



Alphonse Mucha: The Spirit of Art Nouveau

By Victor Arwas, Jana Brabcová-Orlíková, Anna Dvorská

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Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939) was one of the most important decorative artists working in Paris at the turn of the century. His distinctive and original posters and his decorative panels in *le style Mucha* became almost synonymous with French Art Nouveau. The admirer and iconographer of Sarah Bernhardt, he was also well known as the creator of familiar advertisements and as a book illustrator. Yet there was much more to Mucha's achievement than this. At the height of his career as a decorative artist, he became convinced that art should serve ideas, he became chief artistic and cultural adviser to the interwar Czech government, and he completed a major and controversial fresco cycle, the *Slav Epic*, as well as portraits and large symbolic paintings.

This book—the first full-scale treatment of Mucha's entire oeuvre—includes discussions and reproductions of paintings, posters, *panneaux decoratifs*, pastels, drawings, and illustrations from throughout his career. In addition, the authors provide essays on Mucha's Paris years; his association with Sarah Bernhardt; the importance of American patronage on his later work; his graphic and painterly techniques; and the problems connected with the conservation of the large canvases.

This lavishly illustrated book is the catalogue for an exhibition of Mucha's work that will tour the United States, beginning in San Diego in 1998.

Published in association with Art Services International, Washington, D.C.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Alphonse Mucha (1890-1939) was one of the most important decorative artists in Paris at the turn of the century. His sensual female portraits with their elaborate borders?le style Mucha?embody the essence of Art Nouveau. The Mucha family and the Mucha Foundation have put together a touring exhibition of Mucha's work, and this is the companion volume. Though numerous works on Mucha have appeared in the past few decades, none have been as exhaustive as this illustrated group of essays by noted European experts. The full-scale treatment covers paintings, decorative panels, pastels, drawings, photographs, jewelry, and advertisements as well as numerous book and magazine illustrations. The essays elucidate Mucha's political activities in Czechoslovakia, which spawned the enormous murals "The Slav Epic"; his association with the actress Sarah Bernhardt; and the impact of American patronage on his later work. This lavish homage may prove to be the most important study of an amazing and prolific artist. Highly recommended. ?Joseph C.

Hewgley, Nashville P.L., Antioch

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About the Author

Victor Arwas is director of *Editions Graphiques*. **Jana A. Brabcova** is former chief curator of prints and drawings at the National Gallery of Prague. **Jean-Marie Bruson** is conservator at the Musee Carnavalet. **Anna Dvorak** is librarian at the North Carolina Museum of Art. **Jack Rennert** is president of Posters Please, Inc.

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