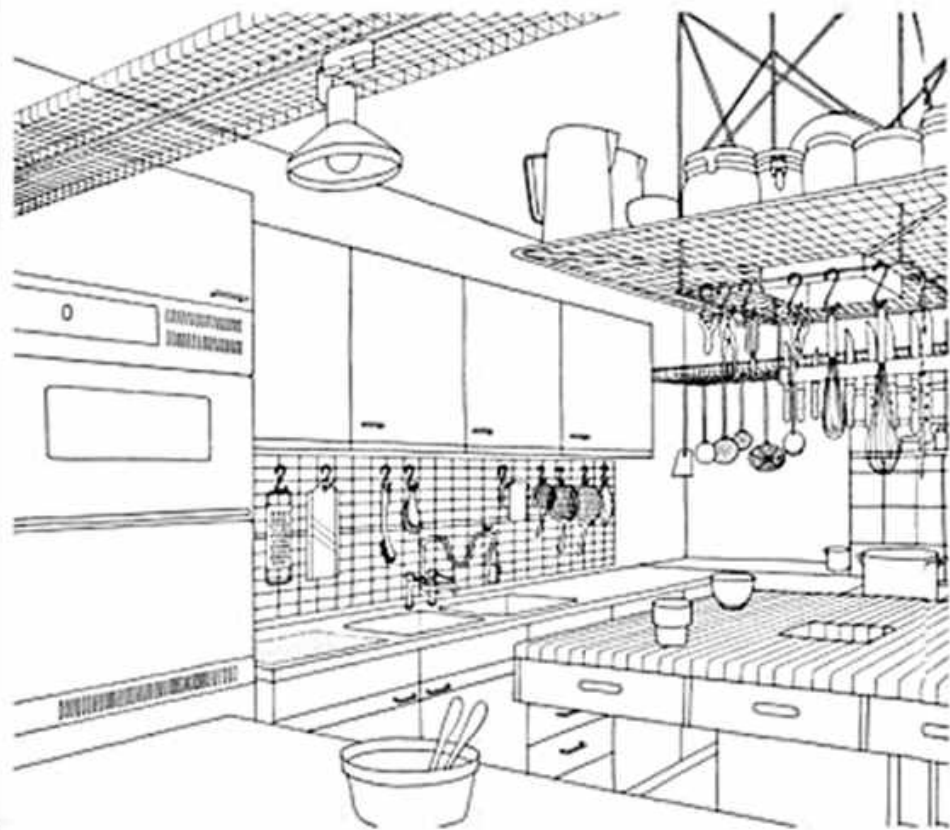
**OTL AICHER, 1975**

# Aicher's and the HfG pupils further design work [1 of 2]



Aicher also created the corporate design for companies such as Erco, Lufthansa, Braun, BMW and FSB.

In 1980 he started a collaboration with Bulthaup. He believed that the kitchen should be an inviting place where meals are prepared together, where all the required tools and implements are clearly visible and stored within easy reach.



In 1982, he published his book "Die Küche zum Kochen". For his research, he visited chefs in star restaurants to talk to them about their kitchens. According to him, a designer who designs a kitchen must be able to cook: **"Designers who don't cook shouldn't be allowed to touch kitchens in the first place."**

# Aicher's and the HfG pupils further design work [2 of 2]



From the beginning the Braun logo had its characteristic "A". Braun's goal was to develop products that meet the needs of the consumer, that are always one step ahead of the competition in technology and design.

In the mid-1950s, Ulm professor Hans Gugelot and his student team revamped the image of the entire Braun product line (portable radios to music equipment) whileworking with industrial designer Dieter Rams **in only eight months.**

*That seems to have been quick at that time!*



What made the Ulm designers different was their radical approach to design. 1959, Herbert Lindinger, a student from a Development Group with Braun, designed an audio system that looked like a piece of engineering.

His audio system became the model for Braun's 1960s audio program.



In a way, Germany's post-war look & feel are highly influenced by Aichers work .



Fonts designed by Otl Aicher

Rotis II Sans Pro

Rotis II Sans Pro

Rotis II Sans Pro Black

Rotis II Sans Pro Black

Rotis II Sans Pro Bold

Rotis II Sans Pro Bold

Rotis II Sans Pro Extra Light

Rotis II Sans Pro Extra Light

Rotis

Rotis Sa

Rotis

Rotis Se

Rotis

Rotis Se

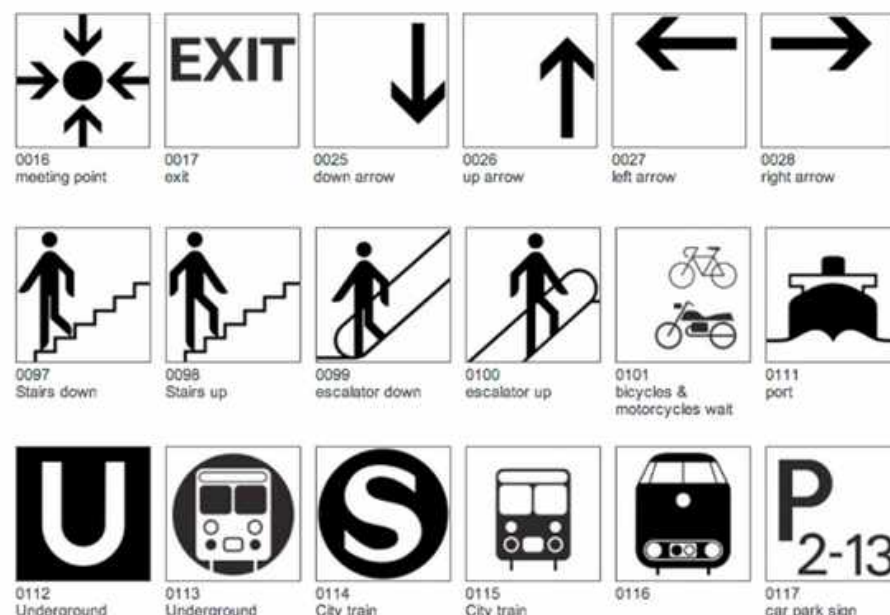
Rotis

Rotis Se

His main contribution to type design is the font Rotis (1988).

Aicher was obsessed with clarity and went on to create a typeface called Traffic (for the Munich's public transport). The font became very popular again in graphic design in the 90s.

<https://www.sparkassengeschichtsblog.de/schlagwort/sparkassen-s/>



*Have you seen Otl Aicher's pictograms or fonts lately?*

# Otl Aicher and today's design



Aicher's vision of making a Corporate Brand out of the Olympics is something that revolutionized the design world.

## *Customer Experience: Implemented before the term even existed*

We can see today that even experiences can be branded and that it's a process of thinking carefully about every single "touchpoint", from the very first interaction with the brand (watching the Olympics logo on TV) to the very last (buying a Waldisouvenir). This is what has evolved now to "customer experience", which as a term didn't exist 50 years ago, but they were already doing it.

Customer experience is also very much in line with the "Ulm model" because experienced designers have to dig deep into a research-based activity, and it's not only based on aesthetics, it's much, much more because it's reaching users (or in the Ulm model case: society).

## *Interdisciplinary and thorough*

Ulm has already integrated various disciplines into its curriculum (more than only visual), such as the ones needed in UX design, making the designer "work as a team player, not just an artist."

A branded product has intrinsic attributes that the company and society add: luxurious, high quality, cheap, innovative, fun, etc. This creates in our minds a value for this product or service and depending on how strongly we feel about it, it can move our own ideologies (see also the Ulm philosophy).

## *The use of a "functional visual language" like the one developed by Aicher, is now applied to most design fields.*

The grid system they implemented is a timeless mechanism to give design uniformity, also used for one of Aicher's most important developments: the set of icons. Icons nowadays are everywhere because they are universally understood, and it has become of much importance to user interface design, infographic design, and signage.

Icons, especially in digital brand design, have become essential to users; they not only enhance the aesthetic but also simplify the core information about the action or idea they represent, to understand them instantly because...

*"a picture is worth a thousand words."*

*Customer-focused and value based as his approach was, it was more true brand design, than "just" design.*



The beauty of the Braun design in the Aicher era is that their main focus on functionality makes it timeless and that the designed pieces belong visually to the same "system" (another UX design term!).

***Did you know that the Braun design system has served as an inspiration for the design of Apple? (yes, that's right).***

The forms and colors were used by Apple to create the classic shape of the iPod, the iMac and even the internal calculator is similar to the Braun calculator!

A design system is defined by Invision app as

***"... a collection of reusable components, guided by clear standards, that can be assembled together to build any number of applications."***

This design system eliminates inconsistencies, saves precious time, and creates unity throughout the design. UXpin defines it as:

***"Design scales. But it scales only with a design system. A design system is a set of standards for design and code along with components that unify both practices. Think of it as the same instructions and Lego kit for everyone."***

Aicher and the design team were thinking far ahead of time.

Dieter Rams (Braun, left) and Jonathan Ive (Apple, right) products compared  
SRC: <https://www.design1st.com/industrial-design-visionary-braun-apple/>.

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## **Back to the Roofs 2022**

*Reinvoking the power of  
a sleeping (brand) giant*

HAPPY END

# *Back to the Roofs: European Championships in Munich 2022*

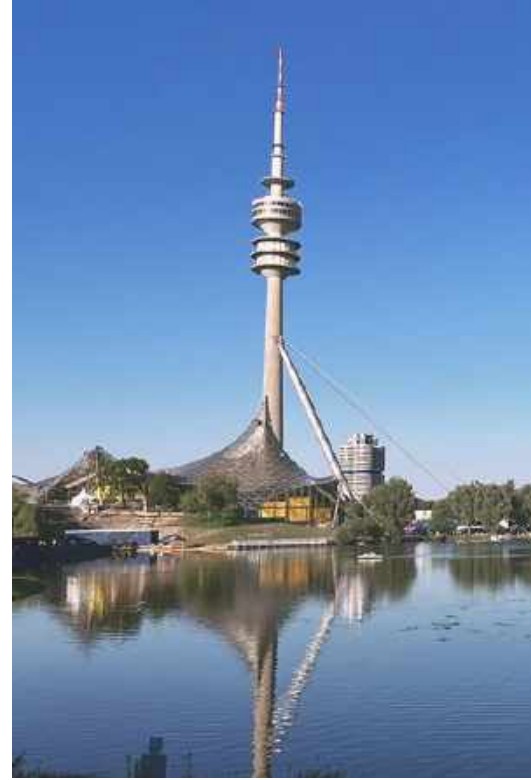
*For me, this is the happy end that is  
just a re-beginning.*

This summer, Munich hosted several European Championships at once. The sun played along and the atmosphere was captivating - reminding people about the excellence and spirit we humans can display - after years of pandemic angst plus difficult worries on the horizon.

Check out some pics here and we highly recommend visiting the City of Munich page.

[Picutres in this section by Tobias Braun.]







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**5.**

**CONCLUSION**

**Learnings & Triggers  
for Discussion**



When I am  
working on a problem,  
I never think about beauty,  
but when I have finished,

*if the solution  
is not beautiful,  
I know it is wrong.*

R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER



# Design vs. Branding - where is the difference?



**Kristin Reinbach**

CEO, Head of Brand Creation & Business Building



**Sofia Luce Gallo**

Brand Design & Visual Customer Experience

So, design is creating something visual. It might be physical or just a layout element, it is something you can usually see. It could already exist in my brain, but you can't tell what I refer to unless I get it out there and make it visible. **This is what we use design for.**

Branding for me would be a bit bigger. **It is about creating a whole world, a whole atmosphere - and I think this worked in a very 360 way here for the 1972 Olympics.**

There were the fonts, the layout aesthetic, certain imagery, buildings, and a clear color code - and that all applied everywhere with massive discipline - even in the showers of the Olympics village.

Design is a broad term that refers to the conception and creation of visual artifacts that serve to communicate something. Design can be a website as well as a soft drink label - it is used to express a message appealingly.

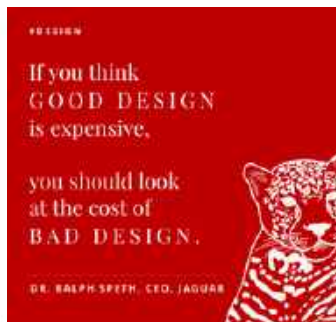
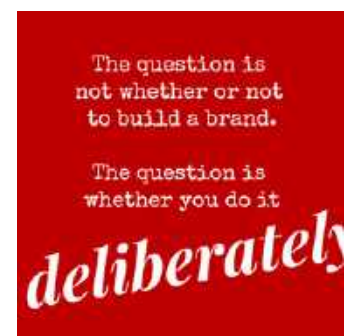
Branding is using design not only to tell a story but to visually describe a personality. Just as people have their physical connotations, a brand has its own visual rules (and not only that, hello tone of voice!) that must be applied in every facet of it.

**Consistency is what makes a brand strong.**

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# The 10 Principles of Good Design

*according to Dieter Rams (Braun Designer)  
and commented by o8 team*

1.

## Good design is innovative

### **o8 TAKE:**

As we always say: Nothing is worse than boring other people. Do not do this, try to create something unique, no matter what. And don't use B2B or tech as an excuse.

2.

## Good design makes a product useful

### **o8 TAKE:**

Indeed a product and its attractiveness and usability rely heavily on good design - of the product itself, its packaging, its everyday use.

3.

## Good design is aesthetic

### **o8 TAKE:**

This might seem obvious, it is not. If it just clicks, that is the moment where the balance between elements, whitespace and message just start to align.

4.

## Good design helps us to understand a product

### **o8 TAKE:**

Imagine a product that gives you no chance to recall how it looks - how many hours would you be looking for it in your flat?

5.

## Good design is unobtrusive

### **o8 TAKE:**

Good design is never trying to dominate you or your brain. It can be exciting, triggering interest, but as a well-cooked dish it should not get too spicy.

6.

## Good design is honest

### **o8 TAKE:**

Good design will not sell you something for what it is not. It will help you to see at its core and perceive its value - and you should be able to rely on its underlying messages.

7.

## Good design is durable

### **o8 TAKE:**

The 1972 Olympics aesthetics is probably the best example for it - "durable" being an equivalent for "timelessness". 10 of 10 points to go to Aicher for that.

8.

## Good design is consequent to the last detail

### **o8 TAKE:**

"The details are not the details. They make the design.

Charles Eames  
Nothing to add there.

9.

## Good design is concerned with the environment

### **o8 TAKE:**

This is a very Yogi attitude as in Asteja and Apigraha (not taking anymore than you really need). The latter can easily be applied to packaging for example.

10.

## Good design is as little design as possible

### **o8 TAKE:**

This reminds me always of the iceberg writing method Hemingway is cited for: You create a draft, then you refine and remove anything unnecessary. Distill to the max.

Truly great brand design helps to translate a *vision* into a *language* that everyone can quickly understand:

into images, feelings, words, and atmosphere.

It can give reality the first shape before it even exists;

it helps shape the *future*.

This might be why it is the main accomplice for any *entrepreneur* and *startup team*.



# Food for Thought

What about Reifenhahls movie: Does creating something like this contain a moral responsibility - or not?

Does it makes sense to think about design before you know the brand values before you have a clear intention?

Is the 1972 Summer Games design rather a true brand - even though it was 'just' called design?

Did Otl Aicher 'brand' Germany - what do you think?

How important was Aichers personal background for what and how he created and worked?

Even though it seems close to perfect: What do you think could one even do better if one would approach it from a not just design, but also verbal communication approach?



*Content precedes design.*  
Design in the absence of content  
is not design, it's decoration.

JEFFREY ZELDMAN

“

The role of the designer is that of a good, thoughtful host anticipating the needs of his guests.

**CHARLES EAMES**

08 WHITEPAPER



6

THE RABBITHOLE

# Resources & Credits

# Resources & Links



Should you want to dig a bit deeper, be warned: One can easily go down a literal rabbit hole here! For most parts it should be easy for you to find interesting reads once you start googling. Therefore, here we are not sharing all the sources we looked into but only selection of the recommended not so obvious ones. Enjoy!



**Olympische Spiele 1936 - Die Triumphe des Jesse Owens**  
 Vier Goldmedaillen erringt der US-Amerikaner Jesse Owens in Berlin und freundet sich mit dem Deutschen



**Olympische Spiele 1936: Propagandaschlacht im Stadion**  
 Mit gigantischem Aufwand inszenierten die Nazis vor 80 Jahren die Olympischen Sommerspiele in Berlin. Machen wir uns doch ein Deutschland friedlich und



**How Leni Riefenstahl shaped the way we see the Olympics**  
 Is Leni Riefenstahl's Olympia Nazi propaganda - or the greatest film about sport ever made? Nicholas



**Marlene Dietrich and Leni Riefenstahl's Divided World**  
 In the nineteen-thirties and forties, they became symbols of opposing sides of the war—and of the



**Estudiamos a un grande del branding: Otl Aicher**

Historia de otl aicher, información y a...



**ERCO (1976)**  
 by Otl Aicher  
 medium.com



**Otl Aicher**  
 Otto "Otl" Aicher was a German graphic designer and typographer. Aicher co-founded and taught at the influential Ulm School of Design. He is known for...



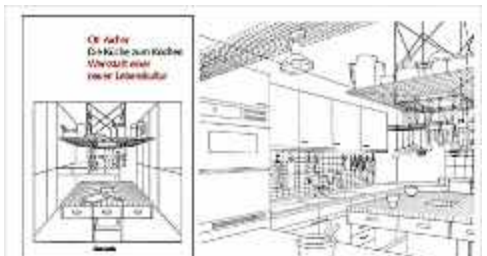
**otl aicher pictograms**  
 otl aicher pictograms set benchmarks in directional signage, advertising,....  
 piktoqramm.de



**Olympia-Jubiläum: 50 Jahre prägendes Design**  
 Die Olympischen Sommerspiele von 1972 sollten ein neues, modernes Image von München in die Welt tragen. Gestaltet von freundllich wirkenden Entwürfen...



**foo - Back to the roofs**  
 foo - Back to the roofs  
 munich2022.com



**Otl Aicher - Die Küche zum Kochen - Stories**  
 Gelächter, schwingende Schneebeesen, klirrende Teller, halbleere Weingläser, entspannte Menschen. Wer steht nicht gern in der Küche mit Freunden,...

- [http://www.frauen-hfg-ulm.de/englisch/frameset\\_1024.html](http://www.frauen-hfg-ulm.de/englisch/frameset_1024.html)
- <http://typographyininformationdesign.blogspot.com/2012/05/pictograms-by-otl-aicher.html>
- <https://www.counter-print.co.uk/products/lufthansa-graphic-design>

# Image (et.al.) Credits

**This whitepaper is a non-commercial publication in which we give an overview of what we consider a very inspiring topic. We invest a lot of time and money (and love) to create and share it for free.**

Being about Otl Aicher and his work, it is per se a HUGE credit to his work; emphasizing the value of his work is the declared purpose of this document. It is built on our research (mostly online) and some private materials. Most picture resources in this whitepaper, therefore, serve as quotes and were found in publicly available sources. In most cases, it is therefore obvious by the annotating texts to whom the credit goes. For example, on p. 8, the movie poster clearly states this movie, and the picture on it stems from Leni Riefenstahl's work; on p. 15, the works of Margarete Kögler, Ursula Wenzel, Ingeborg Schwarz, Anne Preiss, Eva Maria Koch are shown and described as such, on p. 13 works by Albers, Itten, and Peterhans are shown and credited "in situ".

Anything with the Olympics looks (such as the main brand looks, the posted, etc.) is typically be credited to its creator, Otl Aicher, the main protagonist this whitepaper is about. In some cases, that still might be questioned, and one might state that the true credit should go to the then active creative team or, as in the case of the Waldi mascot, to Elena Wischermann. In cases like this, we did our best in a reasonable effort to make sure the creators are correctly credited; in other cases, one will probably never know exactly. Lots of these events happened before the web and giving credit to team members or female colleagues simply was not considered so relevant.

The key visual and cover picture with the swimmers is by Granger, NYC; we hold a license for its use via Alamy.

The brands mentioned here shall be credited, too, as they commissioned and enabled great work: Lufthansa, Braun, Sparkasse, Erco, Bulthaup. As an agency, we know that great work can only happen if the deciders within the companies dare

to decide on designs that are still unique and not washed down. Chapeau to the decision makers at work for that!

Several (the images showing our front hall, the cufflinks, the bookshelf - are from private sources - by myself, Kristin Reinbach, and some have been provided by Tobias Braun (the 2022 games in Munich).

Another batch of pictures/icons is derived from the resources available to Canva Pro account license holders (the champagne bottle on p.4 for example).

Many are based on creative commons, such as the links on the page before/after here; if not indicated otherwise, they were not changed but used in the sense of picture quotes.  
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)

The layouts on p. 38 stem from other OVERW8 in-house work, the scribble on page 43 was created by Gabriela Navarrete during the first research.

The pictures in the "resources and links" sections are thumbnails derived from the respective pages. If links are the sources here, please be aware that their content can change or be redirected in the meanwhile; we cannot be held responsible for such changes.

**Being creators ourselves, giving correct credit is important to us, and we consider it a great way of making sure everyone can appreciate the creative work of others.**

At the same time, we are neither historians nor lawyers, and as you might have become aware in the meanwhile, it is not always that clear who is the rightful real copyright owner. Let us build on the idea of cocreation and prioritize being able to share the results of a pretty wide and deep research here. **Should you notice any gap or have additional info, please email us at [reinbach@overw8.de](mailto:reinbach@overw8.de) - we'll be happy to oblige and adapt accordingly.**

i Link-based sources are to be found on the following page.

# Image Credits / Source Links

- <https://www.counter-print.co.uk/products/luftansa-graphic-design>
- <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/elena-winschermann-graphic-designer-munich-1972/eAGbrRcZNL02nA?hl=en>
- <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/niggilverlag/the-design-manual-of-munich-72-the-joyful-games>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/9713498@N08/2081387264/in/photostream/>
- Hochschule Ulm Pictures: <https://experimentos.valpo.net/de/content/hfg>
- <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-bauhaus-lesser-known-ulm-school-seismic-impact-design>
- [https://www.dear-magazin.de/stories/Otl-Aicher---Die-Kueche-zum-Kochen\\_10293639.html](https://www.dear-magazin.de/stories/Otl-Aicher---Die-Kueche-zum-Kochen_10293639.html)
- <https://www.brandemia.org/un-grande-del-branding-otl-aicher/>
- <https://medium.com/fgd1-the-archive/erco-1976-b7625d7829dc>
- <https://www.piktogramm.de/en/>
- <http://typographyinformationdesign.blogspot.com/2012/05/pictograms-by-otl-aicher.html>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otl\\_Aicher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otl_Aicher)
- <http://architectuul.com/architect/otl-aicher>
- <https://www.grandtourofmodernism.com/sites/details/8/>
- [http://www.frauen-hfg-ulm.de/englisch/frameset\\_1024.html](http://www.frauen-hfg-ulm.de/englisch/frameset_1024.html)
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- <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-bauhaus-lesser-known-ulm-school-seismic-impact-design>
- <https://experimentos.valpo.net/de/content/hfg>
- <https://www.itsnicethat.com/features/ulm-model-inge-scholl-otil-aicher-essay-230117>
- <https://www.muenchen.de/veranstaltungen/50-jahre-olympische-spiele-jubilaumsprogramm.html>
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- <https://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/olympische-spiele-1936-propagandaschlacht-im-stadion-fotostrecke-139668.html>
- <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/10/19/bombshells-a-critic-at-large-pierpont>
- <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20160810-how-leni-riefenstahl-shaped-the-way-we-see-the-olympics>
- The Jesse Owens / Luz Long picture can be found pretty much everywhere and with highly (!) varied source info: [https://www.pinterest.de/pin/337558934566166382/?nic\\_v3=1a1J9jHtG](https://www.pinterest.de/pin/337558934566166382/?nic_v3=1a1J9jHtG) - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/57440551@N03/15819962163/> (the latter probably being unrightfully credited to a modern photographer). Our best assumption is that it must be a 30s original. The most credible source seems to be picture-alliance / DPA; the photographer's name is not directly credited. If you'd like to take on a new project, please feel free to tackle this one. :)

Is any link source/creator still missing? Let us know! Email to: [reinbach@overw8.de](mailto:reinbach@overw8.de)

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