

'THE DIVA IS DISMISSED' by PAULA SCHER (1994)



FUNCTION

- The function of the poster is to advertise the play 'the Diva is dismissed'. The play was an autobiographical solo show by the actor/comedian Jenifer Lewis. She performed the show off-Broadway at the Public Theatre in New York.
- The play was unorthodox and hilarious, something that is reflected in the exciting layout and shouting central figure.

FITNESS FOR PURPOSE

- The poster fulfils its function because it advertises the play in an eye-catching way. The bold colours make it stand out as does the text which is arranged diagonally and vertically.
- Critics described the show as 'wild' and this is certainly reflected in the design.
- Scher's design uses only 2 colours as well as black and white which makes it cost effective.

MATERIALS and/or TECHNIQUE

- The poster was created using the lithographic printing process which creates a flattened, bold effect.
- The lithographic printing process involved placing a photograph and stencilled letters on a large lithographic stone, inking the stone and pulling it through a printing press.

TARGET MARKET/AUDIENCE

- The poster would be aimed at fans of the comedian Jennifer Lewis. She was known as an alternative comedian who believed strongly in feminism. This is reflected in the unconventional layout and design and the imagery of a dominant, confident woman.
- The exciting 'punk'-style layout would appeal to her target market of young, alternative, 'avant-garde' men and women.

VISUAL IMPACT

- A floating female head is the focal point and draws our eye directly to it because it dominates the poster.
- Although not strictly complementary, the colours are on opposite sides of the colour wheel and contrast with each other to create visual impact.
- The black text literally emanates from the mouth of the woman suggesting that the show is alternative and exciting.
- The text is all in capitals, stressing the importance of the information. The name of the play and comedian are rendered in bold lettering, giving those words prominence.
- The shouting mouth and exciting playful layout creates a design that is eye-catching and highly effective.
- The bright and bold primary colours create visual impact and would stand out from other posters.

STYLE

- This poster could be described as 'Post-modern', a popular style of art in the late 20th century.
- The style is simple but effective. The unusual text and layout are exciting and engaging and fits with themes of the play.
- The bold colours and exciting text layout are reminiscent of 1970's punk album covers.
- The floating head, open mouth and text layout are influenced by 20th century Russian political posters.

DESIGN CONSTRAINTS

- The play did not have a huge advertising budget. Scher overcame this constraint by using a limited amount of colours in her design which kept the printing costs down.