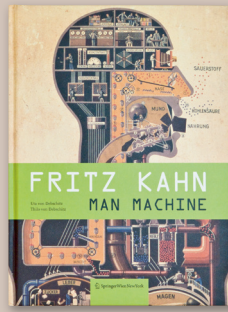




**Graphic Design Referenced**

Rockport  
21 x 25 cm – Hardback – 400 pages – Colour  
English – €50



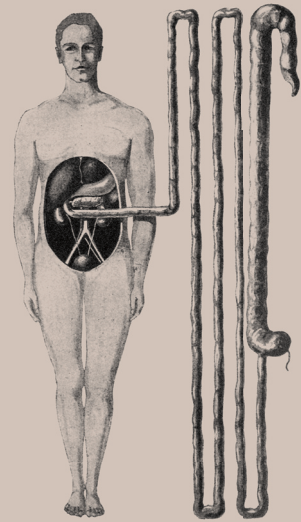
**Fritz Kahn. Man Machine**

Uta von Debschitz and Thilo von Debschitz  
SpringerWienNewYork  
20,5 x 27,5 cm – 207 pages  
French – €49,25



What's the point? So much knowledge accumulated, so many marvellous images, so much energy and ambition invested, reduced to nothing by a shoddy approach. There will be no bible of graphic design. And yet it all started out so differently. The authors, Armin Vit and Bryony Gomez-Palacio, are among the founders of the most important site for thinking and debate about graphic design: [www.underconsideration.com](http://www.underconsideration.com). The idea of linking a history of graphic design to a vast definition of the sector, including a determination of the fields of application and complexities associated with the mastering of a series of practices, was a new and judicious one. But initially the vast selection of references invoked suffered an unfortunate partial paralysis. Eighty percent English-based, the history of graphic design written here smacks of fiction, of the type that the Americans and Russians used to write during the Cold War to appropriate history for themselves. Graphically speaking, the Asian continent does not exist, any more than do Africa or other eastern countries. Europe appears thanks to the British model and some "old Swiss," which would have been too awkward to airbrush out. Rockport's volume will not be exported. Not to France, nor to Switzerland or to the Netherlands, where this model of graphic design work smacks of inanity. Images of the projects realised accumulate one after the other as though forming battalions for battle. No one comes out a winner, not even the short text sulking in a corner of the page. The web model claims its victims. By dint of not counting the space provided, of treating it as something that has to be filled, any coherence vanishes. And this is what has happened in *Graphic Design Referenced*. Despite all the frustrations, it is worth noting a few pages of quality. For instance, it is worth leafing through the historic overview of images that opens the volume. **CB**

Fritz Kahn is a man forgotten by history. And yet this virtuoso of visual allegory, a scientific draughtsman, helped to popularise anatomy at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A great admirer of the human body, which he considered the "most perfect machine in the whole universe," he never ceased to draw associations between this biological entity and the most successful human creations: architecture, factory or machine, as though throughout history man could do nothing other than reproduce the mechanisms in his own body in the inventions he made. In Kahn's drawings, the heart is a piston pump, the stomach and intestines a refinery, the bones the pillars of a cathedral. The variety of styles juggling these visual allegories blend photo-montages, Art Deco influences, traditional anatomical images and modernism. For the first time, these works are brought together in a monograph with 250 illustrations. The author published about a dozen books between 1920 and 1968, however, being a Jew during the war caused his flight from the Nazis and his exile in the United States (supported by Albert Einstein in person), which has made compilation a hard task. Many of his images today remain impossible to find. Those we see here are all enchanting, full of humour and poetry. The scientific pedagogy they bring forward, midway between the worlds of art and apprenticeship, could serve as excellent flagships for visual communication. **CB**



A man produces 30 metres of hair every day. If this production were to be concentrated on just one hair, it would grow by one metre every 40 minutes.