



Press release, 05.04.2016

The Poster Remediated
an innovative poster exhibition
for the 50th anniversary of the International Poster Biennale

This year marks fifty years since the birth of the International Poster Biennale, the world's largest and most prestigious event dedicated to poster art. The 25th Biennale has a special, original and innovative character. The main highlight, the exhibition *The Poster Remediated*, opens on 11 June at 6 p.m. at the Poster Museum at Wilanów. This modern, interactive presentation is devoted to the history of the poster, its presence in public space, to the constant changes and social contexts in which it functions. The show is curated by David Crowley.

In 1906, Georges Méliès, a great cinema reformer, made his *Les Affiches en goguette* [Hilarious posters], where figures from various posters come alive and interact with each other. One hundred and ten years later, the French filmmaker's vision has become only more topical. The 'vitality' of the poster is measured by the rhythm of its changes in the context of the growing domination of new media, its role claimed by previously unknown modes of communication (including social media), while they all remain interconnected. **These relationships and cross-influences within the field of poster art are the main theme of *The Poster Remediated*.**

The show has been conceived in a modern, interdisciplinary and multimedia fashion and is not limited solely to works on paper. It also includes **monumental reconstructions** of poster-based decorations, **smartphone apps** that transform ads

into artworks, **documentations of artistic activity**, and **artistic animations of classic posters** awarded in the Biennale's past editions.

'There is much discussion today about the death of the poster, but in fact, this concern isn't new. It goes back to the late 1960s and the spread of electronic communication. Now, it's the internet that's identified as the poster's nemesis. In reality, we still fill our streets with advertising billboards, and when protestors march against injustice they carry posters. New media communications have lots of poster-like qualities: an internet meme – an image captioned with a slogan – is a digital poster, even if it wasn't created by a poster designer', says the exhibition's curator, David Crowley.

The contemporary history of the poster should include the aspect of its remediation, construed as technological transformations and changes of its functioning in public awareness. One of the examples in the show of such remediation is the history of the poster ***There Is No Way Like the American Way***. A propaganda graphic glorifying the American style of life became a symbol of the Great Depression, when in 1937 *Life* magazine published a photo showing flood victims in Ohio standing in front of it and waiting for food and clothing from a local crisis centre. The poster's slogan, 'World's Highest Standard of Living', turned into its own parody. The exhibition traces the history of the poster's reception, from the original *Life* picture, through its parody in **Terry Gilliam's cult movie *Brazil*** (1978), to **Tristan Eaton's mural painting *The American Way*** at Long Beach, California.

Another example of remediation are changing modes of poster circulation, a phenomenon that could be witnessed in the wake of the **dramatic events of Ukraine's Euromaidan** or during the **mass demonstrations that followed the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris**. Spontaneously created posters, such as the Christmas Tree of the Kyiv Maidan or the white-on-black 'Je suis Charlie' in Paris, were shared over and over again on social media, becoming firmly embedded in public consciousness. The ease of reproduction and publication has not been without an impact on matters of form, but the medium essentially remains that of the poster. A more recent example, combining the peace sign with the Eiffel Tower, is Jean Jullien's 'Peace for Paris' design, created following the Paris terrorist attacks in

November 2015. Symbols were also visually employed following the terror bombings in Brussels in March 2016. Poster artists have always reacted keenly to historical events, including through new media, and such innovative artworks are also featured in the show.

Since the poster has always had a close relationship with politics, the **political context is clearly highlighted in the exhibition**. Posters such as the iconic 'I Am a Man' carried by striking black workers in Memphis in 1968 (the origins of which Crowley traces back to a 1837 woodcut), with a long history of remakes, were a means of political and social persuasion, as were the monumental decorations prepared by artists for the 5th World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw in 1955.

Yet another example of remediation present in the exhibition is Protein World's famous 2015 advertising campaign, ***Are You Beach Body Ready?*** Banned in the United Kingdom, it caused a worldwide scandal, earning accusations of sexism and promotion of unrealistic standards of beauty. The Protein World billboard inspired a wave of remakes and parodies blending art and counterculture, in many cases created by rival companies, that challenged the aesthetic ideals Protein World sought to promote. These reactions, both amateur and professional, are also on show.

Advertising, the way it functions, the means of remaking it, and its impact on the form of the contemporary poster are important elements of David Crowley's curatorial concept. Hence the presence of artists from the anti-advertising movement, especially Vermibus, Jordan Seiler, and the Brandalism collective, whose key projects and street interventions from France, the US, Canada or Britain are presented, as videos and original large-format posters, in a separate section of the show. Hence also the **presentation of the NO AD app written by Jordan Seiler** in 2015. Designed for NYC subway users, the mobile solution uses augmented reality technology to replace ads with artworks in real time. In the Warsaw exhibition, it operates outside its natural environment.

Vermibus, Jordan Seiler, and members of Brandalism are planning to visit Warsaw during the International Poster Biennale.

Political and ideological poster is another genre of the art that breeds spontaneous, grassroots reactions, the phenomenon being spread worldwide and intensifying to the rhythm of election or awareness-raising campaigns. Every country has its own specificity and temperature of debate, yet the responses to current propaganda can be similar. The exhibition features **archival footage from countries such as the United States, Syria, Egypt or Iran, documenting painted-over, remade, or ruined political and propaganda posters**, while Eustachy Kossakowski's photographic series from Paris pictures those that wither away in the street on their own, forgotten, eaten away by time.

***The Poster Remediated* is on show through 25 September 2016.**

PROGRAMME OF THE 25TH INTERNATIONAL POSTER BIENNALE IN WARSAW:

“The Poster Remediated” – the main exhibition featuring a competition

11 June–25 September 2016

Opening: 11 June 2016, 6 pm

Poster Museum at Wilanów

ul. Stanisława Kostki Potockiego 10/16

02-958 Warsaw

“International Poster Biennale in Warsaw 1966–2014”

10 June–25 September 2016

Opening: 10 June 2016, 6 pm

Salon Akademii

ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 5

00-069 Warsaw

For more information, please visit:

www.biennale.postermuseum.pl

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