

ROSENBERG

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Polish Poster Collection

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# The Collection

The Rosenberg Poster Collection is the most comprehensive private pre-1945 and post-war collection of original Polish posters covering movies, theater, music, jazz, opera, dance, sports, political, circus, exhibitions and rare product advertising. The collection represents, in depth, the work of the leading artists from the acclaimed Polish School of Design.



# Strategic Significance

From 1945 to the end of Communist rule in Poland, one art form dominated the country's attention---the cultural poster. Heralded worldwide as the most influential period in innovative graphic design, The Rosenberg Collection, assembled over the span of 30 years, is the largest and most in-depth private collection of these original fine art works on paper. This Collection is best suited to an institution that seeks to enhance its leadership by recognizing artists and unique influential art movements that dominate a specialized art form. Of special note is the Collection's pre-WWII film, political, exhibition and advertising posters. Many of these posters are believed to represent the only surviving original Polish posters from this period.

The socio-historical context in which the Polish Style of Poster Design flourished, consisted of oppression, regulatory rigidity, and censorship. Poland's leading artists, professors of art, design and architecture focused their passion on one art form, the cultural advertising poster. To the people, poster art in the streets---on walls, fences and kiosks, represented hope, and the only beauty visible in their otherwise gray landscape.

The paradox of artists doing their best work under oppressive conditions arose from the demanding negotiation between Professor Henryk Tomaszewski and the Russian government at the end of WWII. Cultural Officials wanted the artists to create posters to promote cultural events such as imported U.S. films---Tomaszewski insisted, that to gain his support, and that of the artistic community and universities, the visual imagery created by the poster designers could not be censored or made to conform to the prevailing social realism style. An agreement was reached, and a renaissance creating a new visual language using symbolism and metaphor was born.

Through international biennales and graphic design competitions, Polish posters attracted international acclaim, and became one of the art world's great stories of creativity. Recent film festivals officially selected the documentary film *Freedom On The Fence* that pays tribute to this inspiring art history and homage to the now deceased decades of Polish artists that produced these works.



# The Scope

Poland's academies of fine art and design drew the country's most passionate art students. The competition to become a recognized artist was heavily dependent on establishing a presence in poster design. Cultural posters advertising film, theater, music, dance, sports, exhibitions and virtually all-public programs were produced in relatively small numbers to satisfy the number of locations where they would be displayed in public places.

These posters were not made for sale. Under Communist rule private art galleries were not permitted. Enterprising collectors in Poland and elsewhere in Europe and Scandinavia secured a poster from lithographic printers---others were destroyed by being pasted on walls or fences for public display.

Paper and ink was expensive so there were no stockpiles of extra posters as was common in European countries where product-advertising posters were produced. Both the limited production and the fragility of the paper seriously impacted survival of posters from the great period of 1945-1980. The Rosenberg Collection preserved these most noteworthy works from this period with artist, subject and condition paramount in selecting the best of the best.

All the globally recognized Polish artists are represented in the Collection---with special emphasis on those whose works won international awards, appeared in solo and group shows in museums and educational institutions and whose careers spanned the decades producing the most innovative and powerful examples of poster design.

Martin Rosenberg's research and personal interviews of art critics, curators, collectors and artists shaped the high quality and balance of this Collection.



# The Origin

In the early 1980's, while attending a business meeting in San Francisco, Martin Rosenberg came across a small group of vintage Polish film, theater and circus posters in a rarely accessed art storage file of a poster gallery. He recognized that the images didn't conform to any design styles in Europe he was familiar with. The language was Polish and the posters were produced in the 1960's and 1970's. A few phone calls made on the following morning confirmed their Polish provenance. More exciting, however, was the feedback from a Chicago based art director of an international advertising firm that these were images appearing in their Graphis Annual publications and the innovative concepts in these award-winning posters were heavily borrowed over many decades by other graphic designers.

Martin acquired the entire lot of posters, feeling strongly that here was a genre of fine art poster design relatively unknown in the Americas. Research validated that there were no major collections, and only modest examples in institutions such as Chicago's Polish Museum of America, The Museum of Modern Art in New York and The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

When the sources for more information seemed exhausted in the U.S., Martin began extensive travel to Poland. Over the next nearly three decades, he developed relationships with artists, professors, museums, collectors and graphic designers from whom he could build a deep knowledge of the history of Polish posters and the historical context in which they were created.

Until the Solidarity movement removed the Communist regime from power and international shipping became reliable, Martin hand carried all the posters acquired in Europe back to the U.S. The first public exhibition he produced was for the Polish Museum of America in 1990---it was the largest showing of vintage Polish posters ever presented outside of Warsaw. Martin went on to produce many exhibitions, author articles, co-produce books, lecture and serve as executive producer and art consultant for the documentary film on the Polish poster, *Freedom On The Fence*.



# Global Interest

Within the appendices included in this proposal are listings of a portion of the news sources reporting Polish poster exhibitions around the globe. Also noted is a portion of the museums known to have examples of the Polish poster in their collections. This research only reaches back a few years so it is not intended to be a comprehensive study.

Much of the general public's knowledge of the Polish poster comes through exhibitions by museums, public and art organizations, galleries and private collectors.

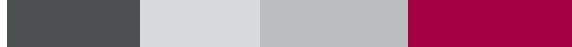
The heightened demand for vintage Polish posters by art collectors and investors corresponds to the high valuations of fine art prices realized in auction sales around the world. Original poster design has become firmly established as a desirable art medium especially where there is a combination of rarity, artistic recognition, innovative composition and design, and appreciation for the poster's subject matter.

Nowhere has this been evident as much as in the dramatic escalation of prices for rare movie posters. Countries whose import of foreign films led to established artists designing original advertising posters for those films is getting the greatest attention. Poland's love of movies produced the first innovative designs in movie posters in the world. Beginning in 1947, films imported to Poland all had a unique poster created by the leading artists of the times led by Professor Henryk Tomaszewski (1914-2005), and supported by fellow painters Tadeusz Trepkowski (1914-1954), and Eryk Lipinski (1908-1991). Artist Tadeusz Gronowski (1894-1990), who studied in Paris, created elegantly styled cultural posters for theater, music and exhibitions during this formative period.

The earliest poster biennales showed the world the "new visual styles" being produced in Poland---their work quickly became internationally recognized.

The largest single topical component of The Rosenberg Collection is the vintage movie posters that represent the period 1945-1970's.

They were printed in extremely small quantities---enough for hanging in the streets to advertise movies being shown. These posters were not produced for sale so their rarity has already been established.



Other historically and important portions of the Collection include:

- Propaganda reflecting the periods of German and Russian control.
- Social and cultural topics such as health, safety in the workplace, education, literature, travel and sports.
- Jewish culture, theater, exhibitions and remembrance posters.
- Exhibition posters from museums and universities for displays of fine art, rare books, architecture and design symposiums, sculpture and archaeology.
- Examples of product advertising posters during the Communist regime and earlier, are within the Collection.

### **Of Special Note:**

It is unique in the annals of art history to identify an extended period when an entire country's art academies, artists and the public focused their creative energy on a single medium---the cultural advertising poster.

It has been said by leading graphic designers and art critics that the suppression of basic personal freedoms in Poland by a totalitarian government provided the stimulus for such innovative expression.

The desire to produce a Polish cultural identity using the poster as a powerful visual communication language kept hope alive and encouraged breaking the chains of oppression.

# Artists Summary

The post WWII period saw the rebuilding of Warsaw, the gradual return of cultural activity, and Communist rule, permeating all aspects of Polish society. The artists and educators surviving the horrific war years applied their inner convictions, and talent, from which they created a new national identity. It would be visual, and unlike what the Russian hierarchy wanted, it would not draw upon the art styles of America or Europe.

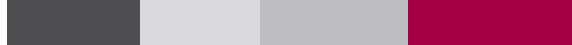
The great names of the post-war movement are Henryk Tomaszewski (1914-2005), Eryk Lipinski (1908-1991), Tadeusz Trepkowski (1914-1954), and Jozef Mroszczak (1910-1975). Of the earlier interwar generation, only Tadeusz Gronowski (1894-1990) remained---having transplanted to Poland his studies in France with A.M. Cassandre's (1901-1968) ideas of modernism and art deco.

Gradually, the younger generation entered the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, and began to design posters. They were trained as painters or architects. Jan Lenica and Wojciech Fangor introduced painterly elements such as texture and strong color. Jozef Mroszczak began to teach at the Academy.

The art was so distinctive it became known simply as the Polish School---it broke cold war obstacles. Polish poster exhibitions and numerous international awards accelerated recognition of these artists. As the 1950's emerged, the older forms of collage combined with influences of abstraction, surrealism and photographic techniques---the second wave of artists stressed design, typography and distancing the art from the Stalinist era. Especially noteworthy are Witold Chmielewski, Wiktor Gorka, Julian Palka, Waldemar Swierzy, Jan Mlodozieniec, Wojciech Zamecznik, Franciszek Starowieyski, Roman Cieslewicz, Liliana Baczewska and Hanna Bodnar.

In the 1960's strong graphic contrasts influenced poster design. Pop art was woven together to adapt new techniques. Simplicity of form, as taught by Professor Henryk Tomaszewski, took hold in younger artists. Artists representing these new styles include Leszek Holdanowicz, Bronislaw Zelek, Marek Freudenreich, Andrzej Krajewski, Hubert Hilscher, Maciej Urbaniec, and Jerzy Flisak.





The 1970's saw a painterly emphasis and increasing influence from outside of Warsaw. The Wrocław Four reflected the new emerging artists; Jan Jaromir Aleksion, Jerzy Czerniawski, Eugeniusz Get Stankiewicz and Jan Sawka. Their approach included more irony, paradox and symbolism. Other maturing and new designers such as Lech Majewski, Mieczyslaw Gorowski, Marcin Mroszczak, Andrzej Klimowski, Mieczyslaw Wasilewski, Grzegorz Marszalek, Jakub Erol, Marian Stachurski, continuously raised the level of artistic competition.

Artists including Wiktor Sadowski, Stasys Eidrgevicius, Wieslaw Walkuski, Rafal Olbinski, Roslaw Szaybo and Roman Kalarus led the final creative surge before the late 1980's Solidarity movement brought political change.

# The Artists

## The Founders : Fine Art Poster Movement

Tadeusz Gronowski (1894-1990)	Eryk Lipinski (1908-1991)	Henryk Tomaszewski (1914-2005)	Tadeusz Trepkowski (1914-1954)
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## The Leaders: A New Language of Visual Art & Communication

Liliana Baczewska (1931-)	Hanna Bodnar (1929-)	Witold Chmielewski (1910-)	Roman Cieslewicz (1930-1996)
Wojciech Fangor (1922-)	Jerzy Flisak (1930-2008)	Wiktor Gorka (1922-2004)	Hubert Hilscher (1924-1999)
Maria Ihnatowicz (1937-)	Witold Janowski (1926-2006)	Andrzej Krajewski (1933-)	Jan Lenica (1928-2001)
Jan Mlodozieniec (1929-2000)	Jozef Mroszczak (1910-1975)	Zymunt Nirnstein (1894-1969)	Stefan Norblin (1892-1953)
Julian Palka (1923-2002)	Jerzy Srokowski (1910-1975)	Marian Stachurski (1931-1980)	Franciszek Starowieyski (1930-2009)
Waldemar Swierzy (1931-)	Jerzy Treutler (1931-)	Maciej Urbaniec (1925-2004)	Wojciech Wenzel (1925-)
Wojciech Zamecznik (1923-1967)	Stanislaw Zamecznik (1909-1971)		

# The Artists (cont'd)

The Successors: Modernism & Contemporary Design (Partial List)			
Jerzy Czerniawski (1947-)	Stasys Eidrigevicius (1949-)	Jakub Erol (1941-)	Marek Freudenreich (1939-)
Mieczysław Gorowski (1941-2011)	Maciej Hibner (1931-)	Hubert Hilscher (1924-1999)	Leszek Holdanowicz (1937-)
Jan Jaromir Aleksiu (1940-)	Tadeusz Jodlowski (1925-)	Roman Kalarus (1951-)	Andrzej Klimowski (1949-)
Edward Lutczyn (1947-)	Lech Majewski (1947-)	Grzegorz Marszalek (1946-)	Marcin Mroszczak (1950-)
Marian Nowinski (1944-)	Rafal Olbinski (1943-)	Andrzej Pagowski (1953-)	Wladyslaw Pluta (1949-)
Janusz Rapnicki (1926-1969)	Wieslaw Rosocha (1945-)	Tomasz Ruminski (1930-1982)	Wiktor Sadowski (1956-)
Wiktor Sadowski (1956-)	Jan Sawka (1946-2012)	Wojciech Siudmak (1942-)	Romuald Socha (1943-)
Roslaw Szybo (1933-)	Wieslaw Walkuski (1956-)	Mieczyslaw Wasilewski (1942-)	Leszek Wisniewski (1953-)
Maciej Zbikowski (1935-)	Bronislaw Zelek (1935-)		



# Collection Management

Posters from the Collection have appeared in fine art books, magazines and newspapers. Exhibitions have been held in public buildings, museums, theaters, film festivals, classical music concerts, International poster fairs and galleries. The depth of material to draw upon, by artist, style and topic, offers a wide range of themes to produce exhibitions.

A library of reference materials in the form of books, catalogues, and articles accompanies the Collection. High-resolution transparencies have been made of over two thousand posters in the Collection. A searchable database is being updated and refined.

Approximately one thousand posters have been archival mounted. The remainder are conserved in flat art files making collection management uncomplicated.



# Collection References

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## **Bernard Ewell**, Accredited Senior Appraiser

“The Rosenberg Collection is unique and it would be impossible to create it now.”  
Bernard Ewell Art Appraisals, Santa Fe, NM  
(800) 884.3254  
artpro@bernardewell.com



# Worldwide Museum Collections

Museum of Modern Art New York City, New York, U.S.A.  
Musée de la Publicité (The Louvre) Paris, France  
Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts Moscow, Russia  
Polish Museum of America Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.  
Swiss Poster Museum Lausanne, Switzerland  
Victoria and Albert Museum London, United Kingdom  
Museum Folkwang Essen, Germany  
The Poster Museum Wilanow, Warsaw, Poland  
National Museum Poznan, Poland  
Autry Museum Western Heritage Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.  
Ian Potter Museum of Art Melbourne, Australia  
National Film & Sound Archive Canberra, Australia  
DePaul Art Museum Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.  
Fryderyk Chopin Museum Warsaw, Poland  
Wallace Library Rochester Institute Technology, New York, U.S.A.  
The Rosenberg Collection Santa Fe, New Mexico, U.S.A.  
The National Museum Modern Art Tokyo, Japan  
University of Derby Derby, United Kingdom  
Cooper Union Collection Science & Art New York, N.Y. U.S.A.  
Pigasus Gallery Berlin, Germany  
Northern Illinois University, College Visual Arts Illinois, U.S.A.  
Drexel University Pearlstein Gallery Philadelphia, PA, U.S.A.



# Recent Exhibitions

National Academy Fine Art	New Delhi, India
Museum of Modern Art	New York, U.S.A.
Hoorn Affiche Museum	Hoorn, Netherlands
Illinois Institute of Art	Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A
Salon International de L’Affiche	Paris, France—UNESCO Event
Texas State History Museum	Austin, Texas, U.S.A.
Cinephilia West	London, United Kingdom
National Museum Modern Art	Tokyo, Japan
Council of Europe	Strasbourg, Austria
Church of St. John	London, United Kingdom
Kemistry Gallery	London, United Kingdom
Sacred Heart University	Fairfield, Connecticut, U.S.A.
Northwestern/Medill University	Chicago, IL, U.S.A.
Pegasus Gallery	Berlin, Germany
Drexel University	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
Northern Illinois University	DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A.
Ogniwo Polish Museum	Manitoba, Canada
Traverse Theater	Edinburgh, Scotland
Galeria MAK	Sarajevo, Bosnia
St. George Church	London, United Kingdom

# Martin Rosenberg, PhD Biography

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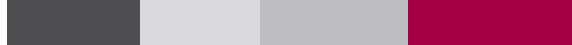
**Residence U.S:** 1204 Gonzales Court Santa Fe, New Mexico

**Website:** <http://www.mrposter.com>  
<http://www.rosenbergcollection.com>

**Books:** Sacred Grounds: Musings From the Mountains of Santa Fe 2010  
Grab the Brass Ring 2011 (Literary Sala Reading in San Miguel 2011)  
Mist Over The River Styx (editing phase May 2012) Mystery Series

**Film:** Freedom on the Fence (Executive Producer) Art Documentary  
Polish Poster Artists: Creativity Under Oppression





### **Community Service:**

- Dialogue San Miguel: Founder and Program Director
- KSFR Public Radio: Santa Fe, New Mexico, Board of Directors
- Santa Fe Film Festival, Chairman Emeritus
- International Vintage Poster Dealers Assoc., Founding Board Mbr.

**The Arts:** DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL Member, Art Advisory Board

### **Current Projects:**

- Producer: Mexico Exhibition of life of Carlos Arruza
- Founder & Program Director: Dialogue San Miguel-A Community Forum
- Poster Design Masters: Exhibition in San Miguel De Allende, Mexico
- Vintage Poster Exhibition, May 2011 Illinois Arts Institute, Chicago
- Lecture and Film Screening to coincide with exhibition from The Rosenberg Poster Collection
- Cataloguing The Rosenberg Collection for international contemporary art museum
- The Rosenberg Collection is the world's largest private collection of vintage and post-modern Polish Cultural Posters

Rosenberg Collection