
THE POWER OF POSTER ART CHALLENGE



CONTEXT

Nebraska has a long history of circulating posters encouraging social action, particularly during years of intense change.

The government promoted posters during WWI and WWII to recruit soldiers, sell war bonds, encourage self-sacrifice and caution civilians against enemy tactics. During the Great Depression, the Government, through the Civil Works Administration art project, hired 28 Nebraska artists to create public art some of which was poster art. Other public agencies and private businesses have also used posters to market a product or communicate a message. Finally, a practice that continues to this day, are the signs that individuals such as yourself have created in support or in protest of something you have strong feelings about.

TAKE THE CHALLENGE

Objective

Using your observation and critical thinking skills, take a close look at examples of historic and contemporary poster art from History Nebraska's collection and reflect on the events and changes occurring in the year 2020. Applying your communication skills, create your own poster that spreads a message about today's themes. (*see the list of posters below)

Essential Questions

- How do events influence artistic expression?
- How does art and language influence public awareness and morale?
- What was the government's role in the production of posters during times of intense change?

Vocabulary

Protest: public demonstration of disapproval

Call to Action: An invitation to take action or complete a task to further a cause.

Collective Impact: Bring people together to work in a structured way to achieve social change or to solve a complex problem.

Propaganda: Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause.

Posters from the History Nebraska collection to consider:

Examine the examples below and compare and contrast posters from different time periods. Consider each of the following questions:

- What message are they trying to convey?
- What problem are they attempting to solve?
- What call to action are the messengers of these posters hoping to create?



For Every Fighter A Woman Worker:

Created during WWI in support of the YWCA March of Women workers, some in uniform.

<https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/C264DE3A-449C-4C45-AF76-532933569451>

https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/121/45416a-1.jpg

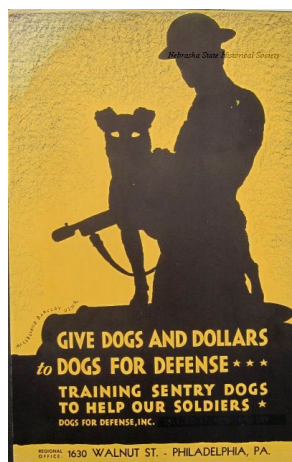


Black Lives Matter:

This poster was printed in June 2020 at the Union for Contemporary Art in Omaha. It was given to the public for free.

<https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/CED36E32-3856-4A1E-9E48-425014198891>

https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/342/134281.jpg

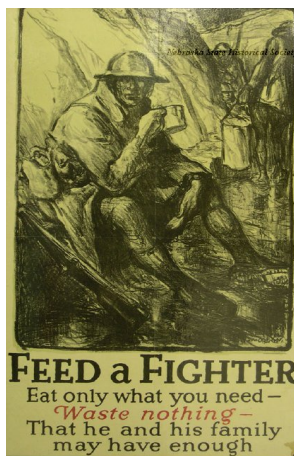


Give Dogs and Dollars for Defense:

Produced by the US Military during WW II to encourage people to donate their dogs and give money in support of the war.

<https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/5DD6D79B-DFA5-4E56-A879-116923999962>

https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/257/110551132.jpg

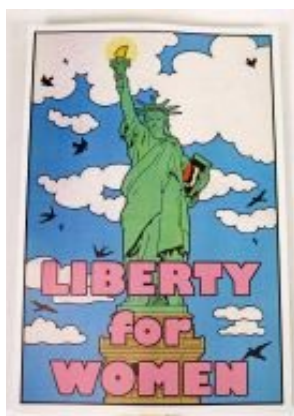


Feed a Fighter:

During WWI, the United States Food Administration, in this poster, reminded people of the soldiers on the battlefield and asked them not to waste food.

<https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/44C3350A-736C-431C-AA60-783378329781>

https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/049/1180410.jpg



Liberty for Women:

A Lincoln artist utilized the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of female empowerment in her poster for the Women's March held in Lincoln NE in January, 2017.

https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/334/133368.jpg

<https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/2774C649-5326-4CD7-8754-062333249063>



For their Sake: Join Now:

This artist understood the emotional impact that distressed children have on the public's conscience. Viewers are encouraged to join the Red Cross during WWII.

<https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/9F05ADA9-21F8-4B88-A2B4-853357909181>

https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/046/1156610.jpg

**Rise Up Pride:**

This sign was created for Star City Pride 2020 scheduled to be held in Lincoln NE in June 2020. Due to Covid-19 the event was cancelled.

https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/342/1190220.jpg

<https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/D9351EA5-4C1D-4825-978C-129596770869>

**Together We Win:**

A WW II poster created by the Labor Management Committee to promote partnership.

https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/133/7294-966.jpg

<https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/DD197CB4-A583-4E9A-A726-942003124040>

**The Challenge: Let's Do Our Part:**

Raymond Johnson of Omaha made this painting for the US Civil Works Administration (CWA) in 1934. Through this Government program, artists were paid to create art during the Great Depression years.

<https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/5CA92818-A3A3-4CAB-964F-408140487123>

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/054/12743%20\[dup644\].jpg](https://s3.amazonaws.com/pastperfectonline/images/museum_184/054/12743%20[dup644].jpg)

HERE'S YOUR CHALLENGE!

Using the resources above, create your own poster to address today's themes including but not limited to COVID-19, economic hardship, equality, racial injustice, and voter participation. Your poster might encourage health and safety practices, social change, racial equity, empathy, compassion and more.

When thinking about your poster, ask yourself if it includes a call to action to help promote social change, well-being or community spirit? The poster should not reference specific political parties or candidates. Poster messaging should not use derogatory or offensive language.

History Nebraska will consider your poster for an upcoming exhibit to accompany 10 professional artists who's work was previously selected. Visit <https://history.nebraska.gov/PosterProject> to view the selected artists and their final designs.

Use the 11 x 17 poster template included here to create your poster; Include your full name and age.

Save your poster as a pdf and submit to: Sharon.kennedy@nebraska.gov

