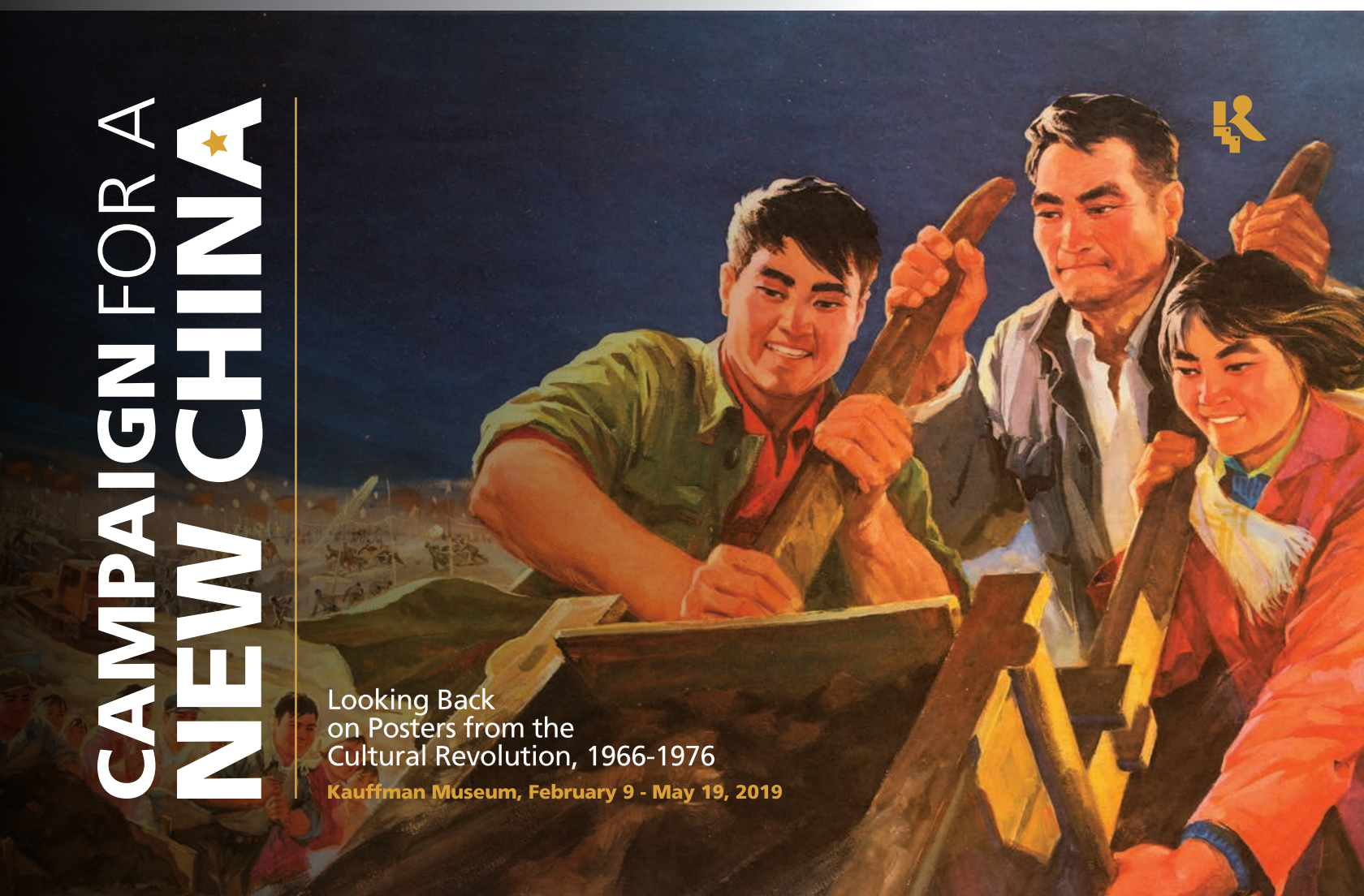


CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW CHINA ★

Looking Back
on Posters from the
Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976

Kauffman Museum, February 9 - May 19, 2019



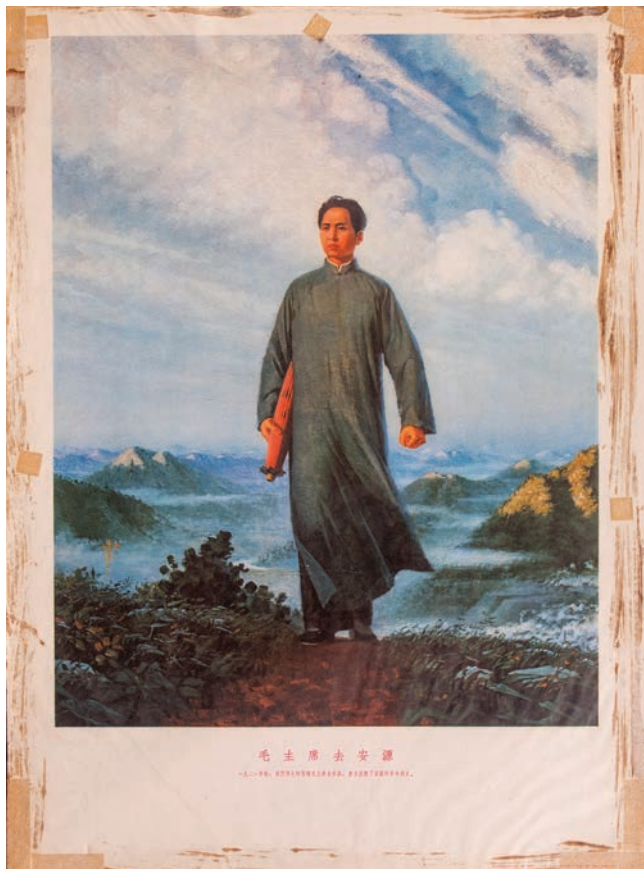
“

Literature and art...operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy...”

Mao Zedong
Talks at the Yan'an Forum, 1942

In 1966, Chinese Communist Party chairman Mao Zedong launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a radical movement to be led by workers and youth to purge the country of corruption, elitism, and capitalist tendencies. Mao believed in the revolutionary potential of art and enlisted artists to promote Communist ideals through paintings and prints, many of which were reproduced and distributed as posters. Plastered on street corners and in schools, shops, factories, and homes, Cultural Revolution posters testify to the comprehensive nature of Mao's campaign by addressing many topics, including rural development, community health, gender equality, and the importance of a true Communist education. All Chinese citizens received and were to learn from these visual messages. Over 50 years later, we look back on a collection of these posters and reconsider the campaign for a New China.

This exhibition, a collaborative venture between Kauffman Museum and Bethel College, features propaganda posters collected by professor Robert Kreider during a people-to-people friendship tour to China in 1976.



OUR GREAT LEADER

Chairman Mao's dominance led to a cult of personality, seen in art, music, theater, and literature of the time. Posters variously depict Mao as a young leader, in solidarity with factory workers and peasants, as model and mentor for young people, and as a wise elder who will guide his nation.

Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan

Mao zhuxi qu Anyuan
Liu Chunhua (1944–)
1968



RE-EDUCATION

Communist leaders focused on destroying the “Four Olds” - old customs, culture, habits, and ideas - and establishing Communist principles to bring about revolutionary change. “Counter-revolutionaries” were sent to the countryside for “re-education” and forced labor. Many of the posters pair images of labor and education, in peaceful, harmonious settings that belie the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution.

Brigade Library

Dadui tushu shi
Zhao Kunhan (1945–)
1975 2nd edition



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Communist Party looked to children and youth as role models for building a new China. Children participated in manual labor, and propaganda messages targeted young, impressionable minds. Children and youth were encouraged to denounce family, friends, neighbors, and teachers if they clung to the old ways of life.

Lead People to Victory

Yin ren ru sheng
Geng Yuemin
1974



SPORTS

Strong and healthy citizens were a metaphor for a strong and healthy society. A healthy lifestyle prepared workers for reaching productivity goals in agriculture and industry, defending the homeland, and working together for national unity. Every individual was expected to join this collective health journey and participate in physical education.

Long Live the Friendship between China and the People's Athletes of the World!

Zhongguo he shijie geguo renmin, yundong yuan zhijian youyi wansui!
Shen Yaoyi (1943–)
1976



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Cultural Revolution prioritized health care by training young people to provide medical services in underserved regions. These health care workers, who also worked alongside their comrades in the fields, were often referred to as “barefoot doctors.” Combining farm work with medical duties exemplified the value of “serving the people.”

Focusing on Healthcare Work in Villages

Ba yiliao weisheng gongzuo de zhongdian fangdao nongcun qu
Huang Kunyuan (1944–)
1969



PEOPLE'S COMMUNES ARE GOOD

Chinese collectivized communes served as hubs from which local politics, economics and industry operated. Workers, organized into brigades, shared tasks of farming, industry and everyday chores. Mao asserted that these collective efforts of hard work and diligence would empower workers and bring prosperity for all.

The Commune's Fish Pond

Gongshe yutang
Dong Zhengyi
1973



WOMEN HOLD UP HALF THE SKY

Communism changed women's roles in China. Communal nurseries and schools enabled women to participate more equally in agricultural and industrial work. Women became more literate and took on positions of leadership within the Communist Party. Change for women was deeply embedded in Mao's charge to destroy old customs and culture, yet the expectations for women to be responsible for house and family remain in the new China.

Actively Participate in Sport Exercise for the Revolution

Jiji canjia tiyu yundong wei geming duanlian shenti
Guangzhou Art Studio
1976 2nd edition



MILITARY

Communist China views soldiers of the People's Liberation Army as the people's heroes. Cultural Revolution campaigns depicted soldiers supporting their communities and families, working cooperatively, and maintaining China's borders. In each context, soldiers are a model of dedication to building and protecting a true communist society.

Continuous Fighting

Lianxu zuozhan
Shang Ding (1954–
1975



INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Mao's foreign policies aimed to build new friendships with those engaged in revolutionary struggle and to solidify China's place of international influence. China actively supported nations engaged in transformational political uprisings and expressed solidarity with disempowered groups around the world.

Nations Want Independence, Ethnicities Want Liberation, People Want Revolution

Guojia yao duli, minzu yao jiefang, renmin yao geming
Fan Yixin (1927–
1973

This gallery guide accompanies the exhibition

Campaign for a New China: Looking Back on Posters from the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976

February 9-May 19, 2019

Kauffman Museum, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas

Text

Rachel Epp Buller, Bethel College associate professor of visual arts and design: lead curator

Elizabeth Friesen Birky, Emma Girton, Renae Stucky: Bethel College student curators

Design

Austin Prouty, Bethel College student designer

Chuck Regier, Kauffman Museum curator of exhibits

Weldon Schloneger, Kauffman Museum photographer

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Cover

***On the Battlefield of Dazhai,
Cadres and Masses Work Together***

Zhantiandoudi xue Dazhai ganbu qunzhong qixin gan
Collectively created by Nanhui Small Group
1976



Kauffman Museum at Bethel College

27th and North Main, North Newton, KS 67117