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19th July, 2010
12:46 pm

Events/Links

Education/
Resources

Just Add Stock
Awards

Search



Mirror man. *Roman Cieřlewicz shouts, entertains and provokes from the gallery walls*

Published on Friday, 16 July, 2010 | 9:04 am

If you see just one design exhibition this summer, make it the Roman Cieřlewicz retrospective at the RCA's Gulbenkian Galleries, *writes John L Walters*. And see it soon, because it comes to an end in just over three weeks, on Saturday 7 August.

It is a moving and exhilarating show, packed with work and beautifully staged and curated by David Crowley, Andrzej Klimowski, Jeff Willis (RCA) and Anna Grabowska-Konwent (pictured **below**, left, with Chantal Petit, Cieřlewicz's widow) of the National Museum in Poznań.

Notebook

#postermadness Poster Cabaret in Austin, with work by Aesthetic Apparatus @theapparatus), Jason Munn (see #Eye76) and Jim Flora #musicdesign 1 hr ago
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Categories

- Awards madness | **35**
- Book design | **39**
- Design education | **28**
- Design history | **111**
- Graphic Design | **340**
- Illustration | **105**
- Magazines | **76**
- Music design | **43**
- New Media | **59**
- Photography | **85**
- Posters | **57**
- Reviews | **25**
- Technology | **97**
- Typography | **126**
- Uncategorized | **0**
- Visual Culture | **296**



Archive

Select Month





At last night's private view, Klimowski (**above**) told us that Cieślewicz's native Poland is a country where the graphic designer is taken seriously – seen on a par with writers, film-makers and theatre directors, and collaborating with them as an equal. When Cieślewicz moved to Paris in 1963 he continued to work in this way; Klimowski cited his poster for Roman Polanski's famous production of *Amadeus* (**below** left).

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- Hoofdletters
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- Social vision
- Social vision
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- Graphic design on the radio
- It's Nice That
- Postcards from the edge
- Wim Crowel
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Art bollocks is everywhere you look. Woolly 'artspeak' is nothing new, but who will stem the flow?
| [41](#)

Pan Am's Helvetica dreamtime. How I unearthed a forgotten chapter in corporate design history
| [36](#)

Golden age of type blogs? A whistle-stop tour through the top ten typographic weblogs
| [32](#)

TypoBerlin Day Three. Jan Middendorp goes into Space and returns to (Sol) Sender
| [32](#)

The Peter Saville principle. 'Music covers are not graphic design, they communicate nothing'
| [21](#)



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| Other contributors 





There are more than 150 exhibits, which makes for a heady visual experience, quite unlike the kind of art show where you see the same language repeated over and over again with small variations.

You see the famous Cieślewicz posters, sure, including the ones for *Katastrofa* and *Vertigo* (see Preview in *Eye* 76), but there are collages, magazine covers and fashion spreads, visual experiments such as the 'mirror' pieces (**top**) and animations. Some of the work is reproduced directly on pillars and walls, which adds to the drama of the display.

Cieślewicz held a mirror to humanity that's as sharp and clear and inspiring as any fine artist or writer of his generation, while making unequivocal graphic design – functional, ephemeral, mass-produced ... bloody marvellous.

We'll post more (and better) images later. There's also a handsome, large-format 24-page catalogue (**below**) with texts by Klimowski and Crowley.



Entry is free, and but unfortunately the show is only on for three weeks, so let me restate that opening sentence. If you see just one exhibition of *any* kind this summer, make it this one. (Go on your way to the park, or a Prom.) This is graphic design that (without losing any vitality or directness as genuine graphic design) murmurs, shouts, screams, entertains and provokes from the gallery wall.

Roman Cieřlewicz retrospective

16 July - 17 August

MON-SAT 11am - 7pm (16 July 11am - 5.30 PM)

Royal College of Art

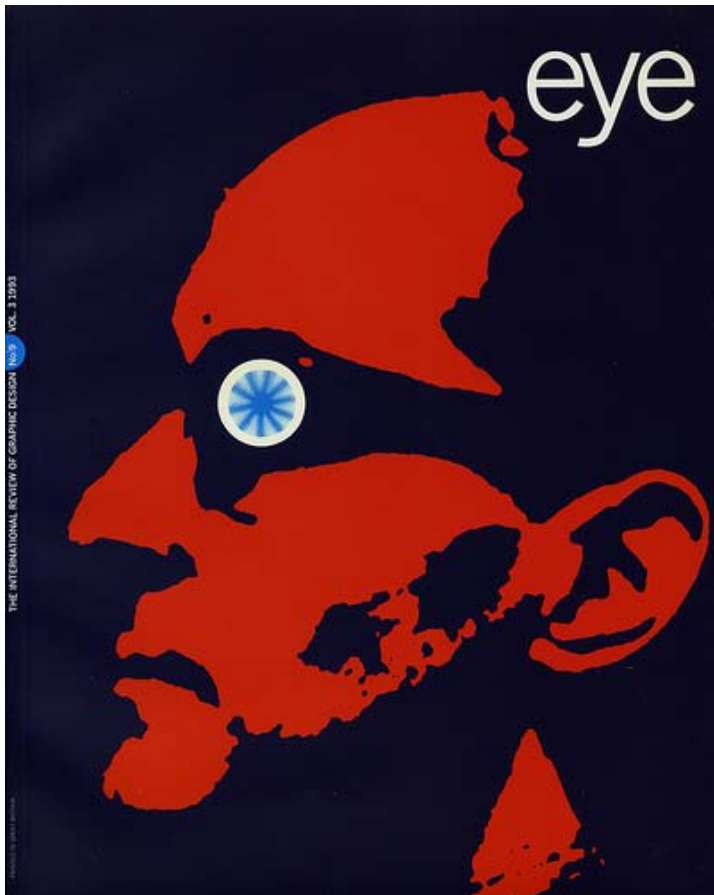
Gulbenkian Galleries

Kensington Gore

London SW7 2EU

FREE ENTRY

Margo Rouard-Snowman's 'Reputations' interview with Cieřlewicz in *Eye* no. 9 (cover **below** with Cieřlewicz's Godard) is now available online, bit.ly/Cieslewicz.



Eye magazine is available from all good design bookshops and at the online [Eye shop](#), where you can order subscriptions, single issues and back issues. The summer issue, *Eye* 76, out today, is a music special. You can read a selection of pages on [Eye Before You Buy](#) on Issuu.

Student subscriptions are **half price**, see bit.ly/EyeStudentOffer.

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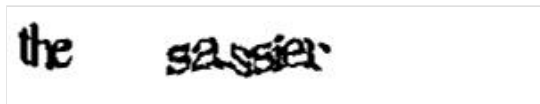
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