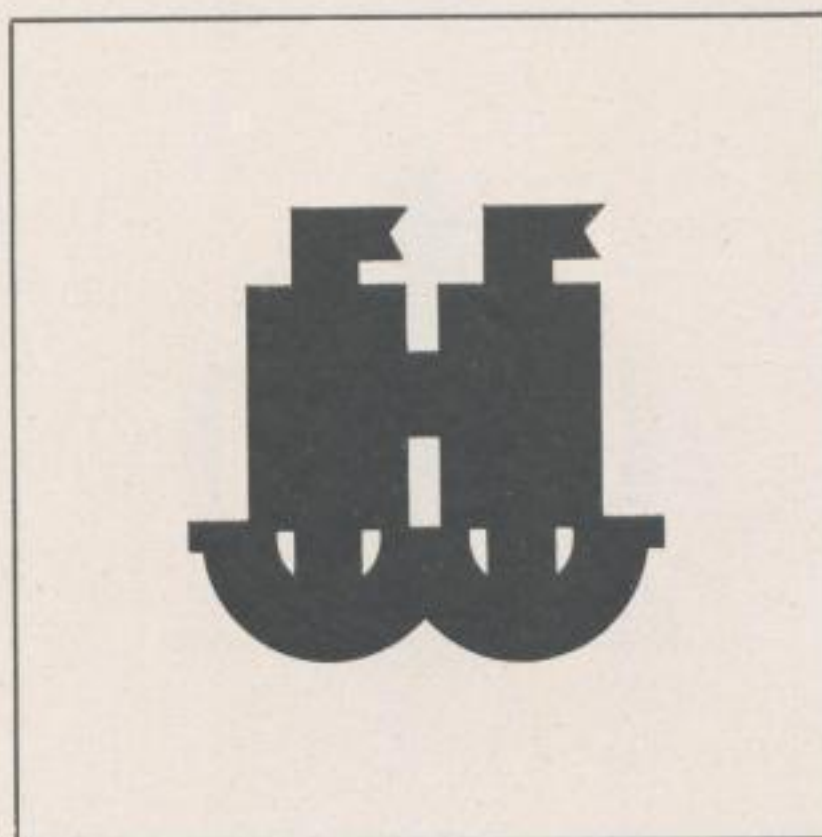


ourselves to effects which are quite different from those that prevailed in the days when we hailed and admired each new Bernhard, Scheurich or Gipkens as "the" solution. These men arduously conquered a new territory for the "flat manner"—today the poster artists command their planes and surfaces with a sureness that is almost like virtuosity. Compared with the things that now spread their flighty selves across the poster sheets as a banquet for the eyes, the venerable "object" posters appear almost realistic—or at all events architectonic. It may be that the present generation, inoculated with the lilt of the jazz-band, is more susceptible to an elegant movement of line and color, than to the "old-fashioned" quiet and objectivity. Whither is this to lead? Many prophesy that it is but a form of transition leading to the pure letterpress poster. But in that case type and lettering would have to be cultivated to a still greater degree than is the case—the formal conventionalization of lettering is not as a rule sufficient for this, and it can be used but seldom for a successful treatment of surface.

The poster art of Berlin is far removed from realism and also, at least for the present, from the "pictorial". There is rather a rigid conventionalization to be observed. The living human figure is simplified into the shapes of logs, beams and balls, and yet at times it sweeps with astonishing sprightliness across the surface of the poster. All these things prove that the *Graphiker*, like the painters and sculptors, are occupying themselves busily with the problems of equipoise, using balance almost as an end in itself. Who knows but that, after the final sense of security has been attained, a surprising serenity will not make its appearance, and bestow a new picturesqueness upon us, which, to be sure, might revert to objectivity, but which would be free for a long time of all that is extraneous or incidental—a real free art but one not painfully and obviously so. Another section of Berlin poster artists seems disposed to incline again to the figure. Nor must one overlook the peculiar humor of Berlin, which permits us to exploit and enjoy all kinds of possibilities and situations with provocative coolness. This is by no means limited to occasional or casual *Graphik*, but proceeds impudently to make use of the bigger formats and apparently more serious tasks, in order to grin at the mentally akin Berliner with a double effectiveness.

To sum up one might well say: There is life enough in the poster art of Berlin, and also a good deal of vigorous ability. The chief cause for grief is the lack of commissions and this can be overcome only by the organized co-operation of all those who are interested. The official centres must in particular be kept from failing in their duty—they must not be stingy with public funds when it is a matter of keeping a capable generation of gifted artists alive and at work by means of a sufficient number of commissions.



WILLY KNABE



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ERNST KNODEL