

ALPHONSE MUCHA

MUSÉE DU LUXEMBOURG

FROM 12 SEPTEMBER 2018 TO 27 JANUARY 2019

Born in 1860 in the small town of *Ivančice*, Alphonse Mucha became famous in 1895 in Paris, with *Gismonda*, his first poster for Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923), the greatest actress of the time. As a poster artist, Mucha developed a very personal style, the "Mucha style", characterised by sinuous forms mixing young women, floral motifs and ornamental lines, as well as a subtle range of pastel shades. This style would soon embody the movement emerging at the time in the decorative arts - Art Nouveau. While he is famous for his posters, Mucha was a versatile artist: painter, sculptor, photographer, decorator and also a valued teacher. During his first trip to the United States in 1904, he was called "the greatest decorative artist in the world". But his political and humanist beliefs led him to gradually give up this decorative style and to undertake cycles of history painting, sometimes in very large format, in a militant and idealistic spirit. Thus, around 1900-1910, he changed and supported resolutely figurative and epic paintings, detached from all the European avant-garde artists. His late works bear witness to his dream of unity among all Slav peoples, notably *The Slavic Epic* (1912-1926), a cycle composed of twenty monumental paintings. This exhibition traces the career of Mucha and draws the portrait of a complex artist, driven by a social and philosophical vision.



1. A BOHEMIAN IN PARIS

Born in the midst of the Czech national renaissance, Mucha passionately hoped for a Czech nation independent of the Austro-Hungarian empire. In *Ivančice*, the talented youth fought for his political cause very early on, by illustrating satirical magazines and decorating auditoriums. In Munich, where he studied in the mid-1880s, Mucha became a leading figure within Czech and Slavic communities.

In 1887, Mucha arrived in Paris, then the European capital of the arts. Artists and students flocked here from every country and gathered together by community. Mucha soon created Lada, a Slavic students' club, then joined the Czech community group, Beseda, which he would later chair.

Mucha, who received financial support from Count Eduard Khuen-Belasi (1847-1896), studied two years at the Académie Julian, then at the Académie Colarossi. But in early 1889, the count cut off his allowance. Forced to work, Mucha produced illustrations for books and magazines. During these difficult years, he lived in the Rue de la Grande Chaumière. Here, Mucha notably met Paul Gauguin and the Swedish writer August Strindberg.

2. A PICTURE-MAKER FOR PEOPLE

In the 1890s, the poster played a central part in visual culture thanks to the perfecting of colour lithography and the development of advertising. Paris became a veritable open-air gallery. By its Japan-influenced format, its hieratic composition and its pastel colours, Mucha's first poster for Sarah Bernhardt revolutionised the codes for this medium. Strengthened by this success, Mucha launched into the creation of advertising posters. In 1896, he signed an exclusive contract with the Parisian printer F. Champenois, who guaranteed him a monthly salary. In 1896, he was thus able to move into a large apartment-studio, Rue du

Val-de-Grâce.

Mucha also produced ornamental panels for Champenois. These were word-free posters, designed for decorative purposes. Mucha was won over by the fact that, unlike traditional artworks, this new art form was accessible to the general public. During the following years, his posters circulated throughout Europe, and the "Style Mucha" became synonymous with Art Nouveau, which was then appearing on the scene.

3. MUCHA, THE COSMOPOLITAN

From 1885 to around 1890, Mucha's fame grew, and, at the same time, Art Nouveau swept through all the major cities of Europe. In 1900, he was the master of posters and most sought-after (and most copied) decorator of Paris. Mucha was thus involved with many projects related to the Exposition Universelle of Paris in 1900, "the greatest event of the century". He notably decorated the pavilion of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a Slavic region annexed to Austria-Hungary since 1878. This order represented a real political stake. After the Exposition, Mucha was named a member of the Order of Francis-Joseph I. This episode put him in a paradoxical and uncomfortable situation in relation to his own convictions. But it inspired him with the idea of an epic that would depict the joys and sorrows of all Slav peoples, by highlighting the ties that united them and their common struggle against oppression. From 1904 to 1909, Mucha visited the United States five times in the hope of raising the necessary funds for this project which would become the *Slav Epic*. In 1909, a Chicago industrialist, Charles Richard Crane (1858-1939), agreed to finance it.

4. MUCHA, THE MYSTIC

In the autumn of 1894, Mucha met the Swedish author August Strindberg, a friend of Gauguin. A mystic, Strindberg was deeply interested in occultism and theosophy. From their regular philosophical discussions, the idea that there were “mysterious forces” guiding each person’s life was born in Mucha. In 1898, this led him to join the Grand Orient de France, the oldest and largest Freemason lodge in continental Europe. For Mucha, Freemasonry was an extension of his spiritualism. It advocates “the improvement of humanity” and the “consciousness of freedom”, around three virtues, Beauty, Truth and Love, the “cornerstones” of the human condition. With his art, Mucha meant to contribute to humanity’s progress. Through the illustrated and commented words of *Le Pater* (*The Lord’s Prayer*), this book, published in 1899, addressed to future generations a message concerning humanity’s progress and how one can reach universal truth.

5. MUCHA, THE PATRIOT

In 1910, Mucha finally returned to his homeland to realise his long-time ambition: to put his art at the service of his country and his compatriots. Thanks to the sponsorship of Charles Richard Crane, he pursued this objective with energy and determination. In 1911, after having completed the decoration of the Lord Mayor’s Hall in the Municipal House, in Prague, he moved into the Zbiroh Castle, in western Bohemia and concentrated on the *Slav Epic* project.

The *Slav Epic* was a resounding call meant to inspire every Slav and to guide their future, by encouraging them to learn from their own history. Mucha chose twenty major episodes which, according to him, had marked these peoples from a political, religious, philosophical or cultural point of view. Ten scenes were drawn from Czech history and ten from the past of other Slav nations. Mucha undertook

considerable preparatory work. He read, consulted scholars and took trips to Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Poland, Russia and Greece, where he drew, photographed and studied local costumes and traditions.

6. ARTIST AND PHILOSOPHER

Anxious to contribute to the spiritual unity of his Slavic compatriots, Mucha was convinced that art could help peoples come together for the progress of humanity. By spreading philosophical ideas, art could bring them closer to each other and help keep the peace, since the Treaty of Versailles did not settle territorial questions between newly independent Slavic nations. In 1938, Czechoslovakia lost large border regions to Germany, Poland and Hungary. On 15 March 1939, the Germans entered into Prague. Mucha’s homeland lost its independence, only twenty years after having gained it. Mucha, both a well-known figure and a Freemason, was one of the first to be arrested by the Gestapo. Discouraged and suffering from pneumonia, he died in Prague on 14 July 1939, ten days after his 79th birthday .

Curator: Tomoko Sato, curator of the Mucha Foundation, Prague

Set design: Atelier Maciej Fiszer

Graphics: Atelier KS

Lighting: ABRAXAS CONCEPT

Exhibition organised by the Rmn – Grand Palais in co-production with Arthemisia and the collaboration of the Mucha Foundation, Prague

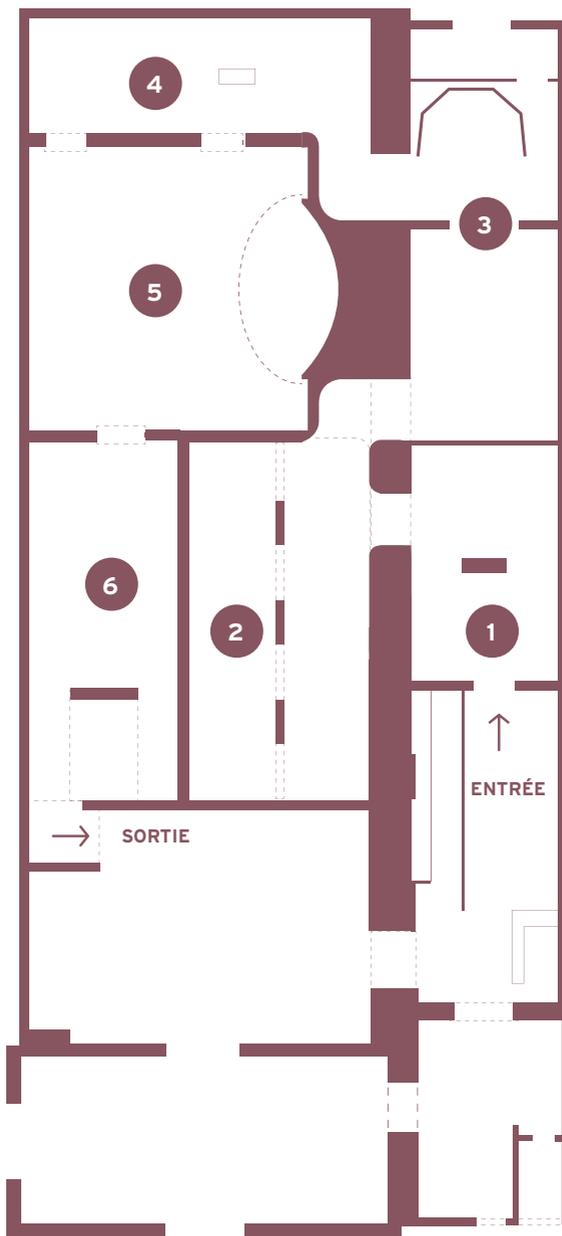
ML MUSÉE DU
LUXEMBOURG
SENAT



ARTHEMISIA



EXHIBITION MAP



AROUND THE EXHIBITION

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

MUSEUM LECTURES

at the Centre culturel tchèque, 18, rue Bonaparte, Paris VI^e
free entry, reservation essential on museeduluxembourg.fr

PRESENTATION LECTURE

Thursday 20 September, 6.30 pm

Tomoko Sato, curator of the Mucha Foundation, curator of the exhibition and Emmanuel Coquery, scientific director of the Réunion des musées nationaux - Grand Palais

First major exhibition dedicated to Alphonse Mucha in Paris for nearly forty years, the retrospective at the Musée du Luxembourg enables you to discover the different facets of this prolific artist. Tomoko Sato and Emmanuel Coquery take you behind the scenes of the exhibition.

FROM CHÉRET TO MUCHA: WHEN POSTERS BECOME ART

Thursday 22 November at 6.30 pm

Nicholas Zmelty, lecturer at the University of Picardie Jules Verne
In the late 1890's, Alphonse Mucha established himself as the absolute master of Art Nouveau posters. Through a panorama of the diversity of the end of century poster, this lecture highlights the singularity of his works and questions the complexity of the relationship between art and advertising.

CZECH ARTISTS IN PARIS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Thursday 10 January at 6.30 pm

Anna Pravdová, curator at the National Gallery in Prague
Like Mucha, from 1850, many Czech artists went to Paris. Specialist of the Czech artistic diaspora, Anna Pravdová introduces you to these artists and their works, from the late 19th century to the Second World War.

PARIS IN THE BELLE ÉPOQUE

Thursday 13 December at 6.30 pm

Dominique Kalifa, professor at University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
Thought of by Walter Benjamin as the capital of the 19th century, Paris, renovated and "embellished" by Baron Haussmann established itself as a major place of innovation in the early 20th century. This lecture evokes the context in which Mucha evolved, while Paris was attracting artists, intellectuals and students and was entering a new century in which it intended to leave its mark.

NUIT BLANCHE (DUSK TO DAWN ART EVENT)

free and open access

Saturday 6 October, from 7.30 pm to 1 am, last entry 12.30 am

Artists of the *Soirées dessinées* collective create, before your very eyes, large frescoes inspired by the works of Alphonse Mucha, accompanied by music and original dance routines composed around Mucha.

SPECIAL EVENING EVENTS

bookings required at museeduluxembourg.fr

SKETCHBOOK EVENING

Tuesday 10 October, 7-9.30 pm

During an evening specially dedicated to drawing, come with your pencils to measure your skills with the famous works of the master of Art Nouveau.

AROUND TATTOOING

Saturday 24 November, 7.30-10 pm

Whether you are a tattoo lover or just curious, come and watch the creation of an original tattoo drawing and discover how Mucha's work has influenced this world.

THE BELLE ÉPOQUE BALL

Saturdays 8 December and 12 January, 7.30-11 pm

Boston, Matchiche, Mazurka: during a costume party, you will discover the fantasy of the Belle Époque Balls. Virtuoso dancer or beginner, allow yourself be carried away by the whirlwind of the party, led by the dancers of the *Carnet de bals association*.

FILM CLUB

Projections in partnership with the cinema Les 3 Luxembourg, 67, rue Monsieur le Prince, VI^e practical information on lestroisluxembourg.com

DILILI IN PARIS, MICHEL OCELOT, 2018

Thursday 4 October 2018 at 8.30 pm

Exceptional preview in the presence of the film crew
In Paris of the Belle Époque, with a young deliveryman on a delivery bicycle, young Kanake Dilili is investigating abductions of girls. From one adventure to another, she meets extraordinary men and women who help her, and bad guys hiding in the shadows. The two friends will make the light, freedom and joy of living together triumph.

FRENCH CANCAN, JEAN RENOIR, 1954

Thursday 15 November at 8.30 pm

Danglard, a show entrepreneur, starts renovating an old establishment he called the Moulin Rouge. He took a gamble of putting an old dance, the cancan, back into fashion and making Nini, a young laundress, a star dancer.

CULTURAL MEDIATION

Bookings at museeduluxembourg.fr

AUDIOGUIDES

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Price: €5 , Sésame+ price : €4

Audioguide application: €3.49 on Google Play and the App Store:

GUIDED TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

Visit: "Mucha style"

from 13 years; duration: 75 minutes

Mucha's posters are appreciated for their graceful female figures, surrounded by motifs with sinuous lines. This style so recognisable, the artist has also developed it on many media. How is it constituted, what are its main components and what vision of the world and art does it refer to? The guided tour provides answers to these questions.

every day at 12.15 pm, additional sessions at 4.45 pm on Sundays and during school holidays and at 7 pm in the evening

Sung tours

from 13 years; duration: 1 hour

Bookings required at museeduluxembourg.fr

Discover the exhibition in an original way during the exceptional visits led by the tenor-lecturer Grégoire Ichou. During the guided

tour, allow yourself to be carried away by the live performance of a variety of tunes, echoing the works of Mucha.

Thursdays 20 December and 3 January 3 at 7 pm, access to the exhibition from 6 pm

Family tour: Alphonse Mucha, art for all

from 6 years; duration: 1 hour

How did Mucha go about creating images that would appeal to the greatest number of people? What did he want to tell everyone through them? This visit specially designed for families enables entering into the approach of the artist to better understand his works.

Sunday at 2 pm, extra sessions during the school holidays

Children's workshop tour: Do it like Mucha

from 6 years; duration: 2 hours

It's your turn to make a poster for your hero or your favourite object: you will spot Mucha's techniques in the exhibition to highlight his subject and you will then reuse them to create an original print.

Sunday 30 September, Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 October,

Sunday 25 November, Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 December,

Sunday 20 January at 2.15 pm

PUBLICATIONS

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Under the guidance of Tomoko Sato

The general introduction of the catalogue, written by the curator of the exhibition, Tomoko Sato, traces the career of this multi-faceted artist. Each essay then explores a specific focus of his artistic personality.

Editions Rmn - Grand Palais, 248 pages, 256 illustrations, bound, € 35

JOURNAL OF THE EXHIBITION

Alain Weill

This journal brings together the emblematic works of the exhibition by placing them in the artistic and cultural context of the time.

Editions Rmn - Grand Palais, 24 pages, 30 illustrations, metal stitching €6

MULTIMEDIA



THE EXHIBITION APP

on Google Play and the App Store: €3.49

ENRICH YOUR VISIT

 on museeduluxembourg.fr

articles, videos and activities-games for young audiences.

Teachers and students, go further with the histoire-image.org and panoramadelart.com websites: notes and works commented for all.

Share **#ExpoMucha**



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Visit histoire-image.org and discover our analyses of artworks.

GRAND PALAIS

MAGNIFICENT VENICE

VENICE, EUROPE AND THE ARTS IN THE 18TH CENTURY

26 September 2018 - 21 January 2019

In full artistic renaissance, Venice of the 18th century was a city open to every type of pleasure. Its modernity was exported all over Europe and founded the new aesthetics. In tribute to this vitality, musicians, dancers and actors will interact with the paintings, and with the public.

MIRÓ

3 October 2018 - 4 February 2019

Bringing together nearly 150 works, this retrospective traces the technical and stylistic evolution of the artist. Miró creates from his dreams and opens the door to his poetic universe.

MICHAEL JACKSON : ON THE WALL

23 November 2018 - 14 February 2019

Michael Jackson's songs, choreographies and video clips are testament to the extraordinary artistic path he was destined for, and were a source of inspiration for many artists: Andy Warhol, Lorraine O'Grady, Isaac Julien... Come and see how their works reflect those of the King of Pop and his personality!

ALPHONSE MUCHA

FROM 12 SEPTEMBER 2018 TO 27 JANUARY 2019

AT THE MUSÉE DU LUXEMBOURG,
19 RUE DE VAUGIRARD 75006 PARIS

OPEN EVERY DAY FROM MONDAY TO SUNDAY 10.30 AM TO 7 PM
EVENINGS UNTIL 10 PM EVERY FRIDAY AND MONDAY FROM 12 NOVEMBER
TO 17 DECEMBER

24 and 31 December: open from 10.30 am to 6 pm,

Museum closed on 25 December

Start of evacuation of the rooms 15 minutes before closing time of the museum

ANGELINA

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Angelina Salon de Thé: open every day at the same times as the museum

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