



Jan Tschichold (1902–1974), who emigrated from Germany to Switzerland in 1933, is considered the father of the so-called New Typography. He brought Bauhaus ideas to Switzerland, expressed programmatically in his 1937 poster for an exhibition of international avant-garde Constructivist artists at the Kunsthalle Basel.

In 1928, Jan Tschichold published a seminal handbook on the New Typography in which he summarized its achievements and advocated the functional use of type. Typography was also to be understood, however, as a design tool open to experimentation. This rational approach would exert a major influence on subsequent generations of graphic designers and typographers. Tschichold's 1937 poster for the Constructivism exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel is a prime illustration of his groundbreaking ideas. The only design element is a single circle, which bears the exhibition title and is rendered in a shade only a few tones darker than the background. The sans-serif type is in all lowercase. For the overall composition, Tschichold stuck to strict mathematical laws related to the

classical theory of proportion. The result is a sensitive balance of symmetry and asymmetry, orchestrated through horizontal and vertical elements as well as the contrast of blank space and type. Everything is deliberately planned down to the smallest detail, for example the small black dot that highlights information about the show. In 1937, a Constructivism exhibition so close to the German border could have undoubtedly been understood as a political protest against the Nazi regime. (Bettina Richter)

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