



Plakat, Union, 1943  
Erscheinungsland: Schweiz  
Gestaltung: Fritz Bühler  
Auftrag: Union, Schweizerische Brikett-Import-  
Gesellschaft, Zürich, CH  
Material/Technik: Lithografie  
127 × 90 cm  
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

Is a coal briquette a subject worthy of depiction? At a time when posters were reproduced in a painstaking lithographic process that required the design to be transferred directly onto the stone, more artistic originals were the rule. That a simple briquette could so prominently take center stage in a poster was conceivable only in the heyday of the object poster.

Fritz Bühler's (1909–1963) glowing red coal briquette appeals to many senses. The poster is not just a striking visual experience, especially if it is imagined as seen on a gray wintertime street; when looking at it, you can almost feel the heat on your skin and hear the crackling of the briquette in the fire. In the 1940s, the so-called object poster advanced to unique prominence in Switzerland, triggered by the rapid economic recovery and rise of an affluent society in a country that had escaped the ravages of war. In the object poster, everyday objects were depicted close-up with painstaking realism, taking on a palpably material and sculptural quality that imbued them with an alluring sensuality and often surreal magic. Depicted in this way, these things also promised a brighter future, a more pleasant way of life. A warm room was

not something to be taken for granted in times of war. Even in the postwar period, coal was still being used for heating, and Switzerland relied on Germany for its supply. Union-Briketts, created through the collaboration of different Rhenish briquette works that dated back to the late nineteenth century, dominated the market. After the war, Switzerland gradually switched to gas heating. Less suggestive than Bühler's poster focusing entirely on the briquette is another one he realized for Union-Briketts in 1949 in collaboration with Ruodi Barth (1921–1999), who trained in Bühler's studio. (Bettina Richter)

<https://www.eguide.ch/en/objekt/union/>