

—#20/30—

## HALL OF FEMMES BY HJÄRTA SMÄRTA

Chosen by Claire Catterall, curator, Embankment Gallery

One thing that warms my heart and makes me just a little more optimistic for the future is Hjärta Smärta's Hall of Femmes project. These Stockholm-based graphic designers have embarked on a journey to rehabilitate the reputations of long-forgotten or neglected female graphic designers. The idea is to search out these women to act as role models for the current generation of women graphic designers. In such a male-dominated industry it's wonderful to see more women emerging; but somehow they still don't seem to get the plaudits they deserve. Hjärta Smärta's first 'outed' role model was Ruth Ansel—the art director of Harper's Bazaar and Vanity Fair. As well as publishing a book about her, they invited her to talk in Stockholm at a sell-out event. Ansel was just the first in what is intended to be a long line of women graphic designers to be celebrated. I look forward to discovering the others and hope that they inspire and

encourage a future generation of talented women graphic designers to be every bit as daring and uncompromising as they were."

Hall of Femmes "is a project initiated in 2009 with the objective of bringing female graphic designers and art directors into the spotlight," explain Hjärta Smärta's Angela Tillman Sperandio and Samira Bouabana. "We always felt we lacked women in the business to look up to, and whose successes we could aspire to."

In March 2009 the pair went to New York to meet

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*Hjärta Smärta*

**BELOW: The Hall of Femmes project seeks to rediscover female designers of note; this book features the work of the first to be chosen, Ruth Ansel**

some of the few leading female designers: their subsequent conversations are being transformed into a series of books. The first features Ansel who, aged just 24, became co-art director of Harper's Bazaar with Bea Feitler, before going on to become art director of The New York Times Magazine and Vanity Fair.

"Each time she was the first woman in that position," Tillman Sperandio and Bouabana note. "Hopefully Hall of Femmes will increase the number of women giving lectures, teaching at design schools, getting attention in the media, attending design juries and receiving design awards," they say. "We believe in the power of role models. We believe that they are crucial when trying to envision success within this profession. With Hall of Femmes we want to direct attention to those who managed to pull it off." ■

hjarthasmarta.se

»Magpie aesthetic\*, shameless borrower, intuitive, and deceptively simple.«

Book of Femmes: Ruth Ansel



BOOK OF FEMMES: RUTH ANSEL

In a world of digital distractions, the *Book of Femmes* offers a rare glimpse into the lives of three iconic women: Ruth Ansel, Gertrude Kautzsch, and Gertrude Tobi. Each woman's story is told through a unique lens, combining historical context with contemporary art and design. The book is a beautiful blend of text and image, featuring stunning illustrations and photographs that bring the women's lives to life. It's a must-read for anyone interested in the history of design and the role of women in the industry.

BOOK OF FEMMES: RUTH ANSEL

What inspired you when working with the magazine? The book is a beautiful blend of text and image, featuring stunning illustrations and photographs that bring the women's lives to life. It's a must-read for anyone interested in the history of design and the role of women in the industry.