

50:50 A CREATIVE LEARNING RESOURCE

This resource is based upon exhibition and event posters spanning almost 50 years of exhibition making at Modern Art Oxford. In January 2011, artists Simon & Tom Bloor selected 50 posters from the organisation's archive, to mark the approaching 50th birthday of Modern Art Oxford. Taking their diverse selection as inspiration, this resource suggests different starting points and lines of enquiry based around the posters, for use in group or individual research.

As part of Simon & Tom Bloors' *Hit and Miss* exhibition (October – November 2010) they chose to redraw and rework 14 posters from the MAO archive. The Bloors re-imagined the selection of posters, playfully borrowing ideas from other artworks to reflect their own interests in printed media and nostalgia.

Modern Art Oxford was known as the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford until 2002.

A set of Teachers' Notes to accompany this resource are available to download from www.mao5050.com or www.getdigital5050.com . From 3 October 2011 a selected poster will be released daily for 50 days on the website www.mao.5050.com .

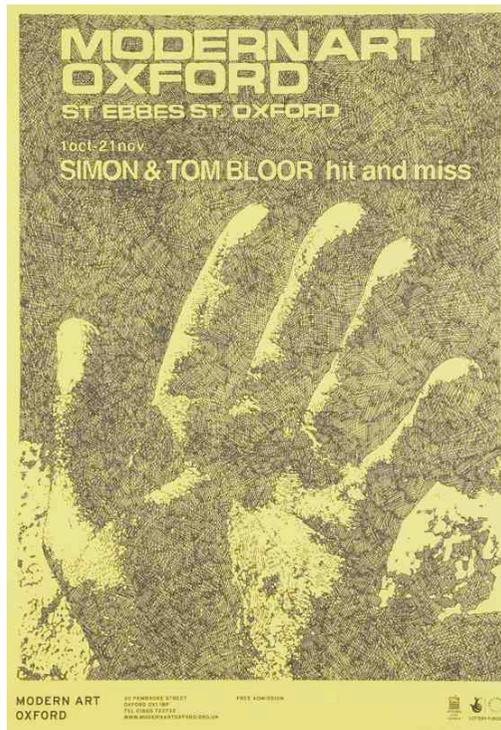
Created by Gill Hart. Designed and edited by Miranda Millward and Sarah Plumb.

MODERN ART
OXFORD

The logo for Creative Junction features a stylized orange and red network of nodes and lines to the left of the text "creative junction" in a grey, lowercase, sans-serif font.

The poster for Simon & Tom Bloor's exhibition at Modern Art Oxford in 2010 featured a work inspired by the Enzo Ragazzini poster, below, dating from 1969.

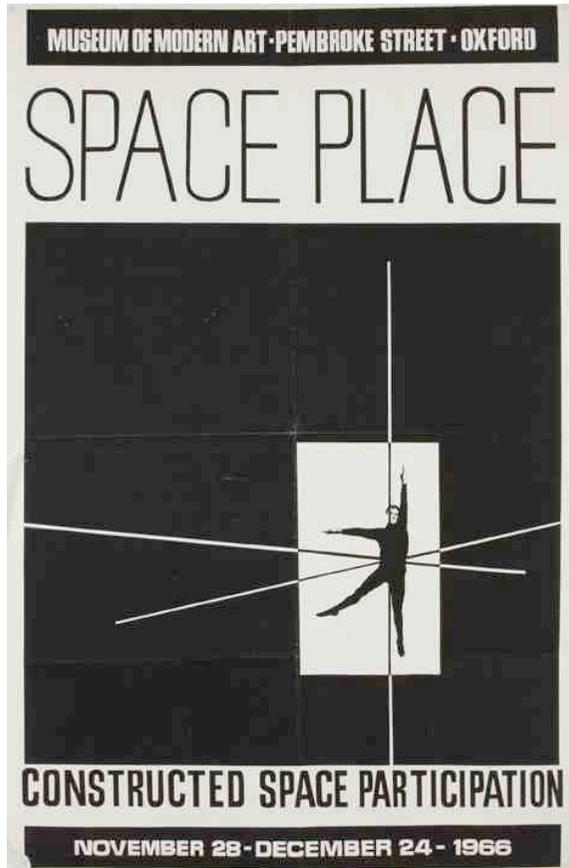
This was one of the first posters we decided to re-draw for our exhibition, we liked the idea of the hand being the signifier of construction, as in hand-made. Simon & Tom Bloor



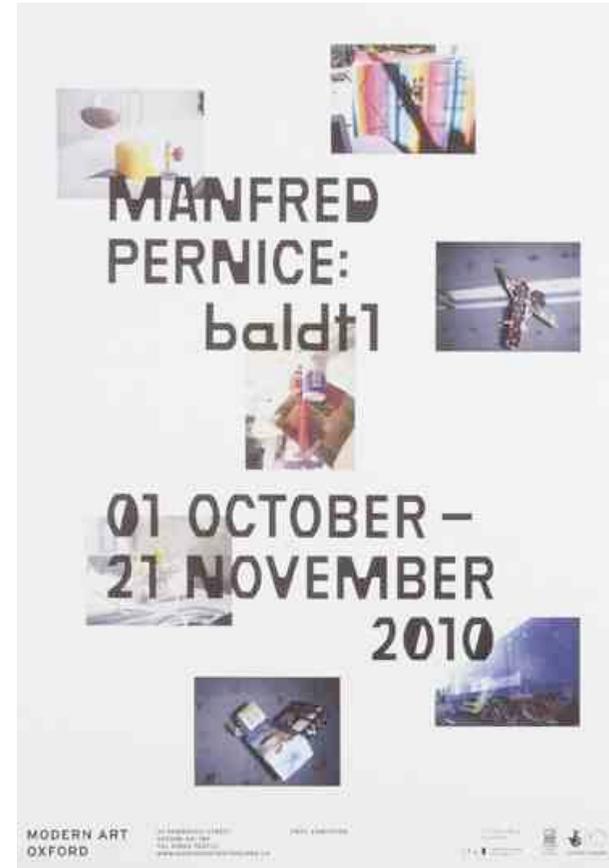
IDEAS TO CONSIDER:

- What is a poster?
- How are posters made?
- Where do you encounter them?
- What function do they have?

STARTING POINT: LINES OF ENQUIRY



The earliest dated poster in the Bloor's selection, advertising an exhibition from 1966



One of the most recent from the Bloor's selection

Posters are a common visual feature of the urban landscape. Modern Art Oxford has used posters as a form of advertisement and communication since its first exhibition in 1965. Most galleries, theatres and arts venues use posters to promote their exhibitions, plays and events.

COMPARE TWO POSTERS FROM THE 50:50 SELECTION:

How does your chosen poster look? How do its characteristics help you to identify when it might have been made?

How does the poster relate to the period in which it was made?

THINK ABOUT:

What kind of font is used and how it is positioned within the poster?

What images are used and how are they used and positioned?

Is there a logo or any use of prominent MOMA/MAO branding or sponsorship?

What is the poster promoting or communicating?

What is the purpose of the poster – how does the graphic layout connect with or communicate that purpose?

IDEAS FOR SELF-LED ENQUIRY:

In groups or as individuals, start an enquiry into one of the key elements of a poster. Use the posters on page 4 as a starter or choose a few from the 50:50 poster selection. Think about:

What is a poster?

Where do we usually find or see posters?

What are the key elements or components of a poster?

STARTING POINT: POSTERS IN YOUR WORLD

Where do you usually see posters?

Do you have any at home?

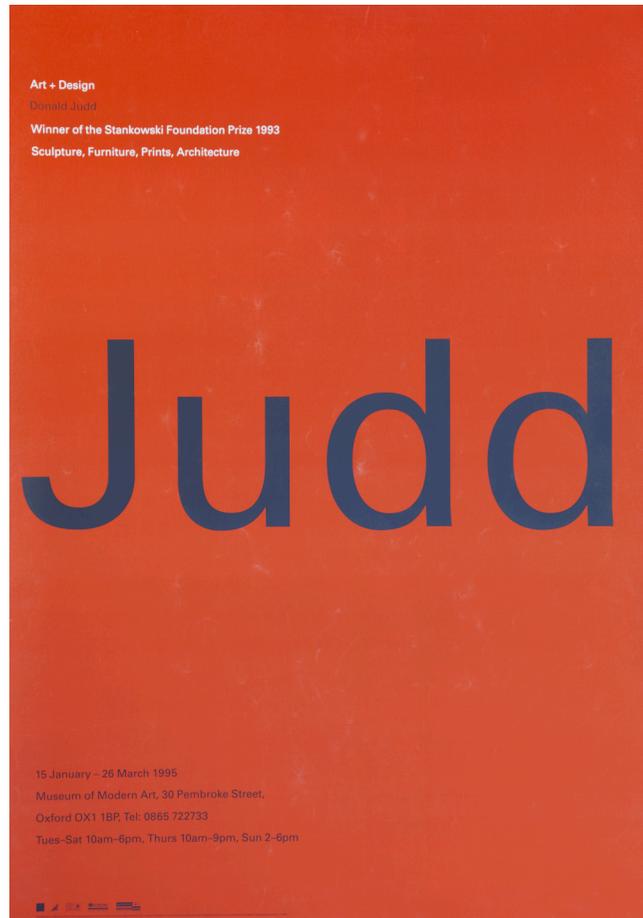
How many do you see on the high street or in your local area?

Start keeping track; note where the posters are located and what their most prominent feature is. Do you think that designers take their location into account?

Can you think of a poster that you have seen recently that made a strong impact upon you?

Have a think about what it was that made the impact. Or, think of one that really did not work. Choose a poster from the 50:50 selection if you need help getting started with this.

The poster for the Donald Judd exhibition (January – March 1995) on page 7, is the art gallery equivalent of a pin-up; the artist's name, like the face of a famous film star or footballer, is more than enough content to communicate the message. **How would you go about designing a poster without words?**



A HUGE poster, about as simple as it could be. All the text is in Univers, and Judd apparently had a thing about what typography should be used for his exhibitions and publications, understandably preferring sans serif to reflect the minimal simplicity of his work. Everything about this poster seems entirely appropriate in reflecting of both Judd's output as an artist as well as his ego.

Simon & Tom Bloor

TO DO:

- **Find out what you can about artist Donald Judd. There is plenty information about him online.**
- **Do you think this poster represents him (and his art) well?**
- **Can you come up with an alternative design for a Judd poster?**

STARTING POINT: THE ART OF A POSTER

Posters have been around for a long time. A form of poster was used in antiquity: wooden panels were used to inform the general population about decisions that had been made by the authorities. Another form of poster was used to advertise Shakespeare's plays in his lifetime. The modern poster came into being around 1870, when printing technology perfected colour lithography and made mass production possible.

Are posters Art? Or do they just advertise the work of artists? Discuss your ideas.

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC TO TRACEY EMIN

In the 1890s the painter Toulouse-Lautrec made a name for himself by designing posters for popular Parisian nightlife spots like the Moulin Rouge. In the run up to the Olympic Games to be held in London in 2012, it has been announced that 12 British artists, including Tracey Emin, will be designing posters for the games. This is not the first time artists have been invited to do so; the Olympics have an interesting visual history.

TO DO:

Find out more about artists who have made a name for themselves as poster designers. You could start with Toulouse-Lautrec. Or, look into the 12 artists who have been commissioned to design posters for London 2012 or some of the past Olympic Games. There are quite a lot to choose from.



HANS HAACKE

Haacke designed this poster as part of his *A Breed Apart* exhibition for MOMA, Oxford in (1978). Look at the photograph, read the text and the advertising slogan. This poster does many things simultaneously. It is an artwork engaging in a critique of politics, advertising and the provision of Land Rovers to the South African Police during the era of apartheid. At that time Land Rover were owned by British Leyland a British Government backed company. British Leyland had a factory in Oxford which is in part why Haacke selected them as a target for his poster campaign.

Think about how Haacke as used the following concepts:

IRONY
CRITIQUE
HUMOUR
SUBVERSION

Can you design a poster to publicise a cause you either support or disagree with?

Can you subvert an existing image or text so that it has a different meaning from what was originally intended?

A team of people are usually involved in the creation of an end product like the posters featured. A copy writer or communications professional provides the text, a photographer might be involved and a designer is responsible for bringing all of the elements contributed by others together using a stylish and appropriate design solution. Accessibility, legibility and branding need to be taken into account.

TO DO:

- Work in a group, a pair or as an individual (if you choose to do this on your own, be prepared to take on each aspect of the overall design).
- Choose an artist or a theme that will form the subject of the exhibition you are designing a poster for. (Or choose a poster from 50:50 and design an alternative version).
- Decide who will write the copy, arrange the photography (including researching copyright) and coordinate the design.
- Create copy (text) for a poster to be located in the following places: a station platform, a cafe, a billboard on a busy road, in the public area of another venue. Think about which message it is important to emphasise for each location. Come up with an advertising slogan.
- Select images that tell different stories about the exhibition or artist and be able to describe the story behind the picture.
- Design a series of posters. Have at least one design featuring minimal text, one with a larger amount of text and one with none. Think carefully about logo placement and visual effectiveness.
- Deliver a group presentation explaining your creative process.