

March 21-July 19, 2009

## Key Psychedelic Poster Artists

*The Psychedelic Experience: Rock Posters from the San Francisco Bay Area, 1965-71*, features artists who defined and developed the psychedelic poster style. The following individuals were movement leaders and offered unique contributions to the poster phenomenon.

### Wes Wilson



Wes Wilson had little academic training, and got his start printing handbills and posters at a San Francisco printing press. The first artist to consistently create posters for the Avalon Ballroom and Fillmore Auditorium, his work is often identified with the first flowering of the psychedelic style. Wilson fashioned his own lettering system by creating three-dimensional, undulating shapes that became the standard most psychedelic artists followed. Wilson's work evoked the full sensory experience of the dancehall environment and the visual distortions brought on by the liquid light shows and psychedelic drugs. Image: Wes Wilson, *Association, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Fillmore Auditorium, San Francisco, 1966*. Collection of David and Sheryl Tippit; © 1966 Wes Wilson

### Bonnie MacLean



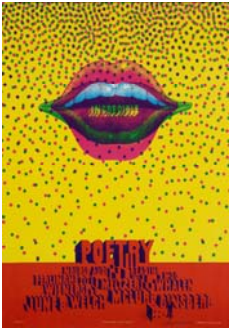
Bonnie MacLean helped her husband, Bill Graham, with just about everything involved in operating the Fillmore, from counting money to designing the “upcoming events” chalkboard in the lobby. This task helped develop her skills as a poster artist. As the only woman artist to receive steady commissions, MacLean produced some posters in Wilson's style, but added her own signature touches. She experimented with cultural diversity and often focused her designs on the facial expressions of detached-looking figures. Image: Bonnie MacLean, *Yardbirds, Doors, Fillmore Auditorium, San Francisco, 1967*. Partial gift of David and Sheryl Tippit; partial purchase with Architecture, Design & Graphics Department Acquisition Funds; and Volunteer Endowment Funds in honor of R. Craig Miller; © Bill Graham Archives, LLC. [www.Wolfgangsvault.com](http://www.Wolfgangsvault.com)

### Alton Kelley and Stanley Mouse



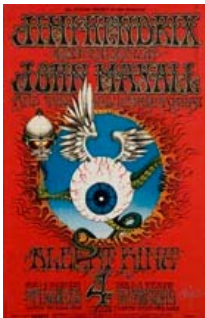
One of the founding members of Family Dog, Kelley handled promotions for its events. After meeting Mouse in 1966, the two collaborated to produce posters that featured light-hearted images. Together, they were known as Mouse Studios, with Kelley imagining the themes and images and Mouse doing the drawing and lettering. One of the most iconic pieces created by the pair was for a concert headlined by the Grateful Dead; they inaugurated the skull-and-roses emblem that became synonymous with the band. Image: Alton Kelley and Stanley Mouse, *Skull and Roses/Grateful Dead, Oxford Circle, Avalon Ballroom, San Francisco, 1966*. Denver Art Museum: Partial gift of David and Sheryl Tippit; partial purchase with Architecture, Design & Graphics Department Acquisition Funds; and Volunteer Endowment Funds in honor of R. Craig Miller; Family Dog © 2008 Rhino Entertainment

### Victor Moscoso



Victor Moscoso was the first academically trained and experienced graphic artist to enter the poster movement. At Yale University, Moscoso studied color theory under artist and color theorist Josef Albers. He took Albers' theories and completely turned them upside down, combining intense, contrasting color. With the vibrating color combinations and lettering pushed to the point of illegibility, Moscoso's posters seem to jump and vibrate off the page. Looking for greater artistic freedom, in 1966 Moscoso formed his own poster production company, The Neon Rose, which allowed him to retain the rights to his own designs. Image: Victor Moscoso, *Incredible Poetry*, Norse Auditorium, San Francisco, 1968. Partial gift of David and Sheryl Tippit; partial purchase with Architecture, Design & Graphics Department Acquisition Funds; and Volunteer Endowment Funds in honor of R. Craig Miller; © 1968 Neon Rose

### Rick Griffin



Originally from Southern California, Rick Griffin started out creating comics for *Surfer Magazine*. After a friend showed him some psychedelic posters, Griffin decided to move to San Francisco to see what he could add to the scene. Griffin drew inspiration from the surrounding counterculture of music and drugs. Old Western imagery, bold color combinations and highly decorative lettering became his trademarks. As he saw it, the lettering was a piece of art in itself. Image: Rick Griffin, *Flying Eyeball/Jimi Hendrix Experience, John Mayall and the Blues Breakers, Fillmore Auditorium/Winterland, San Francisco*, 1968. Partial gift of David and Sheryl Tippit; partial purchase with Architecture, Design & Graphics Department Acquisition Funds; and Volunteer Endowment Funds in honor of R. Craig Miller; © Bill Graham Archives, LLC. [www.Wolfgangsvault.com](http://www.Wolfgangsvault.com)

### Lee Conklin



Of all the San Francisco rock posters, Lee Conklin's are the most directly expressive of the psychedelic experience. Conklin composed posters in overnight sessions during which he crammed forms into almost every single letter and figure. His objects are rarely what they first appear to be. What begins as the letter D might morph into a bird, then after a blink or two transform into two birds. His style of alternative realities and occasional dark images reflected the changes occurring in the counterculture community as young people crowded Haight-Ashbury and drug use skyrocketed. Image: Lee Conklin, *Steppenwolf, Grateful Dead, Fillmore West, San Francisco*, 1968. Partial gift of David and Sheryl Tippit; partial purchase with Architecture, Design & Graphics Department Acquisition Funds; and Volunteer Endowment Funds in honor of R. Craig Miller; © Bill Graham Archives, LLC. [www.Wolfgangsvault.com](http://www.Wolfgangsvault.com)

### David Singer



When David Singer walked into the Fillmore's office, Bill Graham was looking for an artist to take his posters in a new direction. The shock value and appeal of the posters being illegible had worn off, and Singer's work was cool and reserved with subtle visual impact. Working almost entirely with photographic materials, Singer's creations stemmed from his interest in collage. Pulling images from magazines and books, he added his own inventive lettering to create what he called "visual poems". Singer designed more posters for the Fillmore than any other artist, creating 67 examples during the venue's last two years. Image: David Singer, *Grateful Dead, Miles Davis Quintet, Fillmore West, San Francisco*, 1970. Partial gift of David and Sheryl Tippit; partial purchase with Architecture, Design & Graphics Department Acquisition Funds; and Volunteer Endowment Funds in honor of R. Craig Miller; © Bill Graham Archives, LLC. [www.Wolfgangsvault.com](http://www.Wolfgangsvault.com)