

## POSTERS - BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN INDIAN THEATRE AND ITS AUDIENCE

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### ABSTRACT

Theatre and theatre posters are the highest form of expressing emotions. These theatre posters are like the unsung heroes but play a very crucial role in giving a feel of the event. These posters not only promote and advertise the plays but if designed well, they work like a good trailer of these plays. They fascinate and mesmerize the audience, and convince everyone with a single design. Visually a poster is the most powerful artefact that is used to attract the public. From the perspective of a designer, teacher, Art student but above all from the perspective of a layman who is a frequent theatre goer, this research is designed to analyse every poster in context to visual elements and aesthetic value created by these elements.

### KEYWORDS

Poster, Theatre, India, Advertising, Elements, Principles, Audience

### INDIAN THEATRE

Theatre is a very pure form of art which is full of various expressions. Each person can relate to the emotions going on in their personal life. It feels like reading a book, where we can hold the book in our hand and at the same time, we can feel the texture while turning every page. The aroma of paper gives a very satisfying and fulfilling experience. Similarly, theatre gives us such a realistic feel.

The birth of Indian Theater happened with Natyashastra which was written by Bharatmuni in 200 BC to 200 AD in which he describe every character of the play such as Nayak, Nayika and Sutradhar etc. Kalidas, Bhavabhuti, Harsha, Shudraka, Bhasa and Asvaghosa have made major contribution in Sanskrit drama. With the arrival of east India company Indian theatre was suddenly exposed to a whole new world of Western theatre. Prasanna Kumar started the 'Hindu Rangmanch' in Kolkata. In 1852-53, the first ever Parsi theatre company was started in Bombay by PostajiPharmji. During the same time, Rabindranath Tagore wrote many plays like Chitrangada, The King of the Dark Chamber, The Post Office and Red Oleander. By 1942, an association of leftist theatre artists called the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) was formed. This association brought together legendary playwrights like Prithviraj Kapoor, UtpalDutt, Mitra, Bijon Bhattacharya, RitwikGhatak, among others. In 1978, Mumbai's most iconic theatre hotspots Prithvi Theatre came into being. Over the course of time, many prominent theatre groups have come up in the country with invaluable contributions to this space.

### THE ROLE OF POSTER IN PROMOTING THEATRE IN INDIA

Poster is the most significant and important part of print media that is used to promote theatre. It is said that no other media can create the recall value, more than a poster. A theatre poster incorporates typography, illustration and photography in a creative method to create a design which attracts and

mesmerizes the audience. The effectiveness of a poster is determined by the way it can subconsciously engage the audience and make them curious enough to attract them to watch the play.

This research is designed to analyse selected posters in context to visual elements and aesthetic value created by these elements. The research involves the methodology of poster creation, from ideation and implementation.

## ANALYSIS

In today's time, in metros and in main cities various established theatre companies are contributing in this field, where the audience is mainly city people. Posters play a very crucial role in promoting events produced by these theatre groups. In this section, Posters from two prominent theatre groups of India will be analysed, from the perspective of elements, principles and other important factors which constitute a poster and present a perfect picture of the event and pull the audience towards the theatre. These vital elements create a positive visual impact for the viewer who reacts to it consciously and most of the time subconsciously.

### SIR SIR SARLA, ANSH THEATRE GROUP, MUMBAI



**Theme:** Sir SirSarla is a Hindi play about a professor and his two students. The play is mainly about various tangled relationships a person has.

**Text:** In this poster, typographical layout is used. The emphasis is mainly on the title of the play. As the play is mainly about three-character, one professor and his two students, that is why 'Sir' is repeated two times. Big and bold slab serif font is used for the title. To make a poster catchy and recognizable from distance, it is very important to give the emphasis on a particular thing between all the elements. In body

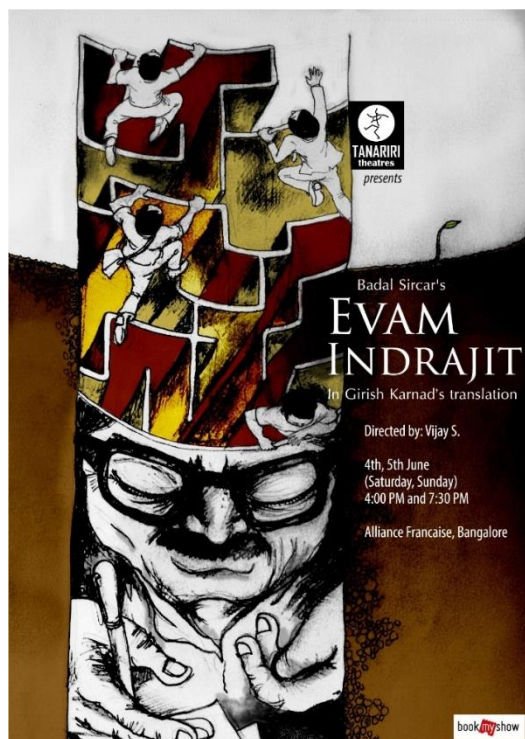
copy only director's name is in bold as he is the captain of the ship, and vice versa for the cast and crew. Despite the font is really big lots of breathing space is present in the poster because there are no other elements or patterns in the background.

**Visual:** In this poster visuals are composed inside the typeface only and the layout is looking united. Main character is SIR so in the word sir very less area is occupied with the visual; the word SIR is clearly visible and readable. Visual is

flowing from top to bottom and that is a sign of proper hierarchy in a design. Focal point is the word SIR and the photograph of the professor. This focal point is very important part of designing and the designer designs the poster in such a way that the viewer sees it first.

**Color Scheme:** Black & white color scheme is used to make the whole poster harmonious. Color is only in the logo of the production company. Being at the corner, it still stands out clearly because there is no color anywhere in the poster.

### EVAM INDRAJIT, TANARIRI THEATRE GROUP, BANGALURU



**Theme:** Evam Indrajit is a 1963 three-act play by Indian dramatist and theater director Badal Sircar. This play revolves around a character named Indrajit. The play is about the futility of life and the roles we all play in society.

**Text:** Text is not emphasized much in this poster only the name of the play is highlighted in a sleek serif font. Serif font is used for the main author, title and the translator of the play. Other copy matter is in gothic style means sans serif. In typography contrast works like wonders. Serif and sans serif fonts together create an identity for themselves and support each other as well.

**Visual:** Visual is left aligned. Illustrative treatment has been given to the visual. In a single visual one can perceive the whole story. In the background there is a illustration of soil and the main character is adjusted in that. The main character is always lost in thoughts and trying to understand the meaning of life and society. So being under the ground it is showing him as being in a hole and under a lot of pressure. On the right side just above the ground, one can see a single leaf starting to bloom. This represents the futility of life and a symbol of hope as well. The visual is like the summary of the play. In the illustration the protagonist is shown in different avatars in a maze, struggling to get out.

**Color Scheme:** Analogous color scheme is used for this poster. Mainly the shades of brown, yellow and Indian red. Illustration is divided into two part the lower part is black & white and the upper part is in color. This is striking the right balance in the design. Main character is in black only just a rough sketch which is a impression of his feeling of incompleteness for himself. The upper background of the poster is white and the maze part can be seen clearly on that.

## CONCLUSION

After reviewing these posters, the findings of this research are that, through a poster the audience can connect directly with all the emotions present in a play. Every element of the poster plays a different role to make it more promising. Whether it is typeface, visual or the color scheme, a slight difference in all these in a poster can create huge difference in its impact. The way these elements are implemented in a poster is also a major factor behind the success of it. Common people do not realize the basics of elements and principles of design but they can simply sense a difference between a good or bad design if a designer does not use the elements properly. As we have seen, an effective design not only conveys the message of the play but also entices the viewer to dwell deep by watching the play. Different methods are used to get this result but the ultimate aim is the same. Poster works like a bridge between audience and the theatre where they go to watch the play. To create regular audience the poster should be authentic, true and should present the real picture of the event or play.

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