



Someone is missing.



A MARTIN SCORSESE PICTURE
LEONARDO DICAPRIO
SHUTTER ISLAND

PRODUCED BY MIKE MEDAVOY ARNOLD W. MESSER BRADLEY J. FISCHER MARTIN SCORSESE BASED ON THE NOVEL BY DENNIS LEHANE
PHOENIX SIKELIA APPIAN WAY SCREENPLAY BY LAETA KALOGRIDIS DIRECTED BY MARTIN SCORSESE
ShutterIsland.com

OCTOBER



This text is the theatrical poster for the 2010 motion picture *Shutter Island*, directed by the legendary Martin Scorsese and starring Leonardo DiCaprio. This image would be most commonly seen in newspaper advertisements and in the foyers of cinemas, where it would be large and glossy. The purpose of this poster is to encourage people to buy a ticket to see this film in the cinema. To achieve this purpose, this text uses a variety of techniques to tell a potential audience specific things about this film.

The creator of this text has used a variety of techniques to tell us that there is a mystery at the heart of this film. First, there is the tag line, "someone is missing." The word "missing" immediately suggests a mystery. Adding to this, the use of the indefinite pronoun "someone" raises a question: who is missing? Second, the creator of this poster gives us further reason to understand that this is a mystery. The image of a character holding a lit match - as though to find his way in a darkened room - suggests to us that he is searching for something, something hard to find. These elements are included for two purposes. The first is simply to tell a potential customer what type of film; it is clearly a mystery of some sort. The second likely reason is to arouse curiosity in the potential customer about the solution to this mystery. If this curiosity drives people to see this film, then this text will have fulfilled its purpose: to sell tickets.

The creator of this film also uses the composition and placement of images to tell us more about the focus of this motion picture. This text consists of two major images: a close up of Leonardo DiCaprio's face and a collage of images showing gothic-looking building on a rocky island. First, these images are roughly the same in size. This tells us that the both are important elements in this motion picture. The creator of this text only shows us one person: DiCaprio, so clearly the film is largely about his character. Nevertheless, his image has to share the focus with the building on the island, so it is central to this story. So far from this the elements presented to us by the creator of this poster, we can tell that this is a mystery about both a central character and this creepy-looking island.

The creator of the poster gives us further information about the world presented in this film by presenting the building on the island as a series of small, not-quite-connecting pieces. This rough collage distorts the building and throws its elements grotesquely off kilter. It hints that something is fractured. Perhaps this building is an insane asylum, a home for people with fractured realities. Alternatively, perhaps there are competing or separate realities in this story. Either way, the message about something being fractured or uncertain will drive the potential viewers' curiosity and deepen the mystery. This further serves the purpose of this text: to selling tickets to this mysterious, fractured film.

The creator of this poster provides us with more visual cues about this film. In particular, the darkened, rocky island is being pounded by waves and surrounded by rough waters. Even in the darkness, we can see the white tops to the waves. This suggests emotional as well as aquatic turbulence. Perhaps the turbulence is in the central character, played by Leonardo DiCaprio; his expression on this poster is one of concern and vigilance. Perhaps there is a greater turbulence in the world. Either way, the creator of this poster uses the combination of the choppy water and the actor's expression to tell us that this film will be a rocky ride, an idea what might appeal to certain moviegoers and entice them to buy a ticket.



Last, the colour palate of this poster is designed to suggest both darkness and danger. Both DiCaprio and the institution are surrounded by murky darkness. This adds to the mystery – much is unseen and unknown – and tells us that the tone of this story is dark, too. It is highly unlikely that this will be a story of lollypops and sunshine. The other colour the designer presents to us is red, both in the words of the title and the flame of the lit match. This is the red of warnings, the same hue used in stop signs and warning signs. This tells us that there is danger in this dark, fractured, mysterious film. Again, these elements will appeal to certain moviegoers with cash to spend.

The theatrical poster for the eighty-million-dollar, Martin Scorsese film Shutter Island is constructed in a way that tells us a great deal about the film. Through the choice of words, the choice of colours and the composition, we are told that this is a mysterious, dark, fractured and dangerous film. The purpose of this message is clear: to appeal to particular potential viewers and get them to spend \$15 to see this film in the cinema.

