

07

POSTERS

<<< / facing page

**POSTER: PRINT THIS  
MOMENT**

- THIRST/3ST.COM
- RICK VALICENTI/3ST
- ILLUSTRATORS: RICK VALICENTI/3ST, BILL VALICENTI
- TYPOGRAPHER: RICK VALICENTI/3ST
- CLIENT: GILBERT PAPER

# WHETHER A POSTER

IS A PROMOTION FOR AN ART EXHIBIT, A MUSICAL GROUP, OR THE VOICE OF DISSENT, IT IS COMMON TO SEE ONE TACKLED ON A WALL OR FRAMED, HANGING IN HOMES AND OFFICES ALONGSIDE PAINTINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND FINE ART PRINTS. NO OTHER GRAPHIC DESIGN FORMAT HAS BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL IN CAPTURING THE ATTENTION AND HEARTS OF MUSEUM CURATORS, ART CRITICS, SOCIAL HISTORIANS, AND THE PUBLIC. SOME PEOPLE HAVE EXTENSIVE POSTER COLLECTIONS THAT CONTAIN EITHER A VARIETY OF POSTERS OR A SERIES.

## OBJECTIVES

Realize why people love posters

Learn the purpose of posters

Understand the context

Appreciate a poster designed as social commentary

Become conscious of a poster as a vehicle for change

## WHY WE LOVE POSTERS

It is not unusual to walk through a public space, see a poster, and think, “I would love to hang that in my home.” In fact, some people find some publicly displayed posters so attractive that they go to extremes; for example, people tried to steal Gail Anderson’s poster for the School of Visual Arts from subway platforms (see the Showcase of Gail Anderson’s work on page 168).

One could surmise that French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec’s adoption of the poster medium (Figure 7-01) encouraged other fine artists’ interest in this vehicle for graphic communication. The American, Japanese, Chinese, Cuban, Israeli, Russian, and European art and design communities (and governments) have embraced the poster. Innumerable visual artists have designed them, such as Eduardo Munoz Bachs (Cuba), Romare Bearden (United States) (Figure 7-02), Milton Glaser (United States), Eiko Ishioka (Japan), Oskar Kokoschka (Austria), Dan Reisinger (Israel) (see Figure 7-28), Ben Shahn (United States), and Tadanori Yokoo (Japan).

When someone chooses to hang a social protest poster or concert poster in his or her room, that individual, of course, believes in the cause or favors the musical artist. Yet, the association with the poster may be more significant—emblematic, perhaps, choosing a poster as an expression of one’s individuality. Milton Glaser’s poster of Bob Dylan has adorned countless walls and has become an icon (Figure 7-03). Depicting an individual as an icon communicates meaning about its subject, as does the poster for 50 Cent (see Timeline, page TL-24). Or perhaps one can identify with the designer’s social or political commentary (Figure 7-04).

## THE PURPOSE OF POSTERS

The purpose of any poster is to communicate a message. To do that, a poster must first grab a viewer’s attention. A poster is seen while someone is on the move—driving, riding, or walking by—so it must be engaging enough to capture a person’s attention amid all the other visual clutter.

FIG. 7/01

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC, HENRI DE (1864–1901). *JANE AVRIL*, 1893.

· COLLECTION: THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, NY



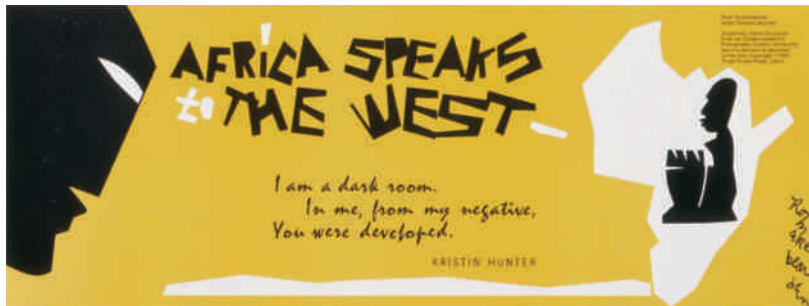


FIG. 7 /02

**BEARDEN, ROMARE, AFRICA SPEAKS TO THE WEST**

ART © ROMARE BEARDEN, LICENSED BY VAGA, NEW YORK, NY. AFRICA SPEAKS TO THE WEST, 1976. OFFSET LITHOGRAPH ON PAPERBOARD. 11 1/2" x 28 INCHES. GIFT OF POETRY ON THE BUSES. ©1976, THREE RIVERS PRESS, CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY. PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM, WASHINGTON, DC/ART RESOURCE, NY

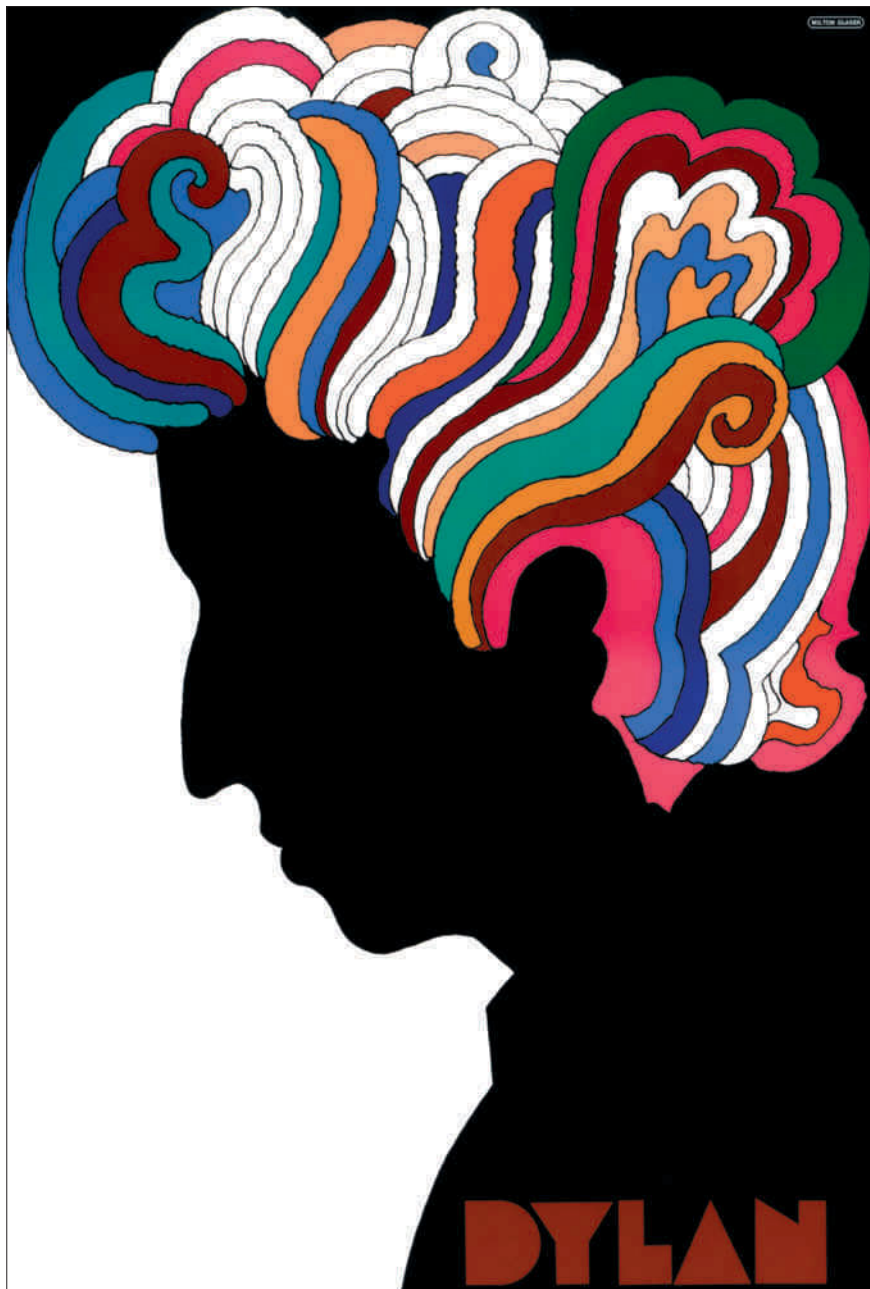


FIG. 7 /03

**POSTER ENCLOSED IN A BOB DYLAN RECORD ALBUM: DYLAN**

MILTON GLASER

Designer Steven Brower comments about this iconic poster: "Islamic art meets Marcel Duchamp at the dawn of the psychedelic era."



FIG. 7 /04

**CAPITAL OF WAR**

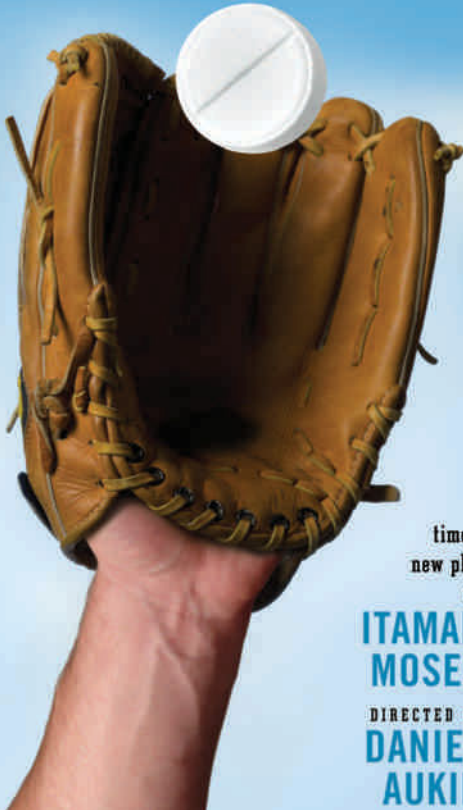
CALAGRAPHIC DESIGN, ELKINS PARK, PA  
ILLUSTRATOR/DESIGNER/ART DIRECTOR: RONALD J. CALA II

The black negative spaces between the white shapes greatly contribute to how the shapes interconnect.





# BACK BACK BACK

It's only cheating if you get caught.



A  
timely  
new play  
BY  
**ITAMAR MOSES**  
DIRECTED BY  
**DANIEL AUKIN**

**PREVIEWS BEGIN MARCH 6**  
CITYTIX 212-581-1212  
MANHATTANTHEATRECLUB.COM

AN ENHANCED PERFORMANCE.



**BACK  
BACK  
BACK**  
BY ITAMAR MOSES  
DIRECTED BY DANIEL AUKIN  
PREVIEWS BEGIN MARCH 6

MTC CityTix 212-581-1212  
MANHATTANTHEATRECLUB.COM

A  
**JUICED-UP**  
NEW PLAY.



**BACK  
BACK  
BACK**

BY ITAMAR MOSES  
DIRECTED BY DANIEL AUKIN

MTC PREVIEWS BEGIN MARCH 6  
CITYTIX 212-581-1212  
MANHATTANTHEATRECLUB.COM

A MAJOR LEAGUE SCANDAL.

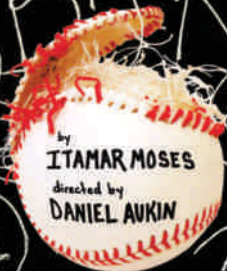
**BACK**  
BY ITAMAR MOSES  
**BACK**  
DIRECTED BY  
DANIEL AUKIN

**BACK**

PREVIEWS BEGIN MARCH 6

MTC CityTix 212-581-1212  
MANHATTANTHEATRECLUB.COM

**BACK  
BACK  
BACK  
BACK**



by  
**ITAMAR MOSES**  
directed by  
**DANIEL AUKIN**

MTC PREVIEWS BEGIN MARCH 6  
CITYTIX 212-581-1212  
MANHATTANTHEATRECLUB.COM

BACK, BACK, BACK POSTER (FINAL POSTER + 4 COMPS)

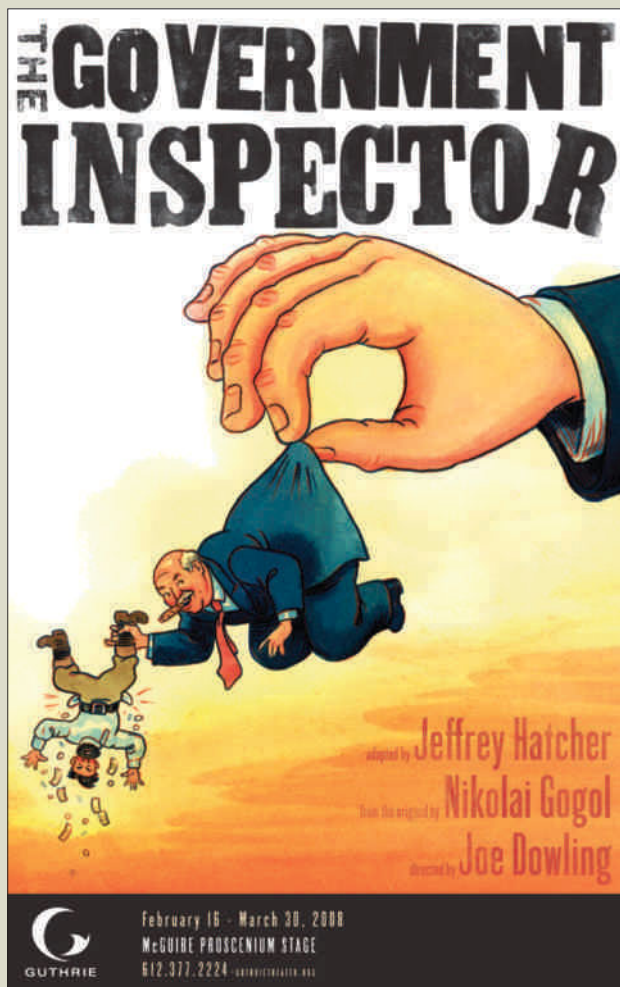
- SPOTCO, NEW YORK
- ART DIRECTOR: GAIL ANDERSON
- DESIGNERS: GAIL ANDERSON, KRISTINA CRITCHLOW, GUSTAVO GARCIA
- CLIENT: MANHATTAN THEATER CLUB

**Guthrie: *Government Inspector* Poster**

“Difficult satirical play to get through about personal greed and government corruption, but made appealing and light through the use of Ross MacDonald’s illustration and woodtype. Ross has a whole letterpress setup in his barn in Connecticut, and while we don’t usually give over the typography to the illustrators, Ross is an accomplished designer and has the best type library going.”

**Guthrie: *Gem of the Ocean***

“Bashan created this illustration himself, with the intention of handing it over to a ‘real’ illustrator. We were all so enamored of it that we used it as final art. The client LOVED this piece. L-O-V-E-D.”



**GUTHRIE: GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR POSTER**

- SPOTCO, NEW YORK
- CREATIVE DIRECTOR: GAIL ANDERSON
- ART DIRECTOR/DESIGNER: DARREN COX
- ILLUSTRATOR: ROSS MACDONALD
- CLIENT: GUTHRIE THEATER



**GUTHRIE: GEM OF THE OCEAN POSTER**

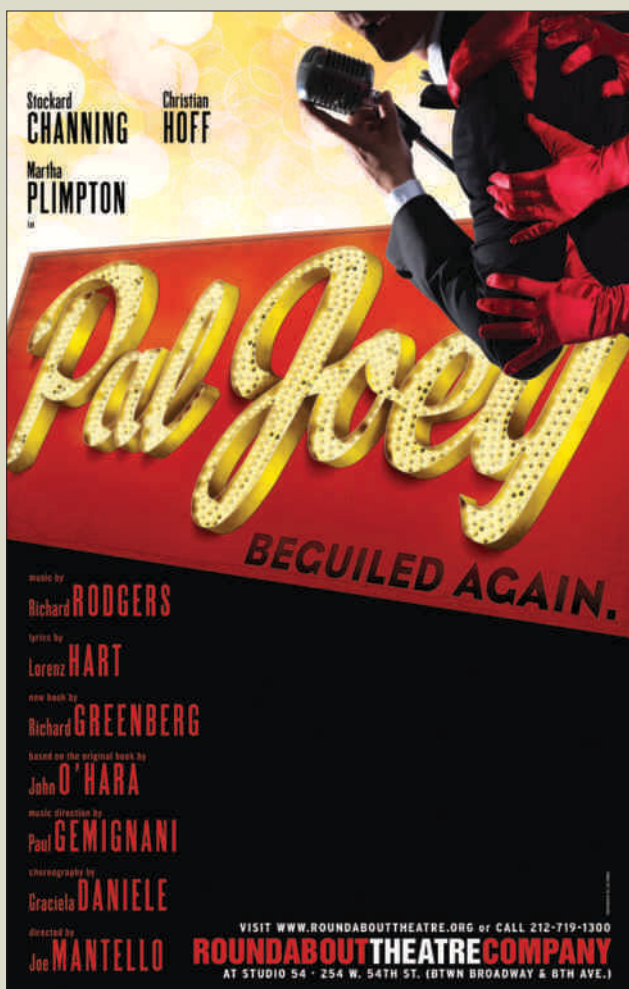
- SPOTCO, NEW YORK
- CREATIVE DIRECTOR: GAIL ANDERSON
- DESIGNER/ILLUSTRATOR: BASHAN AQUART
- CLIENT: GUTHRIE THEATER

**Roundabout: *Pal Joey***

“We sometimes end up using ourselves in art to keep the costs down. The guy is our photo producer, Mark Rheault, and the woman is the wife of Jeff Rogers, the designer.”

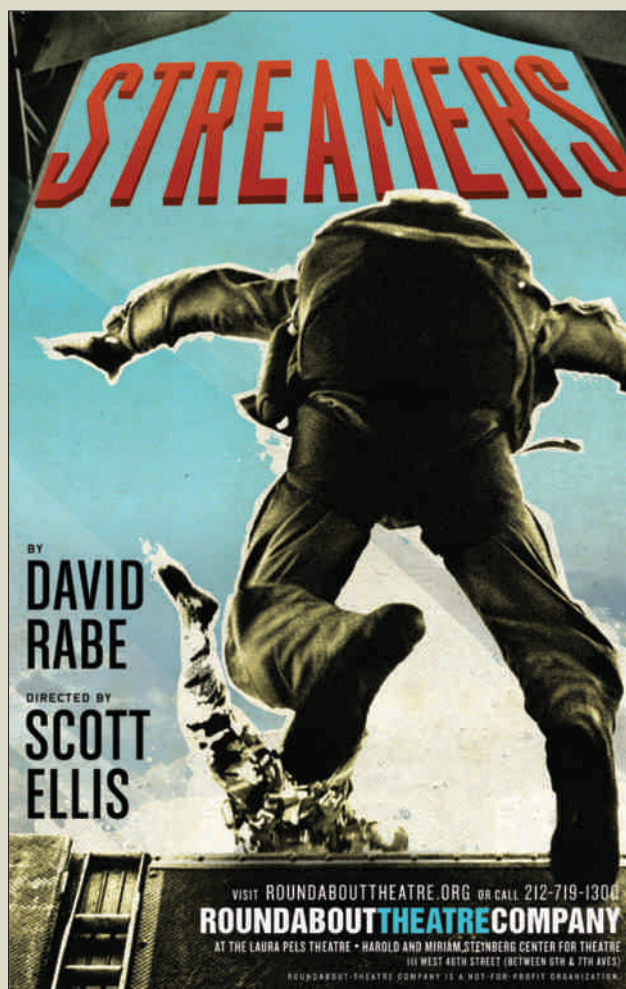
**Roundabout: *Streamers***

“The client liked a photo that was used in the Huntington Theater production of *Streamers* and wanted to use it again in theirs. The quality wasn’t very good, and we wanted to make it much bolder and more graphic. We worked with an artist who’d actually interned with us while he was at SUNY Purchase. I think we were able to freshen it up a bit and the type falling back in the sky was a neat touch.”



**ROUNABOUT: PAL JOEY**

- SPOTCO, NEW YORK
- CREATIVE DIRECTOR: GAIL ANDERSON
- DESIGNER: JEFF ROGERS
- PHOTOGRAPHER: LEN PRINCE
- CLIENT: ROUNABOUT THEATRE



**ROUNABOUT: STREAMERS**

- SPOTCO, NEW YORK
- CREATIVE DIRECTOR: GAIL ANDERSON
- DESIGNER: GREG COLEMAN
- PHOTOGRAPHER/ILLUSTRATOR: DAN SAVAGE
- CLIENT: ROUNABOUT THEATRE

FIG. 7 / 05

**FOR STUDENTS ONLY**

- THIRST/3ST.COM
- RICK VALICENTI/3ST
- TYPOGRAPHERS: RICK VALICENTI/3ST, DANA ARNETT/VSA PARTNERS
- ILLUSTRATORS: RICK VALICENTI/3ST, MATT DALY/LUXWORK
- CLIENT: ALLIANCE GRAPHIQUE INTERNATIONALE/CHICAGO STUDENT DESIGN CONFERENCE 2008

This 24" × 36" poster was conceived and designed to introduce the affordable student design conference. While initially abstract and vague, the poster speaks with clarity through the obvious codes within any designer's visual language. Multiple copies were forwarded to 50 plus colleges and universities.

—Thirst/3st

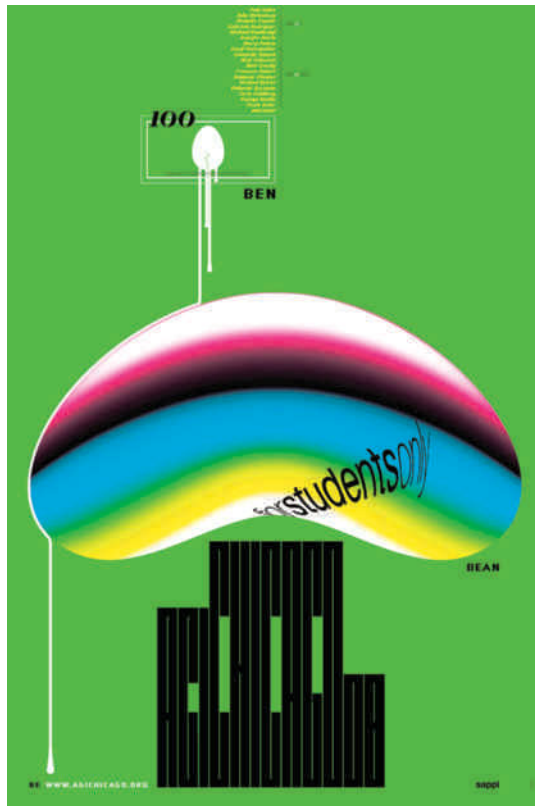
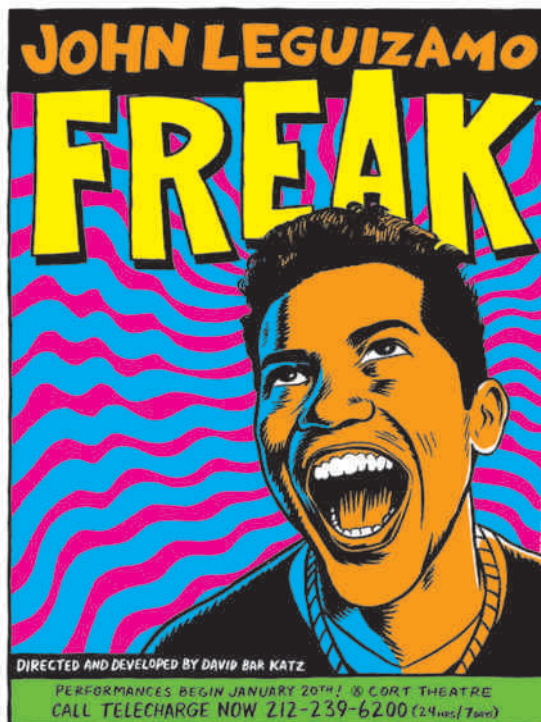


FIG. 7 / 06

**FREAK**

- SPOTCO, NEW YORK
- DESIGNER: KEVIN BRAINARD
- ILLUSTRATOR: WARD SUTTON

John Leguizamo's semiautobiographical one-man performance features many fascinating characters, and the energy of the performer/writer is communicated through the poster design.



A poster is a two-dimensional, single-surface format used to inform (display information, data, schedules, or offerings) and to persuade or promote (people, causes, places, events, products, companies, services, groups, or organizations). Produced in multiples and (usually) widely circulated, posters are often posted in numerous locations around town and are seen more than once by the public. Ubiquity and multiple viewings reinforce messages for any single viewer. In public spaces, we see posters promoting events such as films, plays, concerts, lectures, and conferences. Figure 7-05 promotes a student design conference and multiple copies were sent to colleges and universities. Posters featuring attractive models and celebrities endorsing brands are hung in bus shelters and subway stations. Theatrical or musical events, public service advertising, sporting events, rallies, protest causes, messages of dissent, politics and politicians, propaganda, wars, museum exhibits, and brand advertising are all subjects for posters.

If a poster is not well designed or is dull, surely it will be ignored when surrounded by other visual communication or an interesting environment. An appealing poster design can capture our attention and imagination and perhaps provoke us like no other graphic design application. When words and visuals are effectively combined, a poster has the potential to communicate and become more than just a fleeting visual communication; it can become an object to return to, again and again, for contemplation, enjoyment, or provocation. It is fascinating that in this age of moving images and Flash graphics, a still form of visual communication—a poster—continues to hold our attention; as does the poster for John Leguizamo's one-man play (Figure 7-06).

**A LITTLE HISTORY**

Before posters became a visual communication staple, broadsides were used to communicate ephemeral information—to make announcements and publicize news and events, as well as to promote merchandise. A broadside, or broadsheet, is a large sheet of paper, typically printed on one side. In Europe, after the invention of moveable type, broadsides were used to make announcements. Once printers began working in

the American colonies around the mid- to late seventeenth century, broadsides had a role in colonial life.

Broadsides were relatively inexpensive to produce and served their purpose for local advertisers and information seekers. In both Europe and America, there were advances in printing technology by the late nineteenth century; in France, color lithography was significantly advanced by Jules Chéret, allowing for great color and nuance in poster reproduction. By 1900, colorful posters would eclipse broadsides as visual communication that could attract viewers.<sup>1</sup>

Before the end of the nineteenth century, printers composed posters primarily only with text, sometimes embellishing the poster with decorative yet conventional graphic elements, such as borders or dingbats.

Influenced by the strong graphics and ideas found in Japanese prints and the advantages of color lithography, artists such as Chéret, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Bonnard replaced type with the integration of images and hand-lettering. These new posters, by the mid-1890s, were embraced, collected by connoisseurs, and discussed in illustrated books and magazines.<sup>2</sup>

## POSTERS IN CONTEXT

Most posters are meant to be hung in public places and to be seen from a distance. Understanding the context for any graphic design is crucial. Where will it be seen, and how will it be viewed? How close will the viewer be? In today's competitive visual landscape, a poster must catch the attention of passersby while competing for attention with surrounding posters, outdoor boards, neon signs, and any other visual material. We only need to think of the myriad of posters in the city square near a theater district to realize just how much a poster must do to capture attention.

## CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

The same design development process outlined in Chapter 4 is used—

Orientation ► Analysis ► Concepts ► Design ► Implementation

Sometimes, we can almost see the designer thinking, and in these cases, the design concept is very clear. The poster by Bob Aufuldish for the lecture series at the California College of the Arts Architecture examines ideas surrounding global practice (Figure 7-07). The background is composed

FIG. 7/07

### CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS ARCHITECTURE FALL LECTURE SERIES

- AUFULDISH & WARINNER, SAN ANSELMO, CA
- DESIGNER: BOB AUFULDISH
- CLIENT: CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS ARCHITECTURE
- COURTESY OF AUFULDISH & WARINNER



FIG. 7 / 08

**THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES**

- SPOTCO, NEW YORK
- DESIGNER: LIA CHEE

Enslar's provocative play is captured in this seemingly modest yet brave and emblematic conceptual treatment of type and visual. At second glance, an astute viewer might note an evocative form that both captivates and surprises.

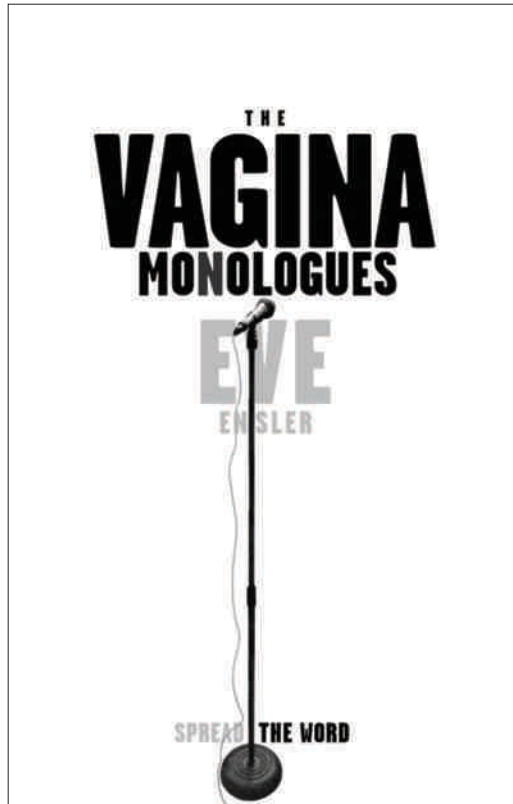
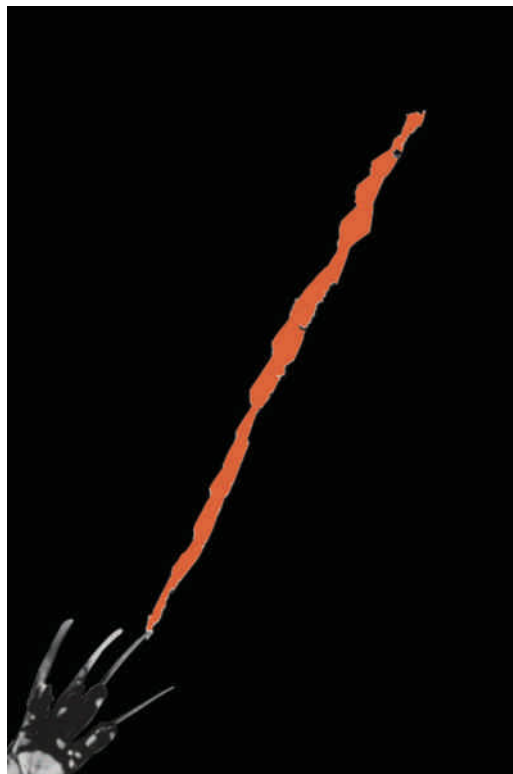


FIG. 7 / 09

**SLASH**

- ART DIRECTOR: DAVID SCHIMMEL
- DESIGNER: STEVEN BROWER
- CLIENT: NEENAH PAPER
- © STEVEN BROWER

Neenah Paper commissioned and auctioned off twenty-four limited-edition punctuation “Punc’t” posters and raised \$14,000 for the Books for Kids Foundation. Brower’s is one of the Punc’t posters as part of the series of twenty-four punctuation marks.



of abstracted airline route maps, and Aufuldish designed the information to “float on top of this field.” In Figure 7-08, the symmetry and vertical microphone stand evokes the title’s form.

On their website, SpotCo, a leading entertainment advertising agency, presents case studies of their work stating their “big ideas,” “key messages,” and “real results” for each poster project ([www.spotnyc.com](http://www.spotnyc.com)). Several issues must be addressed simultaneously in a poster. As SpotCo’s creative director Gail Anderson says, “A good deal of information has to live on each design.”

*Clearly identifying and then stating your three “big ideas” and three “key messages” is an extremely helpful guide for the conceptual development of a poster.*

To formulate your key messages, based on Gail Anderson’s assessment, ask:

- › What will make the average theatergoer/mov-iegoer/concertgoer buy a ticket?
- › What makes this poster’s attraction/cause/brand different from the other choices out there?
- › What are you promoting?
- › Why should someone be interested in this social cause? Political view?
- › How can you craft the message so the target audience believes what you’re conveying?

**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

Like all other graphic design, the success of a poster depends on expressing the design concept through a cooperative combination of type and image, interesting visualization, and considered composition. The very nature of designing for one large graphic surface absolutely invites experimentation; for example, Steven Brower used hand-torn paper and a photo collage to visualize Figure 7-09.

**Visualization**

Any visualization should best serve the design concept. Before a major gallery renovation, Southern Exposure invited artists to respond to the gallery’s tangible space exploring “the notion of home and the relationship between space and identity.” For the exhibition poster *Between the Walls*, Mende-Design visualized a relationship between the walls and the artists in Figure 7-10.

The theme for a California College of the Arts Architecture lecture series was “resourcefulness.” Bob Aufuldish comments about his design for Figure 7-11, “In the context of architecture, resourcefulness means both thinking nimbly and being conscious of the impact architecture has on the planet. Thinking resourcefully, we built all the text for the poster out of flowers.”

Explore techniques to see which ones might work best for your concepts. As listed in Chapter 5 on visualization, experiment with collage, photomontage, and the following:

› *Printmaking techniques:* If you’ve studied printmaking, then further explore one of these options: woodcut, linocut, screen printing (serigraphy), etching, dry point, intaglio, and mezzotint, among others. If you haven’t studied printmaking, start with a **monotype**, a one-off technique (producing one copy) in which a flat surface (Perspex, glass, cardboard, copper or zinc plate) is painted with printmaking ink or oil colors; it is then passed through an etching press or pressed by hand (rolling pin or other tool).

› *Screen printing:* Due to its popularity, screen printing deserves its own entry. Screen printing can be created at home using a porous mesh screen stretched over a wooden frame, a stencil, a squeegee, ink, and a surface, such as paper or a T-shirt.

› *Letterpress:* Letterpress is a printing method using “relief” type printing plates where the image or printing areas are raised above the nonprinting areas. (Your university or neighborhood arts center may have a letterpress that you can use.)

› *Woodblock:* Originating in China, woodblock printing is a technique for printing text, images, or patterns on textiles or paper.

› *Mixed media and experimental media:* Experiment by combining different visual art media; for example, combine paint with collage or combine photography with drawings. Try illustrating with unusual media; for example, use black coffee to paint on unprimed canvas or on paper towels, or model 3D forms out of Model Magic™ material, or create imagery with torn paper. Try a photogram; the placement of an object on light-sensitive paper creates an image of its silhouette. No camera necessary.



FIG. 7/10

**BETWEEN THE WALLS**

- MENDEDESIGN, SAN FRANCISCO
- ART DIRECTOR: JEREMY MENDE
- DESIGNERS: AMADEO DESOZA, STEVEN KNODEL, JEREMY MENDE



FIG. 7/11

**CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS ARCHITECTURE LECTURE SERIES**

- AUFULDISH & WARINNER, SAN ANSELMO, CA
- DESIGNER/PHOTOGRAPHER: BOB AUFULDISH
- CLIENT: CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS ARCHITECTURE
- COURTESY OF AUFULDISH & WARINNER

Sagmeister's poster for the Adobe Achievement Awards, Figure 7-12, is an example of experimental visualization, where they had a wooden floor constructed and then arranged 2,500 filled coffee cups.

FIG. 7 / 12

**ADOBE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

- SAGMEISTER INC., NEW YORK
- ART DIRECTOR: STEFAN SAGMEISTER
- DESIGNER: MATTHIAS ERNSTBERGER
- ILLUSTRATOR: MATTHIAS ERNSTBERGER
- PHOTOGRAPHER: ZANE WHITE
- PRODUCER: PHILIPP HAEMMERLE
- CLIENT: ADOBE SYSTEMS

This student award poster depicts a designer creating an award-winning work out of paper coffee cups—running on pure caffeine as many design students do. Working with a modest budget, we called in many favors of friends such as producer Philipp Haemmerle and architecture firm Loading Dock 5. We needed a studio with 30ft ceilings and scaffolding to get photographer Zane White up high enough to shoot the picture (as it turned out Zane was afraid of heights). We had a wooden floor constructed and then arranged 2,500 filled coffee cups with many helpers.

—Sagmeister



FIG. 7 / 13

**POSTER: OLIVETTI VALENTINE**

- MILTON GLASER
- CLIENT: OLIVETTI

**COMPOSITION BASICS**

**1/ Grab attention.** A poster can persuade people to see a show, purchase a brand, donate blood, get a mammogram, protest censorship, or buy concert tickets. However, a poster can persuade only if it attracts someone's attention, if it pulls someone in. Second, it has to be interesting enough to keep a person from turning his or her head in another direction. Finally, a poster has to call you to action—persuade you to do something.

**2/ Set it apart.** To attract attention, a poster must be visually interesting as well as different from its surroundings. Just like packaging on a market shelf, a poster needs to be differentiated from others competing with it. Since there are many posters advertising films and theatrical events, why should I choose to look at one rather than another? How you visualize and compose can and should create distinction—a unique look and feel, mood, or emotional level for the subject. Your choice or creation of display type and how you visualize will contribute greatly to distinction.

**3/ Communicate key messages.** Hierarchy plays strongly into how well your composition communicates the key messages. You can use type, visuals, color, or all of them to orchestrate hierarchy. Once a focal point ushers the viewer into the composition, the composition should guide the viewer on. On a single surface, color can guide the viewer as well as establish visual connections among elements.

**4/ Single surface, one unit.** Since a poster is seen from a distance, ensuring all component parts act in concert to form a cohesive entity is paramount.

The advantage of structuring a composition for a poster is in dealing only with a single surface, similar to a painting or drawing, where you don't have to worry about continuity over several pages, as in magazine or brochure design. For a novice, it helps to decide if the composition will be dominated by a visual, by type, or by a visual/verbal amalgamation. In Figure 7-13, promoting the Olivetti Valentine, the composition is dominated by Milton Glaser's famous illustration, which is the focal point. Figure 7-14, *Hypatia Lake*, is type driven; the stars and tape add to the flow of the composition, and the arrow aids our focus.



FIG. 7 / 14

**HYPATIA LAKE**

· © MODERN DOG DESIGN CO., SEATTLE

In Figure 7-15 by MendeDesign, although the type and visuals possess complementary qualities, their contrast and structural amalgamation work to communicate. In the same fashion as logos that are structured as emblems, where the pictorial element and the name of the entity are inextricably related, pictorial elements and type can be fused in a poster design, as in Figure 7-16,

FIG. 7 / 15

**CALL FOR ENTRIES/DESIGN AWARDS**

- MENDEDESIGN, SAN FRANCISCO
- ART DIRECTOR: JEREMY MENDE
- DESIGNERS: JENNIFER BAGHERI, AMADEO DESOUZA, JEREMY MENDE



FIG. 7 / 16

**MODERN DOG IN RALEIGH**

- © MODERN DOG DESIGN CO., SEATTLE
- CLIENT: AIGA





FIG. 7 / 17

**MACBETH**

• DESIGNER: CEDOMIR KOSTOVIC

The concept for the poster for the famous Shakespeare drama is based on two strongest symbols that suggest the drama's plot.

—Cedomir Kostovic

FIG. 7 / 18

**8 + 1**

- GEORGE TSCHERNY, INC., NEW YORK
- DESIGNER/ILLUSTRATOR: GEORGE TSCHERNY
- CLIENT: SANDY ALEXANDER, INC., CLIFTON, NJ



promoting the appearance of Modern Dog in Raleigh. In Figure 7-17, a theater poster for *Macbeth*, designer Cedomir Kostovic comments, “The title’s typography is purposely incorporated into the image to support its communicative power.”

How you visualize and structure a composition depends on what you want to communicate. In Figure 7-18, George Tscherny divides the format into a modular grid, using eight of the nine subdivisions to promote a new press capable of printing eight colors plus coating in one pass. Using a *trompe l’oeil* effect, the espresso cup in Figure 7-19 pops forward of the picture plane with the playful copy, “Now that espresso has come to Cincinnati . . .” announcing Louise Fili’s appearance. *Print This Moment* for Gilbert Paper (Figure 7-20) was designed by Rick Valicenti/3st, who believes in making communication design “full of human presence.”

**Poster Series**

Often, a poster stands alone, as a single unit. Sometimes posters, either one design or a related series, are posted in multiples (Figure 7-21). The entire Mission Mall was wallpapered with these fun and nostalgic posters to create a barricade effect. When designing a series, such as that for the 31st Cleveland International Film Festival



FIG. 7 / 19

**LOUISE FILI, CINCINNATI**

- LOUISE FILI LTD., NEW YORK
- ART DIRECTOR/DESIGNER: LOUISE FILI



FIG. 7 / 20

**PRINT THIS MOMENT**

- THIRST/3ST.COM
- RICK VALICENTI/3ST
- ILLUSTRATORS: RICK VALICENTI/3ST, BILL VALICENTI
- TYPOGRAPHER: RICK VALICENTI/3ST
- CLIENT: GILBERT PAPER

*With the introduction of Neutech Paper designed by Gilbert for laser printers, this two-sided poster was inserted into Wired Magazine.*

—Thirst/3st.com



FIG. 7 / 21

**MALL POSTERS**

- MULLER BRESSLER BROWN, KANSAS CITY, MO
- CREATIVE DIRECTOR/DESIGNER: JOHN MULLER
- WRITER: DAVID MARKS
- PRODUCTION ART: KENT MULKEY
- CLIENT: MISSION MALL, MISSION, KS

*A regional shopping mall was going to open in two weeks. The developer of the mall called me and said, "We have 150,000 square feet of blank storefront barricades and it looks desolate in here!" So, in order to get something produced and installed in two weeks and respond to a limited budget situation, I designed a series of three-color silk-screen posters. We printed 75 each of the posters on cheap billboard paper 40" x 60" and simply wallpapered the entire mall. These posters quickly became collectors' items.*

—John Muller

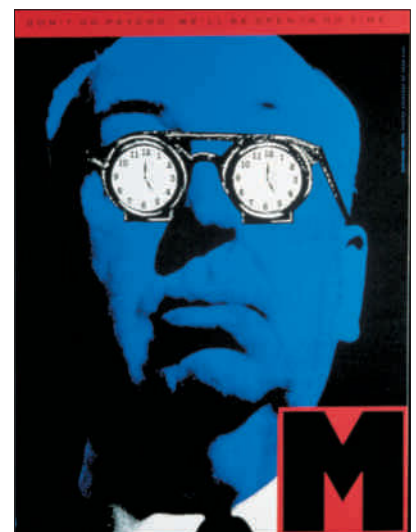




FIG. 7 / 22

**POSTER SERIES**

- CAMPAIGN CONCEPT + DESIGN: TWIST CREATIVE INC.—WWW.TWIST-CREATIVE.COM
- CREATIVE DIRECTOR/COPYWRITER: MICHAEL OZAN
- ART DIRECTOR: CONNIE OZAN, CHRISTOPHER OLDHAM
- ILLUSTRATOR: CONNIE OZAN
- DESIGNERS: CONNIE OZAN, JESSICA ZADNIK
- CLIENT: CLEVELAND FILM SOCIETY

(Figure 7-22), it is important to establish elements of continuity so that the posters seem to belong to one another, like triplets or cousins. Some designers design a template so that elements are positioned similarly from poster to poster within a series, yet they create enough variety to make each individual poster distinctive. (Also see Chapter 8 about designing a cover series.)

Ideas can be expressed through a series—several posters related by strategy and conceptual thinking—as in Figure 7-23, a series promoting tolerance.

In Figure 7-24, for the Theatre Project, Baltimore’s venue for avant-garde theater, David Plunkert of Spur Design established a stylistic theme to connect the series and communicate the

experimental nature of the Theatre Project. Each play is represented by a large singular graphic illustration against a solid background, which allows us to focus on the creative illustration.

**SOCIAL COMMENTARY**

If graphic design and advertising can sell us mouthwash and movie tickets, they can also advance political ideas and social causes. As a mass communication vehicle, the poster can be used to voice dissent, to incite, to propagandize, or to inform. Whether worrisome propaganda or in the service of the public good, a poster can potentially influence many. In the interest of

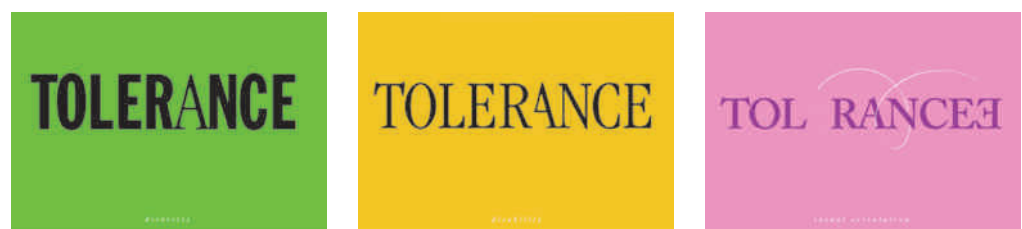
FIG. 7 / 23

**POSTER SERIES: TOLERANCE**

- CEDOMIR KOSTOVIC
- SILKSCREEN PRINTS
- A. TOLERANCE TOWARD DIVERSITY
- B. TOLERANCE TOWARD PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY
- C. TOLERANCE TOWARD SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The series of three posters is based on a metaphorical visual concept that uses typographical characters and their configurations within a word TOLERANCE to make comments about tolerance in our society.

—Cedomir Kostovic



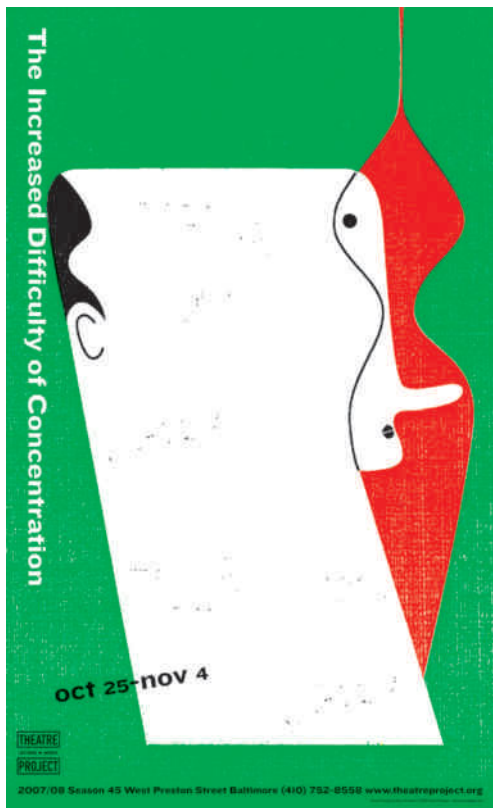


FIG. 7/24

THEATRE PROJECT 07/08  
 POSTER SERIES: *THE INCREASED DIFFICULTY OF CONCENTRATION*, *THE MISTERO BUFFO*, *A SUMMER IN SANCTUARY*, *BALTIMORE: THE OPERA*

DESIGNER/ILLUSTRATOR: DAVID PLUNKERT, SPUR DESIGN

CLIENT: THEATRE PROJECT

The *Mistero Buffo* poster, for instance, distills the picaresque play's iconoclastic characters (all played by a single actor) into a flat, bowler-hatted bottle careening precariously across the page. To "get something a little gritty," I drew the original and then kicked out individual separations and distressed those separations from my printer, producing an image both easy to print and iconic. I try to get a feeling of spontaneity that will strike the viewer on an emotional level if not an intellectual level.

—From an interview with David Plunkert by Taylor Lowe (<http://www.stepsidedesign.com/STEP/Article/28854/0/page/9>)



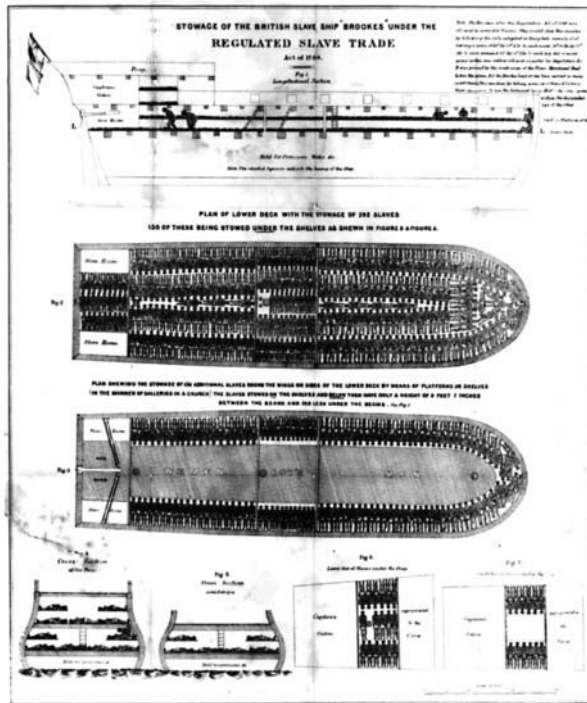
FIG. 7 / 25

**STOWAGE OF THE BRITISH SLAVE SHIP "BROOKES" UNDER THE REGULATED SLAVE TRADE ACT OF 1788.**

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION WASHINGTON, D.C. [LC-USZ62-44000]

*This print seemed to make an instantaneous impression of horror upon all who saw it.*

—Thomas Clarkson



society, with each designer comes the potential for uniquely effecting change. *In a single visual, a poster can carry a message to those who see it, perhaps to people who wouldn't read extensively about a subject or listen to long political debates.*

Figure 7-25 is one of the first widely distributed “protest posters,” a diagram produced by Thomas Clarkson, British abolitionist, and the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, published in 1789. About this poster, the *Independent's* art critic Tom Lubbock, writes: “The power of art has received many tributes, often from those within the profession. But if you're interested in images that have real power in the world, they're probably not going to be bona fide works of art. They're going to be cartoons, posters, documentary photos, emblems, logos, maps, and plans. Perhaps the most politically influential picture ever made is not a painting but a diagram; and it was devised not by an artist but by a campaign group. Its full title is *Stowage of the British Slave Ship 'Brookes' under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788.*”<sup>3</sup>

In the tradition of using the poster to give voice to ideas that matter, contemporary designers create for a myriad of causes, voicing dissent or hope, protesting or urging. In Figure 7-26, Fang Chen pleads for a stop to global warming using a metaphor. Chen says, “I have always believed that a good designer should be able to express complicated and profound meanings in a simple way and a good poster should make people think.” Using the violin as a metaphor in Figure 7-27, Cedomir Kostovic dismantles it, rendering it useless, to represent the division of Bosnia into three sections along ethnic lines. Dan Reisinger, born in Yugoslavia in 1934, spent the German occupation hidden by a Serbian family. In Figure 7-28, he warns against the rise of neo-fascism/neo-Nazism in the former Soviet Republic. Steff Geissbuhler comments on the meaning of the poster in Figure 7-29, “The friendship of Godzilla and King Kong makes them mightier than any other single beast. Friendship does not mean that one has to eliminate the other. It means coexistence with mutual respect and understanding. Nobody has to be the winner—nobody has to lose.”

FIG. 7 / 26

**HELP SOLVE GLOBAL WARMING**

DESIGNER/PHOTOGRAPHER: FANG CHEN

*We all have been taking all kinds of resources from the earth. As the globe becomes warmer and warmer, we need to protect it with our full hearts. The watermelon is the metaphor for cooling off the globe.*

—Fang Chen



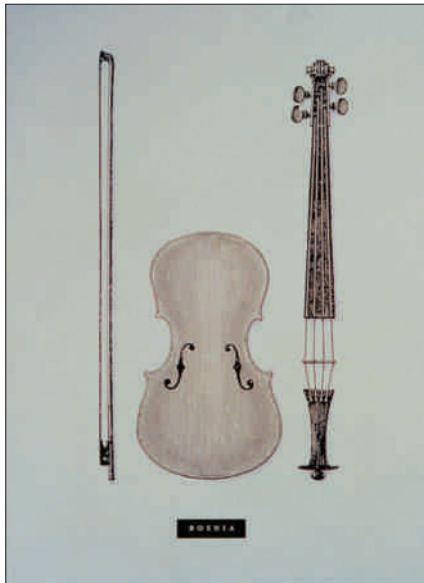


FIG. 7/27

**BOSNIA (DIVIDED)**

- CEDOMIR KOSTOVIC
- SILKSCREEN PRINT



FIG. 7/28

**AGAIN?**

- DAN REISINGER®

FIG. 7/29

**PEACE—GODZILLA AND KING KONG • COMMEMORATION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIROSHIMA**

- CHERMAYEFF & GEISMAR INC., NEW YORK
- DESIGNER AND ILLUSTRATOR: STEFF GEISSBUHLER

*Godzilla is a modern folk hero and a symbol of Japanese superpower, called upon in times of crisis and invasion by other superpowers such as King Kong. Apparently, Godzilla emerged from the volcanic emptiness after a nuclear blast. Therefore, it is even more of a symbol relating to peace. King Kong was used as the American counterpart to Godzilla.*

*The centered red sun on a white background is another symbol of Japan (Japanese flag, etc.). The color palette of red, black, and white is classic, and typical in Japanese calligraphy, painting, and woodcuts. The red-to-white gradation in the background relates directly to contemporary airbrush techniques frequently used in Japanese design.*

—Steff Geissbuhler, Chermayeff & Geismar Inc.

# ESSAY

IMAGE-MAKING FOR POSTER DESIGN/JOE SCORSONE  
AND ALICE DRUEDING

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By Joe Scorsone, Professor, Graphic and Interactive Design, Tyler School of Art, Temple University and Alice Drueding, Professor and Area Head, Graphic and Interactive Design

Designers communicate information and ideas to an audience. Successful images for design engage the viewer in a process of learning something not previously known or understanding a known subject in an entirely new way. The most interesting design happens in part on the printed page; the rest happens in the mind of the viewer.

To communicate effectively, a designer begins by developing a concept that will drive the image-making process. The design concept is a communication strategy that keeps the designer focused while exploring visual options. Through research and various associative techniques, such as mind-mapping, concepts achieve traction when the potential for seemingly unrelated elements to work together is identified. Visual economy is key.

A single image that captures multiple aspects of the concept, balancing simplicity and complexity in the mind of the viewer, is an experience that is unlikely to be dismissed or quickly forgotten.

The visual alchemy of transforming the familiar into imagery with an unpredictable message is the goal of poster design at Scorsone/Drueding. We aim to tap into what is known and understood by the audience and then turn it on its head. The stylistic approach for each poster is determined by what we believe will be the most effective way of visualizing a particular idea. Visual style has a powerful influence on the way images are read. Style should always support the concept.

Style is the “poetry” of visual language. The way something is said—either visually or verbally—makes it unique and enhances its meaning. Designers take their stylistic cues from the subject to maximize the expressive power of their concept. From simple vector drawings to complex, layered collages, stylistic choices bring concepts to life.

This poster [*Over 1,000,000, Sold*] is about human slavery, which is ongoing and shockingly pervasive around the world. Sexual slavery of women and children is one of the most prevalent forms of the practice. In this case, we were faced with another intangible. Slavery is not something you can see. Most people readily understand chains as a representation of slavery or imprisonment. We used the chain to represent one aspect of our subject. The other aspect of the subject is slavery as “commerce.” Buying and selling human beings is making many people very wealthy. The woman, representing all victims of slavery, hangs by a chain as though she were literally a piece of meat for sale in the marketplace. Her arm is brutally pierced with a price tag. She hangs there in

## OVER 1,000,000 SOLD

- THE QUANTO PROJECT
- DESIGNERS: JOE SCORSONE, ALICE DRUEDING



a gesture of abject hopelessness. Nothing about the image is literal—this is not what slavery actually looks like. Again, we are able to capture the intangible through metaphor.

We use metaphor to express ideas that are intangible. Emotions are experienced internally. Their full implication is difficult to communicate without tapping into the power of metaphors and symbols. Common verbal metaphors often lead to interesting visual solutions. Being “consumed” by an emotion—jealousy, rage, or in this case, fear—is a readily understood figure of speech. In this poster [*Fear*], the brain is literally consumed by a relentless swarm of insects. But the viewer understands that it is really the mind—the center of human understanding, identity, and action—that is the figurative target. The insects represent the relentless cultural agents of fear (government, media, etc.) that bombard our conscious and unconscious selves daily. Visualization of the head itself, raw and exposed, enhances the horror of the image.

In this poster [*Alternatives to War*], soldiers are identified by an iconic image that was found in an old military manual. With their identical uniforms and rigid posture, these soldiers represent an abstract paradigm of the modern warrior, precise and impersonal cogs in the wheel of the military machine. What is unexpected here is their essential and even poignant humanity as they participate in familiar and wholesome peacetime activities. The faceless representatives of a national armed force are transformed into individuals engaged in living lives that resemble our own. They are clearly and disconcertingly one of us. The contraction within the imagery turns this poster into a complex question about the implications of sending soldiers—ourselves—to war.



**FEAR**

• DESIGNERS: JOE SCORSONE, ALICE DRUEDING



**ALTERNATIVES TO WAR**

• DESIGNERS: JOE SCORSONE, ALICE DRUEDING

FIG. 7 / 30

**NEVER UNDERESTIMATE  
THE POWER OF NATURE**

- 21XDESIGN, BROOMALL, PA
- DESIGNERS/ILLUSTRATORS:  
DERMOT MAC CORMACK,  
PATRICIA MCELROY
- PHOTOGRAPHER:  
PATRICIA MCELROY
- PRINTER: CRW PRINTING

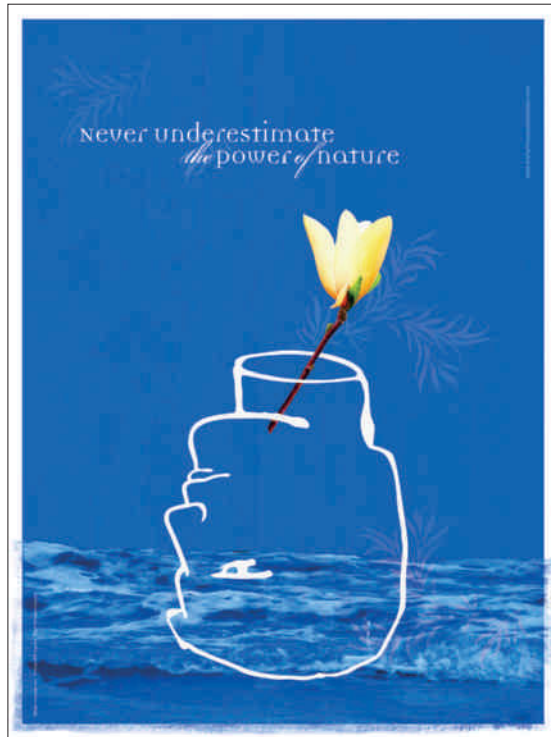


FIG. 7 / 31

**H-E-L-P**

- SOMMESE DESIGN, PORT  
MATILDA, PA
- DESIGNER: LANNY SOMMESE
- POSTER FOR THE HURRICANE  
POSTER PROJECT

Designers/artists were invited to do a poster in relation to the Katrina devastation. An edition of each poster was sold to raise money to HELP the victims of hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. The image depicts (humans, animals and vegetation) trapped tenuously together—each vulnerable to the dangers that surround them.

—Lanny Sommese



In recent times, designers have come together for causes through various organizing bodies. The Hurricane Poster Project is a collaborative effort by members of the design community to raise money for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Examples of these posters are Figure 7-30 by Patricia McElroy and Dermot Mac Cormack and Figure 7-31 by Lanny Sommese.

For The Quanto Project, a protest against human slavery, Lanny Sommese (Figure 7-32), Alice Drueding, and Joe Scorsone (see "Essay: Image-Making for Poster Design") raise their voices in outrage.



FIG. 7 / 32

**HOW MANY MUST SUFFER BEFORE . . . STOPPED?**

- SOMMESE DESIGN, PORT MATILDA, PA
- DESIGNER: LANNY SOMMESE
- DESIGNED FOR THE QUANTO PROJECT

A thematic poster competition soliciting designs that focus on the increasing problem of exploitation of women worldwide. The image depicts a female trapped in the coils of a huge snake, which is intended to metaphorically represent the woman's exploitation by the human slave traders.

—Lanny Sommese

## EXERCISE 7-1

A graphic design solution can be a catalyst for change. If you had a chance to raise your voice in protest through a poster, what would you protest? War? Child abuse? Pollution? What would you promote? Freedom? Clean water? To whom would you appeal?

Select one cause that you deem important.

- 1 At the top of a page, write the name of the cause.
- 2 Sketch or write as many objects as you can think of having similarities to your subject. If you're having difficulty, use attribute listing (see Chapter 4) to help you or treat this as a kind of a Rorschach inkblot test, where you simply sketch the first thing that comes to mind when asking yourself, "What might this remind me of or be similar to?"
- 3 Sketch visual metaphors, at least two, for your cause.

## PROJECT 7-1

### POSTER DESIGN FOR A SOCIAL OR POLITICAL CAUSE

#### Step 1

- a. Select a social or political cause. Gather information about it.
- b. Find related visuals to use as references.
- c. Write a design brief. Define the purpose and function of the poster, the audience, and the information to be communicated.
- d. Generate a few design concepts. Concentrate your conceptual thinking on finding a way to prompt people to think about the cause. Select and refine one concept.

#### Step 2

- a. Determine whether the poster should be visually driven or type driven.
- b. Your poster should be able to grab the attention of people walking by.
- c. The poster should include the social cause's web address and phone number so that people can take action.

- d. Determine at least three different ways your concept could be visualized.


- e. Produce at least twenty sketches.

#### Step 3

- a. Produce at least two roughs before going to the comp.
- b. Be sure to establish visual hierarchy.
- c. The poster can be in either a vertical or a horizontal format.  
Optional: Design a companion web banner.

#### Step 4

- a. Refine the roughs. Create one comp.
- b. The size, shape, and proportion should be dictated by your strategy, design concept, and where the poster will be seen (environment).
- c. Use two colors.

Go to our website  for many more Exercises and Projects, and presentation guidelines, as well as other study resources including the chapter summary.

#### NOTES

1. Digital Scriptorium website, <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/broadsides.html>.
2. J. Stewart Johnson, *The Modern American Poster*. Kyoto: The National Museum of Modern Art and New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1983, p. 8.
3. Tom Lubbock. "Clarkson, Thomas et al: The British Slave Ship 'Brookes' (1789)," *The Independent*. Friday, March 23, 2007. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art-and-architecture/great-works/clarkson-thomas-et-al-the-british-slave-ship-brookes-1789-744401.html>

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