

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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POSTERS COMMISSIONED BY THE MUSEUM FOR THE FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION ON VIEW

Original posters designed by nine artists for the Family Service Association of America will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from April 18 through May 13.

Photography, pen and crayon drawing, watercolor, typography, and graffito (drawing incised on a plaster panel) are used in a variety of ways by the artists to create the posters which will be made available to the 265 family counseling agencies affiliated with the Family Service Association throughout the country. According to Mildred Constantine, Associate Curator who directed the exhibition, the posters differ not only in choice of media, but also according to the individual artist's interpretation of the message.

The artists, selected and commissioned by the Museum for the Family Service Association, were asked to choose one of three fields of activity in which the Family Service Association is interested in using posters: (1) to urge individuals to use the facilities of their local family service agency, which are in general voluntarily supported services through Community Chests or United Funds; (2) to stress the importance to the community as a whole of these agencies; and (3) to aid in recruiting additional social workers. The New York agencies of the Family Service Association are: Brooklyn Bureau of Social Service, Community Service Society, Jewish Family Service, Staten Island Family Service.

The artists who participated in the project are: Bernarda Bryson, Leo Lionni, Noel Martin, Wayne Miller, Costantino Nivola, Robert Andrew Parker, Henry Ries, George Tscherny and Ben-Zion.

Two of the artists depend solely on graphic symbols for their design. Noel Martin's poster is composed entirely of a pattern of question marks and exclamation points with the slogan, "Break a Pattern of Frustration." George Tscherny uses only the slogan, "A Community is PEOPLE Trying to Find Their Way," but the word "people" is repeated over and over again and implies a mass of people jumbled together.

Wayne Miller and Henry Ries, both photographers, use that medium in entirely different ways for their poster designs. Mr. Miller's poster is a larger than life size portrait of a troubled woman. The photograph has been carefully cropped so that the timeless gesture of hands pressing on the head and eyes is emphasized. His slogan is, "Who Can Help Me? - YOU CAN as a Professional Family Counselor. For information on a Career in social work, call....." Mr. Ries, on the other hand, caught a moment of tension in family life, a scene in which the significant details point up

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the various aspects of family problems. In the foreground, sitting in a play pen, is a young child, looking isolated and alone. In the background, seen through the bars of the pen, are the mother and father, despairing, obviously frustrated and divided. It needs no slogan, so simply carries the message, "For Family Counseling, Call:..." and space for the name of the local agency.

Costantino Nivola, the only sculptor in the project, incised his design on plaster. With the slogan, "Build the Family Build the City," Mr. Nivola has composed a cityscape of buildings and people, all intertwined, interdependent in an ingenious design that evokes a happy, cheerful mood. His city is at once buildings, many people and a single family.

Ben-Zion, whose paintings are frequently devoted to Biblical themes, has drawn two figures, one holding an empty box, one crushed by an empty box. The slogan reads: "Don't let your PROBLEMS crush you! for family counseling call..." in an indication that one's problems are not necessarily as heavy as they appear from the outside, and with aid, can be as light as empty boxes.

A detailed watercolor by the young artist Robert Andrew Parker III shows a street corner crowded with hurrying people, with a skyscraper towering above them. "It's Human To Have Troubles," the slogan reads, "for family counseling call..."

Bernarda Bryson's charcoal drawing of two young boys fleeing provides an illustration of a fact, with the slogan, "Delinquency is a Family Problem." Leo Lionni uses an abstract image - a line drawing of part of a man's profile ending in a tangle of lines suggesting a state of mind, with the slogan, "Which Way Out?."

The size of the poster, 30 x 46", was specified and each artist was also required to incorporate space for the phrase that relates the poster to particular localities -- "for family counseling call ..." A list of suggested slogans was given the artists but in every instance they have made up their own. A meeting to discuss the purposes and aims of the Family Service Association was attended by the artists, case workers, family counselors connected with the Family Service Association and members of the Museum staff.

Although the Museum has cooperated with government agencies and private charitable organizations in poster projects, this is the first time it has undertaken a project in the field of family counseling and mental health. Similarly, while posters have been widely utilized in arousing interest and action on problems of physical health, their development in relation to emotional health and personal needs of people is still a largely unexplored area, according to Clark W. Blackburn, General Director of the Family Service Association of America.