



Blatt aus Manual, SBB CFF FFS – Visuelles Informationssystem in Bahnhöfen und Stationen – 1.01 Die Konstruktion des SBB Signets, 1978–80
Gestaltung: Müller-Brockmann + Co., Zürich, CH / Josef Müller-Brockmann mit Peter Spalinger
Entwurf Signet: Hans Hartmann (1972)
Auftrag: Schweizerische Bundesbahnen, Bern, CH
Material/Technik: Papier, Offsetdruck / Schrift: Helvetica (British Rail)
29.7 × 21 cm
Donation: Shizuko Yoshikawa (Archiv Josef Müller-Brockmann)
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

In the 1970s, the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB), under pressure from private road transport, began a policy of expansion. And its graphic identity was finally given its due importance. The SBB's comprehensive information system rapidly took on international significance.

When Josef Müller-Brockmann (1914–1996) received the commission to design SBB's visual information system in 1978, the Heitersberg line from Zurich to Lenzburg—the first major new SBB route to be developed in decades—and the new Bern station were only recently operative. The opening of the Kloten Airport railway station was as important as the implementation of the nationwide timetable—which as of 1982 would considerably simplify rail travel. In the 1972 trademark, Hans Hartmann incorporated the Swiss cross while transforming it into a traffic symbol. It conveyed the message that the SBB was a company that belonged to and served the entire nation. In the revised version, Müller-Brockmann softened Hartmann's

austere geometry in order to achieve a more vibrant design in the details of the white double-arrow cross. Now, red "Swiss flag" traffic signs and blue place-name signs were part of station signage throughout the country. They probably even inspired the later federal law that required that the official national flag be "railway" red as well. The signage system also included pictograms, direction arrows, track numbers, and departure display panels, as well as local poster timetables and the comprehensive route guide for private use. As a typeface, SBB required the use of Helvetica in its well-established British Rail version. The set of rules was based on a simple grid and was adaptable to all situations, also thanks to its two upgrades up through 1992. The clarity and consistency of the visual information system also made it possible to intuitively direct the subsequent significantly larger passenger flows. (Andres Janser)

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