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### **Alan Fletcher**

Alan Fletcher was a British Graphic Designer for 50 years of his life. He was born in Nairobi, Kenya on September 27th, 1931 and died 6 days before his birthday on September 21st, 2006 at the age of 74 in London. He had a wife named Paola Biagi whom he married in 1956 and they had a daughter named Raffaella Fletcher. His daughter and wife are not well known like Alan Fletcher was. Although he got married and had a family he still continued to further his studies to create his own design firm, publish his own books, as well as other inspiring graphic design works.

In the early years of Alan Fletcher's life he spent it in Nairobi, Kenya the place of his birth. His family lived in Kenya until his father's health started to decline badly. They then moved to England when Alan was just 5 to be taken care of by his mother and grandparents in West London. While the war (WW2) was taking place he went to boarding school in Horsham where they believed he was fit to be in the army, church, or banking. Fletcher didn't not like any of these so he decided to go to Hammersmith School of Art in 1949. During the 1950's, Fletcher went to 4 different art schools and some of which he met the people he would later work with. After Alan graduated he moved to Barcelona to teach English at Berlitz Language School for about a year.

Eventually Fletcher returned to London to attend the Royal College of Art in 1953 where he met his future wife Paola Biagi (m. 1956). He also visited the United States with his wife for 2 years to get as much knowledge of US graphic design as he could before they moved back to London which his wife liked a lot. After Fletcher got back to London he continued his studies at

Yale School of Architecture where his skills flourished under the supervision of some of the most notable graphic designers and artists (Paul Rand, Herbert Matter, etc.). In 1958, Fletcher was commissioned to design a cover for *Fortune* Magazine by Leo Lionni.

During his time travelling and studying, Fletcher was also working on his own design firm. In the year of 1962, he co-founded “Fletcher Forbes Gill” with a partnership with Colin Forbes and Bob Gill. In the next year together they produced *Graphic Design: A Visual Comparison*, a book about graphic design and what it is. Eventually, Gill left the firm and was replaced by Theo Crosby. Ten years after the firm was founded it evolved into Pentagram and added two more partners joined the firm, as well as more people seeking out their expertise. Fletcher also founded the British Design & Art Direction with some of his most trusted and creative friends. It was later renamed as Designers and Art Directors Association (D&AD). To this day some of Fletcher's creations and ideas are still used today.

In 1992, after decades of work, Alan Fletcher left the Pentagram. He decided to work from his home in Notting Hill with his daughter helping him. About a year later he joined the Phaidon Press which is where he produced the majority of his work as an art director. Fletcher believed that “Design is a way of life.” In 1994, the book titled *Beware Wet Paint* by Jeremy Myerson, one of many books on graphic design that he wrote. Fletcher took 18 years for his magnum opus, *The Art of Looking Sideways*, which was published in 2001. The Design Council later awarded him the Prince Philip Designers Prize in 1993. Fletcher’s life came to an end when the cancer he had finally took his life just six days before his 75th birthday on September 21st, 2006 in London.

Alan Fletcher is still known by many graphic designers today. His work and ideas still continue to flourish through the minds of other graphic designers that want to follow in his footsteps.

## Works Cited

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