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COMD 3504

March 09, 2022

When looking at movie posters one of the main elements of design that we almost always see is photographs and images accompanied with of course typography. However, with the circumstances of a pandemic occurring the use of illustrations became an alternative option to many art directors, movie studios, and advertising agencies as photoshoots became limited or impossible to do. Akiko Stehrenberger who is a movie poster illustrator and designer saw the increased demand for illustration over the past year. She has created a variety of movie posters for different clients but one that particularly stood out was her “Kiss of the Damned” movie poster.

While looking at the poster an element of design theory that immediately stood out was the use of color and the way it is communicating. As Munari points out, “each colour has its well-defined meaning. In advertising, we use bright brash colours or very refined ones according to our purpose. In printing we use the four-colour system which reduces all colours to a norm while women’s fashions make use of all the colours in rotation” (Design as Art). The language of color is very important in this poster because it’s communicating something and as Munari states there are reasons and considerations made before choosing colors. Colors have specific meanings and provoke different emotions which should easily translate to the viewer. From what I can tell the colors on the poster help me understand that there are two sides to this woman. Half of her is purple and along with that, there is a color change in her eye that helps portray someone else.

The use of black and white is also interesting because the woman in the poster is wearing white but the background is completely black which may also help signify something more.

Although this movie poster is using illustrations rather than actual photos we can see some elements of photomontage. El Lissitzky was an artist who used and experimented with photomontage and in "Our Book" he stated that the technique of the process block contributed to the development of photomontage. The elements of photomontage that are in the poster are seen on the right side of the woman, particularly in her hair. Stehrenberger's decision to make her illustrations overlap as well as rearranging them is what brings in the idea of photomontage. The theory and idea of having various photos or in this case illustrations overlapping to create one image helps with the communication of the poster. As the viewer looks at the poster they get a glimpse or an idea of what type of movie the poster is demonstrating.

Along with having illustrations on the poster, there is also typography to help the viewer understand what is being communicated. Again even though Stehrenberger isn't using actual photography in her posters, the elements of using illustrations and typography together somewhat connects to the typophoto theories. The way that the typography is used in the poster isn't exactly how Moholy-Nagy describes typophoto but the elements of using two different forms of communication into one is something he envisioned for the future. With typophoto, the type is generally bigger and its placement is I think rearranged around or within the design. However, in Stehrenberger's movie poster the type has its own section which is separate from the illustration and on the bottom of it.

With a simple glance at the "Kiss of the Damned" movie poster or any poster for that matter, there are ideas and theories surrounding them. With taking a closer look at this particular poster we were able to see that there is an importance in the colors that were chosen. We were

also able to understand that although not exactly some elements of photomontage, as well as typophoto, can be seen in the poster. Akiko Stehrenberger created this poster for the advertising of a movie and it's successful in the way that it's communicating to the audience strongly. The message is clear and everything in the poster unites to convey that.

Poster - "Kiss of the Damned", 2012



Sources

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