



## WOLFSONIAN

THE MUSEUM OF THINKISM

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### 'REVOLUTIONARY TIDES: THE ART OF THE POLITICAL POSTER, 1914–1989' EXHIBITION OPENS FEBRUARY 25–JUNE 25, 2006 AT THE WOLFSONIAN

*Exhibition Presents 75 Years of Political Poster Art*



MIAMI BEACH, FL—[August 2005] *Revolutionary Tides: The Art of the Political Poster, 1914–1989* focuses on the turbulent years of the 20th century, bringing together more than 100 of the most exceptional examples from the vast poster collections of the Hoover Institution at Stanford and The Wolfsonian–Florida International University. The exhibition, curated by Dr. Jeffrey T. Schnapp, director of the Stanford Humanities Lab, examines the key role played by crowds in modern politics and society from the First World War to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Originating at the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University this fall, the exhibition will be on view at The Wolfsonian from February 25 to June 25, 2006.

*Revolutionary Tides* presents posters from such diverse political settings as New Deal America, the Soviet Union of Stalin's Five-Year Plans, China's Cultural Revolution, the protest movements of the 1960s and Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran. The exhibition features work by world-renowned graphic artists such as John Heartfield, Gustav Klutsis and Xanti Schawinsky, and includes the iconic Norman Rockwell illustration depicting "Freedom of Speech."

"*Revolutionary Tides* is a fascinating look at mass culture and politics. Its focus on visual imagery invites the viewer to find the similarities and differences that characterize visual propaganda over time and through different cultures," said Marianne Lamonaca, assistant director for exhibitions and curatorial affairs at The Wolfsonian. Rare posters from Iran in the 1970s and East Germany in the 1980s on loan from the Hoover Institute will complement The Wolfsonian's posters from the early 20th century.

Posters, a distinctly modern medium of mass communication and persuasion, served as a laboratory for the development of graphic conventions for depicting the masses as political actors. The emergence of a politics founded upon principles of popular sovereignty shaped new images of the masses as a collective force. At the same time, the new art practice of the popular poster shaped the emerging politics and cast artists in the role of mass communicators.

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The exhibition is organized into three broad areas — Figures, Numbers, and Symbols — each of which surveys a particular graphic convention, iconographic element or theme. "Figures" analyzes the graphic vernacular of 20th-century political poster art, such as the presentation of crowds arrayed as fronts or geometrical figures and their abstraction into seas or decorative patterns. "Numbers" emphasizes the intimate ties between modern notions of political power and ideas of quantity, including statistical data, industrial production and large-scale construction and destruction. "Symbols" is devoted to examining the interaction between the image of the crowd and icons representing the group, such as party emblems, faces of leaders or exemplary men or women from the masses.

Dr. Schnapp was a visiting scholar participating in The Wolfsonian's fellowship program and conducted research on the collection specifically for this exhibition. The exhibition is accompanied by the catalog *Revolutionary Tides*, published by Skira. An associated, multi-author book/Web site hybrid entitled *Crowds* (Stanford University Press) weaves together scholarly essays on topics extending from crowds in antiquity to contemporary "smart mobs," with testimonials, semantic histories and reference materials on crowd psychology and crowd sociology.

*Revolutionary Tides* was organized by the Cantor Arts Center with the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, the Stanford Humanities Lab and The Wolfsonian-FIU. The organizers gratefully acknowledge generous support for this project from the Clumeck Endowment Fund, The Bernard Osher Foundation, The Seaver Institute, The Mariposa Fund, Roger and Martha Mertz and Cantor Arts Center members.

#### **About The Wolfsonian-Florida International University**

The Wolfsonian is a museum and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, political and technological changes that have transformed the world. The 100,000 artifacts that comprise the Wolfsonian's collections range from fine art, graphic design and political propaganda to furniture, rare books and ephemeral materials such as postcards and travel brochures.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, Fla. Admission is \$7 adults; \$5 seniors, students, and children six-12; free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, children under six, and Miami Beach residents with ID. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday from noon-6pm; Thursday and Friday from noon-9pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at [www.wolfsonian.org](http://www.wolfsonian.org).

The Wolfsonian receives ongoing support from the State of Florida; Department of State; Division of Cultural Affairs; Florida Arts Council; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs through the Cultural Affairs Council; the Mayor and the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners; the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Miami Beach and the Miami Beach Cultural Arts Council; Crispin Porter + Bogusky; Dacra and the Miami Design District; Continental Airlines, the preferred airline of The Wolfsonian; the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation; Artécity, for inspired condo living; Carnival Foundation; and RBK Productions.

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