

ART OF DISSENT



Speaker

Themes

- Deception
- Stupidity of the masses
- Power of communication (media)

Before the viewing

- Before the age of mass media and the global village, how did the common people get their information to participate in politics?
- Why, generally, are the masses very easy to mislead?
- Hitler published Mein Kampf in 1925 in which he outlined that Germany would have to be ruled by a dictator who would mobilize the masses with propaganda that appealed to their feelings, not their reason, and aroused their hatred for all other allegedly inferior races, especially Jews. Have things changed since 1925 in terms of manipulating the masses?

Discussion

- How does this work differ from Fick's others in style? Is it earlier or later?
- The masks and two outlines represent the masses. How does Fick create a sense of stupidity with these shapes?
- What tricks is the speaker doing to delude the masses?
- What do you make of the left hand salute? Do you think it alludes to anything? Is there anything of note in the letters A B D H?
- Do you identify with the masks or the speaker? Who are you in relationship to this work?

Activities

- Draw all six masks from the front.
Find examples of African or North American masks that compare with Fick's.
- What is the speaker saying that has the masks astounded? Write a few sentences of his speech.
- Look at "Speaker" and "Homo Sapiens" side by side. List all the parallels you see in the works. Why such a dystopic view of mankind?

Extensions

- The Nazis instigated several degenerate art exhibitions which were set up in such a way as to manipulate the masses and to appeal to their feelings, not their reason. Research the 1937 Entartete Kunst exhibition and the techniques it used.
- The faces on Fick's masks look a little like faces in the works by Breughel or Bosch. Look up these two artists to find parallel faces.
- There is an expression, "You get the politicians you deserve." Find examples in the past and the present where this is true.