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The visual culture of the images of the revolt (1968/1977)

In 2018 celebrations were launched to mark the first 50 years since the youth revolution of the Parisian *Mai 68*. The desire to commemorate what 1968 had been - namely, the season that forever changed the world and its customs - was felt so intensely by the world of culture that debates were organized, exhibitions set up and publications realized not only in Europe, but in many other parts of the world as well. The theme of the urban struggle and the revolutionary artistic explosions after the Second World War can be read very well in the changed idea of the city. The city was increasingly lived as a place to be re-conquered, a political space for experimenting common projects of freedom, solidarity and sharing. Corresponding to these claims there was a gigantic quantity of images, of which a certain number would remain the archetype of the 1968-1977 decade; from the psychedelic graphic art of the American West Coast, to the essential clenched fist icons of May 68, to the portraits of the new idols of the period's youth. The city entered into an imagery thought of as creative activity, as a source of utopias and images of the desired future society, to celebrate "imagination seizing power". The posters mentioned were chosen not so much for their aesthetic qualities as, instead, to show the relationship between the different theories and the different forms of revolt that characterized the period covered. These posters helped to enliven the scene of the turbulent street theater. At the heart of this conflict lies the very concept of communication, radically subverted by a new generation that made protest a lever for a change to civil rights and a renewal of politics.

1. INTRODUCTION, OR "BARRICADES CLOSE THE STREET BUT OPEN UP THE PATH"

In 2018, in France, celebrations were launched to mark the first 50 years since the youth revolution of the famous Parisian *Mai 68*. The desire to commemorate what 1968 had been - namely, the season that forever changed the world and its customs - was felt so intensely by the world of culture that debates were organized, exhibitions set up and publications realized not only in Europe, but in many other parts of the world as well. The main reason we still reflect on the events of 1968 probably lies in the fact that the major players triggering that epochal change were not political or religious leaders, but young people. It was, in fact, the uprisings of university students that in the mid-1960s caused uproar on American campuses spurred by contestation regarding civil rights, the racial issue and the Vietnam War. From there, protest demonstrations spread all over Europe - from Paris to Prague, from Rome to London - where the dream of freedom coming from young people had to be acknowledged.

It was that generation - amidst utopias, contradictions and false starts – that would transform the public and the private realms, affirm new languages of art and bring the social classes closer through a direct involvement with political life, from factories to school and university classrooms.

The walls of the cities became the backdrop of an urban theater animated by writings, slogans, posters and mimeographs; the streets, squares and all public spaces became the settings of a multicolored scene, a boiling magma where creativity, contestation and happenings became the protagonists (fig. 1).

2.THE RIGHT TO THE CITY, OR "IMAGINATION TO POWER"

The theme of the urban struggle and the revolutionary artistic explosions in the period after the Second World War can be read very well in the changed idea of the city; from Henri Lefebvre's book, *The Production of Space*, great reflections can be drawn on the social unrest concerning the urban struggles of industrialized countries. The city was increasingly lived as a place to be re-conquered, a political space for experimenting common projects of freedom, solidarity and sharing. Corresponding to these claims there was a gigantic quantity of images, of which a certain number would remain the archetype of the 1968-1977 decade; from the psychedelic graphic art of the American West Coast, to the essential clenched fist icons of May 68, to the portraits of the new idols of the period's youth, from the Beatles to Che Guevara (fig. 2).

The city entered into an imagery thought of as creative activity, as a source of utopias and images of the desired future society, to celebrate "imagination seizing power."

This thought made up of emotions, desires and ideals made itself known in an immediate, direct way, opposing, one against the other, repression and desire, domination and liberation, power and strength.

For the rebellion, the imperative was no longer to delegate or represent, but to rise up and take a stand, to demonstrate, to re-appropriate life in "okkupied" spaces wrested from those in power and opened to group participation. Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Deleuze and Derrida became constant references for determining the end of an era of history, even if what mattered was not so much the opinion of intellectuals, but rather the spread of new ways of life that overturned the clichés generally accepted until then.

And as in all revolts, the spirit that animated the protagonists moved from a utopia that, as Galeano describes, moves its horizon further away with every step, practicing the daily exercise of an "inner revolt" against the indifference that kills.[1]

The city thus appeared an ideal terrain, the herald of a better future, as hoped for and described by Henri Lefebvre,[2] where the essential components of a different and alternative urban life were indicated : the right for everyone to take possession of its spaces, to use it without exclusions or preclusions; the right of everyone to

Fig. 1 - 11th May 1968, *"The night of the barricades"* in Paris, Rue Gay-Lussac (photo: PARIS-JOUR / SIPA).

Fig. 2 - 11th May 1968, *"The night of the barricades"* in Paris, Rue Gay-Lussac (photo: PARIS-JOUR / SIPA).

self-determination, participation in decisions on the transformations and governance of the city. Lefebvre's slogan enjoyed a considerable success in the years immediately after 1968 in various countries, but which then waned in the 1970s.

In more recent times, Lefebvre's thinking has been reinterpreted by David Harvey, who in his book *Rebel Cities* wrote: "*The right to the city... is far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is the right to change and reinvent the city according to our needs. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right, since rebuilding the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization.*"[3]

The right to the city leads to the theme of everyday life, to an urban life made up of commitment and hope, to places of encounter and exchange, to rhythms of life and ways of making use of time that allow full and complete use of its spaces, the right to a joyful and alienation-free daily life.

The slogan "*L'imagination au pouvoir*" (All power to the imagination) coined by Marcuse and taken up by the students of the 1968 protests indicates the desire to think of a new world, different from the previous one. There was an urgent need for a form of communication as direct, fast and rapid as society was at the end of the 1960s; the concept of the image was reconsidered, as images had to be schematic and pasted up everywhere, just as words had to be concise and shouted for slogans. The grey walls of cities and factories, filled with writings and drawings, were transformed into colorful pages of everyday life; by reading them it was possible to understand what was happening around us.

Great marches animated by slogans and banners correlated signs, drawings, words and voices. The social groups that until then had had few opportunities for expression, launched themselves into social and political activism thanks to a new dimension of communication that accelerated their opportunities for work and exchange.

3. THE REBIRTH OF THE POSTER, OR "THE WALLS SPEAK"

In these circumstances, the use of the poster exploded as a rapid, immediate communication tool with great visual impact. Although it was a means of expression already in vogue in previous decades, the poster was revived, with different characteristics, in a decade that saw the awakening of political action and social communication.[4]

Starting from the end of the 1960s, from the revolt of the Parisian *École des Beaux-Arts* to the long wave of the Italian *Sessantotto*, from the drawings of the American Underground, to the large propaganda posters of Maoist China, the poster was the great protagonist of the revolt's international communication. In the very midst of urban mobilizations, the poster experienced a real rebirth in those years, both in its graphic language as well as in its methods of information and agitation. Above all, the poster became a powerful form of communication also made use of by all the play-

Fig. 3a/3b - Attacking on the streets of Paris (credit: Associated Press).

ers who animated the social scene of the period for challenging the institutional order and authorities, a means of "counter-information" with which to counteract the then-current information controlled by the establishment.

The poster proposed identity paradigms alternative to those traditional and consolidated, confronting and competing with other posters, because it had to compete with them for the affirmation of its own message.

4. POSTER PASTING, OR "WE WILL TAKE, WE WILL OCCUPY"

There was a social dimension surrounding the poster that regarded not only its graphic creation or its printing, but also its diffusion. The practice of putting up posters – of pasting them – became an instrument of revolutionary action, a practice of participation, a targeted and conscious search for the abusive occupation of urban spaces, a willingness to take words and images where they could generate provocation, solicit reactions, and possibly obtain new adhesions to one's own cause.

The poster-paster became the clandestine messenger of unauthorized messages, a counter-information militant. Clandestine poster pasting aimed to occupy the public walls of the city, so as to provoke a conflict with the rules of the dominant power but was also an action of confrontation and competition with other groups or with groups of opposite factions.[5]

The main technique of poster pasting is that of the repetitiveness of its message: a row of repeated posters along a wall is more effective than an isolated poster because its visibility also depends on its repetitiveness. This is the same dynamic as a commercial or a campaign ad: the more times a message is repeated, the more visible and effective it becomes.

An analysis of communication codes today shows how many stimuli and impulses were generated then, and the effects of all this can still be found in contemporary graphic design.

Artistic experiments were interwoven with the more usual clichés recovered from the iconogra-

phy of the workers' movement and the Soviet revolution before the First World War, Italian Futurism and French Dadaism. These movements, in the need to quickly equip themselves with a network of means of mass communication and having no particular economic resources, used instruments that were effective for achieving their goals, as well as inexpensive. Leaflets, wall writings, rallies, posters were all tools possessing both these characteristics (fig. 3a-b).

Every movement, no matter how spontaneous, immediately began to equip itself with different tools of mass communication, from leaflets to mimeographs, wall writings, as well as public assemblies, sit-ins, marches with banners, megaphones and *dazibao* big-character posters. From 1968 on, there was an escalation of meetings, performances, happenings leading up to, later on, the free radio stations broadcasting in 1977.

Each of these means of mass communication has a different visual and communicative impact: a poster, or a wall writing, or a banner in a march produces different communicative effects, since writings on walls have a unique and unrepeatable aura, while posters fall within the scope of the reproducibility of a work of art, with a circulation of several tens, hundreds or thousands of copies, depending on the circumstances.[6] Moreover, a poster can be put up everywhere, on walls along streets, it can be pasted on top of someone else's, it can be torn, scribbled on, drawn on, altered, mocked; all actions that became an integral part of the revolt itself.

5. L'ACADEMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS, OR "ART FOR EVERYONE"

With regard to communication, the fundamental characteristic of the poster lies in the synthesis of word and image. This represents a very simple and inexpensive means of mass communication. Moreover, in the 1960s, silkscreen printing, a cheaper and faster method of printing than offset printing, began to become popular. In May 1968, the *Academie des Beaux-Arts*, occupied by the students of Paris, became a hotbed of cre-

Fig. 4 - Serigraph set up at the Atelier Populaire in Paris (credit: AA.VV., 2018. Images en lutte, Beaux-Arts de Paris éditions, Paris, 2018).

ativity and printed creations. In this context, the students who occupied the spaces of the *Academie* and the Latin Quarter set up a printing shop where posters were designed and then discussed in general assemblies; once the most effective ones had been chosen, they were reproduced with silkscreen printing (fig. 4).

With silkscreen printing, posters were printed by hand on frames with the use of thinners and ink, and then, once printed, were hung for drying and then disseminated by being pasted on walls throughout the Latin Quarter. This kind of production was immediate, not only in its feasibility, but also in its necessity, for meeting the imperatives dictated by the revolutionary communication system. In this situation, the dimensions of the paper on which the poster was to be printed also had importance, both for the reproduction processes, as well as for the readability and recognizability of the message, which had to be visible even from a distance.

In a panorama filled with images, at times very simplified, violent, poetic, ironic, allusive, political, psychedelic, emblematic posters were produced, representative of an essential, harshly jarring language, but also rich in references to the

Fig. 5 - Anonymous, U.U.U., first poster printed by Atelier Populaire, U.U.U. as well as the publishing house of the Atelier, 14 May 1968. Lithograph 82x84 cm. (Credit: Atelier Populaire, 1968).

Fig. 6 - Collage of posters printed in silk-screen printing at the Atelier Polulaire (Credit: Atelier Populaire, 1968).

avant-garde movements between the two World Wars, in which the laws of form and of communication proved fundamental to the foundations of contemporary graphics. They were often anonymous posters, deliberately devoid of artistic authorship due to the specific intention of artists and authors who wished to express their solidarity with the ideals of the revolt. The walls of the city took on a chaotic and at the same time artistic dimension, art no longer remained an enclave of the few but became a heritage for all and creativity, being the expression of human ingenuity, became a common asset to share with the entire community.

6. THE COMMITMENT OF ATELIER POPULAIRE, OR "CE N'EST QU'UN DÉBUT : CONTINUONS LE COMBAT"

Once they had occupied the lithography studios of the Ècole, the teachers and students joined together in a collective. The documents of the time show the notice that was displayed at the entrance of the *Atelier*: "*To work in the Atelier Populaire is to give concrete support to the great movement of the workers on strike who are occupying their factories in defiance of the Gaullist government which works against the people. By placing all his skills at the service of the workers' struggle, each member of this workshop is also working for himself, in that he is coming in contact through his practical work with the educative power of the people.*"[7]

The first poster was a lithograph entitled: *Usines – Universités - Union* (Factories – Universities - Union) (fig. 5). During the assembly held on the 14th of May, the artist Guy de Rougemont proposed the use of screen printing. Almost completely unknown in France, this technique was not considered sufficiently elegant and well-defined by many artists who preferred lithography or engraving.

The book *Atelier populaire, présenté par lui-même* published by UUU in 1968 explains in concrete terms the different stages for the purpose of introducing this technique to as many users as possible.[8]

The posters of the French *Mai 68* would have almost all used this technique distinguished by its simplicity: the absence of shading, the use of just one or two colors and a very simplified aesthetics. Many posters were, in fact, composed only of text, in keeping with the graffiti multiplying on the walls of Paris during this period.

The workshops very quickly produced many thousands of posters each day; some artists who later attested their participation in this rather unique experience were Gérard Fromanger, Guy de Rougemont, Julio le Parc (member of GRAV: *groupe de recherche et d'art visuel*). The technical limits of silkscreen printing had profoundly influenced their aesthetic form; this production concentrated in one place, in one time and by a group of artists engaged in strong political dialectics, in fact, gave life to a true "visual identity" (fig. 6).

The graphic analysis of most of the posters shows a strict coherence between strong image and short text; playing with shapes and letters, the drawings are very simplified, and the colors are uniform. The elementary aspect of the realization, and the humor or the ferocity of the slogans contribute to give an impression of strength and *efficacy* to the messages.

7.ART AS EXPRESSION AND ART AS COMMUNICATION, OR "MAKE THE WORD"

The visual dimension of the events linked to the 1968 student protest movement, given its communicative dynamics, went beyond walls and streets, to blend with urban art, nourishing the visual hyper-information of the city and reworking it in a continuous remix of form and content, linguistic appropriation and semantic overturning. In this case, the graphic design of the posters from the 1968/1977 decade anticipated - to the point of competing with - the advertising and graphics of the expressions that were part of the visual regime dominant in the public context.

The idea had already been developed by the figurative avant-gardes of the twentieth century which, as was common in the years of protest, arose with a strong position of refusal and open contrast with
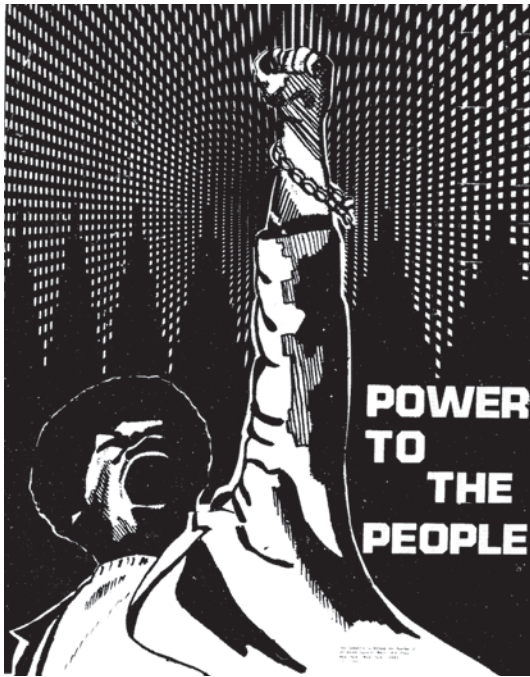
Fig. 7 - Black Panters, Power to the people poster, New York, 1969, screen-print 105 x 74 cm (Credit: Steef Davidson Collection).

Fig. 8 -Chwast Seymour, End, Bad, Breath, 1968, offset 28 x 40 inches. Uncle Sam, a traditional symbol of American patriotism, is subverted to protest the United States 'ongoing involvement in the Vietnam War. (Credit: Seymour Chwast Archive).

Fig. 9 -Anonymous, It's the real thing for S.E. Asia, USA 1970, Serigraphy 38.5 x 28 cm. (Credits: Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam).

Fig. 10 - Student Workshop Berkeley, Against the Vietnam War, USA 1970, screen printing 36x 56 cm. (Credits: coll. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam).

the artistic, philosophical, scientific, social and political conceptions of their time.[9]

When in May of 1968 the first revolutionary wave began, a voracious movement, in search of radical changes, appeared in pursuit of all those elements of graphic renewal, in order to express its anti-establishment message.

During the following decade, the graphics and the images of the revolt would be transformed; other types of posters would follow, in the constant search for new experimental languages pursued by political organizations and movements. Different visual currents can be identified that intertwine and define different identities (figg. 7 – 8) (figg. 9 – 10).

8. THE WORLD OF THE AMERICAN UNDERGROUND, OR "PUT FLOWERS IN YOUR GUNS"

A very important anti-system movement introducing psychedelic collage graphic design was represented by the underground counterculture born in the 1960s, initially developed in the United Kingdom and the United States, and later diffused throughout much of the Western world during the following decade, with London, New York and San Francisco as hotbeds of activity against the ruling class.

A very successful style, both for artistic quality and strong visual impact, was that of psychedelic graphic design. One of the main rules of this ar-
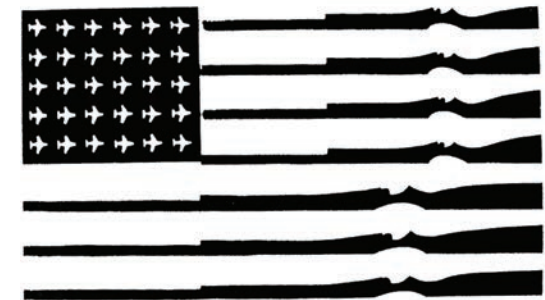
Fig. 11 - Wes Wilson, The Association, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Grassroots, Sopwith Camel; Fillmore Auditorium, July 22-23, 1966, offset 50.25 x 35 cm (Credit: Collection SFMOMA).
Fig. 12 - Victor Moscoso, The Chambers Brothers poster, The Miller Blues Band poster, offset, 1967 (Credit: Neon Rose).

tistic expression, also because of its visionary and destabilizing aesthetic nature, is that of a use, at times extreme and pushed to the limit, of color. Collage and photomontage were another source of inspiration for the Underground, where one tended to decontextualize and deconstruct the images or icons of power.[10] The best known are posters by Victor Moscoso, Wes Wilson, Rick Griffin, Alton Kelley and Stanley Mouse, known as "The San Francisco Five," artists who wrote the history of visual art linked to the culture and the counterculture of the time. A large part of their work was commissioned for the "Fillmore West," San Francisco's historic avant-garde venue run by Bill Graham from 1966 to 1971. [11] All the major bands of the time played the Fillmore and, for each of them, Graham had splendid posters printed both by famous artists and by new talents, still little-known, such as Mari Tepper.[12]

As early as in the summer of 1967, a series of events took place in San Francisco that marked, in some ways, the culminating moment of a countercultural movement that had been establishing itself in the United States for some years. It was the "Summer of Love," in which hippies, the "flower children" who, thanks to the Beat movement (Kerouac, Ferlinghetti, Ginsberg...), proclaimed another culture whose ideals were love, peace, freedom against a consumerist society devastated by racial struggles and the Vietnam War (figs. 11 – 12).

9. THE NEW LANGUAGES FROM GREAT BRITAIN, OR "LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS"

The Great Britain of the 1960s was the primary place in Europe where sensational new things were produced that first affected the culture and customs of young people. From the movement of the "angry young men" up to the first youth gangs (Mods and Rockers), up to the explosion of the Beatles phenomenon, young English people rebelled against their fathers' way of life and poured new music into the streets and squares using a language capable of expressing their revolt.

Fig. 13 - Some posters taken from the Poster Workshop archive (London), animated by Peter Dukes, Dick Pountain and Jean Loup Msika, https://edizionidelfrisco.com/2018/05/31/la-storia-del-poster- workshops-the-place-mythological-where-you-were printing-the-poster-the-rebellion-English /35 cm (Credit: Collection SFMOMA).

In London, the Poster Workshop played a very important role in printing the posters of the English rebellion.[13] From 1968 to 1971, anyone could drop in to the basement of a building in Camden Town and commission a poster from the group of printers. From workers on strike to civil rights groups, liberation movements around the world relied on this group inspired by the Parisian *Atelier Populaire* to quickly produce the posters needed for demonstrations on the hot topics of the period: Vietnam, Northern Ireland, South Africa, housing, workers' and women's rights (fig. 13).

10. THE CUBAN CARTELES, OR "HASTA LA VICTORIA SIEMPRE"

The posters of Latin America, and especially Cuban poster art, reflected the growth of popular art animated by the social changes that took place after the revolution.
Cuban graphic design, in this context, took on eclectic forms, borrowed from the languages and expressive forms of other cultures, revisited by local traditions and languages. The stimulus came from the institutional bodies that promoted an information suitable to create a common consciousness, identifying, in the art of the poster, that closest to the revolutionary spirit.
Cuban graphic production concentrated, in the decade going from 1965 to 1975, on the promotion of art and culture among the population through the establishment of various bodies with the task of spreading education and knowledge and, in particular, the ICAIC (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry).
Cuba, unlike the rest of the world, had no need for counter-information; graphic art spread through the streets, becoming an everyday element of interest and debate and, thanks to a cultural policy that favored the birth of the local film industry, graphic designers had the opportunity to express themselves with imagination and originality. The capacity for expressive synthesis and freedom of expression would allow them to form an original movement of veritable artists dedicated to advertising prop-

Fig. 14a - Félix René Mederos Pazos, Como En Viet Nam, serigraphy, 1970 La Habana.

aganda. The Cuban *cartel* became a synonym of creativity and skill and movie posters, as well as social action posters, are the most evident and significant testimony of this.
Among the many artists engaged in giving a graphic form to the contents of the messages and in developing a personal language, we would mention Raùl Martinez, Edoardo Munoz Bachs, Alfredo Gonzàlez Roostgaart, Fèlix Beltràn, Niko and Felix René Mederos Pazos [14] (fig. 14 a; b).
The excellent formal quality of the drawings often presents bold strokes and very bright, flat colors reminiscent of South American material culture (fig. 15).

11. POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN ITALY, OR "STUDENTI E OPERAI UNITI NELLA LOTTA"

The student protest that exploded in 1968 in *Italy* joined in 1969 with the struggle for workers' and employees' rights. Therefore, the student movement and the workers' movement came together and defined the lines of the urban revolt that, from the universities to the factories, spilled into the streets and squares.

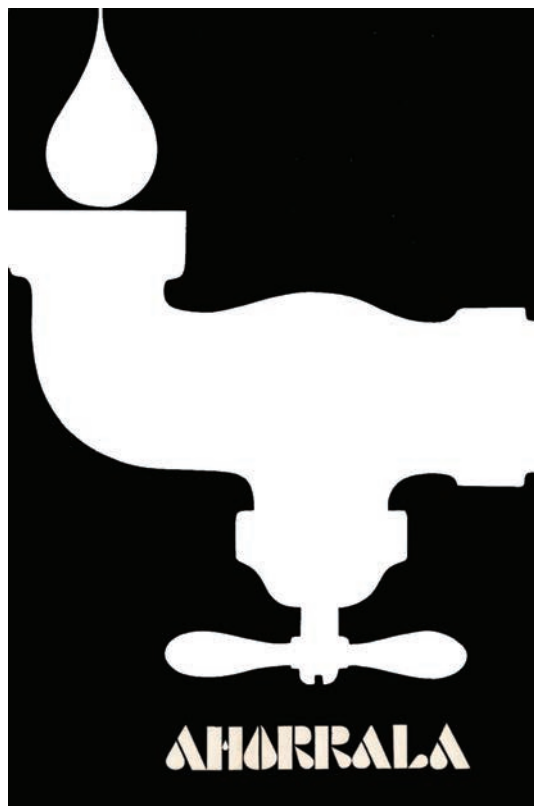Fig. 14b - Félix Beltrán, Libertad para Angela Davis, Serigraphy, 1971. La Habana.

Fig. 15 - Faustino Pérez Organero, Ahorrala, serigraphy, 1983 (Credits: Bardellotto Collection). The manifesto is part of the social action campaigns for water and energy saving of the República de Cuba.

The graphic design of Italian posters was nourished and renewed on the basis of the stimuli and impulses coming from other countries, from the posters of the Parisian *Mai 68* to those from Latin America, from American underground drawings to the big-character posters of Maoist China. Graphic experiments that intertwined with more usual clichés, recovered from the iconography of the workers' movement. The comparison between Italian and foreign posters and between posters of the different movements shows how the language of the revolt influenced political imagery as a whole and its iconic representations, also subverting the graphic design of the institutional parties.

From the seriousness and the bleakness of the communication - which was then called propaganda - of previous decades, the *Sessantotto* burst into this state of affairs, distorting and changing it in a fatal way. William Gambetta writes: "The iconographic references and the narrative strategies of this wave of conflict, in fact, were no longer those of the commercial communication of "neo-capitalism." That youthful revolt, on the contrary, sought

Fig. 16a - Albe Steiner, Poster for the celebrations of April 25th, 1973.
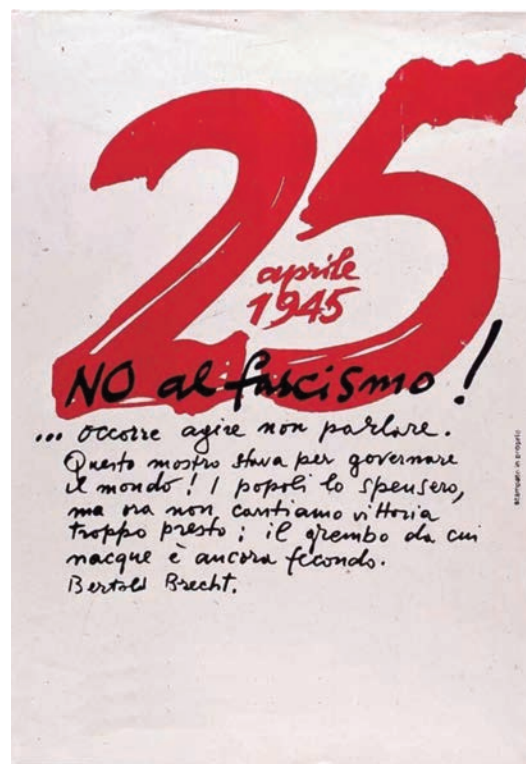
stimuli and inspiration beyond the usual horizons, in other young people who, like them, had taken to the streets and squares, in countries of different cultures and social orders...".[15] The season began in which political parties and movements relied on the skills of graphic designers, illustrators and cartoonists who until then had found no place in political communication. Albe Steiner, Ettore Vitale, Pietro Perotti, Roberto Zamarin, and others were the innovative authors of the post- 68 iconographic revolution (figg. 16 a; b – 17 – 18).

12. CONCLUSION: "THE WORLD IS A FINE PLACE AND WORTH FIGHTING FOR"

Every age has its revolutions, and these have a meaning and a history because they are lived in a specific human, political, economic and cultural context. If the cities in which we live are more and more *visual*, it is thanks to the long wave of

Fig. 16b - Poster for Utopia magazine, 1973.

Fig. 17 - Anonymous, "They made a desert and called it Pace", poster for the U.G.I., Florence, 1974.

Fig. 18 -Ettore Vitale, poster for the celebrations of May 1st, 27th national congress of the Italian Socialist Youth Federation, 1977.

1968 that with its movements generated a huge flow of iconic formulas that pervade the urban habitat: illuminated mega-screens and advertising posters, shop and street signs, posters of events, shop windows and signs on walls. In this "*urban iconosphere*" there are rules that are not always clear, often contradictory and not immediately understandable.[16] In the 1960s, we were only at the beginning of a new age of the image, of appearance, industrial design, television communication and the consequent development of signs distributed everywhere to orient and disorient, fascinate or impress, strike and shock. From the 1960s to the present day, one could say that we have come to live in an increasingly pervasive and ramified "visual reality," made more fluid by the computer and digital revolution; the phenomenon of urban revolt cannot be separated from the communication systems of the revolt itself, and the main tools of social, political and artistic communication have been precisely the *affiche*, the *manifesto*, the poster, legacy of the years of the artistic avant-garde that, starting from the end of the 1960s, with the shock wave of the 1968 student protest movement, in Italy and in the rest of the world, have connoted the urban landscape of our cities.

The revolt of the 1960s was a kaleidoscope of heterogeneous, in some cases contradictory, phenomena which called into question all existing values - personal, social, political and cultural. Technology and return to nature, anticlericalism and fascination with Eastern spirituality, women's liberation and pornography, psychedelic hallucinations and class struggle, individualism and collectivism. Everything and the opposite of everything, so many facets of a single utopia that, as utopia, has not been realized, but continues to fascinate and intrigue us. It is therefore the beginning of an end, but it is also the beginning of a transition from one world to another (fig. 19).

Fig. 19 -Anonymous, Femme Unisson nous!, Mouvement de Libération des Femmes (France), offset, 27x21 cm., 1975 (credit: AA.VV., 2018. Images en lutte, Beaux-Arts de Paris éditions, Paris, 2018).

FINAL NOTE

In telling the story of the revolts through images, there is the risk of incurring mystification, since, in the search for a synthesis, there is an inevitable risk of banalization or, at least, of a partial vision; moreover, as the protagonists would say, revolutions must - or should – be lived and prepared day by day. The posters mentioned were chosen not so much for their aesthetic qualities as, instead, to show the relationship between the different theories and the different forms of revolt that characterized the walls of the period covered. These posters helped to enliven the scene of the turbulent street theater. At the heart of this conflict lies the very concept of communication, radically subverted by a new generation that made protest a lever for a change to civil rights and a renewal of politics.
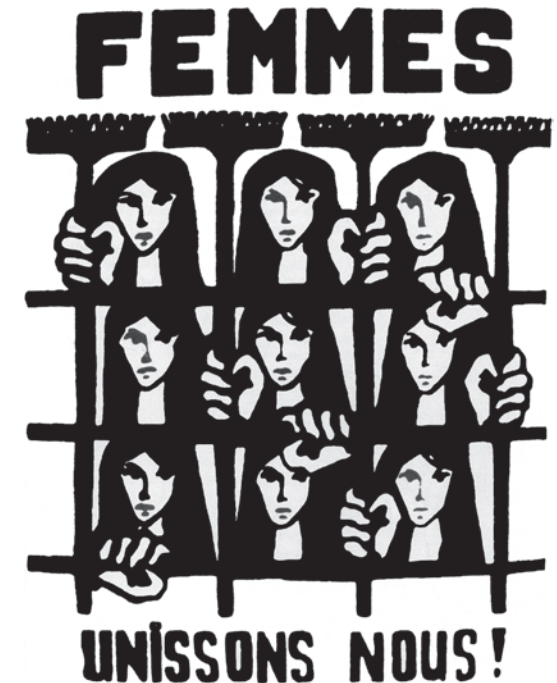
NOTE

[1] Eduardo Galeano writes: *What is the purpose of utopia? It is to cause us to advance*, in Petrella, R., 2016. http://www.vita.it/it/article/2015/04/13/galeano-a-che-serve-lutopia-a-non-smettere-di-camminare/132784/

[2] Lefebvre, H.,2014, p. 22

[3] Harvey, D., 2013, p. 22

[4] For the Italian context, the twenty years between the two World Wars was one of the most productive phases of political communication through increasingly attractive posters, effective in transmitting messages, modern in their graphic design and composition. If in the 1930s an insistent use of posters could be motivated by the low level of literacy in Italian society as well as by the evident propaganda actions of the regime, the reasons for the affirmation of the poster in the 1960s and 1970s appear less obvious and more complex.

[5] In England, in the early 1960s, the Mods and Rockers teenage gangs represented two different lifestyles that engaged in a very violent urban conflict. This guerrilla warfare between opposing ideological groups focused media attention on juvenile distress until, in the early 1970s, the attention on this rivalry ceased, to then focus on the emerging subcultures of hippies and skinheads.

[6] Benjamin argues that the introduction, at the beginning of the 20th century, of new techniques to produce, reproduce and disseminate works of art to the masses radically changed the attitude of the public and artists, causing a political revolution in the relationship between art and power. The new means for reproducing a work of art in any time and place, on the one hand generates the loss of the uniqueness of the work of art, expressed with the concept of "aura." From an unrepeatable event, as it was, in fact, the artwork is continually transformed through the multiplication of reproductions. This phenomenon causes a series of social and political changes. The loss of the aura, therefore, corresponds to the loss of the uniqueness and essentiality of a work of art but becomes an instrument of liberation of the masses from the control of cultural elites or power.

[7] https://digilander.libero.it/sito-graphics/imagini_atelier-populaire.html. Official website of *Atelier Populaire*

[8] *Atelier populaire*, 1968.

[9] The term "avant-garde" is referred to a political and revolutionary context. It is a constellation of events, people and historical conditions that, in a relatively short period of time, brought together painters, poets and artists, who posed themselves the problem of going beyond the conventional canons of their art to achieve a truer and more socially engaged reality.

[10] There is a strong identification, on the part of these artists, in the work of John Heartfield who, through this art form, exerted a very harsh social criticism during the Weimar Republic.

[11] The name, which became legendary in the 1960s, is derived from the intersection of two streets in the city center, Fillmore Street and Geary Boulevard, where Graham's offices were located from 1966 to 1968.

[12] Mari Tepper's works, many of them unsigned, are often mentioned in relation to the graphic art of the 1960s, but, as is true for many other artists, it is very rare to find her references or, least of all, the copyrights. (Figs.14 – 15)

[13] Lord, S., Dukes, P., Robinson, J., Wilson, S., 2018

[14] The exhibition *Cuba Grafica. Manifesti cinematografici dell'IC-AIC dalla collezione Bardellotto*, curated by Luigino Bardellotto and Patrizio De Mattio, IUAV, 2020 (opening date to be rescheduled).

[15] Review of William Gambetta's book, *I muri del lungo '68*, "La Repubblica - Parma", 21 May 2014 https://parma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2014/05/20/news/i_muri_del_lungo_68_manifesti_e_politica_in_italia-86720603/?refresh_ce

[16] *Iconosphere* is a term used by Gillo Dorfles to define everyday urban visual reality in: Dorfles, G., 1965.

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