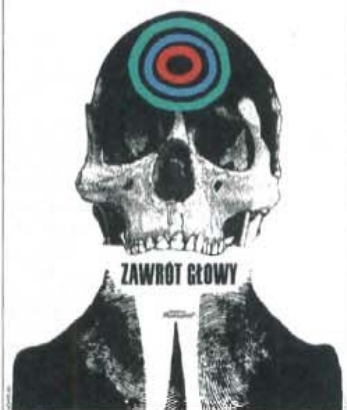


Roman Cieslewicz

KIM NOVAK STREPTAKI 1951 | JAMES STEWART
BARBARA DEL GEDDES ZOBACZANIE KONTAKT W POKOJU | BARWNYN FIRMIE
HITCHCOCKA



Poster for 'Vertigo', 1963

★★★★★

Royal College of Art Chelsea to Westbourne Park

The name may not be instantly familiar, but there are a number of images in this Polish graphic designer's retrospective that almost certainly will be: his poster for the Polish release of Hitchcock's 'Vertigo', for one, that depicts a stark, monochrome 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 among other designers. To begin with, he worked on pioneering posters, using surrealist 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 the constructivism of his Soviet forebears and, perhaps most effectively of all, he refined his photomontage technique, mixing together bits from old master paintings and glossy magazines to form gothic-tinged images full of enchantment and transformation.

Extensive as the exhibition is, it could do with 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. *Gabriel Coxhead*

Colour Is the Keyboard



Alan Davie, 'Diamond Romance'; Albert Irvin, 'Rampart'; Arabella Hope, 'Pink Bath'

★★★★★

Gimpel Fils Mayfair to Sloane Square

The title of this summer group show comes from Kandinsky's mixed metaphor for the synaesthetic effects he experienced when seeing colours as visual equivalents of musical notes. While Kandinsky saw different hues when playing the keys of a piano, I could only muster the refrain from 'I Can Sing a Rainbow' while taking in this chromatic spread.

Each of the works here has one predominant colour and the galleries are arranged roughly in the sequence of a colour wheel. So we have Arabella Hope's pinky-red paint and fabric representation of a bathroom leading on to Albert Irvin's dark-red-over-orange abstract from 1976, followed by Alan Davie's busy, but mostly orange canvas

from 1964. Next comes Andres Serrano's large photographic portrait of Russian Orthodox Bishop Mercurius, wearing elaborate yellow robes, and so on, up to Lucy Stein's expressive painting with its strong purple-violets.

Of course, colours are also associated with states and emotions – red for danger, green for calm, for example, so it's interesting to see the more figurative works going against this. The jovially proportioned Bishop may be resplendent in sunny gold but his eyes are troubled and sad, while the small boy at the centre of Carolina Raquel Antich's painting is surrounded by a sea of melancholy blue, yet epitomises the dreamy, carefree innocence of childhood. To mix the metaphors even more, the artists here may be singing a rainbow, but they're all doing it to a different tune. *Helen Sumpter*

Art

ROMAN CIEŚLEWICZ

A MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION OF
THE WORK BY ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART
GULBENKIAN GALLERIES
KENSINGTON GORE
LONDON SW7 2EU
16 JULY - 7 AUGUST 2010
MON - SAT 11AM - 7PM
FRI 16 JULY 11AM - 5.30PM
FREE ENTRY

SATURDAY 31 JULY 2-3 pm: EXHIBITION TOUR Curators Andrzej Klimowski and David Crowley will lead a tour of the show. **FREE. No booking required.**

WEDNESDAY 4 AUGUST 2-4 pm: "COLLAGE" A workshop for children (4-14 years) led by George Wu and Sarah Gottlieb of Household design studio. Children will have the chance to explore the techniques of making images with collage. **FREE. Please book in advance, email rsvp@polishculture.org.uk (or by leaving your name at the entrance of the exhibition).**

All events take place in the Upper and Lower Gulbenkian Galleries at the Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2EU. For more information visit www.polishculture.org.uk



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