

Sri Lankan Commercial Artists of the Pre-Digital Era: A Case Study of the History of Graphic Design in Sri Lanka

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The aim of this study is to examine and identify the work of artists & designers of the pre-digital era of commercial art in Sri Lanka. It is problematic that many of the commercial work done in this era are not properly documented, deliberately or accidentally, despite the fact that many well-known artists have worked as designers, to create logos, posters, book covers and advertisements, etc.. The study was conducted using both literary and field surveys. Literature survey was conducted to gather information about the documented commercial artists in 1950 to 1980. Whereas a field survey, inclusive of interviews with authors, collectors, and artists who were active in this era, was conducted to gather undocumented information. Evidently, only a handful of work can be authentically attributed to their creators. Some famous master artists were recognized as designers, yet their commercial work are not archived. Most of the work done by lesser known designers cannot be attributed to their creators as these work are uncredited. It can be assumed that designers working as employees of publishing companies were not credited due to copyright policies. Only the signed work can be recognized with their creators, although many of these lesser-known designers cannot be identified due to the lack of proper documentation and proper archiving.

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