

IKON

Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham
b1 2hs
tel. +44 (0) 121 248 0708 / fax. +44 (0) 121 248 0709
website. www.ikon-gallery.co.uk
Ikon Gallery is a registered charity no. 528892

Arefin & Arefin: The graphic design of Tony Arefin

12 September – 4 November 2012

Ikon presents the first survey of work by Tony Arefin (1962–2000), a graphic designer who emerged during the late 1980s as one of the most important figures in the British art world. With his numerous catalogues for institutions such as Chisenhale Gallery, Serpentine Gallery, the ICA and Ikon itself, Arefin had achieved such art world dominance by the early 1990s that design critic Rick Poyner described him as ‘single-handedly processing the print needs of the entire British art scene’. Comprising early publications from the YBA movement to seminal advertising campaigns for corporate clients such as IBM and Nike, the exhibition reveals the intuitive genius of Arefin’s work.

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Abed Mohammed Arefin (later nicknamed Tony by his mother) moved with his family to Bangladesh and then, in 1974, to London as a result of political upheavals in Dhaka. Arefin worked as a picture editor and design assistant for several London magazines, before a brief period as a curator at The Photographers’ Gallery. There he organised an important exhibition of Neville Brody’s influential graphic design for *The Face* magazine, and began designing his own catalogues soon after. He often referred to himself then as ‘Arefin & Arefin’, at once jokily assuming a corporate brand (chiming with Saatchi & Saatchi) and implying multiple identities. Tony and Abed Mohammed, English and Asian - later to split his career into halves, London followed by New York - Arefin was renowned for his compartmentalising tendency.

Naturally gravitating towards the art world, Arefin produced work for a variety of institutions and seminal YBA exhibitions such as *Freeze* (1988) and *Modern Medicine* (1990), both organised by Damien Hirst. He later designed catalogues for artists such as Douglas Gordon, Graham Gussin, Cornelia Parker, Jasper Morrison and Adrian Piper.

Taking full advantage of the possibilities presented by the Apple Macintosh computer and the advent of desktop publishing, Arefin established his reputation as an independent designer. He created a bold visual language, combining acerbic colours, irreverent use of photography and striking typography. Borrowing from contemporary trends in magazine design his work brought a refreshing directness, in stark contrast to the surprisingly conservative applications of graphic design in much art publishing.

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In 1993 Arefin left London for New York, becoming creative director of *I.D.* magazine. In an intensive four year period he immersed himself in magazine culture, art directing three other titles simultaneously: the artists' magazine *Bomb*, photography quarterly *Blind Spot* and *Art and Auction*. As an art director he was able to express fully his expansive vision of graphic design. Exploiting his intimate knowledge of the art world, he collaborated freely with photographers, illustrators and typeface designers to produce some of his most striking and dynamic work.

His prolific output attracted the interest of the advertising industry, and in 1997 Arefin accepted an offer to move to Portland, Oregon as an art director at the agency Wieden & Kennedy. He returned to New York the following year as partner at Ogilvy & Mather. In these corporate settings, Arefin's energy and generosity were a revelation. He produced award-winning work such as IBM's *Magic Box* campaign.

Curated by designer James Langdon, this exhibition rediscovers the contribution of an important but overlooked designer. Material has been generously loaned by Tony Arefin's family, and from many of his friends, clients and collaborators.

This exhibition is supported by Ogilvy & Mather. A fully illustrated catalogue, designed by James Langdon and including text by Emily King and interviews with Rick Poynor and Jonathan Watkins, will be available.

Ends.

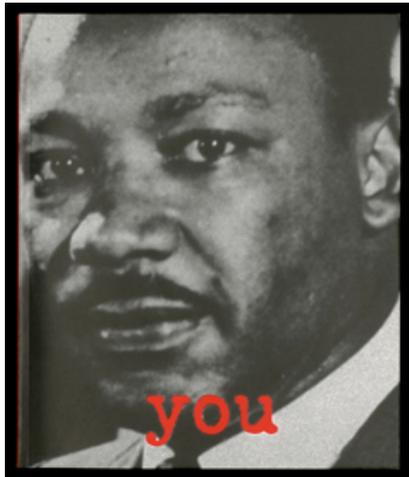
Note to Editors:

1. Private View on Wednesday 12 September, 12-8pm.
2. Sample images are shown on the next page.
3. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 6pm. Admission is free.
4. Ikon Gallery is a registered charity and receives core funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon. Registered address: 1 Oozells Square, Birmingham B1 2HS.

For more information, high-res images and to arrange an interview with the curator please contact Helen Stallard on 0774 033 9604 or email h.stallard@ikon-gallery.co.uk

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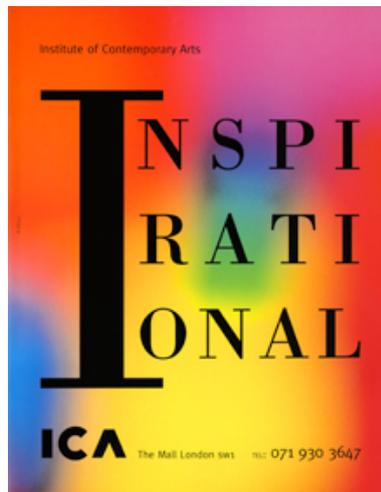
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Adrian Piper
Ikon Gallery (1991)

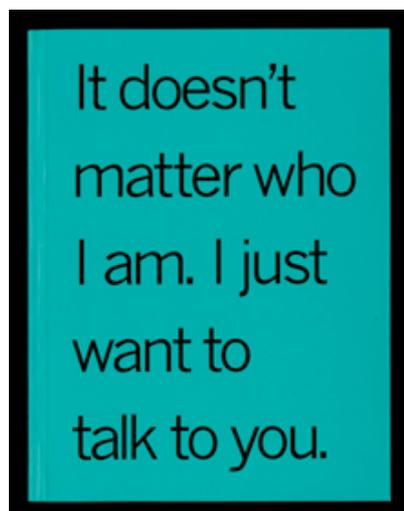
Exhibition Catalogue

Designed by Tony Arefin



Press advert for Institute of Contemporary Arts (1991)

Designed by Tony Arefin



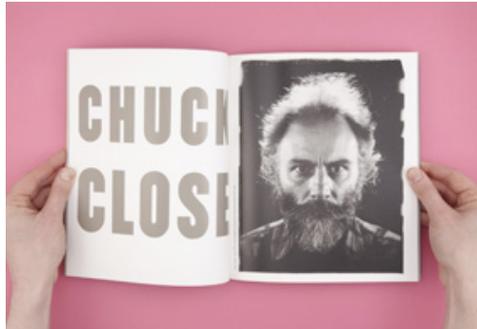
The Sociable Art of Douglas Gordon
Tramway, Glasgow (1993)

Exhibition Catalogue

Designed by Tony Arefin

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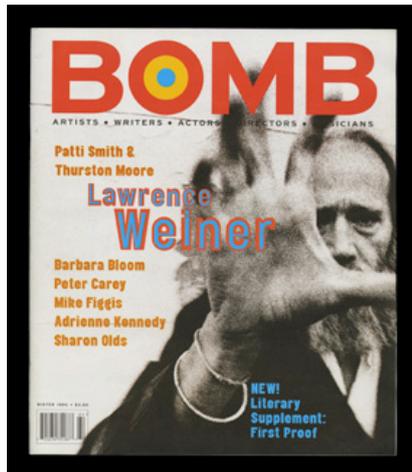
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Blind Spot magazine, Issue eight (1996)

Art direction by Tony Arefin

Courtesy *Blind Spot*



Bomb magazine (Winter 1996)

Art direction by Tony Arefin

Designed by Miranda Dempster