



Shepard Fairey is an American artist, graphic designer and activist.

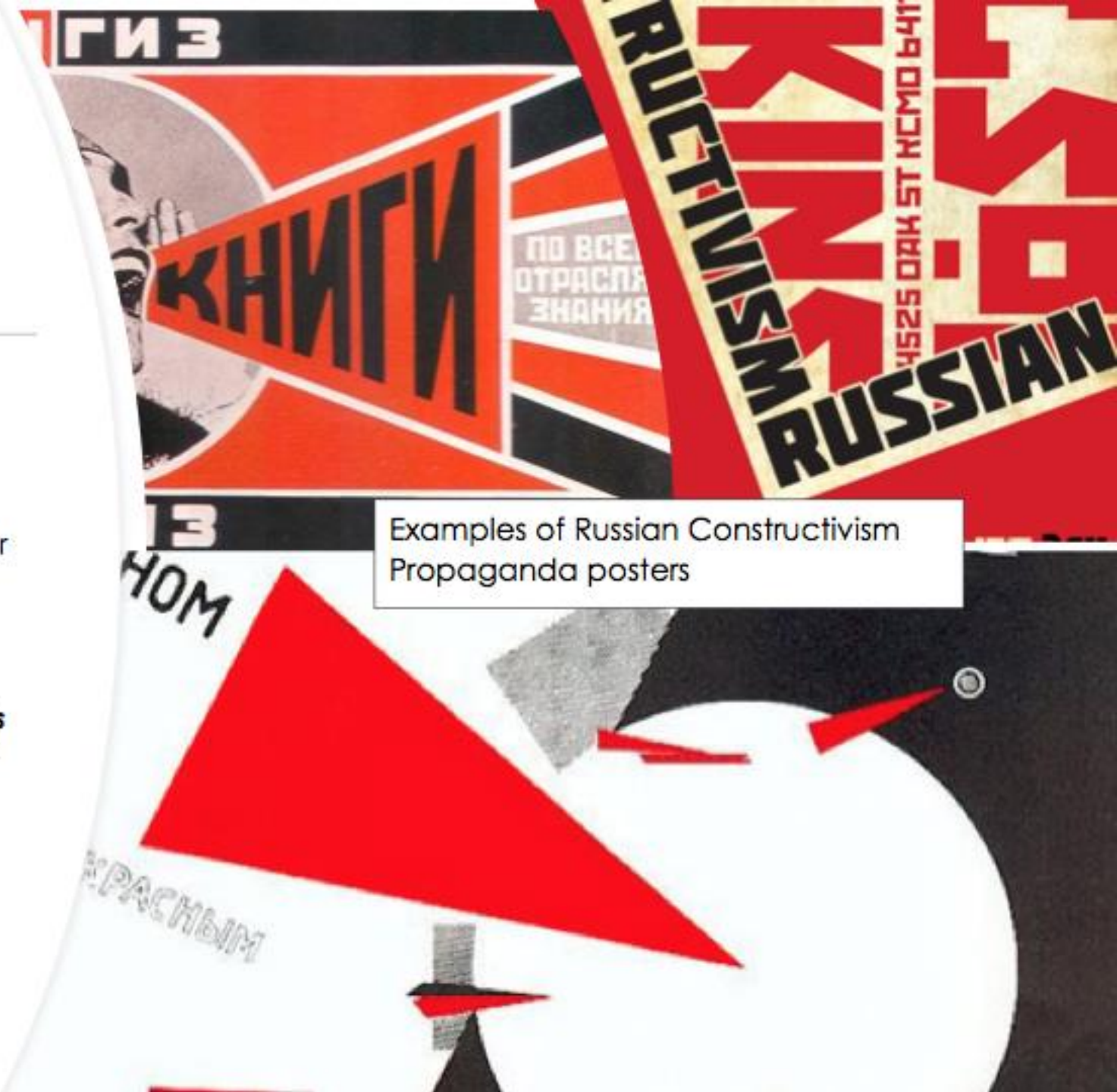
He first gained recognition whilst still a student, creating a sticker and graffiti campaign in 1989. He was into the skateboarding scene in Los Angeles, which resulted in him starting a campaign called OBEY. This later developed into a clothing brand, of the same name, that he founded in 2001.

Fairey became internationally known during the 2008 United States Presidential election for his Obama 'Hope' poster. His work is now included the Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Smithsonian, LA County Museum of Art and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C., among a number of other institutions. He lives and works in Los Angeles.

# SHEPARD FAIREY- Influences

This political edge to his work was inspired by the Russian movement 'Constructivism'. It was an artistic and architectural philosophy that originated in Russia beginning in 1913 by Vladimir Tatlin who wanted 'to construct' art. The movement was in favour of art as a practice for social purposes. It is most famously known for its role in propaganda posters during the Russian Revolution.

*"I love propaganda art from many countries and consider my own work to be propaganda because it's designed to influence people so they see my point of view on issues. Propaganda has a negative connotation because it's usually used to manipulate people into accepting [its message] as the last word on an issue. However, I like to think that my propaganda is the start of a conversation, not the end." Shepard Fairey*



Examples of Russian Constructivism  
Propaganda posters

# The Constructivist Style

The key characteristics of the style:

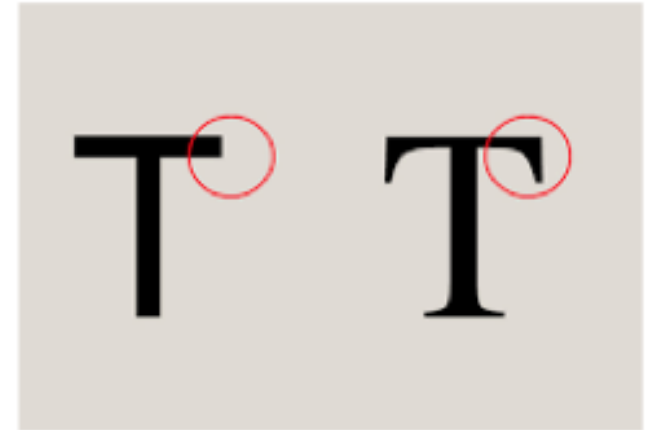
- organisation of abstract, geometric shapes to create 3D forms
- combinations of different sans serif typefaces (typefaces that do not use **serifs**, small lines at the ends of characters) for their visual and formal properties
- simple, flat, symbolic colours
- extensive white space as part of the design
- photography (rather than drawn illustrations) and photomontage

## Where do we see this influence in Fairey's work?

In Fairey's work the constructivist style is evident through his *simplistic, flat and symbolic use of colour*. He also draws heavily on the use of *photographs* as a medium of his politically thought-provoking designs.

Sans Serif

Serif



A serif is the decorative line either end of the letter T above.

Sans Serif (meaning 'without' Serif) do not have these decorative lines – see the letter T to the left and the font I am using in this presentation.

# Influences-

## New York Street Scene- Stencil Graffiti

Graffiti in some countries is seen as vandalism and is therefore illegal. The use of stencils allows the artist to create their artwork/message quickly so as not to get caught.

Stencil art began in New York in the 1970's by John Fekner who was one of the first of the New York Graffiti scene to pioneer stencilling. He stencilled the words 'Wheels over Indian Trails' over a concrete highway.

Stencils are used to create an image that is easily reproduced over and over again.



1979-1990 spray paint  
on concrete

### **Where do we see this influence in Fairey's work?**

Fairey, a street artist himself, has utilised this pioneering stencil style. The simplistic stencil style has become part of his every day practice and processes.

# SHEPARD FAIREY-

## How did he create his designs?

One of the main means of production used by Fairey is the process of **screen printing**.

### A Brief History of the Screen printing Process:

The history of screen printing dates back 1,000 years to China during the Song Dynasty. Very traditional methods of layering images are seen.

It wasn't until the 1910's that printers started experimenting with photo-reactive chemicals forging a more modern and advanced approach to screen printing. Here, it became more of an art form and less of an industrial product.

It wasn't until the 1960s, with the help of **Andy Warhol**, that it became a more widely recognised art form.

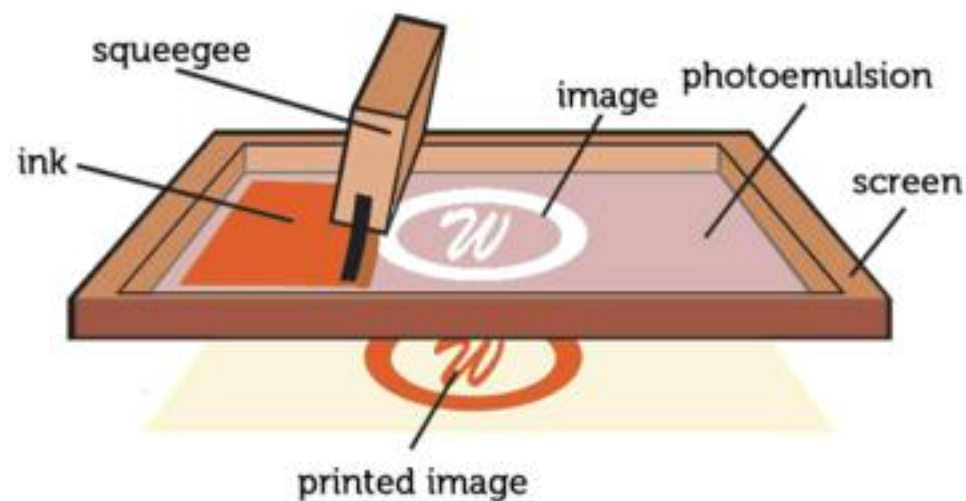


When Warhol began to experiment with screen printing the practice was not a widely used technique. One of Warhol's first screen printed images was one of Marilyn Munroe. Warhol quickly realised that he could produce art, in a systematic manner (like an assembly line of a factory).

These were the first ideas of mass produced art.

Fairey uses these ideas of mass produced art to share his messages with vast audiences.

How the technique works



Do you recognise Warhol's Screen prints?

## Examples of Fairey's work and key characteristics

Bold, flat and symbolic colour

Strong line and stencil style

Political and often controversial



# Task 1

Please use the previous slides and the internet to find the information required to answer these questions. Type straight into this PowerPoint.

Q1. When and where was Shepard Fairey born?

Q2. What is the name of the design school he attended?

Q3. What degree did he receive from design school?

Q4. Which piece of design work brought him global recognition?

Q5. What has Influenced Fairey's style?



Q6. List three characteristics of the Constructivist style.

Q7. Which county first used the process of screen printing?

Q8. Who made screen printing popular?

Q9. Why did graffiti artists use stencils?

Q10. What are the main characteristics of Fairey's style?