National Theatre Posters
Wolfson Gallery, National Theatre
Wednesday 4 October 2017 until 31 March 2018

Exhibition launch: 3 October

National Theatre Posters, curated by design critic and writer Rick Poynor, will open in the National Theatre’s Wolfson gallery in October, exploring poster design at the NT from 1963 to the present.

Curated by Rick Poynor, Professor of Design and Visual Culture at the University of Reading, this exhibition explores the evolution of poster design at the National Theatre, showcasing many classic examples. From 1963 to the present day, each art director led the theatre’s graphic design studio in creating images for posters, programmes and now digital artwork. The exhibition features posters designed by Ken Briggs, Richard Bird, Michael Mayhew, Charlotte Wilkinson and current Creative Director Ollie Winser and the Graphic Design Studio.

The exhibition will include original posters, interviews with past and current Art or Creative Directors and will trace the changes in process, design and function over the past 50 years.

Curator Rick Poynor said:

“An exciting theatre poster manages to capture the essence of a play. It grabs your attention with something surprising and draws you in. The National Theatre has a long tradition of producing adventurous poster designs that encapsulate the inventiveness and energy of its productions.”

“The NT’s first graphic designer, Ken Briggs, collaborated closely with the theatre for a decade. That set the pattern and the theatre went on to appoint a succession of designers – Richard Bird, Michael
Mayhew, Charlotte Wilkinson and Ollie Winser – who have worked in-house on the posters and other graphics. Each designer has maintained a very high standard of creativity and the posters’ graphic styles have evolved to reflect the changing needs of the theatre and its audiences.”

There will be a book, *National Theatre Posters: A Design History*, published by Unit Editions, which will be launched to coincide with the exhibition.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a programme of related events:

**Exhibition Insight with curator Rick Poynor**
27 October, 12-1pm, Wolfson Gallery, £3
A walk around the current exhibition with curator Rick Poynor, please meet in the Wolfson Gallery.

**Talk: Where is the Poster Now?**
8 November, 6-7pm, Cottesloe Room, £7/5
A talk on the art of poster design by Rick Poynor, design critic and Professor of Design and Visual Culture at the University of Reading, featuring his research for the exhibition currently running in the Wolfson Gallery, National Theatre.

**Talk: Graphic Design at the National Theatre**
21 November, 6 – 7pm, Cottesloe Room, £7/5
An exploration of the working design process by the Graphic Design Studio (GDS) at the National Theatre with Creative Director, Ollie Winser and members of his design team focussing on real campaigns for recent NT productions.

**On Screen: Helvetica**
27 November, 5.30pm, Cottesloe Room, £5/3
Gary Hustwit’s brilliantly designed feature-length documentary, *Helvetica*, explores typography. The film features contributions from *National Theatre Posters* exhibition curator, Rick Poynor.

ENDS

For images of some of the posters featured in the exhibition, [click here](#).

If you would like to attend the exhibition launch please contact Louisa Terry on 020 7452 3236 / lterry@nationaltheatre.org.uk

**Notes to Editors**

**Curator Rick Poynor**
Rick Poynor is a writer, critic, lecturer and curator, specialising in design, photography and visual culture. He founded Eye, co-founded Design Observer, and contributes columns to Eye and Print. He is Professor of Design and Visual Culture at the University of Reading in the UK.

**The National Theatre**
At the National Theatre, we make world-class theatre that is entertaining, challenging and inspiring, and we make it for everyone. In 2016-2017, the NT staged 26 productions and gave 2,585 performances at our home on the South Bank. The NT’s award-winning programme had a UK paying audience of 1.8 million, 400,000 of which were NT Live audiences.

The work the National Theatre produces appeals to the widest possible audiences with new plays, musicals, re-imagined classics and new work for young audiences. The NT’s work is seen in the West End, on tour throughout the UK and internationally, and in collaborations and co-productions with partners across the country. Through NT Live, we broadcast some of the best of British theatre to over 2,000 venues in 60 countries around the world.

Our extensive Learning programme offers talks, events and workshops for people of all ages, and
reaches nationwide through programmes such as Connections, our annual festival of new plays for schools and youth theatres. In 2016-2017 there were 196,826 participations through the NT Learning events programme. Over 3,000 schools have signed up to the free streaming service, *On Demand. In Schools*, since its launch in September 2015.

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