

POLIS #2: A Newsletter of Art Museums & Politics

U.S. REVOLUTIONARY POSTERS, at MoMA (Project)

Concept Proposer: FLG, 1969

Much of the United States had been in flames for some time.
The Vietnam War was tearing America apart.
The assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr.
and Robert Kennedy added fuel to the fires.
There were riots from coast to coast.
Many posters were crying out for various kinds of peace and justice.
Was our exhibition program going to pay attention to
only events in Paris?

The newly formed Art Workers Coalition (AWC)
started to put a new kind of political pressure on MoMA
at the beginning of 1969. They wanted to see more
social consciousness, less collaboration of MoMA trustees with war-oriented
corporations, as well as more diversity on the Board,
on the staff, and in both the exhibition program and the acquisitions program. All
that was indeed very white.
And they wanted the right of artists to have a say in how their work
is exhibited, and Free Admission for poor people.

In May, I proposed to Drexler that we follow the Paris poster show with a show of
radical posters from across the U.S.,
touching on all the political issues of the day.
He liked the idea but was now looking on all this
from a new perspective. With the ouster of Bates Lowry,
in May, Drexler had suddenly become (in effect)
Acting Director of MoMA.
He was no longer only the head of one Department.
He was heading all Departments. He was the very *face* of MoMA.
The AWC was pounding at the door, demanding ACTION!
Was my idea the best next step to take?
Or were there better ideas?

He decided on a set of negotiations that will be reported
in the next Newsletters.

FLG
Summer 1969