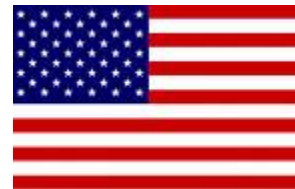


PRESS RELEASE

September 4, 2008



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT INFORMATION: Lawrence Graham Williams III, BA, MFA, PhD. (hon)
Independent Art Historian, Honolulu, Hawaii
info@lgwilliams.com | www.lgwilliams.com/art/Obama_Public_Image_Speaks_Volumes.pdf

Obama's Public Image Speaks Volumes

Images are important; they express ideas and project intent. Even the choice of 'style' reveals hidden truths and revelations. In Modern politics, Lenin, Hitler and Mao all recognized, and thus governed and controlled their populations through subtle image messaging.

Therefore, during this important Presidential Election season, it is important to understand that the public image of Barack Obama in a national campaign poster proclaiming both 'Hope' and 'Progress', in fact, visually promises neither hope or progress. This image doesn't even invoke freedom or democracy.



Rather, the motif for this poster is derived from propaganda posters used during the former Soviet Union. Indeed, Shepard Fairey, 38, recently told *The Los Angeles Times* his Obama portrait "[was inspired by Soviet propaganda posters.](#)" Indeed, Mr. Fairey's fascination and reliance upon Communist imagery and practices are so well known that *Time* called upon the designer to do a portrait of Vladimir Putin.

So, rather than portraying and representing a

future, revolutionary American leader, Obama's 2008 Presidential poster actually conveys, to the learned viewer, an arbitrary red, white and blue façade placed over an old Communist authority. In other words, underlying this familiar face one can also recognize the template of political ruthlessness, suppressed freedoms, and an uncompromising authoritarian. None of these qualities would get a single vote this September except from Anarchists.

Indeed, seeing this Soviet-inspired campaign poster again-and-again at every Obama appearance only reminds me what Obama's 300+ campaign strategists forgot to invite along for the ride: an Al Qaeda Hip-Hop troupe.

This troubling issue raises many questions about Obama's experience, character and judgment.

Style is not the problem, as others have recognized. And, no, neither is competence: in the Photoshop Age, anyone can be a hack or mediocre designer.

History records Thomas Jefferson embracing the design principals of 18th century Neo-Classicism, the most pervasive style in American history. He did so because he *believed* in the style. Jefferson interpreted the Neo-Classic style as a true-to-life, visual and metaphorical embodiment of his highest personal, social and political aspirations.

PRESS RELEASE -- con't.

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Obama's Public Image Speaks Volumes, con't.

What *is* worrisome about Obama's adoption and continued support for the Soviet image is that it gives another clear example of Obama's un-American affiliations. Remember, just last May, Mr. Obama was forced to break with his longtime pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr., after a series of incendiary remarks Wright made about the United States government. Clearly, both un-American issues are the same, except that this new Obama controversy is wrapped in 'visual' rather than 'verbal' terms.

By keeping the inflammatory poster and dumping the pastor, what *is* Obama's message to the American voters? Does Obama *believe* that this communist image speaks to America, and the future of America under President Barack Obama?

On the one hand, these anti-democratic, anti-American "designs" from Fairey come as no surprise. The designer, a career criminal, has repeatedly been labeled in the media as "[not at all unique](#)" and a [chronic plagiarist](#). His rip-off Soviet, Maoist, and Nazi logos are being sold to teenagers and children across America through his clothing line. Last year, a recent Fairey design exhibition was intentionally entitled, *E Pluribus Venom*, itself an impotent and pitiful affront to America's *de facto* motto, *E Pluribus Unum*. Moreover, Mr. Fairey defiantly prompts American's youth towards crime, graffiti and vandalism in his recent book, [The Philosophy of Obey: The Formative Years 1989-2008](#).

On the other hand, at the political level, why did Obama and the DNC give their full support to an admittedly unimaginative, un-American, and

Communist designer and image? What exactly do Obama and The Democratic Party want to convey to the American public with this Cold War icon? Just what future world-view is being conveyed to the trusting, but visually illiterate American public?

Most specifically, just what did Barack Obama have in mind when he wrote to Mr. Fairy and said, "The political messages involved in your work encourages Americans."

Encourages Americans to *what* exactly? To Marxism, Maoism, or Nihilism?!

Barack Obama needs to be held accountable for this deceptive image, while the reality and objectives surrounding this issue are fully examined, explored and explained. The image is still out there, and that is what matters. Everyone needs to call attention to the political and personal ideals that this Obama and Democratic Party poster proudly illustrates: ignorance, injustice and hypocrisy.

#

[LAWRENCE GRAHAM WILLIAMS III](#) received his M.F.A from the University of California, Davis and B.A. from the Kansas City Art Institute. He also holds an honorary Ph.D. from ISSA, Cedar Rapids, IA. Williams has taught art, art history and art appreciation courses at the University of California-Davis, University of Southern California, California College of the Arts, and the University of Hawaii, to name a few. Author of many books and publications on art, art criticism, and poetry, Williams has appeared in Modern Painters, Juxtapoz, Artweek, Art Papers, Village Voice, San Francisco Chronicle, Honolulu Bulletin, Sacramento Bee, LA Weekly, Maui Weekly, SF Weekly, and The Bay Guardian. Williams's recent curatorial projects include Wally Hedrick's, War Room, at San Francisco International Art Fair. Williams's most recent book, Drawing Upon Art: A Workbook for Gardner's Art Through the Ages: (Cengage Publishing), is due out January 2009.

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