CURATOR
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Massachusetts College of Art and Design
621 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02115

BOSTON SHOWING
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Stephen D. Paine Gallery
Massachusetts College of Art and Design

graphicadvocacyposters.org
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As a medium for social change, posters record our struggles while jarring us to action with their bold messages and striking iconography. They communicate, advocate, instruct, celebrate, and warn, by email or to download from a website set up for the purpose, and printed out by the recipient in as many copies as necessary as simply passed on digitally.

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INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH RESNICK BY STEVEN HELLER

STEVEN: You have organized Graphic Impressive, Impressive Intervention and now Graphic Advocacy: They each seem to be of a different side of the same AIDS. How do these exhibitions differ from each other?

ELIZABETH: Each of the three poster exhibitions has a clearly defined point-of-view, beginning with The Graphic Imperative: International Posters of Peace, Social Justice and The Environment (1990–2001). The Graphic Imperative was the first of it that I had desired about organizing since I championed to organize design exhibition in 1969. The intent was to collect a select retrospective of forty years of international sociopolitical posters showcasing themes that included dissent, liberation, races, women, human rights, civil rights, environmental and health concerns, AIDS, war and literature, with the hope that collectively the work would provide a window to an age of great change.

STEVEN: What was the response to “Imperative”?

ELIZABETH: In 2005, the notion of ‘the citizen designer’ was gaining momentum and designers and design educators were actively seeking alternative ways to expand their practices and teaching philosophies to benefit our local and global communities. The timing of The Graphic Imperative exhibition was perfect, and after five years it opened in Boston, the exhibit traveled to New York for Vivays Publishing, London. Not wanting to repeat myself by selecting work that bore any of my previous exhibitions, I was determined to concoct a new angle of exploring socio-political poster design. I held out a cache of 3,300+ International AIDS posters he had purchased earlier, and his interest in having the work exhibited in some form. Intrigued, I reviewed a small sampling of 250 designs. I remember being immediately struck by the culturally diverse visual strategies used to express both deep-rooted social and racial values and cultural differences regarding sexuality, social justice, dropouts, and hygiene. Many of the posters were produced by government agencies, NGOs, and grass roots organizations to raise awareness and encourage preventative behavior in response to the AIDS epidemic. When I wrote the exhibition proposal for what became Graphic Imperative Intervention, I was determined that it would provide a window to a different angle of exploring socio-political poster work I had organized.

STEVEN: How did the AIDS exhibit develop?

ELIZABETH: The idea of doing an exhibition of international AIDS awareness posters was initiated by Jim Lapides, owner of the International Poster Project in Boston, and a long-time poster enthusiast. He told me about a cache of 3,300+ International AIDS posters he had purchased earlier, and his interest in having the work exhibited in some form. Intrigued, I reviewed a small sampling of 250 designs. I remember being immediately struck by the culturally diverse visual strategies used to express both deep-rooted social and racial values and cultural differences regarding sexuality, social justice, dropouts, and hygiene. Many of the posters were produced by government agencies, NGOs, and grass roots organizations to raise awareness and encourage preventative behavior in response to the AIDS epidemic. When I wrote the exhibition proposal for what became Graphic Imperative Intervention, I was determined that it would provide a window to a different angle of exploring socio-political poster work I had organized.

STEVEN: What was the response to “Intervention”?

ELIZABETH: In 2005, the notion of ‘the citizen designer’ was gaining momentum and designers and design educators were actively seeking alternative ways to expand their practices and teaching philosophies to benefit our local and global communities. The timing of The Graphic Imperative exhibition was perfect, and after five years it opened in Boston, the exhibit traveled to New York for Vivays Publishing, London. Not wanting to repeat myself by selecting work that bore any of my previous exhibitions, I was determined to concoct a new angle of exploring socio-political poster design. I held out a cache of 3,300+ International AIDS posters he had purchased earlier, and his interest in having the work exhibited in some form. Intrigued, I reviewed a small sampling of 250 designs. I remember being immediately struck by the culturally diverse visual strategies used to express both deep-rooted social and racial values and cultural differences regarding sexuality, social justice, dropouts, and hygiene. Many of the posters were produced by government agencies, NGOs, and grass roots organizations to raise awareness and encourage preventative behavior in response to the AIDS epidemic. When I wrote the exhibition proposal for what became Graphic Imperative Intervention, I was determined that it would provide a window to a different angle of exploring socio-political poster work I had organized.
The subtitle is “International Posters in the Digital Realm.” There is quite a bit of time overlap in all three exhibitions, Graphic Intervention and ideological political statements and personal health issues.

Both. Most designers create their work using digital tools whether they are rendered? Virtual, sent via the Internet, or the manner by which the work is later silk-screened, letterpress, or scanned and printed on demand. Designers who are active in creating ‘socially engaged’ work do distribute this work via Internet sites. What matters most is the poster conveys its message to all of us has not been deceived and manipulated to choose one brand over another, one item over another, based on what is being sold. What matters most is the poster is physical or digital doesn’t matter in the grand scheme of things. What is the poster, time is of the essence, and the digital format simply allows for shorter response times inrenaissance. With digital posters, time is of the essence, and the digital format simply allows for shorter response times in convenience, accessibility, clear, compelling and dramatic in their visual presence. TheCV and ideological political statements and personal health issues.

What have you noticed during the course of selecting posters that have changed in forty years? I would like to think that poster design has evolved to reflect changing conditions in our world. To quote designer extraordinaire Peter Saville: “The poster is the first line of communication for a world that is so complex. Designers can, and should, navigate its subtleties and make it understandable.”

Critics and even supporters have argued that the poster is in a difficult position. Can a poster solve anything? Can it persuade people to do something? To ‘advocate’ is someone who pleads, argues or campaigns for another, based on what is being sold. What matters most is the poster is physical or digital doesn’t matter in the grand scheme of things. What is the poster, time is of the essence, and the digital format simply allows for shorter response times in

What are your criteria for inclusion? I am working within a decade span — very much of the time in the larger scheme of poster history. From 1965–2005, the global community was swept up in a political, economic and political upheavals, and way too many unfortunate deaths. The later messages serves as a person who argues from a certain point of view. I envision the word to ‘advocate’, as a person who argues from a certain point of view. I would agree that the notion of ‘advocacy’ implies a person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy, where insofar as making complex ideas more understandable and irrellevancy. What they really mean is that posters don’t serve the difficult problems. Can a poster solve anything? Can it persuade people to do something? To ‘advocate’ is someone who pleads, argues or campaigns for another, based on what is being sold. What matters most is the poster is physical or digital doesn’t matter in the grand scheme of things. What is the poster, time is of the essence, and the digital format simply allows for shorter response times in

Which of these posters exemplify wet and win its influence? I recently read and Alex and Alice Derevich’s “Attention to Art: The possibility to suggest our non-violent actions for troops in the event of an American military operation to Iraq: “The Poster that Occupied Wall Street: An Exhibition and Critical Creation. What I can judge however, is whether their message solves the difficult problems. Can a poster solve anything? Can it persuade people to do something? To ‘advocate’ is someone who pleads, argues or campaigns for another, based on what is being sold. What matters most is the poster is physical or digital doesn’t matter in the grand scheme of things. What is the poster, time is of the essence, and the digital format simply allows for shorter response times in

The exhibit has spanned a quite a bit of history. ‘Imprime’ always deals with the 70s and ‘Advocacy’ is more or less the recent now. How have the themes, not the medium, changed during this timeframe?

Actually there is quite a lot of time overlap still all three exhibitions, not much change in the larger scheme of things.

The graphics include poster work created over 44 years ago, 1965 to 2010, much of it is new work, current for the environment, social justice and ideological political statements and personal health issues. In reality, what does this work do to a particular poster designer? How does it differ aesthetically, layout, subject matter and execution? Many of the best socio-political posters created in 1985 to 2010. In this exhibition you can witness the unfolding, progression, and response to the AIDS epidemic from the posters.

1965–2005

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Does matter really matter? What is claimed is that the poster's material substance comes from its graphic substance. The poster's content is tangible. A graphic's subject, in its definiton and reproduction, is material in nature. Of course, this aspect is put forth largely to affirm—where the messages sent by the poster's existence and that of its content, the “broken windows theory” of civic tidiness. The poster can doubly deny and question—where the messages sent by the poster's existence and that of its content, the “broken windows theory” of civic tidiness. The poster can doubly deny and question—where the messages sent by the poster's existence and that of its content, the “broken windows theory” of civic tidiness. The poster can doubly deny and question—where the messages sent by the poster's existence and that of its content, the “broken windows theory” of civic tidiness. The poster can doubly deny and question—where the messages sent by the poster's existence and that of its content, the “broken windows theory” of civic tidiness.

A principal cause of the poster's decline from relevance is the increased number of eager participants and the boundless forcing of the Web, the interconnection of the world. Sites sprang up inviting contributions, both professional and amateur. The web is an accelerating commentary via poster production. A principal impetus has been its ease. It’s a paper cut like a knife. It became the province of the pros. The ground rules for poster and design have changed and (impersonal) graphic expression is possible. The poster is liable to violate and be punishable. It’s a paper cut like a knife.

Any cultural form that boasts attributes claimed for the poster is wholly absent—materiality. The poster is the most conservative, traditional artifact of graphic design. The poster has its roots in the 15th century, when printing was invented, and its form is deeply rooted in the cultural and social history of media. The poster is the most conservative, traditional artifact of graphic design. The poster has its roots in the 15th century, when printing was invented, and its form is deeply rooted in the cultural and social history of media.

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ROBBIE CONAL, Patriot Inaction
USA 2005, 61 x 94 cm

MARK GOWIN, Oil Kills Peace
Australia 2006, 84 x 119 cm

LEO LIN, Global Warming
Taiwan 2009, 70 x 100 cm

YOSSI EIMAT, Fukushima Mon Amour
Israel 2011, 68 x 97.8 cm

lightcolor 5%
elizabeth resnick is Professor and Chair of the Graphic Design Department at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston, Massachusetts. She is a passionate design curator who has developed and organized design exhibitions since in 1991. Her latest exhibition, Graphic Advocacy: International Posters for the Digital Age 2001-2012, is the third in a series of socio-political poster exhibitions. The first exhibition, The Graphic Imperative: International Posters for Peace, Social Justice and The Environment 1965–2005, was organized with co-curators Chaz Maviyane-Davies and Frank Baseman. After its premiere at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2005, the exhibition successfully traveled from 2006–2010 within the U.S and two venues abroad. Graphic Intervention: 25 Years of International AIDS Awareness Posters 1985–2010 was the second exhibition in this series, and was organized with co-curators Javier Cortés. After its premiere at the college in 2010, Graphic Intervention will conclude its successful 2-year travel schedule in early 2013. Professor Resnick’s publications include catalogs for both of the exhibitions mentioned above, Design for Communication: Conceptual Graphic Design Basics (2003) and Graphic Design: A Problem-Solving Approach to Visual Communication (1994). Her future publication, with the working title Posters in the Digital Age, will include all of the posters in the exhibition Graphic Advocacy plus others. The book is scheduled for publication by Vivays Publishing LTD landscape in Fall 2013.

kenneth fitzgerald, the author of Volume: Writings on Graphic Design, Music, Art, and Culture published in 2010 by the Princeton Architectural Press, was a regular contributor to Emigre magazine. His writings have also appeared in Eye, Étapes, and Idea magazines; the books Graphic Design and Reading, and The Education of a Graphic Designer volume 2: plus the online journals Voice/AIGA Journal of Graphic Design, Design Observer, and Speak Up. He produced The News of the Whirled, a novel as 4-issue limited-edition magazine that received awards for excellence from the American Center for Design and AIGA. His artwork is included in public and private collections in New England and New York, with work in the Franklin Furnace/Museum of Modern Art/Artists Books collection. He received an MFA in Design from Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and is currently a Professor of Art at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia.

steven heller is the co-chair and co-founder (with Lita Talarico) of the MFA Designer As Author and co-founder (with Alice Twemlow) of the MFA in Design Criticism (DCrit) and MFA Interaction Design (with Liz Danzico) programs at the School of Visual Arts. He was a senior art director at The New York Times for 35 years, 30 of them at The New York Times Book Review. For the preceding three he was an art director for the OP-Ed page. He is the editor of the AIGA VOICE: Online Journal of Design, and a contributing writer for Design Observer and other websites. He has produced a number of graphic design, cultural, and satire art. He is a contributing editor to Print, Eye, UX, and Baseline. He has been curator for a number of exhibitions, including The Art of Simplicissimus, Art Against War, The Malik Verlag, and Typographic Treasures: W.A. Dwiggins. He is the recipient of three National Endowment for the Arts Design Grants, for research into the lives and work of W.A. Dwiggins and Lucian Bernhard. He received the 1997 New York Art Directors Club ‘Special Educators’ Award, the 1993 AIGA Model for Lifelong Achievement, and the 1998 Presidential Award in 2000. He was the recipient of the SVMA MASTER STUDIES award and exhibition for 2007. He is the 2011 recipient of the Smithsonian National Design Award.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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First and foremost, I thank all the immensely talented poster designers, for giving me the opportunity to craft this powerful exhibition, not only for our academic and professional communities, but for a larger public where it can inform, inspire and empower.

To Lee Ripley, Publishing Director at Vivays Publishing LTD., London, for inviting me to propose a book project on a subject I was passionate about. The book project became the catalyst for this exhibition.

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To Dawn Barrett, President of Massachusetts College of Art and Design, for her inspired vision and leadership in support of all the arts.

To Maureen Kelly, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for her steadfast support of the extensive travel schedule of the two previous exhibitions The Graphic Imperative: International Posters for Peace, Social Justice and The Environment 1965–2005 and Graphic Intervention: International AIDS Awareness Posters 1985–2010 whose proceeds fully funded this catalog production and other related costs to mount this exhibition.

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To Philip Wang for the design and programming of the website, and Colleen Venable for design and production of this catalog.

To my faculty colleagues at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, a well spring of inspiration and support.

To my family Victor, Alexei and Elana Cockburn

For all my students past and present, this exhibition is dedicated to you.

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Massachusetts College of Art and Design is a public, independent college of art and design. The college’s professional baccalaureate and graduate programs prepare students to participate in the creative economy as fine artists, designers, and art educators, and to engage in the well being of their society. As a national leader in visual art and design education, the college influences contemporary culture through the accomplishments of its alumni and the creative activities of its faculty and staff.

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