

PL.atak

Curators' Lab, ul. Nowowiejskiego 12

Artists: Mirosław Adamczyk, Bartosz Mamak, Federacja Anarchistyczna, Marcin Markowski, Grzegorz Marszałek, Piotr Marzól, Grzegorz Myćka, Eugeniusz Skorwider, Max Skorwider, Szymon Szymankiewicz

The exhibition entitled *Pl.atak* presents works that are characterised by artistic autonomy and touch upon important social themes. From the very beginning, posters perceived as a means of artistic expression were located between fine arts and applied arts. On the one hand, they drew profusely from traditional artistic techniques such as painting, graphics and – in a later period – photography. On the other hand, unlike these techniques, posters served clearly utilitarian functions: they were created specifically on commission and their purpose was to inform about or advertise specific events. They were dependent on the context of their presentation and their durability was strictly determined by their functions.

With time, the characteristics of posters began to blur. They became less clear. There were many reformulations at both the manufacturing and definition levels. Poster designers

searched for original means of artistic expression and more and more often used various methods to emphasise their creative individuality. In this way, experimentation became the showcase of better-known creators. This changed the criteria for the evaluation of craftsmanship in this field – this began to shift from 'workshop proficiency' towards the 'adequacy of the idea'. The variety of forms of artistic expression in poster design turned posters into collectibles. In this way, they gained an extra third life. At first, they advertised specific events, then became more autonomous as objects of comparison – the question was whether posters correctly interpreted the advertised events? – to finally become independent works of art, when the original subjects of reference (e.g. concert, theatre play or film) were no longer directly available.

Two categories of works were the most important in the context of this evolution of forms and functions of posters as works of art. The first category involved traditional posters, which were created on commission yet revealed the artists' search for their own styles. Consequently, the subjects presented were freely interpreted making the universal messages free from the original contexts. The second category included so-called self-edited authors' posters. Here, forms of visual communication were similar to traditional posters, but the context of creation was different as it resulted from the artists' inventiveness.

Moreover, the presented works directly refer to universal or specific social problems, thus gaining the potential of critical works. They become reactive commentaries which prompt us to think about social mechanisms, habits and patterns of thinking. They sometimes have the potential to be signs that can inspire or even initiate certain activities.

The title of the exhibition, *Pl.atak*, is also an attempt to go beyond the traditional ways of conceiving posters in the context of their relation to the fine arts. It poses the question of whether poster designers – by rejecting traditional artistic techniques and reducing the

meaning of commission to the act of creation – have led to the development of a new field of artistic expression that goes beyond the traditional concepts of art.

Curator: Mateusz Bieczyński