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## **Modern British Posters: Art, Design Communication**

**Paul Rennie : Modern British Posters: Art, Design Communication** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Modern British Posters: Art, Design Communication:

Modern British Posters explores the interaction between modern art and graphic design in Britain throughout the twentieth century. A distinctive characteristic of modern society is the progressively more complete integration of art, design and architecture. The poster has been an integral expression of this phenomenon since its invention, in modern form, during the 1860s. The poster was made possible by the development of industrial colour lithography and by the appearance of large hoardings as a consequence of metropolitan redevelopment. Furthermore, this co-incidence developed at precisely the same time as the birth of the cultural avant-garde. Following the First World War, during a period of social and political realignment, major artists embraced the developing technologies of graphic reproduction to make commercial poster images and reach out to an audience beyond the complacent limits of the gallery. This required artists to embrace the possibilities of new technologies in print media, and was thus instrumental in

transforming commercial art into graphic design. From this point forward, the poster and the artistic avant-garde have been inextricably linked. The poster reached a level of maturity in design just as the cultural reform of the 1920s was beginning. This synchronicity has established the poster as a particularly significant cultural object. Every great artist in Britain contributed to this effort and *Modern British Posters* features the work of artists such as John Minton, Paul Nash, Hubert Williams, Edward McKnight Kauffer, Leonard Cusden, Edward Wadsworth and Tom Eckersley, amongst many others. These images speak broadly of people, landscape, technology and identity and cover themes such as transport, architecture, the seaside, accident prevention and popular culture. In Britain, the graphic archive is dispersed amongst various institutions. This fragmentation means that, for practical purposes, the general story of British poster design remains to be told. As such *Modern British Posters* provides an important addition to the history of visual culture in Britain during the twentieth century.