

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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PRESS PREVIEW: TUESDAY
March 17, 2-5 p.m.

FOR RELEASE: WEDNESDAY
March 18, 1953

MORE THAN 40 MODERN POSTERS FROM EUROPE TO BE SHOWN

More than 40 recent posters from France, England, Switzerland and Germany will be on view in the Auditorium Gallery of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from March 18 through May 17, in a setting designed to simulate poster display on European kiosks and streets. The artists, all well-known leaders in post-war graphic design abroad, are Raymond Savignac of France, Max Bill of Switzerland, Abram Games of England and Otto Aicher of Germany.

The posters advertise services and products, and announce concerts, festivals and exhibitions. They were designed for public institutions and governments as well as for leading industrial concerns.

This is one of a series of Museum exhibitions of graphic design. They are organized under the direction of Mildred Constantine, Associate Curator of Graphic Design at the Museum. A previous exhibition in the series was devoted to posters designed by American artists for the New York Times. A show to be held next season will be devoted to four American graphic designers, and will include other graphic material as well as posters.

NOTES AND COMMENTS ON THE ARTISTS:

Savignac, whose posters are characterized by the visual pun, was born in Paris in 1907. He has done work for many leading French advertising agencies. Miss Constantine comments on his work: "Savignac's posters attack with mirth. They are aggressive and biting, but still simple and direct. They explode with color and vitality." Savignac himself says:

The idea is the spice of a poster....If I express myself in puns and whimsy, if my posters are graphic jests, it is because I like doing it that way, first of all; second, because I believe that the public is so bored by its humdrum existence that advertising has a responsibility to be entertaining. The man in the street walks with blinders on, or rather with his eyes turned inward and his thought focused on his own torments and passions. Nothing but scandal can take him out of himself and focus his interest on external things. The poster is a visual scandal.

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Abram Games is an English self-taught artist who has designed posters for the British Government as well as for leading industrial concerns, and who designed the symbol for the Festival of Britain. Miss Constantine says, "Abram Games has created a series of posters for products, ideas and services. His success lies in his ability to transmit his ideas by telescoped concepts, by conciliated opposites, by plausible pictorial solutions for problems." In his own statement the artist says:

...the message must be given quickly and vividly so that interest is subconsciously retained....Originality is secured by organizing known factors in new ways....The discipline of reason conditions the expression of design.... The designer constructs, winds the spring. The viewer's eye is caught, the spring released.

The Swiss artist Max Bill, whose posters are exhibited, is an architect, painter, sculptor, industrial designer, typographer and designer of exhibitions. He studied in the late 20s at the famous Bauhaus school in Dessau. The effectiveness of his posters depends on his use of typography and color; he seldom uses pictorial symbols or representations. Miss Constantine comments on his work: "Max Bill creates sentence pictures by the arrangement of type on the poster in much the same way that some modern painters create pictures by their rhythmic use of planes."

A German artist, Otto Aicher, youngest of the group, is Assistant Director and Graphic Artist for the Ulmer Volkshochschule, which he founded in 1945 in Ulm. His posters have been exhibited in Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, London and New York. Miss Constantine says of his work: "Aicher is an imaginative, prolific young designer who performs visual feats with well-knit patterns of lines, straight and curved, and of circles and ovals. When he ventures into a suggestion of representation he uses rhythmic, fluid, stylized shapes which dominate the space around them."