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- 1 Plakat, United Colors of Benetton., 1992, diverse Länder, Gestaltung: Oliviero Toscani, Fotografie: Lucinda Devlin. Abbildung: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK.
- 2 Plakat, United Colors of Benetton., 1992, diverse Länder, Gestaltung: Oliviero Toscani, Fotografie: Franco Zecchin. Abbildung: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK.

With his polarizing Benetton campaigns, Oliviero Toscani (b. 1942) demonstrated that even in the field of commercial advertising a new pictorial rhetoric is capable of drawing attention. The photograph of a truck filled with refugees was a vehement cry in the midst of a consumerist public, raising awareness of a completely different reality.

The toddler dangling helplessly in the air transfixes the gaze. Some of the refugees are already on the truck, others trying to scale its sides. A throng of people carrying only the bare necessities completely surround the truck. But the reason why they are in flight is not the subject here. The longstanding *United Colors of Benetton* campaign started with innocuous images of children from around the world. But Oliviero Toscani increasingly radicalized his pictorial message. In the 1990s, he began to show select reportage photos of present-day global sociopolitical events. People's inevitable encounter with these images on city streets was designed to provoke. Luciano Benetton devised this marketing strategy together with Toscani, thus raising the question of whether it is legitimate to combine business with social responsibility through advertising means.

This is a question that is even more pressing today, when there is so much talk of corporate social responsibility, but the issues are rarely aired in public. The photograph Toscani chose for this poster, and one of an overloaded refugee ship on a Benetton poster from the same year, reveal that, even a quarter of a century later, these images have lost nothing of their topicality. Although somewhat disillusioned these days, Toscani continues to call on companies to use their immense advertising budgets to draw public attention to urgent social and political issues. (Bettina Richter)

Plakat, United Colors of Benetton., 1992
Erscheinungsort: diverse Länder
Gestaltung: Oliviero Toscani
Fotografie: Patrick Robert
Auftrag: Benetton Group S.p.A., Ponzano Veneto, IT
Material/Technik: Offsetdruck
30 x 42 cm
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

<https://www.eguide.ch/en/objekt/united-colors-of-benetton/>