



Shepard Fairey

DESIGNER'S FULL NAME: Frank Shepard Fairey

DESIGNER'S PSEUDONYM/NICKNAME: Shepard Fairey

GENDER: Male

YEAR BORN: 1970

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER BORN: United States of America

YEAR DIED:---

COUNTRY IN WHICH DESIGNER DIED:---

RACE | ETHNICITY | RELIGION | POLITICAL ALIGNMENT

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE AFFECTED EITHER THE ARTIST'S LIFE EXPERIENCE OR WORK BECAUSE IT/THEY PROVIDED A CHALLENGE AT THE TIME, PLEASE EXPLAIN.

Fairey's lack of any one religious belief allows him to look at social and political issues from an unbiased place, which plays a massive role in his artwork. His left-leaning political tendencies also inspire much of his work, which often takes a stand against American conservative values.

DID THIS DESIGNER DO NOTABLE WORK IN FIELDS OTHER THAN WHAT WOULD TODAY BE CONSIDERED GRAPHIC DESIGN? EXPLAIN.

Fairey used his artwork (which is essentially free-range graphic design work) to launch the clothing brand Obey, which became a household name and a brand that could be found (and recognized) across the globe.

FOR WHAT IS THIS DESIGNER MOST NOTED? EXPLAIN.

Fairey is most noted for his outspokenness on political and societal issues through his work, as well as his unmistakable style of simplified renderings of common photos, the use of black, white, and red, and typically a jarring text.

IS THERE ANYTHING CONTROVERSIAL ABOUT THIS DESIGNER? EXPLAIN.

Fairey has found himself in controversy on a few occasions. He was quickly noted for using a photo that was not his own for the 2008 Hope poster, which was circulated during Barack Obama's presidential campaign. Fairey was in hot water again in 2015, when the city of Detroit charged him for malicious destruction of property, as they found 18 of Fairey's posters in unsanctioned sites.

EXPLAIN THIS DESIGNER'S EDUCATION/TRAINING, INCLUDING ACADEMIC, APPRENTICESHIPS, AND /OR MENTORSHIPS.

Fairey graduated from the Idyllwild Arts Academy in 1988, and later graduated again in 1992 with a B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design.

DID THIS DESIGNER PROMOTE A SPECIFIC IDEOLOGY IN HIS/HER WORK? EXPLAIN.

Fairey promotes many ideologies depending on each work, however most can fit under the

umbrella of being counter-cultural.

WHY IS THIS DESIGNER VIEWED AS ICONIC IN THE HISTORY OF GRAPHIC DESIGN?

Fairey is viewed as iconic in the history of graphic design because of his unique style and the impact of his work, such as the Hope poster for Barack Obama (which many cite as his most important work).

IS THERE ANY OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KNOW ABOUT THIS DESIGNER?

Fairey was heavily influenced by the skateboarding and punk scenes of the 1980s. These sorts of counter-cultural ideologies are present in many of his works.

YOUR NAME: Richard Crossno

STATE YOUR EDUCATED OPINION OF THIS PERSON AND THE QUALITY/IMPORTANCE OF HIS/HER WORK. EXPLAIN WHAT INFLUENCE - OR LACK OF INFLUENCE - THIS WORK HAS HAD ON YOUR OWN.

Frank Shepard Fairey, or more commonly known as Shepard Fairey, is a popular artist, graphic designer, and owner of Obey clothing. Fairey graduated from the Idyllwild Arts Academy in 1988, and later graduated again with a B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1992. His fame is a bit unusual, as his clothing brand Obey is recognized worldwide, though his artwork and name are typically revered within art and design circles as opposed to mainstream fame. Fairey is most noted for his outspokenness on political and societal issues through his work, as well as his unmistakable style of simplified renderings of common photos, the use of black, white, and red, and typically a jarring text. Fairey often creates his work via stencils and spray paint, though he kick-started his career early by launching a sticker campaign rendered on a computer. He uses many materials and mediums, though stencils and spray paint and digital illustration are his two main mediums. Fairey was heavily influenced by the skateboarding and punk scenes of the 1980s. These sorts of counter-cultural ideologies can be found in nearly all of his work.

I personally believe Fairey's work pushes boundaries. His work has an edge to it, one that is mysterious, dark, and counter-cultural. They are thought-provoking, change inducing, and inspiring to many artists, as well as to those that appreciate art and its surrounding culture. Though the mediums often stay the same for Fairey, the subject matter does not. Often times while viewing his work, one is immediately met with a counter-cultural stance on American politics, war, and a slew of domestic affairs. Other times, his work can seem elegant and without any sort of looming politically based agenda (though this may be the minority of his work).

The importance of Fairey's work is not lost or unnoticed within the American politics it criticizes, nor is it looked over amongst the art community. His work has helped push American liberal ideologies in a variety of ways. Perhaps the best and most direct example of his relevance is his work during the 2008 Barack Obama presidential campaign, where Fairey created the famous Hope poster. The poster depicted a photo of Barack Obama in typical Shepard Fairey fashion, captioned with just a single word, "Hope." This word, hope, became a central idea for the Obama campaign. This sense of hope created within the campaign allowed citizens to see the country in a new light while exiting the republican-led George Bush era.

Fairey's work and his constant pushing of a counter-cultural American political agenda has influenced my personal work rather heavily.

As a result of my appreciation and admiration of his work, much of my own artwork is centered around a similar counter-cultural agenda. I also create stencils and spray paint over them to create my art, much like Fairey. His art has inspired me to think bigger than a simple work of art (generally). After seeing Fairey's work, I immediately wish to create something equally as thought-provoking and abrasive. As long as Shepard Fairey's work is viewed and debated, his influence in the artistic community will never be lost.

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