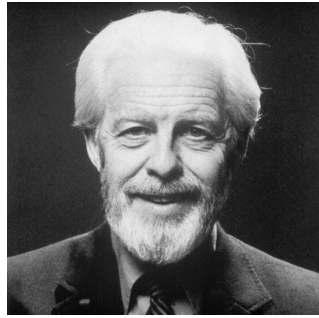


**2004 AIGA Medalist:
Jay Doblin**

Recognition
2004 AIGA Medal Born
1920, New York, New York
Deceased
1989, Chicago

By AIGA
March 01, 2004



Jay Doblin (1920–1989) believed in the power of design to solve large-scale and complex problems. He was an innovator in industrial, product and graphic design, design methods, design theory, and management. Through his teaching, practice, and role as spokesperson, he continually pushed the profession to extend itself beyond surface roles.

Doblin studied industrial design at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, graduating in 1942. He designed camouflage for the military before being hired by Raymond Loewy in New York with whom he worked for the next 12 years, much of that time as executive designer managing the office's largest accounts that included Shell Oil, Nabisco, Coca Cola, and BP.



The Alcoa chairs, left and above, were produced in association with a campaign to demonstrate the versatility of aluminum. Doblin and his chairs appeared in several publications in the spring of 1960



The electric car is by Marny Ferguson, a student of Doblin's from the Institute of Design in the early 1960's

In 1964, following a brief stint as a partner in Lippincott & Marguiles, then the country's leading corporate identity firm, Doblin co-founded Unimark International, which became the world's largest design firm of that era with offices in seven countries. At Unimark, he worked with the J.C. Penney Company to develop a comprehensive corporate identity program that in 1974 won an IDSA Special Award for the Advancement of Design. After leaving Unimark in 1972, Doblin formed Jay Doblin & Associates, in Chicago, a firm which has managed innovative programs for Xerox Corporation, General Electric, American Hospital Association, Borg-Warner, and others. The company was sold to partners in 1985 but continues to extend and apply Doblin's theories and methods.

Throughout his life, even as he ran these large design offices, Doblin was a dedicated and influential educator. From 1947 to 1952 he served as chairman of the evening division of the Pratt Institute. In 1955, after the resignation of Serge Chermayeff, he was selected to direct Chicago's celebrated Institute of Design—established by the late Laszlo Moholy Nagy in 1937 and part of the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) since 1946. While maintaining the experimental nature of the school, Doblin broadened the curriculum to include more formal methods and theories of design. His emphasis on design methods remains one of the school's strengths.

Through his 32-year-long connection with the Institute, as director and teacher, Doblin influenced thousands of designers, many of whom now lead major product design and graphic design operations worldwide.

His influence also extended to policy making. In 1959 Doblin advised Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry on the formation of a national design policy that helped to develop the export laws, design practices and schools that were instrumental in improving product quality.

“Jay Doblin taught us the importance of rule-based design systems. Each added eloquence, clarity and commonality.” — Clement Mok

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