IPT 2024 First Screening (Selection of Posters for Exhibition) Judging Comments

The IPT receives posters from countries and regions throughout the world, and every time a package is opened, one thing you notice is the smell of paper and ink wafting out. In addition to the smell of paper and ink from all these different regions, it also seems possible to catch a subtle whiff of the air inside the studios where the posters were produced, and perhaps the faintest scents of tobacco, perfume and other nuances indicative of the people who were there. The smell of paper somehow evokes the atmosphere – and even the philosophy – of the individual production sites and studios, giving us a sense of the printing culture behind each poster, and seeming to transport us to the places the posters were born.

Like human beings, posters have their own culture, values and individual character. As jury members, we listened carefully to the philosophies we sensed behind the posters and the messages contained within, carrying out the judging thoughtfully, deliberately, and with a positive focus.

With each IPT, the technical merits of the submissions seem to improve, and the posters grow ever more sophisticated. In an age when "on-screen" media is on the rise, it is interesting that alongside designers who seem to have made a post-digital return to traditional poster expression, we also saw the reverse trend of poster design that is suggestive of digital expression. But even as digital production becomes standard and mainstream, there were still many applicants who seemed intent on bringing out the materiality of printed matter by, for example, exploring graphic expression that suits the medium of paper.

With regards to the poster themes, it was hardly surprising that our eyes were drawn to submissions with strong messages. Posters serve as a reflection of their times, so we encountered anti-war posters, as well as those which concerned themselves with prevailing political and social issues, such as the problem of marine plastic pollution. But while posters with weighty themes are often seen as being more profound, this is not always the case. Posters which evoke poetic sentiments or an uncomplicated sense of joy often possess their own unique depth, and may well have something important to say to us.

Category B and the U30 + Student Category accepted self-produced printed posters on the theme of "Think ( )", which not only tested the technical capabilities of the designers and creators, but also the substance and depth of their ideas. We jury members also found ourselves challenged, for deciphering what the applicants had in mind when they created their posters was not always easy. While many posters contained unambiguous images of the brain or people engaged in thought, the submissions which passed the first screening were those which had a compelling message to communicate.

It must unfortunately be noted that a not insignificant number of submissions were removed from consideration not because of any deficiency in quality, but simply because they did not include the required credit line or otherwise failed to follow the entry guidelines. While we recognized the hard work that went into all of these submissions, as jury members it was our responsibility to judge the works impartially and in accordance with the competition rules.

Posters have the power to make us think. Some posters impart a lingering visual impact which stops us in our tracks, and pulls us a step closer. Works which possess a depth that is independent of their visual strength are even more powerful.

What we think of as a "poster" is a tangible paper product, but in recent years, there are more poster competitions which accept digital submissions and are held online, eliminating the need for the physical poster. There may, in fact, be many people who create posters, but never actually print them out at full size. But even if a poster is created digitally, is it not in the comprehensive consideration of the poster's visual expression and

message, the size the printed poster should be, and the selection of things like paper and printing method that we find the poster we know and love? When we have the opportunity to judge paper posters, these are the elements we face head on.

The IPT is a unique competition where posters of many different types and backgrounds come together in a single place, and judging these posters is a singular experience – one that is not without a certain amount of tension. The power of the poster medium is said to be less than what it once was, and perhaps this is so, but the aesthetic and thematic richness of the poster submissions served as a reconfirmation of the ability of graphic design to captivate us. Even as the concept of what a poster is considered to be continues to change and evolve, the appeal of the poster remains as strong as ever.

*This text, written by Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art and Design staff, summarizes the comments and opinions expressed by the eight-member National Jury during the discussions which took place at the IPT 2024 first screening, which was held on April 16-17, 2024.

IPT 2024 – First Screening Procedures
Below are the details of the IPT 2024 first screening procedures:

U30 + Student Category – Preliminary Screening (application deadline – March 31, 2024)

Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art and Design staff first reviewed the digital submissions to confirm that each submission contained the required credit line and otherwise conformed to the entry requirements and guidelines, with 1557 works passing this review. The eight members of the National Jury were each allotted 150 votes, which they cast for the submissions of their choice. Museum staff tallied the results, and the 29 submissions which received four or more votes were printed out as full-size B1-size prints, while the 40 works which received three votes were printed out as smaller A3-size prints.

First Screening – Day 1 (April 16, 2024)

1) Category A – Determination of Prospective Selections
The National Jury members reviewed the Category A poster submissions, each casting a pre-set number of votes for the works of their choice. The jury members then carefully examined the entire body of submissions, regardless of the number of votes that each had received, and after a discussion, 456 posters were set aside as prospective selections.

First Screening – Day 2 (April 17, 2024)

2) Category B – Determination of Prospective Selections
Following the same procedure employed for the Category A submissions, 49 Category B submissions were set aside as prospective selections.

3) U30 + Student Category – Determination of Prospective Selections
Following the same procedure employed for the Category A and Category B submissions, the National Jury reviewed the U30 + Student submissions which had passed the preliminary screening, and 40 submissions were set aside as prospective selections.

4) Final Determination of First Screening Selections
After an initial discussion, the National Jury members re-examined the 456 Category A prospective selections they had selected the previous day. They conducted a second vote, this time casting an unlimited number of votes for the submissions of their choice. After some more discussion, the jury members made a final selection of 304 submissions which were determined to have passed the first screening. The jury members then once again reviewed and discussed the Category B and U30 + Student Category prospective selections, and all 49 Category B prospective selections and all 40 U30 + Student Category prospective selections were confirmed to have passed the first screening.

Post-Screening Administrative Review of First Screening Selections

Following the first screening, museum staff conducted an administrative review to verify that the 393 first screening selections were produced during the designated time period and otherwise conformed to the entry requirements and guidelines, and 301 Category A submissions, 49 Category B submissions, and 40 U30 + Student Category submissions were officially determined to have passed the first screening.