



## Designing Modernism: New Directions at 80

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### Where modern literature met modern art: classic New Directions book design by Alvin Lustig, Paul Sahre, Rodrigo Corral and more

James Laughlin founded the groundbreaking independent publisher New Directions in 1936. Just five years later, Alvin Lustig designed his first jacket for the press, a cover for the 1941 edition of Henry Miller's *Wisdom of the Heart*. Lustig worked with New Directions Publishing from 1941 to 1952, and each cover was different from the last. In 1956, Laughlin looked back on their collaboration: "opening each envelope from Lustig was a new excitement because the range of fresh invention seemed to have no limits." In many ways, Lustig's designs helped New Directions establish its visual and literary identity: modern, distinctive, bold, cutting edge.

The collaboration between Alvin Lustig and New Directions Publishing is now the stuff of design legend. But Lustig is just one giant in a storied history full of them: Andy Warhol, for example, designed covers for New Directions before he was famous, as did Ray Johnson and Milton Glaser. And New Directions was the first US publisher of Jorge Luis Borges, W.G. Sebald and Roberto Bolaño, among many others.

Edited by J.C. Gabel with New Directions Publisher and Editor-in-Chief Barbara Epler, *Designing Modernism: New Directions at 80* surveys the publishing house's remarkable history of bringing together groundbreaking literary modernism with indelible, iconic art and design. Lustig's revolutionary covers from the 1940s and 1950s are, of course, included, alongside original work by Paul Sahre, Megan Wilson, Charlotte Strick, Rodrigo Corral and John Gall, among others. *Designing Modernism* also includes the reflections of more than 40 working designers from around the world discussing their favorite New Directions covers of all time, proving the continued influence of these formal experiments more than half a century later.

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