



It is difficult to determine the status of the poster among the pictorial arts. Some reckon it as a department of painting, which is mistaken, others place it among the decorative arts and I believe they are no less mistaken. The poster is neither a painting nor a theatrical back-drop, but "something different", although it often makes use of the means offered by the one or the other. The poster demands utter resignation on the part of the artist. He must not assert his personality. If he did so, it would be contrary to his rights.

Painting is an end in itself. The poster is only a means to an end, a means of communication between the dealer and the public, something like telegraphy. The poster plays the part of a telegraph official: he does not initiate news, he merely dispenses it. No-one asks him for his opinion. He is only required to bring about a clear, good and exact connection.

To be sure, the communication is plastic. But although the poster artist employs the means of art, he does not do so as an individual means of expression but as an anonymous vehicle of speech, a kind of international code or Morse alphabet. Perhaps one of these days he may be forced to send out S.O.S. signals and in spite of himself his message on this occasion will doubtless bear the impress of his own fear: it will come from the wave-length as if from his own lips. But at the other end of the world, in the tumult of a great city, the voice of thunder will roar out of the loud-speaker with more than human energy, and who will then have ears for the beating of the speaker's heart?

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