

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT THE SERVICE OF THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

CORRECTED



Definition: Graphic design consists in creating, choosing, and using graphic elements (drawings, typography, photos, colours etc.) to create a communication and/or a cultural tool. Each element is symbolic and meaningful in the creation of the project in accordance with certain parameters that may be defined alongside other actors from the communication sector to promote, inform, or teach.



- The point of graphic design is to render information quickly understandable to a broad audience
- A graphic artist may be required to illustrate a newspaper article, layout a report or a book, create artwork for communication campaign (i.e.: a logo, a flyer, or an advertising poster).
- In order to illustrate a message, the graphic artist will have to choose which type of font to use (What type of characters? What size? Italic? Bold?), which colours (warm or cold colours), which image to use.
- Each graphic artist has his own style. Graphic illustration is born of a creative process which varies from one individual to another.

GOALS OF THE SESSION:

- To be able to read a poster created by a graphic artist and recognise its message.
- To compare different styles of communication on the topic of human rights.
- To create a poster conveying an abolitionist message.



ECPM
69, rue Michelet
93 100 Montreuil • France
Tél. : +33 1 57 63 03 57
Fax : +33 1 57 63 89 25
Email : ecpm@abolition.fr
www.abolition.fr

Action financée par la Région



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FIRST STEP TOWARDS GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION AT THE SERVICE OF THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY



Poster for tomorrow: The posters featured below are from a competition open to graphic artists from all over the world, organised by the Poster for Tomorrow organisation on the topic of “the death penalty is not justice”. One hundred posters on the death penalty were selected and exhibited across the world.

The goal of this session is to observe how various graphic artists played with typography to illustrate a particular aspect of the application of the death penalty across the world.



Selcuk Ozis,
Great Britain



Anthony Franzino,
USA

Exercices:

ABCD...

Image n° 1:

- 1) Can you describe what you see?
On poster n°1, the word “justice” is written in the middle, in bold, and with an exclamation mark. The letter “i” represents a hanged person and the “t” represents the gallows.
- 2) Which colours are used on the poster? Only the “i” is in black, what is the produced effect?
The poster uses different shades of grey, making it very clear. Only the “i” is in black. This makes it obvious that it represents a hanged person. In showing this, we instantly understand that the graphic artist wishes to draw our attention on the death penalty issue.
- 3) In your opinion, what message is the graphic artist trying to convey?
The graphic artist wishes to make us reflect on whether justice can be served by applying the death penalty. Thanks to the exclamation mark and the inscription on the bottom of the poster, we understand that he wishes to demonstrate that the death penalty is not justice.
- 4) Do you think that the message illustrated by this poster is clear? Explain why.
Answer left to the student.



Image n° 2:

- 5) Can you describe what you see on this poster?

In the middle of the poster, the number 9 is in very large print. One part of the number is in grey and the other is in red, making the number 1 appear. Beneath this number, an inscription reads: "For every 9 prisoners on death row 1 is later found innocent". The first part of the sentence is written in grey and the second in red.

Beneath this inscription, a picture of an electric chair is barely distinguishable.

At the bottom of the poster, a small red inscription reads: "How many others are equally innocent?"

- 6) In your opinion, what do the black, grey, and red colours symbolise? Which colour stands out the most?

The black colour symbolises death, grey symbolises the half-alive prisoners on death row, and red symbolises the violence of the executions and highlights their irreversible nature, especially for innocent prisoners on death row.

The colour red stands out the most.

- 7) What is peculiar about the number on the poster?

The number contains two numbers: 9 and 1

- 8) What is the issue highlighted by this poster? Do you think that this poster could appeal to an audience that knows nothing about the death penalty? Why?

The poster allows us to reflect on the fact that justice is human, which implies that miscarriages of justice can be committed. Innocent people can thus be wrongly sent to death row. Here, the graphic artist insists on the irreversibility of capital punishment.

The rest of the answer is left to the student.

Images n° 1 and n° 2:

- 9) Aesthetically speaking, which picture do you like the most? Why?

Answer left to the student.

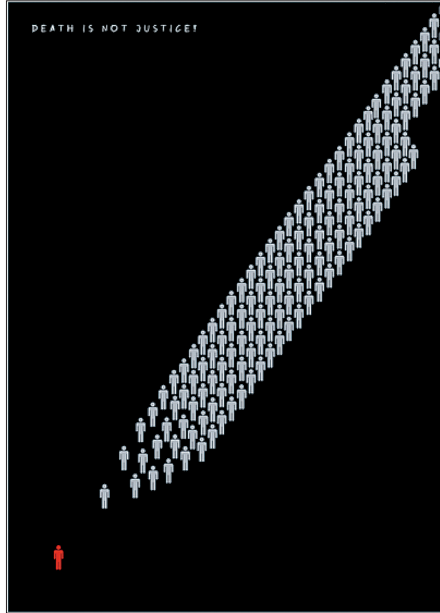
- 10) In your opinion, which poster best illustrates the topic "the death penalty is not justice"? Why?

Answer left to the student.

- 11) You will notice that both these posters are composed exclusively of typography; do you think a picture would have been more efficient? Why?

Answer left to the student.

FURTHER UNDERSTANDING GRAPHIC DESIGN AT THE SERVICE OF THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY



Monica Prus,
Poland



Lucille Clerc,
Great Britain

Exercices:

Image n° 1:

- 1) Can you describe what you see?
The poster is black. A group of people is depicted by small grey characters gathered in the shape of a knife pointing at a single red character. In the top left corner of the poster, an inscription reads: "Death is not justice".
- 2) Who do you think the red character represents?
Who do the grey characters represent?
The red character represents a person sentenced to death and the grey characters represent society.
- 3) What do you think is the meaning behind the grey characters representing a knife?
The grey characters represent society. The fact that they are in the shape of a knife is the graphic artist's way of telling us that the death penalty is applied in the name of all its members, that is to say each and every one of us.
- 4) What message is the graphic artist trying to convey? Do you think it is a powerful way of raising public awareness on the death penalty issue? Why?
With this poster, the graphic artist states that the death penalty is not justice by showing us that its application makes each member of society a murderer. The rest of the answer is left to the student.
- 5) What stands out from this poster?
Is the message that the graphic artist is trying to convey easy to understand?
A lot of simplicity stands out from this poster, its message is very easy to understand and will speak to a broad audience.

ABCD



Exercices:

ABCD

Image n° 2:

- 6) Can you describe what you see?
The poster shows a skull made of black shapes. The background is white. An inscription at the bottom of the poster reads: "58 countries still use death penalty as a legal form of punishment".
- 7) What do you think the black shapes represent?
What gives you this clue on the poster?
The black shapes represent the 58 countries that still practice the death penalty for common law crimes. The clue to this is the inscription beneath the skull explaining that 58 countries still use the death penalty. What's more, the shapes represent retentionist countries.
- 8) Can you name three or more?
USA, China, Iran, Egypt, Malaysia, Japan, India...
- 9) What message was the graphic artist trying to convey? In your opinion, would the message have been as clear without writing the sentence on the poster?
The graphic artist wanted to convey that only 58 countries still apply capital punishment in the name of justice. The graphic artist stigmatises them by representing them in the shape of a skull to show that the death penalty is not justice but revenge.

Image n° 1 and n° 2:

- 10) Which of these two images do you prefer? Why?
Answer left to the student.
- 11) In your opinion, which picture best illustrates the topic: "the death penalty is not justice"? Why?
Answer left to the student.
- 12) When you compare all four images presented in this module, which one do you find the most convincing? Why?
Answer left to the student.
- 13) Give your opinion on the death penalty and explain why you are in favour of or against the death penalty.
Answer left to the student.
- 14) Now it is your turn! Create an illustration on the topic: "the death penalty is not justice". You can take inspiration from the four posters you have studied.
Answer left to the student.

