

BETWEEN ART DECO AND MODERNISM

Polish Posters from 1918 to 1939

From the collection of the Poster Museum at Wilanów

In collaboration with the Polish Institute New Delhi

11th October – 23rd October 2018



Tadeusz Gronowski (1894-1990), Radion washes itself, Date: 1926

Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum, in collaboration with the Polish Institute New Delhi, and the Poster Museum at Wilanów, Warsaw, presents, 'Between Art Deco and Modernism: Polish Posters from 1918 to 1939' from the collection of the Poster Museum at Wilanów. The exhibition will be on view at the Special Project Space, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum from 11 October to 23 October 2018.

About the Exhibition

Since the late 19th – early 20th century, poster design has been recognised in the Polish artistic tradition as a source of national pride. In its early stages, posters executed in Poland and in surrounding countries were very similar and comparable in form. This was because artists and craftsmen were compelled to produce artworks according to popular trends. The use of traditional elements in early posters made them more like pictures or illustrations rather than conventional graphic compositions. This was the popular style, perceived as efficient publicity for goods in the market. Even prominent artists, educated in the academic tradition, had made many significant contributions to the popular and the so-called democratic art of the poster. During the 1920s, when the poster was becoming defined as an independent art form, an interest in folk art patterns emerged, visible in figuration and vivid colouring. Later, in the 1930s, this use of native folklore as a source of innovation served to form a Polish national style.

Poster design was considered a driving force of artistic progress as it brought together architecture, painting and sculpture with artistic design. Artists were not limited to the creation of unique pieces; they were also able to use mass production to present common symbols and aesthetics of the times into their work. It was precisely this ability to blend both the new and the existing that brought Polish artists to a level of international recognition for their modern stylisation and interpretation of folklore at the Paris exposition of Decorative Art in 1925.

In addition to references to folk art, a modernistic orientation, open to impulses from the outside, also appeared and was best expressed by students at the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute. They achieved great success in another important exhibition titled ‘Art and Technology in Modern Art’, held in Paris in 1937. The high awards received by them were recognition of the unique qualities of Polish posters as being highly conceptual, with rationality and clarity of composition.

The two distinct approaches, traditionalism and modernism, complemented each other and were often combined in a manner which allowed for individual expression. It was this harmonious synthesis that best defined Polish poster art in the period between the wars. Towards the end of this period, a distinct ‘Polish’ style emerged.

The outbreak of World War II suspended all stylistic development of the Polish poster as an art, rupturing tradition and slowing creative development. Post-war Poland exposed artists to increasing ideological pressure. Commercial advertising, once a mainstay for poster designers, was removed from all aspects of public life since it facilitated what was newly defined as a degenerate form of

consumerism, unwanted in the idyllic realm of Social Realism. The natural evolution of poster art was diverted when the function of the poster was changed to total propaganda. It is in this form that the Polish poster continued unrecognised for nearly half a century during the era of the People's Republic of Poland.

At the same time, there emerged opposition in the field of artistic form and style, giving rise to the famous Polish School of Posters in the 1950s. Art critics spoke about the refined poetics, painterly form and the visionary character of Polish movie posters from the 50s and early 60s, which were distinct from art of the period.

Mariusz Knorowski

Chief Curator of the Poster Museum at Wilanów

Outreach

Engaging participatory experiences are the focus of the Museum's vibrant education programme. As one of Mumbai's busiest, public cultural spaces, the Museum offers targeted opportunities to a diverse range of audience groups to engage with the city's historic legacies, contemporary art practices, and craft traditions. In conjunction with this exhibition, the Museum will organise special tours, workshops and events curated around the collection on display open to the public. Free public tours of the exhibition will be conducted every weekend in English, Hindi and Marathi. We also offer programming for school and college groups on request.

About The Polish Institute, New Delhi

The Polish Institute is part of the Polish diplomatic mission to India with the aim of promoting and fostering an understanding of Poland's culture throughout the country in a spirit of mutual cooperation. Based in Delhi, the Institute develops events and cultural programming in the genres of the visual arts, film, theatre, music and literature in collaboration with established Indian cultural organisations.

For more information on Polish Institute, please visit:

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/PolishInstituteNewDelhi

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/PLCultureDelhi; E-mail: delhi@instytutpolski.org

WEBSITE: <http://polishinstitute.in/>

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About Poster Museum, Wilanów

Opened in 1968, the Poster Museum, boasts of one of the largest poster collections in the world and is situated in the Wilanów Palace complex, the residence of King Jan III Sobieski. In 1983 the Poster Museum was the recipient of the prestigious Ernst Litfass medal of honour, awarded by Fachverband Aussenwerbung e.V. (FAW) in Düsseldorf. The Museum's archives hold over 62 thousand artistic, advertising and propaganda prints from all over the world. It includes treasured works by artists Stanisław Wyspiański, Józef Mehoffer and Tadeusz Gronowski and from the Polish School of Poster Art. It also holds many unique prints by artists Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Peter Max, Andy Warhol.

The Poster Museum is closely connected to the International Poster Biennale in Warsaw, the first competition devoted to poster design. Ever since, the Museum has held exhibitions for the winners of the competition and is a forum for exchange of information and opinions. The Museum has also held 16 editions of the Polish Poster Salon exhibition, the largest review of contemporary Polish poster art.

The Poster Museum is one of the most dynamic branches of the National Museum in Warsaw. Since its inception, the staff of the Wilanów Museum have organized nearly 400 exhibitions devoted to poster art. The Museum's Documentation Department systematically collects information on the work of leading designers, and exhibitions of other cultural institutions. The Museum also houses a modern conservation workshop, in which works on paper are subjected to specialized restoration and reconstructive treatments.

Poster Museum at Wilanów

Division of the National Museum in Warsaw

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02-958 Warszawa/ Poland

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www.postermuseum.pl

About the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum

The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum opened to the public in 1857 and is Mumbai's oldest museum. It is the erstwhile Victoria and Albert Museum, Bombay, that showcases the city's art and culture through a rare collection of fine and decorative arts that highlight early Modern Art practices as well as the craftsmanship of various communities of the Bombay Presidency.

The Museum was in a derelict condition and underwent a comprehensive five-year restoration by INTACH supported by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai and the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation. The project won UNESCO's international Award of Excellence for cultural conservation in 2005. The Museum re-opened in 2008 with an extensive exhibition programme and is committed to promoting contemporary art and culture.

The Museum hosts an extensive exhibitions programme, which explores the importance of the collection and includes a strong focus on contemporary art and culture. The Museum has partnered with several international institutions to showcase artists and exhibitions including the Victoria and Albert Museum, British Library, Solomon R Guggenheim Museum and Museum of Modern Art in an effort to facilitate international cultural exchange.

The Museum's education and outreach programme aims to build and diversify the Museum's audiences. On offer is a rich selection of programmes including film, music and courses and lectures on history of art focused on providing stimulating, participatory experiences that respond to different age, interest and language groups, and recognize a diversity of backgrounds. These experiences are aimed at encouraging critical engagement with Mumbai's history, art and cultural developments.

For more information on Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum, please visit:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BDLMuseum

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BDLMuseum>

Website: www.bdlmuseum.org

E-mail: enquiry@bdlmuseum.org

Telephone: +91 22 23731234

For Listings

Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum, in collaboration with the Polish Institute New Delhi, presents, **‘Between Art Deco and Modernism: Polish Posters from 1918 to 1939’** from the collection of the Poster Museum at Wilanów.

11 October to 23 October 2018.

Exhibition Venue:

Special Project Space

Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum

91A Rani Baug, Veer Mata Jijabai Bhonsle Udyan

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marg,

Byculla East, Mumbai 400027

Timings:

10:00 am to 6:00 pm | last entry 5:30 pm

Closed on Wednesdays and certain public holidays

For outreach and press enquiries, please contact

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