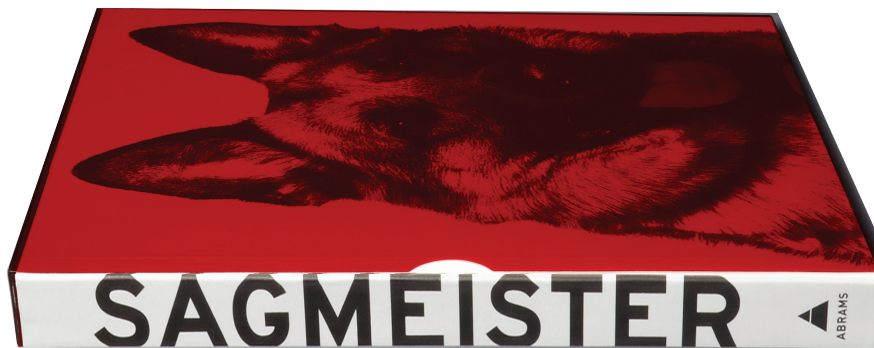


STEFAN



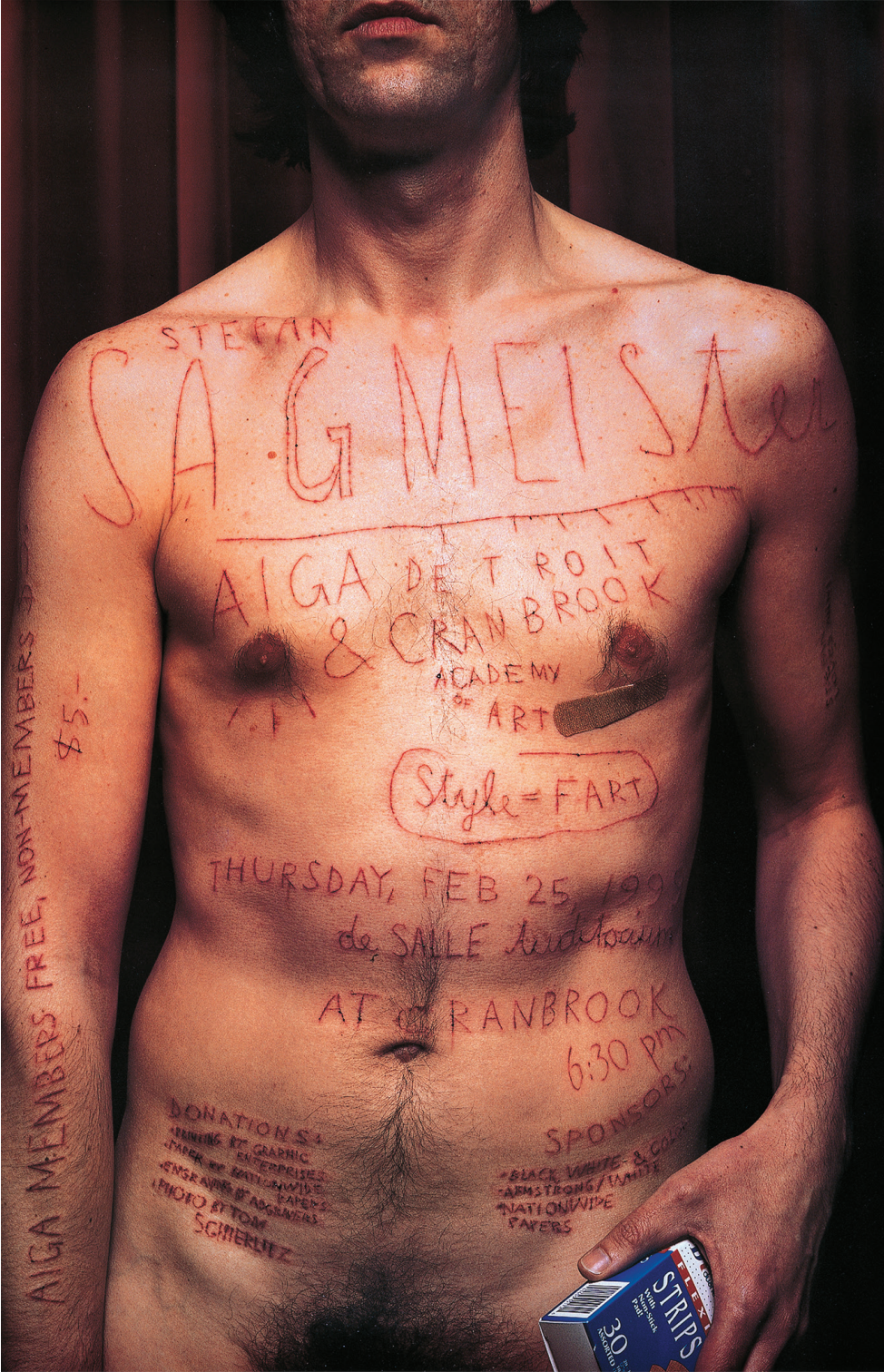
SAGMEISTER

**One of the most
controversial
designers
alive today**

Stefan Sagmeister

Stefan Sagmeister has been described as a conceptual typographer. His designs often appear with simple, bright colours employing bolded black text juxtaposed with his own handwriting or a unique custom font that he designed himself. His use of text often makes the viewer uncomfortable, such as a poster he designed for the Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of Hong Kong, which showed a painting of four Chinese men literally calling for entries, followed by a panel of the men bending over and baring their behinds to represent the “four A’s”. Another example of unique use of type which makes the viewer uncomfortable was a poster for the American Institute of Graphic Arts, where he posed nude for a photo with the text carved into his body with a knife by one of his interns.

► Sagmeister created this lecture poster for AIGA Detroit by having his intern cut the type into his skin.

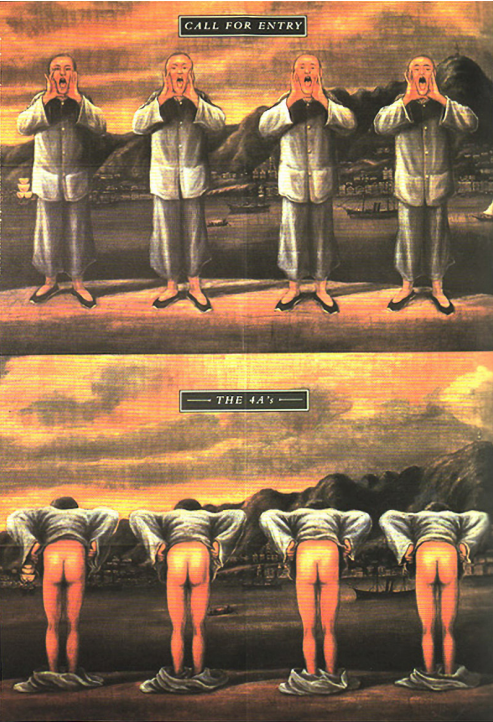


Creative process

Sagmeister likes to think about ideas and content freely, while the deadline for the work is still far away. He likes to focus on a single project a time without interruption. He likes to choose projects that matter to him personally. He likes to use a wide variety of tools and techniques. He tries to get his designs to feel partly brand new and partly familiar at the same time. He looks forward to seeing completed work come back from the printer and getting feedback from people who view his work.



◄ AIGA conference invitation featuring extremely small type.



▲ Four A's awards invitation.

“Complaining is silly. Either act or forget.”

Views on design

Sagmeister sees design as playing an integral role in modern man’s life, with our surroundings being almost completely designed objects which play the same role in our lives as nature did for our prehistoric ancestors in the rainforest. He believes that our surroundings can be designed well or be designed badly and that the distinction makes a big difference in our lives. Sagmeister believes it is important for creative people to spend a certain part of their time doing something they are truly interested in. He notes that every designer that he personally admires incorporates this philosophy into their lives. Sagmeister quotes Donald Judd in saying that “design needs to work, art does not”.

► Poster for an exhibition in Zurich. The numbers and size of the designs on the suits represent the number of times they have been featured in design publications.



Influenced by

Sagmeister cites his greatest influence as Tibor Kalman, who Sagmeister worked under at his New York studio in 1993 after begging Kalman to hire him and offer a work visa. He had a keen interest in Kalman’s method of exploring ideology and imagery found within culture as well as exploration of social taboos.

▼ Packaging for a limited edition David Byrne and Brian Eno album.

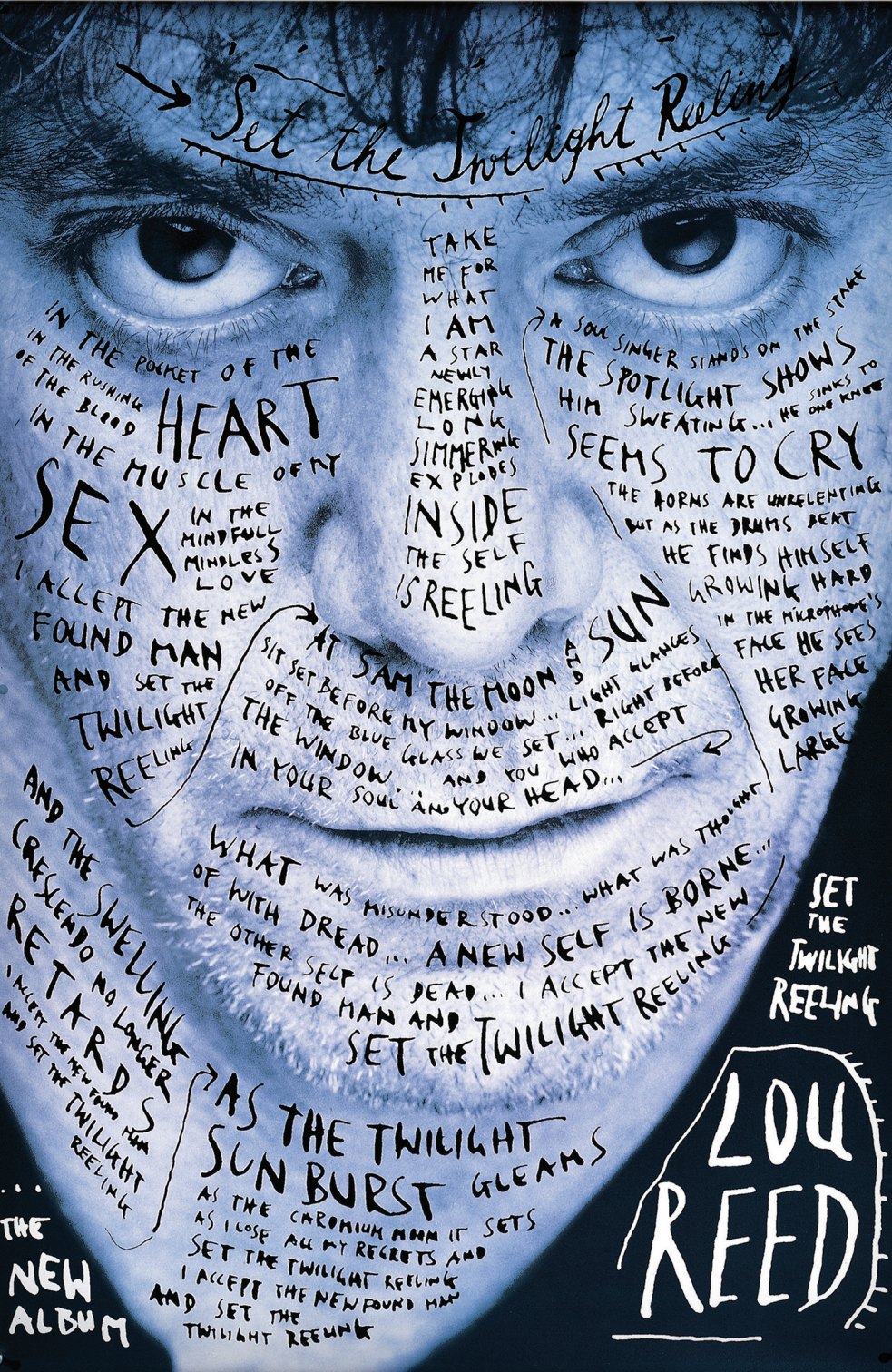


“Having guts always works out for me.”

◀ Having Guts Always Works Out For Me: Comissioned for .copy magazine.

Made you look

The theme of making the viewer uncomfortable is prevalent in his work and won him one of his Grammy awards for H. P. Zinke’s album cover Mountains of Madness. The CD jewel case is made of clear red plastic and the album cover shows a man with a calm face in the sleeve behind it. But when the sleeve is removed from the red plastic, the face is revealed to show the man’s face in a state of panic and distress. Sagmeister was inspired to create works such as this after seeing a dyslexic girl study her math book using a sheet of red cellophane.



► Poster to promote Lou Reed’s album ‘Set the Twilight Reeling’, featuring typography inspired by Iranian artist Shirin Neshat.

Achievements

- Founded Sagmeister Inc. in 1993 creating designs for the music industry.
- Designed album covers for hit albums including Lou Reed, OK Go, The Rolling Stones, Jay Z, Aerosmith, Talking Heads, and Brian Eno.
- Teaches graduate design at the New York School of Visual Arts and chairs the New York Cooper Union School of Art.
- Awards including two Grammys for music packaging (Talking Heads boxset and David Byrne/Brian Eno collaborative album).



▲ Exhibit while at residence in at the MAK museum in Vienna.



“It is very important to embrace failure and to do a lot of stuff—as much stuff as possible—with as little fear as possible. It’s much, much better to wind up with a lot of crap having tried it than to overthink in the beginning and not do it.”

◀ Banana Wall: 10,000 bananas were used to spell out a message for Sagmeister’s gallery opening. The message faded over time as the bananas ripened.

