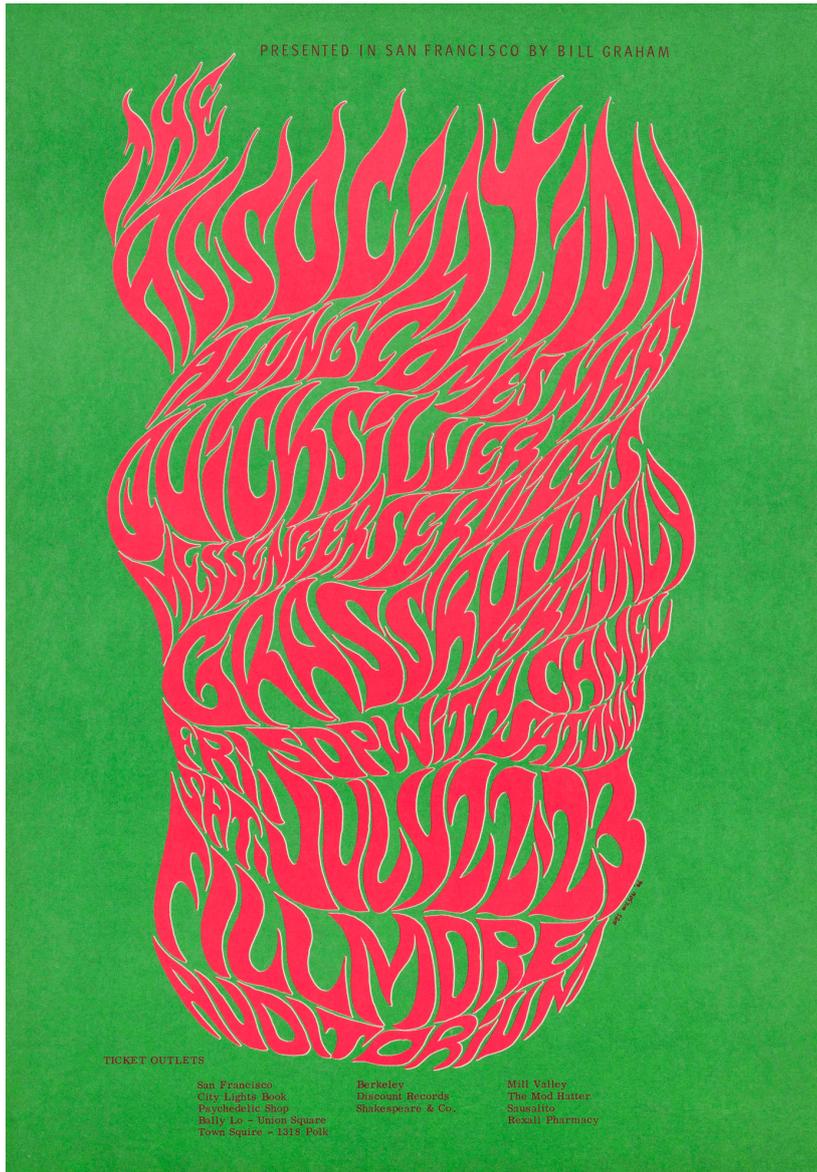


Poster
The Association – Along Comes
Mary – Quicksilver Messenger Ser-
vice – Grassroots

Wes Wilson
1966



Plakat, The Association – Along Comes Mary –
Quicksilver Messenger Service – Grassroots, 1966
Erscheinungsland: USA
Gestaltung: Wes Willson
Auftrag: Fillmore Auditorium, San Francisco, US
Material/Technik: Offset
51 x 35.5 cm
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

In San Francisco during the colorful 1960s, psychedelic rock music embodied the rise of the counterculture. The music found its counterpart in a graphic art that was also under the influence of mind-bending drugs: Wes Wilson's (b. 1937) concert poster from 1966 is both emotionally seductive and visually challenging.

The self-taught graphic designer Wes Wilson was one of the most influential pioneers of the psychedelic San Francisco rock poster. Always on the lookout for new inspiration, he experimented with drugs to help him put his musical experiences into pictures. "A lot of people are poets, real or imagined, and they like to see visual poetry set into poster formats as much as they like songs with great lyrics," said Wilson, who was especially notable for his extremely creative handling of lettering. At first sight, his concert poster seems to derive its appeal from its expressive form and the almost painful contrast between the two complementary colors. That this picture of a blazing flame is made up of twisting and

turning letters only becomes apparent upon closer scrutiny. With their wild contortions the letters recall the ecstatic dancing to the rock music being played at the Avalon Ballroom and Fillmore Auditorium. An important source of inspiration for Wilson's type design was the Viennese Secessionist Alfred Roller (1864–1935), whose *Künstlerische Schrift* (Artistic Typeface) of 1900 Wilson discovered at the legendary exhibition at the University of California, Berkeley, entitled *Jugendstil & Expressionism in German Posters*. By eschewing immediate legibility, the San Francisco rock poster indicated that it was designed only for the initiated and thus acquired its subversive potential. Soon, however, commercial graphic artists were appropriating this style of poster art, leading to a drop in quality in the late 1960s that finally spelled its end. (Bettina Richter)

<https://www.eguide.ch/en/objekt/the-association-along-comes-mary-quicksilver-messenger-service-grassroots/>

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