

English, Doc 1: Women's Land Army (picture)

This document is a placard, an ad campaign which probably dates back from WWII. It may have been created by an American adman, because the style makes me think of a comic strip. We can ask ourselves why and what this image was created for? At first we'll see the description, then why this image was created and finally the evolution of women in society.

It features a woman in the foreground who is working in the fields, and who is wearing farmer's clothes; a shirt and wide pants. She's standing; in her right hand, she holding her coat, and in her left hand a fork which is used to work. This woman is preparing herself to go to work in the fields which are in the background.

Moreover she seems happy, healthy, clean and not very tired. She looks pleased to go to work. At the top there is a catchphrase "For a healthy, happy job" and in the bottom right-hand corner, the slogan "Join the women's land army". Furthermore she looks like an angel with her little nose, beautiful lips and delicate eyebrows. She also looks determined. This ideal picture gives us the impression that everything is perfect, as if she were in paradise and that nothing wrong will happen, as if for the "land army" nothing could touch them. This woman gives the impression to be invincible.

This campaign was created to attract women to do men's jobs, because in this period during the Second World War, men were fighting at the battlefield; women thus had to do what men weren't capable of doing anymore because they were absent.

However the propaganda poster intends to show women that they are beautiful, strong and independent, they can do anything as well as men. This poster also conveys the pride which women can get from doing the work of a man, and to help their country.

Indeed during the war, women were asked to replace men so that economy could go on. It was called the "war effort". During this period women became emancipated and were not simple housewives anymore. They were considered as men. They had to have several roles at the same time: a mother, a housewife, a worker...; in other words the woman in this picture embodies the new woman with both feminine and masculine traits: on the one hand, the male side with her clothes, working tools, job which requires strength, courage and determination and on the other side the "true" woman who keeps feminine traits; she is fit to be seen with her lipstick, perfect haircut, nail polish and untanned skin? This woman has become independent and emancipated. Women could then make fun of everything and do what they wanted, without being afraid of reprisals; before this period, they were not free. We can link this piece to "Rosie the Riveter" who also embodies independent great women, employed to replace men even in difficult jobs and who also embodies the feminine woman despite her apparent masculinity.

We can see that women in this period were presented as models. Indeed it was thanks to them, that the country could live. The role of women has evolved. And the war was one of the reasons explaining the status of women in today's society.

**Restent à préparer vos questions possibles d'entretien...**

