

Millie Goldsholl, Morton Goldsholl, Wayne Boyer, Larry Janiak, and Dick Marx, still from Kimberly-Clark Corporation *Faces and Fortunes*, 1959, 16mm film, 12:48 minutes. Mort and Millie Goldsholl Collection, 1942–1980, Chicago Film Archives

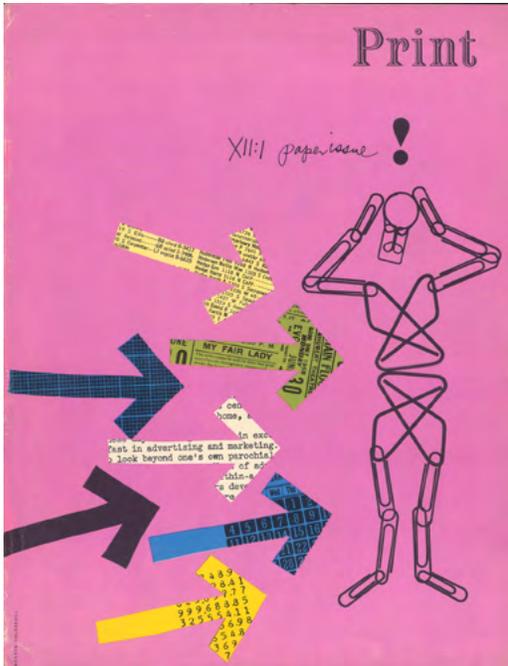
## Block Museum Explores Legacy of Mid-Century Chicago Design Firm that Turned Advertising Upside Down

*Up is Down: Mid-Century Experiments in Advertising and Film at the Goldsholl Studio* opens September 18

The Block Museum of Art announces its participation in *Art Design Chicago*, the Terra Foundation's year-long celebration of Chicago's design legacy with the exhibition *Up is Down: Mid-Century Experiments in Advertising and Film at the Goldsholl Studio* (September 18 – December 9)

*Up Is Down* is the first major exhibition to explore the trailblazing work of mid-twentieth century artist/designers/filmmakers **Morton and Millie Goldsholl** (Morton, 1911–1995; Millie 1920–2012) and their Chicago-area advertising firm, Goldsholl Design Associates.

Beginning in the 1950s Goldsholl Design Associates, headed by the husband and wife team, made a name for itself with innovative “designs-in-film,” applying techniques of experimental and avant-garde filmmaking to advertisements distributed to a broad audience. The studio worked at the cross-section of art, design, advertising, and visual culture, producing television spots, films, trademarks, corporate identities, and print advertisements for **Kimberly-Clark, the National Football League, Revlon, Motorola, and 7-Up**. Although they were compared to some of the most celebrated design firms of the day, the Goldsholls and their designers are relatively unknown today. The Block Museum’s exhibition *Up is Down: Mid-Century Experiments in Advertising and Film at the Goldsholl Studio* will reexamine the innovative work of the firm and its national impact from the mid-1950s through the 1970s.



Morton Goldsholl, magazine cover for *Print* XII:1 titled “Paper Issue,” July-August 1958.  
Courtesy of the Goldsholl Family

“The Block has taken to heart the mission of the Terra Art Design initiative to encourage original scholarship that brings to light a forgotten chapter in our city’s cultural history,” says Lisa Corrin, the Block Museum’s Ellen Philips Katz Director. “The creative impact and influence of this avant-garde firm was significant and has the potential to reframe how we think about Chicago’s central role in American design. The Goldsholls’ story unites themes that connect art history to the histories of consumer culture and the social purpose of design.”

### Studying with a Modern Master

The Goldsholl’s innovative integration of film with other forms of visual production, such as print advertising and brand development, placed them at the forefront of their peers in design and the wider community of filmmakers in Chicago. Much of this innovation is rooted in their training. The Goldsholls attended Chicago’s School of Design and were inspired by its founder, the legendary artist and designer **László Moholy-Nagy**. Moholy-Nagy incorporated into his

teaching in Chicago core principles of Bauhaus philosophy—characterized by an emphasis on abstraction, experimentation, exploration of materials (especially light), and the overriding idea that art can be an agent for social reform. In his curriculum, Moholy-Nagy also emphasized motion picture production as “the medium of the twentieth century.”

Deeply influenced by Moholy-Nagy’s teachings and the Bauhaus approach, with its ethos of aesthetic experimentation, Morton and Millie fostered a similar attitude among designers working in their firm. Over time, Goldsholl Design Associates became a hub for a generation of Chicago filmmakers, many of whom had also attended the School of Design (later the Institute of Design), working across the fields of documentary, animation, design, and experimental film.

### A City of Film Experimentation

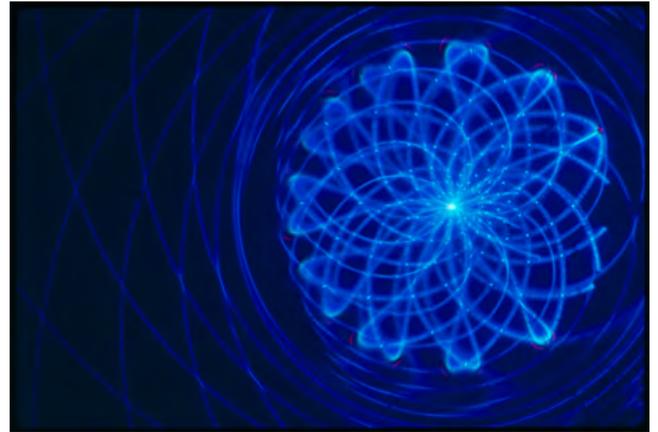
The Goldsholls’ work grew equally out of the unique moving image and design culture of



Photograph of Goldsholl Design Associates, c. 1963.  
Courtesy of the Goldsholl Family.

Chicago. At midcentury, Chicago was known as the “Hollywood” for educational film production, churning out thousands of educational and promotional films each year. By the late 1950s, there were nearly one hundred production companies developing promotional films, public relations films, advertising films, and industry training films. These were shown in museum auditoriums, classrooms, factories, shop windows, department stores and—importantly—in living rooms, through the new medium of television.

Filmmakers worked expansively, producing slide shows, short films, and spectacular industry installations, in addition to print advertising and other ephemera. The creative work these artists pursued often influenced their commercial productions and vice versa. The Block Museum has partnered with **Chicago Film Archives** to feature rare films, television ads, and other moving images by the Goldsholls and their firm in the exhibition. These illuminate the ways the city served as an influential crossroads for ideas connecting art, industry, design, and film.



Morton Goldsholl, untitled Lenstar slide.  
Courtesy of the Goldsholl Family.

“Chicago served as a testing ground, a site where the experimental met the commercial. The vibrant atmosphere of thinking visually through film was part of the culture that made Chicago a fertile ground for the merging of art, experimentation, everyday life, and corporate advertising. Ideas that emerged here gained international currency,” says Amy Beste, Director of Public Programs in the Departments of Film, Video, New Media, and Animation; Sound; and Art and Technology at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and exhibition co-curator.

## Commercial Creativity

The pioneering work of Goldsholl Design Associates remains an unexplored contribution within American advertising and design. The exhibition will highlight some of the iconic **corporate logos** designed by Morton Goldsholl and the firm. Goldsholl Design Associates was also responsible for creating identities for many large and influential companies—often those relating to technology or the printing industry—with some still in use today. Pared down to easily recognizable signs, the graphics capture the essence of companies. (The classic Motorola “M” is one example.) Designed by Morton Goldsholl in 1955, the futuristic logo has remained in use for over sixty years. The exhibition will also highlight prominent **advertising campaigns** by the firm. Goldsholl Design Associates’ work for Motorola, Kimberly-Clark, IMC, and Martin-Senour, established the firm as leaders in the design industry. Other corporate relationships such as their work for Revlon, 7UP, the National Football League, and PBS offered opportunities for technical experimentation with light, collage, and technology, for which the firm developed its own tools and inventions.



Photograph of (from left to right) Fred Nomiya,  
Thomas Miller, and John Weber, c. 1963.  
Courtesy of the Goldsholl Family.

A number of lively Goldsholl firm “reunions” were convened by the Block Museum of Art as research for the exhibition. Family and past employees convened at the Museum to remember Morton and Millie Goldsholl and the vibrant and fluid culture of the firm into the 1980s. A studio ethos of collaborative creativity marked Goldsholl projects with an openness to collaboration and equity. For its day the firm was remarkably diverse, including women in leadership roles. The exhibition will consider the work of these associates, including Thomas Miller, one of the few African Americans nationwide working with major industry clients at the time.

“Inspired by European modernisms and especially the integrative approach of the Bauhaus, the Goldsholls practiced a unique form of hybridity in their commercial and independent work. The intersections across media and a belief in the value of experimentation that they practiced helped redefine the look of everyday visual culture,” says Corinne Granof, Curator of Academic Programs of the Block and exhibition co-curator

*Up Is Down* is curated at the Block Museum of Art by Amy Beste PhD, Director of Public Programs at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Corinne Granof, PhD, Curator at Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University. The exhibition is funded by the Terra Foundation for American Art and The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.

## Rarely Seen Highlights

Working with the Goldsholl’s own family archive and lenders in Chicago and the East and West coasts, as well as partners at the Chicago Film Archives, *Up Is Down* will include rarely seen films, as well as photography, glass slides, posters, print advertisements, and package design that tell the story of the creative life of the studio.

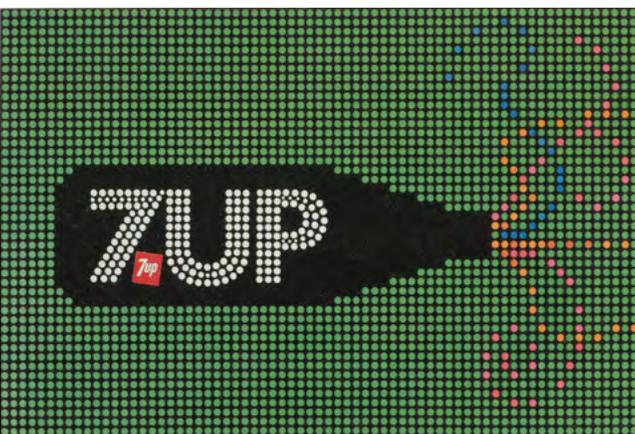
### Some Highlights:

**Untitled Slide Experiments** (1939-1940) A highlight of the exhibition will be the display of a series of “light paintings,” created by Morton Goldsholl. In the early 1940s, Goldsholl assembled approximately forty miniature collages between two pieces of 35 millimeter slide glass. He combined bits of leaves, cotton, seeds, insects, feathers, paint, and fragments of film to create colorful abstract imagery that is transformed when projected. When light is shown through the slides, these experimental assemblages become ephemeral abstractions. When Morton first showed the light paintings to his teacher, Moholy-Nagy, the latter was so enthused with the results and the innovative use of light, color, form, and texture, that he asked Mort to share them with the entire School of Design. According to Morton: *Moholy-Nagy grabbed me and he grabbed my projector and he grabbed the light paintings we went through the whole school that day. Every classroom every one of the classes had to see the full 40 light paintings that I had made and he said this is what I consider painting with light.* The exhibition will include a selection of light paintings that show the range of effects Morton was able to create with this experimentation with color, form, and light.



Morton Goldsholl, *untitled light painting*. Collage material between glass slides. Courtesy of the Goldsholl Family.

**See the Light** (c. 1975). This short television ad grows out of a larger campaign to rebrand 7-Up and its products, including bottles, packaging, and other advertising materials. Drawing inspiration from the visual landscape of advertising itself, the ad is composed of a grid of dots, much like the electric billboards of the day.



Goldsholl Design Associates, 7Up billboard design for “See the Light” Campaign, c. 1975. Courtesy of Dr. Pepper Snapple Group.

The lighted grid reflects the Goldsholl’s training with Moholy-Nagy, who emphasized light as a medium itself. It also showcases the brilliance in streamlined pictographs and minimalist trademark design, which was integral to the firm’s larger success in corporate identity design.

**Faces and Fortunes** (1959). The film that solidified the Goldsholls’ standing as “designers in film” is a visual tour-de-force of the history and value of corporate branding. Produced for Kimberly-Clark as part of the corporation’s efforts to position itself as the leader in paper production, *Faces and Fortunes* grows out of Morton Goldsholl’s research and pioneering work in the then-nascent field of corporate identity. Featuring 15th-century woodblock

prints collaged with streamlined heraldic shapes and abstract logo forms, stylized animation, and a stop-motion assemblage of real-world objects, the film serves as both an essay on and visual demonstration of the way identification symbols function in the rush of contemporary life. Distributed to clients, consumers, and college students, the film not only demonstrated the way branding works, but also provided viewers with the tools necessary to critically analyze new visual landscapes.

***Up is Down*** (1969). Dedicated to Martin Luther King Jr., Millie Goldsholl's award-winning children's film tells the story of difference, diversity, and the potential dangers of state and social institutions through the eyes of an unconventional young boy. Combining faux-naïve hand-drawn animations with an astonishing flash-frame montage of 20th century atrocities, *Up is Down* is at once a children's lesson, a political lament, and a vehicle for social consciousness. It reflects many of the social and aesthetic lessons the Goldsholls first learned at the School of Design, while also expressing a growing ambivalence many at the firm began to have about the ability to solve entrenched social inequities through design.

## About Art Design Chicago

This exhibition is presented in conjunction with **Art Design Chicago**, a wide-ranging initiative to explore the breadth of Chicago's role as a catalyst and incubator for innovations in art and design.

Art Design Chicago is a spirited celebration of the unique and vital role Chicago plays as America's crossroads of art and design, creativity and commerce. With a scope and ambition befitting Chicago's grit and can-do determination, Art Design Chicago shares with the world a dynamic convergence of more than 30 exhibitions and hundreds of public programs in 2018. Together, they tell the stories of the artists and designers that defined and continue to propel Chicago's role as a hub of imagination and impact.

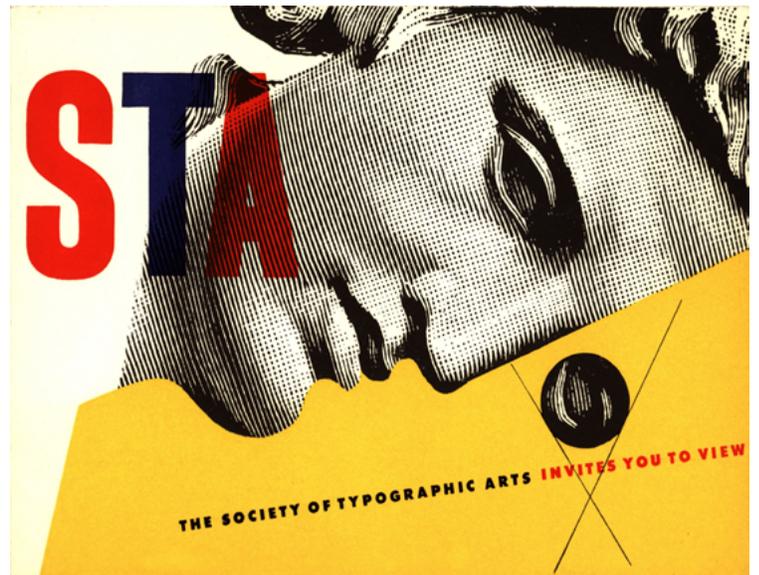
Yesterday and today, across neighborhoods and throughout the nation, the impact of Chicago art and design can be seen and felt everywhere. From art displayed on museum walls to mass-produced consumer goods, Chicago's singular creative contributions are showcased in this citywide partnership of museums, universities, galleries, and other cultural organizations.

Art Design Chicago is an initiative of the **Terra Foundation for American Art**, dedicated to helping people in Chicago and around the world experience, understand, and enjoy America's extraordinary artistic legacy. **The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation** is the Presenting Partner of Art Design Chicago.

Art Design Chicago offers an opportunity to examine the art and design movements that were born and nurtured in Chicago, and their relationships to other artistic developments throughout the world. To support the success of Art Design Chicago, the Terra Foundation is investing over \$6 million in grants and project support for partner organizations.

## About the Block Museum of Art

The Block Museum of Art is a dynamic, imaginative, and innovative teaching and learning resource for Northwestern University and its surrounding communities, featuring a global exhibition program that crosses



Morton Goldsholl, exhibition invitation cover for The Society of Typographic Arts [STA], 1948. Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Libraries.

Block Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The Museum is closed Mondays. Admission is free and open to the public. The Block Museum of Art is a member of the Northwestern Arts Circle, which brings together film, humanities, literary arts, music, theater, dance and visual arts. Search for events across all artistic disciplines at Northwestern Arts Circle.

## Related Events

### Only in Chicago – Opening Conversation with Author Thomas Dyja, *The Third Coast* Saturday, October 6, 2018 – 2PM

*“Improvisation, experimentation, social justice: all these things form the spine of what comes out of Chicago”*  
– Thomas Dyja

Thomas Dyja, third-generation Chicagoan and author of the award-winning *Third Coast: When Chicago Built the American Dream*, will discuss why Chicago was fertile ground for the Goldsholls’ work— and explore the mid-century circumstances that united culture and industry across the city. In conversation with Dyja, exhibition co-curators Amy Beste and Corinne Granof will share insight into the groundbreaking work of the Goldsholl Associates, tracing its artistic influences, including those of artist and designer László Moholy-Nagy, as well as the Firms’ lasting design legacy.

### Ellen Lupton: *Design is Art People Use* Wednesday, October 24, 2018 – 6PM

Inspired by the exhibition *Up Is Down*, writer and curator Ellen Lupton shows how experimental media have transformed commercial design. In the 1950s and 60s, the Goldsholl design firm’s creative explorations of light and media found their way into lucrative television commercials and industrial patents. Lupton explores pivotal examples of how abstract or speculative practices can critique, predict, or transcend the limits of everyday design. From the Bauhaus to *Minority Report* and *Black Mirror*, the strange and alarming visual languages invented by creative artists have the power to melt into daily life. Today’s digital culture blurs the boundaries between art and commerce, transforming what we see and how we see it. Ellen Lupton is curator of contemporary design at Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City and director of the Graphic Design MFA program at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA).



An initiative of  
the Terra Foundation  
for American Art  
exploring Chicago’s  
art and design legacy.



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