Poster - Loose talk can cost lives

Object: Poster

Place of origin: United States (made)

Date: 1942 (made)

Artist/Maker: Holmgren, R. John, born 1897 - died 1963 (designer)

British and American Ambulance Corps. (issued by)

Materials and Techniques: Colour lithograph

Credit Line: Gift of the American Friends of the V&A; Gift to the American Friends by Leslie, Judith and Gabri Schreyer and Alice Schreyer Batko

Museum number: E.594-2004

Gallery location: Prints & Drawings Study Room, level C, case Y, shelf 62, box E

Public access description

This American poster uses humour to be inclusive, playing on the idea of the incongruity of Hitler turning up in disguise (here in an ill-fitting suit) in a mundane setting, listening in to private conversations. The serviceman is trying to impress his girl by passing on information that may seem innocent, but Hitler's newspaper reminds the viewer that in war any news might prove fatal if it falls into the hands of the enemy.

Descriptive line

'Loose Talk Can Cost Lives', World War II poster warning against careless talk, depicting a couple overheard by Hitler, by R. John Holmgren, issued by British and American Ambulance Corps., 1942

Physical description

'Loose Talk Can Cost Lives', World War II poster warning against careless talk, depicting a soldier and girl on park bench. The soldier, dressed in a brown army uniform, with peaked cap, has his arm around a blonde woman, as he talks and smiles at her. The woman, dressed in a red skirt and hat, blue blouse, and yellow jacket, appears to look at him in awe. Her gaze is difficult to decipher, and she may be looking towards a third person on the other side of the man, also seated on the bench; a caricature of Hitler. He is wearing an ill-fitting green suit, and a bowler hat, and he holds up a newspaper. His left ear is greatly enlarged, indicating that he is eavesdropping on the young man. The scene is set onto a yellow background.

Below the image, printed in red on a black 'banner' is the slogan, 'Loose Talk Can Cost Lives'.

Dimensions

Height: 50.7 cm, Width: 35.5 cm

Museum number

E.594-2004

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O122402/loose-talk-can-cost-lives-poster-holmgren-r-john/