

IPT 2021 First Screening (Selection of Posters for Exhibition)

Judging Comments

*This text was written by Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art and Design staff and summarizes the opinions expressed by the six-member jury panel during the discussions which took place at the IPT 2021 first screening held on April 13, 2021.

At the IPT 2021 first screening, it almost seemed as if we judges were the ones being judged. It was with feelings of gratitude for the quite astonishingly large number of works we received this year – almost 6000 submissions from 64 countries and regions – that we cast our votes for the paper posters in Categories A and B, as well as digital submissions in the U30 + Student Category which passed a preliminary screening. This first screening was not simply a matter of selecting works which received the most votes, and the discussions we held regarding submissions which received less than half of the jury members' votes helped us to reflect upon the criteria that we each employ in our judging, which led to many personal discoveries. These discussions continued until every judge was satisfied, and it was in this way that we arrived at our final selection of posters for exhibition.

The submissions ranged from client-commissioned works to self-produced posters which conveyed strong messages, and they were diverse and varied. Some demonstrated technical maturity but had insufficiently developed themes, while others were awkward but powerful. In the end, this was not merely a competition of technical skills, but also a question of which posters managed to catch the viewer's eye and illustrate the contemporary strengths and possibilities of posters as a form of paper media in this modern day and age – a time when our increasingly online environment is said to have made paper media less relevant. We believe we selected works which presented a balanced cohesion of theme, technical skills, and expression, as well as posters which had the power to arrest the attention of viewers and make them ponder the message they were seeing.

Among the self-produced posters which contained a strong message, we saw many posters with universal themes such as the environment as well as those themed around the coronavirus pandemic our world is currently grappling with, but we wondered what happened to other issues, such as the 3.11 earthquake and nuclear accident, natural disasters, and military conflict. From wide-spanning issues to

those that hit closer to home, there are certainly many themes worthy of being taken up. In addition, the IPT 2021 “Invisible” theme was an invitation for applicants to consider things which are invisible to the eye, but we saw somewhat of a tendency towards similarity in the responses applicants provided, with these posters providing a direct view into the issues that habitually occupy the minds of their creators.

In contrast to the posters with strong messages, there were also humorous and light posters that left us amused or in simple wonderment, and this is another attractive quality of the poster. When one of the judges noted something they found interesting about a poster, sometimes another judge would point out that the creator may well have been oblivious to that side of their work. The IPT may be an opportunity to discover the merits of a poster that even the creator is unaware of.

Observing the works submitted as a set or series of posters also prompted us to think, conversely, about the capability of a single poster to make a statement. A work composed of multiple posters has vigor and the capacity to communicate a story, but the ability to take a theme that could easily occupy several posters and encapsulate it into a single one is also something that demonstrates the power a poster can have.

The poster is a medium onto which creators can project their messages using original visual expression. Unlike videos or moving images, posters require viewers to adjust their focus to what they are seeing. It is hard to define just what makes posters so appealing. As our methods of disseminating information and communicating with each other continue to diversify, and with the accompanying lessening of regional distinctions on both the national and international level, this seems like the right time to think about why we choose the themes we do – and why we express them on posters – to probe ways of making the poster even more interesting and to discover the possibilities they hold for us in today’s world.