

Congratulatory postcards of all kinds are on an extraordinary low artistic level. It is seldom that one finds a tolerable example from the graphic point of view. Such a congratulatory card is most likely to be found among those which are purely script, for in such cases the form of the script fostered by the old tradition of lithography is noticeable, at least as regards craftsmanship. Much trouble and work are devoted to the technical printing of these cards, but the artistic arrangement for the most part can unfortunately only be described as trash.

The efforts made by individual graphic artists to induce publishing forms to accept unexceptional artistic designs failed in most cases.

The Technical Group "Graphic Artists", therefore, gladly seized the opportunity offered by the readiness of a big Berlin postcard publishing firm, the Paul Pittius Co., to provide a considerable sum for a competition which they then carried out. The task set was the designing of congratulatory postcards for Easter, Whitsuntide, Christmas and New Year, and birthdays.

The sum offered for distribution as prizes made it seem desirable to restrict the number of competitors, especially because the designing of a picture postcard with script is a matter for graphic artists while the purely pictorial side is, under given circumstances, one for painters. The competition was, therefore, open to the technical groups "advertising art artists" and "painters and graphic artists" of the Reich Chamber of Pictorial Arts, Berlin and Kurmark Sections.

An examination of some 800 designs sent in revealed the remarkable fact that the majority of the competitors had no idea of the meaning and object of a congratulatory card. A number of designs were based on methods suitable — indeed very suitable — for a good printed advertisement — a poster or a prospectus — but never for a congratulatory card. On the other hand, designs were received which were merely based on the laws of free-hand drawing, without paying regard to the purpose for which the cards were to be used.

The purchaser of a congratulatory card does not want any ugly distorted faces or cubist experiments. Hence it was extremely difficult to pick out from among the vast number of designs those whose artistic qualities at least gave an indication of the meaning and object of a congratulatory card.

Unfortunately some designs which had been selected for prizes had to be rejected because the competitors did not belong to the Berlin and Kurmark Sections of the Reich Chamber of Pictorial Arts.

The competition was a first attempt to improve the standard in a domain whose products, which, as they are printed by millions, have a far-reaching cultural and educational effect. The reproductions we publish in this number provide a general idea of the designs, and, in the case of some of those which won prizes, permit of recognizing that a start is being made to improve the artistic standard of congratulatory cards.

PAUL PFUND

BETTER CONGRATULATORY POSTCARDS



4. Preis

A. W. R. WEISSMANN

4th Prize



1. Preis

OSKAR VON ZABORSKY-WAHLSTÄTTEN

1st Prize