



Posters: A Global History

By Elizabeth E. Guffey

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From band posters stapled to telephone poles to the advertisements hanging at bus shelters to the inspirational prints that adorn office walls, posters surround us everywhere—but do we know how they began? Telling the story of this ephemeral art form, Elizabeth E. Guffey reexamines the poster's roots in the nineteenth century and explores the relevance they still possess in the age of digital media. Even in our world of social media and electronic devices, she argues, few forms of graphic design can rival posters for sheer spatial presence, and they provide new opportunities to communicate across public spaces in cities around the globe.

Guffey charts the rise of the poster from the revolutionary lithographs that papered nineteenth-century London and Paris to twentieth-century works of propaganda, advertising, pop culture, and protest. Examining contemporary examples, she discusses Palestinian martyr posters and West African posters that describe voodoo activities or Internet con men, stopping along the way to uncover a rich variety of posters from the Soviet Union, China, the United States, and more. Featuring 150 stunning images, this illuminating book delivers a fresh look at the poster and offers revealing insights into the designs and practices of our twenty-first-century world.

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Editorial Review

Review

“This exciting new study of the social life of posters demonstrates the many uses to which they have been put and shows that the ever-popular medium, far from being defunct, continues to be a vital form of communication and expression. Guffey’s colourfully written account also benefits from numerous well-chosen pictures of posters seen in everyday settings alongside the viewers who admired them, took their cues from, them and consumed them as informal art.”

(Rick Poynor, founder of Eye magazine and cofounder of Design Observer)

“Guffey rescues the poster from its well-meaning but largely fetishized history by connoisseurs, curators, and collectors and compellingly chronicles the past, present, and future lives of this staple of communication. Taking an expansive view of the subject, Guffey reaches far and wide and across the ages for her examples and provides a much-needed cultural context to the diverse roles posters perform in a society—whether connecting communities, building nationalism, inciting consumption, or raising awareness. *Posters: A Global History* is an important addition to design history and a timely reminder of the power of print in the age of the Internet.”

(Andrew Blauvelt, Senior Curator, Architecture and Design, Walker Art Center)

“Guffey’s goal is to tell the story of ‘posters as things’—physical, commodifiable, and transportable objects that ‘materialize the increasingly immaterial nature of visual communication.’ She traces how posters have moved through the life of the world on their ephemeral paper substrates. . . . She grapples admirably with the ambition of her study, uses smart examples, draws on a diverse bibliography, takes her time when the material demands it, and convinces her readers that examining the public lives of posters broadens and enriches our understanding of the medium.”

(Jill Bugajski *Art in Print*)

About the Author

Elizabeth E. Guffey is professor of art and design history at Purchase College, State University of New York, and founding editor of the *Journal of Design and Culture*. She is the author of *Retro: The Culture of Revival*, also published by Reaktion Books.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Maria Ives:

With this era which is the greater particular person or who has ability in doing something more are more important than other. Do you want to become one of it? It is just simple approach to have that. What you have to do is just spending your time very little but quite enough to experience a look at some books. One of the books in the top list in your reading list is actually Posters: A Global History. This book that is qualified as The Hungry Hillsides can get you closer in turning out to be precious person. By looking way up and review this publication you can get many advantages.

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