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The exhibition will be titled *Cinem-Art* and, by showing 5 separate film posters from different time periods and countries, will seek to display to the viewer the rich history of cinema while also examining the political, historical and artistic influences that led to these posters' creation. The chosen location for this exhibition is the Bradford Odeon. This building is an abandoned cinema that was once one of the largest cinemas in the UK, first opening its doors in the 1930's before finally closing in the 1990's. This building radiates the history of cinema and is the perfect location for an exhibition celebrating just that.

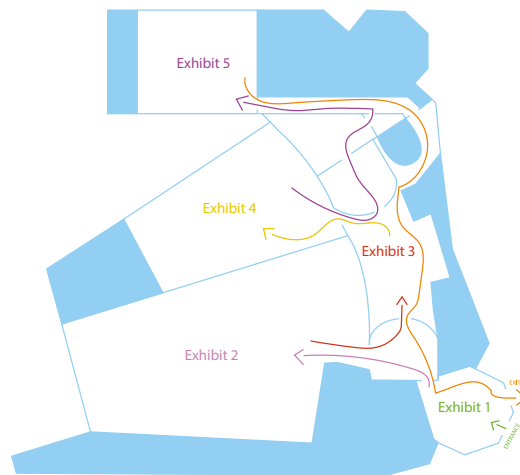


Fig. 1: Exhibition layout



Fig. 2: Bradford Odeon, the location of the exhibition



Fig.3: A film poster for *L'Inhumaine* (1924) designed by Georges Bourgeois



Fig.4: A silent film cinema's lobby in the 1920s.

Walking into the exhibition, you will be greeted by this foyer of sorts resembling those present in silent film cinemas at the time the film poster would've been shown. The first piece, which would be placed on a small stand in the foyer, is by Georges Bourgeois for the 1924 silent film *L'Inhumaine*. This Cubist-inspired poster is an exception when discussing the design philosophy behind designing French silent film posters at the time, which tended to be "extremely conservative, generally emphasizing portraits of one or more actors in a scene from the film" (Printmag, 2015) and were very rarely experimental. The numerous abstract, fragmented yet simple shapes are reminiscent of the Cubist style of displaying different viewpoints in order to suggest a more three-dimensional perspective whilst also making the two-dimensional canvas apparent (Tate, 2021). Cubism was becoming more and more popular in France by this time, inspiring many artists to innovate and create without an endpoint in mind, making the final product seem almost incidental (Sgourev, 2013, p.1606). Despite there being a lack of coherency in the movement overall, this very thing helped artists satisfy "a latent need for expressive freedom" (Sgourev, 2013, p.1608) and create more varied pieces of art than was previously seen, illustrated beautifully by this poster. The reason for making such a unique poster was likely inspired by the film itself, which intended to showcase what was, at the time, cutting edge technology including plastic arts, decorative arts, and architecture (Gartenberg Media, 2021). The painter Fernand Leger and was hired to help create a cubist inspired laboratory for one of the main characters, an engineer representing "the future and the miracle of science" (Gartenberg Media, 2021).



Fig.5: A film poster for *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959) designed by Saul Bass



Fig.6: A cinema in the 1950s

After heading through the foyer, you will enter the first cinema, styled after a 1950s cinema, where the second piece of artwork can be seen projected onto the cinema screen as well as hanging on the wall. This piece is the poster for the 1959 courtroom drama film *Anatomy of a Murder* and was designed by Saul Bass, a designer whose distinctive, minimalist style and unique approach to film poster design helped cause a shift from the more chaotic designs of the 1950s and 60s to a cleaner visual language (Zijlstra, 2015). Bass' approach to these posters involved summarizing the film into a "basic, essential representation" (Solomon, 2013), this style is heavily reminiscent of the Bauhaus movement, particularly through his focus on minimalism and simple geometrical shapes, creating design that was simple and effective, without needing any additional ornamentation (dotART, 2019). By excluding features of the work that were deemed unessential Bass' work also resembles some principles of modernism, particularly late modernism for example the expression of feelings and ideas through abstract means and avoiding creating work from which audiences could come to a strict, immediate conclusion (Garwood, 2017).

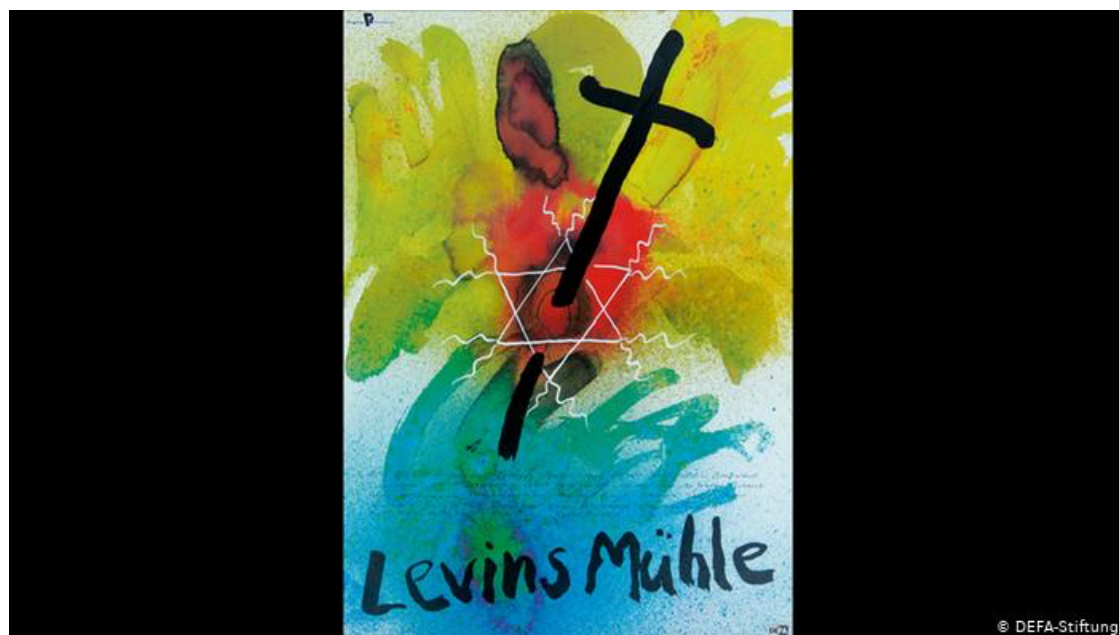


Fig.7: A film poster for *Levins Mühle* (1980) designed by Christoph Ehbets



Fig.8: The lobby of a cinema in 1980

To reach the next piece of artwork you must head into another foyer, this time styled after cinemas from the 1980s. The poster in here will be hung up on the walls in multiple sizes. This poster is from the year 1980 and was designed by Christoph Ehbets for the East German film *Levins Mühle*. It is certainly the most unique poster in this exhibition, favouring the use of symbolic imagery over providing context for the content of the film. This poster particularly resembles abstract expressionism through its use of haphazard brush strokes and a simple composition meant to evoke “a contemplative or meditational response in the viewer” (Tate, 2021). Posters such as these were commonplace in East Germany at one point, since graphic artists in the GDR (German Democratic Republic) tended to have to work with less specifications or interference from marketing and production companies, and so were allowed to express more artistic freedom, using the philosophy of designing posters that were “more art than advertisement” (Lambeck, 2018). This freedom didn’t last, since by the 1970s audiences were expecting more and more imported Western films as opposed to native films (Horten, 2016, p.71), in the struggling GDR film industry these imports became “not just a cultural but increasingly also a financial necessity” (Horten, 2016, p.71). This was

in large part because that the most frequent visitors to the cinema were 14 - 25 year olds, who were expecting adventure, action and comedy films over the GDR's socialist films (Horten, 2016, p.72). This was a big deal since the media was "tightly controlled by the communist regime" (Friehe, Müller and Neumeier, 2020, p.869) and often used as propaganda in an attempt to give people negative perceptions of democracy (Friehe, Müller and Neumeier, 2020, p.870). The media consumed by people in the GDR very much influenced how they voted so this increase in Western imports allowed them a peek at what life was like in countries like the US and France, as the influence of these countries became stronger, so the artistic philosophy behind the posters of the GDR became less prevalent.



Fig.9: A film poster for *Gojira vs Supesugojira* (1994) designed by Noriyoshi Ohrai



Fig.10: Inside a Japanese cinema

The next room you will enter is the second cinema, modelled to look like a Japanese cinema. Just like in the other cinema, the artwork will be projected onto the cinema screen as well as being hung up on the wall. This piece is a Japanese film poster for the 1994 film *Gojira vs Supesugojira* and was designed by Noriyoshi Ohrai. The film is part of the Heisei series of Godzilla films which sought to frame Godzilla as a more unpredictable and dangerous creature as opposed to the more silly and friendly versions that had come before (Haddick, 2021). Ohrai succeeds in creating a sense of grandeur and peril in this poster not only by creating stunningly detailed depictions of each character but by making Space Godzilla (Supesugojira) tower over Godzilla itself, letting the audience know from a glance that Space Godzilla poses a serious threat. Lasers, explosions and spaceships are prevalent in this poster, promising a movie that is just as action-packed. Ohrai designed the posters for other Godzilla films in the series, bringing his distinct style to each one. This was the trend in Japan after the 1980s, where “some designers started to develop their own unique style for a specific series of cinemas or a specific director’s films” (Masuda, 2015) as a way of signalling to the public that a new film series would soon be released. That’s not the only thing that might’ve influenced Ohrai’s design, however. The original context of Godzilla’s

creation was the development of nuclear bombs and the horror and fear in Japan that came from their usage in Hiroshima (Anisfield, 1995, p.53) Godzilla's destructive power and origin are both tied to that fear. This context likely influenced the scale at which Ohrai chooses to portray Godzilla and Space Godzilla, as well as the explosions and general chaos.



Fig.11: A film poster for *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* (2013) designed by Raj Khatri



Fig.12: Inside a Bollywood cinema

The final room in the exhibition is another cinema. This one is modelled after a modern Bollywood cinema and the poster is both projected onto the screen and hung up on the wall. This last poster was created for the 2013 Bollywood film *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* and was designed by Raj Khatri. The poster is a departure from traditional Bollywood posters and follows a trend that started in the 1990s where posters started being created digitally and attempted to try and recreate a scene from the film (Pandya, 2021). Modern Bollywood posters attempt to draw inspiration from Western and Eastern posters in order to create something that encapsulates what the film is about (Pandya, 2021). They also have to be advertised not only to the audience but to external stakeholders (Goswami, 2016, p.188) as well as meeting contractual obligations such as which actor's name appears biggest on the poster (Lee, 2016). It comes as no surprise then that the hand-painted posters of Bollywood past have faded away. Old Bollywood were displayed on the street and featured bold colours that would draw the attention of passers-by, these viewers would then be told what the film was about by showing the villain, the hero etc (Ramnath, 2008, p.56). As

moviegoing changed and India itself changed due to globalization (Ramnath, 2008, pp.58-60), the need to keep up with modern trends became a lot more important with more and more people flocking to the cinema expecting blockbusters akin to those in the West, leading to the style of poster design we see today.

By analysing each of these posters, one can get a greater sense of how the art of cinema has changed and also some of the factors of that. One can also appreciate the pieces in the exhibition as well as all film posters for being an intriguing and evolving form of art.

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