Thesis Proposal for The Master of Fine Arts Degree

College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology

The Contribution to the History of Graphic Design by Dr. Robert Leslie and his Publications PM Magazine and AD Magazine

Erin K. Malone
September 21, 1993

Thesis Committee
Chief Advisor: R. Roger Remington
Associate Advisors: Barbara Polowy Bruce Meader
Resource People: Gordon Goodman Herbert Johnson David Pankow

Departmental Approval:
Date:

Approval, Special Assistant to the Dean of Graduate Affairs:
Date:

Computer needs other than word processing: ☑ Yes
May need use of the IEPL lab for printing outputs of the thesis application.

Committee Approval:
The purpose of this thesis and its associate work is to research and study the innovative contributions of Dr. Robert Leslie (1885 - 1987) to the history of graphic design, through the activities at the Composing Room, Inc. These activities included shows by upcoming graphic designers and two important design publications PM Magazine and AD Magazine.

The application of this thesis will be to interpret the research into a functional information resource for professional designers, design historians and design students. This may be accomplished by developing an interactive media database, a scholarly article and/or other design applications.
Thesis Project Plan

The Contribution to the History of Graphic Design by Dr. Robert Leslie and his Publications *PM Magazine* and *AD Magazine*

Erin K Malone
716 Linden Street
Rochester, New York 14620
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Situation Analysis

Within American design history, there are many people, designers, typographers and printers, who were instrumental in the progression of graphic design as a field. These people were often important to the career development of many now well-known designers and their contributions are often under appreciated for their significance. The typographer, Dr. Robert Leslie, is one such person. I plan to study Dr. Leslie’s contributions and show how his role as mentor was important to the careers of many pioneering designers and to the field of graphic design.

Problem Statement

I plan to research the contributions of Dr. Robert Leslie by studying the activities of the Composing Room, Inc. These included exhibits introducing new, unknown and young designers and the publication of *PM* and *AD* magazines, primarily between 1927 and 1942. These publications were also showcases for the talents of several designers. The audience for my thesis will consist primarily of design historians, design professionals and design students. Other audiences may consist of printers and typographers.
Mission Statement

Within the field of graphic design and design history, there has been no documentation of the contributions of Dr. Robert L. Leslie. This thesis will document his role as mentor to pioneering graphic designers and show the influence that the Composing Room, Inc. and its activities (PM and AD magazine and exhibits at the A-D Gallery) had to the history of graphic design. This information will be presented to professionals and students in the field to educate them on the importance of this work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Processes and Strategies of Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To gather information about Dr. Robert L. Leslie’s life and career.</td>
<td>• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to identify five key biographical elements about Dr. Robert L. Leslie.</td>
<td>• Review videotaped interview with Dr. Leslie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To document Dr. Robert L. Leslie’s role as mentor to pioneering graphic designers.</td>
<td>• After reading the information, the user should be able to compare five events of Dr. Leslie’s life and career to five historically significant events.</td>
<td>• Gather information about Dr. Leslie’s life through obituaries and articles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to define six different aspects of Dr. Leslie’s career.</td>
<td>• Gather information about Dr. Leslie’s life through personal interviews with people who knew him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to create a list of at least ten of the pioneering designers that Dr. Leslie mentored.</td>
<td>• Establish a timeline of Dr. Leslie’s life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to discuss the role Dr. Leslie played in the careers of at least seven pioneering designers.</td>
<td>• Compare life information to important historical events of the same time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Research refugee designers coming to New York in the 30’s and 40’s.</td>
<td>• Plot important historical information on the timeline parallel to Dr. Leslie’s life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create list of designers to whom Dr. Leslie was mentor.</td>
<td>• Categorize the different aspects of Dr. Leslie’s career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create database of artists and dates.</td>
<td>• Highlight significant events and dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Write short bios of designers.</td>
<td>• Research how Dr. Leslie helped several designers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview designers or persons who knew them.</td>
<td>• Interview designers or persons who knew them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To show the influence that the Composing Room, Inc. and its activities (PM and AD magazines and exhibits at the A-D Gallery) had to the history of graphic design.

- After reviewing the information, the user should be able to identify the work of at least seven pioneering designers.
- After reviewing the information, the user will be able to write a list of at least ten of the artists and designers showcased in PM and AD magazines.
- After reviewing the information, the user will be able to make a list of at least ten of the designers shown at the A-D Gallery.
- Collect representative samples of artists work.
- Categorize work by client and date.
- Add samples of work to database.
- Review all PM and AD magazines.
- Create an index of all articles, authors and artists published in PM and AD magazines.
- Develop a working database for all the indexed information.
- Develop cross reference systems for dates, issues, articles and authors.
- Gather information about the Composing Room, Inc.
- Establish a timeline of the Composing Room, Inc.
- Highlight significant events.
- Research and review copies of gallery opening invitations and announcements.
- Create a list of all artists exhibited at the Composing Room, Inc.
- Add this information to the already developing database.
To present this information to professionals and students in the field to educate them on the importance of this work.

- After reviewing the information, the user will be able to recognize the influence of the Composing Room, Inc. within the history of graphic design and make a list of at least five contributing factors.

- Compare the concept of the A-D Gallery to Gallery 291 run by Alfred Steiglitz around the same time.
- Research how the different artists made significant contributions to the field of graphic design.
- Write short bios on each designer.
- Show samples of the work by these designers.

To evaluate this project and modify accordingly.

- After using this project the user will be able to provide feedback on at least two categories.

- Interview user about presentation, access of information, level of understanding.
- Interview with readers of article via reader response card.

- After using this product the user will be able to answer at least ten questions about the product.

- Develop questionnaire.
- Test users on the information.

- Provide an environment for using the information gathered.
- Create an interactive database.
- Write a scholarly article presenting information and samples of work.
Pragmatic Considerations

Budget should not be a hindrance to this project. Expenses will come in the form of outputs for the final presentation, possibly a new syquest disk, and travel and long distance phone costs for interviewing.
This project will be exhibited in the RIT Bevier gallery as partial fulfillment of the MFA. It will be kept on file by the school for future research use. A portion of the project will take the form of an article that will be submitted for publication to such magazines as *Graphis*, *Communication Arts* and *Print* magazine.
Evaluation Plan

Objectives

• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to identify five key biographical elements about Dr. Robert L. Leslie.

• After reading the information, the user should be able to compare five events of Dr. Leslie’s life and career to five historically significant events.

• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to define six different aspects of Dr. Leslie’s career.

• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to create a list of at least ten of the pioneering designers that Dr. Leslie mentored.

• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to discuss the role Dr. Leslie played in the careers of at least seven pioneering designers.

• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to identify the work of at least seven pioneering designers.

• After reviewing the information, the user will be able to write a list of at least ten of the artists and designers showcased in PM and AD magazines.

• After reviewing the information, the user will be able to make a list of at least ten of the designers shown at the A-D Gallery.

Evaluation Strategies

• The user will be given a questionnaire to fill out asking him/her to identify key biographical elements.

• The user will fill out a questionnaire and identify comparative information.

• The user will be asked to define several aspects of Dr. Leslie’s career via a questionnaire.

• The user will be asked to create a list of designers.

• Will observe a discussion about the role Dr. Leslie played in the history of graphic design.

• Will show the user work of designers and will ask the user to identify by artist.

• The user will be asked to write a list as part of an evaluation questionnaire.

• The user will be asked to write a list as part of an evaluation questionnaire.
• After reviewing the information, the user will be able to recognize the influence of the Composing Room, Inc. within the history of graphic design and make a list of at least five contributing factors.

• After reviewing the information, the user should be able to identify at least five significant elements of this work.

• After using this project the user will be able to provide feedback on at least two categories.

• After using this product the user will be able to answer at least ten questions about the product.

• The user will be asked to discuss the influence of the Composing Room and to make a list of the contributing factors. The discussion will be observed.

• The user will be asked to identify five significant elements of this work via a questionnaire.

• The user will give feedback via a semantic differential list of statements.

• The user will be asked to use the interactive database and will answer questions about the navigation and information presented. This will be directly observed.
AD Magazine
Vol. VI, No. 6 (August - September 1940)
“Irvine Kamers”
“Jean Carlu”

AD Magazine
Vol. VII, No. 5 (June - July 1941)
“Alex Steinweiss”
“Herbert Bayer’s Design Class”

AD Magazine
Vol. VIII, No. 3 (February - March 1942)
“Will Burtin”

PM Magazine
Vol. IV, No. 6 (April - May, 1938)
“Hans Barschel”
“AIGA 50 American Prints 1933 - 1938”

PM Magazine
Vol. 5, No. 2 (August - September 1939)
“Agha’s American Decade”
“NY World’s Fair Design Student’s Guide”

“Dr. Leslie’s Life Was One of Purpose, Helping Many Others to Achievement,” Printing News


Meggs, Philip
*A History of Graphic Design*, 2nd ed

Remington, R. Roger and Barbara J. Hodik
*Nine Pioneers in American Graphic Design*

New York Times
Obituary, April 3, 1987

Personal Interviews
Discussion with Herb Johnson
October 25, 1993
**Glossary of Terms**

**PM Magazine**  The publication published by Dr. Robert Leslie to promote artists, designers and printing education.

**AD Magazine**  *PM* became *AD* after Dr. Robert Leslie sold the name to Ralph Ingersoll. Stands for Art Direction.

**‘Uncle’ Bob**  Dr. Robert Leslie

**Job Printer**  A print shop that print on a job to job basis

**Industrial Doctor**  A doctor specifically hired by industry or a manufacturing company. Dr. Leslie was the first Industrial doctor in New York city, hired by McGraw Hill Publishing Co.

**Gebraushgraphik**  Influential graphic design journal first published in 1925. Dr. Leslie was the American liaison and began publishing *PM* magazine when *Gebraushgraphik* folded.

**The Composing Room**  Typesetting firm run by Dr. Robert L. Leslie and Sol Cantor. Also published *PM* and *AD* magazines and sponsored A-D gallery exhibits and later Gallery 303.

**The “Creative Forties”**  Term coined by Dr. Leslie to describe the excitement and creativity of the graphic arts industry during the 1940’s.
Appendix

i - Timeline of Dr. Leslie's life
ii - Notes from 4 hour videotape of Dr. Leslie
iii - Preliminary database categories
iv - Photocopies of obituaries and articles
   Printing News
   Printing History
   Publishers Weekly
v - Preliminary timeline of A -D Gallery exhibits
vi - Notes from discussion with Herb Johnson
vii - Initial Thesis project timeline
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>Classes begin</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>First preliminary meeting with Roger Remington</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 14</td>
<td><strong>Thesis proposal</strong> - first draft</td>
<td>Meet with Bruce Meader</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meet with Barbara Polowy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Confirm thesis committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 21</td>
<td>Turn in Thesis Proposal to School of Art</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Situation Analysis</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Problem Statement</strong></td>
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<td>September 28</td>
<td><strong>Situation Analysis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Problem Statement</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Mission Statement</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Processes and Strategies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research and find videotape interview with Dr. Leslie</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 5</td>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Processes and Strategies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 12</td>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Pragmatic Considerations</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Dissemination</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Evaluation Plan</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Appendix</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Database categories</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| October 19 | Timeline of thesis project  
Bibliography  
Glossary  
Research in the Cary Library  
List of names to interview or contact  
Database development |
| October 26 | Timeline of thesis project  
Bibliography  
Glossary  
Gather information about Dr. Leslie’s life  
Review videotapes  
Talk to Herb Johnson  
Timeline of Dr. Leslie’s life |
| November 2 | Bibliography  
Glossary  
Begin multi track timeline (Dr. Leslie’s life, *PM* and *AD* magazine, A-D Gallery)  
Add information to database  
Talk to David Pankow |
| November 9 | Develop interview questions |
| November 10| Last day of classes |
| November 11| Turn in Final Thesis Project plan  
Interview people by phone, in person |
<p>| November 17| Fall break |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| December 1   | Winter Quarter begins  
Research *PM* and *AD* magazines                                |
| December 7   | Tentative first committee meeting  
Review proposal                                                      |
| December 14  | Index *PM* and *AD* magazine  
Index A-D Gallery exhibit information                                 |
| December 21  | Last class before christmas break                                    |
| January 3, 1994 | Classes resume  
Index *PM* and *AD* magazine  
Index A-D Gallery exhibit information                                 |
| January 4    | Research refugee designers  
Interview people who knew them                                         |
<p>| January 11   | Interviewing                                                          |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| January 18 | Write short bios  
|            | Gather samples  
|            | Add info to database                                                |
| January 25 | Interpret information to show significance of Dr. Leslie’s contribution |
| February 1 | Enter all information into database  
|            | Begin writing article                                                |
| February 15| Tentative thesis committee meeting  
<p>|            | Review information, database structure, article                      |
| February 18| Last day of classes                                                  |
| February 27| Winter break begins                                                  |
| March 7    | Spring classes begin                                                 |
| March 14   | First thesis show opens                                              |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| March 15 | Committee meeting  
                    review layouts, database and exhibition ideas |
| March 22 | Prepare for show  
                    Writing article                                      |
| April 1  | Finished article for publication                                      |
| April 4  | Second thesis show opens                                              |
| April 12 | Interview readers of article via reader response card  
                    Interview users of database about presentation, information access |
<p>| April 19 | Prepare for show                                                     |
| April 25 | Third thesis show opens                                               |
| April 30 | Evaluate project                                                     |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Begin writing Thesis book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>1st draft - give to each committee member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Committee meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>review first draft - changes, suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>2nd draft - give to each committee member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 16</td>
<td>Last day of classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Committee meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>review second draft - changes, suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>Finished thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signing by each committee member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Database categories

### Contacts
- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Relationship to Dr. Leslie
- Relationship to refugee artists

### Listing of refugee artists
- Name
- Country of origin
- School or style
- Major European clients
  - Samples of work
- Major American clients
  - Samples of work
- Type of artist
  - Illustrator
  - Art director
  - Commercial artist
  - Designer
  - Type designer
  - Painter
PM and AD Magazine

Issue no.
Date
Size
Processes and techniques
  typestyles used
inserts
  processes and techniques
  typestyles used
Source of document
Editorial listing of articles
Photographs
  credits
Illustrations
  credits
Cover artist
Featured artist/Designer
  Country of origin
Client list
Samples of Work shown
  clients
  short bios
  author of feature
Books reviewed
Listing of advertisements
Cataloger
Data entry by
Date entered
<table>
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<tr>
<th>The Composing Room</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-D Gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designers/Artists shown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samples of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short bios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibit announcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>designer</td>
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<tr>
<td>techniques and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>typestyle</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Bibliography**

**Glossary**
Our Mission. The College of Art and Design is RIT’s creative hub where art, design, and technology intersect. From centuries-old and contemporary methods of producing fine art to the latest in digital media, we have a wide selection of majors in disciplines related to visual communication, imaging, and science. If your interests are artistic, creative, and professional, a world of possibilities awaits you here.

Faculty Description. At College of Image Arts and Sciences, students can learn how to produce various kinds of media such as film, video, mobile media, CG, and interactive content. As a comprehensive university, we strive to foster highly educated individuals that possess solid expertise and a comprehensive perspective of visual arts by providing many practical opportunities such as internships and courses with hands-on experience. The latest professional equipment and facilities, including a studio provided in partnership with Shochiku Co., Ltd. exclusively for College of Image Arts and Sciences. High employment rate. 98.1% of all 2014 graduates were able to find employment.

Astrophysics and Planetary Science. Scientists like postdoctoral researcher Jake D. Turner and his advisor, Ray Jayawardhana, the Harold Tanner Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, utilize cutting edge telescope arrays to monitor radio emissions from beyond our solar system. Explore more research in astrophysics and planetary science. Engaging our community and our world. Engagement for an informed society. Distinguished Visiting Journalist Program. The College of Arts & Sciences’ new Distinguished Visiting Journalist Program brings accomplished journalists to Cornell for extended stay. Welcome to the College of Arts & Sciences. We continue to build a culture of academic excellence and rigor that prepares talented students to solve local and global problems. Start/End Date: February 1 - August 31, 2021 Pay up to $15,000 MA or PhD students; preference given to students in political science, sociology, communications, history, psychology or related fields, as well as STEM students with relevant experience in qualitative research and data analysis Howard University graduate students preferred Requirements: High Speed Internet Qualitative research experience Submit the following information in a College of Arts and Sciences or School of Arts and Sciences is most commonly a unit within a university which focuses on instruction of the liberal arts and pure sciences, especially in North America and the Philippines, although they frequently include programs and faculty in fine arts, social sciences, and other disciplines. In contrast, an "art school" or "college of arts" usually refers to a unit or institution which cultivates visual or performing arts, while the phrasing "liberal arts college"