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First Paper: War is Madness

Seymour Chwast is an American graphic designer, illustrator, and type designer born in Bronx, New York on August 18, 1931. He was influenced by Paul Klee, Roualt and Ben Shahn. His works and part pieces have been placed on display in many well-known galleries and museums all around the world, including the United States, Europe, Japan, and Russia.

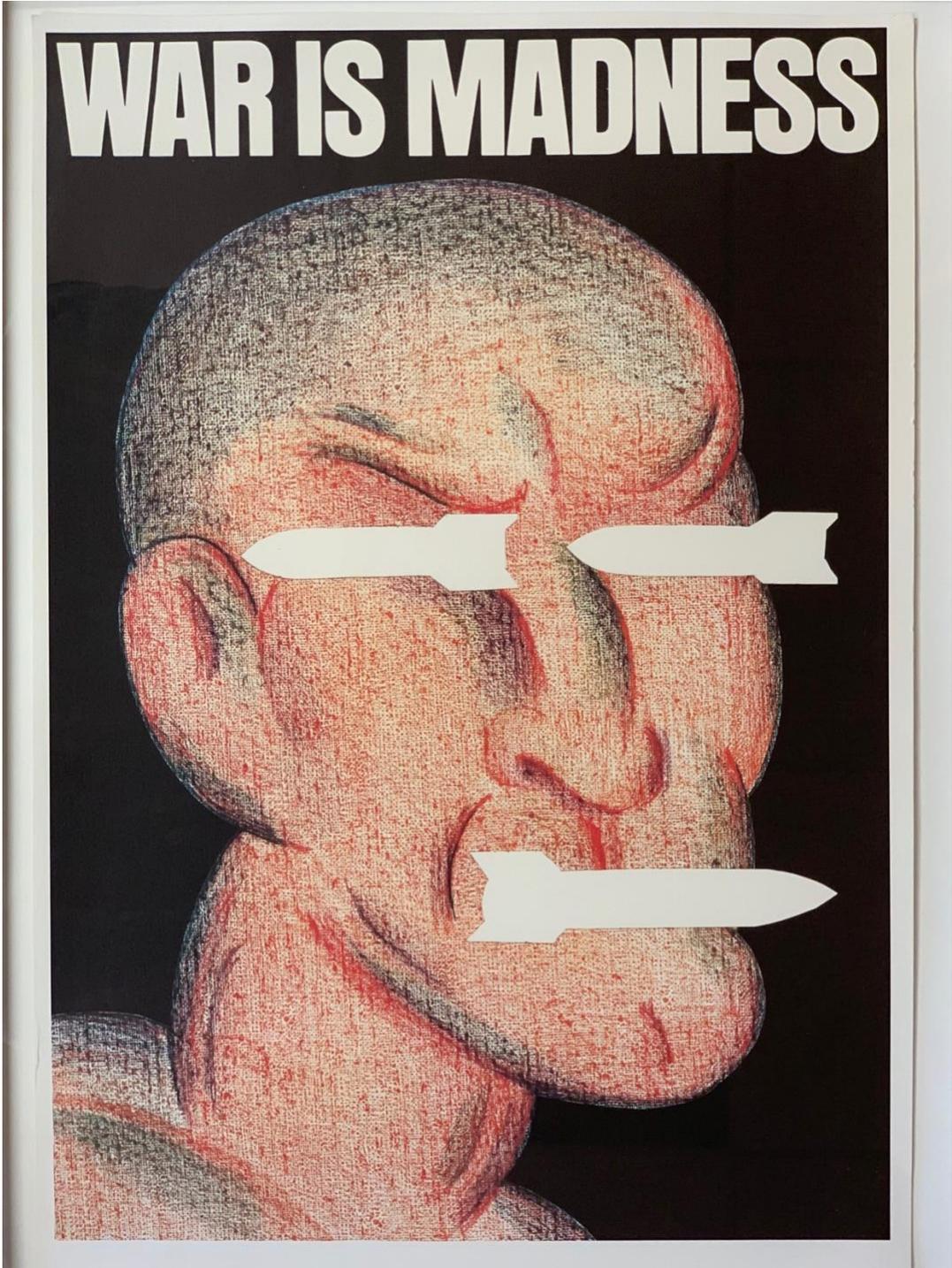
The art piece that I chose my topic for my paper is an offset propaganda poster called “War is Madness” by Seymour Chwast in 1986. The poster was created for an organization in Washington, D.C. called the Shoshin Society. Chwast uses missiles over the eyes and mouth of the character illustrates that on any circumstances, war shouldn’t be the solution to unsolved problems. Since he was born in 1931, he was a child and lived through World War II, The Korean War, and The Vietnam War. The experience that he had as a child must have been traumatic, especially wondering if they’ll ever live to see another day at such a young age. Him living through these three wars took away from his childhood years and took away from his experience as a child.

The illustration that was done by Seymour Chwast in this piece was to show and demonstrate a clear message that war isn't the answer. The missiles in the eyes can also be used to illustrate that many people turn to violence and/or war when it's uncalled for. Some presidents, "rulers", or kings/queens of countries can see and view anything as an opportunity to announce a war with another country. The missiles in the eyes and mouth could be seen in two different ways; one way being that some people are inspired and obsessed with war and violence that they're fine causing wars, fights, and other types of issues that end in someone or many people getting hurt. The other way is through a similar way that Chwast views it, as something that shouldn't exist, the poster is something that was created from his point of view since he lived to experience three wars from a child's point of view.

In the article "On Typography" by Herbert Bayer, Bayer states "once more it became clear that typography is not self-expression within predetermined aesthetics, but that it is conditioned by the message it visualizes (Bayer, page 45)." This section from his article stood out to me because it's explaining that with typography shouldn't be specified towards expressing the designer's person while creating it but should have and give the mood that they want their viewers to see and feel is what should be portrayed into their pieces through typography. In Chwast's piece, the simple use of sans serif as the font family is effective enough so that his viewers can visually, emotionally, and mentally feel and understand the message he's trying to portray in his work. The bold sans serif with the capitalized words "WAR IS MADNESS" gives the feeling that Chwast is "yelling" in some form of way or "being loud" as if he's saying a speech to a group of people. The simple use of the sans serif allows the viewers to read the

phrase without struggle, it's very straight forward, and express that the offset poster is meant to be serious and have the viewer thinking.

In another reading "Typophoto" by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Moholy-Nagy says "Linear typography communicating ideas is merely a mediating makeshift link between the content of the communication and the person receiving it: Communication ←Typography → Person (Moholy-Nagy, page 34)." In Chwast's piece, he illustrates that with the typography he used, he was able connect and interact typography to the content of communication and typography to connect and interact with the viewer receiving the information. He was able to use typography and photography (AKA "Typophoto") in his piece and was able to have them interact, work together, and illustrated what he envisioned. This allows his viewers to see and understand what he thought of to create "War is Madness", there isn't a crowd that's confused on reason it was created. From my understanding, the reason behind "WAR IS MADNESS" is that despite the amount of times that there's a way, nothing gets resolved, there's always going to be disagreements with people no matter the situation, and the best way to move forward is to agree to disagree or work on the solution together, without war or violence.



Seymour Chwast, War is Madness, 1986

Works Cited

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