

ARKEN

PRESS RELEASE

Alphonse Mucha at ARKEN

ARKEN's big exhibition of the Art Nouveau master Alphonse Mucha introduces Mucha's aesthetic universe and unfolds the many contradictory tendencies of the *fin de siècle* period – between nature and city, consumption and beauty, the material and the spiritual.

Long, loose hair, swirling organic patterns and sensual women are the basic elements in the seductive universe of the Czech-born Art Nouveau artist Alphonse Mucha. Mucha made his own unique mark on Paris in the time after 1900 with ground-breaking poster art, jewellery design and shop décor. On 3 February 2018 ARKEN opens a grand exhibition presenting 125 works by this wide-ranging artist. *ALPHONSE MUCHA* explores how Art Nouveau – with Mucha as 'designer-in-chief' of the image and experience of the city – paved the way for the thoroughly aestheticized and stage-directed everyday life that characterizes our own time.

Le Style Mucha

On the morning of New Year's Day 1895 the Parisians woke up to a new kind of street scenery. Mucha had designed a pioneering life-size poster showing the fêted actress Sarah Bernhardt in the title role of *Gismonda*. The posters hung on all the advertising columns of the city and signalled the peak of the new aesthetic era of Art Nouveau. Mucha wanted to revolutionize everyday life through sensuality, beauty and the spiritualizing power of nature. In opposition to the conservative dogmas of high culture, reserved for a narrow upper class, Mucha fused his art with the new consumer culture. His distinctive line and style, *Le Style Mucha*, spread through everything from consumer items to mass-produced posters and into the farthest reaches of the city and society.

Mucha in full flight at ARKEN

ALPHONSE MUCHA explores the links between the worlds of nature and the city, consumption and beauty in Mucha's art through posters, lithographs, jewellery, utility objects, sketches, photographs and paintings. The exhibition tells the story of Mucha's close collaboration with Sarah Bernhardt and his epoch-making influence on poster art and lithography in mass reproductions. It also examines Mucha's work with body language, gesture and the *mise-en-scène* of the female body – and how this becomes part of an innovative advertising idiom. Mucha introduces a new, eroticized aesthetic and an image of woman that forms a precedent for the pin-up girls of popular culture in the 1940s and the visual imagery of pop culture and the mass media today. The exhibition also looks at how the hippie generation of the late 1960s found inspiration in the utopian impulse and spiritual power of Mucha's mind-expanding universe for the design of psychedelic rock posters and album covers. A bombardment of the senses awaits the visitor to ARKEN this February. The exhibition runs from 3 February to 3 June 2018.

For further information please contact:
Head of Communications Marie-Louise Dunker
Phone +45 40 87 27 47
E-mail: marie-louise.dunker@arken.dk

Press Coordinator Lea Bolvig
Phone +45 30 45 67 18
E-mail: lea.bolvig@arken.dk