



## Roman Cieslewicz

Until Sat Aug 7 *Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2EJ*

Art: Galleries: Mayfair to Sloane Square **FREE**  Recommended



Polish Fashion, poster by Roman Cieslewicz, 1959 - Royal College of Art

**Time Out says** ★★★★★

By **Gabriel Coxhead**

Posted: Thu Jul 22 2010

Roman Cieslewicz's name may not instantly familiar, but there are at least a couple of images in the Polish graphic designer's retrospective that almost certainly will be: his poster for the Polish release of Hitchcock's 'Vertigo', for one, famously depicting a stark, monochrome human skull emblazoned with dizzying, concentric circles; or perhaps his magazine cover satirising the Cold War arms race, with its colourful cartoon of Soviet and American superheroes as identical mirror-images of each other.

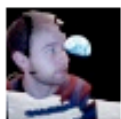
It's this sort of visual acuity that made Cieslewicz so renowned amongst designers, and there are scores of other, equally cogent examples here, arranged into chronological sections. To begin with, he was a pioneering poster designer, influenced by surrealist concepts of montage and juxtaposition. Then, following his move to Paris in 1963, and while working for both fashion magazines and leftist periodicals, he developed a simpler, brighter, pop-orientated style. Later still, he was to experiment with other styles: revisiting the constructivism of his Soviet forebears in a series of museum posters during the '80s; and, perhaps most effectively of all, refining his photomontage techniques, mixing together bits from old master paintings and glossy magazines to form a sort of gothic-tinged surrealism, full of disturbing images of enchantment and transformation.

Extensive as the exhibition is, though, it could do with slightly more explanation and discussion, either as wall-texts or in the catalogue - budgetary constraints, presumably - yet it's frustrating not to know why, for instance, Cieslewicz repeatedly fixated upon pictures of skulls throughout his career. On the other hand, letting images speak for themselves is what his work was all about, as a final display of pages from his own, posthumously published magazine reveals, with their dense, dark miscellany of appropriated imagery.

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### Who's going? (4 people are going)

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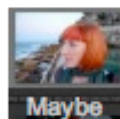
Chris  
Thompsor



Leigh  
Travers



Zuza  
Pogorzels



Cathie  
McGinn

Are you going?

Yes

Maybe


No

## Royal College of Art details

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