

PAUL BUTTERFIELD

AND THE QUICK SILVER MESSENGER SERVICE

BLUES BAND

9:00 P.M. FRISAT & SUN. MARCH 25 & 26 & 27

AUDITORIUM

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The roar of a lion that the hippies marvelled at

A few remarks about the iconographic sources of the so-called psychedelic art in the milieu of American graphic artists from the 1964–1968 period*

Justyna Chojnacka

National Museum in Wrocław

General remarks

The subject of this article is an analysis of a poster announcing three rock concerts at the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco on 25–27 March 1966, which is an early image of projects created in the spirit of the so-called psychedelic art. Poster of the project by Wes Wilson and Chet Helms is in, among others, the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art¹ or Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco².

The selected design is an excellent material for analysis due to the elements used in the composition, characteristic of a larger group of objects related to the visual identification of the Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco in the 1965–1968 period.

Graphic works from the period created at that time were catalogued and discussed in terms of the historical background, anecdotes and memories of artists and participants of events, showing the importance of the phenomenon in shaping the history of applied graphics. However, there is no overall view and analysis of these works in line with the methods of art history.

The aim of this work is therefore to indicate and discuss the stylistic features as well as iconographic and cultural sources of the project, which, due to the dominant inscription, is called *Paul Butterfield* in the collectors' milieu. This leads to the identification of a certain tendency that manifests itself in posters and other fleeting prints in

1. Wes Wilson, *Paul Butterfield*, 1966, print on paper, 50 × 35 cm; private collection. Photo: J. Chojnacka



* This article is the first attempt to summarise information regarding sources of the so-called psychedelic art in the milieu of American graphic artists who created the identification of the Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco in the 1964–1968 period.

¹ See the SFOMA website: <https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/95.456> (access date: 10.08.2022).

² See the website: <https://art.famsf.org/wes-wilson/paul-butterfield-paul-butterfield-blues-band-quicksilver-messenger-service-march-25-27> (access date: 10.08.2022).



³ The interview was produced as part of the OzarksWatch Video Magazine program and originally presented by PBS Wisconsin. See **The Krautwerk Channel**, *Interview w[ith] Psychedelic Poster Art Pioneer Wes Wilson, 1937-2020*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stqsgnr-pAg> (access date: 10.08.2022).

⁴ Only the first four posters from the series "The Family Dog" (1966-1968) were created in collaboration between Chet Helms and Wes Wilson.

San Francisco of this period. On the example of this project, I will also highlight the features of three tangent promoting concerts at the Fillmore Auditorium, only those that were created in collaboration with the founder of the group The Family Dog by Chet Helms and the graphic artist Wes Wilson.

The 2000 publication by Eric King, *The Collector's Guide to Psychedelic Rock Concert Posters, Postcards, and Handbills 1965-1973*, which chronologically organizes posters and other fleeting prints, promoting rock concerts in the second half of the 1960s in San Francisco, was helpful in developing the subject.

The catalogue contains images and technical parameters of objects belonging to the most important publishing series from the 1965-1973 period. The works are listed in chronological order – according to the date of issue – from the newest to the oldest, thus providing elementary knowledge for collectors interested in the subject.

In order to analyse the topic, an interesting conversation is between Jim Baker and the author of the poster in question – Wes Wilson – during which the artist discusses his artistic path and points to the collaboration with the founder of The Family Dog³. In terms of in-depth analysis, it was necessary to refer to source materials related to the activities of Bernarr Macfadden, photographs of Native Americans from the late 19th c. and related to the same period, the work of artists belonging to the *Jugendstil* trend, which were presented at the eventful exhibition in Berkley in 1965.

The analysis presented here will be preceded by a historical outline, necessary to define the artistic environment in which the object was created and place it in a group of works that were created in collaboration with two authors⁴. The main part of the text establishes the basic data and discusses the structure of the project, and indicates three iconographic sources from which the compositional elements of the object come from.

Background

The art, described as psychedelic, played a key role in the national counterculture movement and was strongly associated with the musical precedent of *San Francisco Sound*, which sets the timeframe of the style in question.

The visual form of psychedelic art is inextricably linked with music and manifests itself in the form of rock album covers, visualizations accompanying concerts, articles that appeared in independent magazines and finally in posters announcing rock concerts – after all, this form begins and drives the cycle of creation of the aforementioned works.

Artists creating within these art fields have used an eclectic array of themes and elements drawn from fine arts and popular culture

to illustrate the history of the San Francisco bohemian and celebrate its rituals.

It is worth noting that before 1964, San Francisco was not a significant point on the musical map of the United States. Los Angeles was an important centre, where the *surf music* genre was created and developed. However, the atmosphere of San Francisco, its experimental face and the susceptibility of this relatively small ground to creating a unified music scene attracted many young people. The history of the interracial and working-class Haigh district with its characteristic Victorian houses was also important.

The *San Francisco Renaissance* movement, associated with the arrival of many poets and writers to the Bay Area at the end of World War II, seeking the remains of American bohemia, and then *beatnik* writers with Allen Ginsberg or Jack Kerouac at the fore, inspired people to search for freedom in travelling around America.

There were many eager to recreate the stories of the heroes of famous road novels. One of the seekers was Chet Helms – the founder and manager of Big Brother and the Holding Company, who came to San Francisco from Austin, Texas in 1963, recruiting Janis Joplin to the band along the way. Chester Leo Helms (1942–2005) – music promoter in San Francisco who founded The Family Dog Productions in February 1966 to start organizing a series of concerts at the Fillmore Auditorium. Competing with impresario Bill Graham (1931–1991) in this field, Helms soon obtained all the necessary permits to organize events at the Avalon Ballroom, a former dance hall at the corner of Sutter and Van Nuys Street – a more advantageous space to host larger concerts and spectacular light shows.

Helms organized countless concerts and major events in rock history across the Bay Area between 1966 and 1967. The list of artists he has collaborated with is long. To name a few groups: Blood, Sweat & Tears, Buffalo Springfield, The Byrds, The Charlatans, The Doors, Grateful Dead, The Kinks, Love, Lovin' Spoonful, Moby Grape, Quicksilver Messenger Service, The Carlos Santana Blues Band, Steppenwolf, Velvet Underground and many more. To reach as many people as possible, Helms hired a team of graphic designers to design promotional posters and flyers. A small ensemble, with time it became one of the most influential artistic groups.

“The Big Five” composed of Rick Griffin, Alton Kelley, Victor Moscoso, Stanley Mouse, Wes Wilson are five graphic designers associated with the hippie company The Family Dog, who in their works reflected the bold experimentality of the era.

Projects, already in the times in which they were created, were treated as works of art, and the artists had monographic and thematic exhibitions organized for them, discussing the phenomenon of the so-called psychedelic art. One of the first exhibitions of this kind was the *Joint Show*. The exhibition opened on 17 July 1967, at the Moore Gallery in San Francisco presented the works of the so-called “Big



⁵ Concerts took place in the Fillmore Auditorium until July 1968 when Graham moved to Carousel Ballroom and changed its name to Fillmore West. Artists who cooperated with Graham: Wes Wilson, Bonnie MacLean, Stanley Mouse, Alton Kelley, Greg Irons, Lee Conklin, Rick Griffin, Bob Fried, Victor Moscoso, Randy Tuten and David Singer.

⁶ “Neon Rose Series” is the most characteristic series of psychedelic posters from San Francisco. Projects of Victor Moscoso are located in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Library of Congress in Washington.

⁷ Gary Grimshaw (1946–2014) was the first and main artist collaborating with Russ Gibb. After his first experience with the music and culture in Bay Area, he returned to Detroit with the idea to create a similar psychedelic poster scene. Grimshaw travelled regularly between Detroit and San Francisco in the years 1966–1970. He participated in the creation of an independent countercultural magazine “The San Francisco Oracle”.

⁸ The Family Dog have also created posters advertising concerts in Denver, Colorado and Portland, Oregon, as well as prints related to events organized in 1969 and 1970.

Five” from San Francisco and was a kind of manifesto defining the identity and character of this artistic group. Its overriding goal was to mark the presence of the world of counterculture art in the conventional world of high art as unconventional and counterculture.

One of the creators of the “Big Five” was Robert Wesley Wilson (1937–2020), widely regarded as a pioneer of the psychedelic poster promoting rock concerts of the 1960s. In 1968, Wilson received the National Endowment for the Arts award for his contributions to American art.

After designing a series of posters for Chet Helms and Bill Graham, Wilson was quickly made the “father” of the classic psychedelic poster, which was characterized by vivid, bright colours, clear contrasts and an accumulation of elements. The picture seems to be shaking, undulating to the rhythm of the music played by the promoted bands. Information inscriptions are an integral part of the composition.

Artists creating in this spirit broke almost every rule of conventional design, creating works using distorted forms, illegible letters, unusual colour combinations and the use of collage techniques.

Slow read posters

In the mid-1960s, over a period of several years, the four largest and most consistent series of leaflets were created.

A series of posters, postcards and leaflets commissioned by the famous impresario Bill Graham in 1966–1973⁵, a series of Victor Moscoso “Neon Rose” posters, designed for the Matrix club in San Francisco (1966–1968)⁶, a series commissioned by the rock concert promoter Russ Gibb for the Grande Ballroom in Detroit, Michigan (1966–1970)⁷.

The cycle, which was inaugurated by the phenomenon discussed in the article, was a series of numbered posters, leaflets and later also postcards and image tickets of The Family Dog. The series is based on a group of 147 posters that announced the events organized by the Chet Helms group. The concerts were held mainly at Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco in 1966–1968⁸.

The first designs of the “The Family Dog” series were created in collaboration with the group’s founder Chet Helms and graphic artist Wes Wilson: Helms suggested iconographic material, Wilson designed a poster using the proposed material.

Officially, only four posters were created in this configuration, but Helms was to practice this model of work also in later projects. Proposing a specific source was such an uncomfortable practice for Wilson that he decided to resign from cooperation with the band “The Family Dog” and at the same time began working with impresario Bill Graham, who clearly defined his managerial role, and allowed the artists he worked with to act freely.

The first component that Helms proposed to the artist for the *A Tribal Stomp*⁹ project was a photograph by Edward S. Curtis (1868–1952) of the leaders of the Sioux tribe. The shot was included in the study “The North American Indian” (1907–1930) – a 20-volume collection of photographs and texts by this researcher and photographer, documenting Indian tribes in the western United States¹⁰, for the project “King Kong Memorial Dance” from 1966. Helms proposed a photo of a gorilla cut from a weekly type of a magazine from the 1960s, such as “Life” or “Saturday Evening Post”¹¹, and for creating the fourth project “Dirty Old Man”¹², a fragment of an illustration by the Scottish artist John Faed from 1892 to the poem *Tam o’Shanter* by Robert Burns – one of the most famous Scottish poets.

The subject of this article is the third project in the series “The Family Dog”, promoting the concerts of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and Quicksilver Messenger Service bands, who played for three consecutive evenings on 25, 26 and 27 March at the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco.

The object will be analysed with the indication of individual elements of different origins, which as a whole create an extremely coherent composition. First of all, however, it is worth sketching the project, constructing a classic physical description.

The dominant, central element is the torso of a naked man with his hands raised to his forehead. The figure is surrounded by inscriptions, tightly filling the composition arranged in the field of a vertical rectangle. In accordance with the convention typical for a poster, the size of the inscriptions is determined by the hierarchy of information: first of all, the names of the bands performing, the next information is written in successive lines, the date of the concert and the time.

With its apparent bulge, the ribbon with an arrowhead in the lower right corner comes to the fore, taking the shape of an arrow. The name of the concert hall and the address are inscribed in its radius. This is also the place for additional information regarding the fee charged at the entrance, as well as the artist’s signature.

The composition is diversified by two elements placed in the upper corners: on the left a characteristic sign, a specific logotype of the “The Family Dog” group, on the right, to balance the composition, an inscription defining the nature of the event.

Health without drugs

The composition of the poster *Paul Butterflied* is based on a photograph by Bernarr Macfadden (1868–1955), one of the most extravagant figures of the early 20th century. Founder of the “cosmotarianism” religion who dedicated his life devotedly to promoting “physical culture” in the United States. Willing to take a leading role in this area, in 1905, he bought land in Spotswood, New Jersey, with the

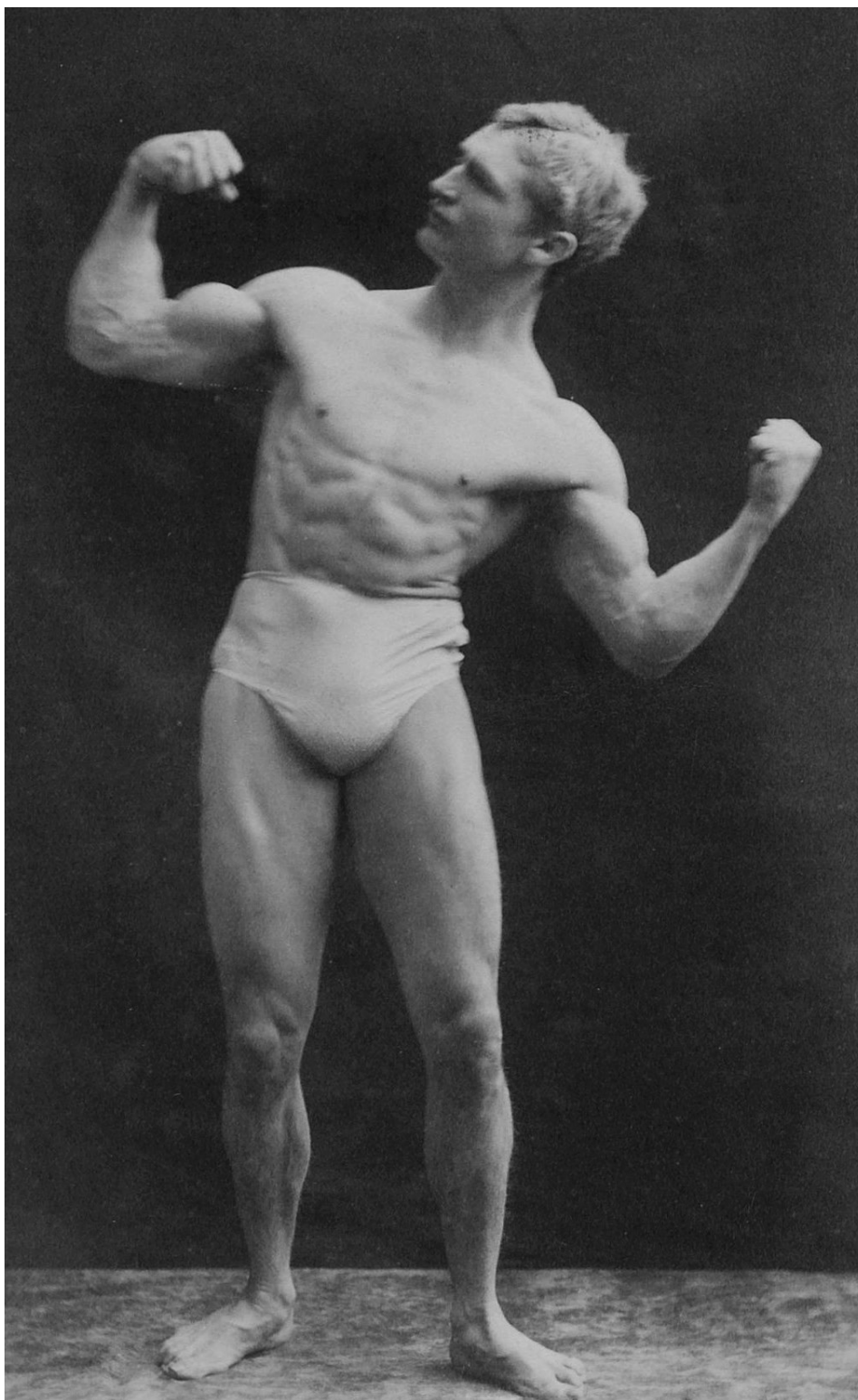


⁹ Poster is located in the collection of Victoria and Albert Museum in London, accession number: E.30–1999. See *A Tribal Stomp. The Family Dog Presents The Jefferson Airplane and Big Brother and the Holding Company*, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O22839/a-trib-al-stomp-the-family-poster-wilson-wes> (access date: 10.08.2022).

¹⁰ The photography is located in the third volume of “The North American Indian” from 1908 where he presented the Indian tribes of Teton Sioux, Yanktonai and Assiniboin. Album is located among others in the collection of Northwestern University Library in Evanston, Illinois. See *Sioux Chiefs*, <https://dc.library.northwestern.edu/items/c21042f3-d9aa-418d-8981-a6f98afbbaa2> (access date: 10.08.2022).

¹¹ There is existing stencil of this poster which is located in the private collection in San Francisco.

¹² Poster is located among others in the collection of Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, accession number: 1974.13.67. See “*Dirty Old Man*”, *Love, Sons of Adam, Charlatans, April 8 & 9, Fillmore Auditorium*, <https://www.famsf.org/artworks/dirty-old-man-love-sons-of-adam-charlatans-april-8-9-fillmore-auditorium> (access date: 24.03.2023).



2. Bernarr Macfadden, before 1918 / TCS 1.2400, Harvard Theatre Collection, Harvard University. Photo: ? https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Harvard_Theatre_Collection_-_Bernarr_Macfadden_TCS_1.2400.jpg (access date: 19.04.2023)

intention of establishing a “Physical Culture City”, where residents could practice a healthy lifestyle, and opened a sanatorium in Battle Creek, Michigan, which offered hydrotherapy, osteopathy, dairy diets and other forms of alternative medicine.

Inspirator of Charles Atlas and Jack LaLanne, in late 1899, founded “Physical Culture Magazine”, which was one of America’s best-known health, weightlifting and physical culture magazines in the early 20th century.

By preaching “*Weakness Is A Crime. Don’t Be A Criminal*”, he urged to fight what he believed to be the most serious aberrations in America: corsets, white bread, doctors, vaccinations, overeating and prudery.

Macfadden presented his techniques in the form of *Building Physical Power* brochures, issued as teaching aids as part of the United Schools of Physical Culture program based at the Flatiron Building in New York.

He was the author of countless articles and books on health and nutrition, and he also founded the long-standing publishing house of Macfadden Publications. In 1911, he published the first edition of *Macfadden’s Encyclopedia of Physical Culture*, an ambitious body collection of health knowledge in five volumes.

In a 1915 book *Vitaly Supreme*, Macfadden offered recommendations for daily habits for wellness and health.

Macfadden’s suggestions contained in the cited volume precisely determine the hours of sleep, meals and walks. The author recommends health-promoting rituals, specific exercises and other activities that should be performed during the day, remembering about the correct position and hydration. He emphasizes the importance of hope, general satisfaction and joy during the day, which can be practiced with a dose of decent laughter after breakfast and before the evening meal.

The text in the book is illustrated with a series of instructional photos. The photo used in Wilson’s project is from chapter 5 of this book: “Straightening and straightening the spine” and shows the tenth figure in a series of exercises:

Place the palm of the right hand across the forehead with the head far back as shown in the illustration, clasping the right wrist with the left hand. Now bring the head far forward, resisting the movement vigorously with the strength of both arms. Continue until tired¹³.



¹³ B. Macfadden, *Vitality Supreme*, New York 1915, p. 52.

Jugendstil

To discuss the typography used in the project, one should refer to the strong fascination of the author and other contemporary artists associated with The Family Dog group. A relevant stimulus for the



¹⁴ The photography is located in the collection of the Royal British Columbia Museum, accession number(s): 193501-001; see the website: <https://search-bcarchives.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/members-of-thompson-river-first-nation> (access date: 10.08.2022)

graphic designers living in San Francisco was the exhibition at the Art Gallery of the University of California, Berkeley in November 1965: *Jugendstil and Expressionism in German Posters*. The compositions presented there, organized with a distinct colour spot, filled with characteristic motifs and non-Euclidean geometry of elements, clearly appealed to visual artists who were searching for and experimenting with drugs popular at the time.

The artists presented at the exhibition included, among others: Ferdinand Andri, Peter Behrens, Hans Christiansen, Fidus, Josef Hoffmann, Ernst Ludwig, Koloman Moser, Jan Toorop or Henry van de Velde.

The German *Jugendstil* was the most eclectic of all the varieties of Art Nouveau, which again inspired American artists years later. Often very literally, they transferred old concepts onto new sheets, wrapping their compositions with characteristic, Art Nouveau ornamentation. The most frequently chosen ones were plant and anthropomorphic motifs.

What delighted young artists the most is the main and most obvious formal principle of this aesthetic. An irregular and dynamically composed line, which took the form of an organic form, drawing plants, a woman's body, the contours of the landscape, waving sea or the course of rivers. It turned out that the words "rhythmic" or "fluid", so popular for the old era, also fit perfectly into the dictionary of visual "psychedelic" artists.

An example that clearly influenced them, both visually and formally, was the calendar attached to the *Ver Sacrum* periodical of the Viennese Secession. The magazine's layout was developed by various artists from the Vienna Secession: Gustav Klimt, Ferdinand Andri, Friedrich König, Emil Orlik, Koloman Moser, Joseph Maria Auentaller – and many others. In addition to colourful woodcuts and decorative borders, the intricately designed characteristic typography of Alfred Roller writhed.

Great Chief

The composition in the upper left corner is joined by a characteristic graphic symbol – a specific business card, attribute or simply the logotype of The Family Dog group [Fig. 3]. The basis for this sign is a photograph of an unknown author, showing the great leader and charismatic chief Emmet Liqueum from Yale¹⁴.

A photographic portrait of the commander Emmet Liqueum of Yale was taken in 1881. The photo shows a man in a cylinder smoking a characteristic ceramic smoking pipe. He was one of the last leaders of the Stó:lō, people then known as the Tait Indians, one of the First Nations group of peoples who inhabited the Fraser Valley and the lower Fraser Canyon in British Columbia, Canada.

He was recorded in the census of 1858, 1878 and 1888. He was therefore a leader in troubled and changing times. British Columbia developed economically thanks to the gold rush on the Fraser river, which attracted over 30,000 prospectors to the almost deserted colony. Veterans of the gold rush prevailing a few years earlier in California came mainly there. Along with the tireless dreamers, many Californian refugees and criminals also arrived. The movement culminated in the Fraser Canyon War, also known as the War of the Fraser River and War of the Miners, fought in the spring and summer of 1858.

Emmit Liqatum has been involved in many of the political, economic, social, cultural and strategic issues that impacted the Fraser Canyon community. He was a key figure in the 19th c. games between newcomers and native British Columbia, who considered him the last Great Chief.

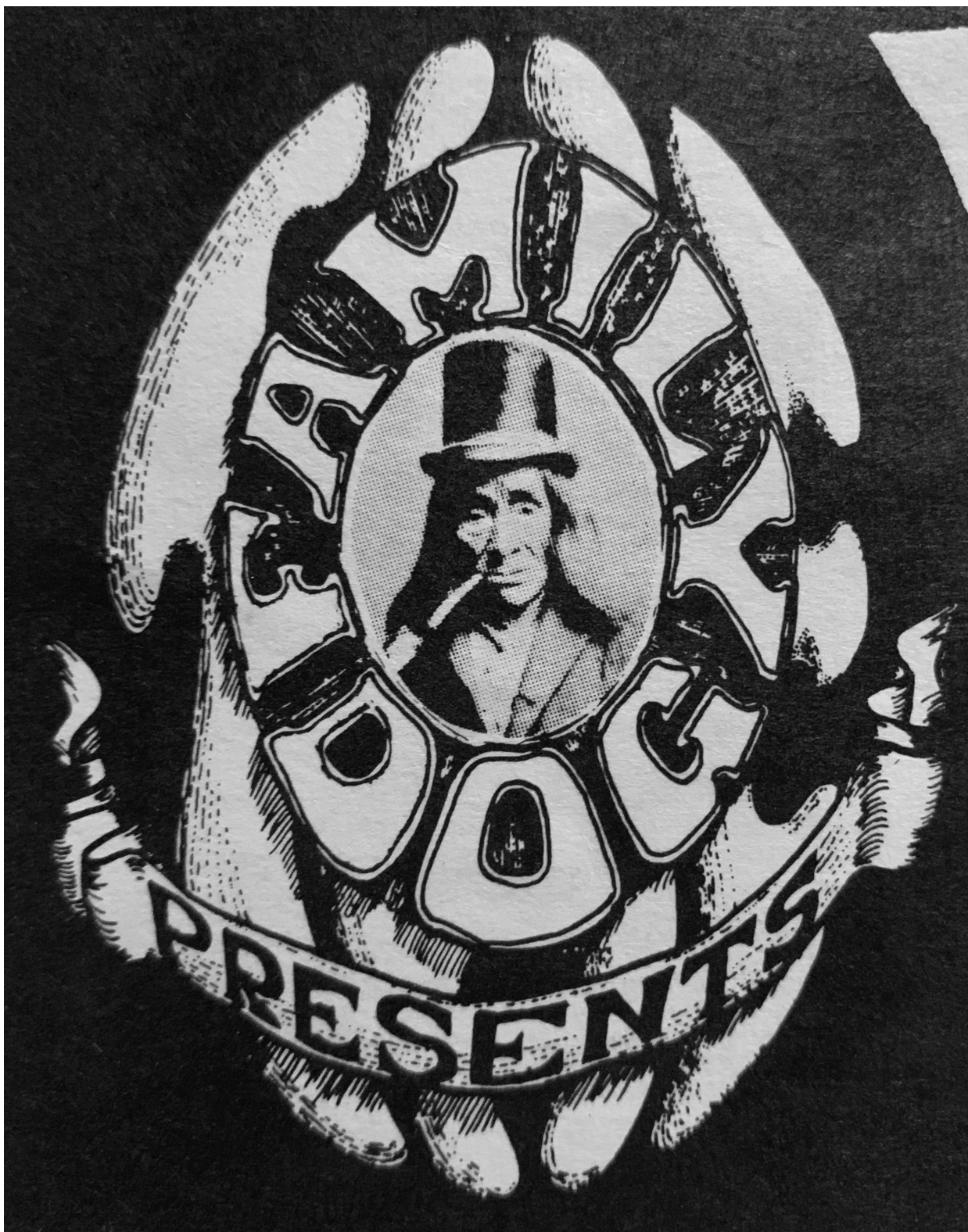
Conclusion

The discussed group of projects is the starting point for a series of posters created in the spirit of the so-called psychedelic art and indicates its origins and defines the direction of evolution in the field of graphics in San Francisco in the second half of the 1960s. These four black and white posters herald what is about to happen a few months later in the field of fleeting prints there – an explosion of colour and fluid forms that will ultimately lead to complex and illegible compositions that are intended only for the “insiders”.

Therefore, focusing on the initial works from the area of the so-called psychedelic art, let's summarize what is the source of inspiration, as well as fragments of cultures we have testimony to in the poster *Paul Butterfield* designed by Wes Wilson and Chet Helms.

The composition is based on a photograph of Bernarr Macfadden, an American eccentric at the beginning of the 20th century. While he was alive, he was a frequent subject of the press and scholars of the subject who almost described him as a charlatan, helper, and quack. The bad fame that he gained made him become a hero of the songs of the past, and almost a decade later, legends were told about him, the humanistic moral of which could be more or less: “a healthy mind in a healthy body”. Experiments with various substances and long-lasting psychedelic jam sessions were supposed to favour the aforementioned development of the counter-culture “spirit”.

For hippies, Bernarr Macfadden could therefore be a clear symbol of health and joy. Associated with a life-affirming attitude and looking for ways to live a happy life. A man who celebrated his 81st birthday by jumping out of a plane in a suit, and which he repeated during his subsequent anniversaries. For promotional purposes, Bernard McFadden changed his name to Bernarr, which was to be associated with the roar of a lion and indicate the strength that can



3. Logotype of The Family Dog group. Photo: J. Chojnacka

be derived from physical culture. It seems that the main reflection related to the promoter of a healthy lifestyle and prophylactic laughing “for health reasons” is related to the joy of life – joy so characteristic of the counterculture in question.

The lettering used in them is an important compositional element of the discussed projects. An important event that made it possible to come into contact with the theme of German Art Nouveau was the exhibition at the Art Gallery of the University of California in Berkeley in November 1965: *Jugendstil and Expressionism in German Posters*, thanks to which young artists could meet, among others, with the world of Art Nouveau.

Studied by artists, Alfred Roller’s font design is an aesthetic that made its way into the San Francisco poster of the late 1960s for good, and graphic designers eagerly used motifs and themes from the works of Koloman Moser, Alfred Roller, Alfons Mucha and other *Jugendstil* artists.

The spirit of German literature accompanying this era also tuned in to the ideology of the counterculture: cults of health, exotic inspirations drawn from the Orient, recurring harmony of the world and Goethe’s mysticism of nature, community of arts, “free love” and other unconventional themes. In America, Art Nouveau actually reached its peak in the early 1920s, i.e. at the time of its collapse in Europe (we can see it, for example, on the facades of office buildings from the 1920s in downtown Manhattan). In the 1960s, Art Nouveau again dominated in its category – applied arts. While in the initial designs of Wes Wilson the font, developed by Alfred Roller, it not yet exploited in this way, in later designs it tightly fills the space of the design with its “swelling” typeface.

Another link is the history of Native Americans with whom members of the counterculture strongly identified. The hippie movement based its ideology on the myth of creation, as well as affinity with Native Americans¹⁵, with whom they shared a sense of cultural alienation from American society and the destiny of beginning to repopulate the earth. The tribal life of the Indians, before the arrival of the white man on the continent, perfectly reflected the harmony and illustrated the vision of the unity of the earth and man as one living organism. The Indian motif appears in psychedelic posters both as a compositional element, such as a photo or motif, but most of all it appears in “The Family Dog” trademark.

The “Paul Butterfield” project is an excellent example of combining different narratives, combining completely different worlds and styles, which the artist surprisingly lightly combines into a coherent whole. It also supports the metaphor of the United States as a multinational melting pot, with the difference that a “psychedelic” melting pot of Native American culture is not excluded¹⁶.

What is also worth noting is that the “The Family Dog” trademark is typical only for a group of objects commissioned by Chet



¹⁵ The complete 8th volume of the “The San Francisco Oracle” (1967) explores the tradition of American Indians.

¹⁶ The original conception of Israel Zangwill’s play *The Melting Pot* from 1908 did not include Native Americans as they were excluded from community due to deviation from European norms.

Helms. Other series, such as *Bill Graham Series* or *Neon Rose* do not have a characteristic mark that would be part of the composition. While in the projects for Helms, the sign was an additional sign, determining the events and giving a specific guarantee of the quality and specific nature of the event, in later years and in other series, there was no need for additional marking. Psychedelic posters were easily recognizable, and the author's narrative within the group allowed for the identification of the artist and facilitated the identification of the promoted place.

Projects, already in the times in which they were created, were treated as works of art, and the artists had monographic and thematic exhibitions organized, discussing the phenomenon of the so-called psychedelic art. Ground-breaking concepts and compositions, embedded in the history of art, have embodied the spirit of the counterculture in graphic images and are one of the boldest and most visually stunning experiments in the history of poster and applied graphics.

Further research on the topic will show the consequences, processes of evolution and the condensation of thoughts of the so-called psychedelic art in applied graphics in the American environment in the second half of the 1960s.

Słowa kluczowe

plakat, sztuka psychodeliczna, Wes Wilson, San Francisco, kontrkultura

Keywords

poster, psychedelic art, Wes Wilson, San Francisco, counterculture

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Justyna Chojnacka, MA, justyna.m.chojnacka@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-9606-9659

She works at the Department of Prints and Drawings at the National Museum in Wrocław. Graduate of the Institute of Art History, University of Wrocław. Her academic interests include Polish and world graphics of the 1960s and 1970s.

Summary

JUSTYNA CHOJNACKA (National Museum in Wrocław) / The roar of a lion that the hippies marvelled at. A few remarks about the iconographic sources of the so-called psychedelic art in the milieu of American graphic artists from the 1964–1968 period

The subject of this article is the analysis of the group of early projects from the series "The Family Dog" (1966–1968) which is the starting point for a series of posters created in the spirit of the so-called psychedelic art and indicates its origins and defines the direction of evolution in the field of graphics in San Francisco in the second half of the 1960s.

The aim is to indicate and discuss the stylistic features as well as iconographic and cultural sources of the model project *Paul Butterfield* designed by Wes Wilson and Chet Helms in 1966. The selected design is an excellent material for analysis due to the elements used in the composition, characteristic of a larger group of objects related to the visual identification of the Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco in the 1965–1968 period.