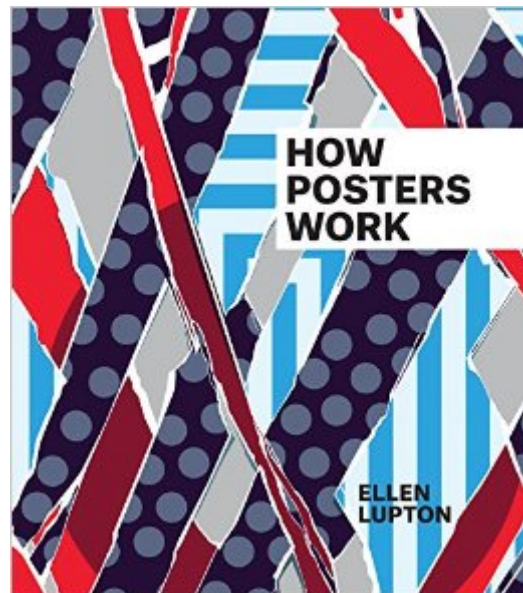


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# How Posters Work



## Synopsis

With its unique focus on visual language, Ellen Lupton's *How Posters Work* is more than another poster book. Rather than provide a history of the genre or a compilation of collectibles, the book is organized around active design principles. Concepts such as "Simplify," "Focus the eye," "Exploit the diagonal," "Reverse expectations" and "Say two things at once" are illustrated with a diverse range of posters, from avant-garde classics and rarely seen international works to contemporary pieces by today's leading graphic designers. Illustrated with over 150 works from the collection of Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, *How Posters Work* provides a stunning education in seeing and making, demonstrating how some of the world's most creative designers have mobilized principles of layout, composition, psychology and rhetoric to produce powerful acts of visual communication.

Ellen Lupton (born 1963) is an acclaimed writer, curator and graphic designer. She is Director of the Graphic Design MFA program at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in Baltimore, where she also serves as Director of the Center for Design Thinking. As Curator of Contemporary Design at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum since 1992, she has produced numerous exhibitions and books, including *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office* (1993), *Mixing Messages: Graphic Design and Contemporary Culture* (1996), *Letters from the Avant-Garde* (1996), *Skin: Surface, Substance + Design* (2002) and *most recently* *Beautiful Users: Designing for People* (2014). Lupton is a 2007 recipient of the AIGA Gold Medal, one of the highest honors given to a graphic designer or design educator in the US.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"How Posters Work" is one of several new books published in celebration of the reopening of Cooper Hewett, the Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City, in December 2014 after a three-year renovation project. This book is authored (in some parts) and edited (in other parts) by Ellen Lupton, a Senior Curator at Cooper Hewett, the director of a Graphic Design master's degree program, and the writer of many important and influential books on design. In a little over 200 pages, filled with over 300 illustrations, the volume articulates several guiding concepts and shows numerous examples of "how posters work," resulting in a publication that is beneficial to working designers, design students, and those who simply appreciate the power and beauty possible in a 2-D printed message. The first 70 pages of the book are dedicated to several well-illustrated essays, starting with Lupton's "Vision is a Process." She notes that the purpose of the book is to explain "how designers see" and to explore the many ways in which graphic designers apply key principles to achieve a communication goal. Then Lupton expands her premise by describing components of a graphic designer's methodology, such as "vision is active," "vision is immersive," and "vision is multisensory." In the next essay, Caitlin Condell, another Cooper Hewett staff member, describes "How Posters Are Made," starting with the lithography process (invented in 1798) and continuing with technologies ranging from silk screen printing and various photographic processes to relatively recent innovations like digital printing and laser cutting.

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