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**COLASITE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DEARTHA  
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**THE TEACHING OF POSTER DESIGN THROUGH  
THE HISTORY OF POSTERS**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Education**

**in**

**Candidacy for the**

**B.A. DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION**

**by**

**Elaine Brazil**

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## INTRODUCTION

Design education in Ireland is poor. Therefore it is vital to teach the students the importance of design and the design process. The Support Studies for the Junior Certificate and the design process overlap. It is important that the students recognise this. As poster design is a very popular question answered by students in the Junior Certificate one feels that the conventional type of media which are used to create these posters, such as paint and collage, should be challenged. It is very important to link history appreciation with the practical art class. As a result of this I decided to base this dissertation on using the history of posters to teach poster design.

Chapter one is a literary review on relevant publications. It covers design education; the importance of Support Studies in the Junior Certificate; what is graphic design; and a brief history of poster design. Chapter two takes into consideration both Rod Taylor's views on the teaching of aesthetic studies and Amy Arntsons design process for companies, coming up with five criteria for design excellence in schools. Chapter three outlines and discusses two schemes of work that were completed with a first year class of twenty four students in St. David's, C.B.S., Artane. Chapter four contains an evaluation of the schemes, the skills the students acquired, and recommendations that emerged on completion of the schemes. Poster design is a subject that students are aware of at present with plenty of examples evident in the environment, both amusing and controversial. To introduce the history of posters as a way of teaching history and support studies will make the students aware of progress over many years and in the techniques used. To let students sample these techniques will help them to understand the history and the skill of the artists at this time. It will help the students to appreciate the time that was spent on works of art.







# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **LITERARY REVIEW**

### **Design Education**

Design education in Ireland inadequate. It has only held a significant place in the Irish syllabus since 1987, unlike the United Kingdom, where Craft, Design and Technology has been an important feature for many years. This is partly due to the lack of artistic education and aesthetic values experienced by students in school. To this day, there is still a low status attached to visual art. The teaching of visual art, like any other subject, depends amongst other things on the enthusiasm of the teacher, as stated by the Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion Paper, "The Arts in Education". Recognition for a need of design in the Irish syllabus was evident in a Scandinavian Report (1961), entitled "Design in Ireland". This report outlined a serious neglect of design within the Irish Curriculum. The year previous to this students studied 'Art' and not 'Art, Craft and Design' as a subject.

Design education can be made interesting by promoting a personal response from the students and by getting them to express their feelings. Design education is "a constantly changing series of opportunities to learn through experience or valid decision making". (1) This is why it is important to encourage the student to complete a certain amount of research and organisation of resources on their own environment.

Design is a problem solving experience to enhance creativity and provide analytical skills. It promotes planning, brainstorming, research, drawing and the process of enquiry. These skills can be used outside the school environment to aid such human







activities as decision making. Through design education the students may become aware of their own needs and the needs of other people. As Green says:

"Design education is not about imposing good taste or buying wisely. It is more concerned with developing a critical understanding of human needs and gaining experience in educating, whether these needs have been met adequately." (2)

Amy Arntson briefly describes the design process that she believes should be used in designing for companies under the following headings, (3)

1. Research
2. Thumbnails
3. Roughs
4. Comprehensives
5. Presentation

The preliminary work in design is as important as the end piece itself especially where students are concerned. It is important for students to get into the habit of developing their ideas and bringing them to some conclusion. This helps to promote organisation and logical thinking. The design process helps to give the students extra confidence and enjoyment. By the time, the students are working on the final stage of their design they know exactly what has to be done, as it is already worked out. Ed Marquand states that, "a designer must find excitement and enjoyment in the design process before he finds pleasure in his end presentation". (4) It is important to promote enjoyment in this area.







Fig. 1.0 Arntson's examples of Thumbnail Sketches for an October Calendar







Rod Taylor in "Education for Art" discusses the fact that art history has become a chore. The students are taught the basic facts with no relation to their work or their environment. This is where design education is falling down.

"Though practical involvement will probably always remain the central activity of primary and secondary school visual art lessons. It should not exist in isolation." (5)

As stated in the Gulbenkians Report, "The Art in Schools", "Participation and appreciation are complimentary aspects of arts education: not one or the other, but both". This is a very relevant point which one has based two schemes of work around. Students at Junior Certificate level should be introduced to History and Appreciation of Art in greater detail, and not as an after thought as with many teachers. Students should be taught about the theories and techniques behind various aspects of art which are often taken for granted.

Elliot Eisner has similar views to Gulbenkians in "Educating Artistic Vision". Eisner argues that the historical and cultural aspects seem to have been neglected. He believes that the production of art alone does not teach a student enough about Art, Craft and Design. Brian Allison stated in 1970 that "... to be educated in art means more than being able to manipulate some art materials". It is up to the art students but mostly the art teachers to change the way visual art is perceived and to look at it on a higher level. This will eventually have some effect on the students.





### **Support Studies in the Junior Certificate**

The Junior Certificate was first introduced in Ireland in 1987 by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). This relatively new syllabus took the place of the Intermediate Certificate. In the Intermediate Certificate art syllabus the emphasis was on the end product, rather than the process, to be completed in a very restricted environment. The Junior Certificate gives the students a better chance to express themselves. It gives them a certain kind of freedom that the Intermediate Certificate failed to give.

The Junior Certificate fortunately acknowledged the importance of the design process not just the end product. Therefore introducing an area called Support Studies. The Chief Examiners Report (1992) defined Support Studies as "ideas; movements; methods; influences; impact; problems encountered and problems solved". (6) Support Studies is a very wide area, but unfortunately it not explained in great detail. The main areas of Support Studies are as follows:

- The students design and thought process
- The students research of the subject matter
- Development of the students ideas
- Evidence of the students problem solving
- The students knowledge of artists, both historical and contemporary, who have worked with similar subject matter

As stated by Rod Taylor, Support Studies can be found in two forms, primary and secondary.







Primary Support Studies include the areas such as:

- Museums and galleries
- Statements made by artists
- Students own work
- The environment

Secondary Support Studies includes the areas such as:

- Reproductions in the form of photos, post cards and slides.

The Chief Examiners Report following the first examination of the Junior Certificate, showed that the expected content of the Support Studies was not described in enough detail. (7) The report suggested that as a result of this, it was noted that the Support Studies were not being used to its maximum. Students and teachers alike were completing it only as an exam requirement, usually at the end of the project and not as an area of inquiry or discovery of a specific subject matter or related studies.

### **Graphic Design**

Graphic design is problem solving on a flat two dimensional surface. Communication is the most important element of graphic design. "It is a business of making or choosing marks and arranging them on a surface to convey an idea." (8) Graphic design has a very long history and should be used to its best ability to help teach students the basics behind graphic design, from cave paintings, thirty thousand years ago, to the Roman alphabet that the designers in Western Europe inherited.







Until the late nineteenth century graphic design were usually black and white prints on paper. The relationship between the inked and the non-inked, and the positive and the negative became very important to the beauty and appreciation of the designs. The most common medium used by graphic designers is paper, whether it is the designing of the poster, leaflet, booklet, magazine or book, they are all formats on what designers organise their designs. From this, graphic design has developed a great deal, depending on increasing new technology and techniques, such as photography and the computer. Students must be kept up to date with these new developments in technology. They have given designers better control over their work, how they are produced and reproduced.

Poster design is a very common area with students of both the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate. It is seen as, 'the old reliable', by most teachers, as it always appears as an option in both examinations. The techniques of poster design are very rarely challenged. Unfortunately, very few teachers actually go into the history, theory and appreciation behind poster design.

Advertising is an interesting area for most students. Poster design can appeal to every student with every taste. The range of posters is wide and varied. These include posters for things such as film; videos; on billboards and also on bus stop. They are easily accessible to students. Amy Arntson states that a successful advertisement must cover each of the following: (9)

- It attracts attention
- It communicates a message







- It persuades or informs an audience

To be well educated in design is a certain way of making improvements to the way one lives. Just because one is a recipient of good design education does not necessarily mean that one has to become an art producer or a professional graphic designer. Everyone becomes a consumer and in this way everyone will be affected by their environment. Therefore it is important to help the students to develop a critical attitude to their surroundings.

### **The History of Poster Design**

"Through its metamorphosis from broadside to gigantic billboard, the poster has become a permanent part of the urban fabric, an ever changing pictorial background for the city street scene." (10)

A pictorial poster is a visual telegram, used by way of combining an idea or information through a combination of both type and images. Posters were intended for pedestrians and occupants of slowly moving vehicles. The earlier poster was designed to be seen close up primarily in daylight. By contrast the billboard must be instantly absorbed, often at a great distance, usually moving traffic. The poster survives as a way to inform and persuade an audience. Unlike many other forms of artistic expression, posters are made in response to specific needs. Most students are interested in what they have to say, as they can be quite controversial, humorous and sometimes quite ambiguous. This is what appeals to people, not only students.









In the United States the extended billboard, which originally anticipated the wide cinema-screen . . .

. . . later imitated the moving frame 1968 (Photos: David Hockney)



Fig. 1.1 Modern Billboard Advertisements







The modern poster is a little more than a century old. The poster is a growing market for consumer goods and services, which developed towards the end of the nineteenth century. Techniques in poster design have developed a great deal from Gutterbergs' letter press; Dürers' woodcuts and lithography, to the computer generated images of the present day. The process of lithography was invented by Alois Senefelder, in Austria, in 1798. His methods were not perfected until some years later, by various artists, namely Jules Chéret. The change in methods has made the pictorial colour lithographic poster a cheap and effective medium for advertising and publicity. Lithography became very popular and widespread. By 1930 the mass produced poster reached its peak of stylistic quality. "The introduction of new technology enabled designers to cope with the onset of the industrial age." (11)

The techniques in the history of poster design are extremely important, as with teaching any aspect of history and appreciation. The students must become aware of how much time and skill was involved and the amount of effort that went into every piece of work. As stated in "The Arts in Education", "The post primary students artistic and aesthetic education in the visual arts should be thoroughly integrated." (12)

Barnicoat gives a detailed history of posters.(13) He discusses the techniques, the styles, the artists and even about the more recent three dimensional posters. These posters can be found on such areas as newspaper displays, cars and other displays, they have become very popular in shop windows. These are examples that students are well aware of, but they need to be taught how to see them through the eyes of a graphic designer.







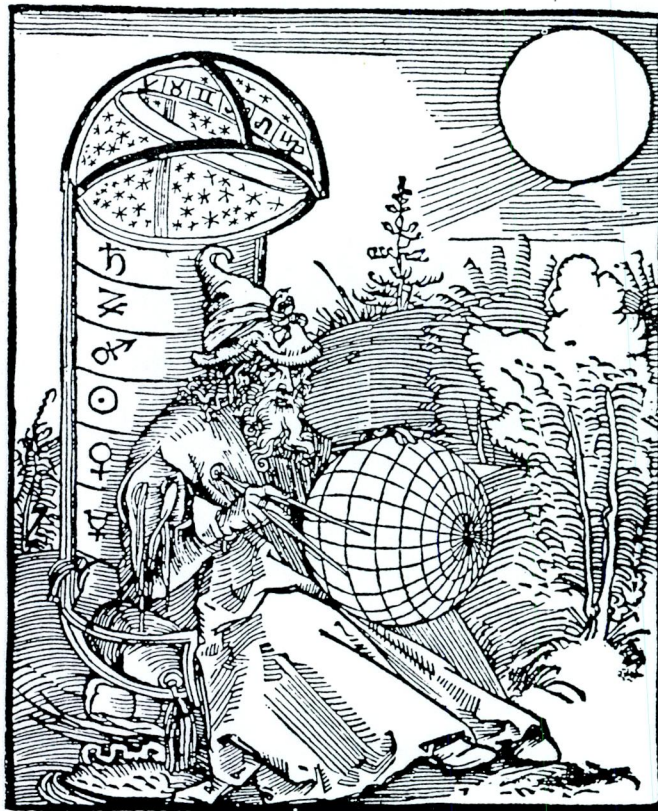


Fig. 1.2 Dürer's Woodcuts









Fig. 1.3 Chéret's Lithography Poster







To a large degree the function of the printed poster has been taken over by the flashing neon signs of the vertical city. Fortunately the poster is a classic and survives as a way to inform and persuade, perhaps because of its essentially topical nature and interest with all generations.







## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER ONE

1. Peter Green, Design Education. P.56. (London: B.T., Batsford Ltd., 1974) p.56
2. Ibid p.21.
3. Amy Arntson, Graphic Design Basics. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988) p.23.
4. Ed Marquand, Graphic design presentations. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1986) p.34.
5. Rod Taylor, Education for Art (London: Longman Group, 1986) p.3.
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7. Ibid. p.7
8. Hollis, Graphic Design - A concise history (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994) p.7.
9. Amy Arntson, Graphic Design Basics, p.80.
10. Dawn Ades, The Twentieth Century Poster, (New York: Abbeville Press pub., 1984) p.82.
11. Armin Hofman, "Thoughts on the poster", in The Twentieth Century Poster, ed. D. Ades. (New York: Abbeville Press pub., 1984) p.90.
12. A Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion Paper. The Arts in Education, 1985.
13. John Barnicoat, Posters.. A Concise History. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972).







## CHAPTER TWO

### Criteria for design excellence in schools

Rod Taylor suggests that the promotion of activities that make up the area of the aesthetic studies should be based on the following: (1)

1. Art history and appreciation should be interlinked with classwork.
2. Development of ideas and preparatory work must be recorded.
3. Students should be given the criteria by which they can evaluate themselves as they work.
4. Art should not be restricted to the art room. Gallery visits, contact with the students environment and working with artists should be encouraged.
5. Aesthetic studies covers a wide area including the following; the visual arts; literature; music; drama; film and dance.

After combining Taylor's listings with Arntson's design process for companies, I am suggesting five criteria for design excellence in relation to schools, with Support Studies being the foundation on which it is based. (2)

The most important aspect of designing a poster is the design process itself. The same amount of emphasis must be put on the design as is put on the end result. The headings under which the criteria for design excellence is listed, can also be used as a guide for the students assessment, with a marking scheme visible beside each heading.







1.     Support Studies
  - Research (20 marks)
  - Thumbnails (10 marks)
  - Roughs (10 marks)
2.     Final Piece (50 marks)
3.     Presentation (10 marks)

Total: 100 marks

### 1.     **Support Studies**

#### Research

To know how to research one must gather and study all the related information on the chosen subject that one can find. As a designer one is expected to build upon the work of others. It is at this early stage that the student must look back with historical reference on other artists works; their layout; presentation; colour scheme and the media used. It is very important that the students take other ideas into consideration, and use them as a stepping stone to reach their own personal solution, and not just use them as an 'easy way out'. The research stage should be the first step of the students being introduced to Support Studies. This must then be carried on throughout the scheme of work. This stage determines the strength of the final solution.

#### Thumbnails

After gathering as much information as possible one needs to explore many alternative solutions not just one solution. Thumbnail sketches contain ideas carried through from research. They are visual evidence of how the student is thinking, searching and sorting out solutions.







## Roughs

Once a range of ideas has been explored one must select one or two for refinement. The roughs are usually enlarged to work up the design in greater detail, using type style, the positive and negative shapes within the poster, the format of the poster and the colour distribution throughout, making sure the composition is balanced. It is while refining these ideas that one should explore various techniques suitable to the design, from paint to lino printing. One must remember to return to the historical reference found during the previous stages. After doing enough work on the rough, without going into too much detail, one must select the most successful design and finish it at its actual size.

## 2. **Final Solution**

The final solution depends solely on the choice of roughs chosen by the student. The student at this stage knows clearly what he wants the end piece to look like, and has his ideas worked out carefully on paper to back him up. Therefore all the student has to do is transfer his design to its actual size using the chosen media and colours.

## 3. **Presentation**

How the finished piece is executed can 'make' or 'break' the design. Neatness and precision is very important. Students must take pride in their work, where it is kept, and how it is presented. Each student must be able to mount their own work. Presentation depends on the design itself, whether it is flush mounted or window mounted. This also gives the students a feeling of satisfaction, after







going through the design process and finishing up with a complete design.

Both the criteria for design excellence and its making scheme should both be discussed in detail with the students, at the start of the scheme of work. As a result of this the students know what is expected of them and what are the criteria for allocating marks for work completed.







**FOOTNOTES**

**CHAPTER TWO**

1. Rod Taylor, Educating for Art (London: Longman Group, 1986) p.6.
2. Amy Arntson, Graphic Design Basics (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988) p.45.







## CHAPTER THREE

### SCHEMES OF WORK CARRIED OUT

#### Scheme One

Theme: Christmas

Activity: To design and make a Christmas poster

Support Studies: Andy Warhol

Ludwig Hohlwein

Other various poster designers.

Aim: To develop the students awareness of shape through stencil printing to make a Christmas poster.

Objectives completed to achieve the aim:

#### Week One

- To introduce the students to positive and negative shapes in the environment.

#### Week Two

- To further the students concept of shape through a Christmas still like using line.
- To introduce the students to composition using a viewfinder and thumbnails.

#### Week Three

- To teach the students to enlarge work using the grid.

#### Week Four

- To introduce the students to the making of stencils through cutting paper.

#### Week Five

- To promote the students use of stencils.









**Fig. 2.0**      **Students Work - Positive and Negative Shapes**



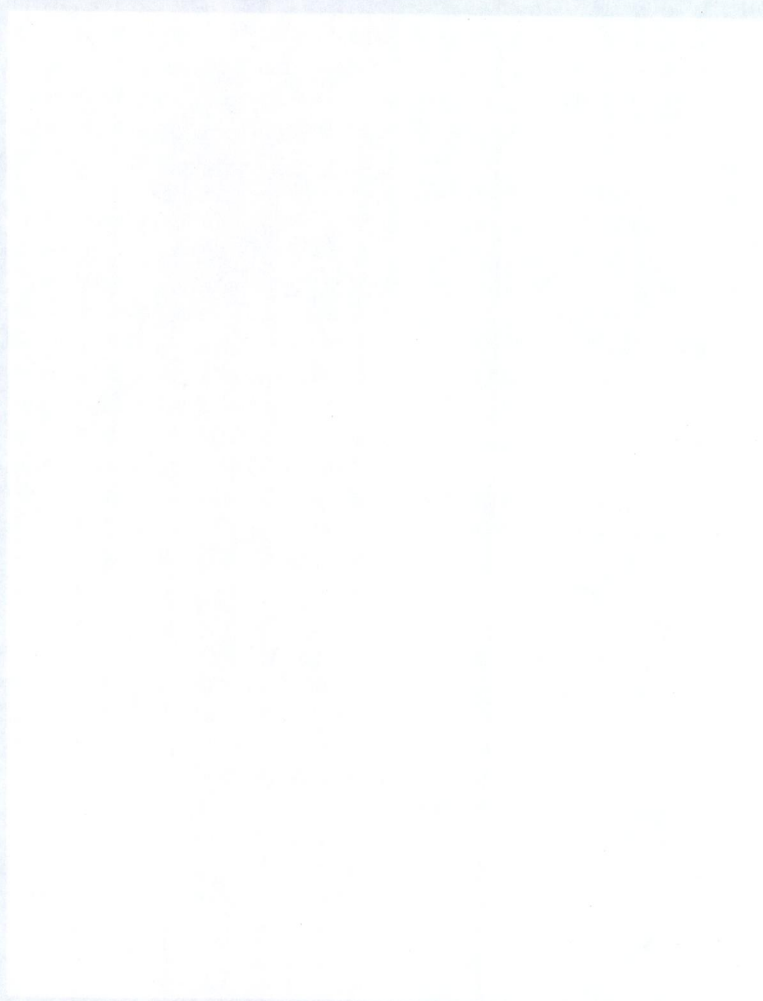
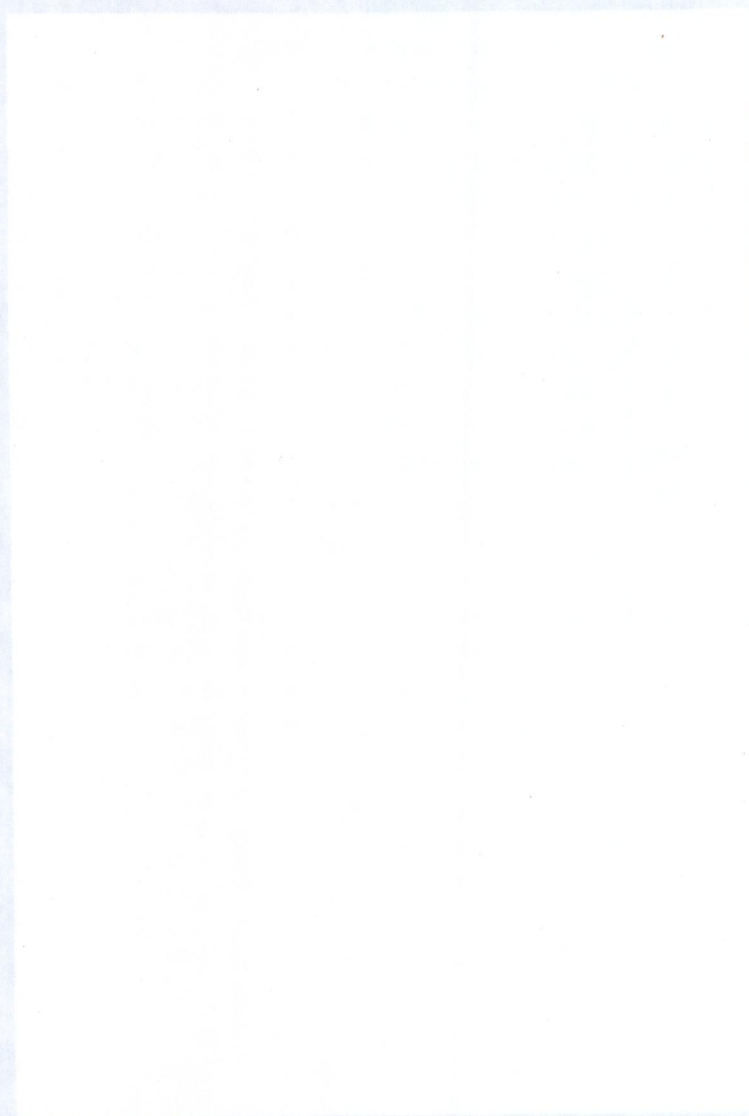






Fig. 2.1 Example of Christmas Still Life Used.







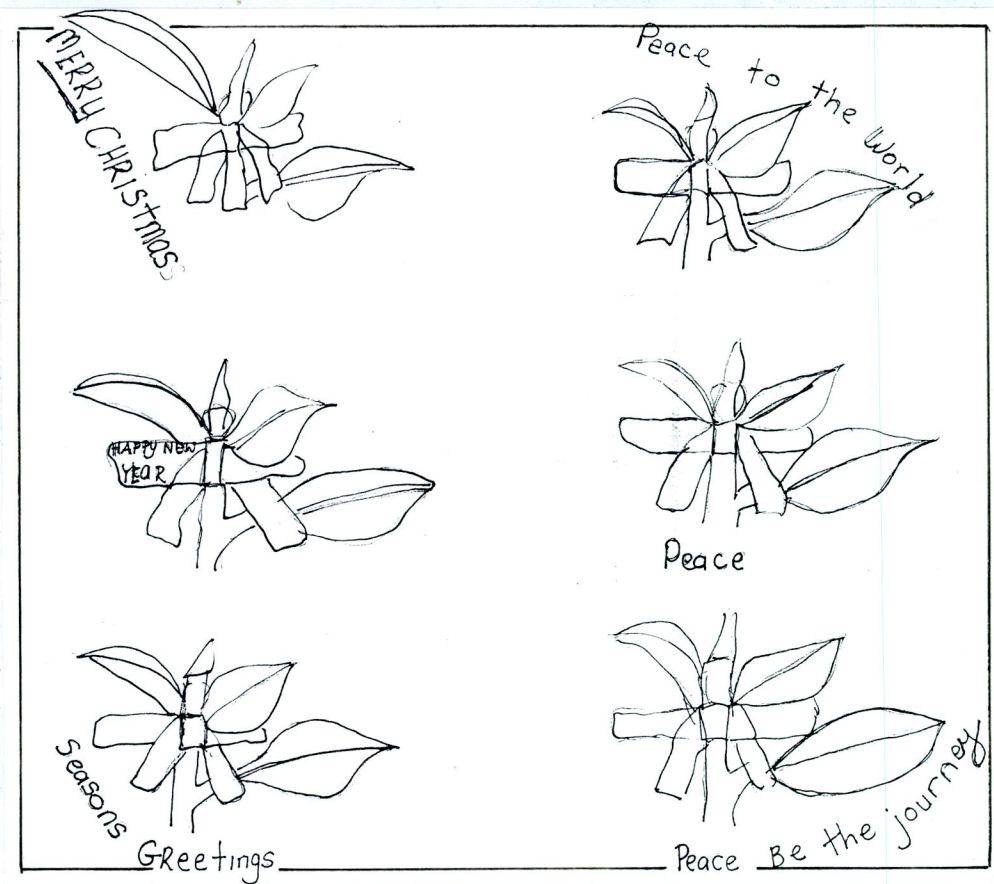


Fig. 2.2 Students Work - Thumbnails for Christmas Poster







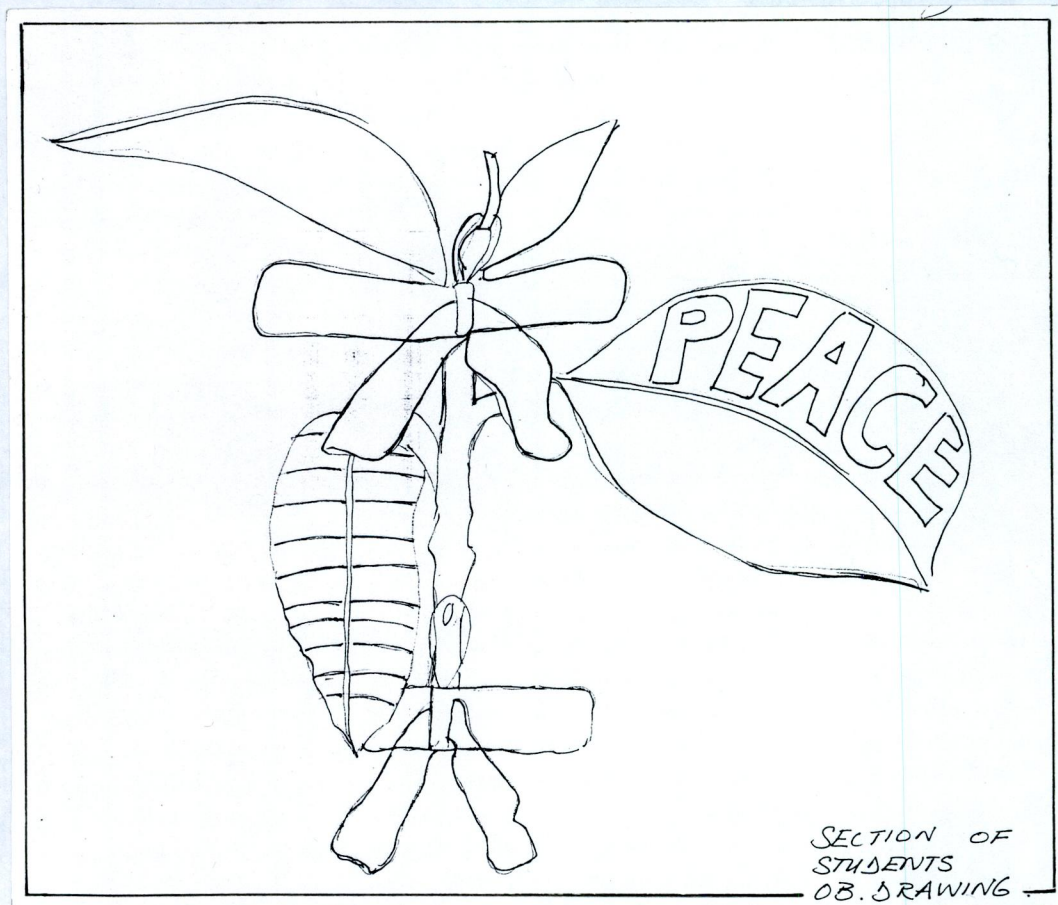


Fig. 2.3 Students Work - Poster Design







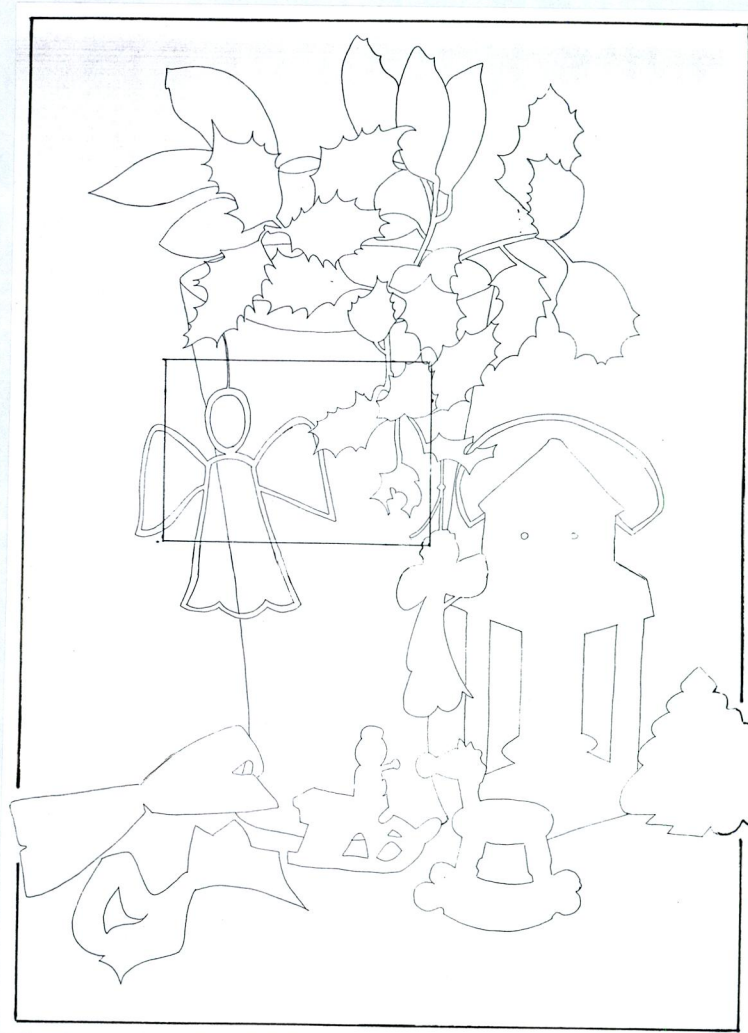


Fig. 2.4 Students Work - An Example of a Final Poster









**Fig. 2.5 Visual Aids Used - Still Life Used to Develop Outline Shape**









**Fig. 2.6 Visual Aid Used - Enlarged Section and Placement of Lettering**



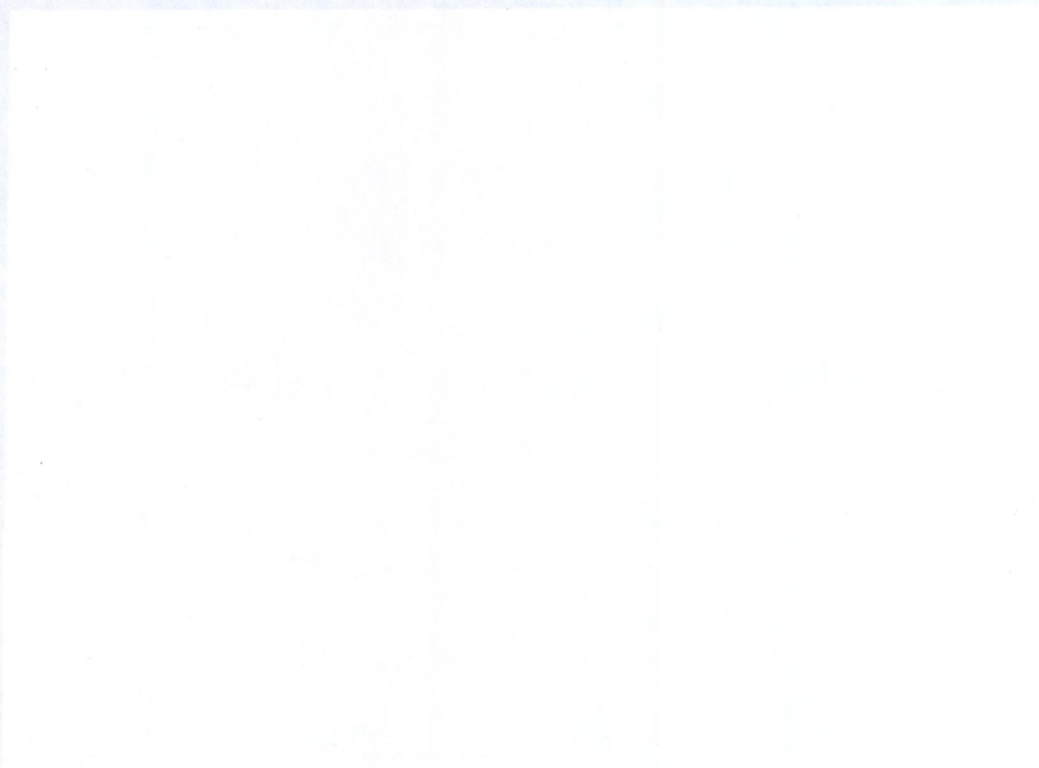




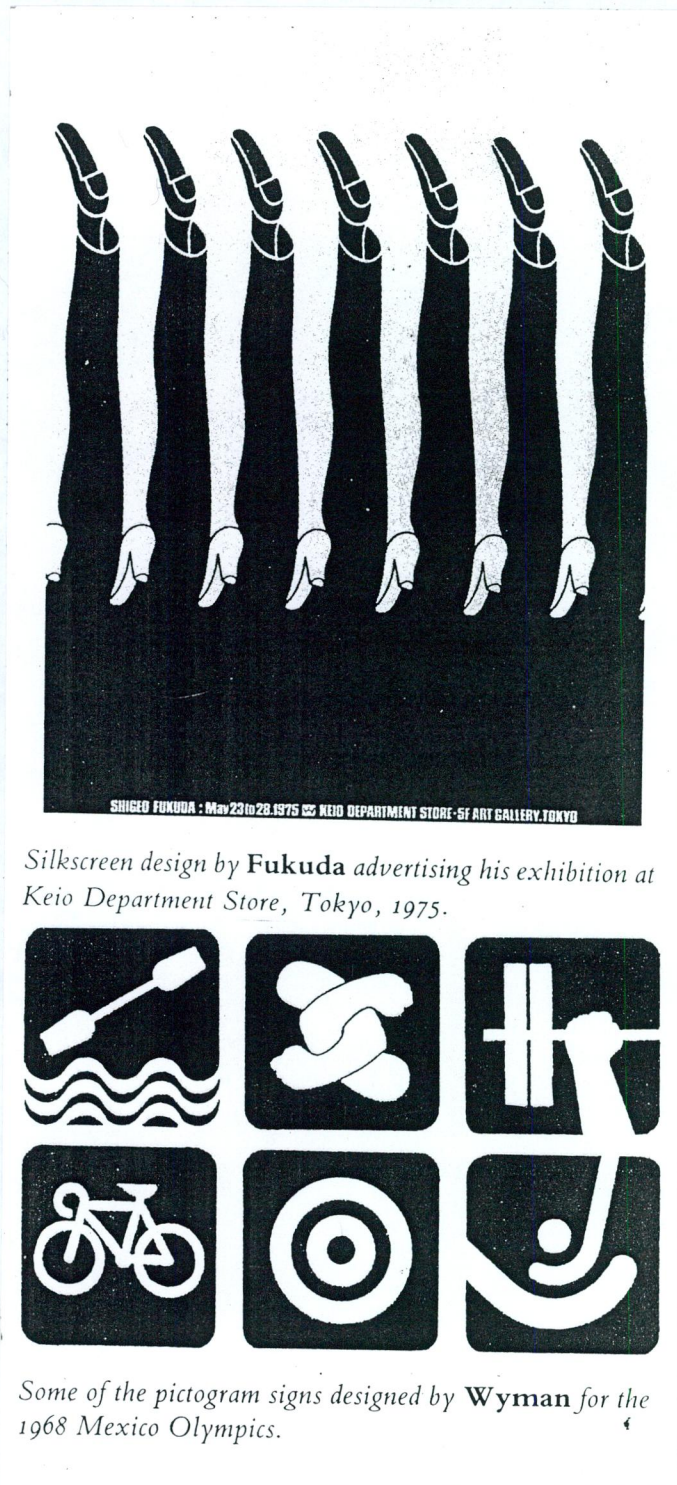


Fig. 2.7 Visual Aids Used - Example of a Stencil Poster









**Fig. 2.8** Support Studies Used - Positive and Negative Shapes  
**Shigeo Fukuda, 1975 (Top)**  
**Lance Wyman, 1968 (Bottom)**









**Fig. 2.9 Support Studies Used - Placement of Lettering in a Specific Format**  
**Tandanori Yokoo - Laboratory of Play (1968)**









Fig. 3.0 Support Studies Used - Use of Outline Shape  
Ludwig Hohlwein - Hermann Scherrer (1911)



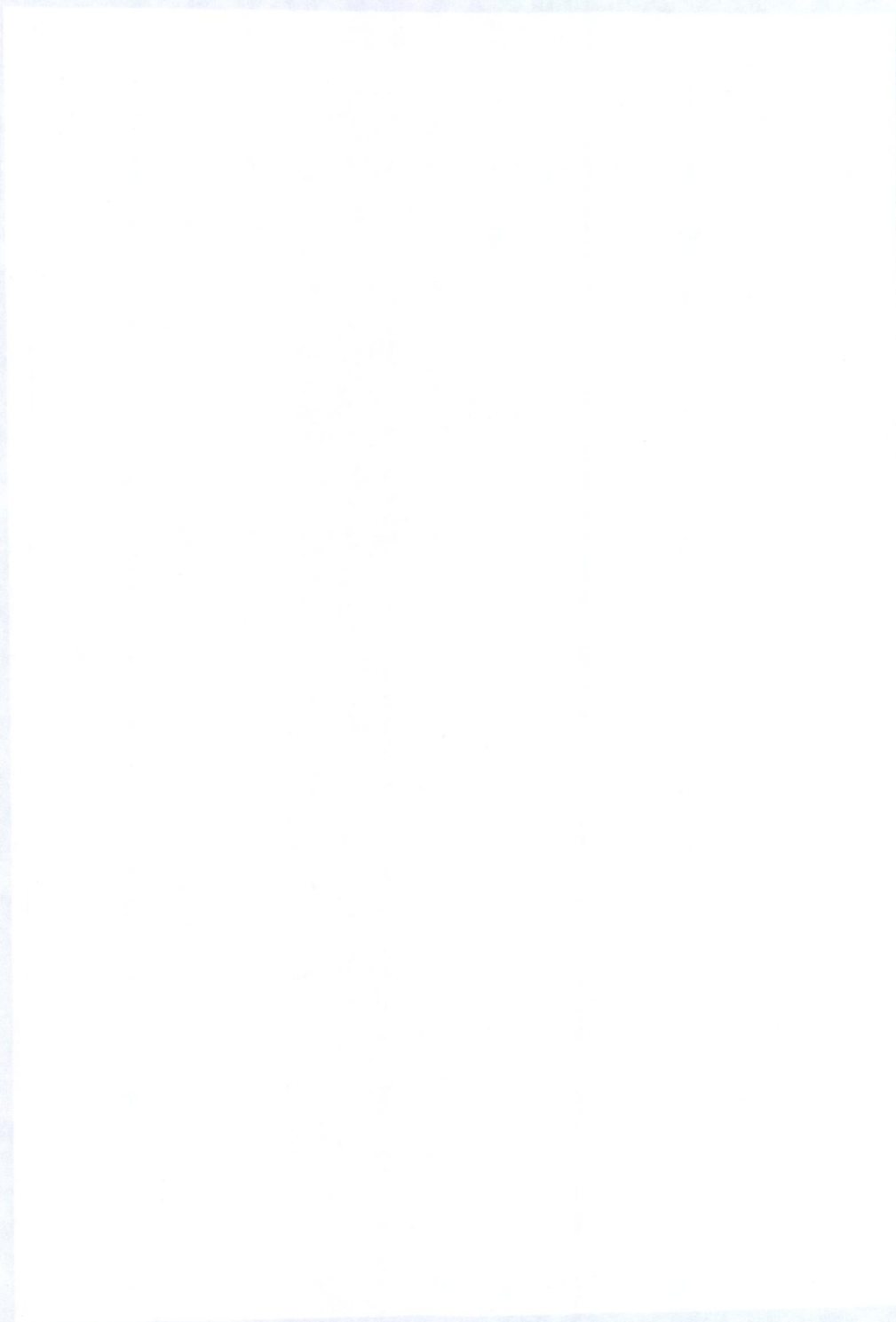






Fig. 3.1      Support Studies Used - Use of Shape  
 Beggarstaff Brothers -Girl On a Sofa (1895)







## Scheme Two

Theme: Easter - The stations of the cross.

Activity: To design and make an Easter poster.

Support Studies:

- Ben Shahn	- Picasso
- Jim Flagg	- Franz Marc
- Jules Cherét	- Beggerstaff Brothers

Aim: To further develop the students awareness of poster design, through lino printing, to make an Easter poster.

Objectives completed to achieve the aim:

### Week One

- To introduce the students to the history and appreciation of poster design through use of slides and a worksheet.

### Week Two

- To promote the design of an Easter poster using thumbnails.

### Week Three

- To get the students to develop their designs into positive and negative shape.

### Week Four

- To complete the positive and negative design using black marker.

### Week Five

- To teach the students how to transfer their designs onto lino.
- To teach the students how to manipulate lino tools while starting on their designs.

### Week Six

- To teach the students how to print using their lino blocks.







Week Seven

- To recap on composition using appropriate type.
- To assemble the Easter posters using the previous weeks prints.







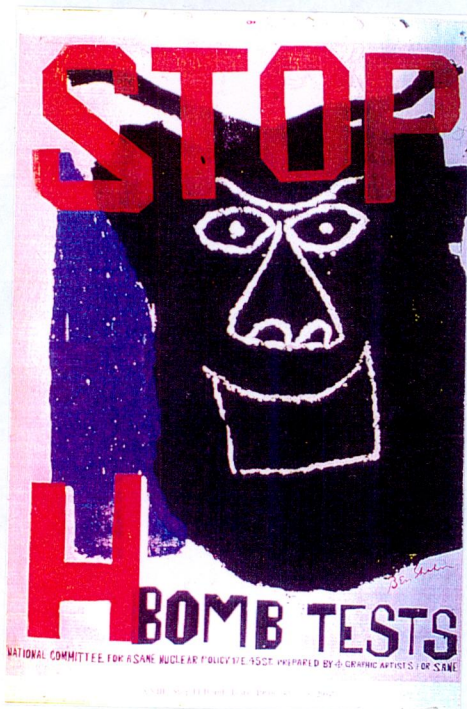
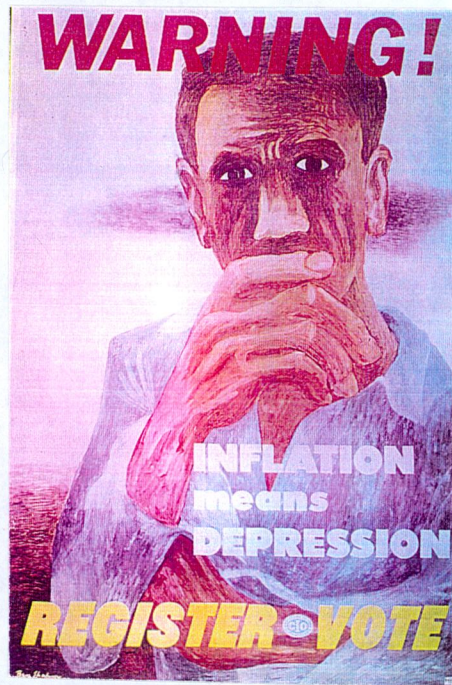
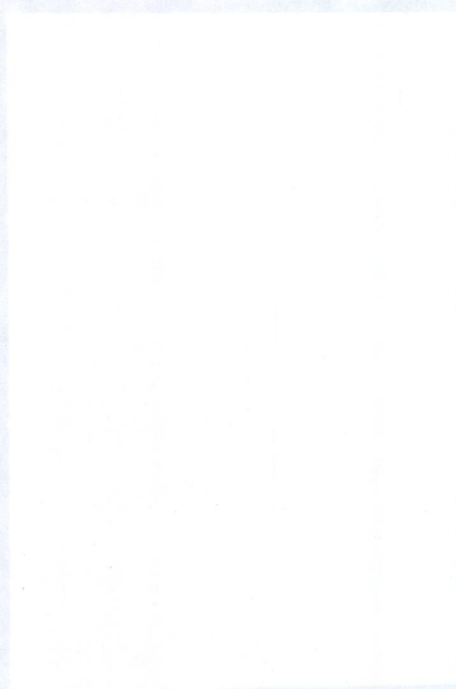


Fig. 3.2 Slides of Posters that catch your attention  
 Slide One - Ben Shahn - Warning Poster (1960's)  
 Slide Two - Ben Shahn - Stop H Bombs (1960's)  
 Slide Three - Jim Flagg - Army Poster







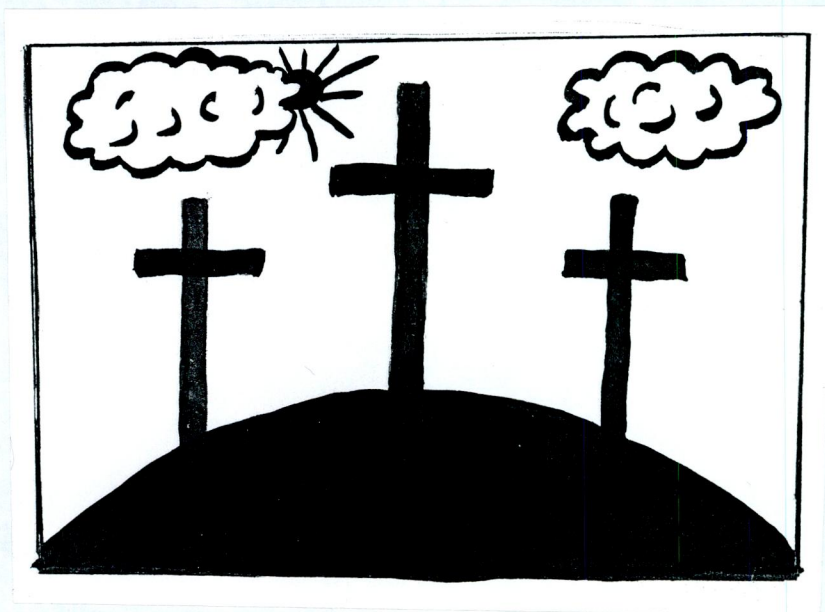


Fig. 3.5 Students Work - Positive and Negative Shape  
Easter Poster Design for Lino Printing









Fig. 3.2      Students at Work  
Lino Cutting (Top)  
Lino Printing (Bottom)







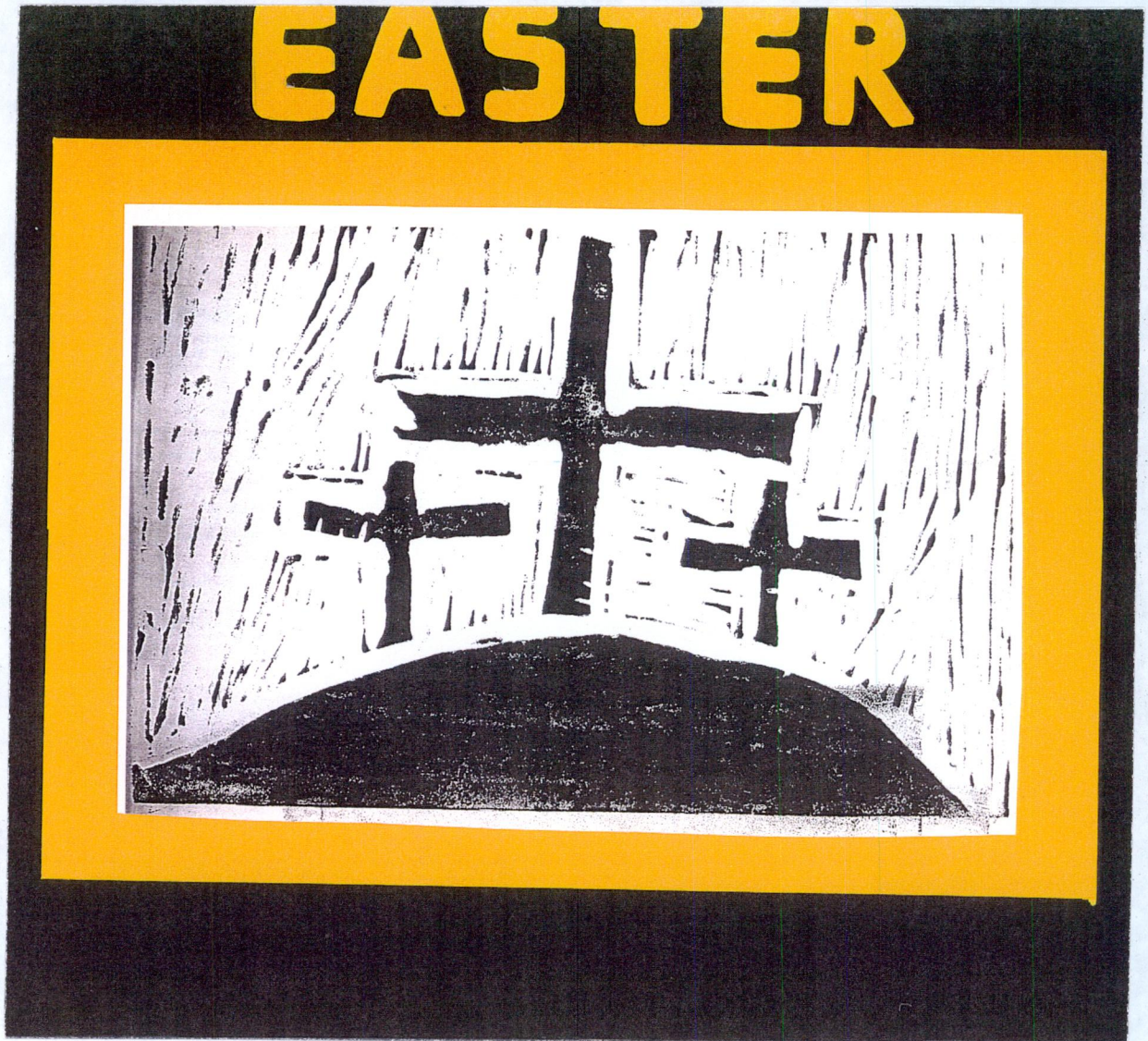


Fig. 3.4 Students Work - Final Poster using Lino Printing and Lettering









Fig. 3.6 Support Studies used - Lino Printed Images  
 Picasso - Exposition (1957)  
 Franz Marc - (1912)







## CHAPTER FOUR

### EVALUATION OF SCHOOL SCHEMES

The elements that were being concentrated on were the same in both schemes. Each scheme was to design and complete a poster using a contrasting technique, in each case, from previous decades, which are still very much in use today. In poster design positive and negative space has to be taken into consideration, due to this, both schemes deal with these elements. One felt that lino printing, through the use of positive and negative shape would be a logical step up from stencil printing, as well as bringing in the craft element.

As this class are quite boisterous, the classes had to be well structured. It was their first time working through the design process. They worked through various criteria that were previously explained to them. This helped them to focus on what they had to do. The completion of each criteria was like reaching a specific goal for the students.

Support Studies was an important aspect of what was taught in both scheme one and scheme two. In scheme one a small amount of Support Studies was introduced briefly, but not in very much detail. As a result of this the students were only interested in the activity and not the learning process.

#### Week One - Scheme One

As the students had completed very little observational drawing, in order to gain their confidence and introduce them to positive and negative shapes, the students had to complete a collage of an object and the shapes contained within it, using black and







white paper. This worked extremely well and got the students ready for observational drawing the following week.

In Scheme Two the history and appreciation was concentrated on in greater detail, having it as a major part of the scheme, and not just as a brief introduction as with the previous scheme.

#### Week One - Scheme Two

The students were introduced to the scheme by conducting an eighty minute class on the history of posters and the techniques used, by doing a brief demonstration on the lino printing process. Slides and large photocopied reproductions of posters were shown to the class to back up what had been discussed. This brought the idea of poster design down to the students level. The students were able to discuss why specific designs worked and why some other designs did not. The students then had to complete a worksheet to accompany the historical Support Studies. The response from the class was overwhelming both verbal and written.

#### Week Two

The students were introduced to modern posters. The idea of the students reviewing posters in the environment helped them to become aware of graphic design present in their surroundings. An example of this was when a student from this class, the week after reviewing the slides, commented on how he had seen a poster similar to what had been discussed the previous week.







The students learned a great deal more about the history and appreciation of art and design from scheme two, in comparison to scheme one. Both schemes relied upon the design process. As the students were introduced to the design process in the first scheme, they were getting used to working with this system a lot better in scheme two. This is evident in the students final work. At the end of each scheme the students had to put together all the relevant Support Studies that they had collected throughout the scheme. It had to be arranged in an orderly fashion, taking into consideration the layout, on two large sheets of paper, similar to what is required from the students for the Junior Certificate.

### **Recommendations**

I have come up with the following recommendations after completing a scheme of work teaching the students poster design through the history of posters.

- The marking scheme and the criteria which the students must follow should be explained thoroughly at the beginning of the scheme. This way the students know exactly what is expected of them.
- Support Studies should be carried out throughout a scheme, not at the end as an after thought. It must be emphasised to students that all research, visual records of ideas and preparatory drawings, are a very important part of the project.
- Students must do historical research while the art project being completed. This research should be kept in a type of folder or scrap book.







- Art should not be restricted to the classroom where applicable. It gives the students a different view point for their project.
- At the end of each scheme the students should use all their research and Support Studies to complete a support studies poster on the art project that they have completed.
- It is important to relate what is being taught in the class to the students experience and level of ability. Discussing the students ideas and thoughts with them openly gives them the confidence to speak up about their ideas.







## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, after completing the scheme on poster design it is evident how Support Studies should and could be integrated. It is a very important aspect of design. Support Studies puts emphasis on the process and not just the students end product.

Chapter one is a personal interpretation of relevant publications. It covers both positive and negative points on design education, in general and specifically in Ireland. Design education is very important to students, it promotes planning which is often neglected during the design process. The Intermediate Certificate and the Group Certificate were replaced by the Junior Certificate bringing with it the introduction of Support Studies. What is meant by Graphic Design and the importance of the history of poster design on students.

Chapter two incorporates both Taylor's views on the teaching of aesthetic studies and Arntson's design process. As a result of this I have suggested five criteria for design excellence in relation to schools, with Support Studies being the foundation on which they are based.

Chapter three discusses two contrasting schemes. One on the teaching of poster design through the history of posters. The other teaching poster design without basing it on the history of posters.







Chapter four is an evaluation of whether the schemes were successful and what skills the students acquired. Once the students have become confident with the design process, the confidence in themselves and their artistic talents will grow also. The design process enhances the process of enquiry and problem solving, all of which can be used throughout life.

To conclude, using Support Studies in connection with practical projects, especially graphic design, aids the learning objectives which are taking place. Students are made aware of, and introduced to the graphic design world that exists outside the boundaries of the classroom walls. This brings art history and appreciation down to the students level.

When the students have learned and practised the design process to their advantage, they will be able to experiment. They must never limit themselves to current tastes or to formal rules of layout, typography and colour.

"There are many ways to solve a graphic problem.

If one solution is rejected another must be found." (1)







## CONCLUSION

### FOOTNOES

1. Alan Fletcher. Graphic Design: Visual comparisons (London, 1963) p.10.







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