**GOING UNDERGROUND:**
Harry Beck and the Iconic Tube Map

**GIACOMETTI AT THE TATE:**
After 50 years, the prodigal son returns

**KEEP IT SIMPLE AND CARRY ON:**
5 British masters of minimalism

**plus...**
Peter Saville
Abram Games
Olly Moss

**ROCK ’n’ ROLL**

5. The Clash “London Calling,” by Ray Lowry
Pennie Smith was snapping photos of the Clash at New York’s Palladium when she captured one of the most iconic images in rock history. Paul Simonon was annoyed by the relatively quiet audience, so he began smashing his bass guitar against the floor. The pink and green lettering of the design was an intentional echo of Elvis Presley’s 1956 debut album.

4. The Beatles “Abbey Road,” by John Kosh
Beats nuts who believed that Paul McCartney died around 1967 and was replaced by a dopplegänger found a lot to examine on this cover. Iain Macmillan shot the cover on August 8th, 1969, outside of Abbey Road studios. The shoot involved just six frames and 10 minutes of work. Tourists flock to the spot, and it’s been parodied countless times—sometimes by members of the Beatles themselves.

What does this cover mean? “Kurt was intellectual and deep-thinking about his work,” says Fisher. “I must assume that the naked baby symbolized his own innocence, the water represented an alien environment, and the hook and dollar bill his creative life entering into the corporate world of rock music.”

2. “Darkside of the Moon,” by Hipgnosis
Their initial inspiration for Dark Side was a photo of a prism on top of some sheet music. It was black and white, but a color beam was going through it. Hipgnosis presented the prism design along with some others ideas to the band (including a design that featured the Marvel Comics hero the Silver Surfer).

1. The Beatles “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band,” by Peter Blake
The cover was originally going to show the Beatles playing in a park. That slowly evolved into the final concept, where they stand amidst cardboard cutouts of their heroes. The band originally planned on including Leo Gorcey, Gandhi, Jesus Christ and Adolf Hitler. Common sense kicked Hitler off the cover, the still-lingering bitterness of John Lennon’s “bigger than Jesus” comment eliminated Jesus and Gandhi got the boot over concerns that India wouldn’t print the album.

**Reader’s poll:**
The 5 Best Album covers ... Ever.
The album cover dates from 1939, when Columbia Records art director Alex Steinweiss decided his label’s offerings might find a wider audience with some added visual appeal. Last month, we asked our readers to select the best album covers of all time. Here are the Top 5:
GOING UNDERGROUND

Harry Beck and London’s Iconic Tube Map by Dan Carrier
The tube map almost never made it out of its creator’s notebook. The designer was Harry Beck, a young draughtsman who drew electrical circuits for the Underground. Beck’s biographer, Ken Garland, befriended him in the 1950s, and before the designer’s death in 1968, he uncovered the story behind the creation of what Beck called “the diagram.”

“As a native of a small village in Devon and moving to London to study art, I found the metropolis impossible to navigate,” Garland recalls. “I would get on the tube and see London’s diagram. London suddenly made sense, and so I asked people at the college if they knew who the designer was.”

Garland was told that HC Beck could be found at the London College of Printing, where he taught part-time, and he paid him a visit. They soon became friends. Beck first drew his diagram in 1931—a difficult time to be working for the newly established London Transport Passenger Board. With money tight, the board’s employees could be laid off at short notice, and then 29, had been employed as a “temporary” since he first started in 1925.

While at work drawing an electrical circuit diagram, he had an idea: a new map that would raise the profile of the tube and attract much-needed new passengers, and that would make the system seem modern, quick, efficient—and, above all, easier to navigate.

At the time, the maps of the network showed individual lines run by different railway companies. It was geographically correct, but impossible to read. The lines snaked all over the place. The first map, published in 1908, betrayed the fact that different operators were competing with each other and could not agree where the Underground ended. Harry laid out London’s Underground routes as he would a circuit board, and took it to the publicity department. He told Garland: “Looking at the old map of the railways, it occurred to me that it might be possible to tidy it up by straightening the lines, experimenting with diagonals and evening out the distances between stations.”

“He was modest,” recalls Garland. “He’d quietly taken the idea to the board after work one evening, where he was unceremoniously dumped from the project.”

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Garland continues: “Beck would not take no for an answer. He went back with a revised copy, and finally agreed to produce a small print run of 1,000 fold-out versions, put them in central London train stations and ask passengers for comments. One of the publicity team went to Piccadilly Circus and asked staff if anyone had been interested in the diagram. The maps had gone within an hour. Beck had been proved correct, and the publicity department arranged for a print run of 750,000.”

Harry Beck was good news for the tube. Passenger numbers had levelled off, and they needed a bright idea to sell the Underground. “Beck’s map was the catalyst,” says Garland.

More than a million were in circulation within six months of being commissioned. Wall maps were next: Beck was paid a further five guineas to produce one. But for something that is so recognizable as a piece of “trade-mark” art, Harry Beck was not, according to Garland, part of the modernist movement that was sweeping through the psyche of painters, sculptors, other designers and filmmakers of the period. “He was not influenced by contemporary art,” says Garland. “He knew little or nothing about it.”

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