DESIGN 11

SEEING RED

Or

“Sometimes the World Sucks”

Social Commentary Posters

Part 1

Research and brainstorming

Art and Design can be a powerful tool for social change.

Don’t believe me? Go to seeredwomensworkshop.wordpress.com and check out the amazing SEE RED Women’s Workshop!

So cool. They were my inspiration for this project: a bunch of kids/art students who used the methods available to them to be heard.

After looking at some of their posters and reading about them answer the following questions in your sketchbook:

1. What are some of the cultural assumptions that the group is challenging. Print out thumbnail examples of posters, paste them in your sketchbook and give relevant answers.
2. How does the imagery and style/methods of the posters support the message being communicated (hint: think about the means and methods of communication in their/our culture)
3. Think about assumptions that are prevalent in our culture. What assumptions does our society make about beauty, sexuality, race, age etc.
4. What are the specific messages being communicated?
5. How are these messages communicated to us? Where do we see them?

The members of the See Red Women’s Workshop were concerned and passionate about advocating for Women’s rights and roles in society, and for good reason. At the time in Britain (and for-sure here too) sexism was still prevalent and informed a lot the treatment of women at home and in the workplace. One could easily argue that these ideas still exist for than we commonly think.

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENT:

* You will create an 18” x 24” poster.
* You need to incorporate photocopies
* You need to incorporate stamps handmade and/or pre-made and stencils.
* You can use hand writing or drawing.
* You need to incorporate a slogan that effectively communicates your idea/message
* You must develop negative space within your image for your text to be included.

WHAT TICKS YOU OFF?

*(COLLECT IMAGES)*

Take a look at images of men and women in magazine. This is our culture’s primary (print) method of communicating the expectations and roles that we have adopted. What are you supposed to look like? What are you supposed to care about? How are you supposed to think about others?

I will tell you this: They generally promote youth, beauty, sexuality and wealth. They have very specific ideas and notions about what each of these ideals look like, have many suggestions for how you might fit into that lifestyle or image, and work hard to make sure they are ideals that you will NEVER attain.

Please take a moment to consider why. What do “they” have to gain by continually reminding us of how imperfect we are.

Which images strike you? Which ones tick you off? Book mark them or rip them out (ask your teacher if they are his/her magazines!) What is the connecting thread between the images?

You may need only one really striking image but it would be better to collect many so that you have options.

Photocopy your images or have your teacher photocopy them for you. Blow them up crop them, shrink them, whatever you want!

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SAY?

*(BRAINSTORM THE WORDS THAT YOU WILL SAY IN YOUR POSTER)*

This can be

A SLOGAN Make it snappy and clever  
FACTS – research!

A QUESTION – to make the viewer think…

Write down as many ideas as you can in your sketchbook. Don’t edit yourself. Try wording ideas in different ways. Try twisting brand or AD slogans around so they are ironic! You may even use

DO: research

DO NOT: rip off other peoples ideas.

SO now you should have a collection of images that all represent a particular prejudice, unfair ideal or expectation that our culture perpetuates.

And you should have a few ideas about what your poster can say.

IMAGE DEVELOPMENT

Our primary method of image development so far has been photocopying. You can do a lot with this.

You can:

* Blow an image up
* Shrink it down
* Repeat an image (create a pattern)
* Degrade image quality (by multiple copying)
* darken it.
* Lighten it
* Crop an image so that it only shows what you want.
* Create a collage out of multiple images.

Work with your images. Think about them and decide what you want to do with them.

Sometimes One image is so powerful that it can stand on it’s own. Blow it up or isolate it by framing it with negative space.

Sometimes you might want to emphasize an idea by showing multiple or repeated images.

What raw material do you need in order to try your ideas. Get them ready for your teacher and give instructions for photocopying with post-it notes:

Eg:

* cut out a portion of an existing photocopy and place a post-it note on it that reads “please blow this image up as large as you can “

Or

* Can you shrink this image to about ½ size and provide me with 12 copies of it?

It may be handy to remember that we will be making 18” x 24” posters.

NEGATIVE SPACE

In order to insert Text into your poster you are likely going to need to create negative space within your composition. This is planned “white space” incorporated into your poster (though it could be black as well and if so your text would have to be white of course) Each of the examples mentioned exists in the appropriate slideshow on our website.

There are a few strategies that you can employ to create this negative space:

1. Framing: You can leave one or more edges of your poster area empty in order to create a framing effect. See The See Red Women’s Workshop Posters *Protest, Alone We are Powerless, Sisters Question, Women Hold up your Sisters and Alone We are Powerless* for great examples of this strategy.
2. You can insert Blocks of negative space overlapping parts of your image. These blocks are going to be strong compositional elements so make sure that they are distributed in a balanced manner throughout your composition or that they are otherwise balanced by the interesting elements within the imagery itself. These blocks of space can be harmoniously inserted such as in the See Red Women’s Workshop poster *Black Women Will Not Be Intimidated* or symbolically inserted right over top of the image such as in Jaime Reid’s *God Save the Queen.*
3. There may be negative space inherent in your imagery already. Feel free to use any of this blank space as opportunity to insert your slogan. Remember if that negative space is black then your text will have to be white or light grey.

TEXT

Once you have decided on your Phrase or Slogan you will have to decide on how to manifest it. You can:

Hand write it: See examples by Pierre Bernard and Paul Rand in slideshow. Try not to use conventional tools for this.

Use Print Making: see *West Side Story* Poster by Saul Bass (one of my faves)

Use Stencils Also Saul Bass’ *West Side Story* poster.

Use cut outs or Collage See Heryk Tomaszowsi’s *Moore*

EVALUATION

SKETCHBOOK WORK

/5 Questions answered in sketchbook (thoroughly and thoughtfully.

/5 Magazine Images in sketchbook (at least 5 images/photocopied or torn out)

/5 Text brainstorming in sketchbook (at least 5 good ideas)