



Ever since its beginnings in 1990, Chaumont design graphique has organized a yearly international poster competition. Long before professional magazines and the generalisation of on-line blogs and portfolios, this sort of competition organized by the biennials presented one of the first media to explore and diffuse the possibilities of posters and their assets.

Posters will become an obsolete medium if their contemporary embedding is not constantly renewed, if their relation to the world and the topical forms are not reasserted. Just like posters themselves, poster competitions will become an outmoded model if they merely serve the auto-celebration of a happy few and the insistent needs of observers of printed matter.

Choosing the form of a competition means gaining each designer's support and participation. Yet competing itself is not the essential factor of that sort of event. It is the much too seldom opportunity to offer the public the possibilities of graphic design, to show its capability of making us stop and to establish a link and an exchange between people and a wide range of subjects.

A competition between peers can be a stimulus, but that is far from being as strong as the stakes related to a commissioned work, the difficulty of making the intelligence of signs exist in public space, of making way for an economy capable of developing a design approach within communication logics. Poster making and graphic design are sometimes like combat sports where economic and cultural precariousness allow all sorts of blows. Poster competitions are not matches, but rather and more than ever necessary to value a profession, a pedagogy, the mechanics in the commission process, the relations between designers, clients, printers... The medium of these competitions

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is the poster, not only because it represents the graphic object that can be shown the most evidently but also because it is the most public object.

This text does not aim at promoting the Chaumont festival itself, it concerns in our point of view all of the competitions and events around graphic design. These are not necessary for their own sake but because signs and images are necessary and through them, the development and appropriation of a visual culture by a public, designers, students and their teachers. Chaumont design graphique is one of these opportunities that graphic design creates in order to grow itself. As organizers of this event, we are in fine just the instrument that graphic design will make use of or not.

The figures concerning the number of designers participating, the number of visitors of the Festival are not the issue. Neither these figures nor an accountant approach can jeopardize the Festival, the real issue being the development of the practices and the place events dedicated to the discipline can occupy or not. We have received numerous signs from France and abroad acknowledging the importance of Chaumont for designers. On its own territory and the region of Chaumont, things are moving towards the opening, in 2016, of a permanent centre dedicated to the culture and the diffusion of graphic design. We are ceaselessly working on maintaining the link between the Festival and the actual developments in graphic design.

Yet more than ever, it is urgent to recall that this effort cannot be made just one-way. Each poster participating in the international competition expresses the designer's conviction and commitment to their profession and art. The competition is a place for expression and sharing, that we hope to be open and reflecting the present. The reply is your responsibility

