

# Typography and Education

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## The emotional typography

Typography and Education (Academic Research/Presentations) / Experiments and Explorations in Education of Typography

### Abstract of the paper:

Typography and typographic experiments in socially engaged posters as an example of the works of graphic artists, and students associated with the Laboratory of Social Propaganda, led by prof. Jacek Staniszewski.

Laboratory of Social Propaganda is a studio dedicated to designing posters and communication which is engaged in hot topics of modern times. In the laboratory as well as around, designers create works on the socially important topics, often touching and sensitive. Freedom of expression, the accuracy of the visual message, even shocking - these words characterize works designed in the studio.

All those works have a lot of emotional power in order to increase the sensitivity of the viewer on the street. They try to catch his attention in the environment of overabundant stimulation. Typography used for posters is often their ultimate signature, kind of the finis coronat opus. Typography raises the emotions of the whole picture, it is often the dominant, but what is most important, it is a coherent whole.

### Keywords:

typography, poster, Polish poster school, emotions, hand lettering, experimental typography, communication,

## Introduction:

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We appreciate hand-painted text over the brush or pencil, easy but with very emotional line. We also like experimenting with different media to produce text, from hand-painted letters with the help of the computer tools, by the destruction of existing computer fonts through the using of well-chosen type.

We believe that an important element of the work, having deciding influence on the viewer, is to arouse emotions in her or him. Our posters are tested in true reality - the streets of our native city or exhibitions in other places. This is also the true in case of street exhibition, and presented posters about freedom and peace in the Ukraine - country during the civil war.



The workshop included the following subjects: Cross culture / Deep-pression / Solidarity with Ukraine / free Tibet / and more.

Laboratory of Social Propaganda is one of the laboratories in Graphics Department at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk is led by prof Jacek Staniszewski, assistant - Edyta Majewska, in 2014/2015 the second assistant was a PhD candidate Jarek Bujny.

Poster 1

Theme: I love Poland

Author: Jacek Staniszewski

Slogan poster is spray painted, which gives the association with freedom and creativity. At the same time the text was reduced to the minimum, and it returned to its roots as a sign.

# Introduction

## The image and words as a coherent message

The works created in the *Laboratory of Social Propaganda* and around focus on the poster. Because the creation of the poster is the field where the most important problems faced by the graphic designers on their professional path concentrate:

- How to visualize the problem
- How to create an idea and solution of the problem
- Which medium should be used; photography, drawing, illustration,
- How to use properly typography in combination with image
- How to compose the whole picture
- What color should dominate, and more...

Creating the poster is an intellectual challenge: How the author is supposed to include the problem and the answer in one and only one image. His (or her) own response is marked by personal point of view and vision of the problem. You have to create an interesting and understandable answers to ALL who will see this picture. Or at least to those, whom we are planning to reach. The picture should be understandable to persons coming from many nations and many cultural backgrounds.

It turns out that this is not easy at all. The poster is also a great starting point for many other communications media. Poster is a kind of key-visual, point of departure. The idea conveyed by posters can be the basis for creation of the entire campaign - websites, advertising, comics, short films, animations and others.

A good idea can be transferred to virtually any medium and expanded . Therefore, in my opinion, is so important to learn the process of creating the poster well.

We relate to the Polish poster school which flourished in the 60s of the last century in opposition to the style prevailing in Western Europe. In the end of XX century communism in Poland collapsed.

Now, after a quarter of a century of delights over the capitalism as a system, we begin to see the dark side. So this is the reason why in the Laboratory students work mostly with social problems. Students after graduation will fall into the rigor of the work aimed at raising profit - in companies or corporations. But there is a chance to keep a spirit of idealism, the soul of an artist and critical eye.

The subject of this article is emotional typography. Therefore I will concentrate on those aspects of the problem and try to explain how to troubleshoot typography in posters socially involved.

## 1. Caption

The first type of typography is the typography as a simple caption. Most of the communication is contained in the image.

Typography in such a situation gives context link to the image in the poster, contrasts the image and enriches it meaning. This type of typography should not prevail or spoil the picture, so usually the author chooses the simple, popular typeface in black, most often non-invasive. The idea is that the viewer first looks at the picture and after that reads the caption. Therefore it must be set in a place to be read AFTER the perception of the image. The viewer first sees the visual message and then can read the caption, which gives him additional, surprising sense of the whole. In this case, the emotions are formed at the interface between the image and typography.



#### Poster 1

Theme: Stop sexual violence

Author: Weronika Lipniewska

This poster without caption could show the effects of playing a child with plasticine. But the caption gives the image context. It makes the poster very powerful, even shocking. Then instead of plasticine we see minced female body. Moreover, there is no repression of the subject from the mind of viewer. This is what happens when somebody will see images too shocking, too scary. Here we have a play of connotations. This visual suspense causes emotional perception and understanding of the meaning.

Poster 1. In this case, the embodiment of typography was apparently easy, since we can use a computer typography. But finding the right place, the right balance of size, color matching poses problems for inexperienced designers.

The most interesting thing is that experienced designers completely forget to reflect on these issues. They solve them intuitive. This is why it is so important to teach those issues to the students. They should solve these problems with full awareness of their importance for the subsequent perception of the whole message.



## 2. Typography as complement

Another type is the typography playing a role in the picture. Not only it completes the picture but has a role to play. It is the main thing we focus on. This time finding a place for the text requires more attention, because it is no longer a signature. Now typography is much more important element and the creator should find the appropriate place for it, often in the center of the layout. Likewise, the form does not have to be limited to computer fonts.

Poster 2

Theme: FREE DOOM

Author: Joanna Patan

Eyes focus on the caption. For typography author used a simple font, basic computer font which is the main fact. But not only one. The eye focuses on it. In this way freedom becomes enslaved.



Poster 3

Theme: Freedom for Tibet

Student work, Academy of Fine Art in Gdańsk, Poland

Hand cut caption may resemble chains, the gravitates down the image. The caption itself is soiled, not fully stamped. The shape of the font looks like it was hastily cut, which gives it the appropriate style. Despite this impression of haste and brutality the size of the letters is perfectly matched.

### 3 Typography as the element of the picture

The caption can also weave in the whole picture, then become one of the graphic elements. Then it begins to fulfill several functions - a caption to the image itself, and simultaneously an element of this picture, often inextricably connected with it. Its color and shape should be selected so that you could feel that it is part of the picture. Remember to maintain its readability. This aspect often escapes designers, therefore reducing effectiveness of the whole picture.



Poster 4

Theme: Cross culture

Student work, Academy of Fine Art in Gdańsk, Poland

The author risked and contained in the image two (or even three) anecdotes. Surprisingly she did it with good effect - slight, witty and very friendly. She has placed the caption well, gave it the appropriate positive color, lots of light between letters makes reading easier. Everything is beautifully mixed together. A message remains positive.



Poster 5

Theme: Human?

Author: Jarek Bujny

The image is an integral whole with the words and concludes it. Hand-written slogan uses different font styles and is the part of the graphic image. There is one more feature: the graphics and text cross together, becoming the beautiful composition. The cross structure focuses the eye in its center on the letter M. The composition becomes the consistent message.

#### 4. Typography as a dominant

The typography that dominates, still being the caption/slogan, becomes homogeneous visual mark. Artists let letters enter into the realm of the image. Text fills the picture as the message and becomes an image, a visual sign. In these works the letter returns to the original function, their ancient roots when it first was a sign, a symbol. Letters include visual content and still communicate. They carry additional significance by its shape, composition, color, mood. In these works authors oppose the standardization, yes they retain readability, simultaneously trying to break free from the typical standardized typeface.



Poster 6

Theme: Deep depression,

Author: Ania Iliszko

Typography is a dominant. The message of the poster is conveyed through interference of the graphic and the caption. The letters are artistic expression, the shape is carefully worked out by the author in order to appropriately excite the spectator. Here everything matters: colors, shapes, raw printed colours. The caption becomes an autonomous form of the expression.



Poster 7

Theme: To be / Tibet

Student work, Academy of Fine Art in Gdańsk, Poland

Poster based on the typographic play on meanings. Meanings are differentiated by color and size of letters. The shape of the letters gives the image of emotions.

## 5. Personal Typography

Every typography made out of the computer is stripped from machinery perfection. Font made manually gains the human element. It becomes more familiar, on a human scale. Such a font also gains uniqueness, just as every person is unique and yet similar to the others. Computer fonts are smooth and repeatable as the product without unique character. Author can give letters a proper character, aggressiveness or privacy. The caption can contain any qualities; it can be sad or rebellious. That is the exploration and defining emotions in typography.

But why are we provoking emotions in the pictures?

Inducing emotions in the viewer is associated with remembering images. The more we move the viewer the more he or she remembers our message. Then there is a chance that the image will appear to the person every time s/he closes the eyelids. Just like humming a tune that someone heard a week ago and still remembers it.



## Conclusions

In my essay, I tried to show how to trigger emotions in the image by typography. Visual messages which I presented on important social issues always evoke some emotions. Many viewers may not agree with the messages that artists communicate in their work. Therefore, it is certain that some emotions are triggered, and where is the emotion, there is also a chance to prompt discussions which can make amends. As the subject of emotions in typography is not well represented in the literature, you could say that my essay provides a unique perspective.

It seems that in the twentieth century typography was stripped from the emotional and personal character. So its value has been marginalized.



Poster 7

Theme: UKRAINE

Author: Eugenia Tynna

Note how wisely the designer used the subtitle in the form of signatures. These are the names of people killed during street protests in Kiev in 2014. The form of signatures gives us the emotions that come from real people. A signature is a personal emanation of man. If the author tried to use a computer typography here, the effect would be too dehumanized.



Photography by Grzegorz Kuleta  
Subject: The exhibition of posters  
„Shout for Ukraine” in Kiev on the Ma-  
idan, March 2014.

In the foreground; students’ posters,  
in the background: burnt buildings.

Authors:

Piotr Paluch, Ola Miętus, Jacek Sta-  
niszewski, Eugenia Tynna, Krzysztof  
Głazewski and others. ASP Gdańsk

But all of these treatments have a single primary purpose; to interest the passer-by, hook him and to convince him to the author’s point of view.

Posters work when they go out into the street and communicate. That is why the works of designers - members of the Laboratory are functioning in urban space. That’s what happened when designers involved in the study spoke after the dramatic events in Ukraine in 2014. President Yanukovich tried to brutally suppress the democratic changes in Ukraine. In a gesture of solidarity, Laboratory prepared an exhibition of posters „Shout for Ukraine”, which appeared in Kiev and supported the residents.

*Jarek Bujny*

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