



The poster work of recent years has confirmed me in the following views:

The poster art of to-day is the art of mastering the printing-machine and its possibilities, for the poster is not a work of graphic art unless it take account of the creative power of the machine. The machine—and in this connection I would include the printer's box of types among machines—creates new values in modern graphic art; the poster has ceased to be a picture. None of the approved painter's methods, whether water-color, pastel or what not or even the methods of so-called painter-etchers, such as dry-point, linoleum- or wood-cut, can create new poster values. If we make use of these methods in creating a poster they constitute merely a more or less successful reproduction of values which have already been achieved in another place. What do we demand of the machine, whose business it is to manifold these values? We demand

deception. the machine must pretend to have painted the picture. To-day nobody wants falsification or imitation; we imitate neither building materials nor the materials of which furniture is put together. We do not paint deal to represent hard woods nor do we paint the staircase walls of our apartment houses to represent marble. To reproduce painting methods on a poster is to falsify the material. But the poster of to-day creates new elements of power. Firstly, we have the photograph as independent creative pictorial element. The photographic camera creates new values and is itself capable of reproducing them, enlarging, diminishing, distorting them of its own accord and inimitably. To limne over a photograph by means of lithography is the most flagrant falsification which now and then makes its appearance on a poster. By means of photography we achieve uncontrovertible documents for use in poster work. They serve to emphasize that which the hurrying passer-by remembers next to the design on the poster: the typogram.

The typogram is the second element of strength in the modern poster. The typogram? It is the most effective arrangement of types, the selection of suitable sizes and correct proportions. To draw types is again a falsification of material. Types can only be set, and again, only pure type, not individual manuscripts, composed by inventors of new types just for the sake of having something different. Type represents an absolute value, the graphic artist may influence the size and the rhythm but never the form itself.

The third element of strength is color. It is the power which links the others together. It is the pulse and the conscience and the very life-blood of the poster.

To command these three elements of power is the modern poster art of the graphic artist.

Trans. by E.T.S.

