

ALPHONSE MUCHA - ART NOUVEAU VISIONARY

Director: Susanna Boehm
Genre: art documentary
Duration: 2 x 26 mins. | 52 mins.
Format: DigiBeta

Synopsis

Alphonse Mucha (1860 - 1939) is the visionary master of Art Nouveau. Born in what is now known as the Czech Republic, Mucha had his artistic breakthrough in Paris in 1895 with his posters of the world famous actress Sarah Bernhardt. Mucha's extensive work consists of prints, paintings, drawings and design objects of global fame.

Since 1910, Charles R. Crane, an American millionaire financed the highlight of Mucha's artistic work: "The Slav Epic". This series of 20 monumental paintings focusses on the history of Slavs. The film discovers these widely unknown paintings in a Moravian castle.

Production

Written & Directed by Susanna Boehm

Year 2004

Music Geraldine Mucha performed by the Czech Nonet

Photography Thomas Kutschker, Marcus Winterbauer

Montage Regina Bärtschi | **Sound** Boris Jöns, Julia Rieck

Sound Mix Julia Rieck, Martin Offik | **Lighting** Pavel Pospíšil

Grip Miloš Trnka, Michal Procházka

Video Post-Production Manfred Hielscher

Voices Dulcie Smart, Robin Gooch, Peter Scollin

Production Assistant Andrea Kuserau

Location Managers Jirí Merunka, (CZ) Reinhard Lorenz (D), Caroline Roussel (F) | **Second Location Managers** Matej Cerný, Michaela Ottová, Frederique Lambert

Production Managers Michael Krause (maxim), Wolfgang Kramer (NDR), Petr Nezval (CT) | **Executive Producer** Peter Roloff | **Commissioning Editor** Ulrike Dotzer - NDR

Production maxim film **in co-production** with NDR and Česká Televize - CT **in co-operation** with ARTE **with kind support** of the Mucha Foundation

Distribution

DVD available at

www.filmsortiment.de

World Sales

german united distributors Programmvertrieb GmbH

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Festivals/Awards/TV

TV premiere

ARTE (Germany/France)

1. part: June 5th 2004

2. part: June 12th 2004

Broadcasts: NDR, Germany | CT, Czech Republic | Finland | Norway | Netherlands | Spain | Poland

Festival premiere

International Festival of Films on Art in Québec, Canada March 2005 - www.artifa.com

Pärnu Film Festival - Estonia July 2005 - www.chaplin.ee/english/filmfestival/

More info

Alphonse Mucha (1860 - 1939) is the visionary master of Art Nouveau. Born in what is now known as the Czech Republic, Mucha had his artistic breakthrough in Paris in with his posters of the world famous actress Sarah Bernhardt. In 1900 the new style's name was not Art Nouveau but Style Mucha. Mucha's extensive work consists of prints, paintings, drawings and design objects of global fame. His masterpieces are widely spread up to present time.

Geraldine Mucha, the composer and daughter-in-law of Alfons Mucha accompanies us through the documentary - both with her charming personality and her music. For this film the Czech Nonet has exclusively performed three of Geraldine Mucha's recent compositions.

Geraldine Mucha resides in Prague's Hradshin in the very studio she inherited from Alfons Mucha - with all his paintings and materials virtually untouched and totally intact. Geraldine Mucha shows us around her place, opening all cabinets and drawers to reveal original paintings, studies and Mucha's enormous photo archive, documents never shown before. These materials are completed with historical film clippings: Mucha working at his "Slav Epic" and the private Alphonse with his family.

In the art-world Mucha's work is sometimes regarded as naive and even Kitsch - maybe unjustly. Starting in Paris his works were triumphantly welcomed both in Europe and the United States. Mucha's exhibitions in Brooklyn and Chicago had more than 600.000 visitors. His works are still very popular until today, his poster prints reaching high numbers of copies.

Sarah Bernhardt's eccentricity had its influence on Mucha: he used to wander around in slavic costumes, being a highly exotic party slicker at the same time. Mucha's own believes were of deeply humanist character. Alfons Mucha was always vigorously searching for human sincerity and the meaning of the modern days' dynamic activities. Mucha reinvented the original means of Art Nouveau: the healing effects of pure beauty, the continuation of traditions and the merging of various different arts and crafts.

The charming young girls on Mucha's posters and paintings alike are glorified, celestial beings. On the other side of his emotional scale Mucha took photographs of the ecstatic movements of a hypnotized model and applied these experiences onto his darker paintings and pastels. Mucha was fascinated by modern technique, at the same time searching for answers in freemasonry, in spiritism, occultism and the mystical, symbolic world of his slavic homeland. These roots became more and more the main source of both his graphic and his paint work. Since 1910 the American multi-millionaire, freemason and slavophil Charles R. Crane financed Mucha's Gesamtkunstwerk "The Slav Epic", a series of 20 monumental paintings focused on the emerging world of the Slavs.

"The Slav Epic" is the highlight of Mucha's artistic work. These gigantic paintings (up to 6 by 8 meters) are exposed to the world in a rotting renaissance castle in the Czech hinterlands - virtually unrecognised by the world. With his "Slav Epic" Mucha created a totally new and dark side of Art Nouveau. Future generations were intended to thoroughly learn through the endless story of suffering of the Slavic people. The coming generations should focus their lives on the meaning of honesty, bravery, idealism und human fate.

The paintings of the "Slav Epic" are so highly impressive because of their colour composition, their artistic perfection, abundance in detail and their meditative expression. The impact of stage-like scenes is strengthened by real people in the foreground, the spectator feels like being in the painting itself.

With his "Slav Epic" Alfons Mucha intended to allow the Slavs and the whole world a peek into the mirror of the past - and to give them hope for the future. He donated the paintings of the "Slav Epic" to the city of Prague. The city council promised to build an exhibition hall for the paintings. This did not happen until today. The Czech Republic prefers to leave the paintings unknown and unrecognised. Is the "Slav Epic" still too controversial to be shown in the capital of Prague?

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