Poster Movements Essay, Research Paper

Poster Movements

Constructivism

This art form appeared in the early 20th century as a result of the Russian Revolution and grew a tremendous amount during the 1920 s and 1930 s. Founded in1917 in Russia by sculptor Antoine Pevsner and his younger brother Naum Pevsner Gabo, they believed that art should be functional and include materials and technology that are new to the market. All the people who eventually succeeded in this art form, where either forced into exile or imprisoned. Although Constructivism was primarily based on sculpting, posters also became and important aspect of Constructivism. Angular lines and abstract shapes mostly characterized them; the colors were usually strictly limited with black, white and red. Most were produced using mechanical printing techniques, with elements taken from architecture and photography. All Constructivism posters have a political undertone; they also by the use of modern typography and photomontage effects would reflect the designer s interest in Cubism and other contemporary European artistic movements. Some of the most important Constructivism poster designers include writer and thinker Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Mayakovskyii, Kazimir Malevich and George and Vladimir Stenberg who developed posters for the Russian film industry. Germany was the site of the most Constructivism activity outside the Soviet Union, especially as home to Walter Gropius s Bauhaus, a progressive art and design school sympathetic to the movement, but Constructivism ideas where also carried to other art centers, like Paris, London, and eventually the United States. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, material came out in large quantities both legally and illegally; the condition of these posters is often very poor, because very few have been looked after. I believe the poster I chose is a good example of Constructivism because first of all it has forms with angular shapes and abstract shapes, as I also stated earlier, the colors are limited to black, yellow and red. Also one can notice the elements of photography and a slight influence if architecture, some work would show more evidence of the link between Constructivism and architecture. I like the expression in the face in the background; it clings it the mind. The Stenberg brothers did this poster; it advertises a 1929 movie called Fragment of an Empire .

Pop Art

Pop Art used the imagery and techniques of consumerism and popular culture, hence it name pop art. It was basically a reaction against Abstract Expressionism, the pop artist thinking that this art form was too pretentious and over-intense. Pop Art brought art back to the material realities of everyday life. It incorporated object that are in our daily life or things that we would see or use such as Campbell soup cans, comic strips or advertisements emerging in the late 1950 s in England but realized its fullest potential in New York in the 1960 s. In the US it was linked to the wealth and prosperity of the post World War II era, in Britain it wasn t as glamorous and had a more nostalgic feel to it. But one cannot deny the roots of this art form, and a person perhaps said to be the artist responsible for the first work considered being pop would be Englishman Richard Hamilton. Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenber were some of the first Pop artists in America, and used popular imagery such as the American flag and beer cans in their paintings, prints and collages. But the artist that I believe made Pop Art what it is in the US and maybe all over the world, has to be Andy Warhol who was known for his silk-screens of both famous people and everyday objects. He did a work representing Marilyn Monroe that was seen and used all over the world in many advertisements, he did many works which had the same feel to this one, such as the one I have chosen. It basically represents James Dean with some Chinese typography, even today I don t find that works like this one lost they re style. There are some other people who would focus on other simple everyday things like Roy Lichtenstein, who employed a comic strip illustrative style in his paintings.

The 60 s Poster.

The poster I have chosen to show the art of the poster in the 60 s is the poster of the 1964 Olympic games in Japan. I liked this poster because it is simple yet expresses a very strong message. Basically, it represents a Japanese running champion with a warm sunset background. He is holding the most important sign of the Olympic games after the 5 rings, the Olympic flame. One can notice that there is not slogan; perhaps it is because none is required for an Olympic event, but I believe that the picture even for another sports ad doesn t necessarily need a slogan. All that is shown is the picture, the logo and name of the Olympic game and the date, and I believe one doesn t need to add anything else. The general mood for poster designers in the 60 s, depends on the background of the designer, for example, I have previously talked about Pop Art, by looking at a Pop Artist s work one can notice the designing and creativity flowing. There is a feeling of more than meets the eye in every poster; it is as if the artist wants us to imagine what he was thinking or as if he wants us to view things his way. On the other hands there are posters like the one I m currently talking about, which basically tries to show a side of an event. So I believe that the posters that we see today were starting to emerge at about that time. The simplicity, the typography and the way things are portrayed today are shown in some 60 s posters, if I was to see this poster today, I wouldn t really feel that it is out of place.

The 70 s Poster

The example I have chosen to show what posters in the 70 s were like was a poster for a Polish circus designed in 1978. It basically illustrates a big elephant with all the members working in a circus on him; the funny thing is that the elephant is riding a tiny bicycle, hence the name of the poster Elephant riding bicycle . The first thing one notices about the poster is the tremendous use of colors. No dull lame colors, not only to illustrate the fun side of the circus because many other posters were designed this way. The second noticeable thing in this poster is the use of cartoon like characters. The font used doesn t really fit the poster to my taste, but it was widely used in the 70 s. This way of designing was used a lot in the 70 s. Many of us have seen posters for Woodstock or a Jimi Hendrix concert; they all have that cartoony colorful feel to them. Especially when a poster was used in connection to music. It was the psychedelic era and the best way to illustrate that was to fill all areas of the poster with colors and round shapes. Look at the way the two little guys on the bottom are drawn; it is typical 70 s. I guess it was a way expressing a feeling that something new had to emerge. I don t really like this style; personally I don t feel that it is nice to have great colors in areas, which shouldn t have these types of colors. But it is an art form.

The 80 s Poster

Everybody believes the 80 s were the worst years, I don t really believe they were that bad. Michael Jackson was the king of pop and jeans jacket was really cool. The poster I have chosen is also for a circus. It illustrates an attractive woman, naked with a beard. I understood what the artist was trying to show, basically that the circus you were invited to go see may have things you could never imagine existed, such as a bearded lady. The poster was done in an art form, which I believe truly emerged in the 80 s, the airbrush technique. Today thousands of artists use that technique to paint walls, cars, and bikes almost anything. I personally love this art form, I believe one can truly achieve nice results with an airbrush, the effects the degradation have are limitless. There are even airbrush competitions today, which show artwork, perfect. By looking at this poster, for example, from a wide angle one can left to believe that it is a photographed picture. The simple use of colors also grabs the attention, when one doesn t have so many colors or things to look at, he focus more one the central object. This was my reaction, for some reason of the entire poster that I have seen this one grabbed my attention, not only because of the actual contents of the artwork but the way it was executed. A strong font similar to the one used in the previous poster is used. Also in this case one doesn t see a slogan, as I said in an earlier poster one has two alternatives to designing a poster, he either inserts a picture with an explanation or he inserts a picture that explains itself, or he might use the typography to illustrate a massage. Going back to the art of airbrushing once it truly started growing in the 80 s regular object or people were usually painted, examples could be ice cream cones, strawberries, classic cars and when painting people, the artist would portrait movie stars, rock stars and attractive women like the example here.

The 90 s Poster

The poster I have chosen to illustrate the 90 s poster is a perfect example of what I like in a poster, what I would actually read. The poster shows a hospital bed with the strong message written in a strong font saying This table is reserved for smokers emphasizing that smokers are destined to end on a hospital bed because of lung cancer. I followed this concept when designing my posters. I wanted to show a simple main image with just a strong phrase consisting with little words. Guy Gumm the art director for this poster also designed another smoking ad. It showed a cigarette with the word slow under it and a bullet with the word quick under it signifying ways of dying. Again in this poster we see a picture with simple words but has a meaning that will make you think. Posters today are more or less like these, simple pictures of an object with usually a strong message relating the picture to an idea. In the case of something, which would cause death they would put the picture of something representing death with a message simply saying, do this and you will die? Examples of posters using such techniques are those warning about the use of drugs, about drinking and driving, having unprotected sex . Etc. We are at an age where we do not need to explain everything we do or see. Some posters today don t even have typography, just a mixture of photography and corporate identity. It has been studied that the average human is getting smarter every year, basically our methods of communicating a message or advertising a product don t really have to be that clear, we now use our imagination to decipher the image.

Swiss Poster

This example I have chosen to show a Swiss poster example is for a poster for the circus and toy part of the collection of the Paris museum of decorative art, presented in Switzerland. It was designed by Swiss designer Martine Waltzer, and it is basically all typography and fonts. What can be read is le cirque et les jouet , the word cirque is made of funky fonts and colors, perhaps to give more attention to the circus part of the exhibition. This is also a good example of simplicity, it is as if the word cirque is made to resemble an animal of some sort, the dot of the i looks like the eye of the animal. Also the date, time and place are included on the poster, basically all the necessary things we need to see on a poster.

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