
ARTICLES

“Trump: Lord of the Lies” and “White Lies Matter” Posters

3 Limited-Edition Anti-Trump Propaganda Posters

by Mark Fox and Angie Wang

KICKSTARTER | June 15, 2020



Hate destroys a man's sense of values and his objectivity. It causes him to describe the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful, and to confuse the true with the false and the false with the true.

—Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love*, 1963

Lies = Corruption

As of June 1, 2020, [The Washington Post's Fact Checker](#) reports that “President Trump made 19,127 false or misleading claims in 1,226 days.” On April 9, 2020, The Atlantic published “[All the President's Lies About the Coronavirus: An unfinished compendium of Trump's overwhelming dishonesty during a national emergency.](#)” On May 26, 2020, Twitter amended two of President Trump's tweets for the first time with a label suggesting that readers “[Get the facts.](#)”

Why does this matter? Because Donald J. Trump is a vector for corruption—the corruption of truth, certainly, but also the corruption of ethics, oversight, science, expertise, independent thought and, ultimately, the corruption of the electoral process and American democracy. It is alarming that the office of the president

gives every utterance (or tweet) from Donald Trump the imprimatur of the federal government—no matter how ill-informed, divisive, or false.

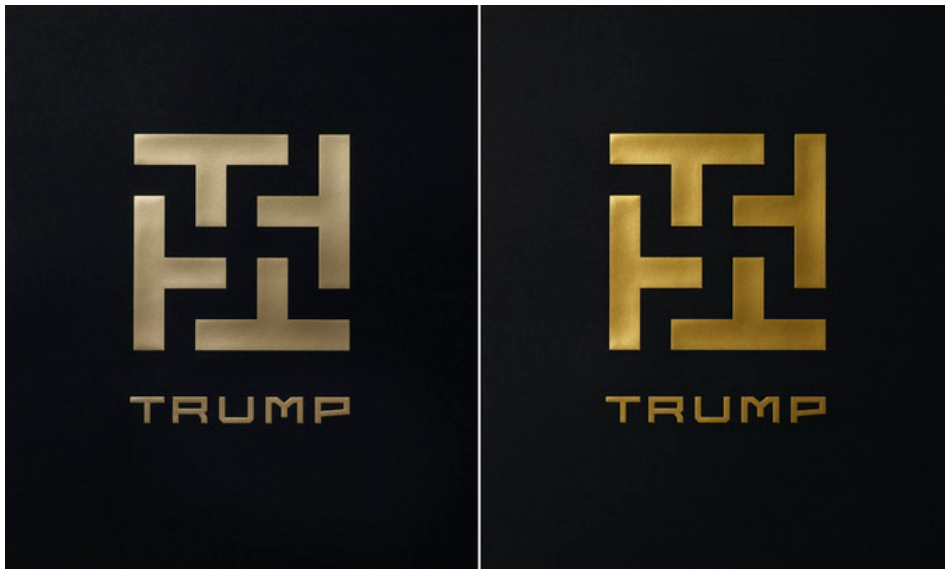
Poster 1: *Trump: Lord of the Lies*



Our design for the poster Trump: Lord of the Lies. The poster will be stamped in two metallic foils and register embossed on heavy black cover stock.

Trump: Lord of the Lies revisits our 2016 poster [Trump 24K Gold-Plated](#) and features the same four whirling letter Ts. This time, however, four flies—agents of pestilence and rot—issue from the central motif. Via platforms like Twitter and Fox News, Trump’s lies are a contagion that spread to the four corners of the earth.

The text “Lord of the Lies” is a reference to William Golding’s 1954 novel and the ancient god Beelzebub, also known as “the lord of the flies” or “the dung-god.” If there is a contemporary embodiment of the dung-god Beelzebub, it is none other than President Donald Trump.



Our 2016 agitprop posters Trump 14K Gold-Plated and Trump 24K Gold-Plated.

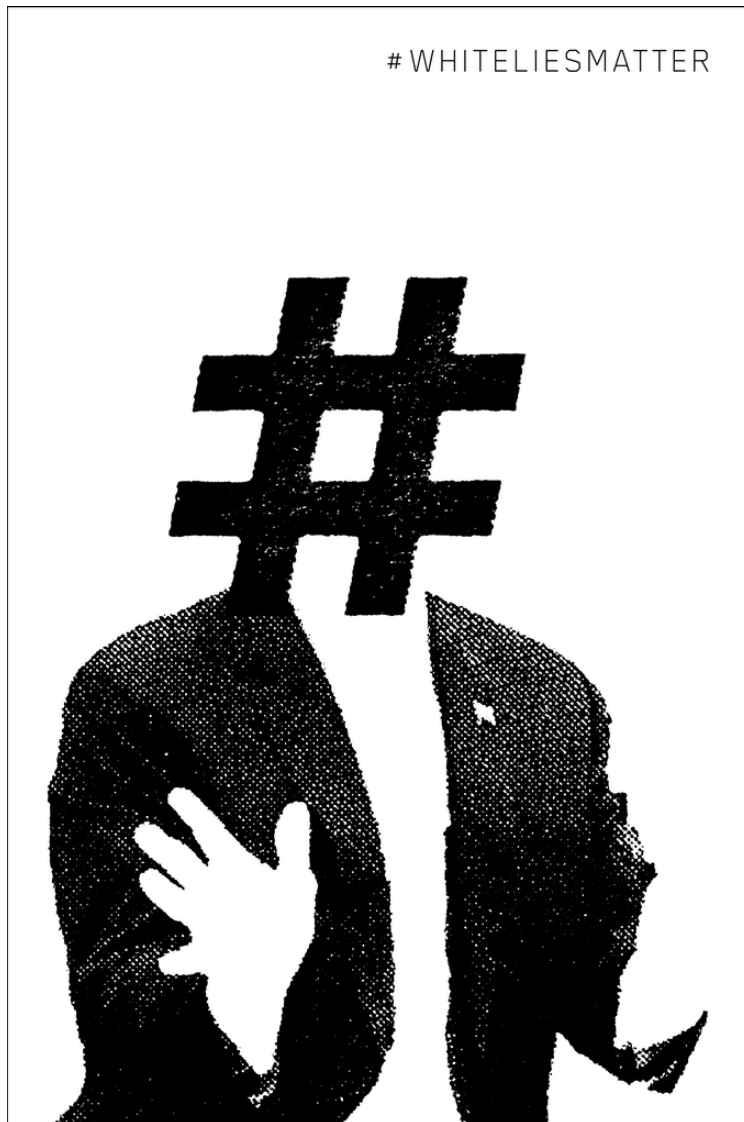
Our 2016 Gold-Plated posters were stamped in gold foil and then register embossed. They are *bling-y*. When we published the posters we wrote, “Let’s be clear: for some Americans, the attractive aspects of Donald Trump’s public persona can obscure his repellent views.” Although Donald Trump is the swamp—and most Americans can smell it—he and his supporters work hard to put a shine on all that corruption. As a result, *Trump: Lord of the Lies* will glint with metallic foils as well.

Posters 2 & 3: *White Lies Matter* Diptych

#WhiteLiesMatter ties President Trump’s propensity to lie about even trivial matters—little white lies—to his race-baiting rhetoric; his “White” lies.

#WhiteLiesMatter is a refutation of “White Lives Matter,” a racist denial of the fundamental truth that “Black Lives Matter.” (“All Lives Matter” is the woolly-headed cousin of “White Lives Matter.”)

Donald Trump’s false equivalency between gun-toting neo-Nazis and anti-fascist protesters in Charlottesville—“very fine people on both sides”—is but one example of a “White” lie. Other racist lies include Trump’s insistence that President Barack Obama was born in Kenya, or that he is a secret Muslim. Trump specializes in racist innuendo and slander: Mexicans are “rapists;” any African-American NFL player—silently protesting police killings of unarmed black men—is a “son of a bitch;” and Covid-19 is “the Chinese virus.”



Our design for #WhiteLiesMatter. The poster will be screen printed in black on heavy white cover stock.

#WhiteLiesMatter reduces Donald Trump to his essence: an empty suit, meaningless gestures, and a narcissistic fixation on projecting an image of power—typically realized by defaming the “other.”

The companion poster features the title *White Lies Matter* set in Swear Smoke, a typeface designed by our friend James Edmondson of OH no Type Company. Like his “White” lies, @realdonaldtrump is a fake—a delusory, vaporous exhalation of hate and fear. The impact of these exhalations, however, are quite real. As James Baldwin writes, “The glorification of one race and the consequent debasement of another—or others—always has been and always will be a recipe for murder.”



Our design for White Lies Matter. The poster will be screen printed in white on heavy black cover stock.

Bearing Witness with Our Work

Joyce Carol Oates has said that “One of the little-understood responsibilities of the artist is to bear witness—in almost a religious sense.” We create this work because we bear witness and, as designers, this is how we choose to bear witness: through design.

We believe in the power of design to condense an idea and fix it in one’s mind. We also believe in the principle of “amplification through simplification”: that as design reduces an idea to its essentials, it can illuminate.



Rhode Island School of Design students bearing witness to the American bombing of Vietnam, c. 1968; and Avram Finkelstein for ACT UP distilling an idea to its essence, 1986.

We designed *Trump: Lord of the Lies* to create a succinct mnemonic for Donald Trump’s corruption. Likewise, the *White Lies Matter* diptych crystallizes Donald Trump’s history of rhetorical flirtations with white supremacists. And after he is voted out of office, this work will add to the body of evidence that many Americans can still tell the difference between what is true, and what is false.

Beyond bearing witness, however, please know that we are committed to using our work to help create a more equitable and just society. After meeting our printing expenses and the related costs of fulfilling our rewards commitments, a limited number of both posters will be available for purchase at [Paper Sirens](#). We will be donating 50% of all future poster sales to the [NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#) and the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#).

The Cultural Impact of Our Work

Since 2016, our most recent agitprop posters—*Trump 24K Gold-Plated* and *Trump (Moloch)*—have been widely collected by museums, primarily in Europe. These include the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A); the Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, Switzerland; the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Netherlands; Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Germany; and the Poster Museum at

Wilanów, Warsaw, Poland. Domestic collections that include one or both of these posters include the Letterform Archive in San Francisco, the Center for the Study of Political Graphics (CSPG) in Los Angeles, and the Milton Glaser Design Study Center and Archives at the School of Visual Arts (SVA) in New York.

Both posters were exhibited in “Protest! Resistance Posters” at the Museum für Gestaltung Zürich in 2018. *Trump 24K Gold-Plated* was included in “Hope to Nope: Graphics and Politics 2008–18” at the Design Museum, London.



Outside Trump World Tower in New York, October 2016; and Trump (Moloch) at the San Francisco March for Science on Earth Day, April 2017.



Trump 24K Gold-Plated on display at the Design Museum, London in 2018.

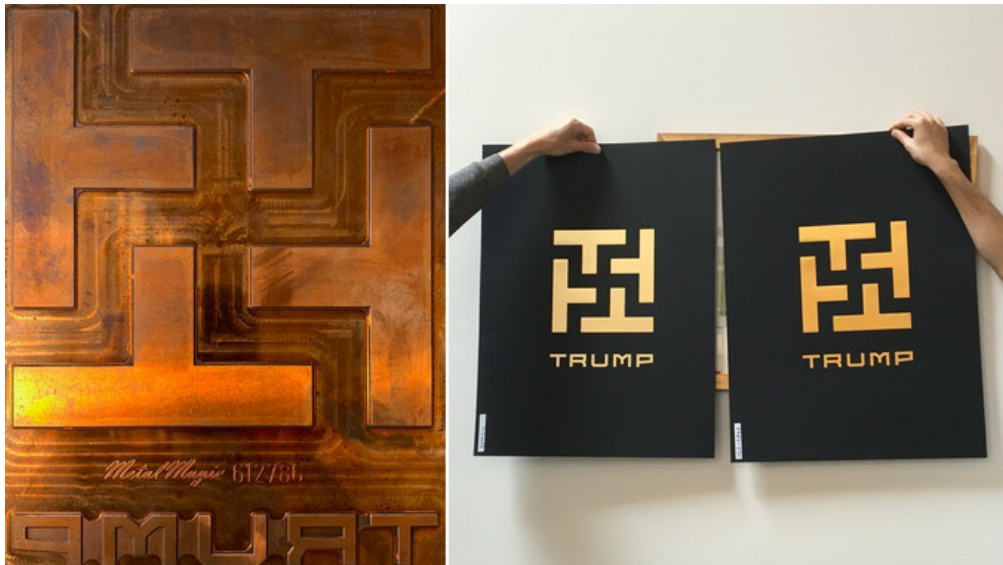
Why are We Kickstarting these Posters?

The last two agitprop posters we designed and published—*Trump 24K Gold-Plated* and *Trump (Moloch)*—we paid for entirely out-of-pocket. Whenever we sold the posters we donated *all* of the money to a range of non-profits, including the ACLU, Planned Parenthood, and EarthJustice. Outlets that sold the posters on our behalf also benefited, including the Center for the Study of Political Graphics (CSPG) in Los Angeles, the independent San Francisco bookstore Christopher’s Books, and our local art supply store ARCH. (We didn’t use any of the money to offset even incidental expenses, like shipping tubes or postage.)

We do not currently have the resources to publish these two new posters without help, which is why we are launching this Kickstarter campaign. If you are able to support this effort with your participation we would be deeply grateful. Regardless, please share this project with your network of friends, colleagues, and fellow activists.

Printing

Trump: Lord of the Lies will be foil stamped in two foils, metallic gold and “bluebottle fly” metallic teal. The image and type will then be embossed to raise the stamped images slightly.



The solid copper die our printer used to foil stamp Trump 14K Gold-Plated and Trump 24K Gold-Plated; and press checking the posters in August 2016.

We will be printing on the same paper we used for *Trump 24K Gold-Plated*, Classic Crest Smooth Epic Black Cover, #130. This is a heavyweight cover stock not normally used for posters—especially agitprop posters. We will also be using the same printer who foil stamped and embossed *Trump 24K Gold-Plated*. The trim size is 18.75 × 22.5".

#*WhiteLiesMatter* will be screen printed in black on Classic Crest Smooth Solar White, 130#; *White Lies Matter* will be screen printed in white on Classic Crest Smooth Epic Black Cover, #130. The trim size of both posters is 24 × 36".

We will keep all funders and supporters up-to-date with the print production process through regular emails. We'll get your mailing address from the survey, so please make sure that information is complete in order to minimize shipping errors.

Risks and challenges

We have a 30-year history of designing for print, including screen printing. (Mark worked for Wasserman Silk Screen Co. in Santa Monica when he was in college.) We are not new to this.

A few details to note:

The screen printed posters will be printed by hand. As a result, occasional imperfections or variations in the printing should be expected.

Although stamped foils and screen printed inks are more durable and less fugitive than those used in offset printing, we do not recommend that you display your posters in direct sunlight—or in excessively damp environments. (No saunas, in other words!) The black paper stock used for *White Lies Matter* will certainly fade over time if the poster is displayed in direct sunlight.

There is always a risk of posters being damaged in the mail, but we are using double-hulled tubes and always roll the posters with tissue and pack them with care. We have used these same tubes to safely ship posters to curators and collectors throughout America and Europe.



Afterword

Summer 2021

Disturbed by the prospect of another four-year term for President Donald Trump, we designed three agitprop posters which we hoped to issue in the summer of 2020: Trump: Lord of the Lies and the diptych #WhiteLiesMatter and White Lies Matter.

We launched a [Kickstarter](#) on June 15, 2020 and successfully funded it three weeks later. 75 backers pledged \$6,881—more money than we sought to raise. In addition to the posters, we produced miniature versions of the art as post-cards and stickers.

Over the summer of 2020 we publicly posted the work around San Francisco. To date the posters have been acquired by Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Museum für Gestaltung Zurich, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), Letterform Archive, and the Merrill C. Berman Collection.