

POSTERS!! POSTERS!!

An Exhibition of Art as Persuasion

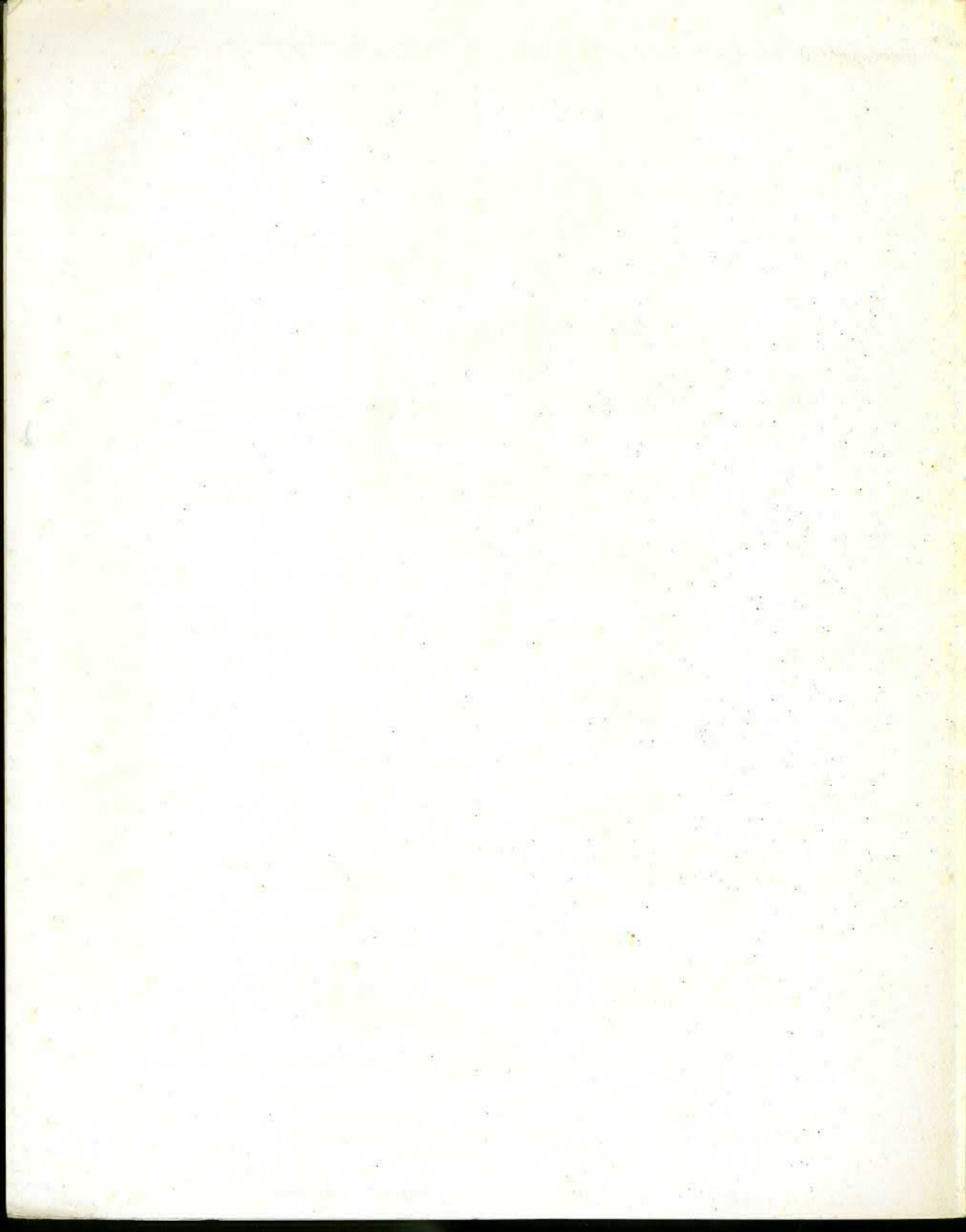
14 NOVEMBER — 3 DECEMBER

ROBERT McDOUGALL ART GALLERY

CATALOGUE

- 1 THE PUSSY NOBODY WANTED (S.P.C.A.)
- 2 IF YOU HAD NOWHERE TO GO . . . NO HOME (6A Organisation)
- 3 PLAN YOUR FAMILY (Family Planning Association)
- 4 MAKE EVERY CHILD A WANTED CHILD (Family Planning Association)
- 5 LOVE CAREFULLY (Family Planning Association)
- 6 WOULD YOU BE MORE CAREFUL IF IT WAS YOU WHO GOT PREGNANT (Family Planning Association of Great Britain. Used in New Zealand)
- 7 CORRECT PRECAUTION PREVENTS ABORTION (Movement to Legalise Abortion)
- 8 NATIONAL WOMANS ABORTION ACTION CONFERENCE (Movement to Legalise Abortion)
- 9 KA WHA WHAI TONU MATAU AKE AKE AKE PATU! (Maori rights movement)
- 10 TE RA O TE REO (Maori rights movement)
- 11 RACISM OUT (Maori rights movement)
- 12 BROWN SKINNED PAKEHA (Maori rights movement)
- 13 GO HOME PAKEHA IMPERIALISTS (Maori rights movement)
- 14 JESUS '73 FESTIVAL (Jesus Movement)
- 15 ONE WAY JESUS (Jesus Movement)
- 16 JESUS CHRIST IS THE REAL THING (Jesus Movement)
- 17 JESUS SYMBOL (Jesus Movement)
- 18 SMILE, GOD LOVES YOU (Jesus Movement)
- 19 GURU MAHARAJ JI (Divine Light mission)
- 20 PEACE, ENERGY, HAPPINESS (International Meditation Society)
- 21 MRS WOTS-A-NAME NEXT DOOR DIED YESTERDAY (Community 73 Movement)
- 22 VIETNAM. WHY? (Anti-Vietnam War Movement)
- 23 OUT NOW. STOP THE BOMBING (Anti-Vietnam War Movement)
- 24 BANDAGES, NOT BULLETS FOR VIETNAM (Anti-Vietnam War Movement)
- 25 VIETNAMESE PEOPLE NEED OUR HELP (Anti-Vietnam War Movement)
- 26 THE WAR, A CONFERENCE TO EXAMINE NEW ZEALAND'S CONTINUED COMPLICITY IN THE OPPRESSION OF SOUTH EAST ASIA (Anti-Vietnam War Movement)
- 27 WOMEN, MARCH AGAINST THE WAR (Anti-Vietnam War Movement)
- 28 AGAIN MOBILIZE JULY 30 (Anti-Vietnam War Movement)
- 29 THIS VACATION VISIT BEAUTIFUL VIETNAM (Anti-Vietnam War Movement)
- 30 VIETNAM. A PEOPLE IS BEING DESTROYED (Anti-Vietnam War Movement)
- 31 DON'T LET THIS MAN GRAB YOUR MARBLES (Organisation to halt military service)

- 32 SHOW OPPOSITION TO CONSCRIPTION AND WAR (Organisation to halt military service)
- 33 KEEP U.S. MILITARY OUT OF THE UNIVERSITIES (Campaign against foreign military bases in New Zealand)
- 34 WASHDYKE-MT JOHN DEMONSTRATION (Campaign against foreign military bases in New Zealand)
- 35 LET'S YANK OUT THE YANKS (Campaign against foreign military bases in New Zealand)
- 36 HELP UNSELL APARTHEID (Halt all racist tours movement)
- 37 ANYONE DISOBEYING THESE LAWS WILL BE IMPRISONED, FINED AND/OR WHIPPED (Halt all racist tours movement)
- 38 MARCH 21—BULLET IN THE BACK DAY (Halt all racist tours movement)
- 39 I'D BE THE LAST TO DRAG POLITICS INTO SPORT . . . (Halt all racist tours movement)
- 40 JACK MARSHALL & CO. BRIDGE BUILDERS (Halt all racist tours movement)
- 41 ABOUT THOSE MASSACRES IN MOZAMBIQUE . . . (Anti-apartheid movement)
- 42 SMOKING IS VERY GLAMOROUS (Cancer Society of New Zealand)
- 43 LIFE IS SO BEAUTIFUL, STAY ALIVE, DON'T SMOKE CIGARETTES (Cancer Society of New Zealand)
- 44 AUTHENTIC ADVERTISEMENT FROM THIS EARLY NEW ZEALAND NEWSPAPER (Marijuana legislation movement)
- 45 DON'T YOU START A FOREST FIRE (New Zealand Forest Service)
- 46 FIRE RUINS FORESTS (New Zealand Forest Service)
- 47 DON'T KILL YOUR COUNTRY (National Conservation Week committee)
- 48 CARE FOR YOUR COUNTRY (National Conservation Week committee)
- 49 HOW TO DESTROY 500,000 YEARS OF WORK. IGNORE IT! (Save Manapouri Campaign)
- 50 SAVE THE BEECH FORESTS (Movement to save the beech forests)
- 51 WE WILL FIGHT THEM ON THE BEECHES (Movement to save the beech forests)
- 52 KEEP OUR BEECH FORESTS (Movement to save the beech forests)
- 53 ECO 73 THERE'S NO TRAGEDY LIKE TOO LATE (Ecology Movement)
- 54 NUCLEAR POLLUTION IS EVERYWHERE (Anti French bomb test movement)
- 55 NEXUS, A PEACE MEDIA POSTER (Anti French bomb test movement)
- 57 UN CAUCHEMRR MURAROA 1973? (Anti-French bomb test movement)
- 58 SPEAK OUT, OR NGATARINGA BAY WILL BE DESTROYED (Ngataringa Bay conservation trust)
- 59 KEEP NGATARINGA BAY NATURAL (Ngataringa Bay conservation trust)
- 60 REVOLUTION (Counter culture movement)
- 61 THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS INSANE (Counter culture movement)



POSTERS FROM THE PRESSURE GROUPS

This is an exhibition of New Zealand posters from the last three or four years. Because they are posters from political pressure groups and from campaign organisations, they are meaningful for two reasons. Firstly they show how art is applied to society in an immediate and relevant way to change peoples habits, or attitudes, or convictions, and secondly they are a revealing indicator of the direction of social change within our society. They show how small groups of people can bring to the notice of the public, and of the government, issues which the group sees as vitally important, and so to promote change where it might otherwise be neglected.

Posters, as we know them today, originated in the middle part of the last century, with the discovery and development of multicolour lithographic printing. However, the public notice, forerunner of the poster, existed long before that. Two thousand years before Christ the Persian civilization engraved the laws of the land on huge, immovable stone tablets which were erected in public places. The Romans painted announcements of gladiatorial combats and theatrical performances on plaster coated wooden noticeboards, which could be shifted around the cities or towns. The ruins of Pompeii revealed walls covered with painted slogans and notices.

The printed public notice did not arrive on the scene until the invention of the printing press at the end of the Fifteenth Century, which allowed large numbers of notices to be printed cheaply and quickly. However, these public notices were

still not posters. Mostly they were simply a printed text in one colour (though they sometimes incorporated a small picture which was of secondary importance to the text). The modern poster had its origins in France, with the first of the great poster designers Jules Cheret. Cheret, who ran his own lithographic printery, produced the first real posters in the 1860's. His advertising posters for the theatre, for cabarets, and for dance halls had simple, bold, colourful images, usually of a pretty girl, and with a text that was brief, to the point, and definitely secondary to the image.

By the turn of the century the output of these posters advertising entertainment and other such luxuries as liquors, beverages and perfumes, was prodigious and the poster had solidly established itself as a part of everyday life, and as a recognized art form, valued by collectors.

Since then the basic character of the poster has remained much the same, but its uses have diversified. The 1914 - 18 war saw governments using the poster to foster patriotic feeling, to encourage increased production from the farmers and factories, and to boost recruitment of soldiers. In the period after the Great War revolutionary movements, especially in Germany, Hungary and Russia made use of posters to arouse the people, and to encourage them to take up arms. And up to the present day, revolutionary societies such as China and Cuba have made vast use of posters to ideologize their people - that is, to encourage in the people attitudes of mind that are necessary to building their nations along socialist or communist lines.

In the West there has been equivalent use of posters by campaign organizations to bring certain issues to the notice of the public, such as the plight of the aged, the dangers of drink, and the awful consequences of war.

Today, in New Zealand, with the presence of newspapers, radio and television as very effective tools for influencing people's minds, businesses and government corporations have, to some extent, by-passed the poster as a means of advertising. But we still see travel posters at the railway stations, cosmetic advertisements in buses, and, week by week, posters proclaiming new products and 'specials' at grocery stores and supermarkets.

Within the last year or two, the poster has also taken on a new role, as a commodity in itself. You might walk into the homes of many young people in New Zealand today to see a recent reproduction of a Toulouse Lautrec revue poster in the living room, Che Guevara in the toilet, John Lennon at the end of the hall and a wide-angle, technicolour Canadian spruce forest next to the Mona Lisa in the kitchen.

Harold Hutchinson, in his book "The Poster - an illustrated history from 1860" describes the poster as '... essentially a large announcement, usually with a pictorial element, and usually displayed on a wall or billboard to the general public. Its purpose is to draw attention to whatever an advertiser is trying to promote and to impress some message on the passer-by. The visual or pictorial element

provides the initial attraction - and it must be striking enough to catch the eye of the passer-by and to overcome the counter attraction of other posters, and it normally needs a supplementary verbal message which follows up and amplifies the pictorial theme. The large size of most posters enables this verbal message to be read at a distance'.

Though reasonably comprehensive, this definition over-stresses the advertising function of the poster.

Not all posters are designed to seduce potential customers into buying goods or indulging in entertainments. Political - type posters aim to educate people or to change their attitudes or to cultivate in them a sense of social obligation.

In addition to Harold Hutchinson's description it is worth noting certain other features which characterise posters. As an artform, posters are very seldom in the lead. More usually they employ the styles that have become accepted by the society of the period as 'good taste'. Poster artists are applied artists. That is, they do not work solely for self expression, or to release their own emotions, or to salve their own aesthetic consciousness. Rather they place their artistic skill at the services of the poster publisher.

Posters are not designed as unique works. Always they are produced in runs of hundreds or thousands, designed to be finally discarded or defaced or blown away in the wind.

The posters in this exhibition are from pressure groups and campaign organisations in New Zealand. They are not advertising posters in the product-selling sense of the word. Instead they are aimed at appealing to people's sense of social obligation, or at promoting a change in attitude among the people.

As such they are barometers of social and political change. We can see, for instance, the growth of the conservation movement, the reaction against the Vietnam war, the campaign that led to the abolition of military service, and the rise of spiritualism with the Jesus revolution and the Eastern mystical religions.

The posters are all from amateur or non-profit organizations. Some of them are quite respectable enough to have been displayed in shop windows and in public buildings. Others have been pasted up illegally at night to appear next morning on power poles, telephone booths and the walls of city buildings. In many cases they have been designed by unpaid artists and published on shoe-string budgets.

Others are the work of design agencies. But none are designed as works of art in themselves and few people would have bothered collecting any of them. The art forms used are certainly not avant guard (in some cases they are decidedly decadent), and only the French bomb test and Ngataringa Bay posters have been the work of well known artists. Many different techniques have been used, but with the emphasis on cheapness of printing. They use black and white photography, or simple designs employing few colours and are reproduced by cheap offset printing or screen printing.

These posters are an example of art directly affecting the lives of people, and as an exhibition we hope that it tells something about the directions of change in our present day society.
