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Title: The Polish School of Poster Art: Posters From the University of Northampton's Osborne Robinson Collection

Creators: Thomas, V., Stenning, S., Abbatt, C. and Duley, C. Osborne Robinson Poster Collection

Example citation: Thomas, V., Stenning, S., Abbatt, C. and Duley, C. (2011) *The Polish School of Poster Art: Posters From the University of Northampton's Osborne Robinson Collection*. Online: The University of Northampton. [Exhibition curated by Vicki Thomas and Suzanne Stenning]

Version: Exhibition catalogue

Official URL: <http://www.blurb.com/b/2356310-the-polish-school-of-poster-art>

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/3984/>



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The Polish School of Poster Art:

Posters from The University of Northampton's Osborne Robinson Collection

A touring exhibition organised by The University of Northampton



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Avenue Gallery, The University of Northampton - 10-28 January 2011

School of Art, Media & Design, University of Wales, Newport - 26 September-November 2011

School of Art and Design Gallery, The University of Derby – 13 February-16 April 2012

Fifespace Gallery, Glenrothes - 5 November–6 December 2012

Exhibition curated by Vicki Thomas and Suzanne Stenning

Catalogue essay: Vicki Thomas

Catalogue entries: Clare Abbatt, Clare Duley, Vicki Thomas, Suzanne Stenning

Catalogue design and layout: Karl Hobbs

Cover image: detail from a poster designed by Eryk Lipinski for the Polish release of the film 'Help!' (1967).

The Osborne Robinson Poster Collection

The posters in this exhibition have been selected from a group of 160 Polish posters which form part of The University of Northampton's Osborne Robinson Collection. The Collection originally consisted of some 2000 posters which were donated to the then Northampton School of Art between 1967-1976 by Thomas Osborne Robinson OBE (1904-1976), scenic artist at the town's Royal Theatre, with the aim of providing students with first-hand access to work by some of the great names of poster design. Since then the collection has been significantly augmented by a variety of generous gifts, principally from Alex Rollins and The University of Wales, and the collection now stands at over 10,000 items. The collection provides an invaluable resource for teaching and research into the historical, sociological, cultural and technical aspects of poster design, as well as for broader cross-disciplinary projects. In recent years it has formed the basis of an international conference, regular exhibitions and loans to national museums.

Thomas Osborne Robinson began collecting posters in the 1920s and continued to do so throughout his life. He travelled extensively and his collection reflects this, together with his interest in theatre, art and design. Altogether there are posters from thirty-six countries, ranging in date from the 1890s to the 1970s. Highlights include British railway posters from the 1920s-50s; international airlines of the 1950s-70s; Polish film posters of the 1950s-60s; and posters designed by artists such as Paul Nash and Ben Nicholson for Shell Oil in the 1930s, to name just a few. More recent donations have added posters dating from the 1980s and 1990s, so that the collection now spans the whole of the twentieth century.

Amongst these many highlights the Polish posters stand out for their painterly use of rich vibrant colour and strong graphic qualities, together with their often enigmatic and intriguing subject matter. The majority of them were commissioned to publicise film and theatre productions, which the artists were encouraged to interpret in a metaphorical or symbolic rather than literal way. These form the core of the exhibition, but we have also included posters designed to attract foreign tourists to Poland and visitors to attractions such as zoos and circuses, as well as a small number of rare Health and Safety posters. Osborne Robinson received a travel bursary to study in

Central Europe in 1968, and it may well be that he collected a number of the posters on this trip.

It is planned that this exhibition will tour the UK and abroad as part of an ongoing research project at The University of Northampton, 'A Thousand Words', which investigates how illustration crosses cultural and language divides.

We are very grateful to Zuzanna Lipińska for her generous advice in the preparation of this exhibition, and for talking to us about her father Eryk Lipiński, whose work features strongly in the Osborne Robinson Collection; also to Clare Abbatt, William Battle, Clare Duley, Karl Hobbs, Barbara Sampson, Shirley Walker, Andrew Langford and The School of The Arts Research Committee for their help and support in the preparation of this exhibition.

Suzanne Stenning and Vicki Thomas
The University of Northampton
January 2011

The Polish School of Poster Art: Posters from The University of Northampton's Osborne Robinson Collection

The Polish Posters created in the decades 1950-70 following the World War Two (1939-45) were exceptional and very distinctive. 160 Polish examples form an important part of The University of Northampton's Poster Collection. They were collected by Thomas Osborne Robinson, a set designer, and given to the School of the Arts in the 1970s to inspire future generations of artists and designers.

The history of the poster dates back to the commercialisation of colour printing in the second half of the 19th century and the development of applied art education across Europe. The Cracow Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1899, was typical of the new art and design schools. An International Poster Exhibition was held in the city in 1898. Today the Academy in Cracow holds a collection of 7,200 items that date from its foundation to the present day. In the 1890s the poster was seen to fit with ideals of the Ruch Odnowy Sztuki Rzemiosł or The Movement for the Renewal of the Art and Crafts, as the Polish Arts & Crafts Movement was known. Poster design was seen as an art form that was accessible to all. This notion of posters being Art for the 'man in the street' remained an important ideal for those creating posters in the 1950's. The Society of Polish Poster Art, founded in 1902, favoured re-workings of traditional Polish Folk Art and themes and so a sense of national identity was linked to poster art early in the century.

Poland became a sovereign state once again after World War One in 1918. In the inter-war period, Polish architects started to play a key role in the development of applied art, and posters in particular. A group of architects at Warsaw Polytechnic took a leading role, including Stanisław Brukalski, Tadeusz Gronowski, Wilhelm Henemebery and Edmund John. They organised educational trips to France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Netherlands and England. The architects saw themselves as part of the wider European art and design movement that we now call Art Deco. Their clients included LOT, the Polish airlines founded in 1929. The airline company commissioned various artists, including Gronowski who created its logotype. Much of the architects' early imagery is in line with art movements prevalent at the time such as Expressionism and Constructivism. It seemed to be thought important to be

linked to artistic trends across Europe, but this interest in design movements elsewhere did not belittle the importance of their own design heritage.

The Poles have strived to preserve their own language and cultural traditions. The country has suffered centuries of invasion and foreign rule. Their lands have, over the centuries, been invaded by the Germanic states to the east, Tartars from the south-east, and Swedish and Russian armies from the north and east. There were periods of independence under Kazimierz Wielki (1333-1370) and flourishing of the Arts and Sciences during the reign of King Zygmunt in the sixteenth century. These periods are looked back on as golden decades for Polish culture.

Sociologists of religion have theorised that one of the reasons that religious faith has remained so strong in the country is because of oppression of the national identity. Maybe design too was strengthened in difficult circumstances. Diana Gromala writes of a common iconography “as a set of images and symbols transmitted verbally and visually from one generation to the next which reinforced their cultural identity of resistance to foreign authority. This iconography derived from folklore, art, literature, ancient city and church symbols and aphorisms.” (Gromala, 1995 p48)

Six million Poles died during the Second World War. In the four decades after the war, there were shortages of all sorts of basic commodities and there was no advertising industry for consumer goods. The commercial market for the Warsaw designers had disappeared. The Polish People’s Republic was a Soviet-supported Communist regime, so all forms of media were controlled and subject to censorship. In the years immediately following the war, the State commissioned posters and there was initially an imposition of Socialist Realism as the dominant style.

In 1950 there was a new six-year economic development plan backed by the Soviets. Posters continued to be commissioned and controlled by government-funded organisations for promoting cultural events such as theatrical productions, films, musical performances, circuses, sporting event and zoos. A new steel works was built outside Kraków, Nowa Huta, and now the workers’ town was not dominated by a church but by a large opera house.

There were also posters to promote health and safety, and others to encourage tourism from outside Poland. The government remained a major patron and encouraged poster production to boost its prestige, but it delegated the task of commissioning to state approved committees who had knowledge and expertise. For example public health bodies, such as TZN (Towarzystwo Zapobiegania Narkomanii) were in an ambivalent position as they were “Both responsible for reducing alcoholism and (qua monopoly manufacturers) as a beneficiary from the sales of alcoholic drinks” (Schupbach, 2009). The State circus agency, United Entertainment Enterprises (ZPR) commissioned posters to reflect the efforts they had made to raise standards in that part of the entertainment world. The posters did not advertise particular performances or acts but simply indicated that a circus was coming to town. The Osborne Robinson collection has some striking examples.

These organisations turned to a network of artists and art school staff to create posters to promote events and distribute information. Eyrk Lipiński, Henryk Tomaszewski and Tadeusz Trepkowski were approached to create posters to promote films that were being distributed in Poland by Centrala Wynajmu Filmnow (CWF), not just Polish films but those imported from other countries. The film posters in particular have become collectable and the focus of other exhibitions. The committee in charge of commissioning film posters would set up viewings and ask artists to attend and submit finished designs for approval. The fees paid were worthwhile (Lipińska, 2010). The core group became known as The Polish Poster School, although the group became much wider and included Jan Lenica, Wiktor Górka, Roman Cieślewicz, and Waldemar Świerzy. The Osborne Robinson collection reflects all these specialist areas of state poster commissioning, although Thomas Osborne Robinson had a particular interest in theatre and performance.

The Posters were often pasted on the hoardings surrounding buildings awaiting post war reconstruction. The streets became galleries where artists' works could be seen. It was Art that met the earlier Arts and Crafts ideals. Often they did not have specific details of events such as venues and times; people went regularly to the local cinema and theatre, and so the posters did not need to give times and places. The images could be reused in another town or for a later run. There were even competitions in newspapers where the public could vote for particular designs. How typical are the posters in the Osborne Robinson Collection of this street art, Schupbach asks, if only those posters considered artistic were preserved? Where are those more mundane

posters? The Osborne Robinson collection does contain some safety, local festival and travel examples by unknown artists, but the others are by artists well known for their film posters.

The commissioning process allowed artists and designers a great deal of freedom of expression. The images and lettering were often hand rendered. They often have a painterly quality. Techniques such as collage and photomontage were also used. The existing tradition of quality poster design was built upon and valued by the State, not only as a source of income but also of pride as the reputation of the designers grew abroad.

“In keeping with a long tradition of resistance to foreign domination, Polish artists and designers capitalized on this creative opportunity by further developing their matrix of powerful visual metaphors. Often characterized by satire, irony, paradox and dark humour, these metaphors allowed double or secret meanings to be encoded in what was deemed legally acceptable.”
(Gromala, 1995 p47)

State sponsorship continued with the establishment of the 1st International Poster Biennale in 1966 and with the founding of the first Poster Museum, Wilanow Palace, Warsaw in 1968. These artists and designers were not isolated. Some entered international competitions and individuals were allowed to travel, including artists like Roman Cieślewicz who left Poland in 1963 to work in Paris. Others like Wiktor Górka taught abroad where conditions were different. The restrictions under which they worked in Poland seemed to add a strength and vibrancy to their work. Cartoons and commentary from the time indicate that regulations and shortages made everyday situations seem absurd and this is reflected by the surrealist style and use of caricature, which is pushed to extremes in some of the poster designs.

“The poster was for me a kind of Trojan horse running freely in the streets and smuggling something which one cannot find there at all.” (Jan Lenica in Dydo 1993 p25).

“The absence of a free market meant that the poster was no longer obliged to serve a purely commercial purpose thanks to which it could preserve its status as an art form.”(Akademia, 2004 p28).

There were links with Cuban poster artists and Wiktor Górka taught in several Art schools in Mexico, where too the idea of the poster as the people's art also proved popular and where bi-annual competitions were also started.

The situation in Poland started to change. Civil unrest in 1968-70 led to the establishment of new alternative networks of distribution and gave artists greater autonomy and freedom to create more challenging imagery. These networks were extended following workers' strikes in 1976 when the KPR (Worker's Defence Committee) was formed. The KPR had much in common with the Catholic Church in its more critical approach to the role of the State and in its support of a distinct Polish identity. In 1978 a Pole, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, became Pope John Paul II, affirming the aspirations of the Polish people.

Between 1980-81 economic difficulties led to a series of strikes and the rise of the trade union Solidarity. The now iconic poster of Gary Cooper, with the boldly painted name Solidarity, caught the imagination and mood both within Poland and abroad. In June 1989 there were elections in Poland and the Communists were no longer in power. The post-war Cold War era was over.

"Posters are 'time capsules', a social artefact documenting a specific place and event." (Raye, p10 in Rivers (n.d))

The posters created in these two decades in Poland continue to be collected and exchanged worldwide, particularly by those interested in film. They form, as Osborne Robinson intended, an important collection to inspire art students. They still challenge those who were not in Poland at the time to see classic operas, films and plays from a fresh and different perspective.

Vicki Thomas

Senior Lecturer in Design, The University of Northampton

List of works

Catalogue entries by Clare Abbatt (CA), Clare Duley (CD) Suzanne Stenning (SS) and Vicki Thomas (VT).

1. **ANON.** Warsaw Polytechnic
Zespol Piesnittanica. Date unknown.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.040/00643

This poster by an unknown artist was designed to publicise a concert at Warsaw Polytechnic.

2. **BACZEWSKA, Liliana (b. 1931).** CWF.
Msciel w Masce [Dr Syn, Alias the Scarecrow]. 1966.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.127/00729

Liliana Baczevska was one of the few women artists designing posters in Poland during the Communist era. In 1957 she was awarded the Tadeusz Trepkowski Prize in Warsaw. Her designs are predominantly figurative, often featuring depictions of heads and incorporating intricate lettering.

The British (Disney) film 'Dr Syn, Alias the Scarecrow', directed by James Nielson and starring Tony Britton, Michael Hordern, Patrick McGoohan and George Cole, was originally shown in 1962 as a three-part mini-series for family viewing. It had an enthusiastic fan following. It was then edited into a single feature-length film to be distributed overseas. The Polish title 'Msciel W Masce' translates as 'The Avenger in the Mask'. This, in fact, more accurately describes the revenge element of the original story by Russell Thorndike in 1915. Baczewski's poster cleverly combines the notions of concealment and identity in the fingerprint mask. (CA)

3. **BOWBELSKI, Adam (1903-1968).** CWF.
Domek z Kart [House of Cards]. 1953.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/1-Poland.102/00704

The Polish film 'House of Cards', political in genre, was released in 1953, the year Stalin died. The playing cards, precariously, support a military cap. Filmmakers and poster designers had to pass the scrutiny of the censors. Edmund P. Lewandowski: "Astoundingly, there were some benefits of censorship to Polish art. Thanks to censorship the artist avoided certain

things. By not representing things straightforwardly, Polish artists had to use metaphor. And metaphor is always beneficial to art.”

Adam Bowbelski was born in 1903 in Vladivostok, Russia. He studied architecture at the Warsaw Institute of Technology 1924-28 and matriculated at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts 1930-32. From 1929 to '39 he produced posters and advertising art for Kola Artystow Grafikow Reklamowych.

On 22 September 1940 Bowbelski was arrested in Warsaw and deported to Auschwitz. In Auschwitz he worked in the locksmith's workshop and made furniture in the SS Firm Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke. He also worked in the camp museum producing landscape paintings, stained glass, portraits of fellow inmates and postcards. He was released from Auschwitz on 27 February 1942. His posters and other artworks are in the collections of the Wilanow Poster Museum, the Warsaw Museum for the History of the Polish Revolutionary Movement and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. (CA)

- 4. BOWBELSKI, Adam (1903-1968).** CWF.
Romeo i Julia [Romeo and Juliet]. 1955.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.116/00718

This 1955 film of Prokofiev's ballet 'Romeo and Juliet' stars Galina Ulanova as Juliet and Yuri Zhdanov as Romeo. This version is a filmed ballet rather than a film of the stage performance.

Mosfilms is Russia's most famous and prolific studios producing countless films since its formation in 1920. (CD)

- 5. CHMIELEWSKI, Witold (b. 1910)** CWF.
Kadet Winslow [The Winslow Boy] 1969
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.145/00747

The 1948 film of Terrence Rattigan's play 'The Winslow Boy', directed by Anthony Asquith, starred Robert Donat, Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Margaret Leighton. It is based on the true story of George Archer-Shee, a cadet at Osborne Naval College in 1908, who was accused of stealing a five-shilling postal order. His family believed him to be innocent and fought his case through the courts. The Solicitor General was convinced of his innocence and the family was paid compensation. In the context of the strict codes of conduct and manners of the time, being guilty would have dammed the family and George to a life shunned by society, with all prospects shattered.

Chmielewski's poster, rendered in flat colour, approved by the censor in 1969 (B-7-1969), indicates both the trial and judgement laid to rest. The lettering is hand drawn. In Poland, under Communist rule, accusation, arrest and judgement must have been familiar to audiences of the film. (CA)

6. CIEŚLEWICZ, Roman (1930-1996).

Dla Mitego Groszam [For a Pretty Penny]. 1963.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/1-Poland.083/00686

Apollo Korzenioski (1820-1869) Polish playwright, poet, and political activist (and the father of Joseph Conrad) wrote 'Komedia' (Comedy) and 'Dia Mitego Grosza' (For a Pretty Penny) in the 1850s. Critical of the Polish nobility the plays were initially produced in print only and 'Komedia' was not staged until 1952. (CD)

7. CIEŚLEWICZ, Roman (1930-1996).

Harnasie. 1966.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/7-Poland.054/00657

Poster publicising a production of 'Harnasie' at the Teatr Wielki (Grand Theatre) in Warsaw. 'Harnasie', which translates as 'Highlanders', is a ballet-pantomime written by Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) which initially premiered in Warsaw in 1938. The subject of Szymanowski's work stems from his fascination with the culture of the people of the Tatra Mountains, and draws on the traditional folklore and music of the 'Gorale', as the Highlanders are also known. (See also poster no. 30.) (CD)

8. CIEŚLEWICZ, Roman (1930-1996).

Jezioro Łabędzie [Swan Lake]. 1965.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/7-Poland.050 /00653

Poster publicising the 1965 staging of Tchaikovsky's ballet Swan Lake at the Teatr Wielki (Grand Theatre.) The Swan depicted in the poster has what appear to be peacock feathers sprouting from its head; peacock feathers feature in the four-cornered hats of the Krakovian national dress. (CD)

9. **CIEŚLEWICZ, Roman (1930-1996).** CWF.
'Mój Stary' [My Old Man]. 1962.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.114 /00716

The poster for the Polish film 'My Father' or 'My Old Man' 1962, was designed by Roman Cieślewicz the year before he moved to Paris. The billboard displaying the text is carried by a running figure, a poster within a poster. The contrasting standing figure creates a balanced visual tension. Cieślewicz favoured collage techniques, often used to surrealist effect. 'I always go for the maximum picture and the maximum information. You need to stimulate imagination to the maximum.'

Cieślewicz graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow in 1955. He was 33 when he arrived in Paris in 1963 and became a naturalized French citizen in 1971. He worked as a graphic artist, art director and teacher in Paris, had over 100 solo exhibitions of his work in Paris, Europe and the US and won many major awards. In July 2010 The Royal College of Art in London held a retrospective exhibition of his work, celebrating an artist whose career bridged the Cold War division of Europe, brought surrealist fantasy to the staid visual culture of communist Poland, and a critical perspective on consumerism in the West. (CA)

10. **CIEŚLEWICZ, Roman (1930-1996).** WAG.
Warszawa. 1956.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/7-Poland.046/00649

This poster advertises a performance in 1956 by the State Song and Dance ensemble 'Warszawa' (Warsaw). The yellow banner with the group's name is held by a mermaid – the symbol of Warsaw and used on the crest of Warsaw since the mid 14th century. Warsaw is 300 km from the sea but legend tells of two mermaid sisters who swam from the Atlantic to the Baltic Sea. One stayed in Copenhagen, the other swam up the Vistula River to Warsaw Old Town, where she stayed, as she loved the place. She would sing to local fishermen in her beautiful voice.

Using such a well-recognized national symbol, Cieslewicz would have connected people visually to the past, to tradition, which they loved and took pride in, along with Polish folk dance and music, just as the worst oppression of the Stalinist era was easing. Stalin died in 1953 and in 1956 Boleslaw Bierut, the hard-line Stalinist who became President of Poland after the

Second World War (1939-45), died in mysterious circumstances on a visit to Moscow. He had attended the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during which Nikita Krushchev delivered his 'Secret Speech', denouncing Stalin's cult of personality and dictatorship. This was termed 'The Thaw' – a term coined after Ilya Ehrenburg's 1954 novel 'The Thaw' which was sensational for its time. Krushchev's 'Thaw' marked a turning point for cultural life in Poland as some Socialist Realist restrictions were relaxed and cultural influences from abroad began to be allowed again, subject to the censor's approval. (CA)

11. DĄBROWSKI, Andrzej (Onegin) (1934-1986). CWF.

Biedni Bogacze [Poor Rich]. 1961.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/1-Poland.100/00702

Poster publicising the Polish release of the film 'The Poor Rich' by Hungarian Director Frigyes Ban, based on a novel of 1860 by Jókai Mór (1825-1904). The story features a black-masked bandit named Fati Negra who forms the subject of this poster, which combines a painterly style with photomontage and collage. (SS)

12. FANGOR Wojciech (b. 1923).

WAG.

Maclovia. 1955

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.143/00745

The 1948 Mexican film 'Maclovia', a romantic drama, was directed by Emilio Fenandez. Maclovia, the beautiful daughter of a leader of the Tarasco Indian community, is forbidden to marry young and poor Jose Maria. Jose attempts to win Maclovia's father's approval. Local life is disrupted by the arrival of a battalion of soldiers and conflict arises when the brutal sergeant falls for Maclovia. Conflicts come to a head on The Night of the Dead. The poster shows the head of Maclovia (an echo of Socialist Realist art in style), dramatised and modelled by the light, in stark contrast to the threatening, cartoonish face in profile, to the right of the poster. Fangor effectively communicates the idea of conflict through this visual clash.

Fangor studied painting under Tadeusz Pruszkowski and Felician Szczesny-Kowarski during World War II. In 1946 he was awarded an arts degree by the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. He then created numerous Socialist Realist paintings and posters. He was a co-founder of the Polish School of Poster Art. In the late '50s he turned to abstraction and became fascinated with space. In 1958, in Warsaw, his exhibition 'A Study of Space' was a sensation

and considered the first artistic 'environment' created in Poland. In 1962 a scholarship from the Institute of Contemporary Art in Washington DC took him to the US and then to travel in Europe. In 1966 he emigrated to the US. In 1970 he had a solo exhibition at New York's Solomon Guggenheim Museum – the first Polish artist to have done so. In 1999 Fangor returned to live in Poland, in an old mill, which he renovated himself. (CA)

13. GÓRKA, Wiktor (1922-2004). State Committee for Physical Education and Tourism

Jagd in Polen [Hunt in Poland]. 1961.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.007/00611

'Hunting in Poland' was designed by Wiktor Górka in 1961 for the Polish State Committee for Physical Education and Tourism, seen here in its German language version. It won an Award of Merit at the 2nd International Tourism Poster Exhibition in Livorno, Italy in the same year. (VT)

14. GÓRKA, Wiktor (1922-2004). CWF.

Kwaidan [Ghost Stories]. 1966

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.138/00740

In this powerful image for the Japanese film 'Ghost Story' the text fits neatly into the top quarter of the poster. The mask, so common in Japanese theatre, suggests a skull. (CA)

Wiktor Górka graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow in 1952. In the '50s he worked for Poland's largest publishing houses and film distributors. In 1970 he travelled to Havana Cuba, with a group of Polish designers; then on to Mexico where he became an inspiration to others through his design work and as a visiting professor at UNAM in Mexico City and several other art schools. He played an active role in the development of international poster competitions and exhibitions. The Socialist Realist posters and paintings Górka produced for the Communist regime are strikingly different in style from his later posters for film, tourism and safety, featured in this collection. His Socialist Realist work satisfies the criteria laid down by the regime: it should be socialist in content, realistic in form. All his work is dominated by the figure. Animals feature in some posters. The Socialist Realist work lacks humour and irony and uses a fairly bland palette. Górka's work from the late 1950's onwards is often witty and ironic, incorporates text imaginatively, is bold in colour and pared down to have maximum impact on the viewer. (CA+VT)

15. GÓRKA, Wiktor (1922-2004). IT (Polish Tourist Information Centre) / WAG.

Poland Invites You to a Fisherman's Paradise. 1967.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.002/00605

'Poland invites you to a fisherman's paradise!' is a prizewinning tourism poster by Wiktor Górka. It was originally printed in various European languages by WAG for the Polish Tourist information Service. It won three international prizes in 1967: 1st Prize at the International Travel Poster Exhibition in Berlin, Germany, Golden Mermaid at the 6th International Travel Poster Exhibition in Milan, Italy, Silver Medal at the 2nd National Poster Biennial at Katowice, Poland and a year later the Sponsor Award at the 2nd International Poster Biennial in Warsaw. (VT)

16. GÓRKA, Wiktor (1922-2004). WAG .

Zatłuściłem [I Greased] 1957.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.157/00759

Posters for work safety and hygiene are not easy to design, but in 1957 Wiktor Górka designed two appealing images 'Make it tight' and the image here 'I greased' or 'I made greasy'. The tank contains oxygen, and one assumes the valve needs to be opened and closed easily. He did not shy away from technical topics and went on to design posters promoting electrification in Mexico. (VT)

17. GRONOWSKI, Tadeusz (1894-1990). ORBIS.

La Pologne Vous Invite [Poland Invites You]. 1950s?.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.012/00616

Known as 'the Father of Polish Design', Gronowski graduated from the Architecture Department of Warsaw Polytechnic in 1925 and subsequently studied painting at the Academie de Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he also worked briefly as an interior designer between the wars. He co-founded the Commercial Graphic Arts Circle in Poland in 1933 and was also associated with the Polish Union of Graphic Artists.

This French-language poster was commissioned by the Polish Tourist Agency 'ORBIS' and probably dates from the 1950s, although the style refers back to the 1920-30s, and the dancing couple are dressed in the traditional costume of the Polish nobility. The symbolism of the blue bird returning to its nest on top of the pillar perhaps adds another layer to this sense of nostalgia. (SS)

18. HOŁDANOWICZ, Leszek (b. 1937). WAG Katowice.

Marya Skłodowska Curie 1967-1967. 1967.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.033/00635

This poster commemorated the centenary of the birth of Marie Curie in Warsaw in 1867. She died in 1934 in France. Curie (who retained her maiden name Skłodowska after marriage, as Skłodowska-Curie) was famous for her work in radioactivity and was the first person to be awarded two Nobel Prizes – in Physics in 1903 and Chemistry in 1911. In July 1898 Skłodowska-Curie and her husband published a paper together, announcing the existence of an element they named polonium, in honor of her native Poland. In 1898 the Curies announced the existence of a second element, which they named radium for its intense radioactivity — a word they coined. During World War I (1914-18) Skłodowska-Curie pioneered the use of radiography units in the treatment of soldiers' wounds. She died from aplastic anaemia almost certainly contracted from the damaging effects of ionizing radiation, which was then not known to be dangerous.

Leszek Hołdanowicz studied in the Graphics Department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow and Warsaw and was awarded the Tadeusz Trepowski Prize in 1963. His style is rigorous and restrained in the use of colour, often limited to black and white. (CA)

19. JODŁOWSKI, Tadeusz (b. 1925). WAG.

Cyrk [Circus]. 1968.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.024/00628

The 'Cyrk' or circus posters have long been popular with collectors of Polish posters. In 1962 the state circus agency United Entertainment Enterprises (ZPR) began commissioning artists to produce images of the circus that reflected contemporary developments in the field. The resulting images encompass a wide range of styles and subject matter (see also poster number 34). (SS)

20. JODŁOWSKI, Tadeusz (b. 1925). WAG.

I Maj. [May Day] 1960s?.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.015/00619

1st May, International Labour Day, is a national holiday in Poland. Jodłowski's poster probably dates from the 1960s. 'Posters such as these were produced to celebrate spring, freedom and the fraternity of nations and were sold to the public to display in their windows as a demonstration of patriotism.' (Lipińska Z. 2009). The price of this poster – 4.50 złotych – is indicated at the bottom of the poster.

Colourful marches were held throughout Poland under Communist rule on 1 May. Attendance was obligatory. Red flags, paper cut-outs (a traditional form of Polish folk art) of doves of peace, pictures of party leaders and 'fathers of Socialism' from the Soviet Union, were carried by the crowds. The penalties for not attending could be serious: salary cuts or loss of privileges at work, students prevented from sitting exams. During the Stalinist era punishments were more severe: people were imprisoned or just disappeared.

Jodłowski graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow in 1951. In 1955 he won 1st Prize for his posters at the 10th Anniversary of the Polish People's Republic. Jodłowski also designed many circus posters. He was proficient at combining painterly methods with a graphic approach to design and incorporated shapes derived from sculpture in his two-dimensional work. Vibrant colour is used to lively effect. (CA)

21. JODŁOWSKI, Tadeusz (b. 1925). WAG.

Przestrzegaj Przepisy BHP [Observe Safety Rules]. 1957.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.159 /00761

22. KRAJEWSKI, Andrzej (1933). CWF.

Delegat Floty [Baltic Deputy]. 1967.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.142/00744

Krajewski's 1967 Pop Art style poster advertised the 1937 Russian film 'Baltic Deputy', which tells the story of the Russian scientist Klement Timiriachev (1843-1920). He was one of the few outstanding Russian scientists who publicly backed the Soviet revolutionary campaign. Timiriachev was elected a delegate to the Moscow City Soviet of Workers' Deputies by the sailors of the Baltic fleet.

Actor Nikolai Cherkasov played the part of Timiriazev. He managed to establish a rapport with Stalin when he elected to meet the Soviet leader to persuade him not to ban director Eisenstein's film 'Ivan the Terrible' (Part 2).

The title 'Delegat Floty' confidently occupies a quarter of the poster and the style suggests levity, but a battleship and a red star are incorporated in the design. The five-pointed red star, a symbol of Communism and Socialism, is considered a symbol of occupation, totalitarianism and state terror in several countries previously occupied by the Soviet Union. It has been banned in Poland, Latvia and Lithuania.

This poster was published in an edition of 6000. (Lipinska, Z. 2009) (CA)

23. KRAJEWSKI, Andrzej (1933). WAG.

Dzień Oczyszczenia [the Day of Absolution]. 1969

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/1-Poland.099/00701

The film 'Day of Purification' or 'Cleaning Day' was made in 1969 and released in 1970. It was made with the cooperation of Polish army units. It is set in 1944 and tells a story involving Polish, German and Russian troops.

Krajewski spent his teenage years living in Wroclaw, a city severely damaged during the war. He then moved to Warsaw and studied under Wojciech Fangor at the Academy of Fine Art, graduating with a Masters Degree in 1963. Pop Art and Art Deco are favoured influences in his work. He has exhibited throughout Europe and in the US. In 1985 he moved to the US where he continued painting. Krajewski recently started designing posters for a Polish audience again, for a prominent Warsaw theatre, and exhibiting in galleries in Poland. (CA)

24. LENICA, Jan (1928-2001). CWF

Kanał [Sewers, a.k.a. 'They Loved Life'] 1957

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.122/00724

Kanał was the second in a trilogy of films on the subject of World War Two which established the reputation of Polish director Andrzej Wajda beyond the Iron Curtain. Set in 1944 in the last days of Warsaw's uprising against the Nazis, it follows a group of the underground Polish Home Army fighters trapped in the sewers of the city as their efforts to escape are thwarted. The pessimism of the film is reflected in Lenica's poster, in which the despairing figure seems to be depicted at the moment of defeat. (SS)

25. LENICA, Jan (1928-2001).

Wizyta Starszej Pani [The Visit]. 1958.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/7-Poland.065/00668

Lenica's poster advertised a production of Swiss author and dramatist Friedrich Durrenmatt's tragicomic 1956 play 'The Visit' at The Dramatic Theatre, Warsaw in 1958. There is a tragicomic feel to the surreal image of the eagle-headed woman who is painting a pink heart onto the mask-like male head held in her hand. The bird-headed woman is reminiscent of figures in Hieronymous Bosch's paintings and that by Rene Magritte in 'The Robing of the Bride', 1940. (A stylized white eagle appears on the national coat of arms of Poland.)

The language of Surrealism was employed by Polish poster designers and developed as a popular device for communicating forbidden truths about Polish society under Communism and getting them past the censor. Viewers of Polish posters became adept at reading layers of meaning in the images they saw. Many Poles felt they were surviving within a system that required the presentation of an external front acceptable to the authorities while preserving an autonomous inner life of independent thought. Symbols and images became powerful and uniting elements in everyday existence. Rafal Olbinsky: 'Not only were Polish artists trying to copy Magritte, we were living this Surrealism in everyday life.'

Nothing could be further from the criteria for Socialist Realist art laid down by the Communists: that it should reflect socialist ideals and be realistic, than Surrealism. Dreams, the freedom to imagine and uncertain outcomes are the stuff of democracy. Playfulness, metaphor, irony and satire, the artist's brush, pencil and ink, concepts and ideas – these were the weapons of soft power. Picasso's statement: 'Art is a lie which makes us realise the truth' could have been reversed in Poland during these years: Art was the truth which made people realise the lie.

Lenica was a graduate of Poznan Technical University's Architecture Department. From 1963-86 he lived in France. He then lived in Berlin from 1986 until his death in 2001. (CA)

- 26. LIPIŃSKI, Eryk (1908-1991).** CWF.
Baza Ludzi Umarlych [the Depot of the Dead]. 1959
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.118/00720

Lipiński's poster advertised the 1959 Polish film 'The Depot of the Dead' which was based on a short story by the Polish cult writer Marek Hlasko, who tragically died in unexplained circumstances aged 35 in 1969 in Wiesbaden, Germany. The story is a dark, brutal and realistic portrayal of the lives of a group of outcasts and desperadoes who drive timber trucks in the southeastern mountainous forest region of Poland. The film portrays the impossibility of changing one's destiny. The poster communicates a sense of mundane bleakness. (CA)

Lipiński was an artist, satirist, caricaturist and essayist and founder and Editor-in-Chief of the Polish satirical weekly magazine 'Szpilki' (Pins). Lipiński studied at the Warsaw Academy for Fine Arts from 1933-39. During the war he was one of the artists working with the Polish Resistance and was involved in producing false documents. He was arrested by the Nazis in a street round-up and imprisoned in the infamous Pawiak prison, then in Mokotow prison before being taken to Auschwitz concentration camp. After the war he joined the Polish Communist Party and contributed to many newspapers and magazines, commenting on events such as the war trials in Nuremberg. In 1946 Eryk Lipiński, Henryk Tomaszewski and Jozef Mroszczak were approached by the Polish Film Department to design posters for them. After much discussion, they agreed but under the stipulation that the work they produced was on their own artistic terms, thus founding what is now called The Polish Poster School. They continued to be active on selection panels and encouraged other artists to submit designs. Lipiński organized the first International Poster Biennale in 1966. In 1978 he founded and became the first Director of the Museum of Caricature in Warsaw, which was named after him in 2002. (CA +VT)

- 27. LIPIŃSKI, Eryk (1908-1991).** WAG.
Na Pomoc! [Help!]. 1967.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/7-Poland.042/00645

Poster publicising the Polish release of the British film 'Help!' starring The Beatles in their second feature film. The poster highlights Lipiński's origins as a caricaturist, and is unusual in Polish film posters in depicting the film's stars so directly. (SS)

28. LIPIŃSKI, Eryk (1908-1991). FIBA
Sixth Women's Basketball Championships. 1958.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.154/00756

29. MŁODOZENIEC, Jan (1929-2000).
Warszawska Wiosna Estradowa [Warsaw Spring on the Stage]. 1965.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/7-Poland.060/00663

Poster publicising a festival of drama celebrating 'Seven Centuries of Warsaw' in 1965. (CD)

30. MROSZCZAK, Józef (1910-1975).
Krakowiacy i Gorale [Krakovians and Highlanders]. Date unknown.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/1-Poland.077/00680

'Krakowiacy i Gorale' which translates as 'Krakovians and Highlanders', is an opera by Wojciech Boguslawski. Boguslawski (1759-1829) was considered the 'father' of the Polish stage. One of the first operas to be written in Polish, 'Krakowiacy i Gorale', premiered in March 1794, the same year that growing unrest at the partitioning of Poland by Russia and Prussia led to the unsuccessful Kościuszko Uprising. The opera's political allusions and instant popularity resulted in it being banned by the authorities after only three performances and nearly led to Boguslawski being arrested.

Warsaw State Operetta moved into what is now known as the Roma Theatre in 1966, a year after Opera Warszawska returned to the newly restored Teatr Wielki. Warsaw State Operetta's initial performance was a staging of Boguslawski's 'Krakowiacy i Gorale'. Meanwhile over at the Teatr Wielki, Opera Warszawska, now renamed Teatr Wielki Opery i Baletu, were staging a version of 'Harnasie', (see poster no 7).

The timing of these productions may well be significant; 1966 being the Millennium celebrations of the founding of the Polish state, and its Christianisation. Both productions make use of the people and traditions of the Gorale, or Highlanders, as a subject and reflect the return to folkloric origins that often accompanies a struggle to forge a national identity and independent statehood.

The poster shows the flat, wide-rimmed blue hats worn by the Gorale and the peacock-bedecked four-cornered krakuskas traditionally worn by Krakovians. (CD)

- 31. PAŁKA, Julian (1923-2002).** WAG.
Oswiecim - Brzezinka [Auschwitz - Birkenau]. 1967 c.
Osborne Robinson Bequest LC.5-Russia.L05/00788

Pałka won a gold medal in the 'ideological posters' section of the second International Poster Biennale in Warsaw in 1968 for this poster, designed to commemorate the 1967 unveiling of the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial. The design starkly superimposes the monolithic silhouette of the memorial against a background of photographs of concentration camp prisoners. The text in this version of the poster is Russian. (SS)

- 32. STAROWIEYSKI, Francisczek (1930-2009).** CWF.
Dzielnicą Kruków. [Raven's End]. 1963?
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/7-Poland.063/00666

'Raven's End' is a 1963 Swedish film, directed by Bo Widerberg, which tells the story of a young working class man, an aspiring writer, who eventually leaves his family with their problems and limited horizons, his pregnant girlfriend, and the general misery of his life up to that point, to make a new life in Stockholm. Widerberg claimed the film was entirely fictional, though the story bears some resemblance to his own. It was shot on location in a run-down apartment block in Malmo with locals playing the part of extras to add authenticity. The film was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Keve Hjelm (playing the drunken father) was awarded the Guldbagge award for Best Actor. Starowieyski's image of an apparently armless, black silhouette figure of a man is perhaps offered hope in the winged, white shadow he casts before him.

Starowieyski was born in 1930. During World War II his family moved to Cracow. He studied painting at the Cracow Academy of Fine Arts 1949-52 and then at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, graduating in 1955. For a number of years he divided his time between the ateliers of Paris and Warsaw and established a reputation as one of the finest members of the Polish School of Poster Art. Starowieyski died in 2009. During his lifetime he took part in over 200 exhibitions throughout Europe, in Canada and the US. He was the first Polish artist to have a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York, in 1985. Starowieyski's style was baroque. His highly imaginative, calligraphically drawn images often combined dissimilar, unrelated motifs to surreal and metaphorical effect. (CA)

33. STAROWIEYSKI, Francisczek (1930-2009).

Smieszny Starusek [Funny Old Man]. 1970

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/1-Poland.091/00693

Starowieyski's poster advertised a production of Tadeusz Rozewicz's 1963 play 'Funny Old Man', performed at Teatr Dramatyczny in 1970. Rozewicz wrote: 'You should avoid all elements of the grotesque.' The 'Funny Old Man' in question presents his story as a monologue, as if in the courtroom, having been accused, falsely, of political disloyalty. After years of living as an impeccable citizen and working as a guide for the Board of Antiquities, it comes to light that he lives with a plastic dummy instead of a wife and dolls in place of children. The dolls are dismembered and some nailed to the table. Starowieyski's baroque style is sometimes surreal and grotesque, though never gratuitously so.

See poster 32 'Raven's End' by Starowieyski. A screw head is seen in the man's shoulder and letters and numbers on the points of the wings of the white shadow. Here, Starowieyski has incorporated two screw heads at the top of the man's trousers and letters and numbers detail the eyelets of the left baseball boot.

Rozewicz (born 1921) fought, with his brother, with the underground Polish Home Army against the Nazis. His brother was executed in 1944. A prolific poet and playwright, Rozewicz is one of Poland's most innovative writers.

Teatr Dramatyczny was founded in 1949 as The Theatre of the Home of the Polish Army, based in the bombastic Palace of Culture, Stalin's post-war gift to Warsaw. When Berthold Brecht visited the theatre he remarked: 'What a beautiful alienation effect!' It is famous for contemporary productions and for introducing new actors and playwrights. (CA)

34. SWIERZY, Waldemar (b.1931).

WAG.

Cyrk [Circus]. 1965.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.020/00624

See entry for poster number 19.

35. SWIERZY, Waldemar (b.1931).

Dziś do Ciebie przyjąć nie mogę.... [Today You Cannot Come ...].
1967.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/7-Poland.074/00677

A musical production written and produced by Lech Budrecki and Ireneusz Kanicki in 1967. The production includes, among other Polish Partisan songs, the popular title song which translates as 'Today You Cannot Come....' (CD)

36. SWIERZY, Waldemar (b.1931). State Committee for Physical Education and Tourism

'Krakowiak' - folk dance. 1962.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.039/00642

37. SWIERZY, Waldemar (b.1931).

Matwa [Cuttlefish]. 1966.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/1-Poland.078/00681

Swierzy's poster publicised two 1922 plays by Stanislaus Ignacy Witkiewicz: 'The Cuttlefish' or 'The Hyrcanian World View', and 'Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat'. They were performed at The National Theatre, Warsaw in 1966. For economy's sake (as was customary) no details of dates and times of performances are given so that the poster could be used multiple times.

Witkiewicz (1885-1939) was home-schooled due to his father's antipathy to 'the servitude of the school'. He joined the Russian Imperial Army at the start of World War I (1914-18), alienating his father, a Polish nationalist, who died in 1915 without seeing his son again. Witkiewicz wrote plays and novels, and worked as a painter and photographer. Of about forty plays written between 1918 and 1925 only twenty-one survive and only 'Jan Maciej Karol Hellcat' met with any critical success during his lifetime.

The National Theatre, Warsaw was established in 1765 by King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski. It was destroyed during World War II, rebuilt and re-opened in 1949 with a Socialist Realist production of 'Ygor Bulichov and Others' by Gorky. (CA)

38. SWIERZY, Waldemar (b.1931).

Namiestnik [The Deputy]. Unknown.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/7-Poland.076/00679

The poster shows the dome of St Peter's Basilica in Rome, its base engulfed in clouds of smoke. Although there is no date on the poster it seems likely to have been produced to promote the 1966 production of the play 'Der Stellvertrete' by the German playwright Rolf Hochhuth (1931-). This controversial play, which criticises the role played by the Vatican during World War II, was chosen by the Teatr Narodowy's director Kazimir Dejmek (1924-2002) to coincide with Poland's 1966 millennial celebration of the founding and Christianisation of Poland. (CD)

39. SWIERZY, Waldemar (b.1931). WAG.

Odpowiednia Oliwarka Do Każdego Zakamarka. [The right oiling can for every cranny] 1957.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.158/00760

This quirky poster, apparently promoting the care and maintenance of machinery, illustrates the range and diversity of Swierzy's design work. This exhibition also features commissions he undertook for the circus, zoo and the State Committee for Physical Education and Tourism, as well as film and theatre productions (see posters 34-41). (SS)

40. SWIERZY, Waldemar (b.1931). CWF.

Tarpany 1961.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/1-Poland.098/00700

'Tarpany' translates as Tarpan – an extinct species of wild horse, also known as the Eurasian wild horse. The modern Tarpan is a genetic recreation of the original wild breed. On a powerful blue background the female centaur (known as Kentaurides in Classical literature) looks out confidently, smiling enigmatically. A male head in profile is seen in the background. Philostratus the Elder (3rd century AD) describes a white female centaur 'that grows out of a black mare, and the very opposition of the colours helps to produce the united beauty of the whole.' The composite, hybrid figure is a liminal being, on the threshold between human and animal form and nature. Having intermediate status, hybrid figures like Centaurs could act as mentors but could also be uncanny, dangerous beings.

Swierzy was a graduate of the Cracow Academy of Fine Arts, 1952. He taught at the Poznan Academy of Fine Arts, then at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts and served as President of the Biennale in Warsaw. Swierzy has produced over 1,500 posters and his poster 'Masowsze', 1954, has sold over 1 million copies. His work has been exhibited internationally. Troxler, N.: Swierzy's 'pictures depict the world as a circus, a tragic transience of ideologies, a surrealist dance.' He is regarded as one of the most important poster artists of our time. (CA)

- 41. SWIERZY, Waldemar (b.1931).** WAG.
Zwiedzajcie Zoo [Visit the Zoo]. 1967.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.030/00632

Poster publicising the municipal zoo in Warsaw.

- 42. TOMASZEWSKI, Henryk (1914-2005).**

1 Maja. [May Day] c 1958.
Osborne Robinson Bequest LC.5-Poland.L01/00604

A poster to celebrate May Day, published c. 1958. The dove sits on a thick cord composed of flags joined in a knot at the centre. The dove is a traditional symbol of peace. (See also poster number 20)

Tomaszewski graduated from the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts in 1939. He was a Professor there from 1952-85. During the 5 year German occupation Poles were denied access to films from abroad. Tomaszewski described the beginnings of post-war poster design. 'A woman responsible for movie propaganda' contacted him with the news that they were going to receive some American films to distribute, but they did not like the posters. Would Tomaszewski be interested in designing some? Tomaszewski met with a small group of colleagues and they agreed, on the condition that 'the posters would not resemble American ones.' Nor Japanese, Russian or Swiss. They wanted to make things their own way. The artists were invited to screenings. Tomaszewski: 'I was trying to find the essence of the film. I was trying to feel the impression that the film had on me. I wanted to illustrate this essence with my own language, in my own way.' Competition between artists produced creative results. Tomaszewski: 'We began racing among ourselves. We always wanted to make something formally better than the other.' An emotional engagement was integral to the work and the boundary between art and design was bridged. The gallery for their work was the street.

80% of Warsaw had been destroyed during the war. As rebuilding began many ruins were surrounded by fences. These fences became billboards. In cities and towns devoid of advertising under Communist rule, posters provided colour and interest to a population hungry for culture – they were referred to as ‘flowers’. (CA)

43. TOMASZEWSKI, Henryk (1914-2005).

Marysia i Napoleon [Maria and Napoleon]. 1966.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/1-Poland.082/00685

The film ‘Marysia i Napoleon’ was written by Andrzej Jarecki (1933-1993). The film tells the story of the relationship between Napoleon Bonaparte and a Polish noblewoman, Maria Walewska. Walewska’s adulterous relationship with Napoleon was said to be encouraged in order that he should be more sympathetic to Poland’s attempts to gain its independence from Prussia, Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There is a second strand to the film set in contemporary times in which a French scientist meets a Polish woman while travelling to Warsaw. The red four-cornered hat (also seen in posters no 30 and 36), worn by the Krakovians but often adopted as a symbol of Poland, is perched upon the head of the angelic figure encircled in blue. (CD)

44. ZAKREWSKA-OBESPIAN, Elzbieta CWF.

Poniewaz Kocham [Because I Love]. 1958?.

Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.126/00728

The flat colours and the use of space in this poster, promoting the Japanese film ‘Because I Love’, recall the Japanese woodblock prints: Ukiyo-e (floating world picture), so influential on artists such as Edgar Degas, Mary Cassatt and in the posters of Toulouse-Lautrec. There are also echoes of Picasso’s style in the figure of the woman. The text is elegantly and subtly incorporated in the design.

Approved by the censors in 1957 (see the censor’s code: B-7 57), this poster is an example of Elzbieta Zakrewska-Obespian’s later work. During the hardest years of Stalinist terror in Poland, which started to change after Stalin’s death in 1953, posters lied about the reality of life under Communist rule and Elzbieta, with her husband Wlodzimierz, were amongst several artists producing work of this kind. Even in the poorest, grayest of cities, with the conventional pastel naïve realism of Socialist Realism, their posters painted a picture of a country being built by the Communists as if it were a step

towards paradise on earth. Other artists of this trend were Lucjan Jagodzinski, Wladyslaw Janiszewski and Witold Chmielewski. (CA)

- 45. ZAMECZNIK, Stanislaw (1909-1971).** WAG.
Wystawa Współczesnej Architektury Szwajcarskiej [Exhibition of Contemporary Swiss Architecture]. 1957.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.033/00636

Stanislaw Zamecznik was an architect and exhibition designer who described his work as 'the art of space'. In 1957 – the same year he produced this poster for an exhibition of contemporary Swiss architecture at The Palace of Culture, Warsaw – he worked with Wojciech Fangor and Oskar Hansen on 'A Study in Space', considered the first artistic environment in Poland, at the New Culture Salon in Warsaw (see also entry for Fangor under poster number 12). (SS)

- 46. ZAMECZNIK, Wojciech (1923-1967).** WAG / Ministry of Polish Culture.
Ogólnopolska Wystawa Architektury Wnętrz [Exhibition of Polish Design]. 1957.
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.3/6-Poland.031/00633

Wojciech Zamecznik, the brother of Stanislaw (see above), studied at the Faculty of Architecture and Interiors at the College of Engineering in Warsaw. He was imprisoned at Birkenau during World War Two and afterwards resumed his studies at Warsaw Polytechnic. After his death in 1967 his work was exhibited in a retrospective at the second International Poster Biennale in Warsaw in 1968. (SS)

- 47. ZAMECZNIK, Wojciech (1923-1967).**
Czerwony Kwiat [The Red Flower]. 1959?
Osborne Robinson Bequest SC.4/2-Poland.120/00722

Poster publicising the Polish release of the film 'The Red Flower' by Yugoslavian director Gustav Gavrin. The film follows the story of a group of Yugoslavian Officers held as Prisoners of War during World War Two, and their refusal to co-operate with their German captors. (SS)

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