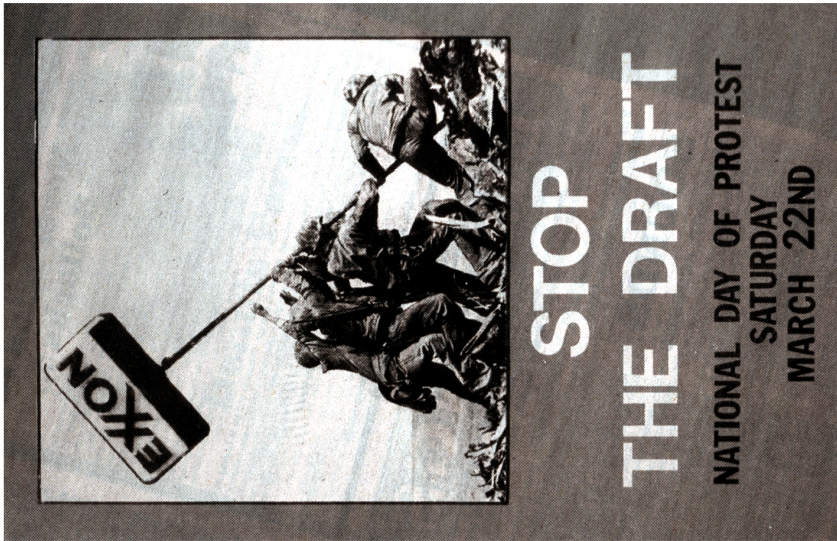




MARCH 15-21, 2007 ← 37 → CITYBEAT



L-R: FORKSCREW GRAPHICS, IRAQ (2004); ERIC LINDROTH, THE GRIM SNEAKER (2006); LEE WHITTEN WITH PHOTO BY JOE ROSENTHAL, STOP THE DRAFT (1980)



TODAYS ONLINE

Written and edited by
Dr. Rebecca Epstein

Signs of Protest



WARNING: While Bush spends billions playing cowboy, 37 million Americans have no health insurance. One American dies of AIDS every eight minutes.

Got your war on? Now go visit the **Center for the Study of Political Graphics'** latest exhibition, **SUBVERTISEMENTS: Using Ads and Logos for Protest**, opening Monday at the Cal State Northridge art galleries (through April 21). It features approximately 90 posters from all over the world – by professional artists, graphic designers, students, and everyday people with a cause – each one exploiting familiar corporate imagery and commercial iconography to advertise an alternative political message.

Two years in the planning, the show hosts work from the 1960s through just last week. Topics include vegetarianism, the environment, globalization, and human rights. Most of the posters were culled from the CSPG's extensive collection; others were donations made specifically for this exhibit. "All donations were subject to the same scrutiny," says CSPG director **Carol Wells**. "If it's good and it tells the story well, we'll use it," adding that "some of the best professional designers are not the best political poster makers."

SUBVERTISEMENTS is divided into three main categories, with some inevitable overlap: posters that appropriate ad imagery to address separate issues (for example, the famous anti-Iraq war/Abu Ghraib image that enlists the bright colors and black silhouettes of the first iPod campaign); product boycotts (i.e., the Marlboro Man for anti-smoking efforts); and event posters with overtly political illustrations. Wells mentions a Jello Biafra concert bill with a drawing of current President Bush wearing a thorny crown of oil wells.

Other notable submissions include one by CSUN student Eric Lindroth, titled "The Grim Sneaker," which depicts the Grim Reaper holding a Nike swoosh for a sickle, and the caption "Sweatshops provide dead-end jobs around the world." Barcelona-based newspaper illustrator Anthony Garner reworked the Esso oil logo, adding S.O.S. and "blood stains, to reinforce the idea of the price of oil in terms of human lives."

Wells suggests that posters haven't been such a popular tool of dissent since the Vietnam era. She credits the computer age, and the ease with which images can now be created, distributed, and printed. "Posters still have a real cost-effective and visual function," she says. "To convey an idea to someone to get them thinking about a problem ... artists can do that better than anyone else."

—Rebecca Epstein

SUBVERTISEMENTS: Using Ads and Logos for Protest. CSUN Art Galleries, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge, (818) 677-2226. Opens Mon.; talk at 10 a.m. Reception March 23, 7 p.m.-9 p.m. Closes Apr. 21. Free. Csun.edu/art-galleries. The exhibit will travel late summer to the Wignall Museum/Gallery, Chaffey College, Rancho Cucamonga.