

Masuma Chowdhury

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Alphonse Mucha

Alfons Maria Mucha, also known as Alphonse Mucha, was an illustrator, a painter, and a graphic designer during the Art Nouveau period. He was famous for his posters which were very decorative and illustrative. He was also involved in advertisement and designs. He started working with a very famous French actress Sarah Bernhardt. He was a struggling artist living in Paris for so many years. The company he worked for was told that Sarah Bernhardt needed a poster for her play Gismonda and Mucha was the only available artist at that time. Even though they did not like it at first because it was not a very common poster using all the poster rules, but Bernhardt loved it.



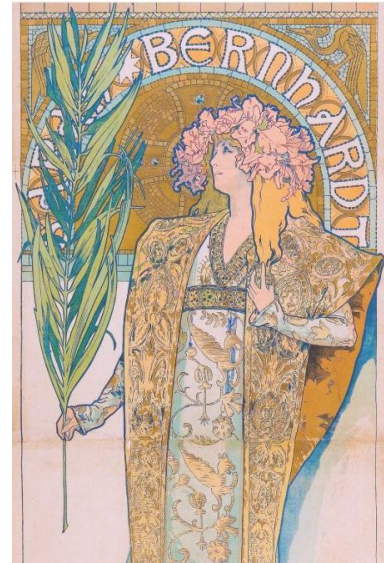
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I chose Alfons Maria Mucha as a Graphic designer that I like because he is an all rounded artist that is not only famous for his graphic design skills but also for his painting and illustration skills. His work

is an inspiration to me, and I wish to have the ability to create such skilled and complex yet artistic designs on my own one day.

Mucha's poster was extraordinary and from his work the poster of Sarah Bernhardt as Gismonda is a masterpiece, it is two meters more than life-sized. She is portrayed as a noble woman wearing this gown with floral patterns. She is holding a palm tree branch

in her right hand. Behind her there is a half arch like a halo, has her name on it and the halo drifts the viewers focus on her face. The background is covered with mosaic tiles because of the shortage of time, most of the background is empty and not decorated. The poster was made with pastel colors probably because of her noble woman role she played as Gismonda. Mucha has represented Sarah Bernhardt as a modest woman. The way she is standing and wearing all that clothing with her skin covered. In the viewers eye she would be seen or portrayed as a noble and respected woman.



Sarah Bernhardt as Gismonda

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Alphonse Mucha's works were recently displayed in the "Poster House - Mucha Exhibition." All his works were amazing to look at. But the three artworks that really stood out to me were, Zodiac, 1896, Été from The Seasons series, 1896, and, L'Émeraude from The Precious Stones series, 1900. Zodiac, 1896 was Mucha's first contract with the printer Champenois. In this piece of artwork Mucha contained twelve zodiac signs behind the woman's head. He portrayed the women with a lot of jewelry and made her look peaceful. I really love the way he did the designs in the background of the women. The composition and the colors of the artwork really stands out. Été from The Seasons series, 1896 is a stunning piece



ETE 1896

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of artwork made by Alphonse Mucha. The way he portrayed the woman sitting down, laying her head on a floral branch is breathtaking. He has a unique way of making them look so unbothered by anything. Finally, L'Émeraude from The Precious Stones series, 1900, is kind of like Été from The Seasons series, 1896. He painted a long green dress on the woman where she was posing. The background matches with her dress. All his artworks are amazing. And most importantly he demonstrated the women in his paintings in a unique way, he made them look beautiful in every angle.

The poster Vin des Incas, 1897, has a different feel to it as compared to Bernhardt as Gimonda. Vin des Incas was one of the most popular wine of that century made from



Vin des Incas

[HTTPS://WELLCOMECOLLECTION.ORG/WORKS/YRDMGPYR](https://wellcomecollection.org/works/yrdmgpyr)

herbs and was sold as medication treating different diseases and illness. But it was mostly used for convalescents. It was made with coca which is the main ingredient used in cocaine. In the poster a lady is partially naked with only her legs covered with a piece of cloth, she is offering a coca leaf to a male Mayan figure who is taken from a photo of a stone slab from a museum. The lady is surrounded by perhaps coca leaves again forming a halo.

Woman during the end of nineteenth century and twenty centuries were stronger and independent and were achieving many things, better and equal jobs as men, right to vote, independence and being educated. Often in advertisements and posters woman

are put in pretty clothing with attractive hair and makeup and with alluring poses to gain viewers' interest. Women were showcased as objects to further sell objects. During the Art Nouveau period, artists such as Mucha portrayed women as happy individuals with more freedom and control. The idea of glamorous and dominant women was selling the designs. The designs show women as they were in a fantasy world with only dream-like features and could also be a way to distract men from the increasingly improving and growth of women during that period.



LA PLUME

<https://www.rawpixel.com/board/1295682/alphonse-mucha-art-nouveau-artworks-free-cc0-vintage-illustrations-paintings>

Mucha's poster increasingly became more and more successful since he started working with Sarah Bernhardt. Bernhardt played the title role of courtesan Camille who is dying of consumption and releases her lover from marrying her. In this poster Bernhardt is seen wearing a huge gown while leaning on a fence of a balcony, her hair tied up with a white camelia flower on the side of her bun. Another camelia is seen at the bottom left and is held by a hand which at that time

symbolized death. The background is filled with silver stars. The colors used are not dramatic at all but instead Mucha used soft nude colors to properly represent the idea of the play and the role she plays in it. The way she is standing with elegance portrays a lover's identity. The thorny rose piercing and

the hearts all represents the plays theme which is sacrifice for love. This poster is also one of Bernhadt's favorite posters made by Mucha.

In conclusion, Alphonse Mucha was a very talented painter, illustrator, and graphic artist in his time. He was given many contracts for the stunning work he used to do. All his



artworks are still being talked about till this day, which is astonishing. Alphonse Mucha's concept of representing the female body and female identity was unique. His style was different and beautiful. He made the females in his artwork look carefree and attractive in their own way. For this reason, he was asked to create a poster for a theatrical production of Gismonda, played by the most famous Parisian actress of the time, Sarah Bernhardt. After this, his work became very popular overnight.

<https://pxels.com/featured/portrait-of-josephine-crane-bradley-as-slava-1908-alphonse-mucha.html>

Resources/Bibliography

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